
Siega Verde (Spain) No 866bis

Official name as proposed by the State Party:

Palaeolithic Rock Art Ensemble in Siega Verde

Location:

Region of Castilla y León
Province of Salamanca
Spain

Brief description:

The Palaeolithic Rock Art Ensemble in Siega Verde covers an area stretching 1.5km along the banks of the Águeda River, a tributary of the Duero River. The 645 engravings were made on an impressive cliff, the result of erosion by the river. They are mostly figurative, representing animals, although some schematic and geometric figures have also been identified. Different techniques were employed: most of those found were the result of percussion engraving, but incision and abrasion techniques were also used.

The group of rock engravings complements the nearby World Heritage Listed prehistoric rock-art sites of the Côa Valley in Portugal.

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 27 April 2007

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 28 January 2009

Background: This is an extension to the Prehistoric Rock-Art Sites in the Côa Valley (Portugal), inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 22nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Kyoto, 1998) on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii).

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and independent experts.

Literature consulted (selection):

Bednarik, R.: Fluvial erosion of inscriptions and petroglyphs at Siega Verde, Spain. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, July 2009, Vol. 36, No. 10.

Gonzalez, A., and Berhman, B.: *Arte paleolítico al aire libre. El yacimiento rupestre de Siega Verde, Salamanca*. Junta de Castilla y León, 2006.

Clottes, J.: *L'art rupestre : Une étude thématique et critères d'évaluation*, ICOMOS Thematic Study, 2002.

Martinho Batista, A.: *A paradigm lost. Côa valley and the open air Palaeolithic art in Portugal*. Edições Afrontamento e Parque Arqueológico do Côa, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, pp. 53-63, 2009.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 23-27 August 2009 (Spain and Portugal)

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 19 October 2009 requesting a joint statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the whole property.

The State Party replied on 16 November 2009.

ICOMOS sent a second letter to the State Party on 14 December 2009, requesting it to consider a single name for the proposed extension and the inscribed property of the Côa Valley in Portugal and detailed information on projects for the improvement of the Archaeological Area, with particular regard to the creation of new parking lots and extension of the visitor centre.

On 27 January 2010 the State Party sent a copy of the Protocol of Intent between the Junta de Castilla y León (Spain) and the Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico, L. P. (Portugal) signed on 26 October 2009 to coordinate the management of the Côa and Siega Verde rock-art sites.

On the same date, the State Party also sent a copy of the Agreement among the Municipalities of Villar de la Yegua, Villar de Argañán, and Castillejo de Martín Viejo signed on 2 December 2009, which commits these municipalities to control urban planning and construction plans in areas in which building development might have a visual impact on the proposed extension and its buffer zone.

The State Party replied to ICOMOS letter of 14 December 2009 on 26 February 2010. The analysis of this information is included in the present evaluation.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 17 March 2010

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The Palaeolithic rock art of Siega Verde lies to the extreme west of Salamanca, close to the boundary

between the Autonomous Community of Castilla y León and Portugal, on rocky outcrops on the banks of the River Águeda beside the bridge that spans it. This is a tributary of the Douro in Spain, parallel to the River Côa, a Portuguese tributary of the Douro.

The nominated property covers both banks of the River Águeda and all the 645 engraved rock surfaces that have been identified, which rarely extend more than 15m beyond the river. It is about 1km long with a total area of less than 1ha. The buffer zone comprises the land immediately surrounding the river, covering in total some 45ha.

Physically, the essential characteristic of the site is the rocky substratum of iron-schist outcrops with relatively regular surfaces that were used for the engravings along the river banks and the ford. The surrounding agricultural landscape of the peneplain is rich in vegetation and bird life.

Varied engraving techniques were employed, the most typical being percussion-engraving, although incision and abrasion techniques were also used. The artistic and archaeological character of Siega Verde is illustrated by the subjects of the rock engravings, which cover a wide range of animal groups. Horses, bovinds, and cervids are dominant themes; very occasionally human forms appear, as well as geometric patterns.

These are typical of representations in the cave art of the Upper Palaeolithic, including the way in which they are presented - as single animals or small groups, very rarely settings with ground lines or vegetation, and very few humans, usually with misshapen faces and fluid outlines. These groups appear in the southern, central, and northern sectors of Siega Verde - monumental horses and bulls, surrounded by smaller herbivores and a few exotic animals such as carnivores and bears, associated with geometrical signs.

Based on its morpho-stylistic characteristics, the find has been dated at 16,000 BC and most of the representations are typical of the transition period between styles III and IV established by Leroi-Gourhan in 1971 for European Palaeolithic art.

Extension

The justification for the World Heritage listing of the Prehistoric rock-art sites in the Côa Valley, Portugal, in 1998 was as 'an exceptional concentration of rock carvings from the Upper Palaeolithic (22,000–10,000 B.C.) that is the most outstanding example of early human artistic activity in this form anywhere in the world.

It was listed under Criterion (i) on the grounds that 'The Upper Palaeolithic rock-art of the Côa valley is an outstanding example of the sudden flowering of creative genius at the dawn of human cultural development,' and under Criterion (iii) because 'The Côa Valley rock art throws light on the social, economic, and spiritual life on

the life of the early ancestor of humankind in a wholly exceptional manner.'

