Transformations I: Man to Animal, Animal to Animal

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Since this project was begun, the amount of information in the file of possible transformation figures has become overwhelming. Because of that and the amount of space needed to do justice to the material, the original text has been reserved for a special publication on this and related material. This article will only contain a brief description of the basic idea and a short description of each illustration. Hopefully this will sufficiently identify the various categories in which these concepts could be represented.

There are three categories of representations: 1- man to animal; 2- animal to animal; 3- man to bird. Each of these major applications have many different possibilities in creating the illusion of transformation. For instance the figures in the first category depict the union of the two separate entities as one, coming out of, attached to the head, horn, back, tail, or out of arm, hand, or foot. There are also several odd representations that don't fit into any of these categories. Notice that these types of unions follow the same types of attachments to the body as double entities.

The animal to animal and man to bird categories echo these types of combinations with only minor variations. In attempting to establish the limits of a concept and its wide variety of representations, one has to be very careful; as with concept, certain manners in creating the graphic image can and often do overlap other areas of concept representation. For instance, the animal headed hunters in Figure 2B are probably not transformation figures, but were included as a comparison that is very close to the types of illustrations in Figure 2A.

Sometimes contexts vary and some particular features may help to weigh the decision in one direction or another. That is the necessity for collecting as large a file as possible. This is the only way any comparative analysis can be accurate. By doing that, we may more fully understand the symbolling process.

Another example includes a figure of historical date that illustrates a man which looks as though he is emerging out of the back of an animal. Even though this is probably a horse and rider because of the way some figures were depicted, it may represent both situations (Figure 6A,B). We often think that it was the horse that allowed these men the first opportunity to really become one with an animal. They learned to communicate with their horses through their muscles, with only the slightest movement of thigh, leg or foot, when both hands were needed to be free to hold shield and spear or shoot a bow and simultaneously maneuver in combat. That oneness in itself created a truly mystical experience. However, there was an earlier experience that created a different type of oneness with and between other life forms. This included two major themes. One is a spirit guardian that dwelled with or within an individual. Many of these were in a non-transformational sense, different from the second theme that represents a person that actually believed to be able to change his shape into and then back again from that of an animal or bird.

Even in our own societies we continue similar themes: Dracula turns into a bat; men change into werewolves; witches into black cats, crows, or owls. Seldom taken

seriously, we view the native beliefs in a similar fashion. We have called similar individuals skin-walkers, the Navajo were-wolves, yei, polymorphs, and elasomorphs. The traditional Native American does, however, take these beliefs very seriously in situations that deal with both shamanism and witchcraft. How many of these illustrations actually depict these beliefs? How many may represent hunting, ceremonial, and magic situations, familiar associations, guides, or characteristics or personifications rather than ecstatic and esoteric transformation? Look at the illustrations in each figure and take the time to visualize the similarities and differences and the combinations of areas of repetition and grasp the fact that some of these panels were made long before the archaic era when Paleolithic man hunted Pleistocene animals and continued down to panels made within our own lifetimes.

These types of symbols are not all that uncommon, but when they do occur, they are often found only once or twice on a panel. There is one panel, however, that has about twenty of these transformation figures occurring in about three different styles from archaic to protohistoric. The practices associated with these depictions evidently took place there for a considerable period of time. Figure 1Aa, enlarged in Figure 1Ad seems to be a bear like Figure 1B on the same panel. Figure 1A illustrates its bear-like appearance with what looks like the head of a sheep emerging from its forehead.

Figure 1Ba-c is a rather odd-faced sheep which may represent a similar situation with a prone human form (Figure 1Bc). Visualize the blackened portion with its arms (the horns) extended up over and encircling the head forming the patinated U-bracket which has come to be associated with esoteric experience. Notice the upper part of the nose above the "wattle"-like extensions (the real sheep's head) looks like a bent knee and a foot. There is much more activity involved with this figure, but this is sufficient for a simple introduction to the fact that something unnatural is going on with these combinations in an identical manner to the depictions of the concepts associated with double entities, but different in that we have combinations of animal and animals and man and animals or birds.

Figure 2A illustrates animals that are on heads, or replacing the heads of humans. Figure 2B depicts figures with animal heads. Figure 3A illustrates men that are attached to or emerge from the heads of animals. Figure 3B shows animals joined to the heads of animals. Figure 3C is a slightly different form, somewhat like Figure 1Aa where the sheep emerges from the bear's forehead, but where some have a nose that includes another head or set of horns.

Figure 4 shows animals attached to the sides of the human form. Figures 5A and B are men and animals coming out of or attached to the tail of another animal. Figures 6A and 6B illustrate men seeming to rise out of the back of an animal. Some of these are superimpositions, probably an intentional incorporation. In the China Lake area of southern California, there are literally hundreds of these types, so many that they seem to be conventionalized combinations.

Figure 7 includes figures whose arms or hands become animals. Notice the figure from Blalock Rapids, Oregon. The two inside legs of the two-headed sheep are the legs of a man whose arms form part of the animal's back (dotted area in the right figure). In Figure 8 the hand or thumb seems to have actually become the animal. Figure 9 illustrates two odd combinations, each with what appears to be two animal heads attached to its body. On the reversed figure (Figure 9B), two sheep heads forming the

typical bipolarcephalic (two-headed) sheep become the figure's legs.

Figure 10 illustrates two special considerations. These super-impositions on the main panel at Quitchupah were combined to create a very subtle symbolism. Figure 10A represents an animal emerging out of the side of the human form like those in Figure 4. Notice how the back of the older randomly-pecked sheep is at the shoulder level of the more recently pecked, less patinated human figure. This anthropomorph has no arm on that side, an intentional addition or combination to create a specific concept. Part of the identification of that concept may include a generative idea since his reproductive organ is the back leg of the older sheep. That is not a haphazard placement, but rather an ingenious intentional combination. To support the intention of that example there is another similar glyph only a few feet from that one on the same panel. Figure 10B also has a later human form pecked over an older more randomly pecked sheep in such a way that the front two legs form exaggerated genitalia. This is also an extremely ingenious method to illustrate the combinations of man or woman and animal, as well as to stress the concepts of their "spiritual rebirth" and esoteric experience associated with the act of transformation.

The odd-looking sheep in Figure 11A is also extremely imaginative in the possibilities of encrypted symbolic meaning. Notice the positive and negative forms that allow one to see one feature more prominently than another. Notice the forward-curving horns, one of which occurs farther along the back than normal. Any time anything deviates from what is normally depicted it indicates that something significant is being stressed. Compare the blackened portion, Figure 11Bb, that creates a smaller animal within the larger one, similar to the two examples that occur in Figures 11Bc and 11Bd. Now also consider what other possibilities may exist. A more detailed analysis of this figure and the rest of these will appear in a special publication concerning rock art, shamen, and the mystical experience.

