

A Review of “Exploring BC’s Pictographs: A Guide to Native Rock Art in the British Columbia Interior”

by

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The recently published *Exploring BC’s Pictographs: A Guide to Native Rock Art in the British Columbia Interior* (Mussio Ventures, Burnaby: 2003) is advertised as a comprehensive guidebook meant to be carried into the field and used to locate pre-contact First Nations rock art sites in the Interior Plateau of British Columbia. The publisher, Mussio Ventures Ltd. of Burnaby, is well known for its line of fishing, camping and off-road exploration guidebooks. Unfortunately, this is a seriously flawed publication for a number of reasons – hence the length of this review.

The authors, Simon Nankivell and David Wyse, share a long-standing interest in aboriginal rock art sites and recognize a debt to John Corner’s (1968) landmark publication *Pictographs (Indian Rock Paintings) in the Interior of British Columbia*. Both researchers have Master’s degrees, although academic disciplines are not indicated, and have taught for three decades in provincial public schools. Mr. Nankivell is currently employed as a part-time instructor of modern languages at the University College of the Cariboo. Mr. Wyse has retired from teaching and is currently employed as an education consultant for the Kamloops Blazers sports team (Nankivell and Wyse 2003: 159).

Field research for this book appears to have taken place over several years, if not decades. The authors state that they have ... “climbed to, driven to or canoed to all of the sites south of Williams Lake. We have measured, sketched and photographed all of these sites, hoping to preserve this non-renewable resource” (p. 7). This is an admirable goal but unfortunately their publication falls far short of providing a complete record of Interior Plateau pictograph sites. This review addresses this, and other, shortcomings of the publication – not about current debates over who has the rights to disseminate information derived from the study of past cultures, nor does it address the problem of how to manage sensitive and fragile sites of this type.

Critique:

Testimonials

The book begins with two testimonials; one by Chris Bose, a Nlka’pamux band member, and a second by Doris Lundy, a respected BC rock art researcher. Mr. Bose praised the intention of the book from a First Nations’ perspective as ... “a comprehensive guide to

these relevant cultural and spiritual artifacts has long been missing from the society, history, and knowledge base of all Canadians”.

Mrs. Lundy, on the other hand, praised the intent of the authors to ... “hear that pictograph research in being continued ... with the participation of the University College of the Cariboo”. She stated that site re-visitation and recording with modern GPS technology and photographic recording methods continues the legacy of John Corner, particularly by ... “recording sites that (Corner) was not able to visit or did not know about” (p. 4).

Mrs. Lundy is correctly identified as having a Master’s degree in Archaeology from Simon Fraser University (Lundy 1974). Unfortunately, this fact is made almost illegible by overprinting of a pictograph symbol on the credit sheet. However, she is listed as a member of the long-defunct Canadian Rock Art Research Associates, an organization that ceased to exist about two decades ago. Careful reading of the text suggests that Mrs. Lundy was not extended the courtesy of examining a draft manuscript, nor is there reference to her expertise in the text.

Acknowledgements

The authors credit employees of the University College of the Cariboo, unnamed personnel at the Enokwin Centre in Penticton, staff of the NorKam Secondary School in Kamloops and staff at the Paradise Ranch. Individuals credited include Ken Favrholt, but there is no indication of his academic degrees in History. Nor do they list his employment record at the Kamloops Museum. Surely this is relevant criterion for consultation.

As for Doris Lundy ... “whose records were so generously made available”, the nature of these records is not described. The emphasis suggests the records provided were personal in nature, not government site form data. The difference is crucial for ethical and legal purposes as researchers conducting Archaeological Inventory studies, as the fieldwork described in *Exploring BCs Pictographs* would appear to require a government heritage inspection permit. It is not clear if the authors applied for, or were granted, such a permit as the publication fails to meet standard reporting criteria for such a project. In fact, this book contravenes established permit reporting standards by including latitude and longitude coordinates for many sites described.

