

# IFRAO Report No. 18

## Minutes of the 1997 IFRAO MEETING Cochabamba, Bolivia

The 1997 IFRAO Meeting was held at the Centro Simón I. Patiño, Cochabamba, on 2 April 1997, as part of the Congreso Internacional de Arte Rupestre held by SIARB. The event was chaired by Roy Querejazu Lewis (President of SIARB).

The following associations were represented by their IFRAO delegates: ARAPE (France), AURA (Australia), CeSMAP (Italy), CIAR-SAA (Argentina), CIARU (Uruguay), ESRARA (USA), SIARB (Bolivia), Société Préh. Ariège (France). The following further member organisations were represented by proxies: ACASPP (USA), AARS (Sahara), ANISA (Austria), AARP (Portugal), Mid-America (USA), MRARS (Macedonia), Orme dell'Uomo (Italy), RASI (India), SARARA (Southern Africa).

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of two prospective member associations, GIPRI of Columbia and a Siberian organisation being established in Kemerovo, who attended as observers. Two further observers were two committee members of SIARB.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 a.m. sharp and closed at the scheduled time, 10.00 a.m., exactly to the minute. All items on the agenda were considered and the meeting was most efficaciously chaired and conducted by SIARB. The following items were considered:

1. Proxies: nine proxies were declared.
2. Confirmation of previous minutes: no minutes had been received prior to the event. Some copies of the Swakopmund minutes were tabled. ARAPE strongly resented the tone and contents of the minutes, deplored the untimely production of the minutes (see Note 1 below), and requested that they be re-written.
3. Matters arising from these minutes: after discussion of the document the meeting decided to reject the Swakopmund minutes, and to regard them as unread.
4. Reports: a series of written reports from members were tabled, others were given verbally. The following reports were provided: Orme dell'Uomo (activities), Mid-America (Ripon congress tentatively in May 1999), CeSMAP, ARAPE (publications, 6000 copies of Unesco brochure), ESRARA (emphasis on indigenous involvement), AURA (became incorporated), SIARB, MRARS.
5. Ongoing business:
  - 5.1 Code of ethics, proposed by SIARB and AURA: to be modelled essentially on SIARB's existing code and relevant parts of the Australian Burra Charter. AURA

suggested long and short versions, and flexibility to account for regional differences was discussed. It was decided that a subcommittee of five be formed and be instructed to produce a first draft, and then circulate it for comment. The following delegates were elected to form this sub-committee: Bednarik, Consens, Hedden, Ricchiardi, Strecker.

- 5.2 Report by IFRAO's Unesco Representative (CeSMAP): no initiatives were reported.
- 5.3 Strategies for collective international action: Unesco and ICOMOS were first discussed. ARAPE then suggested that the most effective means to gain support are press and Internet. AURA advocated a step-by-step text on dealing in a standardised way with specific local issues. It was emphasised that member organisations have to take initial actions, and the Convener was instructed to then assess whether local possibilities of action have been exhausted, before recommending international action.
- 5.4 Rock art and education: CeSMAP recommended that the temporary working group formed in Swakopmund be formalised as a permanent committee. AURA requested the inclusion of an Asian and a South American representative on this committee, suggesting Kumar and Strecker, in addition to Bahn, Seglie, Soleilhavoup, Pager and Swartz. The meeting approved this and ratified the permanent status of this committee.
6. New business:
  - 6.1 IFRAO World Wide Web page: IFRAO approved the location of its central Web page at CeSMAP in Pinero, Italy, to be administered in collaboration with the Convener.
  - 6.2 Groupe de réflexion sur les méthodes d'étude de l'art pariétal paléolithique: the Groupe has provided a letter stating that the objectives for which it was formed have been met and it has been dissolved.
  - 6.3 Quorum: CeSMAP raised the matter of reducing the quorum at IFRAO meetings, which had been discussed in Swakopmund. The Convener explained the procedure for amending the IFRAO Constitution, and was instructed to conduct a postal ballot to revise the size of the quorum (see Note 2 below).
  - 6.4 1998 meeting: several delegates expressed doubts about the ability of AARP to conduct a large international conference in Portugal. Only vague details were available about this event. (AARP has since produced full details about the conference).
  - 6.5 New members: the Kemerovo group, the Grupo de Investigación de Arte Rupestre Indígena (Columbia) and the Asociación Arqueológica Viguera (Spain) notified IFRAO of their wish to join the Federation.
  - 6.4 Conservation issues in Portugal: the Côa issue was briefly discussed and one of the reports by Swartz (see

