

Rock Art in Isolation: The Black Mountains and Red Hills of Hudspeth County

Solveig A. Turpin

Twenty-six newly recorded rock art panels, five in the Black Mountains and 21 in the Red Hills of Hudspeth County, display affinities with Jornada Mogollon and Desert Archaic petroglyphs and pictographs. The identification of Candelaria-style pictographs 80 kms north of the Rio Grande extends the range of this style well beyond its assumed point of origin in Chihuahua, Mexico. The eastern periphery of the Jornada style is also expanded, albeit only slightly. The jagged spires, lofty palisaded walls, and tumbled boulders of these volcanic intrusions afford innumerable niches, crevices, and overhangs suitable for the protection of painted art. The desolate landscape and scarcity of potable water suggest that much of the art was ritually produced, probably as part of the well-documented vision quest or search for spiritual identity that was an inherent part of Native American religion.

Introduction

The Black Mountains and the Red Hills are volcanic intrusions (Bureau of Economic Geology 1995) that rise abruptly west of the Salt Flats in Hudspeth County, between the Guadalupe Mountains to the northeast, the Sierra Diablo to the east, the Eagle Mountains to the south, and the Huecos to the west (Figure 1). Isolated by vast expanses of arid rangeland, these two prominent, highly visible landmarks would serve admirably as way stations for nomadic people moving between the larger mountain ranges. Both also provide the ambience essential for the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment—commonly called the vision quest—that was an integral part of indigenous religion: isolation, elevation, and dramatic contact between earth and sky.

Ten rock art sites containing 26 separate pictograph or petroglyph panels were recorded during a recent reconnaissance of these two geological isolates. At least two previously defined rock art styles—the Candelaria pictographs of northern Chihuahua and the Jornada paintings of the Mogollon region—are clearly identifiable. Some, if not all, of the pictographs display many characteristics of ritual art produced as part of a quest for spiritual identity (Schaafsma 1997; Whitley et al. 1999). On a more

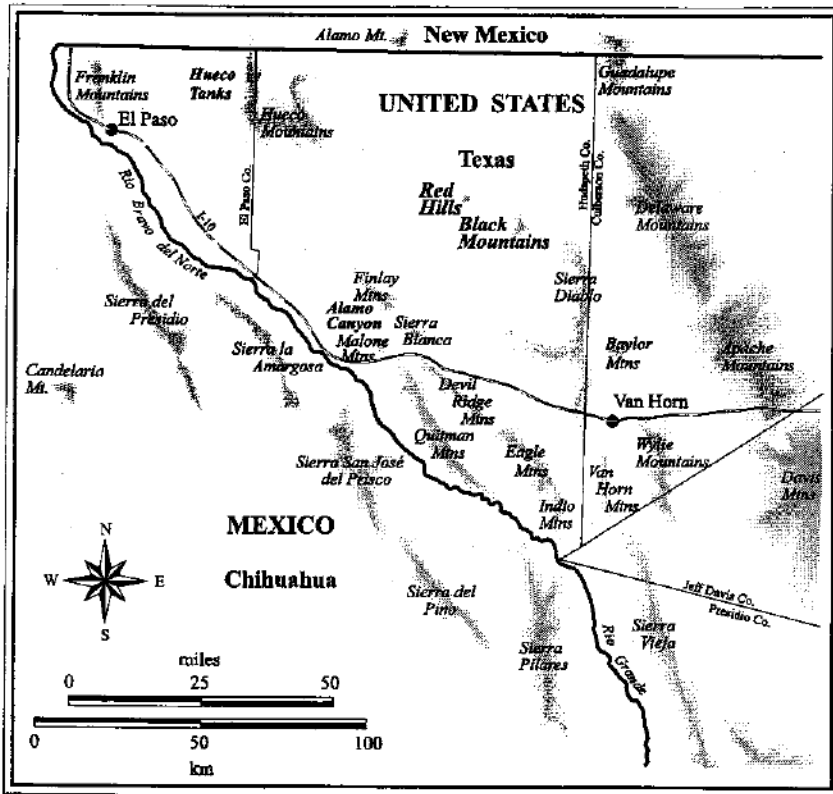


Figure 1. Map of study area.

practical level, they extend the range of the Jornada and Desert Archaic rock art styles typical of the El Paso area and parts south and west while demonstrating the use of these isolated oases in a desolate landscape.

Description of Previously Defined Rock Art Styles

Desert Archaic is a broad term that subsumes local pictograph and petroglyph styles that have been variously called Candelaria, Diablo Dam, and Shumla. Their iconographic similarities and shared themes suggest they “may be varied expressions of a single art tradition or complex” (Schaafsma 1980:56). These art styles are best known for their group hunting scenes, replete with mountain goats, antelope, or deer being pursued by broad-shouldered men wielding lances. Their projectiles are ovals that usually

designate darts or spears so presumably their primary weapon was the atlatl or spear thrower, a trait considered diagnostic of the Archaic period. Projectile points are a focal point of their composition and are often appended to the human figures, replacing their heads, hands, or feet. This emphasis led Sutherland and Steed (1974) to designate the petroglyphs at Fort Hancock the Shumla style after the barbed projectile points of the same name, assuming a Late Archaic or Middle Archaic age (Bilbo and Sutherland 1986) based on dates assigned to the dart point type. Additional radiocarbon dates from northern Mexico and the Lower Pecos region now indicate that Shumla dart points may have been in use from about 3,000 to 2,000 radiocarbon years ago, thus confirming their placement in the Archaic period (see Turpin 1991:32–33).

Very similar but smaller and more vivacious paintings in northern Chihuahua were described by Green (1966) and Davis (1977, 1980) who attributed them to a style he named Candelaria after one of the mountain ranges where they were found. Davis (1980:47) estimated that over a five-year period he had located some 3,000 figures in five sites. Their concentration in a small area in northern Chihuahua led him to propose that the style served as a group identifier. Defining characteristics of this style include: “wildly animated life forms” (Davis 1980:43), primarily humans, sheep, and deer; disproportionately long spears that could be associated with males or protruding from animals and men; series of figures engaged in group activities; placement of figures and scenes in inaccessible niches and depressions; and a preference for red pigment. At the time of his definition, Davis (1980:48) estimated that the paintings were made between the inception of the Christian era and A.D. 1500 while Schaafsma (1997:19) suggested an older time span between 2,000 and 4,000 years ago.

Schaafsma (1980:56, 1997), who originally called the Fort Hancock petroglyphs the Diablo Dam style, thought that the Candelaria paintings were part of the same tradition. It is clearly much easier to convey a sense of animation and vivacity in pictographs than petroglyphs where the medium is less malleable. Thus, the confusing style names may in reality describe one ideographic system, expressed in both petroglyphic and pictographic form (Schaafsma 1980:56). Mendiola (1998) commented that the Candelaria pictographs in Chihuahua were distinguished

by delicacy of line and firmness of stroke but they lacked an archaeological context. If in fact the pictographs and petroglyphs are related, some part of that context may be derived from studies such as the current reconnaissance.

Schaafsma (1975) divides the Desert Mogollon Jornada rock art style into two phases: western and eastern. Jornada rock art is concentrated in southern New Mexico but the eastern phase extends into West Texas, including the famous pictographs at Hueco Tanks State Park and some of the sites described here. Masks, horned rectilinear outlined anthropomorphs with large staring "goggle" eyes, complex animal figures, stepped frets, and circles surrounded by dots are listed as major characteristics of the Eastern Jornada phase. The iconographic repertoire was expanded to include outlined profiled costumed dancers and horned serpents, as well as a number of geometric motifs, such as rain or cloud altars. The Jornada style is assigned to the time period from A.D. 1000 to 1450 (Bostwick 2001:424); the pottery styles noted on the survey suggest that the Black Mountain/Red Hills sites fall at the recent end of that spectrum, ca. A.D. 1250–1450.

