

E.S.R.A.R.A. Newsletter

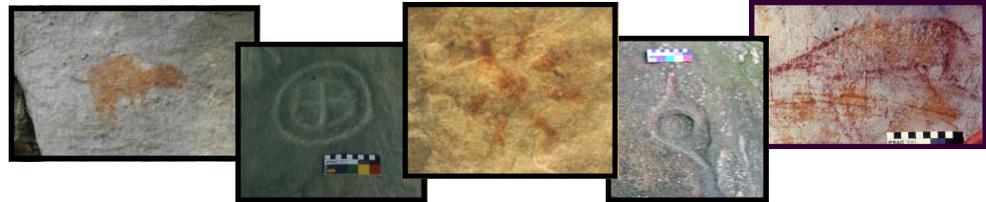
Quarterly of the Eastern States

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President's Message...

Greetings to All Old and New Members:

As anyone involved in eastern North American rock art research is aware, the sites that we deal with today represent only a fraction of the rock art sites that once existed in this region. In my own state (Illinois), one of the most famous North American rock art sites—the Alton Piasa or “Piasa Bird” first described by Father Marquette in the late 1600s—was destroyed by a limestone quarry in the 1850s. Since that time numerous other Illinois rock art sites have been destroyed by coal mining, highway and reservoir construction, cleaning of cave walls to remove graffiti, chalking/painting, vandalism, and the cutting out and removal of rock art panels. The result is that we deal with a sadly diminished resource base from which to try to interpret the full range and types of rock art sites, both prehistoric and historic, that once existed in this section of the Midwest.

In Illinois and other states, however, rock art and other cultural resource sites located on public lands (at least) are now protected by a suite of state and federal laws, policies, and procedures that have developed over the last century starting with the passage of the first federal Antiquities Act in 1906. The purpose of these laws is not to restrict public access to archaeological sites but to insure that such sites are not damaged or destroyed inadvertently or deliberately by individuals, public agencies, or other entities—such as mining companies—that are required to comply with state and federal environmental regulations even when operating on private land. These laws and regulations apply not only to members of the general public but to professional archaeologists as well.

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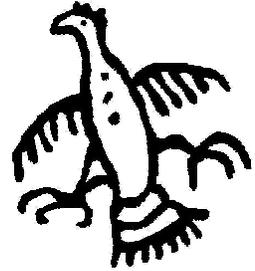
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NEW SUMMER QUARTERLY EDITOR

Greetings fellow rock art enthusiasts! My name is Heather Carey and I have recently had the honor of becoming the new editor for the summer quarterly. Since I am a new face to ESRARA, let me introduce myself. I received an MA in Anthropology from Southern Illinois University—Carbondale several years ago and am currently an archaeologist with the U.S. Forest Service—Shawnee National Forest in Illinois. I am very excited about becoming involved in the organization and look forward to meeting many of you at the 2009 ESRAC this coming spring.



Heather Carey looking for rock art.

In the News...

The Indian Head Rock Controversy Continues

As reported in the Spring 2008 ESRARA newsletter, last year a group of local historians and divers removed a boulder from the Ohio River bed that contained mid-19th century carvings including a face known as the “Indian Head”, as well as nineteenth century inscriptions and transported it to Portsmouth, Ohio. The boulder was located in that part of the Ohio River claimed by Kentucky and was a registered archaeological site in Kentucky. This has resulted in the state of Kentucky taking legal action against the parties involved in the removal. On June 19, 2008, a Kentucky grand jury issued an indictment against Steve Shaffer of Ironton, Ohio, for violating Kentucky’s Antiquity Act by removing the rock without a permit. Violation of this act is a class D felony that carries a sentence of one to five years in prison. Shaffer appeared before Greenup County Circuit Court Judge Robert Conley on July 24, 2008, at which time his attorney entered a plea of not guilty to the charges against him. Shaffer was released on a \$5000 signature bond with a pre-trial hearing set for October 16, 2008. The grand jury also issued an indictment against diver Michael Vetter, who was involved in the removal of the boulder, charging him with one count of violating the Kentucky Antiquity Act. An arraignment date for Vetter has not yet been set. In addition, the grand jury issued a recommendation that future grand juries continue the investigation.

(continued from page 1)

Which brings me to the Indian Head Rock removal controversy, which was discussed in detail in the last newsletter and is briefly updated above. As someone who is interested in the preservation of the history of our country, including both prehistoric and historic period rock art sites, I cannot support what appears to be the unwarranted and—as charged by the state of Kentucky—possibly illegal removal of a rock art site from its original location without the permission of the state and federal agencies involved who are charged with the protection of such resources. This type of unauthorized action, no matter how well-intentioned the motives of the people involved may have been, represents a threat to *all* rock art sites located on state and public lands in eastern North America. Many rock art sites in our region, for example, are located in remote areas that most of the general public never visit, but I doubt that many (hopefully) of our members would support cutting out and moving the images at these sites to more accessible locations where they could help support local tourism. Yet that is precisely one of the arguments that has been made as to why it was necessary to move the Indian Head Rock from the Ohio River to Portsmouth, Ohio. In closing, I would note simply that I believe the state of Kentucky and the Kentucky SHPO office are proceeding correctly in this situation, which hopefully can be resolved before the individuals involved in the removal of the rock face even more serious consequences.

Best Regards,

Mark J, Wagner, ESRARA President

The Ceremonial Mace Motif in Illinois Rock Art

By

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Introduction

The “ceremonial mace” is a well-known Mississippian-period (ca. A.D. 1000-1500) motif in the southeastern United States where it occurs on portable shell, copper, and stone objects recovered from a number of sites throughout the region. Often shown as being held in the hands of human-like figures who most likely represent supernatural beings, the mace or war club consists of a long shaft or handle with a bi-lobed upper body and trapezoidal or keyhole shaped head (Figure 1).

