

TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART

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Centre



TARA



TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART NEWSLETTER

June 2015

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ABOUT TARA

TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art, was founded in 1996 by photographer David Coulson under the patronage of renowned archaeologist, Mary Leakey, and author/conservationist, Laurens van der Post.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, TARA is committed to recording the rich rock art heritage of the entire African continent, to making this information widely available and accessible and, to the extent possible, safeguarding those sites most threatened by both humans and nature, no matter how remote.

TARA achieves this through survey and conservation work, documentation, exhibitions, publications and community projects. TARA has documented rock art in 20 African countries and digitised over 20,000 images, many of which are available online. It is estimated that over one million people have visited TARA's exhibitions. The organisation also works closely with communities in areas where rock art is found, in order to raise awareness of rock art as a fragile heritage resource, and to improve the lives of people in those communities.

MISSION

Create greater global awareness of the importance and endangered state of African rock art; survey sites; monitor status; be an information resource and archive; and promote and support rock art conservation measures.

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Cover:

Detail showing a negative/stencil handprint (rock painting) in a cave in Egypt's White Desert.



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Trust for African Rock Art





David Coulson
Executive Chairman

From the Chairman

The high point of 2014 was the launch of the African Rock Art Image Project at the British Museum on October 6th. This took the form of a public lecture by BM Project Curator, Lisa Galvin, and me followed by a glittering reception in the Ancient Egypt Gallery with the Rosetta Stone as the backdrop. Deputy Director, Jonathan Williams, welcomed over 200 guests and I had the opportunity to talk about origins of TARA's archive. The launch generated considerable press coverage starting with a 3,000 word article on TARA and me in the London Telegraph magazine. Other coverage included a long, illustrated article in the UK magazine, Business Destinations and an article which I wrote for the London Independent, published the day before the October launch. A five-page article appeared soon afterwards in the London Financial Times written by travel writer, Lucia van der Post.

This year's survey expeditions were mainly focused on Ethiopia and Kenya. We made three trips to eastern and southern Ethiopia and four trips to northern Kenya. In Ethiopia, we concentrated on recording new sites in the Hararghe Massif near the Somali border as well as parts of the south where we had not yet worked. In northern Kenya we were able to record new sites near Lake Turkana and in the north-eastern Chalbi Desert area. In the process we found rock paintings near the shores of Lake Turkana, the first "paintings" to be recorded in this part of Kenya. We also recorded rock gongs at some Chalbi sites.

In October/November Terry Little and I travelled to Egypt with three friends of TARA. One of the purposes of this trip was to view little known pre-Pharaonic engraving sites in the Eastern Desert, between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. This was followed by a visit to some extraordinary sites in the Nile Valley between Luxor and Aswan. Perhaps the most exciting site was our visit to Qurta where Dr Dirk Huyge of the Royal Museums of Brussels accompanied us to see auroch engravings which he has dated to around 18,000 years, thereby placing them in the Late Paleolithic era. I have chosen a photo from Egypt's White Desert for the cover of this issue; a hand-stencil.

In line with our awareness mandate, we carried out several outreach visits in northern Kenya including talking to hundreds of school children in the towns we went through and taking young people to see rock art sites. We also attended two cultural festivals, the Lake Turkana Festival in June and the Kalacha Cultural Festival in December where we spoke to local community leaders and young people as well as the Marsabit County Governor and administrators.

Finally, I am happy to announce that TARA, for the 7th time in 13 years, is once again the recipient of a grant award from the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. In December, Terry Little went to Niger to launch the project in Niger's Air Mountains (Sahara Desert) and he and I will be returning in January. This visit marks the first time TARA has been back to Niger following the Tuareg rebellions between 2008 and 2010. In addition to this new North Africa project, we are also planning a rock art conservation workshop in Morocco in 2015 and plan to continue our work in northern Kenya and Ethiopia with the support of The Christensen Fund.

I welcome you to read more about all of these activities and thank you most sincerely for your interest and support of TARA.

David Coulson

Reflections

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

By Josue Cardenas and Diana Loubser

Over a Decade of Reflection

For rock art communities, the benefits are twofold. Firstly, the intangible benefits such as education, increased self-esteem plus a sense of belonging to an ancient culture is of great value. It strengthens unique identity and attempts to preserve evolutionary tribal traditions. Secondly, direct and indirect economic benefits are linked to the archaeological heritage upon which cultural tourism is based, namely; African craft making, traditional cuisine, revitalisation of rituals and storytelling that may take place in a natural setting within a conservation area.

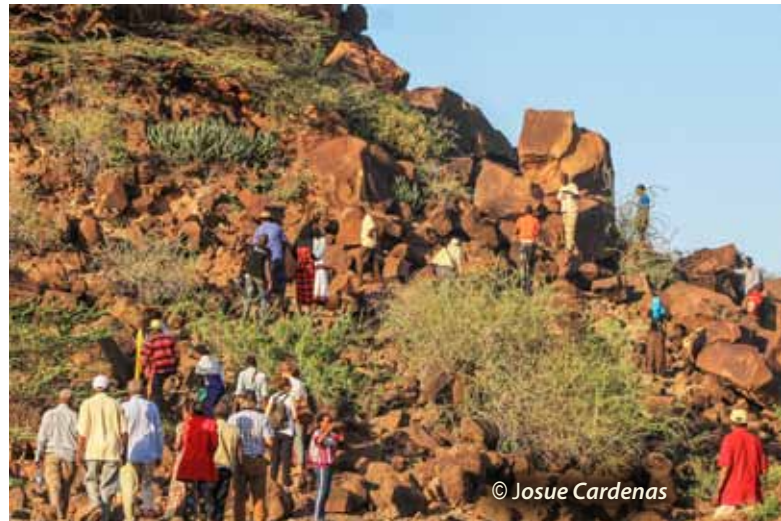
The creation of community museums, tourism initiatives, educational programs and heritage protection projects require tailor-made work plans and a community mandate. Their success also depends on the setting of realistic and achievable goals, aims and objectives. Fair distribution of benefits is critical to the success of any rock art site, eco-tourism initiatives and its surrounding community. TARA achieves this mandate through engagement with local communities and identifying criteria in which African rock art and its associated cultural heritage are able to generate benefits through responsible tourism. A modular, step-by-step approach to community projects ensures survival of each project and its sustainability. TARA encourages independent community-driven projects that are able to generate both economic and social benefits which in turn empower its people with a sense of pride, custodianship, as well as, a better understanding and hence appreciation of ancestral rock art heritage. Without citizen participation, our community projects would not have been as successful as they have.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By Josiah Kabiru

Community outreach is an important aspect of cultural heritage conservation. TARA works with local communities so that rock art heritage can be preserved. The first steps towards achieving sustainability in the conservation of rock art are community awareness and developing a feeling of community ownership. In 2014, TARA carried out two major outreach programs in northern Kenya courtesy of sponsorship from The Christensen Fund and Lundin Foundation.

