

Kohta's Circus

Kohta's Circus site is located in the Gold Butte Area of Nevada. It is a rather large flat area located at the head of a canyon that empties into the Mud Wash, which in turn empties into the Virgin / Muddy River. It is located within an approximate 5 mile walk from what would have been the Lost City / Overton Anasazi population center. The Kohta Circus / Gold Butte area is not thought to have been a habitation site, but rather a ceremonial site for those on the east side of the Muddy / Virgin River. The Valley of Fire / Lost Buffington area is a similar ceremonial area for those on the west side of the river.

Entering the area from the North is rather flat plain with sandstone outcroppings (Figure 1). These outcroppings are severely eroded, creating alcoves at their base (Figure 2) that have some petroglyphs on the outside and pictographs on the ceilings (Figures 3-4). It is thought that these alcoves could have been clan "camping grounds" or areas for "vision quests".



Figure 1 - Desert in Gold Butte



Figure 2 - Alcoves



Figure 3 – Pictograph on Ceiling of an Alcove

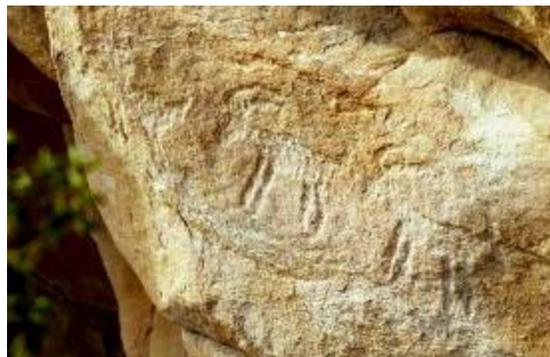


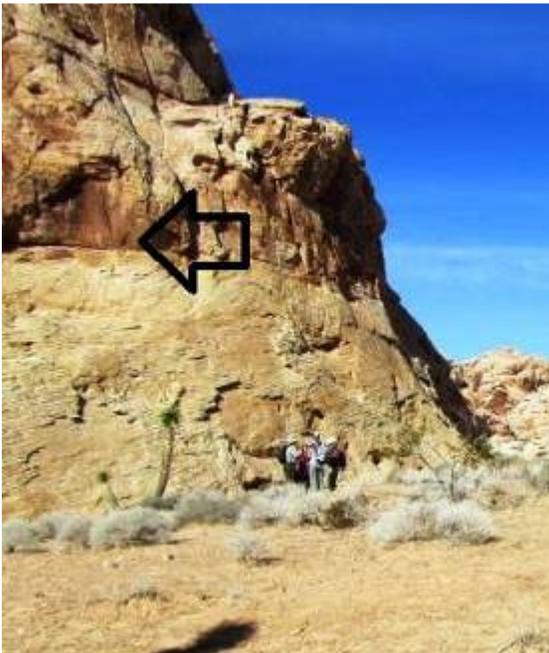
Figure 4 – Petroglyph of Sheep outside an Alcove

The Kohta's Circus area is located about 50 -100 feet below the desert plain. There are two main areas for rock art. The "Circus" panel is located the south wall at eye level extending over 90 feet in length (Figure 5A) and is between 3 feet and 7 feet above the

ground surface. The other “high” panels are located very high (30 - 40 feet above the canyon surface) on the west wall (Figure 5B). The canyon then extends south into the Mud Wash.



Figure 5A – Looking down into the Kohta Circus area. The Circus panel is located between the two arrows.



The “Main High” Panel is located at the arrow.

The “Circus” Panel

The “Circus” panel gets its name from the large number of animal glyphs found on the panel. These include sheep, deer, geese (Figure 6), serpents, and rabbits (Figure 7), turtles (Figure 8), parrots (Figure 9), ants (Figure 10), hummingbird (Figure 10), quail (Figure 11), eagles (Figure 12), water birds (Figure 12), coyote (Figure 13), bear tracks, and turkey tracks. These symbols are included among other glyphs which cover the rock face indicating they are part of the overall story of the total panel. They are likely clan symbols.



