

FALLING LINES

The Parallel Line Motif
As A Defining Feature Of The
Barrier Canyon Style

David Sucec, BCS PROJECT
URARA 2009



Style—

The concepts (involved in visual analysis) stress the appearance of objects rather than their purposes, their forms rather than their meanings...

J. J. Brody, *Anasazi and Pueblo Painting*

Utah Archaic Rock Art Style Chronology (*Working*)

- Barrier Canyon, ca. 6750/5600 b.c.e. — ca. c.e. 300
- Glen Canyon Linear, ca. 6000/2000 b.c.e. — ca. c.e. 1300
- Great Basin Abstract, ca. 6000/2000 b.c.e. — ca. c.e. 1500
- Chihuahua Polychrome, ca. 6000/2000 b.c.e. — ca. c.e. 100
- Basketmaker, ca. 2000/1000 b.c.e. — ca. c.e. 750

- Fremont, ca. c.e. 1/100 – 1350



Maze area, looking east to the Blue Mountains near Monticello.



Heart of the *Barrier Canyon* style territory, the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers, Canyonlands National Park.



With a lower wall, right, and an upper wall, left—*the Great Gallery*, in Canyonlands National Park, is about 300 feet in width with more than 80 anthropomorphic figures and additional bird, sheep, snake, and non-representational images.



The *Holy Ghost Group*. The tallest figure, the *Holy Ghost*, is about eight feet in height. Variable spacing, between figures, suggests a natural gathering.



Barrier Canyon style clay figurines (with punctuate and pecked parallel lines) from Cowboy and Walters caves (above).



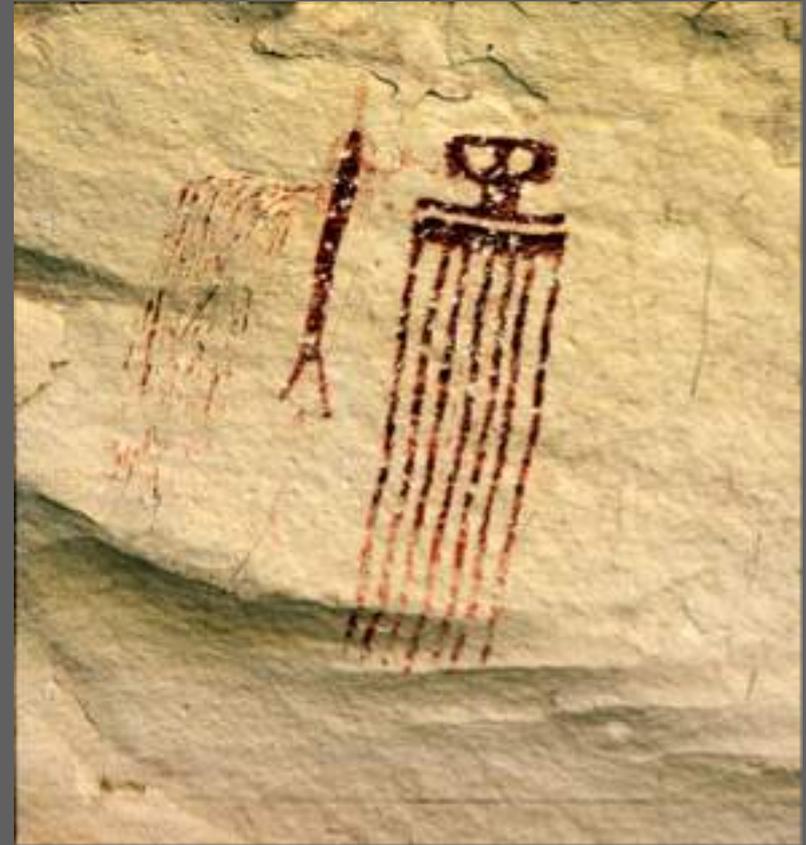


The Barrier Canyon Style

- Elongated figure proportion, width to length, most often tapered
- Spirit Figures are bilaterally symmetrical
- The *parallel line motif* with long vertical lines rather than the typically horizontal orientation (rake) of other Archaic styles
- Arcs over head and/or shoulders
- Headdresses such as “crowns” and double antennae
- Oversize “vacant” eyes
- Compositions apparently representing friendly associations of animal, bird, snake and plant images with anthropomorphic spirit figures.
- Composite figures, or hybrids, made up of body parts of different species
- Quadrupeds (dogs, cougar?) with tails curved over its back
- Fletched or un-fletched spears (tall poles)



