

Gunlock Road

Gunlock road runs along the Santa Clara River, past the Gunlock reservoir to the town of Gunlock, Utah. The river is at the base of a wide canyon, with black basalt on the east and red rock on the west. The canyon widens as you progress toward the reservoir, leading to a large valley on the west.



There are a number of sites along the road including many that show signs of being habitation sites. Most of the petroglyphs are located on individual rocks, with some sites having only one or two rocks with glyphs. This report will highlight only the more significant sites or the more interesting glyphs.

The Hilltop Site

The hilltop site is a mesa overlooking the river with panoramic views up and down the river valley. This was a major habitation site with the outlines of a large pit house (Figure 1) and rectangular room blocks.



Figure 1

One rock looked like it could have been a seat for a “sun watcher” in that it had a perfect view of the eastern horizon from which to watch the sunrise (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Susan sitting on the sun watcher seat

This site has the largest number and some of the most spectacular petroglyphs of the Gunlock road sites. Figures 3 through 7 show some of the more interesting glyphs on the site.



Figure 3 - Anthropomorph



Figure 4 - Falling Man



Figure 5 - Large serpent (top) - Unknown type of quadruped on the bottom left



Figure 6 - Water Bird



Figure 7 - Coyote (?)



Figure 8 a)



Figure 8 b)

The image on the right, Figure 8b, appears to be of an infant (deceased). The image on the left, 8a, shows the deceased infant with two small feet (one with 5 toes and one with 3 toes) in close proximity (those of the infant?). This rock was just below a series of rectangular room blocks (perhaps the infant's home?).

The most spectacular rock on Gunlock Road and perhaps in the St. George area is shown in Figure 9. It has glyphs on all four sides plus the top. However there is no over writing of the glyphs – indicating to me that the story was very important to the people. This rock is difficult to photograph because of its location on the edge of a cliff face – it seems as if you are always shooting into the sun.



Figure 9



Figure 10 –

Figure 10 is a close up of the anthros on the main rock. Note the “power lines” emanating from the figure in the left center. Note how they go around one of the figures above him.

Note also the arm positions of the figures – some up and some down. The figures in the center are well defined while the figures on the far right are less defined.



Figure 11 –

The figure on the bottom left of Figure 11 appears in some sort of “maze”; Note also his large hands and fingers. Note the song glyph on the bottom center. There are at least two other song glyphs on this rock.



Figure 12

The “power line” motif in Figure12 appears to be very popular here and in other locations on Gunlock road. The song glyph motif (three connected paw shaped symbols) is unique.

There is a story connected with this portion of the rock and is summarized in Figure 13)

THE GUNLOCK SERPENT SONG/STORY



The “Song Glyph” symbols were a reminder of how the story was to be sung/charted/told, in order to pass it on correctly to the next generation.

Figure 13 - The serpent song / story is courtesy of Kat and Boma Johnson.

The figure above shows the other two sides of the main rock. The story starts with the spiral and continues around the rock

Figure 14 shows the other two sides of the main rock. Another story likely starts with the spiral and continues around the rock.



Figure 14 Susan and Ron viewing the main rock at the Hill Top site



Figure 15 a)



Figure 15 b)

Figure 14b, shows a spiral (one of the few seen on Gunlock road) and begins a trail (map) that continues around the rock. There are some sheep on this face of the rock. Figure 14a, is a close up of the left side of the rock. There are sheep, a bear paw and a water bird along side a continuation of a trail that starts at the spiral. The sheep symbols are some of the few images of sheep found on Gunlock road.

Sun Watcher Site

The “sun watcher” site, like the Hill Top site was a large habitation site. Figure 16 shows the outline of a rectangular room block, with at least two room. The large rock in the foreground defines one corner of the structure. The rocks on the right define a separation in the rooms and the person standing in the distance defines the opposite corner.



Figure 16 –

This site also contains a sun watcher or sky watcher seat, Figure 17, with unobstructed views of both the east and the west horizon



Figure 17 – Susan next to the sun / sky watcher seat

The site contains a number of isolated glyphs, however the major glyphs are on one “pile” of rocks, Figure 18.



Figure 18 – location of the major glyphs at the sun watcher site



Figure 19

Figure 19 shows two serpents (ascending ?) together with an anthro. The anthro appears to be surrounded by dots (stars – perhaps in the form of the constellation Pleiades?). He also appears to be standing on an inverted horse shoe shape.

Figure 20 and 21 are abstract shapes that are on two adjacent faces of the same rock. The image in Figure 20 can be drawn with continuous starting in the center. There is an opening at about “10 o’clock” that may be significant. The image in Figure 21 has what look to be similar elements, however it is not drawn as clearly as Figure 20. They look to be drawn by the same artist.



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

The image in Figure 22 is a small glyph on a single boulder. This was included because the design is unique to the area and the glyph looks to have been rubbed rather than pecked.

Small Site

The small site consists of a set of images on one large rock, Figure 23. The images on the center and right of Figure 23 are unknown.