In addition to being portrayed on portable objects, painted and carved images of the mace also occur at rock art sites in Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas (Diaz-Granados 2004:145-148; Diaz-Granados and Duncan 2001:171-173, 2005:114-130; Henson 1986:81-108; Muller 1986:36-80; Pulcher 1973; Sabo and Sabo 2005:85, 101, 111). I briefly reported on the distribution of this motif in Illinois in a 1996 summary article on the rock art of the state, at which time it was known to occur only at one site—Austin Hollow Rock (11J-36)—in southwestern Illinois (Wagner 1996:47-80). In a later article, I and others noted that the mace images at this site may have been created by prehistoric Mississippian peoples in an attempt to access sacred power from an adjacent spring (Wagner et al. 2000:161-198).



Fig. 2. Locations of southern Illinois sites.



Fig. 1. Stone ceremonial mace, Spiro site (Hamilton 1952).

Since those articles were published, however, four additional mace images have been identified at the Painting (11Mo-89) and Whetstone Shelter (11J-41) sites. In addition, painted anthropomorphs holding objects in their hands that could possibly represent maces also have been identified at the Piney Creek (11R-26) and Buzzard Rock (11R-6) sites in the same general area of southwestern Illinois (Figure 2). All four of these sites are “old” sites that have been known for anywhere from 50 (Painting, Buzzard Rock, Piney Creek) to over 200 years (Whetstone Shelter) but at which the presence of possible mace carvings or paintings had been previously overlooked. In this article I briefly comment on the distribution, stylistic attributes, and possible significance of the ceremonial mace images found at these art sites in southern Illinois.

Distribution

The five sites containing definite (N = 3) or possible (N = 2) mace images span an approximate 50 km (31 miles) long area of the Mississippi River Valley in southwestern Illinois extending from the Monroe-Randolph County border in the north to Jackson County in the south (Figure 2). The two southernmost sites (Austin Hollow and Whetstone Shelter) are located in the Lesser Shawnee Hills Section of the Shawnee Hills Division while the northern three sites (Buzzard Rock, Painting, and Piney Creek) are contained in the northern section of the Illinois Ozarks Division. The Shawnee Hills Section is underlain by sandstone and limestone with karst features such as sinkholes and caves being very common. The Ozark Division, which consists of the Salem Plateau of the Ozark uplift, contains many southern and southwestern plants and animals that are infrequent or absent in other parts of Illinois. The northern section is underlain by a relatively pure limestone that contains numerous caves and sinkholes (Schwegman 1973: 24, 42).

Site Types

Variation exists among the five sites in regard to physical setting, elevation, and site type. The Buzzard Rock, Piney Creek, and Whetstone Shelter sites, for example, consist of rock shelter sites that contain evidence of human occupation extending back at least 1,000 years. The three sites are variously located directly overlooking the Mississippi River (Whetstone Shelter) or along small creek drainages that drain into the Mississippi River Valley. The three sites variously consist of a half-dome shelter located at the base of a small hill (Buzzard Rock); a half-dome shelter located approximately 200' (61 m) up the side of a steep bluff that directly overlooks the Mississippi River (Whetstone Shelter); and a linear, high-roofed overhang located at the base of a steep-sided ridge in an interior creek valley (Piney Creek). Professional (Piney Creek, Whetstone Shelter) and amateur (Buzzard Rock) archaeological investigations have recovered Late Woodland (A.D. 450-1000) and Mississippian (A.D. 1000-1500) materials at all three sites. Based on archaeological investigations of similar rock shelter sites in the Shawnee Hills Division of southern Illinois (Wagner and Butler 2000), I suspect that all three sites almost certainly also contain earlier prehistoric occupations extending back in time to at least the Late Archaic (3000-1000 B.C.) period, if not much earlier.

The Painting and Austin Hollow sites, in contrast, consist of open air sites that lack evidence of habitation. The Painting site, for example, consists of a series of faded red ocher paintings located approximately 200' (61 m) up the side of a west-facing bluff that directly overlooks the Mississippi River floodplain. The paintings are located directly above a narrow stone ledge that lacks any soil deposits, midden, or associated artifacts. The Austin Hollow Rock site consists of a large sandstone joint block, the flat top of which once was covered by petroglyphs, that originally was located adjacent to a hill-side spring within a narrow creek valley that opens on to the Mississippi River floodplain. Similar to the Painting site, Austin Hollow Rock lacks any evidence of human activity or occupation other than the rock art images themselves (Wagner et al. et al. 2001:68).

Site Descriptions

Austin Hollow Rock (11J-36)

As noted above, Austin Hollow Rock (Figure 3) consists of a large sandstone block once located adjacent to a hill-side spring before being moved in the 1930s to save it from highway construction (Wagner et al. 2000:161-198). Collectors quickly descended on the site, cutting out approximately two-thirds of the petroglyphs in a short burst of looting activity in the late 1930s. A photograph of the rock



Fig. 3. Austin Hollow Rock site, 2007.

taken in 1933, that appears to have been taken shortly after it was moved, however, reveals it once contained at least 26 petroglyphs including two representations of the mace, human feet, bird tracks, ogees and other designs (Figure 4). A 1972 photograph of the site (Figure 5) reveals that one of these maces was later cut out in the 1930s while two still survive today (Figures 6 and 7).

The two surviving maces have maximum length (50 cm) measurements that are virtually identical to that of a 51 cm long

chert mace recovered from the Spiro site in Oklahoma (Hamilton 1952:158), suggesting they may be life-size representations of actual maces. The now-missing third mace appears to have been similar in form and size based on the chalked-in outline on the 1933 photograph.

Both of the surviving maces have long tapered handles, a bi-lobed lower body, and keyhole shaped head or blade sections that expands outward from the tops of the lobes. One has a flat top with a central knob while the top of the other mace is missing. The damaged mace also has a cone-shaped or flat tassel that hangs down one from one side of the bi-lobed body (Figure 5).