Figure 1A

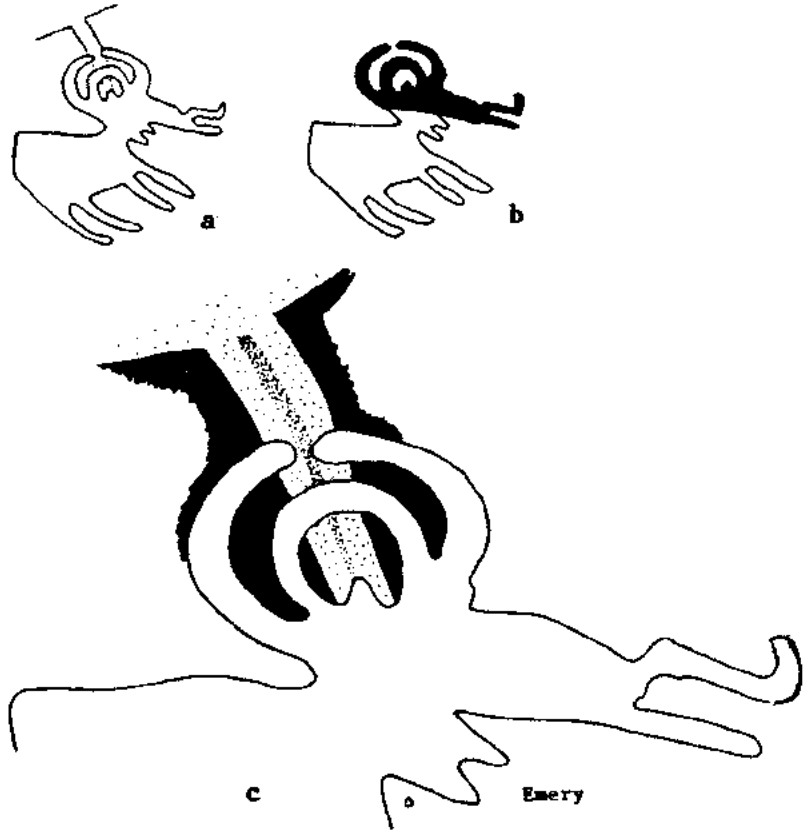


Figure 1B

ANIMAL OUT OF HEAD OF MAN

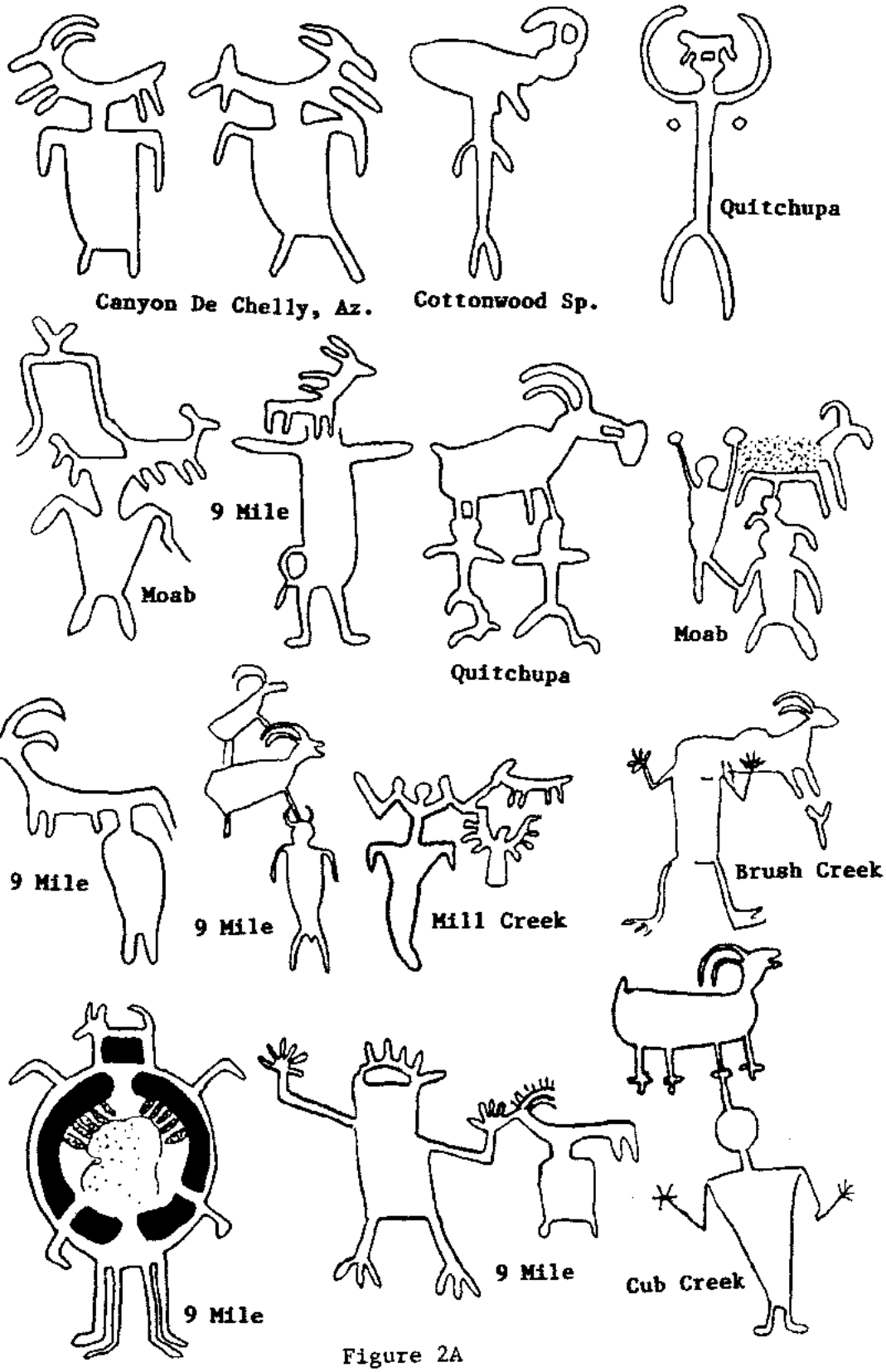
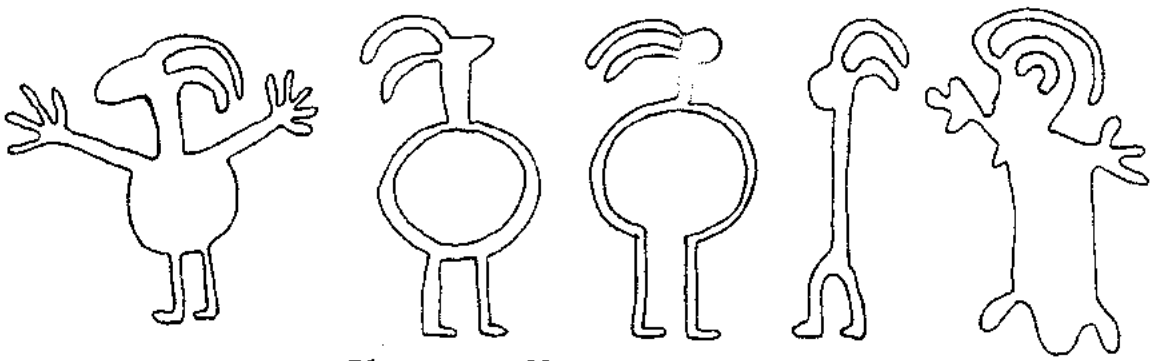


Figure 2A

ANIMAL HEAD ON MAN



Pleasant Valley

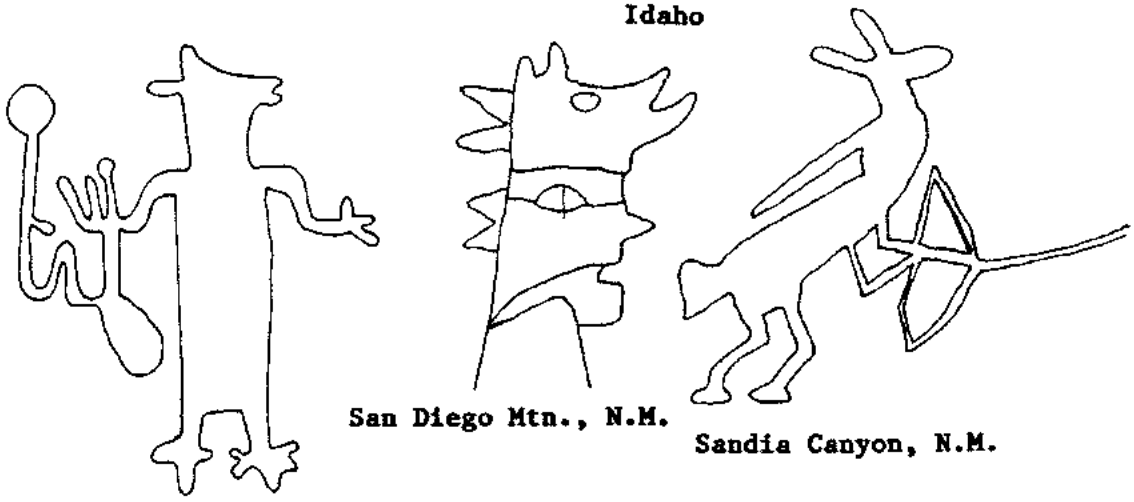
9 Mile

9 Mile

Death Valley, Nev.

Indian Rck.

Buffalo Eddy, Idaho



San Diego Mtn., N.M.

Sandia Canyon, N.M.

9 Mile

Moab

Galesteo Basin, N.M.