Figure 23

The detail of the left side of the rock is shown in Figure 24. Figure 24 consists of two ascending serpents that transform into anthros (the story of the twins representing good and evil?). The anthros appear to be added due to the lighter colored patina. The serpent on the right appears to have come out of a portal and traveled down before reversing direction and traveling up – his arms are facing down. The serpent on the left appears to be traveling up. His arms are facing up and his head could be a portal. There are four “spirit” glyphs surrounding the serpents.



Figure 24

Running Man Site

The running man site consists of one rock, Figure 25. Here we see a spiral, an abstract design that could be a map and a number of anthros – some with arms up, some with arms down, some with large fingers and toes. However many are shown in profile and appear to be running. The site is named after the anthro in Figure 26 that shows the running pose almost perfectly.



Figure 25



Figure 26

Reservoir Site

The reservoir site overlooks Gunlock Lake. There are three separate rocks containing glyphs. The main rock is shown in Figure 27. The glyphs on this rock appear to be very old and are covered with patina. The designs are generally abstract. There is one spiral that appears to be the same age as most of the glyphs. Two glyphs appear to be newer; an anthro on the top right with a square head and body (unique) and a circle with a cross in the center (tp tight). This could be a Hopi symbol with cross being the cardinal directions and the circle being the sky.



Figure 27

The glyph in Figure 28 is on an isolated rock. It is a “j” figure on its side with a circle on one end. Some think the “j” symbol represents the constellation Scorpios that is the portal to the next world.



Figure 28

Unique Glyphs on Gunlock Road

“Song Glyph” is thought to be a reminder of how a story is to be sung / chanted / told. This motif is prevalent along the Santa Clara River. It is also found at other places throughout the southwest both in the form of glyphs, but also as a design on pottery and on Kiva murals. Figure 29 shows the various song glyphs found along Gunlock road.



a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)

Figure 29 – “Song” glyphs found on Gunlock road

Water Bird Motif

This motif is a personal favorite and is the reason for highlighting the glyphs in Figure 30.

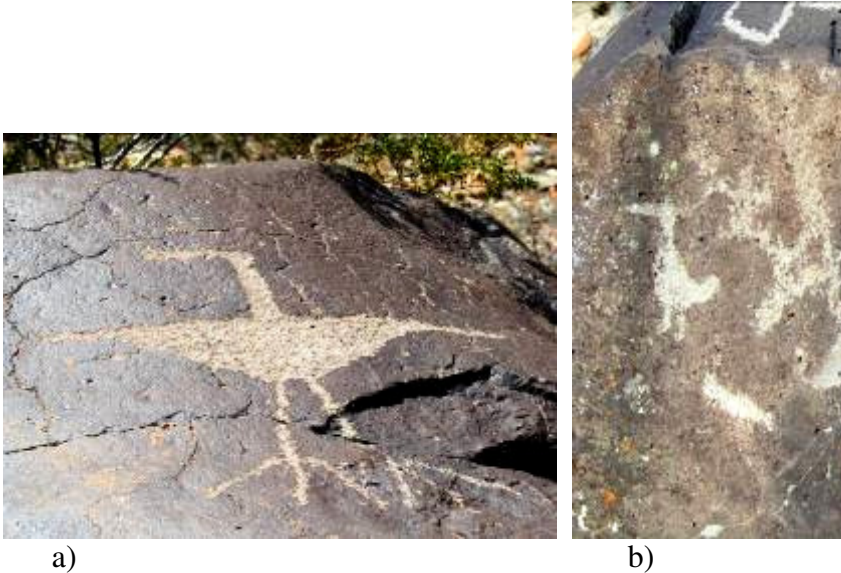


Figure 30 – Water Bird glyphs found along Gunlock road

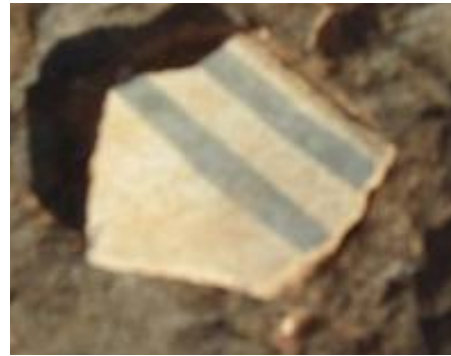
Pottery Shards

It is unusual to find pottery shards when visiting local rock art sites. The variety of types of pottery represented at all of the Gunlock road sites, Figure 31, is interesting. We see gray ware, corrugated ware and black on white painted examples. It is also interesting to see a variety of patterns in the painted shards; both wide lines and very fine lines with the beginning of a complex pattern.

There was also a number of knapping flakes and “finished” pieces. Figure 31f is an example.



a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)

Figure 31 – Examples of Pottery Shards and Knapped Artifacts found on Gunlock Road

Final Comments

The sites on Gunlock Road are interesting and generally different from what is expected in the St. George area.

It is interesting to observe what is there as is shown by the examples given in this report. It is also interesting to note what types of glyphs are not there. There were very few sheep

and only about 3 spirals in 15 plus sites. These symbols are present in high numbers at almost every St. George area site.

It is also interesting to observe that the glyphs are spread out over a very large area – 6 plus miles with typically only a small number of glyphs on isolated rocks as opposed to a concentration of glyphs in a small area.

It is thought that the glyphs in this area are from a wide range of time periods – from Archaic to Virgin Anasazi to Paiute.

John Mangels

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