

Identification

<u>Nomination</u>	The El Vizcaino Reserve (Ojo de Liebre and San Ignacio Lakes and Sierra de San Francisco)
<u>Location</u>	State of Baja California Sur, Municipality of Mulege
<u>State Party</u>	Mexico
<u>Date</u>	31 January 1989

Justification by State Party

The Sierra de San Francisco region contains the most important concentration of prehispanic rock art in the Baja California peninsula. It is of exceptional quality at both the national and the international scale, for its high quality, its extent, the variety and originality of human and animal representations, its remarkable colours, and its excellent state of preservation (criteria i and iii).

[**Note** This property is the subject of a mixed nomination; this evaluation is concerned solely with the cultural elements.]

History and DescriptionHistory

The prehistoric rock art of the Sierra de San Francisco region was first reported by the Jesuit Francisco Javier Clavijero in a publication in Rome in 1789. Further studies were carried out by the Dutch scholar ten Kate in 1874 and the French scholar Diguët (1889-1905). In the present century investigations have been carried out by Georges Enguerrand, Barbro Dahlgren, Stanley Gardner, Harry Crosby, and Javier Romero. Some 400 sites have so far been registered by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), the most important of them within the Reserve, near San Francisco and Mulege, over 250 in all.

The most highly developed prehispanic group in the region was that of the Guachimis, whose territory extended from San Javier and La Purísima in the south of the Reserve to the extreme northern end of the Baja California peninsula. Little is known about this group, apart from the fact that they came from further north.

Description

The paintings are found on both the walls and roofs of rock shelters in the sides of ravines that are difficult of access. Those in the San Francisco area are divided into four main groups - Guadalupe, Santa Teresa, San Gregorio, and Cerritos. The most important sites are Cueva del Batequí, Cueva de la Natividad, Cerro de Santa Marta, Cueva de la Soledad, Cueva de las Flechas, and Grutas del Brinco.

The motifs are very varied, and include human beings (men, women, and children) and many animal species, including rabbit, puma, lynx, deer, wild goat/sheep, whale, turtle, tuna, sardine, octopus, eagle, and pelican; there are also abstract elements of various forms. The frequent depiction of weapons, in association with both human and animal figures, testifies to hunting and warfare. The range of colours covers the entire spectrum, as do the representational techniques used (flat colour, silhouette, shading, etc). This rock art has been the subject of detailed analysis in recent years, resulting in important insights being gained into the social and religious organization of the prehistoric peoples of the area as well as their dietary habits. Obsidian dating of associated objects from excavated deposits shows them to vary in age from 1100 BC to AD 1300, and close analogies have been observed between this corpus of rock art and that from the south-west of the modern United States of America.

Management and Protection

Legal status

In 1988 the Federal Government of Mexico declared El Vizcaino, in the central section of the long Baja California peninsula, to be a Biosphere Reserve and thus protected by Federal law. The Sierra de San Francisco area, covering 183,956 ha, lies within this Reserve and the individual registered rock-art sites are further protected by the Federal Law on Artistic, Historical, and Archaeological Monuments and Areas 1972. Within this area 60% of the land is State-owned, 20% belongs to the commune, and the remainder is in private ownership.

Management

Overall management of the Reserve is the responsibility of its Administration, which comes under the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL). Conservation of the rock-art sites is assured by INAH through its Regional Centre for Baja California, in collaboration with the Central Directorates for Archaeology, Restoration, and Prehispanic and Historic Monuments.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The rock art of the Sierra de San Francisco is remarkably well preserved; this is due largely to the very dry climate of

the region and the sheltered locations of the paintings, which means that they have not been subjected to erosion from wind or rain. Their inaccessibility has ensured that they have not been at risk from vandalism.

As part of the Vizcaino Reserve, the Sierra de San Francisco region will benefit from the protection programme for the whole area being prepared with the help of World Bank funding.

Authenticity

The rock art of the Sierra de San Francisco is entirely authentic.

Evaluation

Qualities and comparative analysis

In evaluating this nomination ICOMOS sought the advice of its International Committee on Rock Art. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman reported as follows:

The Sierra de San Francisco group numbers most of the rock art known in Baja California, and the best... It is indeed of "outstanding universal significance". Besides, it is mostly well preserved owing to its isolation, and very varied, with huge animal and human figures beautifully painted... It is certainly of the quality of such ensembles as Kakadu and Tassili n'Ajjer on the List.

