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NORDESTE PAINTINGS:
THE CASE FOR A PAN-ARCHAIC AMERICAN ROCK ART TRADITION

by

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ABSTRACT

NORDESTE PAINTINGS:
THE CASE FOR A PAN-ARCHAIC AMERICAN ROCK ART TRADITION

By Reinaldo Morales, Jr.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 1998.

Major Advisor: James D. Farmer, Associate Professor, Art History.

This thesis argues that a unified painting tradition was shared throughout Archaic period American rock art, characterized by depictions of elongated anthropomorphs. Research to this point indicates that this style is only found in two areas, the American Southwest and Northeast Brazil. In North America, the figures appear in the Barrier Canyon Style, the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style, and the Pecos River Style. In Brazil, these figures are represented in the *Nordeste* tradition, from the São Raimundo Nonato area, Piauí.

This analysis addresses the elongated anthropomorph as evidence of a shared aesthetic in Archaic North and South American rock painting. The numerous formal similarities indicate more than coincidental stylistic developments. The existence of a shared tradition is considered based on the available data. Conclusions are drawn based on the formal evidence of a pan-Archaic American aesthetic.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that a unified painting tradition was shared throughout Archaic period American rock art, characterized by depictions of an elongated anthropomorph. Research to this point indicates that this style is only found in two areas, the American Southwest and Northeast Brazil.¹ In North America, the figures appear in the Barrier Canyon Style from the Colorado Plateau in Utah as defined by Polly Schaafsma,² in the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style from Arizona's Grand Canyon area as defined by Mary K. Allen³ and in the Pecos River Style from southwest Texas as defined by W. W.

¹ After reviewing several hundred published sites, no other examples of this particular anthropomorphic style were found in the Americas. In a discussion of this phenomenon, Karl Watson (professor of History at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados) mentioned a possible example, a large painted figure with "wings" on the ceiling of Mountain River Cave, St. Catherine, Jamaica (personal communication, August 1997).

² Schaafsma, P., 1971:65-79. Schaafsma later adopted the use of "Barrier Canyon Style" rather than "Barrier Canyon Anthropomorphic Style" (1990:213-234). The shorter designation will be used in this analysis.

³ Allen, 1991:1.

Newcomb⁴ (Maps 1-3.) In Brazil these figures are represented in the *Nordeste* tradition from the São Raimundo Nonato area, which is encompassed primarily by the Serra da Capivara National Park (Maps 4-6.)

All of these styles show similarities in figure types. The head area has a variety of elaboration and is highly stylized. The figures tend to be closely associated with zoomorphs or plant motifs. Compositions occur primarily in shallow rockshelters or alcoves and are seldom obstructed from public view (Figure 1.) The variation in figure size ranges from very small to very large figures. Technically, these are all highly developed painting traditions. The brushwork, draftsmanship, and pigment variation are unequalled in most other styles from either hemisphere in the Archaic period.⁵ This analysis will compare the formal characteristics of these geographically disparate rock painting traditions.

⁴ Newcomb, Jr. and Kirkland, 37-58.

⁵ The Baja Great Mural style on the Baja peninsula shares certain similarities with these other Southwest styles and is discussed in the comparisons.

Rock Art Dating

Rock art is found on every continent except Antarctica and in almost every environmental niche having exposed rock surfaces. It occurs as either rock paintings or petroglyphs (incised, pecked, abraded or scratched images.)⁶ Apart from body decoration, it may be the oldest art in the world and is still being produced today. Paul Bahn cites evidence of modified pigment fragments from sites in southern Africa, southern India, and Europe that are between 300,000 and 125,000 years old.⁷ These pigment fragments may have been used for body decoration or rock art.

Rock art dating technology has improved in recent years, but it remains an inexact science. Accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) carbon 14 dating of extracted organic material in paint samples is one of several new techniques developed to provide direct dating of the art.

⁶ The term "pictograph" has been replaced by "rock painting" in most current literature and will be used in this analysis.

⁷ Bahn and Vertut, 23-24.

This has recently allowed researchers to date three paintings from Chauvet cave in France to over 30,000 B.C..⁸ Association of the art to datable excavation levels can provide a relative idea of age. At *Baixão do Perna I*, this method indicates that the minimum age of one panel of paintings is between 9,000 and 10,000 years old.⁹

A limited number of directly obtained dates are available for the Barrier Canyon and Pecos River Styles, placing both within a reasonably similar time frame, from around 2,700 to 3,400 years ago for the Barrier Canyon,¹⁰ and from around 3,000 to 4,200 years ago for the Pecos River paintings.¹¹ Schaafsma suggests similar dating for the Grand Canyon Polychrome and the Barrier Canyon Style.¹² As yet, no direct dates of binder samples have been completed for the *Nordeste* paintings, but work is

⁸ Clottes, 207.

⁹ Martin, 101.

¹⁰ Tipps, 4.

¹¹ Ilger, Hyman, Southon and Rowe, 303.

¹² Schaafsma, P., 1990:225.

currently underway.¹³ Three sites specifically addressed in this analysis, *Vento*, *Morcego* and *Extrema II*, yielded evidence of use from around 3,000 to 5,000 years ago, respectively. All these data are still awaiting further confirmation, and are mentioned here to provide a general temporal context (Table 1.)

Cultural Milieu

These dates correspond to the latter half of the Archaic period (around 3300 B.C. to A.D. 700.) in North America¹⁴ The early part of this period was marked by the Altithermal (5000 B.C. - 2500 B.C.,) a drastic climatic change marked by a general warming and drying of the environment.¹⁵ This significant period of drought forced changes in the survival strategies of the sparse populations that were living in these areas. The Medithermal followed (2500 B.C. - present,) with a slight

¹³ Marvin W. Rowe Ph.D. (Professor of Chemistry, Texas A&M University,) personal communication, 23 April 1998.

¹⁴ Schroedl and Coulam, 13.

¹⁵ Jennings, 113.

increase in effective moisture, similar to current conditions.¹⁶

These arid, upper elevation regions were populated by small bands of hunter-gatherers with limited but highly adapted technology.¹⁷ Apart from the rock art, little remains in the way of material culture. They built no permanent architecture, produced no ceramic wares, and did not inter their dead. Most artifacts from this period are portable items such as small tools (stone and bone,) woven fiber, figurines (clay and split-twig,) bone beads (for pendants, necklaces or bracelets,) and painted pebbles.¹⁸ The parietal and mobiliary art are evidence of a highly developed belief system and ceremonial structure, despite their band level of social development.

Solveig A. Turpin cites ethnohistoric accounts of adaptive strategies in northern Mexico as a possible explanation for the creation of the Pecos River Style

¹⁶ Jennings, 113; Schaafsma, C., 64.

¹⁷ Turpin, 1982:26.

¹⁸ Jennings, 156-160.

art. The concentration of populations around seasonal resources required strategies of instilling social order. This may have led to the emergence of ritual to enhance group solidarity.¹⁹ The necessity of subsistence procurement across wide areas and the concentration of formerly dispersed nomadic bands would account for the development of regional similarities in ideology and artistic expression. Over a period of a few thousand years, these highly mobile bands could have spread their ideologies or art over a considerable distance.

The similarities between the painting styles of the Archaic American Southwest might have been the result of occasional inter-regional contact and diffusion of ideas. In this model, differences in style would be local variations on a broader areal framework that "shared a world view and its associated ideology to a significant degree."²⁰ The possibility also exists that these styles were "conceived and developed locally," and the stylistic similarities are the coincidental results of a shared

¹⁹ Turpin, 1994:90-92.

²⁰ Schaafsma, P., 1990:231.

"shamanistic tradition in place for thousands of years."²¹ This later model would account for broad consistencies in Archaic American art from throughout the western hemisphere.

Diffusion and Independent Innovation

Explanations for the similarities in disparate cultures generally fall under one of two models, either a) diffusion of traits from one culture to another or b) independent innovation of traits within a culture.

"Cultural diffusion is a process by which part of one culture spreads to another culture... Most anthropologists consider two types of diffusion. One is called direct contact - or direct borrowing - and identifies the dispersal of an idea, trait, behavior, etc., between one society and another. The other type of diffusion is usually called stimulus diffusion. In this, the idea of the trait or action is passed from one people to another, but the trait itself may not be diffused."²²

Independent innovation argues against this model, and proposes that "cultural behavior or ideas... were created by a person or persons *independently*" of any outside

²¹ Turpin, 1994:90-91.

²² Fingerhut, x.

influence.²³ These two models represent extremes and should be considered as two ends of a continuum of cultural interaction.

An intermediate position of cultural inheritance, "elements passed down through a long series of cultures," is proposed by Terence Grieder who states that "culture is the product both of heredity from cultures which are ancestral to it and of its own adaptation to its environment."²⁴ This would account for Schaafsma's "shared world view" and Turpin's "shamanistic tradition" as explanations of the shared cultural root of the Archaic Southwest cultures.²⁵ If the similarities in the rock art are evidence of independent expressions of this cultural connection, then the *Nordeste* Tradition would appear to share the same cultural root as the Southwest traditions.

²³ Fingerhut, xi.

²⁴ Grieder, 4.

²⁵ Schaafsma, P., 1990:231; Turpin, 1994:90-91.

Review of the Literature

American Southwest

In 1971, Schaafsma described the Barrier Canyon Style and provided the first summary of the elements of this style.²⁶ At the time of this and her subsequent 1980 publication, approximately twenty sites were known to Schaafsma²⁷. Subsequent research has determined that the style is represented in over 150 sites throughout the Colorado Plateau,²⁸ yet her initial style characteristics are for the most part accurate. Field observations confirm the existence of a greater diversity of torso types and proportion, and a wider variation of color than in the sample available to Schaafsma in 1980.

Gebhard first suggested a "Pecos Style" for some of the paintings along the Rio Grande near the Pecos and Devil rivers in Texas.²⁹ In 1967, Newcomb set forth a

²⁶ Schaafsma, P., 1971:65-79.

²⁷ Schaafsma, P., 1980:61.

²⁸ James C. Blazik (National Park Service Ranger, Division Of Interpretation, Arches National Park, Utah) personal communication, July 1998; Sucec, 62.

²⁹ Gebhard, 79-82.

four period chronology for the Pecos River Style.³⁰ These periods were maintained by Turpin³¹ and Shafer³² in subsequent publications on the art.

Allen first brought the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style to public notice in 1988.³³ In subsequent papers, she extended the range to include a total of eleven Grand Canyon Polychrome sites, and another four of questionable stylistic affiliation.³⁴ Schaafsma's 1990 article on one site, Shamans' Gallery, remains the only refereed source for information on the style.³⁵

Northeast Brazil

The primary stylistic classifications of the rock art in the São Raimundo Nonato archaeological area, Piauí, Brazil, were first put forth by Niède Guidon in 1984,³⁶ and further elaborated by Anne-Marie Pessis in

³⁰ Newcomb and Kirkland, 37.

³¹ Turpin, 1982:30-32.

³² Shafer, 138-142.

³³ Allen, 1991:1-16.

³⁴ Allen, 1992:49-70; and 1994:95-105.

³⁵ Schaafsma, P., 1990:228.

³⁶ Guidon, 1984.

1987.³⁷ The figures addressed in this analysis were identified as part of the *Nordeste* tradition (one of three identified by Guidon, including the *Agreste* and *Geométrica* traditions. Figure 2) The traditions were further divided into subtraditions, styles and complexes. The *Salitre* subtradition and the *Serra Branca* style (*Varzea Grande* subtradition, Figure 3)³⁸ are the focus of this analysis.

Methodology

Observations made in the field augment the published information on each of these traditions, and provide the primary sources for the formal analysis. Field research was conducted in the summer of 1998 in Utah, Arizona, Texas, and Piauí. Twenty-nine Barrier Canyon Style sites were visited, including unpublished and unrecorded sites.³⁹ Four Pecos River Style sites were visited with

³⁷ Pessis, 1987.

³⁸ Guidon, 1984:181-185, 191-194.

³⁹ Blazik's familiarity with a majority of the known Barrier Canyon Style sites allowed him to illustrate to the author the diversity of the style in several days of on-site research.

the assistance of Emmett Brotherton⁴⁰ and Rock Art Foundation guides.⁴¹ Published and unpublished photos taken by Jim Zintgraff of additional Pecos River Style panels were also reviewed (including unpublished sites in Mexico.)⁴²

Data on the Grand Canyon Polychrome site of Shamans' Gallery comes from on-site observation and the site report filed by Schaafsma with the Grand Canyon National Park Resource Management and Planning Division.⁴³ For other Grand Canyon Polychrome Style sites not visited by the author,⁴⁴ this analysis relies upon photographs and drawings obtained from Allen via her website.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ranger, Seminole Canyon State Historical Park, Comstock, Texas.

⁴¹ The Rock Art Foundation is a non-profit organization headquartered in San Antonio, Texas, that promotes the conservation and interpretation of the Lower Pecos rock art.

⁴² Jim Zintgraff, photographer, allowed access to some of his photographs at the Rock Art Foundation.

⁴³ Schaafsma, P., 1988.

⁴⁴ Publication of photographs and descriptions of several Grand Canyon Polychrome sites has raised concern among local Native American groups, resulting in a reluctance on their part to condone further research. (Larry Lesko, Assistant Forest Archeologist, Kaibab

In Brazil, field observations of thirty-four sites in Serra da Capivara National Park were carried out under the direction of Guidon with the Fundação do Museu do Homem Americano (*Museum of American Man Foundation*) in São Raimundo Nonato, Piauí. Several sites not open to the public were visited with Irma Ason Vidal⁴⁶ who is cataloguing the sites with the Foundation. The holdings of the Foundation's library were made available by Guidon, who also provided radiocarbon dates. Information about the current status of the rock art research in the park was gathered in several conversations with Guidon.

The formal comparison of the various styles is summarized in Charts 1-4 based on Schaafsma's original Barrier Canyon Style / Pecos River Style comparison.⁴⁷ This is augmented by the inclusion of the Grand Canyon Polychrome and *Nordeste* figure types. The analysis

National Forest, Arizona; personal communication, 8 July 1998.)

⁴⁵ Allen, 1998.

⁴⁶ Ph.D. student, Archaeology, University of Valencia, Spain.

⁴⁷ Schaafsma, P., 1971:Figure 132.

addresses five primary characteristics: 1) scale (variations in figure size); 2) draftsmanship (linear versus painterly);⁴⁸ 3) hue (variations in the use of color); 4) composition (the spacing and arrangement of the figures within a panel); and 6) the figures' relationship to other elements (primarily attendant anthropomorphs, zoomorphs, geometric motifs and plant motifs.) Iconography will be considered in specific cases to augment the formal analysis.

This analysis approaches the elongated anthropomorph as evidence of a shared aesthetic in Archaic North and South American rock painting. The numerous formal similarities indicate more than coincidental stylistic developments. The existence of a shared tradition, i.e., "styles that are similar in content and expression, and for which a temporal and cultural continuity can be demonstrated,"⁴⁹ is considered based on the available

⁴⁸ The formal characteristics addressed in the analysis of draftsmanship are very similar to those used by Heinrich Wölfflin in his analysis of the linear versus the painterly, and absolute versus relative clarity, in High Renaissance and Baroque art.

⁴⁹ Schaafsma, P., 1985:252-253.

data. Conclusions are drawn based on the formal evidence of "a common psychological element,"⁵⁰ or a pan-Archaic American aesthetic.

⁵⁰ Joyce, 359.

CHAPTER 1: THE NORDESTE TRADITION

Research in the São Raimundo Nonato archaeological area in the state of Piauí was begun by the Franco-Brazilian Mission in 1970, and has been going on continuously since 1978. The research was undertaken in a 7,500 square mile area of the Maranhão-Piauí basin,¹ and is currently concentrated in the 300,000 acres of the Serra da Capivara National Park, in the Varzea Grande region (Maps 5 and 6.) To date, over 250 rock art sites have been recorded.²

Guidon identified three painting traditions in the area, the *Nordeste*, *Agreste* and *Geométrica* (Figure 2.)³ The chronology of these traditions was based on the changing occupational patterns of the area.⁴ The *Nordeste* is considered the oldest, with origins as far back as 10,000 B.C. Around 7,000 B.C. the *Agreste*

¹ Guidon, 1995:121.

² Vidal, personal communication, 7 September 1998; Pessis, 1995:117.

³ Guidon, 1984.

