

Volume 24, Number 4
Spring 1998

La Pintura

The Official Newsletter of the American Rock Art Research Association
Member of the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations

Burned Petroglyphs in Deadman Wash

Jane Kolber

Deadman Wash descends from a high elevation of the San Francisco Peaks north of Flagstaff, Arizona. Flowing northeast, it crosses Highway 89 and enters Wupatki National monument, eventually emptying into the Little Colorado River. The vegetation ranges from tall ponderosa pines to short scrub growing out of powdered lava. The Sinagua, Cohonina, and Kayenta Anasazi lived and moved through the area.

Since 1991, the Arizona Archaeological Society has held its rock art recording field school there. From the beginning of the drainage until it enters Wupatki, 48 rock art sites have been found and recorded in detail. Almost all of these contained petroglyphs. Most are on basalt, except for the six painted sites, which are usually found on limestone. Some sites contain only one element, but Hueso de la Vaca, the largest, has more than 500 scattered on talus boulders and cliff faces high above the bottomland.

Curvilinear geometric forms such as circular shapes, spirals and undulating lines predominate. Many of the spirals and squiggles have dots attached. More realistic representational images are human and animal-like. Perhaps the Deadman Wash rock art can best be described as having a preponderance of purposefully composed panels incorporating images that could be interpreted as snakes.

Deadman Wash has very few signs of vandalism damage. However, a great tragedy occurred in this drainage last year. In 1996, after being scheduled to return to Deadman Wash, our project was moved south to Red Tank Draw outside of Sedona due to the extreme fire danger. When we returned this year, not only did our campground show signs that the fire had been there when we were slated to be there, but one petroglyph site was destroyed by the intense heat. The carvings popped right off the rocks. Fist-size and smaller chips littered the ground where once stood an intriguing rock art site. This site had not yet been recorded—we had used it for a teaching site and fortunately have at least some photographs of the irreclaimable images.

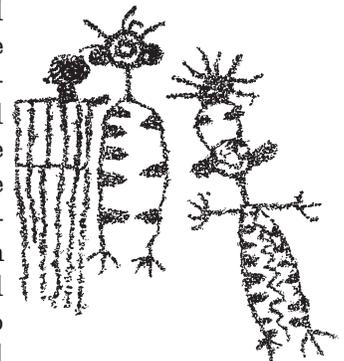
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More Rock Art Recording News Inside!

Ridgecrest Report Thanks to More Than 100 Volunteers!

Elva Younkin
Curator, Maturango Museum

Ridgecrest experienced an extraordinarily successful Rock Art Happening over Memorial Day weekend as the Maturango Museum hosted the 25th Annual ARARA Conference. According to all the numbers, one would have to say this was the most successful Conference ARARA has had in all those 25 years. Attendance was about 550, with close to 400 attendees at the Reception held at the Museum on Friday night. Seven field trip sites were available to chose from on Friday and again on Monday. A total of 448 participants registered for trips, including 355 on Friday and 394 on Monday (not all those who signed up for the conference went

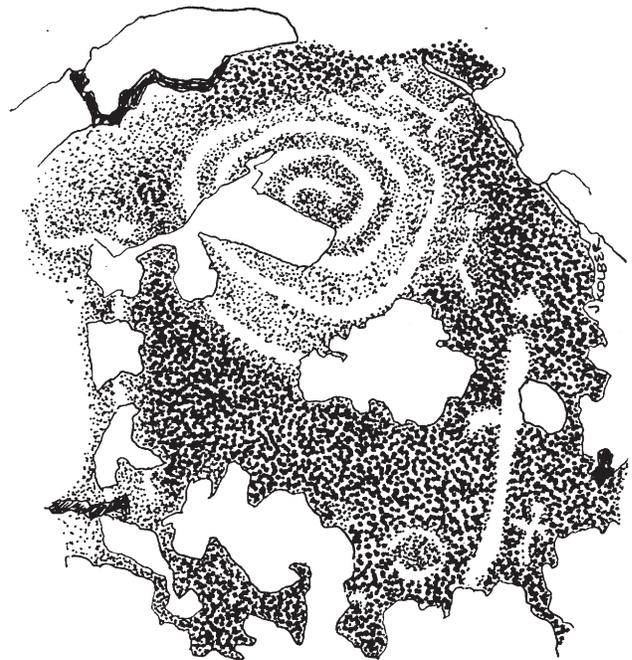
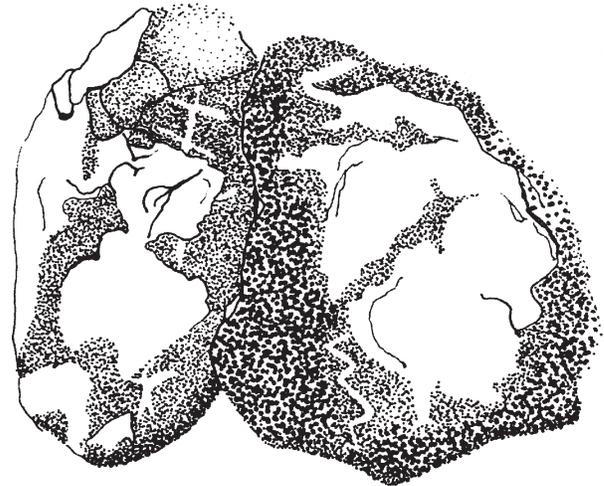
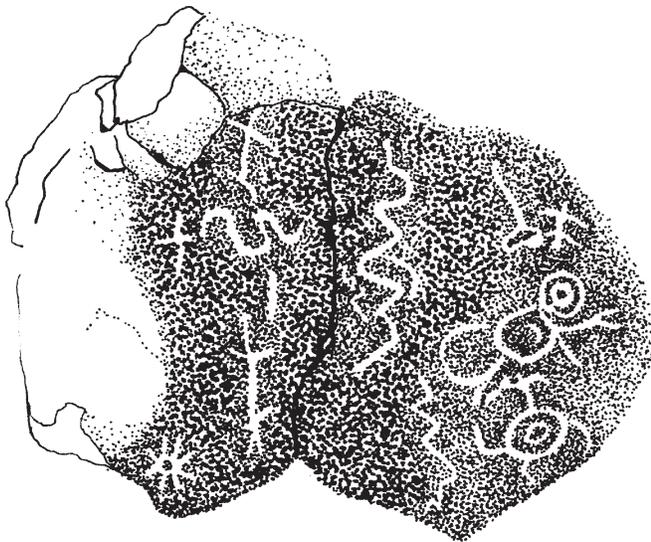


