

**Comments on the Cave Valley  
Style of Rock Art  
in Southern Utah and Northern Arizona**

Alex and Mary Patterson

The Cave Valley Style of rock art, named by Schaafsma in 1971, is found in southern Utah, northern Arizona, and elsewhere. Manning (1989) in his "Reappraisal of the Cave Valley Style" cites as important a recently-located petroglyph showing a stick figure drawn within a triangular-shaped Cave Valley Style anthropomorph. He suggests it represents "some type of covering or physical adornment, a robe perhaps or garment that covers the human figure." (Manning 1989:66) The authors propose tentatively that the covering is stone and that the triangular shapes of the covering represent a stone artifact called the tcamahia, found in Anasazi ruins dated to Pueblo II-IV. The tcamahia was used historically as a ritual object in ceremonies in the Pueblos, especially Hopi, where it was associated with Snake ceremonies, the Twin War Gods, and the Stone People, a mythical race from Below. Additional study is planned.

Named by Schaafsma in 1970 (Schaafsma 1970:116) the Cave Valley Style of rock art is characterized by squat anthropomorphs with triangular-shaped arms and legs and in some cases triangular bodies. See figure 1A-G for some examples at Cave Valley, Oak Creek Canyon, both in Zion National park, aa Gunlock site west of St. George, Pipe Springs in the Arizona strip and Marsh Pass, near Kayenta, Arizona.

Originally this style was thought to occur only in southern Utah and in the so-called Arizona strip. Castleton and Madsen in their paper "The Distribution of Rock Art Elements and Styles in Utah" in 1981 showed eight sites with this style in those areas. See Figure 1-H.

Steve Manning, in his paper in 1989 "A Reappraisal of the Cave Valley Style" indicates a much broader geographical distribution as well as quantity of sites. He counts about 75 sites found as far north as the Lehman Caves in Nevada, as far south as the Valley of Fire, and as far east as the Kaibab Plateau in northern Arizona. (Manning 1989:63).

He illustrates a figure found north of Kanab which he views as an "important discovery, and one that perhaps would help define the meaning of the triangular figures in the (Cave Valley Style). See Figure 1-I. He continues:

"Within the triangular outline was a stick figure of an anthropomorph. This figure is illustrated in a method reminiscent of a child drawing clothes on a stick figure. The triangular outline feature appears to be a representation of some type of covering or physical adornment, a robe or garment, that covers the human figure." (Manning 1989:66)

