

## ROCK ART AS A FORM OF PRAYER

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To a large degree, I believe there is a lack of understanding regarding rock art, even a form of misunderstanding which confronts us on many different levels. Some of that can actually be called a blatant ignorance. That sounds a little hard, and it is. As members of the Utah Rock Art Research Association, it is a part of the purpose of our existence to help educate the public regarding the values, importance and significance of what rock art really is.

I believe that we are falling way short of our goal. Apart of that is the fact this volume you are reading is, in all honestly, only being read by not many more than some 200 people. And, we do not have any exposure to the general public. As a result, some of the blatant ignorance, which confronts us, is seen in post cards. Because of copyright laws I cannot reproduce them here, but I will describe them.

The first one was printed by Mountain West Prints and distributed by Great Mountain West, 1995, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115. The credits for the photographs were by Don Green Photography. When I put a slide of it up on the screen while presenting this paper, I simply asked, "What's wrong with this picture?" This is a common children's game.

Within a few seconds laughter rippled through the audience. The title on the front of the card stated, "Fremont Indian State Park," in large, gold italics. "Utah" appeared below in bold pale blue capital letters. The problem with it was that the collage of three photographs consisted of the two biggest Barrier Canyon Style panels and one Fremont panel from Sego, Utah. Those two locations are a little over half of the state apart. That is an embarrassment, not only for them, but I believe to a certain respect to us as a whole. It

is obvious someone does not know what they are doing.

The second card is like one that nearly all of you have seen in curio shops and the trading posts to which only tourists usually go. It consists of supposed rock art symbols and their meanings. It has the kind of symbols that are laughable; a drawing of a bonfire for the meaning of friendship, crossed arrows for war and a broken arrow for peace. Those images also occur on "Indian" copper bracelets and meditating or Indian "rune" stones. This is about the same thing I have seen being taught to Cub and Boy Scouts, and grade school students in public school. Has anyone ever seen anything like that in rock art?

Better still in some respects of this analogy, but far worse in its potential impact because it uses more realistic rock art elements, is a little booklet I found after giving this presentation (Harris 1995). Some of the more off-the-wall interpretations are in Figure 1. Nothing really needs be said about them, but I would like to point out that every set of joined arms that I have seen reach out to the sun on key dates. How does that fit with his interpretation? The first and second images in the second line are good examples of limits of variation. Many of the forms he labels as "springs" point to groins and vulvae. The form he labels "scorpion" looks very suspiciously like a bipolar-cephalic sheep. The caption for what he labeled "shields" occurs below these images. Even though he believes shields can be confused with spirits, he does not label any of them as such.

Even though these are only just a little better than the more simplistic ones, they are somewhat more believable to those who are naïve as to what rock art really suggests. There are, however, a few interpretations in which he is very

close to what is more likely a part of their symbolism. Do these, as well, help in any way to portray that rock art is that simplistic? What is really surprising is that in the upper right hand corner is a band that announces that this booklet is the recipient of the "Best Book Series Glyph Award Winner." There is no other mention of that award in the booklet. Since it doesn't state who gave that award it makes wonder.

The September just before this symposium, one last problematic card was found at the Nine Mile Coalition's gathering in Nine Mile Canyon. This card was printed in part to publicize the potential damage to Nine Mile Canyon's rock art due to natural gas development that is threatening the canyon. It was also an announcement of the College of Eastern Utah and Ken Sanders Rare Books' invitation to The Nine Mile Gallery, a photographic exhibit by photographer Diane Orr and video by Ute storyteller Larry Cessopooch in Price. It also announced the Salt Lake City exhibit on the evening of September 11th. At the Price gathering Dr. Ray Matheny, one of my old professors, was to be the guest speaker, after which a tour followed.

The photograph on this card consisted of the famous "Hunting Panel" in Cottonwood Wash in 9 Mile. I was stunned when I saw it. It was a dark cloudy, rainy day and we were in the Nine Mile Ranch's bowery. I had to step out to the edge to get more light to see if I was not just imagining what I was looking at. I couldn't believe it. I was not just imagining it. I quizzed many of the people there and throughout the rest of the day to see if they could see anything wrong with it? None of them said that they could see anything wrong. Some even said, "It is a photograph, what could be wrong with it?"

The problem with this is that something in the panel was missing. I suppose it was the photographer, Diane Orr, who removed a very important part of that picture. To me, any intentional removal from, or addition to, a photograph of rock art, is falsifying the truth. Someone not

familiar with that image or its setting could take the resulting falsification as reality.

What was removed was a very important part, I believe, that was an impetus for the rock art elements that literally followed. It was a large part of an aspect of the empowerment of that panel, an aspect of rock art that is referred to as rock incorporation. Figure 2 illustrates a photograph that includes this natural feature. It was taken in the 1930's on one of Albert Reagan's trips. A glass negative of that and many other Reagan photos were in the archaeology storage stacks at the old Academy in Provo.

Just imagine, after being very familiar with this aspect of the panel, and even having watched a shaft of light emerge from it along with two other natural vulvae along that same side of the canyon, this natural feature had suddenly disappeared from the photo. It just was not there any longer. That was very suspicious! What was removed was a discoloration on a natural feature in the surface of the cliff face. On some of Orr's other photographs she seems to have altered the natural settings to include a more dramatic scene with the sun in places in which the sun could not naturally be seen.

Von Del Chamberlain, a past director of the Hansen Planetarium in Salt Lake City, Utah, showed a slide at ARARA'S 1987 conference in St. George, Utah. In that picture he doctored the juxtaposition of two celestial bodies. If I remember correctly, it was Venus and the moon. He was questioned about it during his presentation by a very observant attendee, and severely booed when he admitted it. He had never said anything about it until he was caught. Changing the picture was considered highly unprofessional. Perhaps for aesthetic purposes some may consider it acceptable. However, in the long run, there are too many problems that such an act can create. There are far too many natural aesthetic "Kodak moments" to have to falsely create them.

In one Utah Travel Council pamphlet the photo of this panel omitted the same thing, possibly

because it was believed to detract from the esthetic nature of an otherwise beautiful panel. In the National Geographic photo in the January 1980 issue of the Utah Louvre this same feature was only partially included.

All of these are examples of a blatant ignorance.

Blatant, in one sense means conspicuous, a word introduced to the English language as an allegorical representation of calumny (Ayto 1990:66). One aspect of calumny is slander (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). In so doing, is it possible that they are not only diverting the truth, but committing an act of slander? Notice at the far left of Figure 2, the large oval depression created in part by exfoliation. This also shows a discoloration in the color of the patina and a possible water stain that changes over time. If that fact is obvious from an examination of photos over a period of time, I believe that it was probably obvious to the ones who made that panel and used it over many generations. It may also have even enhanced its power in that it may have seemed to have been a part of a living entity. That alone is significant. The left-most sheep in the top row stands on the very edge of this oval and is half in and half out of the discoloration. I believe that both of those aspects are intentional and significant. With other corroborating examples, it appears to be the case.

The left-most sheep in the third and fourth lower rows, have their rumps at the edge and seem to emerge from it. To me, this natural feature must have been a conscious, even conspicuous element in the panel. Not only the positioning of the panel, but, I believe that the elements in the panel were choreographed to take advantage of it and what it seems to symbolize. All of the elements seem dependent on that vulva-like form. I suggest these sheep could not only be emerging out of it, but in a sense it could be the site or their birth. Notice that the examples in Figure 3 A,a,b,c and d, have natural holes that sheep seem to walk out of or away from. In 3 A, a, a row of sheep seem to emerge from between the legs of Nal Morris' Great Mother (Morris

1992). Notice the natural hole below her groin area with a phallus pointing to it, or is it a spring.

In Figure 3A,d, there is a Bisected Circle, a vulva variant around an angle of the cliff face, another natural feature, but still attached to the rump of the sheep. In a way this possibly implies that it is not only emerging from it, but also from whatever the other side of that cliff face may have represented, which is different from the one on which it is found. I do not believe that all of these examples represent that possibility, but at the moment, where do we draw the line? All of them seem to have that potential on at least one level of their meanings.

In Figure 3C, there are a few of the many sheep which walk out of cracks from a possible vulvate form or at least implying a similar symbolism. One of the attributes or affinities which cracks represent is that they are also considered another vulvate or portal image. Many rock art figures are copulating with them. It is a passage through that liminal veil-like form which gives us its significance.

Many who comment on the Cottonwood Wash Hunting Panel, suggest that this procession represents sheep migrations back down into the canyon following the births of the yews, which alternate with the adult sheep in the second row. I believe that is possible, but only on one level of its real intent. It is likely true that those smaller (baby) sheep had just recently been born, but I believe that this also could be another symbolic birth or rebirth. These sheep all move towards a hunter and their possible death. Some believe that they are being led by a possible Animal (Beast) Master or Lord of Game in the personage of the two-horned, cloven-hoofed figure sanguineously attached to the sheep within the top row which has a shaft of light coming out of his mouth on a key date.

Since there are many sheep that emerge from such features, why they do create that imagery here and what does it signify? The symbolism was obviously more or less obvious. Some

would simply call it "Hunting Magic". However, I believe that short changes it. It is far more than that. This is one of these Joseph Campbell things that is a book in and of itself. The important point here is not whether or not we understand why, but whether it is a part of the panel, and if the elements were intentionally involved and interact with it. We should not only recognize this as a possible, natural, vulvate form in the first place, then leave it alone.

The examples in Figures 3A-C should be fairly self-explanatory. However, in case they are not, let me note that some seem to be very understandable, while others are not as identifiable. And as mentioned, some may not even belong here. Until we know more about them and feel more comfortable about where to draw the line between what we think does and does not belong together, simply consider them as comparative examples. Notice that some even have about them what could be described as a mystical nature. They do not seem to be very natural for what is, in the first place, a very natural situation.

In Navajo one could call any one of the natural vulvate forms or features a "tse josh." That is a stone vulva with a referent for that of Mother Earth and or Changing Woman. On the Salt Trail, Hopi pilgrims feign copulation with a natural hole to which they refer as the vulva of Salt Woman. Why do that? The belief was that they would increase their children and improve their health (Simmons 1942:235-6). There was nothing profane about it. I had the opportunity to witness something similar to this by two young Navajo boys who one day took me to a box canyon full of copper colored ore at Coppermine, Arizona. At the time I just thought they were trying to embarrass me, but later found out that it was a ritual observance expressing respect for Changing Woman and then gaining obligatory blessings.