The two sites of the Côa Valley and Siega Verde lie only some 60km apart as the crow flies, a three-day walk at the most. The Águeda valley runs parallel to the Côa valley and both flow into the Douro valley, making communication between the two very easy for both hunter and prey. It was always a significant travel route, an ecological corridor for the movement of plant and animal species. The rock engravings bear witness to ancient contacts. Both are spread along river banks and occur on the same type of rock, the techniques are the same, and the subjects and conventions are identical.

History and development

The open-air rock-art ensemble of Siega Verde was created in the Águeda river valley during the last part of the Würm glaciation, c 20,000 BCE.

The history of the site can be reconstructed by means of stylistic and chronological analysis based on comparing the engraved figures of the nominated property with those of Côa and of other Palaeolithic sites throughout Europe. This analysis shows that activity on the site lasted from the Gravettian (21,000 BCE) to the Magdalenian (12,000-11,000 BCE), with a peak between the Solutrean and the Magdalenian (16,000-13,000 BCE).

Human activity came to end in the area later, around 10,000-7,000 BCE, after the last glaciation. The less monumental and naturalistic carvings left by Epipalaeolithic groups date from this period.

Subsequent visits to and use of the area cannot be confirmed because of the absence of archaeological remains, although in historic periods the valley was inhabited and used, as attested by the ruins of a medieval mill (Pedrogordo) and the traces of long agricultural exploitation of the land, such as stone-revetted terraces.

The recent history of the area is one of abandonment following the progressive cessation of traditional agri-pastoral activities. The area is characterized by modest development, the most relevant of which is represented by a bridge built in the 1920s.

The engravings of Siega Verde were discovered in 1988, since when they have been extensively studied, legal protection has been established, and conservation work has been undertaken.

The engravings belong to the same chronological and cultural phase as those of Foz Côa. This is proven by the use of similar cutting techniques (cutting with hard resistant tools and pecking, through either direct or indirect percussion) that were used in two different periods, as well as the strong similarities in the engraved

drawings.

The evolution of the two sites was closely linked. Siega Verde chronologically completes the forms represented in the Côa sites, especially in the middle and later phases, which are poorly represented in the Portuguese site. Thus the two sites form a unity in terms of chronology, graphics, geology, and environment, and so considering them together enhance the understanding of the dynamics of their use.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Comparative analysis

The State Party has based the comparative analysis for Siega Verde on a selection of sites from the Iberian Peninsula, which are deemed to be relevant examples for assessing the specificity of the proposed extension. Comparison is also made with Foz Côa itself, to highlight the complementary nature of Siega Verde to the Côa site.

Examples considered in the comparative analysis are El Castillo and La Pasiega in Cantabria and Tito Bustillo in Asturias, all of which are included in the World Heritage serial site of Cave of Altamira and Palaeolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain (1985 and 2008, criteria (i), (iii) and (iv)), and Font de Gaume and Combarelles, which are included in the Decorated Caves of the Valley of the Vézère World Heritage Site, France (1979, criteria (i) and (iii)).

The Siega Verde site in Spain is very similar to that of the Côa Valley (Portugal) in terms of chronology, iconography, and continuity from a territorial and geographical point of view. The Siega Verde engravings epitomize the artistic model of the late glacial age, while Foz Côa expresses the highest artistic achievements of the Upper Würm glacial.

Siega Verde is considered to be the iconographic parallel model of Palaeolithic caves in Castilla. The similarities with Los Casares, La Hoz, and El Reno highlight the fact that outdoor rock decorations represent a variation of the engraved cycles found in caves and illustrate the adaptation of artistic conceptions to a different space.

ICOMOS considers that, despite the fewer engravings and the smaller dimensions compared to Foz Côa, Siega Verde may be considered a satellite of Foz Côa, and this also holds true for other adjacent valleys. The proposed extension is nonetheless unique in Europe and, after Foz Côa, the most important example of Palaeolithic rock art in an outdoor environment. The site is remarkable for both its style and its age. Most of the engravings showing horses, bovines, and other rarer animals were made within a relatively short period toward the end of the Solutrean and, in particular, during

the Middle and Upper Magdalenian. The depictions therefore appear relatively homogenous. Apart from their engraving techniques, they clearly correspond with cave paintings from that epoch. Siega Verde is, as it were, a 'cave without a roof.'

ICOMOS considers that Foz Côa and Mazouco (Portugal) and Siega Verde and Domingo García (Spain) form part of a large region of Upper Palaeolithic rock art in which the entire development of the Ice Age art of the central and southern Iberian Peninsula can be traced. The significance of these sites in terms of cultural history is equal in importance to that of the famous caves in Cantabria and Asturias (Palaeolithic Cave Art of Northern Spain). Foz Côa and Siega Verde provide essential information for understanding a cultural region of ancient Europe, and without them our knowledge would be inadequate.