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Burned Petroglyphs

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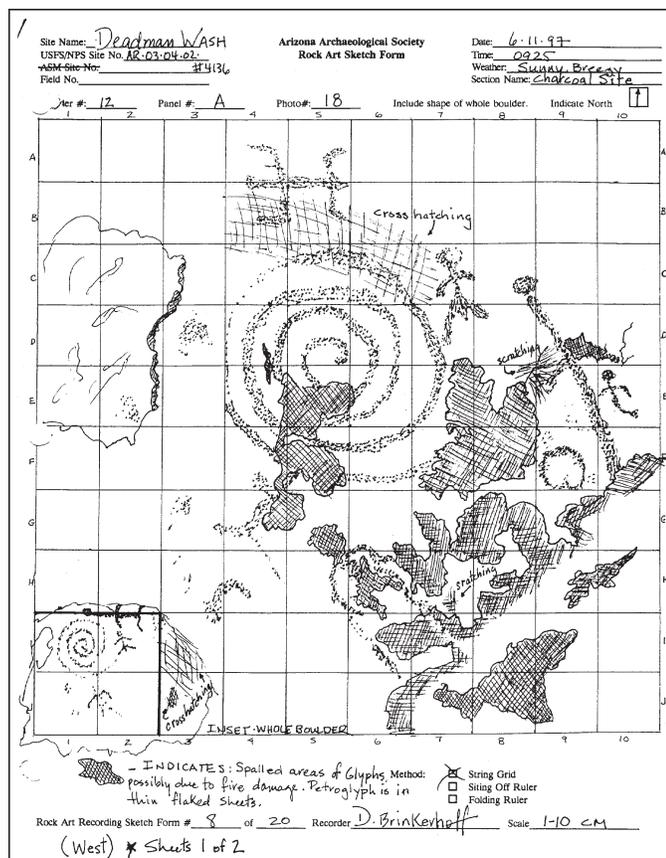
the trimming of the close vegetation which provides the fuel for this type of destruction. Several problems could arise from changing the environment. Advice, suggestions, and information, preferably with supportive material, are being sought.



Other rock art sites have been damaged by fire. At Mesa Verde, Battleship Rock had a similar fate, for which Sally Cole has generously shared her report. Richard Davis of Horsethief Lake State Park in Washington has informed us about a site that was damaged by a fire started by a spark from a passing train. I am interested in obtaining information about any other fire-damaged rock art sites in hopes of helping to avoid future occurrences. One suggestion I have received is

The rock art of a complete drainage originating in the San Francisco Peaks has now been recorded. Hopefully the final report will provide insight into the people who created them and present a basis for the protection and conservation of the area.

Jane Kolber, Chair <jkolber@theriver.com>
 Conservation and Protection Committee
 P.O. Box 1844
 Bisbee, AZ 85603



Recording of burned petroglyphs, from the Deadman Wash project. Drawing by Darlene Brinkerhoff.

Albuquerque Alert

By attaching a rider to a \$6 billion appropriations bill for emergency disaster relief and defense, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM) succeeded in getting 8.5 acres deleted from Petroglyph National Monument to allow construction of a six-lane freeway-type road, Paseo del Norte. The President doesn't have line-item veto power over non-money items like this, and he was advised by the Department of Defense that, unless he signed the appropriations bill by May 1, 1998, troops would have to be furloughed from Bosnia and the Persian Gulf. Consequently, Public Law 105-174 was signed into law with little attention to, or real debate about, the precedents set by Domenici's rider.

Now the Albuquerque City Council and Mayor must take action to either build the road, or decide to leave the 8.5 acres (which is now city property) as permanent open space. Currently, 8 out of 9 City Councilors favor road construction, and the Mayor opposes it.

Although the Albuquerque politicians and the developers who support them generally want Paseo del

Norte, the majority of Albuquerque voters, in unbiased polls, turn thumbs down on the road and would even pay more for alternatives.

The politicians need to hear from the people—lots of people, including folks from different states to underscore the national significance of the petroglyph area. Pueblo leaders have lifted their veil of religious secrecy and revealed some of the extraordinarily rich significance of this special place. Road construction would knowingly desecrate this ancient Native American place of worship.

