

A Resolution Condemning Acts of Vandalism at Archaeological Sites in, and Illicit Export of Prehistoric Treasures from, the Republic of Mexico

WHEREAS: Unauthorized and unscientific digging in prehistoric sites in the Republic of Mexico is extensively carried on in order to recover prehistoric objects and art treasures for ultimate export to foreign collectors in defiance of the laws of the Republic of Mexico, and

WHEREAS: Each instance of such illegal export of prehistoric objects from the Republic of Mexico which comes to the attention of the public press of Mexico is widely advertised in feature articles and editorials, thereby increasing the difficulties of Mexican archaeologists and impairing public relations of non-Mexican archaeologists engaged in research projects, and

WHEREAS: Difficulties faced by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia of the Republic of Mexico, charged with the duty of overseeing Mexican anthropology, have recently been set forth by Dr. E. Dávalos Hurtado ("La Defensa del Tesoro Cultural de Mexico," *Miscellanea Paul Rivet, Octogenario Dicata, XXXI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Vol. I, pp. 439-442., Univ. Nac. Autón. de Mexico, 1958*), and

WHEREAS: The curbing of commercialism and illegal export of Mexican antiquities is most desirable in order to preserve the patrimony of the Mexican people and to permit continued scientific investigation of the prehistory of Mexico by qualified foreign workers, and

WHEREAS: The objectives of the Society for American Archaeology, as stated in its constitution, Article II, are (Section 1) "The objects of the Society shall be to promote and to stimulate interest and research in the archaeology of the American continents; to encourage a more rational public appreciation of the aims and limitations of archaeological research; to serve as a bond among those interested in American Archaeology, both professionals and non-professionals, and to aid in directing their efforts into more scientific channels; to publish and to encourage the publication of their results; to foster the formation and welfare of local archaeological societies; to advocate and to aid in the conservation of archaeological data; and to discourage commercialism in the archaeological field and to work for its elimination." (Section 2) "The practice of collecting, hoarding, exchanging, buying, or selling archaeological materials for the sole purpose of personal satisfaction or financial gain, and the indiscriminate excavation of archaeological sites are declared contrary to the ideals and objects of the Society."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Society for American Archaeology condemns all vandalism of archaeological sites and the contraband trade in Mexican antiquities as destructive of the priceless cultural heritage of prehistoric art and archaeology of the people of the Republic of Mexico, as ruinous of proper and desirable relations between the people of the United States and the people and government of the Republic of Mexico and as inimical to continuance of scientific archaeological studies by foreign scholars.
And further,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Executive Committee of the Society for American Archaeology pledges itself to use every means to uphold the National Antiquities Act of the Republic of Mexico by cooperating with the Republic of Mexico in efforts to curb illicit traffic in antiquities.

By this action the Society for American Archaeology, through its Executive Committee, pledges its support to the Republic of Mexico in its attempts to preserve archaeological sites in Mexico and prevent the contraband trade in Mexican antiquities.

The secretary of the Society for American Archaeology is instructed to forward copies of this resolution to the American Association of Museums, the U.S. Customs Service, the Customs service of the Republic of Mexico, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia of the Republic of Mexico, the American Anthropological Association, the Secretary of Public Education of the Republic of Mexico, the museums and monuments division of UNESCO.