

SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND GOALS
FACING ROCK ART RESEARCHERS IN UTAH

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Eventhough we do have some unique problems regarding rock art here in Utah, the majority of the situations addressed in this paper as problems, are ubiquitous to rock art researchers everywhere. An important problem here in Utah is the degree of awareness of the professional archaeologist concerning the scientific value or amount of contribution rock art has to offer. In California, for instance they do not have our exact problems for several reasons. First, the professionals in that state, especially at U.C.L.A., have long accepted rock art as a major source contributing certain areas of information. Second, they have access to the ethnographic present to help them. Third, California lacks the cultural diversity found in Utah.

Here in Utah, we have an extreme abundance of the most magnificent rock art in the United States. Our rock art has both an extremely wide breadth of what seem to be active and continuous expressions with a wide range of aerial and temporal diversity. Also, similarities and differences within and between these styles vary greatly within their time and space. With such a wealth of information to work with, it is our premise that it is possible that rock art research will become a valuable area of contribution to the field of archaeology. This will only be possible with an appropriate approach and proper assimilation of information.

Our experience has shown that the professional community here in Utah, generally knows very little about rock art. Two examples illustrate this situation. One occurs in Buck Horn Wash in the San Rafael, where a BLM sign states that the Barrier Canyon pictograph panel there was made by the Fremont Culture. A similar sign occurs in Moon Canyon just across the Colorado border which explains to the public that the "carrot people" (Barrier Canyon) figures were also the production of the Fremont Culture.

Since very little rock art research of the type acceptable to the professional archaeologist had been done in Utah, our main and foremost concern is to gather the types of information acceptable as sound data by the professional, assimilate it and then present it to both the public and professional communities here in Utah. This needs to be done in such a way as to be convincing enough to earn rock art the status of being a credible source of information. Concrete evidence needs to be formulated to define and link rock art to specific problems and cultures. This will help us help define what is, or is not Barrier Canyon, Basketmaker, or Fremont. The diversity of what has occurred within each of these different distinctive stylistic groups, needs to be delineated. This is probably an indomitable task because of the situation which exists among the professionals themselves in being unable to agree as to just what is or is not Fremont (Madsen, 1979:711,739).

Before we can present information acceptable to the scientific community we, ourselves must establish a history of responsible research, so that our findings have a credible character. In other words we can not be known for using rock art in a manner that is "unacceptable" to the professional community or make the kinds of claims that are not substantiatable with the use of rock art. There are several Rock Art Researchers (nearly all without professional training or background in archaeological theory and practice) that take rock art and use it to prove what is unprovable with that kind of evidence.

It has been the policy of the Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA) to encourage any and all research in the hopes that no matter what the results are, some contribution will be made and the quality of the work will stand on its own merits. What ever the results, through peer counsel, assistance and review, the author will grow and the work be improved.

There have been a few problems with that policy. The main problem is that the general public takes some statements of individuals with questionable attitudes or practices as authorities on rock art, and that since we encourage all research, that leads the professional and public to believe that the U.R.A.R.A. condones their methods or concurs with their conclusions. Since neither is nor should be the case, we do not accept any methods or conclusions not found to be based on sound scientific procedures and principles. We also acknowledge that many contributions have been made by avocationalists, or researchers lacking in some professional attitudes or practices. On the other hand, some contributions

need some reassessment, while the works of others contribute very little except perhaps new sites. We hope that the U.R.A.R.A. and those who are associated with it or influenced by it will become a source of stability from which a professional scholastic influence may be felt.

We feel that if any work is to have value, the process in reaching those conclusions must be duplicatable by others, who with the same resources must come up with the same results, not other possibilities to be argued. One must stay within the confines of the evidence. In other words if we follow the same trail through as complete a source of information we will reach the same conclusion if it is sound, and he uses as complete a set of resources. In areas where there is a lack of proof, one can only make statements that can be substantiated, or label it speculation. Because exceptions will always be found, statements should never be made as exclusives, such as "the Barrier Style only occurs as paintings" or "occurs only in the San Rafael area".

The program that we propose, follows four major areas, Record, Organize, Publish and Present. To obtain the goal of acceptability, we need to record, gather and archive sufficient information to provide the data base to work with that shows sufficient consistencies in repetition and some degree of predictability in order to help solve problems. To do this we need to organize and analyze the data into as complete a set of categories of elements and motifs with distribution and occurrence information as possible. These lists will be as accurate and complete as possible an expression of what the aboriginal population in Utah was doing with rock art on any level of concern. The information that is distilled from these analyses needs to be presented at U.R.A.R.A. symposia and published so that it can be readily available to the public and the professional alike. Each of these blocks of data will address specific areas of concern and answer or help answer pertinent questions.

To present this information to the professional it will need to be submitted to as many of their journals as possible. This information will also need to be presented to them on a one-to-one basis and in such meetings as UPAC and Great Basin Archaeological Conferences. The time commitment to accomplish this is many years, but once that is done we have no doubt that along with the efforts of A.R.A.R.A. and others we will convince the majority of the professionals that rock art does have value. If we do our job well, there will only be a few hard core skeptics left.

