

AN ANALYSIS OF HEAD FORM AND HEAD GEAR OF THE INVERTED BUCKET-HEAD HEADHUNTERS

Following a brief inspection of the Fremont rock art around Vernal, Utah, it became obvious that the Classic Vernal Style is characterized by many ways of depicting forms of heads and head gear. Many of these have more than just passing similarities and differences. Among these, there is one very distinctive head shape commonly referred to as the "inverted bucket head" (Schaafsma 1971:15). This type of head often has squares or circles centered at the top, narrow end (Figures 1 and 2). With such a significant percentage of repetitions, the inverted bucket head may be a means by which a unique segment of Fremont society identified itself.

In the Vernal area all these different head shapes, head gear, and facial features appear to be part of distinctly different styles and yet, are mixed with other Classic Vernal stylistic representations. A closer examination shows that other figures also share a significant percentage of inverted bucket head traits. These head shapes, and other shared traits, also appear to be segregated geographically (Figure 3). The inverted bucket, circle and square head forms occur primarily around McKonkie's Ranch, while other Fremont stylistic forms are concentrated south of old Merkley Park (Figure 3). Many figures of the inverted bucket type are shown holding what appears to be decapitated heads. However, figures with other head shapes also hold decapitated heads. In other panels in the Vernal area most of the other forms of head hunters fall into distinctive style groups. Many of these express a

close affiliation with the inverted bucket head group.

There needs to be an in-depth analysis to establish what these distinctions are. So far, no one has attempted to define the limits of variation of shape of the inverted bucket head. There needs to be a definition of what the inverted bucket head is or is not before any analysis can be complete. This paper is only part of a preliminary analysis. A succeeding paper will continue this study from another point of view. This "substyle" of the larger Classic Vernal Style has enough distinctive features to warrant special consideration.

It is acknowledged that sufficient examples with similar traits and contexts need to be examined before any credibility can be placed on any assumption to support or discredit the assumption. Before the definition is valid, these distinctions need to be defined in terms of what is typical or representative and what is extreme. It is also necessary to consider as many alternatives for assessment or significance as possible.

Even though style affiliation has been assessed it may be impossible to obtain specific sources or concepts for the form of these distinctions. Many petroglyphs are symbolic, abstracted, codified or personalized. Because of many repetitions of glyphs, similarities in variation and the contexts in which they repeat, it is possible to make statements of their significance and

