

Figure 1. Center section of Buckhorn Wash Panel with spirit figure incorporating rain or water symbol (far left figure). Images are about life size.

WATER AT BUCKHORN WASH: Symbolism in Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art.

David Sucec, BCS PROJECT

The study of symbols enables us to reach a better understanding of man—of man "as he is," before he has come to terms with the conditions of History. Every historical man carries on, within himself, a great deal of prehistoric humanity.

Mircea Eliade 1961,12

Abstract

The Barrier Canyon style rock art panel at Buckhorn Wash contains several images of spirit figures whose forms incorporate a visual motif of vertical parallel lines (figures 1,2). La Van Martineau has suggested that the motif is a "rain symbol." This linear motif can be found associated with anthropomorphic figures at numerous Barrier Canyon style rock art sites and as discrete images at other Western Archaic rock art sites in Utah. The motif is found in Pueblo kiva art and among the earliest visual images/symbols of the Old World. The parallel line image is also associated with zig-zag, wavy-line, and snake images. Together the motifs represent the complex or family of aquatic symbols.

Buckhorn Wash Panel

Situated in the arid San Rafael Swell, Buckhorn Wash is without surface water during most of the year. The panel lies about two miles up Buckhorn Wash from the San Rafael River and the ten-mile wash affords an easy route

between the river and the higher land that lies to the north. From the top of the wash there is an unobstructed view, and a walk of about twenty-five miles, west to the resource-abundant Wasatch Plateau and its fertile alluvials.

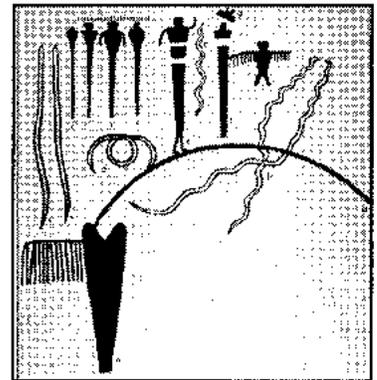
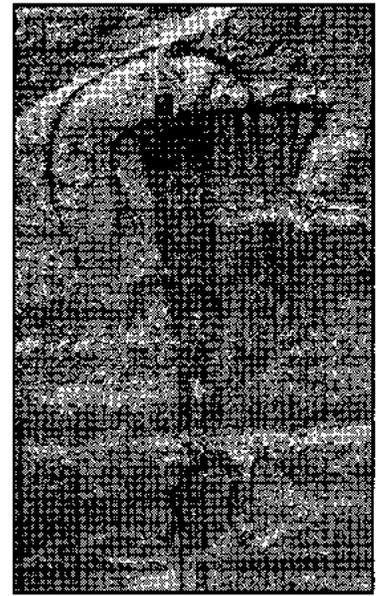
Almost two-hundred feet long, this well-known gallery of Archaic rock art is one of seven or eight major Barrier Canyon style rock art sites. Including the major sites, more than one hundred fifty panels of this style rock art have been found on the Colorado Plateau—the vast majority in Utah.

As at the other major Barrier Canyon style rock art panels, many large anthropomorphic or human-like images have been painted across the face of a great sandstone wall. Designated a *spirit figure*, the type of elongated anthropomorph seen here is thought to represent a spiritual entity: a deity, a spirit, an ancestral spirit or shaman.

Rain Symbol at the Buckhorn Wash Panel

At Buckhorn Wash, Martineau suggests that figure 2 is a “Hopi deity...reaching out of his abode and giving of his safety, or good fortune (rain)...” (1973,111). The line curved over the deity’s head and shoulders indicates “abode,” and the series of vertical parallel lines is the symbol for “good fortune,” in this case “rain.” To Martineau, the form of another Buckhorn Wash spirit figure (bottom left figures 3, 4) suggests a more specific identification: “Alosaka (Muyingwa), one of the few Hopi deities who actually makes his home in the underworld. He is the god of reproduction of man, animals and plants” (Martineau 1973,113).

This figure, with its associated motif of parallel lines, (figure 4) is, Martineau thinks, linked with a composition containing a number of animated snake images, curved lines and smaller anthropomorphic figures (figure 3). Martineau describes the motif of painted parallel lines (in this instance, the lines extend downward from both of the outstretched



Top: Figure 2. Spirit figure with incorporated rain symbol (vertical parallel lines). Life size.

Middle: Figure 3. After Martineau drawing of upper composition, Buckhorn Wash Panel.

Bottom: Figure 4. Detail, spirit figure with a series of parallel vertical lines associated with its form. Life size.

arms of one of the smaller figures—upper right) as the “symbol” for “salvation or saving rain” (Martineau 1973,113). Martineau believes that this composition may depict the origin, or an early version, of the Snake Dance. Still practiced by the Hopi, the “snake ceremony seeks divine aid for these (Alosaka’s) reproductive blessings” (Martineau 1973,113).

Besides the figures mentioned above, there are at least five other spirit figures incorporating the parallel line motif exterior to the torso-form. Martineau suggests that one is a Hopi deity and another a Snake Dancer (Martineau 1973:109). He does not mention the three other figures. Martineau believes that the artists who painted these spirit figures, rain symbols, and snake forms were the ancestors of today’s Hopi Snake Clan (Martineau 1973,107-113).

Pueblo Rain Symbol

In late prehistoric (Pueblo III, IV—ca. a.d. 1100–a.d. 1700) and historic Pueblo painting, the parallel line motif is not found in the rock art panels but in the kiva and it is combined with stylized cloud forms (figures 5, 6). The cloud and rain symbol are often associated with stylized snake-lightning composite images. The symbols were most frequently painted on the kiva walls (figure 5) and on ceremonial objects (figure 6), but they were also painted on the roof supports and rendered in dry pigments, sand, flowers, ash, and other powdered colors on the kiva floor (Figure 7) (Brody 1991, 151,154,165).

In *Anasazi and Pueblo Painting*, J. J. Brody cites a report stating that on several occasions during the 1880s small groups of young women and men renewed the kiva



ABOVE. Left: Figure 5. cloud-rain symbol with snake-like lightning forms. Kiva painting, Walpi, Hopi First Mesa, Pueblo IV type.