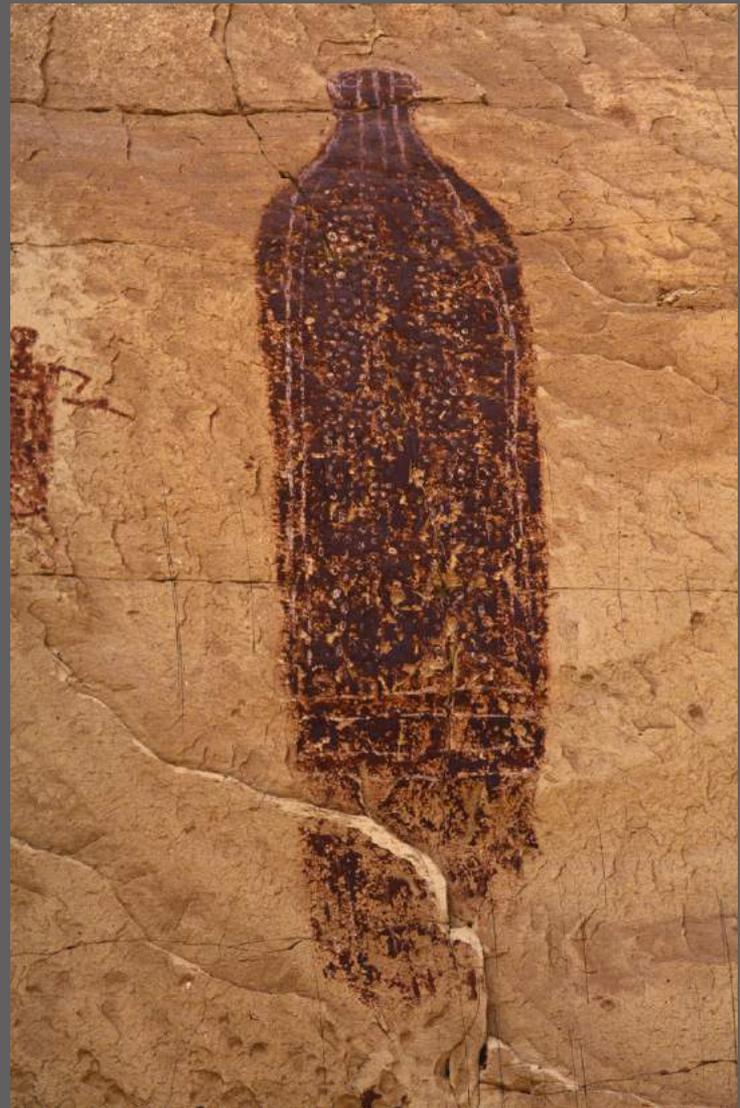
Glen Canyon Linear



Barrier Canyon

Archaic Parallel Line Motif

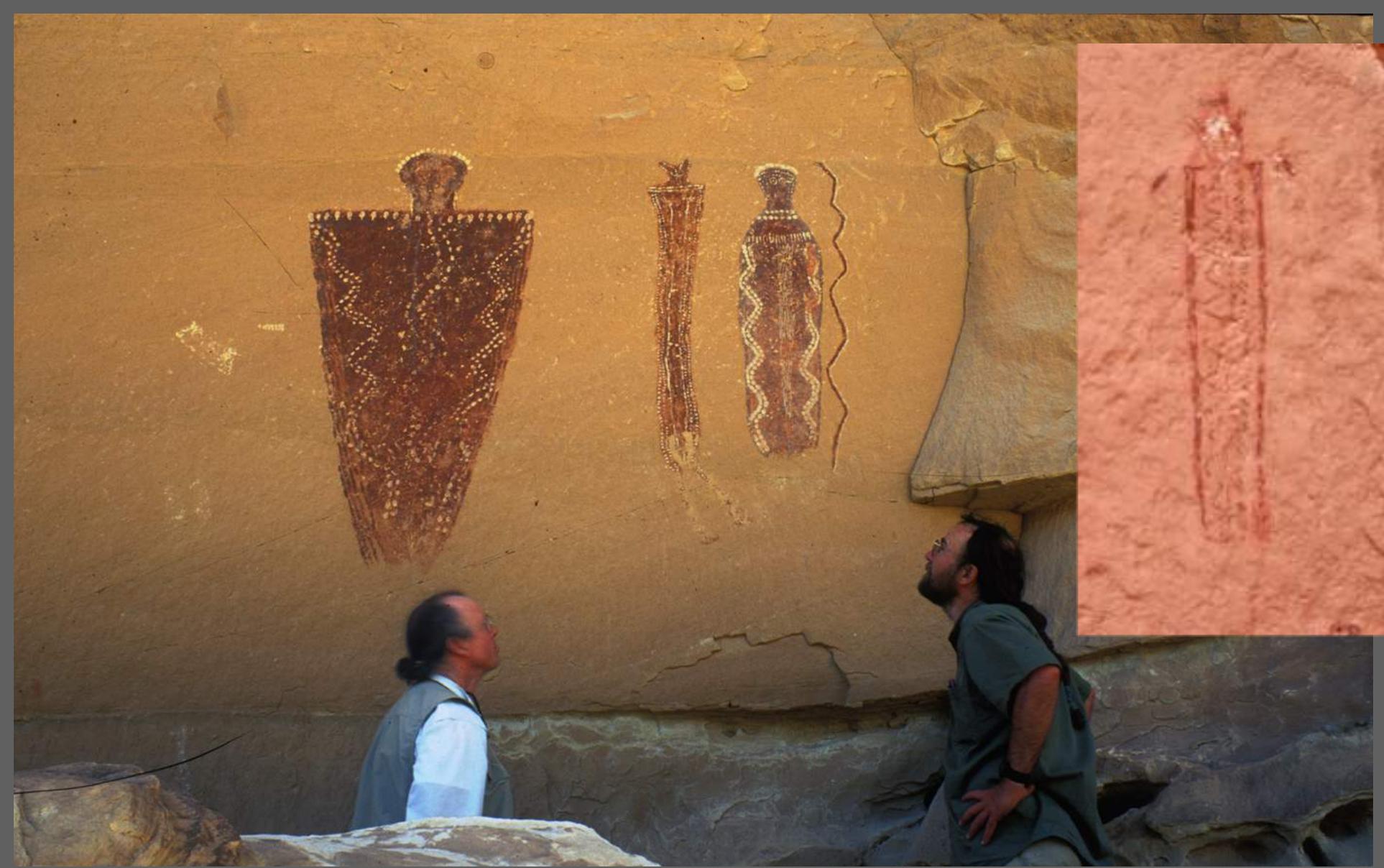
Left: “Rake,” “comb” or “brush” – vertical dimensions lesser, horizontal dimensions greater.
Right: “Broom” – vertical lines greater dimensions, horizontal dimensions lesser.



Great Gallery. *Barrier Canyon* style figures with parallel line motif.



Full body parallel line motif. Left: Harvest Panel, upper right: Canyonlands NP, lower right: Maze District.



Parallel lines of dots, wavy parallel lines, vertical wavy snake form.
Above: Glen Canyon Recreation Area. Inset: Great Gallery.