The main objective of the trip undertaken in June was to increase awareness of rock art in the northern Kenya region. Community talks were held in Marsabit County where publications and banners were used for local community engagement. A secondary objective was to establish links with other stakeholder organisations operating in northern Kenya. TARA held meetings with the local communities around the rock art heritage sites and emphasized the need



© Josue Cardenas

Members of a local youth group visiting the Afgaba rock art site near Kalacha.



Wanjiku Mwangi talks to young people at Kalacha about their rock art heritage in the context of Kenya's cultural heritage.



Special guests at the Kalacha festival included former Miss Tourism Marsabit County, Qabale Duba, pictured here at Afgaba rock art site.

to conserve the sites. Our findings are that it is the herders who are the scouts whilst the elders provide mythologies, stories of origin and history. It is vitally important to make firm connections with community anchors and mobilisers.

School Visit

During this outreach mission, the team visited South Horr Primary School to address the Deputy Head teacher and approximately 300 Class 6, 7 and 8 students about the rock art of their region. The learners showed interest in the presentation and were already familiar with many of the rock art images.

Due to Africa's extraordinary wealth of rock art heritage being at grave risk, TARA attempts to engineer proactive educational change through support of teachers and learners in schools close to rock art sites.



Emmanuel Ndiema of the National Museums, David Coulson and Josue Cardenas of TARA looking at ancient engraving near Kalacha.

Inclusion of Cultural Rights

Inclusions of cultural rights as a basis for community projects such as those implemented by TARA have encouraged stakeholders to work together to promote rock art conservation within a natural setting and enhance socio-economic development, as well as, improve cooperation in both these areas. Achievement of cultural cooperation only happens if members of a community have the right to participate democratically in the cultural development of the community; in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of decisions that may have an impact on general cultural rights. This approach in turn encourages citizen participation.



TARA team with South Horr Primary School staff.



School children outside South Horr Primary School.



Presentation to 300 students at South Horr Primary School.



A close-up of school children responding to the TARA presentation.



NORTHERN KENYA, KAISUT AND CHALBI DESERTS SURVEY TRIP

By Josiah Kabiru

Marsabit County is the largest and most remote of all Kenyan counties. It experiences a harsh desert climate in most of its regions. However, the county has the richest archaeological, indigenous cultural diversity and rock art heritage resources. TARA had already documented some rock art sites but had heard of many more sites via contact with community representatives living in the region.

In September, TARA carried out a survey mission to northern Kenya courtesy of sponsorship from The Christensen Fund. The survey team made up of myself, Community Projects Coordinator, Josiah Kabiru; community consultant and naturalist, Wanjiku Mwangi; intern, Josue Cardenas and TARA driver, John Githinji, were accompanied by Emmanuel Ndiema Acting Head of Archaeology of the National Museums of Kenya (NMK). We traveled to the Chalbi and Kaisut deserts in northern Kenya. Survey work was undertaken in Korr, Maikona, Kalacha, Surima and Ngurnit, all sub-regions of Marsabit County.

Field guides; Bwana Molukulu, Mr. Fabiano and Mwalimu Mogul assisted in finding the new sites which included Burka Oasis near Kalacha, Ramata Octulo near Maikona and Sulima East. These sites will in future add value to the eco-tourism of Marsabit County and northern Kenya as a whole.

The survey trip was a success with the team recording a number of new sites and established contacts with community members and organizations operating in the region. A positive outcome is that settlements living in close proximity to rock art sites have had their interest in ancestral rock art refreshed through awareness. The seed for valorization of the rock art and its conservation has also been sown and will in the future add value to eco-tourism within Marsabit County. The new sites will no doubt attract anthropological researchers and university academics. Such field missions are critical for preservation, especially since Marsabit County and Turkana County are subject to oil exploration activities which could have an impact on yet to be discovered rock art sites.



Driving across the dry lake-bed, Chalbi Desert.



Engravings of camels at Ramata Octulo near Maikona.



Geometric engravings near Surima, Lake Turkana.



© Josue Cardenas

David Coulson with Dr. Emmanuel Ndiema of the National Museums of Kenya recording rock engravings at Ramata Octulo near Maikona.



Old engravings of giraffes on the rocks of Burka Oasis (west of the Oasis).



Mzee Molukulu points to a rock engraving of an elephant and a lion, near the eastern side of the Chalbi Desert.



Concentric circles on a rock near Surima, Lake Turkana (south east).



Engravings of antelope, rhino and long necked giraffes near Afgaba waterhole, north of Kalacha, Chalbi Desert.

LAKE TURKANA FESTIVAL 2014

By Josiah Kabiru

TARA attended the annual Lake Turkana Festival, which was held in June 2014. The TARA team led by Chairman, David Coulson, guided about 30 visitors to Marti Rock Art Site, near Loiyangalani in the north east. At the invitation of the National Museums of Kenya who were co-organizers of the festival, TARA was asked to guide visitors to the rock art sites and also talk about the importance of the heritage both to the locals and the visitors.

Marti has a wide distribution of giraffe rock art paintings. David Coulson gave a presentation about the rock art and its importance to the local people. Valuable contact was made with local communities and institutions present at the festival. Loiyangalani is fast becoming a tourist attraction due to the unique desert environment, the rich cultural lifestyle of the peoples of Lake Turkana and other attractions like the rock art. Loiyangalani means "a place of many trees" in Samburu. Last year's theme was "Embracing cultural diversity for cohesion and social-economic development".

The event was co-organized by the County Government of Marsabit, Local Community Festival Committee, Kenya Tourism Board, National Museums of Kenya and Kenya Wildlife Service. The event featured performances and cultural traditions from at least twelve ethnic communities which live in Marsabit County: El Molo, Rendille, Samburu, Turkana, Dassanatch, Gabra, Burji, Borana, Konso, Sakuye, Garee and Waata.

Community Networking

The primary objective for the trip was to increase awareness of rock art in the region. Community talks were held in Marsabit County where publications and banners were used for local community engagement. Establishment of links with other stakeholder organisations operating in Northern Kenya was achieved. TARA met with local elders and conducted cultural heritage presentations in towns in close proximity to their surveys.



Samburu warriors at the Lake Turkana Festival.



David Coulson talking to a group of press and visitors at the Marti rock art site, near Loiyangalani.

KALACHA CULTURAL FESTIVAL 2014

By Diana Loubser

Over the years, the core of all the work that TARA has done is the setting up of educational exhibitions and attendance of many festivals. In early December, TARA was again invited to the Kalacha Cultural Festival in Marsabit County. TARA was represented by its Chairman, David Coulson, community consultant and naturalist, Wanjiku Mwangi and TARA's intern, Josue Cardenas. The festival was organised by the Kivulini Trust. The theme of the festival was "Heritage for social cohesion and prosperity".

