From the Chairman

2012 has been another exciting year with new adventures, challenges and discoveries. Our biggest news of the year was the agreement we reached with the British Museum in London, whereby over the next five years the BM will be acquiring a copy TARA’s rock art archive as part of their global digital collections. To quote the Director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor, “Partnership between TARA and the Museum will help preserve and share this notable archive and establish it as a major academic resource.”

This project was made possible by a generous grant to the Museum by Arcadia, one of TARA’s major donors. From TARA’s perspective the initiative effectively guarantees the long term preservation of the archive. It also guarantees that scientists, historians and conservators all over the world will now be able to access and to use our unique collections. From a personal perspective, it also means that my life’s work is now in safe hands. Our survey work is in no way complete yet, but at least the 17 years of work to date is safe and has not been in vain.

Once again our survey trips in 2012 were both productive and exciting. In March, thanks to the generosity of a long-time supporter (also now a board TARA board member), Susannah Rouse, we were able to visit several remote rock art sites, by helicopter, in the region of Lake Turkana, northern Kenya. One of these sites is a very important and hitherto unknown rock engraving site situated on an ancient lava beach, about 15 kilometres east of the Lake, south of Alia Bay. The engravings, which number in their thousands, were probably made by ancestral Twa, perhaps 2000 years ago. (See p. 4).

Perhaps the most exciting survey trip of the year was a return visit to northern Chad in order to document rock painting sites in the Ennedi Mountains not far from the Sudan, Egyptian and Libyan borders. Alec Campbell and I came here in 1996 but had too little time to do justice to the amazing amount of art in this part of the southern Sahara. (See p. 8).

On November 24th Alec Campbell, one of TARA’s founding trustees and a personal friend and mentor of mine going back exactly 40 years, died at his home in Botswana at the age of 80. Throughout TARA’s existence Alec was a huge source of knowledge and of inspiration. He will be sorely missed by all of us. (See p. 16).

TARA is meanwhile pleased to welcome to its Executive Board: Dr Sada Mire, former Director of Antiquities in Somaliland, and Susannah Rouse, a dedicated conservationist.

“Partnership between TARA and the Museum will help preserve and share this notable archive and establish it as a major academic resource.”

Cover: Rock painting of two human figures with cheetahs(!) in a small cave in the Ennedi, Chad.

Published by: TARA
ISSN 1996-8191 (print) / ISSN 1996-8205 (online)
Designed by: Richard Wachara
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TARA is a member of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations.
The British Museum Acquires TARA's African Rock Art Collection

The British Museum has formed a partnership with TARA, acquiring a digital copy of TARA’s major photographic archive both to preserve it and to make it fully available online through the British Museum website. The 25,000 digital photographs of rock art sites from across Africa will be catalogued and made accessible through the British Museum’s online collection catalogue, drawing on documentation from TARA staff and archaeological and anthropological research. The Museum will digitise its own African pictorial collection of 19th and 20th century photographs alongside the TARA images to support the integration of this archive.

The Museum’s African pictorial collection contains nearly 15,000 photographs that range from negatives, gel photos, glass plates, prints, and most recently, digital photographs. These are used for research, exhibitions, training, community outreach, museum partnership programmes and publications. Pictures in this collection are from throughout the African continent and embody the early stages of the medium up to the present day. Subjects include daily life, art, portraiture, official government photographs, natural landscapes and pictures from pre-colonial, colonial and independent Africa. The collection also holds film, video and audio recordings from various time periods and regions.

The project will take five years and involve research by Museum staff and on-going collaboration with TARA, as well as involving African communities. Through the incorporation of this collection into the British Museum’s online database, people across the world will be able to both use and contribute to the archive and its documentation. Partnership between TARA and the Museum will help preserve and disseminate this important collection and establish it as a major academic resource. By combining a wide range of research from the Museum, TARA’s international network and colleagues in Africa, the archive will capture and preserve knowledge about rock art for future generations.

