

# “The Duck Story in Rock Art”

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This story comes to us from “Zuni Folk Tales”, published in 1901 by ethnologist Frank Hamilton Cushing. Cushing lived with the Zuni from 1879 to 1884, gaining their trust and learning many of their stories.

The story of Kiakklo and the Duck takes place during the Zuni migrations, when the people were searching for their center Place. A brave young warrior named Kiakklo was entrusted with the task of finding the Center Place for his people. Kiakklo wandered too far to the north and became blinded by the snow. A duck flew to Kiakklo's aid, and said that she would lead the way for him. Kiakklo took off his necklace of tinkling shells and placed it on the duck's neck, so that he might follow the sound. He followed the duck to the sacred lake of the Gods, near Zuni Pueblo. Kiakklo then visited the Gods in their underwater home. While under the lake, the Gods taught Kiakklo the creation story. Kiakklo promised to keep the duck with him always, either on his head or on his shoulder. Finally a Koyemshi (Mudhead Kachina) took Kiakklo back to the Zuni people. Kiakklo eventually became a kachina spirit whose duty it is to teach the creation story to the young initiates.



Figure 1

The duck is a "frequent flyer" in Native American pottery of the Southwest. Duck shaped pottery has been found in Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, the Mogollon areas of Arizona and New Mexico, and near modern Zuni. The duck shape continues to be popular in modern Zuni pottery, and is a major player in modern Zuni carved fetishes.

Kiakklo and his duck are sometimes represented in Zuni Kachina dolls, and a similar folk doll made by the modern Maya has been found as far south as Guatemala. (Figure 1)

The major Zuni kachina, the Shalako, has a long, sharp duck-like beak. Ducks are also believed to help bring the ancestor spirit kachinas back to Zuni for ceremonies.

## The Duck in Rock Art



*Figure 2*

The duck appears in rock art throughout the Southwest, but in higher concentration in Northeast Arizona and Southeast Utah, in what was the original range of influence of the Zuni people during their migrations. The duck also appears in rock art in Southwest Utah as far west as Cedar City, and in Rosy Canyon, north of Canebeds, Arizona.

Kiakklo and his Duck are often described as a "Duck-Headed Anthropomorph", but a closer look will usually show that there is a human head, albeit a small one. This is somewhat of a sly dig at Kiakklo, for his not-so-smart behavior.

## The Raven's Crack Site in Rosy Canyon

This panel in the Raven's Crack Site tells part of the Creation Story with many of the key players. The characters in this rock art panel are touching, by overlapping or with connecting lines, demonstrating the interconnectedness of all beings.

The petroglyph in Figure 2 shows a Shalako-like image with a duck on his head. The lower part of the Shalako figure is difficult to make out, until you realize that some of the lines which at first appear to be his body, are actually part of the Scorpion's tail, situated below him.

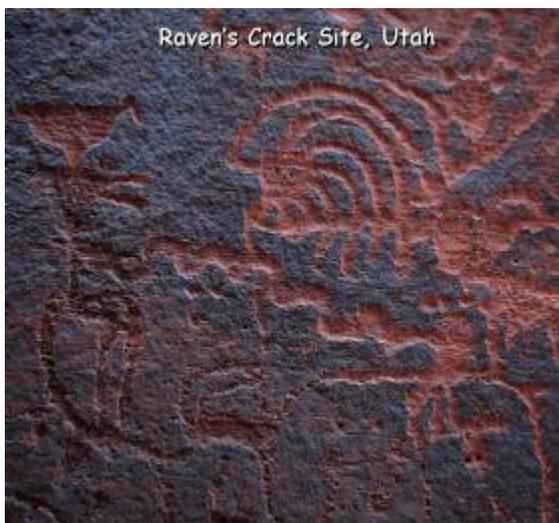
There is a scorpion just below the Shalako figure, which represents the constellation "Scorpius", which points the way to the "J" shaped Hole in the Sky - a dark area in the Milky Way. This "J" shaped area is the portal to the next world for spirits departing this

one. This is also often represented by the “J” symbol alone, based on the shape of the scorpion's tail.