Is it expected that the sheep represented in the Hunting Panel as coming out of this vulvate form are to be hunted? Or is it the artists' desire to help preserve their ability to hunt them? Is this,

in part, an eternal *prayer* for their increase? Not this entire panel was created at one time, so there may be several different meanings for many of the elements here. One feeling is that some of those in Figures 3A and B represent the attainment of enlightenment. That is suggested by the rampant sheep in the Hunting Panel walking up a ramp of light. A point of that light emanates from the tip of the phallus of the hunter on the far right. That hunter has a different shaft of light emanate from the tip of his phallus at three different times of the year. Such a situation is extremely rare and would thus be extremely powerful. Doubling two of those dates makes that five times a year. He is no ordinary hunter. If not, who is he?

If he is any kind of a hunter at all he is what we need to call a mystical hunter. There are several different ways of looking at the intent of the solar interaction with his phallus. On each higher level it becomes more esoteric. On a possible penultimate level he might be involved with the concept of one or another of various initiation situations. On one side of that, the ewes might be the initiates being led by their guides. Or, on the other extreme, this panel may involve the idea that it may be somewhat like the belief that the hunter who could become the hunted. The right "hunter" may be god, hunting those who want to be taught. Those various possibilities are the types of things we will probably never know and at this point are really not all that important. All we really need to know is the mystical nature of much of this symbolism, which takes it out of more normal interpretations and involves what we must assume is the propitiations for either more game, or enlightenment, or both. In either case is that a part of their *prayers*?

On another even higher level, some of the sheep walking out of such womb-like images are felt to possibly represent the birth of the one that's shown in the bellies of many seemingly pregnant female figures, Figure 3B. In some situations these figures seem to relate to this natural vulva. In another situation, which relates to this latter possibility, both Nal Morris and I believe that

there is an element of the renewal of time, and or, the birth of an aspect of time. That in part is represented by the presence of two bipolar cephalic sheep in two of these panels. One of those is in the Hunting Panel, which very few people ever notice. The other one is below Nal's Great Mother in Figure 3A,c (Morris 1990:90,1992).

There is another example to support the time aspect of this possible interpretation. Consider Figure 3 A includes a panel that has a small sheep seeming to walk away or emerge from an inverted U-Bracket with a dot centered within it. This sheep is enlarged to the right and marked with an asterisk. To the left of it there is a T-like element (a possible abstract phallic figure) with its short tang pointing to a notch in which the sun rises on Equinox. On the right side of it is a Y-Forked phallic variant pointing to the position for Summer Solstice sunrise. On either side of this sheep, balancing it between two possible phalli and at least one tse josh seems to suggest the importance it had for the concepts of time.

The two sets of opposed, crescentic figures are balanced on either side of a universal, vulvate V form. The right-most was the T element just referred to which seem in one sense to also have something to do with time. It is the V, on either side of which, the two sets of crescentic objects are balanced., which seems to create this division. On the Rochester Creek Panel there is a bipolar cephalic sheep with a V with a vertical line splitting the V on its back. Nal Morris discovered that it was divided down the center of that dividing line by the edge of light and shadow on a key date (ibid:88). Both Nal and I again believe that opposed backpackers may also possibly be used to mark a solstitial position. Are these two sets of opposed, crescentic objects highly stylized backpackers? The mystical, five legged sheep above them in 3 B,a is treated in an upcoming volume on Moab and its rock art. Some of these deal with time as well. For the moment they are only thoughts and are neither provable, nor disprovable. However, their presence is highly suspicious. What I find so

fascinating is that no matter what level of interpretation with which we can look at these panels, they are all various degrees of a searching, a longing, a concern and even a placation and besechment. These are all likely considerations of various acts of *prayer*.

Do all of these considerations place a sufficient amount of stress on the fact that there is a substantial amount of ignorance regarding what is going on in rock art, let alone what we are doing with it. Hopefully the efforts of those who are doing research in this and other similar organizations will help to illuminate the fact that we need to be a little more cautious and considerate rather than simply trying to get what one of our so called professional members calls a BKQ picture. That is a "book quality picture." If, in fact we are well past the time when rock art was called "doodling", then why do so many still believe that it what it is? If we and our published proceedings, had more exposure there would be far less ignorance.

Any rock art elements should be book quality if they contain information that will help us to understand something better. It should not be a matter of riding on the bandwagon fad that rock art is to provide something that will look pretty on a coffee table. Look at the last image of two animals redrawn from Mohen (2002:124-5) and Clottes and Lewis-William (1998:75,78) in Figure 3B, which emerge from a small tunnel in a Pleistocene cave. The latter authors suggest the animals emerging from the darkness of that chamber could mean the rebirth of life in the warmer seasons. Is the natural vulva in the Hunting Panel really any different on at least one of these levels, if not more?

Now look at the composition to the left of that last one. It has two animals that are possibly in the rump-to-rump solstitial positioning on either side of a figure with a natural, patinated section within its body that may be considered vulvate. If so, what would that mean in relation to what has been considered thus far? It may also depict these animals walking away from, or out of, that

vulvate form like Figure 3A.c, as well as the last composition. It also marks a solstitial position with a crack that intersects the alignment of the horns of the animal on the right. Also notice that these are also multi-legged tying them in with the concepts behind the one in Figure 3B, as just mentioned.

I would now like to consider the next set of cards which were presented at the symposium. They did not represent negative situations, but were an example of the ignorance regarding similar concepts of *prayer*. They will set the stage for what will follow. Look at Figure 4. The first one is a picture of a flute player in front of a bellowing elk. From the flute, as if they were notes of music, fly birds in a light blue stream up past a yellow *moon* in the cool evening air. It is obvious what the birds *signify*, but is their *symbolic* content as obvious? Are these graphic images really the visual, or pictorial, manifestation of his *prayers*? If Christians believe that their singing of hymns is praying, why cannot the playing of a flute, as well as dancing, be acts of *prayer*?

Figure 5 illustrates a less natural, somewhat stylized pipe smoker, whose smoke transforms into a bird flying upwards towards the *moon*. His head is raised, looking up, as the bird and the *prayer* it no doubt represents leaves his lips. Another one of these is Figure 6. It is redrawn from a photograph of a postcard representing a New Mexico flute player with his flute raised up to a crescent *moon*. Was this really taken as it is caught in the seeming truthful image of this photo or was it also doctored as many photos are (Brugioni 1999)? It could actually be real, as well as having the sun in the same position, but is it?

Would a sheep holding its flute out towards where the sun rises in a crack between the cliff and an outset rock, Figure 7A, be any different as it seems to woo the sun. And, what about those which play through a crack and into the Other-world beyond, Figure 7B,C? They are much like the flute players which seem to be *praying*,

Figures 4-6. There are numerous examples of flutes in cracks, on cracks or along cracks, Figures 7B, C. These are not all. Even the playing of the flute in the germination of seeds, the melting of ice and snow or the wooing of a pretty girl, is no less than a form of *praying*.

Notice Harris' "spring" symbol, marked with an asterisk, in the center of Figure 7B is intimately associated with a crack somewhat like some of the phalli below it. Also notice Harris' spring symbol to the left which points to the belly of the smaller figure. In that assumed copulation scene, is his "spring" pointing towards the one he is wooing like the one to the left? Strange? It is dangerous trying to make a dictionary of symbols and their meaning(s). This is certainly the case when a person only knows one of their many and often diverse meanings. And, what if there is no meaning at all?

Based on what you have just seen with flutes and phalli being placed into or onto cracks, what does the last image in Figure 7C, a pipe smoker with the tip of his pipe on a crack suggest? After what you have just seen it may not matter exactly what it means. You can get a grasp of a part of it, get a feeling of it. The pipe smoker is obviously taking advantage of that same context, and a similar concept.

Figure 8, is a redrawing of a painting of a girl with her arms upraised in what seems an attitude of *prayer*, supplication, or thanksgiving. Behind her arms is a set of faint, translucent, ethereal bird wings that almost seems to represent her spirit. An eagle circles overhead soaring on the thermals. Some believe such a pose, in combination with that act or intent, creates a spiritual vortex. Does just the presence of this bird as a messenger or a representative of that spiritual realm, indicate the acceptance of the responsibility it has to take her *prayers* to the Holy Ones, the Above Beings? Do the bird-like feathers behind her image indicate that she is in a spiritual attitude, even *praying*? Is there any difference between those two statements? I believe they exemplify a "this and that" situation. That

is, a “both” rather than an “either or situation”. How many times do we see that position with anthropomorphs on the rocks? Patterson (1992:161) quotes four authors who state that such a position indicates *prayer* or a form of worship. Rev. Galal R. Gough also agrees (2002:31). That frontal form, like the profile positions which we have dubbed supplicators are probably, in reality, no different.

To those familiar with the esoteric, that pose is called the orans position of a *praying* figure, but on a higher level it also symbolizes the post-mortem etheric gesture of a departed spirit (Ovason 1999:332). On another level, it also represents the etheric five-branched or five-fold man with his four limbs and head spread out as in de Vinci's art canon of a man within a circle, a form of squaring the circle.

Figure 9 is the redrawing of another card including those elements in a more abstract manner. The form of a rapture is probably the main focus of the picture. Two profile heads look upwards in to different directions placed below an ethereal, translucent circle, again as a possible image of the *moon* and a mystical buffalo skull. Below the bird is a corn plant with rain or lightning symbols. This nonetheless seems to be a *prayer*. Figure 10 is a photograph of a beautiful bird carved by my brother Harrison Habaa'dih from Kayenta, Arizona. He found this broken and healed piece of cedar and saw this bird in it. It is believed that in a sense it called out to him for a reason. That reason was held in the potential of its form. What is important about this is that at that time he was going through several struggles and in part, the act of carving this bird was an expression of those feelings and his *prayers* for their release, to find resolution. After freeing it from its bondage within that stump, it became a symbol of his quest. We have talked on many occasions throughout his life about some of the situations he has gone through. He asked me if I would be its custodian, a guardian of its intent. That is a situation, and the responsibilities it requires I solemnly bear. That bird to a large degree represented his *prayers*, an expression of

his emotions and his anxieties, and now it is also a part of mine, as well.

