

# Maybe I'm Amazed: *Comparisons of Maze Imagery in Southern California and the Southwest*

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I can think of several classifications of images within the native American "rock art" context which consistently evoke a relatively heightened initial level of inquiry and attention: hand prints; ornate anthropomorphy; and, "maze" patterns. One merely has to observe the reactions of people who view such images for the first time—their questions, study of detail and the overall cognitive-emotive impact reveal their intensified fascination. Elaborate anthropomorphs promote inferences of behavior, status or function. Hand prints afford a more personal connection and inclusive ceremonial context to ponder. A maze-like pattern tends to convey a premeditated order and intricacy which induces a sense of mystery, a design challenging for a corroborating piece of material culture or solution. I continue to be no less vexed by the type, distribution and enigmatic nature of maze-like imagery.

The following serves as a descriptive review of design commonalities and variances found between the "mazes" of coastal-inland southern California and a few selected examples from Utah and Arizona. It is tagged by a brief discussion regarding several of the most often advanced origin, function, and diffusion hypotheses for the maze concept. It is not an enlightened analytical attempt. Actually, the notion for this presentation was spawned by a field trip to the Arizona Strip during the URARA symposium in Kanab, Utah. Members of our group encountered a relatively large solitary white pictograph (Figure 1), prominently placed high on a cliff face, which struck

me as reminiscent of the "maze" designs that occur in significant density in coastal-inland Southern California, my neck of the woods. Being so inspired, I sought to review my inventory of "mazes" for comparisons. A significant hurdle in such a review was, "What qualifies as maze imagery?"

For various reasons, most always *subjective*, certain Native American rock images transcend the description of geometric rectilinear or curvilinear, blanket or pottery pattern, and assume the somewhat indelible moniker of "maze." Very few of these images, and only one in Southern California, actually possess a "solution" in the contemporary sense that an identifiable pathway leads to an objective, thus qualifying it as a *true* maze. An author's choice to use the "maze" description is largely a function of their background and research

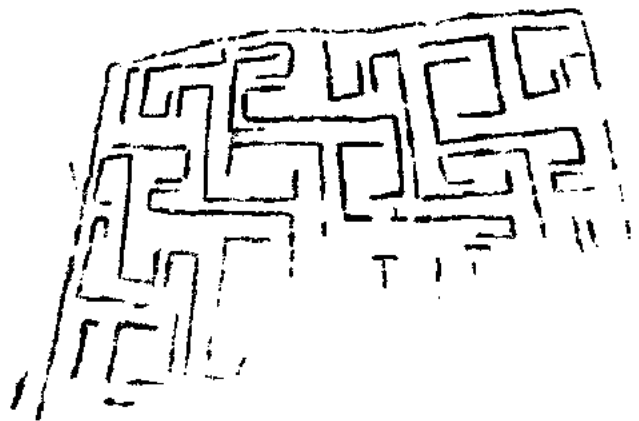
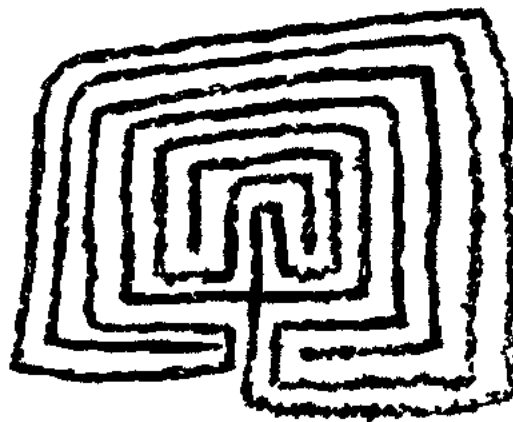


Figure 1. A large white pictograph "maze" located on ranch property in the Arizona Strip region.

focus, the motif's initial visual impact, how it contrasts with adjacent and regional imagery, and the affiliated group's prehistoric or historic artistic material legacy. The use of labels such as "blanket," "basket" or "pottery" to differentiate these geometric designs have been convenient at times given contemporary correlative data. Indeed, several researchers (e.g., Schaafsma 1987) have provided compelling links between certain culturally specific textile or ceramic motifs and regionally correlative "maze-like" rock imagery. However, the broad-brush interpretive value of such labels is tenuous when one considers the potential variances in antiquity and provenience of Native American rock imagery, let alone the highly questionable confidence level that exists with iconographic interpretation. Additionally, labels establishing a perceived association with various material culture media avoid the notion of whether or not these images emerge out of a similar concept or function. Other issues such as the prerequisite level of intricacy, possession of single (unicursal) or multiple (multicursal) pathways, lacking or possessing false turns, and so forth, cloud the delineation and usage of *maze* terminology. Having gone through this obligatory, albeit brief, terminology diatribe, perhaps a better question to ask is, "Does a literal application of the term 'maze' in rock art really matter?" Well, perhaps it does.

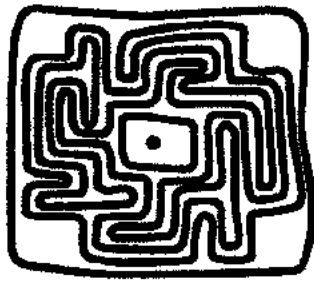
The known or hypothesized origins and meanings of mazes or maze-like designs appear sporadically in the literature—particularly those focused on the Old World (e.g., Bord 1975), or more locally, relating to the Hopi or Pima beliefs (e.g., Grant 1967:65-66). Common themes of European maze interpretation include: journey; the hereafter; death and rebirth; exclusive entry; and ceremonial dance (Bord 1975). The available interpretations of North, Central and South American maze designs generally trend toward representing life's pathway and rebirth, with the maze itself symbolizing Earth Mother (Waters 1976:23-25). The nesting of a cross or swastika design within the maze pattern has further broadened the interpretive possibilities to include cardinal directions, the phases of life, or itself symbolic



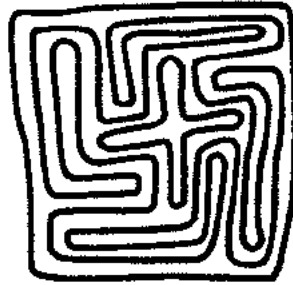
*Figure 2. A rectilinear version of the "Minoan Maze" pattern located near Orabi, northeastern Arizona. The outwardly pointing end of the interior cross is incorporated into the maze pathway, exactly like the circular versions. The Hopi name for this design is Tāpu 'at (Waters 1976:23).*

of Father Sky (Bush 1990). For the Hopi, both a square and round form of the highly stylized and reported Minoan labyrinth (e.g., Grant 1967:65-66; Bord 1975) encapsulates the "whole myth and meaning of the Emergence," and the design itself (Figure 2) is referred to as the "Mother Earth" symbol (Waters 1976:23). Subtle variances in interpretation exist between the Hopi square and round maze versions, including the circular type symbolizing the extent of traditional Hopi lands (Waters 1976:24). Interestingly, it has been suggested that the distribution of maze-like designs in coastal-inland Southern California may suggest tribal or subgroup boundary markings (Joseph 1974:47).