Right: Figure 6. Detail, painted cloth curtain, First Mesa Hopi, 1892. Cloud-rain and snake-lightning symbols.

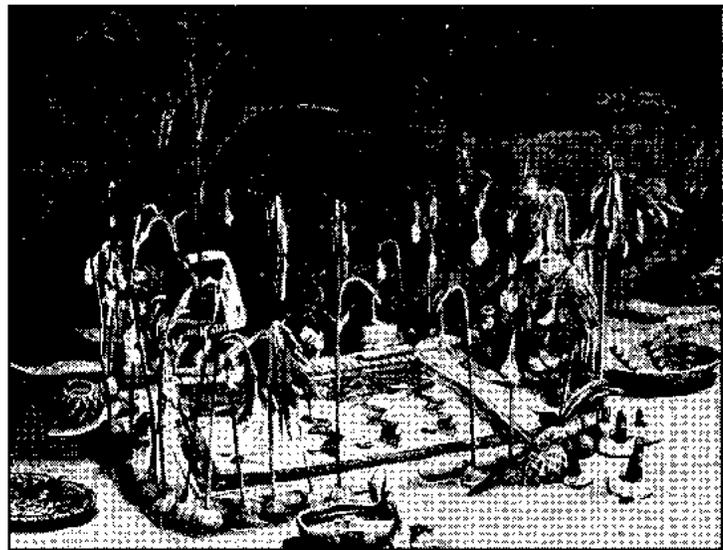


Figure 7. Dry painting of stylized snake-lightning forms standing on clouds with rain below. Antelope Altar, Walpi Pueblo, Hopi, northeastern Arizona, 1896.

walls with “fresh mud plaster.” The young women decorated the roof beams with “mud-plaster paintings of clouds, lightning and other rain emblems, as well as with handprints. They referred to these paintings as ‘prayers,’ and in the ‘old usage,’ the pictures expressed a desire to grasp clouds and to bring rain” (Brody 1991,151). The young men did the wall paintings (under the supervision of older men) which, “like those on the ceiling, were more than ornament. ‘They say the clouds and other symbols are as much prayers for rain and other blessings as the altar itself’” (Brody 1991,151).

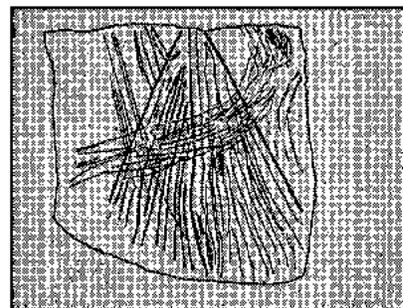
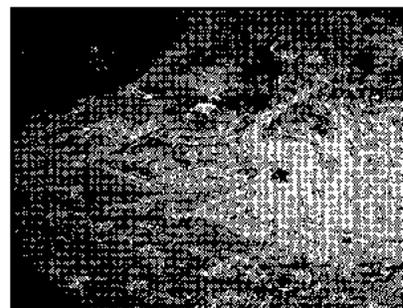
During the 1896 Snake Dance, a dry painting was the centerpiece of the Antelope Society Altar (figure 7). Its imagery consisted of stylized snake-lightning forms “stand(ing) on clouds from which rain falls.” (Brody 1991,163) The Hopi ceremonialists believed that, through its ritual association, even the materials of dry paintings could acquire “supernatural power.” In the early 1890s, the dry painting made for the Antelope Society kiva was “destroyed *ritually* on the last day when the cloud symbols drawn along its base (we)re carefully removed and deposited in agricultural fields” (Brody 1991,165).

Rain or Water Symbol in the Old World

Not unlike those of the prehistoric and early historic Pueblo cultures, the surfaces of Old European (ca. 7,000 b.c.- 4,000 b.c.) objects (sculptures, engraved objects, and ceramics) are rich with symbolic imagery. As reported in her study of archeomythology, *The Language of The Goddess*, Marija Gimbutas’s investigation revealed four categories of interrelated image groups.

The symbols and images “cluster” around a “self-generating Goddess” and her basic functions as “*Giver-of-Life, Wielder-of-Death,* and as *Regeneratrix* and around the *Earth Mother, the Fertility Goddess* young and old, rising and dying with plant life. She was the single source of all life who took her energy from the springs and wells, from the sun, moon, and moist earth” (Gimbutas 1991,xix).

The first category of symbols, given the designation of *Life-Giving*, “embraces the aquatic sphere since the prevalent belief was that all life

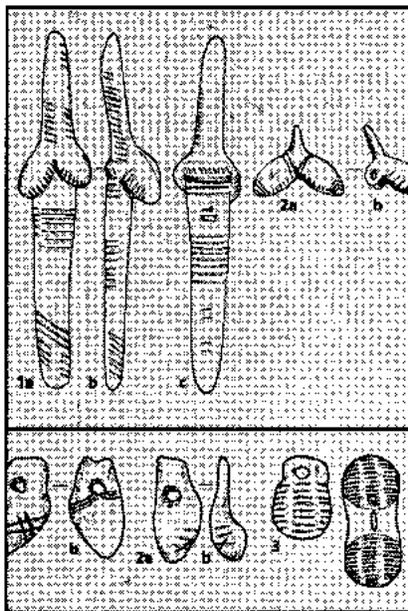


Top: Figure 8. “Macaroni,” careful finger markings in soft clay ceilings. Maybe the earliest examples of the parallel line imagery.

Bottom: Figure 9. Drawing of engraved limestone. The markings symbolize the flow of water suggesting life, healing, and abundance, upper Paleolithic.