Do these images help to illuminate the fact that much of what is on the rocks are likely or even possibly, forms of *prayer* in one aspect of one's worship or another. Conway (1993:45) quoted Dan pine, a spiritual leader in the Canadian Shield, as saying that in his 90 years on the medicine path that 'My every step-my every breath-is a *prayer*.' If that is the case then would every element he placed on a rock be a *prayer* as well? I believe so, at least in one form or another.

Let us take a few moments and consider the expressions of not only birds, but also other image as an expression of *prayer*. We have seen, that in several different instances the concept of the spirit and *prayer* is to a degree inseparable. Many of those actions of not only producing some rock art, but just being there at a site is, in a sense, making the very breath taken at a sacred place a *prayer* for an offering, to those who control that (the resolution of that) offering. At some rock art sites some have seen *prayer* feathers left as offerings. They still return to these ancient as well as modern sites to *pray*. They do not have to be reminded of the Christian Hymn, Did You Think To Pray which begins,

“Ere you left your room (or sacred shrine) this morning, did you think to *pray*?” Some of those *prayer* feathers include beads, or at least knots that are an analog, or a synonym of a bead, which is a prayer.

Did you know that the word bead originally passed from a Germanic word for **prayer** and into Old English as *gebed*. By the 13th century it became *bede*. In German, *gebet* is still **prayer** (Ayto 1990:56). It also relates to an Old English word *bid*, to ask or demand. It is interesting that in the creation of a bead, as well as probably every rock art element, there is a bidding, or **prayer that** is evoked for the fulfillment of each individual aspect of that bead's or panel's intent, which these so-called artists made or *prayed*.

Had you ever thought that a panel of rock art could be prayed (pecked or painted) into existence?

Does that make any sense? Does that make each element a part of the circle or cycle of life? Does that make each element a **prayer**? Maybe not. But they have an affinity in that every bead, every song, every dance and in many respects, if not all, it makes any rock art element a part of the destiny they have to fulfill. And that destiny is not only set by the hands of those mystics who created them, but by those who continue to use them as manifestations of the *prayers* of both, often over vast periods of time.

Thor Conway (1993) refers to the rock art in his book, *Painted Dreams, as "Canadian Shield"*. I do not think Conway ever actually called rock art *prayers* as such. From his statements, I believe that for him they were more on the order of dreams, as the book title suggests. I would not disagree with that, but I would prefer to call much of the rock art we see as **prayers**. On one level a person's dream is also a form of one's prayers. Conway hints at that when he states that the soul speaks in the language of symbols, and that it is symbols that speak to the soul. If that is the case, then I would believe that these images are the language of *prayer*. In many instances, I really believe that certain rock art figures were used to get answers. I suggest that some were actually heard to speak as oracles, especially in some cases where shafts of light come out of their mouths. Or, when they pop off of, or out away from the cliff face with sidelight at first or last light or even during the day.

Some Medieval artists were believed to have painted pictures that could heal as well as speak to an observer (Ovason 1999:153). I know several Navajo who go to rock art panels to receive a healing, physically as well as spiritually. There is a Navajo poem that states:

T'aadoo 'iits'a'i doo t'aadoo naha'nani shizhe'e  
tse yikidialchi nte bitch'e'etiindo sizi, dadiyini  
bich'i' *sodizin* yee yaa ntsekes deeji neiikagi

'it'eego hoozhoogoo nda'aztiinigii bikaa' neikai  
dooleel niigo."

This translates,

Silent and still my father stands before the old  
writings on the rocks. He is thinking a *prayer*  
to the Holy Ones, asking them this day to keep  
our feet on the trail of beauty.

Just going to a rock art site is also an aspect of *prayer*. I believe this is also the case of the pilgrimages on trails that lead to sacred places like Spirit Mountain, in Nevada. The trail shrines on that thin ribbon worn into the desert pavement are like beads on that fragile string that mark procession and progression. Making rock art at some of those shrines is a means to help sanctify those sites, to give sanctity, to make it a sanctuary, or a shrine. Thus we see the intent of following that trail. They are the *prayers* of those who made that pilgrimage. It is not just one act of theirs on that journey which sanctifies it. It is all the acts of walking, dancing, sleeping and dreaming, of making rock art and crying for, or *praying*, which creates the sanctity of any such act or site at which it occurs. Remember, "It is good to have an end in sight to our journey, but it is the journey that is important in the end."

Sanctity is a word from our vocabulary, not theirs. Others that flesh out that concept are consecrate, dedicate, enforce, reinforce, edify, empower, confirm. These verify, as well as purify, and give solemnity to the individual, the shrines, the trail and the act of following it as a **prayer**. This is no different from pilgrims following the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral or from Compostella to Rosslyn along the metaphorical Milky Way road. The more **prayer** is used, the more power it has and can offer.

These trails are no different from walking labyrinths for the *prayer* that this makes and the emotional, psychic, and spiritual benefit one receives from this *prayerful* act. On one level both a labyrinth and a maze mean a circle, with its coming and its going (c.f. Telesco



2001:38,56,58,74,78). It is bringing together the opposite edges of the bowl, the coming and the going into one line, as a coincidence, mathematically speaking, described in "How To Complicate a Simple Circle" Part 2 (Warner 1995).

Each shrine and each panel on that trail is like another bead of a rosary that passes through one's fingers or beneath one's (feet) feet ratifying the intent of that pilgrimage. Even the making of that rock art, the rhythm of each blow; blow by blow producing dint mark after dint mark, influences one's emotions and spiritual experiences. This creates the melody and meanings of the supplicant's song. Each brush stroke, dipped in the paint pot, stroke after stroke, rhythmically produces or makes manifest, the **prayers** of one's heart. It is like the beads passing through one's fingers, and strung along the conceptual threads as if holding to the thread-like trail.

Whether breath taken, step trudged, dint mark pecked, brush stroke applied or pebble added to another cairn, all are just another act confirming that intent, making that procession valid. It is not only the offering of another *prayer*, but also rather different aspects of the continuing *prayers* being offered during the experience of that ordeal or that event in their lives. All are manifestations of one's spiritual intent. The power invested in those sites by those acts is still present. It can even be felt today. As many of you, I know of such sites. There are those among us who have sat and cried at a site because of its effect. I have! A Hopi woman told me once that redrawing these figures was a reenactment of their *prayers* for either good or bad. That reenactment was literally a re-offering of that *prayer*, a re-empowerment of its original intent.

Walking that line to and from the point of the pilgrimage is walking the rim of the bowl, imbuing the trail and the individual with the power of that place as well as the light received not just from the destination, but from the sacrifices, trials and ordeals, that the journey offers through the forge it creates. All of these acts are like tying a knot. Tying both ends of that

trail together creates the fulfillment and destiny of the one making the sacrifice. The ritual of participation is the closing of that cycle or circle. It creates the rim of that tilted bowl, a mandorla, meaning the center of the universe in which exists a fully awakened being.

Add to that the principle of repetition, which strengthens power and creates a successful ceremony (Reichard 1963:496,241). It is not just in repeating that pilgrimage. It consists of every step it takes to make that participant a pilgrim, and to complete that pilgrimage as a statement of one's commitment. It is not only every peck mark made to express one's own destiny, but also every hand placed there to draw strength from older images from their spirit as well (c.f. Conway 1993:117). The destiny of those acts is to bring that intent from the form created to the realization of what that form represented, or the intent of its production, bringing the cycle of that (circular) form full circle. There is sharing in the continuation of that part of the mystical process. It is no less a part of the melody than each element, or note which is a part of the creation of the song it plays. Every song is a *prayer*, and every *prayer* is the song that one's heart sings (Warner 1992A).

That song, or **prayer**, is often the one given to the one who is making those sacrifices and offers that **prayer** and received that vision which, in many instances, I believe, is composed of and by the elements which were created on the rocks. The **prayer**, the vision, the song and the rock art are all one and the same sings (Warner 1992A). Each verse and chorus forms another circular revolution in the **prayer** being offered; another revolution in that upwards-spiraling vortex, another vibration from the rim of a ringing bell, the vibration from the rim of a bowl or a drum.

During a Peyote ceremony I once had the opportunity to attend, coals were taken from the fire and the Road Chief made an eagle from them on the floor in front of us, on which he burned tobacco and peyote. He fanned the smoke up as he sang his *prayers* for that event so the smoke

from that bird could take them up to the Holy Ones. Is that any different from those on the cards just described at the beginning? Is it any different than the rock art we look at and ponder? No, not really. Is making any changes or falsifications of these panels an invalidation, a nullification, a cancellation of their *prayers*?

*Prayers* smoked through a turquoise pipe are said to be more efficacious than normal *prayers*. But, if one can see that which gives turquoise that ability, one will know that it is also what affords the "broken *heart* and contrite spirit" of a pilgrim taking on the features of one with a precious, or jeweled, *heart* another breath (the shell, wind jewel of Quetzalcoatl). It is making rock art, adding another pebble, taking another step, all combined with the right mental, spiritual and physical state of a Penitent. All add their various features to their *prayers* as well. One becomes the flute or the pipe through which that prayer is offered. It is the *heart*, not the mind, where luminous consciousness is made (Sejourne 1960:119-129,131). The "artist", or "mystic", and the rock art he or she makes are one.

Smoke is also a form manifesting and carrying prayers with it in a circleness as it spirals up. Extending a part of or all of one's self by participation is helping to fulfill the destiny of one's self and the smoke. A literal **prayer** circle is believed by many to create a vortex lifting **prayers** up like smoke. And, an eagle circling upwards is felt to be an extension of that. Note the affinity they share. Is it not synonymous to one who is a pilgrim on the spirit trail, or simply on one's own vision quest at a rock art site? I know of a young Navajo who had a life changing experience in Salt Lake City one morning. To confirm the validity of what he had heard, he went to the top of Ensign Peak to *pray* for a verification of its truth. When he finished praying he heard the screech of an eagle above him. As he lifted up his head, he saw the bird circling over him several times. He believed it was a confirmation of the truthfulness of what he had heard and what he wanted to know.