ICOMOS notes that, although the engravings of Siega Verde have always been exposed to wind and weather, they are in excellent condition. Differences in technique and the patina of the images make it possible to describe the development of this sanctuary. It may be assumed that there were many other rock art sites from the Upper Palaeolithic, but they would often have been situated on riverbanks and would today have disappeared as a result of the creation of the great reservoirs of the Iberian Peninsula. Siega Verde has thus remained a unique cultural monument.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, although based only on examples from the same region, has identified those examples that are relevant in demonstrating how the extension would best illustrate the cultural links between two exceptional sites and their millennial survival, thus shedding additional light on the way of life and customs of the prehistoric groups that inhabited Foz Côa, Siega Verde, and the Iberian Peninsula.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this extension for approval on the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

The proposed extension is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Siega Verde property represents the most remarkable open-air ensemble of Palaeolithic art on the Iberian Peninsula within the same geographical region as the World Heritage listed prehistoric rock-art sites of the Côa Valley.
- Siega Verde and the rock-art sites of the Côa Valley best illustrate the iconographic themes and organization of Palaeolithic rock art, which adopted the same modes in caves and in the

open air, thus contributing to a better understanding of this artistic phenomenon.

- Together they compose a unique site of the prehistoric era, rich in material evidence of Upper Palaeolithic occupation.

The justification for the inscription of the Côa Valley ensemble in 1998 was as an *'exceptional concentration of rock carvings from the Upper Palaeolithic (22,000–10,000 BCE) that is the most outstanding example of early human artistic activity in this form anywhere in the world.'*

ICOMOS observes that Siega Verde shares the same cultural values as the Côa sites. An extension of the Côa Valley World Heritage group to include the Siega Verde property therefore appears logical. The existence of the art of Siega Verde can only be explained by the documented presence of hunter groups in the Côa valley on the Portuguese side, and only the existence of Siega Verde in Spain can confirm their patterns of movement and way of life.

ICOMOS considers that the justification proposed for including the Palaeolithic rock art ensemble of Siega Verde as an extension of the Côa Valley rock-art sites is appropriate.

ICOMOS has requested the States Parties to consider a single name for the proposed extension and the existing World Heritage Site. The State Party has proposed the following single name: Prehistoric Rock Art sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde.

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

According to the State Party, the exact extent of the Siega Verde rock-art site in antiquity is unknown, and so it is not possible to assert that the site is complete in terms of its original distribution. However, it is both homogeneous and continuous in the way in which it develops within the spatial limits that have been discovered over c 1km. It can be assumed to be close to the conceptual content intended at the time of its creation.

The engravings follow a linear course along the bank of the River Águeda, perfectly reproducing the typical pattern adopted for prehistoric paintings inside caves and in this way thus confirming the case for the integrity of this outdoor ensemble.

The Siega Verde rock art was discovered in 1988 and is deemed not to have suffered any significant changes in form, content, or distribution since that time. It therefore remains in its original condition, at least from the moment of discovery.

ICOMOS considers that the engravings are all contained within the perimeter of the nominated property. They are

visible and mostly in good condition. A few, especially those carved into horizontal surfaces, are eroded and can only be seen in oblique light. Others are partially or totally covered with lichen. For a long time this part of the river was popular for bathing and attracted a few graffiti. Nevertheless, the great majority of the engravings remains intact.

ICOMOS also considers that the environment was clearly selected by prehistoric people because of the curving riverside with spectacular rocks along it, and that this has not undergone any modification over the ages. The landscape is for the most part intact, apart from one place a little downstream of the bridge, within the nominated area, where there are three modern structures used to study the water flow, with an electric line to service them. Because of their impact on the visual integrity of the site, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should give consideration to the removal of these structures.

In its response of 26 February 2010, the State Party has informed that, at the moment, it would be complex to remove the water measurement stations which provide useful data for the management of the river. Nevertheless the agency responsible for the measuring stations has expressed its commitment to assess the consequences of the proposed removal and to find the best solution to reduce the impact of the infrastructures associated to the stations.

Apart from these particular intrusions, the integrity of the surroundings has been preserved.

Authenticity

Siega Verde is presented as an authentic demonstration of the graphic system of Palaeolithic man for several reasons:

- It illustrates the characteristic graphic symbols of the Palaeolithic style, which was not reproduced after the retreat of the Quaternary period ice.
- It can be located through formal parallels with contemporary caves within Styles III and IV of Leroi-Gourhan's classification of Palaeolithic European art.
- It is representative of the art for which the cultural context is the area of Côa, where the archaeological remains have been dated to the Upper Palaeolithic.
- It possesses an internal organization that perfectly matches Palaeolithic art forms, with the same central and lateral elements and the same interconnections and proportions of figures and species that can be found in dated Palaeolithic decorated caves.
- Its central zone includes a section on which the support for a road bridge was built in the early 20th century. That section dates back to a period before the bridge was built, when most people were unaware of the characteristics of

Palaeolithic art, so that the possibility of falsification can, with almost complete certainty, be ruled out. The techniques and weathering of the figures also demonstrate the antiquity of the ensemble.

Siega Verde forms part of the cultural environment of the River Côa, with places such as Fariseu, where recent archaeological excavations have confirmed the authenticity of these engravings.