following pages) was tabled.

These minutes were compiled by the IFRAO Convener, R. G. Bednarik.

NOTE 1: Jean Clottes, one of the few delegates who read the document, wishes to go on record as strongly resenting the personal attacks contained therein, such as those relating to the Coa issue. He suggests that whenever the action of an IFRAO Representative is criticised, he or she should be advised immediately.

In addition it is to be noted that criticisms of individual IFRAO Representatives should be directed to the respective organisations they represent. Representatives attend IFRAO meetings not as individuals, they represent organisations, and such meetings are not appropriate venues to consider the conduct of individuals. Minutes of such meetings need to reflect this principle, and should not name individuals (except where they are addressed as individuals, e.g. members of committees). In addition, it should be noted that some of the decisions taken in Swakopmund were contrary to the IFRAO Constitution. To avoid such errors at future meetings the Constitution should always be referred to. It should also be noted that IFRAO 'acts as an altruistic focus and cohesive medium for the discipline', its roles do not include the facilitation of endeavours to politicise the discipline.

Subsequent to the IFRAO Meeting in Cochabamba, the current IFRAO President, R. Querejazu Lewis expressed concern about the practice of individuals holding several proxies. He reminds us that the person acting as a proxy, in order to serve the organisation he or she acts for, needs to be fully familiar with the policies and priorities of that organisation. He suggests that in future, proxies will need to be limited to one per delegate.

NOTE 2: The IFRAO President prefers that the quorum at future IFRAO meetings be eighty per cent minimum, unless more than fifty per cent of the total IFRAO membership is represented. A significantly lower quorum would involve the danger that, at a poorly attended meeting, a minority might be capable of making decisions on behalf of the unrepresented majority.

RAR 14-421

## **An evaluation of rock art conservation practices at Foz Coa, northern Portugal**

B. K. SWARTZ, Jr.

The phenomenon of rock art is now of global interest and concern. International organisations now exist that deal with rock art, such as the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO), and the UNESCO-based International Committee on Rock Art (ICOMOS-CAR). It has now become critical that some international consensus be established for a more detailed world-wide convention on proper rock art conservation.

This problem was recently highlighted by the sudden urgent situation caused with the discovery of petroglyphs at Foz Coa, Portugal, that were in imminent danger of destruction by dam backwater inundation. How can resolution of highly vested conflicts be accomplished in a way that allows for the best execution of conservation policy? Portuguese government representatives invited me to Foz Coa to see the area and to consider conservation problems. What I encountered was appalling. This is not to be considered a condemnation of the people of Portugal. In fact they are to be commended for having

concerns on conservation. The responsible organisation for managing the Coa archaeological resources has been the Instituto Portugues do Patrimnio Arquitectnico e Arqueolgico (IPPAR). I find that almost anywhere I go, when governments, corporations and even academic colleagues within the discipline become involved with rock art conservation, the results are usually disastrous.

A basic problem with conservation policy is the basic human condition. Humans are primates, that is they must see and touch everything. Their reality is based on sight and touch. If you cannot see it, it does not exist, e.g. foreign sub-molecular particles on engraved rock surfaces. Primates are also curious, they cannot keep their hands off of anything. Also, as lineally-thinking Indo-Europeans we are materialistic. Reality must be concrete; the object itself is important rather than its context. If we follow our instincts we will often unknowingly destroy data. Added to this is the problem of introducing or attracting (often inadvertently) numerous human primates with all these foibles to accessible rock art. The problems are then compounded.