That back and forth pounding of each dint pattern precisely placed in making an element is like the forwards and backwards movement of a *prayer* feather fan, or the grinding on a metate. It is a creative action to sustain life. Also, a more powerful coincidental circle is created, as well as a blessing on the element being dented and the meal being ground.

The pecking or grinding, and the singing over it through *prayer*, is in part the creation of its actual blessing. That metaphorical closing (forewords and backwards/going and coming motion) literally transforms that motion into a coincident circle, and thus there is a spiraling form like Hamlet's mill grinding out the meal of spirit and time (De Santillana and Von Dechend 1992). That is the bipolar aspect of simply being a closed circle. It is the expansion of a closed form into one which is also a part of the doing of not doing; another way of increasing the power of that particular circle of movement into a spiraling vortex. This is believed to give even more power to one's actions, thus **prayers** become even more efficacious.

This is another way to take the moment of completeness beyond this realm and send it through eternity, into infinity. Are we still in many ways, just as ignorant of what is going on as those illustrated earlier, only hopefully on a less blatant level? When will we ever learn what our stewardship really is? Like the birds represented here, we also have responsibility as stewards of their rock art, and thus their *prayers*. People, out of respect, would not take a coin from a fountain, or a wishing well. Or would they remove a candle, or offering at a roadside shrine of the death of a loved one, or flowers, pinwheels and flags from a grave on Memorial Day. They would not damage the shrine on 7th South between 5th and 6th East in Salt Lake City, where the stump of a cut off limb seems to possess an image of the Virgin Mother. People in all these situations leave offerings as repositories of one form of their *prayers* and devotion. Yet we have not done all that we can do to help

others realize that rock art is really no different. URARA still has not met its full potential.

One can look at any rock art site to see how what occurs there fits in with what has been suggested here. We often joke about some of the things we see. However, I challenge you to look at them in this new light and be serious and respectful of their purpose. If we do this, I honestly believe we will then begin to see far more than those who only look at sites with the attitudes exemplified by the first examples in this presentation.

Let me take just one site as an example. I selected it since it was not suggested by the other commentaries that this site was probably related to anything dealing with the spiritual and or metaphysical. At Fish Creek Cove there are probably more rampant sheep (lifted up on an angle) than at many others combined. Most often there or only one, two or in some cases just a small hand full. Many of the sheep here are rampant. They face both to the east and sunrise, and to the west and sunset (Figure 11) for just a few.

It has been shone in several of my articles that rampant animals raise up to greet the sun. Referring to this as a greeting may not be a very appropriate term. However, greeting is a part of the prelude to its intent. Some of the sheep even have their front legs reaching up like what we have called "supplicators". Let us take a moment and consider why there are so very many here at this presumed hunting and butchering site. How does a site such as this compare to the Hunting Panel? For those who went there what did it have to offer?

It seems that in several previous remarks regarding this site there was a consensus that it was simply a hunting site, although a complicated one. We know those who made them did not differentiate between sacred sites and profane sites. Every site was first and foremost sacred. Secondly, there was no such thing as profane as we define it. In several articles I have shown that the original definition of pro (before) fane or

fanum (temple) was a term which originally had connotations of pre-initiation, such as one being in that place or state of mind which was in anticipation of the enlightenment about to come.

Even dictionaries still carry connotations of not being among the initiated, nor possessing esoteric or expert knowledge. It was also used as a cognate for the "fool," the idiot, the zygote, the initiate on the path of his pilgrimage. If this site was simply a hunting site, then why is there so much that deals with what seems the sacred, the spiritual, the esoteric and metaphysical?

I suggest that Figure 12, portrays what is assumed to have been an intentional invisible human figure. It is as much a type of mystical symbolism as any that I have ever seen. To indicate his presence only his assumed sash, belt lines or kilt and shield have been depicted. Figure 12b. illustrates how the fringe on this shield-like form has fringe only at the beginning of the light which is coming onto the cliff face providing highlighting which is depicted as black in 12 b. Since the pecked and painted shield is still very red, it is not thought that this figure was also painted and later faded out of visibility. There are many such figures which were believed to be intentionally depicted for very specific reasons by just their personal adornments or articles of clothing with no body parts indicated.

One aspect of that invisibility is part of a mystical symbolism, no doubt representing, on a lower level, possibly a visionary (OOBE), through a spirit figure or even a Holy One or Deity. Notice that it is only the fringe that is highlighted. Fringe, feathers and hair are considered to be an extension of the symbolism of light and of one's spirit. That light expands out to fill in what is seemingly a body form of light that was previously missing. Except for the fringe on the shield, the white is light and the dark is the shadow on Figure 12c. It then falls into the category of Symbolic Solar Interactions which I refer to as a "Being of Light". So this "man" with his shield is probably no ordinary man or warrior. Is he the sun bearer, the sun himself or

the hero who's task it was to carry it as a test? Or is he a mystic warrior seeking blessings as a *prayer* for him, and perhaps his shield (c.f. Warner 1992B)?

Figure 13a. illustrates how the light moves across a man behind a red painted circle. These actions of light, which were congruent with various aspects of this image at several points, illustrate that he is also not an ordinary man, or one that is not in an ordinary state of mind or being. See Figure 13b. And, if he is hunting, it is probably enlightenment. Notice the little figure within his body, a figure within a figure.

Figure 14b illustrates how the light (as black dots) moves up the ladder and into the door of the house in 14 a. It was likely made by a Ute. The light then fills in the doorway and then enlarges over the rest of the house. This is reminiscent of the house at another site which has a shaft of light approach the door, move into the door and then shuts off, seemingly to go into the house. Figure 14c (Robin and Ewing 1989).

There are other houses that would be interesting to watch to see if they also have similar solar interactions with their doors. It would be interesting to know where that building really is. It does not look like the school house nearby at Fruita, but could it be a similar school, as a place of enlightenment? It is no coincidence, as we commonly use that term today, but it seems that this house was placed where it was to coincide with the form and movement of the light to provide that additional mystical, non-ordinary or mundane symbolism.

What are the chances that such symbols and their interactions would occur at a basic hunting site where animals were killed and butchered only for simple economic reasons? Or, more likely, would they occur at a site where initiates would be taken to be taught more sacred aspects of their cosmology? It is likely that these strange animals were a part of that process. If it is a hunting site, who and what are they hunting? Is this a site where one was taken to hunt for enlighten-

ment by stalking their deities in the forms of stags or sheep (Reichard 1963:115,549)? These last images occur to the far right of the site.

Figure 15 is to the left of the site with twin-like figurine forms and a headless shield-like figure. The edge of the light and shadow in Figure 15a, falls down through a large headless shield-like figure with a phallus. And no, the head was never there and just faded. As the light moves across this figure the edge of light aligns with the phallus and splits a spiral below him, as shown in Figure 15a. In this context, one aspect of the spiral is likely a vulvate form since it is connected to the phallus of the shield figure. This is only one part of a very dramatic portrayal providing a copulative concept with whatever the spiral's many different meanings may imply. Two feasible concepts that seem to fit this context are a vulvate form and a solar symbol. See line 2.

At Sand Island, the shadow of an outset block of stone at sunrise produces a line that runs from the tip of a flute-player's flute through an exaggerated, negative vulva of a facing female figure, reinforcing other contexts where the flute touches the vulvae of some female forms.

Just before the interaction in line 2, the interaction in line 1 of Figure 15b took place. Here the edge between light and shadow splits the twin-like figures, two water birds and the bisecting line of a rayed circle, which could also be a vulvate form. On another date, the final interaction with the possible twin-like figures aligns them in such a way as to suggest that this headless, phallic, circular figure may possibly have been their father, and represents, in part, their conception. See Figure 15b and c; lines 1 and 3.

The rayed, Bisected Circle is either a vulvae sun or a Sun Womb, or sun in the womb of the mother, thus suggesting the idea of solar conception. If that is the case, then this image is likely a representation of the sun and his headless form may have some relationship with that identity. During the last interaction in line number 3, the twins are split by the line that bisects the previ-

ous spiral as it was from the phallus of the shield figure and the interaction in line 1. This is not all that complicated, but will be treated in more detail in another presentation.

On at least one level, or perspective, the solar interactions in Figure 15f,g, which are from another site may, in a way, potentially help to evaluate it as another possible headless, sun-like shield or circular figure as well. There are two possible views of this. Both say the same basic thing as well. I do not believe this is an either or situation, but a both, a this and a that. One of these is the possibility that the two opposed curving lines at the bottom are feet pointing to the right and the left as seen in Figure 15d, slightly rotated. On several occasions I have illustrated how feet can be used as phalli. The other possible view may be suggested by what the light and shadows do on it in Figure 15g, line 7, the last position illustrated, but not the end of the interactions. As the thin sliver of light moved across the central dot, it aligned with what I earlier thought, and previously supposed to be, the leg to the left in Figures 15g and d. Immediately after watching the interactions with Figures 15a-c I had one of those very odd paradigm shifts.

This paradigmatic shift in my visual perception was that what I had just viewed as a leg, shifted in my mind so that it could now possibly be viewed as a curved phallus if the next line to the right could then be considered as the figure's other leg. See Figures 15d,e, slightly rotated, to better visualize it. Is he also a believed to be a possible representation of the sun like the shield-like form in Figure 15a-c? This last view would give him arms alternating in different directions, like several others at the site, rather than two uplifted arms in an attitude of prayer or worship.

On two different dates it has two different shafts of light touch the central dot.

Since it has two curved ray-like lines where the head should be, is it not a headless figure representing the sun? Since it is a dot centered circle, sun-like figure, and, if it is a (sun-like) shield as

well, is it a possibility that this is the sun with his phallus of light with an interaction on an equilateral cross? Thus it could be a symbol of one of his offspring, one of the possible twins in Figure 15a. In other words Figures 15a-c and Figure 13g, basically represent, if not the same event, then a similar concept or expression of it.

