

## SUPPLEMENT 6. THE ROCK ART AND MIDDENS

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Below the structures on top of the cliff is some rock art, and below that, some midden material. The interpretation of the rock art and associated middens is highly imaginative. There are two panels and two middens, separated by talus. The authors reject an Apishapa affiliation for the art because of a lack of pecked images and the presence of shield-bearing warriors. They go on to interpret it using Pawnee concepts and motifs. But absence of pecked figures more likely due to the absence of stone resistant enough to erosion to develop a patina against which pecked figures would be visible. And while shield-bearing warriors are generally absent in Apishapa rock art, the same is true of art that can be attributed to the Central Plains tradition (Blakeslee n.d., O'Neill 1981, Wedel 1959, Wells 1996). Shield-bearing warriors do appear in later rock art, but that can be attributed to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Osage and Comanche who entered the region during the historic period, as some shield-bearing figures are on horseback and share stylistic features with pedestrian figures that carry guns. Missing from the Wallace site are common earlier motifs in from the Central Plains: geometric designs such as turkey tracks, stars in the shape of crosses, a ladder-like design, and zigzags; and zoomorphs such as bison, bears, the underworld monster, and ground-dwelling birds. All this aside, the interpretations are still fanciful at best. Thus two pairs of white and red crescents drawn back to back within a circle (or two arcs) and separated by a vertical string of diamonds becomes 1) a geometric design rather than a shield, with 2) the white crescents seen as the moon, with no explanation of why there are four crescents and why the white ones have triangular red tips and two offset red rectangles intruding into them. The string of diamonds is interpreted as the

celestial serpent, with a comparison to the famous Pawnee star chart, in spite of the fact that it is placed where the Milky Way runs in the star chart, which also includes a realistic depiction of the serpent constellation (Scorpio), with the stars depicted as small crosses.

Another design from the eastern panel that they interpret consists of three figures on an oval background and above a multi-colored crescent (Huffman and Earley 2014: figure 14). Each of the three is a tapering triangle with rounded corners that is white at the upper (broad) end, black below that, and red toward the base. They interpret these motifs as turkey tail feathers, which they describe as “white, dark, and red” and which they then relate to Pawnee springtime Thunder ceremony. Unfortunately for their thesis, turkey tail feathers are red at their broad tips, followed by a dark band, with banding (not pure white) below. The motif does not come close to a good depiction of turkey feathers.

The rock art is found on a huge monolith that had caved off from the cliff, creating an enclosed space. Testing there revealed two middens, one at the base of the main cliff face and another at the base of the monolith, below the eastern art panel. A test trench directly below the western rock art panel was sterile.

The article contrasts the contents of the two middens without taking preservation into consideration. The west midden contained a large deposit of fragmented large mammal bone that was in very bad condition. Ireland (1968:40) interpreted the location and condition of the bones as reflecting refuse in the form of comminuted bone from the site directly above, bone that had deteriorated due to soil moisture. Poor preservation may have limited the recoverable specimens to those from large mammals, as even some of the more stable pieces deteriorated completely when cleaned in the lab.

Huffman and Earley (2014:669-670) see the bones as ritually deposited by proto-Pawnee doctors because “Pawnee spirit lodges are sometimes located underneath such a bluff.” They cite an account of beaver bones being returned to water as part of a First Fruits ceremony as supporting evidence but fail to mention that there are no accounts of Pawnee doctors ritually depositing bison bone at this kind of site, which is more commonly called an “animal lodge” (Parks and Wedel 1985). Furthermore, no such bone deposit have been reported from any of the Pawnee animal lodges whose locations are known. Another problem for their interpretation is that they report that the bone midden extended for over seven meters west of the original test trench, which was five meters long. How many doctors do they imagine visited the site? The eastern midden, at the base of the monolith, not the bluff, was clearly drier than the other one, as it held more than 100 preserved maize cobs. In addition Huffman and Early report “pottery, lithics, and some bone and ground stone artifacts.” They also discuss a large raptor talon and seven oyster shells. Neither of the two early reports that discuss the site mention either the eagle talon or the oyster shells nor any chipped stone from the eastern midden. We assume that Huffman and Early had access to an uncited report that we have not seen or have seen them in the collection from the site. Nevertheless, the unmodified oyster shells are anomalous and similar specimens have never been reported from Central Plains tradition sites (Blakeslee 1997, Carlson 1997). Indeed, in a summary of the use of shell in eastern Colorado, Calhoun (2011:70-71) questions the association of the shells with the rest of the site.

Neither of the 1968 reports included faunal remains in their lists of artifacts from the test trenches, but the items they do list do not support the contrast that Huffman and Early make. Both middens contained manos, and both contained pottery, although in very different amounts.

The western midden had the base of a point or knife, while the eastern one yielded a sandstone shaft smoother (Ireland 1968:42-43). Also in the eastern midden were found two lumps of hematite, one of which exhibited use facets, but neither report mentions lithics (i.e., chipped stone).

Having attributed the western midden to doctors, they argue that “it follows that the east unit may have been associated with priests” (Huffman & Earley 2014:669-670). The raptor talon “may have once belonged to a sacred bundle, and the priest responsible may well have lived in House 5.” In addition to the explicit surmise, that statement also includes an incorrect tacit assumption: that only Pawnee priests dealt with sacred bundles. Only priests dealt directly with village bundles among the Skidi Pawnee, but other people, including doctors, could own a sacred bundle (e.g., Good 1989). Huffman and Earley speculate that their hypothesized priest may have lived in House 5 because it was oriented to the east, but curiously it is the least east-facing of the four houses that they map.

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