

# **UTAH ROCK ART**

## **VOLUME XXX**

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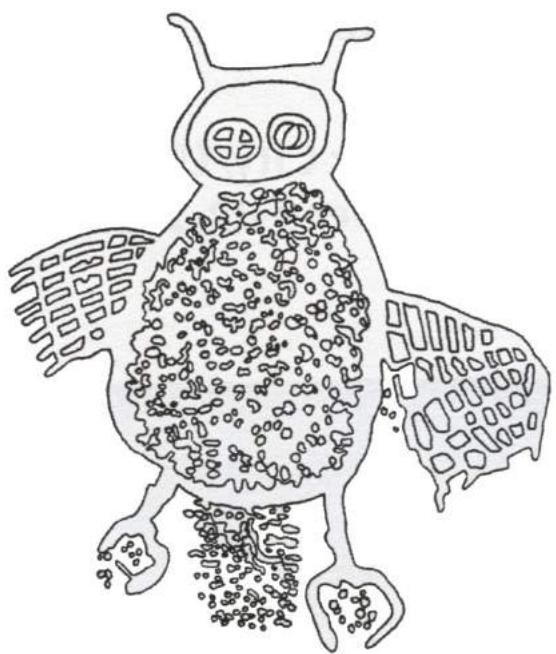
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Bernard M. Jones, Jr

## ROCK ART ON AN ANCIENT MIGRATORY ROUTE

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### I. THE PROJECT

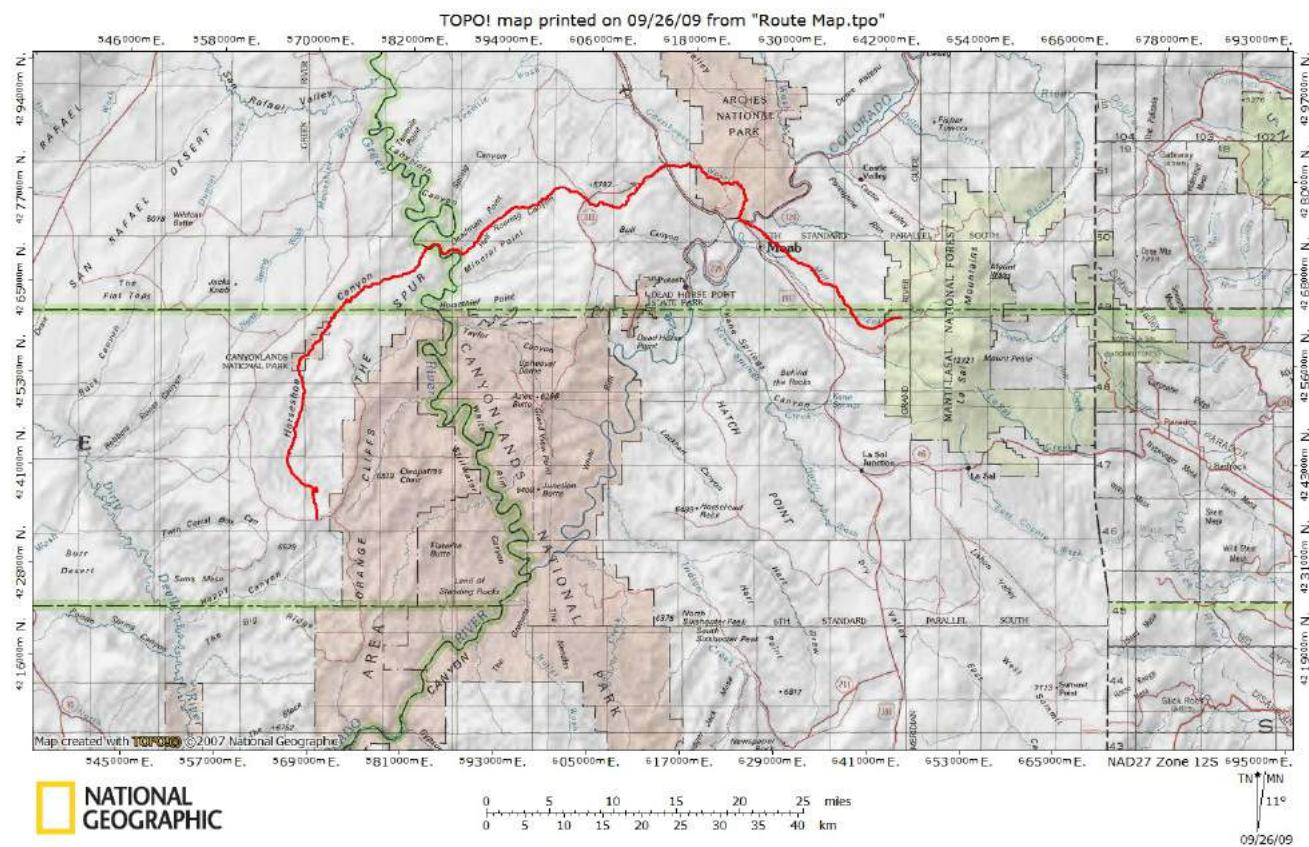
The location of rock art often reflects how native people moved through the landscape, and the rock art itself was a part of their experience of the land. Years ago I read that people probably moved between the Green and Colorado Rivers by traveling through Hell Roaring Canyon, Seven Mile Canyon and Courthouse Wash. There is intermittent water throughout the route and the walking and river crossings are relatively easy. I realized that anyone continuing on to the La Sal Mountains would walk through Mill Creek, because it has a perennial stream and a direct route to the mountains.

I mentioned this idea to Gary Cox, a long time ranger at Hans Flat, and he pointed out to me that Horseshoe Canyon, home to the Great Gallery and other impressive rock art panels, connects to the Green River just above Hell Roaring Canyon, and that it was all probably an ancient migratory route for native people. At that point I decided that it would be fun and informative to hike the entire route, document all of the rock art sites that I come across and see what insights come from encountering these sites on foot instead of by SUV.

The route includes about 95 miles of canyons (Figure 1). I had already hiked in parts of all of

the canyons, and I was aware of about 30 rock art sites in the study area. My original hope was that I would be able to find a total of at least 100 sites, but I was pretty far off in my hypothesis. So far I have hiked the route from the Green River to upper Mill Creek and I have documented 134 rock art sites in 49 miles of canyons. I'm sure Horseshoe Canyon will bring many more. This essay will report on what I have found along the route between the Green River and the La Sals, draw some objective conclusions based on data, and also put forth some more subjective conclusions based on the experience of encountering these rock art sites on foot as the native people did.

There are two public rock art sites along the way, the Moab Panel at the mouth of Courthouse Wash and the Moab Man Panel across from the Moab Golf Course. I designate these public because they are included in a pamphlet on rock art of the Moab area and visitation is encouraged. Another panel at Bartlett Wash has an information board at the parking area, so visitation there is at least somewhat encouraged. The other 131 panels are less well known. My goal was to walk to all of these sites and see what insights might come from viewing them as a group.



**Figure 1.**

## II. DOCUMENTATION

For each site I filled out a brief documentation form and took photos. The form includes entries for the following categories:

- Site:
  - Location:
  - Rock Art:
  - Type of Site:
  - Time Period:
  - Habitation:
  - Water:
  - Geological Strata:
  - Elevation:
  - Attractions:
  - At least one photo
- XXX-30

I wanted to keep the form short and simple because I had to carry everything on my back. I tried to keep it all on one page. Quentin Baker suggested that I record plants that are found in the area of the site, but I chose not to because I am not confident in my ability to identify all of the plants, and since all of these canyons have been extensively grazed, I didn't think the current plants would be a realistic reflection of what was available in the area in the past. A copy of the documentation page was kept in a folder on my computer and a printed page was kept in a notebook. A sample page (Figure 2) shows how a finished page looks.

**Site:** Moab Panel

**Location:** Outside of the mouth of Courthouse Wash, on the ledges above Highway 191  
GPS:

**Rock Art:** Pictographs and Petroglyphs. Some very impressive BCS anthros, unfortunately severely vandalized, but still discernible. The panel is probably at least ten yards wide, but most of the north end is difficult to make out. The petroglyphs are at the base of the BCS panel. They are apparently of Formative origin.

**Type of Site:** Billboard, meant to be seen by anyone entering the Moab Valley through the crossing near today's highway bridge.

**Time Period:** Archaic and Formative

**Habitation:** No

**Water:** Plentiful. Courthouse is nearby, and so is the Colorado River.

**Geological Strata:** Kayenta

**Elevation:** 4093

**Attractions:** A perfect billboard location high above the valley floor but easily accessible. It would be seen by everyone who came through the area.

**At least one photo:**



**Figure 2.** Sample Documentation Page

Each category presented its own issues, which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

### Site

Each site was given a name. I tried to use descriptive names only and to avoid names that would prejudice the way the people see the panel. Some panels already have a commonly used name and I retained those, even when I felt that they might prejudice interpretation. For example, I am not so sure that the central figure of the Intestine Man panel (Figure 3) depicts intestines or even an anthropomorphic figure, but I kept the commonly accepted name.



**Figure 3.** The Intestine Man Panel

A site was defined somewhat subjectively. Some sites are as close as ten yards apart, but they didn't seem to belong together, so I separated them in order to be able to provide more accurate data. Other sites extend over a greater distance, but there is continuity, either in imagery or in the physical site. For example one site, a long-inhabited alcove, is probably close to two hundred yards long and has twenty rock art panels. Sites ranged from one figure to hundreds of figures.

## Location

Location was described verbally and with GPS coordinates. Each site was plotted on a map using National Geographic topo software to help me get a feeling for how sites are spaced and clumped on the landscape.

## Rock Art

The rock art was described verbally and recorded with photographs. I noted whether the rock art was petroglyphs, pictographs or both. Some sites are easy to describe verbally because they are small and simple. Other sites, the many large and complex ones, are almost impossible to describe adequately with words. I kept many photos in my computer file for these large sites.

