

ROCK ART AND ROCK ART RESEARCH IN AUSTRALIA

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Australia has the world's largest concentration of rock art and it is the only country where extensive ethnographic information about the original meaning and purpose of rock art has been obtained. The nature and geographical distribution of Australian rock art are briefly reviewed in this paper. Analytical studies of rock art pioneered by Australian scientists have made a significant contribution to the development of the global discipline. Two other aspects of Australian initiatives in this field are extensive ethnographic studies that have been conducted for well over a century and the emphasis on the preservation and management of rock art. Despite great improvements in the latter, there remain significant instances of concern where poor management and racism have marred Australia's performance and where political support for rock art protection has been lacking.

Dr Robert G. Bednarik is the Founding Convener and Editor of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) and the founding Secretary and Editor of the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA). Besides this he is Life Member, Honorary Member or Member of numerous scholarly associations world-wide.

An epistemologist, Dr. Bednarik has worked extensively in all continents and his main interest is in the origins of human constructs of reality. He discovered the largest rock art corpus in the world in the 1960s and has produced 1,230 publications, about half of them in refereed scientific journals.

Dr. Bednarik has also worked on various thematic and geographical areas: especially in central, northern, eastern, western and southern Europe; Siberia, India, China, Canada, USA, Mexico, Caribbean, various South American countries, Southern Africa, Morocco, all regions of Australia. He is presently working on several ongoing projects related to rock art in different parts of the world.

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