Acquisition made possible through the generous support of the Arcadia Fund

Arcadia is the charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. Since its inception in 2001, Arcadia has awarded grants in excess of $237 million. Arcadia works to protect endangered culture and nature. For more information please see: www.arcadiafund.org.uk

The name Arcadia carries many associations, including a utopian view of the natural world and of the aspirations of human societies. To its founders it also embodies Arcadia’s ideal: the desire to preserve but also acknowledge the transience of the world’s most beautiful and fragile treasures of nature and culture.

From its foundation in 1753, the British Museum has been one of the world’s great resources. As a forum for the comparison of cultures, it is unparalleled. For over two centuries the Museum has united material from diverse societies, documenting histories from around the globe. It remains committed to preserving cultural knowledge for future generations.

The British Museum is an ideal partner to achieve TARA’s objective of making its rock art archive widely and freely available. The Museum is a custodian of endangered knowledge and a centre of academic excellence. As the UK’s most popular visitor attraction, it boasts over 6 million visitors a year. The Museum’s online collections attract an average of 1.5 million page visits per month. In 2011, the BM released a Semantic Web version of the database which facilitates wider access to its data and knowledge. As an organisation active in the heritage sector in Africa, the Museum offers TARA many opportunities for leveraging its resources through fieldwork, publications and exhibitions.

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“Replica of a 2,000 year old Bushman/San rock engraving from the northern Cape, South Africa, created from one of TARA’s photos, on show outside the British Museum in 2011.”

Neil MacGregor
Director of the British Museum
Engravings of giraffe and other animals on a cliff at the edge of a riverbed, near the south-east shore of Lake Turkana.

Northern Kenya/Lake Turkana

By David Coulson

In March 2012 a TARA supporter, Susannah Rouse, sponsored a helicopter trip that enabled us to document sites in a remote region to the east of Lake Turkana, not far from the Ethiopian border. One of the sites had come to light towards the end of 2011 when two friends of mine, Willie Roberts and Ed Ghaui, were doing support work for Tullow Oil on the east side of Lake Turkana.

Willie Roberts informed me about what looked like a rock engraving site, and soon after he and Ed sent me images by email. TARA quickly realised that this was a very important site, but was troubled about how to get there since this was/is an extremely remote desert region with no roads, about 600 miles north of Nairobi. Realising the possibility of other sites in this area, I discussed the problem with Susannah Rouse, who proposed using a helicopter.

Gilfred Powys, a great expert on aloe, was invited to join the expedition, as this area of northern Kenya has many rare aloes. Over the course of two and a half days this small group (Susannah, Gilfred, Charlie and I) covered nearly 2000 miles of extraordinary country, flying right up to and along the Ethiopian border.

Thanks to the tip-off from Willie Roberts the previous year, we were able to find the amazing engraving site between Mt Por and Koobi Fora, which TARA believes to be one of the most important Twa sites in the whole of Africa. Another hundred miles further north we were also able to document another very interesting Twa engraving site in the Sibiloi National Park which had been reported to TARA by Professor Stanley Ambrose who had driven through Sibiloi about 2 years previously. We also documented an important site on the southeast shores of the lake. Meanwhile, Gilfred was able to collect aloe specimens on remote mountain tops, hitherto unknown to science.

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Malawi

By David Coulson

In April 2012 Gloria Borona and I travelled to Malawi to survey a number of specific sites in the Chongoni World Heritage Site/area. Some of these sites are already open to the public and others not. The sites they surveyed which are open to the public were Chentcherere 1 & 2 (sites associated with Female Initiation), Namzeze cave, (a site associated with male initiation) and the Mphunzi Mountain sites which are very interesting and scenic. On Chongoni Mountain we surveyed two important sites, Phanga la Ngoni and a Twa (Akafula) geometric site not far from the first site. Neither of these last two sites is open yet to the public.