This five-day event showcased the diversity of the region's cultural and natural heritage through artistic expressions, medicinal plants, exhibitions of traditional foods, songs, dances, and a guided visit to a rock art site. Participating communities included: Samburu, Gabra, Daasanach, Rendille, Boran, Somali, Turkana, Konso, El-Molo, Garri, Burji, Sakuye and the Waata tribe. Nearly 50 performing community groups performed vibrantly.

This year's festival brought together pastoralists, fisher folk, metal artisans, hunter-gatherer and agricultural communities of the region to share and celebrate their cultural and natural heritage in order to promote cultural diversity, social harmony and sustainable development. The importance of harmony in the region was emphasised by different speakers in the light of the many development challenges which the region now faces.

TARA gave two presentations, the first a keynote speech by David Coulson on the "Treasures of Northern Kenya" with special emphasis on the region's rock art heritage. The second presentation was a talk to about 100 young people by David Coulson and Wanjiku Mwangi. As a heritage agent, TARA believes that indigenous people and their ancestral legacies are today tangible assets. The targeting of young Kenyans and the development of a lasting awareness of the importance of rock art is critical to ensuring that cultural heritage is passed on from one generation to another.



Turkana woman dancing at the Kalacha Festival.



A Sakuye woman participating in a dance at the Kalacha Festival.



Sakuye women dancing at the Kalacha Festival.



© Terry Little

Documenting geometric paintings made by hunter-gatherers on the roof of a huge rock shelter in the Hararghe Massif, eastern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia

By David Coulson

Ethiopia's rock art is severely threatened by population expansion and human activity. With a surge in the extraction of natural resources, the rock art heritage is at risk of damage, destruction and disappearance. At the same time, the people who have knowledge of it and/or link with it are slowly becoming disassociated with the landscapes, environments and heritage around them. There is a desperate need for creating written awareness materials targeted at all levels of society.

The daunting task of rock art recording is not only to preserve the imagery for future generations, but also to capture the data in such a way that it is useful for detecting patterns or clues used to make sense of past human behaviour. This process also involves community members in identifying the sites and contributing information about local beliefs and traditions related to the art.

The first survey trip conducted in March was to sites where archeologists Pere Teilhard de Chardin and Henry Monfried had worked in 1929. De Chardin returned in 1933 to excavate here with Paul Warnert. In the same year the Abbe Henri Breuil (world's greatest authority on rock art at the time) came to study the paintings and the German archeologist, Leo Frobenius also visited in the 1930s. Meanwhile Desmond Clarke was working here in the 1970s and in 1999 Delumely

excavated in the cave. There can be no other single rock art site in Africa which has attracted so many 'A List' 20th century archeologists. Some of the paintings appeared to be hunter-gatherer, while at other sites, pastoralist paintings featuring cattle and camels were seen.

On the second visit, the TARA team returned to the Hararghe Mountains (Massif) to document 15 sites in this area. Some of these were also pastoralist sites, while others were hunter-gatherer sites. The success of this trips recording and documentation is that approximately 1,200 images have been added to the TARA African Rock Art Archive. Although one of the sites had been totally destroyed in the past through vandalism, the rest were in relatively good condition considering the probable age of some of the art between 2,000 and 5,000 years old.

The second part of this visit took us to the SNNP Region (Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region), formally Sidamo Province. These 5 important sites in the Dire Dawa area of eastern Ethiopia were first recorded by Dr Yonas Beyene, an Ethiopian archeologist and anthropologist from the Authority for Research and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage (ARCCCH) in Addis Ababa and Dr Metasebia Bekele an anthropologist from the Association for Research and Conservation of Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Landscape (ARCCIKCL).



Important geometric engraving site in southern Ethiopia first recorded and excavated by Prof. Yonas Beyene and Dr Metasebia Bekele.

The cave named 'Porc Epic', is one of the most famous sites in East Africa and is located just to the east of Dire Dawa, (see image below right). Composed of sandstone and limestone, the cave has an entrance that measures 11 metres in width, 9 metres in height and has a depth of 15 meters. The paintings here appear to be early Hunter-gatherer Period. Sadly, there have been a number of illegal excavations as the site is close to a major centre and many villages. This makes it very vulnerable to human damage.



Geometric paintings on the roof of a rock shelter in the Hararghe Massif, possibly the work of Twa hunter-gatherers.



David Coulson and Habtamu Tesfaye recording rock art at the Goda Buticha site, near Dire Dawa, eastern Ethiopia.



© Terry Little

TARA staff with NANAMAC student artists at TARA H.Q.

Ancient Rock Art Becomes Contemporary

By Josiah Kabiru

Purity Senewa of the Nairobi Museum and Mwanaima Salim of the Nairobi Gallery had a vision about involving their art students in a rock art project. This was finally realised in July 2014 when the Nairobi National Museum Art Club (NANAMAC) embarked on a collaborative rock art project. Josiah Kabiru and Kerstin Rust were there to promote the idea and to begin organising a joint workshop between TARA and the National Museums of Kenya.

Rock Art Workshop October 2014

In mid-October, TARA finally joined hands with NANAMAC to facilitate a two day mentoring workshop for upcoming young artists selected from different schools within Nairobi. The participants were creatively involved in the drawing of rock art images which they interpreted in a contemporary way. On the second day, teams collaboratively painted a 'mazera' stone mural in the lower botanical garden of the National Museums of Kenya which showcased modern cultures expressed on rock faces to be passed on to future generations.

Mr William Wambugu of the Nairobi Botanical Gardens perceived the 'Modern Rock Art' as important so that a legacy would remain behind for future generations and to create an educational outdoor space for teachers and learners.



© Diana Loubser

Josue Cardenas preparing for the workshop with NANAMAC.

Upon having our first discussion with NANAMAC patron Purity Senewa (Arts Curator, National Museums of Kenya), I thought about how interesting the club of young artists was and that the TARA team should get involved. At first, I struggled with the idea of combining ancient rock art with NANAMAC's focus on modern and technical art and specialised materials.

My attitude changed when TARA hosted the young artists on Day 1 of the Rock Art Workshop. The artists found an inspiration in the ancient African rock art. They put much thought into attempting to understand how the rock art was created and reasons why ancient artists painted as they did. I eagerly watched the way in which these young artists transferred the rock art images onto paper so easily using their drawing skills. It was amazing to see so many different interpretations of ancient rock art images.

On Day 2 of the workshop, individuals were provided with an opportunity to place their own rock art messages in order to pass it onto future generations. I found the experience overwhelming; modern art culture was reflected in a simple way but showed a deeper meaning. Examples of this included the use of an image of a fist to portray the strength found in synergy, eyes to portray how differently we see the world and a sunset behind an Acacia tree to portray the beauty of Africa. All of the artists explained their choice of image. A common thread was the inspiration gained from their experiences of the environment.

