

## A PLAINS-LIKE PANEL ON FERRON CREEK

BY

JESSE E. WARNER AND JOSEPHINE HARPER

On the west bank, near the mouth of a small side canyon that drains into Ferron Creek, is an unusual petroglyph panel (Fig. 1). It does not seem to fit in with any of the other panels in the area. Because of that, it is proposed to be an intrusion from another stylistic area. There are four major points that set this panel off as different from what is considered typical for this geographical area. First, the form of the animals within the composition. Second, the heart-lines depicted within nearly all of the animals in the panel. And third the technique by which the panel was produced seem to be associated with many later intrusions in the area. A fourth area of concern is the general feel of the panel is that it just does not belong in this area.

This is a very interesting panel, produced by scratching with a little abrading. The majority of the panels around this site were produced by either pecking or painting; percentagewise relatively little scratching and abrading occurs. Other panels produced mainly by or containing some scratching and abrading do exist in the general area, but the form of those figures, their associated subject matter, and their style isolates these as not belonging (Fig. 2).

The majority of scratching and abrading thought to be indigenous to this area is usually found in smaller figures or panels than this one. Other scratched figures in the northern part of the Colorado Plateau that are also thought to be intrusive are a little larger, like this one.

Some indigenous scratched figures are combined with other techniques; many panels that contain scratched elements contain elements produced by other techniques as well. Among the indigenous scratched panels (Fig. 2) in the immediate vicinity are scratched animals exhibiting completely different styles from the panel in consideration.

It must also be noted that scratching alone is not a valid criterion for determining an age or style affiliation since all major styles used scratching to various degrees.

This brings us to the next point. This panel is also set off from others in the area by the form of the elements. The form of an element is a stylistic indicator, if indeed it is diagnostic, a means of identifying the style, of treatment. The panel in question is composed of six quadrupeds markedly different from what is considered as usual for this area. First the shapes of the animal's bodies are distinctive. Hoof treatment on one is also different; realistic representations of hooves in profile (rather than split hooves or human foot-like knobs at the end of the leg) are rare in this area. Three other animals have stick-like legs, a

trait shared by many styles.

A small hump on the back, behind the head with the opposed horns identifies these animals as buffalo. The inclusion of hump-backs and horns like these are not unusual for other bovine representations, but inclusion of ears, especially like these, is rare.

Another major feature setting this panel off is the heart-line depicted on all but one of the animals (the one with forked hooves, another feature making it different from others in the panel). The heart-line represents internal organs, depicted on three as a hatched area between two lines from the mouth to the interior area of the animal. Common to plains styles, the heart-line spread into Utah by both intrusion, when peoples with this trait visited our area, and by adoption, when northern Utah people seem to have borrowed the trait from their neighbors. Several indigenous panels in northeastern Utah, probably Fremont and Ute, contain heartlines.

The animal at the upper left (without the heart-line and with other differences in body shape and appendage expression) has several features suggesting this figure was either produced by another individual, or was not part of the original composition. The probability of a later production is suggested by its being superimposed over an abraded concentric circle. However, the fact that it is scratched and a buffalo may suggest it could be contemporaneous.

The general feeling of this panel is different from other panels found in this area. There are Archaic, Barrier Canyon, Basketmaker, Fremont, and Ute panels all sharing sites within the area, yet none have the same feeling as this panel. It seems to fit better into one of the Plains styles for the following reasons: First, it is the largest scratched panel and contains the largest number of scratched figures. As was mentioned, few panels of this size are scratched. This is especially true with this many different scratched elements where all of the elements exhibit stylistic differences. Second, the form of the animals is similar to Plains or Plains-like panels. Third, this panel contains so many buffalo. When other buffalo occur in this area they are usually individual animals or minimal occurrences, and to a certain degree are more diminutive. Fourth, the heart-line is a major Plains style trait, fairly uncommon here, and Fifth, the form of the fletching on the arrows is not common here, but is common on the plains. One similar example occurs below the Wyoming border near Manila, Utah. Because of the above considerations, this panel appears to have been produced by a style foreign to this area, probably an intrusion from the Plains.