The authors credit ... “the support and wise advice of the B.C. First Nations ... throughout”(p.6), but fail to identify them or whether they received approval of band councils for their research. It is well known that the Sto:lo, Nlka’pamux, Upper and Similkameen First Nations require researchers to apply for heritage research permits to conduct fieldwork within their traditional territories. It is not known if these First Nations’ permits were acquired as no mention is made in the book of these protocols and procedures. It should be noted that BC government heritage inspection permits also require First Nations to be informed of fieldwork for legal and ethical reasons. Virtually

all First Nations' heritage permit require band members to be included in research if possible.

It would be enlightening to know if the authors approached any of the current researchers of British Columbia First Nations rock art who are actively engaged in the field and who also possess advanced academic degrees. Several come to mind, including Dr. Martin Magne and Michael Klassen (MA) who are working with the Upper Similkameen Indian band towards the development of a federally recognized national place assessment for the pictograph sites between Hedley and Princeton since these sites are discussed by Nankivell and Wyse.

The authors credit a heavy reliance of the works of Annie York, Richard Daly and Chris Arnett, authors of the 1993 publication *They Write Their Dreams on the Rock Forever*, particularly in terms of their discussion of symbol interpretations. Regrettably, Annie York is deceased, but it would have been a common courtesy to forward a draft of *Exploring BC's Pictographs* to Daly and Arnett for commentary. It appears that this was not done as no accreditation is given other than to Mr. Bose and Mrs. Lundy. Such actions are standard academic practice so its absence is regrettable especially since the authors boast of having academic degrees as well as ... "excellent research skills" (p. 159) which presumably includes the courtesy and ethics of including past researchers' commentary in their publication.

Preface

The rationale of the book is stated as an effort to inform the public of rock art sites in the province as well as how to access them. The authors state that they were concerned about the issue of including detailed site location data on most sites (sites located on Reserves do not have geographical coordinates included) as they were concerned about vandalism and theft. The British Columbia Archaeology Branch insists that this type of information not be included in reports that can be accessed by the general public and as a condition of permitted research.

Nankivell and Wyse rationalize that specific site location data would not lead to negative impacts as ... "Corner's book ... provided detailed directions ... (but) did not result in the loss of any sites" (p. 7). This is a questionable assumption and is clearly contradicted in their "Missing or Unavailable Sites" chapter where 14 sites (#s 10, 38, 64, 86D, 88, 93, 97, 110, 112, 129, 160, 195, 200 and 207) have been negatively impacted by spray painting (N = 4 cases), landscaping, dam or highway construction (N = 7 cases) or have simply vanished (pp. 115-119).

Additionally, the reference to rock art, or any archaeological, site as a "national treasure" is a mistake as the general public may interpret this phrase as inferring monetary value. This could lead to theft of images as has already occurred at sites #56 ("Buck and Doe") and #60 ("Guardian Spirit"). The use of the term "priceless" and "jewels" to describe rock art also don't help this issue.

Introduction

The introduction is only two and one-half pages long but exhibits a lack of knowledge by the authors of key concepts in Anthropology, Archaeology, History and Geophysics relevant to rock art:

Site ages are listed as being a maximum of 500 years. If the authors had thoroughly read Keyser (1992), who is listed in their bibliography, they would be aware that at least one pictograph feature dating 2050 +/- 100 years BP is recorded for the Okanagan (Copp 1980). It is likely that sites pre-date 2000 years as radiometric estimates going back 6000 years have been obtained in the adjacent Columbia Plateau (Keyser 1992) and to even greater ages elsewhere in North America (i.e. 7500 rcyrs bp in the Baja area).

Pictograph symbols are suggested to be indecipherable, that their meanings ... “can only be guessed at” (p. 8). The authors contradict this in their discussions of Annie York’s symbol interpretations as well as Richard Daly and Chris Arnett’s (1993) theoretical discussions of rock art in **They Write Their Dreams on the Rock Forever**, a source also listed in their bibliography. In addition, although listed in the bibliography, they appear not to have integrated the theoretical discussions of Chippindale and Tacon (2000), Clottes and Lewis-Williams (2002), and Keyser (1992), all listed in the bibliography, other rather than from a superficial perspective.