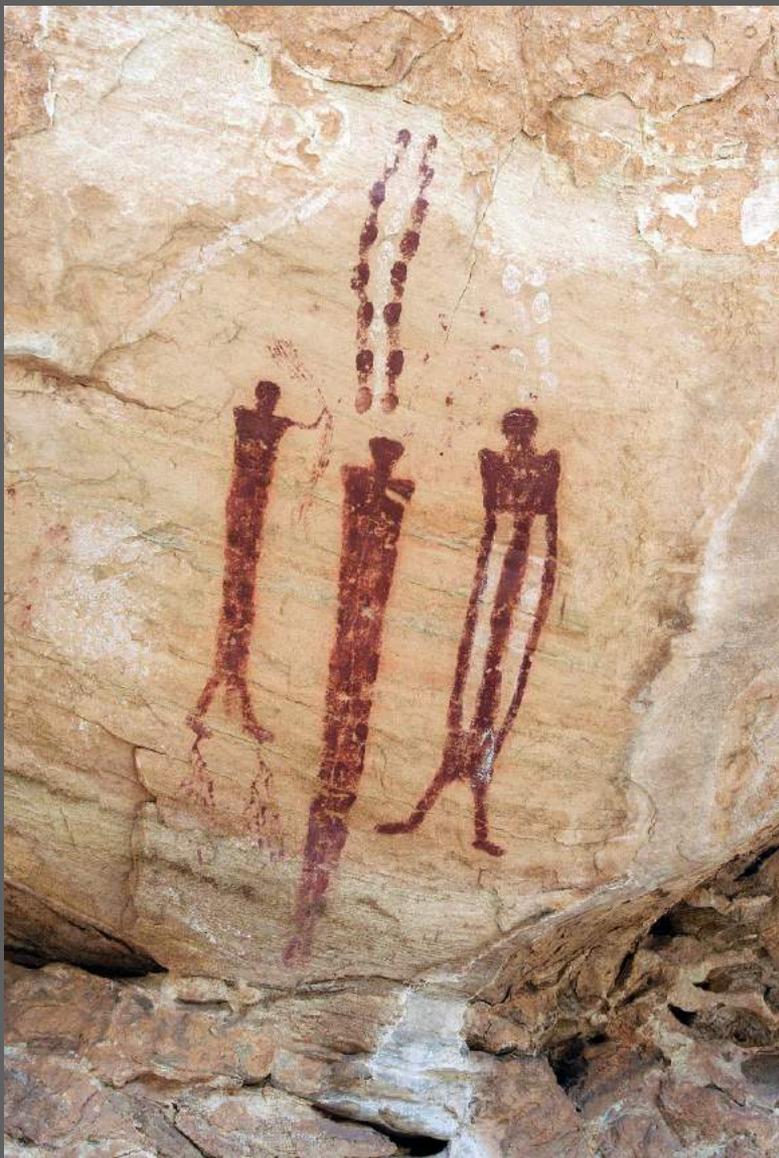


Canyonlands NP

Salt Creek variant,
finger smears,
horizontal and
vertical straight,
wavy, and snake
parallel line motifs.



Left: horizontal PLM, Mussentuchit, in height.
Right, banded figure, San Rafael Swell, both about 12 in height.



Left: triad figure, San Rafael Reef. Right: scratched figure, Dirty Devil River.



Buckhorn Wash.

Left figure with parallel lines extending from fingers, holding a wavy snake.

Right figure with wavy and straight PLM falling from arms. PLM arc over head and shoulders.

Figures about four feet in height.

Inset, bottom left: Virgin Spring, PLM falling from wing-like arms.



