A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY?

Further Thoughts About The Image
Making Of The Barrier Canyon
And Fremont Styles

David Sucec, BCS PROJECT
URARA 2010
Barrier Canyon Style
Fremont 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*
BCS PROJECT Working Chronology

• Barrier Canyon Style, ca. 6750-5600 B.C.E. – ca. C.E. 300
• Glen Canyon Linear Style, ca. 6000-2000 B.C.E. – ca. C.E. 500?
• Basketmaker Style, ca. 2000-1000 B.C.E. – ca. C.E. 500
• Fremont Style, ca. C.E. 100-400 – ca. C.E. 1300
Barrier Canyon rock art style area.

Fremont rock art style area in green.

Elements and Motifs of Style
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
— Shoulder band and humped 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)
Fremont Style

– Hourglass figure / elongated trapezoidal figure (Uinta)
– Bison horn headdress and fringed “horn” headdress
– Elaborate necklace / chin line
– Horizontal “belt” line
– Slit eyes
– Arms extend straight down at slight angle from shoulders
– Feet pointed outwards
– Fringed staff
– Angularity of figures
– Bow and arrow
Fish Creek Cove rock art site, overview.
Fish Creek Cove painted images. Two figures on the left have long been assigned to the Fremont style but every element and motif is found in the Barrier Canyon style. Inset: BCS figure, Fish Creek Cove.
Head motif
Shoulder / concavity motifs
Shoulder motifs
Shoulder motifs
Shoulder motifs
Ferron Box High Panel... what stylistic elements and motifs are seen here?
High Panel, arcs
Ancestor Panel, PLM arcs over individual heads of large figures and over several figures at right.
Above: Painted arc over head, humped shoulders.
Right: Abraded San Rafael Variant figure with PLM arcs over entire body. Dirty Devil area.
Ferron Box High Panel, right wall.
Snake motif. Above: Buckhorn Wash
Snake motif
Weavers Caves PLM images

Mixed Style / Unique Images
Sheep Canyon
Carrot Man Panel
Attention to Style…so what?

Classifying, as opposed to not classifying, has a value of its own, whatever form the classification may take.

…the demand for organization is a need common to art and science and that in consequence 'taxonomy, which is ordering par excellence, has eminent aesthetic value.'

Given this, it seems less surprising that the aesthetic sense can by itself open the way to taxonomy and even anticipate some of its results.

Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*
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Art objects are elements of particular temporal, spatial, and social sequences that may be called "historical styles." ... style is perceived as a function of the human imagination…rather than as the by-product of some metaphysical or social Darwinian "historic force."

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