A number of abstract geometric pictographs defy any attempt to place them in a well-defined style. They are unlike the formalized rectilinear designs that Schaafsma (1975:94) calls Desert Abstracts but they do belong to the enigmatic tradition that bears many names but is in essence ubiquitous among the desert Archaic cultures of the American Southwest and northern Mexico. The common denominators include the usual ladders, circles, squares, zigzags, and lines whose meanings are open to speculation and whose often isolated and obscure context implies some sort of private ritual or record.

The Black Mountains

The Black Mountains are much larger than the Red Hills and provide a more diverse resource base, in part because of a spring that once flowed from the head of a short canyon on the south side (Brune 1981). Although the spring is now reduced to a seep that flows only during wet weather, the density of occupational debris in the canyon and on the flats fronting it testify to its former appeal to the prehistoric people who camped in the lee of the mountain. In fact, our limited reconnaissance identified numerous campsites in the southwestern sector of the mountains, including extensive

concentrations of burned rock (commonly called middens)—of both sedimentary and igneous rocks—several pottery types, and projectile points ranging in age from the time of Christ to just prior to Spanish contact. However, the sense is one of short-term, logistically focused forays targeted toward specific resources or embedded in seasonal rounds that emanated from the larger mountain ranges visible in all directions.

The Black Mountains are a mixture of rock types dominated by igneous formations that has eroded to create vertical columnar palisades atop rocky slopes that are littered with enormous boulders. The latter often abut or come to rest at angles that leave small niches and overhangs that are sometimes large enough to offer limited protection from the elements. The rock art is painted in these crevices, nooks, and crannies, difficult to see and even more difficult to photograph or copy.

Two pictograph sites, one with four panels, were recorded in the southwestern quadrant of the mountains, within a few hundred meters of the erstwhile spring. One is clearly akin to the Jornada Mogollon pictographs and petroglyphs so abundant to the south and west (Sutherland 1996:Map 1); the other is more closely aligned to the generalized Desert Archaic tradition.

Cerro Negro, 41HZ584

Cerro Negro is a cleft in the *pared* or perpendicular high wall, facing south over the plain on the southern perimeter of the mountain. The largest pictograph is painted on the exterior face of the bluff where time and exposure have taken their toll (Figure 2). The figure is locally known as the Tall Man but the remnant paint is too faint for accurate copying. However, inside the niche that penetrates the rock face immediately east of this elongated figure, other red paintings are still clearly discernible. Three motifs stand out from the generic geometric designs in their clear affinity to specific figures at Hueco Tanks, Fort Hancock or Alamo Canyon, Alamo Mountain, Three Rivers, and other Jornada Mogollon rock art sites.

The first of these is a solid reddish orange triangular body with square head and round vacant eyes, commonly called goggled-eyed (Crotty 1990:149) or Tlaloc (Schaafsma 1980; Sutherland 1998) (Figure 2a). Sutherland (1996) in particular makes a case for a direct connection with Tlaloc, the Mesoamerican rain and

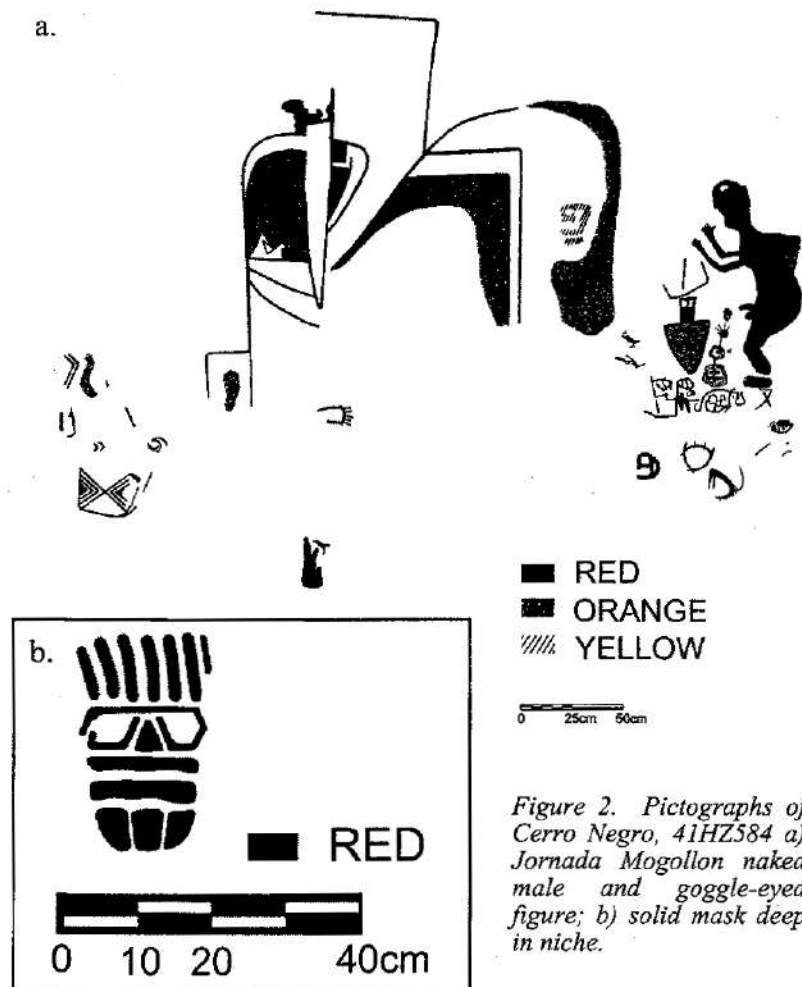


Figure 2. Pictographs of Cerro Negro, 41HZ584 a) Jornada Mogollon naked male and goggle-eyed figure; b) solid mask deep in niche.

fertility deity whose image is dominated by large circular eyes. Crotty (1990:149) argues that their restricted distribution and iconographic dissimilarities from either kachina or Mesoamerican rain deities render the comparison inappropriate. The relevant point here is that this particular Cerro Negro pictograph is a very simple rendition of a typical Jornada Mogollon figure, thus providing it a cultural affiliation and a rough temporal range.

Immediately adjacent to the goggled-eyed figure, a phallic, possibly hump-backed man appears to be communing with a crack in the rock that runs diagonally in front of his hands and penis (see Figure 2a). Superficially, he is reminiscent of Kokopelli in that his hands are placed as though holding a flute but his triangular hump is lighter red than the rest of the figure and may have been an afterthought or later modification. Thus, the resemblance to Kokopelli, the well-known hump-backed fertility figure, may go beyond the artist's original intent. Two similar figures—one with bird-like facial features and another wearing a mask—were painted in outline in two separate alcoves at Hueco Tanks (Kirkland and Newcomb 1967:Plates 136, 144). Newcomb identified them as kachina dancers, in part because other outlined figures are clearly wearing elaborate costumes, but the Cerro Negro figure is obviously naked. Although executed in a different medium, the Cerro Negro painting is identical to a much smaller petroglyph at Alamo Canyon where an ithyphallic man assumes the same position immediately adjacent to a similar crack in the rock (Texas Historical Commission, National Register files). That this character appears in two media suggests that he was a specific figure or icon known to his viewers through oral tradition.

The third Eastern Jornada motif (Schaafsma 1975:Figure 86) is a mask, constructed of solid blocks of red pigment and hidden in the farthest recess of the niche (Figure 2b). These so-called solid masks abound at Hueco Tanks where Kirkland (Kirkland and Newcomb 1967:197) thought they were far more competently painted than the outline masks. He described the paint as thin liquid that soaked into the rock like dye, each block distinct, and the design composed with considerable artistic ability. So it is with the mask at Cerro Negro.