The art at the Chongoni World Heritage sites appears to fall into two different ancient traditions. First there are the more recent White “Chewa” paintings, which appear to be associated with the Nyau Secret Societies, documented by Dr Benjamen Smith of RARI in the 1990s. And secondly there is the geometric art (both red and bichrome paintings) of the Akafula or ancestral Twa people which is found throughout large parts of southern, eastern and central Africa. Some of this art is believed to be between 1000 and 3000 years old. One of the main sites documented on this mission was Chentcherere 2, a site associated with Female initiation. This site, which is open to the public, was over a period of years seriously damaged by chalk and charcoal graffiti and one of the key components of this project and mission was to professionally clean this graffiti. To this end TARA had arranged for an expert in this type of restoration, Clare Dean, to travel from the USA to undertake the graffiti removal. TARA was able to document the graffiti removal and photograph the paintings after cleaning.

On Chongoni Mountain close to two important painting sites. Chongoni World Heritage Site.

Community Conservation

In May 2012, TARA joined colleagues from the Malawian Department of Antiquities for a documentation exercise at the Chongoni World Heritage Site. A total of 1,353 high resolution images were recorded at Chentcherere, Mphunzi, Namzeze, Nuana Ngombe, Diva and Phanga la Ngoni rock art sites. Prior to this activity, Claire Dean of Dean & Associates Conservation Services in the USA led a Malawian team in the restoration of the Chentcherere rock art site which had been badly damaged by graffiti (see before and after pictures). The team also developed a signage plan for the Chentcherere, Mphunzi and Namzeze sites. All these activities were carried out within the framework of Antiquities/TARA joint project supported by the US Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation. On the mission were Medson Makuru, John Chilachila and Moses Mkumpha from Antiquities. They were also joined by Nhlalhla Nkobi representing RARI - Rock Art Research Institute based in South Africa.

In August, TARA and the Department of Antiquities conducted a community sensitization exercise at Chongoni Rock Art World Heritage Site. The aim of this activity was to strengthen dialogue with the local communities on the management and conservation of the rock art sites. A total of 220 community members attended these meetings held in Naoza, Chipazi, Mpale and and Hinda villages. These communities live around Chentcherere, Namzeze and Phanga la Ngoni sites.

- Gloria Borona
In late October 2012 TARA organised a mission to Chad to survey sites in the Ennedi Mountains near the Libyan and Sudanese borders. In 1996 the late Alec Campbell and I visited the Tibesti and Ennedi Mountains in northern Chad for the first time. On that visit we both only had time to spend a week in the Ennedi but realised there were many other important sites in the area.

The Ennedi is a 15,000 square mile wilderness in the southern Sahara situated in the north east corner of Chad not far from the borders of Sudan, Egypt and Libya. Geologically, the Ennedi is an ancient sandstone plateau which, over millions of years, has fragmented into numerous separate massifs, canyons, organ pipes, forests of stone and fairy-tale castles of rock. The area is full of rock art most of which dates back to when the Ennedi was relatively fertile and still supported pastoral communities with large herds of cattle.

The earliest art here might have been made by hunter-gatherers and could be around 6000 years old and possibly even older, but most of the paintings probably date from the last 3000 years. The two most recent periods (k styles) of art are the horse period (roughly between 2500 and 1500 years ago) and the Camel period (roughly between 2000 years ago and the present day). Today the inhabitants of this wilderness are nomadic pastoralists known as the Tubu, the equivalent of the Tuareg across the borders in Niger, Libya and Algeria.

When Campbell and I came here in 1996 we only had a short time in the Ennedi having spent the greater part of the trip in the more widespread Tibesti Mountains which are of volcanic origin. We were impressed by the Ennedi, and by the rock art they saw, and realised that TARA needed to come back to explore other areas that we had been unable to visit.

In 1996 large parts of northern Chad were still difficult to reach due to the many land mines left by Colonel Gaddafi as he retreated back to Libya following his unsuccessful invasion of Chad a few years earlier, but in that year TARA was able to take advantage of some calmer times. Now once again we learnt that the situation was calm.

