



THE RITUAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS OF PETROGLYPH BOULDERS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT - Seemingly unimportant stories that southeastern Indians have shared with ethnographers often turn out to be critical in understanding the rituals and religious experiences of the Indians. Recent research on petroglyph boulders and ethno-histories in the region suggests that instead of being direct recounting of specific mythological stories, the production of petroglyphs in the southern Appalachian Mountains is related the sweating and going-to-water purification rituals shared by all southeastern Indians, regardless of language. Prior to any major economic or social undertaking or event, such as planting, harvesting, hunting, marrying, raiding, gambling and ball playing, southeastern Indians felt obliged to contact or supplicate spirit beings living beyond a thin “veil”. To contact the beings in the spirit world, all southeastern Indians did some degree of fasting, sweating and washing in a creek. Various Cherokee, Creek and Yuchi stories mention this in one way or another, ranging from creation myths to historic events. What was said in these accounts and what were portrayed in the glyphs had a feedback on the perpetuation of the Indians’ beliefs and practices. The socio-economic roles of the slant eyed Master of Game, the Horned Serpent and their spirit-being consorts are discussed in relation to depictions of them and their underworld abodes. Generally speaking, the normally hidden underworld domain of these spirit beings was made visible for all to see through the pecking of pertinent designs on to rock surfaces; petroglyphs gave inner mental constructs an outer physical expression. The correspondence between pecked motifs on the boulders with prominent features on the surrounding landscape supports Indian claims that the petroglyph boulders are three-dimensional picture maps of the surrounding spirit world.

RIASSUNTO - Alcune storie apparentemente di poca importanza che gli Indiani del Sud-Est hanno condiviso con gli etnografi spesso risultano essenziali nella comprensione dei rituali e delle esperienze religiose degli Indiani. Recenti ricerche sulle rocce con petroglifi e sulle etno-storie della regione suggeriscono l’ipotesi che, invece della narrazione diretta di specifiche storie mitologiche, la produzione di petroglifi nei Monti Appalachi meridionali sia in relazione con i rituali di sudorazione e purificazione nell’acqua condivisi da tutti gli Indiani del Sud-Est, a prescindere dalla lingua. Prima di qualunque importante impresa economica o sociale, o evento, come per esempio la semina, il raccolto, la caccia, il matrimonio, gli assalti, le scommesse, il gioco della palla, gli Indiani del Sud-Est sentono il dovere di mettersi in contatto o di supplicare gli spiriti che vivono oltre un sottile “velo”. Per entrare in contatto con gli esseri del mondo degli spiriti, tutti gli Indiani sudorientali digiunano, sudano e si lavano in ruscelli. Diverse storie Cherokee, Creek e Yuichi fanno menzione di tali attività in un modo o nell’altro, con una varietà che va dai “miti di creazione” fino a eventi di epoca storica. Ciò che veniva detto in tali racconti e ciò che veniva raffigurato nei glifi trovava riscontro nella perpetuazione delle credenze e delle pratiche indiane. I ruoli socio-economici del Maestro dei Giochi dagli occhi storti, del Serpente Cornuto, e dei loro spiriti consorti saranno discussi in relazione alle raffigurazioni di loro e delle loro dimore sotterranee. Parlando in generale, il mondo sotterraneo normalmente nascosto di tali spiriti veniva reso visibile a tutti attraverso la picchiettatura di specifici disegni sulle superfici rocciose; i petroglifi hanno conferito a costruzioni mentali interiori una espressione fisica esteriore. La corrispondenza tra i motivi picchiettati sulle rocce e alcune caratteristiche prominenti nel paesaggio circostante conferma le affermazioni degli Indiani secondo cui le rocce con i petroglifi costituirebbero delle mappe tridimensionali per immagini del mondo degli spiriti che ci circonda.

