

Rock Art on the Channel Islands of California

Clement W. Meighan

Based on our knowledge of the abundant and diverse rock art to be found on the mainland of southern California, a search was conducted for rock art on San Clemente Island. This was largely negative and comparative studies show that the whole group of islands off southern California (Fig. 11.1) does not participate, except to a very limited extent, in the rock art traditions of the mainland. What is known of island rock art is reviewed here.

The Southern Islands

San Clemente

Although San Clemente can be characterized as a rocky island, with abundant boulders and outcrops, the rocks are dominated by volcanic outcrops which

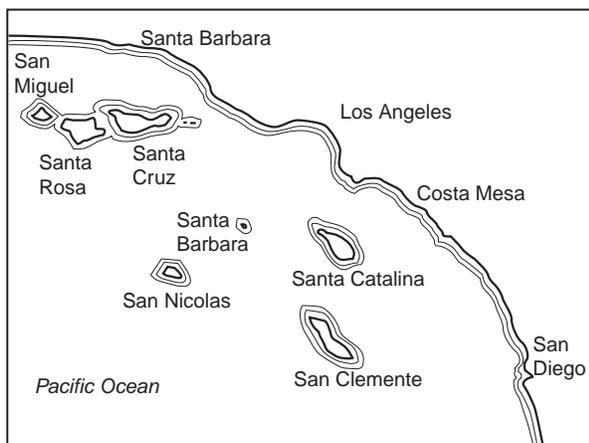


Fig. 11.1. Islands off the California Coast.

provide relatively poor surfaces for rock art. Some areas of sandstone and volcanic tuff are found, but these are easily weathered. Painted rock art, in particular, is less likely to be found on the rough, irregular, and dark colored rocks of the island. In spite of this, one rock art site is known in a small cave at the south end (Zahniser 1981), containing a few small nondescript red-painted figures. This location is at the base of steep sea cliffs, facing south, and is almost inaccessible. I am indebted to Dan McCarthy of the University of California, Riverside, for field sketches of the elements visible at this site (Fig. 11.2). The red painted elements are too simple to be diagnostic of style, but they would not be surprising in Chumash sites on the mainland (Grant 1965). The same elements would not be typical of mainland San Diego County and, while the parallels are too tenuous to prove anything, they suggest possible relationships to the north.

Other rock art sites are rumored to exist on San Clemente, reported to us by navy personnel on the island who claim to have seen them in the deep and precipitous canyons in the southern part of the island. One observer reports a circular painted element in a small cave; we were not able to find this site, but if it exists it would also relate to the Chumash.

Additional rock art is suggested in the form of pits, lines, and grooves at the Ledge Site

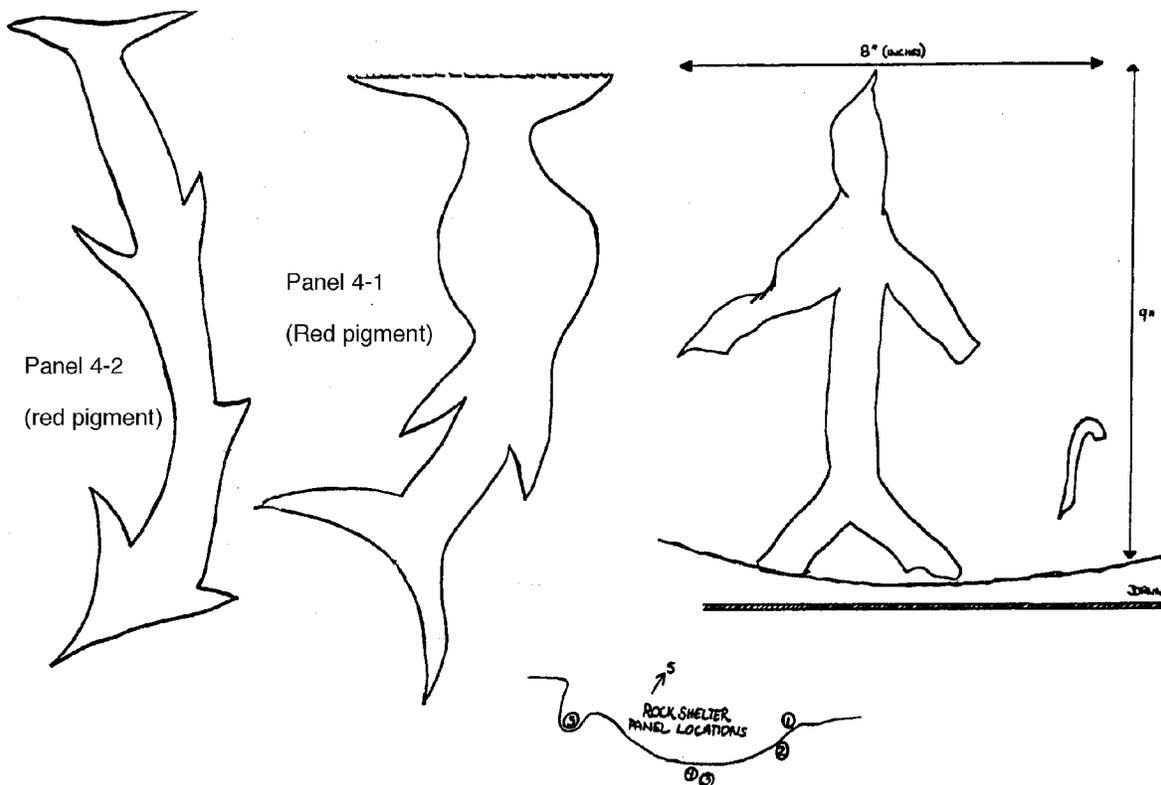


Fig. 11.2. SCLI-1724. "Rough drawings from E. Younkin's field notebook" and re-drawn by Joanna Cramer, July 28, 1980. The figures in the rockshelter were not traced. There are five main areas of visible red pigment with only three identifiable figures.