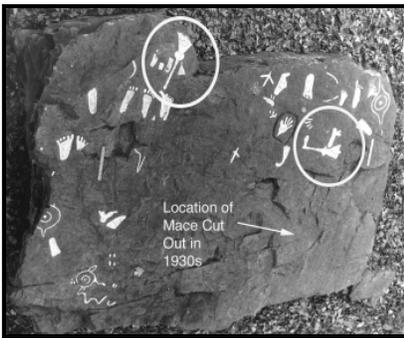


Fig. 5. Early 1970s photograph of Austin Hollow Rock (Pulcher 1973).

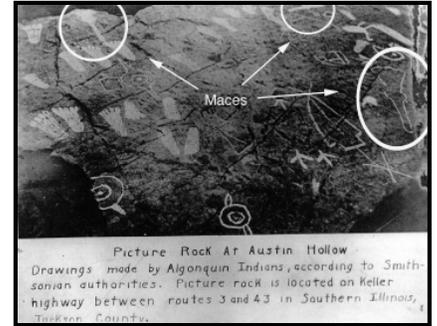


Fig. 4. Ca. 1920's photograph of Austin Hollow Rock.



Fig. 6. Eroded mace image, Austin Hollow Rock, 2007



Fig. 7. Outlined mace image, Austin Hollow Rock, 2007.

Painting Site (11Mo-89)

The Painting site consists of a series of very large Mississippian period (A.D. 1000-1450) red-ocher paintings located high up the side of a bluff escarpment that overlooks the Mississippian River floodplain (Figures 8 and 9). This site represents the only known survivor of a series of such bluff-side painting sites (including the famous Piasa Bird or Alton Piasa) that once existed in southwestern Illinois (McAdams 1887:21-36). Similar to the Piasa Bird, most of these sites were subsequently destroyed by rock quarrying in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The red-ocher paintings at the Painting site were created by Native Americans who ascended a steep talus slope leading up from the floodplain to reach a narrow linear ledge that extends in a north-south direction along the bluff-face (Figure 9). The Painting site contains a combination of very large paintings, which clearly were intended to be visible to viewers standing on the floodplain some 200' below the site, as well as small paintings that could only be seen by persons

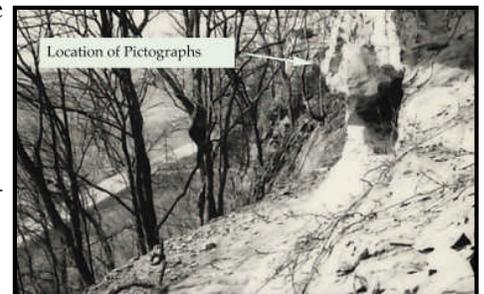


Fig. 8. Painting site, Monroe County, 2003

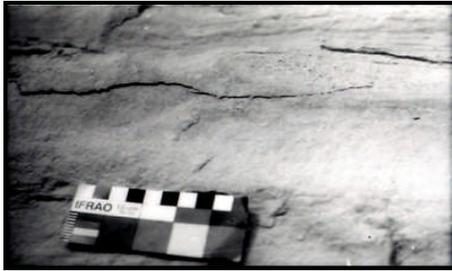


Fig. 9. Faded mace painting, Painting site, 2003

standing on or near the ledge. Images at this site include the largest (ca. 48 cm high by 44 cm wide) painting of an ogee yet identified in Illinois; a ca. 50 cm tall faded human-like figure that stands next to the ogee; a circle with three dots inside of it that could represent a possible stylized face; spread wing “thunderbird” with tail feathers; three small avimorphs; a fine-line drawn bird shown in profile that resembles a possible prairie chicken or pheasant; and one example of the ceremonial mace. In several cases, the paintings are located around natural concavities or niches in the bluff, some of which also have ocher inside of them. The apparent use of the paintings to

“frame” the natural concavities suggests that some of these niches, the largest of which measures approximately 1.5 m long by 80 cm high and which extends approximately 2 m back into the bluff face, may once have contained offerings or ritual items that have long since been removed.

The ceremonial mace is located at the north end of the site, directly above one of the concavities and approximately 2 m above the floor of the stone ledge. This horizontal image is similar in form to the maces at the Austin Hollow site, consisting of a long shaft with bi-lobed upper body and an expanding or trapezoidal-shaped upper body or blade section with a knob at the top (Figure 9). It is almost twice the length of the maces at Austin Hollow Rock, however, measuring 92 cm long by 7 cm wide across both the lobed part of the shaft and the top of the key-hole-shaped head or blade section. The small knob that projects out of the top of the head measures approximately 3 cm long. Rather than being a depiction of a life-size mace, the length of the Painting site mace appears to have been exaggerated to almost twice the size of a real mace to make it visible to persons traveling along the bluff base below the site.

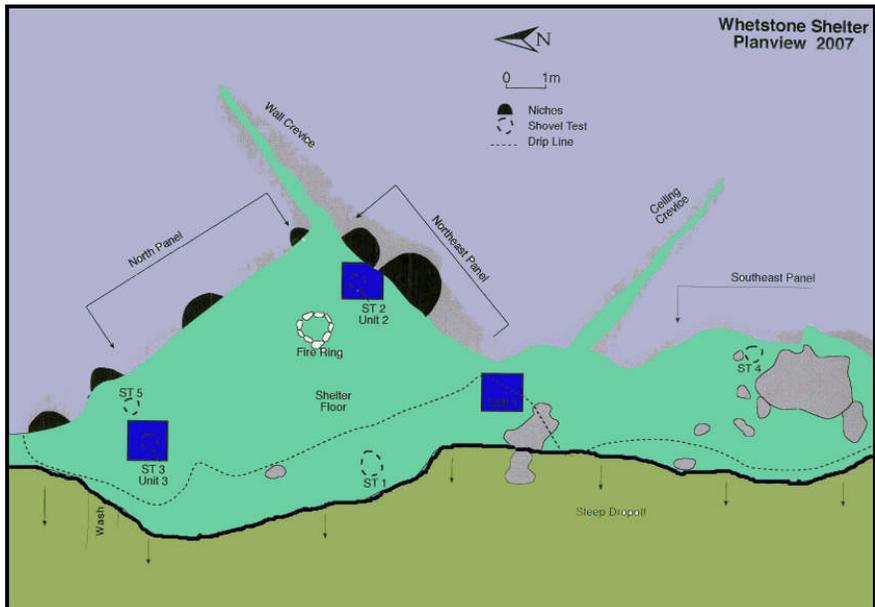


Fig. 10. Site Plan, Whetstone Shelter, 2007



Fig. 11. SIU Excavations, Whetstone Shelter, 2007.