ICOMOS considers that, whilst direct dating is not possible for engravings, all specialists (apart from one - R. Bednarik, see Literature consulted) have attributed the Siega Verde rock art to the Upper Palaeolithic period, i.e. from the Gravettian to the end of the Magdalenian/beginning of the Epipalaeolithic (Style V). These overwhelming supportive attributions are based on the subjects represented, the techniques (both picked and, later, finely engraved) and conventions used, together with existing knowledge from many open-air rock-art sites on the Iberian Peninsula (Domingo García and Piedras Blancas in Spain, and above all Foz Côa, but also Mazouco and half a dozen other sites in Portugal). The most important of these ensembles are at Foz Côa and Siega Verde.

The proposed extension includes representations of a wide range of fauna, some of which have long since disappeared. The State Party refers to woolly rhinoceros, bison, reindeer, *G. megaceros* stags, bears, and felines.

ICOMOS considers that all these data are not indispensable in establishing the antiquity of the site, but that they nonetheless add to the argument. Whilst ICOMOS has some doubts over the identification of some of the specific fauna named, such as the woolly rhinoceros or *megaceros* deer, the remainder are easily confirmed. The characteristic Palaeolithic style and subjects are obvious and correspond with those of contemporary decorated caves.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. ICOMOS acknowledges the complexity of removing the measuring stations and appreciates the commitment manifested by the State Party in exploring the possibilities to reduce the impact of the related infrastructures. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to provide update information on any progress undertaken in this direction.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The nominated extension is proposed on the basis of the same criteria (i) and (iii) under which the Prehistoric Rock Art Sites of Côa Valley (Portugal) were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the

grounds that the Palaeolithic rock-art ensemble of Siega Verde offers exceptional evidence of the first examples of symbolic creative expression and the beginning of humanity's cultural development and that it complements the Côa ensemble.

ICOMOS supports the justification for this property as giving form to one of humanity's earliest expressions of creative genius in this region and, thanks to its slightly more recent chronology, provides additional information for understanding the evolution and variations of rock art during the Palaeolithic.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed extension significantly reinforces the case for applying this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the rock art of Siega Verde, and its relationship with that of its neighbouring Côa Valley, reveal in an exceptional way vital aspects of the social, economic, and spiritual relations of our earliest ancestors.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed extension is exceptional evidence of the magical and religious practices of the Palaeolithic peoples who inhabited the Iberian Peninsula, a cultural tradition that has long since disappeared, and that it contributes to a better understanding of the cultural and spiritual world of our ancestors.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed extension significantly reinforces this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed extension significantly reinforces criteria (i) and (iii), already adopted for the original property, and that conditions of authenticity and integrity have been met.

Description of the attributes

- The entire system of engravings documented at Siega Verde and described in the nomination dossier;
- The different types of engraving technique (pecking and incision) which distinguish certain figures from others and which attest to the evolving artistic language of the site over the millennia, and which also demonstrate and clarify the connection with Foz Côa;

- The geomorphology of the area, with the bend in the river and the overhanging cliff, as well as the relationship of the engraved rock cliff with the river, which show the role given to water, and its surrounding landscape. This has remained almost intact without undergoing any major changes and so may give an indication of the environment favoured by Palaeolithic people.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

The socio-economic characteristics of the region are such as not to create any pressure on the cultural and environmental heritage of the area. In fact, the population of the region is decreasing.

Neither the proposed extension nor its buffer zone is therefore threatened by development pressures, new construction, or vandalism.

ICOMOS recommends, however, that the State Party consider undertake steps to remove the three existing structures located in the nominated area downstream of the bridge used to study the water flow, along with the electric line servicing them.

Tourism pressures

Access is controlled and visitor numbers are modest. Groups of visitors, which are usually accompanied by guides, follow fixed circuits, so as to see certain of the principal rock-art areas, including selected animals and fine engravings. Surveillance cameras cover the area.

Environmental pressures

None have been detected. The risk of pollution is at a minimum since the uranium mine at Saelices was closed and the waste from urban centres is properly treated.

Natural disasters

The most likely threat is from fire, but the morphology of the terrain is said to be such as to minimize the threat of fire to the proposed extension. Most of the site is covered by Plan 42 of the Integrated Programme for the Prevention of Forest Fires in the Junta de Castilla y León.

Impact of climate change

This may result in increased flooding, but the property is protected from periodic river floods by the Iruena dam (Fuenteguinaldo, Salamanca).

ICOMOS considers that the main potential risks to the property would be uncontrolled visitor access and occasional flooding. However, both are well controlled and neither now pose any threat.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The well defined proposed extension covers the two riverbanks and all the identified engraved rock surfaces, rarely extending more than 15m beyond the river. It is about 1km in length with a total area of less than 1ha.

The buffer zone, which is also well defined, is large enough to protect the property, covering in total some 45ha.

The population density is extremely low, averaging 2.7 inhabitants per km².

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are appropriate.

Ownership

The ownership of the protected rock-art ensemble is divided between:

Parcels of land in public domain (Commune of Villar de la Yegua):

- 7 parcels within polygon 514 of Villar de la Yegua.