Now we discuss the point of including this second illustration. Note the figure to the left in Figure 15f. It seems to be a Double Entity (DE), a figure suggesting the emergence of the man's spirit if the bulbular part of the figure being touched with the point of light in line number 1, which continues on down to his phallus, is the head of his emerging spirit. The head of the main body is touched by two upraised and joined arms as the point of light in line number 2 touches his real head. His hands raised up in that position form a Bisected Circle DE. That would then make the hollow circle above this head, the head of his emerging spirit, at the moment of ecstasy.

In many Navajo or Apache ceremonials the participant needs to become the Hero, the boys with Monster Slayer and the girls with Changing Woman. Is the function of these two similar panels one of those situations when an initiate as a hunter of enlightenment is becoming one with the Hero, the son of the sun? We cannot be sure, but I have never heard a better explanation regarding these interactions. Again, these are a form of the prayers of not only those who made them, but those who used them.

Because of the number of representations which I believe are intended ambiguities, I suspect that this very likely may be another example of intentionally creating an image which can be regarded as a representation of the sun; see Figure 15a. Does he really have a phallus and does it really interact with the cross-like symbol?

The reason both views contain the same symbolism is that both hands and feet can be phallic metaphors. Is that imagery, and the possible phallus of light phenomenon, only like other representations of a "Hieros Gamos" or a "Di-

vine Connubium"? Or, are they combined with those who want to join in that situation?

The answer to all of these questions seems to be "Yes". But are these a part of the real answer? If so, do Figures 15a-c and 15g, possibly say the same basic thing? I believe that in their graphics alone the symbolism in Figure 15f does not equate to either the rayed BC or spiral in 15a and b. However, that may have been the intent at that site if it was a place of initiation. In other words they seem to relate, but not exactly in that part of the symbolism.

Can we then say with any certainty that the headless images in Figures in 15d, e, probably do not represent the sun, since they have two curved ray-like forms? If the view in Figure 15d, was the only one intended, then only a part of the other rays assumed to form the image of an anthropomorphic sun-like figure, would appear where the head should be. Is it possible or even likely that the dot-centered circle or sun shield-like form is the head as well as the body?

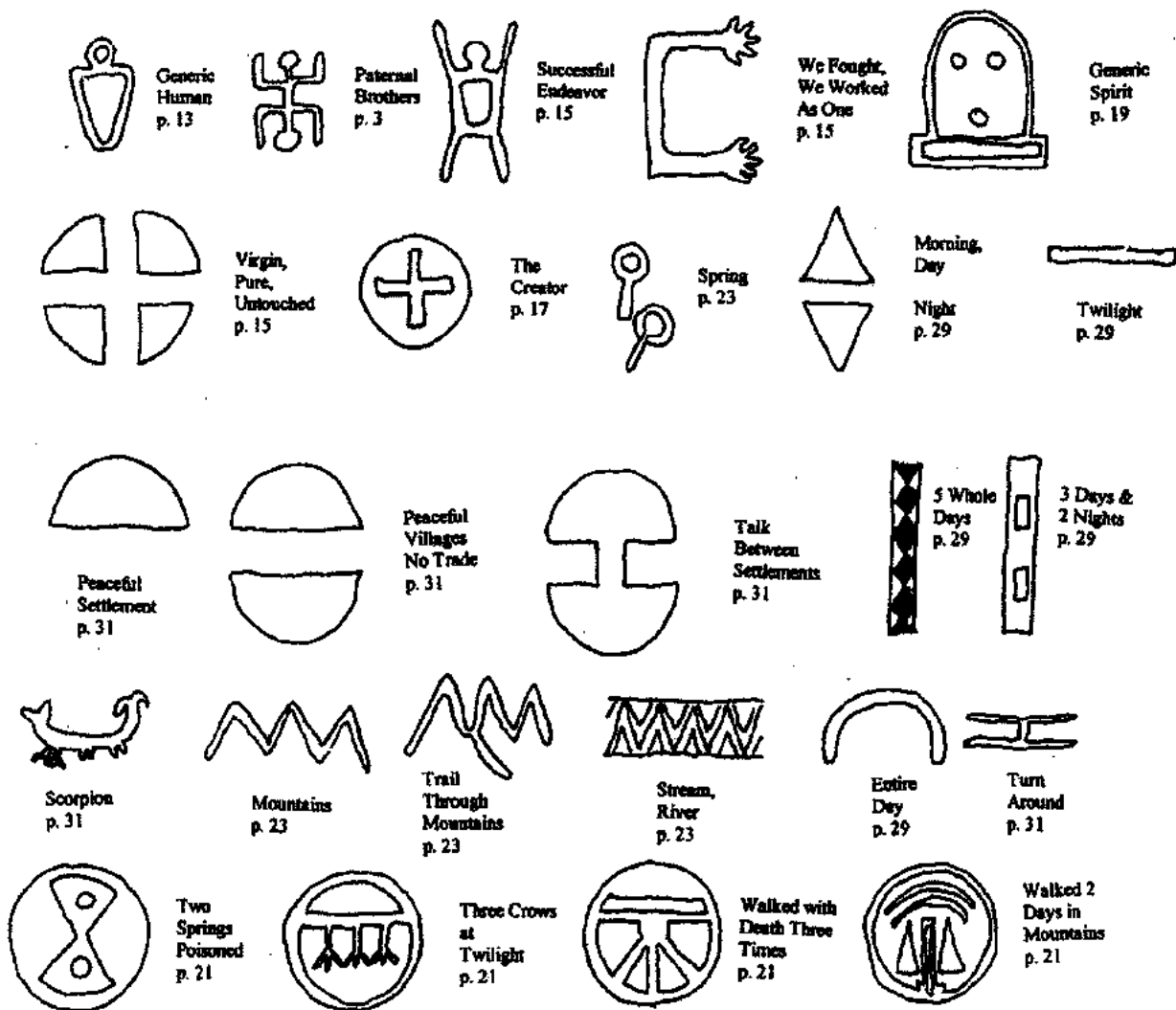
To my knowledge there has been no known mention of a headless figure representing the sun itself, until these two instances. Most of the symbolism at the site of Figures 15a-c is believed to have been about the esoteric experience; the attainment of light and knowledge from the sun. This seems to suggest another extension of this symbolism into an area of metaphysical representation. It also could underscore the fact that we can never state anything with any certainty. If these two, or even if only one, represent the "being-ness", the physical manifestation of the sun, how may other images here could also represent the sun? Is the figure with the sun-fringed shield the "Sun Bearer" as already suggested? If what has been presented regarding these two figures was not enough to ponder; now there are those other possibilities to think about.

Is this a site for *prayer* and fasting, of ordeals and dancing, of struggles in the perfection of one's heart? Or, are they the doodlings of hunters expressing the procession of seemingly headless animals which really do have heads, but

that are only different animals to be slaughtered for some future meal? Could they be the deities that spew out their life's blood in the form of spiritual instructions to those who hunt them? There is some evidence to suggest that possibility as well. This is a lot to think about. How seriously should we take any of it? That depends on whether one can see anything in it at all. If you do, if you really care to know more, you need to think about all of the other possibilities. If you do not, it really doesn't matter, or does it?!

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"It is possible to mistake a shield for a spirit. They appear somewhat the same, but remember that a spirit will always -- even remotely -- resemble a living creature, whereas a shield is a collection of symbols, each having a distinct meaning apart or combined" (p. 21).

Redrawn from: *Easy Field Guide to Rock Art Symbols of the Southwest*. Best Book Series Award Winner; by, Rick Harris, 1955. Published by American Traveler Press, Phoenix, Arizona.

Figure 1. "Off-the-wall" interpretations.





Figure 2. The Hunting Panel (Regan 1930).



Figure 3A. Sheep.

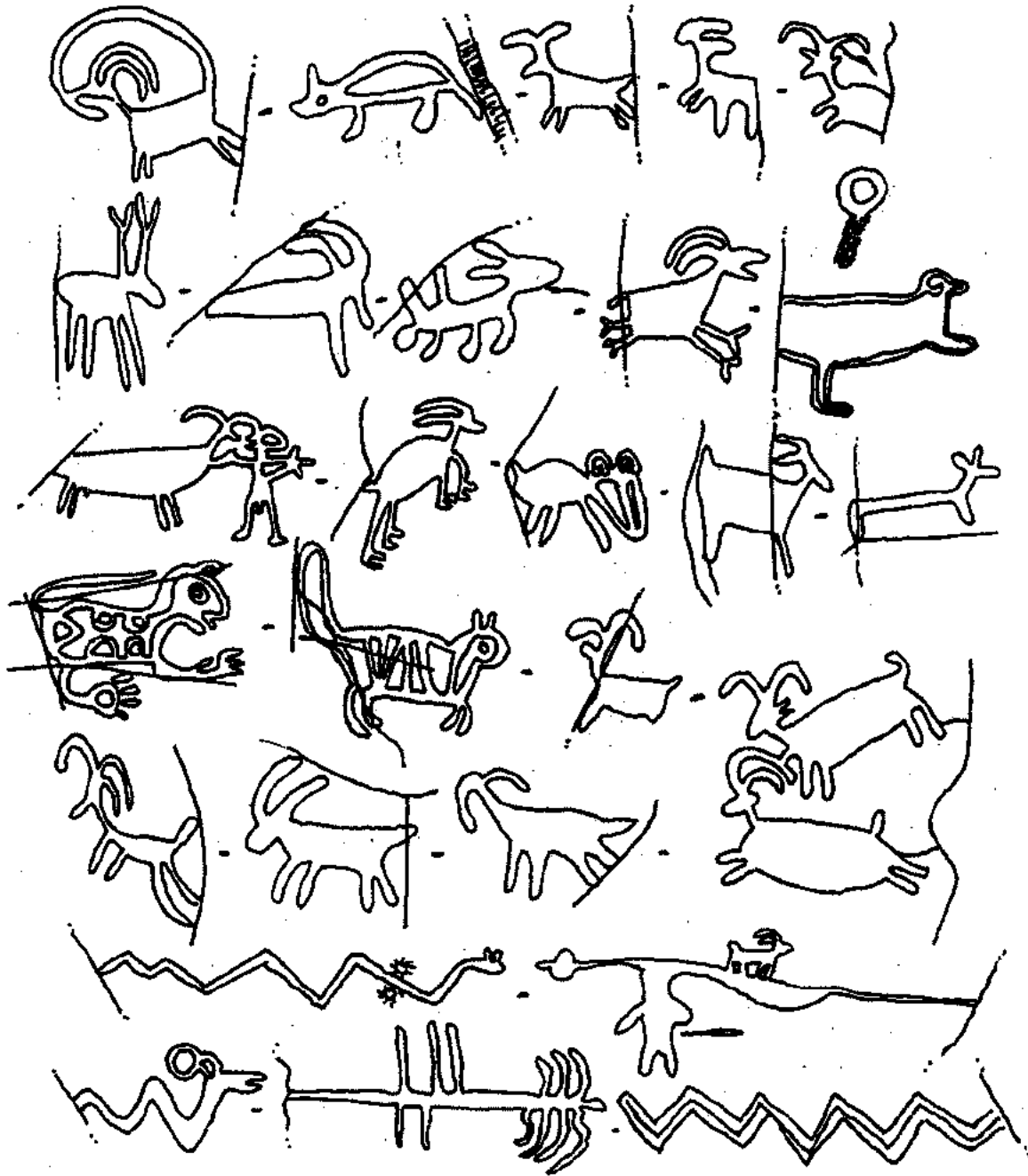


Figure 3B. Sheep emerging from cracks.