## Type of Site

This included designations like billboard, habitation, along the trail, near water source, etc. This category didn't turn out to be very useful, because almost every site is near the trail and water and not far from a habitation site. This entire route proved to be well-watered, highly livable and easily traveled.

## Time Period

There is one panel in the study area that has been scientifically dated. The panel at Bartlett Wash (Figure 4) has been dated to approximately 2000 years old (Tipps 160), which makes it late Archaic.



**Figure 4.** Bartlett Wash Panel, dated at about 2000 years old

For all other panels I had to make a subjective judgment based on rock art style. I'm not very confident in my ability to do this with much accuracy. I think that when objective methods of dating rock art are further refined, there will be many revelations concerning our assumptions regarding the absolute ages of panels. For my project I labeled every panel as Archaic, Formative or Ute. I used the term "Formative" instead of Anasazi or Fremont because in the Moab area both groups were present and much of the rock art shows characteristics of both cultures. There were only two panels that I identified as Ute, both containing shield figures (Figures 5 and 6).



**Figure 5.** Ute Shield Figure



**Figure 6.** Ute Rock Art figures

I suspect that one panel is Pueblo IV (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Possible Pueblo IV Panel

### Habitation

I hoped to be able to look at panels that were associated with habitation sites to see whether or not they had any distinguishing characteristics that other panels lacked. Some panels were obviously in alcoves that had been occupied, but others were so close that I felt that their proximity to habitation sites was significant. Then it became difficult to determine how close to a habitation site was close enough. Ultimately, these canyons were so heavily used and occupied that I felt that all sites were relatively close to a habitation site, so I don't consider my data in this category to

be of significance. The areas that appeared to me to have been most heavily occupied were upper Hell Roaring Canyon, the Dubinky Well/Bartlett Wash area, middle Seven Mile Canyon, lower Courthouse Wash, and Mill Creek.

### Water

I thought proximity to a water source might also yield characteristics that could be revealing. I had hiked in all of these canyons before, but until I hiked the length of each of the canyons I did not realize how well-watered these canyons are. I never had to walk far to the next water source and the walking was easy, which explains why this was an ancient migratory route through the area. There is a perennial stream throughout Lower Seven Mile Canyon and Courthouse Wash and again through the length of Mill Creek. At places there was so much water that I struggled to successfully jump across it. In Lower Seven Mile canyon some of the springs were so active that it sounded like someone was running water into a bathtub. Ultimately, like habitation sites, proximity to water proved to be inconsequential because water was never far away.

The two driest areas were in lower Hell Roaring Canyon and middle Seven Mile. Lower Hell Roaring had a couple of areas where water is occasionally present, but was absent when I hiked through. There was no rock art in lower Hell Roaring Canyon and few rock surfaces that would have been appropriate for rock art. Middle Seven Mile, however, has a heavy concentration of rock art and the greatest concentration of Archaic rock art between the Green River and the La Sals. It is generally dry, but there are some water

sources. It would be interesting to know if there was more water present in the canyon during Archaic times.

### **Geological Strata**

I noted the geological strata that each site appears in. The Cutler, Moencopi and Chinle appear only in lower Hell Roaring Canyon. The remainder of the route moves in and out of the Wingate, Kayenta, Navajo and Entrada layers. I didn't expect this data to reveal much of interest, but, surprisingly, this information yielded some of the most significant conclusions. The data will be examined below and detailed results will be presented.

### **Elevation**

The elevation of each site was recorded. I got the elevation from my GPS device, and I am not too confident that it is a totally accurate reading. The lowest elevation in the study area is the Green River at about 4000 ft. The highest elevation I recorded at a rock art site was 5488 ft. Elevation did not seem to be a significant factor regarding why sites were chosen for rock art.

### **Attractions**

I couldn't think of a better name for this category, but what I did here was make a subjective judgment regarding why the site was chosen for the creation of rock art. The most common reasons I listed here were that the site was along the trail, near water, in or near a habitation site or a perfect rock surface for rock art. Other comments included areas that are ideal for agriculture, ledges that may have been used for ceremonies or initiations, a wall that is perfect for a billboard site that will be seen by all passersby, and a few high sites that offered

excellent views of the sky that might have been used for astronomical observation.

### **Representative Photo**

For each site I printed a representative photo onto the page with the data. The purpose of the picture was to help me remember the site, so I picked a photo with the most memorable features. For example, the photo of the Moab Panel in Figure 2 is only a small part of the entire site, but it will quickly remind me of what site the data is describing. Photos of the entire site were included in my computer file for the site.

## **III. DATA AND OBJECTIVE CONCLUSIONS**

### **Total Distance and Total Number of Sites**

134 sites were found over a distance of 49 miles, so there are approximately 2.73 sites per mile.

I got my distances by using National Geographic software, and I expect that the walking is not nearly so direct. The site number of 134 is the number of sites that I documented. I am sure that there are many more sites that I never found. I tried to cover both sides of the canyon, but often I only looked closely at the areas that showed the most promise. I went up a few side canyons, but even in areas that had a high concentration of rock art the side canyons usually had none. Two exceptions were the branch of Mill Creek known locally as Left Hand and a side canyon in Lower Courthouse Wash. But there were many side canyons that I didn't have time to investigate. I stayed almost exclusively in the canyon bottoms. I investigated the benches in a few areas and often found rock art, so there

may be more art on the benches that I didn't see. In all, I documented 25 panels on the benches. Some bench areas I investigated because I was told that there was rock art and other areas because I thought that there should be rock art. Of course, sites that were originally made to be hidden or private weren't

likely to be seen by me as I walked down the middle of the canyon, so almost all of the 134 sites were originally meant to be seen by people traveling this route. And time and erosion have certainly destroyed many sites over the years.

### Canyons -- Mileage, Sites, Site Density

**Table 1.** Canyon Mileage, Site Count, Site Density

Canyons	Mileage	# of Sites	Site Density (per mile)
Hell Roaring / Dubinky/ Bartlett Wash	13.35	7	0.524
Seven Mile			
Total	10.75	14	1.3
Upper	3.28	1	0.3
Middle	4.0	13	3.25
Lower	2.2	0	0
Courthouse Wash			
Total	8.14	18	2.2
Upper	2.82	3	1.06
Lower	4.98	11	2.2
Mouth	.34	4	11.7
Moab Valley (all sites are on the Moab Ledge)	4.66	18	3.86
Mill Creek	10.49	77	7.34

I measured each canyon segment in Table 1 separately using my map software, and the segments don't add up to exactly 49 miles, but I don't think the software and my manipulation of it is accurate enough for that to happen.

There were some areas with little or no rock art. The lower ten miles or so of Hell Roaring Canyon had no sites, but there were few appropriate rock surfaces and not much water. I suspect that early travelers on the route were doing what I found myself doing--moving rather quickly to get to the next water source. There is a three mile stretch in Mill Creek with no rock art, but the rock in that stretch offers no good surfaces, and if art had in fact been present here, it would have quickly eroded away. Lower Seven Mile Canyon and Upper Courthouse Wash--the area where the trail moves through the Entrada formation--had great surfaces for rock art and lots of water, but very little rock art. This is more of an enigma, and I will discuss it more fully when I consider geology.

The areas with the heaviest concentrations of rock art were middle Seven Mile Canyon (which had the highest concentration of Archaic sites), the mouth of Courthouse Wash and the lowest part of the canyon, Mill Creek and the Moab Ledge (located on a bench on the east side of the Moab Valley).

There were only two boulder sites (Figures 8 and 9). All remaining sites were on canyon walls.



**Figure 8.** Boulder site



**Figure 9.** Boulder site

**Geology -- Strata****Table 2.** Geological Strata

<b>Geological Strata</b>	<b>Total Length (miles)</b>	<b>% of the route from the Green River to the south end of Mill Creek Canyon</b>
Cutler/Moencopi/Chinle	7.26	14%
Wingate	7.4	14.3%
Kayenta	2.6	5%
Navajo	16.52	31.9%
Entrada	5.0	9.6%
Undifferentiated Valley) (Moab	4.86	9.4%
Open Country	8.0	15.5%

Table 2 shows the length of each geological strata was present at or very near the canyon floor and the percentage of the total route from the Green River to Mill Creek for each of the strata. I lumped the Cutler, Moencopi and Chinle together because they only appear in one place (lower Hell Roaring Canyon) and there was only one rock art site in the area. The Entrada also only appears in one stretch, lower Seven Mile and Upper Courthouse Wash. The Wingate, Kayenta and Navajo formations appear in multiple places. The route crosses the Moab Fault, which complicates the geology. The open country appears at the top of Island in the Sky, in upper Seven Mile Canyon and as the route crosses both Highway 191 and the highway in Arches

National Park that crosses Courthouse Wash. I listed the Moab Valley as undifferentiated because geologically the valley is a jumbled mess caused by the collapse of a salt valley.

**Geology -- Site Density and Percentage of Sites****Table 3.** Site Density and Percentage of Sites

<b>Geological Strata</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (sites per mile)</b>	<b>% of Sites</b>
Cutler/Moencopi/Chinle	1	0.14	0.74
Wingate	10	1.35	7.4
Kayenta	10	3.84	7.4
Navajo	110	6.65	82.0
Entrada	3	0.6	2.2
Undifferentiated (Moab Valley)	0	0	0
Open Country	0	0	0

Table 3 shows the statistics for the density of sites for each geological layer. The number that jumps out immediately is the very high density of sites in the Navajo. The low density in the Cutler/Moencopi/Chinle segment can be explained due to a large extent by the lack of appropriate rock surfaces and lack of water sources. But the low density of sites in the Entrada is intriguing. The layer looks very similar to the Navajo and is very well watered. So why would the density be so high in the Navajo and so low in the Entrada? The data doesn't tell us why, but I will speculate below in the section of subjective conclusions.