Pictographs, or at least some sites, are considered to be sacred by many First Nations but there is no discussion of aboriginal emic perspectives as to why this is significant (cf. Schaafsma 1983) other than scattered references to Vision/Spirit Quests and a general misunderstanding about the nature and significance of shamanism (see following discussions). Throughout the text, pictograph painters are referred to in the male gender. It is doubtful that only males were the producers of these features (see discussion under Shamanism).

The authors state that ... “no other book has attempted to fully reveal this hidden archaeological treasure up to this point” (p. 8), apparently forgetting that John Corner (1968) provided vehicle mileage figures to sites from known points as well as access and site drawings of individual motifs and panels in his book.

Global Position Satellite (GPS) instruments were used in order to provide latitude and longitude, but not UTM, coordinates for many (but not all) sites. The instruments used are not identified nor the accuracy of readings discussed. In addition, the authors do not indicate the datum used (NAD27, NAD83 or WGS84). This information is critical for understanding the limitations of this technology as errors can easily be obtained on the order of 10 to 100 meters or greater depending upon the age of the equipment, quality of reception and other variables.

The authors play word-games with their “audacity” to suggest meanings for some sites and symbols, in the text referred to as ‘icons’. This is a standard ploy usually employed

by pseudo-archaeologists (avocational archaeologists lacking relevant academic standing) to suggest academic theories are irracionales or invalid (i.e. Eric Von Daniken's volumes concerning extra-terrestrial visitations allegedly recorded in the archaeological record). Such posturing usually indicates that the authors have little understanding of the criteria of scientific investigation and/or fail to understand the difference between an hypothesis (working statement requiring verification) and a theory (validated model that explains reality). Moreover, there are major differences between the terms 'symbol' and 'icon' that need to be explained, preferably in the context of the discipline of semiotics (symbolic notation) [cf. Uco 1973] where the nature of untested hypotheses versus theories is well understood.

Differences between emic ('native', 'local', 'ethnic') perspectives, academically referred to as 'world views', are briefly discussed. The authors appear to recognize that cultural differences (past and present) exist among cultures, but fail to adequately develop this (see discussion on shamanism).

Pictograph sites are described by geographical region (a mass culture emic perspective) rather than by ethnic and/or culture area as defined by aboriginal peoples. Alternatively, site areas could have been discussed in terms of symbol (motif or design element) regional typologies such as developed by Keyser (1992) and/or by modern ethnolinguistic boundaries (Kroeber 1939, Rae 1939). However, such an approach requires discussion of problems determining past ethnolinguistic boundaries even though such boundaries are described; including Na-Dene ("northern" B.C.), Coastal and Interior Salish and Kutenai language groups.

"Northern B.C." sites discussed in the text are limited to areas on the edge of the boreal forest south of Prince George. This area is really "North-central" B.C. that, when combined with the southern Interior Plateau, covers only about two-thirds of the provincial landmass.

A brief discussion of site preservation problems states ... "most people are aware that all pictograph sites are protected by law" (p. 9). This is a dubious claim and cannot remain unchallenged. In addition, the authors fail to discuss the nature of **Heritage Conservation Act** (the provincial legislation), nor the penalties for contravention.

There are several issues that need to be discussed regarding the "Icon Dictionary". Primary among these is that the icons appear to be an entirely emic construct on the part of the authors and not verifiable based on the nature of the evidence provided in the text. The authors mention Annie York's claim that the pictographs were written in a "Chief's language". The dichotomy between a common language and one for individuals of the highest standard has been documented, at least for Salishan-speakers. However, this claim remains untested with regard to rock art sites including the publication under review.

The inclusion of a glossary and bibliography is definitely beneficial to readers unfamiliar with technical jargon. However, the limited choice of books (no academic peer-reviewed

journals are listed) among the hundreds available suggests a relatively low level of scholarly activity in preparation for publication.

Shamanism

The topic of shamanism is one of greater complexity than presented in the text. Shamans, invariably identified to be male, are not necessarily all one gender as a quick consultation of the Human Resources Area Files (HRAF) will show. Another error is an assumption that all cultures with shamans are assumed to have only hunting and gathering (foraging) subsistence strategies. A quick perusal of relevant literature, some of which is listed in their bibliography, indicates that shamans or traditional healers are characterized by all levels of human socio-cultural integration from foragers through pastoralists, horticulturalists, agriculturalists and industrialists. The authors also present shamanism in the past tense whereas it is a thriving part of many cultural worldviews.

