

# Discovery of Rock Paintings and Libyco-Berber inscription from the upper onilahy, Isalo Region, Southwestern Madagascar.

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With the kind assistance of Dr Chantal Radimilahy, National Coordinator of the African Archaeology Network in Madagascar, I learned about the “*Musée d’Éthnographie de Genève*” (MEG) website’s ethnographical exhibition on Peoples and Cultures in Southwestern Madagascar through photo slides taken by the French Ethnographer Jacques Faublée in 1939. Among the slides were displayed rock paintings from different caves and rock shelters in the Isalo region. Through consultation with my lecturers at the Archaeology Unit of the University of Dar es Salaam, namely Prof. Felix Chami, Prof. Fidelis Masao, and Prof. Audax Mabulla, I realized the importance of those paintings for the prehistory of Madagascar. I therefore embarked upon MA fieldwork on those rock paintings. This paper is a preliminary report of the results of such field work.

I launched a survey work and discovered one site in the southern region of Isalo (Figure 1). I subsequently invited Prof. Chami to come to provide me scientific advice on how to handle such wonderful rock paintings not previously known in Madagascar. Others in the team include *Maîtrise*’s students in History from the University of Toliara, namely, Mex Tafitasa, Nadya Ravololonirina, and Norbert Antilahy, and few supportive villagers (Plate 1). The African Archaeology Network in Madagascar, under the coordination of Dr Chantal Radimilahy, provided the useful logistic equipments. The different approval signatures from national to local administrative authorities, the security provided by the “*Brigade de Gendarmerie*” of Benenitsy and mostly the kindly open-mindedness of the *Zafimanely* King (Plate 1) to give permission for accessing the site were of huge contributions to the achievement of the expedition.