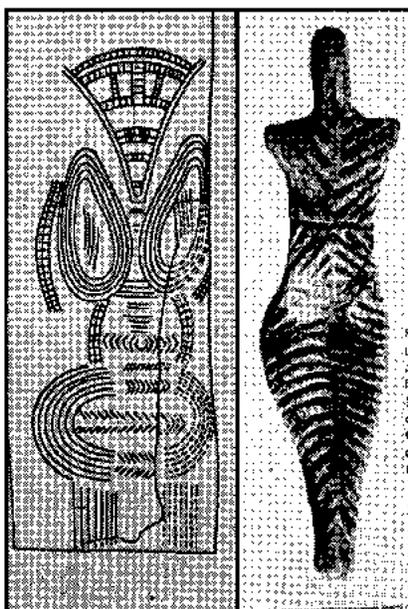
comes from water.” The symbols of water expanses, streams, and rain—meanders, parallel lines, zigzags, wavy or serpentine bands, net, checkerboard—belonged to the realm of the “*life or nourishment-giver and protectress*” (figures 9, 10, 11) (Gimbutas 1991,xxii).

Gimbutas is persuaded that this “rich group of symbols” is Paleolithic in origin, and she traces the symbolic imagery back to the period when the first sculptures of bone, ivory, or stone appeared, “around 25,000 b.c. (figure 10 top) and their symbols to an even earlier time” (figures 9, 10 bottom) (Gimbutas 1991, xix).



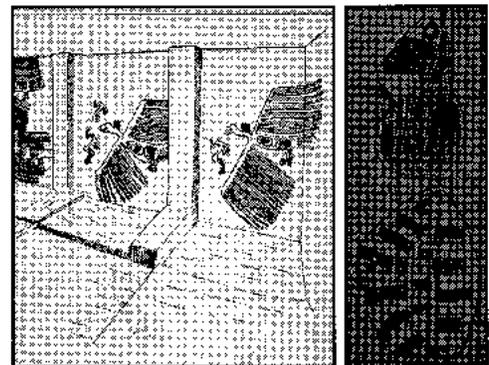
When associated with the Bird Goddess image (figure 11 right), the aquatic symbols suggest her function as a giver of moisture and life waters. When the *brush* image (parallel lines bound by a bar on one side) is associated with or in place of the pubic triangle on a Goddess image, it may symbolizes her regenerative powers (Gimbutas 1991,298).

Motifs of parallel lines are also found on pendants dating back to 30,000 b.c. (figure 10 bottom). Sometimes, they are found incised on amber stones (figure 13). Because the yellow transparent stones are associated with healing energy Gim-



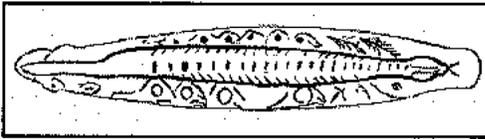
TOP LEFT. Figure 10.
Top: After Gimbutas drawings of objects with incised parallel lines. Schematized figure ca. 25,000 b.c.
Bottom: Pendant beads with incised parallel lines, ca. 30,000 b.c.

LEFT. Figure 11.
Far left: After Gimbutas drawing of Goddess with engraved parallel lines, ca. 20,000 b.c.
Near left: Bird Goddess with linear symbols, ceramic, ca. 5,000 b.c.



ABOVE. Left: Figure 12. After Gimbutas drawing of fresco of stylized vulture forms with wings of parallel lines symbolize death and resurrection. Ceremonial space, Catal Huyuk, Asia Minor, Early 7th Millenium, b.c.

Right: Figure 13. After Gimbutas drawing of amber pendants incised with parallel lines (healing energy symbol), ca. 4,000 b.c.



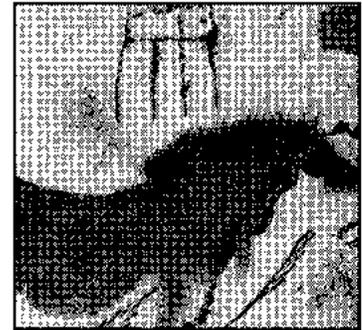
LEFT. Top: figure 14. After Gimbutas drawing of engraved antler. Snake associated with young birds, plants and tri-line implying use in a spring ritual celebrating regenerative growth. ca. 12,000. b.c.



LEFT. Bottom: figure 15. After Gimbutas drawing of engraved bone. Snakes associated with "brushes" (parallel lines) motif. Suggests regenerative powers of Goddess. Upper Paleolithic.

butus feels that the brush image may have well been a symbol of that energy (Gimbutas 1991,300). Incorporated as the wings in the vulture form (figure 12), the parallel lines symbolize that "death and resurrection (regeneration) are inseparably linked" (Gimbutas 1991,187).

Along with aquatic symbols, the brush appears in the Upper Paleolithic in association with snakes and fish. The symbols surrounding the snake and the anthropomorphic Snake Goddess are the same as those associated with the waterfowl and the Bird Goddess. Gimbutas thinks that snakes must have been considered guardians of the springs of life in prehistory, as they still are in European folklore. The snake's influence was felt not only in life creation, but also in fertility and increase, and particularly in the regeneration of dying life energy. Its seasonal renewal in sloughing off its old skin and hibernating made it a symbol of the continuity of life and of the link with the underworld (Gimbutas 1991,121).



Rain Symbol in Utah Archaic Rock Art

In Utah, the rain, or water, symbol is primarily associated with the Western Archaic rock art styles. Often called a *rake*, the parallel line motif is found most frequently in four of the Utah Archaic styles: *Great Basin Abstract*, *Glen Canyon Linear 5*, *Chihuahua Polychrome*, and *Barrier Canyon*.

In Utah, the Great Basin Abstract style is found west of the Wasatch Front while the other three Archaic styles share southeastern Utah. The dates for the Archaic styles are uncertain but are



Top: Figure 16. Painted parallel line and plant-like images with pregnant mare. Lascaux Cave, ca. 15,000 b.c.

Bottom: Figure 17. Pecked. Great Basin Abstract Style, Delta area.

thought to be within the general culture dates—ca. 6,000 b.c. to ca. a.d. 500. The Glen Canyon Linear 5 and the Great Basin Abstract styles may have continued into late prehistory, until ca. a.d. 900-1050 and ca. a.d. 1500 respectively (Turner 1963,39, Heizer & Baumhoff 1962,234).