Parcels of land in private ownership:

- 23 parcels within polygon 501 of Villar de la Yegua;
- 5 parcels within polygon 002 of Villar de Argañán;
- 18 parcels within polygon 501 of Castillejo de Martín Viejo.

Protection

Legal Protection

All rock-art sites are protected under State Law 16/1985 for Spanish Historic Heritage.

In the Plan for Castilla y León (1989), both the proposed extension and the buffer zone of Siega Verde were declared BIC (*Bien de interés cultural* = properties of cultural interest), the highest level of protection for cultural property afforded under Spanish legislation.

Other legal instruments that ensure the protection of the proposed extension are Law 12/2002 for the Cultural Heritage of Castilla y León and its related by-law, which was approved in 2007 (Decree 37/2007).

The following also apply to the proposed extension and its buffer zone: the Law for the management of the Territory of Castilla y León (Law 10/1998 and Law 12/2003); Law 5/1999 for Urban Planning and its related

by-law (Decree 22/2004); Law 1/1998 on the municipal competences concerning the Historic Heritage; and Law 29/1985 and its subsequent modification (Royal Legislative Decree 1/2001) on the protection of the public hydraulic domain.

With reference to the European legal framework, the property and its buffer zone are included in the Nature 2000 Framework (Law 42/2007).

Other legal tools that apply to the area are the laws concerning agriculture and stock breeding, road development, and accessibility to public places.

After the discovery of the ensemble and as soon as its contents had been revealed, work began on protection and conservation, such as closure of the area of the engravings, control of access roads, and installation of protective panels and video-surveillance cameras.

The mayors of the three relevant local government areas (Villar de la Yegua, Villar de Arganan, and Castillejo de Martín Viejo) agreed in 2009 to prohibit development on the hill overlooking the site above the upper boundary of the buffer zone.

On 2 December 2009 an Agreement among the three municipalities was signed which commits the signatories to declare as areas of special protection those in which, because of their position and conformation, development may have an adverse visual impact on the proposed extension. As a consequence, any future development of the area will have to take into consideration the status of the proposed extension and enforce the preservation of its values.

Effectiveness of protection measures

The implementation of the legal instruments listed above is in the charge of various administrative bodies.

The implementation of the Law for the protection of cultural heritage is the responsibility of the Territorial Commission for Cultural Property of Castilla y León which is aided by the government security services in matters relating to compliance with the standards and to looting.

The Autonomous Community of Castilla y León has established a specific agreement for the protection of its cultural heritage between the *Delegación* of the Government of Spain and the Regional Council for Education and Culture. On this basis several initiatives have been undertaken, such as sensitization courses for civil servants with responsibilities in matters relating to cultural heritage.

Other bodies with responsibilities over the proposed extension and its buffer zone for specific matters are the municipalities (implementation of the planning standards concerning the protection of cultural heritage and urban environment), the Forest Guard (monitoring protection of

spaces included in the Nature 2000 framework), and the Territorial Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (application of the legislation concerning EIA).

The ensemble of Siega Verde is adequately covered by legal measures to guarantee its protection under present conditions.

ICOMOS considers that the measures in place to protect the site are adequate and appropriate.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

Between 1989 and 2005 R. de Balbin Behrman and J. Alcolea González studied and prepared an inventory of rock art for the property. They endeavoured to make the descriptions as complete as possible. As mentioned under Authenticity, a few fauna species may be in doubt, but on the other hand, given the wealth of fine engravings, it is probable that research will reveal further examples.

ICOMOS considers that the inventory is detailed and it will be a useful basis for further research.

Present state of conservation

Although the engravings of Siega Verde have always been exposed to wind and weather, they are in very good condition. The patina on some images is non-destructive and makes it possible to describe the evolution of this sanctuary.

Active conservation measures

Since the Siega Verde prehistoric site was discovered several conservation measures have been undertaken to ensure that it retains its values, the most important of which have been prohibition of free access and the establishment of a surveillance system, which is to be supplemented in due course by a sensitization programme and guided visits.

The financial plan for the conservation and presentation of Siega Verde falls within the 2004-2012 Plan of the Junta of Castilla y León for historic heritage, for which 15 million euros have been allocated. A new museum of the Ministry for Culture near Vila Nova on the rock art and archaeology of the Cõa Valley is to open in 2010.

Other planned conservation measures in place include:

- Prohibition of bathing and casual visits and control of the proposed extension by means of a metal enclosure with an overhead permanent surveillance camera mounted above the bridge crossing the site which covers all the central part of the site.

- The employment of two permanent custodian /guides.

Future conservation projects include:

- Rehabilitation of the Mill at Pedrogordo and of a rural building nearby, in order to complete the interpretation programmes by providing information on the occupation of the area in historical times, as well as supplying services to visitors;
- Repair of the fishery, 200m upstream from the Siega Verde bridge, with the aim of reorganizing the bathing area and stabilizing the depth of the waters;
- Improvement of road access to the proposed extension, creation of new car parking, improvement of the track from the old car parking area to the fishery and the mill, construction of a bridge for access to the river and of a controlled bathing area for children.
- Improvement of access to the interpretation centre and reorganization of its surroundings (new parking area, new toilets, educational installations, etc), and a project for renovation of the museum layout.