Part of our plan for this second visit was to try and rediscover some of the sites recorded by a Frenchman, Gerard Bailloud who had lived here in the early 1950’s. During the period he lived here he had traced large numbers of paintings and had made beautiful reproductions from many of these.

Fortunately our guide, Pier Paolo Rossi, had visited the Ennedi several times in the intervening years and had done his own research. He had talked to local Tubu who had told him of paintings they had seen in particular caves or rock shelters. Whenever he’d been able to he had gone to check these out and on several occasions had found Bailloud sites.

Another exciting discovery was of a pastoral period painting, also reproduced in Bailloud’s book, that could have been at least 3000 years old. Again, it was Pier Paolo who spotted it. Depicted on the sloping roof on inner cave, or recess, were two human figures. One was a woman in a long dress seated opposite another figure with strange, curly legs who was playing a harp-like instrument with vertical strings.

This image was in fact reproduced on a Chad (Tchad) postage stamp of the 1950s. I was intrigued by the harp-like instrument in the painting which looked familiar and later I found a pharaonic painting (touristic reproduction) depicting the identical instrument.

Some of the most exciting art, however, was from the horse period of Saharan art. Scenes of masses of galloping horses ridden by people with long lances, strange hats and sometimes pointed white beards were common. At one site there was a long gallery with an inner cave, like a large hole in the centre, at the back. To the left of the hole were about 30 galloping horses all heading towards the hole and galloping headlong into it. Meanwhile to the right of the hole were another 30 or so horses galloping to the left towards and into the hole. Further down the gallery were other holes, some of which opened out into inner caves and all around the holes, leading into the holes, were red painted spots. The latter may have been symbolic of some sort of force or energy and seemed to be related to a lot of earlier pastoral paintings close by rather than the horse art. Perhaps the holes were a feature of some vanished mythology. This is not the first time we have recorded painted spots and dots next to the entrance to holes, recesses and caves.

We recorded 22 important new sites on this trip and once again realised we had only scratched the surface of what’s out there! At one site we recorded, a local Tubu told us that the whole mountain was full of paintings and that was just one of the many.
The Gusii people who inhabit Kisii in western Kenya are known for their soapstone carvings. Soapstone is a soft and easily worked stone that comes in a variety of colours and can be carved into various objects and sculptures. The Tabaka region in Kisii is the hub of the soapstone industry as well as being home to some ancient rock engravings. In August 2011 Elakana Ongesa, a renowned sculptor, organized an international symposium "African Stones Talk" with support from UNESCO, which was attended by participants from over 12 countries. During the symposium, Elkana organized visits to the rock art sites and the participants were amazed to see numerous old engravings on the soapstone rocks. They were also shocked to see the severe threats from human activities, mainly soapstone carving and quarrying. Also under threat is the oral history associated with the art, which is an integral part of the community's culture. All those who visited the sites agreed that urgent actions needed to be taken to save this fragile heritage. It is against this background that TARA requested for emergency support from the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development with an overall objective of documenting the sites and engaging communities in the conservation efforts.

TARA, the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) and Design Power Consultants (DEPCONS) carried out the documentation exercise from 23-24 August 2012, and a total of 520 images were generated. The team visited some of the sites that had been destroyed and recorded the damage. The local elders contributed valuable oral history related to the sites and the culture of the Abagusii people. Prior to the documentation work, TARA's Chairman David Coulson attended the closing ceremony of the annual 'African Stones Talk II' conference in Kisii and gave a presentation on the importance of the Kisii rock art heritage.

From 15-17 October 2012, TARA, NMK and DEPCONS conducted a community engagers' workshop in Kisii, which aimed to sensitise the communities that live around the rock art sites on the need for their partnership, dialogue and participation in the management and conservation of their fragile heritage. The objectives of this workshop were to create awareness on the importance of rock art heritage in Kisii, as well as develop a 'common conservation message' that the participants would take back to their communities on how best to manage and conserve the rock art heritage. The workshop, held in Ogembo, Gucha District, was attended by 33 participants who were drawn from the rock art sites in Sameta, Manga, Gotichaki and Tabaka. The participants visited the rock art sites in Sameta and Gotichaki and witnessed the conservation challenges that need to be addressed urgently.