THE SOUTHEASTERN INDIAN SOCIAL-ECONOMY AND RELIGION

This article is structured in terms of an analytical approach developed in South Africa through which the rock paintings of San gatherer-hunters were assessed in terms of their socio-economic context and core religious ritual (Lewis-Williams and Loubser 1986:268). The communal trance dance was shown to be a central ritual among these people that helped them to heal sickness, procure game animals, control the weather, confront enemies, and maintain ties with neighboring camps (Lewis-Williams 1982). Altered states experienced during the trance dance “generated a reservoir of metaphors on which the mythological *bricoleur* (Lévi-Strauss 1972:16-17) and the artist [producer of petroglyphs] drew” (Lewis-Williams and Loubser 1986:268) (Figure 1).

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The pecked petroglyph boulders considered in this article occur in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of northern Georgia and western North Carolina. Historically this region was dominated by the Iroquoian-speaking Cherokees, although Muskogee- and Hitchiti-speaking Creeks, Uchean-speaking Yuchi, and to a far lesser extent, Algonquian-speaking Shawnee people, are also known to have lived there. Due to the fact that the Cherokees are most intricately connected with the major petroglyphs discussed in this article, their ethnography is used as the primary source for interpretation. However, it is important to note that at least some of the petroglyphs, particularly those in the Georgia foothills, were probably the work of Creek Indians. Whoever made the petroglyphs, the almost constant interaction between the different linguistic groups through economic exchange and raiding probably accounts for their broadly similar social structures, economic and political systems, and religious practices. Among the Cherokees, Creeks, and other neighboring southeastern Indians, the lineage household was the primary economic unit, being composed of several maternally related nuclear families (e.g., Bartram 1995; Champagne 1990). This household unit managed agricultural and hunting activities.

Labor tended to be divided between male and female. When men were not discussing politics or conducting rituals in the townhouse, they were out on trading, hunting, or raiding expeditions. Women for the most part cultivated and harvested corn, beans, and squash on nearby family plots or helped one another around their households. Occasionally, however, men could be found in the fields, such as during spring planting, while women at times joined men during winter hunts or even on raiding parties (e.g., Perdue 1998:17). Men supplemented their community's plant diet by hunting deer, turkey, raccoon, bear, and by fishing. Wild herbs and berries, collected by both men and women, were used for food and medicines.

Bigger villages, which tended to be the core of a matrilineal-centered world, were located on rich agricultural soils near rivers where there were also plenty game, fish, and fowl. Surrounding this core were fields of domestic crops, interlaced with old fields lying fallow. Within the old fields, perennial crops, such as berries, fruit, and nut trees, and economically useful weeds thrived. A patchy mixture of woods and open glades that occurred beyond the fields served as a valuable combination of orchard, hunting ground, and source of wood and medicinal herbs. Medicinal and spiritual plants, particularly mind-altering native tobacco, were often maintained in discrete locations within the woods that were known only to their caretakers, typically a medicine man (e.g., Ethridge 1978). Viewed from above, subsistence basically followed a concentric ring pattern, with everyday activities occupying the core and spiritually-associated activities being more prevalent around the periphery.

Subsistence and other aspects of everyday life among the southeastern Indians were closely tied to rituals that they believed facilitated their communication with spirit beings. The Indians believed that all of nature was animated as part of a great whole from which they have not completely separated themselves. Although the Indians viewed themselves as masters of animated things, they were nonetheless dependent on rocks, plants, and animals for their livelihood and asked pardon whenever they took and used these things for their sustenance. They believed that like humans, all things survived after death in the spirit world, which was located below the ground and beyond the sky vault (e.g., Mooney 1900:445-446). Cherokee and Creek hunters sang deer and bear songs on reaching the hunting ground (Mooney 1900:435), which was often marked by a change in landscape or altered features, such as petroglyph boulders (Parris 1950:37). When Judaculla, the Master of Game, was invoked in hunting prayer songs, the hunter first prayed to the fire, from which he drew his omens; then to the reed, from which he made his arrows; followed by prayers to Judaculla; and finally to the very animals he intended to kill (ibid. 342). Mooney (1900:455) noted that even when everyday Indians went digging hematite for red paint or chert for arrowheads, they first had to make a prayer beside the outcrop and hang a small gift upon a nearby bush or stick before quarrying.