A brief textual discussion of shamanistic visions ending in images being painted on rock is accurate as far as it goes, but inadequately contextualized in terms of ethnohistoric Plateau cultures. The summary of the ethnographic record generalizes from the Salishan records (Teit 1900, 1906 - but curiously not his 1930 publications, especially **Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaux**) through analogy to the Na-Dene and Kutenai. This is not justifiable as the three ethnolinguistic groups were differentiated in terms of social organization, subsistence strategies and worldviews.

Particular errors include statements that the Salish were incapable of storing enough food to subsist over the winter months characterized by constant threat of starvation ... “(e)ach month seemed dominated by the unending search for food” Another curious statement is ...”they did not plant food and because they did not have access to daily catches of ocean salmon ... lakes and rivers froze over, making it necessary ... to chop holes in the ice to get water and to try to catch fish.” Moreover, ancient First Nations peoples are viewed to have lived so precariously that they had to procure aid from shamans who could predict food resource availability (p. 13). These statements do not represent subsistence strategies detailed in numerous ethnographic and archaeological studies with any accuracy, are generally simplified or false, and are at the least misleading.

It is evident that the authors have not consulted the archaeological or ethnographic record in sufficient detail to justify such statements. Archaeological research (Chatters 1984, Grabert 1970 to cite only two studies) point to dramatic increases in Plateau populations over the last 4000 years primarily based on increasing access to anadromous salmon procured along the Columbia and Okanagan Rivers.

The rationale for painting ungulates (especially deer) is equated to hunting magic where the shaman would predict where and when the resource would be available, hunters would procure game based on this advice, then they ... “commemorated their gratitude by painting (the deer’s) spirit ... (o)ther deer would see the painting and be pleased to die to feed the humans” (p. 13). This is an overly simplistic and mostly discredited view of the rationale for rock paintings as was made popular by L’Abbe Breuil (1952) to explain

some of the rock art of western European caves and rock shelters of Upper Palaeolithic age and overlain on Interior Plateau sites in B.C.

An evolving theory of rock art and shamanism goes far beyond this type of explanation. The reader is directed to the pioneering work of Gallery Murrill (1893) as well as modern theorists (Lewis-Williams 2002; Chippendale and Tacon 2000; Clottes and Lewis-Williams 1996; York, Daly and Arnett (1993) as well as rock art webpages and electronic journals maintained by academics, for example; the American Rock Art Research Association, the European Rock Art Association, the Australian Rock Art Association, the Rock Art Research Institute [UNESCO], the Valcamonica Rock Art Association, and others) for alternative perspectives.

A general description of a Vision Quest is provided in which various methods were used to attain an altered state of consciousness. In this state, a spirit helper (Guardian Spirit) was attained and powers gained. A record would then be painted on rock to commemorate the event. Although Interior Plateau peoples are not generally known to have relied on hallucinogenic drugs to attain altered states of consciousness, which the authors state, they are correct to indicate that an altered state can be achieved through fasting and heavy physical labour. However, this was not accomplished solely by shamans – other members of society were also practitioners.

Such visions are known to produce visual patterns known as entoptic phenomena regardless of the method of induction. Classic migraine sufferers are known to experience similar visual disruptions at the onset of a classic migraine attack where levels of the brain chemical serotonin are dramatically reduced – resulting in constriction of the arteries supplying blood to the brain and producing visual disturbances. Various hallucinogenic drugs as well as simple fasting may also produce these phenomena.

Lewis-Williams (2002) equates visual disturbances to the early stages of shamanic trances, of which there are three increasingly deeper levels. Several types of rock art images such as whorls, ‘rainbows’, and ladder-like designs are identical to those perceived in early trance stages. As such, the authors are probably correct that some rock art is the result of shamanic trances, but do not explain this sufficiently even though this information is available in bibliographic sources identified in the book.