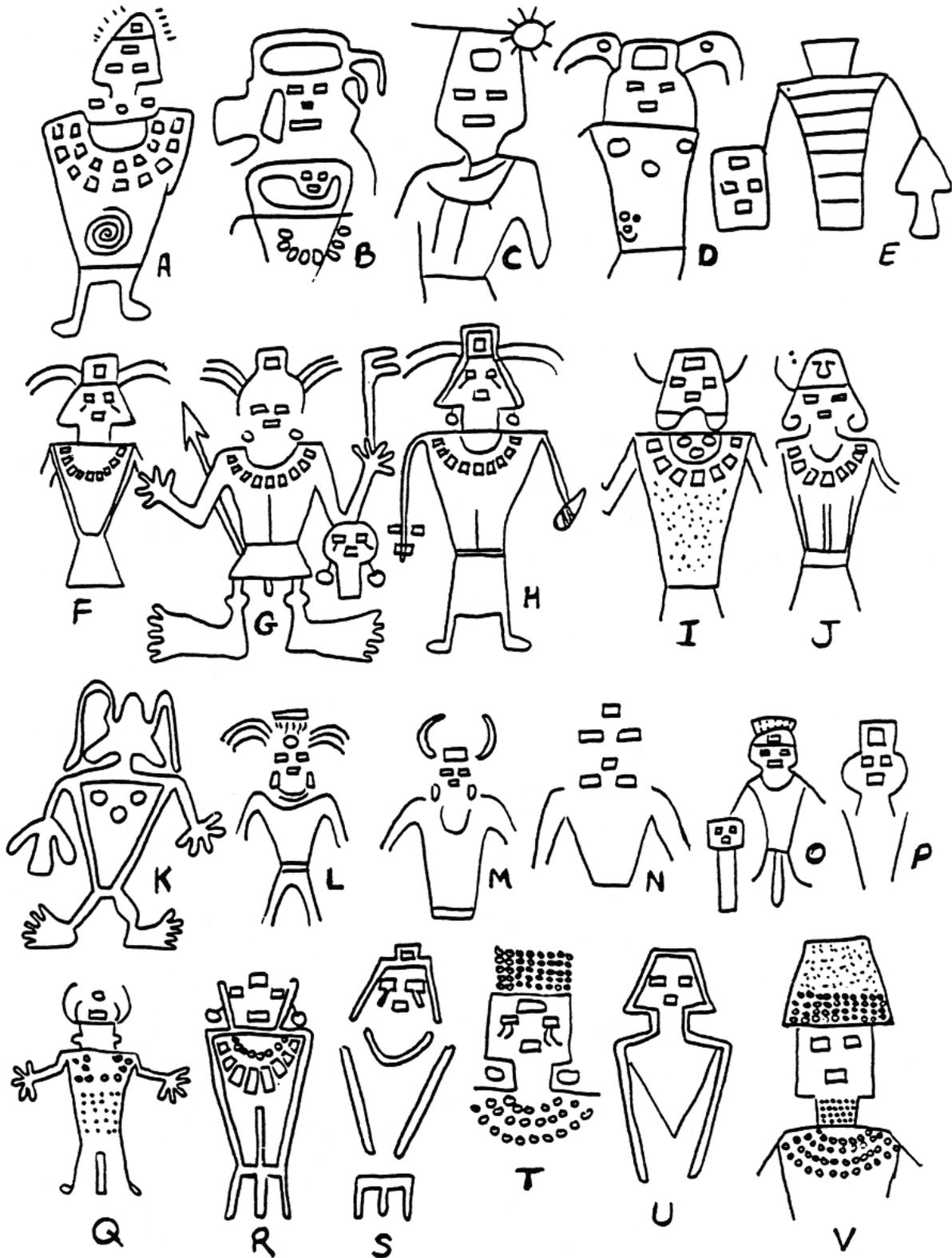


Figure 1.

relationships. Research will ultimately define most of their more obvious concepts, plus some less obvious ones. It may also show possible variation in concepts.

Because of the large number of repetitions of the inverted bucket form our understanding of it and its variations has increased. If a glyph has been conventionalized with a large percentage of similar representations, we know it was important to those who chose it to identify their particular style group. The widespread acceptance of this convention is relative to the area over which it predominates.

Care must be taken since speculation becomes poor and unforgivable when it is unfounded, unreasonable or illogical and left as no more consideration necessary. We continually need to maintain an open mind and listen to qualified suggestions. These speculations then need to be considered in light of the evidence to be acceptable. When speculation is used with sound and controlled reasoning, appropriate ethnographic comparisons and consideration of other possibilities, narrow dimensions of known facts can be expanded. Progress comes only from an intelligent use of experience. Wrong conclusions, on the other hand, generally result from the lack of comprehensive analysis. By asking questions concerning elements expressing both similarities and differences many new avenues of investigation can be opened.

The Prime Form

There is a wide range of different representations of what is accepted as "inverted bucket head". Even though this distinct head form occurs over a wide area of northeastern Utah and western Colorado, this cannot be the only reason for such wide variations. Change through an extended period of time probably never had much

effect on this style either. Evidence suggests this variant of the Classic Vernal Style seems to have been relatively short-lived in respect to the Fremont style in general. The changes that occurred seem to have occurred quickly and spread equally as fast.

Many examples seem to be depicting the shape of the head as a stylistic preference. These occur as inverted bucket, bucket, square and circular in shape. Other examples seem to be a combination of the shape of the head and head gear, such as a cap or headdress (Figures 1A, F, H, J, O and V). Others could express distinctive hair treatments or a combination of hair and headgear (Figures 1I, J and K). There is also the possibility that the representations, as drawn, could be symbolic of something not actually visible on the individual but only represented in rock art. What is visible in rock art is probably symbolic of an idea or object that was used for personal or group identification.

The inverted bucket form itself is the most diagnostic feature used to identify the inverted bucket form figures. This form also has the most variation of any other inverted bucket trait. It also has the widest distribution of any other associated trait. The combination of the inverted bucket form with a restricted crown also has a wide distribution. On the other hand, the forehead spot, itself, has a far more restricted distribution.