9 Mile

Figure 2B

MAN OUT OF HEAD OF ANIMAL

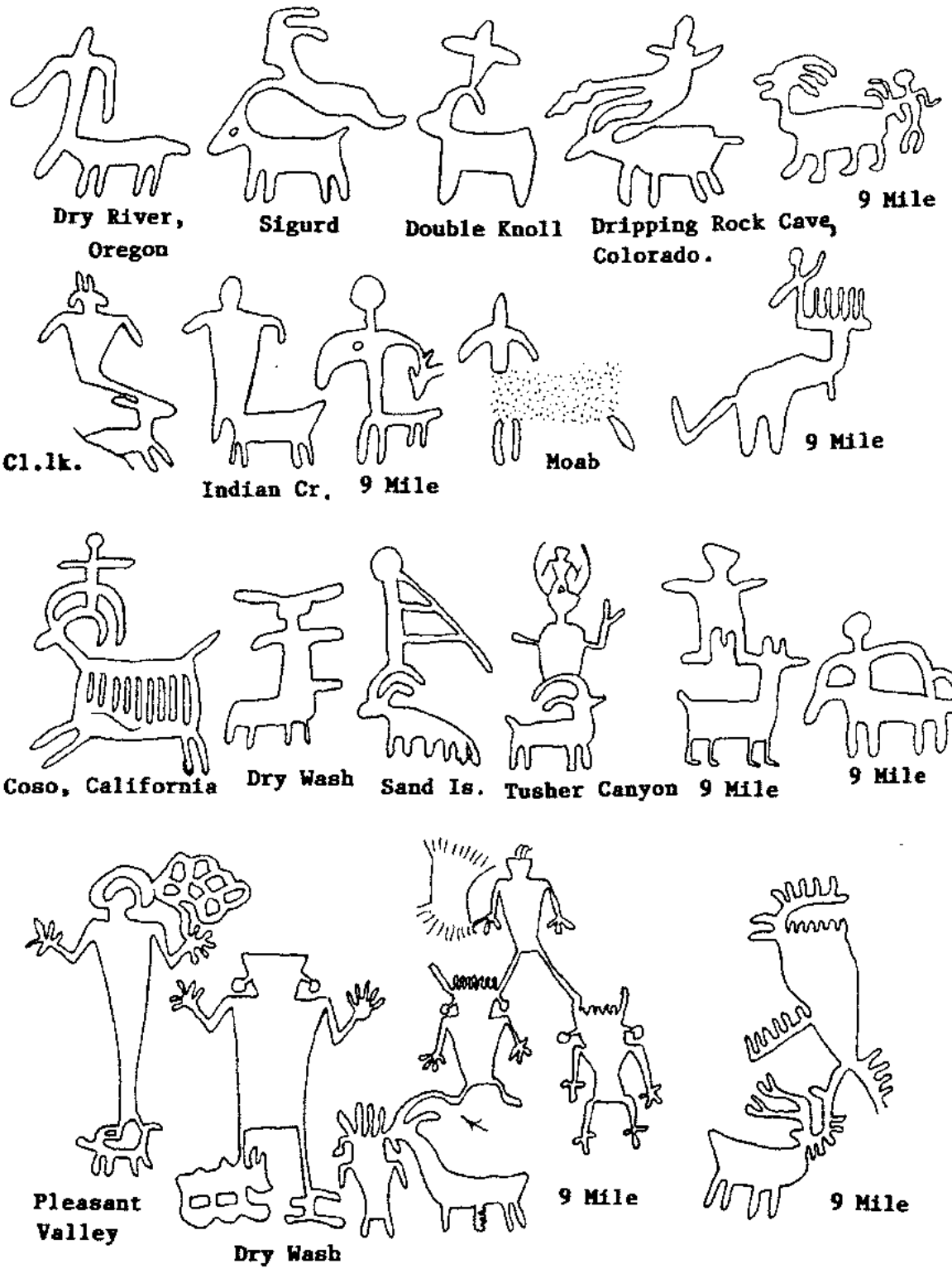


Figure 3A

ANIMAL OUT OF HEAD OF ANIMAL

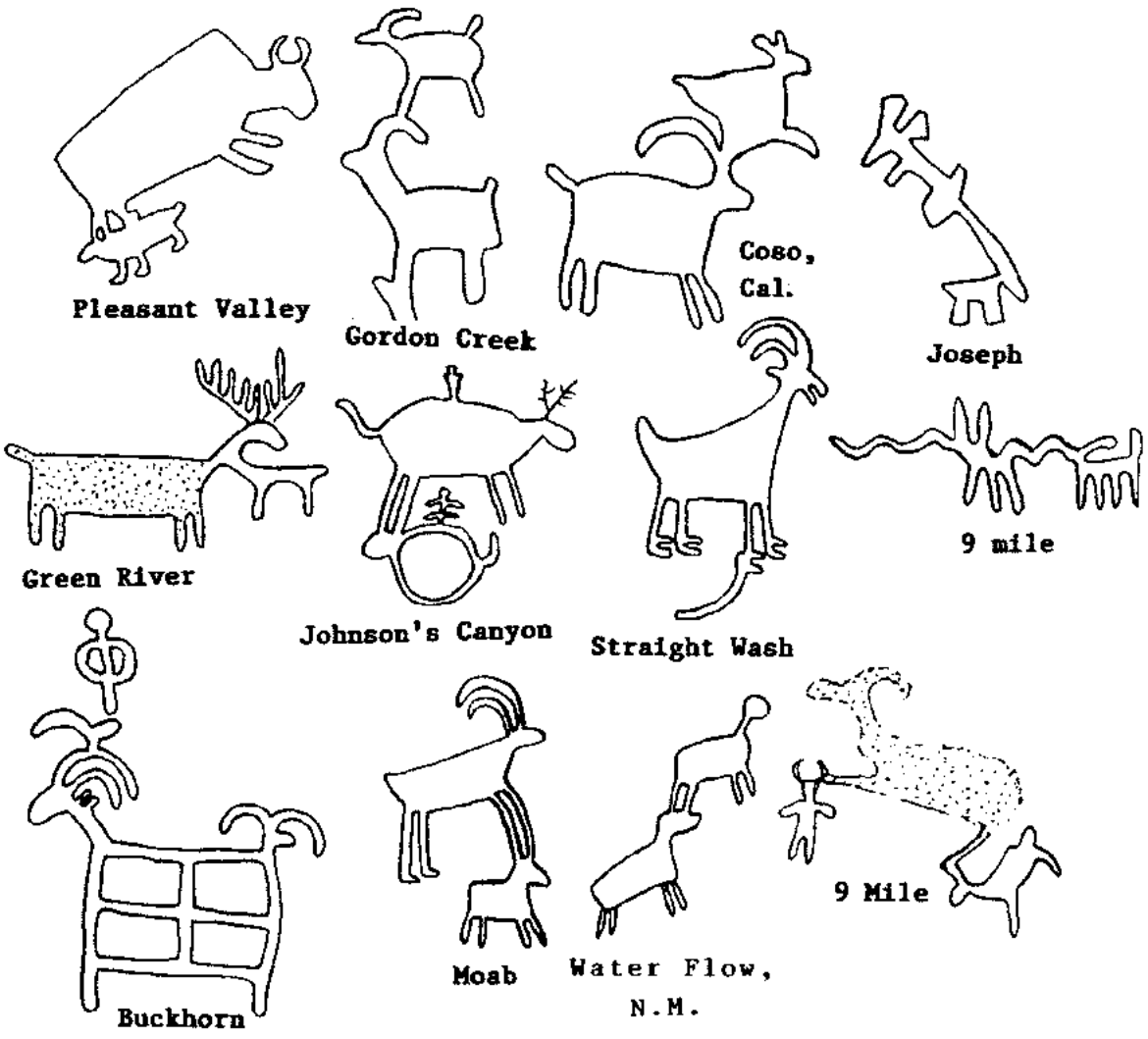


Figure 3B

ANIMAL OUT OF HEAD OF ANIMAL

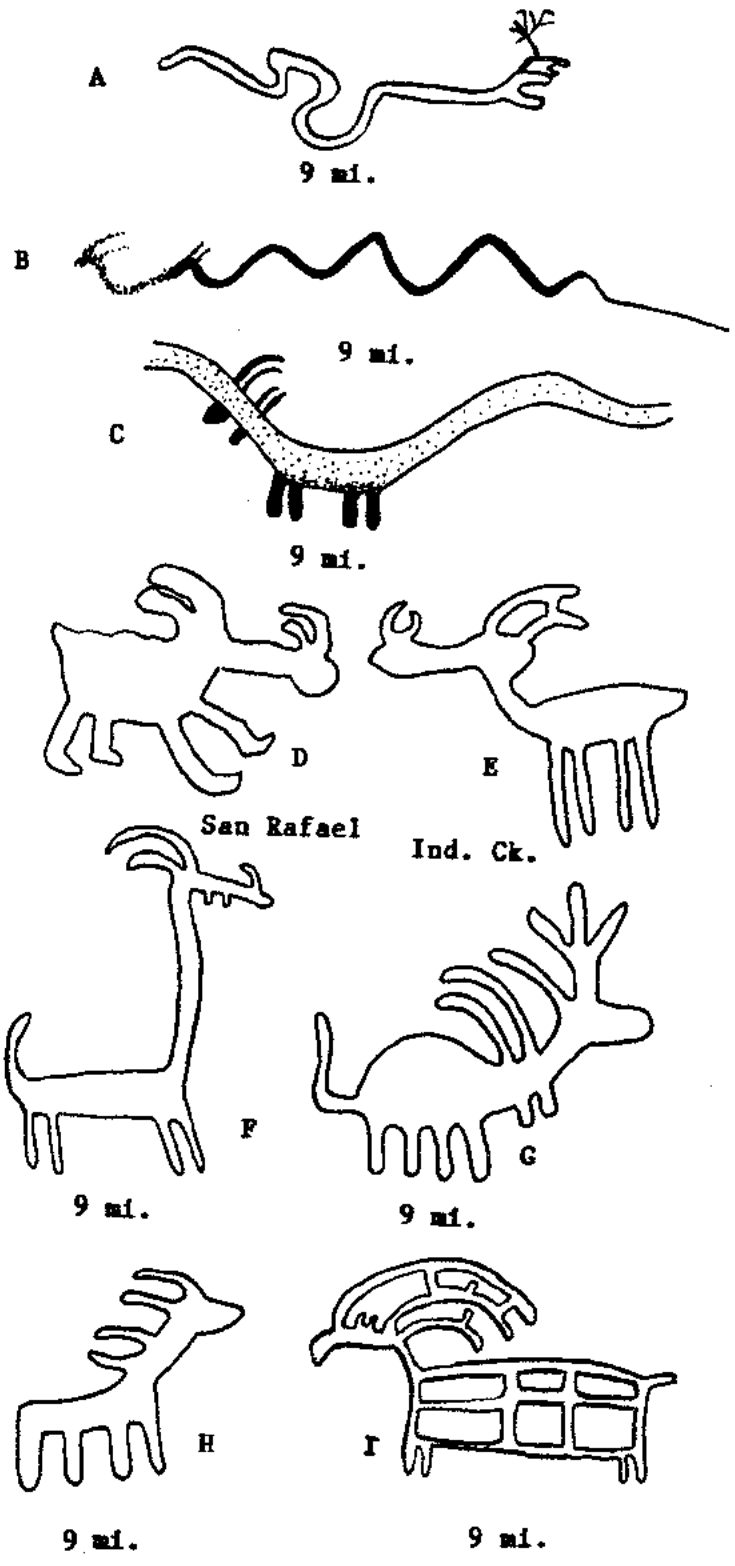
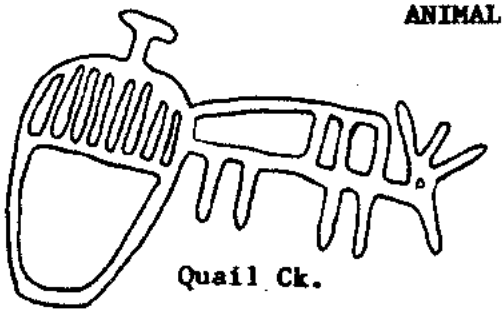
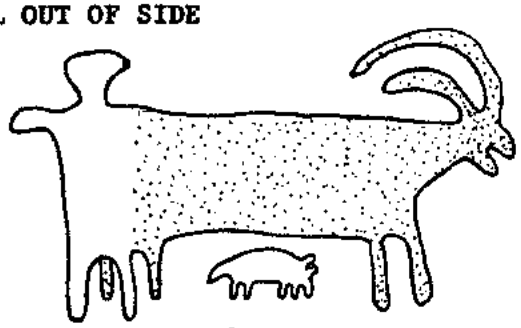