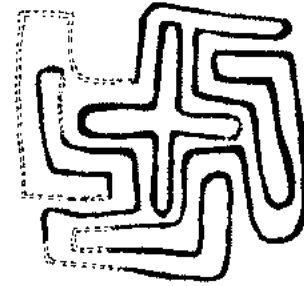
Hedges (1979:56) describes the southern California area known as Rancho Bernardo as the "florescence" of large scale geometric and maze-like imagery, thus becoming the type site designation for the style name. References to the Rancho Bernardo images date back to the work of Mallery (1893:62-64) and Steward (1929:88-90), and were first seriously investigated by Malcolm J. Rogers during the 1930's while based out of the San Diego Museum of Man (Hedges and Hamann 1987). Due to the consistency, proximity, condition and uniqueness of the Rancho Bernardo designs, the notion of a single "artist" or group could not be ruled



*Hemet Maze, CA-RIV-20*



*Ramona Maze, CA-RIV-1138*



*Mt. Russell Maze, CA-RIV-464*

*Figure 3. Comparison of three similar design concepts in southern California petroglyph mazes. The dotted line projections on CA-RIV-464 are after McCarthy (1988).*

out for a significant portion of the area's maze-like paintings (Hedges and Hamann 1987:14).

I'll attempt to describe some of the mazes, from a composition perspective, that occur in coastal-inland southern California and compare them with a selected group from the Four-Corners region. I credit John Rafter (1983) for introducing me to the utilization of an artist's perspective in viewing and comparing maze designs, and Ken Hedges (1979) for pioneering the style description, analysis and distribution of maze-like imagery in Southern California. My goal here is to stimulate more comparisons and discussions of these enigmatic motifs. Perhaps, at some point, a coherent classification schema will be developed for such designs.

Hopefully, this will unveil greater insight into their form and function, or at the very least, tighten up a rather loose nomenclature.

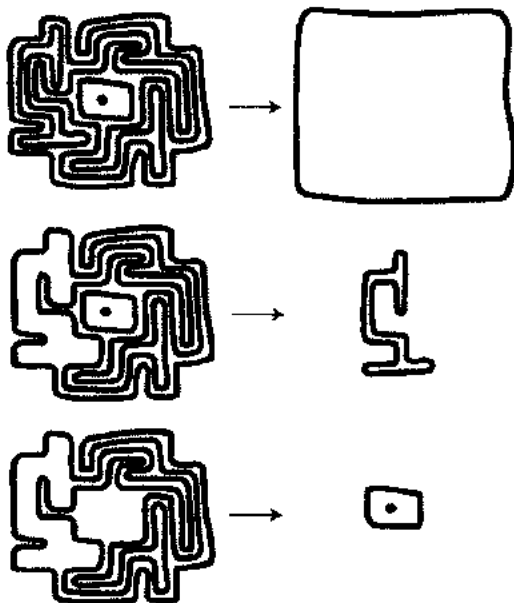
### Southern California Maze-Like Designs

#### Petroglyphs

*The Hemet Maze Stone, CA-RIV-20.* This is the most familiar of the maze-like designs in Southern California (Figure 3), having attained the distinction of California Historic Landmark No. 557. It has been set aside within a small county park (unfortunately closed indefinitely due to lack of funding and frequent illicit activities). It is a deeply carved and well executed petroglyph with atypically broad lines, curiously located in a region where petroglyphs are infrequent.

Over the years, speculation regarding the origin of the Hemet Maze has run the gamut from shipwrecked Buddhist missionaries (Weight 1955), to the "Cascadians" of 15,000 years ago who were once thought to be Mayan ancestors (LeBaron n.d.), to the work of local stone workers before the turn of the century. Perhaps the earliest *balanced* opinion was presented by William Duncan Strong in the 1920s, who after making comparisons with petroglyphs from a broad regional context, suggested that the Hemet maze may date back 2,000 years (Weight 1955). These factors continue to contribute to occasional questions regarding its authenticity as a Native American production.

Rafter (1983) points out that as a result of the even density and balance of the Hemet



*Figure 4. Progressive breakdown of the Hemet maze design into constituent contiguous line elements (after Rafter 1983).*

Maze's lines, it produces an even "color" effect for the motif. In Figure 4, the Hemet Maze is sequentially broken down into its continuous line components. By removing the constraining square border and the inner square with a dot, the bulk of the design is one continuous line joined end-to-end (Rafter 1983). It has been suggested that the double-ended "T" component has special significance (Rafter 1983; Smith and Turner 1975:81), but it is my view that it is most likely a natural consequence of the overall design. There exists an unobstructed path from the top of the design to the central square, qualifying this image as a true maze (Rafter 1983). I should note that the authenticity of the dot in the center has been rebuked as a bullet hole by at least one local historian (Jennings 1994). Early photos confirm the dot's presence back to at least the 1920's.

The authenticity of the dot has interpretive significance in that it *may* represent the "navel" of the earth or "death" if one should attempt establishing a parallel of its design concept to local sandpainting imagery (Kroeber 1925:664). The non-connected border may correlate with sandpainting symbolism as representing "the horizon or edge of the earth" for Kumeyaay versions (Kroeber 1925:664), or the celestial sphere or Milky Way in Luiseño examples (Kroeber 1925:662). As pointed out by Rafter (1983) the overall shape of the maze is that of a swastika, which is significant in that the following two "maze" examples are located in regional proximity to the Hemet Maze and more clearly reflect this design concept.