(Zahniser 1981). I examined a considerable number of such markings during the 1983-1984 field work. The rocks are all solidified volcanic tuff of a chalk-like texture and I am not convinced that any of the markings are aboriginal. They appear to be from recent collectors and picnickers. Due to the softness of the rocks involved, grooves and pits are made merely by moving the rocks with a pick and shovel and the markings (including one small cross-hatch) appear fresh and can be duplicated in a few seconds with the point of a trowel.

The possibility of recent embellishments is also supported by the discovery of a rock art assemblage on a peak near our field camp at Stone. This site (Stone Mountain) was recorded by Frank Wood during our 1983 field project. The location includes a number of stick figures, a picture of what appears to be men in

a canoe, and other elements cut into the surface of volcanic tuff boulders with a knife or other sharp implement (Fig. 11.3). The rocks are on a knoll where there is a small navy installation requiring frequent visits. I believe the "rock art" here is clearly recent because of the fresh appearance of the sharply-incised lines. Even more convincing is the fact that the large rocks chosen for decoration have been recently moved and overturned by bulldozers in creating a level area for buildings. The decorated surfaces were not accessible until recent construction activities placed them where they are today.

Other studies in 1984 investigated some locations where cupule rock art was said to be found. All proved to be rocks pitted by natural causes. Since cupule sites are common on the adjacent mainland and on Catalina Island to the north, it would not be surprising to find

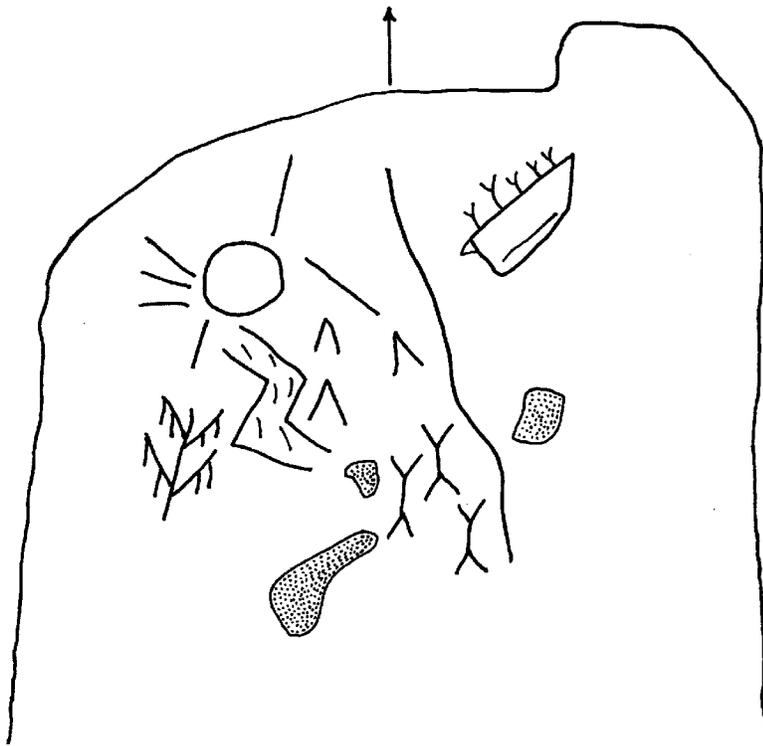


Fig. 11.3. Stone Mountain "Petroglyph."

such sites on San Clemente; however, none are verifiable at present.

In sum, of the thousands of sites recorded on San Clemente Island, there is evidence of only a minute amount of painted rock art.

Santa Catalina

Catalina Island is the closest to the mainland of the southern islands, 26 miles off the Los Angeles Basin. On clear days it is readily visible from the coast along many miles of the coastline.

Catalina has extensive rock outcrops, especially numerous along the coast. The geology is diverse and includes rock of several origins. The central interior is famous for its steatite outcrops, which provided most

of the material used in southern California for bowls, effigies, and other aboriginal manufactures. The rock art of Catalina includes several stones bearing pits or cupules (Minor 1975). Such pitted stones are common in southern California, with over 500 sites widely distributed on the mainland (True and Baumhoff 1981; Hedges 1980; Smith and Lerch 1984). They are generally small to large boulders found on the surface of habitation sites. Usually, but not always, they are surrounded by midden. The Catalina examples fit this pattern; there are six sites, of which two have more than one cupule rock. The nine decorated boulders have from 3 to 49 small drilled pits (2-15 cm diameter, 2-7 cm deep); some also have grooves

cut into them. All of the Catalina examples are on steatite and some are associated with steatite quarries where bowls were made. The quarries themselves often show bowl scars and stubs where pieces of steatite were removed, but such marks of manufacturing activity cannot be confused with rock art.

It is reasonably well documented that cupule rocks are places of supplication for some desired event, the pits being made as accompaniment to individual prayers. Repeated use may lead to covering the entire surface of a boulder with pits, sometimes arranged in circles or lines. This form of decorating the rocks must be considered a practice of the common people, rather than sacred or esoteric, since cupule rocks are usually in the middle of village middens and not in isolated or special locations.

