

McConkie Ranch Rock Art and Evidence of Conflict

Alicia Oliver



What is the question?

Are claims about the frequency of conflict in Fremont society based on rock art panels supported by the actual frequency of symbols of conflict?



Panel 124 Anthropomorphs 227-231

What is the problem?

Rock art...

... has not been properly evaluated or recorded.

... is understudied.

... is one of the few ways archaeologists can gain insight into the social consciousness of a prehistoric society.



Panel 31 Anthropomorphs 52 and 53

What is the significance of the research?

This study will affect Fremont research questions like...

... How did the Fremont conceptualize conflict?

... How frequent are conflict symbols in the rock art record?

This study will affect rock art research questions like...

... How can statistical analysis be conducted on rock art?

... How can researchers make grounded claims about rock art?

Who were the Fremont?

The Fremont were...

... a mix of indigenous hunter-gatherers and migrant farmers.

... in the archaeological record between AD 300 - AD 1300.

... known for their plain gray ware pottery, pit houses, and rectangular metates.

... skilled at using irrigation and slick rock water runoff to water crops.

What does Fremont rock art look like?

Fremont rock art has...

... a combination pigment and pecked images.

... Basketmaker II influence in anthropomorph shape and other style elements.

... anthropomorphs, zoomorphs, and abstract designs like spirals, fringed circles, and more.

What does rock art look like in the Uinta Basin?

Classic Vernal Anthropomorphs...

... have wide shoulders, tapered waist, headdresses, jewelry.

... are the only style connected to Fremont.

... are the most commonly cited style when referencing Fremont conflict.



Panel 111 Anthropomorph 194

What does rock art look like in the Uinta Basin?

Shield Bearing Warriors...

- ... have bodies obscured by a shield.
- ... have limbs and a head sticking out from behind the shield.
- ... have uncertain origins (Keyser and Loendorf).



Panel 106 Anthropomorph 188

What evidence of Fremont conflict is there?

Architecture in Nine Mile Canyon...

... shows hidden granaries and difficult to access refuges near the villages.

... indicate raiding was common and villagers chose passive defenses instead of fighting back.

Bioarchaeology at Fremont sites includes...

... injuries consistent with butchering an animal on human bones in Fremont villages, especially to the south near the Ancestral Puebloans.

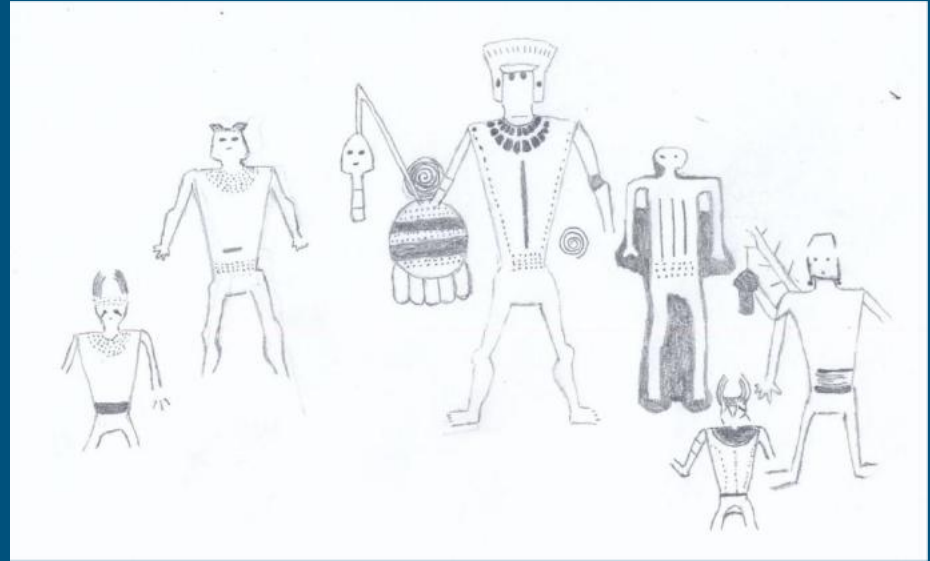
... scalps found in sites in Northern Utah seem to have been kept as a trophy.