The Kisii project is unique and challenging, because in this case conservation directly conflicts with community livelihoods. TARA continues to engage with the government and the local community in order to arrive at a solution that is beneficial and acceptable to all the stakeholders.
TANZANIA, Kondoa

By John Kimara, (Antiquities Department, Tanzania)

The Kondoa rock art region is located at the northern limit of the Southern Africa Rock Art Tradition, which contains numerous rock art sites of exceptional quality. Two examples of outstanding typologies of the tradition are represented, including: the reds of the Late Stone Age hunter-gatherers; and the so-called late whites that represent the art of the farming communities that probably arrived in the Kondoa region about 1500 years ago. The art demonstrates historical/scientific, artistic/aesthetic, and social/religious/spiritual values. Potential educational and economic values for the benefit of local community and the country as a whole are also evident. Although it is very difficult to accurately interpret the art due to lack of concrete reference materials, rock art specialists have theorised that the art of the Kondoa region explores diverse aspects of both hunter-gatherer as well as agro-pastoral societies and their ideology.

Kondoa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is exceptional for the following criteria: the quantity and quality of the paintings; in particular for the late whites; the location and diversity of the paintings; the style and aesthetic qualities of the work; the unique combination of the different traditions superimposed; and the evidence of continuity in the tradition and cosmology of the inhabitants. There is also evidence of authenticity of tradition, use in some few sites as evidenced by the continued use for ritual practices of rainmaking and traditional healing.

In March 2012 TARA and the Tanzanian Division of Antiquities visited Kondoa (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) to install signage at Kolo and Pahi rock art sites and set up a community campsite. The signs were produced in both English and Swahili and positioned at strategic points, to create awareness among the visiting tourists and the local people. The campsite was handed over to the community-selected committee, which is responsible for its management. In November 2012 TARA, the Tanzanian Division of Antiquities and the people of Kondoa hosted Rob Quiroz and Gomogoka Finike from the US Embassy in Tanzania in Kondoa for a launch of the community Rock Art project. The community welcomed the guests with song and dance, and showcased cultural products in Kondoa. The ceremony was held at the Kolo campsite, which is fully managed by the community and one of the major investments of the project. As a result of flowing water which creates dark/yellow/white patches on the rock surface. Around these patches are often lighter regions caused by deposition of the mineral salts, hence the rock surface changes to a white/dark/yellow colour. These mineral salts sometimes build up and obscure the paintings or may be deposited behind the rock surface causing it to flake off.

Main conservation challenges

There are diverse challenges facing Kondoa WHS in general include both natural and human factors:

Natural Factors
Moisture is a primary agent in the weathering of rock arts/paintings through infiltration of water; rain water; condensation; and humidity. This results in disintegration of rock surface and fading of the paintings. Weathering is a result of flowing water which creates dark/yellow/white patches on the rock surface. Around these patches are often lighter regions caused by deposition of the mineral salts, hence the rock surface changes to a white/dark/yellow colour. These mineral salts sometimes build up and obscure the paintings or may be deposited behind the rock surface causing it to flake off.

Human Induced Factors
These arise mainly due to interactions between the rock art/paintings and people, and include:

- Graffiti and scratching – The most affected sites are Pahi, Kolo, Thawi and Kandaga (Figure No. 3).

- Illegal digging by treasure hunters – Local community’s misconception that the sites contain treasures led to damage of the rock art sites through digging of its deposits in front of some rock paintings. The most affected sites are Kinyasi, Pahi, Usangy, Soera, Thawi and Cholincholi, Masange and Musia villages.