Sutherland (1996:56) describes solid masks as "those comprising facial design arrangements of solid rectangles, triangles, stair steps, and many other geometric shapes." She considers them more sacred than the outline masks, in part because of the tendency to place them in secluded locations, certainly a criterion that applies to the Cerro Negro mask. The blank or negative space used to indicate eyes was then analogous to the staring orbs of the Tlaloc or goggled-eyed figures. Parker (cited in Sutherland 1996:56) suggested that the solid masks were metaphors for the three-tiered universe of sky, earth, and underworld, thus reflecting

Mesoamerican and shamanistic cosmology. In his model, the ocular plane represented the sky and spirit world, the olfactory plane the earthly world, and the oral plane that of the underworld. Certainly, the placement of the Cerro Negro mask in the innermost heart of the rock implies sacred or esoteric meaning, perhaps marking the portal that gave access to the spirit world. The widespread notion that spirits abide in or behind the bedrock is evidenced in rock art around the world (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1990; Turpin 1992) and further supported locally by another pictograph, at Cueva Tecolote in the Red Hills, where a small figure is shown emerging from a fault line (see 41HZ602, below).

Some estimate of the age of these specific figures is provided by a suite of experimental radiocarbon dates from Hueco Tanks. Samples taken from two goggle-eyed figures range from a calibrated age of A.D. 660 to 1020 while other related motifs date as late as A.D. 1210 to 1390 (Hyman et al. 1999). Thus, the Cerro Negro pictograph could have been painted at any time during this 700-year period.

Los Nichos, 41HZ589

Los Nichos consists of four separate alcoves, niches, or crevices with paintings, all within a 40-meter stretch of the west-facing wall above the mouth of the only spring-fed canyon in the Black Mountains. Cerro Negro is just around the corner, facing out over the plain, while Los Nichos fronts on the interior of the canyon. The paintings are all hidden in nooks and crannies created by boulders tumbling down the slope and coming to rest at odd angles. The panels were lettered A through D in the order found, with D upstream of A through C.

Panel A is very faint but the few remnants appear to be parts of a human figure with one arm bent upward and the other downward (Figure 3). The torso is twisted, reminiscent of the Storyteller figures in Alamo Canyon (Apostolides 1984), thus reflecting the influence of Jornada iconography. However, this interpretation is certainly open to question given the deteriorated condition of the pictograph.

The horned and antlered animals in Panel B are square-bodied deer and mountain goats characteristically seen in the Desert Archaic styles (Figure 4a). Their human companion appears to have

only one arm but the other overlaps the neighboring deer. A small open triangle (Figure 4b) separates this scene from a natural hollow in the bedrock that contains a geometric pattern of intersecting straight lines (Figure 4c). The latter is a recurring format, later seen at 41HZ602 and 41HZ618 in the Red Hills. Beneath and slightly left of this abstract design, a phallic man and a smaller counterpart appear to have impaled one of

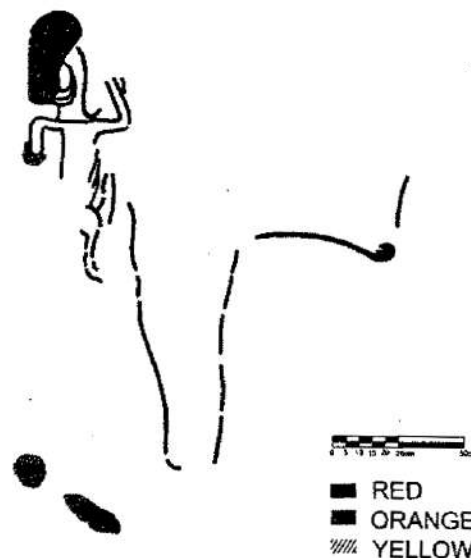


Figure 3. Los Nichos, 41HZ589, Panel A. Possible story-teller figure.

bird-like figure and two more animals of strange design. Given its Archaic theme and style, this set of paintings probably predates the nearby Jornada pictographs. The square-bodied animals more precisely align Panel B with the petroglyphs at Fort Hancock that originally resulted in the definition of the Diablo Dam (Shaafsma 1975) or Shumla styles (Sutherland and Steed 1974) although the characteristic projectile points are missing. The vivacity and group cohesiveness so evident in the Candelaria style are also lacking.

Panel C is an almost indistinguishable panel marked by two red ovoids filled with red dots (Figure 5). Although there is no ready identification of these designs, they follow structural rules generally applied to the production of petroglyphs, such as those at Fort Hancock (Alamo Canyon) and in the Red Hills at Evans Dints. The remainder of the panel is undecipherable.

Panel D is a confusing mass of abstract designs including serpentine lines, Xs, intersecting lines, chains, circles, line-and-circle motifs, and other geometric patterns with no

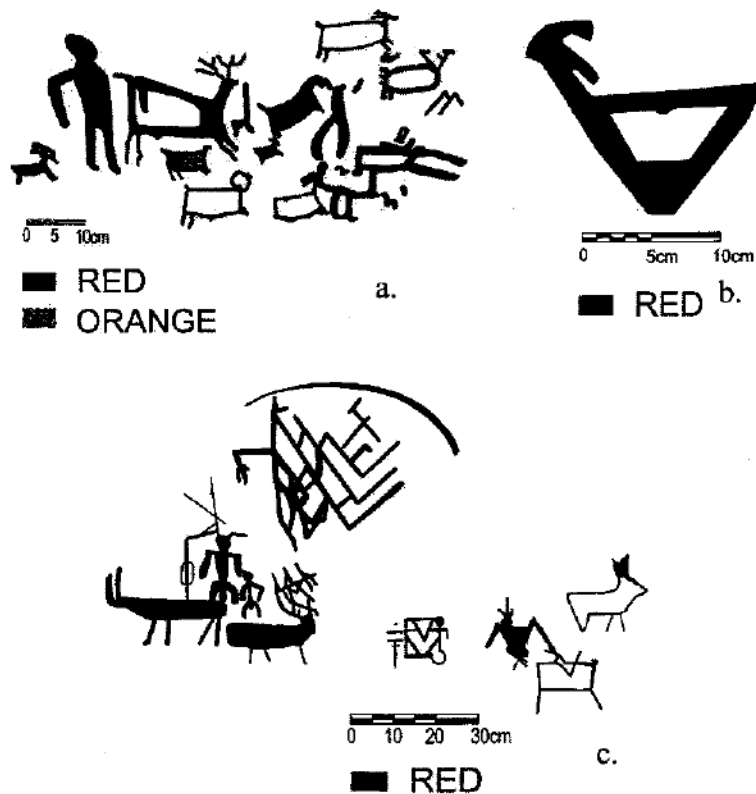


Figure 4. Los Nichos, Panel B. a) Deer, goats, and a human figure, probably of Archaic origin; b) enigmatic triangular motif; c) geometric design contained within a natural hollow.

discernible structure or meaning. Although geometric motifs are common in both Jornada Mogollon and Desert Archaic art, none of the ones featured here provide any discriminating attributes.

Los Nichos overlooks extensive occupational debris that litters the canyon and spreads out onto the southward plain. Dart points, arrow points, and pot sherds indicative of a Late Archaic to proto-historic exploitation of the valley are of little help in narrowing the potential age range of the pictographs but the iconography shows influences derived from Jornada Mogollon (Panel A) and Desert Archaic (Panel B) sources.



Figure 5. Los Nichos, Panel C. Ovals with dots.

The Red Hills

The Red Hills (Bureau of Economic Geology 1995) are shown on the USGS quadrangle map as the Antelope Hills, not to be confused with the Antelope Hills in Shackelford County in the Texas Panhandle. A fantastic jumble of spires and boulders, the hills are now waterless except when rainwater collects in the *huecos* or hollows atop the rocks. Copious amounts of domestic debris scattered on the ridge tops, surrounding isolated boulders, and concentrated in front of the small shelters indicate that indigent people exploited the temporary supplies of casual water and the natural shelter afforded by the tumbled rocks. However, life in the Red Hills must have been totally dependent on intermittent seeps, sporadic rainfall, and the liquid trapped in desert succulents.