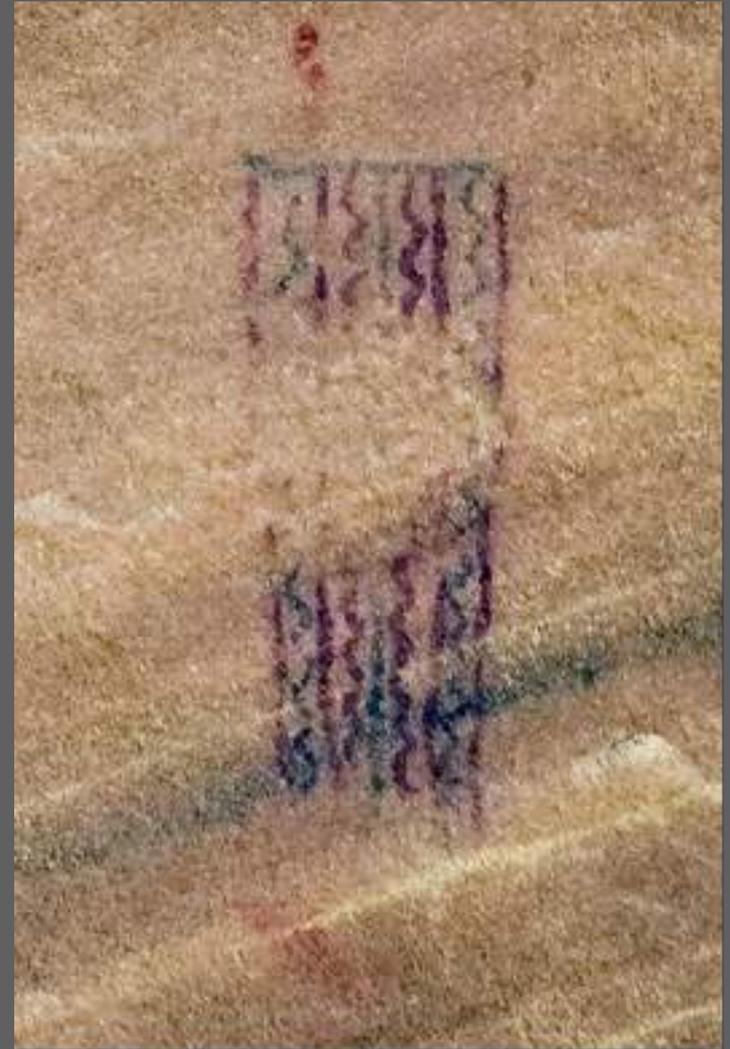


Above: Ferron Box, *Barrier Canyon* style parallel line motif
positive hand prints.

Left: Canyonlands NP, finger smears.



South Temple Wash. *Barrier Canyon* style dog/quad with parallel line motif.



Figures without heads? *Barrier Canyon* or *Chihuahua Polychrome* or *Glen Canyon Linear* style? Left: Weaver's Caves, right: Grand Staircase/Escalante NM, Site B.

...symbols on figurines...with meanders, zigzags, or parallel lines emphasize...(an) intimacy with the aquatic life-giving sphere, suggesting (a) function as a giver of moisture and life waters.

Gimbutus, *The Language of The Goddess*

Discussion: parallel line motif

- Blanket pattern, tattoo, or symbol?
- Weavers Caves/Avery Wash/Escalante
- Water family symbols
- Mixed-style figures



PLM – blanket pattern...tattoo...or?



Chihuahua Polychrome



Great Basin Abstract



Barrier Canyon

Bottom left: Weaver's Caves parallel line motifs with curved tail dog.

In four Grand Staircase /Escalante area PLM sites, unlike CPS, there are no plant images or animal prints or bird tracks in panels.



Parallel line motif with wavy lines – above: Weavers Caves, right: Holy Ghost figure.



Barrier Canyon, Chihuahua Polychrome, or Glen Canyon Linear?



Upper left: Mixed-style: more *Barrier Canyon* or *Fremont* in style?

Lower left: Concave-sided figure from Canyonlands NP.
Below: Bucket headed figures from the Great Gallery.