### **General observations**

The fundamental conservation problem at Coa is, of course, obvious — the inundation of the rock art by the reservoir formed by the construction of the dam. Inundation has two effects on the petroglyphs, (1) their rapid destruction and (2) making them inaccessible for appreciation and study. In some ways the existing situation is even less satisfactory, in that intermittent wetting and drying is the worst possible condition for maintaining old rock art surfaces.

During my stay I was amazed to discover a photograph in the March 1995 issue of *Centros Historicos* of an elaborate chalked Coa petroglyph. This is an utter taboo in any long-term rock art management policy. The publication of such an act shows a lack of awareness of basic rock art conservation. Suggestions that have been made of making latex moulds also show this unawareness. A statement by the American Committee to Advance the Study of Petroglyphs and Pictographs (ACASPP) dealing with these matters has been published in various sources and in several languages, including Spanish, French and English. The most widely distributed version is Swartz (1981).

### **Direct field observations**

Evidence of the following practices were observed by the writer in the field:

1. *Excavation at base of panels.* This activity not only disturbs the immediate terrain, but important associated materials may be lost or destroyed, e.g. possible abandoned engraving tools used to make the markings.
2. *Rubbed surfaces.* This activity alters trace element frequencies and removes ageing residues. Indirect evidence of rubbing is indicated by cleaned surfaces from which recent silt should have adhered from recent inundation. This observation is further corroborated by photographs documenting people touching the panel surfaces.

3. *Rock cutting*. This disfigures the terrain and alters the context of immediate rock configurations.
4. *Widespread disturbance of ground surface*. This also mars the terrain and alters context (disturbance of prior [earlier] natural ground cover).
5. *Labelling of discovered panels with paint*. Two sets of labels were noted, one with yellow paint and another with red. Labels serve as beacons for visitors. Those who manage the area can locate discovered panels from their records and by familiarity with the area. Labelling invites vandalism.
6. *Nearby construction*. These are signs, fences, paths and other construction near and about the petroglyphs. These features can attract unsupervised visitors.
7. *Employment of uniformed guards*. If guards are employed sufficient staff should be maintained to fully monitor the region. Guards should be aware of all human activity in their area of responsibility. If this is not done guards may attract and antagonise high-risk visitors. Guards I encountered felt they had inadequate resources to effectively do their job.

Two unwise social policies noted were (1) the banning of knowledgeable individuals from the area who wished to observe and study the petroglyphs and (2) discouraging the photographing of the panels. Photography is totally non-intrusive. The more something is photographed, the more thoroughly it is documented. Indeed it might be useful to offer guides to locals interested in doing photography.

### Recommendations - Nation of Portugal

Conservation recommendations are determined by the policies the managing authority wishes to pursue. 'Conservation' is not comparable to preservation, but is the wise shepherding of natural and cultural resources. The basic Foz Côa management policy alternatives would seem to be:

1. complete construction of the Côa dam inundating the upstream valley where most of the presently known petroglyphs exist;
2. maintaining the status quo, the lower Côa valley being intermittently flooded by the Douro River, or
3. reversion to the condition prior to the Pocinho dam construction.

If a resource itself *cannot be protected* the best conservation policy is 'complete intensive documentation' and long-term archival maintenance of the recovered information, so as to preserve and maintain the database. Complete intensive documentation entails not only traditional means of recording such as textual description and measurements, mapping, photography and sketching, but also newer and more technical approaches that are available and should be employed, such as global positioning, stereophotogrammetry, digital imaging, image capture etc. All recording should be done twice, by two independent teams of two trained individuals each, a recorder and a checker. Recording of the same evidence should be done several times within the daily (and perhaps seasonal) cycles and under varying weather conditions. Conditions