The southeastern Indians believed that spirit beings resembling humans and talking animals, lived both in mounds and in mountain tops and at bottom of river pools from which they enter and exit the everyday world through portals. Among these Indians, isolation, prayer, and fasting were prime requisites for obtaining clearness of spiritual vision of the spirit world and its beings. Fasting normally only lasted one day, from midnight to sunset, but on occasions of communal importance specialist religious functionaries fasted for longer periods (Mooney 1900:480). To become a medicine person among the Creeks, students had to fast in isolation for 12 days within a winter house and chew on the bitter-tasting root of the *Sou-watch-cau* plant for inducing visions (Hawkins 1982:78-79). To obtain a vision of the spirit world within the mountains and river pools was to obtain a spirit guide and protector (Mooney 1900:321, 470). Even though the southeastern Indians did not incorporate vision questing as a rite of passage into adulthood, hunters and medicine people seemed to develop close relationships with specific rocks, plants, or animals.

The importance of altered states in southeastern Indian religious experience should not be underestimated. According to Mooney (1900:492), every Indian ritual was supposed to be in accordance with "direct instruc-

tion from the spirit world as communicated in a vision” or dream. A story of how dreams and so-called going-to-water ritual ensured success in the hunt illustrates the link between altered state encounters and hunting success. The story recounts how an unsuccessful hunter had a strange dream “so vividly that it seemed to him like and actual happening” (Mooney 1900:323). Upon waking up the hunter found a single stalk of corn, Selu, telling him to wash in the river before everyone was awake, and then to go out again into the woods, and he would kill many deer and from that time on would always be successful in the hunt.

GOING-TO-WATER AS A CENTRAL RITUAL AMONG SOUTHEASTERN INDIANS

James Mooney, the well-known Smithsonian ethnographer who did extensive fieldwork among the Cherokees of the southeastern Appalachian Mountains in the late nineteenth century, observed that sacred myths were only recounted by Cherokee priests and medicine people “who observed the proper form and ceremony” (Mooney 1900:229). The proper place for myth-keeping priests and medicine people to meet was at in the *âsĩ* sweat lodge, the proper time was at night, and the proper rituals that followed at daybreak for all participants were to be scratched with a sharp-toothed comb and dipping seven times in a stream while facing the rising sun (ibid. 230). Normally, sweating and going-to-water was preceded by a period of fasting. This purification rite, witnessed more than a century before by the trader James Adair (1930:39, 103, 109, 117, 126, 127, 130, 132, 176) and Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins (1982:75-78) among neighboring Creek groups, was also part of the annual renewal Green Corn Dance or Busk ceremony, ball games, and most other communal and private rituals, ranging from preparation for raiding or hunting excursions through menstrual seclusion (Fogelson 1980:70, Mooney 1900:469) to successfully obtaining an altered state vision (Mooney 1900:492). Even implements and weapons that became polluted through touching forbidden animals were subjected to sweating and being immersed in water (e.g., Mooney 1900:265). The central importance of the going-to-water purification ritual among the southeastern Indians in part explains why their towns and structures were normally located near rivers and creeks (e.g., Adair 1930:238-239, Mooney 1900:395).

STRUCTURES ASSOCIATED WITH GOING-TO-WATER RITUALS

Tightly constructed and generally dark and warm structures used during going-to water rituals all contained centrally-located fire places, and came in different sizes, ranging from the small private *âsĩ* through medium-sized family winter houses to large communal townhouses (Adair 1930:453). Among the Muskogee Creeks, a round big-house always stood west of their square ground, and was known as the *tcokofa* or town “hot house” (Swanton 1928a:59). The Indians viewed such structures as places of re-birth, where transitions from one state to another occurred. For instance, communal Green Corn rituals marked the annual summer-end harvest, monthly rituals celebrated the appearance of the new moon, menstruating and pregnant women regularly secluded themselves in an *âsĩ*, warriors purified themselves in townhouses prior to and after raids, medicine men retired to such structures preparing their teams for ball games or to make rain or heal patients.

