

EXPRESSION, No. 3, January 2014
BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON
INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF
NON-LITERATE PEOPLES

*UISPP-CISENP was founded in 2006 as an international scientific commission of
The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences
(Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protobistoriques)
President, UISPP-CISENP: Emmanuel Anati*



San Rock Art (South Africa)

EXPRESSION invites us to consider the human mind and spirit.

Join our interdisciplinary dialogue with UISPP-CISENP and all those thirsty for an understanding of the intellectual and spiritual expressions of non-literate peoples.

We note with pleasure the birth of the new *Center for Desert Archaeology and Anthropology* in the Negev, in Mitzpe Ramon, about 100 kilometers from the site of Har Karkom. Take a look, in this issue, at Emmanuel Anati's announcement and call for collaboration from international researchers.

In this, our third issue of **EXPRESSION**, we seek to clarify that *we* are the **NON-LITERATE PEOPLES** referred to in the name **CISENP**. We discuss the premises of our research group. What are expressions of the human

intellect and spirit? How can we read, decode and comprehend prehistoric, tribal, and contemporary art by learning an ancient human language we seek to understand? If we agree that millions of signs have been etched and painted on stones, on all continents, we assume that they were intentionally crafted, have meaning and were read. Beyond the useful work of identifying, counting, and dating representations, we ask: what is the significance or purpose of these? Can we read them today?

How can we use our own intellect and spirit to learn to read lines, symbols, figures, designs, and motifs on objects, fabrics, masks, and rocks? How can we, in the 21st century, become literate in “our own” universal language?

Lysa Hochroth, PhD
Editor-Secretary, UISPP-CISENP

WHY IN THIS DESERT?



Har Karkom (Negev Desert).

CENTRE FOR DESERT ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Dear Friends,
We have given birth to a logistic base for our project “Man and the Desert” in the Negev Desert, Israel. It is equipped with a basic research library of ca. 3500 volumes, a modest laboratory, an operative space and the possibility of hosting guest researchers.

The core of our documentation relies on fifty years of surveys and

excavations in the Sinai Peninsula and in the Negev Desert, including thirty years of research at Har Karkom, a holy mountain with shrines and altars related to various archaeological periods.

This is a new and challenging project. Related to other aspects of research in the field of Conceptual Anthropology, it elucidates the early, intellectual and spiritual adventures of humanity.

Deserts are often neglected, though they have been the source of civilizations and of religions. The logistic base is located in a vital place for the story of Man: in the land bridge connecting Africa to Asia and to the rest of the world. The steps of the first hominids out of Africa are overlapped by those of the first *Homo sapiens*, by those of the biblical exodus and

by those of the last migration waves out of Africa. Thousands and thousands of years later, monotheism was born in this area, as narratives of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam echo the story of Man in the desert.

One of the first tasks we have concerns reorganizing archaeological collections and planning a museum in the heart of the desert. We are in the process of classifying over 60,000 photographs on desert archeology, mainly of standing pillars, rock art and geoglyphs, from the Middle East and other parts of the world, planning an educational exhibition on “Art of the Desert”.

Our main base is in Italy and the newly created “Desert Base” is set to benefit from the active participation of both local and guest researchers, from

the Middle East, Europe and other continents.

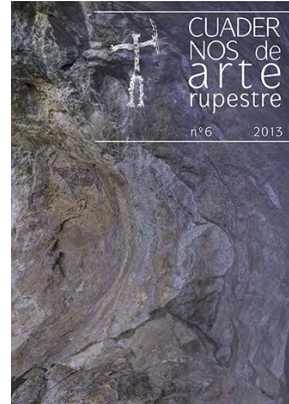
We would appreciate learning from experienced colleagues and cooperating with other institutions on both desert archeology and anthropology, exchanging information and developing publications. Exchange of researchers and of students may be considered.

Research projects on desert rock art, geoglyphs and other specific themes related to human creativity, to be supported by both international and national institutions, are open to cooperation. Volunteers are welcome.

This preliminary letter is aimed at inviting students and researchers to keep in contact and share in the experience.