**The Ramona Maze, CA-RIV-1138.** From my perspective, the Ramona Maze (Figure 3) is an even more remarkably "carved" petroglyph maze. It was exposed and "rediscovered" following heavy rains in the 1970s (Smith and Freers 1994). This petroglyph was directly associated with a large village site, putting to rest some of the speculation regarding its authenticity. The surface of the boulder on which the maze design was executed has a slightly undulating contour to it. The smooth parabolic grooves and ridges of the design are relatively deep and broad, blending with the

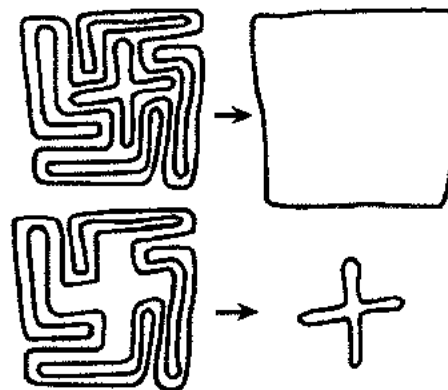


Figure 5. Progressive breakdown of the Ramona maze design. Note the internal outlined cross motif.

natural contour of the rock to form a balanced and aesthetically interesting design. It should be noted that following its rediscovery and the subsequent attention it received, a controversy developed over the maze's propriety between Native Southern Californians, land owner, local authorities and advocates. Ultimately, the maze was removed from its location along with the entire parent boulder and placed in a small courtyard behind an administrative building on the Saboba Indian Reservation.

Breakdown of the motif (Figure 5) reveals three continuous lines forming the image, including the same type of constraining border as CA-RIV-20. The middle line forms the bulk of the design and is a distinct swastika. The interior line is remarkable in that it forms an outline cross. The similarity of the interior cross concept is inescapable with that of the Hopi maze design (Figure 2) which has been described as representing the "cardinal or directional points" according to Waters (1976:24). No similar interpretation for the Ramona Maze is offered here. Unfortunately, I do not have precise data noting directionality of the motif prior to its being moved in order to make further correlations. Gerald Smith (personal communication 1995) notes that the panel had a southeastern orientation.

**The Mt. Russell Maze, CA-RIV-464.**

Located within the same river drainage as the Ramona Maze is yet another petroglyph maze, the Mt. Russell Maze, CA-RIV-464 (Figure 3). Unlike the previous two mazes, this one is



CA-RIV-1103



CA-RIV-19

Figure 6. Two "mazes" of similar design in southern California. The Connell Ranch maze, CA-RIV-1103, is a petroglyph maze; and , CA-RIV-19 is a pictograph maze and part of a large panel composed of two distinct rock art styles.

significantly smaller, more crudely carved and smoothed, of narrower line, and is located on a vertically oriented surface. However, it is nearly identical to the Ramona Maze in concept, lacking only the constraining outline border.

A significant feature of this maze is the traces of red stain that exist within several portions of the design (McCarthy 1988). This is clear evidence that the petroglyph was painted at one time. Whether it was painted immediately after its creation or significantly later has not been determined. The residual paint material may be too scant in organics to date by current methods. However, at some point in time an attempt to date both the petroglyph and pictograph components may provide answers to some very significant questions regarding temporal placement for the maze concept and the group most likely responsible. Figure 3 presents the three petroglyph mazes for side-by-side comparisons.

**The Connell Ranch Maze, CA-RIV-1103.**

This petroglyph maze (Figure 6) is located further outside the main river drainage region than the previous three petroglyph mazes and clearly differs in design concept. It lacks considerable smoothing within the shallow grooves and is partially obliterated by exfoliation. It is located on the horizontally oriented surface of a rock outcrop situated on top of a small hill possessing a commanding view of the region. It is a solitary image and its location is phenomenologically prominent.

Providing that the projected maze lines are accurate in the illustration (Figure 6), the

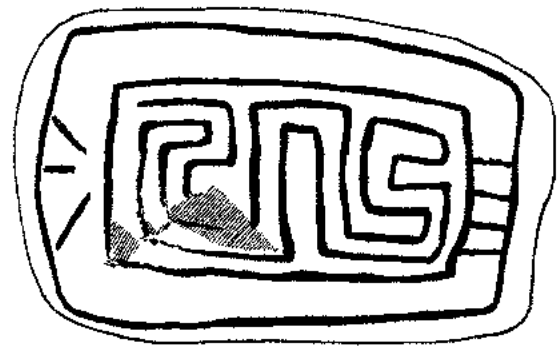


Figure 7. The Murrieta Maze Stone. This petroglyph design occurs on the reverse side of a portable metate and is currently part of the collection at the Ramona Museum in Hemet, California. The diagonal lines represent plow damage from its unearthing in 1947.

design is very similar in concept to the small pictograph maze at CA-RIV-19. Both are composed of a single continuous non-intersecting line, constrained by a simple border, and lack any recognizable nested cross or swastika motif.

**The Murrieta Maze Stone.** A maze-like petroglyph design graces the reverse side of a portable metate that was discovered in 1947 by a Murrieta farmer, Sid Ely, while plowing one of his fields (Figure 7). Although it may be somewhat of a stretch to call this design a maze, which it has already been labeled, it nonetheless encapsulates many of the attributes maze-like images of this region possess: symmetry, outlined border, non-intersecting interior lines, and relatively even line spacing. It is the

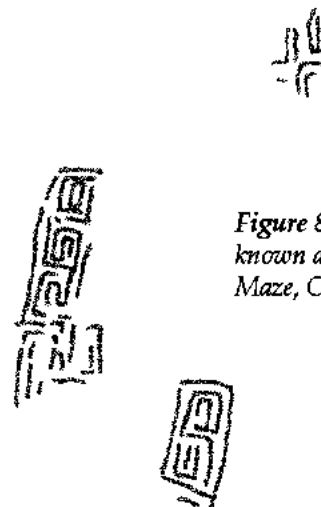


Figure 8. The red pictograph known as the Domenigoni Maze, CA-RIV-4930.