⁴ Pessis, 1987:458.

appeared, and replaced the *Nordeste* by 4,000 B.C. The *Agreste* tradition disappeared by 1,000 B.C. The *Geométrica* tradition has not been connected with a datable cultural sequence.⁵

The elongated anthropomorphs were not restricted to separate styles, but were components of several styles and subtraditions of the *Nordeste* tradition. As it is represented in the rock art of Piauí, the *Nordeste* tradition is defined:

...by the presence of graphisms of composition, of pure graphisms, and of graphisms of action. The pure graphisms are clearly in the minority. The anthropomorph and zoomorph figures, integrating the graphisms of composition, are distributed equitably and form an ensemble superior in number to those of object representations and of phytomorphic representations.

[...par la présence de graphismes de composition, de graphismes purs et de graphismes d'action. Les graphismes purs sont nettement minoritaires. Les figures anthropomorphes et zoomorphes, intégrant les graphismes de composition, se répartissent équitablement et forment un ensemble supérieur en nombre à celui des représentations d'objets et des figures phytomorphes.]⁶

⁵ Martin, 258, 286, 296.

⁶ Guidon, 1984:163. All translations by the author.

This general description sets the *Nordeste* tradition apart from the other traditions based upon the frequency of elements (anthropomorphs, zoomorphs, and abstract / geometric elements), and particular "graphisms."⁷

Within this tradition, the elongated anthropomorphs discussed here belong to the *Serra Branca* style (*Varzea Grande* subtradition,) and to the *Salitre* subtradition (Figure 3.)⁸ The *Serra Branca* style is considered the most recent evolution of the *Varzea Grande* subtradition, developing out of the *Serra da Capivara* style.⁹

The main feature of [the *Serra Branca*] style is the replacement of dynamics by a tendency toward rigidity of delineation in graphic presentation. Human and animal figures tend to be right angled and are filled by geometrical designs. Decoration is a common characteristic of simple or ornamented figures. Representations of animals... are reduced in number... Individual figures are more numerous than collective arrangements... The graphic representation

⁷ According to Pessis, "graphism is the term that designates the material elements of the graphic representations." [*graphisme est le terme qui désigne les éléments matériels des représentations graphiques.*] (1987:128.) This is more a determination of *what* is being represented, than *how* it is being represented; an iconographic assessment, rather than an observation of form.

⁸ Guidon, 1984:181-185, 191-194.

⁹ Pessis, 1987:454.

of depth is made by means of horizontal planes in a vertical disposition but in separated groups... consistent with the individualistic character of this style.¹⁰

Color is varied, including the use of red, white, black, gray, and yellow. Pessis stresses that "the rectilinear tendency in the morphology of the figures and the evidence of right angles are the result of a presentation of form, and not a technical limitation."¹¹

The *Salitre* subtradition takes its name from the site of *Salitre*, in the *Serra Nova* region (Figures 15, 17, 19, 34.)¹² This site has a large number of elongated anthropomorphs, probably more than any other site yet surveyed. Elongation, however, is not among the qualities Guidon uses to delineate the subtradition:

In the *Salitre* subtradition, the arrangement of the components of the frontal-profile scenes is completely characteristic. The sexual features of the anthropomorphs are very clear. The male is viewed frontally, the female, in profile... figures executed by a contour outline are dominant... filled, in most cases, by a geometric tracing...the arrangement of the panels and their internal organization is quite linear... the colors most

¹⁰ Pessis, 1995:118.

¹¹ Ibid., 119.

¹² Guidon, 1984:191.

employed are red (dominant) as well as yellow and, more rarely, white.

[Dans la sous-tradition *Salitre*, l'agencement des composants des scènes face-profil est tout à fait caractéristique. Les caractères sexuels des figures anthropomorphes sont bien nets. L'homme est vu de face, la femme, de profil... dominant les figures exécutées au trait de contour... sont remplies, dans la plupart des cas, par un tracé géométrique... l'agencement des panneaux et leur organisation interne est plutôt linéaire... les couleurs les plus employées sont le rouge (dominant) ainsi que le jaune et, plus rarement, le blanc.]¹³

The range of figural variation, draftsmanship, and color make this subtradition inclusive of a number of possible different styles.¹⁴ At *Serra Branca* style sites, *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II* (Figures 9, 30 and 38,) and *Morcego* (Figures 26 and 27) specifically, formal traits of the *Salitre* subtradition are apparent. Guidon's criteria for distinguishing between the *Salitre* subtradition and the *Serra Branca* style (*Varzea Grande* subtradition) are the actions that the figures are engaged in ("graphismes d'action," iconographic differences) rather than the purely formal qualities of

¹³ Guidon, 1984:192-194.

¹⁴ Guidon noted at the time of her analysis that it is premature to propose a division of styles. (1984:194.)

the anthropomorphs.¹⁵ Additionally, the resemblance of the figures at *Angelim do Barreirinho* (*Salitre* subtradition, Figure 4)¹⁶ to a *Serra Branca* style figure at *Caboclo* (Figure 5) is evidence that these classifications will stand to benefit from this present analysis.

While the *Nordeste* tradition has not had a specific elongated anthropomorphic style delineated as of yet, the recurring presence of a frontal, static, geometrically elaborated anthropomorphs is evident in the analyses of Guidon and Pessis. The Brazilian art is still undergoing assessment, and the cited style definitions should be considered a firm base for a more detailed work in progress.¹⁷

¹⁵ 1984:192.

¹⁶ Guidon, 1991:54.

¹⁷ Guidon, personal communication, June 1998.

CHAPTER 2: RELATED AMERICAN STYLES

Evidence of the *Nordeste* tradition spreads from the *Varzea Grande* region in Piauí to other areas of Northeast Brazil (including sites in Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso), but the elongated anthropomorph is not in the repertoire of figural representations from these areas.¹ Other American rock painting styles, however, do share the dominant motif of the elongated anthropomorph, including the Barrier Canyon, Pecos River, Grand Canyon Polychrome and Baja Great Mural Styles, all in the American Southwest (technically the Baja Great Mural Style is in Northwest Mexico, but is geographically part of the region.) Certain aspects of the Baja Great Mural Style are problematic in the context of the terms of this thesis, and the style is considered in a separate section at the conclusion of Chapter 3.

¹ Guidon, 1995:122.

The Barrier Canyon Style

Barrier Canyon Style panels are found in shallow rockshelters, alcoves and other open spaces throughout the Colorado plateau. The sites are very 'public' in the sense that they are not hidden in deep recesses of caves or behind natural obstructions (Figure 1.) Many sites, especially in Horseshoe Canyon (formerly "Barrier Canyon"), have an amphitheatrical quality in their visual and acoustic characteristics.²

Schaafsma introduced the Barrier Canyon Style by noting that "the dominant motif in these paintings is the long dark form of the human torso"³ While this is true of the limited sample available to Schaafsma at the time of her initial publications, current research indicates that figure types vary greatly in this style (Chart 1.) They range from very thin figures to oval, almost round anthropomorphs. Many are 'dark forms,' but some are predominantly white as in examples from Lavender Canyon, Titus Canyon and Salt Creek (Figure 6.) Rather than

² Farmer, 61-71; Waller, n.p.

³ Schaafsma, P., 1987:69.

having a single diagnostic torso type, the Barrier Canyon Style is best characterized as having an extreme variation of anthropomorphic figures, with the elongated torso as the most prevalent type.

Schaafsma summarized the formal variations of torso elaboration:

...the human forms vary from sketchily painted shapes to precisely painted figures which exhibit a high degree of detailed decoration... Many anthropomorphs are depicted without arms or legs, but arms and legs may be present, particularly in special instances in which a figure is carrying something... The treatment of the head is also varied... heads are lacking altogether on some figures... the decorative treatment of the torso may be intricate and textile-like, although most figures are simply plain... Simpler torso embellishment consists of heavier vertical striping of the entire figure, or the presence of an open panel of striped decoration in the midst of a solidly painted field.⁴

The techniques of torso elaboration or decoration in Barrier Canyon Style figures are extremely varied. Each anthropomorph is unique in its representation. Several panels have groups of figures sharing a single tableau, and having a very similar appearance (Molen Seep Wash, Virgin Springs, North Temple Wash, and Buckhorn Wash, for

⁴ Schaafsma, P., 1971:69.

example. Figure 7.) Even in these groups, however, only slight variations exist between the figures or the differences in accoutrements associated with each anthropomorph.

In most Barrier Canyon Style panels, the anthropomorphs share the composition with other elements, primarily zoomorphs and geometric designs:

A number of figures are flanked with zig-zag lines or other simple motifs, and a few carry wild plants or other objects... abstract elements are almost entirely lacking in panels of this style. Naturalistic renderings of animal or bird figures, however, are visible in association with the anthropomorphs... It is worthy of note that the small figures do not occur at random... but are arranged in composed groups or are directly associated with the large anthropomorphs.⁵

These observations were based on the twenty sites that were known to Schaafsma by 1980.

Schaafsma's observation about the non-random arrangement of the compositions has been confirmed by field observation. Mountain sheep or related species, birds, snakes, and canines are the most commonly identified animals represented (Chart 2.) These are

⁵ Schaafsma, P., 1971:69.

placed in organized tableaux in direct contact with or in proximity to the anthropomorphic figures, and vastly outnumber the anthropomorphs at some sites (Figure 18.) A diverse repertoire of design elements exist in the Barrier Canyon Style, in addition to an obvious concern for compositional unity.

The Pecos River Style

Pecos River Style sites occur in a similar general physical context as Barrier Canyon Style sites - shallow rockshelters and alcoves. Schaafsma noted the primary similarities in the two styles in her 1971 analysis.⁶ Differences exist, however, that distinguish the Pecos River Style from the Barrier Canyon Style. Fewer zoomorphs appear in the Pecos River Style compositions, along with a higher percentage of plant motifs and abstract elements. The Pecos River Style anthropomorphs do not display the same variety in figure type as those of the Barrier Canyon Style. The Pecos River Style

⁶ P. Schaafsma, *The Rock Art of Utah*, fig. 132. Most other works referring to these similarities cite this source.

figures are primarily frontal, static and rectilinear. Periods 3 and 4 reach a level of polychrome that is not found in the Barrier Canyon Style, perhaps due to the durability of the pigment recipes. While examples of anthropomorphs in close proximity to zoomorphs (such as large cats at Panther Cave) do occur, the figures are more frequently associated with plant-like forms and abstract designs (Figures 2 and 3.) Carolyn E. Boyd and J. Philip Dering have suggested that this is evidence of the ritual use of hallucinogens and medicinal plants in Archaic period Texas.⁷

A definitive chronology is not available for the Pecos River Style, but Shafer's synopsis of the four periods serves as a stylistic summary of Pecos River art:

The Pecos River Style paintings incorporate several colors... Dark red predominates, followed by black, light red, yellow, orange, and white... [In Period 1,] they are dim, cigar-shaped or vertically elongated rectangular figures, usually with arms but mostly lacking heads and legs... [In Period 2, the] figures are large, many over six feet tall, some over ten. They are elongated with parallel sides or with broad shoulders, outlined in dark red or red-orange. The bodies may be filled in with lines or may be a solid color. The majority are illustrated

⁷ Boyd and Dering, 256-275.

in front view, but a few are shown in profile. Heads are not shown, but headdresses may be... Strange accoutrements are often attached to the arms... During Period 3, anthropomorphic figures are painted in two or three colors, and black is used more often. They are smaller than those of the previous period, and heads are shown on most... Accoutrements are more stylized than in the second period... The most stylized humanlike figures appear in Period 4. They are painted in three colors, and circles and dots appear as body ornamentation.⁸

Shafer suggests an evolution from more representational to highly stylized anthropomorphic depictions.

Differences between the Pecos River Style and the Barrier Canyon Style exist, but Shafer's synopsis shows that they share many primary defining characteristics.

Turpin recently offered a conservative, "uniformitarian hypothesis," that "would explain similarities between the Pecos River style and distant pictographs in Baja California and Barrier Canyon, Utah." She proposed that these areas "manifested beliefs inherent in a shamanic religious tradition, generated from a common root but developed independently."⁹ The primary similarity between the Pecos River and Barrier

⁸ Shafer 138-142.

⁹ Turpin, 1998.

Canyon Styles is the dominant motif of the elongated anthropomorph.

The Grand Canyon Polychrome Style

If there is a 'common root' expressed in the figural representations of the Barrier Canyon and the Pecos River Styles, then the Grand Canyon Polychrome style and Nordeste tradition may share the same 'root.' The physical context of the Grand Canyon panels are basically the same as the other two Southwest styles (Figure 1.) The similarities in anthropomorphic depiction were seen by Schaafsma as evidence that, "within a broad areal framework," the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style "falls within the general definition of the Barrier Canyon Style."¹⁰

Allen gives the following description of the Grand Canyon Polychrome style:

The Grand Canyon Polychrome style is characterized by highly detailed, heavily decorated anthropomorphs, some of them life-size... eyelashes, painted fingernails, and polka-dot decoration are hallmarks of this style. The anthropomorph's body

¹⁰ P. Schaafsma, "Shaman's Gallery," 228.

shape is characteristically a long narrow rectangle, sometimes tapered towards the feet, and decorated with lines, zig-zags, or filled rectangles. Many figures have no neck or shoulders, with the body and head forming a continuous unit. When they do occur separately from the body, the head shapes are round, bulbous, or trapezoidal. Arms are outstretched and frequently originate mid-torso. A wide variety of colors, including green, orange-red, and yellow ochre, are used, but the most common pigment choices are dark red, black, and cream... Quadrupeds - typically bighorn sheep or antlered deer - usually accompany the anthropomorphic figures.¹¹

This assessment was based on Allen's experience with over a dozen sites, whereas Schaafsma's conclusions were based upon the detailed recording of one site, Shaman's Gallery, and Allen's published descriptions.

Nonetheless, Schaafsma contends that the Barrier Canyon Style and the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style "are close enough in style and subject matter...to be considered the work of similar peoples who were roughly contemporary" with potentially "similar cultural implications and dating."¹² Allen points out that, "many of the traits distinguishing Barrier Canyon from

¹¹ Allen, 1994:100.

¹² Schaafsma, P., 1990:217, 228.

Grand Canyon Polychrome pictographs are the same traits linking Grand Canyon Polychrome with Pecos River rock art."¹³ The similarities in these three painting styles (Chart 1-4) are evidence of a unified Southwest rock painting tradition.

¹³ Allen, 1994:101.

CHAPTER 3: COMPARISON OF STYLES

The Nordeste Tradition and the Barrier Canyon Style

Due to variations within each style, no single archetype for the elongated anthropomorph exists (Chart 1.) As evident in the characterizations by various authors, the elongation of the torso and the static frontal pose are the primary diagnostic features. A Barrier Canyon style figure from the Head of Sinbad panel in Utah, (Figure 8) and a *Serra Branca* style figure from the panel at *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, in Piauí, (Figure 9) provide typical examples. The main figures are static and frontal, with short outstretched arms. Hands and feet are clearly recognizable in the Utah example, suggesting only a minimum of stylization in the appendages. The main anthropomorphs in both panels are about two feet tall and are closely associated with a smaller figure in profile. This pairing of a static frontal figure and a smaller profile figure is common in the elongated anthropomorphs of the *Serra Branca* style, and the *Salitre* subtradition.¹ The pairing of figures in

¹ Guidon, 1984:192.

this way occurs in the Barrier Canyon Style with less frequency. In many Barrier Canyon style panels the groupings frequently occur in threes,² but many other combinations can be found.

The torso elongation is apparent in these two figures and is reinforced by the attenuated limbs. The stylization is most pronounced in the elongation of the torso and in the abstraction of the head area. The torsos are slightly tapered toward the bottom. The internal patterning is roughly symmetrical, with the designs divided into three recognizable horizontal registers in the *Nordeste* elongated figure and in two vertical cross-hatched elements in the Head of Sinbad figure. Both are executed in a red pigment, but the Barrier Canyon style figure shows additions of white in certain areas. Although it is not apparent in this *Serra Branca* figure,

² Blazik, personal communication, 24 August 1998. ("The panels that contain compositions of "Threes" are fairly plentiful... Even in the extremely complex panels (numerous figures, elements, etc) there seems to be a case that could be made to show that compositional triads can be found that form sub-segments within the whole... these and other sites are not uncommonly set up in such a way that there are is a "main" panel and then two accompanying sub-panels a short distance removed.")

other examples closely resembling this one are bichrome or polychrome, frequently outlined with red and filled with yellow.