**Conclusion One:** There is a disproportionately high number of sites in the Navajo formation and a disproportionately low number of sites in the Entrada formation.

## Content

**Table 4.** Content of the Rock Art in each Canyon

	Hell Roaring Area	7 Mile	Court-house	Moab Ledge	Mill Creek	Total	% of Sites
Total sites in canyon	7	14	18	18	77	134	
Anthropomorphs	4	12	13	9	72	110	82
Sheep/quadrupeds	4	9	3	11	59	86	64.1
Snakes	2	3	2	10	33	50	37.3
Birds	0	2	1	0	0	3	0.02
Tracks	0	0	1	2	20	23	17.1
Flute players	0	0	0	0	5	5	0.04
Centipedes	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.014
Abstract elements	2	4	15	12	50	83	61.9

Table 4 indicates the number of sites that contain at least one of the elements. They do not indicate how many of each element are at the site, only that there is at least one.

Most of the quadrupeds are sheep, but I lumped all quadrupeds together in one category. The abstract category can be anything from dots, circles and other geometrics to shapes that seemed random, or possibly unfinished or eroded figures.

Interpretation of a rock art site is difficult and complex. To interpret just one site fully is the subject of an entire essay. Figure 10 is an

example of a complex panel that could be discussed at great length.



**Figure 10.** An example of a very complex site. There are many such sites in the study area.

Rather than trying to take on the impossible task of interpreting the complexities of 134 sites, I have simply gathered some basic data regarding content based on motifs and how often they appeared in each canyon. The following discussion will look at each motif, present examples and draw a few conclusions.

### Anthropomorphs

Anthropomorphic figures were found in 82% of the sites, 110 sites total. At most of these sites, they dominate the imagery. It is easy to say that the rock art of this area, of both the Archaic and Formative periods, is oriented towards humans and their activities. That may seem obvious, but other rock art traditions are not so human-oriented. For example, the cave art of Europe is dominated by animal imagery and humans are relatively rare. Here, however, humans and their activities are the primary concern of the artists. In my analysis of the anthropomorphic images, I will look at art that is characteristic of the archaic and formative cultures, and also examine iconic and narrative imagery.

**Conclusion Two:** Rock art in the study area is dominated by anthropomorphic imagery.

#### Archaic Anthropomorphs

Almost all of the Archaic rock art in the study area is painted. The pictographs range from relatively simple armless and legless torsos to complex, detailed figures that are so far removed from the human form that they can at times be difficult to recognize as anthropomorphic.

Figures 11-14 are examples of simple, relatively undetailed torsos.



**Figure 11.**



**Figure 12.**

Figures 11 and 12 are painted in red with the wide shoulders and tapered torsos typical of Barrier Canyon Style anthropomorphs. While

Horseshoe Canyon (formerly known as Barrier Canyon) is not surveyed in this essay, it is a part of the study area and will be examined soon. I think the influence of the art of Barrier Canyon, especially the Great Gallery, is present throughout the entire route, although we will not be able to fully understand who influenced whom until we can reliably date the artwork.



**Figure 13.**



**Figure 14.**

Figure 13 shows a variety of faded Barrier Style figures with no ornamentation. Figure 14 is decorated with dots on the shoulders, but is otherwise a typical Barrier Canyon Style anthropomorph with an armless, legless, tapered torso.

Figures 15 and 16 are details of the panel shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 15.**

Figure 15 is a limbless torso with indistinct stripes in the torso most likely created with fingers. Prominent are the large, vacant eyes.

Figure 16 has much more detail in the torso and a t-shaped head that bears very little resemblance to anything human. These figures are from a panel dated at two thousand years old, as late Archaic, yet they are very different from the formative anthropomorphs that we will see in the next section.



**Figure 16.**

Other anthropomorphs presumed to be archaic show much more detail and complexity.



**Figure 17.**

Figure 17 is a carefully arranged group of four anthropomorphic figures, a sheep, a snake and a curved abstract shape that some people think

represents a comet. I have no idea what the comet-like shape represents, but its shape and colors add movement to the arrangement.

The panel is executed in red, yellow and white pigments, although the yellow is very faded. The central, dominant figure is very detailed with hands and feet that are very different from one another. The snake is right above the head. The anthropomorph on the left is armless and has a t-shaped head, making it appear much less human-like than the central figure. The two shapes on the right are barely anthropomorphic, but one clearly has eyes. Otherwise their only anthropomorphic characteristic is that they are tall and thin. The sheep on the right is positioned like animals in other panels that are interpreted to be shaman's animal helpers. The shamanic interpretation would help make sense of the otherworldly, nonhuman appearance of this and other Archaic panels. This is nothing close to a realistic depiction of our human world. It is something from another world, possibly experienced in an altered state of consciousness.

Figure 18 is another carefully arranged Archaic pictograph panel.

Under a rain cloud are two anthropomorphs, two snakes, a bird and three parallel, vertical lines. The anthropomorph on the left has a head that looks more like a plant to me, something like a prickly pear. The dominant anthropomorph in the center looks more human, and in his (or her) one arm holds a bird. A closer look (Figure 19) reveals eyes painted in blue and a snake in the large mouth area. The bird is very human-like in structure, with only the feather-like marks on its arms indicating that it is a bird. In this panel we have

seen how the Archaic anthropomorph can in fact stray very far from human representation into something that is more the creation of a human mind than a representation of anything in the empirical world.



**Figure 18.**



**Figure 19.** Detail of Figure 18

A close look at one more panel of archaic anthropomorphs will take us a step further from representational art, by which I mean art that attempts to realistically portray things seen in the natural world. The Intestine Man panel (Figure 3) features three anthropomorphs that bear little resemblance to humans, but it

presents us with mysterious cultural information that we would be hard pressed to examine adequately with empirical data. The Intestine Man (Figure 20), as mentioned above, may not be either a man or a depiction of intestines.



**Figure 20.** The Intestine Man  
(detail of Figure 3)

The intestines in the torso could just as easily be snakes. Of course, metaphorically both could be represented. We all contain a gut full of snakes. The arms are upright, as arms might be, but they show little resemblance to real arms. The left arm (right in the photo) is connected to the “intestines” and appears to be a part of them that extends upward outside of the body. The other arm is attached to the outside of the body. The lower body, where

you might expect to see legs, has something else altogether. It could be dress-like clothing or even feathers, but it doesn't bear much resemblance to anything anthropomorphic. The head appears to have been damaged by erosion, but what is left bears little resemblance to a head. So with all of these traits, is this really an anthropomorph exhibiting intestines? It's difficult to say, but this is a good example of how far from representational art the archaic artist could stray.

The figure on the right (Figure 21) is also intriguing.



**Figure 21.** Another detail of Figure 3

The head, which looks more like a head this time, has four groups of parallel lines extending from it. The very short legs could

hint that this person is wearing a robe or some garment that covers most of the legs. The arms, however, are replaced by outlines of wings, each of which has a stalk of some kind of vegetation sticking into it from below. Above each wing, flying creatures move away from the head in opposite directions. If they are birds, they would have to be hummingbirds, but I think they are probably wasps or hornets. What are we to make of this? It's hard to say, but it appears to involve plants, wings and insects.

The third anthropomorph (Figure 22) is another enigmatic image.



**Figure 22.** Another detail of Figure 3

Again, the legs are very short with feet that appear to end in four claws. One foot has

snake-like lines around it. There appears to be a tail between the legs. The torso has three parallel lines crossing it in two different places, possibly a pattern on clothing. The head is completely missing. A strand of something (vegetation, an animal's detached tail?) represented by three parallel lines is draped over the top of the figure. On one side are more of the insects or birds. On the other side what appeared to me at first to be a bird turned out upon closer examination to be some sort of creature, possibly even the body of a bird, crossed by a snake. I originally thought that the snake was thin wings attached to the body. On the far right side of Figure 3, there is another of the same type of creature that is larger. Again, we are left with little idea of what is actually being depicted here. The Archaic artist(s) responsible for the creation of this panel were certainly not painting a naturalistic portrait of the world around them. The theory that these images are the result of shamanistic altered states of consciousness is certainly possible. Regardless, these images are highly imaginative.

In summary, Archaic anthropomorphs are almost always pictographs. They range from relatively simple limbless, tapering torsos to highly complex, detailed depictions of imaginative creatures that bear little resemblance to anything in the natural world. As we shall see in the next section, Formative anthropomorphs from the study area are very different from the Archaic in many respects.

**Conclusion Three:** Archaic anthropomorphs are usually pictographs that are non-representational in nature.

### Formative Anthropomorphs

The anthropomorphs from the Formative era panels are noticeably different from those of the earlier Archaic era. There are a few pictographs (Figures 23 and 24), but the vast majority of the images are petroglyphs.



**Figure 23.**



**Figure 24.**

Most of the anthropomorphs are silhouettes, rather stiff and static (Figures 25 and 26).



**Figure 25.**



**Figure 26.**

Elaborate headgear, as shown in Figure 26, is common. These are not depictions of people in

their everyday guise. They are probably dressed for ceremonial occasions or are perhaps depictions of supernatural beings. A few of the petroglyphs have details inside the torso, usually of jewelry or other decoration (Figures 27 and 28), but most do not.



**Figure 27.**



**Figure 28.**

A few are depictions of heads (Figures 29 and 30), but most are full bodies, sometimes with weapons or tools (Figure 31).



