

Rosy Canyon – Lower Ravens Crack

Lower Ravens Crack is a narrow slot canyon that empties into Rosy Canyon. The surrounding terrain is all “slick rock” with juniper and pinion pine vegetation, Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1



Figure 2

There is a glyph at the entrance to the canyon, Figure 3. *“This scene appears to be the familiar Anasazi/Ancestral Puebloan migration story. The anthropomorph looks like the Hopi god, Masau, telling the people about their mandate to migrate. The anthro is Masau in his earth form, here in this world, not a previous one, because of the square head (earth symbol), and because his arms and legs are pointing down toward the earth. But this might also indicate some wishful thinking on the part the shaman who made the glyph- hoping that all the journeys to the 4 directions were complete, and that this canyon was now the true "Center Place", the home where they could settle. Sadly, we know that this was not true, as the drought in 1100-1150 forced them to move on.”* (courtesy of Kat Johnson). Note that the journey symbols are rectangular spirals rather than round.



Figure 3

Figure 4 is an image further up the canyon. Next to it, Figure 5, is some severe flaking of the cliff face, but it looks like some of the flaking could have been glyphs – use your imagination.

Further into the slot portion of the canyon are glyphs on the left side. Figure 6 is an elk with a couple of sheep with extremely large horns. These glyphs are difficult to see because the rock face is good and the glyphs appear to be completely repatinated.

Below is a set of spirals with horizontal wavy lines going in opposite directions, Figure 7. The rock and glyphs are badly eroded because they are low on the wall and are affected by water flow during rainy periods.



Figure 4

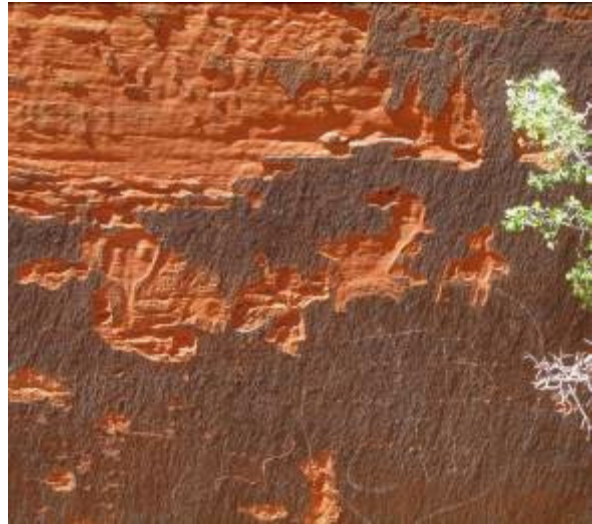


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

Figure 8 shows the main panel in the slot. The glyphs at the far end are completely repatinated, while the nearer glyphs appear to be newer.

Figure 9 shows the image of coyote where the individual peck marks are shown.

Figure 10 shows an abstract design that is connected to the sheep and turkey track in Figure 11. The wavy lines in Figure 11 are connected to the three vertical turkey tracks in Figure 12. A foot symbol or bear paw is shown in Figure 11. All of these glyphs are completely repatinated and very difficult to see.



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

Figure 13 is a complex image consisting of what could be old glyphs modified with newer images. The central image is what appears to be a duck sitting on top of the head of an anthro. This figure is connected to a newer area and what appears to be spider woman. Below, Figure 14, are two images, what appears to be a deer or a sheep and what could be a human in a sitting position, perhaps playing the flute. The motif of a duck sitting on the head of an anthro is not that unusual. In fact, another site in Rosy Canyon, the Basket Site, has a pictograph with the same design, Figure 15. These motifs tell the story of Kiaklo and the Duck, a well known story from Native American mythology.

Per Kat Johnson: *"The original epic legend of Kiaklo and the Duck was recorded in detail by ethnographer Frank Cushing. To make a very long story much shorter: Kiaklo was a hero who went looking for the Center Place for his people. He went too far north, became blinded by snow, and was guided home by the wise and kind Duck."*

Figure 16 shows the Ravens Crack twist on the original Kiaklo and Duck story- while Figure 17 illustrates the point that while the top figure is indeed the Duck, the bottom figure is far more likely to be the Zuni kachina known as the Shalako, the awesomely tall star performer with the scary clacking beak, who appears in the Shalako Ceremony. This ceremony is held around the time of Winter Solstice, when the ancestors' spirits return home to Zuni pueblo. So- why this twist on the original story? Why not? Stories change as customs change, and obviously, we don't know all the stories..... We've seen this rock art variation in a few other areas, but the Duck is not talking to us.

The “Spider Woman” symbol is important because she is a key part of the creation story in many Native American cultures. A tip regarding identification of Spider Woman (or Spider Grandmother as she is sometimes called) - there's no need to count legs or worry if there are not exactly 8! It is the concept of "legginess" that is important in the depiction. Often you will see an accompanying web or egg case."

This site illustrates the importance of knowing Native American mythology in order to understand the rock art.