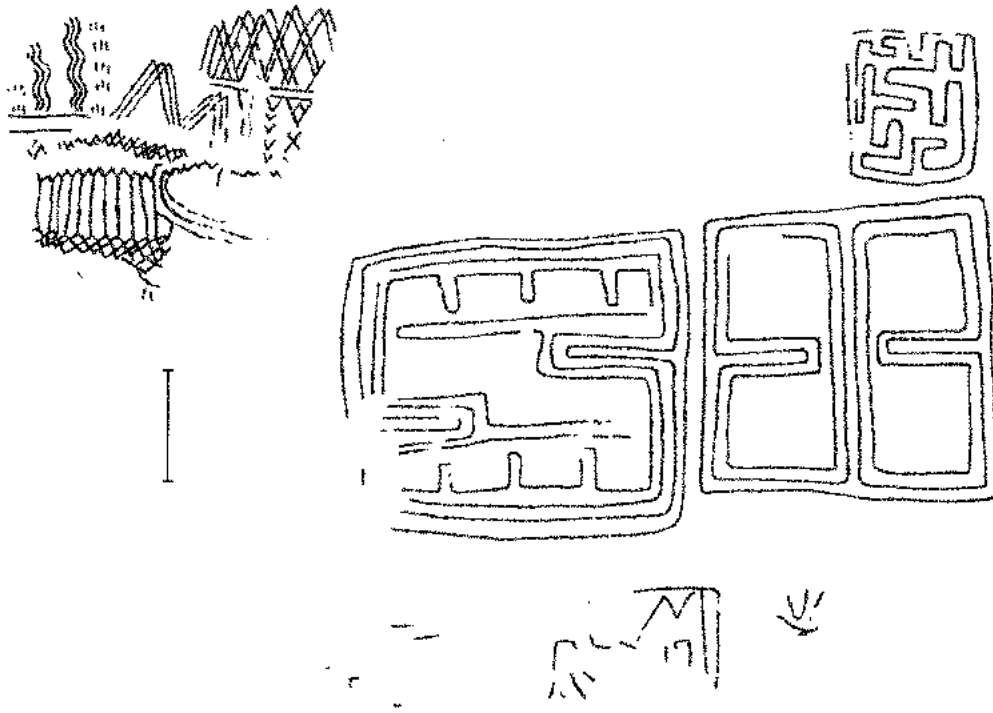


Figure 9. The complete panel at CA-RIV-19 containing the "Invisible Maze," which earned its name due to the extremely faded and subtly visible "maze" images. The scale bar represents 30 cm.

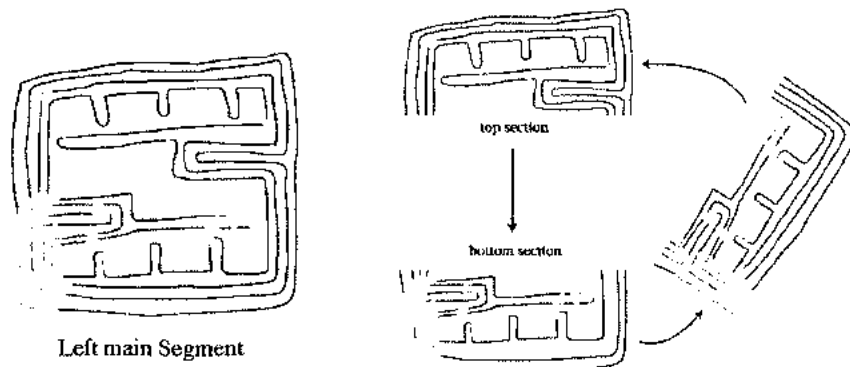
only specimen of its type in the area of which I am aware. The basic design concept is similar to the recently discovered Domenigoni Maze (Figure 8), which is a faint red pictograph unfortunately slated for destruction to make way for a massive reservoir project. It should be noted that precedence exists for using the "maze" label to describe long or short series of outlined and connected scroll patterns in Old World art (e.g., Bord 1975:37) and rock art element inventories (e.g., Castleton 1984:xix).

### Pictographs

*The "Invisible Maze," CA-RIV-19.* Several interesting features distinguish the main pictograph panel at CA-RIV-19 (Figure 9) which is

located on the unusually flat, vertically oriented face of a large granite boulder. The panel is composed of two rock art styles, San Luis Rey and Rancho Bernardo (which includes mazes), and is entirely in red pigment. The maze-like images are very faint and many of the lines are painted in corresponding shallow smoothed groves. As previously mentioned, the upper right small pictograph maze pattern is identical in concept with CA-RIV-1103, a petroglyph (Figure 6). The larger "maze" components are both bordered, uniquely stylized relative to the region, and contain significant symmetrical areas of white space. The most remarkable feature of the main pictograph "maze" design is that the left segment can be divided into top and bottom halves which are reverse mirror

Figure 10. This breakdown of one of the main components of the unique "Invisible Maze" illustrates the reverse mirror imagery used in balancing the composition.



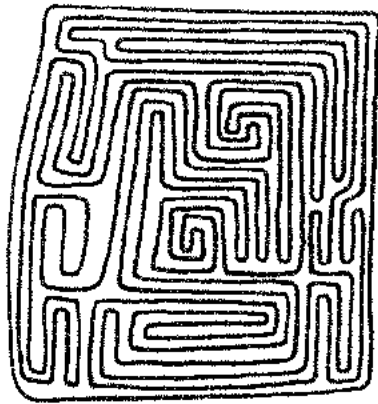


Figure 11. The Moreno Maze, CA-RIV-21.

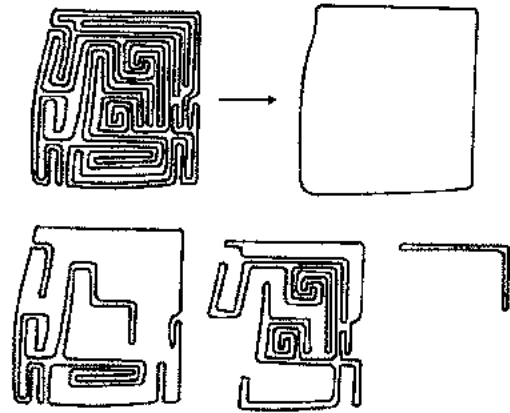


Figure 12. Breakdown of the non-intersecting continuous line segments which compose the Moreno Maze.

images of each other (Figure 10). The right main panel segment has both right-left and top-bottom symmetry, thus preserving the *quadrant balance* seen in several of the previous "maze" examples and many rectilinear geometric motifs found in the Greater Southwest which sport other descriptive or interpretative labels.

**The Moreno Maze, CA-RIV-21.** This red pictograph maze (Figure 11) possesses a significantly convoluted interior design most reminiscent in visual effect to those in the Rancho Bernardo area from which the style receives its name. The panel is located on a vertical granite face and is fully exposed to the effects of weathering. Three continuous non-intersecting lines create the interior design, each connected end-to-end (Figure 12). The interior

design forms two recognizable scroll patterns. Creation of this design was no easy task, particularly for preserving the scrolls and overall rectangular shape, without significantly violating the homogeneous line spacing and creating excess white-space. While the resultant image is completely different than the petroglyph examples, the parsimonious usage of continuous line components is again displayed in the concept of this maze. This pictograph has been damaged by lichen growth, wildfire, exfoliation and most troubling, shot gun blasts. Still, it is perhaps the finest Rancho Bernardo Style example north of the type sites.