Cordial regards,
Emmanuel

Rock Art Links



<http://www.cuadernosdearterupestre.es>



TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART (TARA)
<http://www.africanrockart.org>



To participate in **GIPRI's July 2014** seminar field workshop in rock art,
Contact: Guillermo MUÑOZ
gipricolombia@hotmail.com

EXPRESSION DISCUSSION FORUM



Tassili N'Djarr, Southern Algeria

What could be the meaning of geoglyphs? Can we read lines in rocks or earth, like in Nasca and at Har Karkom? What do stories, narrative scenes, with human, animal, and hybrid characters, like in Tassili N'Djarr, tell us?

In Origini della Scrittura (Atelier, 2013), Emmanuel Anati returns to the heart of the matter...can we read art? Is it writing?

“The formal reconstruction of evolution that would have led to writing, according to research into evolutionist structures, shows which forms could have been graphic

antecedents. Marija Gimbutas, (...) in her book *The Language of the Goddess* (1989) formalized the documentation regarding the existence of a proto-writing, 8,000 years ago or so, for the repetitive symbols printed onto statuettes and other Neolithic objects, chiefly in the area of the Balkans. If these graphemes had consistent significance as adjectives or referents for the images, they had a magical-religious function. As isolated terms, they rarely formed sentences.

Analogous phenomena have been recognized in other contexts, in tribal populations of early agricultural peoples, hunter-gatherers, and even in some groups of prehistoric art, as for example, in the Mesolithic societies of Europe, the Azilian culture in France, the Romanelli in Italy or the Maglemosian in Northern Europe approximately 10,000 years ago. We have also surmised that even the Natufian, Epipaleolithic cultures of the Mediterranean Near East, 18,000 years ago, used repetitive symbols with consistent meanings (Anati, 2007a). These graphic phenomena implied mental capacities and a widespread tradition of graphic symbolic expression, but did not correspond to all the characteristics of a true form of writing since in these the faculty of transmitting sentences and complex thoughts appeared to be missing.

Alongside the structural, evolutionist hypothesis of the reconstruction of the formative

process of writing, research into the decoding of prehistoric art reveals the capacity of human beings, in even more ancient eras, thanks to their own narratives, to transmit graphically messages and notions, using metaphoric logic that was rather complex and not limited to expressing adjectives or qualities alone, but managing to communicate entire narratives, through sequences and associations of pictograms, ideograms, and psychograms (Anati, 2010). The scholastic, rational reconstruction of the graphic evolution that should have led to writing, is now found in confrontation with evidence of the capacity of humans, even 30,000 years ago or more, of discovering and rediscovering the system of graphic representation of oral communication, giving thought a legible, visible form. (...)

Traces of pictographic writing exist in different eras, on all continents, even if the entity of the type of messages transmitted varies. The thesis we are elaborating (...) demonstrates that writing is a primary, human capacity; acquired at a certain level of activating associative faculties in the human mind, which can, then, manifest themselves in diverse forms, when need be. It is a capacity that can also not be used, which is why in each period, there can be populations who are either literate or not.

We take as a given that through prehistoric art, humans meant to communicate, but that is not enough

to define prehistoric art as real writing. It is essential to verify if there exist in remote, ancient periods in prehistoric art, cases of intentional communications found where complex thoughts and ideas can indeed be decoded. (...)"

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<http://cisenp.wordpress.com>

ATELIER colloqui

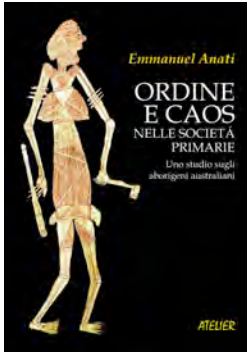


ATELIER is a workshop for research, experiment and debates on the intellectual and spiritual expressions of cultures...