Letters expressing support for the monument and its rock art may be addressed to:

President Alan Armijo
City Council of Albuquerque
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

and to:

The Hon. Jim Baca, Mayor
City of Albuquerque
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

If you have Internet access, the URL for further information from Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs (FOTAP) is: www.igc.org/fotap

Send copies of your letters to FOTAP and they will send copies to the other Albuquerque City Councilors and to the Bernalillo County Commissioners.

Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs
2920 Carlisle NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

International Newsletter on Rock Art

INORA, the International Newsletter on Rock Art, edited in France by Jean Clottes and published three times a year, is available to ARARA members for \$18 a year. ARARA submits subscriptions twice a year, in January and July. By subscribing through ARARA, you eliminate the \$10 French bank charge. The 32-page newsletter, printed in French and English, contains the latest in international rock art news. Inquiries may be directed to the address below. Send a check for \$18 made out to ARARA to:

Donna Gillette
1642 Tiber Court
San Jose, CA 95138
Phone: (408) 223-2243
e-mail: rockart@ix.netcom.com

Ridgecrest Report

Continued from page 1

on field trips). There was one field trip of about 20 participants on Thursday before official tours began.

One of the many comments heard during the four-day conference was that it was the best organized and most successful conference participants had attended. The papers portion of that was, of course, due to the ARARA Board and volunteers. The field trips, reception, and in-town logistics were handled mostly by Museum staff and volunteers. That, of course, would not have been possible without the very positive and supportive response from our close neighbor, China Lake NAWS, and the wonderful, world-class petroglyph sites they closely monitor and protect.

It is most important to understand that we just could not have done it without our *wonderful* volunteers. They were all standouts, but in particular I would like to thank Mike and Jean King for their extraordinary dedication to seeing a task done thoroughly and well, even when that task expanded beyond all expectations. Kudos also to Sue Byrd for not throwing up her hands and heading for the hills when ardent rock art lovers embraced her food with the same enthusiasm they show rock art.

The following is, I hope, a complete list of those who helped to make this project so successful. To any I may have inadvertently left out, I sincerely apologize.

Navy

NAWS Commanding Officer: Capt. Stanley W. Douglass.

Executive Officer: Capt. John Langford.

Environmental Project Office: Carolyn Shepherd, Tom Campbell, Steve Cooper, Raymond Kelso.

Pacific Ranges and Facilities Department: Sandy Rogers and Department personnel.

Public Affairs Office: Steve Boster, Peggy Shoaf.

Safety and Security: Will Levy and Department personnel.

Range Scheduling: Department personnel.

Volunteers from the Maturango Museum

Field Trip Scheduling: Mike & Jean King, Elva Younkin.

Tour Guides (43): Bernice & Dick Boyd, Lloyd Brubaker, Sherri Brubaker, Steve Cooper, John Dipol, Bill & Shirley Eastman, Dave Ganger, Amy Gilreath, Dan & Sally Goss, Linda Hamlin, Jerry Hinman, Susan Hueber, Dale Lane, Debbie Lane, Jan Lawson, John Lewis, Caroline Maddock, Mark Pahuta, Jim Pearson, Anna & Ken Pringle, Richard Raczkowski, Fran &

Sandy Rogers, Pat Rogers, Carol & Dave Rugg, Electa Russell, Gene Schneider, Gary Staab, Debbie Stonehouse, Bruce Wertenberger, Janet Westbrook, Dave Whitley, Bill Wight, Don & Mary Witcher, Al & Joan Woodman, Elva Younkin.

Sue Byrd and Reception helpers (14): Jane Van Aken, Ruth Amster, Dona Anderson, Doris Bush, Donnie Goettig, Sally Goss, Karen Grundler, Easter Hart, Susan Hueber, Elaine Jenne, Sharon Jouret, Peggy Mills, Joan Woodman, Elva Younkin.

Oasis Garden Club Flower Arrangements for Reception (2): Wanda Hewett, Marianne Kistler.

General Spruce-up and Arrangement Outdoors (7): Susan & Werner Hueber, Chris Moore, Dave Rae, Pat Rogers, Bruce Wertenberger, Elva Younkin.

Landscape Sculpting (5): Earth Landscaping.

Outdoor Lights and Banners (5): Steve Benson, Carroll Evans, Jason Freeman, Jan & Anne Thompson.

Outdoor Tables and Chairs (6): Steve Benson, Carroll Evans, Jason Freeman, Susan & Werner Hueber, Mike King.

Museum Store (7): Mary Adler, Jason Barker, Lori Boyd, Karen Grundler, Lois Hinman, Roy Ito, Sharon Jouret, Mary Witcher.

Representatives at Maturango table at Conference (3): Jerry Saholt, Sharon Jouret, Heather Barker.

In-town Coordinator of Conference: Elva Younkin.

And Thank You, Elva!

The ARARA Board of Directors, on behalf of the membership and all who attended the Ridgecrest Conference, extends our heartfelt thanks to Elva Younkin for coordinating the conference and its field trips. No one worked harder than Elva to make her long-held dream of a Ridgecrest Conference come true. We have all benefitted from her skill, determination, and cheerfulness in making this a job well done.