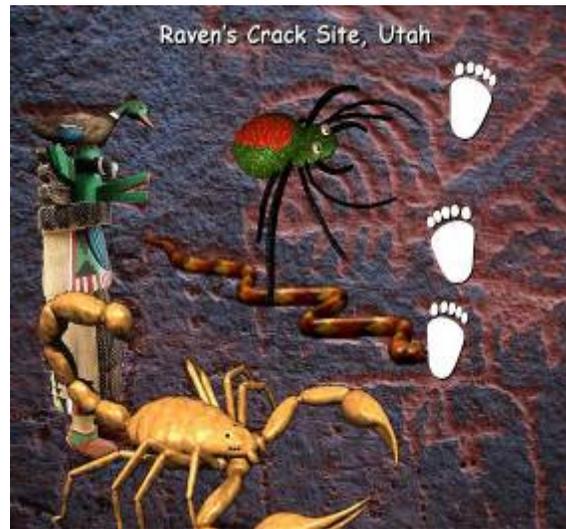
To the right of the Shalako is an image with a number of curving lines. This is Spider Woman (Hopi/Navajo) or Water Spider (Zuni), both of whom have major roles in the Creation Story.

The diagonal wavy image is a serpent, or Kolowisi, the Zuni Water Serpent.

Finally there are bear tracks leading from the bottom of the panel to the top, guiding the way to the spirit world in the sky. Members of the Bear Clan are teachers in many Native American cultures.



*Figure 3A*



*Figure 3B*

Go to <http://dixierockart.webs.com/Field%20Trip%20Reports/Rosy%20Canyon%20-%20Lower%20Ravens%20Crack%20-%20Revised.pdf> to see more images from this site.

## The Basket Site in Rosy Canyon

Figure 4 shows a pictograph of a partially eroded anthropomorph with the duck on his head. This image is also in Rosy Canyon, a few miles from the Ravens Crack site.



*Figure 4*

Go to

<http://dixierockart.webs.com/Field%20Trip%20Reports/Rosy%20Canyon%20Field%20Trip%20-%20April%202011.pdf> and  
<http://dixierockart.webs.com/Field%20Trip%20Reports/Rosy%20Canyon%20-%20The%20Basket%20Site%20v.%202.0.pdf> to see more images from this site.

## The Procession Panel on Comb Ridge

This panel tells the story of three groups of people (Figure 5) coming together in a “center place” (Figure 6). The leaders of this group have crooked staffs (symbols of authority and power) and some have ducks on their heads, (Figure 7). Another anthropomorph in the procession also has a duck on his head. (Figure 8 above and to the left of the central deer)



*Figure 5*



*Figure 6*



*Figure 7*

One Anthropomorph away from the procession has a bird on his head on his head, but more likely an eagle than a duck. (Figure 8)



*Figure 8*

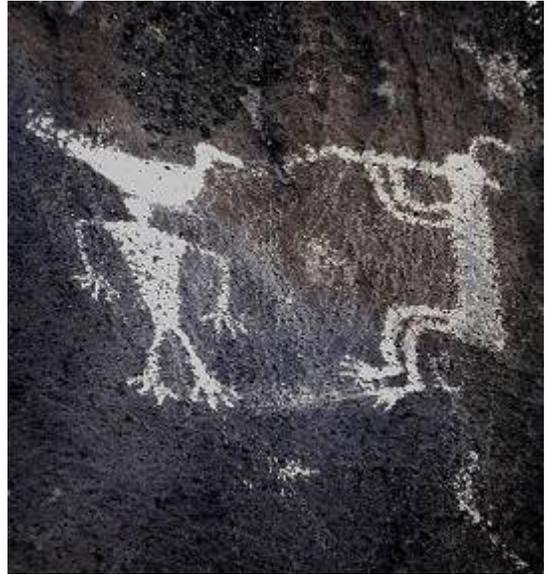


*Figure 9*

Other sites mentioned in the presentation were:

The High Panel at Butler Wash, Utah  
Mexican Hat, Utah – multiple sites  
Cedar Mesa, Utah  
Grand Gulch, Utah – multiple sites  
Collins Canyon, Tributary of Grand Gulch, Utah  
Mill Creek – near Moab, Utah  
Chinle Wash, Navajo Nation  
Near Cane Beds, Arizona  
Cedar City, Utah

The Kiakklo and the Duck Petroglyph sites are located in what was thought to be one of the original areas of Zuni influence, and along Zuni trade routes in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico.



*Figure 10 – near Cedar City*

This is a prime example of understanding rock art by understanding the stories of the parent culture of native peoples.

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