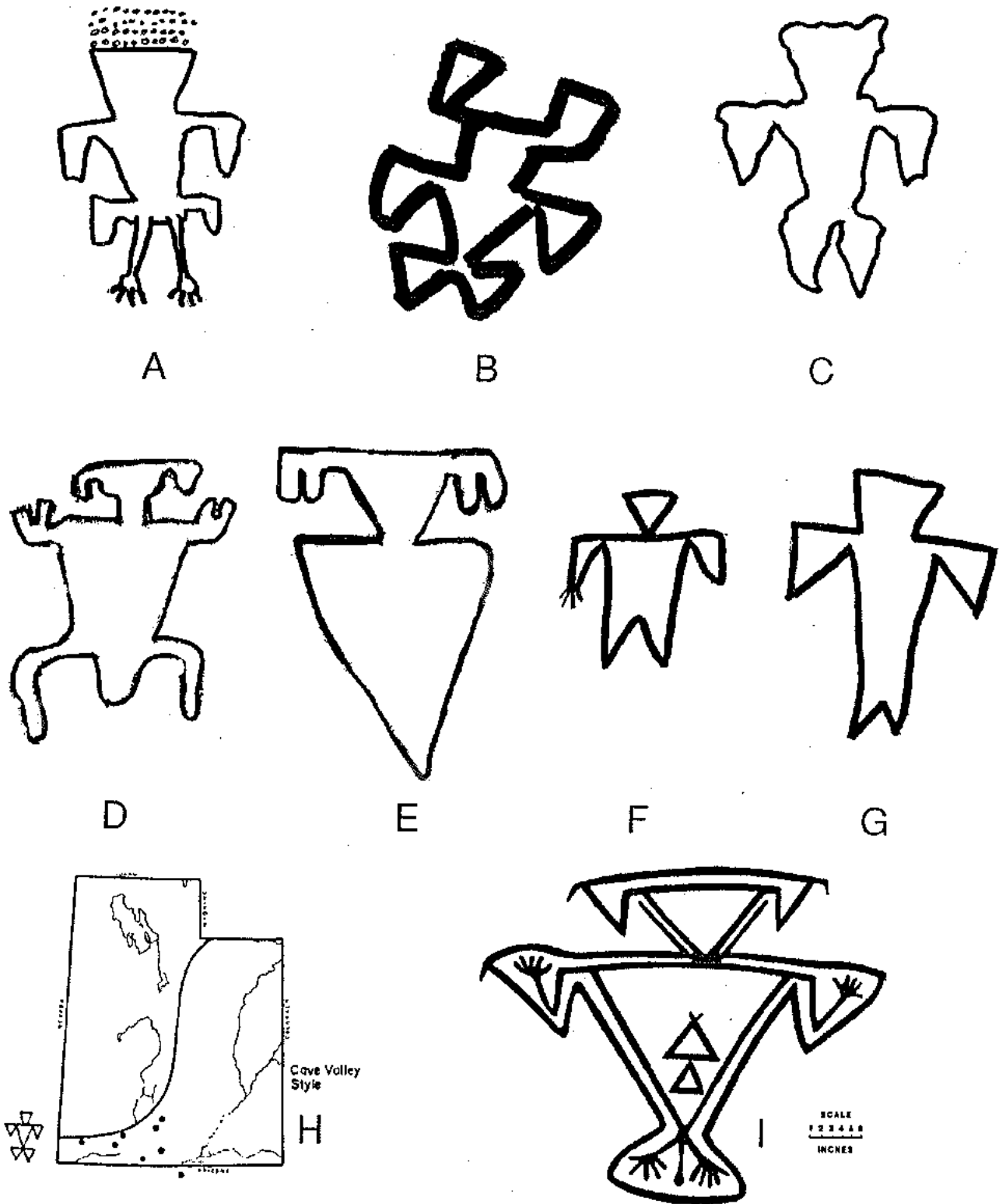


Figure 1--Examples of Cave Valley Style: A. & B. Cave Valley Cave, Zion National Park; C. Oak Creek Canyon Cave, Zion National Park; D. Gunlock site, west of St. George; E. Pipe Springs, Arizona; F. & G. Marsh Pass, Kayenta, Arizona. All slides taken by authors unless marked otherwise. Not to scale. H. Cave Valley Style sites from Castleton & Madsen 1981:171. I. "Man in a coat" petroglyph. from Manning 1989: fig. 2.

Manning found, what we think of, as a "key" glyph--one that unlocks the meaning of a particular figure or style. His is a very important find. My purpose today is to offer some tentative thoughts on the questions asked above by Manning in regards the meaning of his "man in a coat" glyph and the Cave Valley Style.

First what is the most distinctive feature of this Style? Opinions may differ, but we singled out the triangular-shaped arms, legs and in some cases, bodies. These appear to be, more or less, isosceles triangles with rounded ends, although there is much variation. Their length varies from stubby to extended, but usually the length is two to five times its greatest width. They generally have no hands or feet, although there are significant exceptions to this which we will address later.

What could these strangely shaped arms, legs and bodies mean? We decided to search through artifacts recovered from archaeological excavations in the Anasazi culture area for possible leads.

In Jesse Jennings' Prehistory of Utah and the Eastern Great Basin (Jennings 1973) we came upon an artifact that seemed too have a celt-like triangular shape similar to these arms, legs and bodies. Jennings called them "digging-stick blades or tcamahias." (Jennings 1978:125, Fig. 123f). Others called them "hoes." See Figure 2-A, B, C, D, and E. for examples from the Four Corners area, Walpi at Hopi, Museum of Pueblo Center, Albuquerque, and from Awatobi ruins, at Hopi.

To relate this tcamahia to the Cave Valley Style we had to understand it better: First, where was it found? Secondly, what dates can be ascribed to it archaeologically? Thirdly, what were its uses, particularly from a ritual and ceremonial point-of-view?

Woodbury described many hoes or tcamahias excavated from Awatobi ruins in Hopiland in a Pueblo IV time frame in his 1954 paper entitled Prehistoric Stone Implements of Northeastern Arizona. See Figure 2-E. He states that tcamahias appear to be chiefly a San Juan-Mesa Verde trait, which spread south into Chaco Canyon and via the Kayenta region into Hopi country. (Woodbury 1954:166).

How could they have gotten into southern Utah? Jennings attributes Coombs Village near Boulder, Utah to the Kayenta culture along with "over 300 sites on the Kaiparowits Plateau." "At Coombs Village, near Boulder, there was...strong ceramic evidence of trade and other contact with the Fremont peoples to the north and west." (Jennings 1978:125)