Figure 3C

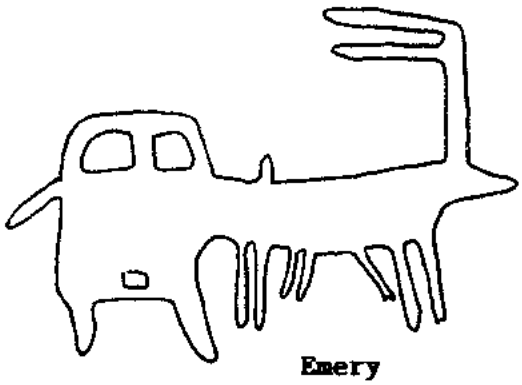
ANIMAL OUT OF SIDE



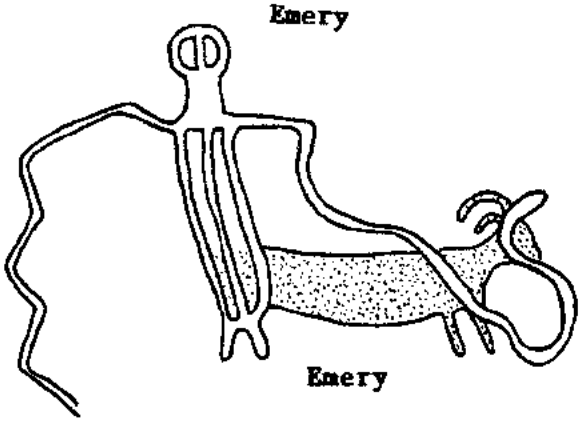
Quail Ck.



Emery



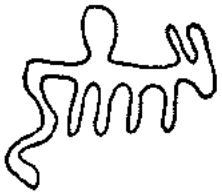
Emery



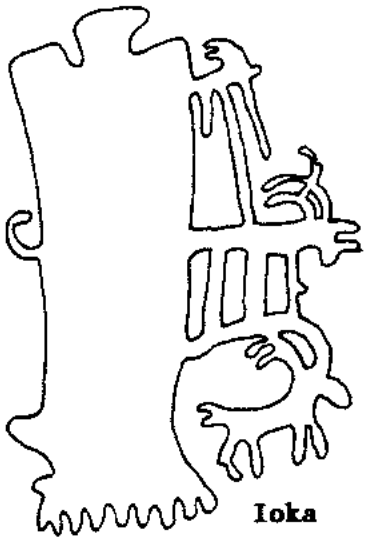
Emery

9 mi.

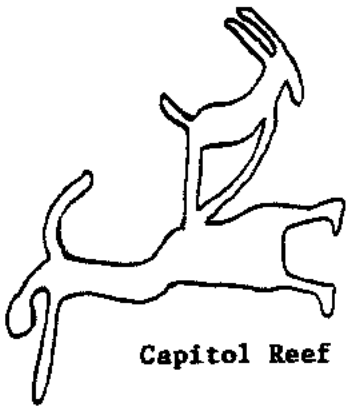
9 mi.



9 mi.