The predominantly domed roofs of hothouse structures were equated to the back of a turtle and the fire at its center as the turtle’s head. Amy Walker, a Cherokee medicine woman from North Carolina, says that entering an *âsĩ* lodge is returning to the mother’s womb and crawling out is being re-born (North Carolina Museum of History 2011). The turtle allusion is a reference to the animal’s natural ability to move between dry land and water; contrasting physical locations are apt metaphors of changes in bodily and mental states. Yuchi stories of transformation have medicine people riding turtles (Wagner 1931:77) and terrapins (Speck 1909:147) across rivers, normally at the edge of settled areas.

Center and periphery within settlements and built structures are spatial metaphors for changes in states. It is worth noting that the periphery is defined by the angle from which the structure is approached or viewed. When approached from the side, the east-facing entrance and dark western end marked the points of transition, while when viewed from the bottom or top, the smoke vent in the roof and fire place on the floor were the portals. Being located on one side of an inhabited settlement, the structures in turn were in liminal positions. As will be seen in the discussion below, petroglyph boulders typically occurred at transition points on the landscape that surrounded the settlements, marking boundaries and associated changes when crossing into the sacred terrain of spirit beings.

GOING-TO-WATER AND SHAPE-SHIFTING

As “places of passage,” *âsĩs*, winter houses, *tcokofas*, townhouses, square grounds, and nearby rivers were mentioned in stories associated with physical transformation, commonly referred to as shape-shifting. Stories mentioning shape-shifting range from those told by everyday people to those sacred myths recounted by ritually pure priests and medicine people. It is everyday stories of medicine people who shape-shifted into animals



that particularly highlight the hot house and a nearby river as a transformative space. A dramatic example of such a transformation is a Cherokee story of a hermit boy who changed into a giant snake while spending the night in his grandmother's *âsî*. At dawn, when the grandmother stared into the dark *âsî*, she saw that her grandson shape-shifted into a giant horned serpent, or *Uktena*, curled up like a fetus within the cramped space. With human legs and deer head attached to a reptilian body, the partly transformed snake boy slithered through the settlement to a deep pool at a nearby bend in the river, where he disappeared under the water. Being a medicine person like her grandson, the grandmother eventually entered the pool too (Mooney 1900:304). The Creeks also believed that the horned serpent was once a human who shape-shifted while encamped within a structure or around a fire near a river (e.g., Grantham 2002:25, 211-220).

Entering or exiting water, crossing or travelling along rivers, or entering and exiting associated hot house structures are metaphors for shifting states of consciousness. The innermost circle of a whirlpool, for example, was likened to the smoke vent portal of a submerged townhouse with apparitions of spirit people residing within (e.g., Mooney 1900:347). Muskogee Creeks believe that their old capitol town, Coosa, is covered by a whirlpool, with beams of the main hot house "whirling round this eddy, an occasionally [apparitions of] men sitting upon them" (Swanton 1928a:71). A Cherokee woman following her husband through the woods saw him changing into a hooting owl as he reached the river bank. Only after the owl flew around and landed on the river bank did he change back into a man (Mooney 1900:292). An eagle shape-shifted into a man when he entered a townhouse to kill seven singing medicine men is an account of battle between medicine-people (ibid. 293). Certain warriors had medicine to change their shape as they pleased, so that they could evade their enemies, such as when a warrior shape-shifted himself into a swamp woodcock bird as he crossed a river (ibid. 394). Swimmer and John Axe, two respected Cherokee medicine men, succinctly summarized the above-mentioned concepts when they told Mooney (1900:240) that "streams...are the trails by which we reach the underworld, and the springs at their head are the doorways by which we enter it, but to do this one must fast and go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide."