**Figure 29.** Simple outlines of heads



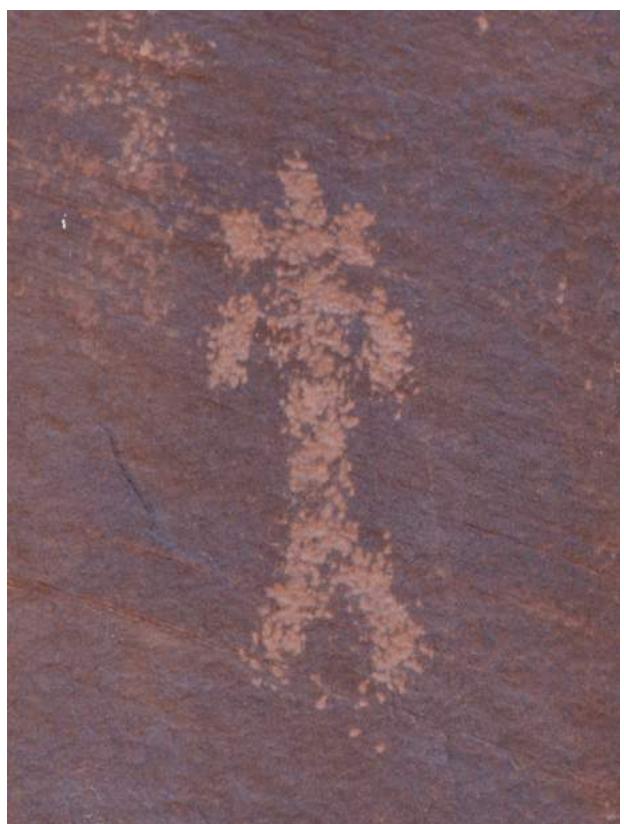
**Figure 30.** Eyes, nose, mouth and antlers. Perhaps painted pigment has disappeared over the years.

Figure 32 appears to show the type of hair whorls that unmarried Hopi women wore in historic times.

Others are more difficult to interpret. Figure 33 shows either a three-headed person or uses perspective to show three people standing in a group, all facing forward.



**Figure 31.** Formative anthropomorph with shield and possibly a spear or atlatl.



**Figure 32.**



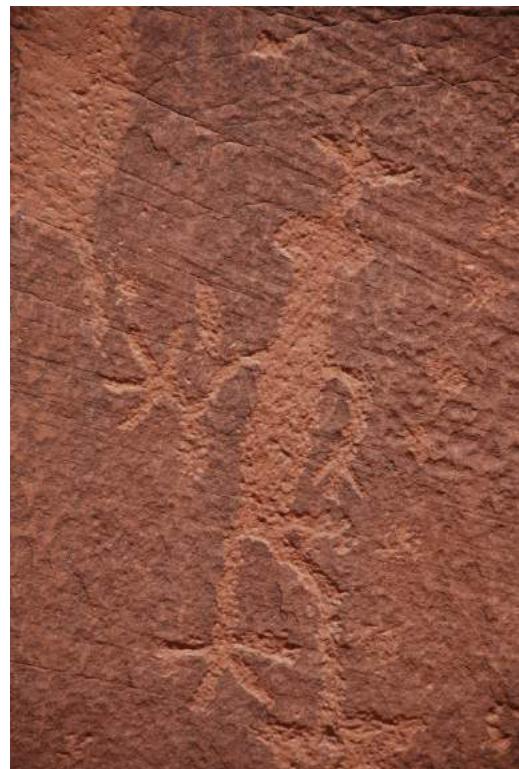
**Figure 33.**

Figure 34 uses natural stains in the rock to augment the composition. Stains appear between the legs and between each of the arms and the body.



**Figure 34.**

Figure 35 has a huge right hand and right foot and a head ornament. Of course, most anthropomorphs don't appear in isolation from other petroglyphs. Figures 36 and 37 show pairs of anthropomorphs that are obviously meant to relate to one another.



**Figure 35.**



**Figure 36.** Note the differences in feet



**Figure 37.**

Many panels have complex arrangements of figures (Figures 38 and 39).



**Figure 38.** A complex panel located on a ledge

We will look at panels with narrative characteristics in the next section. For now, we can summarize our look at Formative anthropomorphs.

**Conclusion Four:** Formative anthropomorphs are usually petroglyphs in silhouette with little detail.

#### Iconic and Narrative Imagery

Any type of imagery could be found in iconic or narrative settings, but since the panels in the

study area are dominated by anthropomorphic imagery, we will use anthropomorphs as examples of these types of images.



**Figure 39.** A complex panel with a variety of anthromorphs, sheep and a track.

In *Art of the Warriors* James Keyser defines iconic imagery:

“Drawn as individuals or small groups of figures, iconic images are static, showing neither movement nor interaction, and not depicting real life events.” (60)

Most of the anthropomorphs in the study area seem to me to fit into this iconic category. Narrative images are more active and interactive. Keyser again:

“[Narrative imagery] depicts real people interacting in everyday events.”

With this definition he is referring to the Biographic Tradition of the Great Plains. I think Keyser's definition fits well with the imagery in my study area, except for the word "everyday." Many of the narrative panels in the study seem to be referring to ceremonial events or even to scenes that may have been witnessed in the altered states of consciousness of shamanic activities. Let's look first at iconic anthropomorphs.

### Iconic Anthropomorphs

Iconic images are static and are not interacting. Figures 40 and 41 are examples of iconic Formative anthropomorphs.

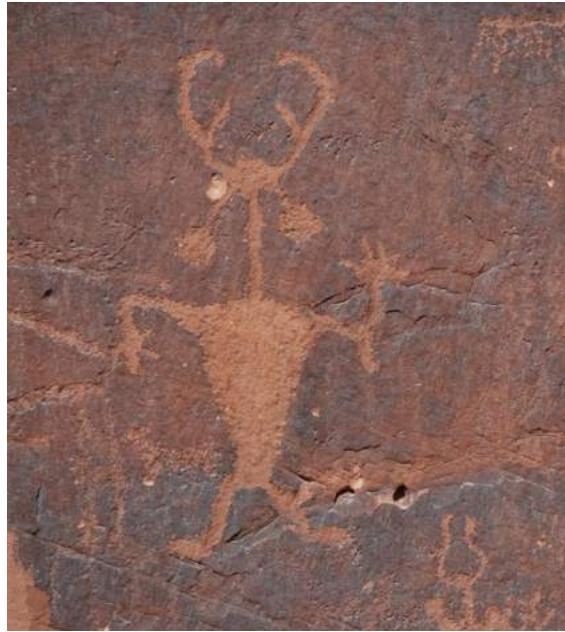


**Figure 40.** Static outlines of Formative era anthropomorphs



**Figure 41.** A group of iconic anthropomorphs

Figures 11, 12 and 13 would be examples of iconic Archaic anthropomorphs. In both Figures 42 and 43, the anthropomorphs are static, facing forward and lacking action. What was the intended purpose of iconic imagery? It is difficult to say, but many of these images retain their power today. Figure 42 is the famous Moab Man, found on the Moab Man panel, one of the two public sites in the study area. It is indeed possible that it may once have been part of a narrative panel, but most of the panel has spalled off over the years and we are left with an iconic image. The Moab Man still has his charisma. He is a featured image used by Moab businesses and events to give them an image both local and exotic. It probably helps that he is located just off the 14<sup>th</sup> hole of the Moab Golf Course, where he has cheered on many a double bogey.



**Figure 42.** The still iconic Moab Man

Figures 43 and 44 are two more iconic images, each holding what appears to be a similar piece of equipment. One has a triangular head or hat; the other has a flat head and horns.



**Figure 43.**



**Figure 44.**

#### Anthropomorphs in Narrative Settings

It is very difficult to communicate narrative in a visual image. Painting is not a temporal art like music or literature. A painting can only give a snapshot of one moment in a narrative sequence. Part of the mystique is wondering what happened before and what will happen after the scene we see. Consider that the rock art we are examining was made hundreds of years ago by a culture that was radically different from ours, and the mystique increases dramatically. Wouldn't it be wonderful if ancient peoples had left millions of videos on some primitive version of YouTube that we could study? But they didn't, and we are left with enigmatic snippets of narrative scenes that give us some cultural information, but invariably pose more questions for us than they answer. Remember that narrative images show action and interaction.

We will begin with hunting scenes. Hunting scenes comprise a minority of the narrative

panels, but still they are not rare. Figure 45 shows an antlered bow hunter in a scene with three more anthropomorphs and a line of sheep. Figure 46 is a very complex hunting scene with a large central quadruped, probably a bear, and a multitude of other figures, including two bow hunters and a man with a spear or possibly an atlatl in the upper left hand corner (Figure 47).



**Figure 45.**

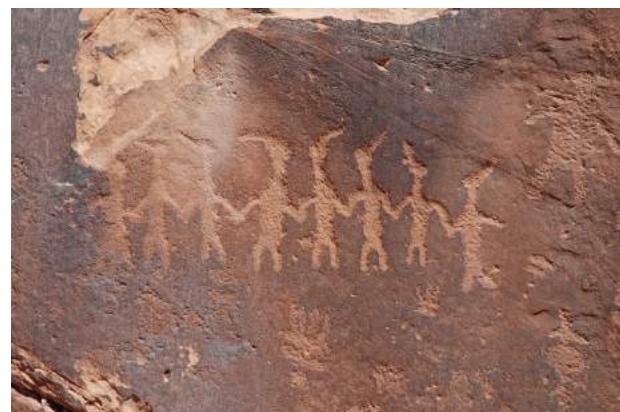


**Figure 46.** A complex hunting scene



**Figure 47.** Detail of Figure 46. A man with an atlatl or spear takes aim.

Other narrative panels involve ceremonial events or at least social events. Many panels show lines of people holding hands (Figures 48 and 49), and animated flute players provide music for the occasion (Figures 50 and 51).