The questions I would like to leave with these artists are firstly, "Is there a common message conveyed in ancient rock art?" Secondly, "If the answer is yes, what is the message our ancestors wanted to pass on to our generation all those thousands of years ago?"



Rock art mural at the Nairobi National Museum Botanic Garden. The mural represents modern thoughts being passed on to future generations.

Future Plans

"It is the intention of both TARA and NANAMAC to plan an annual activity based on the success of this venture. Thank you to all TARA staff who were involved in this inaugural workshop".

Josiah Kabiru, Community Projects

"As a fellow artist and rock art restoration expert, it was an honour to plan and carry out this milestone workshop with such talented young people from Nairobi. It was refreshing to observe first hand, the roots and links with African cultural heritage over these past few months. Trends across Africa reveal that cultural heritage is somewhat being forgotten by new generation who are perceived to be less interested in keeping ancient cultural heritage alive. The youths present at the rock art workshop were reminded that ancient rock art and ancestral cultural heritage are still important.

Art connects people! I personally think that the world needs more artists. It was a privilege to share some of my knowledge about the restoration techniques and preservation of rock art from Mexico. I witnessed a renewed curiosity and interest in ancient rock art as the young artists who attended asked many questions. My challenge to those artists is to continue their investigations and find out what it may have been like painting on rock surfaces and carving into rock 30,000 years ago".

Josue Cardenas, Intern (Mexico)



Pre-dynastic engraving of an Ibex in Egypt's Eastern Desert .



Dynastic engravings on a cliff face in the middle of Egypt's Eastern Desert.



Mysterious concentric circles on a boulder in Kenya's great Rift Valley near Lake Turkana (Cradle of Mankind), perhaps used for rain making rituals.



An 8,000 year old painting of a masked man with one or more “mushrooms” on his shoulders, Algeria (Sahara).



© Terry Little

TARA Chairman and Founder, David Coulson talks to invited guests at the British Museum launch reception, October 6th 2014.

British Museum African Rock Art Project launch

By Diana Loubser

The British Museum gave a reception October 6th, in their Egyptian Rooms to celebrate the launch of the TARA/BM African Rock Art Image online joint project. Continuous screening of TARA images, located next to the Rosetta Stone, showcased many of TARA's rock art images while statues of the Pharaohs like Ramses the Great looked on. In his welcoming speech the Deputy Director, Jonathan Williams, spoke of TARA's extraordinary achievement in putting together this Pan-African collection and of the museum's pride and delight that it is now under their wing.

Deputy Director, Jonathan Williams stated: "The British Museum is pleased to be the permanent home to the TARA rock art image collection. The TARA collection will add to the British Museum's study, recording and open access of all human history."

TARA Chairman David Coulson spoke about his personal journey which had later become TARA's journey and about TARA's delight that the collection should have found such an ideal home. Both Williams and Coulson praised the generosity of the Arcadia Fund for making this project possible.



© Terry Little

David Coulson speaking in the Lecture Theatre at the British Museum.



John Dauth, Former Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom with Dr. Lissant Bolton, Keeper of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at the British Museum.



Left to right: Shane Winser; Deborah Coulson, Nigel Winser of Earthwatch Institute and TARA Advisory Board member and Angela Fisher.



Left to right: Anthea Case CBE of the Arcadia Fund, David Coulson (TARA) Jonathan Williams, Deputy Director of the British Museum and Terry Little from TARA.



Left to right: Deborah Coulson, Alice Coulson, Jenny Byers and Daisy Coulson.



General view of the reception in the Egyptian Rooms surrounding the famous Rosetta Stone seen here in glass cabinet.



The British Museum African Rock Art Image Project Team: Elizabeth Galvin (curator), Helen Anderson, Victoria Suzman, Jorge de Torres with David Coulson and Terry Little.



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Partnerships

Terry Little and Diana Loubser

African Wildlife Foundation

In October, TARA partnered with AWF to provide input into the Kondoa/ Kolo Hills REDD+ Project to provide knowledge and information about rock art for this region. Both organizations core focus is the direct involvement of communities in the management of forest landscapes and associated rock art sites. Both organisations also support the generation of income to ensure that the local people are becoming the main beneficiaries of economic initiatives.

Due to the extensive nature of The Kondoa World Heritage Site and a rapidly growing population, there has been increasing pressure on the Miombo woodland, rock art sites and the conservation area as a whole. As with much of the greater Kondoa site, there is extensive livestock keeping and farming. Forests are being cleared for charcoal burning and wood collection for brick making which bring the added risk of the spread of fires. Wood fires are regularly used to “crack” and break up the rocks into granite chips for sale to the road construction company who

are building the new road though the middle of the World Heritage Site . At the same time, increasing agricultural encroachment into the site areas is bringing more threats closer to the actual sites. With joint cooperation, careful monitoring of the region is possible.

Getty Conservation Institute

The Southern Africa-Australia Rock Art Conservation Exchange took place in August at Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, Australia. The exchange was sponsored by Getty Conservation Institute and attended by TARA's COO, Terry Little.

Australia and the subcontinent of southern Africa face many of the same issues in the preservation of their rock art. Both have a rich heritage of rock art sites and indigenous communities closely associated with them. Both also suffer from lack of public awareness of the significance of these sites.

The visit to Australia was a uniquely productive experience in that it enabled an exchange of expertise, knowledge and fostered the beginnings of what are hoped to be enduring contacts. Meetings were held at selected sites which aimed at further strengthening

1. *Community engagement workshop, Kondoa, central Tanzania in 2009.*
2. *Granite chips used for construction from boulders next to an iconic Kondoa painting site. Illegal quarrying is a serious threat.*
3. *Aboriginal rock painting from the Kakadu National Park, Northern Australia.*
4. *Dr Wolde Tadesse of The Christensen Fund, introducing the head of the Ethiopian delegation, Mr Taferi at the Kalacha Cultural Festival.*

links, enhancement of best conservation practice, and the study of indigenous management practices together with sustainable use of these sites.

Kivulini Trust

The Trust's objective is to support pastoralist communities in the rangelands of Northern Kenya maintain their cultural and natural heritage, and to realize their aspirations for positive change. Kivulini collaborates with a number of communities in Northern Kenya to strengthen their own capacity to effectively revive, document and transmit their cultural heritage. Kivulini



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1. Marsabit Governor Ukur Yatani discussing Enset, an ancient false banana, a traditional staple food from Ethiopia.
2. Scene from the closing ceremony at the Hargeysa International Book Fair in Somaliland.
3. Rock painting of a cow and human figure at the Laas Geel Rock Art Site, Somaliland.
4. Experts meeting at Prince Claus Fund. Terry Little discussing TARA projects with Marianne A. Eijgenraan and Ida de Kat-van Meurs from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November, 2013.