The use of the term 'head' in this case is purely an iconographic assessment. It is being used to describe a feature of the Head of Sinbad anthropomorph. This interpretation is not only convenient, but is also supported by the formal qualities of this specific representation. The Head of Sinbad anthropomorph has clearly and carefully executed appendages. The fingers and palms of the hands are well defined. The legs are relatively naturalistic not only in their general demeanor, but in anatomy and perhaps perspective or foreshortening (the feet being slightly down-turned but not completely flattened, with the left foot pointing outward slightly, and the right shown almost straight down.)³ The legs show the narrowing of the calf to the

³ Many Barrier Canyon Style compositions give the impression of perspective, but it cannot be known if this was an intent, or even a compositional device available to the artists. There may very well be an 'other' perception of perspective, with an incumbently 'other' method or representation, operating in many of the panels

ankle. With these clearly human attributes, the use of the term 'anthropomorph' is firmly supported.

The figure from *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II* exhibits a similarly recognizable anthropomorphic anatomy. This figure is described first by a complete outline, similar to the careful outlining of the hands and feet at Head of Sinbad. The torso design elements are separated from the outline by negative space less than half a inch wide. The hands and feet are slightly more stylized than in the Utah example, with the feet reduced to trapezoids and the hands shown with three bulbous 'fingers.' The head area is slightly less stylized in proportion, but it is still one of the primary non-human elements of the figure (along with the elongation.) A recurring motif in the *Nordeste* tradition are the short lines emanating from the top of the head area. The head itself is highly rectilinear, with two vertical lines dividing it. Where the Utah figure's head seems to accentuate an aspect of the face (the large 'eyes') the treatment in this *Serra*

but completely unrecognized by the contemporary westernized viewer.

Branca style anthropomorph seems to remove any hint of facial features. Both may be representations of masks, but the Piauí figure seems to beg this interpretation more than the Utah figure.

The Head of Sinbad figure is recognizable as an anthropomorph despite the highly stylized head. In figures from a Barrier Canyon Style panel at Molen Seep Wash (Figure 10,) a similar head stylization is the primary element that suggests an anthropomorphic representation. The figures approach three feet in height but are less than three inches wide. The torsos terminate at the top with a thin vertical line, connecting the torsos to two large circular 'eyes.' Additional linear elements are associated with the figures, appearing to emanate from just above each anthropomorph. A convincing argument can be made for referring to these figures as "possible representations of personified plant figures," considering their context in this and other panels.⁴ Schaafsma has noted harvest

⁴ Blazik, personal communication, 22 August 1998. The term "phytomorph" has been considered for these figures, but will not be used in this analysis for

motifs and plant representations at a Barrier Canyon Style panel in the Maze district of Canyonlands National Park, Utah.⁵

The figures from Molen Seep Wash are best considered plant-like anthropomorphic figures, as they are stylistically similar to other elongated anthropomorphs, but appear to function with other motifs that may signify rain, clouds, water, or harvesting. These are accented with possible grain or grass motifs, seen in the thin lines just above each figure in the right half of the panel. The torso elongation in this case might represent the idea of growth or growing. Iconographic interpretations of this kind are heavily dependent on the specific context of the figure in the overall composition, and should not be considered a blanket interpretation for similarly elongated Barrier Canyon Style figures.

reasons of clarity. Fairly obvious plant motifs occur at several sites (Bird Site, Old Woman Wash, Buckhorn Wash, Sejo Canyon, and Virgin Springs.) At others, there is a plant-like quality in the forms of some anthropomorphs.

⁵ Schaafsma, 1980:66.

An anthropomorph from the site of *Vento* has prominent 'eyes,' similar to those in the Molen Seep Wash figures (Figure 11.) The entire head area is described only by the two large circles. The figures are outlined in red, and filled with white or yellow, with the torsos bisected by vertical linear elements. The *Vento* figure, however, has clear arms, complete with fingers. The style of representation here is almost identical to the arms and hands of the initial *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II* anthropomorph (Figure 9.)

Both figures are part of a larger group (Figures 12 and 13.) The Utah panel is a composition consisting of seven or eight of these hyper-elongated anthropomorphs, a larger solid anthropomorph, numerous small quadrupeds, geometric elements above the figures, and a small bird-like figure in a field of finger-sized dots above the group. The panel at *Vento* is a less unified collection of figures, some of which are elongated. Several figural types are present, but are partially obscured by the deterioration of the pigment and the uneven rock surface. This area of the rockshelter shows evidence of two or more different styles and several groups where zoomorphs

are dominant in the composition. It is more difficult to isolate some of the compositional units at *Vento* than it is with the panels at Molen Seep Wash. Some areas have evidence of multiple use, exhibiting substantially different representational approaches to anthropomorphic figures.

The outstanding feature of these figures is their extreme elongation. The torsos terminate without legs, and only the *Nordeste* figure has arms. In the Great Gallery panel, the same stylization is used in a bichrome figure (Figure 14.) Similar to a figure from *Salitre* (Figure 15,) this particular style of representation is a variation on the general theme of elongated anthropomorphs. Without the suggestion of a head, or headdress in the case of the *Nordeste* figure, these could almost be mistaken for simple geometric designs. This is a level of abstraction unequaled in other local styles from either area.

Another common figure type is represented at the Great Gallery and *Salitre*, (Figures 16 and 17.) The torsos are rectangular, decorated with geometric designs. Few if any curved lines are used. The interior patterns

vary from simple vertical or horizontal lines, to complex grids or mazes. The Great Gallery figure lacks the prominent tapering common in many Barrier Canyon style anthropomorphs.⁶ The torso of the *Salitre* figure terminates abruptly, and no indication is given of any neck or head area. Only two short parallel lines at the top left of the figure provide any evidence of appendages, in this case up-turned arms. This interpretation of 'arms' is supported by the repetition of the lines in the figure to the left, and the frequency of similar elements in other *Nordeste* anthropomorphs. These upturned arms usually occur as elements on the profile 'companion' figures, which frequently make up the smaller half of paired *Nordeste* figures, such as in the earlier example from *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*.⁷

⁶ While the tapered torso is very common in the Barrier Canyon Style, the rectilinear torso is also found in many sites. (South Temple Wash, several sites in the Needles and Maze Districts of Canyonlands National Park, and in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Blazik, personal communication, 5 November 1998.) The most severely tapered torsos have been classified by Sucec as the San Rafael Variant of his "Spirit Figure" type. (Sucec, 65.)

⁷ Guidon's "face-profil" composition. (1984:192.)

A key difference between the Barrier Canyon style and the *Nordeste* elongated anthropomorphs should be pointed out. A figure from Emery County, Utah, has been classified by Sucec as an example of his "Composite Figure" type (Figure 18.)⁸ This therianthropic⁹ form is not well represented in the *Nordeste* elongated figures examined to this point. A unique relationship also exists between the anthropomorph and the minute zoomorphs in the Emery County composition. Numerous Barrier Canyon style panels depict these zoomorphs around, on, or inside the torsos of the anthropomorphs. In many compositions, the arrangement of these figures combined with occasional geometric elements implies a narrative or a didactic intent on the part of the artist. This is not quite as apparent in the *Nordeste* elongated figures. The group of figures from *Salitre* (Figure 19) implies an interaction between the dominant anthropomorph and the zoomorph through the geometric element almost connecting the two, but not as implicitly as the Emery County panel.

⁸ Sucec, 62.

The level of detail in the minute Barrier Canyon Style elements is almost unequalled in any other rock art style from either region. The zoomorphs in the Emery County composition (Figure 20) are barely more than three-quarters of an inch in length, relative in size to the earlier Great Gallery example (Figure 16.) The extreme variation in figure size, from almost nine feet tall to less than an inch, has been pointed out by Farmer as a primary characteristic of the Barrier Canyon style.¹⁰ Some figures are easily seen from a distance, others require the close proximity of the viewer.

The visibility of most Barrier Canyon Style sites is due to the very large size of the anthropomorphs and the public placement of the panels. The paint in some of the Great Gallery figures covers broad areas with a single pigment. This may have been applied with the side or palm of the hand, or with large brushes. In many of the small zoomorphs, individual brushstrokes, the width of only a few hairs on a brush, can be seen. In the small

⁹ Therianthrope: combining human and animal form (Webster's Third International Dictionary, 1976.)

birds of a Barrier Canyon Style site in Grand County, Utah, near Canyonlands National Park, the individual feathers can be read in figures less than an inch long (Figure 21.) At the same site, one of the anthropomorphs has an intricately elaborated polychrome torso design, with the same fine brushwork as seen in the wings of the minute birds (Figure 22.)

An example of a minute *Nordeste* elongated anthropomorph is a figure from *Canoas II* (Figure 23.) These are much less often depicted than the larger figures in the sites surveyed to this point. *Nordeste* anthropomorphs generally range between eight and twenty inches high. The accompanying zoomorphs generally share roughly equal compositional space as the anthropomorphs. The minute *Canoas II* and Barrier Canyon style zoomorphs are evidence of highly detailed brushwork. These examples and the very large paintings show a diversity of application technology in both styles.

¹⁰ Farmer, 61-71.

The Nordeste Tradition and the Pecos River Style

A Pecos River Style anthropomorph from Fate Bell Annex near Comstock, Texas (Figure 25) and a *Nordeste* figure from *Morcego*, in the north of Serra da Capivara Park (Figure 26) are examples of the immense scale present in each style. The *Nordeste* figure is one of the largest recorded in the tradition, at almost six feet tall.¹¹ The Pecos River Style figure is of similar proportion, but some of these anthropomorphs are over ten feet tall.¹²

The rectilinear torsos of these figures are similar to the previous examples from the Great Gallery and *Salitre* (Figures 16 and 17.) The majority of emphasis is placed on the torso design and attendant elements. Both are elaborated primarily with rectilinear motifs. In the Pecos River Style figure, the torso design is limited to thin horizontal lines, with diagonal lines roughly centered in the top half of the torso. The interior

¹¹ Guidon, personal communication, 2 June 1998.

¹² Shafer, *Ancient Texans*, 140.

lines exhibit the same quality of brushwork as the outline.

The *Morcego* figure's torso is divided into two horizontal registers by finger-width lines. The other interior lines and the figure's outline are about an eighth of an inch wide. Despite the different application media, the pigmentation is the same throughout this anthropomorph. Elsewhere in the panel are examples of figures executed in different shades of red, and one in yellow monochrome. The head treatment varies somewhat between the Fate Bell Annex and *Morcego* figures, with the first having little interior treatment, but topped off with several long thin lines in an arc. The *Morcego* anthropomorph has generally the same rectilinear head with interior rectilinear elaboration as the earlier example from *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II* (Figure 9.) Just as in the Pecos River Style example, the top is accented by thin vertical lines, in this case, they are short and straight. The appendages are described with only a minimum of detail, and seem to be mere attachments to the torso outline.

Another similarity in these two compositions is the plant-like motifs that accompany the anthropomorphs. The Fate Bell Annex figure is flanked by two linear elements that resemble cactus (*Agave lechugilla*) stalks. The *Morcego* figure is also flanked by secondary figures, in this case smaller anthropomorphs (Figure 27.) A yellow attendant figure can be seen in profile to the immediate left of the main anthropomorph. The two parallel lines representing the arms are similar to the motifs on the previous figure from *Salitre* (Figure 17.) Several other frontal elongated anthropomorphs occur to the left. Each of these is individualized by complex torso designs and have geometric elements emanating from their head areas.

At the site of *Extrema II*, the association of plants to anthropomorphs is much more apparent (Figure 28.) These *Serra Branca* style figures are arranged in a group around a motif that looks like a tree.¹³ The anthropomorphs in this group are the typical red

¹³ This simple motif also resembles depictions of antlers in other panels.

monochrome figures most diagnostic of the *Nordeste* tradition. The lower part of an elongated anthropomorph is just above and to the left of this group, and is associated *face-profil* with another anthropomorph. The importance placed on the plant imagery is similar many Barrier Canyon style compositions,¹⁴ although associations between anthropomorphs and plant motifs are most prevalent in the Pecos River Style.

One of the few well preserved examples of the variety of colors used in the Pecos River Style is the White Shaman site (Figure 29). Another quality most apparent in the white central figure is an acute sense of draftsmanship. Another pair of figures from *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II* are examples of the carefully executed line work and geometric torso elaboration found in the *Serra Branca* style (Figure 30). The Pecos River Style figure's torso design is dominated by a solid black rectangle, symmetrically balanced within the surrounding white figure. Several thin red lines cross the upper torso in

¹⁴ See footnote 4, this Chapter.

diagonals, and several curved red lines flank the central black element.

The larger of the two *Paraguaio* figures also bears carefully balanced rectilinear torso designs. Certain elements have been filled with the same red pigment as the drafted outlines. Other interior elements have apparently been left unfilled. This might indicate the fading or exfoliation of a second pigment. The conscious use of solid and outlined areas might also indicate an intention to use the color of the rock surface as a design element. Even as a monochrome image however, the consistent line quality and evenly balanced distribution of interior design elements, give this figure a similar refinement as that of the Pecos example.

In both of these examples the torso and appendages are treated as a complete unit, as opposed to the Fate Bell Annex and *Morcego* figures where the arms were reduced to simple linear elements attached to the torso, rather than a continuation of the form. Here, the limbs terminate in open ended forms. The white pigment of the White Shaman figure makes it easy to see where the figure stops and the background begins. However, the *Serra*

Branca figure's hands and feet are only loosely indicated by a short angle in the line. This convention, found in several other *Serra Branca* style panels, allows for an impression of hands or feet without the need for a natural outline or solid shape. This is a conscious use of positive and negative space in the description of a form.

The Nordeste Tradition and the Grand Canyon Polychrome Style

A Grand Canyon Polychrome Style panel from Arizona known as Shamans' Gallery (Figures 31 and 32,) shows a similar variety of color as the Pecos River Style. Munsell color readings were recorded by Schaafsma on various areas in the panel, yielding, in addition to black and yellow, "4 different shades of green, 10 of red, and 3 of white".¹⁵ She suggests that in the approximately 6 by 60 foot panel, multiple sequences of painting and slight differences in paint preparation

¹⁵ Schaafsma, 1988:5.

probably account for this variation of pigment.¹⁶

Several different colors are visible in the illustrations, but reflected sunlight from the floor of the rockshelter tends to cast an orange hue, making accurate color measurement and reproduction difficult. One of the most colorful areas of the panel (Figure 33) is a section dominated by a green crescent shape over several anthropomorphs. Even with the orange hue, the white, yellow, and bright lime green can be seen.

The site of *Salitre* includes a panel, about fifty feet in length and two feet tall, with a series of polychrome figures painted on almost a single register (Figure 34.) The range of color is not as diverse as the Shamans' Gallery panel, but in direct sunlight these paintings are almost luminescent, as the pigment is very well preserved in many of the figures. The colors are limited to yellow and a few shades of red. Although averaging only a quarter of the height of the Shamans' Gallery figures, there is a great deal of variation in torso elaboration in this panel.

¹⁶ Schaafsma, 1988:5.

A panel at *Extrema II* (Figure 35) has polychrome anthropomorphs that are similar in form and torso elaboration to the large figures at the left end of the Shamans' Gallery panel (Figure 31.) These anthropomorphs have a more rounded shape than the rectilinear figures illustrated in the Pecos River Style and *Serra Branca* Style comparison. The site of *Extrema II* has numerous styles represented. Because of this "inextricable mixture of works,"¹⁷ the site is referred to as "rococo."¹⁸ The static polychrome anthropomorphs from this panel are distinctly different than animated *Serra Branca* style figures from the same site (Figure 25) although they are considered the same style (*Serra Branca*.) The formal evidence suggests that these elongated figures may represent a unique style.¹⁹

Composition

One of the primary differences between the Grand Canyon and *Salitre* compositions is the spacing of the

¹⁷ Guidon, 1984:247.

¹⁸ Vidal, personal communication, 4 June 1998.

¹⁹ The question of a 'Nordeste Anthropomorphic Style' is addressed in the Conclusion.

elements. At Shamans' Gallery, the central part of the panel is very crowded, with many of the anthropomorphs 'shoulder to shoulder.' The lack of space is probably due to the numerous painting sequences that occurred in the site. The *Salitre* panel in contrast may have been painted by a single artist who had plenty of compositional space to work with. The consistency of application, pigmentation, and a rather conventionalized appendage treatment in a number of the figures supports this hypothesis.