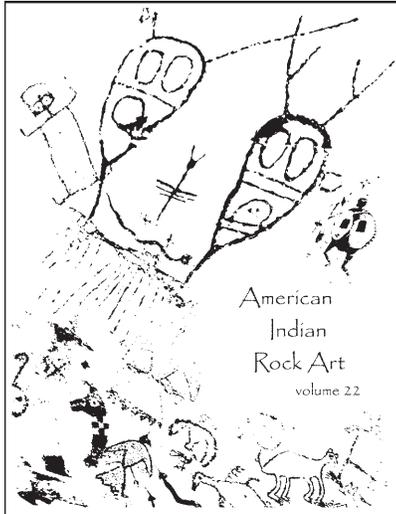
Reminder:

Dues Are Due Now!

The ARARA membership year runs from July 1 through June 30. If you did not pay your dues along with your Conference registration, NOW is the time to send your payment (see page 11 for rates) to:

ARARA Membership
Arizona State Museum
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721-0026

American Indian Rock Art Volume 22 Announced



ARARA is pleased to announce publication of *American Indian Rock Art, Volume 22*, containing 14 papers from the 1995 Albuquerque Conference. Edited by Steven Freers, the new volume has 192 pages with dozens of black-and-white photos and illustrations. Volume 22 was introduced at the Ridgecrest conference and is now avail-

able at the price of \$19.00 per copy plus \$3.00 shipping. Orders, with payment made out to ARARA, may be addressed to:

ARARA Publications
P.O. Box 65
San Miguel, CA 93451-0065

ARARA Receives Preservation Technology and Training Grant

The American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA) was recently the recipient of a publication support grant from the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT), an office of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The grant will help fund the cost of producing a monograph focusing on the history and development of rock art conservation to date. The working title is *A Review of the State of Rock Art Conservation: its Practice and Literature*. J. Claire Dean, of Dean & Associates Conservation Services, Portland, Oregon, an experienced archaeological conservator who specializes in the conservation and preservation of rock art sites, is the author of the publication.

North America and especially the western United States is rich in rock art resources. Rock art—the images left in paint and hammered outlines on sandstone, granite, and basalt rocks and cliff faces—is a

visible record of the thoughts and beliefs of those who have inhabited this continent for the past 10,000 years. Some rock art sites in Australia and Europe are more than 30,000 years old. With increased industrialization, urban development, and the recent growth in popularity of rock art as a tourist destination, the continued survival of these fragile sites is threatened.

Dean's monograph will outline the past development of rock art conservation research and projects and assess the current state of the field. A worldwide approach will be taken, which is necessary in order for the monograph to be comprehensive and accurate. However, developments within the United States and North America in general will be highlighted as the primary audience for this publication is expected to be North American. Dean's monograph will be published in ARARA's *Occasional Papers* series and is the second such volume to be devoted to conservation issues.

Siberian Rock Art Exhibit Announced

"Leaping Elk, Dancing Men," a photographic study of Bronze Age and early Iron Age petroglyphs of the Altay Republic, has been announced by the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, Pacific Grove, California.

The exhibition has been created by Christopher Hulse, an anthropologist and photographer from Pacific Grove. The photographs are accompanied by informational text concerning cultural provenience, geography, and topics relating to the study of rock art. The exhibition will be on display at the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History from June 13 to August 16, 1998. Admission is free. The Museum is open 10-5 daily, closed Mondays. Telephone: (408) 648-3116.

La Pintura is the quarterly newsletter of the American Rock Art Research Association.

Arizona State Museum
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721-0026

ARARA is not affiliated with the University of Arizona or the Arizona State Museum, which provides mailing facilities as a courtesy to the Association. Editorial offices of *La Pintura* are located at 8153 Cinderella Pl., Lemon Grove, CA 91945-3000. Subscription to this publication is a benefit of membership in ARARA.

Rock Art Recording Projects Or, How We Spend Our Spare Time...

Janet Lever

Baird's Chevelon Steps (Standing on a Corner in Winslow, Arizona...)

My car mechanic asked recently, "Where the hell have you been doing all this driving?" My truck has over 187,000 miles! I had the privilege and pleasure of driving to Winslow, Arizona, for a week of rock art recording at the end of September with the Arizona Archaeological Society. Their ongoing project to record and study the rock art at Baird's Chevelon Steps, on a tributary of the Little Colorado River, takes place spring and fall with volunteers and graduates of the Arizona Archaeological Society Field School run by Jane Kolber.

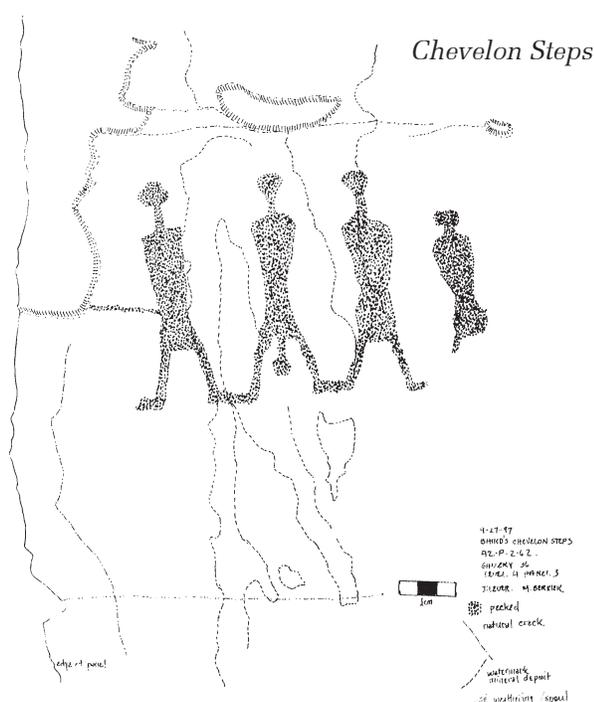
The purpose of my participation was to include tracing in the documentation techniques used by the group. Panels with particularly obscure images of rock art (due to re-patination as well as ongoing weathering processes) were chosen. While other team members continued with scale drawings, photographs, forms, and element analysis, Margaret Berrier and I negotiated the waters of Chevelon Creek and set up our sheets of mylar and plastic film. Before putting pen to film, however, there was always an interesting discussion of each panel: why is it on this rock surface; what