Trust works with 'grass-roots' partner organizations to promote cultural identity and support inter-ethnic exchange and dialogue, and to promote culturally appropriate education to enhance cultural expression.

Pharo Foundation

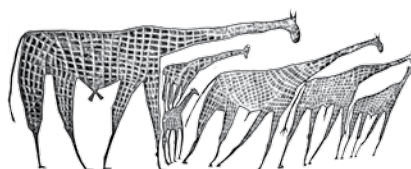
TARA Chairman, David Coulson, was invited to make a presentation at the 7th Hargeysa International Book Fair in Somaliland in August. His presentation focused on the spectacular rock paintings such as those found at Laas Geel. Images were viewed and described in a Pan African context.

The annual fair is similar to a cultural festival which aims to enable young people to access a range of cultural heritages and to stimulate the revival of all forms of art and human expression, including painting, poetry, storytelling, drama and of course writing. Participants included well known African writers as well as international writers and journalists.

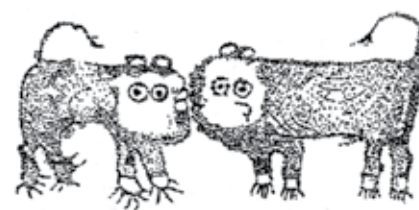
Prince Claus Fund

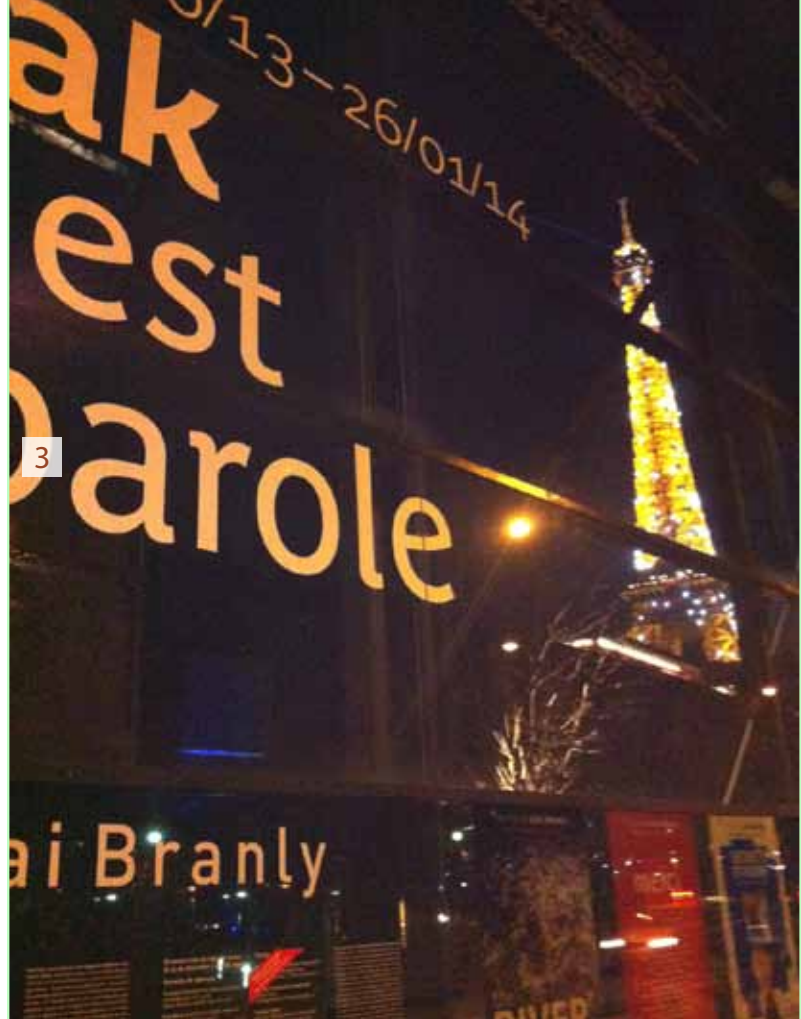
Over the past 10 years, Cultural Emergency Response (CER) has provided a swift response to urgent cultural needs in situations of conflict and disaster. Its purpose is delivery of 'first aid' to cultural heritage that is threatened or damaged. A quick response ensures that cultural heritage is prevented from worsening or being destroyed completely. The CER Program uses knowledgeable partners such as TARA who implement cultural relief projects.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CER, the Fund organized an international expert meeting entitled: 'Culture is a Basic Need Revisited' in November 2013 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in which Terry Little participated and presented a paper "Heritage under pressure of human development".



Vectorised by Richard Wachara





Quai Branly Museum

TARA's Chairman David Coulson was invited to participate in an International Congress on African Rock Art in Paris in January. This took place at the world famous Quai Branly Museum on the river Seine in Paris, France.

Organised mainly by the Sorbonne University, and sponsored by Total in collaboration with UNESCO, this event was attended by rock art specialists and researchers from a number of different countries including Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Somaliland, Namibia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Angola and Zimbabwe.

In his opening address Laurent de Soultrait of the Total Foundation pointed out that it was as a result of his many conversations with TARA's David Coulson over the last 3 years that he had come to recognise the huge diversity and importance of African rock art which is why Total had decided to sponsor this event. David Coulson was a member of the Committee of Honour for the Congress which was attended by some 200 people.

During a total of 6 sessions the different speakers focused on a variety of different topics and geographical areas such as the dating of rock art, the interpretation of specific rock art images and sites, different recording techniques, the rock art of Tunisia as well as new discoveries such as the Cave of Beasts in Egypt's Western Desert. A keynote presentation was given by David Coulson on the 'World Heritage rock art sites of Africa and their future', focusing on the critical importance of engaging local communities in their management and preservation.

Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

In July, David Coulson and renowned Kenyan sculptor Elkana Ong'esa led a joint discussion on rock art as a window into the cultures and histories of African vanished worlds. The key question asked was, "How can we preserve these priceless resources for future generations to learn from?" The presentation took place at Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in Washington D.C.

1. Key note speakers at the Paris Conference.

2. The flyer for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Washington D.C., USA.

3. Quai Branly Museum, Paris.



© Alec Campbell



Petroglyphs in northern Kenya depicting running giraffes.

Rock Art in Kenya, and the Future of Africa's Past

In the absence of a written history going back before the last hundred years, rock art stands out as a priceless resource. Little if anything is known about much of Africa's amazing past, and Kenya is no exception. Rock art opens windows onto this past giving us glimpses of vanished worlds informing us about the culture, history and identity of this great continent, but how can we preserve this resource for future generations to enjoy and learn from?

TARA is a Nairobi-based organization committed to raising international awareness of this heritage and where possible to preserving it for the benefit of future generations. This program is presented in collaboration with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival's Kenya Program, the Smithsonian's Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Collections, and the Smithsonian's Human Origins Program.