Variations of the Prime Form

Other variants of the inverted bucket form include the paddle form (Figures 2I—M) and an unnamed form that has upper ear-like lobes as well as the pendant-like lobes (Figures 2B—G). There are what appear to be schematized variants of each of these forms that are borderline on other head forms. In such a case they have not been used for this study, but they need to be

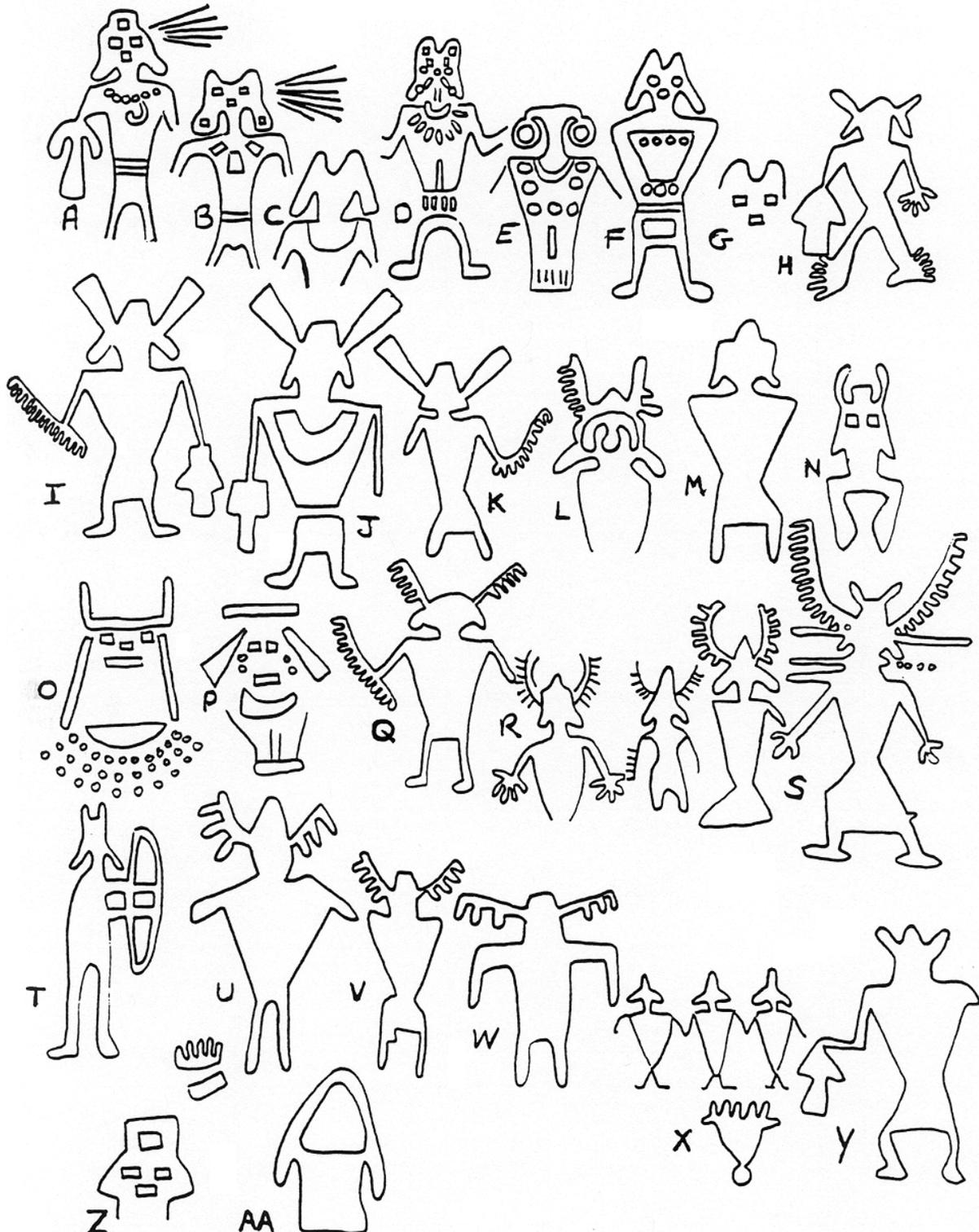


Figure 2

considered for a more detailed consideration of each variant.

Incorporation of Additional Symbolism

Notice the typical form, repetition of detail and variation shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Also notice the incorporation of additional symbolism in the inverted bucket head of Figure 1A. The head gear of this character has a square enclosed above a dividing line within a restricted crown. By creating two sections, the line seems to separate the head, head gear or possible symbolic representa-

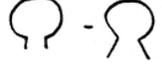
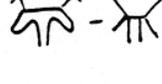
DOMINANT FORMS	NORTH OF OLD MERKLEY PARK			SOUTH OF OLD MERKLEY PARK			TOTALS
 Faces with out head outline	78	11	16			105	
 Square heads	79	18	1			98	
 Circle heads	34	19	1			54	
 Bucket heads	28	18	-			46	
 Inverted bucket heads	21*	4*	3			28	
 Flop eared	4*	41*	2			47	
<u>LESS DOMINANT FORMS</u>							
 Stick forms	4	3	1			8	
 Negative forms	1	-	2			3	
 Triangle forms (may be a variant of the bucket Form)	1	-	1			2	
 Half circle without neck	4	2	-			6	
 More naturalistic head forms	1	1	-			2	
						<u>total</u> 399	

Figure 3.