Ioka



Capitol Reef

Figure 4

MAN OUT OF TAIL

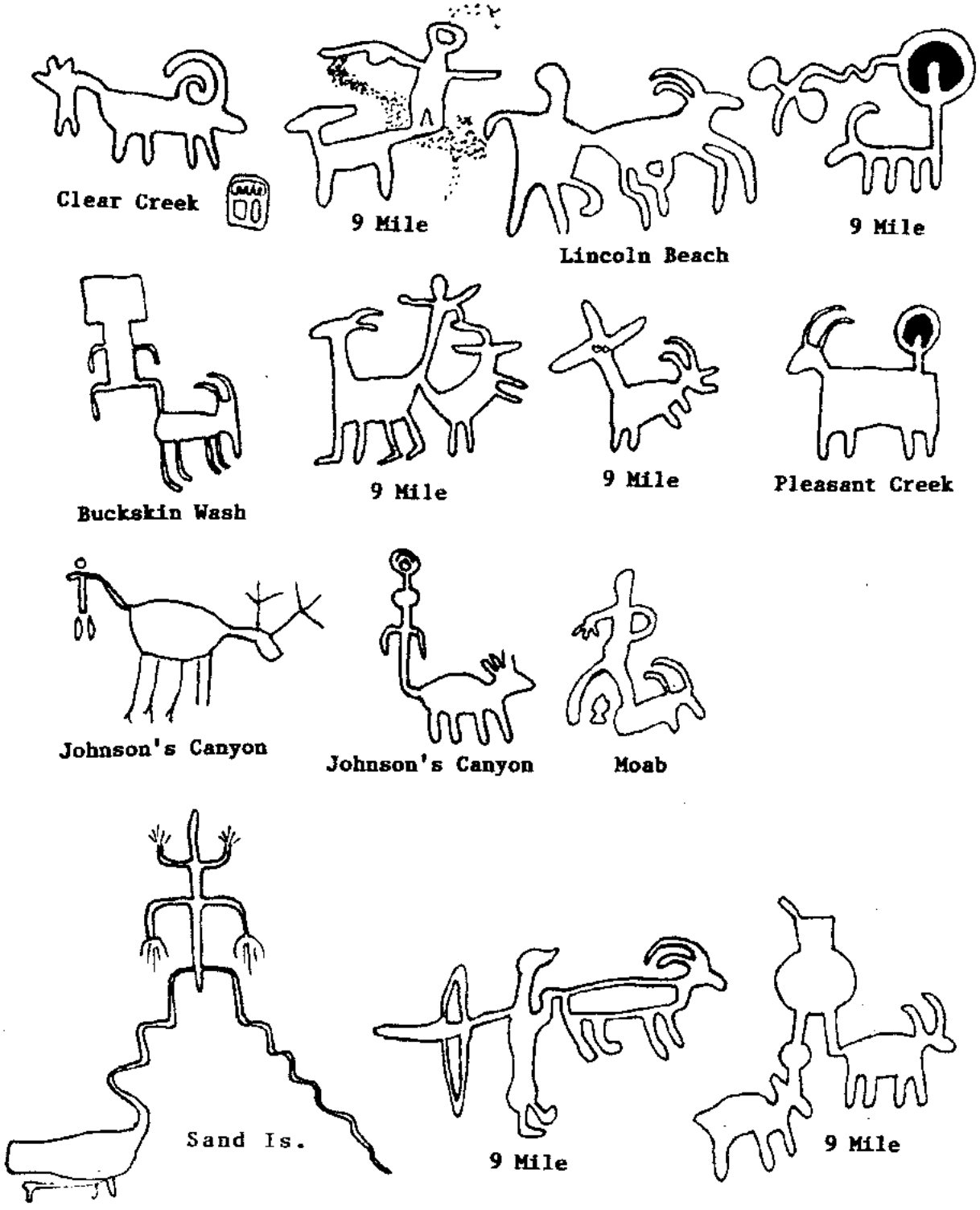


Figure 5A

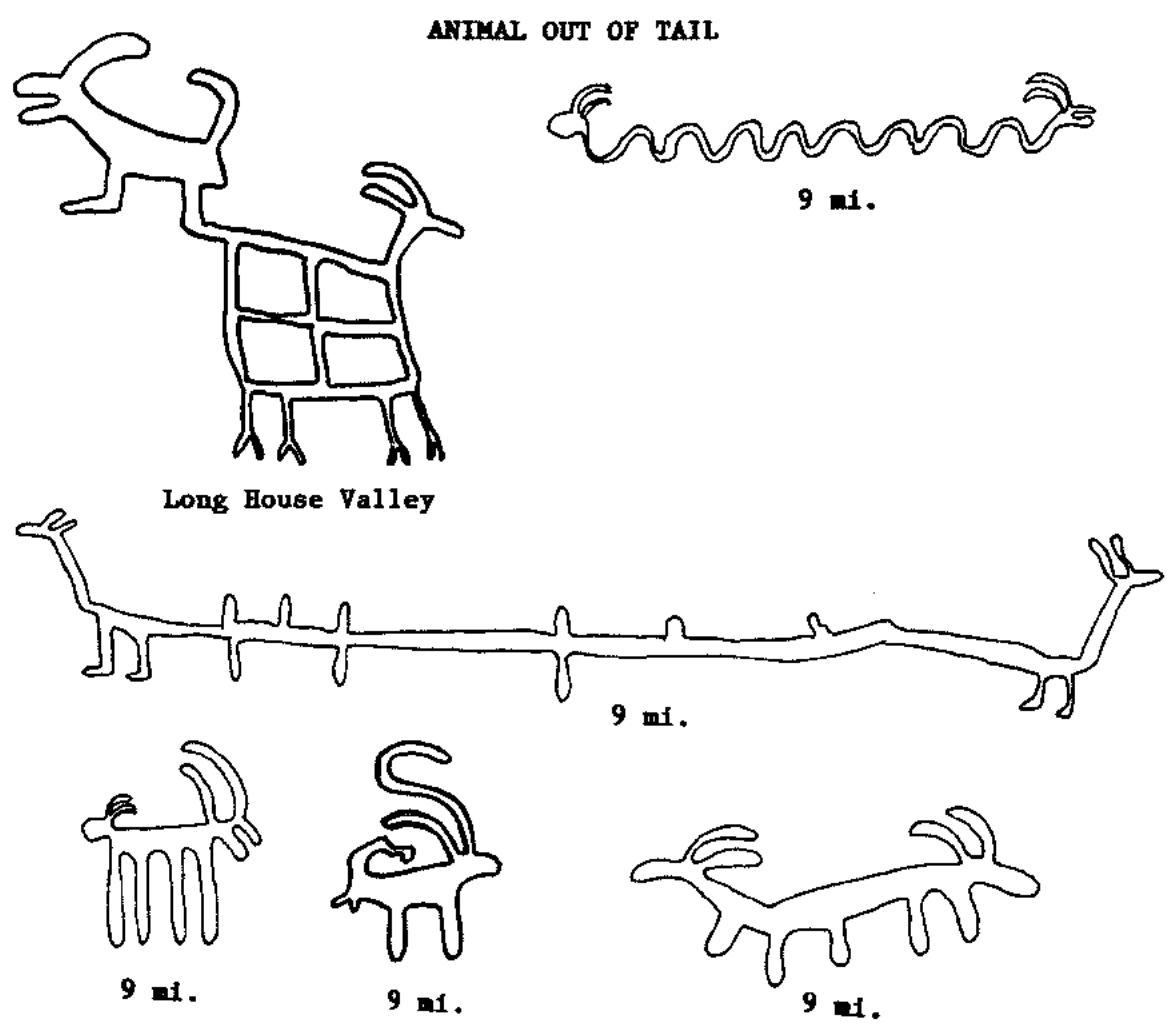


Figure 5B

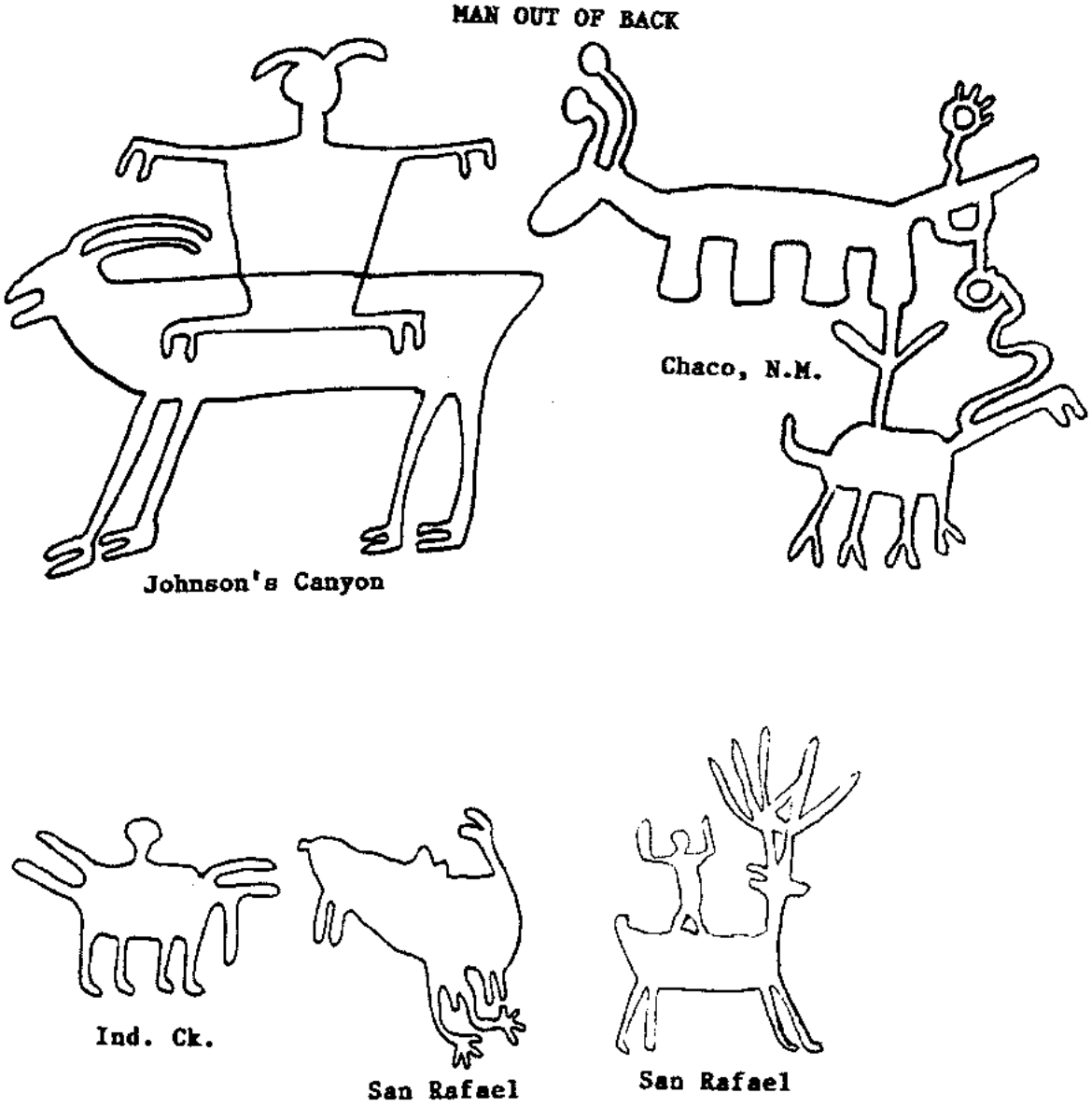

MAN OUT OF BACK
Johnson's Canyon
Chaco, N.M.
Ind. Ck.
San Rafael
San Rafael

Figure 6A

MAN OUT OF BACK

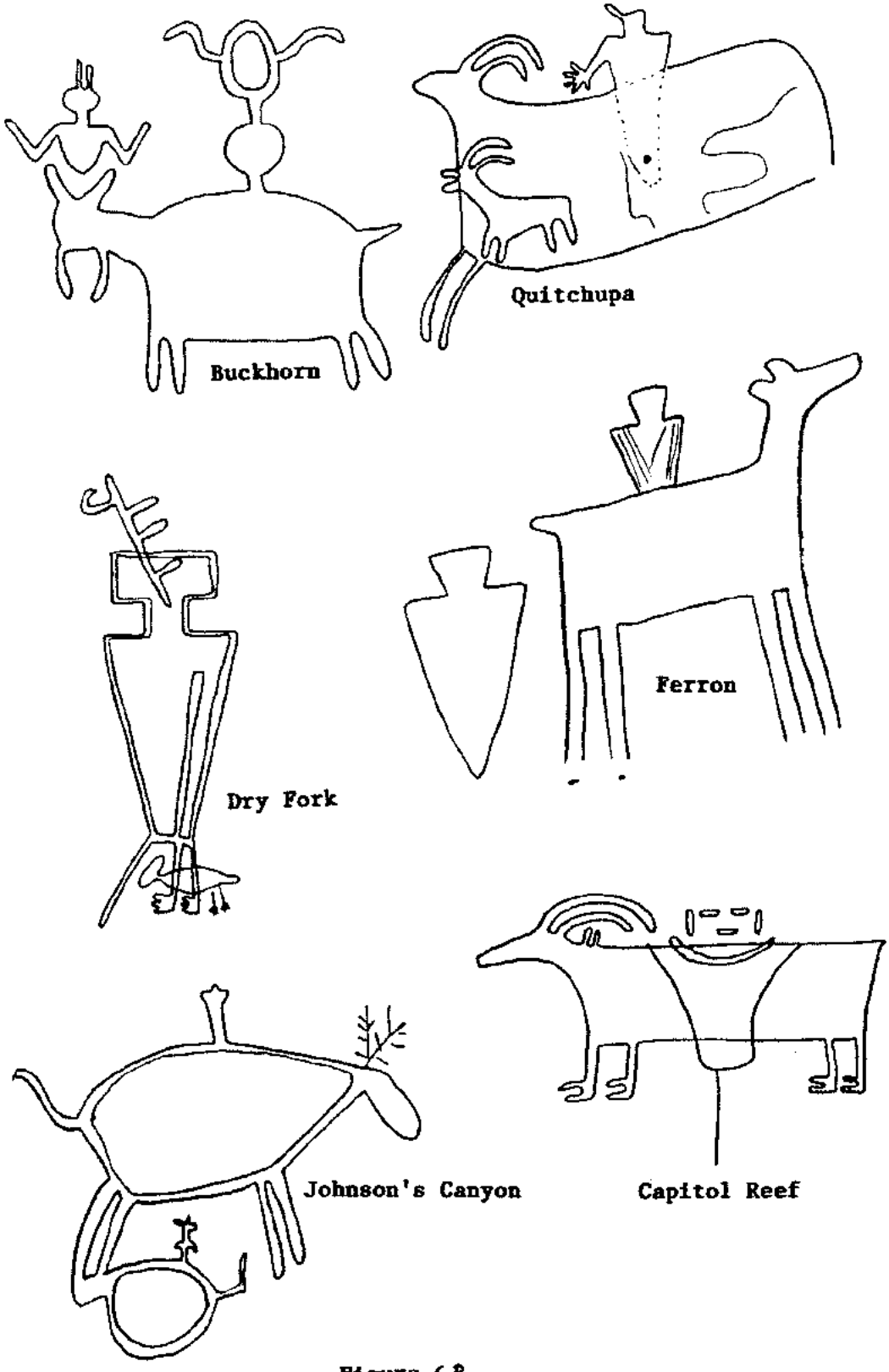


Figure 68