ICOMOS considers that further information is needed about the construction of a new parking area and the enlargement of the interpretation centre. A letter was sent to the State Party on 14 December 2009 raising these issues.

The State Party has replied informing that the scheme approved for the upgrading of the information centre envisions the improvement of the internal distribution of spaces and functions. The construction of restrooms will imply a 35,80m² increase of the built surface.

The modification of the parking area and of the access to the information centre includes the reduction of the steepness of the path to the parking area and the improvement of the latter, the adaptation of the structures left by the old hotel to accommodate didactic activities and leisure, the construction of a pergola to shade this area. Other works comprise the maintenance and improvement of drainage and water installations.

On the base of the information provided, ICOMOS considers that the enlargement and upgrading works that are planned by the State Party on the visitor centre and its surrounding area appears to be moderate and necessary to improve the functioning conditions of this facility. Nevertheless, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party assesses the consequences before planning any future enlargement of the visitor centre in relation to the impact of any construction on the character of the area surrounding the nominated property and of an increased number of visitors to the proposed extension.

Maintenance

Maintenance is the responsibility of the Junta of Castilla y León and the Municipality of Villar de Yegua. ICOMOS

considers that it is competently carried out.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

ICOMOS considers that the ensemble of Siega Verde is adequately covered by physical protection so as to guarantee its conservation under present conditions.

ICOMOS considers that the rock engravings of Siega Verde are in very good condition and well studied and recorded, and that the ensemble is adequately covered by physical protection to guarantee its conservation. Although the planned works to the interpretation centre and its immediate surroundings are contained and do not affect the nominated property, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party assess the consequences before planning any future enlargement of the visitor centre in relation to the impact of any construction on the character of the area surrounding the property and of an increased number of visitor to the proposed extension.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

Management of the nominated property is delegated to the local action group ADECOCIR (Association for the Development of the Region of Ciudad Rodrigo), which includes, among others, all the municipalities of the area.

The director/manager of ADECOCIR is responsible for the overall management and maintenance of the property. Security is provided by the Junta de Castilla y León and by an outside contractor. The Junta is responsible for maintenance of the equipment, whilst the Municipality of Villar de la Yegua maintains paths, bridges, etc. Technical responsibility is in the hands of an archaeologist of the Territorial Service for Culture of the Junta.

ADECOCIR provides the human and material resources to accomplish management tasks in the following ways. There are: one person for the public, staff for the guided visits, and one person for educational activity and promotion employed on the site. The services supplied include guiding for visitors, surveillance of installations during opening hours, ticketing, serving in the shop, drawing up and implementation of sensitization and dissemination programmes and educational activities.

The Junta de Castilla y León has developed programmes and projects in collaboration with the Portuguese institutions IGESPAR (*Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico* -- Institute for the Management of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage) and the Archaeological Park of Côa. This enables the authorities to share and upgrade their knowledge about conservation programmes for and joint presentation of the open-air rock-art sites at Foz Côa

and Siega Verde. The close association already established between the authorities responsible for the two properties through a technical working group has been formalized in the form of a Framework Protocol of Intent signed on 26 October 2009, with the aim of coordinating future scientific research, conservation, and presentation and preparing specific joint programmes. The Protocol establishes a permanent coordination body and a Joint Monitoring Committee charged with the task of coordinating the management of the C6a and Siega Verde rock-art sites and implementing future joint programmes.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

Various municipal, regional, and European Community plans and projects affect the property and its management which contribute towards ensuring an overall management of the proposed extension and its buffer zone. The most relevant are:

- The 2004-2012 Plan for the Historic Heritage of Castilla y León and the sector plan for the World Heritage sites, concerning the properties included in the Tentative List for consideration of their inscription on the List.
- The Strategic Plan for the Historic Ensembles of the Provincial Administration, for the management of the tourist potential of the provincial heritage.
- The European Plan 'Network Nature 2000', which is integrated into the Network of the Natural Spaces of Castilla y León.
- European initiatives on trans-European cooperation for encouraging sustainable development (Interreg III).

This part of Spain is far from any major tourist centres. Despite the cultural interest of towns such as Ciudad Rodrigo, the number of visitors to Siega Verde is relatively small, on average fewer than 3,000 per year since 2000, when the Interpretation Centre was opened and numbers increased.

ICOMOS observes that in case the number of visitors increases, in the event of this extension being approved, there should be no adverse effect on the conservation of the property. However, the local authorities and the managers appear to be prepared to face such an eventuality by different means, i.e., the provision of more guides or upgrading the visitor centre.

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 14 December 2009, requesting additional information on this issue.

On the base of the information provided, ICOMOS considers that the current scheme for upgrading the visitor centre consists of moderate improvements that appear to be necessary for the best functioning of this facility. Nevertheless, ICOMOS recommends that an assessment of the consequences of the possible

increase of visitors be carried out and a comprehensive cultural tourism strategy be elaborated for the proposed extension.