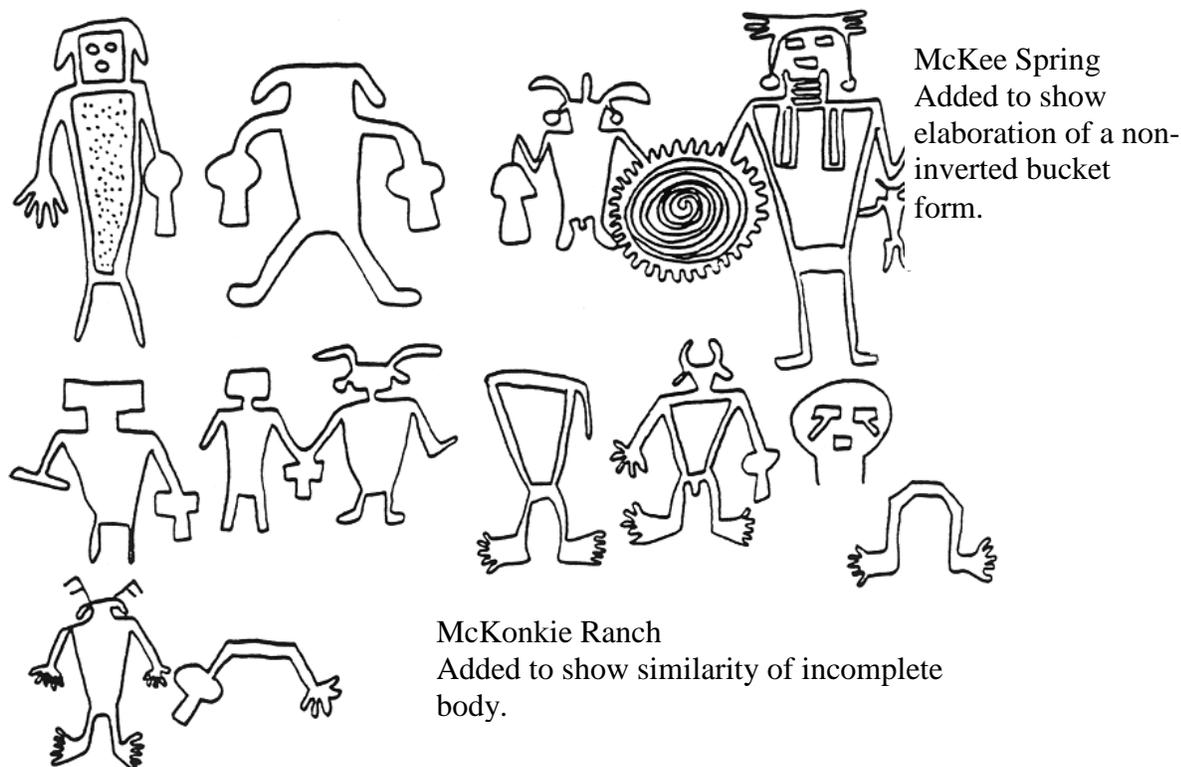


Figure 4.

tion. This same line repeats in Figures 1A, F, H, J and O. Figure 1A, however, is very unusual, in that the eyes and mouth are upside-down. Because of this additional symbolism and its unusual nature, this figure should provide some clues to the significance of the inverted bucket form head. This, and similar examples provide information because additions and differences of stressed points in many respects carry more clues than do similarities (Warner 1982a:42, 48).

This reversal seems like an odd situation. It seems to be important that the neck is only partially shown. After a close examination, it is obvious that this is the way the artist left it. Since this style shows decapitated heads and other dismembered bodies (Figures 1, 2 and 4), this may also depict decapitation. An examination of other similar examples should illuminate the logic of this situation.

Reversibility

It is the author's view that the head, if not just the facial features of Figure 1A, has been reversed. Even though reversing this head must have been a new innovation, other examples do occur (these will be discussed below). This type of innovation is distinctive of types of changes that resulted in what is believed to be the rapid development of the inverted bucket head type.