Table 11.1. Comparison of Catalina Island rock art records.

Element	Number at Torqua Cave	Number at Quist Site
Total figures in site	19	23
Sun disk	1 (12 rays)	1 (16 rays)
Anthropomorphic figures	2	4
Feet, varying number of digits	4	3
Possible fish	0	2
Arrow	1	0
Cross or X	2	1

Cupule rocks are inconspicuous and often largely buried. I have seen some where only a few inches of rock is now visible above the surface. Such locations are easy to overlook, and they are no doubt more numerous than the record shows. I would expect them to be present on all of the southern islands, but as mentioned above they cannot be verified for San Clemente and none are recorded for San Nicolas. This may be partly due to the available rock; the complete correlation of pitted stones with steatite on Catalina is significant, since this rock is absent from the other islands. On the other hand, some sandstones and soft rock are available on San Clemente and San Nicolas while cupule sites on the mainland occur in hard rock including granite. The nature of the rock may therefore inhibit, but does not prevent, the production of cupule sites.

Except for the cupules, there are not known to be any pecked or grooved petroglyphs on Catalina. Painted rock art, however, has been reported over a period of many years, starting with a mention by Holder (1910), an early sportsman and traveler who published about the Channel Islands. A small cave at Little Harbor is reported to contain a few fragmentary red-painted figures. A shelter with some rather nondescript painted forms was described by Quist (1978) and the important site of Torqua Cave (described below) was excavated by Nelson Leonard. I visited the latter site

in 1973 during the excavation and recorded the rock art present.

There is considerable confusion in evaluating the records. Both Leonard and Quist identified their sites as the same one initially noted by Holder, but the site records indicate them to be separate locations. Although the sites are described as being in the same vicinity, there is no formal

site record on Quist's site and it is said to be both further from water and 100 feet higher in elevation than Torqua Cave. It appears that the Quist site is a previously unrecorded location; a comparison of the rock art recorded by Quist and that of Torqua Cave is given in Table 11.1. So far as can be told from the published evidence, Torqua Cave is the site mentioned by Holder.

Could these records refer to the same site? There are enough similarities to suggest this as a possibility, and the Quist site could not be found by me or recent visitors to the island; however, Quist's drawings bear little resemblance to the record from Torqua Cave. The "sun disk" (Fig. 11.4a) measured at Torqua Cave is 26 by 34 cm; Quist's "sun disk" is said to be 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter. Quist (1978:41) shows a figure somewhat similar to element No. 18 (Fig. 11.4b). He states it to be 18 inches (45 cm) wide; the one at Torqua Cave measures 27 cm wide. Quist's (1978: 41, lower left) figure is like element 19 (Fig. 11.4c) from Torqua Cave. He states it to be 12 inches (30 cm) across; the Torqua Cave example has a maximum dimension of 20 cm. Torqua Cave's rock art was recorded in 1973; Quist's site in 1978. If these records represent the same site, the discrepancies in recording are extreme. If different sites, they are generally similar in content.

Torqua Cave (SCAI-32) is a rock shelter containing up to 2 meters of midden. It was excavated and recorded

by a UCLA crew in 1973. The rock art includes 19 identifiable elements and a number of unidentifiable smears of red paint and faded or exfoliated elements. The base rock is schist, dark in color and of coarse texture. The painted elements are all in red ocher, which is visible but has little contrast from the dark background color of the rock.

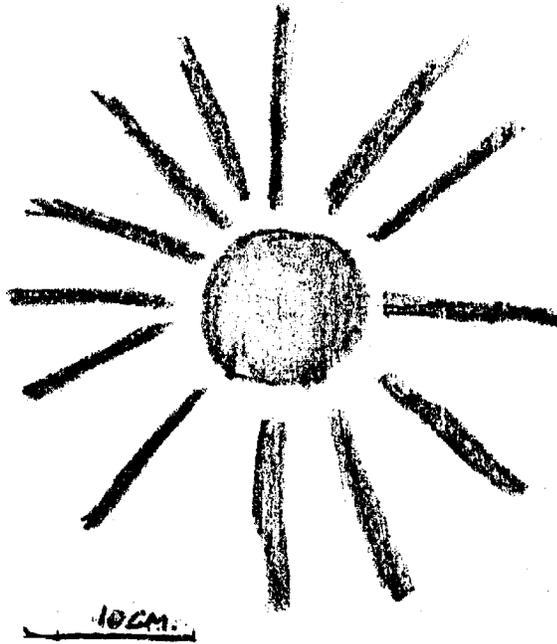


Fig. 11.4a. "Sun disk" Torqua Cave, Recorded by C. W. Meighan, 1973. Courtesy UCLA Rock Art Archive.

This site is definitely of "Chumash" flavor and style, particularly in the occurrence of the sun disk and the imaginary creatures that are reminiscent of some sort of marine invertebrate like nudibranchs or marine worms. Because of the resemblance to Chumash rock art, a detailed search was made to see if other colors of paint were used. White and black are commonly found in Chumash rock art and some Chumash sites also include yellow, blue, green, and other colors. On Catalina, however, only red is present and no trace of any other color was found.

The elements at Torqua Cave are all fairly small. The smallest are 8 by 12 cm; the largest is 26 by 34 cm. Most elements are 15-20 cm in maximum dimension. The individual paintings are on four different faces of the rock shelter spread over a distance of several meters. There is no particular grouping or arrangement of the elements and they appear to have been done one or two at a time and not to form a "scene" or "composition."