are the various layers of pecking; what can we see at this time of day; what is the relationship of this panel to the rest of the canyon, so rich with petroglyphs, plant and animal life, and signs of earlier human occupation? A secure rope would have been nice at times and, in the afternoon sun, the black-patinated sandstone was hot enough to fry an egg! So you choose your working hours carefully and try not to upset any fast-moving lizard, moving slowly on steep slabs of rock with precarious footing.

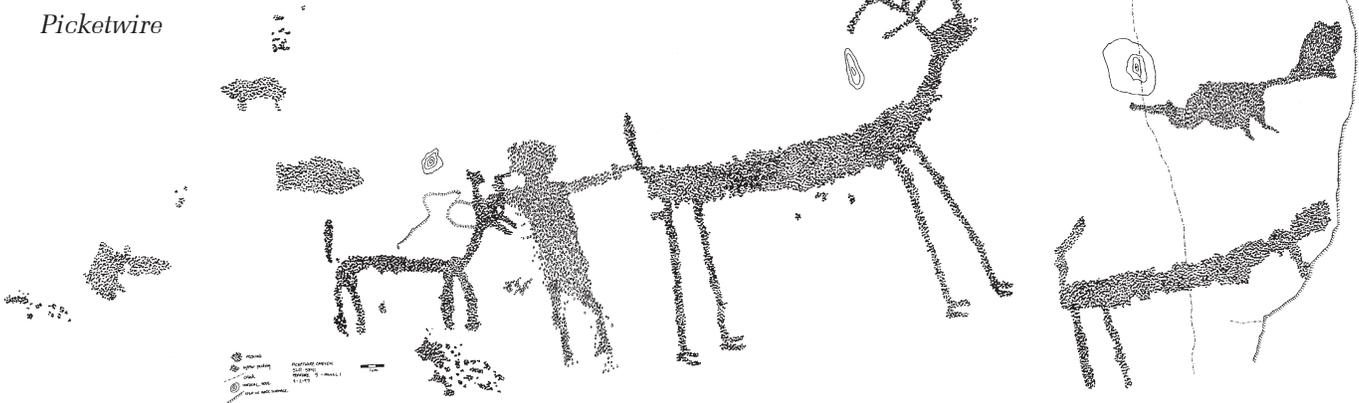
Tracing enables the recorder to "get in touch" with the process of making petroglyphs, pecked and re-pecked, elements interwoven and superimposed. What you see and feel is part of the documentation process: cracks and shifts in the rock surface, lichen and weathering, mineral deposits and water marks—all are drawn. I suppose it is our goal to put the art back in rock art recording. Perception is followed by careful execution and the finished document is an accurate whole: this is what we experienced.

Another Rock Art Recording Volunteer Saga

This September I got a phone call from Mark Mitchell, the Forest Service archaeologist in charge of a PIT (Passports in Time) project in southeastern Colorado. The project consisted of re-surveying rock art sites after a fire in summer 1996 and recording some of these sites with a small team of volunteers. The Picketwire canyons may not hold the most spectacular rock art in North America, but the context of a lesser known culture and the challenge of locating older re-patinated panels as well as those burned and spalled made the week very worthwhile. With the help of previously made maps (though a number of panels were missing), we spent the first day locating, discussing, taking photographs, and tracing. Site data had already been collected. The task of coordinating a volunteer group of mixed skills and interest levels was maintained by a relaxed but focused P.I. (Mark Mitchell) and a determined rock art recorder (yours truly). Getting people to look at the whole site—related ground stone and lithic scatters, proximity to the river below and the cliffs and structures above—was goal number one. Specific panels were examined and materials for tracing were set up. As interesting quadrupeds and enigmatic abstract meanders and grids emerge on the tracing, one can't help but wonder—who made these petroglyphs and why? The fires of the previous summer had impacted several panels. Close-growing juniper trees had burned and affected the adjacent sandstone—blackened with soot and scorched red-orange,



Picketwire



in some cases the stone had been blown away by the heat of the fire (it makes you want to hurry up and record what is still intact!). Management suggestions will be made to the Forest Service to clear close-growing piñon and juniper from the petroglyph panels. Hundreds of sites remain to be recorded—next field season.

So, for the past week I've been re-drawing the

tracings, remembering the days in the canyon, and hoping that these clear recordings will become part of the information that the Forest Service uses to understand the prehistory of the Picketwire canyons and to educate a growing number of visitors. I would encourage other rock art researchers with field experience and a little extra time to share their knowledge with similar Passports in Time projects.