of context such as landform configuration, rock/bluff position, ground cover, associated non-rock art archaeological remains should be noted and meticulously recorded. All rock art surfaces to be inundated would be inaccessible and rapidly destroyed by water erosion and, therefore, should undergo complete intensive documentation. Engraved rock surfaces enduring the wetting and drying process caused by intermittent inundation should also undergo complete intensive documentation. This would be the only reasonable conservation procedure to deal with alternatives 1 and 2 management decisions (see above). Such actions as relocation of engraved rocks and protective waterproof-coating of engraved surfaces prior to inundation are not reasonable alternatives. Rock art panels stripped of their contextual setting are much diminished and become, essentially, objects of rock art. Coating or spraying of rock art surfaces alters them and destroys possibilities of trace element analyses. Long-term inundation would still cause extensive general rock deterioration. The proper conservation measure for alternative 3 is obscuring the rock art exposures by natural cover and removing or preventing the introduction of attention-producing features, such as signs, identification labels, paths, fences etc. (see observation 6 above).

Alternative 3 not only offers the only possibility of the preservation of a full-range of rock art for future research, but also interpretation for the public, i.e. the viewing of a full range of unaltered petroglyphs in a natural setting. It is the responsibility of the managers of rock art to make a representational sample accessible to all. The heritage of rock should be available for all humankind. In the case of Foz Côa the general population of the area and the nation has been intimately involved, and a major force in its fate. This is certainly the one case where public interest should be considered. Precedence of policies on public availability to rock art phenomena on a global scale may very well be established by decisions made for Foz Côa. If a viewing area and interpretation centre are established the accessible remains should be initially intensively documented and then be *continuously monitored*. The selection of petroglyphs should be representational, not marginal.

### REFERENCE

SWARTZ, B. K. Jr. 1981. Standards for the recording of petroglyphs and pictographs. *Current Anthropology* 22(1): 94-5.

### Acknowledgments

Support for travel and field observations of this study, conducted from 26 June to 2 July 1995, was made possible by a grant from the Luso-American Development Foundation. A public lecture on the conclusions of my field work was presented at the Universidade do Porto on 30 June 1995, and at a public conference, Forum do Côa, of involved officials and scholars, held 1 July 1995 at the University of Lisbon. I was accompanied in the field by Dr Mila Simões de Abreu, Ludwig Jaffe and Dr Paul G. Bahn. Drs Vítor and Susana Oliveira Jorge also co-operated during my stay. It should be stressed that only I am responsible for the conclusions of this investigation.

Professor B. K. Swartz, Jr., Department of Anthropology, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, U.S.A.

[This paper is to be republished in the Turin Congress proceedings.]

## An investigation of the Portuguese government policies on the management of the Foz Côa sites

B. K. SWARTZ, Jr.

Official IFRAO Consultant, Conservation of Côa Rock Art

On 14 August 1996 an e-mail message was sent to Shirley-Ann Pager, in-coming President of the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations (IFRAO). The print-out of this message, a bill of charges by Ludwig Jaffe on the archaeological activities at Foz Côa by João Zilhão and other archaeologists of the Ministry of Culture of the Portuguese government, was given to this writer. It was agreed that this issue be placed on the agenda of the IFRAO Annual Meeting to be held on 16 August at Swakopmund, Namibia. This message has subsequently been published (Jaffe 1996).

Grave concern of the charges was expressed by the IFRAO Representatives at the meeting, and in partial response to the request by Jaffe that 'an international commission be created' to look into this matter, this writer was designated to be an 'Official IFRAO Consultant for the Conservation of Côa Rock Art'. [It should be noted that in a letter, dated 26 August 1996, Zilhão also suggested that a commission be formed, composed of Paul Bahn, Andrea Arcá, Angelo Fossati and the writer of this report. Arcá and Fossati declined the invitation and Bahn was already willing to let me proceed at the Swakopmund meeting.] The following is the report of my investigations.