Fig. 11.4b. Element 18, Torqua Cave, SCAI-1724.



Fig. 11.4c. Element 19, Torqua Cave, SCAI-1724.

Other cave sites on the mainland, particularly in the southern part of the Chumash style area, share important features with Torqua Cave. These sites all have small painted elements done exclusively in red and they are sites with more than a meter of shell midden deposit abutting the painted surfaces. In other words, they are areas of habitation where everyday activities took place. Mainland sites closely comparable to Torqua Cave include Bony Peak (VEN-195; Garvin 1978; Gibson and Singer 1970) and Saddle Rock Ranch (LAN-717; Reinhardt 1981). All the sites of this kind appear to be quite late in time; LAN-717 extends into the historic period and the other locations are probably within the past few hundred years.

Interpretation is not easy. The rock art at such locations certainly had a special meaning for the people involved, but the sites themselves could not have been secret locations visited only by religious specialists. While sites of this kind are similar as a subset of Chumash rock art, they do not contain the same elements, and, whatever their uses, each site seems to have focused on a different purpose. Although some artistic elements are shared, in general the sites do not share a common iconography. Bony Peak has several birds (“eagles”) and the site is in an area where golden eagles are known to nest; Saddle Rock Ranch has many anthropomorphic stick figures; Torqua Cave has “footprints” and strange zoomorphic forms. Astronomical figures are not very prominent. Torqua Cave has only one “sun symbol.” Astronomical significance may be a key meaning in the larger and more elaborate rock art sites, but it is hard to demonstrate any such component in the southern islands, or among the simpler “residential” rock art locations.

San Nicolas

San Nicolas is the outermost of the islands, some 80 miles from the mainland. On clear days it can be seen from both San Clemente and Catalina. It is basically a sandstone plateau, flat on top with cliffs around the

margins. There are extensive areas of sand dunes. Rock exposures are limited to the coastal cliffs.

A single rock art site is known, consisting of fish petroglyphs in a sea cave (SNI-53, Whale Cave; see Heizer and Clewlow 1973 Fig. 248e; Reinman and Townsend 1960 Appendix 2; Rozaire and Kritzman 1960; Hall [1962] published an inverted photograph of this site). Intensive survey of San Nicolas Island (hundreds of sites in only 32 square miles) has revealed no other rock art site. The main decorated face at Whale Cave split and fell off in 1959 and was removed to the Southwest Museum. An upper portion of the same panel was removed from the island in 1978 and sent to the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Later, this part was also transferred to the Southwest Museum, which now preserves most of the rock art from the site. According to George Kritzman of the Southwest Museum, who has extensive field experience on the islands, a winter storm in the 1980s washed all the sand out of Whale Cave, although a few rock art elements still remain. [The sand has probably been removed and redeposited several times since the site was abandoned, and it is likely that during the use of the cave, ritual objects were buried in it.]

The Reinman and Townsend photograph shows nine fishes outlined with cut or grooved lines in the sandstone, an unusual method of rock art production in California. Of the fishes shown (Figure 11.5), three have no fins, six have dorsal fins and might represent killer whales (but one of these also has three ventral fins, and the fishes represented could equally well be sharks). One picture shows an eye and one shows a mouth represented by a slit; these details are often present on the miniature fish effigies found on the southern Channel Islands.

The Reinman and Townsend (1960) report differs in highly significant ways from that of Heizer and Clewlow (1973), and it appears that the drawing in the

latter publication is based on a photograph. The Reinman and Townsend report indicates five fish forms in one area of the site and ten in another for a total of fifteen elements. The nine reported by Heizer and Clewlow represent only one of the decorated faces and their illustration disagrees on several points: number of elements, completeness of the drawings and, most importantly, the Heizer and Clewlow drawing shows two small superimpositions where there are none. Each picture is individually drawn and does not touch any other element. In addition, Reinman and Townsend show two geometric elements lacking in other illustrations: a cross-hatch design and a set of parallel zig-zag lines. These simple geometric

elements also occur in many southern California rock art sites.

A zoologist who looked at the drawings thought them likely to be killer whales, dolphins, or porpoises. Whatever their identification, fish forms are rare in California rock art, and there is no other site with a predominance of such representations. The closest sites with large numbers of fish representations are in central Baja California; these sites are hundreds of miles distant, and the fishes are pecked rather than grooved (Meighan and Pontoni 1978; Pontoni 1977). Extensive documentation of the Baja California sites is on file at the UCLA Rock Art Archive.