A look at the composition itself provides a few additional insights (Fig. 1). All the animals face to the right. This panel has eight bar-like lines abraded across the panel to create the impression of a corral into which the animals are being funneled. Impalements add to the hunting concept. The panel is placed on a block of stone set away from the cliff at the bottom and the right sides. At the bottom of the panel is an overhang acting as a baseline for the eight bar-like lines. At the top of the panel these lines are attached to a natural horizontal crack suggesting another type of natural barrier. This rock incorporation forms a corral-like enclosure. Since the outset block of stone is open to the left, and all the movement of the

animals is to the right into this box-like form, the formation suggests a canyon used as a drive site. The small canyon at the mouth of which this panel is placed could have been effectively barricaded by a post-like structure represented by the eight bar-like lines, or by a simple line of individuals.

Drive representations are not uncommon either in Utah or in Plains symbol systems. Some forms seen elsewhere in Utah are even similar to the bar-like forms here. For instance, in Nine-Mile Canyon is a similar series of lines behind an individual holding a bow or a Y-shaped or forked stick, similar to several other figures suggested to be "hunting shaman" (Fig. 3a). In front of this figure a two-horned snake has been composed in the shape of an enclosure, similar to many corral-like depictions sheep are depicted going into, or already enclosed (Fig. 3d-g).

North of Vernal, Utah, is another representation of a drive. Another anthropomorph holds a fork-shaped object, and drives an animal through a human funnel toward a checkerboard-like element possibly representing a corral (Fig. 3c). In Buckhorn Wash, a sheep seems tied to a pole-like structure (Fig. 3b).

Many of the drive representations in Utah rock art are bulbous-shaped enclosures (Fig. 3d-g). In Bock's Canyon near Cedar City, Utah, there is an enclosure with a barred grid inside, an association suggesting the combination of two types of symbols of entrapment. In that canyon there are several sheep in association with barred grids.

Because of our unfamiliarity with the various Plains styles, drive representations as depicted there are not well known to us. This panel may be the remains of a Plains group that came into Utah and while here left this account of a hunting foray. Further research and correspondence may help in this assessment.

Two other sites have what may be very abstracted, scratched animals that are somewhat similar to each other, yet different from what is normally found in the local styles. These come from the San Rafael Reef and from southeast of Hanksville (Figs. 4 and 5). Even though they do not relate to the panel under consideration perhaps they are also good candidates for production by non indigenous people who came into this area and left their graphic remains.