At *Caldeirão da Vaca I* in Piauí (Figure 36,) a panel of elongated anthropomorphs occurs at the west end of the site. These are very tightly organized, similar to areas of the Shamans' Gallery composition. In less than 6 feet, there are at least 18 figures, the majority of which having extremely elongated torsos. Several of these approach almost two feet in height, yet are barely two inches wide. These figures are hard to see, and only traces can be seen on the left end of the panel. The pigment on this partially exposed rock surface has deteriorated somewhat, but close inspection revealed a

high degree of color variation, including two different reds, a deep purple or black, yellow ochre, and white.

In a detail from the panel (Figure 37,) a small figure appears about six inches tall, in close proximity to or holding a plant-like motif. This recalls similar motifs at Fate Bell Annex, *Morcego*, and *Extrema II* (Figures 25, 27 and 28.) To the left of this figure is one of the larger anthropomorphs, executed in red outline with yellow and white fill in the vertical torso divisions. As with the Pecos River Style White Shaman and the figures from *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, the torso and appendages are depicted as a continuous unit terminating with open-ended lines, creating a juxtaposition between positive and negative space.

The Shamans' Gallery composition is more compressed than most Barrier Canyon and Pecos River Style panels, but is generally characteristic of the Southwest tradition. The sites of *Salitre*, *Caldeirão da Vaca I*, *Extrema II* illustrate examples of the same arrangement of figures. These sites are more typical of the scale of *Nordeste* elongated figures, as opposed to the large anthropomorphs from *Morcego* and *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*

(Figure 38.) The range of color at this Grand Canyon Polychrome Style site as well as several Pecos River Style sites is not as pronounced in the Barrier Canyon Style and *Nordeste* tradition. Shamans' Gallery is only one of fifteen possible Grand Canyon Polychrome sites.²⁰ Further research may determine the full scope of this style in the Southwest elongated anthropomorphic tradition.

The Baja Great Mural Style Problem

A fifth rock art style dominated by large anthropomorph also occurs in central Baja California, but the relationship of this style to the others considered here is more problematic. The Baja Great Mural Style was first extensively examined by Clement W. Meighan in 1966²¹ and shares many of the compositional qualities of the Barrier Canyon Style (Chart 4.) The paintings were probably executed between 500 and 2000 years ago,²²

²⁰ Allen, 1992:49.

²¹ Meighan, 1966:372-392.

²² Crosby, 1997:224.

making them considerably younger than the Utah panels. The Great Murals are dominated by large static anthropomorphs, usually frontal with upturned arms, and executed primarily in red and black (Figure 24.) Zoomorphs share much of the compositional space.²³ Most common are deer, mountain sheep, or antelopes, with other smaller animals also depicted. There is a "virtual absence of snakes," plants, and man-made devices.²⁴ This taxonomy is fairly secure as most of the Baja Great Mural Style figures are executed with a high degree of naturalism (Chart 1.)²⁵ The size of the zoomorphs ranges from generally life-size to larger. Anthropomorphs "are more variable in size, ranging from a few inches to over 10 feet in height," but most are life-size.²⁶

The murals occur on the walls of shallow rockshelters and alcoves, up to thirty feet above the floor in some cases.²⁷ The overall size of the

²³ Ibid., 210.

²⁴ Meighan, 1966:385.

²⁵ Meighan, 1983:63.

²⁶ Meighan, 1966:379, 388.

²⁷ Meighan, 1966:379.

compositions shares the monumental aspect of some Barrier Canyon Style panels, due in part to the large size of the figures. The predominance of red in the paintings is consistent with the Barrier Canyon and Pecos River Styles. The balance of black and red in many figures is also very common in the Pecos River Style. The later date suggested for the Great Mural Style is evidence of the duration of the Southwest anthropomorphic tradition over several millennia.

The Baja Great Mural Style is noticeably different from the other Southwest styles in the degree of anthropomorphic stylization and consistency of form (Chart 1.) Crosby's analysis of the Great Mural figures stresses,

that their creation was neither casual nor the product of individual inspiration or self-expression... The Painters adhered to a remarkably rigid code... The seeming "naturalism" of the Great Murals was actually subject to a number of formal and arbitrary rules... Nearly all the Painters gave each creature a characteristic and invariable aspect.²⁸

²⁸ Crosby, 1997:211.

Barrier Canyon Style figures do not adhere to a rigid code, and indicate a high degree of individual self-expression. This does not preclude a similar function or meaning for the art, but is evidence of a different style of symbolizing that meaning.

With the exception of one substyle within the Baja Great Mural Style, known as the Southern Semiabstract school, the anatomical proportions of the Baja figures consistently conform more closely to natural human anatomy. The legs are about half of the total figure, the arms span almost the same width as the figure height, and the heads are generally one seventh to one eighth of the total height.²⁹ Hands and feet are shown in natural proportion, but the feet are usually turned out in an unnatural position. What appear to be breasts on some figures are depicted in profile on otherwise frontal figures. Abstraction of the human form is primarily limited to these techniques and a lack of natural interior detail. The "greatest differences among the

²⁹ Crosby, 1997:215-217.

works" are seen in the torso patterning and color fields.³⁰

The Baja Great Mural Style's conformity to this standard aesthetic in anthropomorphic depiction contrasts with the Barrier Canyon Style's distinct individuality and paucity of naturalistic representations of humans.³¹ The Pecos River Style is similarly diverse in its variations of figure types, but also lacks naturalistic human figures. The Baja Great Mural Style anthropomorphs more closely resemble the later Red Monochrome Style from the Pecos River area, a distinctly different style from the earlier Pecos River Style.³² These monumental painting styles probably share a common root,³³ but the degree of stylization of the primary motif - the anthropomorph - sets the Baja Great Mural Style apart as a distinct aesthetic.

³⁰ Ibid., 212-213.

³¹ See Chapter 2, page 24.

³² Newcomb and Kirkland, 81.

³³ Turpin, 1998.

CONCLUSION

This thesis considers the formal similarities between the elongated anthropomorphic traditions of the American Southwest and Northeast Brazil. The *Nordeste* tradition from Brazil includes depictions of anthropomorphs with elongated torsos frequently elaborated with geometric designs. The limbs are attenuated and sometimes absent. The head area has a variety of elaboration. This is a unique style of anthropomorphic representation in South American rock art, limited to the *Salitre* subtradition and the *Serra Branca* style of the *Varzea Grande* subtradition. However, these same features are also diagnostic of the Barrier Canyon, Pecos River, and Grand Canyon Polychrome Styles from the American Southwest.

All of these styles share similar depictions of elongated anthropomorphic figure types, including hyper-elongated and rectilinear torso forms. The variation in figure size includes very small to very large figures. In both North and South America these styles occur in shallow rockshelters or alcoves, and are seldom

obstructed from public view. The brushwork, draftsmanship, and color variation are evidence of highly developed painting traditions, unequalled in other rock art styles in the Archaic period.

These geographically disparate rock paintings should not be considered elements in a single style. Even the similarities between the Southwest styles do not automatically qualify them as a pan-regional style. They best fit the idea of an anthropomorphic tradition: "styles that are similar in content and expression, and for which a temporal and cultural continuity can be demonstrated."¹ The inclusion of the Brazilian tradition, separated from the Southwest by over 5000 miles, adds another consideration to these stylistic similarities. Formally, they are very similar in content and execution. An iconographic analysis of each could determine if substantial ideological continuity also exists, rather than a coincidental similarity of formal expression.

¹ Schaafsma, 1985:252-253.

The question of cultural continuity can only be addressed in the broadest of terms, and would be premature at this point. A temporal continuity may one day be suggested by advances in dating technology. Material evidence, apart from the pigment left on the walls of these rockshelters and alcoves, neither supports nor denies a communication network or migration 2000 to 5000 years ago that would have transferred an artistic style from South to North or vice versa. If the elongated anthropomorph also shared a similar iconographic significance throughout the Western Hemisphere during this time period, then this would be evidence of a broad ideological connection, despite a lack of corroborative material evidence. This is "an exercise that must rely heavily on the intrinsic value of the study of style,"² and formal evidence has been presented in this thesis that indicates a number of stylistic conventions shared by these culturally disparate groups.

² Turpin, 1990:277.

This thesis has shown that in the *Serra Branca* Style and the *Salitre* subtradition, a recurring style of representation is evident that could be considered a separate style. At the sites of *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, *Morcego*, *Vento*, *Extrema II*, *Caldeirão da Vaca I*, *Angelim do Barreirinho*, and *Salitre*, groups of figures occur in compositions that are distinctly different than the other figures and compositions of the *Nordeste* tradition.³ The term *Nordeste Anthropomorphic Style* is proposed, based on the formal similarities between the elongated figures of the *Serra Branca* style and the *Salitre* subtradition. Further research into the iconography, technology, and context of the art will address the feasibility of this independent style.

³ These are also found at *Nordeste* sites not discussed here, such as *Estevo III*, *João Arsena*, *Pinhãzinho*, *Pitombi*, *Pinga do Boi*, *Entrada do Baixão da Vaca*, *Entrada do Pajaú*, *Canoas I*, *Caldeirão do Rodrigues*, *Boquierão do Sitio da Pedra Furada*, *Perna II*, *Europas I*, *Roça do Zeca*, and *Angical*.

Implications

The evidence presented in this thesis provides the groundwork for a more detailed investigation of intra-American cultural diffusion and homogeneity. An independent innovation model would imply that the geographic (and possible temporal) disparities between the *Nordeste* and Southwest painting traditions discounts the possibility of shared cultural traits beyond those that are common to all hunter-gatherer populations in the Americas. A strictly materialist approach to this problem would cite the lack of evidence in the archaeological record of population movement between Northeast Brazil and the American Southwest in support of the cultural isolation of the regions. The formal evidence presented in this thesis would have to be viewed as a series of parallel developmental coincidences, despite their overwhelming similarities.

At the opposite end of the cultural interaction continuum is the model of direct contact diffusion.⁴ This would explain the similarities addressed here in terms of a physical transfer of the painting style (including its technological sophistication and iconography) from one region to the other. The less invasive model of stimulus diffusion proposes that the *ideas* represented in the paintings would be transferred through cross-cultural contact. This would result in the style being "significantly altered" to meet "the needs of the receiving society," and would be "difficult to demonstrate because the change of the diffused item may be so great that it is hardly recognizable. All that may be perceived is the general format of the item."⁵ This thesis has demonstrated that similarities exist beyond a "general format."

A modification of the stimulus diffusion theory is proposed by Grieder, who states that

⁴ Fingerhut, x. See also pages 8 and 9 of this thesis.

⁵ Fingerhut, x.

"in practice none of these procedures operates in isolation from the others. Invention is occurring continuously in every culture, inventions are spreading, and some kind of migration is a factor in virtually every society - with the migrants providing unconventional responses in their new environments and starting new chains of inventions."⁶

From this perspective the spread of a rock painting tradition throughout the Americas would have been marked by changes in style and technology stimulated by changes in environmental conditions. The iconography could have remained intact in a migration even if the inter-tropical environment separating the arid regions of Northeast Brazil and the American Southwest prohibited large-scale mural painting. This would especially be true of a trans-Caribbean migration route, where even if such painting occurred its chances of surviving several millennia of natural catastrophes would be unlikely.⁷

This thesis does not attempt to justify any of these models. Evidence of a shared aesthetic in American rock painting is presented. The similarities are not

⁶ Grieder, 10.

⁷ See footnote 1, Introduction.

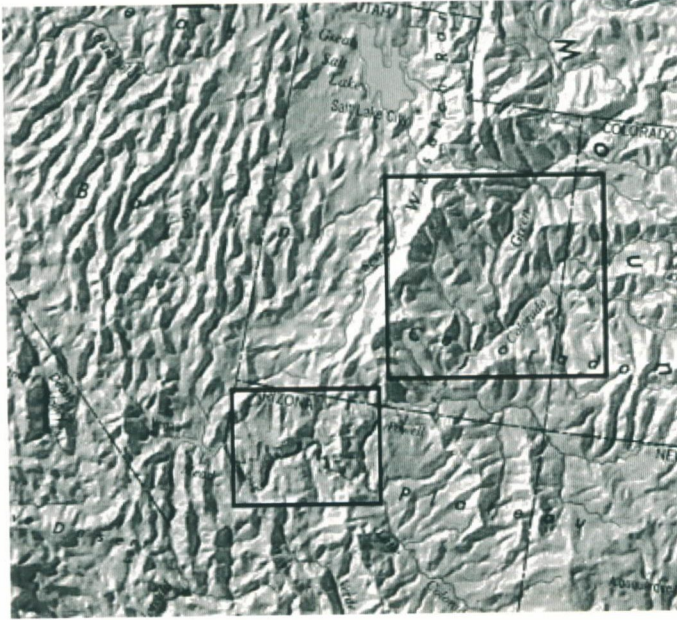
superficial. The sophistication of the paintings is evidence that this art was not a casual cultural activity. The technology required to execute the paintings had to be carefully developed and passed down through generations. The tentative dating of the art suggests that this was a long surviving cultural phenomenon. A detailed iconographic analysis of the elongated anthropomorphic painting tradition is necessary to determine further cross-cultural similarities. Any theory or model proposed to explain these similarities must account for both the geographic isolation of the regions as well as the substantial evidence of a shared aesthetic presented here.

ILLUSTRATIONS

All photographs © 1998 Reinaldo Morales, Jr.,
except Figure 7 by James C. Bazik
and Figure 24 by Robert Mark.



Map 1. North America showing the location of the areas discussed.



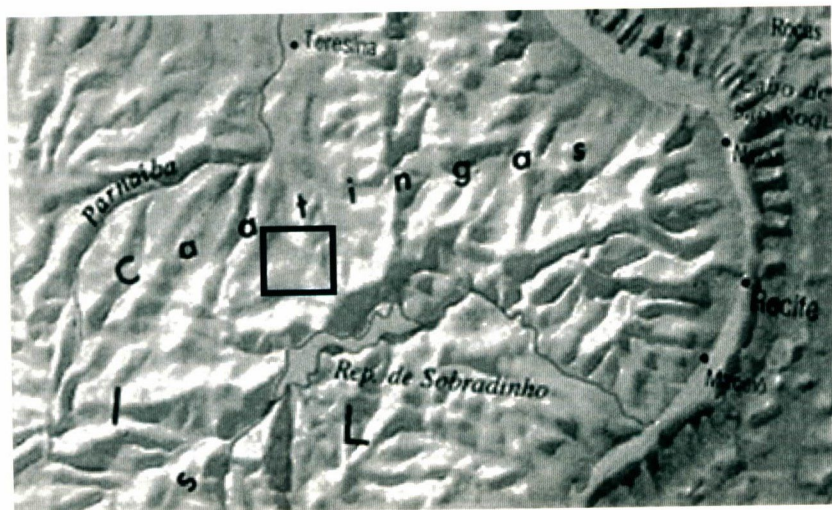
Map 2. Detail of North America showing the range of the Barrier Canyon (right) and Grand Canyon Polychrome (left) Styles.



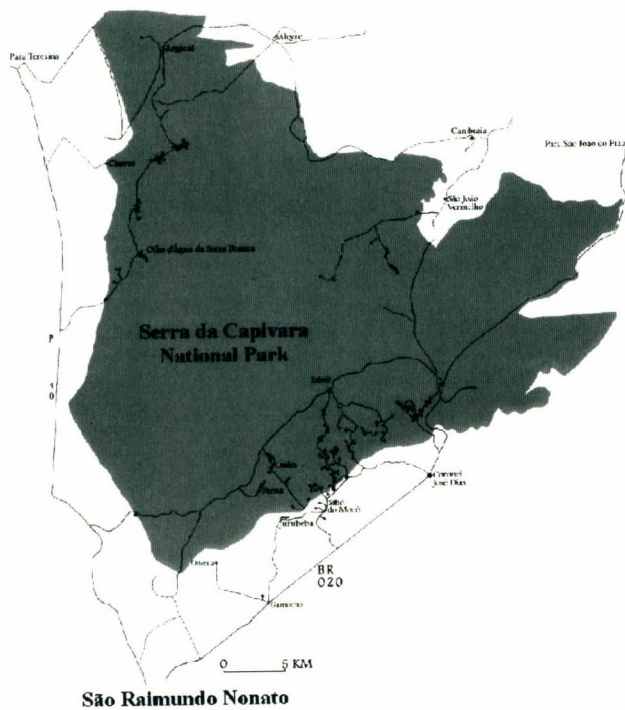
Map 3. Detail of North America showing the range of the Pecos River Style.