Date: Friday, June 27, 2014

Time: 3:30 – 4:30pm

Location: Q?rius Learning Center, Ground Floor

National Museum of Natural History

(10th St. & Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC)

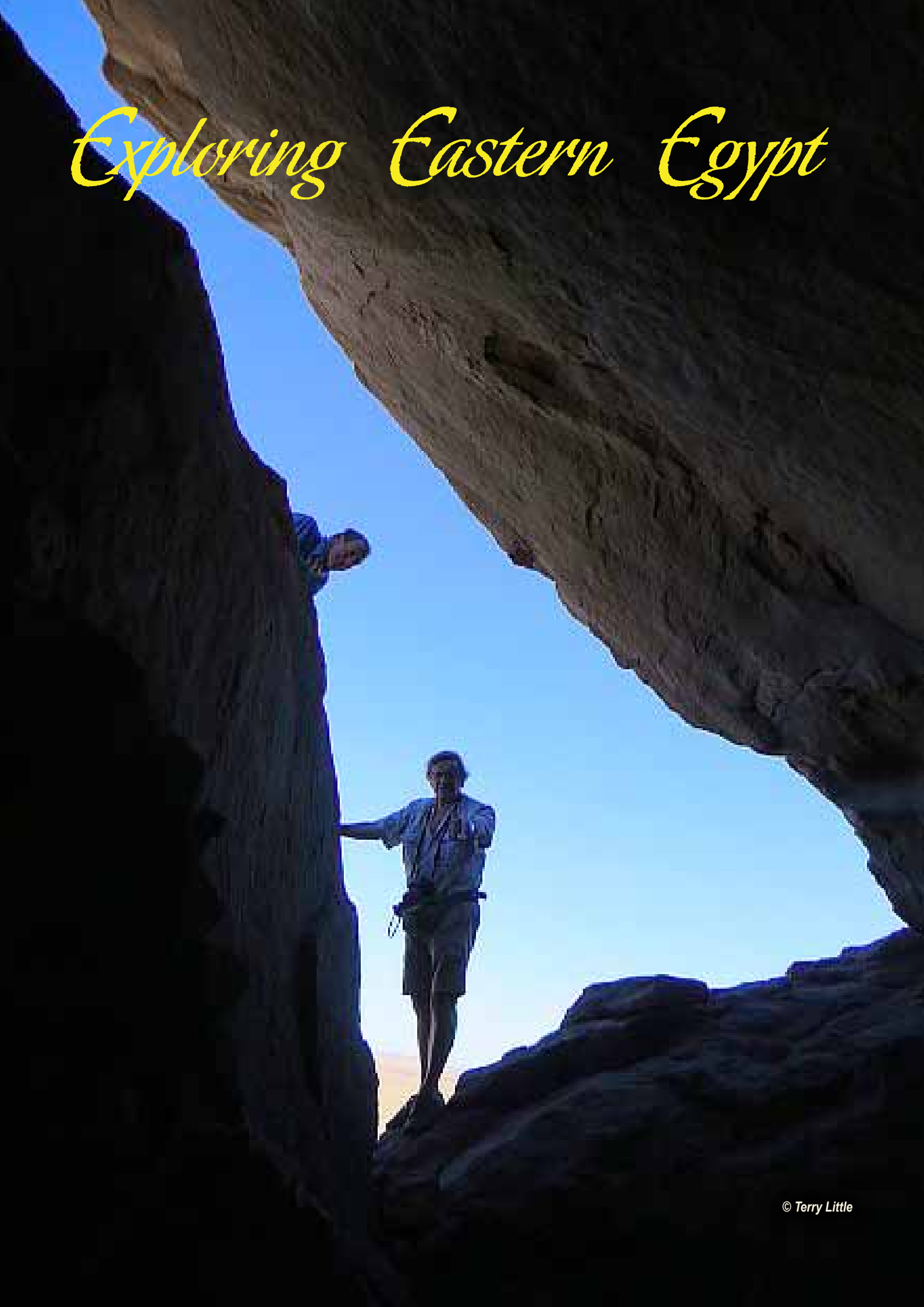
**Presenter: David Coulson (Executive Chairman and Founder of
TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art)**



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History



Exploring Eastern Egypt





Pre-dynastic engravings of river boats in Egypt's Eastern Desert.

By David Coulson

In late October and early November 2014, I, Terry Little and three Friends of TARA explored a number of little known engraving sites in Egypt's Eastern Desert. Most of these engravings date back from before the Pharaohs, roughly between 7,500 - 5,500 years ago. Boats with oarsmen and high prows figured prominently in this art even though many of the sites are over 150 km from the Nile River.

On the same trip we visited an important site in the Nile Valley near Qurta. Here we were shown some remarkable engravings of aurochs by Dr Dirk Huyge and his team who have recently dated some of these engravings to around 18,000 years of age or older. This discovery places this art in the Late Paleolithic era; the first Paleolithic art recorded on the African continent. Until recently, Paleolithic art was always associated only with Europe.

Many of the eastern desert sites are under threat, mainly from treasure hunters who mistakenly believe that there is a connection between rock art and tombs, and that if there is a tomb, there must be treasure. We saw several cases of illegal excavation and tunnelling at important rock art sites.

After visiting Qurta in the Nile Valley, we visited this important rock art site on the West Bank, south of Edfu. The Gebel el Silsila Survey has thus far discovered more than 60 rock art sites on both sides of the Nile River that date from the Epipalaeolithic (ca. 8,500 to 6,500 years ago), to the Early Dynastic (ca. 3100-2686 B.C.)



Large panel of rock engravings featuring giraffe, ibex and other animals.



Detail showing one of the 18,000 year old aurochs engravings at Qurta in the Nile Valley between Luxor and Aswan.

periods, including a rare wall relief showing an unidentified pharaoh which was discovered within the sandstone quarries of Gebel el Silsila.

We were privileged to have been taken round by a Swedish archeologist, Maria Nielson, whose team has discovered many new pre-dynastic rock art sites in the area on both sides of the river. Gebel el Silsila is a fascinating place which is otherwise known as the place where the Ancient Egyptians, and the Greeks and Romans after them, quarried stone to build their temples and tombs. Over a period of thousands of years stone was quarried here on both sides of the Nile River and whole mountains were removed in the process. The stone slabs were transported hundreds of miles in barges down the Nile River to Thebes, Memphis and Giza. Some of the stone was even taken across the Mediterranean to Ancient Rome. Precise records exist in hieroglyphics of where the stone was taken and for which temple. Gebel el Silsila is a place of great beauty and wonders to behold across the whole site - so much to be learnt here about Egyptian culture.



A panel of rock engravings in Eastern Desert featuring camels, warriors and cattle.

Dr Dirk Huyge and David Coulson looking at rock engravings on the cliff above the Nile Valley near the archeological site of El Hosh.