Baird's Chevelon Steps

Jane Kolber

The Arizona Archaeological Society is sponsoring a recording project that will help preserve one of the most impressive sites in the Southwest. Baird's Chevelon Steps is a fantastic petroglyph site situated along a bend in northern Chevelon Creek between Holbrook and Winslow, Arizona. It is on private land currently being commercialized for tourist visits as part of the "Rock Art Canyon Ranch" package. It has gated roads and an enormous fence blocking the entrance. Thousands of spectacular images have been carved into the cliff walls and on boulders at their base. Some vandalism has occurred with carved names and spray paint. Natural elements have played havoc on many of the images. Wind and rising waters have spalled and flaked and worn away at the surfaces.

A few years ago, we were approached by a Homolovi Chapter member, Darlene Brinkerhoff, to engage in a recording project to help protect and preserve this site. The landowner agreed and has actively assisted us in setting this endeavor in motion. We have been involved in fund-raising efforts to support our work.

Many people and organizations have generously contributed, but we're a long way from acquiring enough money to complete our project.

With hope and confidence in meeting our goals, we held our first session last fall. Each rock art site requires different methods, so our first venture was to map the area. Robert Mark and Don Weaver created the maps. Then the site was divided into workable sections or galleries. We formulated a plan and created new recording procedures and forms.

A regular session was scheduled for March, but we had to cancel this as "a river ran through it," eliminating the possibility of access to the site. The next session was planned and occurred after our field school. Eight volunteers worked for a week and recorded parts of several galleries.

The site presents many logistical problems. Many thousands of carvings are located in a 150-meter-long curve in the canyon which has steep walls rising about 15 meters. Petroglyphs are carved on all surfaces including those at lofty elevations. Elements are densely compacted with much superimposition. The lighting conditions change every few minutes so that photographers are continuously hopping back and

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Chevelon Steps

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forth across the creek. Some shots need to be taken from the rim across the canyon. Other photographs and some of the drawings will necessitate people working with climbing gear and hanging off the cliffs when I'm not watching. In some places, we'll use ladders and scaffolding will be built.

There is a great variety of images, but the numerous large and complex anthropomorphic shapes seem to dominate the site. In addition there is an abundance of animal-like forms of varying types and sizes with some very impressive bird-like forms. Many of the figures have pecked-out areas located in the middle of their bodies and sometimes also on their hands and feet. These intrusions were done at a later time than the original forms. The great stylistic and methodological diversity lead us to believe that the carvings were created over a period spanning about 2,000 years or more.

Kelley Hays-Gilpin and a NAU survey crew examined the area north and east of the site and found sparse, scattered lithic debris everywhere with one concentration of utilized flakes and debitage on a low dune and nearby blowout. Potsherds were very rare, and include possible Basketmaker II, Pueblo I, and Pueblo III types representing the Kayenta, Little Colorado, and Cibolan ceramic traditions. One archaic projectile point base, possibly a San Raphael, was noted on the canyon rim north and west of the site, but no sites were found in a cursory examination of that area. The area south of the site has not yet been examined systematically, but no habitation sites are known.

It appears that it will be impossible to record all the rock art at this site and that it will probably take the rest of my recording life, but we'll give it our best effort with the help and generosity of many. Our next work session is planned for the end of September. The fragility and vulnerability of this site necessitates continuous efforts toward its protection and preservation.

Contributions are our only support and they continue with the generosity of those who care about preserving our past. The latest contributions are from:

Darlene Brinkerhoff
Desert Foothills Chapter
Charlie Gilbert
Mary Jordan

The author maybe contacted at the address given on page 2 of this issue of *La Pintura*.

Traveling Photographers Beware!

New X-ray Hazard for Film

Recent warnings posted on several history, archaeology, and photography listserve sites, as well as articles and editorials in photographic publications, have alerted us to some unsettling news for traveling photographers. The following article is adapted from a recent posting on the rock art listserve, with acknowledgement to those who, among others, have helped spread the word on the Internet: Dito Morales, Dan Mouer of Virginia Commonwealth University, and Anne Stoll of the University of LaVerne.

For those of you planning to fly for fun or fieldwork this summer, watch out for those airport x-ray machines! Two recent articles, one in the May/June issue of *Photo Techniques* and one from the editorial in May's *Shutterbug*, describe new "film-killer x-ray" security equipment being used in "certain large American and foreign airports" which destroys film, exposed and otherwise. The new equipment is the InVision Technologies CTX 5000 baggage scanner, which the FAA is paying for (they cost a cool \$900,000 each!). On *most* domestic flights, only checked baggage is at risk—they say—but on international flights, "carry-on baggage may be at risk as well." When asked, an InVision official acknowledged that the "rate of scanned films that are damaged is 100%." Apparently David Attenborough and crew found out this was too true. He and a BBC film crew spent five weeks in New Guinea filming on location, passed through the Manchester airport, and lost everything!

The photo folks say we have three options: insist on having your film hand-inspected, buy your film when you get there, and/or ship film to yourself at your work site (and at home afterwards) in several batches by way of a shipper such as FedEx who will guarantee no x-raying. And if you thought that using one of those lead bags would help, get this: these new x-ray machines are programmed to respond to anything mysterious by re-scanning just that area with a high-power narrow-beam CAT scan which will penetrate anything—so the lead bag *guarantees* your film is ruined. The FAA will not give out the list of the airports with these new x-rayers for security reasons, but information can be gleaned from the company's web site (www.invision-tech.com).