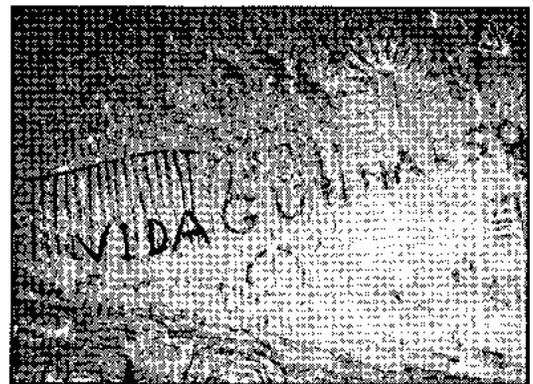
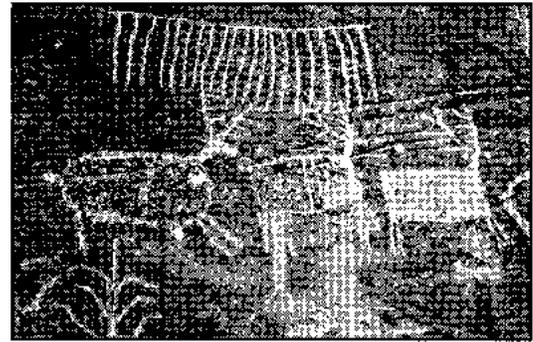
At Utah sites, the Great Basin Abstract style is often mixed with representational images. The pecked parallel line motif can be seen in various forms and combinations such as a rake-form (the Old World brush with lines bound by a bar on one side), lines within a rectangular or an oval box, or simply parallel lines (figure 17). Curvilinear meanders and wavy lines, similar in form to the Old World aquatic symbols, are also present.

Unlike the Great Basin Abstract style, the Glen Canyon Linear rock art sites in Utah contain a high percentage of representational images. The pecked parallel line motif is often seen incorporated into the interior designs of the representational images, especially quadrupeds and anthropomorphs, as well as unincorporated, or discrete, rake/rain symbol images (figure 18).

The imagery of the Chihuahua Polychrome style is the most non-representational of the four styles. Most Chihuahua Polychrome images are painted in varieties of red ochre but there are highlights and images in white, black, green-grey, and other colors. In addition to the parallel line motif, blocks and lines of dots are common motifs as are animal/bird footprints, plant-forms, atlatl symbols, concentric circles, and "fringed" elements (figure 19). These non-representational and, surely, symbolic images are the basic forms that characterize Utah's Archaic rock art styles and are most similar in form to those of the Old World stone age imagery.

Rain Symbol in Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art

At most Barrier Canyon style sites, the parallel line motif is incorporated within the body-form—either defining the entire body or a part, usually



Top: Figure 18. Pecked, Glen Canyon Linear Style, Uintah Basin.

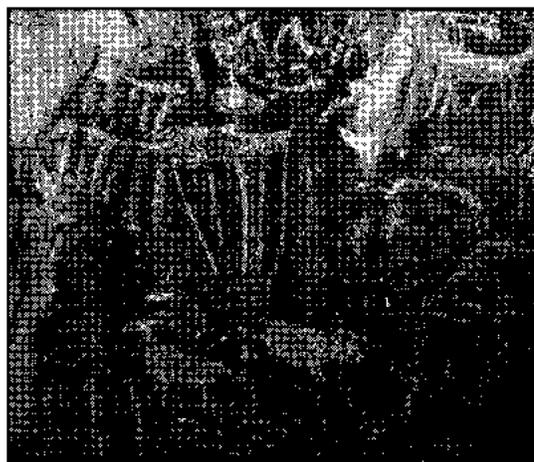
Bottom: Figure 19. Painted, Chihuahua Polychrome Style, San Rafael Swell.

an upper section. Much less common are the figurative images that have the motif incorporated exterior to the body. However, there are at least two Barrier Canyon sites where discrete parallel line motif images occur.

Figure 20 shows the motif with elongated parallel lines. This detail comes from an unusual site which consists, almost exclusively, of painted parallel line motifs. Some of the images have linear zig-zags, wavy lines, and angular frets painted between the vertical lines. Some of the images appear to be identical in form, interior designs, and color to the Barrier Canyon spirit figure but without the heads. This site appears to have ritual significance. For example, almost without exception, the images were carefully painted with a small brush/tool and a consistent high quality of execution. The variable condition of the paintings suggests that individuals have been visiting this site over a very extended period of time. Yet, while one would expect some evolution in the parallel line images, the paintings are remarkably similar in form.

The second site, which consists of painted and pecked images, has both discrete and incorporated imagery (figure 21). Judging from the level of repatination, it appears that the three images were pecked about the same time. Here, the motif's lines are curved slightly inward at the bottom to suggest a torso and the line, or bar, at the top is capped with a "bust" of a human-like form—a Barrier Canyon style spirit figure.

There are significant differences between the Barrier Canyon and the other three Archaic styles. The most striking is the scale of the imagery—Barrier Canyon style spirit figures are often life-sized and can run to more



Left: Figure 20. Painted parallel line images. Many of the images at this unique site appear to be similar to the interior linear pattern of Barrier Canyon style spirit figures. Escalante River Drainage, about 12 inches in height. Right: Figure 21. Pecked parallel line image incorporated within the anthropomorphic figure. Barrier Canyon Style, Book Cliffs. About 24 inches in height.

Left top: Figure 22.

Right, a low-fired red clay figurine with traces of red ochre paint. Parallel line motif engraved on head and body. Barrier Canyon style. Walters Cave, ca. 7100 b.c.

Left, a grey unfired clay figurine with vertical and horizontal lines of punctuated dots. Barrier Canyon style, Cowboy Cave, ca. 5700 b.c. Hand-sized.