What evidence of Uinta Fremont conflict is there?

The Uinta Fremont had...

... cliffside granaries could be evidence of passive defense like in Nine Mile Canyon.

... rock art panels that depict weaponry, captives, shields, trophy heads, and scalps.



How was the rock art recorded?

Official records were incomplete, so I...

... created panel designation from scratch and numbered them for easy reference.

... numbered anthropomorphs starting at 1 and identified the style of each.

... noted if the anthropomorph had a war or trophy symbol and recorded the symbol type if present.

Pre-existing Records

Harvard Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology

Bridging the Gap in Dry Fork Canyon: Combining Archaeology and Ethnography for a More Comprehensive Understanding of Fremont Rock Art. Melissa Anne Malone

Rock Art of Utah. Polly Schaafsma



What are the categories of Anthropomorphs?

Anthropomorphs were either...

... Classic Vernal Anthropomorph: “trapezoidal body and simple, large, round, rectangular or bucket-shaped head” (Schaafsma 1971:15) or...

... Shield Bearing Warriors: body hidden by circular shield with a head peeking above the shield and sometimes with limbs sticking out the bottom or sides or...

... En Toto Pecked: anthropomorphs that were completely pecked but did not match the Classic Vernal Style or...

... Interior Line Design: anthropomorphs that had designs inside their outline but did not match the Classic Vernal Style.

What were the symbols of conflict?

Categories of war symbols are...

... image or symbol that represent what would be used during conflict/warfare.

... shields, clubs, projectiles.

Categories of trophy symbols are...

... images or symbols that represent what was won through conflict.

... trophy head, scalps, and captives.

Statistics

... Frequency Tables for actual occurrence

... Chi Squared Test of Independence $p < 0.05$

What were the results?

There were...

... 190 panels.

... 159 with anthropomorphs.

... 471 anthropomorphs total.

Frequency of Anthropomorph Style Types

Anthropomorph Style	Frequency	Percent
Classic Vernal Anthropomorph	327	68.1
En Toto Pecked	75	15.6
Interior Line Design	31	6.5
Shield Bearing Warrior	38	7.9
Total	471	100

Frequency of War Trophies by Anthropomorph Style

Anthropomorph Style	Captive	Scalp	Trophy Head	Total
Classic Vernal Anthropomorphs	3 (2.68)	1 (1.78)	13 (12.52)	17
En Toto Pecked	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0
Interior Line Design	0 (0.32)	1 (0.21)	1 (1.47)	2
Shield Bearing Warriors	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0
Total	3	2	14	19

Sum: 0.40. Degrees of freedom: 6. p-value: 0.998823

Frequency of War Symbols by Anthropomorph Style.

Anthropomorph Style	Bow	Club	Shield	Spear	Total
Classic Vernal Anthropomorph	2 (0.67)	5 (1.67)	10 (16.33)	3 (1.33)	20
En Toto Pecked	0 (0.03)	0 (0.08)	0 (0.82)	1 (0.07)	1
Interior Line Design	0 (0.03)	0 (0.08)	1 (0.82)	0 (0.07)	1
Shield Bearing Warrior	0 (1.27)	0 (3.17)	38 (31.03)	0 (2.53)	38
Total	2	5	49	4	60

Sum: 35.87. Degrees of freedom: 9. p-value: 0.000042.

Frequency of War Symbols by Anthropomorph Style Excluding Shield Bearing Warriors

Anthropomorph Style	Bow	Club	Shield	Spear	Total
Classic Vernal Anthropomorph	2 (1.82)	5 (4.54)	10 (10.00)	3 (3.64)	20
En Toto Pecked	0 (0.10)	0 (0.23)	0 (0.5)	1 (0.18)	1
Interior Line Design	0 (0.1)	0 (0.23)	1 (0.50)	0 (0.18)	1
Total	2	5	11	4	22

Sum: 2. Degrees of freedom: 6. p-value: 0.900728.

