Title
"Coso" Style Pictographs of the Southern Sierra Nevada

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Two recently discovered pictograph sites have similarities indicating common origin to the “Coso” style petroglyphs identified by Grant, Baird and Pringle (1968). These sites were located during field reconnaissance in the Southern Sierra Nevada. The two sites appear unique for two reasons: (1) they date to the late prehistoric and historic periods which previously have not been noted as containing “Coso” style rock art; and (2) “Coso” style pictographs are exceedingly rare and are unknown for these periods.

Grant, Baird, and Pringle (1968) defined a peculiar petroglyph style found within the Coso Range located in the western Mojave Desert. Petroglyphs are found on patinated basaltic cliffs and boulders and display a wealth of representational zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms. The most recurrent zoomorphic form and that which has come to characterize this locality is the full front-facing horned and boat-shaped bodied bighorn sheep.

Grant, Baird, and Pringle (1968:18) say of this pattern:

This method of drawing the horns (often with ears added) is probably the most characteristic feature of the Coso sheep. Both these features are extremely rare in other parts of the west. A few isolated examples in Texas may be laid to independent invention, but a single example in Nevada east of the Sierra Nevada and numbers of horn-front sheep from the middle Columbia near Vantage suggest a northern extension of Coso ideas.

Pictographs in the Coso style are rare and none seem to be attributable to the late period. Grant and his associates state that

In the Coso Range, there are six sites where
some designs are painted, and the style indicates that they are late and done by another group of people [emphasis added].

Most if not all the late period pictograph sites in the Coso Range are abstract and bear no resemblance to the earlier period petroglyphs. Furthermore, the only “Coso” style pictograph with zoomorphic representations appears very old (Campbell Grant, personal communication).

The two pictograph sites to be described here contain elements which appear similar to those found on petroglyphs in the Coso Range. Both sites appear to date to the historic period based on the representation of “Europeans” on horseback. The second site is located adjacent to a small open campsite containing pottery, which is suggested to further date the site to the late prehistoric or historic periods.

The first site (CA-Ker-735) is located north of Walker Pass in Indian Wells Canyon (Figs. 1, 2). Above the drainage, on a large granite
boulder rockshelter facing eastward, is a large polychrome panel consisting of approximately 50 different elements. Some of these elements are superimposed on earlier ones which are mostly painted in black and red pigment. The ceiling of the shelter is fire-blackened. No artifactual remains were noted in the vicinity of the site, although a boulder containing seven bedrock mortars or "cupules" is found in front of the shelter.

The panel is approximately 2 m. in width and 1 m. in height. Most significant is the depiction of men wearing hats and riding on horses (Figs. 3 and 4), thus dating the site to the period of European contact in the area. These elements would appear to date to a time around the 1860's when gold and silver mining interests attracted Whites to the region; but they could also document earlier events, such as the Bonneville trapping expedition which passed the mouth of Indian Wells Canyon in 1835.

The paintings appear so fresh that the actual pigment looks as though it was smeared on and has not been absorbed into the rock. Many of the other pictograph sites in the region appear older, with no actual pigment evident but only the stained rock manifesting the designs. The question immediately arose as to whether the site could be a forgery or manufactured even later in time than previously suggested. In an attempt to resolve this question a scraping of the white pigment was collected and analyzed using quantitative X-ray fluorescence.

Through conversations with paint specialists, it was discerned that white pigment would be amenable to analysis in this way and that it would be possible to tell, first, whether the paint is of commercial or native origin, and
second, if the paint was commercial, whether it was purchased prior to the 1930's. White paint manufactured in the late 1800's and early 1900's was lead-based. Lead was replaced in the 1930's by titanium as the base for the white pigment, and this latter substance is still in use today.

The analysis revealed the elements enumerated in Table 1. Error factors for major constituent elements through this type of analysis run as high as 15% per element, so care was taken to obtain a more precise measure of lead and titanium. No lead was revealed in the sample but a trace (0.62%) of titanium was present. This percentage is much too small to have come from commercial paint where titanium is a major constituent, amounting to 10% or more by weight. Since the pigment used apparently was not commercial paint, and the site apparently is authentic, analysis of the stylistic elements was undertaken. Fifty different elements are distinguishable in the pictograph panel. Seven of these are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENTAL CONSTITUENTS OF WHITE PIGMENT FROM INDIAN WELLS CANYON PICTOGRAPH (CA-Ker-735)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Constituents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃KAl₅(SiO₄)₃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(muscovite mica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CaSO₄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TiO₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Analysis conducted by Trace Analysis Laboratory, Hayward, California.
Fig. 5. Close-up of Coso style bighorn sheep at pictograph site CA-Ker-735.

Fig. 6. Close-up of Mountain lion (?) or dog form at pictograph site CA-Ker-735.
these are definitely bighorn sheep. Six are
shown with full front-facing horns and one has
side-facing horns. They are all rendered in
white pigment. These sheep bear striking re­
semblances to elements found in the Coso
Range (compare Figs. 4 and 5 with Grant,
Baird, and Pringle 1968:27, 61, 75, and Heizer
and Clewlow 1973: Pls. 11 and 18).