If the head as represented (Figure 5A) is turned upright, the partial neck would be at the top of the head, and the restricted crown and forehead would be on the shoulders (Figure 5B). Apparently the artist consciously intended to reverse either the head or the facial features (Figure 5C and D). Even though the reason is not obvious, it may provide a clue to the symbolism of the inverted bucket head. If reversed, this head would be a bucket form (Figure 5D). The

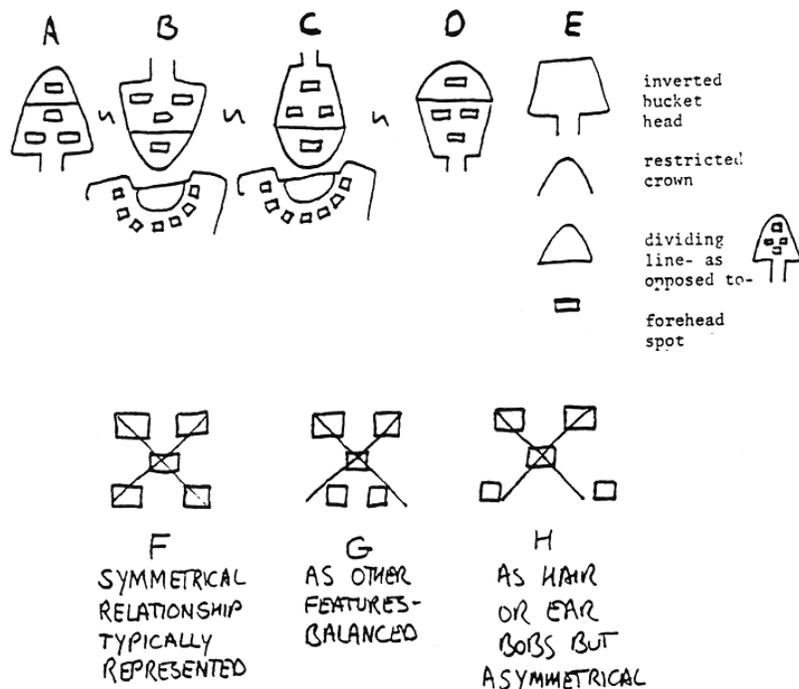


Figure 5.

restricted crown and forehead spot on top of the reversed head indicate that this is an entity in itself. This is a compound motif formed by various combinations of the following entities: inverted bucket head shape, restricted crown, dividing line and forehead spot (Figure 5E). Placing the restricted crown and forehead spot at the top of the reversed face adds more credence to the idea that the form of the inverted bucket shape of this face is important. If the

restricted crown of the inverted bucket head was not a separate entity, it would have occurred below, if the whole head and head gear were reversed (Figure 5B and C). Whether or not it is an inverted or regular bucket head, it seems that the face, if not the entire head, has been removed and reversed.

Compare Figure 1A with the reversed face-like form at the side of Figure 6D. Notice the dot above the reversed face. This dot is similar to the one on the neck of Figure 1A and

the anthropomorph in Figure 6D, if the face is turned upright. Without head outline the facial features of Figure 1A have the same arrangement as the facial features in Figure 6D. This face provides additional evidence that heads were reversed or are reversible.

A close inspection shows that even though the facial features in Figures 1A and 6D have a different arrangement when reversed, facial features like Figures 1E and 7 are

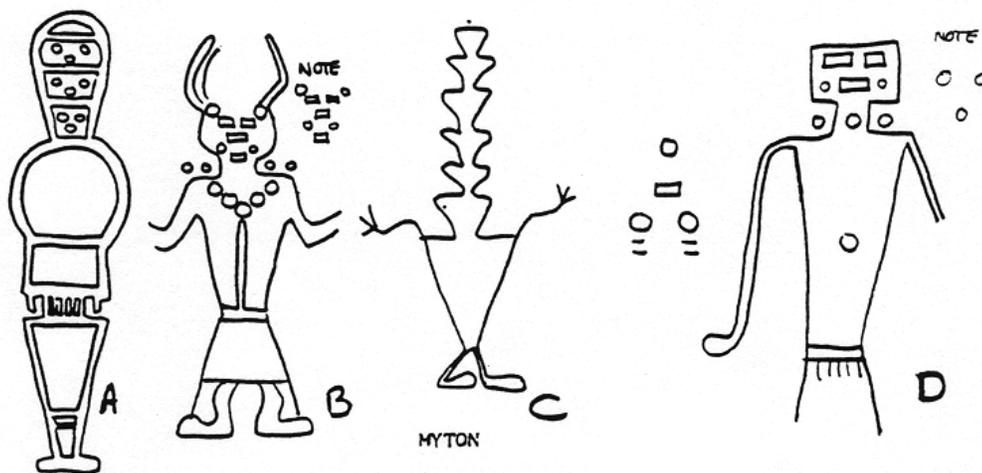


Figure 6.

basically the same when they are reversed as when they are upright. If they were reversed, this feature would not be noticeable unless other factors were present. Other examples of faces without head outlines are shown in Figure 7. Like the facial features discussed in Figure 6D, some of these could be reversed or are reversible. Several elements that have the same form when reversed are increasing as more sites are being studied (Figure 8 as opposed to Figure 10). Element reversal (whether symmetrical or asymmetrical) seems to be a concept drawn from a shared cultural reservoir of accepted ways to express ideas.