© Karine Dyskiewicz

David Coulson, with Security Chief, Rhissa Agboulah shows US Ambassador Reddick the Big Giraffe carvings at Dabous.

Niger

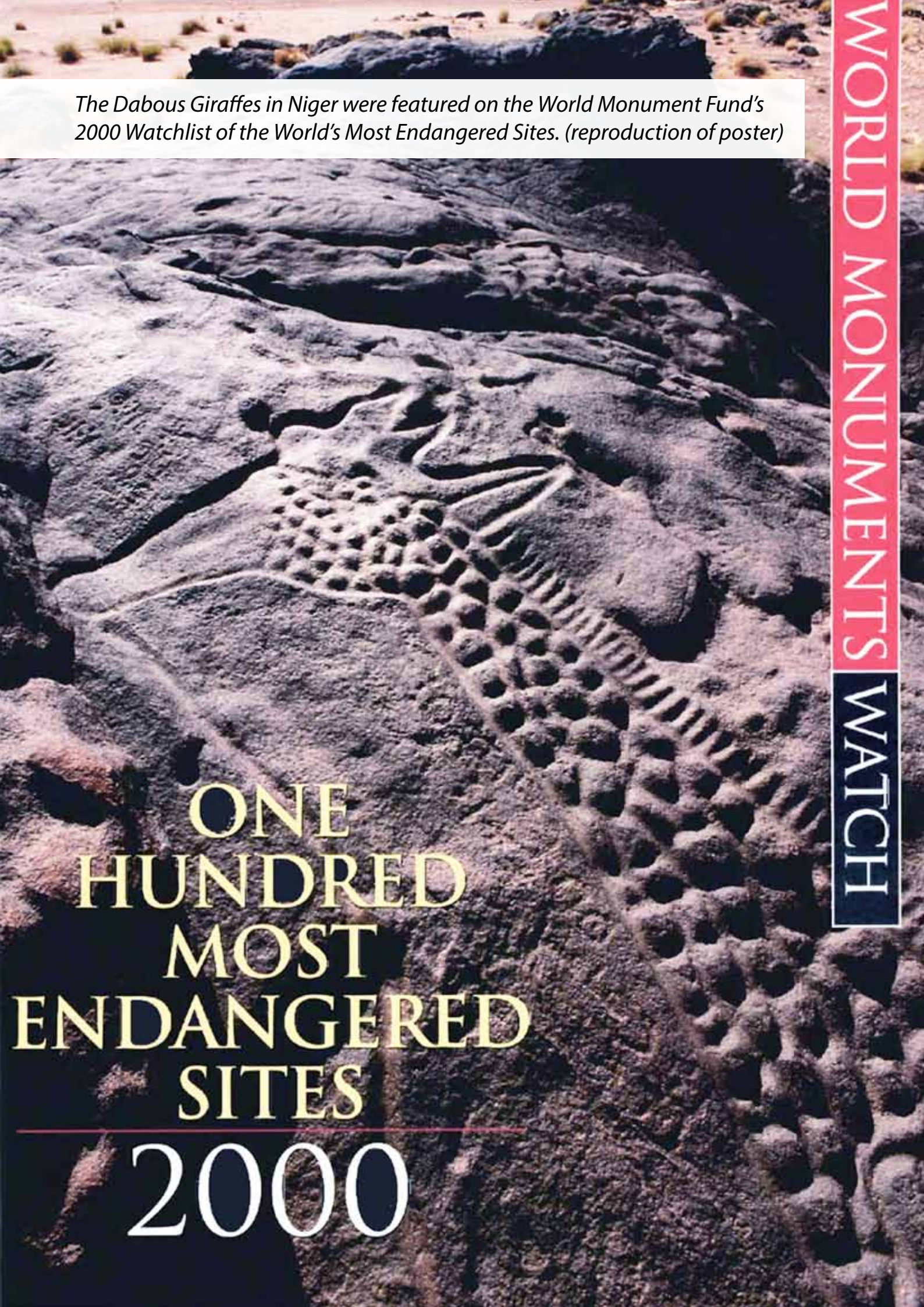
Community conservation and valorization of the rock art of Iférouane in the Agadez Region

In Niger, rock art is very common and is found through out the north of the country; mainly in the Air Mountains but also in Djado in the region of Kavar and in the Termit Massif. The Iférouane region probably has the most rock art sites of high quality in Niger.

The most iconic rock art engraving site in Niger is the Dabous Giraffe which drew international attention in 1997 following the publication in National Geographic of images by TARA Chairman, David Coulson. The life-size engravings of two giraffe are the most remarkable of all the Air's extraordinary engravings and perhaps of the entire Sahara. They are, without doubt, one of the world's greatest prehistoric masterpieces. Their extraordinary form, so true to nature, is deeply carved into the rock face, their lines carefully polished, faces and lower legs smoothed and body patterning etched to define shape and texture.

TARA and the Nigerien NGO, ANIGOURANE, are determined to see the Dabous site and all of Niger's rock art protected and have worked together for over a decade to raise awareness to the beauty of the engravings but also to their delicate state of conservation.

In 2014, the two organizations received a grant from the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) for the conservation and valorization of the ancient rock art of northern Niger. Activities include involvement of municipalities in the recording and management of the rock art and increasing awareness on rock art for schools. Travelling exhibitions and a documentary film will be produced by the end of 2015 to support the project aims. At the end of the AFCP funded project there will be greater awareness levels at the community level which we believe is a key consideration in long-term conservation.



The Dabous Giraffes in Niger were featured on the World Monument Fund's 2000 Watchlist of the World's Most Endangered Sites. (reproduction of poster)

WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH

ONE
HUNDRED
MOST
ENDANGERED
SITES

2000



© Karine Dyskiewicz

Visiting a recently documented rock art site with the US Ambassador to Niger. To the right is a large engraving of a horse facing left. From the left: Adamou Danladi, Director of Culture of Niger; Ahmed Oumouss, Director of the Rock Art Center of Morocco; U.S. Ambassador Eunice Reddick; Terry Little; Karine Dyskiewicz, Coordinator, ANIGOURANE; David Coulson.