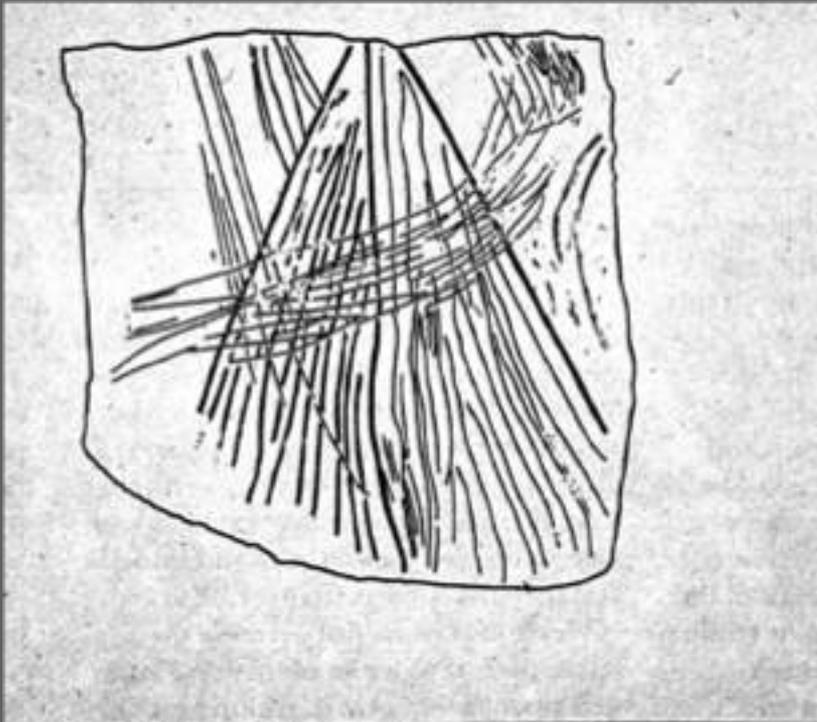




Left: painted figure with parallel line motif, Range Creek Canyon.
Right: pecked *Fremont* style shaman, 9 Mile Canyon.

...symbols on figurines...with meanders, zigzags, or parallel lines emphasize...(an) intimacy with the aquatic life-giving sphere, suggesting (a) function as a giver of moisture and life waters
Gimbutus, *Language*

The Water Family Symbol Complex

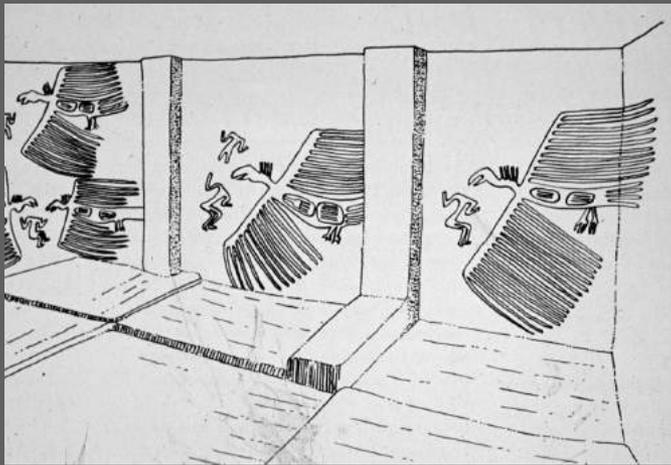


Left: “,,,comet, streams, and a serpentine band...such markings symbolize the flow of (life, healing) water.” Magdalenian period.