Jaffe levels nine specific charges at the Ministry archaeologists. None of the charges are documented by Jaffe, only asserted, and none are specifically denied by Zilhão! This creates a ludicrous situation for an outside investigation. For a comprehensive investigation to be done it is necessary to solicit or subpoena direct face to face testimony in Portugal from the individuals involved. This is beyond my personal means and that of IFRAO. Jaffe's charges 5 and 8 are not pertinent in that the events in question transpired while the resource was being managed the Electricidade de Portugal (EDP), not the Ministry of Culture. This investigator has no further information on the very serious charges 1 and 7 than that made in the statement. Charge 2 is admitted and defended by Zilhão. Fundamentally all the charges listed can be grouped into two basic issues: (1) care of the resource, and (2) accessibility to the resource.

The care of the resource can be further subdivided into two areas: (1) treatment of the surfaces of the rock art panels, and (2) recovery procedures for portable archaeological remains in association with the rock art (or in the district under management by the government), an aspect of charge 6. The following can be inferred from Zilhão's statement in his letter to IFRAO of 26 August 1996:

1. 'Whether lichen should, or should not, be removed

from rocks [rock art panels] ... is a matter of scientific debate ... [non-removal] is inadequate and contradictory with the need for adequate study and presentation of the panels to the public'.

2. That Zilhão has, at the minimum, approved the lichen removal: 'I [Zilhão] assume full responsibility for the decision to allow my colleagues doing rock art recording to perform this [lichen] cleaning'.

No mention is made of documentation of lichen growth prior to its removal. If lichen must be removed it is probably best accomplished by killing rather than by mechanical means. There are first-hand eyewitness accounts of the presence of electric generators and the storage of hoses in the area. There are hearsay statements that rock art panel surfaces were washed with pressured water hoses by untrained personnel using chemically treated water. It is now generally accepted worldwide that recording methods requiring direct surface contact are inappropriate (cf. American Committee to Advance the Study of Petroglyphs and Pictographs, Inc. [ACASPP] statement on *Standards for recording of petroglyphs and pictographs*, multiple publication including English, Spanish, French and Italian versions, 1980-). The relation of direct contact procedures with problems of conservation and public interpretation is less clear (see below).

Zilhão refers in his 26 August letter to '... archaeological excavations that we made next to the rock panels.' During the time of EDP management of the Côa valley, in the summer of 1995, I noted extensive disturbance of the soil in rock art areas, especially at the base of various panels (Swartz 1995). I have a first-hand account that this condition still persists under the management of the Ministry. Controlled excavation and careful provenience recording are proper functions of archaeological research. Minimal standards of field excavation, for example those stated by the Society of Professional Archaeologists U.S.A., must be followed if professional field standards are to be maintained. In this dispute no one has mentioned any statement or record of controlled excavation in the area. It is, of course, possible that excavation units have been backfilled, but this is not apparent from observation. I noted no baulks or side walls in abandoned excavation pits.

Zilhão makes it clear in various statements, including his letter of 26 August 1996, that his main concern is the interpretation of the rock art to the public within the Archaeological Park of the Côa valley. The concerns of public interpretation and conservation of a resource come into conflict. As noted by this investigator (Swartz 1995: 5): 'The heritage of rock art should be available for all humankind. In the case of the Foz Côa the population of the area and the nation has been intimately involved and a major force in its fate.' It is clear the Portuguese people deserved a well-interpreted rock art park. It must also be stressed, however, that the Côa representations may be tens of thousand of years old. If evidence of the past that has survived for a period of time unimaginable to most is snuffed out, the magnitude of such an act or activity must be realised. Therefore it is incumbent on those in positions

of responsibility to act as the conservators of the resource. It can never be replaced. Each situation, environmentally and politically, is different and no rules can be universally applied. This investigator believes that considerations of preservation must be paramount in any management policy of rock art. Must visitors be shown every example of rock art in the park? Must the rock art to be viewed be made to look clear or can the original surface suffice? From information I have in hand I am not certain what policy is being followed on these matters by the Ministry archaeologists. These are not easy decisions to make and honourable people can view things differently. From the facts known to me, my view is that the present policy of the Ministry archaeological program pays insufficient attention to the preservation of C oa rock art for posterity.