Whetstone Shelter (11J-17)

The Whetstone Shelter site is one of the oldest known rock art sites in southern Illinois, reportedly having been first discovered by the earliest American settlers in Jackson County, Illinois, around 1805 (Middleton 1888:8-9). Located within a high bluff shelter overlooking the Mississippi River, the site contains one of the largest assemblages of prehistoric petroglyphs and pictographs within the state (Figure 10), many of which can be stylistically dated to the Mississippian period (A.D. 1000-1550). Prehistoric petroglyphs at the site that include human hands, ani-

mal paws, grooves, pits, ogees, cross-in-circles, maces, bi-lobed arrows, and other designs extend the length of the shelter walls (Wagner 1996:55-56; Figure 11). In addition, a series of faded red paintings are located on the shelter ceiling at the northwest end of the shelter as well as on the bluff face located above the shelter entrance (Wagner et al. 2007).

Southern Illinois University (SIU) and Shawnee National Forest (SNF) archaeologists revisited the site this past summer to document the rock art designs at the site in detail as well as conduct limited test investigations into the shelter floor to recover an artifact sample that could hopefully provide information regarding the age and purpose of the rock art designs at the site (Figure

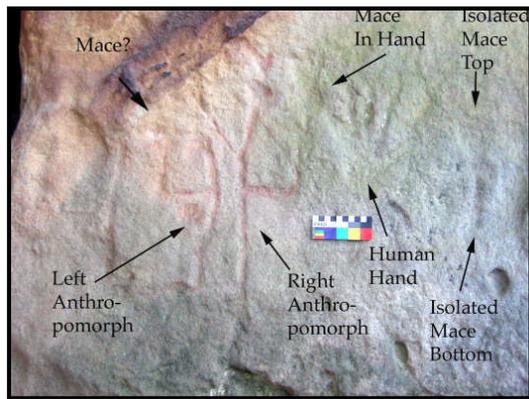


Fig. 13. Anthromorphs with maces, Whetstone Shelter, 2007

morphs standing back-to-back, one of whom (the figure on the right) holds an upraised mace in its upraised arm (Figure 13). The figure on the left also holds an object in its upraised arm, but due to weathering this object can now only be identified as an amorphous pecked area. Given the overall bilateral symmetry of this petroglyph group (i.e., two stick figures standing back to back with upraised arms), however, this object almost certainly represents a mace. The third mace consists of isolated image located approximately 23 cm south of the paired anthropomorphs on the same wall. The two most distinct maces—the one in the hand of the southern (right) anthropomorph and the isolated mace to the south—have very short handles, globular bodies, and short keystone-shaped upper bodies, with the isolated mace having a knob on top of the head or blade section. The isolated mace measures 19 cm long by 7 cm wide while the mace held by the right anthropomorph measures approximately 14 cm high by 7 cm wide.

The identification of the Whetstone Shelter “river map” petroglyph as representing a pair of anthropomorphs holding maces in their hands is given added significance by the marked similarity of this image to that of the famous copper headdress plate recovered by burial mound researcher Cyrus Thomas in the 1890s from the Upper Bluff site, which is located approximately 21 km (13 miles) south of the Whetstone Shelter site (Thomas 1894:161; Figure 14). This plate portrays two “dancing warriors” standing back-to-back, each of whom holds a broken mace in his hand. Indeed, the overall similarity of the composition of these two images—paired anthropomorphs or human figures standing back to back and holding maces in their hands—is so striking that we believe both may be representations of a specific Mississippian period myth that Native American peoples in the area depicted on both portable ritual items such as copper plates as well as on the landscape itself.



Fig. 12. Northeast panel group, Whetstone Shelter, 2007.

12). This work resulted in the discovery of three previously unknown ceremonial mace images, all of which had been either overlooked or misidentified by previous researchers (Wagner et al. 2007).

In contrast to the possible life-size or larger than life maces at the Austin Hollow and Painting sites, respectively, the Whetstone Shelter maces are miniature images. All three of the maces are located on the northeast wall of the shelter (Figure 12), with two of the maces forming part of an enigmatic arrangement of grooves and pits that had long been suggested to represent a map of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (Merwin 1937). Our 2007 work revealed that in reality the “river map” petroglyph represented two paired stick-figure-like anthropo-



Fig. 14. Upper Bluff site copper plate (Thomas 1894:161).



Fig. 15. Piney Creek site, 2008.

Piney Creek (11R-26)

The Piney Creek site (11R-26) consists of a large rock shelter (Figure 15) in a narrow interior creek valley that contains the largest number (200+) of painted and pecked prehistoric designs of any site in Illinois (Wagner 2002). Although some of the designs at the site may have been created as early as the Middle Woodland period (100 B.C.-A.D. 350), the bulk of the images including avimorphs with bi-lobed arrow headdresses clearly date to the Mississippian period. (A.D. 1000-1500).

Among the painted images at this site are two “warrior” anthropomorphs that are stylistically similar to the “Dancing Warrior” figure at the Rattlesnake Bluff site in Missouri who holds a mace in his outstretched hand (Diaz-Granados and Duncan 2001:115). The first of the Piney Creek images consists of a fine-line drawn, right-facing figure that measures 26 cm high by 30 cm wide (Figure 16). Shared stylistic details between this figure and the Rattlesnake Bluff “Dancing Warrior” image include semi-flexed legs, body shown in profile, and a rectangular shield held high in front of the body with the other arm raised in a striking position behind the head. Unfortunately, a 1904 visitor to

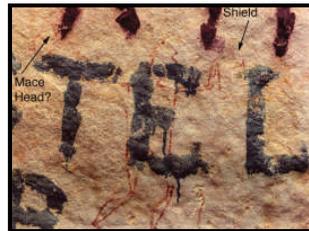


Fig. 16. Raised-arm warrior pictograph, Piney Creek site.