One petroglyph and 20 pictograph panels were recorded in eight sites in the Red Hills. The petroglyph and four of the major pictographs cluster in the center of the largest encircling ridge. The fifth complex pictograph site occupies a rock outlier that rises abruptly from the plain almost a kilometer south of the main body

of hills. The rest are under boulders which came to rest at angles that afford slight protection from the elements.

The paintings range from a single element to elaborate compositions that combine figures and abstract motifs. Jornada Mogollon influences are evident at Cueva Tecolote, one of the more complex panels, but not to the degree seen at Cerro Negro in the Black Mountains. The second large site, Los Vientos, clearly belongs in the Desert Archaic tradition, represented by Panel B at Los Nichos. More precisely, the Los Vientos pictographs are excellent examples of the Candelaria style of northern Chihuahua, thus expanding its range northward by some 80 kms.

Many of the isolated elements or motifs are in crawl spaces under large boulders and consist of single, parallel, or arched red lines, and blotches. Part of the difficulty in analyzing many of these paintings is their deteriorated condition and their inaccessible locations. More complex geometric designs dominate 41HZ605, 41HZ607, five of the seven areas of 41HZ618, 41HZ629, 41HZ626 where an unusual concentric circle is perfectly drawn (Figure 6a), and one panel at 41HZ609. One pictograph in 41HZ618, Panel 29 (Figure 6b) consists of nested zigzag lines contained within a box outline, the so-called rain symbol of Mesoamerican origin. Schaafsma (1975) calls many of the geometric designs of eastern New Mexico Desert Abstractions but the Red Hills motifs are not totally consistent with the iconography she illustrates.

Cueva Tecolote, 41HZ602

Isolated geometric motifs painted under boulders, one below and one beside a long narrow overhang, as well as the only petroglyph recorded during the survey, were included under this site number since all are joined by scattered burned rock and lithic debitage. The minor pictographs and the petroglyphs, however, seem peripheral to the central overhang which shelters the largest and most complex painting in the Red Hills.

The Pictographs

The main pictograph panel is an amazing conglomeration of apparently unconnected motifs scattered above and below a long red line that appears to emanate from a striped human figure (Figure 7). Among the geometric designs are small linear stepped

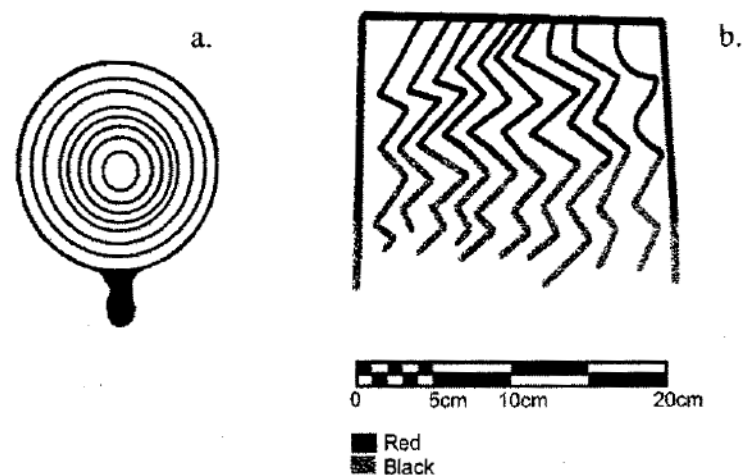


Figure 6. Geometric designs a) perfect concentric circles at El Tunel, 41HZ626; b) boxed zigzag at Siete Pinturas, 41HZ618.

frets (Figure 7a) and a larger boxed chevron, both typical of Jornada iconography (see also Figure 2, far left). The stepped fret is incorporated into both Mesoamerican and Puebloan iconography where it has various meanings, linked to supernatural power, sacred mountains, clouds, and rain. Often, the stepped fret, staircase, or rain altar motif is but one element in a larger, more complex composition, for example, as interior decoration of the bodies of goggle-eyed figures at sites such as Hueco Tanks (Kirkland and Newcomb 1967:Plates 141, 142, see also Plate 149; Davis and Toness 1974), Alamo Mountain (Steed 1979:64), and Three Rivers (Crotty 1990:Figure 12.1). The boxed chevron appears in petroglyphic form at Alamo Mountain as the body of a goggled-eyed or Tlaloc figure (Steed 1979:36) as well as at Hueco Tanks (Davis and Toness 1974:10) and Three Rivers (Coward 2001:9). At far right is another recurring motif. A natural hollow in the rock has again been filled with a linear design, much in the manner seen in Panel B at Los Nichos (41HZ589) in the Black Mountains and at nearby 41HZ618, Panel 26D.

Almost lost in the visual overload is a small figure with elaborate ear spools or a fantastic hairdo (Figure 7b) who appears to be



Figure 7. Cueva Tecolote, 41HZ602, complex designs above and below a long dividing line include boxed chevrons. a) Stepped frets, characteristic Jornada Mogollon designs; and b) a small human with elaborate ear whorls is emerging from a crack in the wall, the entrance to the spirit world (see next page for enlargements of [a] and [b]).

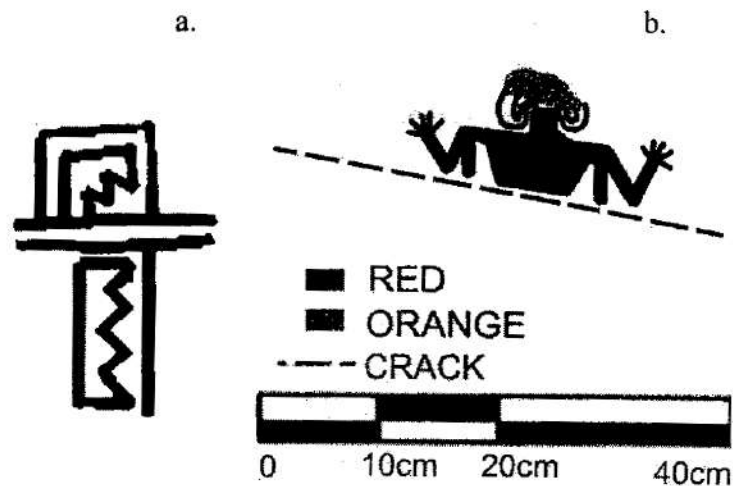


Figure 7. Enlargements of Cueva Tecolote designs.

emerging from a fault line that runs parallel to the floor of the cave (see also Kirkland and Newcomb 1967:Plate 147, 26-A). The same ornate headgear is seen on male figures with drooping earlobes at Fort Hancock. Here, only his torso is visible above the fault, a common convention used to illustrate that he is between two worlds—the natural and supernatural. The emergence theme reflects a widespread belief that the spirit world is contained within or veiled behind the surface of the rock (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1990; Sutherland 1996; Turpin 1992; Whitley et al. 1999).

The Petroglyphs, Evans Dints

The only petroglyph recorded during this reconnaissance is in one of the most concentrated pictograph areas, so close to Cueva Tecolote that it was included under the same site number (41HZ602). The motif is extremely simple, consisting largely of a series of dints on the side of a boulder (Figure 8). Below the peck marks, an unidentified object has been outlined by smoothing the gaps between dints. The scarcity of petroglyphs is probably due to rapid exfoliation, which is exacerbated by the extreme temperatures and high winds characteristic of this desolate region.

