
The common methodological bases in the restitution of Paleolithic Rock Art.

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Abstract

The Discovery of the "Sala de los Polícromos" of Altamira in 1879 and the successive findings of the different decorated caves motivated the need to implement a series of methodologies with the aim of advancing the study, documentation and restitution of Paleolithic rock art.

During the history of rock art research, we can observe four main stages. These have been divided according to the most used registration methods. At first, until the end 19th century, the freehand tracing was used as a method of documentation. Then, and during the first decades of the 20th century, the direct tracing was the most used for the registration of artistic motifs, leading to decontextualizing the figure of the whole as shown by some works of H. Breuil or F. Benítez Mellado. In the mid of that century, the degradation suffered by the figures studied and the interest in a record as accurate as possible led to a growing concern for the preservation of the figures themselves and the figures as a whole generating a gradual interest in indirect tracing. The improvement of the technique grew gradually thanks to the work of some of the most relevant researchers of the time, the marriage Delluc, M. Lorblanchet or J. González Echegaray. The biggest advance, associated to indirect tracing, came with the computer revolution and the improvement of photography at the end of the 20th century. The use of digital resources has increased the accuracy and preservation of the figures, resulting in the development of new methodologies and software that enhance the results of the different studies. One of the most remarkable examples so far is the work of G. Tosello and C. Fritz in the cave of Chauvet.

Despite being a discipline with more than a century of development in the restitution of parietal artistic motives, the results that we find in the multiple publications follow different methodologies depending on the researchers, that is, we still do not have a unified methodology. The diversity of results implies, in many cases, misunderstanding due to lack of information. This variety of results implies in many cases misunderstandings due to the lack of information, and this lack of information sometimes makes it difficult for any other researcher to make a correct interpretation of the restitution. For all these reasons, it is necessary to value and develop common bases, which should be founded on the latest technologies and, in addition, allow us to present the information with typified criteria.

Keywords: Paleolithic Rock Art, Restitution, Common methodological bases, Technology.

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