

Rock Art Eccentrics Part III

Incorporation of Natural Rock Elements Into Rock Art Images



Roger Cook

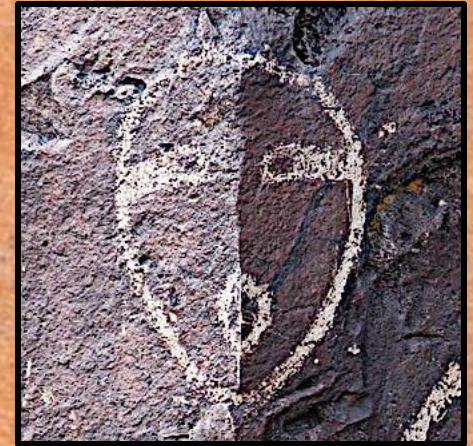
URARA Symposium Oct. 2024

INTRODUCTION

Eccentric: something that is unusual, peculiar or odd

Rock Art Eccentric: image that is unusual or peculiar due to incorporation of natural rock elements such as:

- holes
- cavities
- cracks
- corners
- edges
- protrusions
- texture
- coloration
- etc.



INTRODUCTION

- Majority of photos are from NM
 - Some from UT, TX, AZ & CO
- Volcanic rock and sandstone are predominant surfaces
- These images grab your attention and allow you to get into the mind of the creators – at least to some degree
- Emotional connection with peoples of the past
- Using rock contours can give images a partial 3D effect
- Rated R: some slides contains nudity
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Petroglyphs are 'Living Entities'

'Consultants from the Pueblo of Acoma describe petroglyphs as 'living entities.' For ritual practitioners, rock art sites are portals to power, petition, and presence of Holy beings, ancestors, or both. Indigenous consultants often point out that incorporation of natural rock features, the flow of water, growth of lichen and other 'natural' interactions attest to the significance of place and setting for them.'

Kelley Hays-Gilpin, *We are all connected: Rock Art Ontologies in the Southwestern US*, 2019

Faces, Masks, Kachinas

'Pueblo kachina masks are the most diagnostic element of the Rio Grande rock art style. Throughout they vary from simple to complex in detail.... Masks carved under the open sky on prominent landscape locations such as hilltops, knolls and intrusive volcanic features may well have served as petitions to the spirits of rain clouds attracted by their images.....**rock art empowers the landscape** and defines places where communication with powerful supernaturals may take place because they are attracted to their images.'

Polly Schaafsma, *Beyond the Village: Arroyo Hondo, Rock Art, and Religious Transformations in Classic Period Pueblos*, internet publication





NM



NM



NM



CO

Bob Crifasi photo



NM



NM



NM



NM

John Pitts photo



NM



NM



NM



NM



NM

Corner Masks

- Common in Rio Grande & Jornado Mogollon rock art styles
- Range from quite simple to very detailed
- Although mentioned in the literature, I have found no documented explanation for the corner masks
- Seen as living entities that are watching the landscape.
- One eye is always on each side of the corner, giving them a 180° view of the landscape, which often is very expansive.
- They are looking for anything that would be noteworthy to report back to the elders. Perhaps watching for friends, enemies or rain clouds.