- The continuous reuse of sites for contemporary rituals – This poses big threats due to the splashing of local fatty brews/liquids onto the painted surfaces. The liquid dries as a stain which is not possible to remove and obscures the paintings. The worst affected site is Kolo 1, the main site.

- Enhanced Photography - Some visitors and professionals have been known to use water and even Coca-Cola to bring out the colours for photography, which in the long run affects the condition of the paintings.

- Dust – Cultivation or grazing around or near rock art sites causes dust to rise up and land on the rock arts surface, which in the long run obscures the paintings.

Conclusion
Community involvement, willingness and understanding of modern conservation philosophy is a very important prerequisite for the sustainable conservation of this important intangible cultural heritage in Africa. Furthermore, experience should be gleaned from elders on how a balance can be struck between traditional and modern conservation techniques, for a sustainable use of the heritage for the benefits of the existing and future generations.
Kakapel, Western Kenya

Kakapel is Kenya’s premier rock art site uniting a variety of styles in one shelter. TARA has been involved at Kakapel since it recorded the site in 1997, but especially since 2002 when the site was damaged by graffiti. Working with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), TARA raised funds to have the site cleaned by an international expert. Through TARA’s intercession the site was gazetted as a National Monument in 2004 and is administered by the NMK. In 2008/2009 TARA raised funds to put up a community centre near the rock art site to better engage the community in the management of the site. The centre is now fully managed by the community, through selected representatives from all the Locations in the District. It is designed as a space for the Iteso community to enjoy and share their cultural heritage; dances, music, rock art, rituals, oral literature and other material culture. In December of every year, the Iteso people from both Kenya and Uganda come together for a cultural festival whose aim is to enhance a sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Leaks occurred during the recent heavy rain season, and renovations on the building were carried out by the local community with support from TARA. The Kakapel project continues to demonstrate that heritage is at the heart of any society and it can be harnessed to bring about social and economic transformation.

Dr Emmanuel Ndiema of the NMK, with support from TARA, received a grant from the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) to carry out research work at Kakapel. The area is well-suited for interdisciplinary research, as it has archaeological deposits and rock paintings and could shed light on the possible interaction between hunter-gatherer and pastoral communities that have occupied the region over time. This site has important implications for the spread of pastoralism in Eastern Africa and for the possible identification of a pastoralist rock art in East Africa. This collaborative project re-visited the questions of authorship, antiquity and the meaning of rock art at Kakapel and comprised of selected excavations at the rock shelter and analysis of the rock paintings and collection of materials for environmental reconstruction.

Mfangano Island, Western Kenya

In 2012 TARA supported the Mawanga rock art site to fence the site to keep away goats that had been sheltering at the site. The site committee at Mawanga continues to effectively manage the site and invest the proceeds from tourism in community development interventions, such as the Mawanga school. Mawanga rock art site and the surrounding heritage are powerful sites with an interesting story line about rain making and the history of the Abasuba people which has been passed from generation to generation.

Lokoro, Northern Kenya

In 2012 TARA produced a 15-minute documentary, ‘The Mystery of Namoratunga’, highlighting the Namoratunga burial sites and the associated rock art in Lokori, northern Kenya, against the backdrop of the rich Turkana natural and cultural heritage. The story is beautifully told and showcases the splendour of this heritage in a manner never seen before. Take the journey to this epic location through this stunning documentary.

Nyero, Uganda

In February 2012, TARA and the Ugandan Department of Museums and Monuments (DMM) conducted a two day training for tour guides at Kumi University near the Nyero rock paintings. The training was conducted within the framework of the project ‘Heritage Conservation of Nyero Rock Paintings and Others of the Karamoja Region’ with an overall aim of equipping the local people with skills in guiding tourists at the rock art sites and the surrounding environment. The training was attended by 25 participants from Nyero, Mukongoro, Komuge, Karamoja and Kakoro rock art sites. Through the various presentations, participants designed a holistic guiding experience, incorporating both natural and cultural heritage at the Nyero rock art site. The facilitators included: Sarah Musalaz, Linda Nenuba and Nelson Abiti from DMM, TARA’s Gloria K. Borona and Herbert Byaruhanga from the Uganda Tour Guides Association. The Ugandan Museum is working on the nomination of the rock art of Nyero and the surrounding rock art sites into the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Consulting community members at Mawanga rock art site.

