

THE ENGRAVED PEBBLE STYLE FROM UTAH VALLEY

BY

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Like each of the other areas that involve an engraved pebble style in western Utah, the stones found in and around Utah Valley contain distinctive characteristics. The four major distinctions are: a favored type of stone; additions of new techniques; additions of new elements; and presentations of designs in different layouts. Most examples of this style are on exhibit at the Hutchins' Museum in Lehi, Utah or are in private collections. Stones recovered by Hutchins came mostly from more permanent habitation sites along the shores of Utah Lake and at West Canyon. The few notes Hutchins took in the 30's, however, are of little value in understanding the cultural context of the stones. Many of these stones were also found in the vicinity of several petroglyph sites which express a distinct style that was formerly considered Great Basin Curvilinear. With more examples and analysis I believe they will be redefined as a western Fremont variant.

Nearly all the stones bearing the distinctive Utah Valley Pebble Style are black slate. Unlike the obvious sources for the favored types of stone from Skull Valley and the Salt Flats, a concentrated source for the black slate has not been found. A few slate stones, however, do occur sporadically in nearby creekbeds and fields. Several outcroppings of different types of stone suitable for engraving have been found but none of these appear to have been used by the makers of the Utah Valley Style. In the few instances where other kinds of stone were used in this area, they contain representations more similar to the Salt Flat Style. One example is an engraved figurine. These stones mainly occur at sites with multiple types of Fremont remains, suggesting an overlap in style areas. As pointed out in the Skull Valley (Warner 1979) and Salt Flats reports (Warner 1981a), the makers of engraved pebbles in those situations likely came from permanent habitation sites such as those near Salt Lake, Utah, Cedar, or Tooele Valleys. So far, however, no strong correspondence can be demonstrated.

The predominant technique used on black slate is a simple straight scratched line. In the Utah Valley Style the line is usually deeper than in the Skull Valley style. These stones, however, have not had the centuries of wind-borne abrasion like

those in Skull Valley. The rocking line does not occur on the green slate in Skull Valley and was probably a later innovation on the patinated stones. Because the rocking line does not occur on any black slate and does on the patinated stone in Utah Valley, and also because these different styles are predictable by technique and design layout, style differentiation in these instances is easy to distinguish. The rocking line may have been a preferred technique on patinated stone alone. On slate the rocking line is as easy to make and is as visible, but as far as can be determined does not occur. By fairly consistent, isolated associated remains there is little question that the age sequence for these styles is probably Skull Valley, Salt Flat, and then Utah Valley. There are several "new" techniques which appear only in the Utah Valley Style.

Here, holes are drilled into the surface, creating a different visual effect. Small dots were a newer innovation in the Salt Flat Style, but they were not produced by drilling. In Utah Valley, the small pecked dot that was common in the Salt Flat Style occurs less often than the drilled hole. In the Salt Flat Style the small peck occurred in tight abstract arrangements. In Utah Valley the same size peck occurs in more widely spaced geometrical designs. The drilled hole is also more widely spaced and also occurs in definite geometrical patterns. In this style side-notching and grooving appear and become quite commonplace. Many pieces of black slate have been totally abraided. These fall into several categories: pendants, ceremonial-like objects or gaming pieces, and perforated disks ranging in size from 1 to 5 centimeters in diameter. Another category is biomorphic forms representing birds, dog-like figures, rabbits, fish and anthropomorphs.

The pendants range from small cylindrical stones with a groove for suspension to flat stones with a drilled hole. One crescent-shaped pendant is grooved at both ends for suspension. Most of these are totally abraided, some notched or engraved. One assumed pendant was abraided to represent an anthropomorph in form. The neck looks like a groove for possible suspension. Another pendant, very suggestive of fertility, contains two breasts and a vulva-like form. No other aspects imply the human figure. Still another represents a skull-like figure.

Some of the abraided stones have been shaped into specific forms, such as circles, squares, abstract and odd shapes, some suggesting the stone's original form. Despite all the abrasion, only one stone suggests the abraided fleshers quite common in the Skull Valley collections. Several black slate forms are shaped like arrow shaft smoothers. One of these has holes drilled horizontally under the groove for what may be pendant-like suspension. These holes are joined over the end

by an engraved line similar to another figure without a central groove. The holes suggest eyes and the engraved line a mouth. A bulbular, flat-based stone with similarly repeated designs occurring three times was labeled a "cradle board" by Hutchings. Another innovation of this area is the production of anthropomorphs whose body out-line was scratched within the outside edge of the stone, instead of using the shape of the stone itself to depict body form. The only other examples currently known to do this come from the Promontory Point area. In Utah Valley the most interesting engraved human figure consists of a female with pendant breasts extending to the side. She has enlarged, up-raised hands with an enclosed grid by her side. What makes this figure so unusual is that it duplicates a petroglyph from Red Cut at Fairfield, Utah. The petroglyph is now part of a monument commemorating Ft. Crittenden. The petroglyph site occurs 18 miles from where the engraved pebble was found. The existence of this type of phenomenon is rare. Without further research, its significance is uncertain.