Risk preparedness

The proposed extension is included in Plan 42 of the integrated Programme for Fire Prevention of the Junta of Castilla y León. The Archaeological Area is also included in the Salamanca Provincial Plan for Fire Prevention.

ICOMOS considers that, although the prevention measures established at a broader territorial level are the most appropriate for reducing risks, it would also be useful for the basics of disaster preparedness to be imparted to the site staff through training.

Involvement of the local communities

The management of the property is directed towards community participation by various local entities. Since 2005, visitor management has been the responsibility of the Association for the Development of the Region of Ciudad Rodrigo (ADECOCIR), which was appointed for a renewable five-year term.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

The major funding sources are from the Junta de Castilla y León, General Directorate for Cultural Heritage, through direct funding and co-funding from European programmes.

ADECOCIR manages financial resources from European funds (European Fund for Regional Development or Interreg programmes).

Currently, the professionals engaged in the protection and management of the proposed extension consist of the following: one archaeologist of the Territorial Service for Culture of the Junta Castilla y León based in Salamanca; the research team of the University of Alcalá de Henares, which has the scientific responsibility for the site; two guards, one from the permanent staff of the Junta and one hired from a private company; ADECOCIR personnel looking after visitors and specialized guides; and an archaeologist hired by ADECOCIR for educational activities.

Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS considers that the current management appears to be effective in protecting, conserving, and presenting the property and its attributes.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate and that the collaborative arrangements in place with the Portuguese authorities are appropriate. ICOMOS suggests, however, that although the fire-prevention measures at the regional level are adequate and the most appropriate for reducing

risks, it would be useful to instruct the site staff in the basics of disaster preparedness. ICOMOS recommends that an assessment of the consequences of the possible increase of visitors be carried out and a comprehensive cultural tourism strategy be elaborated for the proposed extension.

6. MONITORING

The Junta of Castilla y León has made provision for specific plans to evaluate and conserve the property, with indicators of values and controls. It has also appointed a custodian responsible for the physical surveillance of the site and its conservation.

Key indicators have been adopted to measure the state of conservation of the engravings and of the site itself, with the frequency and responsible authorities named.

They include:

- For the *engravings*, comparative photographic documentation and monitoring of the engravings since their discovery with regard to erosion/natural degradation and the evolution of lichens and patina.
- For the *site*, evaluation of human intrusions and impacts on the site, monitoring the evolution of river flows, and analysis of the ecosystem environment of the banks of the River Águeda.

ICOMOS considers that the indicators and processes in place are appropriate for monitoring the condition of the property.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the extension of Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley, Portugal to include Palaeolithic Rock Art Ensemble in Siega Verde, Spain and become Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde, Portugal, Spain should be approved on the basis of ***criteria (i) and (iii)***.

Recommended statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The property includes the two Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley (Portugal) and Siega Verde (Spain), consisting of rocky cliffs carved by fluvial erosion and embedded in an isolated rural landscape in which hundreds of panels with thousands of animal figures (5,000 in Foz Côa, around 440 in Siega Verde) have been engraved over several millennia.

The rock-art sites of Foz Côa and Siega Verde represent the most remarkable open-air ensemble of Palaeolithic art on the Iberian Peninsula within the same geographical region.

Foz Côa and Siega Verde provide the best illustration of the iconographic themes and organization of Palaeolithic rock art, which adopted the same modes in caves and in the open air, thus contributing to a greater understanding of this artistic phenomenon.

Together they form a unique place of the prehistoric era, rich in material evidence of Upper Palaeolithic occupation.

Criterion (i): The rock engravings in Foz Côa and Siega Verde, dating from the Upper Palaeolithic to the final Magdalenian/ Epipalaeolithic (22.000 – 8.000 BCE), represent a unique example of the first manifestations of human symbolic creation and of the beginnings of cultural development which reciprocally shed light upon one another and constitute an unrivalled source for understanding Palaeolithic art.

Criterion (iii): The rock art of Foz Côa and Siega Verde, when considered together, throws an exceptionally illuminating light on the social, economic, and spiritual life of our early ancestors.

Integrity and Authenticity

The integrity of the property is expressed primarily by the homogeneity and continuity in development within the spatial limits of the engraved rock surfaces as well as by the adoption of the typical patterns of prehistoric paintings inside caves, thus confirming the argument for the integrity of this outdoor ensemble.

The authenticity of the property is demonstrated by stylistic and comparative considerations, which also include the examination of artistic themes and organization of rock engravings in caves. The only doubts relate to the interpretation of certain animal figures (e.g. woolly rhinoceros, bison, *megaceros* deer, reindeer, and felines).

