

UC Merced

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Talking Stone: Rock Art of the Cosos

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/43r334d5>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 38(1)

ISSN

0191-3557

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Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed

after death. Images are made of wood and fibers and are intended to be representations of the person who has died. They are often embellished with feathers, and sometimes possessions of the dead. Mourners will make miniature bows and arrows or baskets, depending on the gender of the deceased. During the final ceremony, these effigies are brought out in a procession, accompanied by music. It all ends with the *nukil*, the burning of the images. This can be done for some individuals months after their death. Feasting and singing accompanies all these ceremonies, often lasting for many days, depending on which group is involved. Bean provides, through direct quotations from both ethnographers and indigenous witnesses, details for not only the Cahuilla, but also the Luiseño, Serrano, Cupeño, Kumeyaay, and other surrounding groups.

The next chapter focuses on the socio-political and economic aspects of mourning and death. Bean describes how many clans and tribes were invited to these mourning events, forming fluid regional congregations. Often these and other ceremonies occurred during the late fall or winter so that they did not interfere with food collection and food-producing activities. The redistribution of food and manufactured goods such as beads was an important feature of these ritual congregations. *Peón*, traditional gambling activities, as well as private exchanges of items and the arrangements of marriages, also occurred at mortuary and other ceremonies. Some of the most significant items exchanged during mortuary ceremonies were shell beads—in fact, they were key to many of the interactions between tribes. *Olivella* and other

beads were kept and exchanged by the clan chiefs, not ordinary individuals. The clan leader (*net*) had the great responsibility of keeping both the shell beads and the sacred bundle.

Bean concludes this superb book with a chapter on transitions to somewhat altered customs, as many who were trained in performing the traditional mortuary rites have passed on. Nevertheless, numerous core aspects of customs surrounding death persist or have been revitalized. I know I will personally never forget attending the burning of the possessions of a Kumeyaay leader with Katherine Siva Saubel in 2013. The types of items burned were not always traditional—they included a Jacuzzi, a satellite dish, and a file cabinet, but many aspects were similar to those described in the early accounts compiled by Bean, including the eerie sound of women wailing during the ceremony.

The significance of mortuary ceremonies for all aspects of Cahuilla life cannot be overstated. Bean has pulled together a formidable array of comprehensive and detailed accounts of the many facets of death and mourning. The reader comes away with the realization that death cannot be separated from life, and that it is a core element of traditional Cahuilla culture—which differs greatly in that respect from modern Euro-American culture, which compartmentalizes death into a small corner, thus separating it from the living—who perhaps are too intimidated by death, which we shall all meet. Thank you, Lowell, for your deep understanding and presentation—it is unparalleled.



Talking Stone: Rock Art of the Cosos

Paul Goldsmith

Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2007,
112 pp., ISBN 978-1607815570, \$16.00 (paper).

Reviewed by Clare Bedford

University of Central Lancashire

When writing *Talking Stone*, Paul Goldsmith aimed to provide a visual experience for the reader, to explore

a little of the origin and possible meaning of Coso petroglyphs by listening to multiple voices on the subject. However, he also aimed to keep interpretation to a minimum to allow readers to look at the images with fresh eyes and form their own opinions, and to avoid diminishing the mystery, magic, and power of the rock art. I would argue that he was successful in these aims and struck a good balance between imagery, information, and interpretation with this book.

Starting with the visual experience, *Talking Stone* is full of spectacular photographs of Coso rock art, forming a collection that shows a large range of figures in the rock art as well as showing some petroglyphs in their current landscape. The images in this book are brilliantly presented, with very little text to draw the reader's eye from the photographs. They are also organized in a manner that introduces the reader to different images depicted in these petroglyphs. The order of the collection of images tells a story, guiding the reader through the process of recording the images in the petroglyphs and related archaeological artifacts.

In addition to the great photographic record of rock art presented here, Goldsmith also tells the story of exploring Coso petroglyphs in an engaging way. He explains the challenges faced in the process of reaching and recording the petroglyphs, which helps the reader to better understand the landscape and context of the work. In clear and concise text, Goldsmith introduces aspects of the origin of the petroglyphs, the history of the Coso and rock art iconography, as well as other related archaeological themes and artifacts, while avoiding specialist terms. As a result, the book is well pitched to a wide audience, without requiring readers to have previous archaeological or anthropological experience.

Sections of text are kept short, allowing the book to be a predominantly visual experience as planned, but the text that is included is informative. Each carefully ordered group of images of petroglyphs is accompanied by a short text, which nicely introduces an aspect of rock art study, including potential identifications of figures, interpretations, or practical issues such as rock art dating. In each case, useful information is provided, but the reader is encouraged to explore the images and form their own conclusions.

Although *Talking Stone* draws on a range of different opinions related to the interpretation of rock

art, Goldsmith is careful to avoid presenting his own specific interpretations. Instead, he puts forward a range of perspectives for the reader to consider and explore further. This range of perspectives comes from Native Americans, anthropologists, artists, hunters, and a psychologist. For example, the chapter on abstract petroglyphs outlines the theory that such images may have a neurological origin in humans, causing them to be created all over the world and to be familiar to observers on a subconscious level. Another viewpoint on Coso rock art comes from a Native American, who explains that he does not know the meaning of the images, but what is important is that he has a connection to them.

In the chapters on figures that appear to depict bighorn sheep, atlats, and anthropomorphic figures, Goldsmith outlines potential explanations of the significance of these images, whilst observing that individuals viewing rock art tend to draw on their own experiences to explain the art they see. In each case, an introduction to the imagery and a brief potential interpretation is given, hopefully inspiring readers to think about these and maybe read a little further. To encourage this, Goldsmith also helpfully provides information about how to find out more.

I really enjoyed reading *Talking Stone*. My impression is that Goldsmith was excited about writing it and is very keen for readers to explore the subject further. As a researcher studying rock art in another part of California, I am excited to see such a collection of stunning and detailed images of Coso rock art. I am fascinated by the familiar, unfamiliar, and enigmatic figures presented. I feel that *Talking Stone* provides a great photographic record of Coso petroglyphs and gives a good introduction to aspects of the study of rock art in language that is clear and engaging. Importantly, it gives the reader a range of perspectives to contemplate as part of their personal experience of the images of petroglyphs that are presented.