One prominent aspect about this style is the free and easy flavor they have over styles from other areas. These objects show more apparent placement of geometrical abstract designs than other styles. Overlapping of lines is extremely rare, unlike those seen in Skull Valley and Salt Flat Styles. In Skull Valley and Salt Flat compositions lines appear to be more randomly placed, although somewhat purposeful. The Utah Valley patterns are different because they are more geometrically structured, open types of abstraction, simple, but formal.

It is obvious that the types of artistic expression in the form of engraved designs express a different scope of mental activity in each of these three major styles of engraved art. The Skull Valley and Salt Flat designs were probably engraved by peoples during the foraging process. The simpler Utah Valley style stones on the other hand, probably came from more permanent habitation sites. The types of production in each of these areas also probably express different areas of concern (c.f. Warner 1981b). Since the Utah Valley stones only come from two restricted areas it seems that such stones were not part of the cultural activities of the inhabitants of sites without engraved stones, or they did not produce them due to the lack of immediate access to the materials. In either event, the associated remains in these different clusters of mound sites in Utah Valley suggest that the sites are generally contemporaneous. Similar situations occur in Skull Valley and the Salt Flats with campsites of the same nature, which occur more distant from areas in which the preferred types of stone were found. The Utah Valley Style is represented by the fewest specimens of the three areas discussed above, and no research has been conducted into other associated areas. When this research is done, the relationship with neighboring styles will

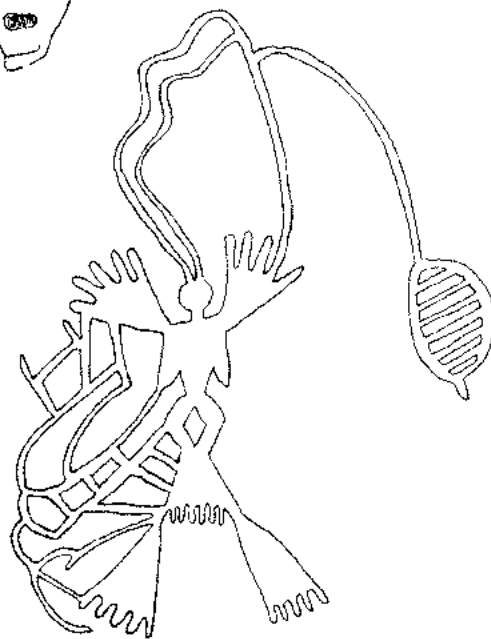
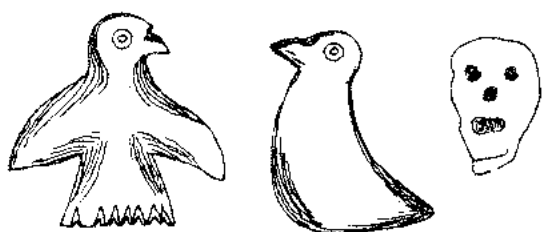
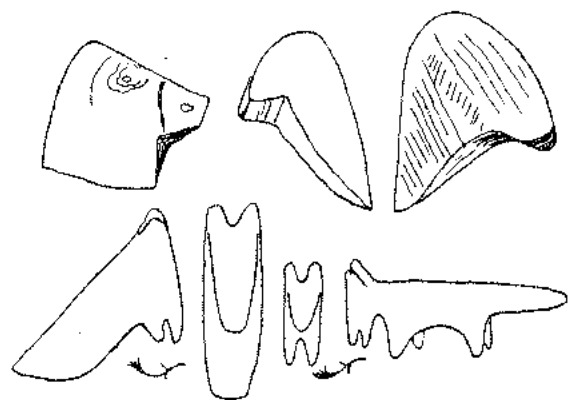


FIGURE 2

become clearer. Until then, we can only note the distinctiveness of all the other styles of engraved designs within this small area. We can also note in each of these cases, the associated types of petroglyphs and pictographs do not duplicate the same stylistic flavor of the engraved art forms. This in itself is certainly significant. Nevertheless, the importance of these engraved compositions for the present, provides an entirely new and different area of insight into the conceptual areas in which these Fremont groups expanded activity and concern for graphic conceptualization.

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