

Canaan Gap

The Canaan Gap petroglyph site is located on a cliff face east of Little Creek mesa and south of Smithsonian butte (two other prominent petroglyph sites).

Figure 1 shows the general area from the top of the mesa directly over the main petroglyph site. This area contains evidence of habitation; pit house ruins, fire pits, etc.



Figure 1

There are four main petroglyph panels and some lesser, isolated glyphs. The glyphs are very well defined. They are deeper than “normal” glyphs. It is thought the reason for this was that once the patina layer on the rock was penetrated, the glyphs eroded to a greater depth due to wind erosion. For this reason, the glyphs at this site are called “cookie cutter” glyphs.

Panel 1

Panel 1 is shown in Figure 2. The glyphs on panel 1 consist of anthros and sheep. The anthros most likely are in the form of spirit beings (no hands or feet) and have a somewhat “ghost like” appearance.



Figure 2

Panel 2

Panel 2 (Figure 3) is perhaps the most dramatic panel that we can see in the St. George area. It is a very large panel and has what seems to be only one idea.

The first surprising thing is that this entire rock face is void of glyphs, which indicates that the idea of the glyphs shown was very important – no one wanted to distract from the idea.

It begins (Figure 4 and Figure 5) with an anthro next to a closed circle and an open circle with two horizontal lines coming off the diameter of the circle. There are two other horizontal lines above the anthro. The circles are connected to lines which run until they reach a crack in the rock, where they converge. The pecking of the glyph then follows the crack downward and continues at the bottom of the panel where the crack in the rock branches. Some extraneous dots are present and are thought to be bullet holes in the rock.

At the far right of the panel are four glyphs (Figure 6). They are a star, an anthro, a horizontal line and what looks to be a lamp shaped object with a line and closed circle above the “lamp”.

There is no idea of the meaning and whether the figures to the right are part of the story. However the panel is very dramatic and shows movement and energy.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Panel 3

Panel 3, (Figure 7), is also a very dramatic panel, especially with the clarity of the light colored glyphs on the very dark patina. The detailed panel is shown from left to right in Figures 8 through 11.

The images are again very unique. Figure 11 shows a coyote in great detail, drawn in perspective from the rear. Next to it is an image of a bear, one of the only ones seen in the St. George area. Next to it is a two headed sheep (Figure 11 and 12). Below it is shown another sheep (Figure 11 and 12) with its horns pecked in as if it were part of a closed arc.

Figure 13 shows the same type of sheep with its horns expressed as a closed arc. However it is connected to a stylized anthro with a triangular shaped body with the arms and legs extending away from the body.

There was no over writing of the images, which is unusual for a panel having a large number of images. It is also unusual that all of the images are written within the dark patina band of the rock face.



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Figure 11 shows anthros with different body types, an arrow pointing down, a vertical serpent pointing down and perhaps two foot prints or bear paws.



Figure 10



Figure 11

Panel 4

Panel 12 is the largest panel at this site and contains the largest number of glyphs. Again, the panel is composed primarily of anthros and sheep. Interestingly, the largest figures, in the center, have the lightest color and have the deepest marks. Note, some of the body styles are rectangular and some are triangular (cave valley style). The largest figure, Figure 4, has a rectangular body, a round head with perhaps one eye (profile view) and a head dress.

At the far left of the panel, Figure 13, there is a prominent “falling man” that has no head (deceased).

There are some interesting minor images on this panel. Figure 14 shows another sheep going in two directions (two heads with one body) on the lower right with light color. There is also what appears to be a water bird (center).

The various styles of figures indicate multiple artists. However there is no over writing of the glyphs indicating that they were probably all made at near the same time by perhaps the same group of people. The sylphs appear to be better defined than those in panel 1.



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

Figure 16 shows a boulder below the cliff face that illustrates the severity of the erosion within a glyph.



Figure 16

Not all of the glyphs on the west side of the site are the “cookie cutter” type (Figure 17 through 19).

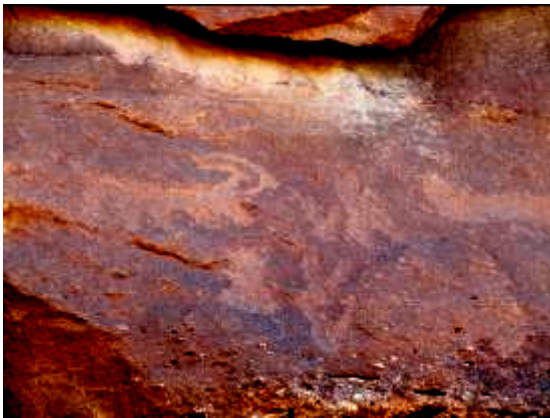


Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

East Facing Site

Moving from the west facing portion of the cliff face around to the east side are additional glyphs of a completely different style and perhaps age.

Figure 20 shows sheep, partially covered with patina.



Figure 20

Figure 21 shows glyphs that are completely covered with patina, so much so that the glyphs are almost invisible. One can see a serpent and what looks like a “turtle” along with some other glyphs that cannot be identified. These must be very old.

Figure 22 shows a serpent, which marks the end of the glyphs at this site.

Figure 23 shows a series of sharpening marks made in the rock. This was located in a small alcove at ground level.

Summary

The Canaan Gap site really seems like two very separate sites. Panels 1 through 4 appear to be from the same time period and are directly below the habitation sites identified on the top of the mesa. The glyphs are very well defined and the artistic style is unique. The subject matter of the glyphs is fairly limited to anthros and sheep with some limited exceptions. None of the panel experienced any over writing of the glyphs, another unique feature.

Not all of the glyphs on the west side of the west side of the site are the “cookie cutter” type. This could be due to different people at a different time or merely a different type of rock? However the artistic style appears different.

The glyphs on the east side of the mesa, are completely different and likely older. The artistic style is completely different from the “cookie cutter” glyphs.



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23