Map 4. South America showing the location of the area discussed.



Map 5. Detail of Northeast Brazil showing the São Raimundo Nonato archaeological area.



Map 6. Serra da Capivara National Park.

Site Name / Number	¹⁴ C Date (yr BP)	Lab	Reference
Piauí			
Morcego	2840 ± 100	GIF-5404	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Morcego	4290 ± 110	GIF-5405	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Vento	2790 ± 110	GIF-4924	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Vento	2880 ± 90	GIF-4624	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Vento	2950 ± 110	GIF-4923	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Extrema II	4730 ± 110	GIF-5401	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Extrema II	1420 ± 50	Beta-115911	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Extrema II	3100 ± 50	Beta-115912	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Extrema II	3350 ± 60	Beta-114015	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Extrema II	2960 ± 60	Beta-114016	Guidon [†] ; Martin (1996)
Texas			
41VV75-1	3865 ± 100	ETH-5909	Russ et al (1990)
41VV576-3a	>3000 ± 70	ETH-7047	Russ, Hyman and Rowe (1992)
41VV576-1a	>3355 ± 65	ETH-6962	Russ, Hyman and Rowe (1992)
41VV576-1b	4200 ± 90	AA-7063	Chaffee, Hyman and Rowe (1993)
41VV50-3a	2950 ± 60	AA-8699	Ilger et al (1995)
Utah			
42SA20615-2a	2710 ± 75	AA-9179	Tipps (1995)
42WN418-2a	3400 ± 65	AA-8625	Tipps (1995)
42GR382-1a	2100 ± 50	AA-9116	Tipps (1995)

[†] Guidon, personal correspondence, 7 June 1998.

GIF : Centre des Faibles Radioactivités (CEA-CNRS) - Gif-Sur-Yvette, France.

Beta : Beta Analytic, Inc. - Miami, Florida, USA.

ETH : Institut für Teilchenphysik Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Hönggerberg - Zürich, Switzerland.

AA : NSF-Arizona AMS Laboratory - Tucson, Arizona, USA.

Table 1: Summary of Radiocarbon dates.

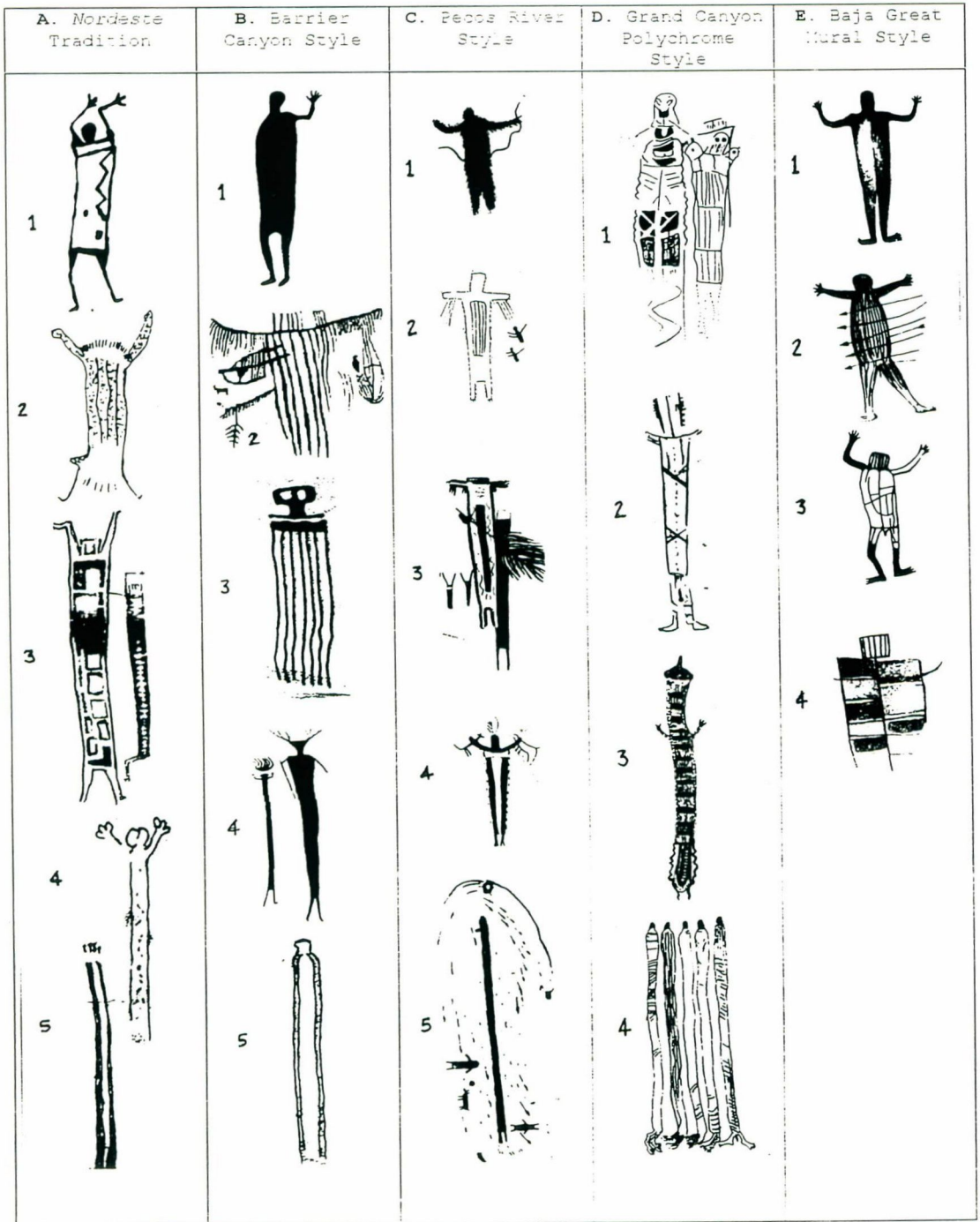


Chart 1. Southwest and Nordeste Similarities:
Anthropomorphic Types

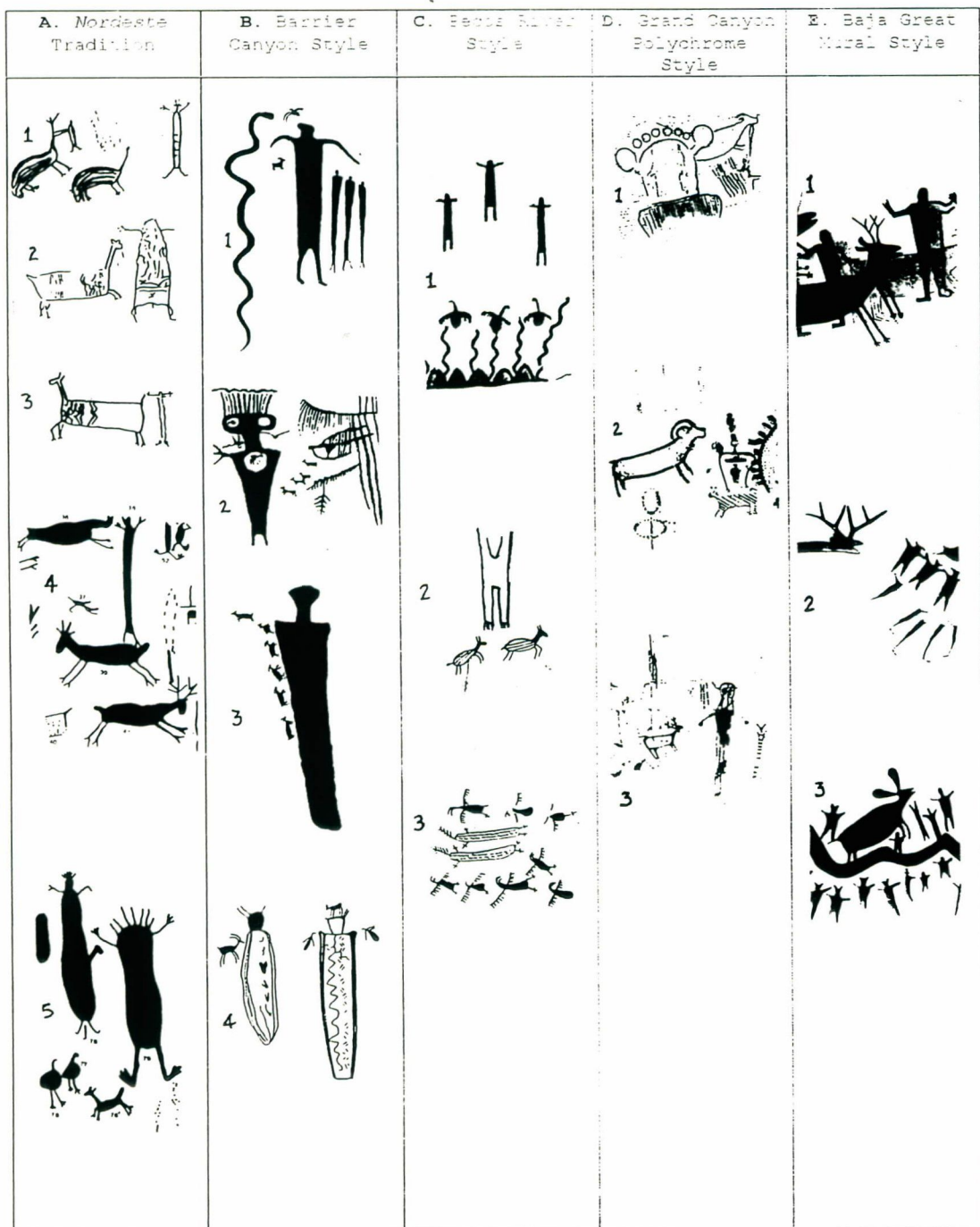


Chart 2. Southwest and Nordeste Similarities:
Relationship to Zoomorphs


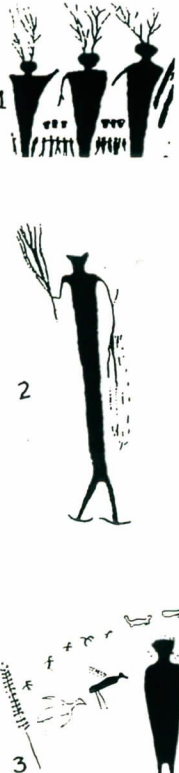
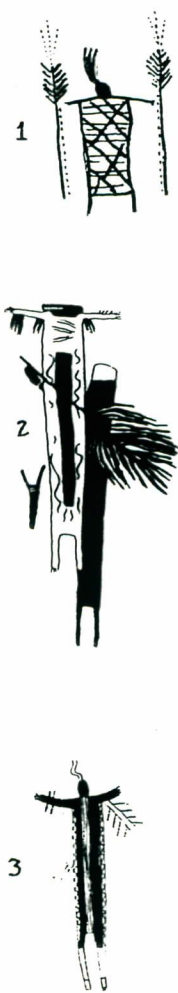

A. <i>Nordeste</i> Tradition	B. Barrier Canyon Style	C. Pecos River Style	D. Grand Canyon Polychrome Style	E. Baja Great Mural Style
				

Chart 3. Southwest and *Nordeste* Similarities:
Relationship to Plant Motifs

<p>A. Nordeste Tradition</p>	
<p>B. Barrier Canyon Style</p>	
<p>C. Pecos River Style</p>	
<p>D. Grand Canyon Polychrome Style</p>	
<p>E. Baja Great Mural Style</p>	

Chart 4. Southwest and Nordeste Similarities:
Composition



Figure 1. Physical context of the rock art. Barrier Canyon Style site, Canyonlands National Park (top); *Nordeste* Tradition site, *Angical* (center); Grand Canyon Polychrome Style site, Shamans' Gallery (bottom.)

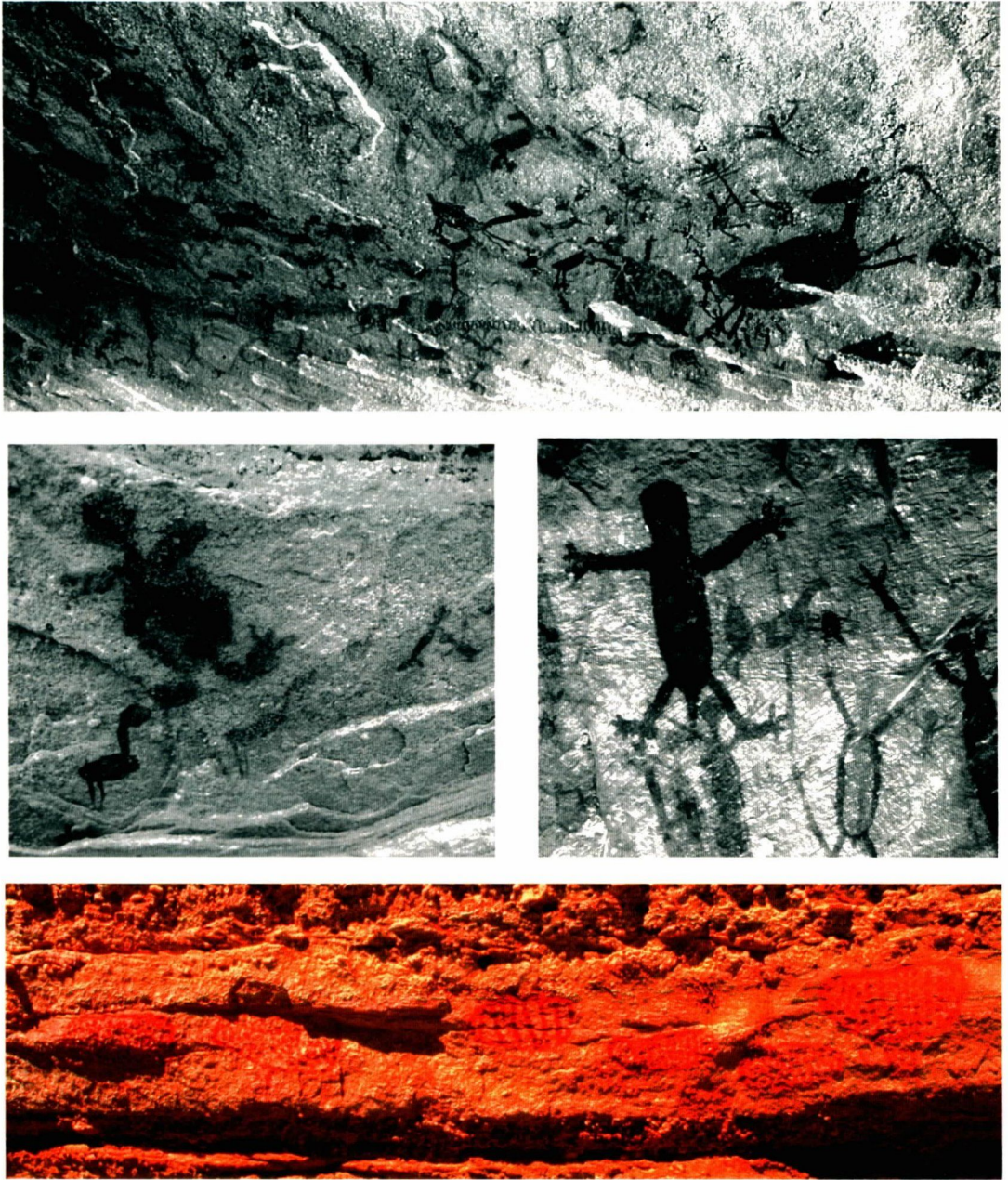


Figure 2. Nordeste Tradition (Varzea Grande Subtradition, Serra da Capivara Style,) *Entrada do Pajaú* (top); Agreste Tradition, *Canoas II* (middle left) and *Extrema II* (middle right); and Geométrica Tradition, *Salitre* (bottom.)