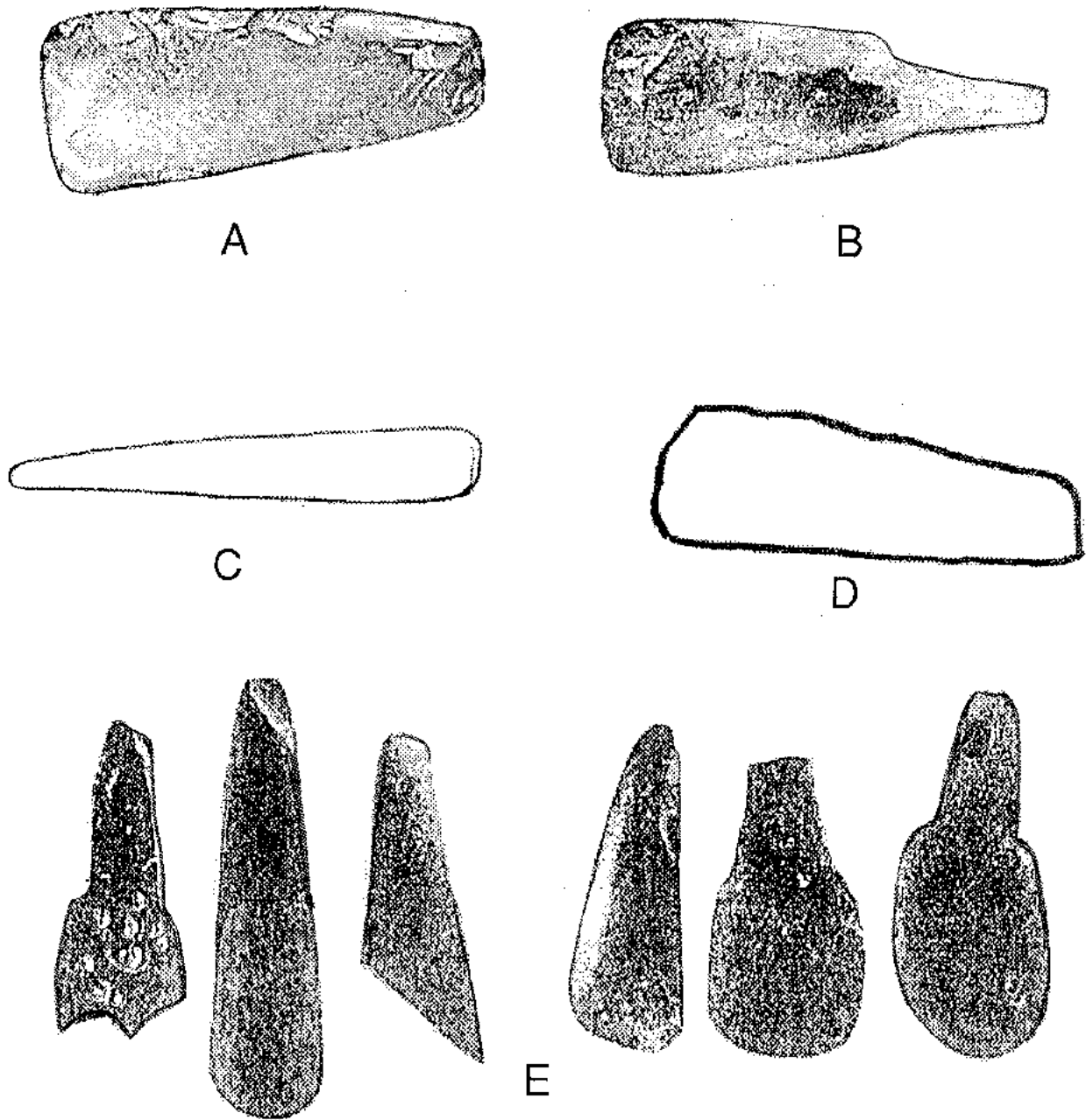


Figure 2--A. Digging-stick blade or tcamahia from Coombs Village, Boulder, Utah. from Jennings 1978:125 & Fig. 123. Approx. six inches long by two and one half wide. B. Tcamahia from kiva in Four Corners area. ten and one quarter inches long and three and three quarters inches wide. from Ellis 1967:37. C. Drawing of tcamahia from Antelope Kiva, Hopi, 1893, 17 inches long, four inches across one end, and one and one quarter inch across the other end. from Stephen 1936: Fig. 332. D. Tcamahia. from Museum of Pueblo Center, Albuquerque, NM. Approx. ten inches in length and three inches at greatest width. E. Tcamahias, Hoes (?), and Picks (?). from Awatobi ruin, Hopi. from Woodbury 1954: Fig. 35.

What archaeological dates can be ascribed to the tcamahia? Again Woodbury places them primarily in a Pueblo III time-frame; only the tcamahias found at Alkali Ridge near Blanding were ascribed to Pueblo II. However, tcamahias were found in the Grand Gulch which could not be dated with certainty. Woodbury also points out that tcamahias were often heirlooms, "brought from former settlements and cherished through the centuries because of their importance in ritual and ceremony," (Woodbury 1954:167)

What were the uses of this artifact? Woodbury divides these artifacts into two classes, i.e. those used in agriculture and those used in ritual, stating:

"While stone hoes with broad blades and narrow handles have continued in use until recent times in the Pueblo area as agricultural implements, the slender blades called tcamahias seem to have become symbols and ceased to be used as actual tools." (Woodbury 1954:166)

Florence Hawley Ellis in her 1967 article "The Use and Significance of the Tcamahia" also concludes that tcamahia were primarily dedicated to ritual and ceremonies in the Pueblos. For example, Fewkes in 1901 had counted "eighteen tcamahias on the Hopi Antelope altar (prepared for the Snake ceremonies)." See Figure 3-A. As to practical use Ellis states that "although originally used primarily in agriculture, (the tcamahia) now is used principally for digging up snakes"--which snakes in turn are used in the snake ceremonies. (Ellis 1967:35) Ellis points out that the Hopi Snake Priest of the Underworld is known as tcama'hia, "the spiritual chief of the Snake People".