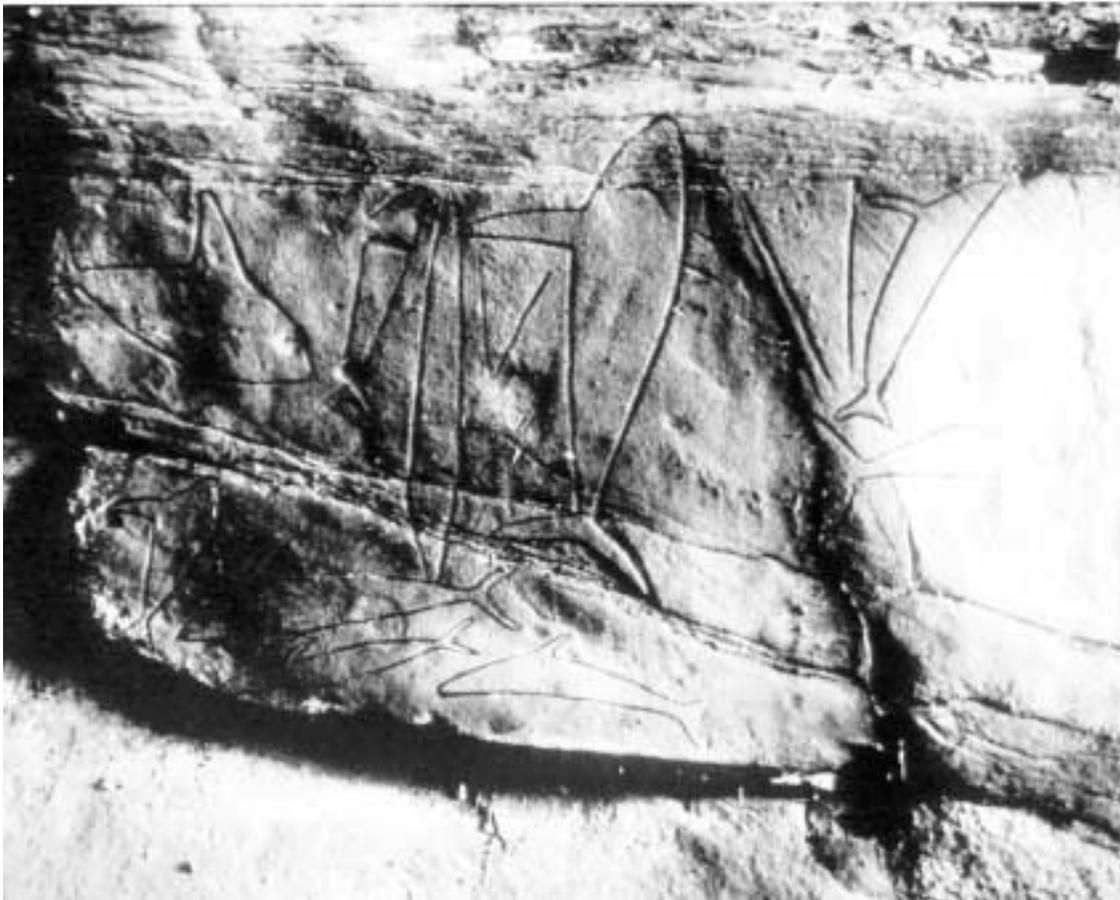


Fig. 11.5. "Whale Cave" San Nicholas Island. Photo by C. Rozaire, 1958-9. Courtesy UCLA Rock Art Archive.

As this report and numerous others document, maritime adaptations have been characteristic of the southern California islands for thousand of years, and maritime influences in the religious beliefs are seen in such things as the production of steatite fish effigies and miniature canoes buried in some graves. Both fish and Delphinidae (particularly dolphins and porpoises) were major food resources for some island sites, the Little Harbor Site on Catalina being the best example of heavy dependence on Delphinidae (Meighan 1959). Whale Cave is undoubtedly a part of the religious or mythical beliefs of the islanders concerning the creatures of the sea. It is tempting to suggest hunting magic as a motivation for the site, but if the representations include killer whales there is more going on here than mere representation of food resources. In a conversation about this site with Alexander Marshack of Harvard University, a noted expert on Paleolithic art, he immediately suggested that the San Nicolas site had to do with the “master of the animals,” the spirit or deity responsible for bringing sea creatures to the island where they could be obtained by man. This is a compelling interpretation, although it cannot be proven with any archaeological evidence from the islands. It may be noted that Whale Cave is the westernmost point of the western most island. Beyond this location there is nothing but the wide Pacific,



Fig. 11.6a. Petroglyphs in Jones Cave, Santa Rosa Island.

unknown to the ancient Californians but widely believed by them to border the land of the dead. From that vast expanse of water came most of the food resources of the islanders.

The Northern Islands

The northern channel islands are much closer to the mainland and to each other. They are also much closer to the major area of Chumash rock art and the most elaborate painted rock art in California (Grant 1965). It can be expected that the northern islands would therefore have much more extensive rock art than the southern islands. This is in fact not the case. So far, the most elaborate rock art site on all the islands is Torqua Cave on Catalina. For the northern islands, there are few records.

Santa Rosa Island

Orr (1968) reports on many years of survey and excavation. The only rock art he reports for Santa Rosa is a site called Jones Cave (Site 131.147; Orr 1968:104) which contains a number of small grooves (Fig. 11.6a). He believes these marks may not be rock art at all, but abrasion marks from grinding shells or bones. This site, however, also contains a group of 29 cupules (Fig. 11.6b), apart from the other marks, so it may in fact contain some simple rock art.

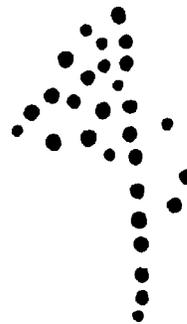


Fig. 11.6b. Cupules in Jones Cave, Santa Rosa Island.

Grant (1965) mentions that another site on Santa Rosa (Site 131.79), at the headwaters of Rancho Viejo Creek, shows a very faint and unrecognizable pattern in red and black on the ceiling of a cave. He comments that no other paintings are known on the island. He mentions the Jones Cave site referred to above and considers it to be a petroglyph location.

Santa Cruz Island

Grant (1965) states that there are petroglyphs in a site known as Olsen's Cave on Santa Cruz Island. No details are given.