Fig. 17. Possible original appearance of Piney Creek warrior pictograph.



Fig. 18. Raised arm anthropomorph with shield, Piney Creek site.

the Piney Creek site painted his name directly over this figure, obscuring important details in regard to the type of weapon held in the hand raised behind the figure. What may be the trapezoidal head of a mace, however, can be seen extending out from beneath a maroon-painted letter located directly above and behind the warrior (Figure 16). A reconstruction of the possible original appearance of this figure, which was created on the computer using Photoshop to erase the 1904 painted names and fill in the possible missing sections of the painting, is provided in Figure 17.

The second Piney Creek anthropomorph consists of a much smaller (15 cm tall) image that is shown in the same pose as the larger Piney Creek and Buzzard Rock anthropomorphs (i.e., shield held in front of the body with the other arm raised behind the head in striking position) (Figure 18). It is unclear, however, whether the vertical extension at the end of the raised arm represents a mace or whether it merely indicates the raised lower arm and hand of the figure. I suspect that it indeed does represent a mace, possibly similar to the one held by one of the paired anthropomorphs at the Whetstone Shelter site where the mace is simply shown as a small projection at the end of the arm.

Buzzard Rock (11R-6)

Similar to the Piney Creek site, the Buzzard Rock site (Figure 19) contains a series of small painted anthropomorphs that hold objects in their outstretched arms that cannot be positively identified as (but which I believe are) maces. This site, which has been known since at least the 1950s, contains a series of petroglyphs including the largest surviving horned ser-



Fig. 19. Early 1970s photo of Buzzard Rock site (SIU site file photograph).



Fig. 20. Horned rattlesnake petroglyph, Buzzard Rock site, ca. 1970.

pent image (hence the name “Buzzard Rock”) in Illinois. This image, which measures approximately 1.3 m long, is located on the side of a projecting ledge at the eastern end of the shelter. Other petroglyphs that surround this image include a deer, concentric circle, and avimorphs (Figure 20).

The “buzzard” and other petroglyphs remained the only known rock art



Fig. 22. Charcoal-drawn anthropomorph with shield and possible mace, Buzzard Rock site, ca. 2003.

images at the site until a series of charcoal-drawn and other pictographs were discovered at the much darker western end of the shelter in 2000. The charcoal figures included an anthropomorph with drawn bow; three anthropomorphs holding shields and other objects in their hands; a serpent; possible winged figures, and other images (Figure 21). The three anthropomorphs, who are portrayed in frontal view have shields (two rectangular, one triangular) attached to the ends of their outspread left arms while they hold vertical stick-like objects that could represent maces in their right hands (Figure 22). The anthropomorphs vary in height from 12 to 14 cm while the linear objects they hold in their hands vary in length from 2 to 6 cm. The interpretation of the linear objects held by these figures as possibly representing the ceremonial mace is strengthened somewhat by the identification of charcoal-drawn anthropomorphs that hold maces in their outstretched arms at the Picture Cave site in nearby southeastern Missouri (Diaz-Granados 2004:143-146). Although the Buzzard Rock charcoal-drawn pictographs are simpler in style and less detailed than those at Picture Cave, it may be that they express similar mythological themes involving supernatural beings who carry warrior-related paraphernalia including shields and maces.

Discussion

The five above sites probably represent only a small fraction of the actual number of sites that once contained (and possibly still do) mace-related imagery in southern Illinois. The mace is a highly symbolic icon that formed an integral part of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC) during the mid to late thirteenth century (Muller 1986:62; Waring and Holder 1945:20). The mace is well-represented in Mississippian shell and copper art, particularly at the Spiro site in Oklahoma where broken long-handled maces are shown in association with human heads on various shell objects (Phillips and Brown 1978: Plates 55 and 56). A long-handled tasseled mace also is depicted as grasped in the outstretched arm of the winged being known as the Falcon Impersonator on a copper plate from Mound C at the Etowah site in Georgia (Thomas 1894:304). Broken long-handled tasseled maces also are depicted in the hands of the two “dancing” figures on the well-known copper headdress recovered from the Upper Bluff site in Union County, Illinois, only approximately 30 km south of the Whetstone and Austin Hollow sites (Thomas 1894:161).

Phillips and Brown (1978:Plate 56) have suggested that the long-handled mace as depicted in Mississippian art was a symbolic representation of a “wooden prototype of more practical use”. In particular, they noted the striking similarity of the mace to the wooden “war club” recovered by Cushing in the late nineteenth century from the Key Marco site in southwestern Florida (Gilliland 1975: Plate 81b; see also Phillips and Brown 1978: Plate 56). The flat-topped Key Marco mace, however, is quite different stylistically from the majority of maces depicted on Spiro shell art, virtually all of which have domed or castellated tops (see, for example, Phillips and Brown 1978:plates 65 and 66). The single example of a flat-topped mace recovered from the Spiro site also differs from the Key Marco mace in having a rectangular body similar to that of the



Fig. 21. Charcoal drawings, Buzzard Rock site, ca. 2003.

dome-topped mace shown in the hand of the Falcon Impersonator image on the copper plate from the Etowah site (Phillips and Brown 1976: Plate 109; Thomas 1894:304). The Key Marco mace also differs from the diamond-bodied maces held by the twin figures on the copper plate from the Upper Bluff site. It is virtually identical, however, to the long handled flat-topped maces depicted at the Austin Hollow and Painting sites. Similar depictions of flat-topped maces occur at Mississippian rock art sites in nearby southeastern Missouri, most notably at the Washington Park site (Diaz-Granados 1993:243; Diaz-Granados and Duncan 2000:173).