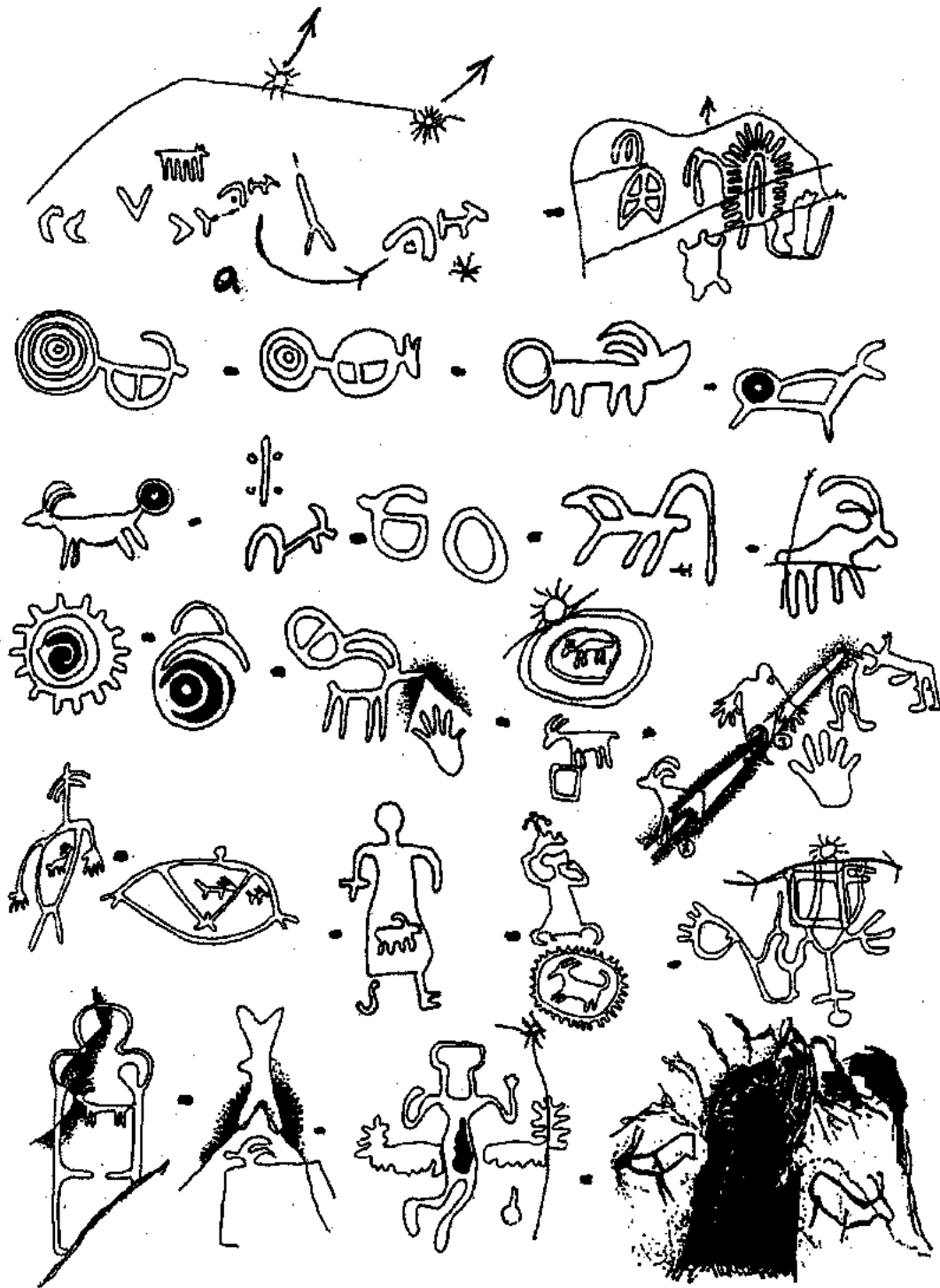


Figure 3C. Sheep with a ramp of light.

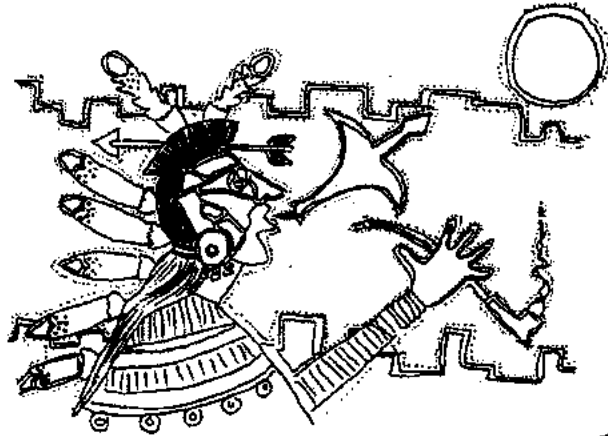


Figure 4 (top). Flute player. Figure 5 (center). Pipe smoker. Figure 6 (bottom). Flute player.



Figure 7A. A sheep holding its flute out towards where the sun rises in a crack.

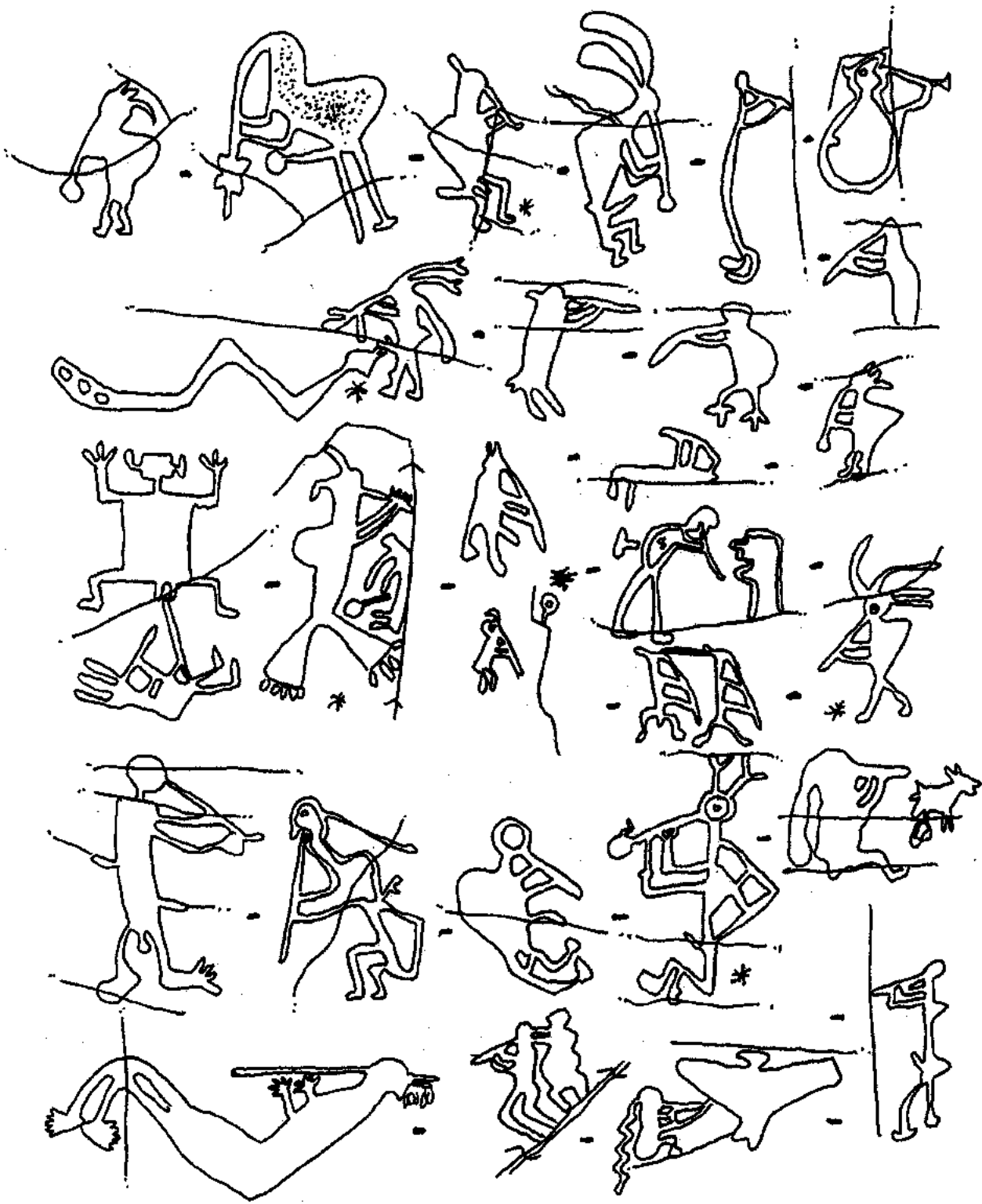


Figure 7B. Flute players and the other world beyond.