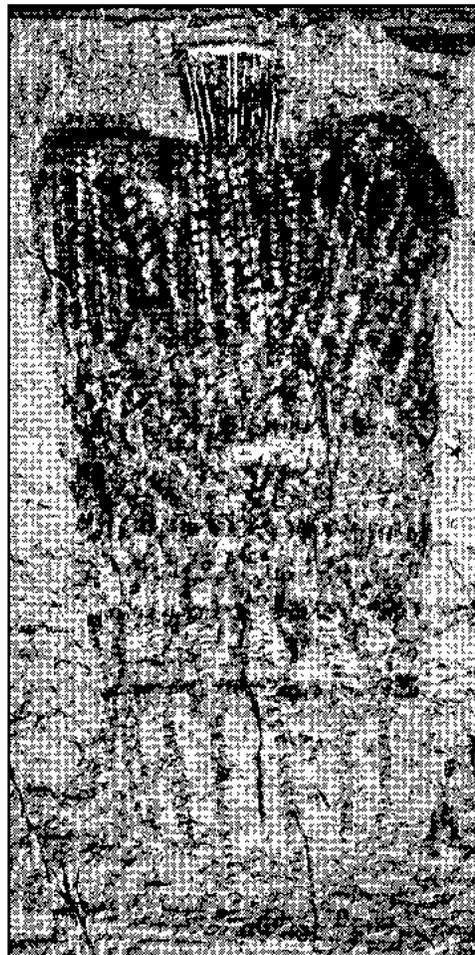


Right: Figure 23.

Red painted spirit figure with parallel lines of white dots on head and body. Also pecked lines of dots. Early Barrier Canyon style image, Great Barrier Canyon style image, Great Gallery. Larger than life-size.

Left bottom: Figure 24.

Red painted spirit figure with white dots and parallel lines on body. Early Barrier Canyon style image, Hanksville area. Life-sized.



than eight feet in height compared to two or three feet for the tallest figures of the other styles. Another difference is seen in the image inventory at the Barrier Canyon style sites—almost totally representational and usually dominated by an upscale anthropomorph(s). A third important distinction is the intimate and interactive association frequently seen between the Barrier Canyon style anthropomorphs and their animal, bird, insect and plant forms. And, consistently, the paintings of the Barrier Canyon artists are of a higher competency and creativity—in technique, process, and representational modes—than those of all the other prehistoric styles.

Early Barrier Canyon Style Parallel Line Imagery

Quite possibly the oldest image/object in the Barrier Canyon style, a hand-size hardened (probably baked) red clay figurine (figure 22 right), has the parallel line motif engraved on the front of its head and body. The engraved linear marks were made with an indirect percussive technique that

left cashew or bean-shaped depressions regularly spaced over the length of the lines. The same technique, with the resulting bean-like depressions, was employed to engrave lines on the lower half of figure 23—of course, at a much greater scale (about fourteen times larger).

In addition to the pecked linear elements, there are layers of vertical lines of white dots painted on the upper part of the torso. Parts of the upper torso have been overpainted with transparent red ochre washes and lines of white dots. The layered color patterns create an interior depth not common within the style. A white band has been painted across the crown of the head and solid, white parallel lines down the “face.” The emphasis on the rounded shoulder-forms, seen in all three figures (22, 23, 24), is also unusual. A number of features—form, dot motifs, color, and paint condition, and level of repatination—suggests that figure 23 is very old, surely among the oldest of its style. Although there are some differences between the three interior parallel line motif figures, they appear to represent the same entity.

Interior Parallel Line Motifs

The interior parallel line motif is most often seen as a distinct unit within the figure (figure 25, 26) or forming the body/torso itself (figures 29, 30). Perhaps the best known rock art image on the Colorado Plateau, the Holy Ghost figure from the Great Gallery displays a painted parallel line motif on its chest and neck. In addition, the artist scratched long vertical, evenly spaced, lines in the spray-painted body form and incised zig-zag and wavy lines between some of the lines, similar to the image in figure 20. The parallel line motif was defined by paint and abrasion in figure 26. The spirit figure



Far left: Figure 25. Painted parallel line motif on torso and neck of the “Holy Ghost” figure. Great Gallery. Larger than life-size.

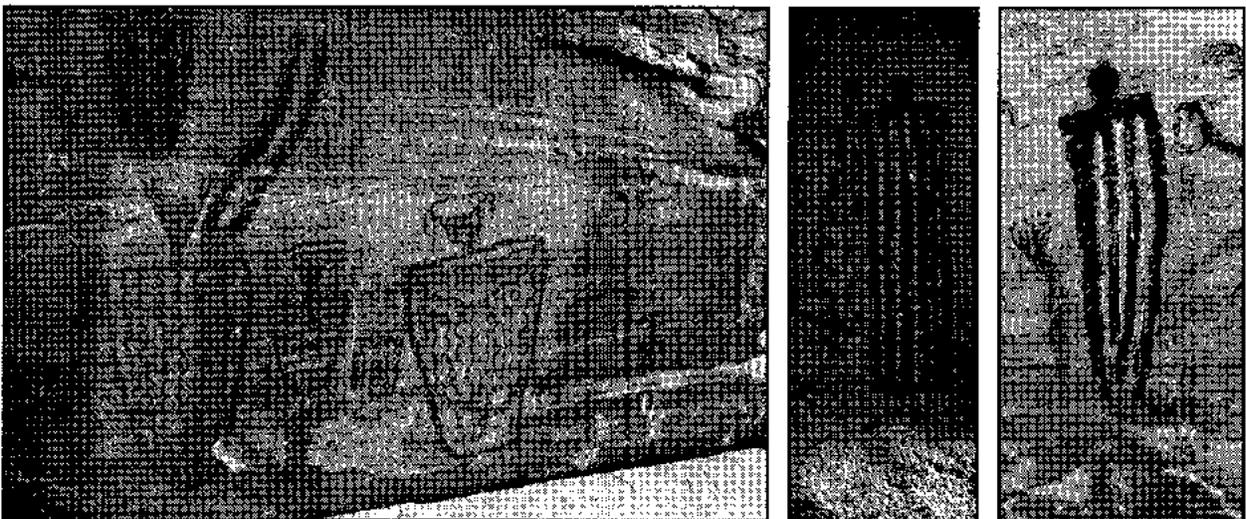
Middle: Figure 26. Painted and incised parallel line motif on chest area. Harvest Panel. About life size.