More importantly for our study Ellis points out the reason for the reverence of the tcamahia in ritual and ceremony: first they were the weapons of the sacred War Twins and secondly they symbolized the mythical Stone People of the Four Directions. She quotes Alexander Stephen in his Hopi Journal in 1893 as follows:

"The old stone hoes are not called hoes, only tcama'hia...They are implement (hoe) and weapon (axe) combined; the war god's weapon--tcama'hia... The chama'hiya, the celts upon the altar, are from the Chiefs of the Directions... These are the very precious knives...of these deities, the sacred piercers fallen from the Above.

The chama'hiya shinyumu are originally the Stone People, Owa'nyumu, Owa'shinyumu, of the Stone when it had speech and life, and these people were spread to the four corners of the earth, and were known as follows: At northwest, Chama'hiya; at southwest, A'wahi'ya; at southeast, Yo'mahiya; at northeast, Chima'hai'ya. We pray for them to come from the four quarters". (Stephen 1936:625, 706)

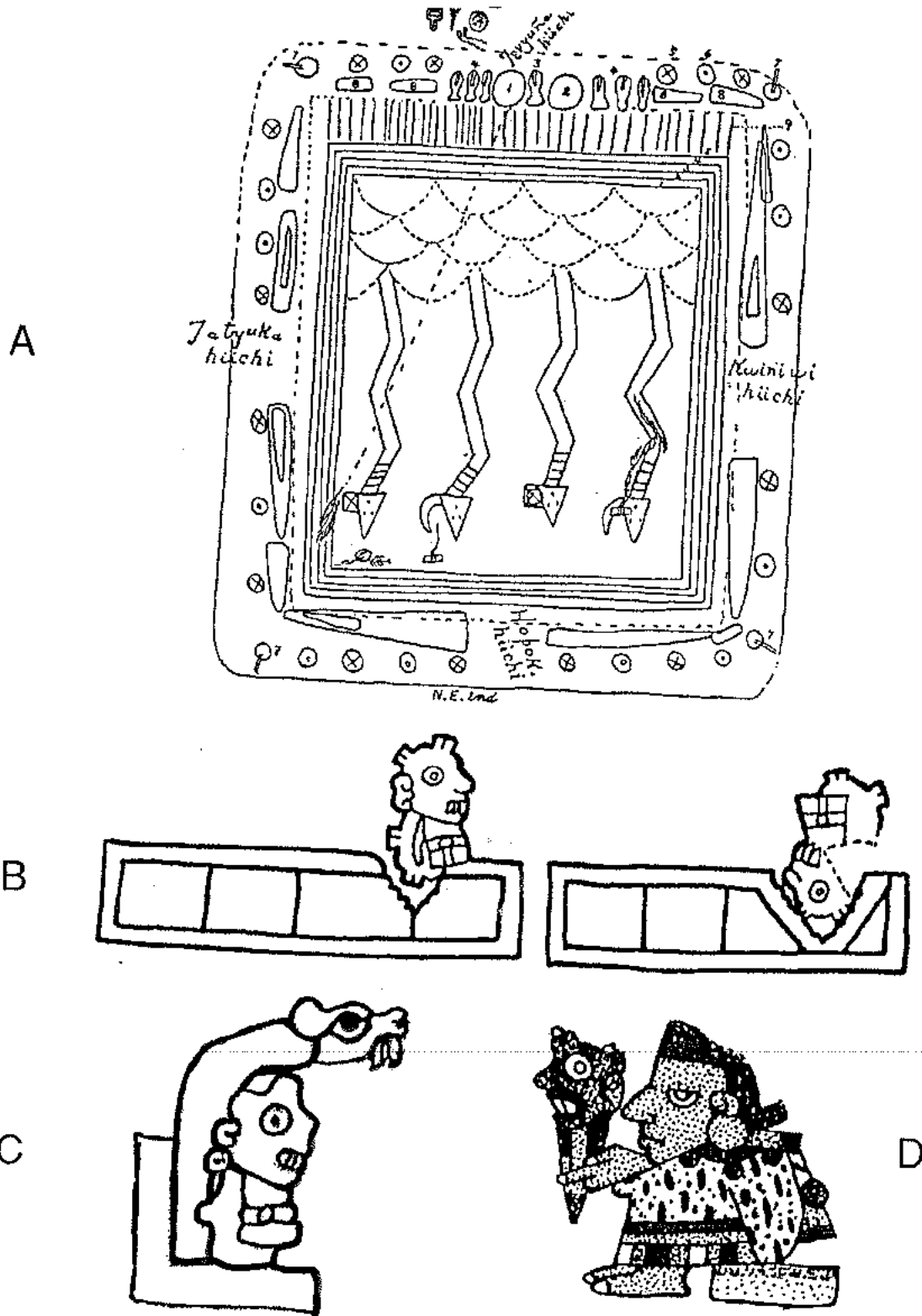


Figure 3---A. Antelope Altar. from Stephen 1936: Fig. 365. B. Xolotls rising out of and descending into objects. from Smith in Benson 1973:65. C. Xolotl associated with snakes. from Adelhofer 1963:44b. . D. Unnamed male holding xolotl staff. Bodley Codex 8-1. from Furst 1978:54

Alexander Stephen further explained the purpose of the tcamahia:

"The chama'hiya were very excellent...they well knew all concerning Snake ceremonies, they swallowed the snakes, as the Naso'tan swallow sticks... The snake went down into the stomach and was drawn up again, and rain speedily followed."