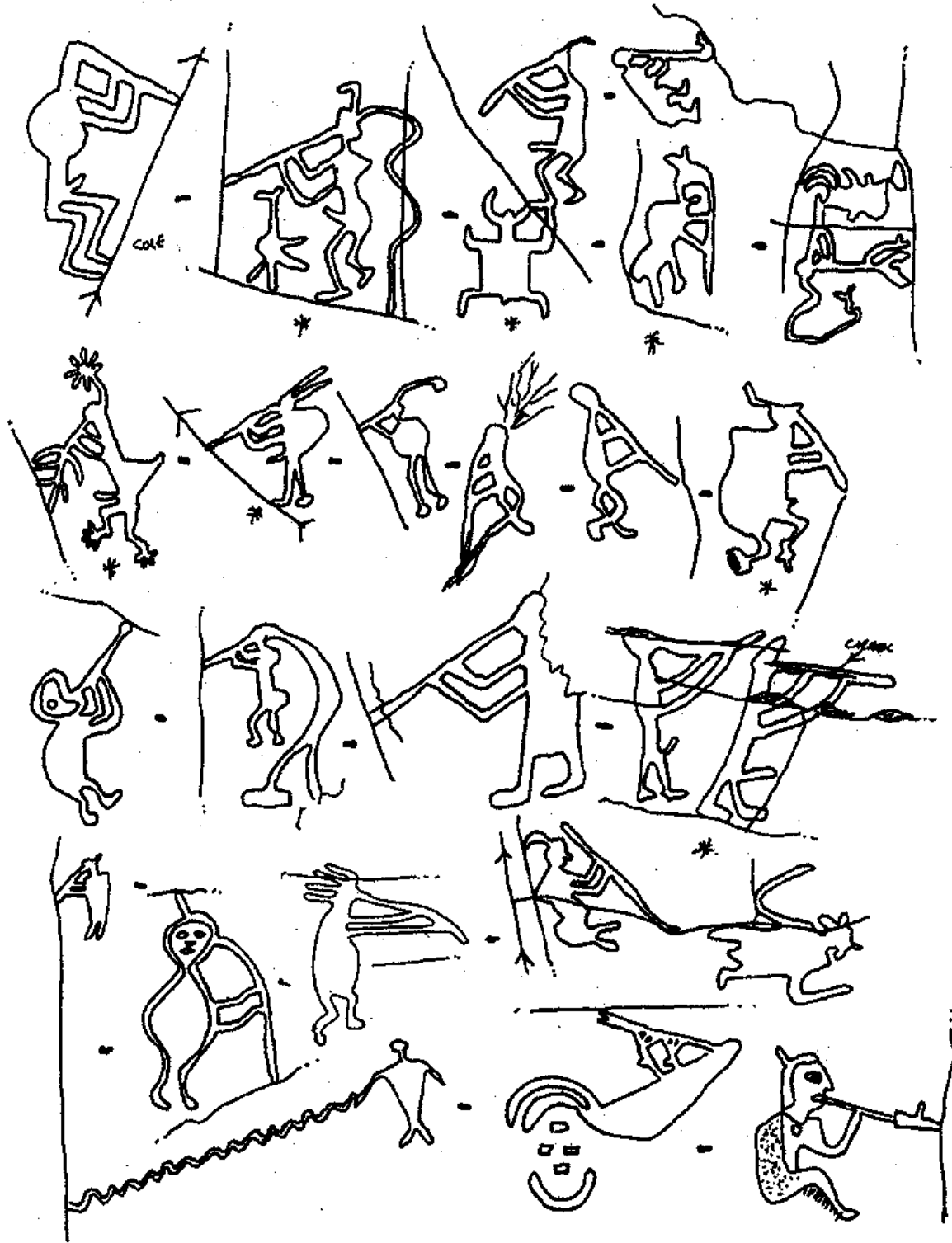


Figure 7C. Flute players associated with cracks.



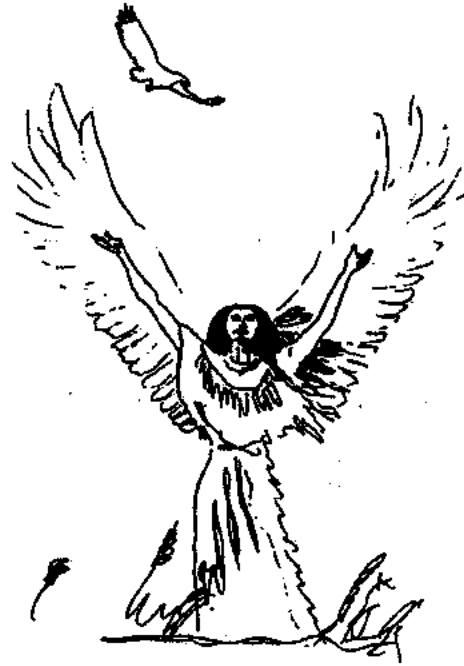


Figure 8 (top). Women with arms raised.  
Figure 9 (bottom). Redrawing of a card with elements of prayer.



Figure 10. Carved bird by Harrison Habaa'dih from Kayenta, Arizona

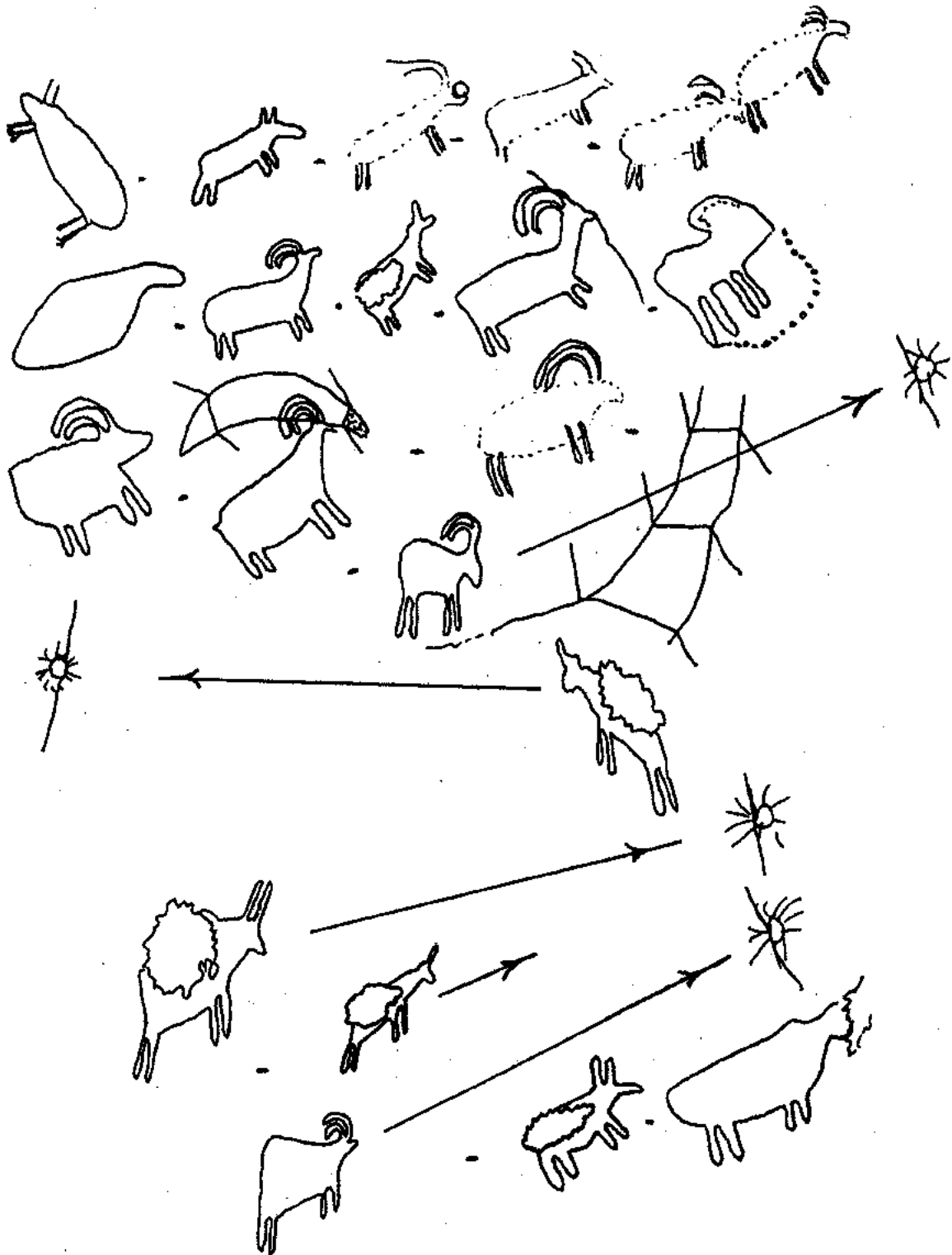


Figure 11. Rampant sheep facing the sun.