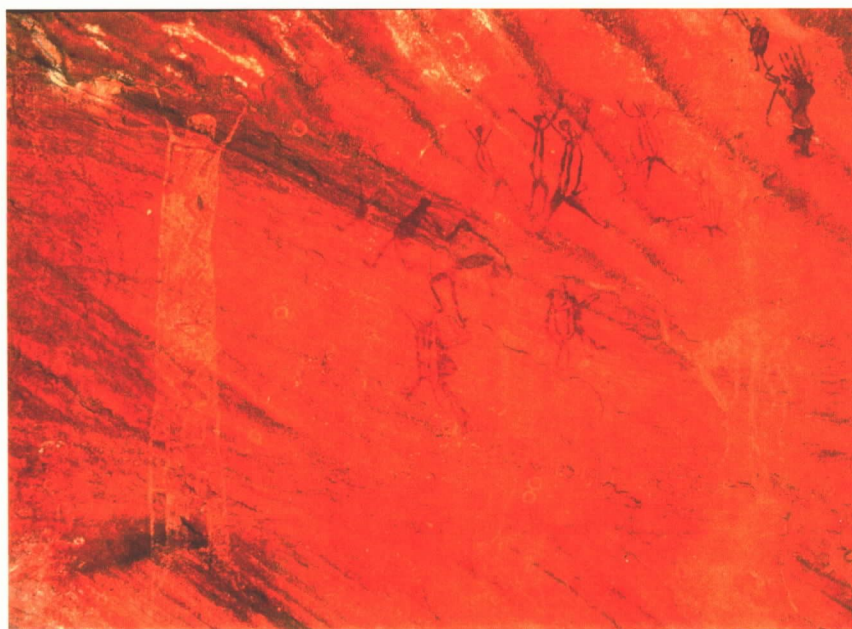
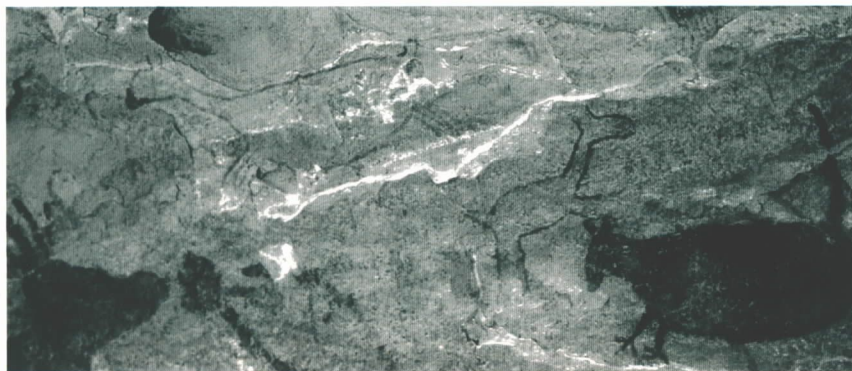


Figure 3. *Varzea Grande* Subtradition, *Serra da Capivara* Style Style, *Entrada do Baixão da Vaca* (top,) and *Serra Branca* Style, *Caboclo* (middle); and *Salitre* Subtradition, *Salitre* (bottom.)



Figure 4. *Angelim do Barreirinho, Piauí (top.)*

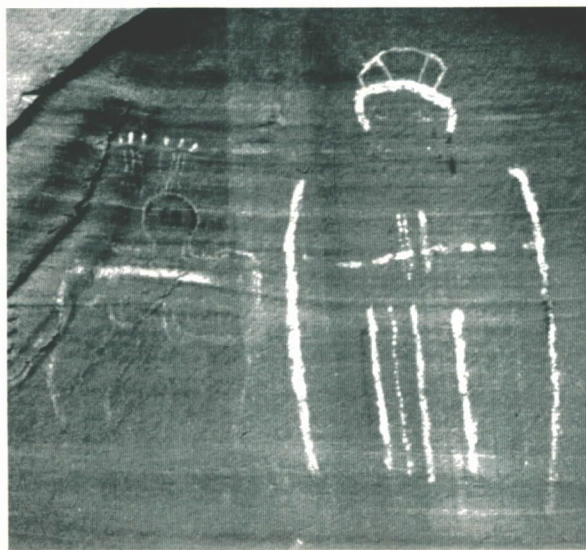
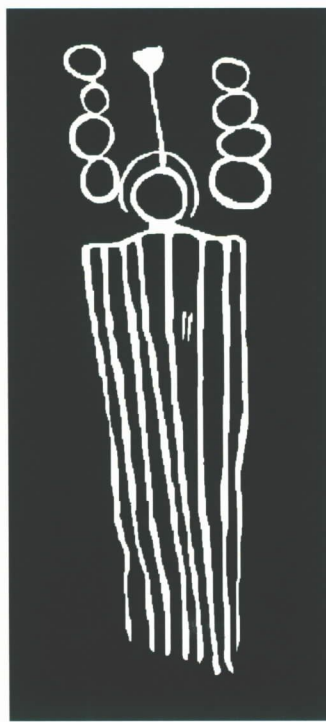
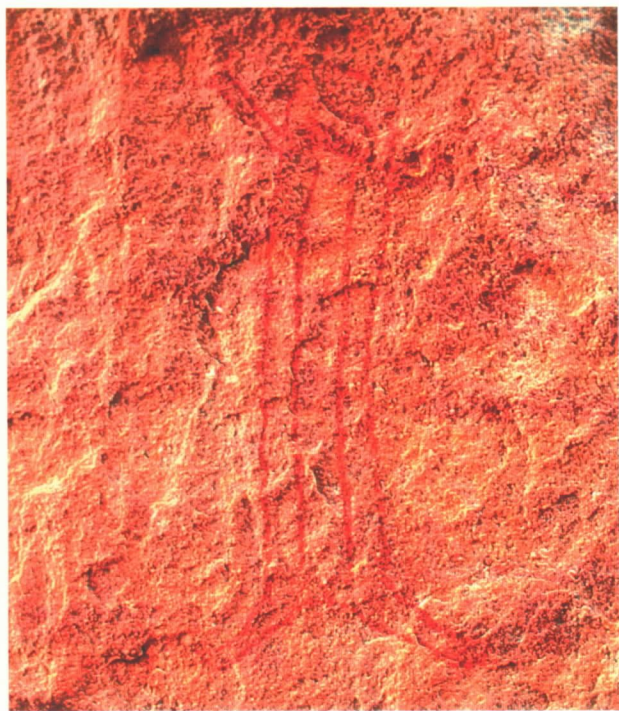


Figure 5. *Caboclo*, Piauí, detail (top left.)

Figure 6. Predominantly white Barrier Canyon Style anthropomorphs. Lavendar Canyon (top right,) Titus Canyon (bottom left,) Salt Creek (bottom right.) Photographs by Blazik, 1998.

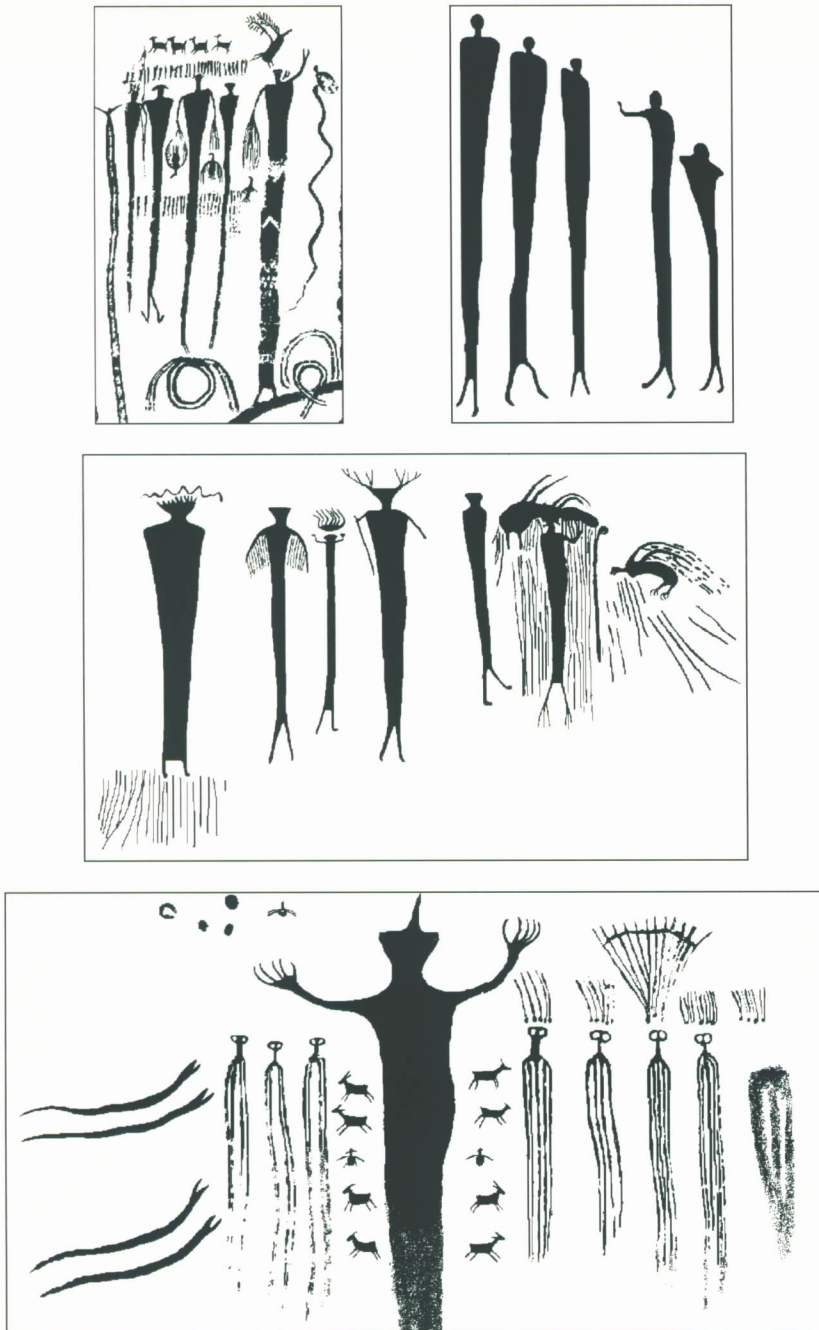


Figure 7. Groups of almost identical Barrier Canyon Style anthropomorphs, Buckhorn Wash (top left,) North Temple Wash (top right,) Virgin Springs (center,) and Molen Seep Wash (bottom.)

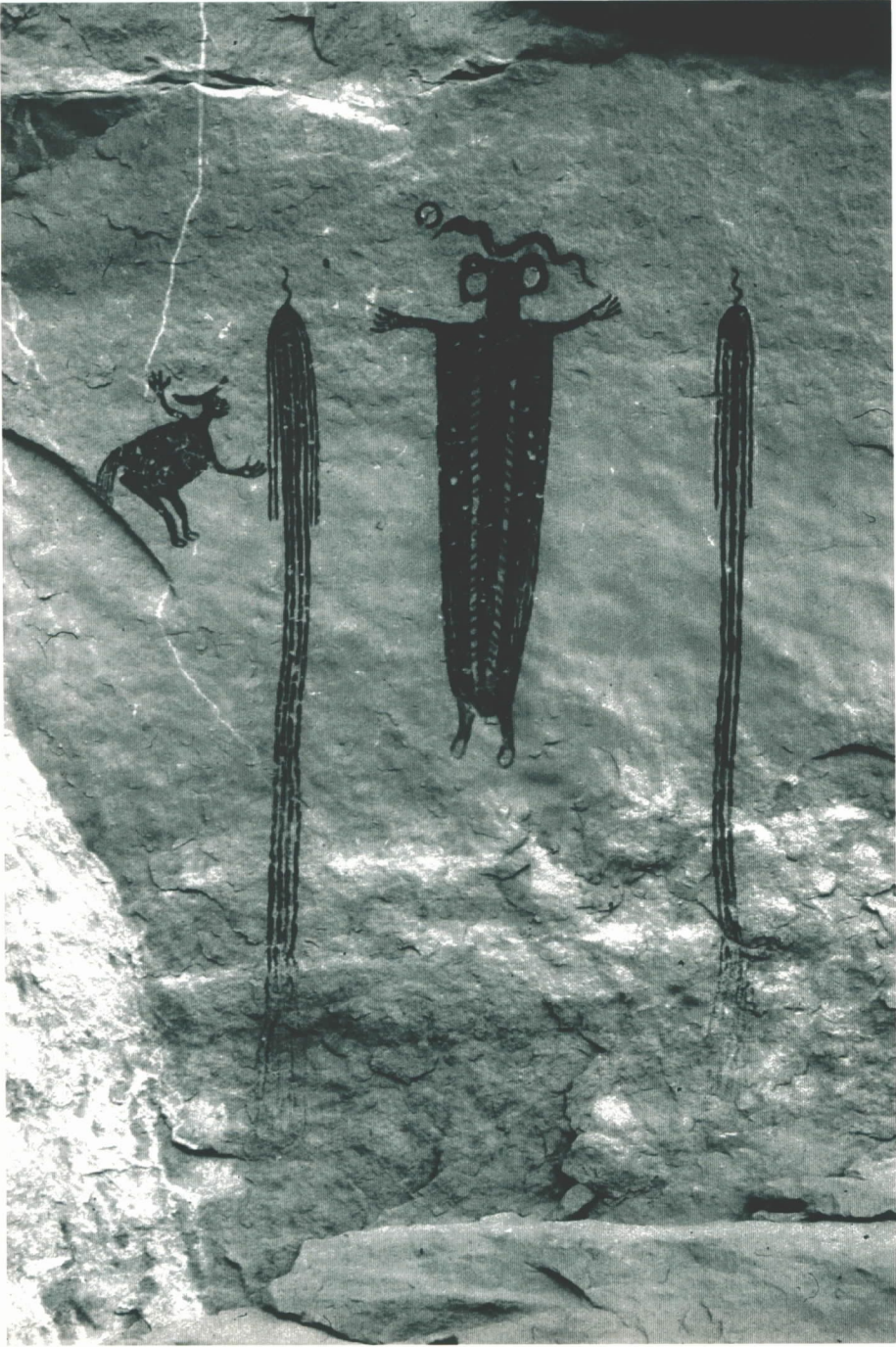


Figure 5. Head of Sinbad, Utah, detail.



Figure 9. *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, Piauí, detail.



Figure 10. Molen Seep Wash, Utah, detail.



Figure 11. *Vento*, Piauí, detail.

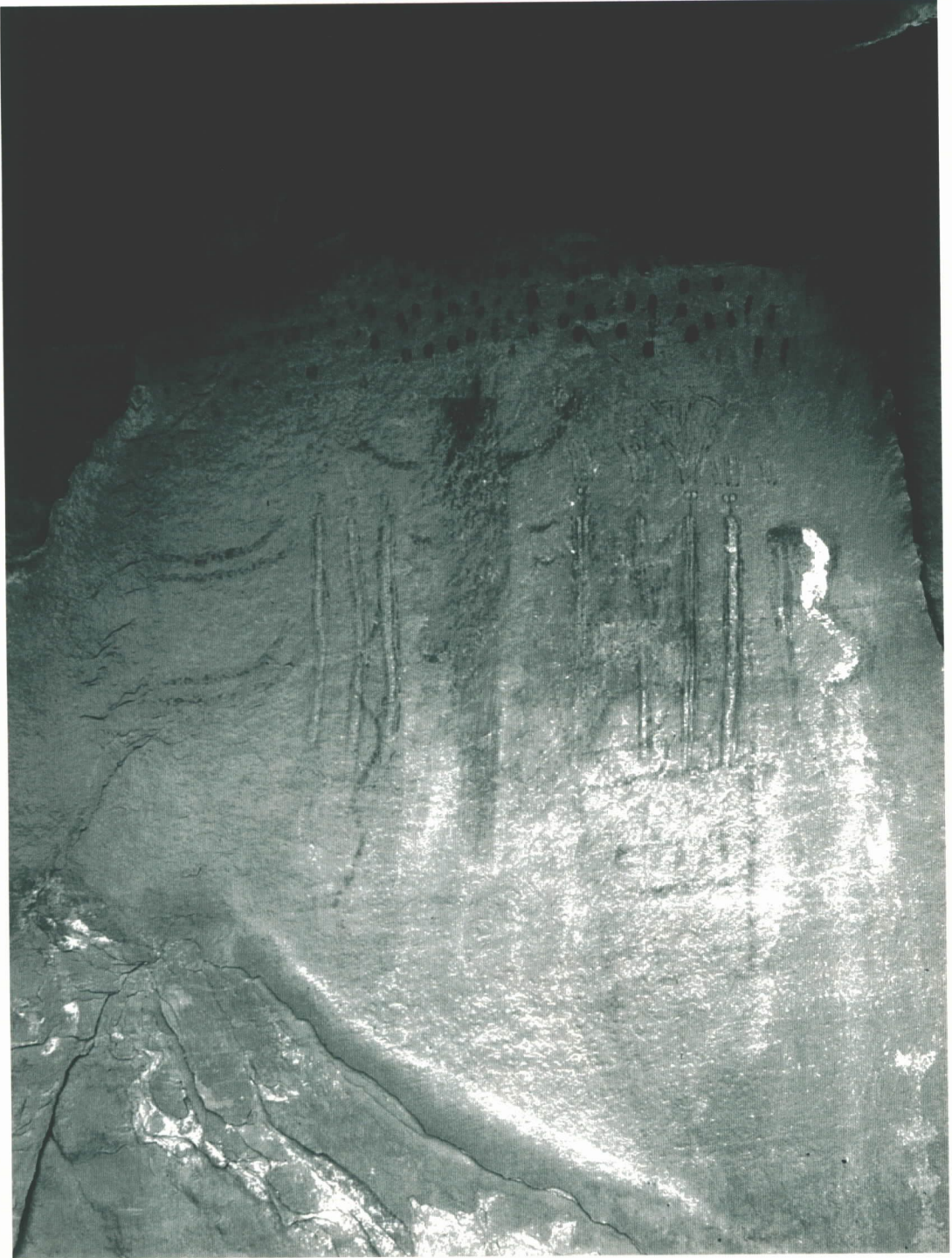


Figure 12. Molen Seep Wash, Utah, group.