What do we learn about Shield Bearing Warriors?

... Shield Bearing Warriors only have shields.

... Perhaps they do not commemorate a specific warrior.

... Could they be part of a protective ritual to shield warriors from harm?

... More research into origins will help clear this up.



Panel 1 Anthropomorph 1

What do we learn about Classic Vernal Anthropomorphs?

... Perhaps conflict was remembered or communicated in ways that did not preserve, like oral language.

... Perhaps conflict was not as common or as important.

... Perhaps only mytho-historical figures were worth commemorating in rock art.

... Perhaps farmers were creating rock art while avoiding conflict and foragers were raiding the villages.



Panel 20 Anthropomorphs 45 and 46

How to improve the methodology?

The study would be better if I had...

... access to all of the panels and time to record them.

... had a chance to look at alternate interpretations for some motifs. For example, all rods were clubs when they may have actually been divining rods.

... had multiple archaeologists categorize the panels and anthropomorphs to observe a difference in individual observations.

More research veins for the future!

For people conducting Fremont research I recommend...

... investigating evidence of passive defense in the architecture of the Uinta Fremont.

... being more cautious when citing rock art as evidence for claims.

For people conducting rock art research I recommend...

... investigate the origin of Shield Bearing Warriors.

... treating rock art motifs like artifacts by making tables and doing statistical analyses.

Bibliography

- Clay, Johnson and Byron Loosle
2002 *Prehistoric Uinta Mountain Occupations*. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Cole, Sally J.
1990 *Legacy on Stone: Rock Art of the Colorado Plateau and Four Corners Region*. Johnson, Boulder, Colorado.
- Coltrain, Joan Brenner and Steven W. Leavitt
2002 Climate and Diet in Fremont Prehistory: Economic Variability and Abandonment of Maize Agriculture in the Great Salt Lake Basin. *American Antiquity* 67(3):453-485.
- Finley, Judson Byrd, Erik Robinson, R. Justin DeRose, and Elizabeth Hora
2020 Multidecadal Climate Variability and Florescence in Fremont Societies in Eastern Utah. *American Antiquities* 85(1):93-112.
- Gunnerson, James H.
2009 *The Fremont Culture: A Study in Culture Dynamics on the Northern Anasazi Frontier*. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
- Keyser, James D.
1975 A Shoshonean Origin for the Plains Shield Bearing Warrior Motif. *Plains Anthropologist* 20(69):207-215.
- Loendorf, Lawrence L.
1990 A Dated Rock Art Panel of Shield Bearing Warriors in South Central Montana. *Plains Anthropology* 35(127):45-54.
- Malone, Melissa Ann
2006 *Bridging the Gap in Dry Fork Canyon: Combining Archaeology and Ethnography for a More Comprehensive Understanding of Fremont Rock Art*. Master's Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, Arlington.
- McCool, Weston C. and Peter M. Yaworsky
2019 Fight or Flight: An Assessment of Fremont Territoriality in Nine Mile Canyon, Utah. *Quaternary International* 518:111-121.
- Novak, Shannon A. and Dana D. Kollmann
2000 Perimortem Processing of Human Remains Among The Great Basin Fremont. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 10:65-75.
- Schaafsma, Polly
1971 *The Rock Art of Utah*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology Vol. 65. Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Simms, Steven R.
2010 *Traces of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah*. University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Simms, Steven R., Tammy M. Rittenour, Chimalis Kuehn, and Molly Boeka Cannon
2020 Prehistoric Irrigation in Central Utah: Chronology, Agricultural Economics, and Implications. *American Antiquity* 85(3):452-469.
- Sundstrom, Linea
2008 Buffalo Gals: Images of Women in Northern Great Plains Rock Art. *American Indian Rock Art* 34:167-175.