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## Preface of the Proceedings of the 47th Inhigeo Symposium edited by Gaston Godard, Philippe Grandchamp and Pascal Richet

Pascal Richet

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# **PROCEEDINGS OF THE 47<sup>TH</sup> INHIGEO SYMPOSIUM**

EDITED BY

GASTON GODARD, PHILIPPE GRANDCHAMP AND PASCAL RICHEL

**LES EYZIES, FRANCE – 15-24 SEPTEMBER 2022**

SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZED BY

CLAUDINE COHEN, FRANÇOISE DREYER,

GASTON GODARD AND PASCAL RICHEL



## Preface

These proceedings gather 21 papers written on various topics presented in September 2022 at the 47<sup>th</sup> symposium of the International Committee on the History of Geological sciences (INHIGEO), which was held at Les Eyzies de Tayac in southwestern France. A glance at these papers, and at the 16 abstracts also submitted by other authors, reveals the wide variety of themes discussed, which is in fact a hallmark of INHIGEO symposiums. The whole set thus provides a vivid illustration of the vitality of History of geology. Thanks are due to all authors for having produced such a concrete outcome of lively presentations and friendly discussions during the symposium and the excursions, and also for their responsiveness and quick reactions during the reviewing process of the Proceedings.

As a matter of fact, the 2022 INHIGEO symposium was initially planned in Russia. In 2020, however, it appeared that an alternative location had to be sought after. The idea then came to Claudine Cohen that France could take the responsibility to organize it, with rehistory and Geology as a special theme. The idea was at once endorsed by COFRHIGEO, the French branch of INHIGEO, which set up a four-member organizing committee for this purpose. It was the pride of place taken by prehistory that led to select as the central site of the symposium the small town of Les Eyzies, which has been dubbed the *Capital of Prehistory* because of the wealth of inhabited shelters and ornamented caves found nearby along the Vézère valley. Owing to its tourist importance, Les Eyzies was in addition making available the nice auditorium of the *Centre international de la Préhistoire* as well as a variety of boarding options for the participants.

It happened that the preparation of the symposium was fraught with uncertainties related to the covid pandemic, the risk of yet another confinement in France, travel restrictions caused by the war in Ukraine, and the ensuing consequences on the planned budget. Luck was on our side, fortunately, as a single participant became positive to covid only near the end of the symposium. A funny view was then offered by the participants when all of them got tested at the same time on the parking lot where the bus was waiting to leave for the post-symposium excursion. Three additional participants tested positive either on the spot or

slightly later on, but two of them could nonetheless continue the excursion in the car of one of the organizers — a useful rescue vehicle!

In the end all initial worries have been alleviated. Despite a situation that was not completely back to normal, 43 participants and 10 accompanying members were present. From a material standpoint, things went smoothly thanks to COFRHIGÉO treasurer Françoise Dreyer who managed to keep within the planned budget — production of the present volume included — despite the great many different sources of expenses related in particular to the excursions. In a masterly way, these excursions were mainly designed by Claudine Cohen for Prehistoric caves and shelters and by Gaston Godard for the sites of geological interest. Here it is not needed to describe the sites visited in any detail. It will thus suffice to list them and let interested readers know that the relevant field trip guides can be downloaded at <https://hal.sorbonne-universite.fr/COFRHIGEO>.

In practice, it proved convenient to pick up the participants at the Poitiers TGV railway station on September 15 before making the first visit at the PALEVOPRIM human paleontology laboratory (and collections), which is known, among other things, for the discovery of the 7 million-year old Toumai hominid in Chad. A stop was then made at the former abbey of Nouaillé, near the site of the 1356 Poitiers battle between the French and English, and the night spent in the small town of Saint-Junien. The day after, the second site visited was the former Rochechouart crater, produced 215 million years ago, whose breccias were long considered to be volcanic in origin until François Kraut eventually showed in the late 1960s that these and other strange rocks found locally had been produced by an impacting asteroid. The bottom of the crater could be seen at the Champagne quarry whereas additional information was found at the Pierre Pellas Museum in Rochechouart.

The symposium itself opened on September 16 with a late-afternoon guided tour of the beautiful, recently refurbished National Prehistory Museum. The tour began with a speech of the museum director Nathalie Fourment and was followed by an evening cocktail on the Museum terrace dominating the Vézère river during which

welcome addresses were given by Les Eyties mayor Philippe Lagarde and current COFRHIGEO and former INHIGEO president Philippe Taquet.