Right: Figure 27. Painted dots and parallel line motifs on body and wavy lines next to it. Great Gallery. About life size.

has a stylized head with a white crown, and wavy lines run up both sides of its torso. About life size, figure 27 also comes from the Great Gallery. It has a horizontal line of white dots painted across its lower section and vertical red and white parallel lines over most of the figure. There are also a few delicate white vertical lines painted on the lower section of the head below the eyes. Vertical zig-zag or wavy lines also run up each side of the figure.

Body or torso forms exhibit some variations in size and form throughout the style area, and the parallel line motif can be found in all of the variants. Figure 28 shows several variations of the parallel line motif on a shield-shaped Barrier Canyon style spirit figure. Reading from the left, interior parallel patterns of wavy, horizontal, straight vertical, and wavy snake lines with heads fill the figures. All appear to be painted about the same time. Streaking diagonally, above the figure on the left, parallel lines of red paint, carefully smeared on with fingertips, recall the “macaroni” finger markings of Paleolithic Europe (figure 8).

An elongated rectangular spirit figure has white dots carefully placed, by thumb or finger, between red vertical parallel lines (figure 29). Three wavy snake images (two very faint) float heads up to the left of the figure. To the left of the striped anthropomorph in figure 30 is a clump of plant-like forms



Left: Figure 28. Section of a large panel with variations of the parallel line motif including wavy lines, horizontal lines, straight vertical lines and wavy vertical snakes (with heads). About four feet in height.

Middle: Figure 29. Spirit figure with painted red vertical parallel lines and white dots (thumbprints) carefully placed between the lines. Wavy snake lines, with heads, float to the left of the figure. About four feet in height.

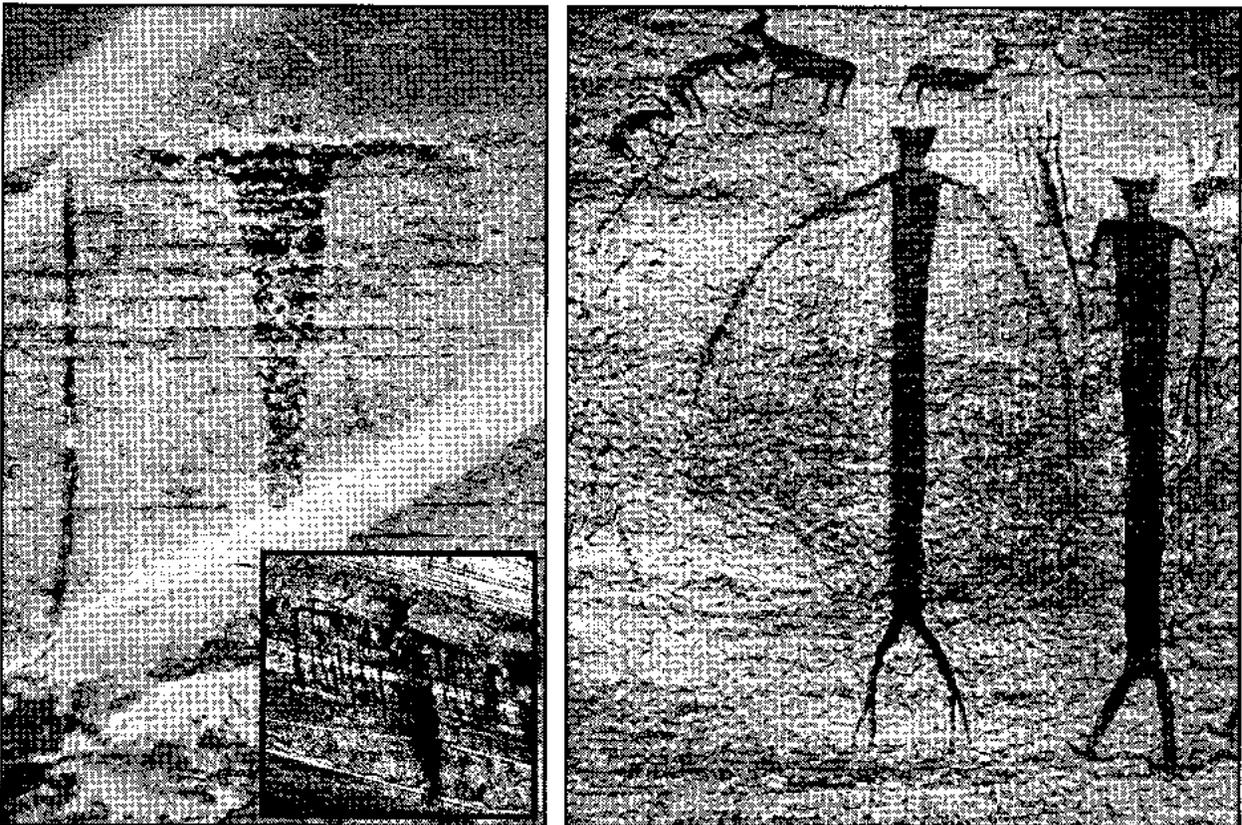
Right: Figure 30. Painterly parallel-line figure associated with a clump of plant-like forms and a snake-like image with a horned sheep's head and bird-like feet (fragment at right). About four feet in height.

with roots and a composite image with a snake's body, bird-like feet, and a salivating horned sheep's head approaches from the right.

Exterior Parallel Line Motifs

The concentration of Barrier Canyon style figures with exterior parallel lines in the Buckhorn Wash area is unusual. As indicated above, there are at least eight representations of exterior line motif figures at the panel itself. There are at least another five more images, in three other sites, that have similar images and there could well be more in the area.