**Figure 48.** A group holding hands, presumably for a dance



**Figure 49.** Another group of dancers, accompanied by two large snakes



**Figure 50.** Two flute players



**Figure 51.** Another flute player, obviously having a good time

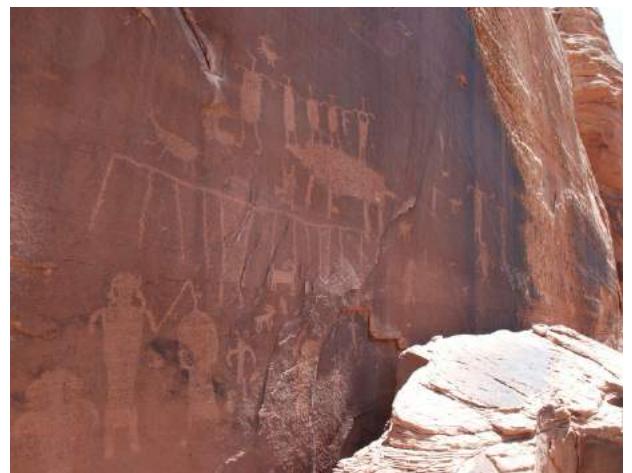
The study area contained only one group of backpackers (Figure 52).

Some narrative scenes are very complex. Figure 10 contains many rows of anthropomorphs, animals both large and small, a flute player on his back, and many abstract, geometrical lines and shapes that all seem to be a part of one carefully composed arrangement.



**Figure 52.** Backpackers

Is it a ceremony, the depiction of a myth, a dream? It is very difficult to know with any certainty, but clearly something is going on. One last narrative image (Figure 53) located in a notch high above the canyon floor, shows another complex scene. Again, people, animals and geometric designs are composed into a portrayal of some ceremony or event. The scene shows action and interaction.



**Figure 53.**

To summarize, anthropomorphs are the dominant content in the rock art in the study area, appearing at 82% of the sites. The anthropomorphs depicted show a great deal of variety. They are rarely representational; instead they seem to express iconic and symbolic concepts. Rather than depicting the outer world, they show the inner world of imagination.

## Quadrupeds

After anthropomorphs, quadrupeds are the next most common type of image, appearing at 64% of the sites. By far sheep are the most common quadrupeds, although many other types of animals are depicted. We will begin by looking at images of sheep from both the Archaic and the Formative eras.

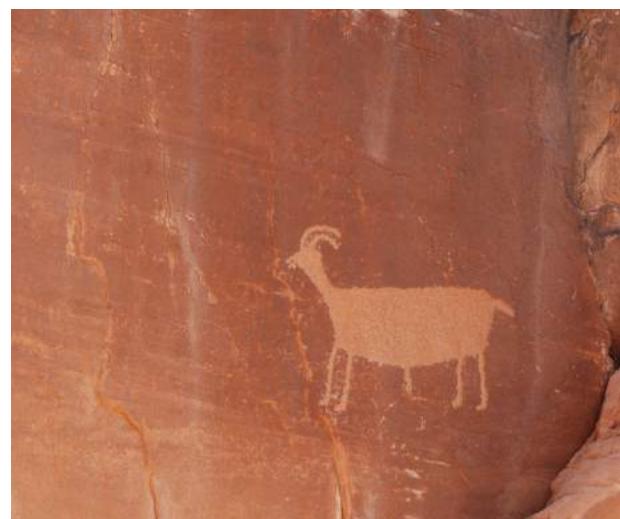
Sheep are far less common in Archaic panels than they are in Formative panels. There is a single sheep pictograph on the right side of Figure 17. Figure 54 shows a detail from the TV Sheep panel. These boxy sheep are an example of Glen Canyon Style No. 5, identified by Christy Turner and dated to the Basketmaker III Culture, 500-700 A.D. (9)



**Figure 54.** Detail of the TV Sheep panel

Petroglyphs of sheep are much more common on panels from the Formative cultures. Figure 55 shows an iconic sheep. This one, located in

a high notch, is quite large and is meant to be seen from the canyon floor. Figure 56 is an unusual naturalistic depiction of sheep grazing on a hillside. The hillside just beyond the panel could have provided the scene.



**Figure 55.** An iconic sheep



**Figure 56.** Grazing sheep

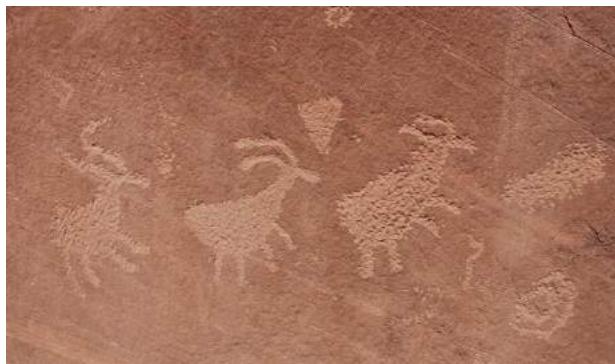
Some sheep show action. Figure 57 shows a sheep in motion, and Figure 58 shows a line of sheep that could almost be said to be dancing. The sheep on the far right is raised up on hind legs.

Sheep can also have symbolic content. In one case, a line departing from a sheep's horn coils into a spiral (Figure 59). Another panel shows

what are probably sheep emerging from a crack in the rock (Figure 60).



**Figure 57.** A sheep in motion



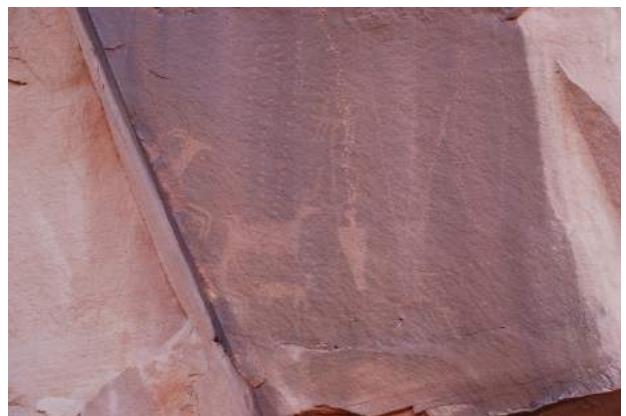
**Figure 58.**



**Figure 59.**

Other quadrupeds appear in the study area, but not as often as sheep. Deer and elk are not uncommon and other animals, sometimes difficult to identify, appear as well. Figure 61 shows a horned anthropomorph with a group of

deer. Since he (or she) has no weapon, I assume that this is not a hunting scene.



**Figure 60.** Quadrupeds appear to be emerging from a crack



**Figure 61.**

Figure 62 shows a large elk. Its size dominates the panel, which also includes sheep and people without weapons.

Bear tracks are commonly depicted (tracks will be looked at more closely below), but bears themselves are rare. Figure 63 is a detail of Figure 47. It appears to be a large, complex hunting scene, with the bear the central figure. Bears, like deer and elk, are common in the study area, and even today bears will occasionally roam through Mill Creek in the study area.



**Figure 62.**



**Figure 63.**

Figure 64 shows a nearly life-sized horned quadruped that is abraded onto the wall of an alcove..

There is one fox clearly depicted (Figure 65) in a panel that appears to date from the late Archaic. It is interesting to note that canines are fairly common in Archaic era panels, but relatively rare in Formative era panels.



**Figure 64.** Horned quadruped. The biped is Ryan Anderson of Moab



**Figure 65.** A fox

And last, some quadrupeds are clearly not creatures that are found in the natural world. Figure 66 shows a creature whose tail is a large spiral.



**Figure 66.**

## Snakes

Snakes appear at 50 sites, 37% of the sites in the study area. They are common in both Archaic and Formative panels. They are not depicted in naturalistic settings, and most likely they were not a part of the hunting culture. Armless and legless and as quick as lightning, the snake has a potent bite and arises a very primal fear in many people. When I lived on the Navajo reservation, I found that Navajos were almost unanimously afraid of snakes, which they equated with lightning. When snakes appear in rock art panels, they usually seem to me to be there for symbolic reasons. Snakes can be long and undulating (Figures 67 and 68) or coiled (Figures 69 and 70). Some snakes almost become random meanders (Figure 71).



**Figure 67.** An undulating snake, at least 15 feet long



**Figure 68.** This snake was made with three lines instead of the usual two.



**Figure 69.** A coiled snake, or is it a spiral with a loose end?



**Figure 70.** A coiled snake



**Figure 71.** A meandering snake with two more conventional snakes

Vertical snakes also appear, as if they are rising up from the ground (Figure 72).



**Figure 72.** Several vertical snakes

Snakes often approach the abstract, and Figure 73 could be a rattlesnake or simply an undulating line crossed by shorter lines at the end.



**Figure 73.**

The horned serpent appears occasionally (Figure 74).



**Figure 74.** A horned serpent

The Snake in Mouth panel (Figure 18) shows a large snake that seems to be moving towards the head of the main anthropomorph, but a detail (Figure 75) shows where the panel gets its name. Here the symbolic nature of the snake is obvious. The snake is an easy metaphor for the tongue, as here, or for lightning or intestines (Figure 3).



**Figure 75.** Detail of the Snake in Mouth panel

### Centipedes

Like the snake, the centipede is a squirming thing with a surprisingly potent bite. Only two panels in the study area depict centipedes, but

in both cases, the centipede is a featured image at the panel (Figures 76 and 77).



**Figure 76.** A centipede at an Archaic site



**Figure 77.** Two centipedes at a Formative site

## Birds

There are few depictions of birds. Only three sites in the study area contain images of birds. Two are on Archaic era panels, but one of those, the Intestine Man site, might well depict flying insects, not birds (Figure 21). The other, the Snake in Mouth site, has a bird/human figure standing on the hand of the central character (Figure 19). Only one Formative era site has a bird image (Figure 78), which appears to be a heron or some sort of shore bird.