Mississippian SECC icons such as the mace held multiple symbolic meanings that varied depending on the context in which the icon appeared and the manner in which it was used. The presence of the mace in the outstretched hand of the Mississippian Birdman or “Falcon Impersonator” image (see Brown 1985:100; Howard 1968:40) indicates that in one context the mace is associated with aggression, warfare, power, chiefly ideology, and the Upper World of the prehistoric southeastern United States. Dye (2004:190-191) also interprets the mace as part of the “figural imagery associated with combat that emphasizes the portraiture of the ideal warrior hero” used by Mississippian warrior chiefs to legitimize and maintain their social authority. King (2004:169) similarly notes that the weapons, including the maces portrayed on copper headdress plates, found in high-status Mississippian graves at the Etowah site in Georgia draw “their meaning from combat and warrior figures of the supernatural world”. In this same vein, the similarity of the paired anthropomorphs with maces at the Whetstone Shelter to those of the Upper Bluff site copper plate suggests they also most likely represent supernatural figures associated with warfare and the Upper World of prehistoric southeastern Native American cosmology.

In other contexts, however, the mace motif is linked with the Underworld, which was a place of change, disorder, and fertility (Hudson 1976:128). This is most clearly demonstrated at the Spiro site where depictions of short-handled maces are associated with piasa images (composite serpent-cat-bird-deer images) and snakes (Phillips and Brown 1978:Plates 80, 103, 106, 107, 108, 114). Tasseled maces, such as the one at the Austin Hollow site, also are associated with snakes and horned snakes at that same site (Phillips and Brown 1978:Plates 62, 109). The linking of the mace, a symbol of aggression and warfare, with Underworld monsters such as the piasa may be a metaphor for the power possessed by these dangerous creatures. Such an interpretation agrees with the presence of a tasseled mace at Austin Hollow Rock, which was once located next to a spring of the type that historic period Native Americans (at least) often viewed as the dwelling place of the horned serpent.

Finally, the size variance between the Whetstone Shelter (14 to 19 cm), Austin Hollow (51 cm), and Painting site (92 cm) maces as well as the possible maces at the Buzzard Rock site (2 to 6 cm) suggests that portrayal of the mace as to actual size was not an essential factor in the depiction of this motif on the landscape. Rather, size was adjusted to fit the needs of the various physical locations. In the case of Austin Hollow Rock, the virtually identical lengths of the three maces suggests they may have been portrayed close to actual size. In the case of the Painting site, however, the size of the mace may have been exaggerated to make it more visible from the floodplain located below the site. At the Whetstone Shelter site, the mace was portrayed in miniature form to make it agree with the small size of the overall composition which most likely had to be reduced in size to squeeze it into a vacant lower corner of a vertical sandstone slab that already may have been covered with numerous other petroglyphs.

Acknowledgements

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Dick's Ridge Serpentine Stone Wall

By

Tommy Hudson

About twenty years ago I heard of a "serpent" that had been constructed out of stone on Dick's Ridge in northwest Georgia. Last year a local informant, Wade Gilbert, led me to not one but three such stone constructions in the same area. The third and largest that was shown to me is the subject of this report.

Dick's Ridge crosses northwest Georgia in a south to north direction for approximately thirty miles and parallels Taylors Ridge. The few gaps in the ridges are how people have traditionally crossed these ridges in historic times and by inference, prehistoric times. Indian trails and pioneer roads have been transformed into modern highways in the last few decades. All three of these walls are located near the most prominent gaps in these ridges.

The Dick's Ridge stone wall runs parallel to the top of the ridge for approximately 300 feet (Figure 1). It is constructed of local stone ranging in size from 3" (fist size) to over 36" (washing machine size) in diameter. The stone is a limey sandstone the same as is found in the surface exposures of bedrock on the ridge. There is very little tumbled down loose stone on the slopes indicating that the core wall is largely intact. At the southern end of the wall it makes a sharp turn and the end of the wall points to the east. The last 15' of the wall is carefully stacked so that the wall maintains a close to level plane as it drops off the slope. This gives the end a thicker and taller appearance or possibly the intention is for this end of the wall to be the "head" of the serpent. Interesting stuff.

Moving northward along the wall there are sections that are only one or two layers of stone in height that connect and incorporate the existing exposed bedrock into the wall construction. Walls that incorporate bedrock and boulders are a recurring theme in the southeast. In my opinion this also demonstrates that the wall was not used as a defensive barrier in conventional warfare. I have to say it would be hard to load a rifle or nock an arrow while lying on ones side next to a 12" high wall. An embrasure or inset located near the center of the length of the wall could make the argument that this is a defensive structure except for the fact that it is inset on the wrong side of the wall. Similarly much of the wall is not located at the optimum crest of the ridge so that defenders would be exposed to multidirectional fire.

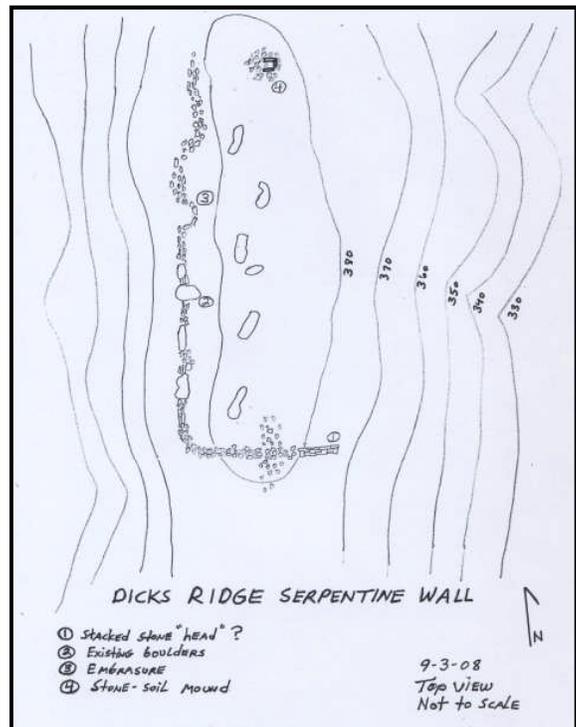


Fig. 1. Plan view of Dick's Ridge Serpentine Wall.