**Rancho Bernardo Maze, W-2029.** Considered the largest pictograph maze of the region, this beautifully executed maze (Figure 13) was

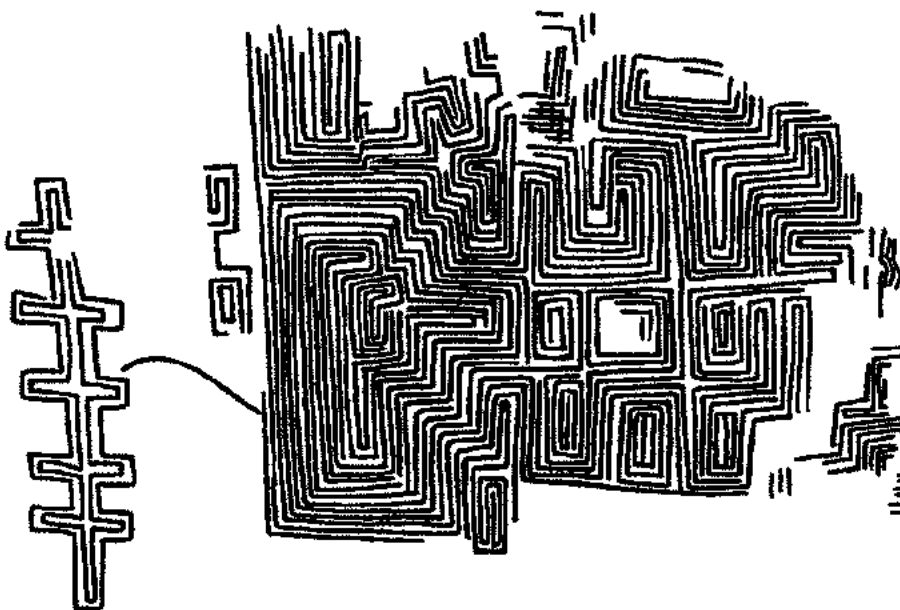


Figure 13. A "classic" Rancho Bernardo maze, W-2029. Drawing courtesy of Ken Hedges, from Hedges (1970:52).

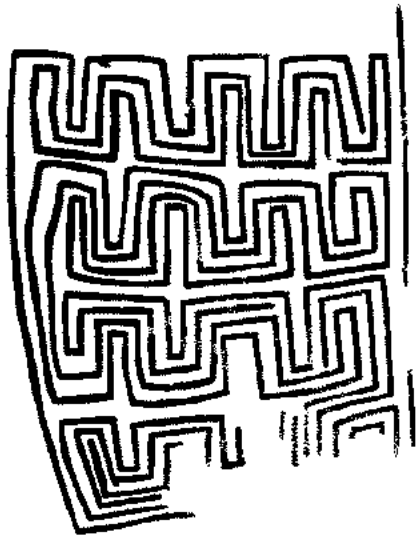


Figure 14. Piedras Pintadas, W-219, Locus 5, Panel 1. Drawing courtesy of Ken Hedges, from Hedges and Hamann (1987:Figure 10).

featured in an early *Touring Topics* article by Dunn (1930). Several basic design subpatterns contribute to its overall effect: concentric squares; single line scrolls; connected parallel rectilinear partial enclosures and zigzags; and, rectilinear meanders. Associated with the principle maze design is an outlined “pipette” motif, a design concept fairly common to the area as part of the Rancho Bernardo Style.

Hedges (1994) has suggested that a phosphene form constant, the “double crenelation” pattern, serves as the basis for “pipette” imagery, and more important for this discussion, the structural design basis of some southern California maze designs.

*Piedras Pintadas, W-219, Locus 5, Panel 1.* This panel (Figure 14) is but part of an extensive series of maze-like and associated images at Piedras Pintadas (Hedges and Hamann 1987). It is comprised of a series of horizontally stacked concentric crenelation designs (Hedges 1994). The partially fragmented line which forms the border is incorporated into the maze design, rather than being a distinct and separate line. Several “mazes” of similar construction exist in the region and have as a tangible building block the crenelation pattern—one of the basic phosphene form constants (Hedges 1994). Moreover, the carryover of certain geometric

patterns and themes used to create the “mazes” at Piedras Pintadas and those of the Rancho Bernardo region, makes these images especially noteworthy of study in order to help develop a hypothesis concerning the likelihood of concept diffusion versus spontaneous independent creation.

*Andreas Canyon Maze-Like Design.* This fragmented red pictograph (Figure 15) represents an extension of the Rancho Bernardo Style into the Southern California low desert. Regionally, it is perhaps the closest the maze design gets to curvilinear in concept. It is associated with other pictograph rock art which fails to fall neatly into existing style classifications. Because of its location relative to early potential trade routes between the Southwest and coastal-inland southern California, it may stand as a potentially significant data point in the argument for diffusion of the maze concept to or from the east (Hedges and Hamann 1987:25). Other similarly significant maze data points include the petroglyph mazes of Palm Canyon, near Palm Springs, and the “pipettes” at Travertine Point, located along the northwestern shore of the Salton Sea (Hedges and Hamann 1987:25; McCarthy 1981).

*“North” Canyon Maze.* This well preserved red pictograph maze is located well north of the Rancho Bernardo complex near the

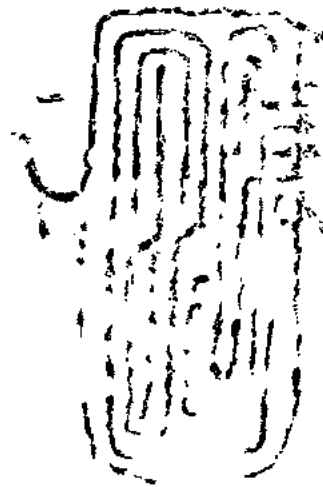


Figure 15. Maze-like design from Andreas Canyon near Palm Springs, California.