**Figure 78.**

## Tracks

Tracks appear in 17% of the sites. Tracks of humans and bears are most common, but other types appear as well. Many of the tracks are stylized in design, and it is difficult to be sure what animal's tracks are being depicted. All of the sites with tracks are from the Formative era. Figures 79 and 80 each have more than one kind of track, and Figure 81 shows sandal prints and a bear track carved on the top of a rock.

## Abstract

The abstract category is a bit of a catch all category. Some of the images were put here because I could not relate them to any representational category. Abstract elements appeared at 62% of the sites.



**Figure 79.**



**Figure 80.**

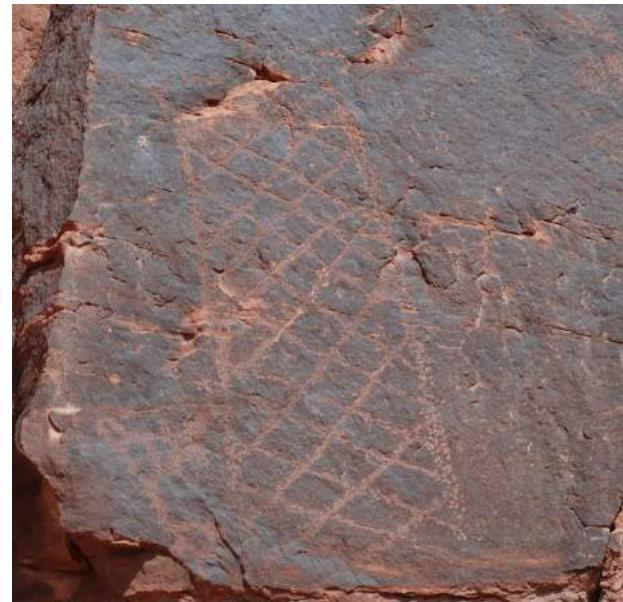


**Figure 81.**

For this discussion I will ignore abstract elements that could be unfinished or eroded images, along with meandering lines, and focus on images that seem to have been made intentionally by the artist. I will begin with an image that might very well be a blanket (Figure 82). If it is a blanket, of course, it is not an abstract image, but it would also be the only image of a blanket in the study area. Figure 83 might also have some relation to textiles, or it could just be an abstract design.

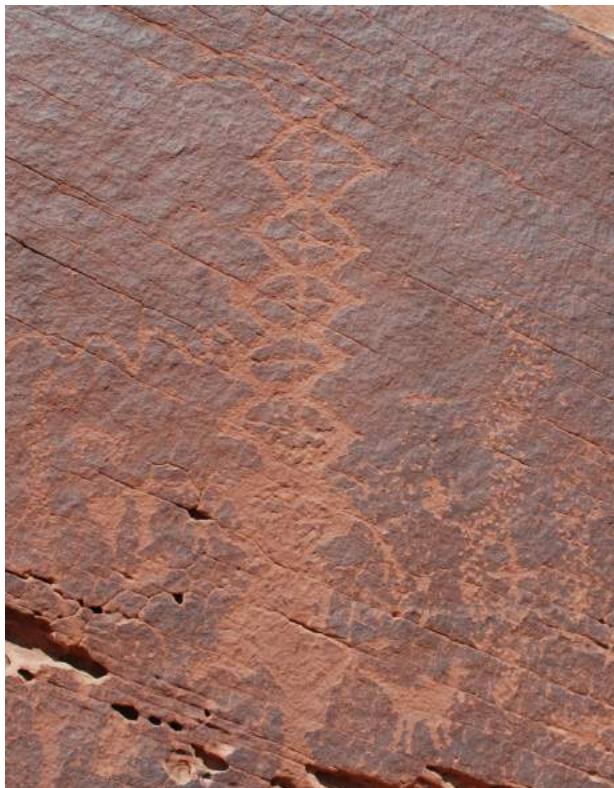


**Figure 82.**



**Figure 83.**

Figure 84 looks like it could be a stylized depiction of something plant-like or snake-like, but it could also be an elaborate geometric design that had some meaning to the artist. Figure 85 could also be a snake-like image or an image from a pottery design.

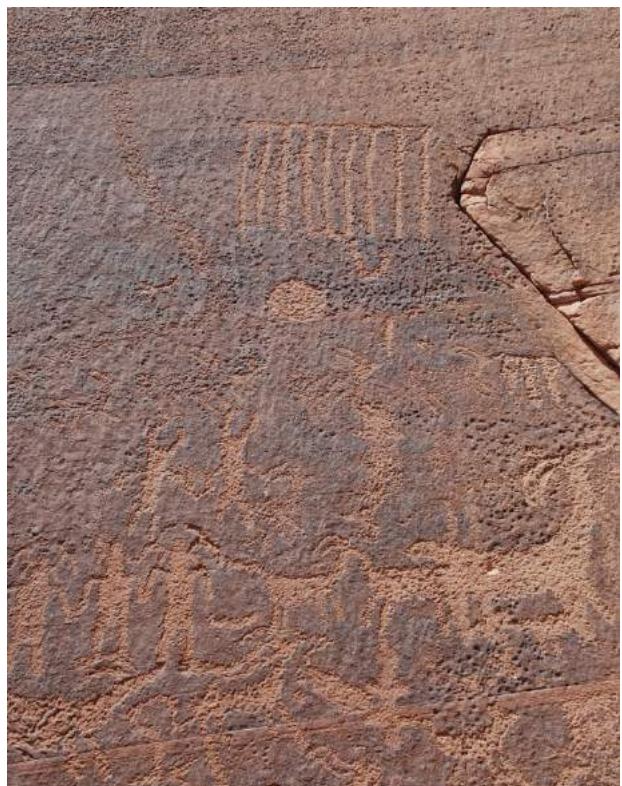


**Figure 84.**



**Figure 85.**

Figure 86 has what many people call a rake at the top of the panel. This is almost certainly not a rake-like tool. It could be a stylized depiction of a rain cloud, or it could just be a geometric design.



**Figure 86.**

Figure 87 is a design of dots.



**Figure 87.**

This appears to be an Archaic panel because of the heavy repatination and the fact that there are some much lighter Formative era images on the same rock surface a few feet away. Dots were found more often on Archaic panels than on Formative panels.

Figures 88 and 89 are circular designs. Could they be Ute shield figures? Possibly, but these images and several others like them are found on high ledges that have an excellent view of the western sky. It seemed to me that they might be stations for astronomical observation. If so, these images might have something to do with astronomical symbols.



**Figure 88.**



**Figure 89.**

Figure 90 is an image that we might associate with a star or the sun, but there is no reason to assume that ancient Native American cultures

stylized the sun or the stars the same way that we do.



**Figure 90.**

Figures 91 and 92 both feature round geometric shapes with small lines around the edge.



**Figure 91.**

Figure 92 also has handprints and is clearly meant to symbolize something, but it is very difficult to say exactly what.

**Figure 92.**

I will close this section on abstract elements by showing an entire complex panel that features abstraction, mainly lines, in its content. Figure 93 shows the entire panel, which is very difficult to photograph straight on because the ground below the panel slopes sharply down.

**Figure 93.** A huge panel dominated by abstract elements

Figures 94 and 95 show each side of the panel closer up. Interpretation of this panel could probably fill a book. The patterns of lines give the impression of a city road map, which is certainly not the intention. The lines are definitely not random and are an integral part of the overall design. The point, I suppose, is that many abstract elements probably have a great deal of meaning, but the meaning is lost to us.

**Figure 94.** The left side of the panel shown in Figure 93**Figure 95.** The right side of the panel shown in Figure 93

## Summary

This long section on content has simply been a look at the different types of images that appear in the study area. Interpretation of 134 entire panels, which would certainly be of value, is beyond the scope of this essay. I will comment on how panels are related to each other in Section IV.

## Data and Notes by Canyon

Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 summarize the data and notes by canyon.

### Hell Roaring/Dubinky/Bartlett Wash

**Table 5.** Hell Roaring/Dubinky/Bartlett Wash

Segment	Miles	Sites	Density (Sites/Mile)
Total	13.35	7	0.524
Geology	Miles	Sites	Density (Sites/Mile)
Cutler	7.0	1	14
Moencopi		in upper	
Chinle		Chinle,	
Wingate	3.68	1	1.5
Kayenta	0.1	2	20
Open land with Navajo outcrops	6.0	3	2
Rock Art		Sites	
Pictographs only		1	
Pictographs and petroglyphs		2	
Petroglyphs only		4	
Archaic rock art		3 all BCS	
Formative rock art		6	

**Notes:** Hell Roaring/Dubinky/Bartlett Wash:  
Elevation of sites 4435-5178  
All sites were meant to be seen by passersby.  
4 sites in habitation area, 3 along trails

### Seven Mile

**Table 6.** Seven Mile

Segment	Miles	Sites	Density (Sites/Mile)
Upper	3.28	1	0.3
Middle	4.0	13	3.25
Lower	2.2	0	0
Total	10.75	14	1.3
Geology	Miles	Sites	Density (Sites/Mile)
Navajo	0.94	0	0
Kayenta	0.86	1	1.16
Wingate	4.0	13	3.25
Open land (Moab Fault)--	2.18	0	0
Entrada	2.2	0	0
Rock Art		Sites	
Pictographs only		7	
Petroglyphs only		6	
Archaic rock art--		8	
Formative rock art		6	

#### Notes: Seven Mile

Elevation of sites 4574-5021

In middle Seven Mile, there are five sites that appear to have been created at habitation sites.

There are two impressive sites away from the trail that may have had some sort of ceremonial significance.

**Notes:** Seven Mile (continued)

High percentage of Archaic sites.

Preference for Wingate; aversion to Entrada.

More pictographs than petroglyphs.

Middle Seven Mile feels very lived in.

One site is a marker for where the trail leaves the canyon to skirt around a pour off.