The authors attempt to explain the presence of the majority of Plateau rock art in terms of an allegedly emic explanation wherein mountain peaks are considered masculine, but valley floors are feminine. Sexuality is indicated in some anthropomorphic rock art motifs, the so-called ‘three-legged men’ who appear to exhibit erections. In deeper stages of shamanic trances male shamans have been observed to be dreaming as deduced by brain wave signature patterns, rapid eye movements and accompanied by erections (Lewis-Williams 2002). However, ethnographic information does not always support the contention that mountains are invariably masculine and valley bottoms feminine, in fact engendered mountains (male and female) are recorded (Manual 1996: personal communication; Douglas 1996: pers. comm.). One cannot stereotype or overly generalize complex mythological schemes and how they are perceived as cultural landscapes.

The authors' attempt to reconcile rock art and shamanism through the theoretical perspective of Whitley (2000) in terms of six metaphorical themes (Death and killing, Aggression and Fighting, Drowning or Going Underwater, Flight, Sexuality and Transformation) is appreciated, but so too is the approach taken by LeVan Martineau (1973).

Martineau applied the science of cryptography and personal knowledge of Ute sign language in an analysis of Great Basin pictographs. One of his conclusions was that certain design elements, notably spirals and bighorn sheep motifs, served as cognitive maps illustrating direction and distance to waterholes in desert regions of the Basin. Similarly, Australian aboriginal art relates to 'song lines' which are also maps, but maps where the symbols must literally be sung as mnemonic aids in order to guide one through the landscape.

In summary, the authors provide a very generalized discussion of the context between shamanism and rock art. The reality of the situation is very much more complex than presented.

Interpretation/Icon Dictionary

There are several errors in this section of the book that could easily have been corrected had the manuscript been submitted to someone familiar with the ethnographic and archaeological records of the Interior Plateau. Specifically, these include:

- “The most commonly painted animal in southern B.C. is the deer, followed by mountain sheep and mountain goats” (p.18). This is an unsubstantiated estimate that is not validated through any tabulation of the alleged 3500 general and 375 alleged unique symbols in southern Plateau rock art sites (p.131). Where some researchers see deer, others see a different ungulate such as an elk or a canid (dog, coyote or wolf). Interpretation in these cases is variable and extremely subjective. Moreover, the authors claim that there are differences among the four defined research areas, but fail to identify them. Without documentation and statistical analysis, such statements are suspect from a purely scientific perspective and, as with other assumed correlations, remain untested hypotheses. Thus claims that ... (o)nly 20% of the Northern site's icons appear in the South” (p. 131) are statistically meaningless.
- Deer do not possess horns, those projections are antlers – an entirely different organic structure (p.18).
- Hunting is not a uniquely male domain (p.18). Women have been known to hunt and trap, perhaps not ranging as widely as men, but ethnographic records do not restrict hunting to one sex or gender.

- The ‘fact’ that fish were rarely depicted may not be due to their commonality or that they ‘surrender’ themselves to the fishers, even though ... “the survival of the tribe was dependent upon catching and storing salmon” (p.19). This statement contradicts the limited and erroneous discussion concerning fish in the Introduction, and does little to explain the rarity of fish imagery.
- Moose and beaver were rarely recorded (p.19). This is plausible if they were minor adjuncts to subsistence, but historical and archaeological data in southern B.C. preclude evidence for moose. Moose have only been seen since the early 20th century in the Okanagan-Similkameen and not at all in the archaeological record since they have only recently been extending their range southwards from the northern Fraser Plateau and sub-boreal forests. Beaver has been identified in at least one Similkameen site provisionally dated 200-1000 years BP, but their importance was intensified for First Nations with the advent of the fur trade during the early 19th century.
- The statement that plants and roots appear infrequently depends upon image identification – which is subjective. The idea that plants and roots are identified with women’s work and were therefore not a source of dreaming for the men (p. 19) is not only sexist, but is incorrect from an ethnographic perspective. Shamans, of either gender, functioned as healers. Traditional healers use roots, plants and extracts as curative agents.
- The Stein River valley is described as being unique in terms of the nature of unique images and as a spiritual centre ... “with no parallel elsewhere in the southern province” (p. 19). This statement is attributed to Annie York (York et. al. 1993). However, other unique and highly concentrated rock art sites cluster along the Similkameen River from Hedley to the Wolfe Lake area south of Princeton – a fact recognized in the Thompson-Okanagan site description chapter of the book. Perhaps the Stein valley complex is not as unique as the authors profess it to be.
- Reference to special reverence for the sun and alleged prominence of sun imagery, a subjective determination of imagery, is proclaimed (p.19). Human figures with up stretched arms are allegedly images of sun worship, followed closely by alleged lunar imagery. These interpretations are questionable as they are not validated by ethnographic information or any other form of analysis. Rather, they appear to be connotations that would better be described as untested hypotheses at this point.
- The statement that ...“(w)e know many of the literal meanings of the icons because native people have told us” (p. 17) appears to be an attempt to justify the authors’ idiosyncratic typology of pictograph symbols from an ethnographic perspective. Unfortunately, the native informants have not been identified (other than Annie York) nor have they provided information stating how the informants came to possess this information.