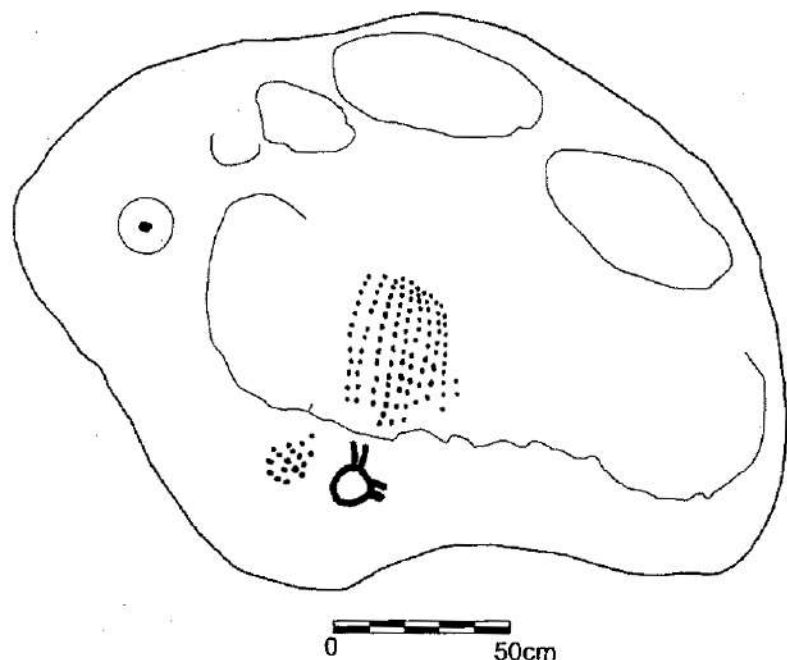


Figure 8. Petroglyph at 41HZ602, Evans Dints, scattered dots with connected series.

El Corredor, 41HZ603

The crest of the ridge above Cueva Tecolote is littered with burned rock, flint, and flint tools. Several of the large boulders are pocked with hollows, or *huecos*, that would have held casual water; beside many of those depressions are grinding slicks or mortar holes. One round mortar hole is completely contained within a small shelter created by a boulder standing on end, thus protecting it from the elements. Two man-made rock walls served different purposes. The one atop the ridge was probably a wind-break used to close an opening between two boulders; one lower on the slopes of the interior basin seals a crevice that would have served admirably as a burial vault.

Two small overhangs protect remnant red pictographs. One contains only blurred linear motifs and the other an amorphous

blob. Very faint red paintings were found on one side of a narrow gap between two prominent boulders directly above Cueva Tecolote. The pictographs are very dim so Figure 9 should be seen as a reconstruction of the original paintings. One appears to be stacked triangles like the Tlaloc or goggled-eyed figure at Cerro Negro but lacking the round staring eyes, much like several petroglyphs in Alamo Canyon (Texas Historical Commission, National Register files). Next to it is a gourd-like object with stripes and a stem. Miscellaneous solid red geometric motifs complete the panel.

The placement of these paintings is unusual in that they are not sheltered from above. Their only protection is the adjacent rock face; the gap between the boulders is less than a meter wide. This exposure can account for their faded condition and the difficulty in determining if any of the motifs are interpretable.

Cueva Lorenzo, 41HZ605

A sparse talus of burned rock and flint flakes emanates from a triangular cleft on the north face of the bowl-like formation on the north end of the hills. At the entry, the niche is about 2 m high and

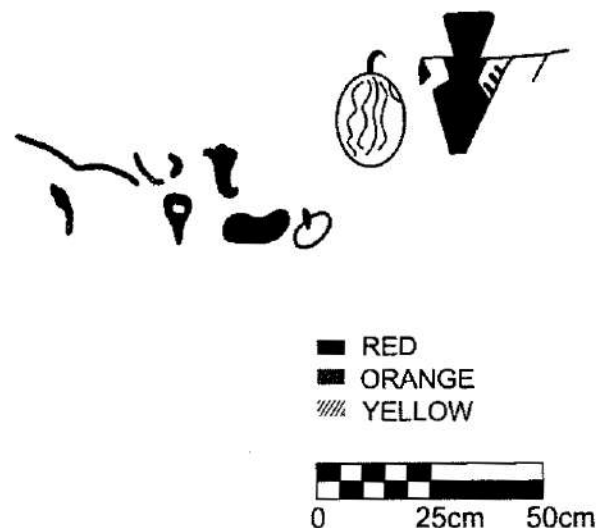


Figure 9. El Corredor, 41HZ603. Faint designs on an exposed boulder include stacked solid triangles that are related to Jornada Mogollon iconography.

4 m wide but the walls converge sharply to a point 10 m inside the rock. Bright yellow geometric designs overwhelm the paler reds but all of the motifs are abstract (Figure 10). Entoptic phenomena or form constants noted by rock art researchers around the world, and represented in this one small site, include combs, ladders, rakes, dots, and segmented lines. The most interior paintings are red dots and lines on the under-surface of a low ledge. They can only be seen by lying down and sliding back into the rear of the crevice. Whatever esoteric knowledge is contained in these enigmatic designs is further protected by their inaccessibility. The use of so much bold yellow paint is unusual but limonite outcrops of a similar hue were noted on the north side of the Black Mountains and on the west side of the Red Hills so the raw material was readily available. The view from the cleft entrance encompasses the interior bowl of the formation and extends north towards the Guadalupe Mountains. The designs are clearly non-representational and conform to the description of phosphenes or form constants experienced during altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988). Such an explanation finds coherence in the desolate grandeur of the jagged hills.

Piedra Berrenda, 41HZ607

A large freestanding boulder rests beside the main road leading into the interior of the hills. Its angle of repose creates a shallow shelter, 1.1 m wide and 70 cm deep (Figure 11), whose occupation is evidenced by burned rock and stone artifacts surrounding the entrance. The rear wall of the shelter is covered



Figure 10. Cueva Lorenzo, 41HZ605. Bright yellow linear elements dominate this small site. None of the geometric designs bear upon the problem of age or cultural relationship.



Figure 11. The shallow cave formed under Piedra Berrenda.

with red, orange, and yellow pictographs that are badly overlain by gray mineral accretions which obscure many of the details (Figure 12). The uppermost glyphs are the dim remains of boxed chevrons, their outlines squarer than the rectangular examples found in the Black Mountains but still suggestive of a Jornada affiliation. The lower wall contains a concentric circle, two sets of nested zigzags—one angular and one sinuous—and a series of vertical curvilinear motifs of linked circles and arcs. The meticulous spacing of the nested zigzags is mirrored at Hueco Tanks where they are considered in the context of a rain and lightning complex (Kirkland and Newcomb 1967:Plate 148; Davis and Tones 1974; see also Figure 6b).

The pictographs at Piedra Berrenda are non-representational but definitively composed. They do not have the nervous energy and random orientation often conveyed by abstract paintings associated with altered states of consciousness but the motifs still conform to the catalog of form constants or entoptic phenomena experienced by entranced subjects. Thus, the panel is consistent with its setting in a strange and alien landform that begs for concurrence with the supernatural universe.