<http://www.atelier-etno.it>
atelier.etno@gmail.com



Aboriginal men and boys prepare a "corroboree".
<http://www.aboriginalculture.com.au/religion.shtml>



New Book – Just Published
From Emmanuel Anati, *Ordine e caos nelle società primarie, uno studio sugli aborigeni australiani* (Atelier, 2014):

“To Be or Not To Be”

If Aboriginals have had, and still have, difficulty adapting to Western society, it is because their concept of order and their conceptual structures are different than Westerners'. Today, Aboriginal society is attempting to integrate (into modern Australia) by developing a dialectic that is far from their nature, discussing whether or not to accept or refuse European canons, from rule of law to religion. Previously, laws and traditional beliefs were truths, not subject to discussion, but rather part of their very being.

The new order is fragile because it can be criticized and discussed. Therefore, Western laws and beliefs are considered volatile and ephemeral. The eternity of these laws and beliefs is not credible.

Without even posing the problem of believing or not believing in these, it is moreover an issue of establishing whether or not it is convenient or not to abide by these and submit to them. Accepting or not accepting laws and beliefs becomes then more often a question of opportunism. It is not surprising to see that conquered people view their conquerors with this kind of contempt.

The presence, more and more commonplace, of a generation of children of mixed marriages, has a noteworthy influence on the process of integration, especially in urban centers. The various attempts by the Australian government to indoctrinate, adopt and convert the indigenous populations have never obtained the expected results. Thus, a division between two parts of society has been created within Aboriginal society: an urban and suburban division where the awareness of assimilation is prevalent and various levels of integration or opposition to integration occur, and another part of this society that maintains its ties to the land but which, in relation to the rest of Australian society, remains marginal, practically forming a non-integrated society that often chooses not to integrate. These people do not accept the order in Western society and they consider it instead an uncontrollable chaos. They are terrorized by the

danger of being involved in it, as they would lack all the security provided by and guaranteed by traditional order.

Within these two categories, there are various tendencies, based on the level of interaction with the surrounding world and the positive or negative habits that are developed. Instability leads to a loss of identity and to the alteration of traditions, along with alcoholism, prostitution, apathy or violence. If the old order was relinquished without the new order being accepted, the consequence is the chaos in which individuals get lost, incapable of orienting themselves toward future prospects. This is not only true of Aboriginal society. There are Aboriginals who have attained important social and professional positions within Australian society: directors of public agencies, attorneys, physicians, and business leaders. These people remain still and all within Aboriginal society. Despite things opening up gradually, until recently, it was very difficult to find an Aboriginal lawyer defend a European Australian, or an Aboriginal doctor care for patients of European origin. Professors teaching Aboriginals and entrepreneurs taking care of workers in a state of dependency seem to take care of Aboriginals' interests. This situation has created a *de facto* society within the society.

Integration has not always been successful and has not always been the ideal solution. The divergent faces of order confront each other and the contrasts between different visions can be the cause of chaos.



*The Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Law and Cultural Centre advocates social justice with respect for and connectedness to "Tjukurrpa" (dreamtime/ universal life force/ cosmos).
<http://www.kapululangu.org>*

Aboriginal society had its own laws that guaranteed order. Aboriginals relocated near missions or shantytowns around urban centers have abandoned these habits, renouncing to strong references. The resulting loss of traditional order disintegrates into the production of a society abandoned to chaos. It is a phase of transition, temporarily without prospects, awaiting salvation from the outside, but which sounds the death knell of the old, traditional order. The ancestral spirits have stayed in the Dream Time, which is growing distant. They have abandoned their progeny (...)

RECENT & INTERESTING PUBLICATIONS

NORTH AFRICA

“The Signs of Which Times?
Chronological and
Palaeoenvironmental Issues in the Rock
Art of Northern Africa”

(Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences,
Brussels, 3 - 5 June, 2010)

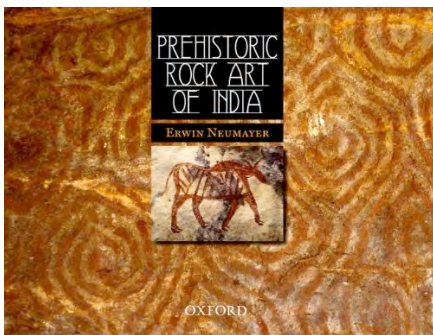
Abstracts online:

[http://www.kaowarsom.be/documents/
Abstracts_Rotskunst.pdf](http://www.kaowarsom.be/documents/Abstracts_Rotskunst.pdf)

Jitka Soukopova, “The Earliest Rock
Paintings of the Central Sahara:
Approaching Interpretation” in *Time and
Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness
and Culture*, vol. 4-no. 2 (July 2011), 193-
216. Available online:

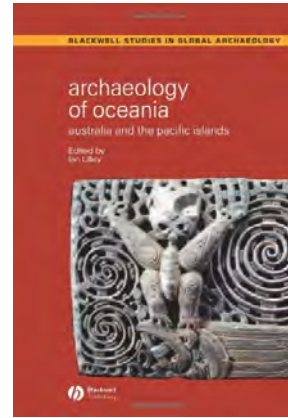
[https://www.academia.edu/2067705/The
Earliest Rock Paintings of the Central
Sahara Approaching Interpretation](https://www.academia.edu/2067705/The_Earliest_Rock_Paintings_of_the_Central_Sahara_Approaching_Interpretation)

INDIA



Erwin Neumayer, *The Prehistoric Rock Art
of India* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

OCEANIA & AUSTRALIA



*Archeology of Oceania: Australia and the Pacific
Islands*, ed. Ian Lilley, “Blackwell Studies in
Global Archaeology” (Blackwell
Publishers, 2006)

THEORY

Stanley I. Greenspan and Stuart Shanker,
*The First Idea: How Symbols, Language, and
Intelligence Evolved from our Primate Ancestors*
(Da Capo Press, 2004, 2006). Review by
Colin Renfrew, *Brain*, Oxford Journals,
Available online

[http://brain.oxfordjournals.org/content/
128/7/1737.full](http://brain.oxfordjournals.org/content/128/7/1737.full) Digital edition available
on:

[http://books.google.fr/books?id=2zprX
k7vdUC&hl=fr](http://books.google.fr/books?id=2zprXk7vdUC&hl=fr)

*Origins of Pictures: Anthropological Discourses
in Image Science*, eds Klaus Sachs-Hombach
and Jörg R. J. Schirra (Herbert von Halem
Verlag Köln, 2013). (in German).

[http://www.halem-
verlag.de/2013/origins-of-pictures/](http://www.halem-verlag.de/2013/origins-of-pictures/)



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PROTOHISTORIC SCIENCES

CALL FOR PAPERS

*The 17th World UISPP Congress “ATAPUERCA” will be held in Burgos, Spain, 1-7 September 2014. CISENP is meeting to discuss the issues we explore herein and prepare through discussions in these virtual pages. Colleagues are invited to send in abstracts **by March 30, 2014** for the session on “Intellectual and Spiritual Expressions of Non-literate People”. Papers will be published in the Acts of the Congress Fall 2014 and their content circulated in **EXPRESSION**. Please send the title of the paper you would like to present and a short abstract (10 lines) to the President of CISENP –*

Emmanuel Anati:

cispe.research@gmail.com.

To register and for more info:
<http://www.burgos2014uispp.es>

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DISCUSSION BLOG
TODAY!

<http://cisnp.wordpress.com>

If you missed our first two discussion topics, these issues, **EXPRESSION** N° 1 and N° 2, are now available on our blog and on academia.edu:

[https://www.academia.edu/5346537/BIMONTHLY E-LETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS OF NON-LITERATE PEOPLES](https://www.academia.edu/5346537/BIMONTHLY-E-LETTER-OF-THE-COMMISSION-ON-INTELLECTUAL-AND-SPIRITUAL-EXPRESSIONS-OF-NON-LITERATE-PEOPLES)

[https://www.academia.edu/5599376/EXPRESSION No. 2 FINAL](https://www.academia.edu/5599376/EXPRESSION-No.-2-FINAL)

We seek your comments, articles, images, examples, questions, reflections, and queries for **EXPRESSION** N° 4 on:
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EXPRESSION

N°3

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