Some of the large stones used in the construction of the wall have been shimmed to bring them into a level plane. Why shim a rock that would have to be moved by several people to its final location in the wall and then picked up again to add a 2" shim? Other stones in the wall are obviously out of plane and that did not stop the stacking of more stones onto them. Why bother with this technique only in certain locations?

The north end of the wall terminates near an obviously looted circular stone mound. (I say "circular" but one must keep in mind that many of these type constructions appear circular at first glance but may have other shapes.) The mound proper is approximately 8 feet in diameter after deducting the loose stones around the mound that may have been removed from the center of the pile. The height of the soil in and around the edge of the mound gives the indication that the mound may have originally been composed of soil and rock. It is not unusual for stone mounds in northwest Georgia to be constructed in this way. There are stones located in the center of the mound that are standing edge up and form what may be a rectangular box grave about 2' x 3' in size. This rectangle is on an east-west axis. Stones at the center of the box have been displaced but not removed. The sub-soil at the stone-soil interface may be intact. A proper quarter excavation of the mound beginning at the center and extending beyond the edge of the pile into undisturbed residual soils would yield a comparative profile. I hope that sometime in the future qualified persons may do this.

Dick's Ridge is one of the best examples of serpentine walls in north Georgia and as usual the examination of the wall raises more questions than answers. It would come as no surprise to those that know me that I would view the wall in my belief that the tri-level cosmos was the basis of all native American belief systems through time and space. With that in mind I would ask the following:

1. Are these types of walls defensive in terms of a serpent guarding the gap and /or the summit?
2. Is the serpent emerging from the stone mound? A lower world creature entering the middle world to access the upper world?
3. Is this an underworld serpent located on a middle world ridge guarding the access to a transition point on the sacred landscape such as the gap or an upper world staging area such as the nearby summit? Is it both?
4. Are the various stone pile and wall complexes in the southeast illustrations of serpents emerging from the underworld through stone mounds?
5. Is the serpent emerging from the boulders and bedrock that are incorporated into its construction or do the boulders and bedrock demonstrate that the serpent's origins are from the underworld. Or both?
6. Did Woodland and early Mississippian societies move their belief system staging locations from mountains to mounds? Mounds, after all, are meant to be mountains.
7. Were mountain locations a diminished property at some point in favor of more controlled and publicly visible mound-plaza sacred areas? Mississippian mound-plaza configurations are also typically located in high yield agricultural areas.

Questions 6 and 7 may not appear to be germane at this time but I believe that future research will prove otherwise. Dick's ridge is one of a dozen such sites as this in north Georgia and all of them have a purpose that makes for interesting research.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Midwest Archaeological Conference - October 15-19, 2008 in Milwaukee, WI at the Hyatt Regency. *Submission deadline is September 15, 2008.*

SEAC - November 12-15, 2008 in Charlotte, NC at the Hilton University Place. *Submission deadline is August 29, 2008.*

ESRARA -

ESRAC 2009

The Eastern States Rock Art Conference will be held March 27, 28, and 29 at Red Top Mountain State Park located approximately 30 miles north of Atlanta, GA. The tentative schedule includes a reception and social on Thursday; a bus tour (lunch provided) of local rock art sites on Friday; and papers on Saturday, followed by business and board meetings. After the meetings will be our banquet and auction (be thinking of things to bring such as books and unusual items about any subject). Sunday there will be a special tour for those who can stay to one of our more remote rock art sites in North Georgia. The group will be limited to less than ten people. More information on this tour will be forthcoming.

A conference packet that will include information about lodging, directions, and local attractions will be sent to all members. Currently a block of 20 rooms has been set aside for the conference at the Red Top Mountain Lodge. The deadline for reserving these rooms will be **January 27, 2009**. If you want to be an early bird the phone number at the lodge is 1-800-573-9658 or go to redtopmountain.com. Other local motels will also be listed in the info packet. The closest airport is Hartsfield-Jackson in Atlanta (40 miles), followed by Chattanooga (70 miles).

There is also a call for papers. Rock art, stone piles and constructions, geoglyphs, iconography, and all subjects related are welcome. As an example, I will give a presentation on serpentine stone walls in North Georgia and their relationship to the tri-level cosmos.

This conference is always fun with some of the most interesting and cutting edge theories and hypotheses in archaeology today. I can be contacted at myrockart@yahoo.com or by phone at 678-983-5333.

- Tommy Hudson
ESRAC Organizer

UPCOMING CONFERENCE INFORMATION

SAA - April 22-26, 2009 in Atlanta, GA at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. *Submission deadline is September 10, 2008.*

SAA Rock Art Symposia

Carol Diaz-Granados (Washington University, St. Louis and ESRARA) and Len Stelle (Parkland College, Illinois) are organizing an all-day rock art symposium for the 2009 Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meetings in Atlanta, Georgia. This symposium, which will be entitled “Crossing Boundaries: Rock Art and Cultural Identity”, will consist of both morning and afternoon sessions. The symposium abstract is as follows:

As a highly distinctive and immobile cultural expression, rock art is uniquely suited to studies of past cultural identity. Rock art both defines boundaries and transcends those inferred from other kinds of cultural phenomena. In the American Southeast, and throughout the world, rock art scholars are crossing geographic, cultural, and theory boundaries to explain the complexities of cultural identity.

The morning session, which will be chaired by Carol, will consist of international papers covering the rock art of the United States, Polynesia, Canada, Mexico, and France. Among the presenters in this session will be world-renowned French rock art researcher Jean Clottes. The afternoon session, which will be chaired by Len Stelle, will consist of a combination of papers on the rock art of the Eastern Woodlands, as well as areas outside of the continental U.S. The SAA is currently drawing up the program for the 2009 meetings and the specific date and times for the papers in this symposium have not yet been determined.