Crossing Frontiers: 1998 International Rock Art Congress Vila Real, Portugal September 6-12, 1998

There is a major update on the WWW site for *Crossing Frontiers*, the 1998 International Rock Art Congress. Point your web browser to <http://www.utad.pt/IRAC>

to see what is happening: 20 Symposia (calls, aims, 120 papers, 147 authors, 90 summaries); Accommodations (choices, prices, and on-line reservations); and Tours Before and After the Congress (dates, itineraries, prices).

Viva! All these details are online now (<http://www.utad.pt/IRAC>). We look forward to seeing you in Portugal.

Mila Simões de Abreu
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Editor's Note: In addition, we have received specific information on the following 1998 IRAC Symposia. Readers who may be interested in submitting papers to these Symposia or to any others listed on the superb *Crossing Frontiers* web site should act quickly since the July 31 final deadline is fast approaching.

Recording and Preventative Conservation

The heart and soul of rock art research is recording. Recording is what generates the data we study. It is imperative that we have a continuing concern on this topic so we can better interpret and conserve our resource. Send abstracts of your contributions to the Recording and Preventative Conservation Symposium for IRAC 1998 in Vila Real, Portugal, to:

B. K. Swartz, Jr.
<01bkswartz@bsuvc.bsu.edu>
or
Jane Kolber <jkolber@theriver.com>
(see page 2 for Jane's mailing address)

Computers and Rock Art

The referring page for the Computer and Rock Art session of IRAC '98 is now

<http://www.10mb.com/rupestre/cyber.html>

You will find the rationales, the online form, and the abstracts available. In which ways can computers, computer devices, and broadcasting technology be useful and powerful for rock art research? *Computers and Rock Art* will be like an open screen, with different "windows" (if you will excuse the pun) leading to various "folders." Any related subject or "file," no matter the format, is welcome for discussion.

Abstracts can be submitted on paper or electronically via the following addresses.

Andrea Arcá – Footsteps of Man
Piazzale Donatori di Sangue, 1
25040 CERVENO (Bs) - ITALY
Fax: 0039.364.434351

Online: <http://www.10mb.com/rupestre/onl.html>
e-mail: araca@inrete.it

The following two symposia are being coordinated by Robert Bednarik of AURA:

Science and Rock Art

The use of science as a way of exploring rock art involves systematic pursuits based on reproducible observations, measurements, and experiments, whose results can be presented as falsifiable or refutable propositions. This includes a wide range of possibilities, most of which have attracted little sustained research work. Examples range from studies of paint residues through computerized image manipulation.

Rock Art of Asia and Australia

This symposium is proposed to consider the rock arts of the largest and smallest continents together, as a single region. Papers are invited about rock art in the two continents, as well as from New Zealand and other islands in the general region. Any topic related to prehistoric or rock art is welcome, and new finds and developments are of particular interest.

To submit an abstract or request further information on these two sessions, contact:

Robert G. Bednarik
AURA
P.O. Box 216, Caulfield South
Vic. 3162, Australia
Fax: 61-3-95230549
e-mail: aurawww@slu.unimelb.edu.au

Book Review

New Book Highlights

Lesser-Known Rock Art

Reviewed by David S. Whitley

L'Art des Cavernes en Pays Basque: Les Grottes D'Ekain et D'Altzerri by Jesus Altuna. Paris: Edition du Seuil. Hardcover, 200 pages, references, 211 color photos, maps, charts and line drawings. Quality paper. Price: 295 French francs.

The western world has been transfixed by the recent discoveries of two important French Paleolithic painted caves: Cosquer, whose entrance is submerged under the Mediterranean Sea; and Chauvet, whose dramatic polychromes warranted *Time Magazine* cover treatment. News such as this is good for the rock art world because it reminds the general public about the importance of the subject that we hold dear. But it also has its peril because, inadvertently, it can communicate the message that all rock art sites are as dramatic as these two, or that only sites of such grandeur are worthy of note. As we all know, such is simply not true.

Within this context of recent discoveries, Edition du Seuil has published a full-color book on two lesser-known Paleolithic sites in the Basque country of northern Spain, Ekain and Altzerri. Written by Dr. Jesus Altuna, professor of archaeology and specialist in archaeozoology at Basque University, it combines careful documentation and analysis of the rock art with a beautifully crafted book. The result is a work of science and (publishing) art that should be emulated by rock art authors and publishers worldwide.

The Basque country (also known, in Spain, as Cantabria), contains 60 upper Paleolithic rock art sites (as of a 1986 tabulation). The best known of these is Altamira, whose 1879 discovery played a significant role in the eventual recognition of the Paleolithic age of the French and Spanish caves. Beyond Altamira, other well-known Basque sites include Tito Bustillo and the complex of four caves at El Castillo, leaving 54 sites that, beyond the world of the Paleolithic expert, are all but unknown. Altuna's book, in dramatic fashion, reveals what the rest of us have been missing by our ignorance of this rich record of rock art.