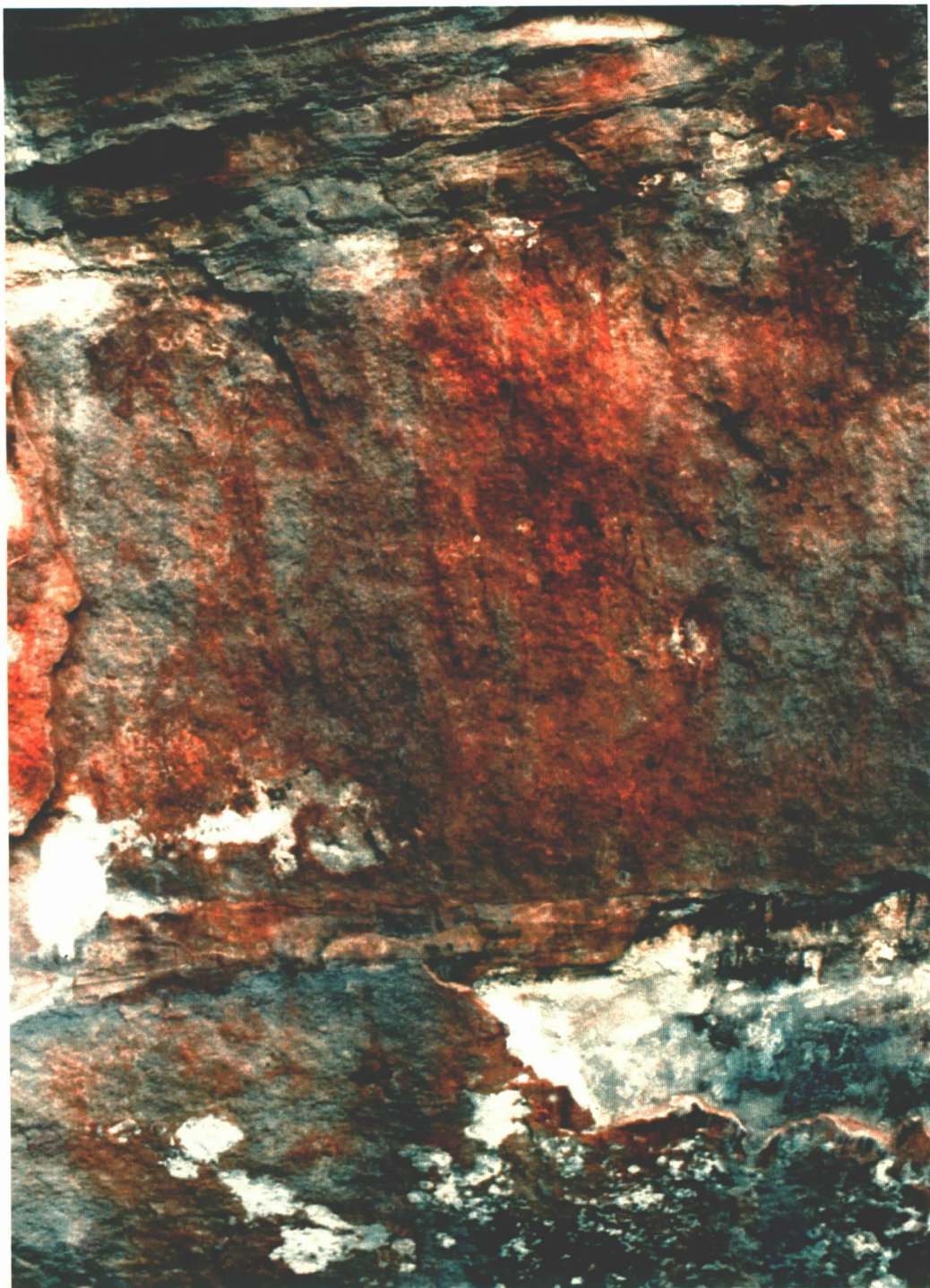


Figure 13. *Vento*, Piauí, group.

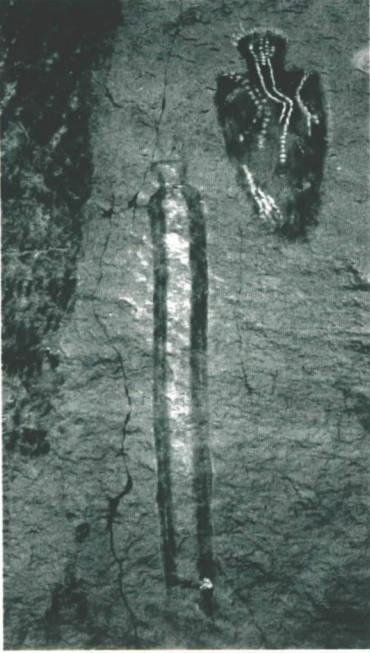


Figure 14. Great Gallery, Utah, detail (left.)
 Figure 15. *Salitre*, Piauí, detail (right.)

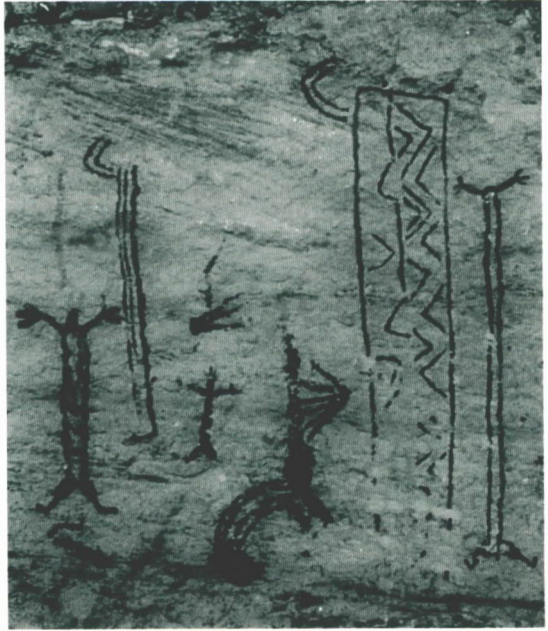
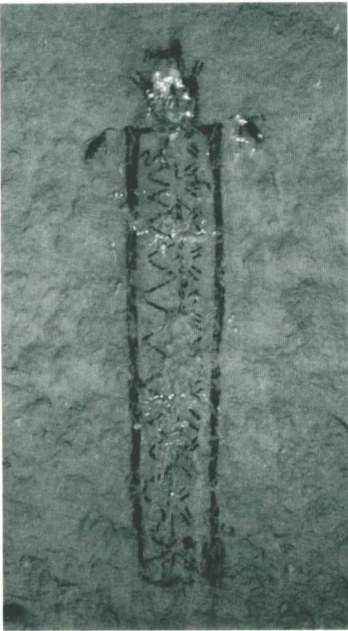


Figure 16. Great Gallery, Utah, detail (left.)
 Figure 17. *Salitre*, Piauí, detail (right.)



Figure 18. Emery County, Utah, group.

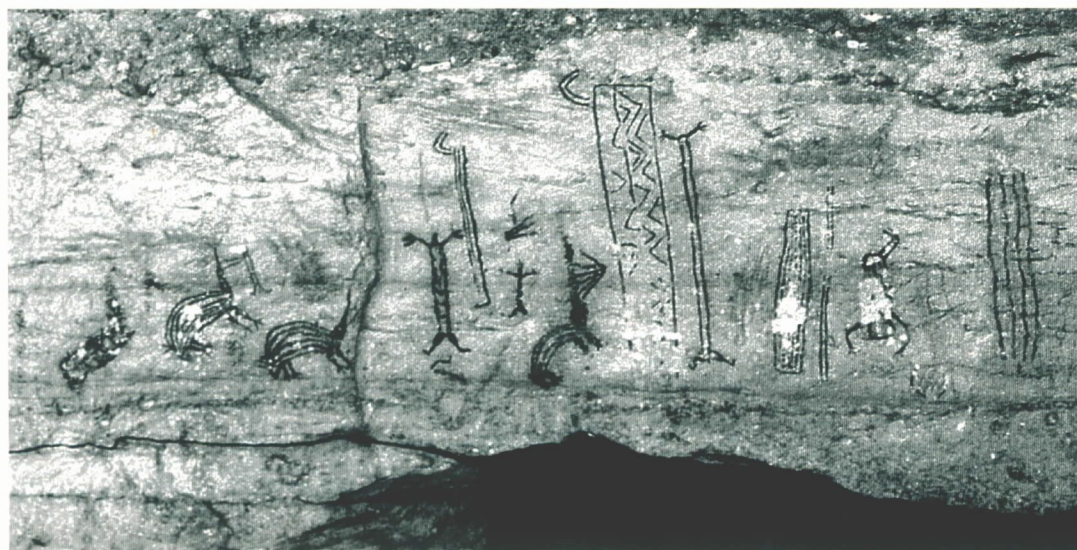


Figure 19. *Salitre*, Piauí, group.



Figure 20. Emery County, Utah, detail.

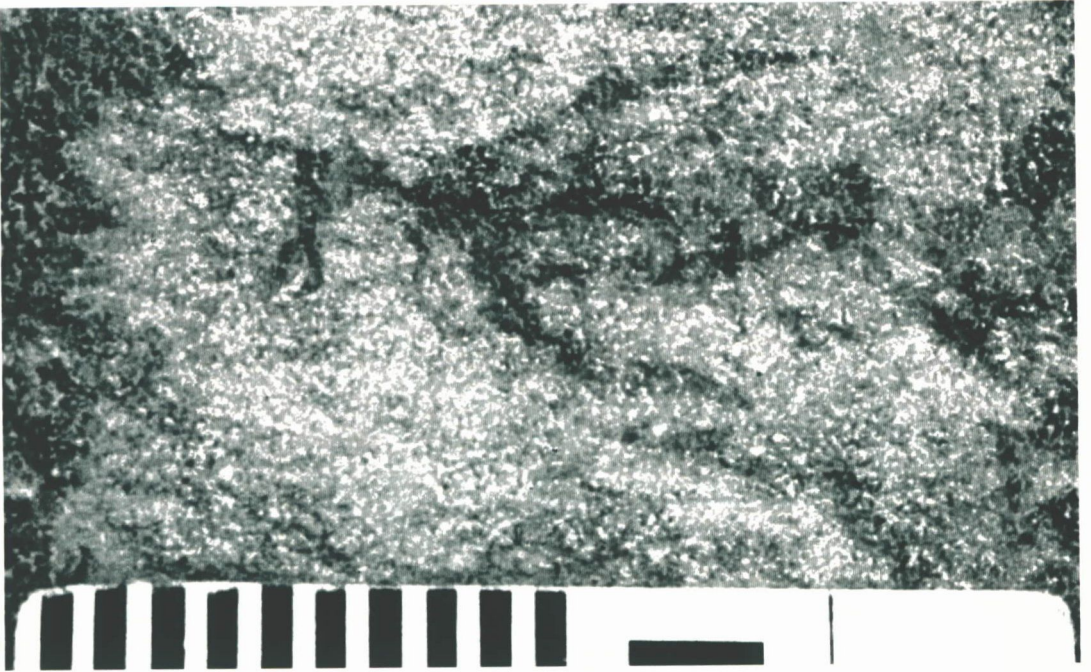


Figure 21. Grand County, Utah, detail of zoomorph (scale is in 2mm intervals.)



Figure 22. Grand County, Utah, detail of anthropomorph.



Figure 23. *Canoas II*, Piauí, detail (scale is in 10mm intervals.)

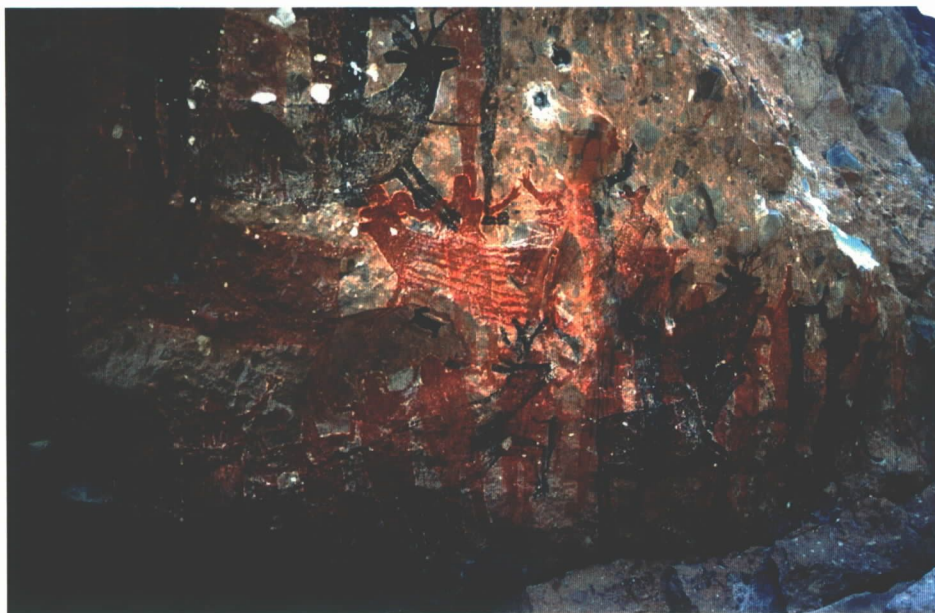


Figure 24. Baja Great Mural Style panel, Cueva Pintada. Photograph by Robert Mark, Rupestrian CyberServices, 1997.