Marija Gimbutus, *Language of The Goddess*



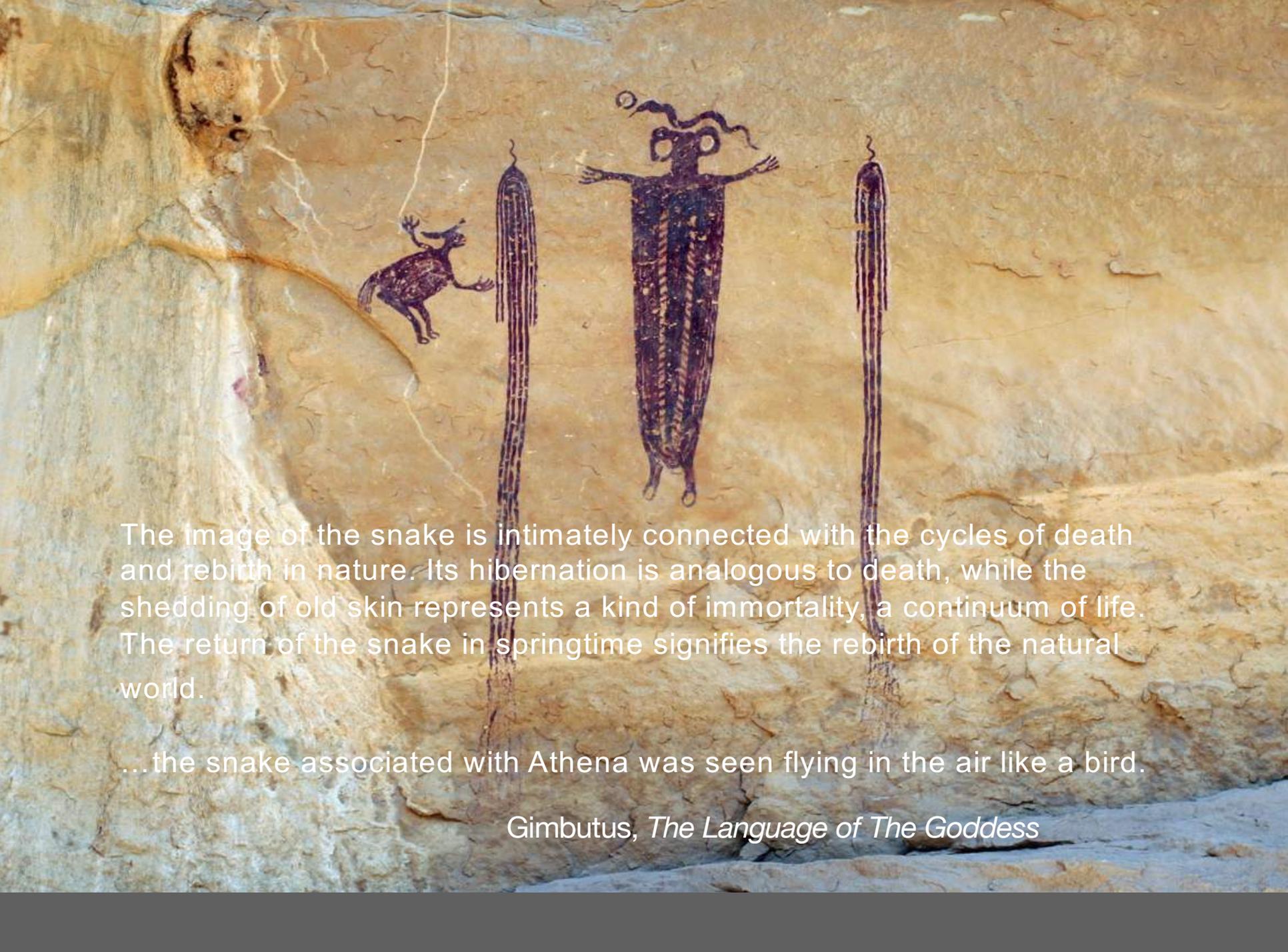
European parallel line motif
Left: "macaroni" marks, cave ceiling.
Right: PLM form, cave wall.



Left: Representations of vultures with “wings like brooms...significantly, the birds are not black but red, the color of life.”
Catal Huyuk, Anatolian Neolithic, early 7 mil. b.c.e. Marija Gimbutus, *Language Of The Goddess*



Right: Walpi, “On several occasions, Alexander Stephen observed groups of four or five young women, assisted by young men, washing and renewing kiva 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 (Stephen 1936:195-96) Terrence Grieder, *Origins of Pre Columbian Art*



The image of the snake is intimately connected with the cycles of death and rebirth in nature. Its hibernation is analogous to death, while the shedding of old skin represents a kind of immortality, a continuum of life. The return of the snake in springtime signifies the rebirth of the natural world.

...the snake associated with Athena was seen flying in the air like a bird.

Gimbutus, *The Language of The Goddess*