Another Hopi informant told Stephens: "The chamahia (sp) came from the Below, were at Toko'nabi (Navaho Mountain, Utah) and at A'kokyabi (Acoma, New Mexico)... They are lo'lomai, good, he says, and bring rain, but I can not make out whether or not he means people or stone celts." (Stephen 1936:745)

Ellis concludes her analysis of the tcamahia by saying it was probably used as a skinning knife... "The old stone tcamahia...would serve well in prying the skin from the flesh, even in scalping, without danger of cutting the hide... The use of the tcamahia as a skinning knife would fit the symbolic interpretation: i.e. as a skinning knife it could represent the spirits of (both) hunt or warrior personages." (Ellis 1967:42)

Next we found that the Twin War Gods occasionally turned people to stone. We asked ourselves "Was this the origin of the Stone People?" It wasn't clear. Parsons said: "Turning people into stone is a privilege of the war gods." (Parsons in Stephen 1936:144, Note 1) Stephen tells the story of two children from Walpi who, when beaten by their mother, left home, going up on the mesa by the house of the Twin War Gods. The Twins, learning that the children did not want to return home, invited them to sit down in the doorway of their house. When the children's relatives came looking for them, carrying prayer feathers and food offerings, and asked Pu'ukonhoya, the elder war god, for the children's return, the War God said that "he was satisfied with these two children and he turned the children, the food, and food vessels into stone and they are still there up on a Hopi mesa." (Stephen 1936:143-4)

As a counterpoint to this discussion of the tcamahia we quote the comments of Karl Luckert in his Olmec Religion (1976) where he cites the Great Serpent as a key player rather than the Twin War Gods:

"Very fascinating, though in the reports somewhat muddled and not understood, is the subject of the tcamahia. These, according to Hopi tradition, are remembered both as people and as sacred stone celts. As people, they know the snake ceremonies, they swallow snakes, and they are vaguely associated with Acoma, Laguna, and the distant Land of Red. As spirits they come to the altar in answer to prayers, they invoke the clouds, In their concrete form, however, they are ceremonial celts which are placed around a sand painting of the Snake ceremony. These celts belonged to the Stone people at a time when stones still had speech and life. Now

they represent how, axe, and weapons of the Great Serpent. In this manner they are also the precious knives of the Chiefs of the Directions--also sacred piercers which had fallen from above." (Luckert 1976:153-154)

So what might we conclude from this discussion on the tcamahia? In the Pueblos the tcamahia seems intimately associated with the snake and snake ceremonies, the Twin War Gods and the Stone People. Putting the snake association aside for a moment, could the "man in the coat" glyph which Manning found stand for a War God or a Stone Person inside a "coat" of stone shaped like tcamahias?

Are there any precedents for Stone People--a concept new to us? We found several and offer two examples--one from Mesoamerica and another from Wyoming.

Mary Elizabeth Smith in Benson's Mesoamerican Writing Systems (Benson 1973) proposes that certain figures found in 13th century Mixteca codices from southern Mexico are "stone men." These figures are called Xolotls and like these from the Vienna Codex (See Figure 3-A) are described as "bald, armless and legless figures with fangs in their open mouths, round eyes and paper banners around their necks," often seen ascending from or descending into various objects as here in and out of the earth. (Smith in Benson 1973:65) The volutes around the body suggest roughness or even stone. These figures are often seen associated with snakes as in Figure 3-C. Finally they may be part of an object such as this staff or celt--as in Figure 3-D. Smith cites Dominican friar Antonio del los Reyes (1980:i-ii) writing in the 16th century to the effect these may be the original or "true" Mixtecs who "emerged from the center of the earth" and were called tai nuhu or "men of the earth." (Smith in Benson 1973:68-70)

Much closer to home in Wyoming among the Wind River Shoshoni the rock art style called the Interior Line Style by Gebhard and Cahn (1950) and Gebhard (1969) may relate to stone people also. Ake Hultkrantz, the renowned Swedish anthropologist, who lived with the Wind River Shoshoni in the 1940s and 1950s writes about these figures from Dinwoody Canyon--See Figure 4-A--as follows:

"The high mountains were formerly haunted by dangerous spirits, the dzoavits or pandzoavits. They were humanlike monsters made of stone (author's italics) with stone packs on their backs, but their faces and hands were of soft material. They ate people and could come to the camps to do so. It was risky to talk to them. Most Shoshoni we asked said that this kind of spirit is extinct nowadays. However, they may exist underground and underwater."

Despite the above Stone People are not found extensively in southwestern ethnology and myths. The Twin War Gods and Snakes figures are. Can we associate these two concepts in rock art with the Cave Valley Style?