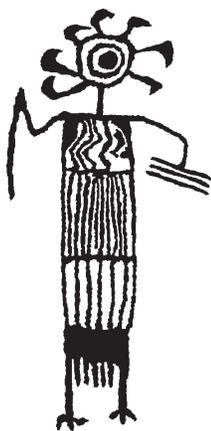
Ekain and Altzerri both date between 12,000 and 13,000 B.C., or the Upper Magdalenian, making them roughly 2,000 years younger than Altamira, and 17,000 years younger than Chauvet. Both sites are of similar

size, containing slightly more than 60 motifs (depending upon how you tabulate hachures and geometric "signs"). Both also contain similar though not identical motif assemblages. Horses predominate and bison are common in Ekain, along with lesser numbers of reindeer and ibex, and occasional fish, bear and rhino, in addition to geometric patterns. At Altzerri, bison are most common and horses are relatively rare, but ibex, reindeer and other animal species and "signs" are also represented. And, while both sites contain pictographs and fine-line petroglyphs, monochrome paintings predominate at Ekain while engravings are more common at Altzerri.

Altuna, as a zooarchaeologist, takes particular note of the animal species represented in the rock art. Excavations at the mouth of Ekain yielded a rich faunal assemblage allowing for the reconstruction of the subsistence practices during the period in which the paintings were made. A comparison of the excavated faunal remains to the motif assemblage yields a straightforward pattern: what was drawn in the caves and what was hunted and eaten outside were very different things. Horses comprise 58% of the rock art, for example, and less than 1% of the excavated bone, while the next most common species in the art, bison, represents 19% of the motifs, and still only about 1% of the bone. Given that there has been a recent (American) effort to revive the Paleolithic hunting-magic hypothesis, Altuna's empirical evidence does much to discredit the plausibility of such "art=food" arguments.

This last circumstance points to the fact that the interpretation of Paleolithic rock art is currently undergoing renewed debate, after languishing for a couple of decades during which interpretation was abjured and avoided (as if no interpretation were somehow better than a well-reasoned, even if unproven, interpretive hypothesis). This debate shows no sign of abating and, one way or the other, it promises to influence rock art research worldwide. One result is that well-crafted studies such as Altuna's *L'Art des Cavernes en Pays Basque* will provide substantial empirical data upon which this debate will develop. This book is very highly recommended, partly due to this last fact, partly because it is a beautiful and enjoyable volume, and partly because—even though published in French—it is so well illustrated and designed that it will easily communicate its message to all readers, regardless of their proficiency in French.





The **American Rock Art Research Association** is a non-profit organization dedicated to encourage and to advance research in the field of rock art. Association members work for the protection and preservation of rock art sites through cooperative action with private land owners and appropriate state and federal agencies.

The **Association** strives to promote non-destructive utilization of rock art for scientific, educational, and artistic purposes. This is accomplished through a wide-ranging program to inform and educate the members as

well as the general public regarding the rock art heritage of the United States as well as worldwide. These goals are communicated through the quarterly newsletter, *La Pintura*. Annual three-day conferences give both members and others interested in rock art the opportunity to share professional papers, slide presentations, and informal discussions.

Membership in the **American Rock Art Research Association** is open to all who profess an active interest in research, non-destructive utilization, and preservation of rock art, regardless of their nationality or country of residence. Membership fees are as follows:

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Sustaining	\$40.00
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Membership runs from July 1 through June 30 of each year. Although the Association is concerned primarily with American rock art, membership has become international in scope. The benefits of membership include yearly subscriptions to *La Pintura*, reduced conference fees, and information on current publications in the field of rock art.

But more importantly, membership means a shared concern for the ongoing conservation and preservation of one of the most significant elements of our heritage. Memberships may be sent to:

ARARA Membership
 Arizona State Museum
 University of Arizona
 Tucson, AZ 85721-0026

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The **American Rock Art Research Association** subscribes to the following Code of Ethics and enjoins its members, as a condition of membership, to abide by the standards of conduct stated herein.

1. All local, state, and national antiquities laws will be strictly adhered to by the membership of **ARARA**. Rock art research shall be subject to appropriate regulations and property access requirements.
2. All rock art recording shall be non-destructive with regard to the rock art itself and the associated archaeological remains which may be present. No artifacts shall be collected unless the work is done as part of a legally constituted program of archaeological survey or excavation.
3. No excavation shall be conducted unless the work is done as part of a legally constituted excavation project. Removal of soil shall not be undertaken for the sole purpose of exposing sub-surface rock art.
4. Potentially destructive recording and research procedures shall be undertaken only after careful consideration of any potential damage to the rock art site.
5. Using the name of the **American Rock Art Research Association**, the initials of **ARARA**, and/or the logos adopted by the **Association** and the identification of an individual as a member of **ARARA** are allowed only in conjunction with rock art projects undertaken in full accordance with accepted professional archeological standards. The name **ARARA** may not be used for commercial purposes. While members may use their affiliation with **ARARA** for identification purposes, research projects may not be represented as having the sponsorship of **ARARA** without express approval of the Executive Committee.

The **ARARA** Code of Ethics, points 1 through 5, was adopted at the annual business meeting on May 24, 1987. The Code of Ethics was amended with the addition of the opening paragraph at the annual business meeting, May 28, 1988.

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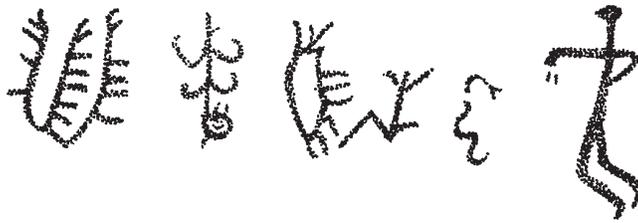
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La Pintura is the Official Newsletter of the American Rock Art Research Association
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