

V. AN UNUSUAL CHUMASH PICTOGRAPH

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A well preserved pictograph with some apparently unique features was recorded in the Obispeño Chumash region during the course of a summer site survey in 1967. The pictograph is located approximately four miles south of San Luis Obispo and is designated site SLO-211 in the records of the Archaeological Research Facility at Berkeley. It is a shallow sandstone cave, facing west above a small valley, and contains three discontinuous designs near the outer edge of its five foot high ceiling. All designs are executed in red.

The first motif consists of a chevron design, very similar in form to that recorded on the slate burial slabs of the Purisimeño Chumash region (Schumacher 1874) and on the wooden grave markers of the Santa Barbara Channel, as observed by the Spanish priest, Father Font (Bolton 1930).

The second motif is located on the outside edge of the ceiling and is almost totally destroyed. It consists of the rays of a circular sunburst pattern. This design is frequently found elsewhere in the Chumash area (Grant 1965).

The third motif, the most unusual of the group, consists of three distinct design elements. Three concentric circles are clearly defined. The two outer circles are connected, and the area between them is divided into quadrants by "stretcher" elements which resemble hides or anthropomorphic figures. Each quadrant is filled with a single "marine element," alternately executed in outline or solid style. Grant (1965) notes these marine elements elsewhere in the Chumash area. The inner circle contains a cross-like extension, the horizontal arms of which terminate in expansions which resemble the arms of a Maltese Cross. Speculation at this point as to whether the cross design is a cultural parallel or due to Spanish contact is futile, but the entire design composition is unique as far as the author knows.

References

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