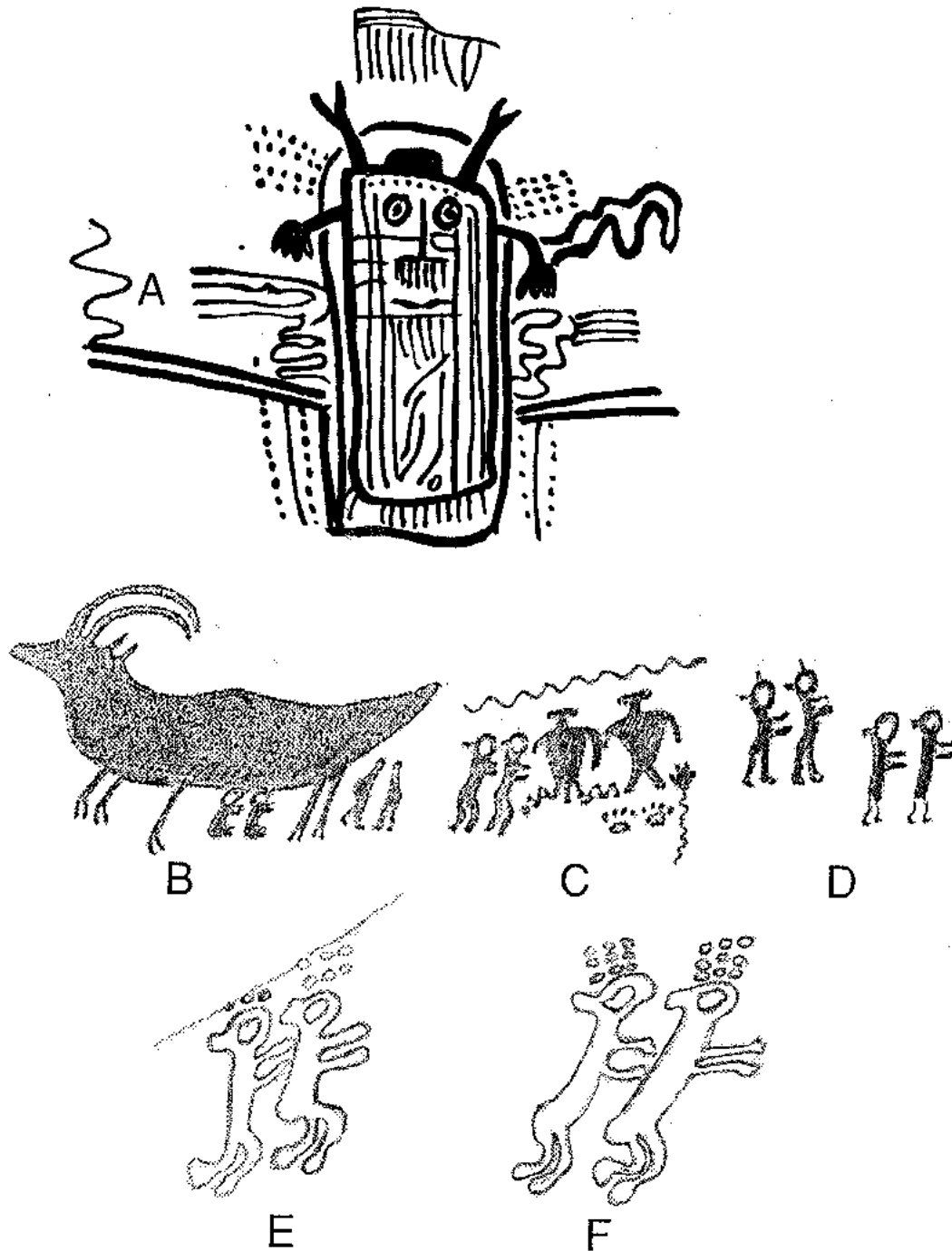


Figure 4--A. "Spiritual power radiates like electricity from *pandozoavits* (depicted here in a rock drawing), the dangerous, mysterious ogre and visionary spirit of the Shoshoni." from Hultkrantz 1987:50. B. War Twins nursing under mountain sheep. from Harris 1981:Fig. 1. C. War Twins passing large figures. from Harris 1981:Fig. 3. D. War Twins on way to adventures. from Harris 1981:Fig. 8. E. War Twins under mountain sheep as in B. above, showing dots over heads (telephoto lens used). F. War Twins passing large figures as in C. above (telephoto lens used).

To begin with, interpretations of the Twin War Gods in rock art are scarce... In fact the only interpretation of the War Twins we know of, involving Anasazi rock art, is the one done by James R. Harris in 1981 entitled "The War Twins Petroglyph and a Tentative Interpretation." The panel in his study is near Rock Ruin, Kachina Bridge, Natural Bridges National Monument, Utah. He proposed that the five pairs of stick figures, four of which are shown in profile with a circle head and tab pointing to the rear, are representations of the War Twins in various adventures. (Harris 1981:Figs. 1,3, & 8). From his article are two pairs of twins under a mountain sheep, one pair passing two large figures and two pairs on additional adventures. See Figure 4-B, C, & D.

Now we would like to show you two pair of these figures from the Rock Ruin site taken with a telephoto lens. See Figures 4-E & F. This pair (4-E) under the mountain sheep have dot patterns over their heads. These merge with the pecked body of the sheep so we can't count the dots clearly. In 4-F we see another pair with the dot patterns clearer. Our count is nine dots in three rows of three over each figure.