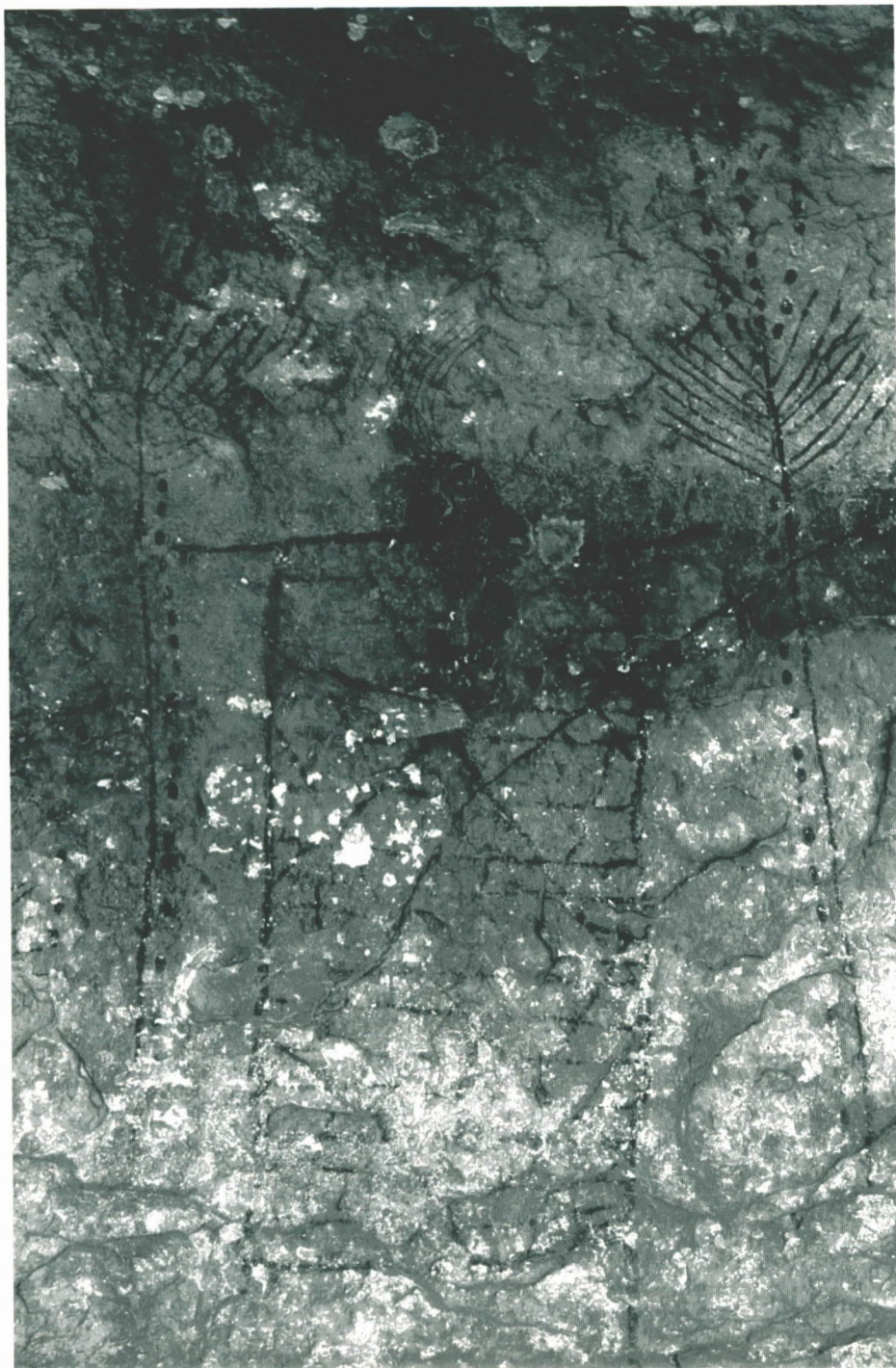


Figure 25. Fate Bell Annex, Texas, detail.



Figure 26. *Morcego*, Piauí, detail.



Figure 27. *Morcego*, Piauí, detail.



Figure 28. *Extrema II*, Piauí, detail.



Figure 29. White Shaman panel, Texas, group.

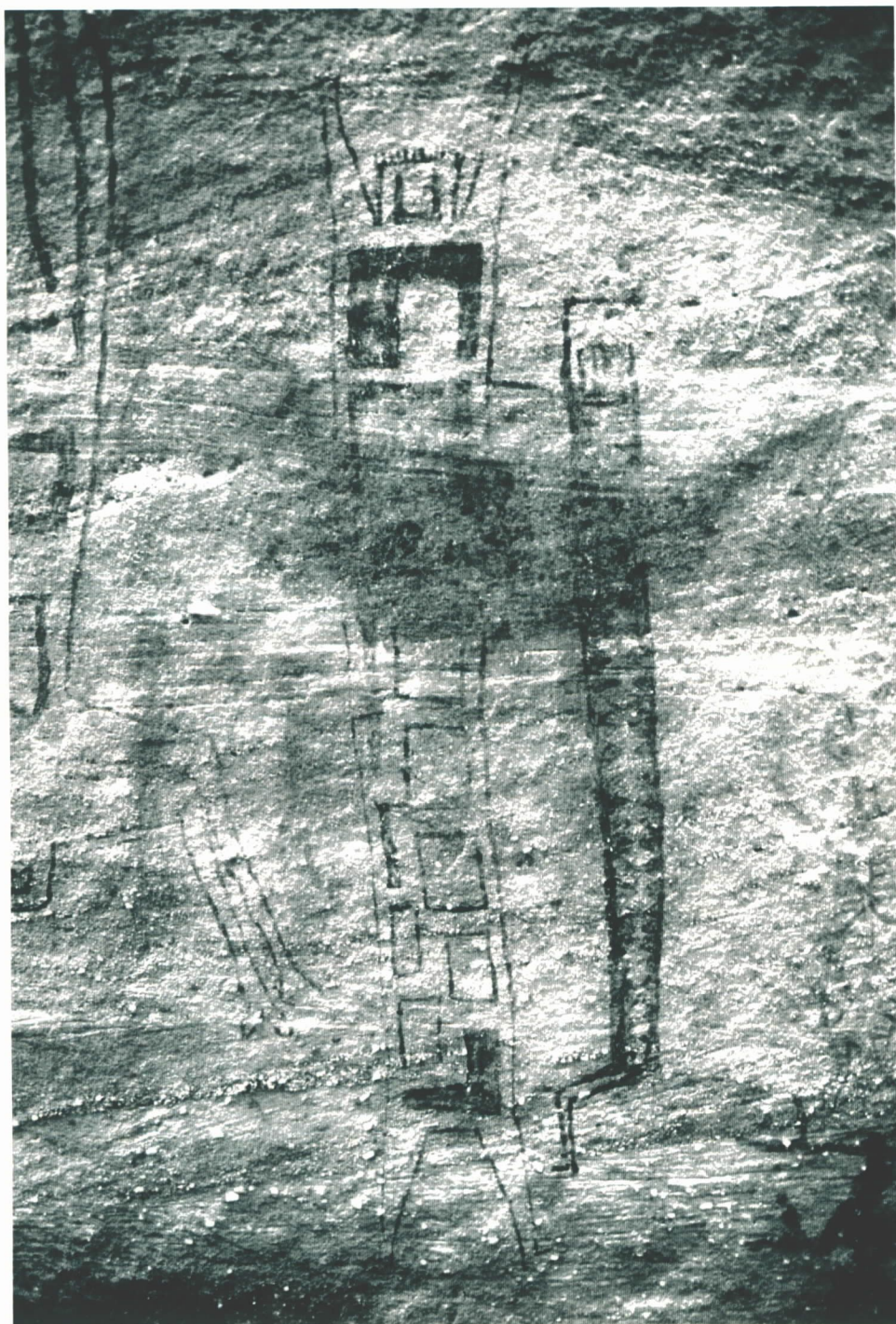


Figure 30. *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, Piauí, detail.



Figure 31. Shamans' Gallery, Arizona, left side of panel.



Figure 32. Shamans' Gallery, Arizona, center of panel.



Figure 33. Shamans' Gallery, Arizona, detail.

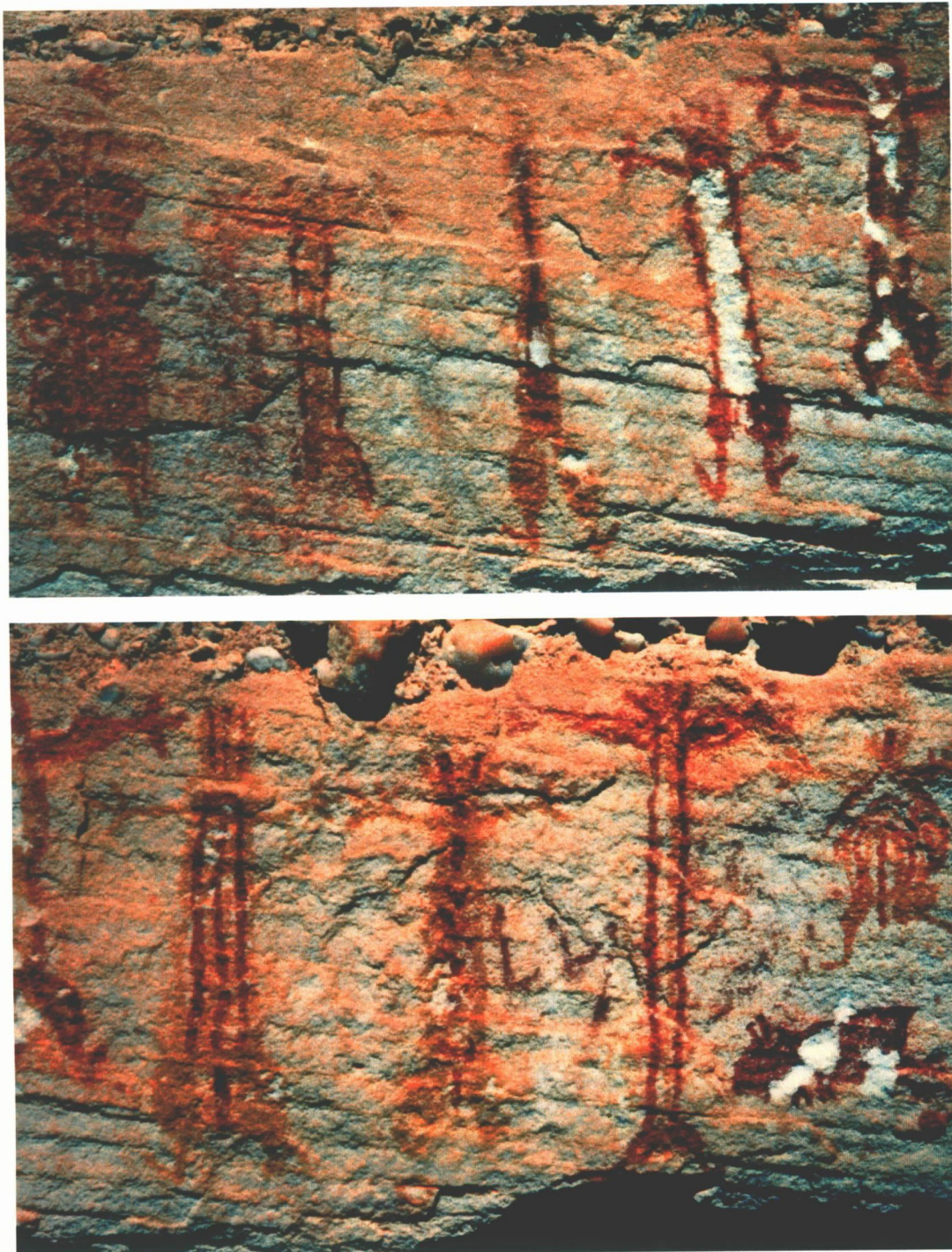


Figure 34. *Salitre*, Piauí, detail of panel.



Figure 35. *Extrema II*, Piauí, detail.

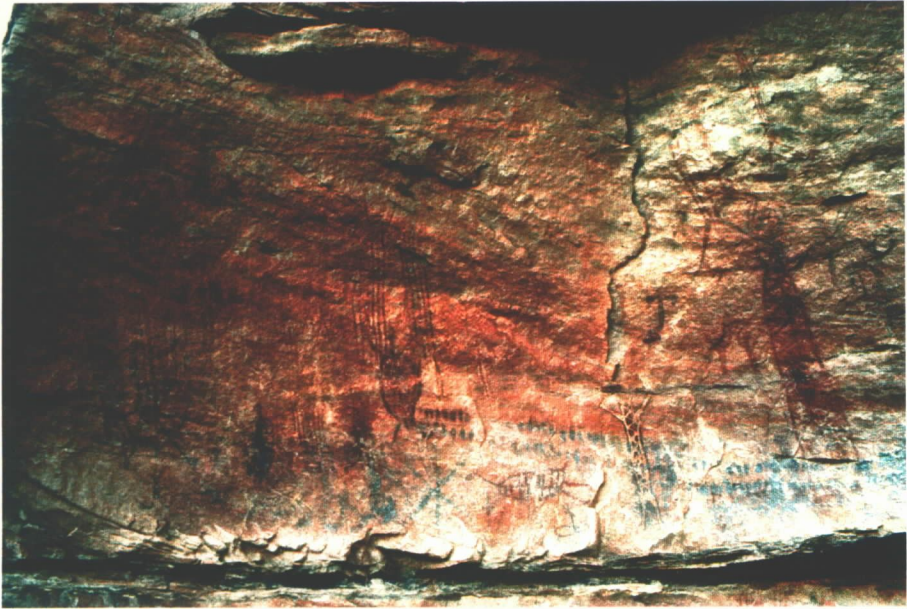


Figure 36. *Caldeirão da Vaca I*, Piauí, detail of panel.



Figure 37. *Caldeirão da Vaca I*, Piauí, detail.

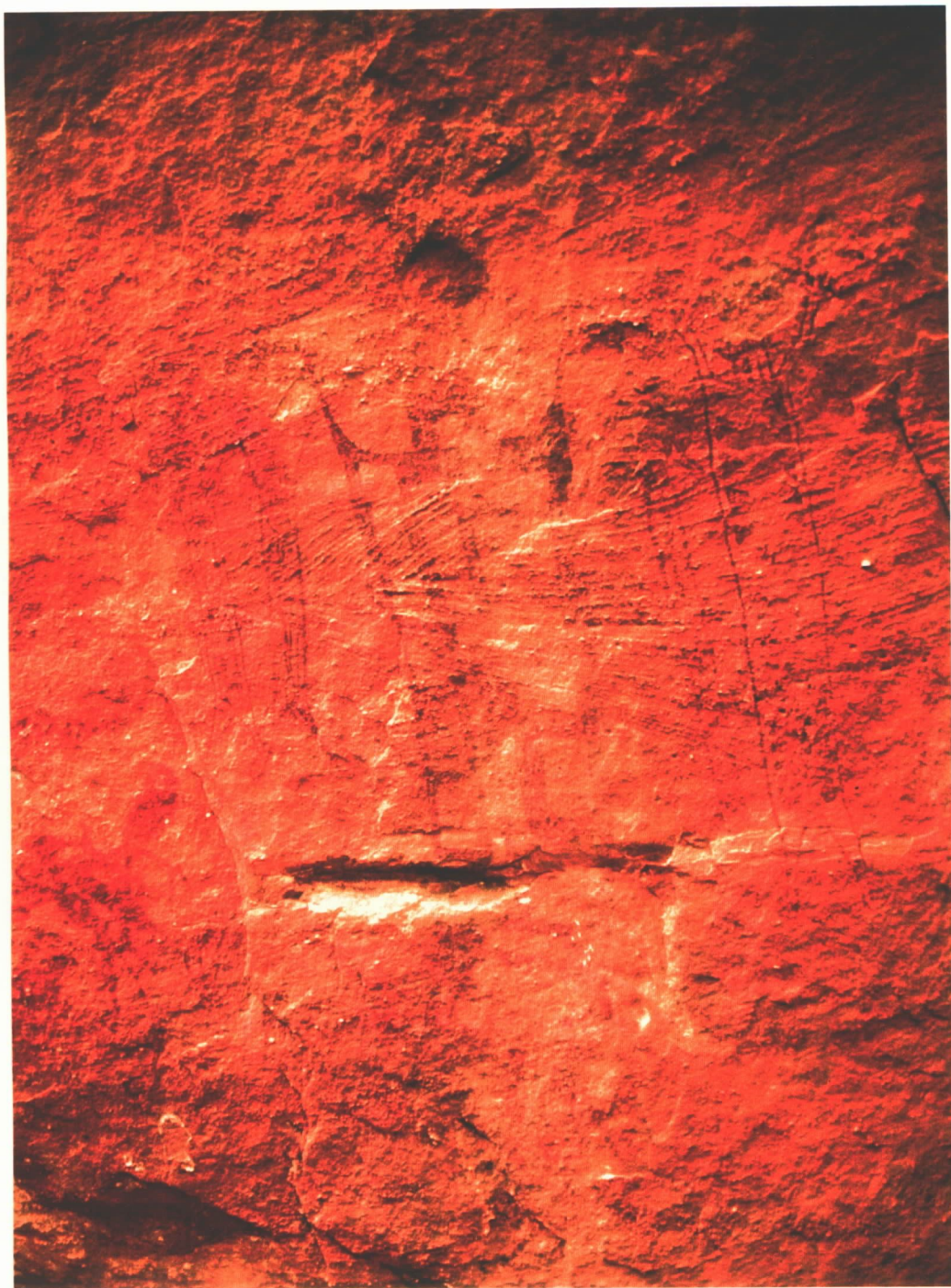


Figure 38. *Boqueirão do Paraguaio II*, Piauí, main anthropomorph group with large central figure (approx. 4 feet tall.)

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