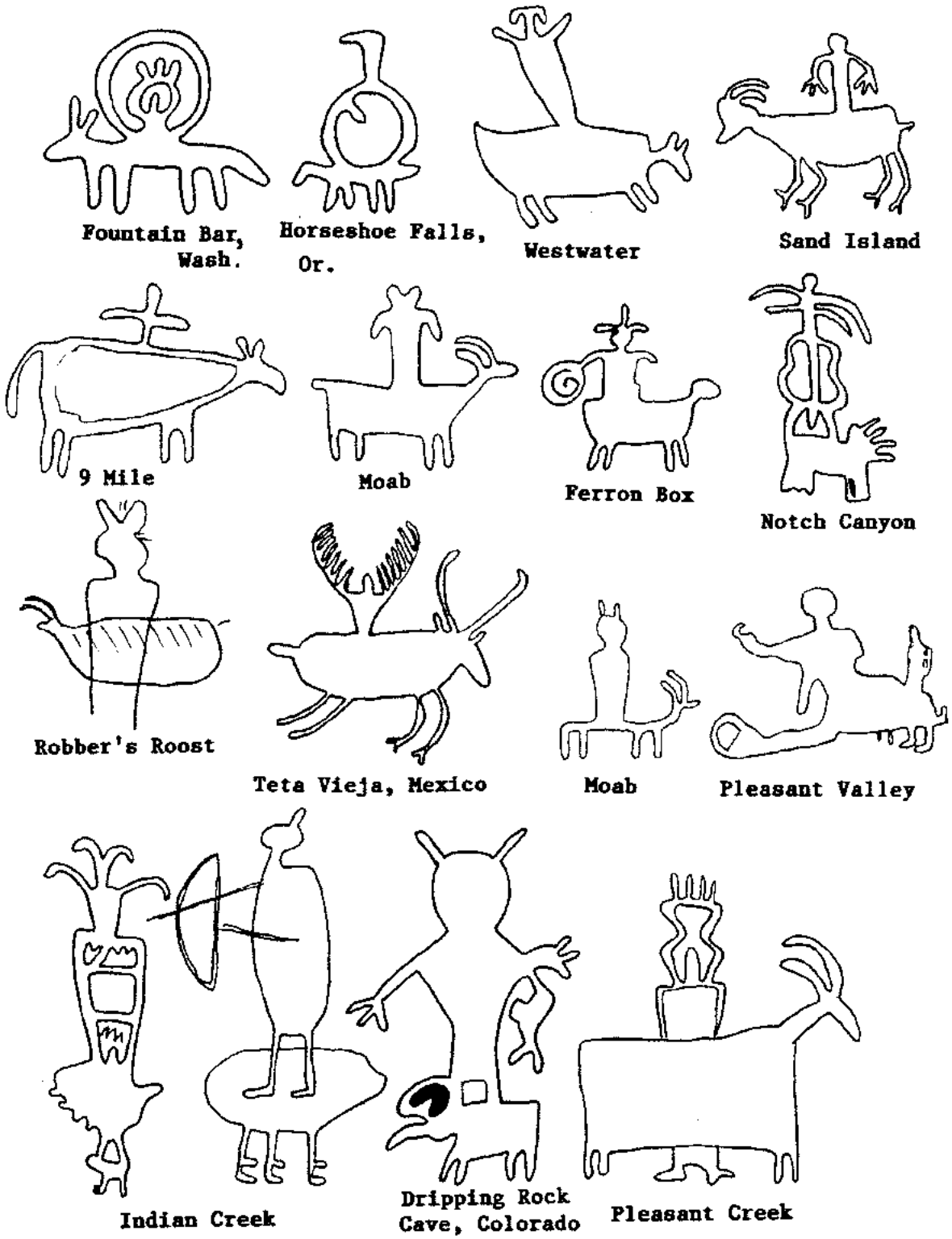

Fountain Bar, Wash.
Horseshoe Falls, Or.
Westwater
Sand Island
9 Mile
Moab
Ferron Box
Notch Canyon
Robber's Roost
Teta Vieja, Mexico
Moab
Pleasant Valley
Indian Creek
Dripping Rock Cave, Colorado
Pleasant Creek

Figure 6C

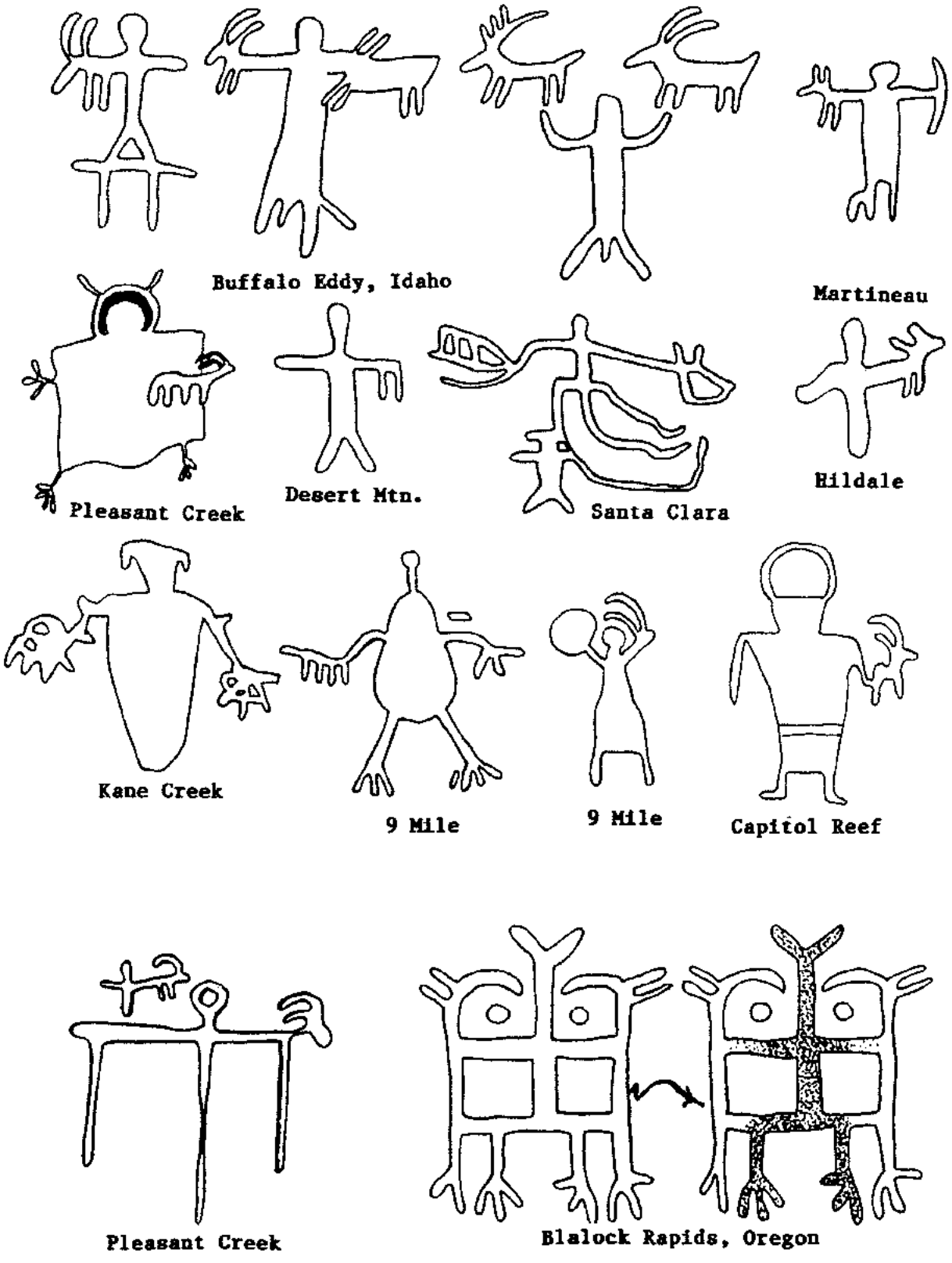
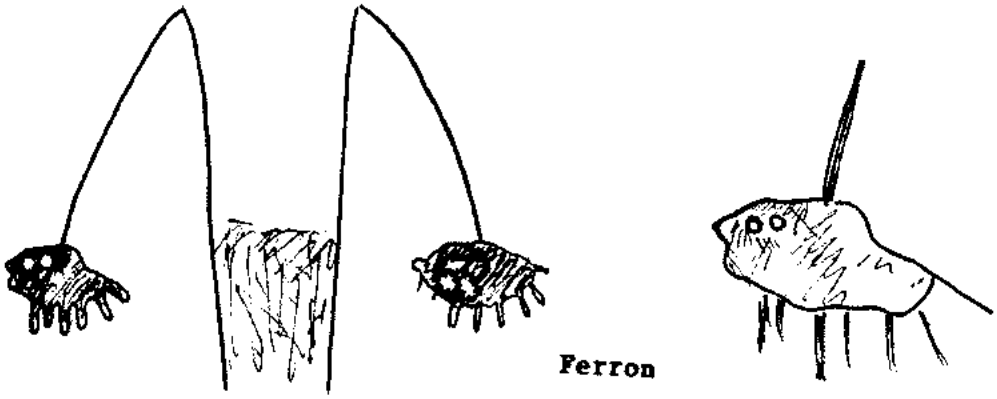
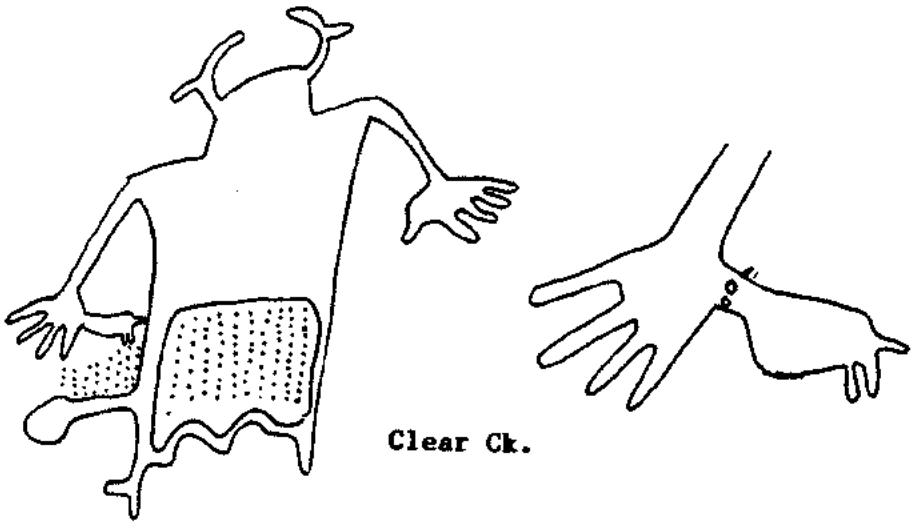