NM



NM



NM



NM



NM



NM



NM



NM

Square corner mask
with natural nose



NM

Corner mask over
horizontal corner



Mask over
diagonal corner

NM

NM



Lichen
growth
over
one eye

Other Uses of Corners



AZ

UT





UT

Full-Bodied Anthropomorphs




AZ



NM



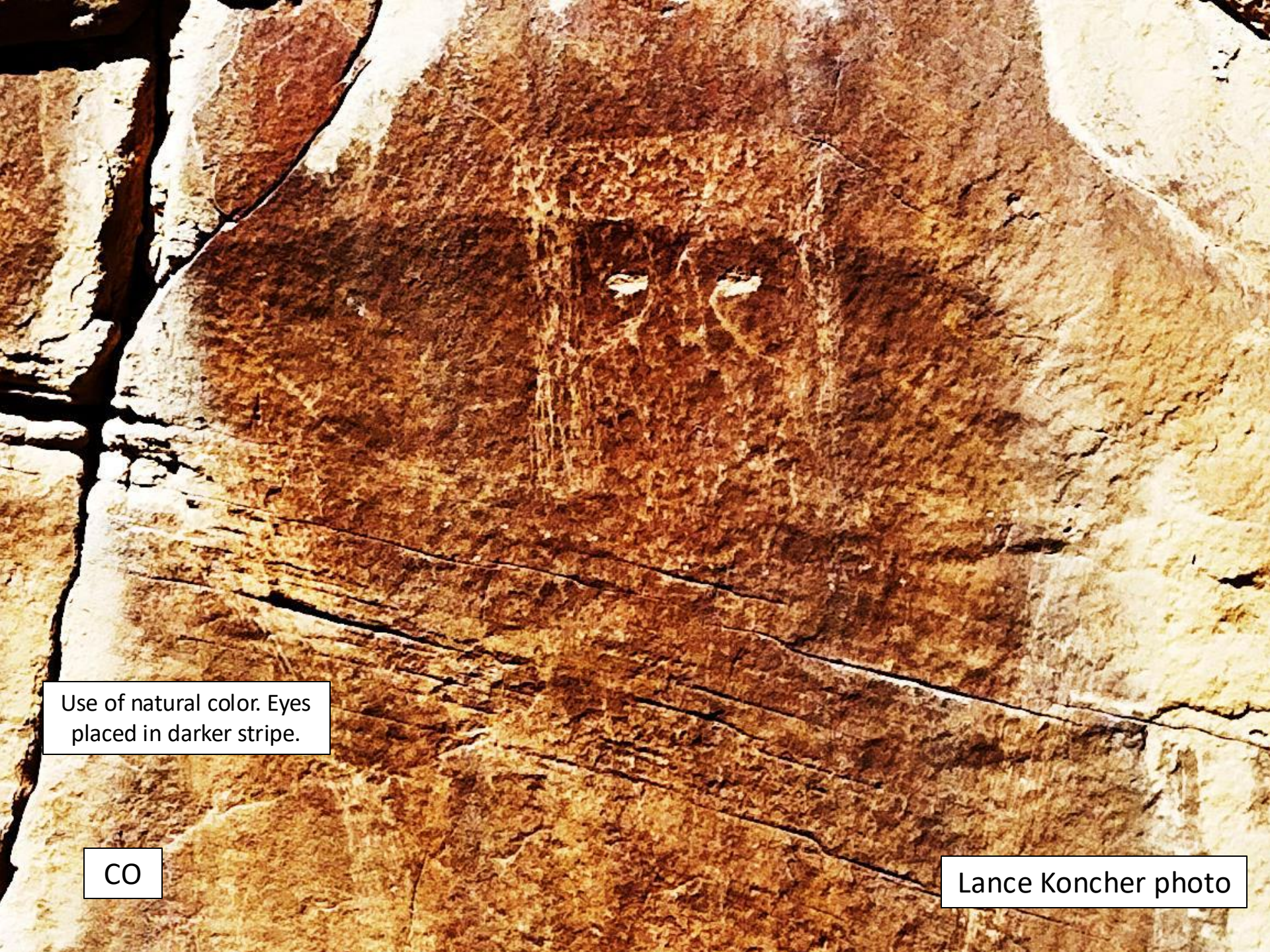
NM



Use of natural color. Eyes placed in darker stripe.

CO

Lance Koncher photo



Use of natural color. Eyes placed in darker stripe.