The symmetry of these faces and anthropomorphs seems to indicate that they were

intentionally designed to be the same when reversed (Figure 5F, G and H). It may be that it was simply an artistic development to balance these face forms and create greater symmetry. If symmetrical features were reversed, it seems logical to assume that in a few examples there would occur some iconic clues to indicate that these were reversed (Warner 1982b: 7-11). Such clues could be detached radiating lines around the restricted crown of Figure 1A, the eyebrow-like marks under the eyes of the reversed face in Figure 6D, placement of the crown in relation to the reversed face as discussed, or possibly the representation of facial features without head outline (Figure 1N).

There is another important motif that

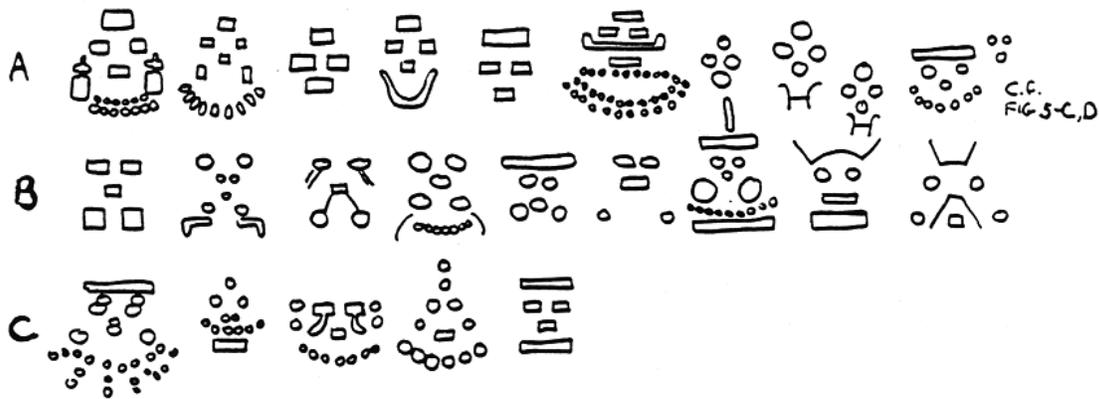


Figure 7.

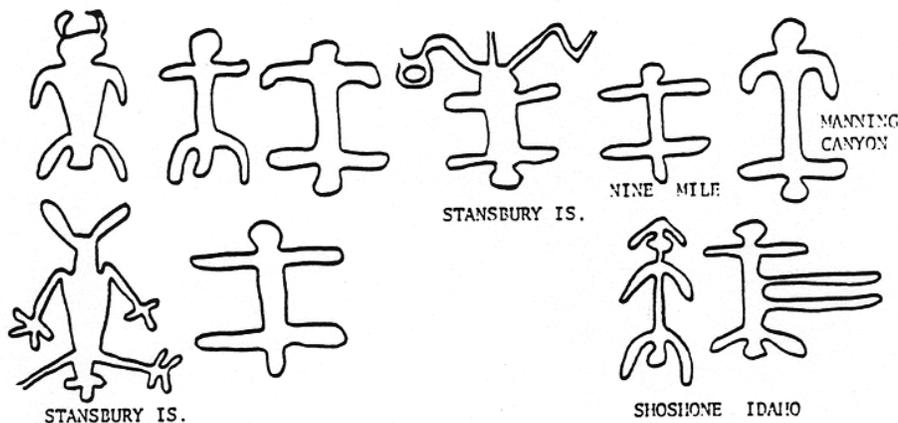


Figure 8.

illustrates the idea of symmetry. The anthropomorphic forms in Figure 8 repeat often enough to become motifs. For this analogy it is important that hands and feet are not represented—indicating that when reversed they still have an upright appearance like the faces in Figure 7.

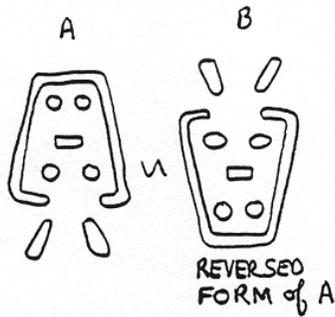


Figure 9.