From September 17, the scientific part of the symposium was made up of 39 oral and 5 poster presentations that alternated with a series of visits to the Lascaux International Center of Cave Art, the Lascaux 4 fac simile, Le Moustier shelter (of Mousterian fame), La Ferrassie shelter (where 8 reasonably complete Neanderthal skeletons have been found, out of the 12 found in the Dordogne region and 44 worldwide), Commarque Palaeolithic cave and castle, Cro-Magnon, Laugerie-Basse, Laugerie-Haute, Abri du Poisson and Cap-Blanc shelters and Font de Gaume cave. What made these visits specially informative is that many of them were made under the guidance of the anthropologists who are still excavating them. As for the accompanying members, they were taken care of during the sessions with visits of the well-known village of Domme, Marqueyssac gardens, and Beynac castle, followed by a boat trip on the Dordogne river, and of yet another picturesque village, La Roche Gageac. From a social standpoint, worthy of note were also a dinner in Sarlat, after a late afternoon guided tour of this beautiful city, and the symposium banquet held in Les Eyzies on the evening of September 21<sup>st</sup>.

The post-symposium excursion began the day after with yet another visit to an ornamented cave, that of Pech Merle, famous for its painted horse, which is located 90 km south-east of Les Eyzies in the Quercy region. Not far away are the *phosphatières* of Cloup d'Aural, one of the many former sites of extraction of phosphates that were actively mined in the 1860s for producing fertilizers and have since then proved valuable from a paleontological standpoint because of the variety of fossils trapped in the phosphates during their formation. After a night spent in Agen, the last day on September 24 was devoted to three Miocene historical stratotypes North of Bordeaux, namely, L'Ariey and Bernachon for Aquitanian, Pont-Pourquey for Burdigalian and Lassime for Serravallian; additional information was then obtained at the Saucats Nature reserve museum. Another site visited at Loubens shows thick Miocene oyster beds, which form a small cliff over the Garonne river at Sainte-Croix-du-Mont. As described by Gaston Godard in

his paper, this site has the additional interest of having triggered reflections on the nature and deposition of fossils that antedate by several decades Steno's *Prodromus*. Followed by a wine testing offered by the owner of the place, this visit was quite appropriate for the last day of the symposium, which ended for good at the Bordeaux TGV station.

Needless to say that such an extensive program could not be worked out by the organizing committee alone. Hence, the organizers warmly thank the numerous people who helped us plan either the symposium in Les Eyzies or the excursions, namely, G. Merceron et O. Chavasseau for the Poitiers PALEVOPRIM laboratory; M. Yserd, for the Rochechouart Nature reserve; Ph. Lagarde, Les Eyzies mayor; N. Fourment, director, and M.-C. Ruault-Marmande, B. Gravina and A. Turq, researchers at the Musée National de la Préhistoire; C. Vigne, director, C. Roudet, his assistant and all staff of the Pôle d'Interprétation de la Préhistoire; G. Pinçon, N. Coye and S. Konik at the Ministry of Culture; M. Martinez, administrator, and C. Tyssandier, his assistant, of the Sites de la vallée de la Vézère, A. Mathieu, A. Maureille, J.-P. Chadelle and E. Bougard for the guided visits of the prehistoric sites; B. Defois, curator of the Pech Merle cave; J.-M. Touron, owner of the Cro-Magnon shelter; P. Texier, Research director at C.N.R.S., S. Maury and A. Raux, prehistorians; I. Petrin, of the Maison Bordes, which hosted the headquarters of the symposium; R. Bondonneau for the guided tour of Sarlat; T. Pélissier et his team for the Cloup d'Aural *phosphatières*; A. de Seze for the Sainte-Croix-du Mont outcrop and the generous wine testing at his property; B. Cahuzac, of the Bordeaux Linnean Society, and M. Locascio and Y. Gilly, of the Saucats-La Brède geological reserve for the Miocene stratotypes, for which they in addition kindly provided us with relevant information for the fieldguides; and A. Léautier, travel agent at Périgord Voyages, for valuable help in planning bus transportation.

Last but not least, these warm thanks must be extended to Philippe Grandchamp for efficiently producing these Proceedings, as he is doing every year for the COFRHIGEO *Travaux* of which the present volume is a special issue.

Pascal RICHET  
On behalf of the Organizing Committee

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