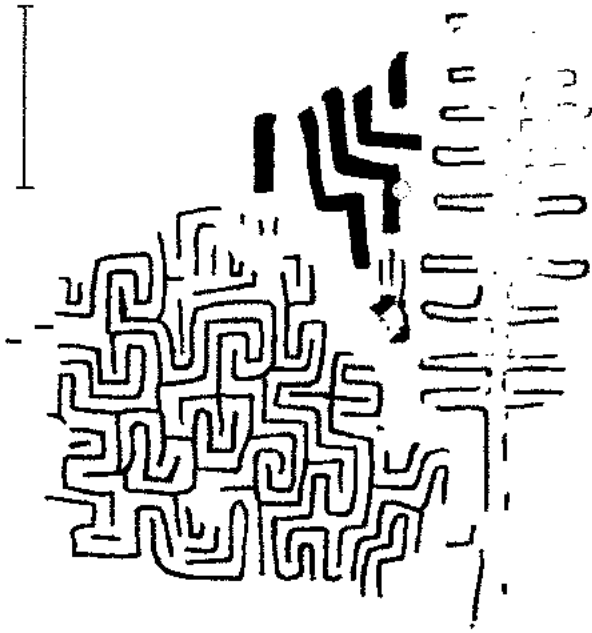


Figure 16. "North" Canyon Maze, California.  
The scale bar represents 30 cm.

geographic nadir of the Luiseño creation myth (Figure 16). It significantly varies in design from those previously described in that it incorporates intersecting line segments and lacks a constraining border. It is principally composed of three and four-way intersecting perpendicular line segments around which are nested various simple and outlined rectilinear scrolls. The line spacing is relatively homogenous, as is the length of each outlined scroll segment. A carefully placed hand print is located centrally among the panel elements.

Comparatively, the remnants of a "maze" pictograph at CA-RIV-733, situated twenty-five miles to the east, bears similarity in design

Figure 17. This is the faint residual component of an apparently larger image at CA-RIV-733. The cultural affiliation of the site and region continues to be debated. Interestingly, it is identical in basic design concept to the "North" Canyon Maze in Figure 16, which is located in a region of strong cultural association for the Luiseño.



Figure 18. The petroglyph "maze" component from "The Maze Panel" — Arizona Strip (courtesy of Mary Allen).

(Figure 17). Interestingly, the "North" Canyon Maze has a fragmented "pipette" design associated with it, as does W-2029 (Figure 12), which is located some forty-five miles to the south. In terms of physical condition, the pictograph pigments appear exceptionally "recent" in relative terms to other Rancho Bernardo style motifs and most San Luis Rey panels. This is remarkable due to its frank exposure to weathering.

#### Selected Maze Designs of Utah and Arizona

"The Maze Panel" — Arizona Strip. This petroglyph maze (Figure 18) illustration was provided from a recording by Mary Allen. It is located on a panel in direct association with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images. The maze is constructed of a series of diagonally repeating scroll patterns which form an elegant motif. The "maze-effect" is achieved by the preservation of even line spacing and the sufficient variation of basic subpatterns, both hallmarks of maze-like motifs. It bears some resemblance to the "North" Canyon Maze on first pass; however, the absence of intersecting lines and the repeating symmetrical patterns markedly differentiates the manner of its

construction. This northern Arizona “maze” does, however, share clear similarities with petroglyph designs found at Cerros Calera near the city of Caborca, Sonora, Mexico (Ballereau 1987:107-108).

**“White Maze” – Arizona Strip.** This well executed white pictograph is located high on a cliff face, commanding a dramatic solitary presence. To create the rendering (Figure 1), a long shot with a telephoto lens was required to minimize the distortion. Because the bottom of the maze has been weathered away, it is impossible to determine whether this motif had other nested designs or even a “solution.” However, in many ways this design possesses the attributes which one expects in a labyrinth. It differs from several of the aforementioned mazes in that it *lacks* long connected continuous lines or an abundance of intersecting lines. Rather, it is principally a collection of relatively short rectilinear “C” and “S” segments, oriented in various non-connecting arrangements. It appears to have a single line border enclosing the pattern. If a design such as this were a true maze, it would no doubt be quite challenging to peregrinate through its intricacy.

**“Blanket” – St. George, Utah.** While this design (Figure 19) may be properly construed as a “blanket” design, the label skirts the issue of whether or not the motif was generated from an identifiable maze concept or tradition. Stylistically, the example underscores the common usage of the outlined scroll motif, geometric design balance and a constraining border. Note the similarity of the lower half of

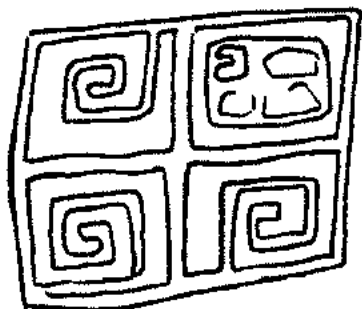


Figure 19. One of the known “blanket” designs from the St. George area. Courtesy of Judith Warner, from Warner (1990).

this pattern with the vertically arranged pictograph “maze” motif (Figure 8) at CA-RIV-4930. The ubiquitous scroll pattern, itself likely out of the phosphene generated array (cf., Kellogg et al. 1965:1129), occurs clearly on the saddle blanket of a Navajo produced petroglyph horse (James and Davidson 1976:Figure 12).

The St. George panel is divided into quadrants, which naturally forms an internal cross design. The quadrant design layout is common and tends to gravitate connotations of the motif away from “maze” and toward that of a blanket, pottery or clan symbol when comparable material cultural items are absent. The “decorated block designs” at Waterflow, New Mexico, illustrate this design concept and label perfectly (Warner 1986:Figures 2-3).

A perhaps bigger stretch in this design’s analysis will yield the swastika concept, given the overall “look” presented by the directionality of the scroll patterns nested within the quadrant layout. A comprehensive survey of similar designs in the greater Southwest, such as in Petrified National Forest (Bock and Bock 1990:44), may reveal whether a prevalent clockwise or counterclockwise direction is conveyed.

**Sinagua Textile Petroglyphs – Wupatki National Monument, Arizona.** Schaafsma (1987) presents compelling evidence to label certain petroglyph design patterns as textile or pottery derivatives in her analysis of Sinagua rock art at Wupatki National Monument.

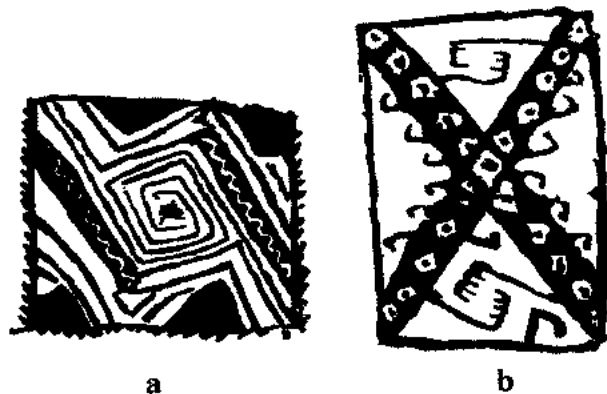


Figure 20. Sinaguan textile petroglyphs from the Little Colorado River area, Wupatki National Monument, Arizona: (a) Crack in the Rock; (b) Horseshoe Mesa.