Buffalo Eddy, Idaho
Martineau
Pleasant Creek
Desert Mtn.
Santa Clara
Hildale
Kane Creek
9 Mile
9 Mile
Capitol Reef
Pleasant Creek
Blalock Rapids, Oregon

Figure 7

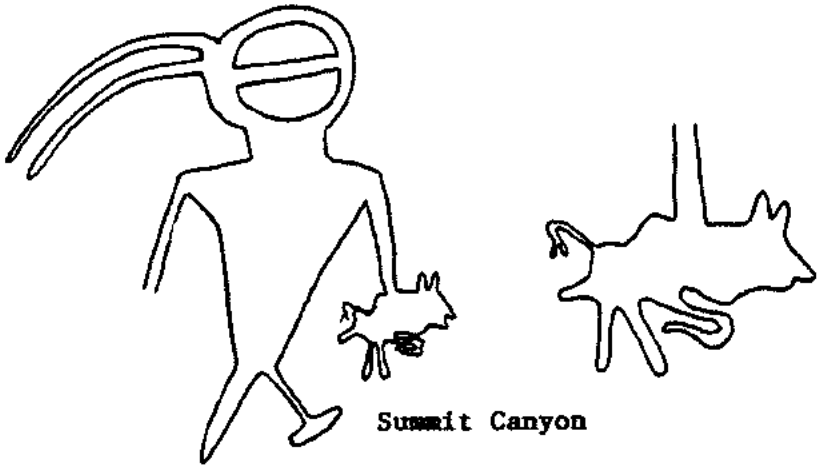
HAND IS ANIMAL



Ferron



Clear Ck.



Summit Canyon

Figure 8

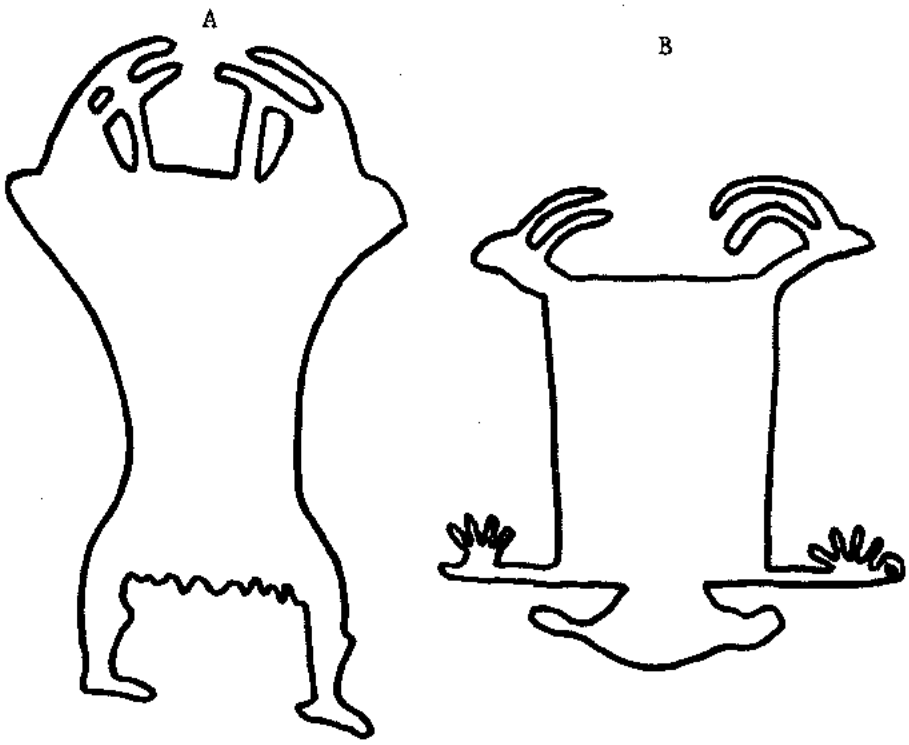
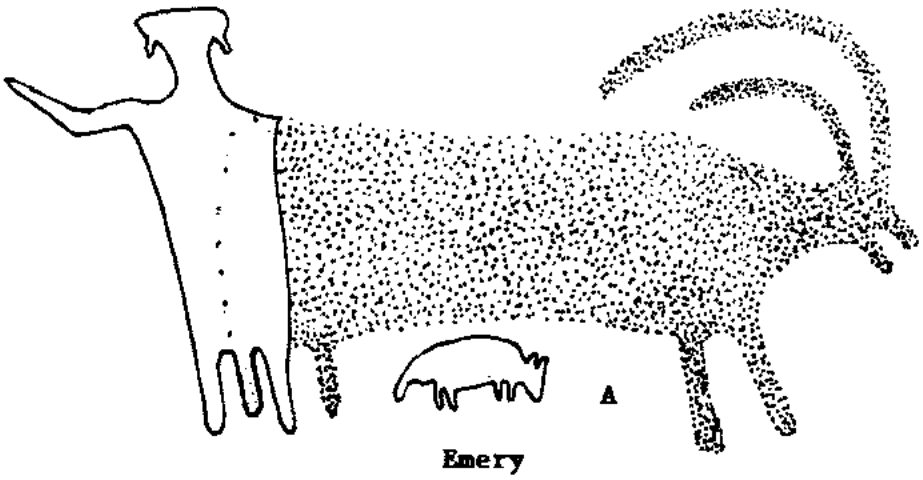