San Miguel Island

No rock art sites are so far reported from San Miguel, which has had considerably less survey and excavation than the other islands.

Since I have not worked on the northern islands, I am not familiar with their geological situation. All have rock outcrops and caves, however, and all may well turn out to have rock art sites when a specific search for them is made. At present, the extensive site records in the Rock Art Archives at UCLA do not include records of any rock art sites on the northern islands.

Conclusions

All of the islands are characterized by minimal rock art sites, usually one or two per island and these not very elaborate. Cupule sites are recorded only for Catalina (and possibly Santa Rosa). Pictorial petroglyphs are recorded only for San Nicolas. Several small sites with painted rock art are noted, but Torqua Cave (Catalina), with less than twenty painted elements, appears to be the most complex rock art site on all the islands. To the extent that stylistic comparisons can be made from such a meager roster of rock art elements, San Nicolas stands alone because of its unique site; all other islands may be considered to be

in the Chumash sphere of rock art. The general lack of interest in rock art is one of the characteristics that separates the cultures of the island world from the mainland world.

Cupule rock art is common on the mainland adjacent to both northern and southern islands. The heartland of Chumash painted rock art is in the mountains of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, facing the northern islands. For the southern islands, the mainland includes the Santa Monica Mountains, which are linked to Chumash rock art. The Los Angeles Basin itself has minimal rock art because it is an alluvial plain. To the south, rock art in the coastal mountains is characteristic of southwestern California, primarily geometric elements associated with puberty ceremonies. San Clemente Island faces this coast but has none of its typical style; the one site on San Clemente is quite limited and is more similar to the Chumash than anything else.

The limited rock art known from the southern islands appears to relate to the art and culture of the northern islands and Chumash mainland, even though none of the southern islands were within Chumash (or Hoka-speaking) territorial boundaries in historic times. This may indicate that the southern islands were in Hoka linguistic territory prior to the coming of the later Shoshonean-speakers and that the latter may have occupied the southern islands in very recent times, perhaps only within the past 400 or 500 years.

Our small amount of rock art evidence agrees with other archaeological evidence that the Channel Islands (both northern and southern) constituted their own cultural area, somewhat distinct from mainland developments. The islands share more cultural traits with each other than with the archaeology of the mainland, and trade and contact among the islands appears to have been well developed. Esoteric and ritual activities for the islanders were expressed in ways other than rock art production and there is no

island rock art closely comparable to the more elaborate mainland sites.

For the islanders, it is possible that what has been called “portable rock art,” consisting of incised and decorated stone objects small enough to be carried (Lee 1981) was the ritual item of choice. This is particularly true for the many effigies and small decorated plaques (Fig. 11.7) described by Cameron (in press), although these are heavily concentrated on the southern islands and are rare elsewhere.

Acknowledgments

A preliminary version of this report was presented at the 1990 Rock Art Symposium at the San Diego Museum of Man. Susan Colby did considerable checking on the problematical site records for Catalina rock art sites and I appreciate her effort to resolve some of the confusions in the literature. I am also indebted to George Kritzman and Charles Rozaire for information and photographs of Whale Cave. Lynn Barabas was able to fill me in on the present location of the fragments removed from Whale Cave. Campbell Grant and Michael Glassow kindly shared their data on the rock art of the northern islands and offered useful comments.

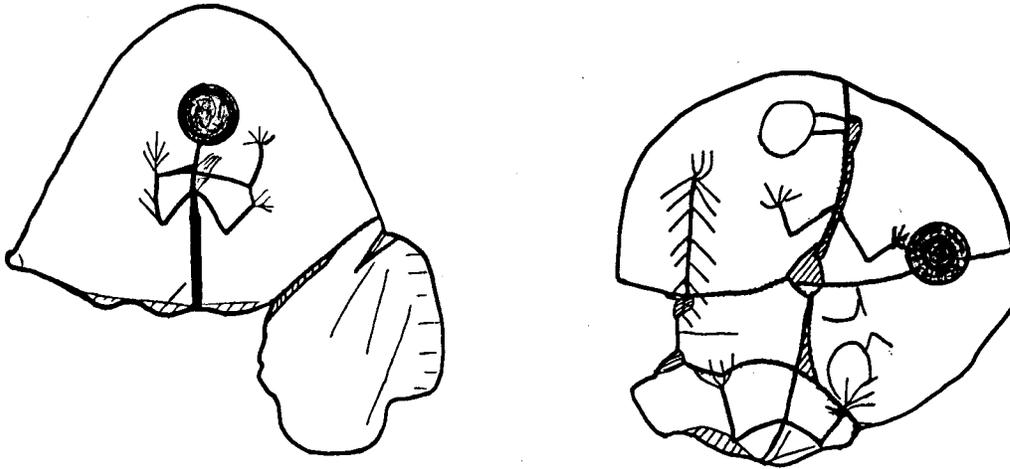


Fig. 11.7. Steatite plaques from San Clemente Island showing Chumash rock art elements. The one on the left makes use of the perforation as part of the design. These are sketches after Cameron. Maximum dimensions - left example 11.7 centimeters; right example 9.4 centimeters.

Clement W. Meighan and the Rock Art of the Channel Islands: Afterward, by Jo Anne Van Tilburg

In 1984, Clement W. Meighan had completed a thorough survey of the available published and unpublished documentation known to exist on the rock art of the Channel Islands. He prepared and presented a paper detailing what he had discovered in the same year and then, in August, sent down from his UCLA office to the Rock Art Archive the bulk of the material he had gathered, instructing that it be kept on file (Table 11.2 and Table 11.3). His apparent intent was to carry on with his research some time later and he drafted or edited a preliminary manuscript that confronted three specific problems.