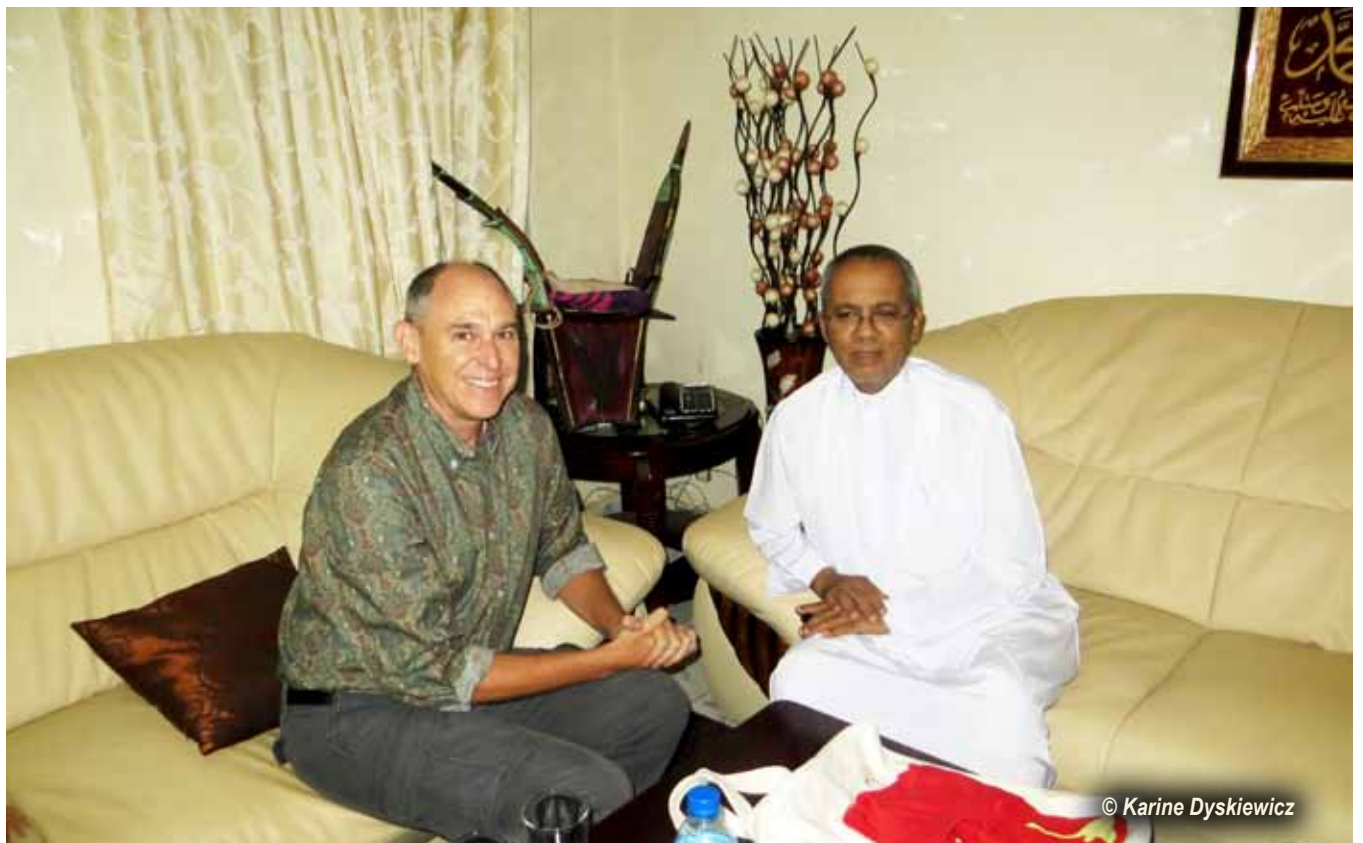


© Terry Little

Community Workshop participants at a rock art site south of Iferouane, near the Air Mountains, northern Niger.



Dr Ahmed Oumouss talking to participants at the training workshop in Ifrouane, near the Air Mountains.



Terry Little launched the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation Project in December 2014 with the blessing of the Nigerien Prime Minister, Brigi Rafini.



Engraving of a decorated human figure in the Air Mountains.



Engraving of a warrior on a large boulder which has fallen on its side.

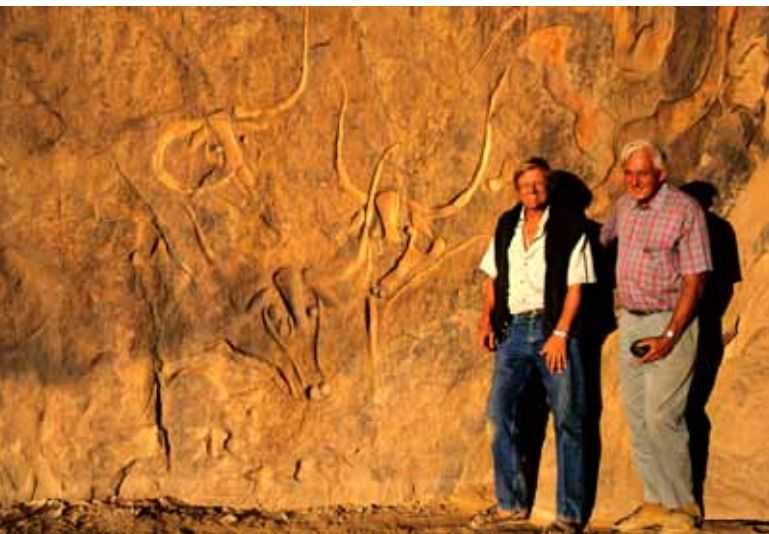
Social Media Snap Shots

By Diana Loubser

TARA launched its new website in March 2014. It is proud of this milestone, so why not share it with the world? Since August 2011, our Facebook Profile has grown steadily from 415 'likes' to just under 5,000 likes in December 2014. Our Twitter popularity status is currently at 62% with TARA being followed by 566 people and 209 permanent followers.

TARA is still in the process of building its Google+ links and currently has 17 followers and 59 organisations in its circles. Please add TARA to YOUR circles! TARA's social media trends have also been positively influenced through other media agencies writing internet articles about David Coulson. The sharing of these articles with TARA's

own connections caused major spikes on Facebook with some 2,000 views occurring each time they were released, thus catapulting TARA to stardom. With developments in social media, TARA must continue to keep abreast with new social communication avenues. Not only do these avenues have the ability to share information with a wide range of people, but it has the ability to do it quickly. With the advances in technology we can only dream what the future has in store for us.



Above: David Coulson and Alec Campbell next to the "Crying Cows" engravings in south east Algeria. (Ref Telegraph Magazine link below).

The Telegraph Magazine 21 June 2014.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/10912342/One-mans-mission-to-save-worlds-earliest-cave-paintings.html>



Above: Looking out of a painted cave in the Tadrart in south eastern Algeria. (Ref Business Destination link below).

Business Destinations Magazine Autumn 2014.

<http://www.businessdestinations.com/relax/tara-casts-a-light-on-africas-rock-art/>



Above: David Coulson with Financial Times journalist Lucia van der Post looking for rock art sites in a remote part of northern Kenya. (Ref Financial Times Magazine link below).

Financial Times Magazine October 2014 (Special Travel Edition).

http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/press_releases/2013/tara.aspx



Above: Paintings of cattle and humans on the roof of a cave in Somaliland (Ref The Independent on Sunday Magazine below).

The Independent on Sunday 5 October 2014

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/africas-ancient-rock-art-can-it-be-saved-from-destruction-9769962.html>

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