

Three Rivers Petroglyphs – September 2022 – by Elly



The Tularosa Basin of New Mexico has been inhabited by humans for at least 10,000 years (may be for longer: Steeves 2021). The art of the Jornada Mogollon people, as evidenced by the [Three Rivers Petroglyph](#) site, is breathtaking. Compared to other sites in the SW I have seen, more naturalistic animals, tracks, humans, masks, and faces appear here. The number of petroglyphs (close to 22000) is stunning; the techniques are unique. The styles represent the times this site was occupied: 400-1400 CE.



Different artists or times?



The artists and their people left this area (like many others in other places in the Southwest around 1300) and they are the ancestors of contemporary native peoples and that's reflected in, e.g. present pottery patterns. Currently, the [Mescalero Apaches](#) (probably not related) have a reservation to the East, including the Sierra Blanca Peak.



The fun of petroglyph sites is to discover the glyphs and to appreciate their design(s). I have no idea what the one in the below picture means!



Towards the East, the Godfrey Hills in the distance

There are amazing representations of animals, e.g. birds, turtles, big horn sheep, and antelopes. Also of animal being hurt by arrows, as in the below, which picture also has tracks.





owl



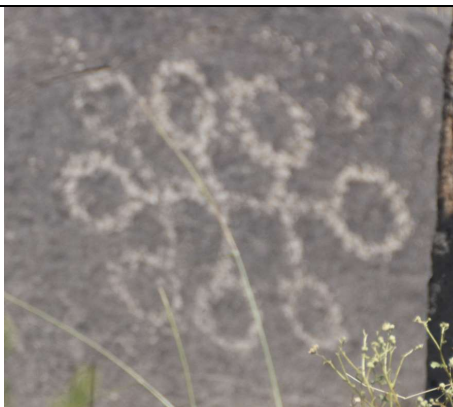
Jumping antelope/sheep



Bighorn



And there are geometric figures.



Some more intriguing pictures:



Katsina-like



Bear and human?



The Tularosa Basin is also home to the [White Sands NP](#) (and the various military testing sites). I love the minimalism of the landscape. Both pictures are oriented towards the East and have Sierra Blanca in it.



A wonderful experience.

Reference

Steeves, Paulette 2021. *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere*. Nebraska UP.