

Field Trip - Virgin River Gorge

The DAS visited the Virgin River Gorge on January 8, 2011.

Multiple rock art sites on the cliffs overlooking the Virgin River near the Eastern end of the Virgin River Gorge.

There is evidence of pottery shards (Figure 1), scraping stones and even a large flat stone that could have been used for working hides (Figure 2). These things indicate that this was a most likely a habitation area. The rock art sites are on the cliffs overlooking the river and were not affected by either the 2005 or 2010 floods (again making this a good habitation site). There is a large flood plane across from the sites, now covered with Tamarisk trees that appear could have been an ideal location for farming. The area is also surrounded by the Beaver Mountains, which would have provided an excellent location for hunting.



Figure 1 – Area where pottery shards were found



Figure 2 – Rock for working hides

Site 1 – “Newspaper” Rock

Newspaper rock is a stand alone, large rock, located very close to the area where the pottery shards were found (Figure 3). The glyphs on this rock are located on the north face of the rock, with the best patina. The glyphs are a complex montage of sheep and deer, hunters at least two with bow and arrow, spirals, portals, lines that could be a map. There was evidence of over writing of the glyphs (Figure 4 through Figure 8). There were two areas with abstract designs on the “front face” on an area without patina, Figures 9 and 10.



Figure 3 – Newspaper Rock



Figure 4 – Newspaper Rock



Figure 5 – Right side



Figure 6 – Top



Figure 7 – Left Middle



Figure 8 – Left Bottom



Figure 9 – Bottom Right (1)



Figure 10 – Bottom Right (2)

There were two glyphs on the east face of the rock in an area with no real patina (Figures 11 and 12).

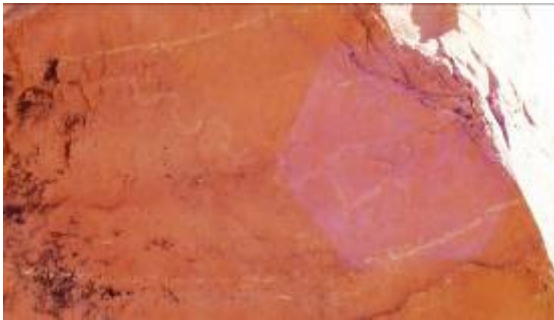


Figure 11 – Serpent on East Face



Figure 12 – Abstract Design on East Face

Site 2 – The “DaVinci Man” Panel

The DaVinci man panel is located about 100 – 200 yards from Newspaper Rock. Again, it is a stand alone panel (Figure 13) named for its very distinctive anthropomorphic design (Figure 14 and 15).



Figure 13 – DaVinci Man Site



Figure 14 – DaVinci Man Glyph

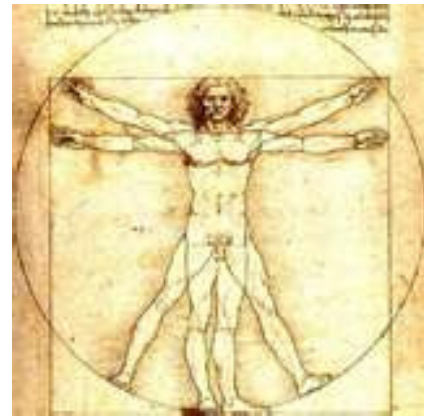


Figure 15 – DaVinci Man

The DaVinci Man panel (Figure 16) contains the DaVinci man anthro, plus a series of spirals and lines that appear to be a map (top right) along with a series of dots that run from the bottom to the top of the panel. There are two series, one with large dots than the other. There is also what appears to be a “falling or floating” man – center left.

The rock appears to have fallen from the ledge above before the glyphs were made – there are faint glyphs on the surface where the rock initially was located. The crack at the top of the rock appears to have happened after the glyphs were made.



Figure 16 – DaVinci Man panel



Figure 17 – Top half of panel

Large DaVinci man anthro (figure 14) is enclosed within a large circle (portal). Also within the circle are the badger clan symbol, a large dot, and a diagonal line. Close examination may indicate that the portion of the arms that connect the man to the circle may have been done at a later date (different color patina). The portion of the arms that point inward, seem to have 3 fingers when combined with the upward facing arms make this anthro a spirit person, likely from the badger clan.

The lines center right and top right appears to be a map of the river that shows, what I believe is the main river entering the rock scene from the center right and moving up toward the top spiral. I believe that the lower line (spiral with line going up) depicts a branch coming into the river. There is in fact a large dry wash that flows into the river at this site (Figure 18). There is a “shield” symbol slightly upstream of the junction of the river and the wash, perhaps indicating a village or some other important site at this location. The map appears to me to be of the river downstream from this site. At the top of the panel is an anthro with his arms outstretched, perhaps saying “stop” don’t go any farther down the river.

The bottom portion of the panel (Figure 16) has two series of dots, one large and one small, running from the bottom to the center of the panel.

The lower portion of the panel also has a “falling or floating” man figure (below the DaVinci man anthro, next to the infinity symbol).



Figure 18 – Dry wash (center top) joining with the river that is running diagonally from left to right

Site 3 – The “Crane” Panel

The “crane” panel is located about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the first two sites. It is a large rock with only one glyph – a large flying crane or water bird (Figure 19). Beneath one side of the rock is a small “cave”, now partially filled with animal refuse. On the ceiling of this “cave” is one faint glyph (Figure 20). Could this have been a location for “vision quests”?



Figure 19 – Crane



Figure 20 – Glyph on Cave Ceiling

Site 4 – The “Platform” Area

This is a large flat area at the top of the cliff complex west of the river. This appears as if it would have been an excellent location for performing daily work, much like a patio or courtyard. It also provides an excellent 270 degree view of the surrounding area, the near and distant mountains and the river gorge to the north and south. There are a small number of “isolated” glyphs on the rocks surrounding the north side of this area (Figures 21 - 24).

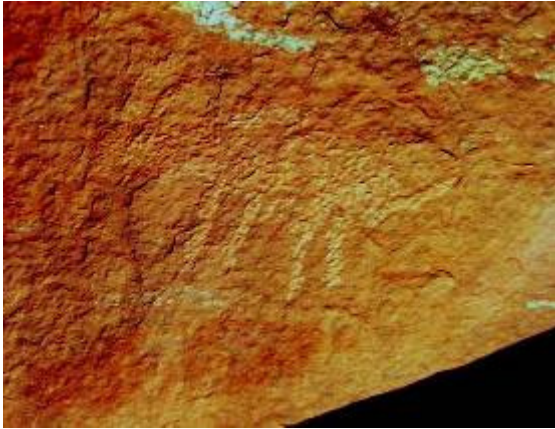


Figure 21 – sheep



Figure 22 – anthro (?)



Figure 23 – anthro



Figure 24 – falling man