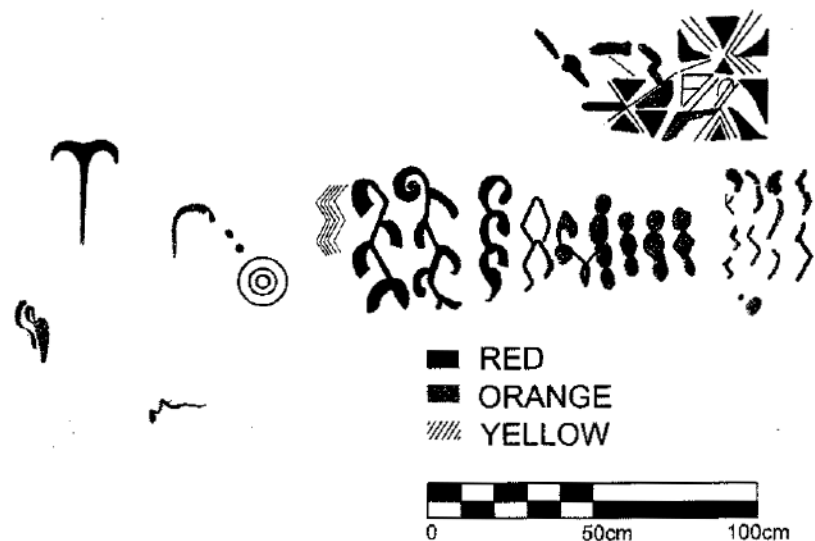


Figure 12. *Piedra Berrenda, 41HZ607*. In the lee of an isolated boulder, a complex series of well-organized motifs includes the nested chevrons seen at Cerro Negro and Cueva Tecolote.

Los Vientos, 41HZ609

An isolated pinnacle of rock that rises from the plain south of the main body of the Red Hills is replete with prehistoric and historic detritus, the latter dominated by tin cans and other items manufactured in Mexico. Low rock walls are also apparently the work of modern migrants attempting to block the constant winds that give the site its name. Two of the three pictograph locales contain relatively simple designs executed in the standard red pigment. Both are surrounded by occupational debris. One is under an overhang that was the most densely utilized portion of the outcrop but the other is fairly well obscured under a large boulder.

The third locale rivals Cueva Tecolote for artistic skill but its theme is much more focused. Two large panels and an isolated figure are hidden in a triangular recess that faces north towards the main mass of the Red Hills, far from the densely occupied, south-facing alcove with its red rectilinear pictograph. This small niche is on the side of the rocky tor, 2 m above the ground surface

and is just large enough for one person to sit and paint. Uniquely, the pigment is black which adds to the difficulty of discerning the figures on the dark surface of the exposed rock. A drastic difference in clarity between the two major panels can be attributed to their degree of exposure to the elements; one faces out into the sunlight, the other is in the recess where it is always in shadow.

The back wall is covered with a swirl of speared animals and male hunters wearing V-shaped headdresses like many that appear in petroglyphic form at Fort Hancock and in pictographic form at the Candelaria type sites (Figure 13a). The detailed form of barbed projectile points mirrors the petroglyphs at Fort Hancock that led Sutherland and Steed to name the Shumla style. Some of the prey are square-bodied, others are boat-shaped; most are prong-horned but at least one is antlered so both antelope and deer may be represented. The animals face either right or left but small paintings extend far back into the recessed area of the niche, again reflecting the idea of the rock face as the veil between the natural and supernatural worlds. Higher on the west wall, where the degree of exposure is considerably less, another group of speared animals run and rear in the face of small hunters (Figure 13b). This composition seems to be bounded on two sides by an irregular line that may represent the magical enclosure that entraps the prey. The square-bodied and boat-shaped animals are again antlered or horned but the lances lack weights and some of the dart points are less clearly barbed. Barbed dart points are appended to one figure's leg and two others are at the end of elongated arms, an iconographic convention rampant at Fort Hancock. The prints at the bottom of the panel may be human or bear tracks, the similarity between the two often recognized by prehistoric artists.

Sutherland and Steed (1974:6) pointed out their Shumla style artists' preference for depicting group hunting scenes by covering large boulders or bluff sides with several figures of men, spears, and animals. This same predilection is a characteristic of the Candelaria pictographs (Davis 1980) although some of Davis' (1977, 1980:Figure 7) illustrations show bows-and-arrows, thus placing them much later than the Archaic age implied by the Shumla dart points. At Los Vientos, the grouping of figures into coherent scenes is evident in the placement of one panel on the rear wall of the alcove and another on the right lateral. The

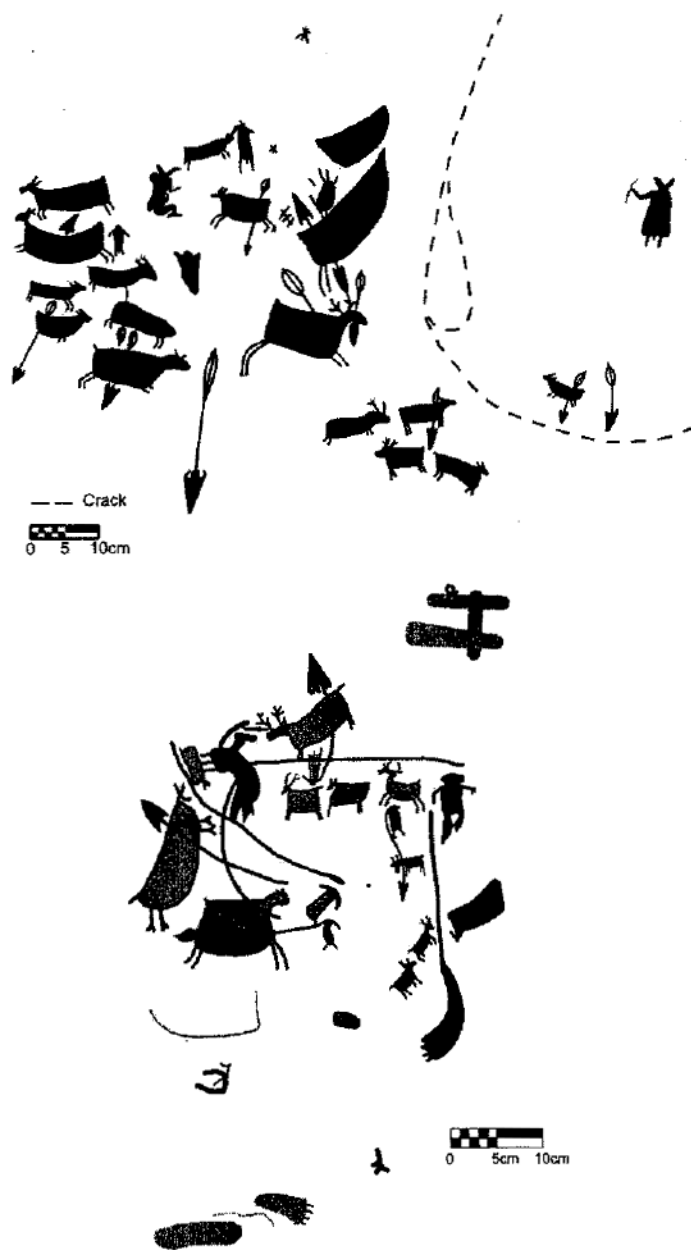


Figure 13. *Los Vientos, 41HZ609. a) facing the entrance, this scene, with its emphasis on projectile points, is related to the Diablo Dam, Candelaria, or Shumla style of northern Chihuahua and southwestern Texas; b) a side panel in the same style shows swirling beasts enclosed by a curving line.*

V-shaped headdresses at Los Vientos are similar to the horns worn by many of the hunters at Fort Hancock (and Candelaria), as are the limbs that end in spear points (see Figure 13b). An interesting detail is the rounded protrusions on both sides of the uppermost human's head in Panel B. This characteristic has been noted on later Red Monochrome paintings in the Big Bend and Lower Pecos regions where the buns were thought to be some form of hair dressing. The elaborate ear spools or hair whorls worn by the small figure emerging from the crack at Cueva Tecolote (see Figure 7b) may provide an alternative interpretation. The Desert Archaic styles probably predate the Red Monochrome pictographs and nothing else in this or its companion panel implies any form of relationship with the Red Monochrome artists other than the possibility of some continuity in hair styles or ear ornaments over time and space.