**Courthouse Wash****Table 7.** Courthouse Wash

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Upper	2.82	3	1.06
Lower	4.98	11	2.2
Mouth	0.34	4	11.7
Total	8.14	18	2.2

<b>Geology</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Entrada	2.82	3	1.06
Navajo	3.04	11	3.61
Kayenta	1.67	4	2.39

<b>Rock Art</b>	<b>Sites</b>
Pictographs only	4
Pictographs and petroglyphs	2
Petroglyphs only	12
Archaic rock art	3
Formative rock art	13
Ute rock art	2

**Notes:** Courthouse Wash

Elevation of sites 4093-4216

Surprising lack of sites in Entrada

Habitation sites throughout Lower Courthouse

Primarily formative sites.

5 sites near the mouth of the canyon are up high in the Navajo even though there are good Kayenta surfaces at canyon level. The view of the western horizon from these sites is possibly important for astronomical observation

**Moab Valley/Moab Ledge****Table 8.** Moab Valley/Moab Ledge

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Total	4.66	18 (all located valley bottom from the Colorado River to the Mill Creek the Mill on Creek Moab Canyon Ledge) entrance).	3.86

<b>Geology</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Undifferentiated in Moab Valley	4.66	0	0
Navajo -- Moab Ledge is above the valley on the east rim.	3.98	18	4.5

**Table 8.** Moab Valley/Moab Ledge  
(continued)

<b>Rock Art</b>	<b>Sites</b>
Pictographs only	1
Petroglyphs only	17
Formative rock art	17
Fake rock art of recent origin	1 (the pictograph site)

**Notes:** Moab Valley/Moab Ledge

Elevation of sites 4677-4482

The fake site is white handprints that are very large and poorly made.

All other sites are formative time period and petroglyphs.

Noticeable consistency in content. (anthros, quads, snakes, abstract)

All sites are on Navajo cliff, even though it is far above valley floor.

All sites have an excellent view of the western sky and the western rim of the Moab Valley.

**Mill Creek****Table 9.** Mill Creek

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Total	10.49	77	7.34
<b>Geology</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Density (Sites/Mile)</b>
Navajo throughout canyon	10.49	77	7.34
<b>Rock Art</b>		<b>Sites</b>	
Pictographs only		1	
Pictographs and petroglyphs		3	
Petroglyphs only		73	
Archaic rock art		3	
Formative rock art		77 all	

**Notes:** Mill Creek

Elevation--4384-5488

All sites have Formative rock art, only 3 have Archaic.

Habitation sites throughout the canyon.

All but one site has petroglyphs.

Anthropomorphs present at 72 of 77 sites.

Five sites have flute players, but one of these has 16 flute players.

All sites are in the Navajo, which is present at stream level throughout the canyon.

There is abundant water throughout the canyon.

No depictions of birds

One boulder site

#### **IV. SUBJECTIVE CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF HIKING THE ROUTE**

Unfortunately, the large group of images that we viewed in the section on content comes across more like a catalog from an art exhibition than an experience of rock art in its native setting. The intention of my project was to hike the length of the route and experience the rock art sites as people did in the past. Often my research felt more like me-search. I was always searching for rock art sites, and I was also taking inventory of my experience and how it might shed light on my interpretation of the rock art.

Rock art studies often focus on why rock art was made and on isolated images shown as pictures in publications. In this section I want to put more emphasis on the audience for rock art and how they may have been affected by it. Rock art serves to both explain and map the landscape. Location must have had great importance. In *The Figured Landscape of Rock Art* Chippendale and Nash make a profound statement regarding the importance of location in rock art studies: .

“The insecurity of time [dating] is compensated for by security in place.” (7)

In this section, I will draw some general conclusions based on both my statistics and on experiencing the rock art in place. These aren’t scientific conclusions based on an empirical approach, but perhaps they could provide a theoretical framework that might be investigated empirically in the future.

#### **1. The Trail**

Did any of the rock art sites appear to be trail markers, boundary markers or anything of the sort? Of course, the many billboard-type panels were meant to be seen by all passersby, but only one panel seemed to have significance in relation to the trail. When I hiked down Seven Mile Canyon from the top of Island In The Sky, I was surprised to find that my hiking partners and I were stopped by a huge pour-off in the upper part of the canyon. We continued to hike along the canyon rim, but it was beginning to look like we might not ever be able to get back to the canyon floor. A branch of Seven Mile was coming in on our left, and with the main canyon on our right, we were approaching a point that looked too sheer to descend. I was beginning to think that my idea of a migratory route through the canyon might be all wrong. When we got to the sheer point I looked down and immediately recognized where we were. A couple of rock art sites that I had already visited by driving and hiking up Seven Mile were in the area below us. I looked to the right and saw an area that might offer a chance to descend, so we headed that way. When we got there the trail was obvious--a well worn route that at first went down through a wide crack and then out onto slick rock benches that were easy to negotiate. I knew we had found the old route, but as we came out onto the first slick rock bench I was very surprised to see that we were face to face with a large red anthropomorph that I had only seen before from the canyon bottom (Figure 12). It showed up better from above than it does from below. It seemed to me to be clearly associated with the trail, something that I never would have known if I had not hiked the route. I don’t mean to say that it was a trail marker, because you had to already be on your descent

before you would see it. But I think it was associated with the trail and the descent, possibly as a greeting, a warning, a blessing, or something of the sort. So, to answer the question that this paragraph began with, I do think that some panels, but not too many, were designed to provide information to those traveling the route.

**Conclusion Five:** Some sites were designed to provide some sort of information to travelers on the migratory route.

#### Influence from One Panel to Another

I also wondered if it were possible that panels were related to each other in some kind of order, like chapters in a book or lessons to be learned in a sequence. That seemed unlikely, because the panels didn't seem to be made at the same time. In fact, I didn't find any evidence that panels were related in this kind of way. They each had their own content and didn't seem be related.

**Conclusion Six:** The rock art along the route showed no evidence of being related sequentially by content.

There was, however, evidence of another kind of influence from panel to panel. I couldn't help but notice how the body of rock art built up over time. At first there would have only been canyon, and then the first Archaic panels were made. If current scientific dating is accurate, the Great Gallery was one of the earliest sites, and what an influence that would have had on all who later traveled the route! We tend to separate Archaic and Formative

cultures, but it must be remembered that one transitioned into the other, and the Archaic culture's iconography was, and still is, ever present in the canyons. So, is there evidence in the panels of artists being influenced by panels that they had seen? I will present three examples here of such influence.

An image of an armless torso with vertical striping topped by a t-shaped head appears in Hell Roaring Canyon and again in Seven Mile, about eight miles away along the route (Figures 96 and 97).



**Figure 96.** Seven Mile Canyon



**Figure 97.** Hell Roaring Canyon

Are these meant to be representations of the same supernatural character, or did seeing the image in one location inspire the artist in the other location to paint a similar image? It's impossible to say, but these are the only two images of their type along the route, and I can't help but think that ancient audiences in the canyons would have seen them as similar and linked the two sites in their minds because of this.

The main figure in the large alcove in Hell Roaring Canyon, the so-called Comet Catcher (Figure 98), appeared to me to be a very unique Archaic anthropomorph. I had never seen anything like it in the study area or anywhere else. But I came across a remarkably similar

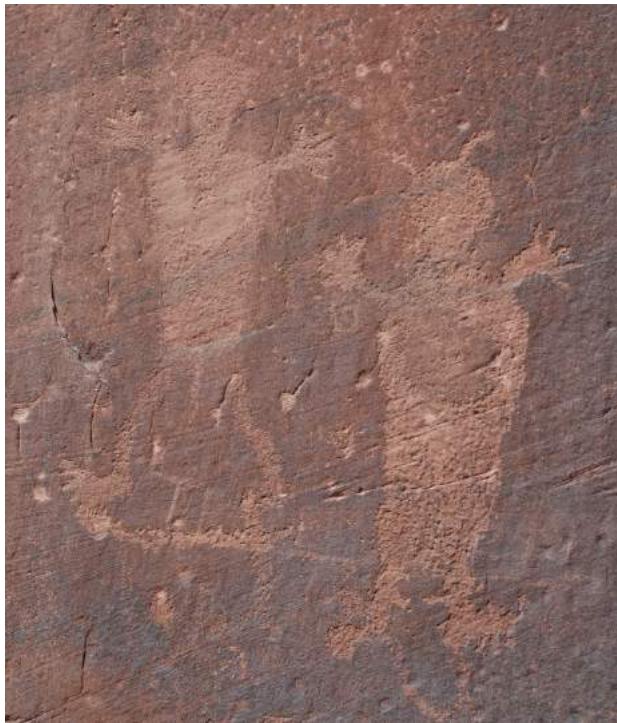
image in a petroglyph panel about 37 miles away in Mill Creek (Figure 99).



**Figure 98.** Hell Roaring

Other images in the petroglyph panel seem to be from the Formative period. Is the petroglyph meant to be a copy of the Hell Roaring pictograph? If so, the Archaic rock art was influencing the Formative petroglyphs that came later.

Another example of Archaic rock art possibly influencing Formative petroglyphs occurs in Seven Mile canyon (Figure 100).

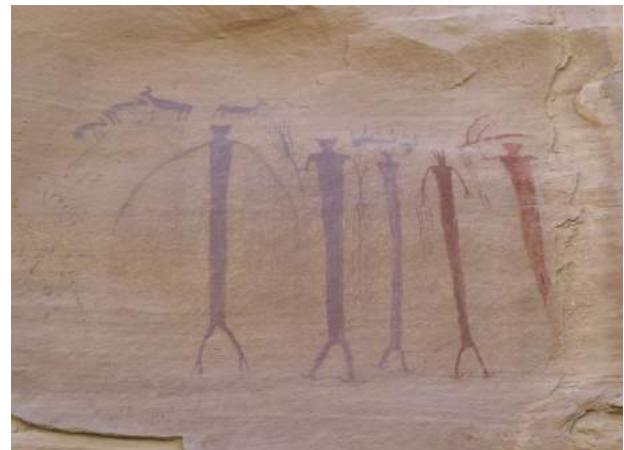


**Figure 99.** Mill Creek



**Figure 100.** A Barrier Canyon Style anthropomorph in a petroglyph panel that includes images that are characteristic of both the Archaic and Formative periods.