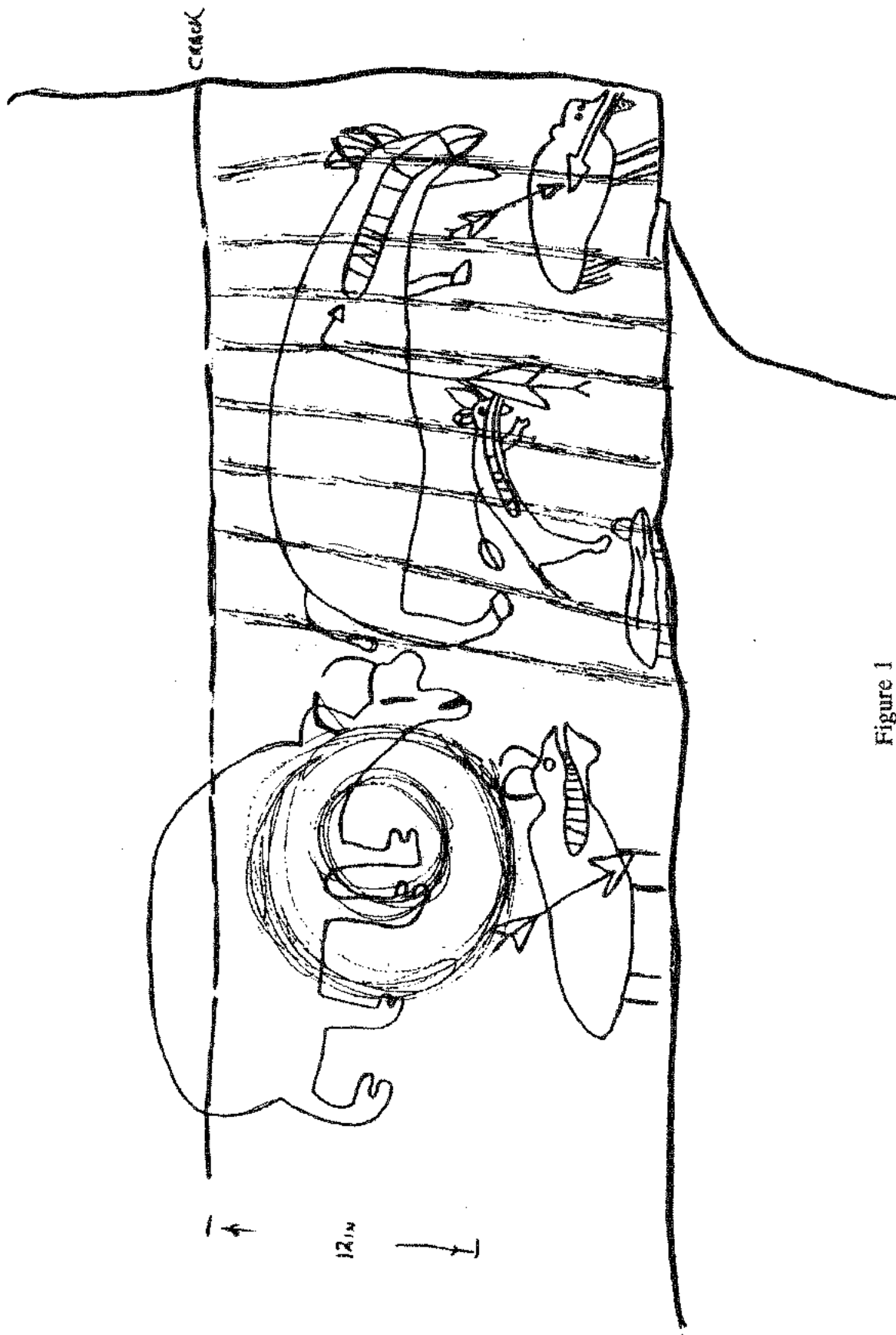


Figure 1



Figure 2

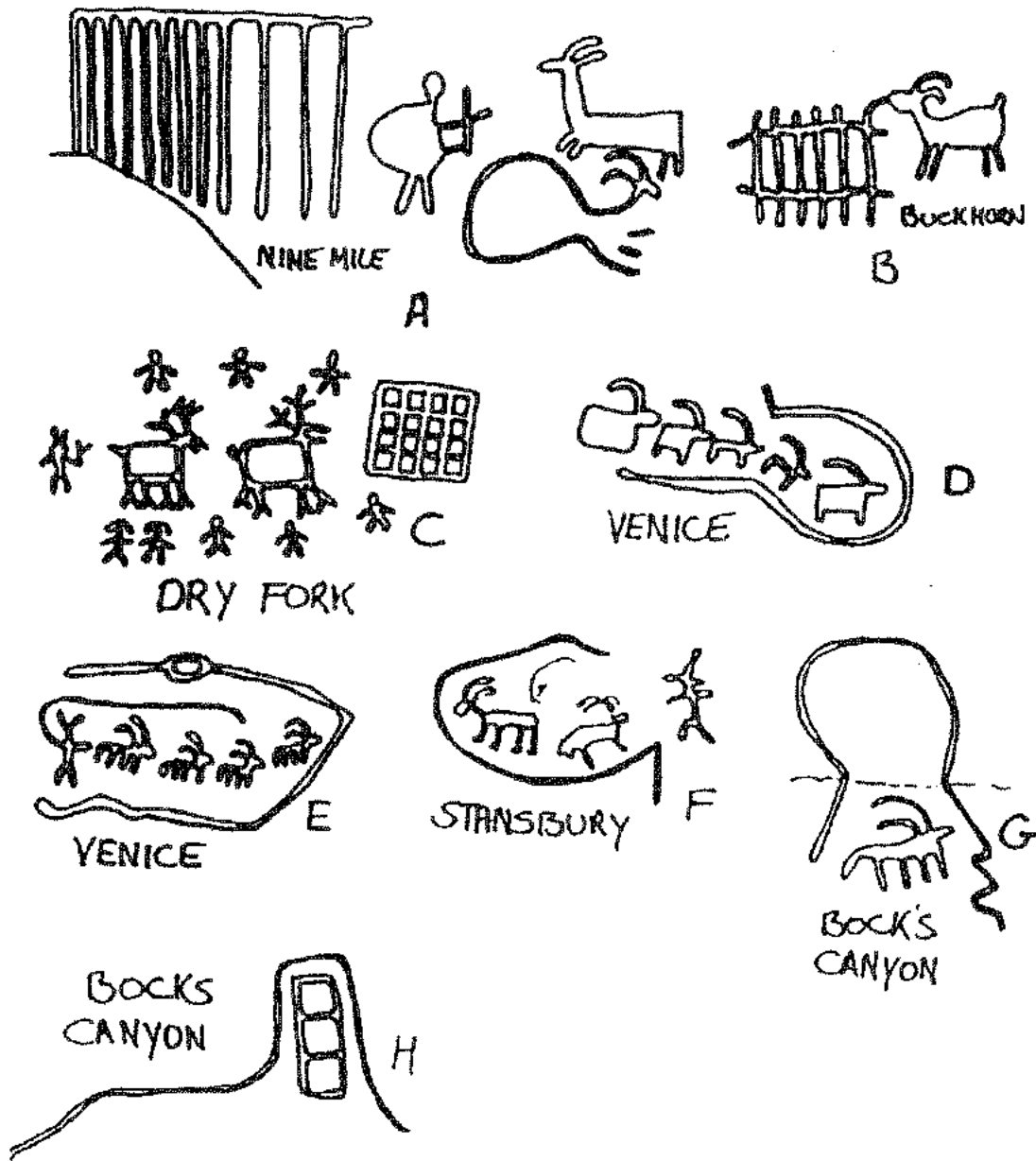