Additional comments

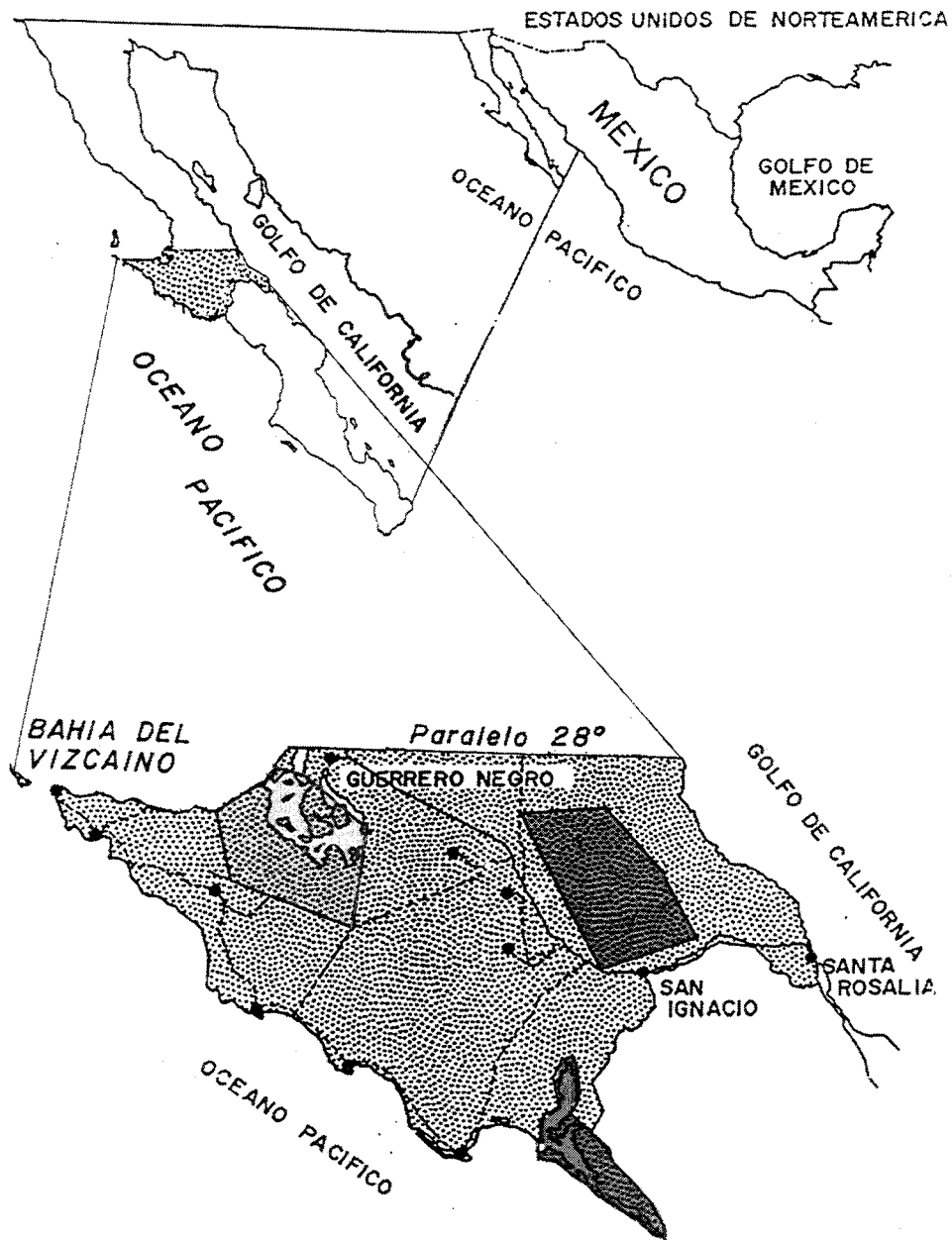
The nomination dossier does not provide any indication of a buffer zone as such. However, since the designated area of the Sierra de San Francisco lies well within the protected Biosphere Reserve, this may be deemed to constitute a buffer zone.

Recommendation

That the Sierra de San Francisco component of this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of cultural criteria i and iii:

- Criterion i The rock art of the Sierra de San Francisco region of Baja California is one of the most outstanding concentrations of prehistoric art in the world and a dramatic example of the highest manifestations of this human cultural expression.
- Criterion iii The Sierra de San Francisco complex is illustrative of a strong human cultural group that existed in the harsh climatic region of the Baja California peninsula, but which disappeared rapidly after contact with European settlers for a variety of causes.