What especially caught my interest here are the people to the right of the Barrier Canyon Style figure who are bent over and have a staff or stick in their hands. They are not common, but I knew I had seen something like them before. When I looked at a photo of a panel from the San Rafael Swell, I found similar images (Figure 101).



**Figure 101.** An Archaic panel with anthropomorphs or zoomorphs (far left) bent over with staffs, similar to those in Figure 100.

The panel in the Swell is not in the study area and is far from Seven Mile Canyon, but these are the only two panels that I have seen with this motif. It is possible, of course, that the artist at one panel had seen the other, but it is also possible that both artists were depicting the same sort of ritual or event and produced the same image independent of one another. Is the panel in Seven Mile a Formative panel that has been influenced by Archaic imagery? It is also quite possible that the Seven Mile panel was made in the transitional period between the Archaic and Formative and includes imagery from both periods. Accurate scientific dating of this petroglyph panel could help answer some of the questions that arise here.

**Conclusion Seven:** There seems to be influence from one panel to another, both from place to place and from one time period to another.

The rock art suggests that there was cultural continuity through time. The older rock art was always present for those who came later, just as it still is today, and even if later people didn't interpret it the same way as their ancestors did, it still may have had an influence. Earlier rock art was always present to those traveling this route, and it provided a continuity in how the landscape was experienced.

In his recent book on Fremont rock art, Steven Simms makes a similar point:

"Rock art is one element of a Fremont 'social geography.' It offers a glimpse of the agency of individuals who did not act alone but were instead part of a social fabric that for the Fremont included a worldview that extended beyond the household and the family. Nor is rock art just about the makers and meaning it held for them. This is because rock art remains meaningful on time scales that transcend the lives of individuals. Instead the initial intent fades and the importance of the maker diminishes as future users and caretakers construct the meaning of rock art for their own times. Rock art does not

passively reflect a meaning, but is a vehicle used to construct meaning as history proceeds." (103)

Simms is making the point that rock art remains meaningful and relevant through time, even when the intent of the original artist has been lost. It is a part of the experienced landscape.

Simms again:

"...landscape and place were important to shaping the production of Fremont rock art, and that those places remained spiritualized for centuries because of continuity in heritage and worldview." (108)

The point made here is that through rock art, particular places were given a special status that they retained through time. I felt the same thing as I traveled through the canyons: rock art imbued power to places that would have been experienced by all subsequent audiences who experienced the art, even if they saw it differently from the people who made it.

## 2. A World of Rock

In compiling my data for this project, I probably walked over 150 miles in canyons. It became obvious to me that to the people who lived in these canyons, their world was a world of rock. When we walk through the canyons, we walk in worlds of biology and geology, but to native people the canyons were, and still are, highly spiritualized. With our scientific outlook, we don't give much thought to what goes on inside of rock, but to native people the

world of rock was not as inert as we see it. In his discussion of the highly shamanistic rock art of California, David Whitley describes how the Indians of California viewed their world of rock:

“... ‘entering a cave’ or rock was a metaphor for a shaman’s altered state; therefore, caves (and rocks more generally) were considered entrances or portals to the supernatural world. This was because rocks were considered to be numinous; that is inhabited by supernatural beings.” (80)

“This reflects the belief that power lies inside rocks and that by piercing the stone veil between the natural and the supernatural worlds, an individual can gain power.” (100)

Whitley bases his ideas on native Californian ethnography as well as on the rock art. While we don’t have ethnographical resources for the Archaic and Formative periods, we can see evidence of many rock art panels that show images that are going into or coming out of cracks. Figure 61 is an example, and the famous Holy Ghost group at the Great Gallery appears to show anthropomorphs emerging out of the rock. Rock art is often found in alcoves that place it inside of the natural surface of the cliff. Rock art is located on the interface of the inner, spiritualized world of rock and the outer world of daily life. In altered states of consciousness, shamans could enter cracks or

caves that opened up into the supernatural world.

So what should we make of this? To me, the implication is that much of the rock art we see is an expression of things related to the spiritual world of the ancient people of these canyons. Their spiritual world was located in the landscape that surrounded them. It was not a Sunday morning thing; it was their 24/7 existence. What we think of as supernatural they thought of as natural. After all, the people in rock art are referred to as anthropomorphs because they have some characteristics of humans but also many characteristics that are non-human or supernatural. This spiritualized landscape transcends our rational, human-oriented and science-oriented world view. It was the dwelling place of the ancient people who made this rock art. The art is an expression of their interaction with a landscape that they saw very differently than we do.

**Conclusion Eight:** Rock is not just a convenient canvas for the creation of rock art. It is also an integral part of the spiritual world of native cultures, and this view of the spiritual nature of rock influenced the native artists.

Earlier I showed statistics that demonstrated that ancient artists had shown a preference for the Navajo sandstone and an apparent aversion to the Entrada sandstone. I was surprised at this conclusion, and I felt it indicated an awareness among cultures of the different geological layers. This should have been obvious--they lived in a world of rock and probably understood it in ways that we have no awareness of. I asked both Pueblo and Navajo people how their cultures interpreted geological layers and got similar answers: the

layers reflect the creations of previous worlds. Both Pueblos and Navajos believe that there were several worlds prior to today's world. This is actually quite logical and not completely alien to our scientific concepts of how geological layers were created. I began to consider why, then, would ancient rock artists have preferred one rock layer over another. I googled "ethnogeology" and found that this field doesn't exist. I'm afraid that our ethnologic community has overlooked something that may be of importance. Ancient artists showed a sensitivity to geology that is reflected in their preference for rock art settings. It occurred to me that if different layers corresponded to different previous worlds, it could be possible that mythological motifs associated with those worlds might appear on the corresponding geological layer. This is highly speculative, of course, but an examination of what kinds of imagery appear on each geological layer might yield interesting results. Regardless, the sensitivity to geological layers reflects a knowledge of geology that probably has cultural implications.

**Conclusion Nine:** The preference for the Navajo layer and apparent aversion to the Entrada layer that was found in this study implies that ancient cultures were aware of geologic layers and that this awareness had some cultural significance.

### Education and Enculturation

As I walked through the canyons I couldn't help but think about what significance a forty-nine mile long art gallery would have had for the people who traveled through it. Of course they had their stories, their songs and a few portable objects that carried cultural content,

but the rock art was an integral part of the land, and they would have confronted it each day in their travels as well as at their camps. As I envision it, extended family groups would move through the canyons in pursuit of life's necessities. Men would often be gone on hunting trips, and most other able-bodied adults and older children would often be outside of the canyon corridor gathering plants and seeds. But the youngest children and the elderly or disabled--those who were not so mobile--would likely stay in the canyons near the water sources. This would be a prime time for education, for teaching the young what they needed to know to be successful members of their family and of their culture. Certainly stories and songs would be involved, but what rock art would offer would be lessons of place. Each panel is rooted in a place and has something to tell about that place. Each panel would elicit stories and songs, as well as lessons, to teach the young about how to be people of their kind. There were no textbooks and no essays to write, but the images in the art certainly carried information about the places and their importance to the culture. Repeated visits would almost be like mnemonic devices to help drive lessons home. Thor Conway refers to rock art sites as "sacred reference points for tribal identity." (32) They serve to humanize the landscape, to transform it from a cold environment indifferent to our needs to a place that we are a part of, that is intimately linked to our culture and history.

Steven Simms again says it well:

"The Fremont landscape was much more than a container. It was experienced and imbued with memories and meanings. Important to the

story here is the notion that landscape is the canvas upon which rock art is created. For the Fremont that canvas was a social landscape..." (71)

The rock art sites linked the land to the culture, communicating heritage to each member of the society, and insuring continuity over time. Rock art provided opportunities for education, stimulus for ritual and ceremony, and a medium for expression of both cultural and personal information.

**Conclusion Ten:** Rock art sites were integral to the education and enculturation of tribal members. They linked the culture and lifestyle to the land. They helped to humanize the landscape and connect the people to the land and the land to the people.

## V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

My project will continue over the next couple of years as I hike the length of Horseshoe Canyon and document the rock art there. Perhaps more canyons and more rock art images will bring more insights. For now, I will conclude by gathering the conclusions that I have reached so far.

**Conclusion One:** There is a disproportionately high number of sites in the Navajo formation and a disproportionately low number of sites in the Entrada formation.

**Conclusion Two:** Rock art in the study area is dominated by anthropomorphic imagery.

**Conclusion Three:** Archaic anthropomorphs are usually pictographs that are non-representational in nature.

**Conclusion Four:** Formative anthropomorphs are usually petroglyphs in silhouette with little detail.

**Conclusion Five:** Some sites were designed to provide some sort of information to travelers on the migratory route.

**Conclusion Six:** The rock art along the route showed no evidence of being related sequentially by content.

**Conclusion Seven:** There seems to be influence from one panel to another, both from place to place and from one time period to another

**Conclusion Eight:** Rock is not just a convenient canvas for the creation of rock art. It is also an integral part of the spiritual world of native cultures and this view of the spiritual nature of rock influenced the native artists.

**Conclusion Nine:** The preference for the Navajo layer and apparent aversion to the Entrada layer that was found in this study implies that ancient cultures were aware of geologic layers and that this awareness had some cultural significance.

**Conclusion Ten:** Rock art sites were integral to the education and enculturation of tribal members. They linked the culture and lifestyle to the land. They helped to humanize the landscape and connect the people to the land and the land to the people.

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