Figure 3

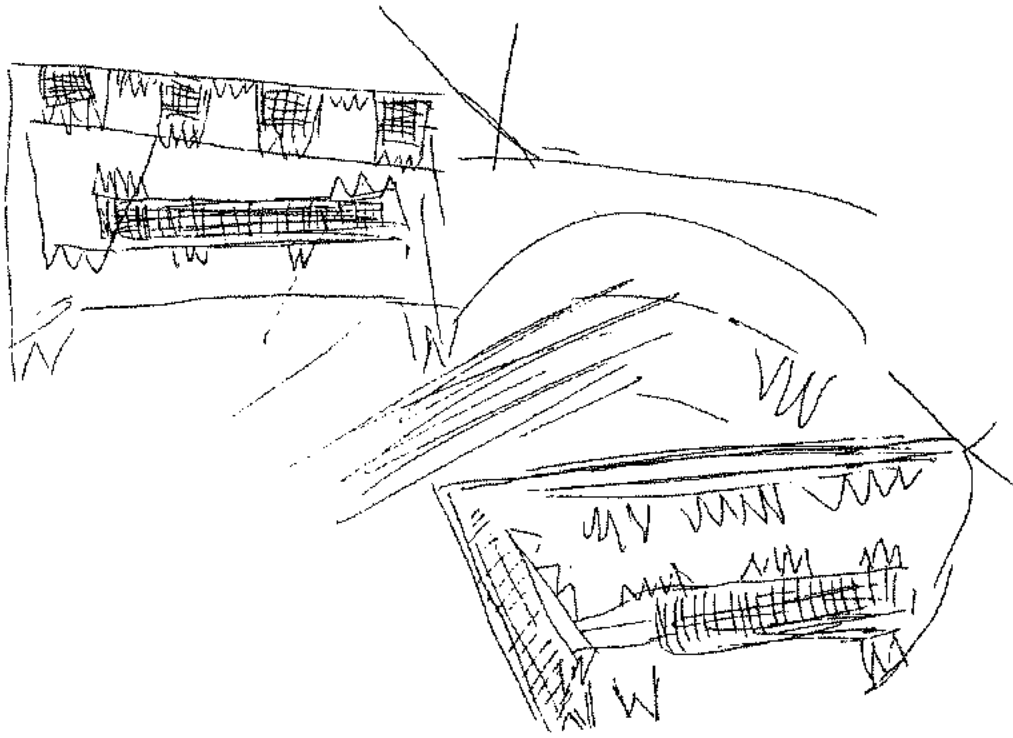


Figure 4