James Teit consulted with many First Nations band members and elders in the late 19th and early 20th century. Throughout his many publications he illustrated many pictograph symbols with interpretations. This was admirably summarized in Corner (1968). Perhaps the native informants the authors consulted have also read these works? This could explain why the authors find Teit's and York's interpretations ... "remarkably consistent" (p. 130).

- Although the authors state that they consulted local First Nations informants, local Similkameen band members (Dennis 2001: pers. comm.) identify the 'goat icons' of the authors as bighorn sheep based upon the size, shape and configuration of the representation of ungulate horns. Goats have short, straight horns whereas bighorn sheep horns are large and curl – especially on males.

It could be suggested that some representations of bighorn sheep are metaphorical such as the image of an anthropomorph (human being) astride one as depicted at site #135 (Ashnola/DhQx-04), but one would never know from *Exploring BC's Pictographs* as the site is not illustrated and the image in question referred to as ... "an impaled sheep" (p.76). One wonders if the authors consulted any Lower Similkameen Indian band member familiar with this site.

Should Nankivell and Wyse wish to pursue the interpretation of rock art symbols it is strongly suggested that they become familiar with the existing anthropological, archaeological (including landscape archaeology), semiotic, cryptographic and neurological research of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Moreover, a more detailed reading of extant ethnographic literature pertaining to rock art and body art (for example; Teit 1930a,b; Mallory 1893) derived from the subject ethnohistoric populations in whose traditional territories the sites described are located would undoubtedly prove beneficial in leading to a better understanding of these sites.

Site Descriptions

The authors are to be commended in refraining from publishing GPS coordinates or specific access instructions with regard to those sites located on Indian Reserve lands. Pictograph sites, as the authors indicate, are often considered to be sacred in nature. As such, it was wise of the authors to refrain from publishing some site location information for these culturally sensitive sites and features. On the other hand, these concerns appear to be rejected or ignored for sites located off-Reserve since GPS coordinates are included in site descriptions.

The authors' claim that their book represents the single most comprehensive work on the subject falls far short of reality. A major problem with this claim is the fact that many well-known and previously recorded pictograph sites are missing from their discussions. For example, Similkameen sites DhQx-4 and DhQx-27 are not discussed even though the sites have been part of the provincial archaeological record database for decades and are

easily accessible. Other examples could be cited, but I have neither the time nor inclination to correct the authors' database.

Interesting omissions are the Borden site numbers for many sites discussed. Inconsistent reference to this alpha-numeric data labeling system is dismissed with the statement that they ... "included Borden numbers simply because they were available" (p. 22) and furthermore indicate that they are of little use since each Borden block covers an area too large to be useful as location data. This indicates a definite lack of understanding of what these numbers are and how they are used to manage heritage resources since it never was intended to define specific site locales (Borden 1952)!

The authors claim to present "over 250 sites" (p. 7) and imply that this is the sum total of known pictograph sites in the south-central to north-central Interior Plateau. Even though they address the fact that some sites have 'disappeared' and others weren't accessed due to lack of landowners' permission – there are more than 250 pictograph sites recorded in the area – including a significant number they appear to have 'missed' during their field studies.