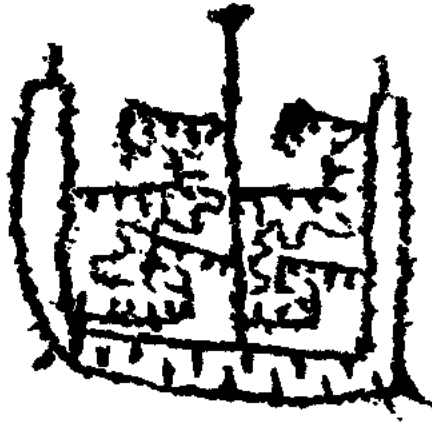


Figure 21. Partially bordered petroglyph textile/ceramic/maze-like motif from Wupatki National Monument.

Constraining rectangular borders, fringe, hook patterns and comparable material culture evidence provide a high level of confidence with these labels (Figure 20). Yet, other motifs in regional proximity reflect a maze-like theme (Figure 21) and might achieve the “maze” term if not for the obvious textile associations. The “barbed lines” as seen on this motif may also be found on Pueblo II ceramics (Schaafsma 1987:23).

#### Indian Creek, Utah

The McCreerys (1982:Figure 11) illustrated a maze-like meander enclosing an anthropomorphic figure at one end as part of an array of other petroglyph elements in their archaeoastronomy analysis of a panel along Indian Creek, Utah (Figure 22). This labyrinth-like image is distinct from the other elements of the panel in

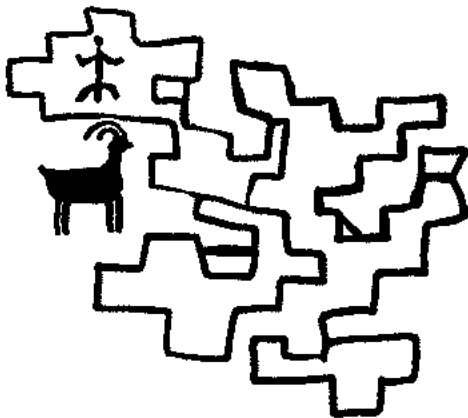


Figure 22. Hopi petroglyph from Indian Creek, Utah (after McCreery 1982:Figure 11).



Figure 23. Petroglyph maze design from Cocoraque Butte, Arizona, in the region historically populated by the Tohono O’odham (from photo courtesy of John Fountain).

both style and space. The path for this potential maze intersects itself several times, however, the existence of the stick figure helps convey the “maze” impression. The “attendant zoomorph” (Figure 22) may provide a significant relationship. While their analysis focused on solstice observation potentials for the locale, they suggested a Hopi connection with this rock art. If a Hopi maze connotation were applied to this particular meander, it would have to account for the stylistically and perhaps functionally different aspects present when compared to those described in the ethnography (Waters 1976:23; Figure 2).

**Cocoraque Butte Petroglyph Maze — Tohono O’odham Territory, Arizona.** This petroglyph image (Figure 23) is from one of the several well reported examples of this maze pattern in northern and southern Arizona. It is a popular image utilized in Pima and Tohono O’odham basketry, which often incorporates an anthropomorphic figure at the maze’s entrance. This particular version has a single open-space pathway to the center, providing that the route is not blocked by the intersection of lines in the lower two sections of the pattern.

Grant (1967:65-66) describes the remarkable similarity of this style of Southwest “maze” with nearly identical versions in Europe, often referred to as “Minoan Mazes.” Bord (1975) catalogues the expansive presence and import of this Minoan Maze motif which

includes: Scandinavian stone alignments and church paintings; western European petroglyphs; Cretan coinage; British hedge and lawn designs; and, various arts and crafts to name a few examples. Yet, despite the relatively large number of maze designs in southern California, none to my knowledge come close in appearance to this one.

## DISCUSSION

### Southern California Maze Tradition

While Grant (1967:66) discards the notions of simple coincidence or Pre-Columbian importation of the Minoan Maze design from Europe to the American Southwest as probable, he instead offers support for the hypothesis of the Spanish introducing the design to the Hopi and Pima after A.D. 1600. In contrast, while Euroinfluence in southern California became culturally intrusive, particularly with the Mission Period commencing in A.D. 1769 (White 1959), it did not likely facilitate the emergence of maze-like imagery in southern California. Assuming for discussion purposes *only* that similar maze iconography was "introduced" to both the Southwest and coastal-inland southern California groups by Europeans, it may be *unreasonable* to anticipate exact duplications of the imported "template" by the Native Californians.

The southern California "maze" distribution occurs in regions significantly influenced or inhabited by the Luiseño, who primarily used symbolic imagery, rather than representational forms, to depict their ideas or objects graphically. Sandpainting data and the San Luis Rey Style pictographs of the region demonstrate this tendency (Smith and Freers 1994:20). Also, images of profound significance and import, such as the occurrences of men on horseback (Quinn 1981) or Christian cross imagery (Freers 1995) are surprisingly rare in the rock art record for this region. These European images and concepts did not appear to influence a pervasive change in motif stylization or depiction in the strict "Western" representational sense. It is certain from the data that such influences were out of context for

the rock art created during adolescent initiation ceremonies. The most likely point of Euroinfluence was the shaman, who would *not* have been bound to ceremonial rigidity but prone to individuality in terms of graphic expression and purpose with a new form of "power." Therefore, the probabilities favor some variance in terms of resultant maze imagery, *even if* the template obtained from a Euro-source was indeed an exact duplicate of the "Minoan Maze."

Further argument against Euroinfluence of maze imagery is provided by the oft-debated concept of "style" and temporal placement. The Rancho Bernardo Style by definition (Hedges 1990) predates the San Luis Rey Style, which itself may have been significantly influenced by European religion around 200 years ago. Therefore, the temporal opportunity for the genesis of the Rancho Bernardo style likely predates significant Europresence or opportunity. Even the early castaways or shipwrecked Europeans, post A.D. 1542, had very limited material resources or art forms in possession to influence the native Californians (White 1959:9). A clearer determination of these issues, of course, could be accomplished by direct rock art dating.