Another large zoomorph (Fig. 6) may be
interpreted as a dog, coyote, or mountain lion.
The resemblance to Coso style elements is
again quite noticeable. Grant and his asso­
ciates have suggested that this zoomorph is a
dog, as it is sometimes shown attacking moun­tain sheep in petroglyph panels found in the
Coso Range. Almost identical petroglyphs are
illustrated in the report on the Coso rock art
(Grant, Baird, and Pringle 1968:22). Heizer
and Clewlow (1973:Figs. 60/ and 61c) depict
other Coso glyphs illustrating this same
element.

Other elements in the panel include at least
three recognizable horse and rider motifs all
painted in white pigment. Other elements
include anthropomorphs, sunbursts, chains,
“shields,” other abstract elements, and a very
notable “flower form.” This large flower form
(Fig. 4) is painted in orange and white. The
only other large element in orange pigment is a
fading shield-like pattern. Superimposition of
some elements is common with earlier designs
painted in red, black, and, less frequently,
white.

The second pictograph site (CA-Tul-478)
displaying Coso affinity is found above Lamont
Meadow in the Southern Sierra Nevada (Fig.
1). The large granite boulder upon which the
panel is painted orients east and is found above
a stream terrace. Adjacent to the site is a small
area of midden containing a sparse amount of
fire-affected rock and several potsherds (type
unknown). Also placed nearby are three bi­
facial manos, found in situ, perhaps cached by
aboriginal inhabitants for future use. One of
the manos is made of nonlocal material, vesic­
ular basalt transported from the desert floor to
the east.

The pictograph panel is badly faded but
contains two clearly distinguishable bighorn
sheep in red pigment with full front-facing
horns and boat-shaped body. Also depicted is
a man on horseback. This site would seem to
date to the historic period, based on the
presence of the horse and rider motif and its
assumed contemporaneity with the adjacent
archaeological locus. This would be the first
documented occurrence of a Coso style picto­
graph outside of the desert area of the western
Mojave.

Both these sites appear intriguing and
suggest a late reappearance of interest in
ceremonialism in the form of paintings, per­
haps “copying” earlier petroglyph forms found
in the Coso Range. The Coso Range was the
territory of the ethnographically described
Little Lake Shoshoni (Steward 1938:80-84).
Since the Shoshoni and neighboring groups
denied any knowledge of the purpose or the
production of rock art, it is illuminating to
learn that the actual practice continued to
some extent into historic times. During his­
toric times, the Little Lake Shoshoni moved
far south of their original territorial bound­
aries and most likely utilized the productive
piñon stands above and adjacent to the picto­
graph localities described herein.

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Grant, Campbell, James W. Baird, and J. Kenneth Pringle

Heizer, Robert F., and C. W. Clewlow, Jr.

Steward, Julian H.

A Cache of Deer Snares from Owens Valley, California
CAROLYN M. OSBORNE HARRY S. RIDDELL, Jr.

The recovery of a cache containing a bundle of nine deer snares is one result of a program of archaeological site survey in the 1940's and 1950's by the junior author and O. B. Riddell (Riddell and Riddell 1956: 28). In that time period, this two-person team recorded some 300 archaeological sites in the Owens Valley region and made a collection of some 13,000 specimens from these sites. (The specimens are now housed in the Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.) The research plan followed by the Riddells was primarily limited to areal survey of the Owens Valley to obtain the location and artifactual inventory of the sites in an effort to preserve as much data as possible at a time when critical inroads by development and private collecting were destroying the data base. No outside funding for this expensive effort was solicited and, of course, none was obtained. Naturally, the program had its limitations, but its basic goals were met. Much of the data preserved by the program were timely, as many of the sites recorded have ceased to exist or have been so severely vandalized that representative collections of data and artifacts can no longer be obtained from them.

Whereas the major effort of the program was to record sites and make surface collections, some test excavations were made. Most notable were those at Iny-2 (Riddell 1951) and at Iny-382 (the Rose Spring site). The latter prompted a full-scale excavation (see F. Riddell in Lanning 1963). It was this last excavation which provided sufficient stratigraphic control to allow Lanning to prepare his chronology of projectile point types which, with minor modification, serves as a basis for subsequent ordering of archaeological chronologies through typological differentiation in the Great Basin (Lanning 1963).

The other controlled excavation as an element of this research plan was done at an earlier date than the one at Rose Spring. It was a test excavation of a protohistoric/historic Owens Valley Paiute winter village, the Cottonwood Creek site (Iny-2). The published report defines and describes for the first time Owens Valley Brown Ware as a distinct pottery ware. The work at Iny-2 further elucidates the last native cultural component of the Owens Valley region (Riddell 1951).

Other removal of subsurface cultural material was limited, but included the recovery of the deer snare cache from a rockshelter (Iny-46) near the confluence of an unnamed creek and Cottonwood Creek, near Rogers' pack station above Diaz Creek. The rockshelter is an exogene cave in a granitic mass (Fig. 1), the floor of which is covered to a depth of about 45 to 60 centimeters with granitic sand. The only cultural evidence in the sandy deposit was the cache itself. The sloping floor area, which