The following illustration provides further evidence for the concept that symmetrical face patterns are reversible. Without much imagination, Figure 9A could be taken as an outline of a reversed animal's head with human facial features that would be the same if reversed (Figure 9B). Either way, the face has two eyes, a mouth and two

"earbobs" like the faces in Figure 7. If this is an animal's head, it was intentionally reversed to form an inverted bucket head-like form. This then may indicate its source, or that the animal and the inverted bucket shape are closely related. This possibility has more credibility because of the number of other associations of either eared or animal-like features in association with the inverted bucket head. This will be the major emphasis of an additional paper.

For further evidence of reversing heads, consider Figure 10F, which represents two anthropomorphs interlocked at the head. Notice the horns of the up-side-down figure. Reverse the upper figure and the horn pattern is basically the same as those in Figures 2U—W and 10A.

By turning the top prong inward, the horn pattern was constructed to create a negative inverted bucket-shaped head outline for the figure below. Remove this horn headdress and, like those in Figures 1L, M and N and 7, the lower figure has no head outline. It is extremely unique that two sets of bilateral

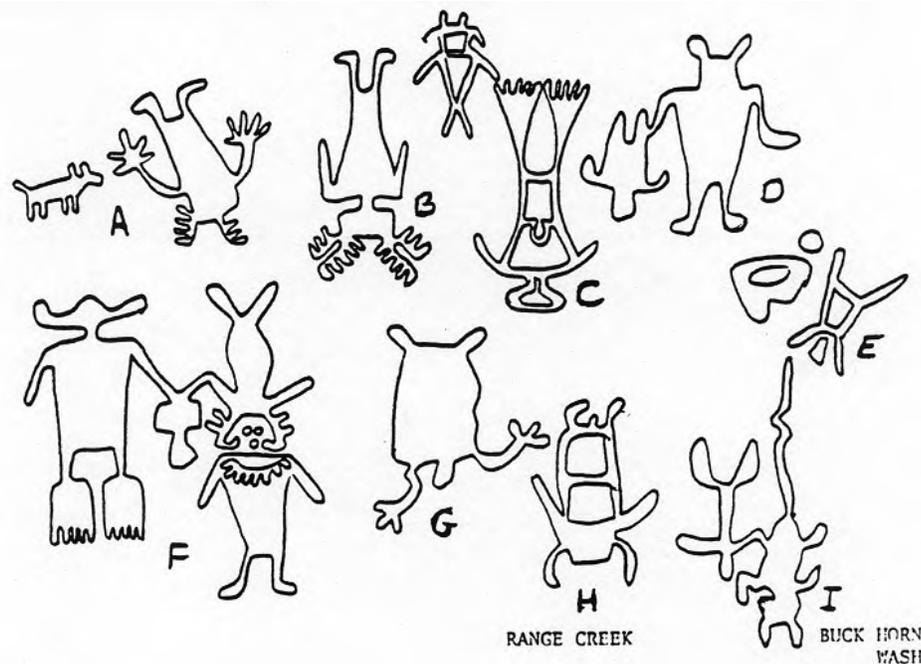


Figure 10.

antler-like prongs as seen upright take the place and form of the two sets of feather-like protrusions of many inverted bucket-shaped heads in Figures 1D, F and H and similar to B, G, K and L. This positive and negative form is a fascinating piece of graphic ingenuity, which is also symbolic.

Combinations

If figure 1A represents a combination of motifs, some of the other inverted bucket head variants may also be compound motifs. The inverted bucket head shapes in Figures 2B, C, D, F and G seem to be combinations of the inverted bucket head forms with ears or lobes hanging down (Figure 2A) and ears right-side-up making a combination of both motifs (Warner 1984). It may be that when Figure 2-A is reversed and combined with its original upright form we may have the source for the "paddle form" inverted bucket variant (Figures 2I—L). The spots on the upright ear-like lobes of Figure 2D and the lower lobes of Figure 2B are interesting. The features of Figure 2-B, including the ear-bobs without the head form, would produce the features of Figures like 5-F, 7-B and 9. Likewise the spots on the restricted crown of Figure 2A, without head form, produce some of the various features in Figures 7A and C. The lower spots on Figure 2B could possibly be the source for the position of the lower spots of Figures 7B and 9. Similar spots also occur in Figures 1H and N. These could represent hairbob ties like those seen on clay figurines. They could also represent ear-bobs (Figure 1G, H, L, N, R and T).