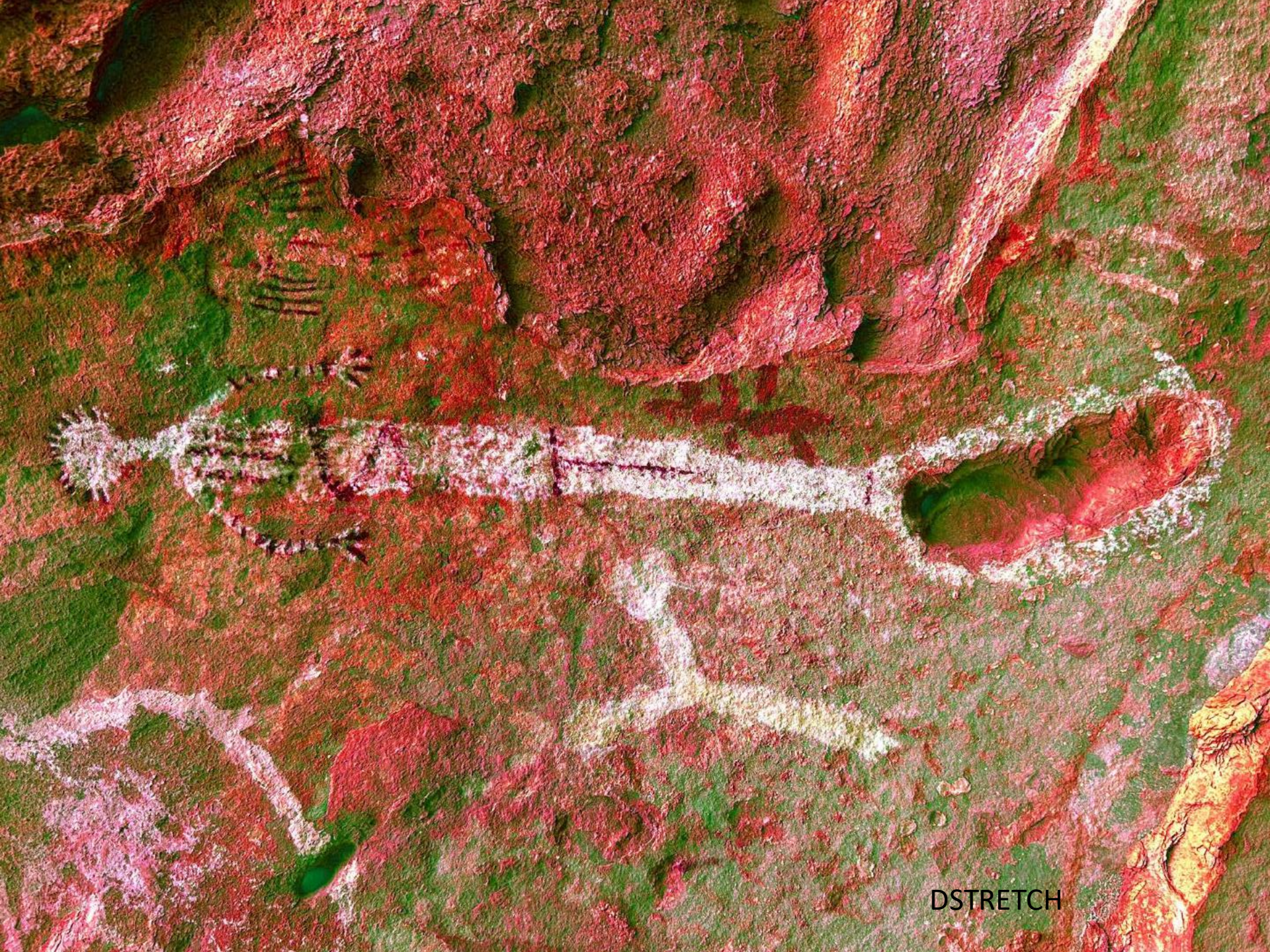
CO

Lance Koncher photo



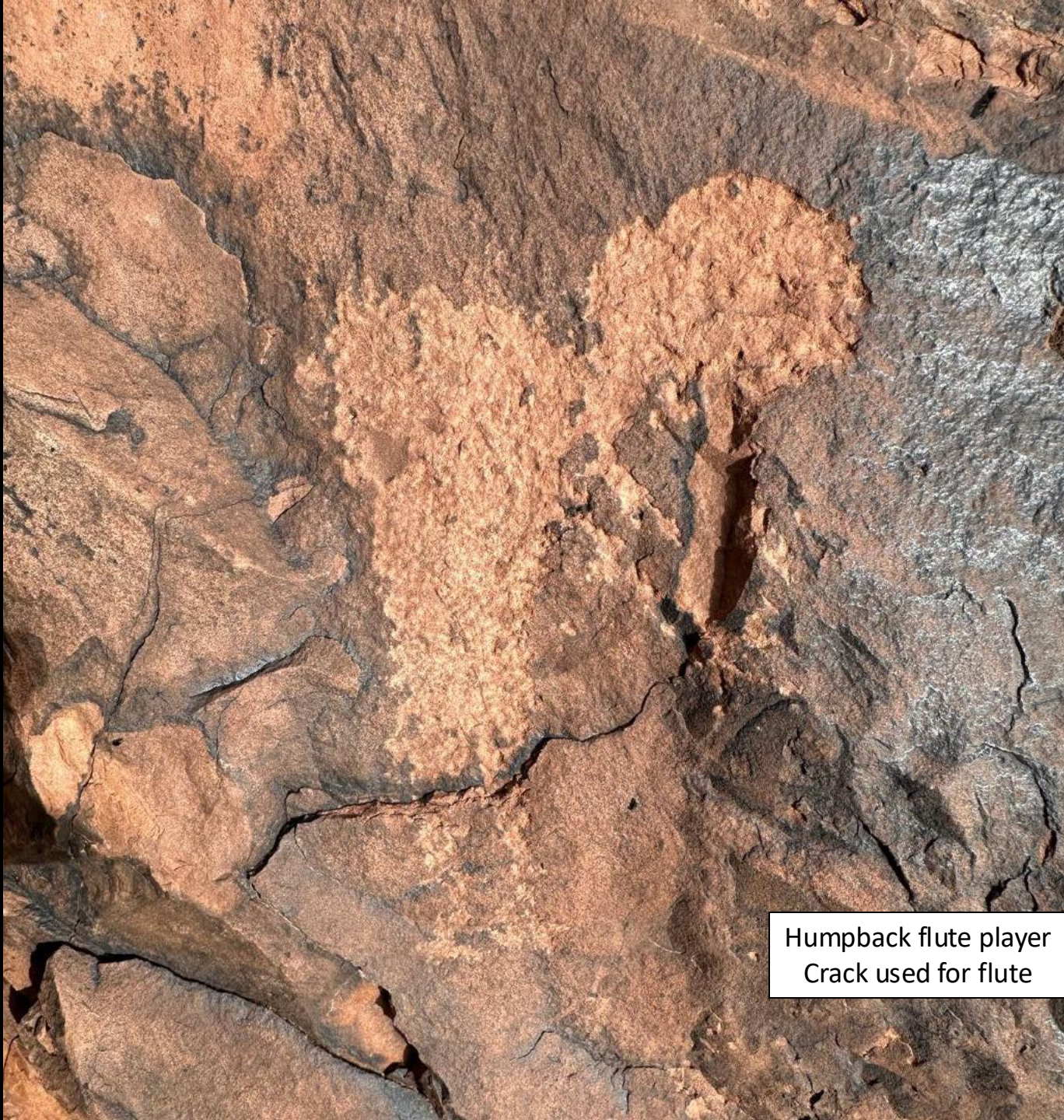
Archaic image

AZ



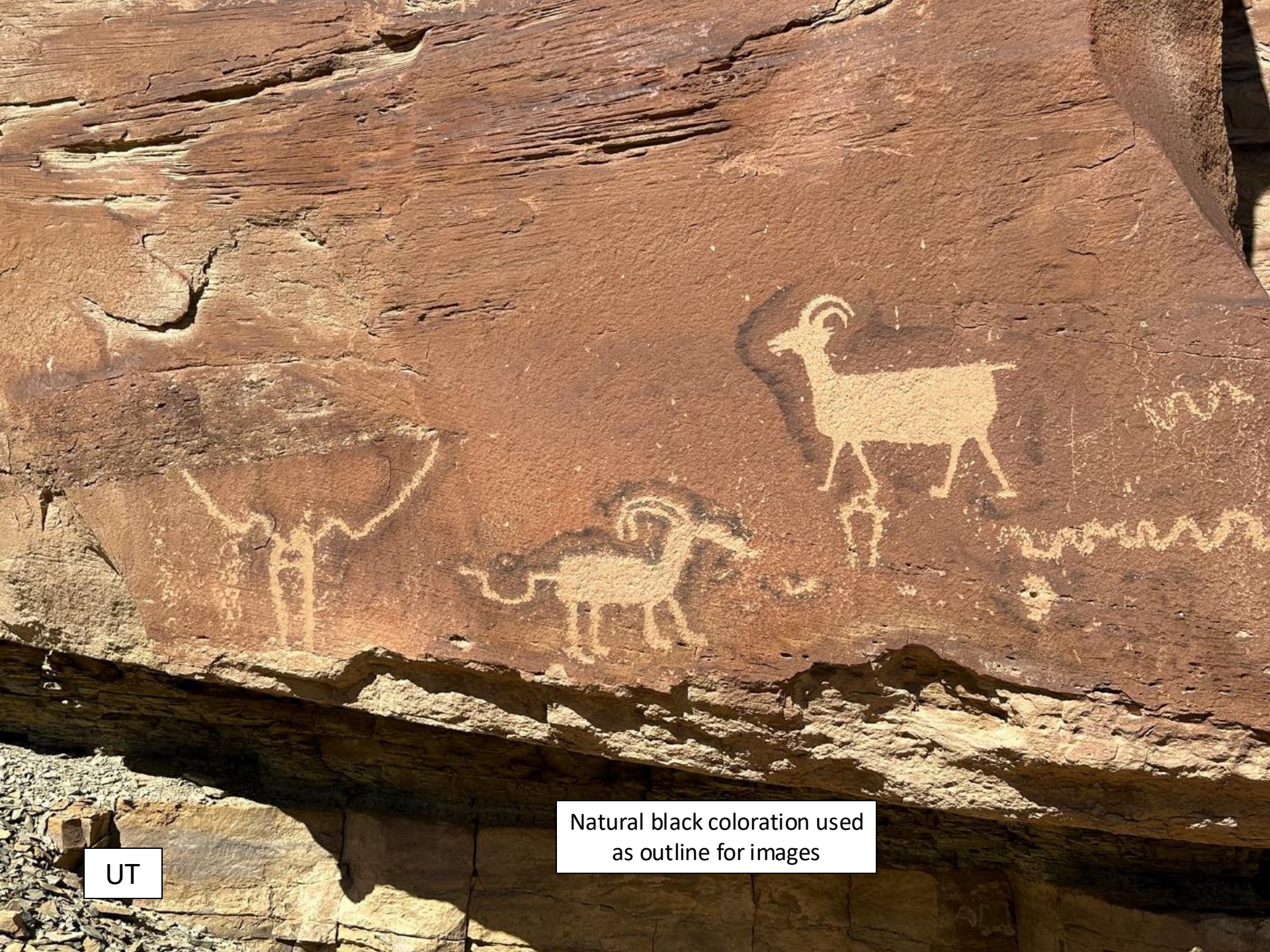
DSTRETCH

NM



Humpback flute player
Crack used for flute

Animals



Natural black coloration used
as outline for images

UT



UT



UT



NM



NM



NM



TX

DSTRETCH

Ceiling texture used to
create texture for horns



NM

Antlers created by