Siete Pinturas, 41HZ618

Originally, 41HZ618 was recorded as four separate sites but a surface scatter of burned rock and debitage unites them into one, despite the variety of features—seven pictographs, a stone circle, mortar holes, grinding slicks, and patches of black midden soil. The first area is a boulder outcrop with four rock art locales on the south and west sides. Panel 26A contains one yellow and one red deer painted on the underside of a boulder on the southern side of the outcrop. Panel 26B consists of yellow and red zigzag lines under another isolated boulder, diagonally northwest on the other side of the outcrop. About 10 m east of Panel 26A, Panel 26C is a niche that has yellow geometric and abstract lineal motifs next to a bedrock metate. Red spiderweb lines on the underside of a very large boulder, about 30 m west of the main pile, were labeled Panel 26D. Like Cueva Tecolote and Panel B at Los Nichos in the Black Mountains, the linear motif is contained within a round hollow in the bedrock.

Traces of red paint can still be detected inside the entrance of a low cave, adjacent to an arroyo that cuts through the middle of the site. The cave was originally recorded as 28A due to burned bone, debitage and fire-cracked rock trailing from its low narrow entrance. On the eastern opposite end of the same boulder pile, a few red lines and circles in another small alcove were labeled 28B.

Immediately across the drainage and facing 28A is yet another low alcove under an immense boulder. Originally numbered 29, this panel is the seventh now included in this one large site. It is also the most distinct, consisting of a series of vertical nested zigzag lines, the upper half red and the lower half black, encased in a box (see Figure 6b).

El Tunel, 41HZ626

One large boulder stands out amongst a tumble of giant rocks that have rolled down the eastern slope of the main mass of the hills. A tunnel-like passage runs through the boulder on a diagonal from northeast to southwest; low rock walls have been erected at both ends to block the wind, but one has fallen or been pushed aside, possibly to provide an exit. Despite the cramped quarters, four red motifs are painted on the ceiling. A small squat man, approximately 10 cm tall, is very much like figures in the Mogollon Red style (Schaafsma 1980:188) but an affiliation cannot be proposed based on a single pictograph. An even smaller quadruped of unknown species, a series of undulating lines, and almost perfect concentric circles exhibit such contrastive levels of artistic ability that they were probably drawn by different artists (see Figure 6a).

Horseshoe Rock, 41HZ629

On the far southwestern end of the main mass of the Red Hills, a cluster of boulders with four fairly large *huecos* was assigned the trinomial 41HZ629. Just inside the opening of an alcove under one of the larger boulders, a red bisected horseshoe-like motif, 20 cm long, has been painted on the ceiling, mirroring the secluded location of so many of the pictographs in this region. The consistent relationship between boulders, hollows that could retain water, and pictographs is perpetuated here.

Discussion

Despite the fact that both Jornada Mogollon and Desert Archaic influences are evident in the iconography, all of the pictographs recorded during this reconnaissance share certain characteristics that suggest they are the products of rituals like the vision quests practiced by indigenous people at the time of contact. All of them are in elevated positions with broad vistas. The Black Mountain sites overlook the monotonous barren flats

that stretch to infinity, providing the sense of isolation that is an essential characteristic of the vision quest or endeavor to communicate with the spirit world. The Red Hills sites are set down in an exotic landscape of rugged spires, tumbled boulders, and jagged ridges (Figure 14), surrounded by vast expanses of desolate plains at the edge of the great Salt Flats. The pictographs are hidden under and between boulders, in niches and cracks, in a manner consistent with private experiences rather than public performances. Further substantiation of the ritual implications of the rock art is the congress with the supernatural implied by the figures emerging from or entering faults or cracks in the bedrock.

The iconography of the paintings provides additional evidence of the ritual nature of the art. Sutherland (1996, 1998) argued that Jornada Mogollon rock art is a syncretism of Archaic and Mesoamerican cosmology ancestral to the development of Puebloan religion. Although this hypothesis has not been universally accepted, the consensus is that the art is ceremonial in nature and that its development was influenced by Mesoamerican contact (Crotty 1990; Schaafsma 1980). Much of the metaphorical symbolism was perpetuated in late Pueblo art and ceremony, confirming its religious ontogeny and linking the prehistoric past to the ethnohistorically documented present (Schaafsma 1992:76–77, 2002).

The Desert Archaic pictographs, seen at Los Nichos, Los Vientos, and possibly at Siete Pinturas' Panels 26A and 28A, are clearly different, iconographically, technically, and philosophically. Wedging the animal scenes into almost inaccessible cracks implies some esoteric meaning was attached to them even though they lack the formalized religious overtones evident in the Jornada style. Although the Candelaria style, epitomized at Los Vientos, focuses on hunting as a way of life, the stylized projectiles, their replacement of human body parts, and the headdressed hunters go a step beyond realism into the realm of the supernatural. The objective of these hunts may have been the capture of the essence of a spirit animal rather than a simple record of events, actual or anticipated. Schaafsma (1997:18–19) hypothesized that the Candelaria style was the manifestation of a quest for shamanic power, whether related to hunting prowess, weather control, or group well-being, concepts not unlike those motivating ethnographically documented vision quests. On a more practical level,

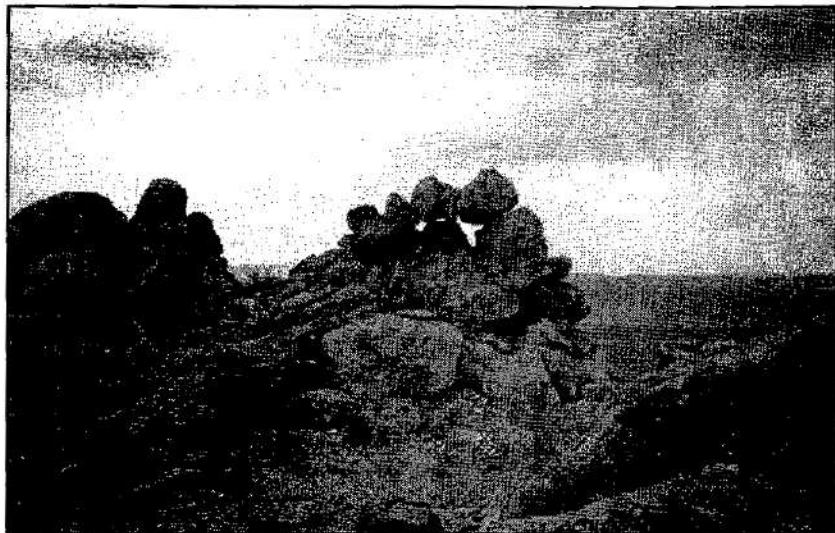
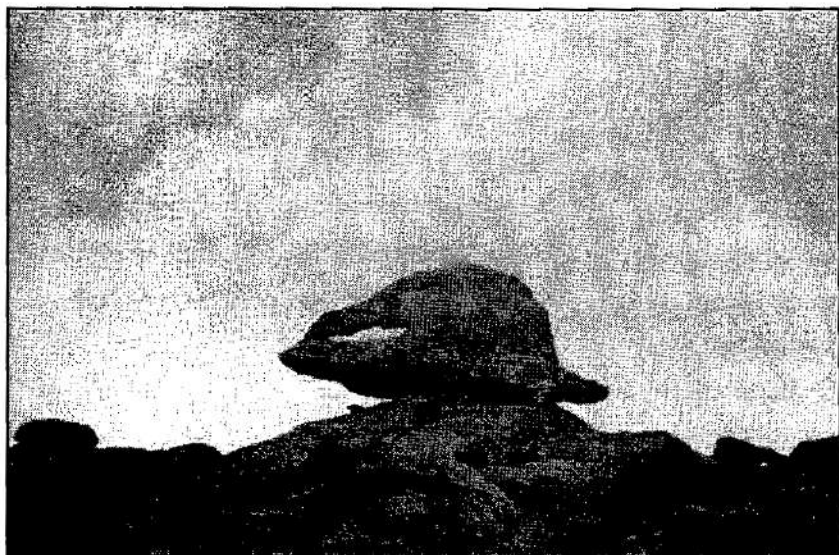


Figure 14. *The other-worldly landscape of the Red Hills.*



Los Vientos, over 80 kms north of the Rio Grande, demonstrates that Candelaria-style pictographs are not restricted to northern Chihuahua, thus raising some interesting questions about their function as group identifiers (Davis 1980).