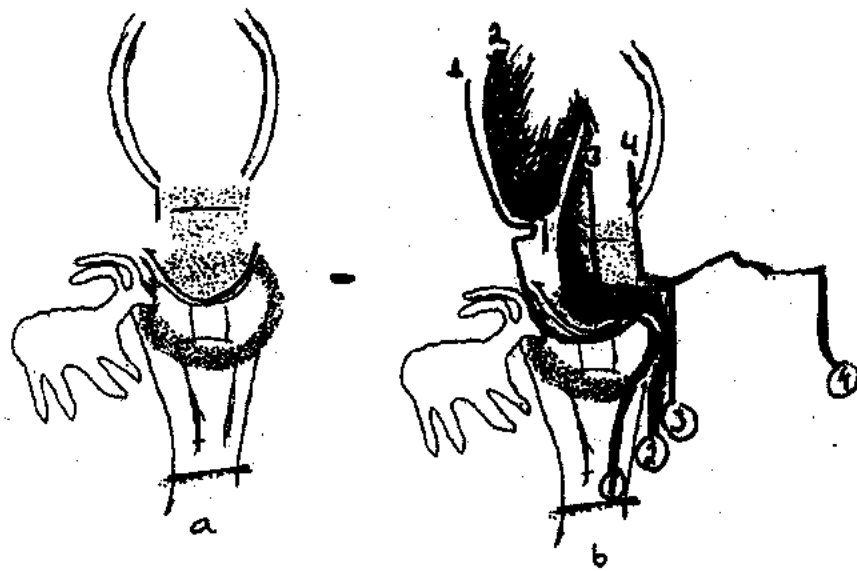
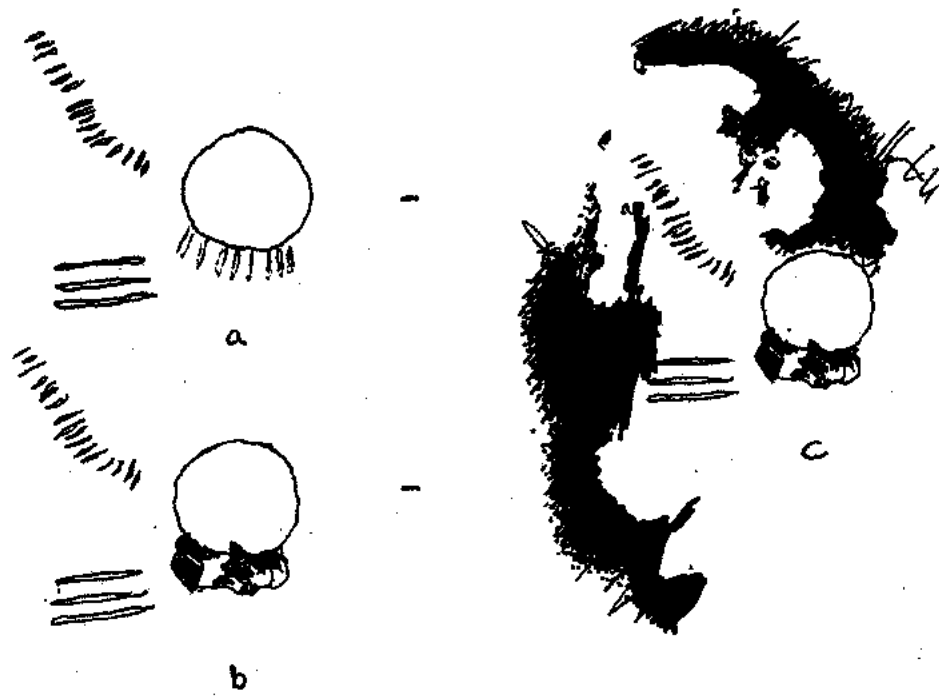


Figure 12 (top). Symbolic figures and light.  
Figure 13 (bottom). Movement of light and enlightenment.

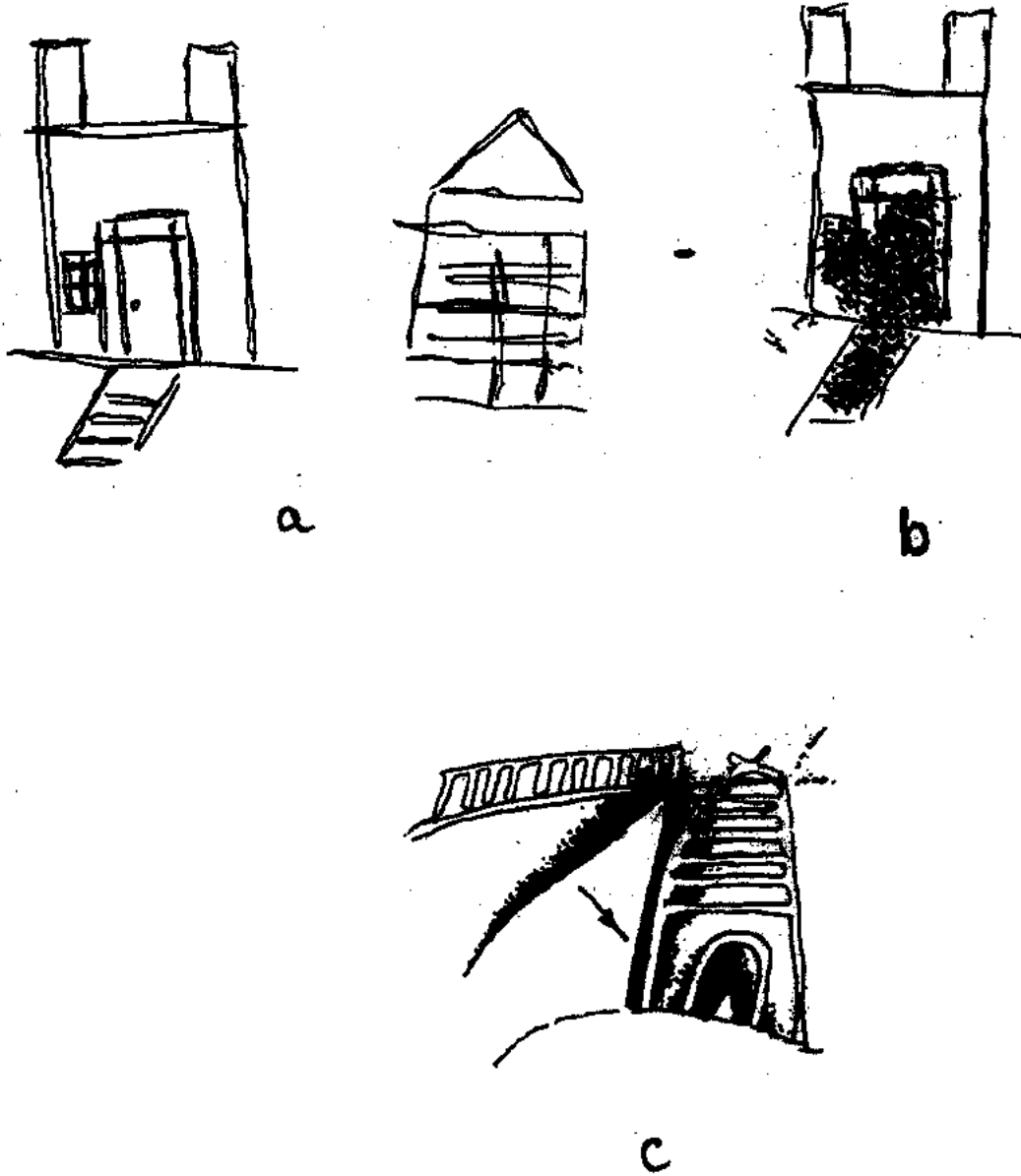


Figure 14. Moving light.

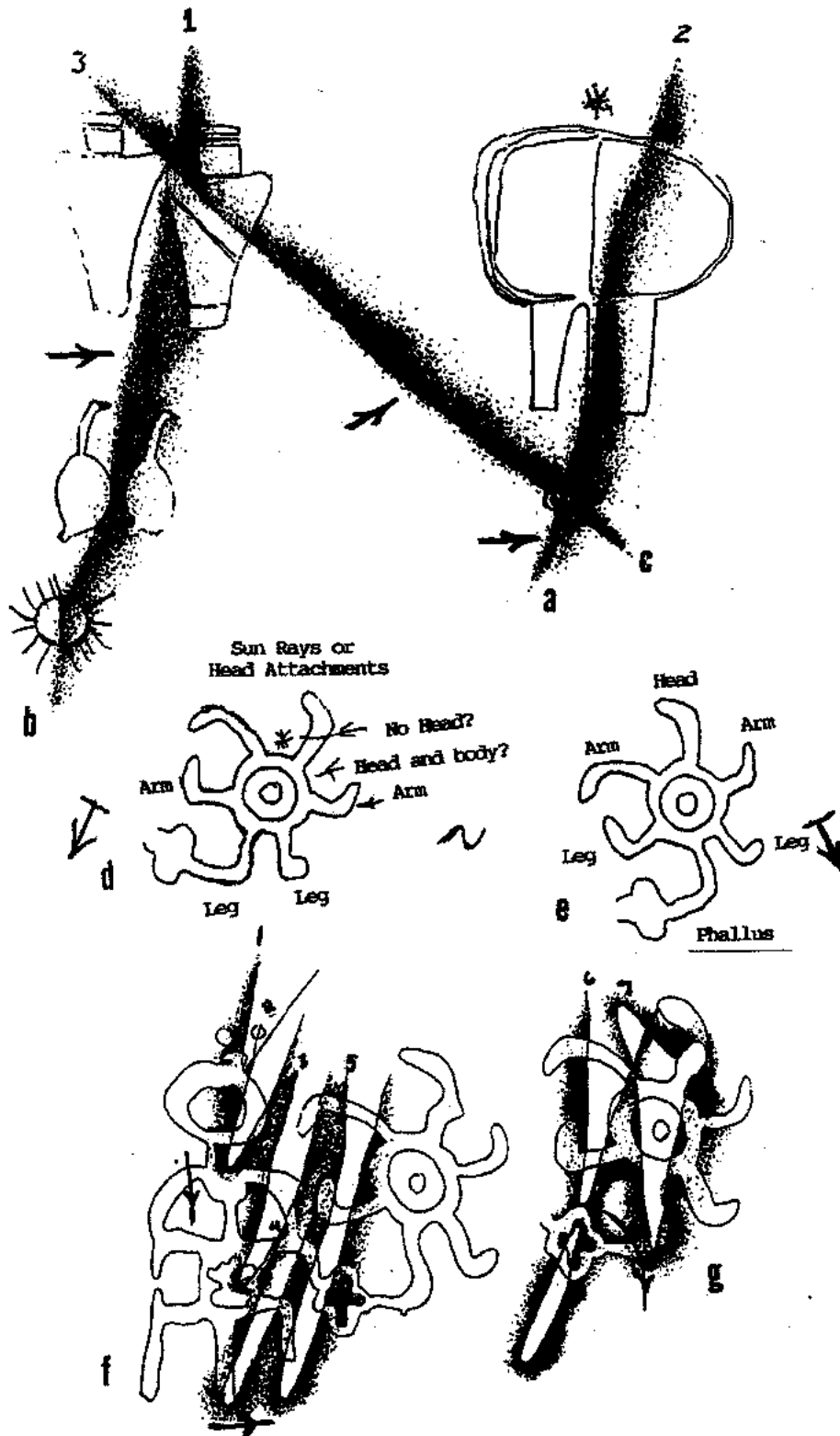


Figure 15. Forms, lights and shadows.