V-shaped feature



Curved wall used for
3D effect

NM

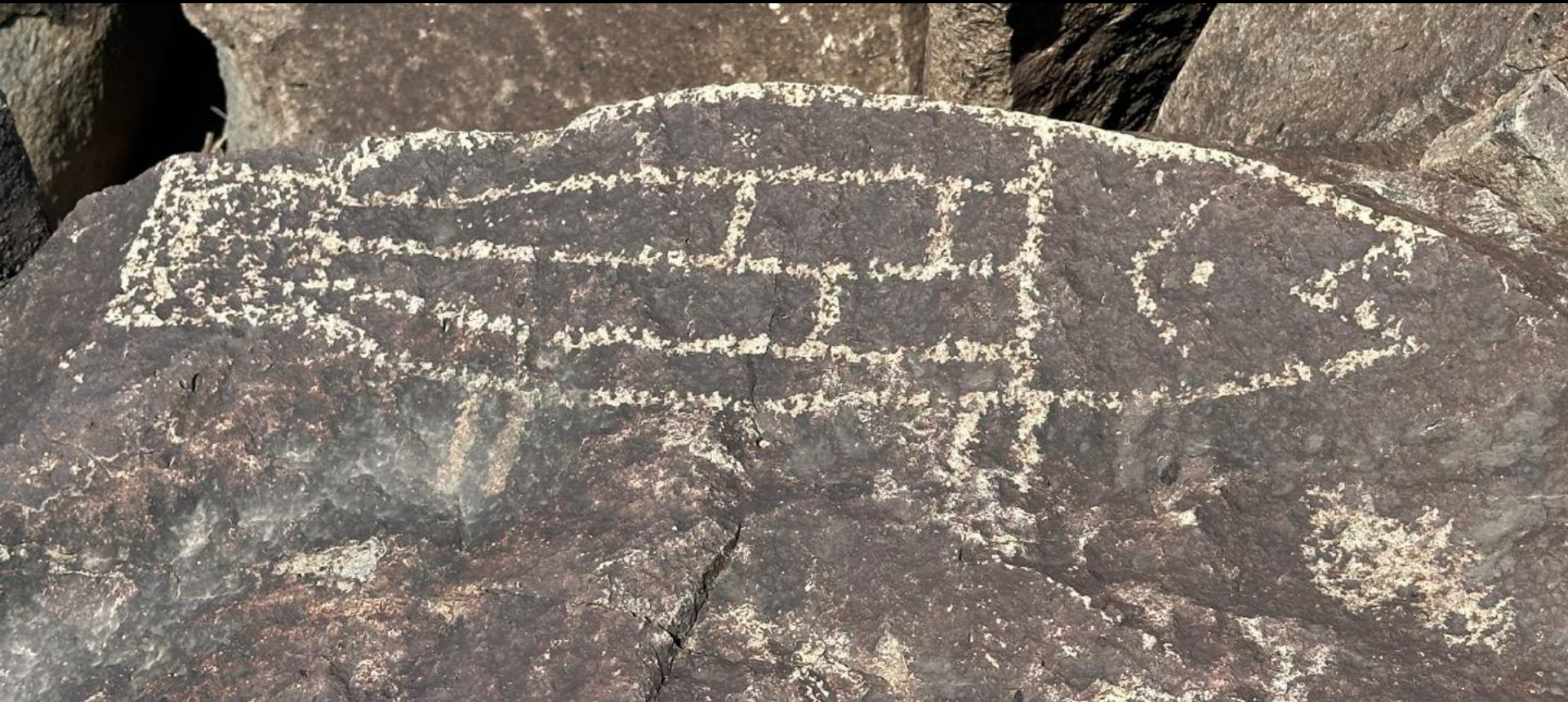


Owl created on rock with
rough shape of an owl

NM



NM



NM



NM

Historic era Mule

Geometrics & Other



NM



NM





NM

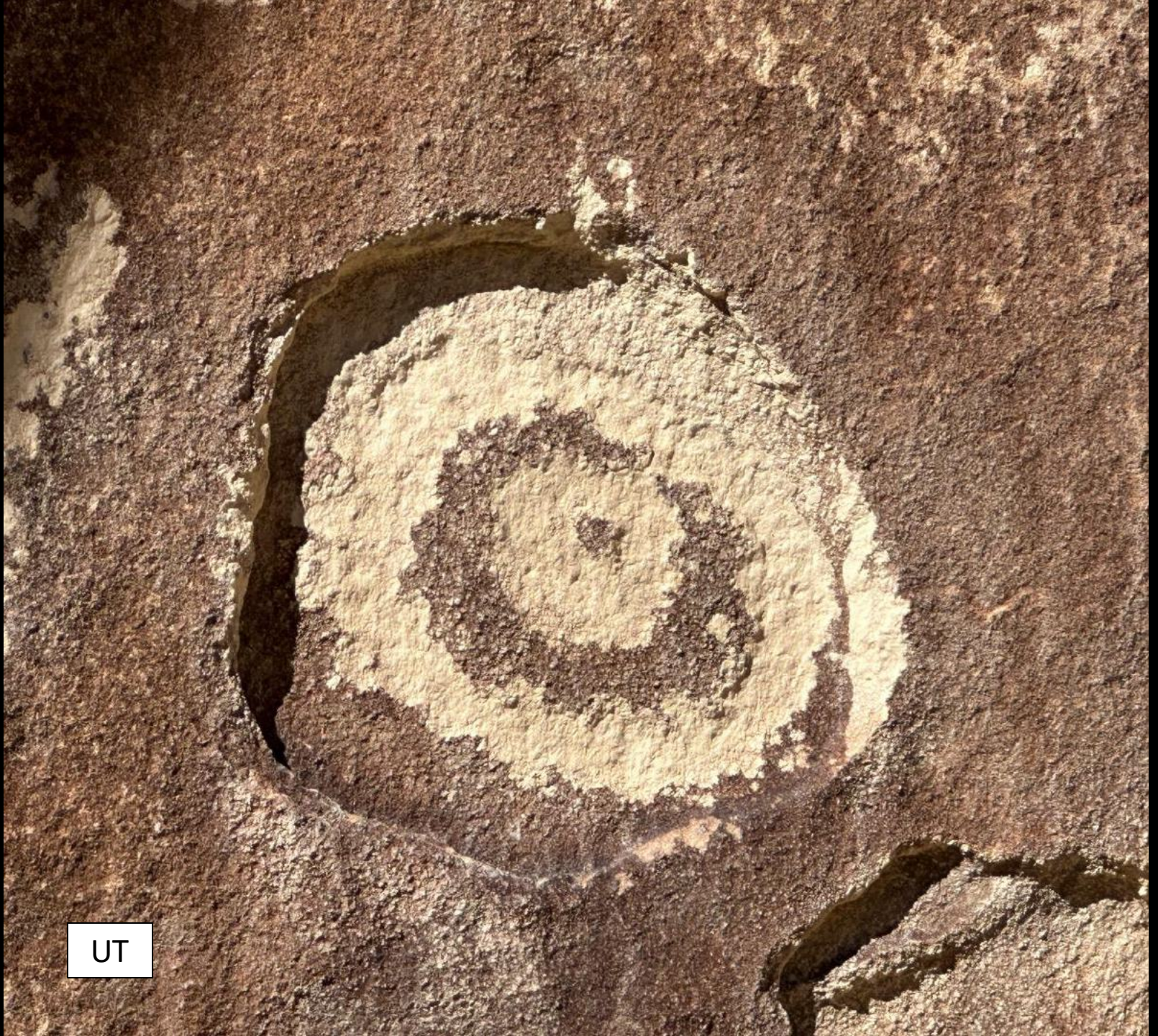


Fulgurite with image of
an anthropomorph with
possible lightning leg

AZ



AZ



UT



NM



NM



UT



NM



NM



UT



UT



NM



NM

Masau - god of the Underworld