The first problem was conflicting site location and rock art data for Torqua Cave on Catalina Island. Meighan had recorded Torqua Cave on 13 March 1973, and his records disagreed fundamentally and extremely with Quist’s (1978). For a time, he actually

felt that two caves were located in the same general region and that Quist’s site was not Torqua Cave at all. Meighan (RAA MF 812E) had “measured the elements...with a tape measure,” but, in honestly judging his data, was “sure about a lot of it, less sure of some of it.” While he recognized that discrepancies in recording were always possible, “in this case they are extreme.” He found it “hard to compare with Quist” since “you can’t tell what many of his elements were supposed to be; they are just random smears of paint in his drawings.”

Eventually, Campbell Grant (RAA MF 812 E) convinced Meighan that “there can be no doubt that the Torqua site and Quist’s site are one and the same...with some difficulty, I was able to correlate about ten of the elements.” Publication of Quist’s report at UCLA highlighted for Meighan “the general tendency of rock-art people and archaeologists to work independent of one another,” a point he lamented often and strove mightily to change throughout his long and distinguished career.

Table 11.2. Site records* dealing with the rock art of the Channel Islands, California: archive file ref. MF 812 A-F and MF 1407.

Site Name	Recorder	Date	Assigned No.	Rock Art
Jone's Cave, Santa Rosa Island	P. Jones	1901	CGSB-38	Pictographs
Catalina Island	C. Meighan	1954	SCAL-104	Cupules
Torqua Cave, Catalina Island	C. Meighan	1973		Pictographs
"Holder's Site," Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1976	SCAL-32	Pictographs
Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1976	SCAL-26	Pit and groove
Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1976	SCAL-92	Cupules
Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1977	SCAL-117	Cupules
Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1977	SCAL-128	Cupules
Catalina Island	N. Leonard	1977	SCAL-129/J-2	Cupules
San Clemente Island	D. McCarthy	1980	SCLI-1724	Pictographs
Dick's Harbor, Santa Cruz Island	C. Grant	1981	CGSB-61	Petroglyphs
Olson's Cave, Santa Cruz Island	C. Grant	1981	CGSB-39	Pictographs
Catalina Island	C. Grant	1986		Pictographs, Cupules

*on file with the Rock Art Archive, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA 1901-1986.

Table 11.3. Correspondence* dealing with the rock art of the Channel Islands, California: ref. MF 812 A-F and MF 1407.

Sender	Recipient	Date	Subject
C. Meighan	N. Leonard	17 May 1977	Torqua Cave
G. Lee	N. Leonard	25 Sept. 1977	Painted Cobbles, Catalina Island
N. Leonard	G. Lee	17 Oct. 1977	Painted Cobbles, Catalina Island
G. Lee	N. Leonard	30 Oct. 1977	Painted Cobbles, Catalina Island
N. Leonard	G. Lee	9 Nov. 1977	Pit and groove sites, Catalina Island
G. Lee	N. Leonard	17 Nov. 1977	Pit and groove sites, Catalina Island
D. Fredrickson	N. Leonard	9 Jan.1978	Rock art paper
N. Leonard	D. Fredrickson	4 Sept. 1984	Rock art paper
C. Grant	C. Meighan	8 Sept. 1984	Torque/Quist
C. Meighan	C. Grant	21 Sept. 1984	Torque/Quist
T. Hudson	C. Meighan	21 Sept. 1984	Mainland influences
T. Hudson	C. Meighan	22 Sept. 1984	Comments on paper
Rock Art Archive	C. Meighan	17 Feb. 1984	Quist/Leonard
C. Meighan	C. Craig	6 June 1986	Pictographs and cupules sites,Catalina

*on file with the Rock Art Archive, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA.

The second problem was that all of the available drawings and sketches of rock art at Torqua Cave were quite subjective and frequently wrong. Issues of perspective, selective composition, scale, and other variables were either not addressed or ineptly handled. Meighan's own sketches, which I regard as the most reliable of any available to date, were not to scale. Using the computer drafting tools then available to him, he attempted to translate his field sketches into finished drawings. As many no doubt remember, Meighan lauded computer applications to 1980s rock art research goals but, as he realized even then, certain challenges and methodological shortcomings were inherent. He was initially very pleased with the results he achieved through computer drafting of the rock art elements at Torqua Cave, although by today's standards he would consider them unreliable. In the end, however, Meighan chose not to publish them until he had an opportunity to check them again in the field.

After seeing some of the drawings, Campbell Grant (RAA MF 813 E) told Meighan that he wished that "people doing drawings of rock art would either take a trained artist with them (if they were not a trained artist already) or illustrate their paper with photographs." Standard photography, however, has always had serious drawbacks as a recording tool. I'm certain that today Meighan would urge replacement of most photographic methods with the types of digital field technology pioneered and now in use by the Rock Art Archive.