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

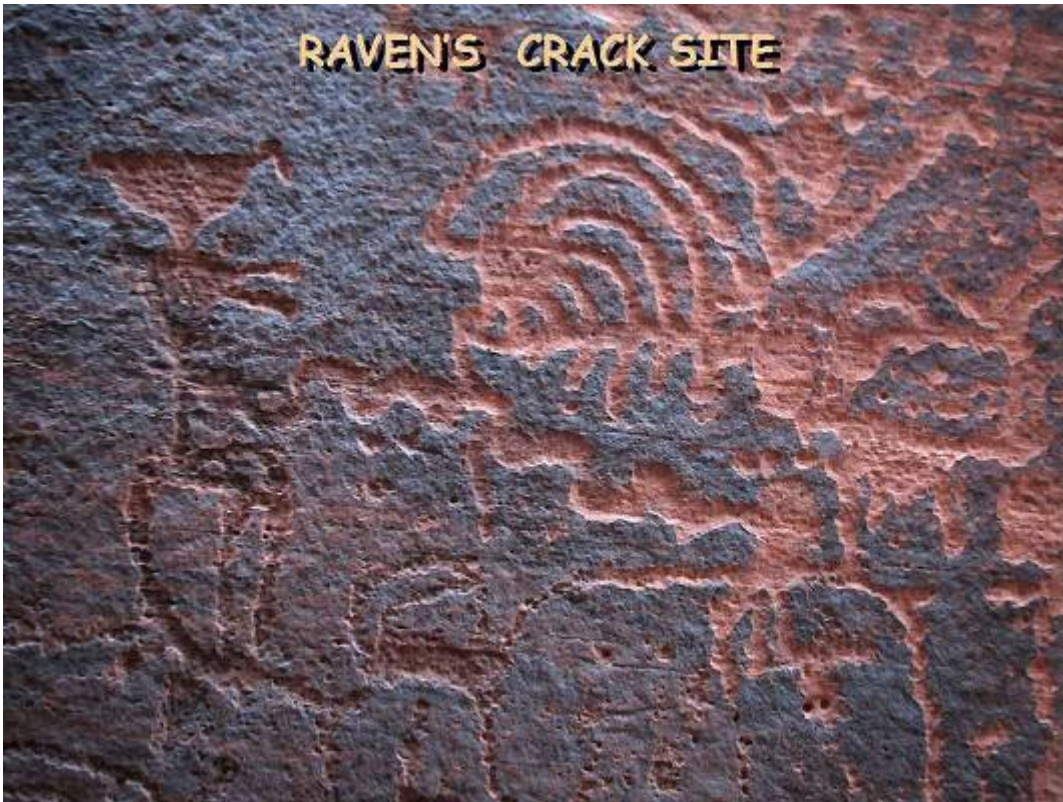


Figure 16

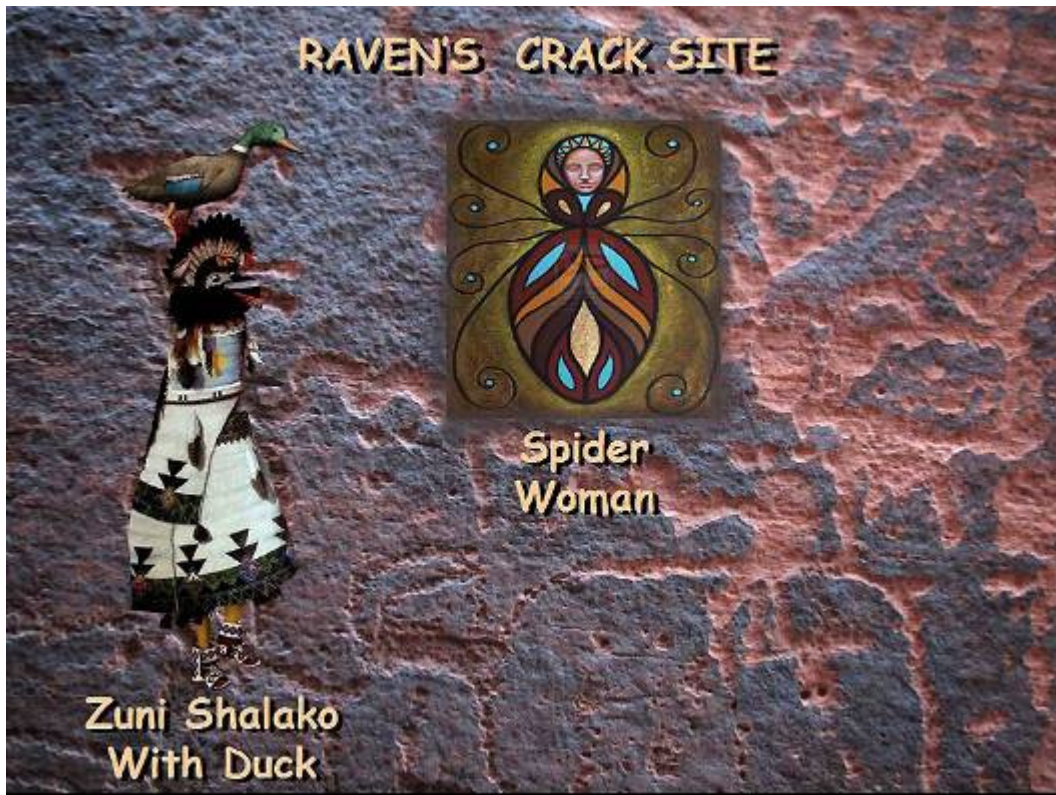


Figure 17

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John Mangels