Hedges (1994) offers the best hypothesis for the creative inspiration of certain maze-like patterns found in coastal-inland southern California. Several of the "mazes" have as a basic element of design the *double crenelation* pattern (Figure 14) which has been identified as a phosphene form constant. The neuropsychological model serves as a plausible explanation for some maze-like images—which sets aside "classic" maze function—and nests well with known shamanic functions and practices. Unresolved as a working hypothesis is whether such a form constant promulgated a cultural template for "style" in the Rancho Bernardo area or by import, and whether an enlightened individual or small group canvassed this broad landscape (Hedges 1979:52).

It would be hard to ascertain with some confidence whether or not the maze concept in southern California was spawned locally or via intergroup exchange. Several of the petroglyph mazes (Figure 3) are highly stylized and bear

some affinity to concepts from the Southwest. They occur in proximity to natural travel routes into and from the southern California region and possess the *potential* for greater antiquity than the Rancho Bernardo pictographs. The once painted Mt. Russell Maze and the Murrieta Maze Stone metate may hold clues in terms of obtaining potential date ranges or at least temporal sequencing. Whether their manufacture was part of the same tradition as the pictographs, a separate phenomena, or part of the concept diffusion to the south which eventually evolved into the Rancho Bernardo Style, remains unclear. The premise of an old linkage to groups of the Southwest does exist for sandpaintings, as does the suggestion of relationships between their imagery and maze designs (Rafter 1983).

Kroeber (1925:661-662) in his discussion of southern California sandpainting notes the residual old connection of this practice with the "Pueblos and Navajos;" however, he continues, "not even a trace of the custom exists among the intervening tribes of the Colorado River, nor apparently among the Pima." The survey of Rancho Bernardo images by Hedges (1987:17-23) notes a similar geographic absence. There are some tenuous parallels with these observations of sandpainting and maze imagery in terms of antiquity of the base tradition, the geographic void of intervening design occurrences, and perhaps even some of the symbolism.

There are some pitfalls in using sandpainting imagery to "interpret" maze symbolism. Cohen (1987:24) points out that while sandpaintings and some pictographs emerge out of similar intention and function, relative to southern California puberty initiate ceremonies, sandpaintings were destroyed following the ritual to *conceal* their symbolic imagery and *prevent* desecration or ill-use. It is natural to wonder: Why then would they choose the indelible nature of rock paintings or carvings to convey similar sacred concepts? Perhaps only concepts acceptable or instructive to the average pedestrian, such as cardinality, celestial sphere, path of life and so forth were reflected. On the other hand, one problem with

the preceding view is that the potency of sandpainting as a ceremonial device was ephemeral and process specific. Symbolism used in sandpaintings may have had distinctly different functional consequences from similar imagery found in maze designs or other rock imagery. Those familiar with the San Luis Rey Style will recognize that given the litany of "avenging beings" and "spirit helpers" in local Shoshonean cosmology, scant evidence of their presence exists in the rock art, at least in overt representational terms, for the majority of these beings.

Therefore, the production of southern California "maze" rock art was probably unconnected with the ceremonial creation of adolescent initiate art—they were most likely separated by tradition and time, perhaps even culture.

### Maze of Distinctions

Clearly, one is to be disappointed if the literal definition of a functional maze is applied to many of the previously discussed images. In the *absence* of supportive ethnographic or material evidence, certain motif characteristics appear to promote one label or another. The examples of *true* mazes typically possess a relatively uncomplicated route—though the route may symbolically represent significant trials and tribulations, goals and/or processes. Geometric rectilinear or curvilinear motifs comprised of solid filled designs, a quadrant layout, uneven zones lacking design elements, mirror imaging or repetitive elements seem to lend themselves better to "clan symbol," textile or pottery labels. The positive aspect of the



Figure 24. Petroglyph geometric rectilinear design from the Gillespie Dam area, Arizona.

aforementioned labels is that they are usually more richly descriptive than terms like geometric rectilinear or curvilinear, or a mind-numbing descriptor like "multiple segmented rectilinear array with intermittently intersecting nested subpatterns rendering continuous homogeneous tracts of open space."

Another problem—it may be particularly difficult to consistently assign a satisfying term for complex rectilinear motifs when they are amid a much larger inventory of competing design elements. Figure 24 is an example of a petroglyph which may be comfortably termed "maze-like" if displayed in solitary fashion, grouped with other accepted "mazes," or presented visually in some *featured* way. However, it is located among literally hundreds of varied petroglyph elements, some spectacular, along an extensive basaltic ridge. Of the dozen or so individuals informally interviewed during a southern Arizona field trip, none chose to refer to this pattern as a maze. This crude example supports the notion that some special visual distinctions or associations may be required to facilitate subjective consideration of maze terminology.

The formal distinctions between the world-wide usage of the terms labyrinth or maze have been blurred over time. The classic *labyrinth*, or unicursal pattern, possesses a single pathway to the center; whereas, the term *maze* refers to multiple pathways or dead ends, a multicursal design (Bord 1975:9). Whether or not the term "maze" should be reserved solely for Native American rock imagery demonstrating both an objective and identifiable pathway is probably moot. Where material remnants are not helpful, I prefer usage of the qualifier "true" for those mazes which have suggested or known intentions (e.g.; the Hopi Earth Mother Symbol), and "maze-like" for the host of other geometric patterns achieving the general impression of a maze.

## CONCLUSION

Given the number of "maze" designs presented in this paper, one can readily see the marked variance in the manner of overall

design this "class" of Native American images possess. Significantly, most "mazes" contain some of the following common attributes: relatively even line spacing and "color," intricacy; considerable stretches of narrow non-interrupted white space or solid lines themselves representing "pathways;" nesting of constituent subpatterns; constraining borders; symmetry; a lack of representational imagery (in the Western European sense); and an absence of a solution or compelling objective. Where present, they are often the most visually commanding element at a site, and sometimes, the only one.

The question of whether or not the maze concept diffused or was created spontaneously in certain areas of North America is ambiguous at best; however, this imagery has a wide distribution with geographic specific "hot spots" that possess highly stylized versions of the theme. Therefore, at the very least, it would be reasonable to adopt the view that the "maze" concept was distinctly potent, irrespective of group. The mere fact that these images somehow "hang" together in the visual sense, regardless of prior labels or interpretations, warrants their continued investigation.

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