NM

Masau - god of the Underworld



NM

Special Location No. 1

Multiple eccentric figures along a cliff face
Utah



UT



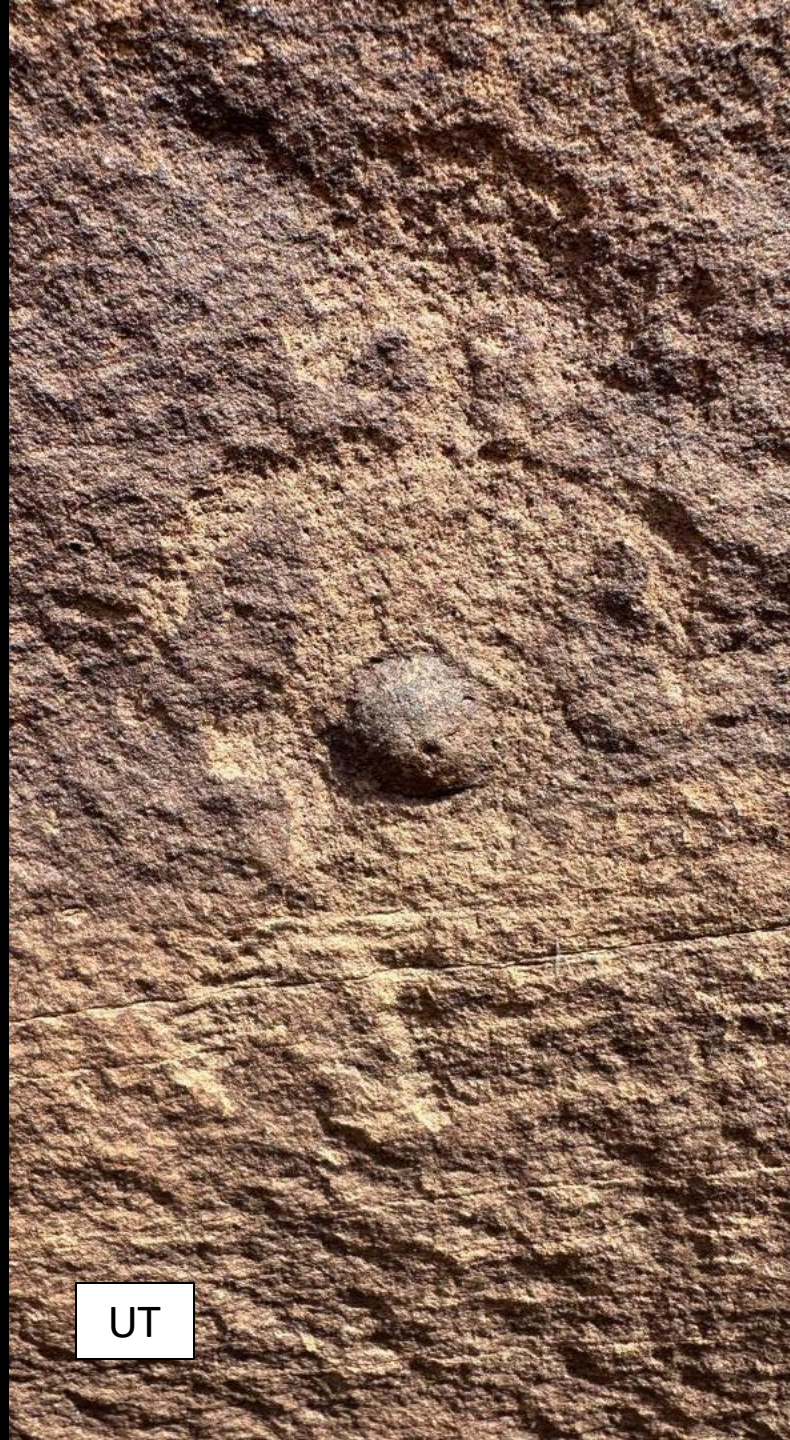
UT



UT



UT



UT



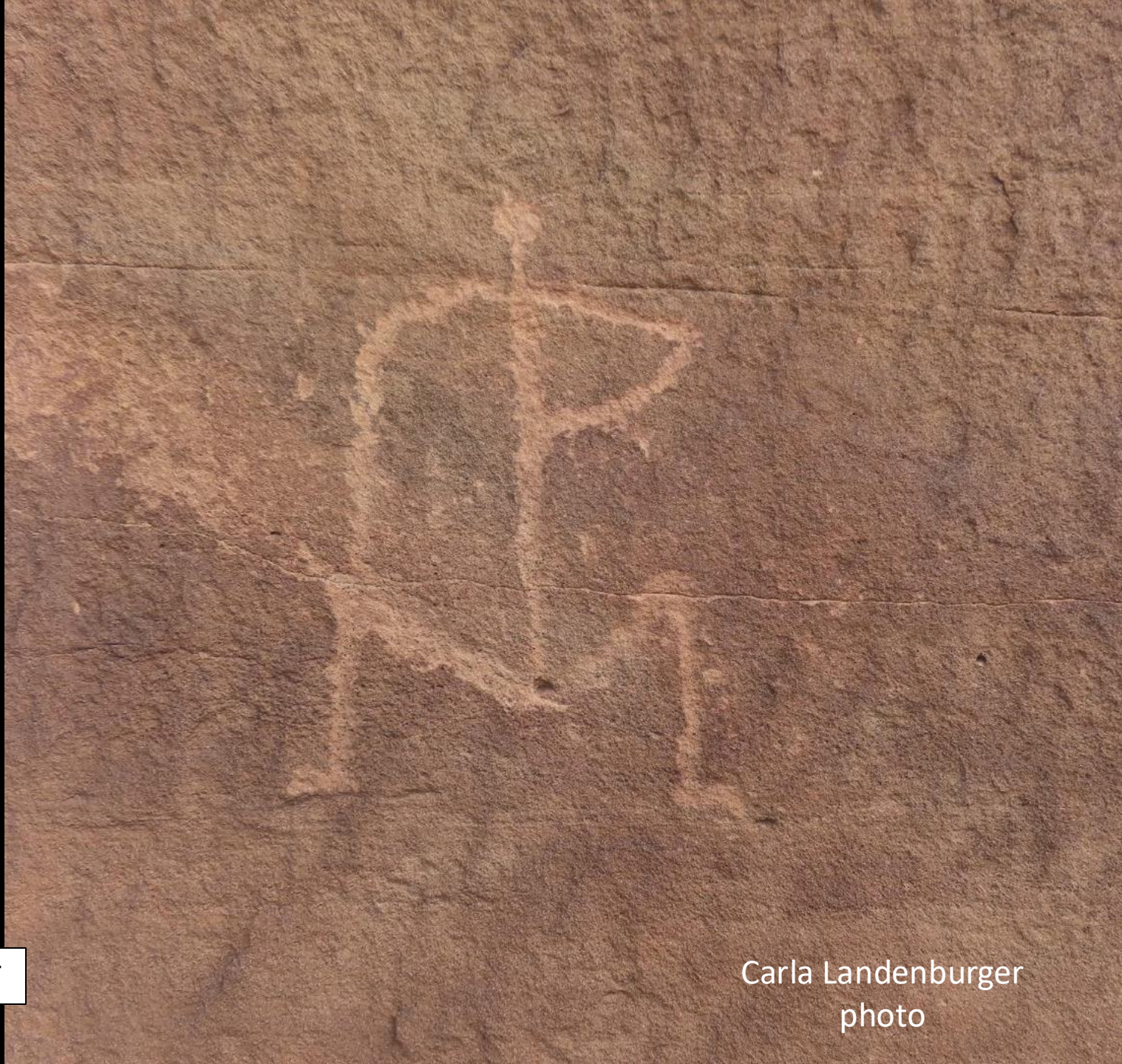


Teardrop shaped eyes



UT

Carla Landenburger
photo



UT

Carla Landenburger
photo

Special Place No. 2

Use of White Inclusions In Reddish Sandstone
(all from the same general area of NM)