ICOMOS, October 1993



LOCALISATION



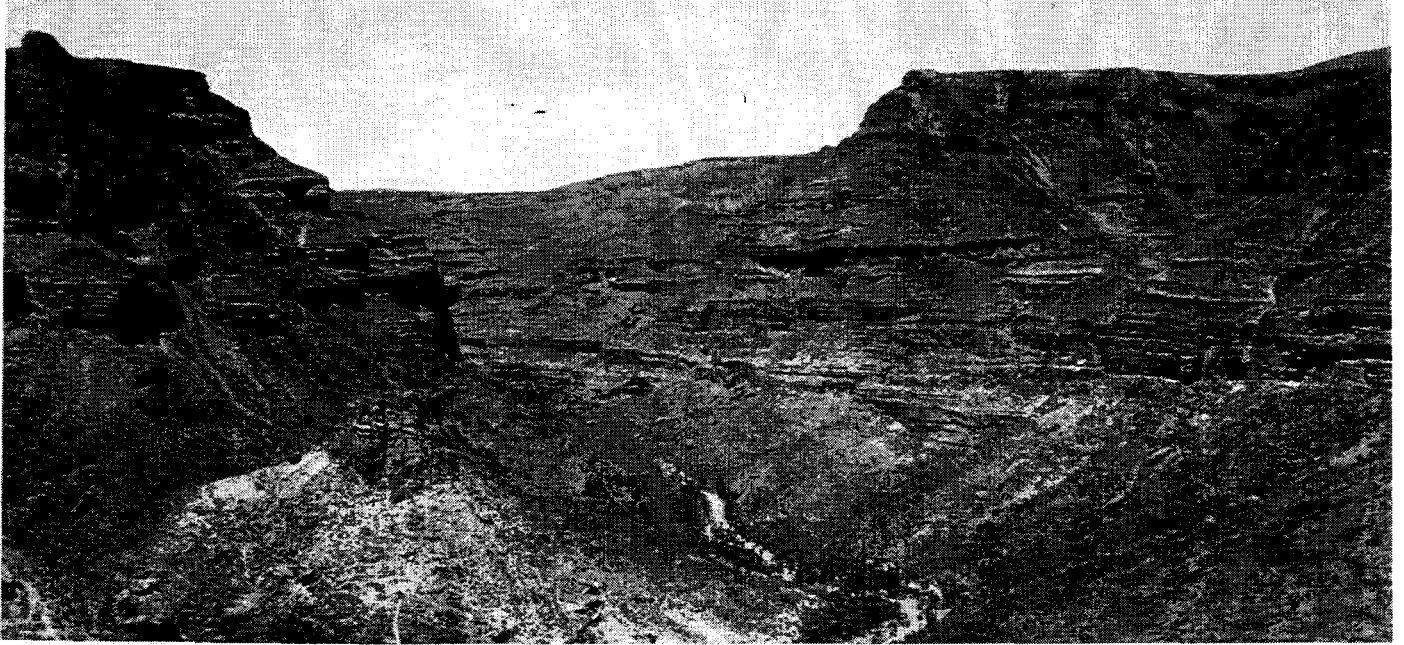
SECRETARIA DE DESARROLLO SOCIAL
 INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ECOLOGIA
 DIRECCION GENERAL DE APROVECHAMIENTO
 ECOLOGICO DE LOS RECURSOS NATURALES

LOCALIZACION DE LA R.B. "EL VIZCAINO",
 ASI COMO LAS AREAS PROPUESTAS PARA SER
 DECLARADAS COMO PATRIMONIO DE LA
 HUMANIDAD

SIMBOLOGIA

- R.B. " EL VIZCAINO"
- AREA "LAGUNA OJO DE LIEBRE"
- AREA "LAGUNA DE SAN IGNACIO"
- AREA " SIERRA DE SAN FRANCISCO"

Réserve de El Vizcaino : plan de localisation des zones
 proposées pour inscription /
 El Vizcaino Reserve : location map of the nominated
 areas



Réserve de El Vizcaino / El Vizcaino Reserve : Sierra de San Francisco



Réserve de El Vizcaino : Sierra de San Francisco, peinture
préhispanique /
The El Vizcaino Reserve : Sierra de San Francisco, pre-hispan.
painting