The third problem was really not a problem at all but a new rock art discovery. On 5 August 1985 two new sites on Catalina Island, one of which was a rock art site at Little Harbor, were discovered and described by Curt Craig and David Doody. Craig appears to have sent field notes and other site documentation to UCLA rather soon thereafter, but may not have addressed his correspondence to Meighan personally. Unfortunately (and much to his annoyance), Meighan was not aware

of Craig's letter until 6 June 1986, when someone in the then Institute of Archaeology "finally got around" to forwarding it to his office (RAA MF 1407). Jubilant at the good news, he tried to reach Craig in Avalon, but, unfortunately, the telephone number he was given was incorrect. He then wrote Craig a congratulatory letter saying:

...you have just doubled the amount of recorded rock art on Catalina and made a big addition for all of the southern islands. I can't believe that I worked at Little Harbor and was all over the area yet did not find the rock art site. The answer is that I wasn't looking for rock art at the time and you don't see what you aren't looking for. Anyhow, this record (and your other site at Little Springs) adds a lot of important information. The rock art itself isn't too spectacular, but it does relate to the mainland and since we have so little in the way of rock art from the islands, it is a major addition even to find a couple of new sites. The "cupule" rock art with all the little drilled pits is also very valuable. I saw a couple of rocks like this on top of the island

(up near the airport) and have photos of them but no very detailed records.

The only description of the Little Harbor site on file with the Rock Art Archive, therefore is included in the brief but very interesting site record Meighan received from Craig and subsequently placed there. Its discoverers designated the site "Little Harbor 11-F-1," and documented at least four discrete features. Feature 4-F-1 is a small, north facing cave or rock shelter near the shoreline in which the rock art consists of at least three panels of rather damaged but still bright, red ochre pictographs. They made several detailed sketches (Fig. 11.8) and took a sequence of color photographs. Associated with the cave was a boulder of a green, close-grained type of micaceous steatite approximately 1 m long and 50 cm wide (Feature 4-F-2, Fig. 11.9). Pecked or drilled into the surface were a number of apparently randomly placed pits, most of which were about 2 cm deep. Feature 4-F-3 (not shown here) is a south-facing, blue-grey steatite outcropping bearing a series of pecked and smoothed grooves up to 2.5 cm deep.

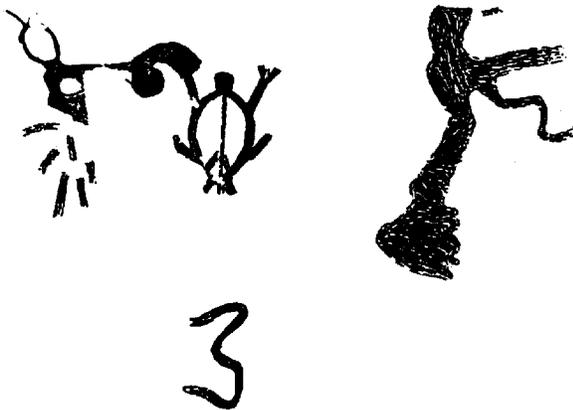


Fig. 11.8. Little Harbor Site Pictographs, Catalina Island.

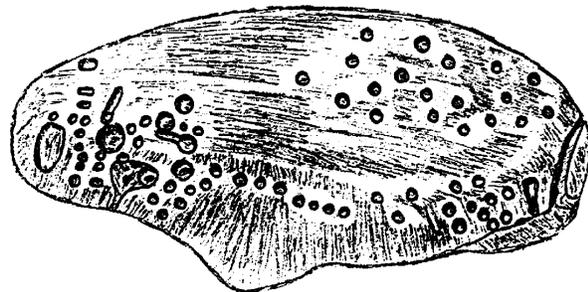


Fig. 11.9. Little Harbor Site cupule boulder, Catalina Island.

It seems clear that Meighan fully intended to examine the Little Harbor rock art site in person and to judge it for himself, and equally clear that he delayed publication of his paper on the rock art of the Channel Islands until he had a chance to do so. The purpose of this “afterward” is to provide, from an historical perspective, a footnote to his paper describing the materials he had personally gathered and researched as well as those he intended to look into in more detail in the future. It is apparent that, as Meighan wrote to Craig, “some more study” of rock art sites on the channel Islands is required.

Notes

1. The Rock Art Archive is a research and laboratory unit of The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA and was founded in 1976-77 by Clement W. Meighan with C. W. Clewlow, Jr. Meighan directed and guided the Archive from its inception until his retirement from UCLA. In 1997, I was asked to assume the role of Director and did so after talking with Clem, who felt strongly that the Archive not be allowed to falter. “The Rock Art Archive is a unique academic resource, and UCLA has the only one of its kind at the university level in the US. The Archive has been self-sustaining for twenty years and is essentially cost-free to the University. It contributes to all of the main objectives of the University of California: teaching, research and community service. It is important that it go forward.” (RAA Corresp. File C. W. Meighan to J. Van Tilburg, 1996).

Acknowledgments

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Leonard, Nelson N., III.

1978 Rock Art of Santa Catalina Island. Complete handwritten copy of a paper given at SCA meeting. Yosemite, California, 1978, including notes and correspondence.

Meighan, Clement

1973 Torqua Cave. Manuscript notes including field originals or copies of sketches of numbered rock art elements (measured but not drawn to scale) made in 1973. These elements do not match well with those preliminarily redrawn by Meighan with the aid of a computer.

Meighan, Clement

1984a Rock Art Sites on the Southern Islands of California. Complete typescript with bibliography and illustrations (including those made with the aid of a computer) of a paper given at unnamed conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, Oct. 1984.

Meighan, Clement

1984b Omnibus of the Rock Art of the Southern Channel Islands, 1973-1984. Collection of background materials intended for use in further preparation of conference paper manuscript on the rock art of the southern Islands of California. Little Harbor Site correspondence with C. Craig not included.

Quist, R.

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