

## 20 YEARS OF THE ESTONIAN SOCIETY OF PREHISTORIC ART

The Estonian Society of Prehistoric Art (ESPA) was founded in autumn 1988 by members of the research group of petroglyphs at the Estonian department of All-Union Astronomy and Geodesy Society and by other enthusiasts. By this time, the research group had been active for seven years. The main aim of the society has been the study and promotion of prehistoric art in Finno-Ugric areas. The emphasis has been on the study of Lake Onega rock art: in 1986 a new site (on Cape Swan) was discovered and a dozen years later, the first volume of the catalogue of petroglyphs has been published in English. ESPA has departments in Estonia, Finland, and Russia (St Petersburg). Overview of the former activities of the society can be found in English in journal *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* (Vols. 18/19, 2001).

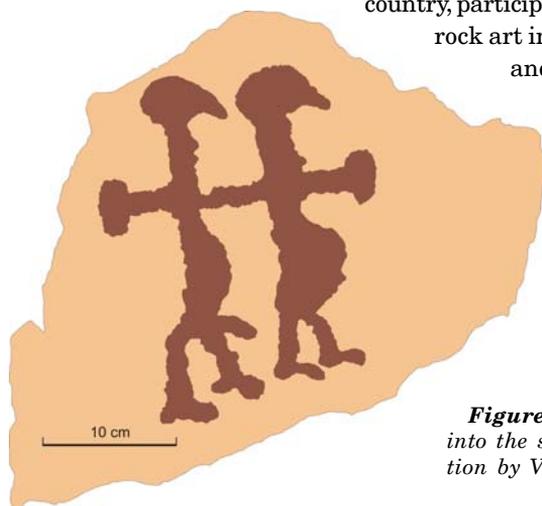
Events to celebrate the 20th anniversary of ESPA were held on 24–26 October, 2008, in Tartu, Estonia. On the society's annual meeting, Väino Poikalainen overviewed the society's activities in 2008. This year and in previous years the activities have centred not only on research but also on organising expeditions and exhibitions.

EPSA's summer expeditions have traditionally turned attention to prehistoric and younger sights of a particular region in Estonia. This year the expedition took the society's members to Rebala, the Viimsi Peninsula, Prangli Island, Iru hillfort, Lahemaa National Park, and elsewhere in North Estonia. The most impressive of the visited places was the small Aksi Island in the Gulf of Finland with its cobblestone labyrinth. Expedition participants visited Karula, where they explored figures discovered on the local church wall and collected daub samples for the purpose of dating the images (Fig. 1).

Members of EPSA took part in various events organised by other societies and institutions. Ülo Kestlane, Ants Kraut and Jüri Peets were involved in the excavations of a Viking Age boat in Salme village on the Saaremaa Island. Väino Poikalainen and many members of the Finnish department of the society took part in fieldtrips in Åland/Ahvenanmaa (organised by Eeri Siljander), Armenia, and Spain. In the latter

country, participants of the trip became acquainted with rock art in Levanti near Barcelona and Valencia and cave art in the Pyrenees (Fig. 2).

Loit Jõekalda, together with a group of artists who belong to the group *Musta Joutsen* ('Black Swan'), visited the Valcamonica rock drawings' site in the Alps and took part in the tour



**Figure 1.** Anthropomorphic figures carved into the stone wall of Karula Church (Reproduction by Väino Poikalainen).

**Figure 2.** A Neolithic image of a honey bearer on rock at Cueva de la Araña site in Spain (photo by Väino Poikalainen).



organised by Mikk Sarv to see rock carvings at Alta in Lapland and the Sámi culture.

An exhibition of Karelian rock carvings by photographer Igor Georgiievski and archaeologist Nadezhda Lobanova, also a member of the society, was displayed in Palmse manor, North Estonia, in summer and autumn of 2008. From May to December, an exhibition of photographs and rock carving reproductions by Väino Poikalainen during his 2005 and 2006 expeditions to Lake Onega was set up in Saatse, Southeast Estonia. On the international Biennial of Graphic Art in Kaunas, Lithuania, Loit Jõekalda was awarded the first prize for his exhibition “Stone Age Graphics” which consisted of photos and reproductions of rock art found in Karelia and on the Kola Peninsula.

