

Two Stray Quadrupeds at Weitchpec

Robert Mark and Evelyn Billo
Rupestrian CyberServices, Flagstaff, Arizona

Two stray quadruped petroglyphs, recently discovered near Weitchpec, appear to be unique in the northern California Coast Ranges (Figure 1). The petroglyphs at the site (CA-HUM-173) are carved in a large outcrop of schist on the north bank of the Klamath River, below its confluence with the Trinity River. Most of the petroglyphs face the river and are geometric designs. The Weitchpec petroglyphs were first described by Steward (1929:plate 22b). Heizer (1953), in discussing the site, reported that "The Indians claim that the simple geometric figures (6-pointed star, zigzag, spurred line) are the source and origin of all basket designs." Heizer and Clewlow (1973:Fig. 16, plate 7b-f) illustrated the geometric figures. None of these authors mention animal motifs in their publications about this site, nor are they mentioned in the site report.

Northwest California petroglyphs are, in general, geometric and abstract rather than representational. They are predominantly PCN's (pecked curvilinear nucleated), cupules, and grooves; but zigzags, curvilinear designs, cup and ring glyphs, and circles (concentric, rayed, bisected, quartered) are also found (Heizer and Clewlow 1973, Jordan 1995:159-167, Mark and Newman 1995:13-18). Much less common are representational designs such as animal tracks, but until now no zoomorphs had been reported. A database and literature search of petroglyph types in northwestern California counties (Sonin and Marymor 1995) and in southwestern Oregon, west of Lake County (Loring and Loring 1983), showed no references to zoomorphs or quadrupeds. Extending the search to northeastern California, Lee, Hyder, and Benson (1988:138) state that at Lava Beds National Monument "Geometric designs predominate.... There are a few bug-like motifs, and some human figures.

Conspicuous by their absence are images of ungulates; not one has been noted at all these sites." CA-SHA-217 in the Southern Cascade Mountains, east of Redding on Bear Creek (Heizer and Clewlow 1973:Figs 280-284) is the closest site to CA-HUM-173 that includes quadruped designs, of which we are aware. Lake County in south-central Oregon also has quadruped petroglyphs.

CA-HUM-173 is near the boundary of the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Indian Reservations, which we visited on August 6, 1995, with Frances and Robert Connick. We observed to the right of the left-hand main panel (Figure 2) two small (about 10 cm long) pecked quadrupeds (Figure 3). They appeared fully repatinated and not modern. Additionally, we noted on and around the schist outcrop some deeply abraded grooves and several pecked cupules also not mentioned in published reports.

Without sharply oblique lighting, petroglyphs with patina that closely matches the rock surface are difficult to see. We digitally enhanced our images by utilizing subtle differences in color to improve contrast for

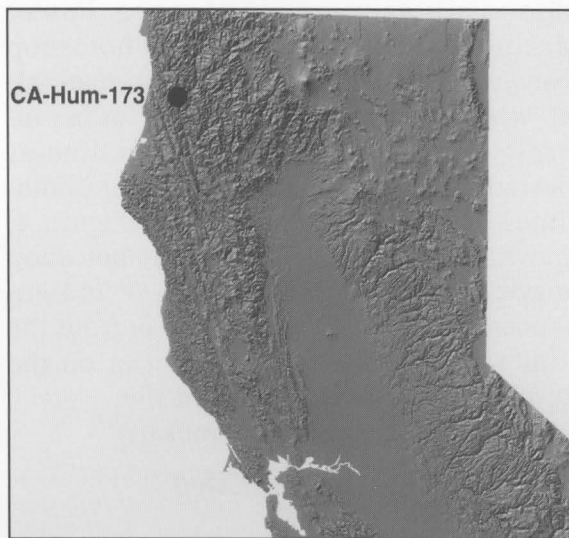


Figure 1. Location of the Weitchpec site in the northern Coast Ranges.



Figure 2. River-facing side of carved schist outcrop (scale in centimeters). Ellipse highlights area where quadrupeds are located.

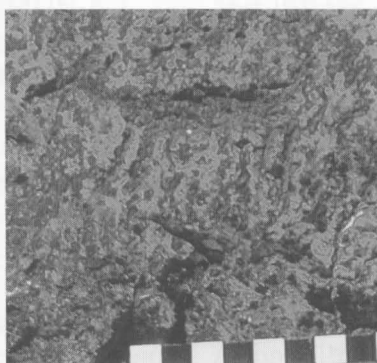


Figure 3. Left quadruped, image digitally enhanced using Adobe Photoshop. Two digitally enhanced versions of the image are shown. Scale in centimeters.



Figure 4. Artist's (Bruce Rogers) interpretation of petroglyph shown in Figure 3. Image was digitized and enhanced as outlined in the text.

black and white publication (Figure 3). Our technique uses Kodak Photo CD scans of 35mm slides, processed on a Power Macintosh 9500 using Adobe Photoshop (Newman and Mark 1994). We asked an artist, who has not been to the site, for his interpretation of one quadruped outline as viewed on an enhanced digital color photograph. His results are shown in Figure 4, drawn in Adobe Illustrator from a Photoshop image. Computer files of the raw and enhanced color images are available from the authors (rockart@infomagic.net).

<http://www.rupestrian.com>

References Cited

- Heizer, Robert F.
1953 Sacred Rain Rocks of Northern California. *University of California Archaeological Survey Report 20*, Paper 22.
- Heizer, Robert F., and C. W. Clewlow, Jr.
1973 *Prehistoric Rock Art of California*. Ramona: Ballena Press.
- Jordan, Leigh
1995 *Petroglyphs of the Southern North Coast Ranges: A Study of Style and Meaning*. MA Thesis, Sonoma State University.
- Lee, Georgia, William D. Hyder, and Arlene Benson
1988 The Rock Art of Petroglyph Point and Fern Cave, Lava Beds National Monument. Unpublished manuscript on file at Lava Beds National Monument.
- Loring, J. Malcolm, and Louise Loring
1983 *Pictographs and Petroglyphs of the Oregon Country, Part II: Southern Oregon*. Institute of Archaeology Monograph 23, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Mark, Robert, and Evelyn Newman
1995 Cup and Ring Petroglyphs in Northern California and Beyond. In: Jack Steinbring, ed., *Rock Art Studies in the Americas*, pp.13-21. Oxbow Monograph 45. Oxford, England: Oxbow Books.
- Newman, Evelyn, and Robert Mark
1994 Rescuing the Photo Archive, A Digital Perspective. Paper presented at the 1994 International Rock Art Congress, Flagstaff, AZ. Manuscript in the possession of ARARA.
- Sonin, William
1995 *California Rock Art: An Annotated Site Inventory and Bibliography*. Edited by M. Leigh Marymor. Occasional Papers, Volume 17. Los Angeles: UCLA Institute of Archaeology Rock Art Archive, in conjunction with the Bay Area Rock Art Research Association.
- Steward, Julian H.
1929 *Petroglyphs of California and Adjoining States*. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 24(2):52-238.