Figure 7 – Geese



Figure 8 - Turtles



Figure 9 – Parrot



Figure 10 – Ant and Hummingbird



Figure 11 – Quail



Figure 12 – Water Bird and Eagle



Figure 13 – Coyote, Sheep and Water Bird



Figure 14 – Large Anthros

The far left of the panel has a number of large anthropomorphs (Figure 14), some animal symbols and a hunting scene (Figure 15). Note that the deer has a vertical arrow in its back and a hunter pointing a bow and arrow at its front.



Figure 15 – Hunting Scene



Figure 16 – Anthro with Spirals and a Venus Star.

Another interesting symbol that appears frequently throughout the circus panel and on the other panels in the area is that of an anthro with spirals coming out of both sides of its head or neck region (Figure 16). It has been suggested that this could be interpreted as “what do I do now?” One spiral could mean “we came from there” and the other “do we move to another place?” – A decision symbol.

There was also a reclining flue player as a part of the story (Figure 17)



Figure 17 – Reclining Flute Player

The “Circus” panel shows a story of migration, with sheep and animals moving in mass in one direction (right) on the top portion of the panel and then back again (left) on the bottom portion of the panel. In many places, the sheep are connected nose to tail with a line. At various points, other symbols come into play to enhance the story (Figure 18 and 19).



Figure 18 – Sheep moving right – Note upside down burden basket and flute player (right center)



Figure 19 – Sheep moving left – Note the “path” running across the figure and the large tree of life.

The “High” Panels

There are at least 5 separate panels high on the west cliff wall. Some can be reached by climbing but the main panel could not be reached by our group – how did they do this precision work?

The “Main High” panel is shown in Figure 20. The clarity and precision of this rock art panel is amazing. The figures are precise and remarkably there is not sign of erosion.

This panel contains a number of different symbols; short rain symbols along the top, Burden baskets with an “H” or bat clan symbol, Venus star, cross with closed portals at each end, spirals, reclining flute player, serpent, sprit figures, and coyote.



Figure 20 – the “Main High” Panel

The story is about the lack of rain – the short rain symbol, extending over time from left to right. At the start of the story as the rain stops, everything is still OK, the burden baskets are upright - full. But as time goes on, things change – the burden baskets are upside down – empty. The crosses with the portal indicate that the people have completed their journey to the north / south / east / west and have settled in their “center place” – what went wrong? There is a reclining flute player playing to the creator (Venus star) for rain. The people need to make a decision (see the “decision” symbol – figure with two spirals. Their decision is to begin another journey – see the third spiral attached. The flute player may also be playing to the ancestor spirits for assistance with the journey. Finally you see coyote with a spiral attached to him beginning the journey and leading the people.

There are two other high panels that are likely by the same author using some of the same symbols (Figure 21 and 22). Figure 22 shows what could possibly be a map of the people’s journey. The burden baskets again have the “H” symbol.

The other two “High” panels are shown in Figures 23 and 24. Figure 23 is located below the “Main High” panel and contains an anthro, a tree of life and a cross with closed portals. This panel is incomplete. Figure 24 shows a spiral with many sheep moving in the same direction – north.



Figure 21 – Empty Burden Baskets



Figure 22 – Empty Burden Baskets with a Map

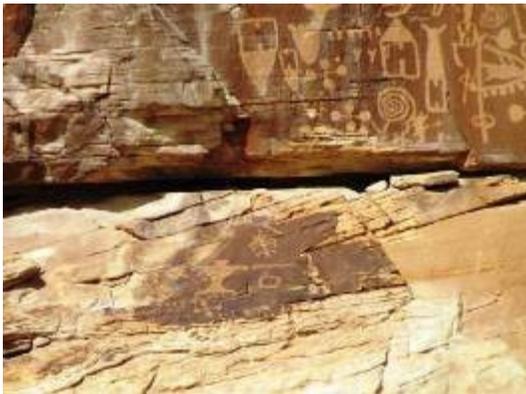


Figure 23 – Below the main panel



Figure 24 – More of the Journey story?

This entire area is about choices, and journeys necessitated by the lack of rain. **It's all about the rain!**