Pekka Kivikäs, the eminent Finnish scholar of rock art, opened a permanent exhibition in the Museum of Central Finland. Väino Poikalainen delivered a paper on the 10th anniversary celebration of the Finnish Society of Prehistoric Art. Members of both societies, Juhani Grönhagen, Pekka Kivikäs, Rauno Lauhakangas, and others participated in the seminar in honour of the centenary of Claude Lévi-Strauss and a seminar celebrating 40 years from discovering the rock paintings in Astuvansalmi, Finland.

The society’s members from Estonia and Finland also visited the Tartu Song Festival Museum. A smaller conference was held at Tartu Nature House. The opening speech was given by Tõnu Viik, member of EPSA and president of the Estonian Naturalists’ Society. Greetings were brought from EPSA’s sister society in Finland by Liisa Vartiainen. Then followed conference presentations: Enn Ernits gave an overview of systematisation of Karelian rock art, Väino Poikalainen discussed the petroglyphs on Cape Karetsky at Lake Onega, and Eero Siljander overviewed medieval paintings in churches of Finland. The joint paper by Enno Tanilas, Eero Siljander and authors of this news piece focused on the anthropomorphic and cross figures discovered by Tanilas on the wall of Karula Church. Ülo Kestlane spoke about the Viking Age ship of Salme and introduced the course of archaeological excavations and find material. The event concluded with a slide show of photos from Gunnar Jaadla’s trip to Santorini Island in Greece, and Väino Poikalainen’s travels to Armenia and Spain.

The anniversary events ended with a sightseeing tour in Tartu: the society's members visited St John's Church, the Dome Hill, the Botanical Gardens of the University of Tartu, and other sights of Tartu. The next year's plans will include a summer field trip to the islands of Saaremaa and Ruhnu, an expedition to Lake Onega, and several exhibitions. It is high time someone started compiling the chronicle of the society's members' experiences, and, fortunately, Eve Selisaar has taken on the task.

Enn Ernits  
Väino Poikalainen

## **2008 PRESIDENT'S FOLKLORE AWARDS**

On 27 February 2009, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented the Folklore Awards of the President of the Republic of Estonia to Urmas Haud and Taisto-Kalevi Raudalain, the best voluntary folklore collectors of 2008. The head of state's award to the best folklore collectors was reinstated in 1993 on the initiative of the Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and with the support by the President's Cultural Foundation.

In 2008, a call to compile a Kalevala-metric song to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia was made by an initiative group in Viru County (Rein Sikk, Urmas Tamm, Marge Lepik, Viivi Voorand, Kai Tingas, Kadri Mägi, and Igor Tõnurist). In response to the call, 650 people sent self-authored verses and the result was a long and beautiful song which was performed in Rakvere Church of the Holy Trinity on Independence Day, February 24, 2008. The sent verses and the composed song text were handed over to the folklore archives.

Today's keywords are family, reflections, and the lost worlds. The laureates of this year's President's Awards sent to the archives lore material connected with their family and kinship, their roots. This material reflects the rather sad fate of small nations, villages and farms in the 20th century. It is inevitable that the old is replaced by the new and settlement patterns change, but difficult to accept when this happens by force or violence, destroying people's lives and homes.

The material collected by Urmas Haud comes from the villages of Riisa and Tõramaa, situated between Pärnu and Viljandi County in central and southern Estonia. Urmas Haud, astrophysicist by profession, has collected and systematised the folklore of his home region and family, and has made it available online for the general public (<http://www.aai.ee/~urmas/riisa.html>). Haud handed over the website and its source material – local historical studies and 222 photographs with captions – to the Estonian Folklore Archives. The photos mainly come from the collections of Urmas