Stacked Faces

Other interesting examples are implications of stacked faces as illustrated in Figure 11A and C. On Figure 11A

there is the stacked eye, mouth situation similar to, but more complex than Figure 9. There are several possibilities of what these combinations of features could represent. The mouth of the upper face could be a forehead spot of a lower face like Figure 7A. Figure 11C could also represent two stacked faces, or it could also be a rectangular forehead spot, circular eyes and a rectangular mouth under two rectangular spots similar to those on Figures 2D, 7A and 11B. The first face in Figure 7C, however, implies a superimposition of facial features.

There are several other features that show more identifiable representations of stacked faces (Figures 6A—C). These provide more support for the possibility of viewing Figures 11A and C as stacked faces. Figure 1N could also be two such stacked faces that have been reversed like Figure 1A. The figures previously mentioned in Figure 8 may also express a similar situation. Like the reversal of symmetrical faces, these figures have a head, shoulders, arms and are symmetrically reversed at the waist. Symbolically, the legs may be another set of arms with a head in between. This stresses the feasibility for considering the reversing of symmetrical faces idea. Some of these figures may represent phallic individuals or other concepts.

The concept of the three dots above the

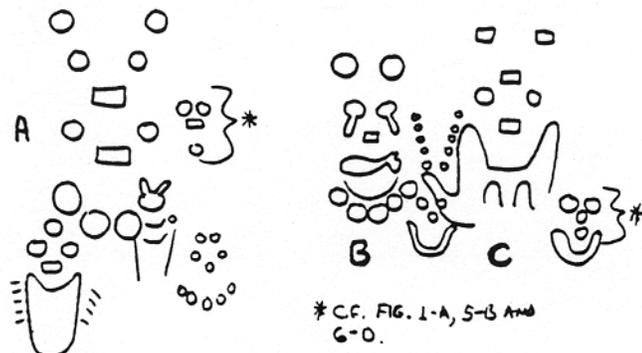


Figure 11.

shoulders of Figures 1A and 6D may be included in one of the following ideas. One, instead of a head outline, some figures have only eyes and a mouth (Figures 1L, M and N). The head held by Figure 1H is also represented by three similar marks. Two,



Figure 12. Photo from Albert Reagan's slide collection. On file at the Archaeology Dept., Brigham Young University, Provo Utah.

however, the marks may also represent a necklace with three pendants similar to those in Figures 1D, I and K, and 2B. Three, they may also depict hair-bobs or jewelry.

Another possibility is that some of the sets of three dots in the necklace form could stylistically represent a decapitated head worn as a necklace similar to the situation of the flayed head in Figure 12 (Kidder and Guernsey 1919). If they do not represent stacked faces or facial features similar to those without body and head outline, they may represent in some cases, another manner in which decapitation is shown.

Besides lacking head outline, figures in these panels are often lacking other body parts. These anthropomorphs have a large percentage without hands or feet, while arms and legs are present. Many of these figures also lack legs. This is an interesting cultural preference. It may be that anthropomorphs without head form or body parts were another innovation or preference for a style designed for group identification or concept representation.

In the Ashley and Dry Fork areas the bucket head is mostly represented on shield figures and anthropomorphs with which they are stylistically associated. The regular bucket forms occur at about the same extent as do the inverted bucket forms. Both the combined square and circular head shapes occur at a slightly higher percentage than the bucket and inverted bucket types (Figure 3). The contexts and relationships of other head forms, mainly those of the "flopped-eared" type (Figure 4) found south of old Merkley Park, seem to indicate a situation different from that of the inverted forms. The inverted forms and other types drawn in that style express much more detail and elaboration, as well as the majority of decapitation.

South of old Merkley Park there is a majority of different head forms with less elaboration and detail. In this area there are also fewer scenes associated with head hunting. Decapitated heads are often more stylized in form and are generally less elaborate. Individuals holding this style of head often display less jewelry and elaborate head gear. Among this group, there seems to be little depiction of arrogance as found among the inverted bucket types and Classic Vernal Styles. Most of the solidly pecked stylized heads held by this non-inverted bucket group often take the shape of the inverted bucket head. Most of the decapitated heads held by the inverted bucket head headhunters are more natural or similar in shape to those who hold them. These

headhunters have head shapes that occur as squares, circles, half-circles or inverted bucket shapes.

This brief examination of clues that may be relevant to the significance of the inverted bucket form is only a small fraction of the story. This study provides evidence for enough repetition and variation to provide insights into the fact that there are some unique situations being expressed within this style. It is also evident that there has been much more stylistic conventionalization than is found in other Fremont styles.

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