To tackle these four areas we all need to work together and as individuals we need to commit to help to do whatever we feel we can. Not all our interests are alike, not all of us are concerned about the same problems as others. However, we all can contribute. We need to better coordinate our efforts so as not to waste time duplicating each other's work. U.R.A.R.A. has helped with that problem to a great extent, but few know how to record a site properly and even fewer know what to do after the site has been recorded.

These problems will not be solved this year or in the next few years. Depending on the response to this, we visualize a ten to fifteen year project based on an increased rate of information accumulation. Without the cooperative effort, it would probably be beyond our lifetime. To shorten this time period we feel a few suggestions will help. If we can organize our field trips we should be able to cover a majority of the rock art areas that are most accessible within the next three to five years. If on an individual basis we make a commitment to report a comfortable number of new additional sites, then our records will accumulate much more rapidly. If 20 people contribute just 2 new sites per year we would have an additional 40 sites. If each contributed 4 we would know of 80 new sites. Many of these could be presented at the Symposia. For those who haven't had the desire to contribute these could merely be a representation of the panels, a short description of the site and what feelings were had about its significance. This is the foundation for further investigation. One individual cannot spend all his time searching for new sites. Also by simply asking local residents about rock art many sites are brought to our knowledge. From there, the Site Record Committee can take the information and fill out the appropriate forms. This is not overly technical and something that anyone can do, with a little training.

Other projects need to be undertaken to expand our membership and to provide information about rock art to the public. Several projects that would be effective could be media exposure with TV, newspapers, magazines, etc. covering topics like vandalism, examples of the value of rock art, Solstice or Equinox sites at those times of the year, etc. Exhibits at libraries, fairs and museums could be beneficial. The new exhibits at the zoo and aviary are very suitable for the reproduction of glyphs of birds or animals that may create an interest.

We also need to solicit the participation of others to help in our cause. The Sierra Club, other environmental groups, astronomical clubs, Scouts, and even the professionals. We need to have suggestions and contributions. We need

individuals to explore the possibilities of enhancing the exposure of the value of rock art to the public.

We need to come to a consensus on the probable and alternative stylistic distinctions between various cultures. We need to define regional and temporal expressions of each stylistic group. At this time we have not got enough information to even make definitive statements on substyles or areas of cross-cultural exchange or adoption.

A LIST OF PROBLEMS AND GOALS

1. To help professionals accept rock art as a valid and viable contribution.

2. To record, and archive sufficient information to provide the data base to work with, that demonstrate sufficient consistency.

3. To organize information into as complete a set of categories of element and motif lists with distributional charts and style profiles.

4. To publish this information in blocks that will address specific areas and needs, to help answer pertinent questions.

5. Determine the potential contribution of Utah rock art.

6. Determine stylistic distinctions between Utah's various cultures. Identify and define regional and temporal expressions of archaic, prehistoric and historic rock art.

7. Determine potential substyles and percentages of preferred types of expressions not commonly shared with parent styles.

8. Determine areas of cross-cultural comparisons of similarities and areas of correspondences of shared traits for both styles and substyles.

9. Determine areas of cross-cultural comparisons of differences (areas of non-correspondence or non-shared traits), traits which are diagnostic.

10. Gather as many examples as possible of superimpositions to create a chronological yardstick. Measure any notable differences in repatination, technique of production or any other distinguishing traits.

11. Explore associations with remains of material culture. Note possible ties with pottery styles, lithics, etc., and request testing and possible Radiocarbon Dating.

12. Determine distributions of styles, motifs and elements from areas of concentrated occurrences to isolated representations.

13. Determine the degree of conventionalization.

14. Any other pertinent information that can help determine values or rock art.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF RESEARCH THAT NEED ADDRESSING

1. Distribution sequences for such things as head gear types, head shapes, body shapes, appendage expression, etc. (do these facts occur in other Fremont styles or does evidence express movement or diffusion over time?).

2. An analysis of distribution, variations of form and contexts of specific types of motifs such as bipolarcephalic sheep, two-horned snakes, shield figures, types of fertility representations, combat figures, flute players, figurine body forms, Salt Creek face motifs, crescents and dots, arcs or rainbows, diagnostic style necklaces, diminutive figures, types of hunting representations, double exposures, joined circles or triangles, mud- or paint-overs, modifications, cross-outs or "killed" figures, detached body parts, multiple armed or legged figures, bombed anthropomorphs, sun-headed figures, implications of shamanism, tear-streaks, facial and body decoration, etc.

3. Distribution of different types of sheep based on an expression of body shape, numbers of horns, legs or the presence of other features.

4. Problems in the use of repatination.

5. Evidence of Fremont occupation south of the Colorado River.

6. Evidence of Fremont rock art outside traditional Fremont territories.

7. Occurrence of Fremont adoption of Anasazi, Plains, or Great Basin traits.

8. Instances of Anasazi adoption of Fremont or other traits.

REFERENCES

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