NM

Corner mask with white
inclusion 'moon'

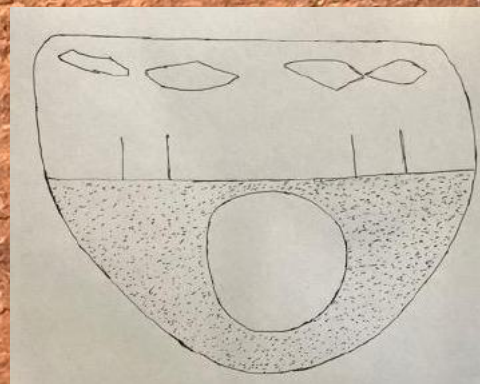


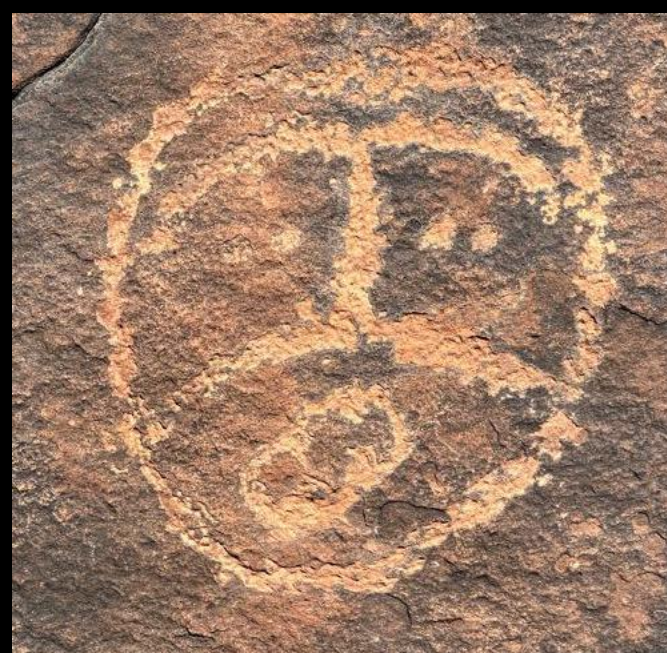
NM

Minimalistic mask with white
inclusion used for one eye

NM

4-Eyed Mask
White inclusions used for eyes







Nearby pecked shield figure



NM

Natural round, white inclusion pecked out for a shield,
faint pecked neck and head. Natural features for legs.



NM

Natural round, white inclusion incorporated into rear leg

Acknowledgements

Tim Sweeney
Dr. Dave Love
Richard Jenkinson
John Pitts
Bob Crifasi
Dave Manley
Glenn Stone
Rich Eagle
Troy Scotter
Susie Kinkade
Margo Mahoney

Jorge Fulco
Wendy Harrell
Carol Patterson
Carla Landenburger
Ben Everitt
Scott Thybony
Darlene Koerner
Steve Acerson
Lance Koncher
Margaret Berrier (Marglyph)

Summary

- Incorporation of natural rock features into rock art images is intentional
- Makes an image more special, perhaps gives it more power
- Many variations
- Archaic to historic
- Found across the entire SW
- A link to the humanity, imagination & creativity of those who created these images
- Not something you see every time you go out but it is there if you are looking for it



I ❤️ Rock Art !

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URARA Rocks!