Several of the figures have bird-like outstretched arms/wings. An unusual painted figure at Buckhorn Wash displays an elegant symmetry with fine lines drawn from its outstretched arms downward (figure 31). A vertical



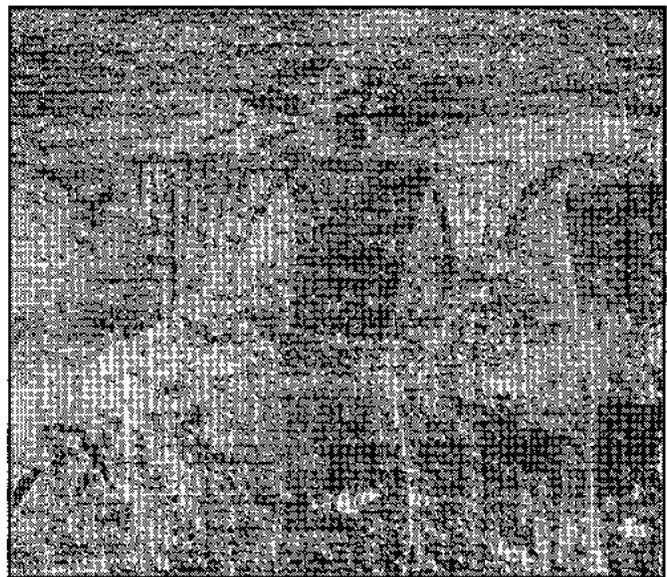
Left: Figure 31. Symmetrical spirit figure with fine drawn lines falling from outstretched arms. Buckhorn Wash. About life-size.

Left inset: Figure 32. Bird or flat-headed figure with painted parallel lines extended below outstretched arms, or wings. Buckhorn Wash area. About 18 inches in height.

Right: Figure 33. Painted composition with rabbits, deer, plant-wands and a figure with fine lines painted below curved arms or wings. The figure also has root-like feet. Buckhorn Wash area. About four feet in height.

straight snake-like form is connected to the tip of the arm at the left. The inset, figure 32, is found at a site east of Buckhorn Wash that contains at least three figures with exterior line motifs. The painted red figure appears to have a bird-like or flat head. This particular form appears in the rock art of many cultures and is popularly called a *Thunderbird* figure. Located a few miles west of Buckhorn Wash, figure 33 is part of a composition that contains rabbits and deer. One figure holds a plant and plant-wand or fan in each hand. The figure with the exterior parallel line motif appears to have curved arms or wings, and has roots for feet. This panel is located near a large spring.

Another figure at the Buckhorn Wash Panel has line motifs connected to its outstretched arms (figure 35). Both straight and wavy lines are found extending from one arm (left). A curved form consisting of three parallel lines, partially blended together on the right side, covers its head and shoulders. Martineau describes this image as a Hopi deity “dwelling in his abode” (Martineau 1973,109). In figure 36, a detail of a very faint composition, there is an unusual incorporation: the parallel line motif flanks both sides of the figure but appears to lie behind the arms. In this image, the linear motif is not connected to the arms—the parallel lines descend from horizontal lines or bars that extend from the figure’s shoulders.



Left: Figure 35. Spirit figure with straight and wavy lines extending downward from arms. A three line arc covers the head and shoulders of the figure. Buckhorn wash. About life-size.

Right: Figure 36. Spirit figure with parallel line motif on either side of the shoulders. Buckhorn Wash. Almost life-size.

Discussion

Do we ever understand what we think? We understand only such thinking as is a mere equation and from which nothing comes out but what we have put in. That is the manner of working of the intellect. But beyond that there is a thinking in primordial images—in symbols that are older than historical man; which have been ingrained in him from earliest times, and, eternally living, outlasting all generations, still make up the groundwork of the human psyche.

C. G. Jung 1936,129

Indeed, what is striking is not the metamorphosis of the symbols over the millennia but rather the continuity from Paleolithic times on.

Gimbutas 1991,xix

The mythologist Joseph Campbell suggests that we may think of images, myths and rites as "a function of the local scene, the landscape, the history, and the sociology of the folk concerned (in which case our approach will be ethnological or historical)" or as "clues to what may be permanent or universal in human nature (in which case our emphasis will be psychological, or perhaps even metaphysical)" (Campbell 1959,461).

Working from the ethnological and historical point-of-view, Martineau learned the identity, the meanings and functions of the historic Pueblo images, symbols, myths and rites and projected his findings back to the Archaic Barrier Canyon style paintings at Buckhorn Wash. And Gimbutas employed the same method to interpret Neolithic European cultural symbols, representational images and objects, and trace their meaning and functions back to the Upper Paleolithic and earlier.

As Campbell suggested, images, myths and rites can also be considered from a psychological point-of-view to find their nonhistorical and universal meanings or messages. A key to Campbell's search for the universality in myth was C. G. Jung's identification of primordial images, symbols or archetypes in the psyche of modern man. Archetypes and symbols originate below the threshold of consciousness in an aspect of the psyche which Jung designated the "collective unconscious"—"the matrix of consciousness (which) has its own inborn structure" (Jung 1966,97).

"All events are ruled by the structure," the poet Octavio Paz quotes anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, "that is, by a universal unconscious rea-

son. The latter is identical among savages and among the civilized: we think different things in the same way. Structure is not historical: it is natural, and in it resides the real human nature" (Paz 1970,133). At this point, Levi-Strauss departs from the Jungian model, suggesting that "it is only forms and not contents which can be common. If there are common contents the reason must be sought either in the objective properties of particular nature or artificial entities or in diffusion and borrowing, in either case, that is, outside the mind" (Levi-Strauss 1970,65).

The content, Levi-Strauss insists, is variable when it is established through the interaction of people but this is not the case with form. Form is common to all because it reflects, or is an expression of, our "inner cohesion," or universal reason—the unconscious structure of "real human nature." The development of "pictorial form is not greatly modified by cultural and individual differences," agrees aesthetician and psychologist Rudolph Arnheim. "It is for this reason that the drawings of children look essentially alike throughout the world, and that there are such striking similarities among the early art products of different civilizations" (Arnheim 1960,167).

