

FOREWORD

ROCK ART AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CULTURAL ROUTE

"...Rock Art is the artistic expression of the ideas of ancient humans. Europe preserves in its territory the largest known concentration of artistic manifestations on rock; this is undoubtedly a great "territory-museum" inherited from the first Europeans..."

(Preamble of the Candidacy presented by International Association PRAT-CARP to obtain the European Cultural Route Mention for European Rock Art)

In 2008, the International Association "*Prehistoric Rock Art Trails – Chemins de l'Art Rupestre Préhistorique - Caminos de Arte Rupestre Prehistórico*" (I.A. PRAT-CARP) submitted to the European Institute of Cultural Routes (www.culture-routes.net) its proposal for the Rock Art of Europe forming the basis of a Council of Europe Cultural Route. I.A. CARP's document-proposal was founded on the value and interest of Prehistoric Rock Art, the oldest cultural expression common to all Europe, and the route would include most of the rock art sites in the continent open to the public in a supervised manner and which are managed sustainably. In other words, European tourist destinations based on Prehistory and its art, many of them listed as World Heritage by UNESCO. The project of the route was also open to the inclusion of new destinations within the Council of Europe's area, and even in surrounding regions, such as the Near East or the Maghreb.

In this way, a direct relationship was established between the future Council of Europe Cultural Route "*Prehistoric Rock Art Trails – Chemins de l'Art Rupestre Préhistorique*" (PRAT-CARP) and the World Heritage List, with a manifest wish to add the declaration of European Cultural Route to the listing as World Heritage by UNESCO. Indeed, countries in the geographic area of the Council of

Europe possess as many as 11 rock art sites listed as World Heritage, and these are dated from the early Upper Palaeolithic to historical times. They are:

1. Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley (France), 1979
2. Rock Drawings in Valcamonica (Italy), 1979
3. Cave of Altamira and Paleolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain (Spain), 1985-2008
4. Rock Art of Alta (Norway), 1985
5. Brú na Bóinne - Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne (Ireland), 1993
6. Rock Carvings in Tanum (Sweden), 1994
7. Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde (Portugal-Spain), 1998-2010
8. Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain), 1998
9. Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape (Azerbaijan), 2007
10. Decorated Cave of Pont d'Arc, known as Grotte Chauvet-Pont d'Arc, Ardèche (France), 2014
11. The Sassi and the Park of the Rupestrian Churches of Matera (Italy), 1993

In May 2010, the Council of Europe accepted the proposal of Cultural Route for the sites belong to I.A. CARP and thus ratified the PREHISTORIC ROCK ART TRAILS project. At that time, the idea of holding a meeting with all the World Heritage rock art sites became a priority for the Cultural Route.

In this way, the PRAT-CARP cultural route held the first **INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN WORLD HERITAGE PREHISTORIC ROCK ART SITES** on 9th-11th April 2014. The meeting brought together, for the first time, the managers of all the sites with rock art listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, all of them key sites in the History of Culture.

The main aim of this symposium was to hold a meeting with all the technical managers of the European rock art







sites that are listed as World Heritage (together with a large number of archaeologists, restorers and technical managers in the cultural tourism administration of rock art). In this way, the intention was to improve, through the exchange of information among experts, the conservation of the rock art sites listed as World Heritage in Council of Europe member countries.

Further goals were:

- To contribute towards improving the management (especially as regards protection and dissemination) of World Heritage sites in the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route.
- To encourage the dissemination of information about World Heritage rock art sites in Europe and the World Heritage Convention itself.
- To improve coordination between the institutions managing World Heritage rock art sites in terms of management, protection and cultural tourism publicity and to foster the coordinated development of research, protection and publicity plans of the European sites. These projects would aim to find ways to enhance the sustainability and capacity of cultural tourism management at the rock art sites.

The place chosen for this meeting was none other than the country town of Rames de la Victoria (Cantabria, Spain), a location with as many as 10 prehistoric rock art caves, one of which, Covalanas Cave, has been listed as World Heritage since 2008. In addition, one of the sessions took place in Altamira National Museum (Santillana del Mar, Cantabria), on the invitation of its then director José Antonio Lasheras Corrucho, when the attendees took the opportunity to visit the museum. The symposium was organised by Rames de la Victoria Town Council and the PRAT-CARP Technical Unit, with funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain, and from the Government of Cantabria, through its Education, Culture and Sport Department.

It was opened by the President of the Autonomous Community of Cantabria, Ignacio Diego, the Mayor of Rames de la Victoria, José Domingo San Emeterio, and the director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Penelope Denú. A total of 89 participants represented all the European World Heritage Rock Art Sites as well as other institutions associated with the PRAT-CARP Route, UNESCO and ICOMOS.

The presentation of the management models at each site was complemented by two round table sessions. The first examined current problems in the management of World Heritage Rock Art sites while the second discussed international cooperation for management and the development of management plans.

The main results of this symposium were achieved in the meetings and contacts made between the management teams at the European World Heritage Rock Art sites and by raising awareness of the need for coordination and cooperation between all in order to improve the quality of site management. A consequence of this has been the recent preparation of joint proposals to be presented at European calls for projects and the idea of repeating the experience with a new symposium in 2016.

Aware of the landmark that this symposium signified, the organisers always intended to publish and disseminate the communications that were presented there. This aim was taken up by the Region of Murcia, a member of the International Association CARP, which agreed to devote a special issue of its on-line journal CUADERNOS DE ARTE RUPESTRE to the communications presented at the symposium by the different rock art sites.

From the International Association CARP, we would like to thank the editors of this publication, and above all the authors, for their work in making this publication a reality. It will help us obtain a precise understanding of the UNESCO World Heritage rock art sites in the Council of Europe region.

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