This is an incomplete study if one examines descriptions from a site-by-site perspective. Not only are Borden site numbers indiscriminately listed, especially for sites on Indian Reserve lands, but most sites are described in text format without benefit of graphic representation. Sites illustrated with a photograph do not show entire panels and obscure the true nature of the data. For example, Site #46 (Braeside) is notable for the large number of pictograph symbols including zoomorphs (deer) and anthropomorphs (humans), almost all illustrated by Corner. Nankivell and Wyse (2003: 59) illustrate this complex site with a photograph of a single anthropomorph – thus obscuring the nature of the site.

In addition, whereas John Corner (1968) painstakingly sketched site motifs to show almost all the pictograph motifs portrayed (barring smudges and ill-defined figures that defied reproduction). Nankivell and Wyse chose to illustrate all sites with very small (7.5 x 5 cm) digitally modified images. Each image appears to have been enhanced in order to illustrate red symbols. This would have been fine had the authors only stated that this manipulation had occurred, but they did not. A better approach, and one used globally by rock art researchers, would have been to include a colour and size scale in each photo although researchers should be careful not to actually touch motifs with it.

Descriptions of site motifs and design element interpretation are idiosyncratic and appear to be based on the authors' personal biases rather than reference archaeological, or any other discipline, theory. An emic interpretation of rock art symbols hundreds to thousands of years old requires explanations based upon theory, not speculations derived from late 20th to early 21st century amateur iconography rooted in preconceptions fashioned by an industrialist worldview of reality and nature (cf. Eco 1976).

Some minor problems in the text include the use of such terms as 'up' when the authors mean 'north' or 'upstream' and 'God' for the aboriginal 'Creator'. Equally annoying is

the sloppy transliteration of feet to meters. Thirty feet is not ‘about’ 10 meters – it is closer to nine, actually 9.14, meters - an error of scale of nine percent.

An important error, at least to the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, is the consistently incorrect address for the Chuchuwaya Family Centre – listed as being in Osoyoos. In fact, the address for those seeking permission to visit sites on Upper Similkameen Indian band Reserve lands is the band office in Keremeos – a long way from Osoyoos, especially since the latter is in Okanagan territory.

Missing Sites

The authors credit missing sites as those that have disappeared as a result of landscape alteration, vandalism, double-registration, or natural stains mistaken for pictographs. However, as stated above, several previously recorded and locally well-known sites are missing from the book. Interestingly, 11 sites are listed as ... “still awaiting examination and fieldwork” (p. 119). This is odd since the authors’ biographies (p.159) and introduction (p.7) state that the book covers *all* pictograph sites in the study area (emphasis added).

The authors state that several areas were examined for pictographs but their searches were unsuccessful. One location searched, apparently unsuccessfully, was DeRenzy Canyon listed somewhere “south of Penticton”. Site #131 (DiQv-23) is listed as “Skaha Lake/Derenzy Canyon” (p. 76). This could be interpreted a result of poor editing if not for the fact that the canyon in question, also known as Manual’s Canyon, can be found northeast of Oliver and follows Wolf, or Wolfcub, creek on the Nk’mip Reserve. This DeRenzy canyon contains three pictograph sites – all recorded in the provincial site database and known locally.

Recording Tips

It is gratifying to see that the authors recognize recording methods that damage sites are inappropriate. Photographic records are truly the best and are usually non-invasive method as long as one is careful placing colour or size scales. So-called ‘misting’ or spraying with water is appropriately discouraged and this is ‘a good thing’ since water, even distilled, can interfere with the stability of pictograph images. However, it is inadvisable to sketch pictographs using an overlay of rice paper, or any other material, as the authors suggest. Rock art researchers prefer to make such sketches directly from photographs since overlays and the pressure of sketching can also damage pictographs.

Summary

Exploring BC’s Pictographs fails to justify a claim that it is the most comprehensive guide to, or examination of, Interior pictographs primarily because it does not provide detailed information of the sites discussed nor have the authors demonstrated a sufficient understanding of contemporary First Nations, their past, or concerns about cultural sensitivity. Errors and omissions were noted throughout the text, most of which could

have been caught through editing and/or consultation with academics, consultants or laypersons familiar with the subject and subject areas.

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