Regardless of whether the meaning attributed to the early visual forms derive from their origin in the psyche or because of their objective visual properties or from the association of men or from some combination, the images represent the beginning of man's symbolic activity. The early symbols "reflect basic human experiences by means of equally basic pictorial form" (Arnheim 1960,167). Before language and discursive reason, man thought symbolically (Eliade 196,12). And this early form of reasoning is "in images rather than by intellectual concepts," in the "concrete logic of sensible qualities which is at the basis of all artistic representation" (Arnheim 1962,6).

In pre-literate or proto-literate culture, the art symbol becomes the fact; that is, it simultaneously represents, defines, and manifests its referent. In such cultures, art objects and events serve as media for information storage, rather than books.

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Mircea Eliade, historian of religion, emphasizes that images, symbols and myths are not "irresponsible creations" of the psyche; rather "they respond to a need and fulfil a function—that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being." The sacred mysteries were "expressed by a pattern of symbols rather than by the interplay of concepts: a metaphysic—that is, a whole and coherent conception of Reality, not a series of instinctive gestures ruled by the same fundamental reaction of the human animal in confrontation with Nature" (Eliade 1961,176).

The Water Symbol Complex

The aquatic symbols are among mankind's most constant family of visual images. Although some water symbols appear to be non-representational images, more frequently they appear to be elementary or schematic (stylized) representations (figures 5-6, 8-16). The images reflect the objective visual properties of rain, running water, and fluids. These symbols may also function as mnemonic images that have been handed down from primordial times (Jung 196,80).

The earliest record of the water symbol complex, and the oldest example of intentional engraving, is an engraved ox rib which was found at Pech de l'Aze', France, in Lower Paleolithic deposits dated at a startlingly ancient 300,000 b.c. (Grieder 1982,21). The rib is marked with pairs of parallel lines engraved in double arcs, zigzag and serpentine forms. Parallels, pairs, the number two and doubleness, Gimbutas notes, meant a "blessed multiplication". Since "it was more than one it had more strength and more influence on fertility." "Fertility was not sexuality, it was multiplication, growing, flourishing" (Gimbutas 1991,317).

From the beginning, the complex of water images represented an important part of the visual pattern that symbolized the invisible but potent life force and its processes. In particular, the "Waters" symbolized the entire universe of the virtual—they were "the *fons et origo*, the reservoir of all the potentialities of existence; they precede every form and sustain every creation" (Campbell 1959,66).

By the Upper Paleolithic, the creative life force was associated with the female and personified by the goddess. The power of the "Life Creatrix and Regeneratrix was in animals, plants, water, mountains, and stones. The Goddess may be a bird, a deer, a bear, a vase, an upright stone, or a tree. The anthropomorphic Birth Giver was interchangeable with bear, deer, elk. The protectress of young life, the Nurse, or the Madonna, appeared both as human and as bird, snake, bear" (Gimbutas 1991,317). Water was the vehicle of the power of the goddess; but equally, "it was she who personifies the mystery of the waters of birth and dissolution—whether of the individual or of the universe." "The amniotic fluid is then precisely comparable to the water that in many mythologies represents the elementary substance of all things" (Campbell 1959,64). The process of seasonal awakening, growing, fattening, and dying was seen as connecting humans, animals, and plants: "the pregnancy of a woman, the fattening of a sow, the ripening of fruits and crops were interrelated, influencing each other" (Gimbutas 1991,317).

Because water is critical to all of life, wild and cultivated, the images have remained useful and relevant or potent to millennia of both hunters-gath-

ers and agriculturists (Campbell,1959,66).

Conclusion

An unprecedented efflorescence in rock art seems to have occurred in the Western or Desert Archaic. This phenomenon resulted in an impressive accumulation of Archaic rock art sites like Buckhorn Wash. Many of these sites contain skillfully pecked and painted images—some with imposing figures larger than life, some with finely rendered quadrupeds smaller than an inch, and, surprisingly, the appearance of at least four rock art styles. It is not clear whether this increase in activity indicates an awakened creative impulse in the local population, diffusion of new images and ideology, shifting populations, or even a second wave of immigrants from Asia.

In the abstract images common to all of the Western Archaic styles (figures 17-24), we see a close correspondence to symbolic images engraved on Old World objects and figurines (figures 9-15). Gimbutas associates these basic images with the aquatic realm and the single source of all life—a life-giving and life-renewing "self-generating Goddess." The snake, guardian of the springs of life, and the waterfowl are related symbols of regeneration often found with the water symbol complex.

The kiva art associated with the Hopi Snake Ceremony includes Pueblo agriculturists' versions of these ancient images—the parallel line/rain symbol and zig-zag snake and lightning forms—joined with a new form of stylized clouds (figure 5). The ceremony and its symbols are associated, Martineau relates, with "Alosaka (Muyingwa)" the Hopi god of reproduction of man, animals and plants. Other scholars relate that "Muyinwa," is not only "the maker of all life germs" but "prayers for rain are directed to him." And his sister (Tih-Juyi-wuhti) is the mother of game animals—antelope, deer, mountain sheep, and rabbits (Gill and Sullivan 1992,202).

The Buckhorn Wash figure was painted by a hunter-gatherer, the Pueblo images by an agriculturist. Before the hunting and gathering lifestyle gave way to the domestication of animals and the planting of crops in Europe. "There was no division into the Lady of Plants and the Lady of Beasts; no deity ruled over the plants or animals separately" (Gimbutas 1991a,317).

Bracketed by the symbols of the Old World Stone Age and the Pueblo, there is no reason to think that Martineau's reading of the Buckhorn Wash rain symbol and figures (figures 2, 3) is not essentially correct. Likewise, the many Barrier Canyon style spirit figures (figures 23-30) with the interior or exterior parallel line motif probably represent the life-giving and life-renewing entity—especially when snake, zig-zag or wavy line forms are present. However, considering the possible temporal span (one to five-thousand years or more) between the paintings of the Archaic and Pueblo images, the figure

could well represent a less differentiated deity/spirit or personification of the life-giving and renewing power—closer, perhaps, to the single, self-generating goddess than to Alosaka (Muyingwa) and his sister.

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