Back at the Cave Valley Cave in Zion we searched for paired figures with dots. We used Roland Wauer's 1965 drawings of this site for this study. (Wauer 1965) See our Figure 5-A, B, C, D, & E. We found a pair of Cave Valley Style anthropomorphs (5-A) with their left hands raised, fingers outstretched--and having dots over each of their heads. Counting Wauer's dots over the heads of the figures the left figure has 10 dots and the right figure six dots, three on each side of a center ellipse, which at one time may have been three dots. As far as dots are concerned the Rock Ruin figures with nine dots over each head in the east almost match this pair of figures with ten and either six or possibly nine dots at Cave Valley in the west. Could these Cave Valley figures somehow relate to the eastern pair that have been interpreted as the War Twins?

Now we address this upraised hand figure--usually the left hand--along the Utah/Arizona border. We called these the Waving Men. Besides the original pair from the Cave Valley Cave, we found four more at the Cave Valley Cave. See Figures 5-B, C, D, & E. There was one (5-F) at Oak Creek in Zion, one (5-G) at Skutumpah, one at (5-H) at Marsh Pass near Kayenta, Arizona, several (6-A) at the Processional Site on Comb Ridge, one (6-B) at Cannonball Mesa near Hovenweep National Park, and finally one (6-C) at the Cliff site east of Bluff.

This latter pair of small anthropomorphs at the Cliff site (6-C) have circular heads with a tab, triangular legs, and one big hand upraised--the left one--fingers outstretched. They seem very similar to the Cave Valley pair, except for the absence of dots over the head and the shape of the head itself. With their triangular legs and trapezoidal body they could even be termed Cave Valley Style anthropomorphs.

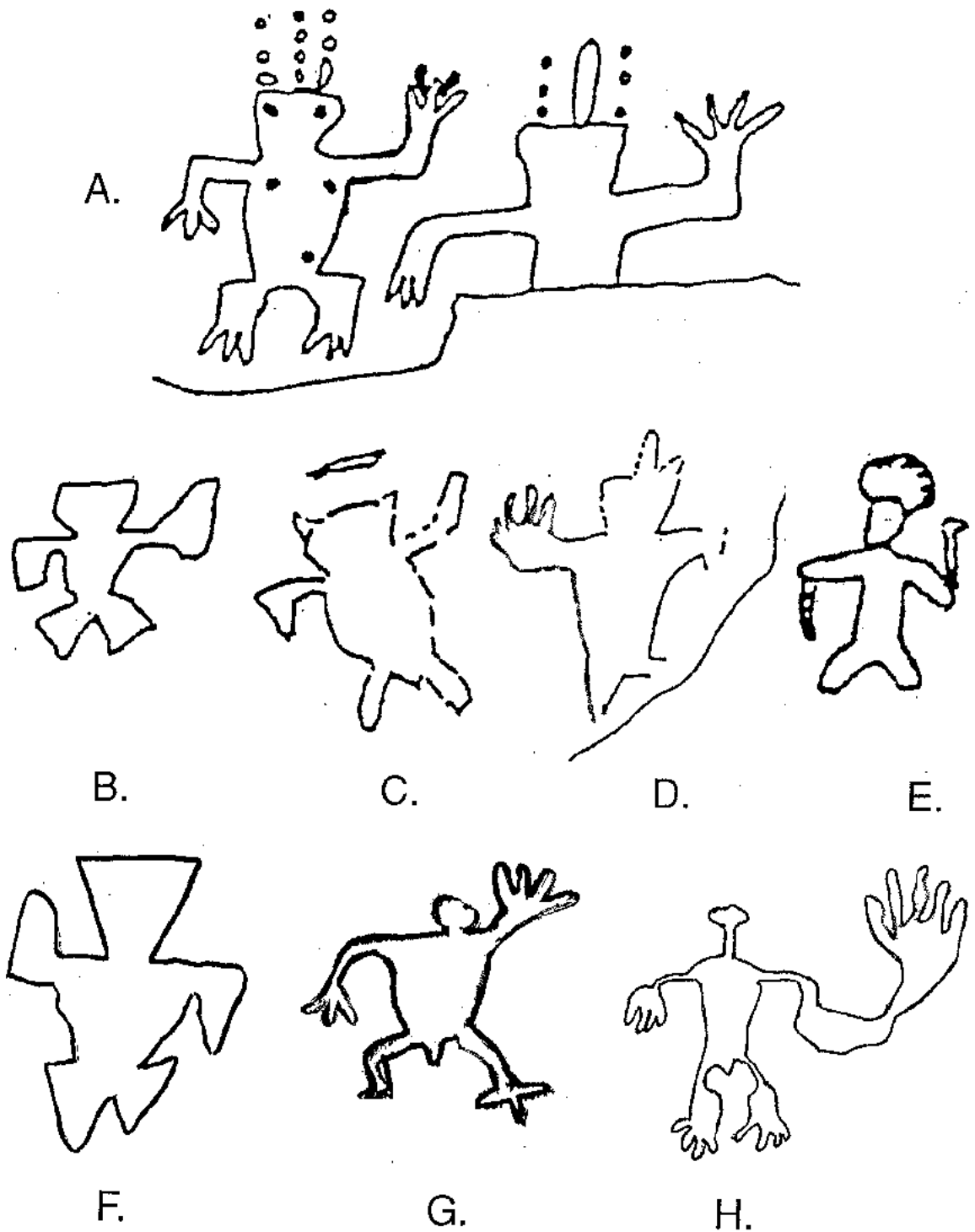


Figure 5--A. Pair of Waving Men with dots over heads at Cave Valley Cave, Zion National Park. from Wauer 1965: Fig. 3. B. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965: Fig. 4. C. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965: Fig. 4. D. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965: Fig. 3. E. Waving Man (?), same site, from Wauer 1965: Fig. 3. F. Waving Man from Oak Creek Canyon, Zion National Park. G. Waving Man from Skutumpah, Utah from Castleton 1987:Fig. 6.29. H. Waving Man from Marsh Pass, near Kayenta, Arizona.