The abstract geometric motifs are discrete, both in their spatial delineation and in their obscurity. That so many lack artistic merit further bolsters the vision quest interpretation, since talent was apparently not a prerequisite for painting. The designs are typical of petroglyphs and pictographs seen throughout the Southwest and northern Mexico and provide few more specific temporal or spatial links. All belong to the categories of geometric symbols called phosphenes, form constants, or entoptic phenomena—the signs that are experienced rather than visualized during trance states (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988). Since trance states were an integral part of the vision quest and often induced by sensory deprivation or overload, the presence of these abstract designs is perfectly consistent with their otherworldly context, especially since they are more abundant in the eerie landscape of the Red Hills.

The reconnaissance of the Black Mountains and Red Hills has expanded the eastern extent of the Jornada Mogollon rock art region, albeit only slightly. The presence of Candelaria pictographs 80 kms north of the Rio Grande is perhaps more significant in terms of defining territorial ranges, seasonal movements, or ethnic divisions. The different painting styles are consistent with the surface artifacts in demonstrating exploitation of the mountain resources during the Archaic and Formative periods of local prehistory. Even during more mesic periods, when the spring on the southern side of the Black Mountains flowed with some regularity, the resources of these two isolated ecozones were probably only capable of supporting short-term, rain-fall-dependent forays for most of prehistory. The sheer number of paintings suggests that at least some of the visits were prompted by metaphysical rather than practical reasons.

Acknowledgments

This project was sponsored by University of Texas Lands—West Texas Operations under the direction of Steve Hartmann, a constant and steady supporter of the conservation of cultural resources on public lands. We were introduced to the area

by Don Cox, Ken Moore, and Tommy Gray of University Lands with the kind permission of rancher Tom Baylor. Jim Evans, UT Lands, pointed out the only petroglyph found during this reconnaissance, and helped with the second field session survey. The survey crew consisted of Greg Sundborg, Billy Turner, Steve Schooler, Larry Riemenschneider, Herb Eling, and Cristina Martinez. Cristina Martinez and Billy Turner copied the pictographs in the field and Cristina Martinez produced the illustrations used in this report. Carole Medlar drafted the location map. The field work was conducted under the authority of Texas Antiquities Permit 2188 issued to University Lands with the author as Principal Investigator.

References Cited

Apostolides, Alex

- 1984 Alamo Canyon: The Storyteller Woman Panel. *The Artifact* 22:11-25. El Paso Archaeological Society.

Bilbo, Michael, and Kay Sutherland

- 1986 Stylistic Evolution of Rock Art in the Jornada Mogollon. *The Artifact* 24(3):11-30. El Paso Archaeological Society.

Bostwick, Todd W.

- 2001 North American Indian Agriculturalists. In *Handbook of Rock Art Research*, edited by David S. Whitley, pp. 414-458. Altamira Press, Walnut Creek, California.

Brune, Gunnar

- 1981 *Springs of Texas*. Branch-Smith, Inc. Fort Worth.

Bureau of Economic Geology

- 1995 Geologic Atlas of Texas, Van Horn and El Paso Sheet. University of Texas at Austin.

Cowart, Fredric H. II

- 2001 *The Best of Three Rivers Sketchbook*. Privately printed.

Crotty, Helen K.

- 1990 Formal Qualities of the Jornada Style and Pueblo IV Anasazi Rock Art: A Comparison with Implications

for the Origins of Pueblo Ceremonialism. In *American Indian Rock Art* 16, edited by Solveig A. Turpin, pp.147-166. National Park Service, American Rock Art Research Association, and Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas at Austin.

Davis, John V.

- 1977 The Candelaria Pictograph Site of Northern Chihuahua. *La Pintura* 1(3). American Rock Art Research Association.
- 1980 The Candelaria Style, an Identifiable Rock Art Tradition of Northern Chihuahua. *The Artifact* 18(2):41-55. El Paso Archeological Society.

Davis, John, and Kay S. Toness

- 1974 *A Rock Art Inventory at Hueco Tanks State Park*. The Artifact Special Report 12. El Paso Archaeological Society.

Green, John W.

- 1966 The AtlAtl Pictograph Site. In *Transactions of the Second Regional Archeological Symposium for Southeastern New Mexico and Western Texas*, pp. 12-23. Special Bulletin 1. Midland Archeological Society, Midland.

Hyman, Marian, Kay Sutherland, R. A. Armitage, J. R. Southon, and M. W. Rowe

- 1999 Radiocarbon Analyses of Hueco Tanks Rock Paintings. *Rock Art Research* 16:75-88.

Kirkland, Forrest, and W. W. Newcomb Jr.

- 1967 *The Rock Art of Texas Indians*. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Lewis-Williams, David, and Thomas A. Dowson

- 1988 Signs of the Times. *Current Anthropology* 29:201-245.
- 1990 Through the Veil: San Rock Paintings and the Rock Face. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 151.

Mendiola Galván, Francisco

- 1998 A Recent Reconnaissance of Rock Art Sites in Chihuahua and Southern New Mexico. In *Rock Art of the Chihuahuan Desert Borderlands*, edited by Sheron Smith-Savage and Robert J. Mallouf, pp. 9–31. Occasional Paper 3. Center for Big Bend Studies, Sul Ross State University, Alpine.

Schaafsma, Polly

- 1975 *Rock Art in New Mexico*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- 1980 *Rock Art of the Southwest*. School of American Research, Santa Fe, and the University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- 1992 *Rock Art in New Mexico*. 2nd edition. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- 1997 *Rock Art Sites in Chihuahua Mexico*. Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico Archaeology Notes 171. Santa Fe.
- 2002 Pottery Metaphors in Pueblo and Jornada Mogollon Rock Art. In *Rock Art in Context*, edited by Solveig A. Turpin, pp. 53–68. Special Publication 3. Rock Art Foundation, San Antonio.

Steed, Paul

- 1979 Rock Art on Alamo Mountain, Otero County, N.M. Part II. *The Artifact* 17(3). El Paso Archaeological Society.

Sutherland, Kay

- 1996 Spirits from the South. *The Artifact* 34(1 & 2). El Paso Archaeological Society.
- 1998 Mesoamerican Ceremony among the Prehistoric Jornada Mogollon. In *Rock Art of the Chihuahuan Desert Borderlands*, edited by Sheron Smith-Savage and Robert J. Mallouf, pp. 61–88. Occasional Paper 3. Center for Big Bend Studies, Sul Ross State University, Alpine.

Sutherland, Kay, and Paul Steed

- 1974 The Fort Hancock Rock Art Site Number One. *The Artifact* 12(4). El Paso Archaeological Society.

Turpin, Solveig A.

- 1991 Time out of Mind: The Radiocarbon Chronology of the Lower Pecos River Region. In *Papers on Lower Pecos Prehistory*, edited by Solveig A. Turpin, pp. 1–50. Studies in Archeology 8. Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas at Austin.
- 1992 More Sacred Holes in the Ritual Landscape of the Lower Pecos River Region. *Plains Anthropologist* 37(140):275–278.

Whitley, David S., Ronald I. Dorn, Joseph M. Simon, Robert Rechtman, and Tamara K. Whitley

- 1999 Sally's Rockshelter and the Archaeology of the Vision Quest. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 9(2):221–247.