ARARA - May 22-25, 2009 in Bakersfield, CA.

New Museum Exhibit ...

A Warrior's Story: An Oglala Sioux Painted Buffalo Robe, University Museum at SIU-Carbondale



Buffalo Robe at SIUC University Museum.

The images painted on the robe show aspects of life among the Ogalala.

Photo by Jeff Garner.

One of the highlights of the fall exhibits at the University Museum is a buffalo robe, a treasure donated by the family of William McAndrew, SIUC's first head football coach. The robe is a hair-on buffalo hide decorated on the smooth side with drawings that chronicle highlights of martial life among the Oglala Sioux. The robe dates to the 1860s through the 1870s. Scenes show warfare with the Crow people, including raiding parties returning with horses. Figures in Civil War uniforms show up in more recent illustrations on the same robe. Curator Lori Huffman said she is in consultation with experts at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center as she puts together the exhibit. The robe will be on display until Dec. 12. An exhibit reception is set for 4 to 7 p.m. on Sept. 6.



Two depictions of an Ogalala warrior riding his horse disguised as an Apsalooke warrior. Details in the left picture indicate preparation for war. On the right, the warrior carries a full-feathered lance.

Did You Know...

The logo for the U. S. Forest Service heritage volunteer program called *Passport in Time* is based on a rock art panel near North Hegman Lake, MN.

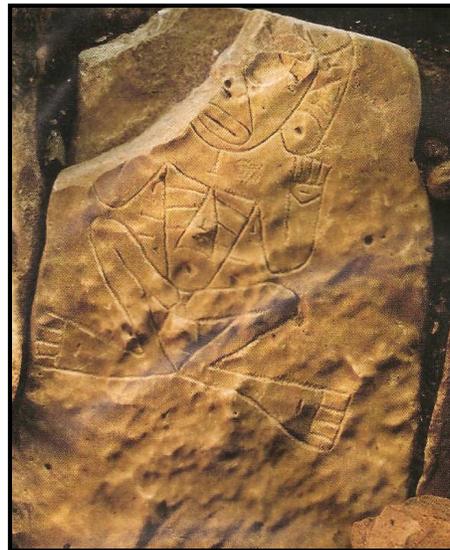
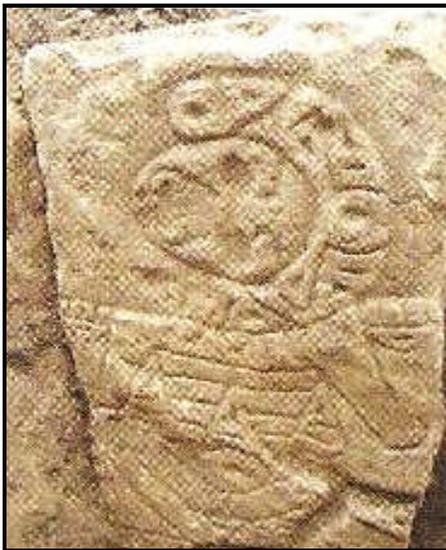
Rock art conveys a sense of antiquity that spans both prehistory and history; it is mysterious—it does not reveal everything—and it is an experience in itself. Anyone who has seen a pictograph or petroglyph knows what I mean. To see a pictograph for the first time is to feel a connection with the past that no other experience in archaeology or history can evoke. I wanted volunteers to feel that way about their PIT experience.

- Gordon Peters
Founder of PIT



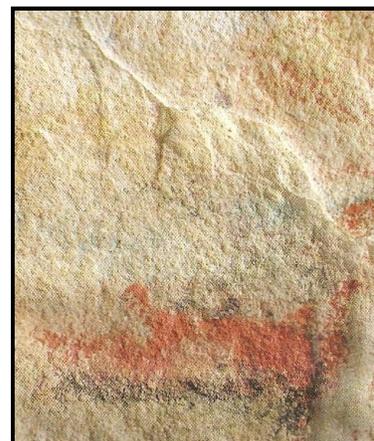
Rock Art News From Around the World...

Puerto Rico: Surveys for an Army Corps of Engineers flood-control project revealed one of the most significant pre-Colombian sites in the Caribbean. The half-acre plaza or ball court is bordered by stones with petroglyphs, including one that depicts a man with his legs in a frog-like position and another with a woman who appears to be decapitated. Researchers expect the site will illuminate aspects of ritual life of the pre-Taino and Taino cultures that occupied the island before Europeans arrived. (*Archaeology* January/February 2008)



Wyoming: Ewes with painted rumps are responsible for creating “rock-art” panels in central Wyoming. That’s what researcher Bonnie Newman, of the Museum of New Mexico’s Office of Archaeological Services, and her colleague Larry Loendorf discovered when they compared suspiciously abstract smears at the Notches Dome site with paint found at the remains of a nearby historic shepherds camp. X-ray fluorescence spectrometer analysis revealed that blue, green, and red paint smeared onto Notches Dome rock projections was chemically very similar to the paint used in a woman’s portrait on a barn wall at the sheep camp. Ewes marked with paint for breeding and branding purposes had most likely taken shelter beneath the rock ledges, where they left paint smears later mistaken for rock art. Probably dating to the seventeenth century, actual rock art at Notches Dome generally depicts figures on horseback and other representational forms. And while the style is known as the Foothills Abstract Tradition, what turned out to be sheep marks always seemed a little *too* abstract.

-Jennifer Pinkowski
(*Archaeology* January/February 2008)



Have you recently...

- written any articles pertaining to rock art?
- photographed or visited any new rock sites?
- participated in or directed a field project related to rock art?

We are always looking for new information to share with fellow ESRARA members. Please send any items of interest for the next Quarterly to :

Nancy Bryant,
Fall Quarterly editor

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