However, the shape of these heads--the circle with tab--matches those on the five pairs of twins Harris had interpreted as the Twin War Gods at Rock Ruin in Natural Bridges, 30 miles to the north. Have we closed the trail of pairs from Rock Ruin in the east to Cave Valley in the west, using the dot motif, from Cave Valley in the west back to the Cliff site in the east, using the waving man motif, and then from the Cliff site in the east north to Rock Ruin with the circle with tab heads on the pair? If Harris was correct in his interpretation of the War Twins in the first place at the panel at Rock Ruin, then dots, waving men, and circle with tab heads all may be somehow designators or modifiers of the images of the Twin War Gods.

Finally we turn to the Snake Ceremony and its possible relation to the Cave Valley Style.

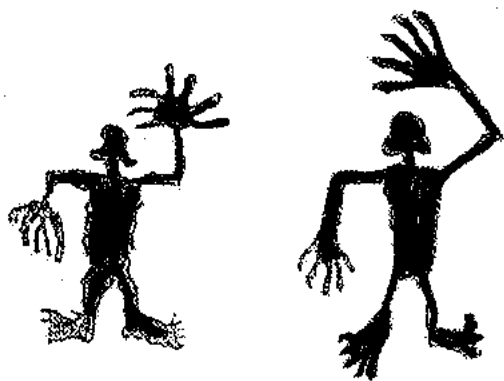
We have been particularly intrigued by one of the figures at the Cave Valley Cave site. It is a representation of a Cave Valley Style figure with something in or on its mouth. Schaafsma (1970: fig. 123) shows the figure with the typical flat-topped head and truncated body and appendages--but with zig-zag line across the face, about where the mouth might be. See Figure 6-D. Upon seeing this glyph in the dim light of the cave we immediately thought of the Snake Ceremony of the Hopis where live snakes are held in the mouths of the participants.

Then we came across this photo of a diorama done at the Smithsonian Institution of the Hopi Indian Snake Dance (Luckert 1976: fig. 56). see Figure 6-E. Note that all participants have a white line painted horizontally across the face under the nose, including the women who are sprinkling corn meal on the snakes. The pictograph in the cave with the zig-zag white line across the face could represent either this face painting or the snake in the mouth of the participants of the snake ceremony. In either case this pictograph at Cave Valley seems to link the Cave Valley Style to the Hopi snake ceremonies which were dominated by the presence of the tcamahia.

Much work lies ahead in this tentative study of the Cave Valley Style and the tcamahia. We must add many more sites to our inventory. We must investigate more stone artifacts from excavations along the Utah/Arizona border to determine if more tcamahias are present. We must pursue the motifs that seem prevalent in connection with the Cave Valley Style--the waving men, the dot patterns and the circle head with tab (and there are others not considered herein)--and attempt to understand these.



A.



B.



C.



D.



E.

Figure 6---A. Waving Men at Processional Site on Comb Ridge, near Bluff, Utah. B. Waving Men at Cannonball Mesa, near Hovenweep National Park, Colorado. C. Waving Men at Cliff Site, east of Bluff, Utah. D. Figure from Cave Valley Cave, Zion, with horizontal zig-zag in face. from Schaafsma 1971:116. D. Hopi Indian Snake Dance from Smithsonian Institution. from Luckert 1976:Fig. 56.

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## Figures

### Figure 1.

Examples of Cave Valley Style: A. & B. Cave Valley Cave, Zion National Park; C. Oak Creek Canyon Cave, Zion National Park; D. Gunlock site, west of St. George; E. Pipe Springs, Arizona; F. & G. Marsh Pass, Kayenta, Arizona. All slides taken by authors unless marked otherwise. Not to scale. H. Cave Valley Style sites from Castleton & Madsen 1981:171. I. "Man in a coat" petroglyph, from Manning 1989: fig. 2.

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### Figure 5.

A. Pair of Waving Men with dots over heads at Cave Valley Cave, Zion National Park, from Wauer 1965:Fig. 3.; B. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965:Fig. 4.; C. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965:Fig. 4.; D. Waving Man, same site, from Wauer 1965:Fig.3.; E. Waving Man(?), same site, from Wauer 1965:Fig. 3.; F. Waving Man from Oak Creek Canyon, Zion National Park; G. Waving Man from Skutumpah, Utah from Castleton 1987:Fig. 6.29.; H. Waving Man from Marsh Pass, near Kayenta, Arizona.



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