The second basic issue is access to the resource. As I was personally involved I can attest the validity of charge 9 made by Jaffe (1996). I can also attest to hostility directed at Dr Mila Sim oes de Abreu (Portugal's IFRAO Representative and independent discoverer and promulgator of the C oa petroglyphs) by local officials in 1995. An event, subsequently labelled 'The Penascosa Incident', transpired on 29 July 1996. In an apparent accidental encounter at the site Abreu requested permission from Helena Moura, an archaeologist employed by Zilh o, to visit 'a site across the river' (Quinta da Barca) which was explicitly denied. There are numerous witnesses to this event (bus travellers, Moura's tour students, a television crew and others). Moura's tour began with the students and television crew entering the fenced off area (of the petroglyph district). Jane Kolber (Chair of the Conservation Committee of the American Rock Art Research Association), a colleague of Abreu, followed the tour. When Kolber was identified Moura requested a guard to escort her from the premises. Another colleague of Abreu, Paul Firnhaber, was informed by Moura 'that she was under orders [to deny permissions]'. This incident has not been denied by the Ministry archaeologists. Zilh o states that the site of Quinta da Barca is still privately owned and the owner has not given the Park authority to provide entry to the public. Zilh o is concerned that Abreu did not communicate to the Park co-ordinator about Kolber's visit. Kolber presented a series of criticisms about Park conservation practices which were released to the general public before Park officials claim they were aware of her presence in Portugal. Kolber states that she made several efforts to contact Zilh o, beginning upon her arrival on 14 August 1996. An article in the newspaper *Expresso*, enumerating Kolber's criticisms, was published on 17 August.

There seems to be a pattern of academic xenophobia in some quarters of the Portuguese government. This investigation has not discovered from whom Moura got 'her orders'. Zilh o has been co-operative with foreign scholars. All persons with a legitimate academic interest in the C oa or any other rock art resource, whether foreign or Portuguese, should have free access to the resource, particularly active researchers who need to refer to and expand their database. Rock art data are unique in that they are not portable, hence physical access is critical.

This is an issue of academic freedom. A supportive statement on *Academic freedom and intellectual honesty* in rock art study is presented as an item in the Rock Art Ethical Charter, a solemn declaration of the scholars who met at the International Rock Art Congress NEWS95, Pinerolo, 9 May 1995. There is little precedent on this issue. In the introduction of *Academic freedom, 1940 statement of principles and interpretive comments*, published by the American Association of University Professors it states 'Academic freedom is essential to these purposes [free search for truth and ... free expression] and applies to ... research. Freedom of research is fundamental to the advancement of truth.' In item (a) of the section Academic Freedom in the same document it states 'The teacher [defined by footnote as an investigator who is attached to an academic institution] is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results ...'.

#### Recommendations

On the basis of this inquiry I propose two recommendations for approval by IFRAO, to be forwarded to UNESCO:

1. In the management of rock art resources, *primary* consideration must be given to the preservation of the resource for future study and appreciation.
2. Rock art manifestations provide information for databases and such resources on public lands must be made available for study and research by all interested and qualified scholars.

This investigator believes that the most effective way to establish the proper procedures for shepherding rock art resources is to establish a body of precedent derived from the study of rock art phenomena throughout the world, not by arbitrarily issuing dicta and formal regulation. I hope this investigation contributes to such an end.

#### REFERENCES

- JAFFE, L. 1996. Systematic vandalism and improper conduct in the C oa valley rock art area. *AURA Newsletter* 13/2: 12-13.  
 SWARTZ, B. K., Jr. 1995. Unpublished report to the Luso-American Development Foundation.