New roof at the Kakapel Community centre.

Elders point out ancient circles at the Mawanga rock art site.

Documentary film on the Namoratunga project.

Gloria K. Borona shows participants examples of rock art from Africa.
Tribute to Alec Campbell

By David Coulson

TARA is sad to announce the death of Alec Campbell, one of TARA's founding trustees, in Botswana on November 24th 2012. Alec had been diagnosed with leukaemia earlier in the year. He was 80 years old. His knowledge and deep understanding of African culture as well as his gentle demeanour will be sadly missed by anyone who had the good fortune of meeting him. During the last 20 years, Alec played a major role in sensitising the continent and indeed the world to the importance and vulnerability of Africa's remarkable rock art heritage.

Educated in England, Alec came to Africa in 1951 to serve in the Rhodesian Police. He went to Rhodes University in South Africa, where he met and married Judy Strachan. Early in 1962, they went to Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and Alec was appointed District Commissioner in Ghanzi. After Independence he was appointed Director of the newly established Department of Wildlife and National Parks. He was also the Founder and first Director of the National Museums of Botswana, which he ran for 25 years, and was the author of many books and papers on Botswana’s history, archaeology, wildlife, and environment. He is perhaps best known for the work he did at the Tsodilo Hills in northwest Botswana, where he found and recorded several hundred rock painting sites. He ‘put the Hills on the map’ and subsequently initiated the process that led to Tsodilo being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the mid-1990s Alec helped me establish TARA. Africa’s rock art heritage had long been our shared passion and our first project was to produce an authoritative, illustrated book on the rock art of the whole of Africa. Together we crisscrossed the continent, travelling tens of thousands of miles working in nearly 20 different countries. What Alec particularly relished were our adventures in the Sahara Desert.

One the most memorable of these adventures was the expedition to Niger in 1999, funded by the Bradshaw Foundation, in order to study and preserve two 6000 year old, life-size giraffe carvings in the Sahara which had been recorded by TARA in 1997.

Alec had a great fascination for Africa’s distant past, and his contribution to our knowledge and understanding of Africa’s rock art cannot be overstated. Alec worked tirelessly to put together the rock art database that is now TARA’s core asset. As a result of Alec’s dedicated work, the magnificence and diversity of African rock art is now better known across the world.

With Pier Paolo Rossi in the Acacus Mountains, Libya.

Alec recording paintings in south western Libya.

Partners

We are extremely grateful to the foundations, embassies, governments and other bodies around the world whose contributions in cash and kind – as well as their moral support – made it possible for TARA to achieve its mission in 2011.

We are especially thankful for the support of the Arcadia Fund, which funds many aspects of our programmes and operations; and to the Ann and Robert Lurie Foundation which continued to contribute generously to TARA. The Headley Trust (UK) also granted support towards TARA’s core costs.

TARA has continued to enjoy support from the United States, through the Ambassadors’ Fund for Cultural Preservation, which has given tremendous support to community rock art projects in Tanzania, Uganda and now Malawi. Meanwhile, the Dutch Embassy in Tanzania funded the installation and promotion of “The Dawn of Imagination” exhibition at the National Museum and House of Culture in Dar es Salaam, which opened in December 2011. The German Embassy in Tanzania funded the publication of Ninapende Michoro Yo Msimbani (‘I Love Rock Art’ in Swahili) which accompanies the exhibition.

TARA recognises with gratitude the partnerships it enjoys with the national and local heritage bodies in Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Somaliland, Tanzania and Uganda, with whom it has worked in 2011. TARA particularly recognises the support of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, with whom TARA recently renewed its partnership agreement.

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