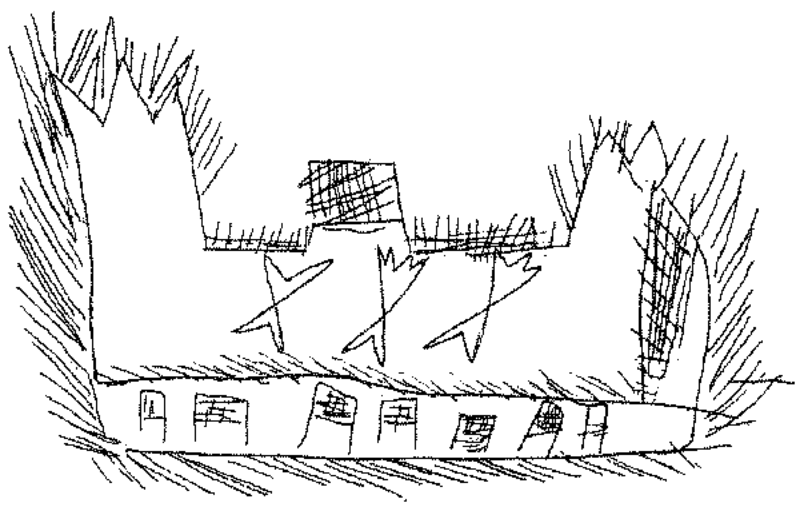
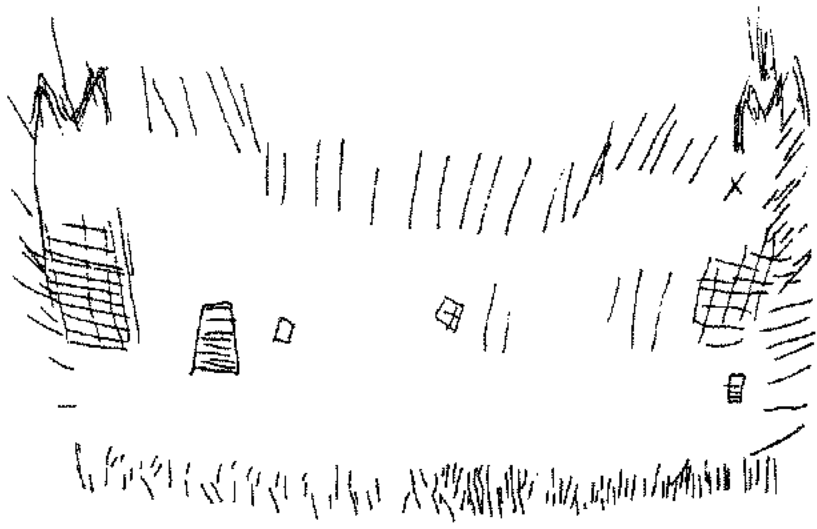


Figure 5