Figure 9



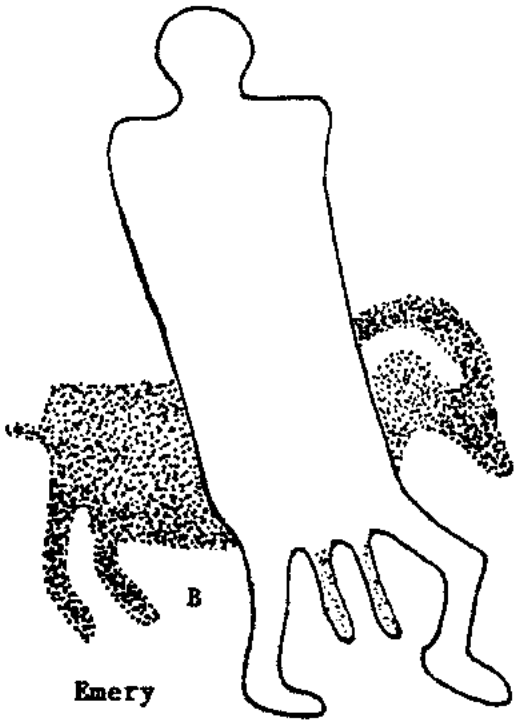


Figure 10

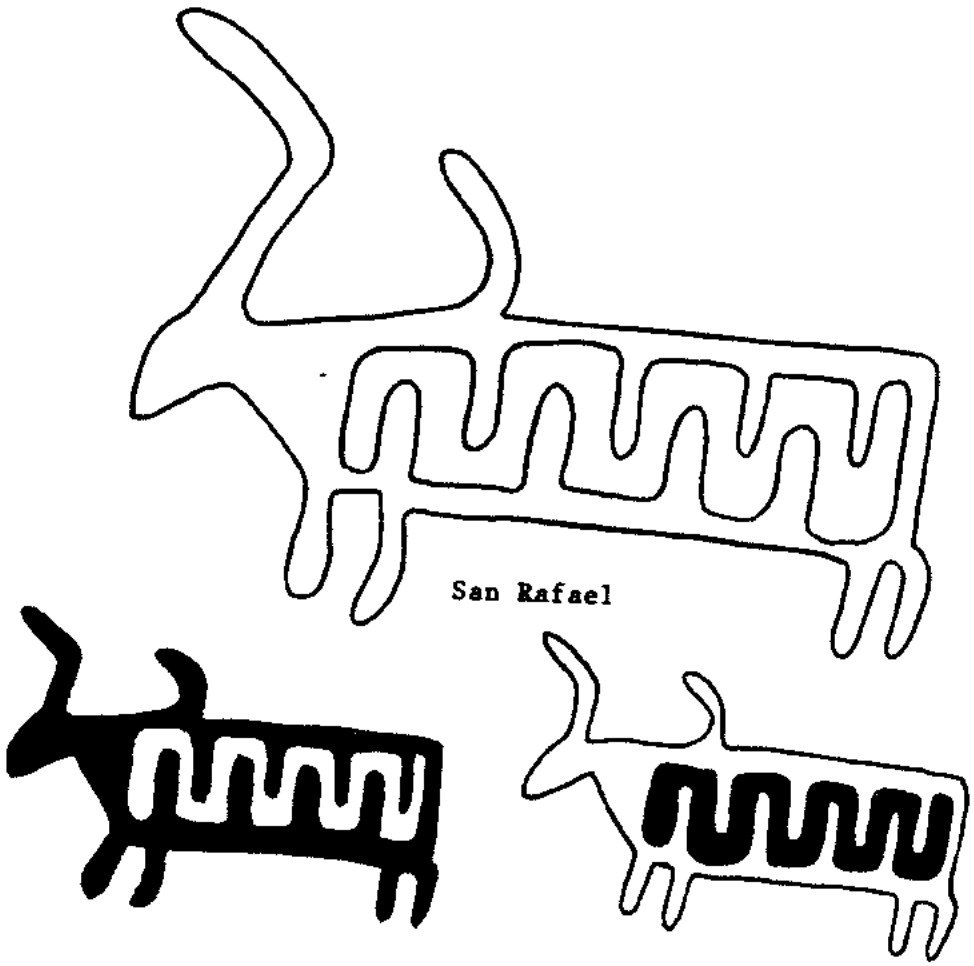


Figure 11 A

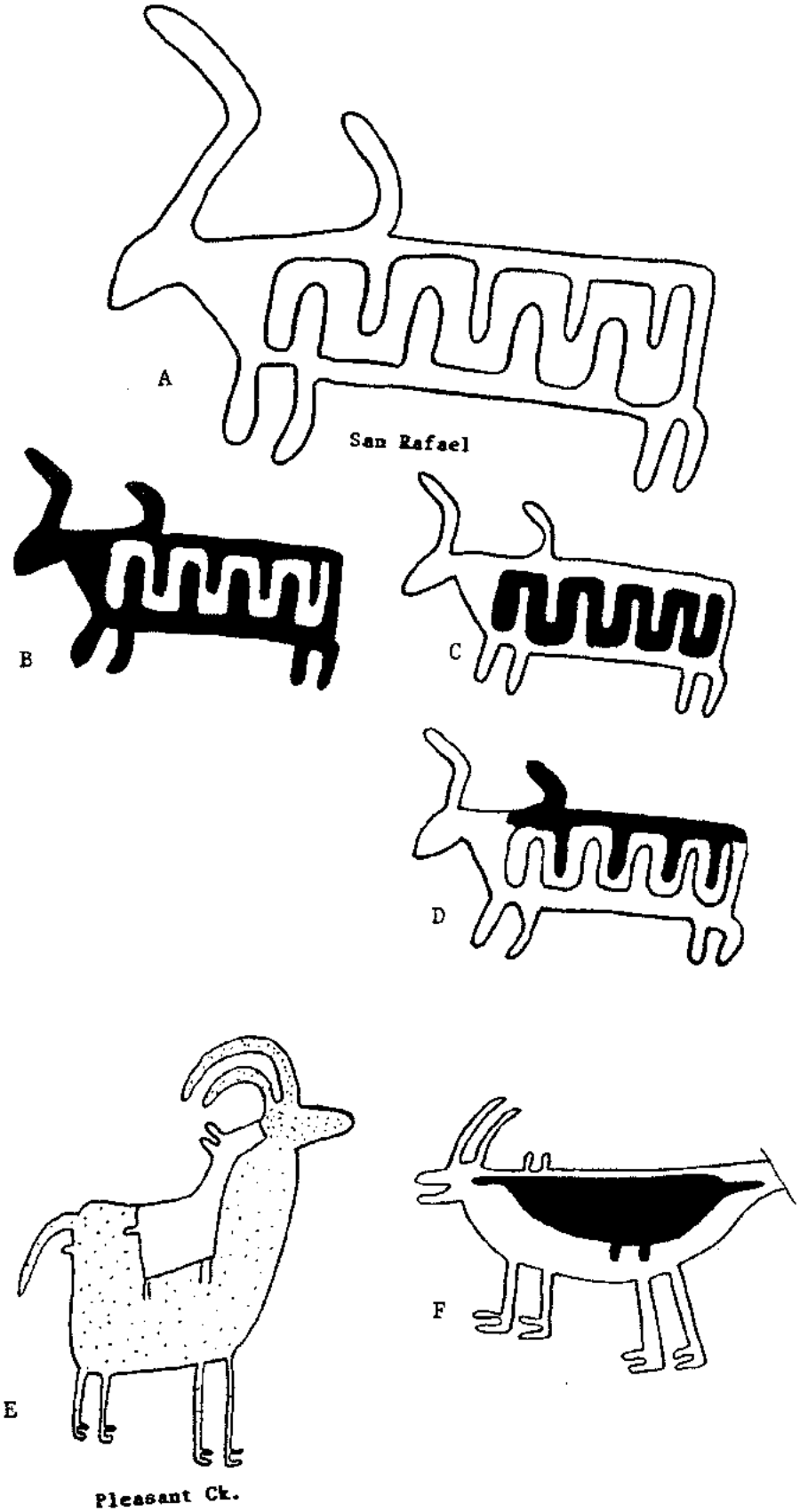


Figure 11 B

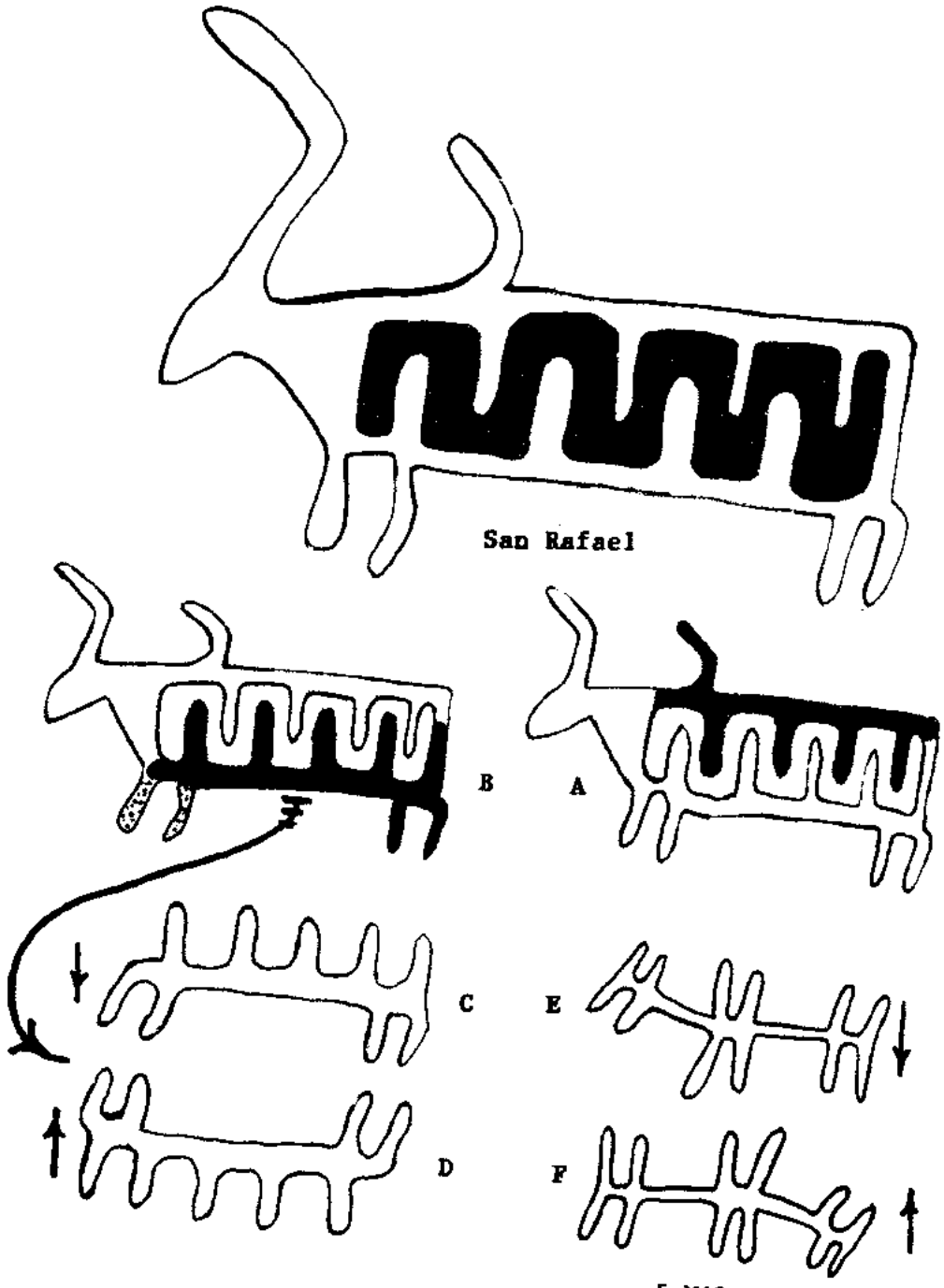


Figure 11C