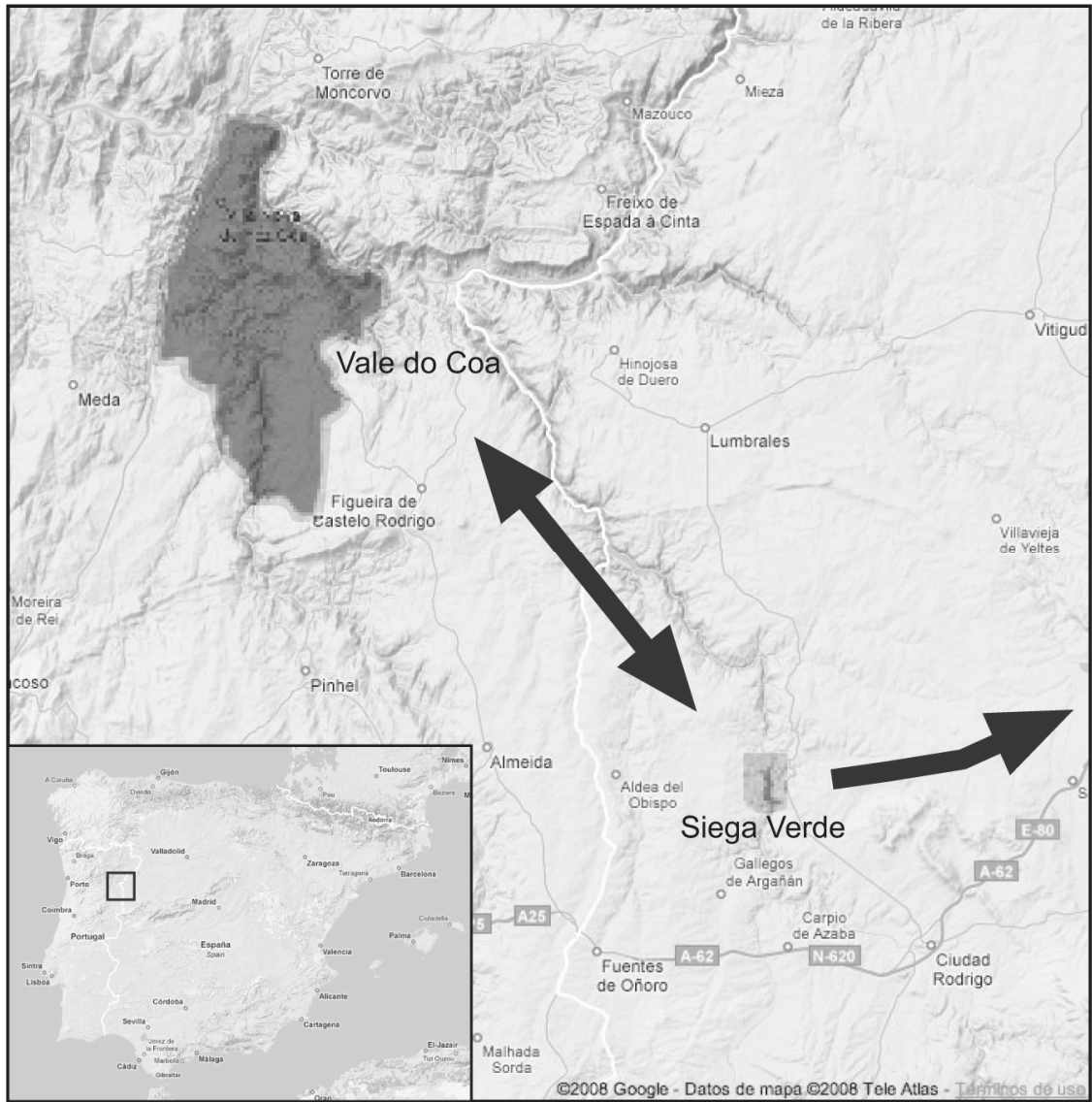
Management and protection requirements

Siega Verde is protected under various national laws for heritage protection and planning and has been declared a BIC (*Bien de interés cultural* – property of cultural interest). Protection has been implemented since the BIC designation. Management is delegated to the local action group ADECOCIR (Association for the Development of the Region in Ciudad Rodrigo). The ADECOCIR manager is responsible for the overall management and maintenance of Siega Verde, while security is provided by the Junta de Castilla y León, which is also responsible for the maintenance of equipment. The Junta de Castilla y León has developed joint programmes with the Portuguese institution of IGESPAR (*Istituto de Gestão do Património*

Arquitectónico e Arqueológico – Institute for the Management of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage), which is responsible for the Côa Valley site, with the object of studying and presenting Siega Verde and Côa Valley together.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Continue the efforts that the State Parties have been initiated for the coordination of the protection and management of the inscribed property at Foz Côa and of the proposed extension, as well as of presentation and promotion activities for both properties;
- Ensure the full and prompt implementation of the agreement signed on 2 December 2009 by the relevant municipalities to prohibit building development on the hill overlooking Siega Verde and to designate as special protection areas those in which development might have an adverse visual impact on the property;
- Develop a comprehensive cultural tourism strategy for the proposed extension and provide the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS with detailed information on any progress made in this direction;
- Assess the interrelated consequences before any possible future enlargement of the visitor centre and its parking area be planned;
- Keep the World Heritage Committee informed on the progress made on the removal of the measuring stations and related infrastructures in accordance with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.



Map showing the location of Siega Verde and Côa Valley with their connecting corridors



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



General view of the nominated property



Panel 8



Panel 46



Section of the visitors trail