MYTHICAL ACCOUNTS ASSOCIATED WITH GOING-TO-WATER TRANSFORMATIONS

As is the case in most other religions, myths among the southeastern Indians in effect describe the ongoing rituals and religious experiences of the people telling the myths. Also, the world of departed spirit beings was a mirror image of the world of living physical beings. The Cherokee maintained that a gigantic dome-shaped rock vault that enclosed the earth and sky was the *âsî* sweat lodge of *Selu* (also known as Sun or Corn Mother) and *Kanaṭî* (also known as Moon or Great Thunder) (Mooney 1900:256). The *Yuchi* believed that they came from a square ground in the Sky World, covered by a rainbow-colored dome. They drew upon this upper world rainbow configuration to construct their "big house" and square ground down on earth, which they used for various ritual purposes, including annual *Busk* ceremonies (Speck 1909:106-17). A Cherokee myth mentions a medicine man that shape-shifted into a giant horned serpent, commonly known as *Uktena*, to save humans from the overwhelming light and heat of the female Sun (Mooney 1900:295), which expressed the potency of female menstruation (ibid. 319-320). The *Uktena* failed, but a medicine man who shape-shifted into a rattlesnake successfully bit the Sun and so limited much of her power to behind the eastern side of the massive domed-shaped sky vault. The daughter of the Sun were taken to the world below the sky vault and the tears of grief from the Sun for her departed daughter caused a massive flood, purifying the medicine man for taking her daughter (Mooney 1900:254). The *Uktena* retreated beyond the sky vault too, sending smaller horned serpents to the numerous river pools and mountain passes that dot the landscape below. Living beyond the far western section of the sky vault was the Moon or Great Thunder (ibid. 257). Cherokee priests addressed the Great Thunder as the Red Man. Like *Uktena*, smaller versions of Thunder or Red Man were sent to live lower down, within abodes that had entrances at spring heads and below cliffs. These earthbound manifestations of *Kanaṭî* or Red Man were known as *Judaculla*. The dome-shaped rocks within river pools were the primarily the abodes of the immanent *Uktenas*, while the dome-shaped mountain tops were the places where *Judaculla* could be found, both types of locale being scaled-down versions of the sky-vault and large-scale versions of *âsî* sweat lodges, winter houses, and townhouses. The Cherokees believed that thunder was a horned snake within the rain which connected the sky vault, the human-built houses on earth, and the underground or underwater townhouses (Mooney 1900:481). Mythical stories like this portrayed a tiered cosmos in which similar structures and deities were nested at different levels, but yet interconnected via portals, such as sweat lodge entrances (including front doors, smoke vents, and fire pits), river pools, and caves leading into mountain tops (Figure 2).

Terrestrial counterparts of the celestial *Selu* and *Kanaṭî* were the medicine woman from *Kanuga Town* (Garden Creek Mound on the Pigeon River of western North Carolina) and her husband *Judaculla*, or Red Man. The transcendent *Kanaṭî* and immanent *Judaculla* both had dominion over the animals and both were

accordingly regarded as the spirit helpers of everyday Cherokee hunters (Mooney 1900:262). Ever since various manifestations of Judaculla left for the world below the sky vault, these slant-eyed giants, also known as Tsul'kālū' (meaning "he has them slanting"), lived in the dark world of the west (Mooney 1900:391). From various underground townhouse abodes below prominent mountain tops, Judaculla will release game to Indian hunters. In an account the Cherokees told the Zeigler and Grosscup (1883:22) Judaculla could shape-shift into a snake, presumably the Uktena horned-serpent. According to Cherokee elder Tom Belt (personal communication to Scott Ashcraft), Judaculla's slanting eyes are actually referring to his pupils, oriented vertically like that of a snake or cat. Judaculla and his Creek equivalent, Tall Man (e.g., Chaudhuri and Chaudhuri 2001:128, Swanton 1928b:497), was called Ka'la hi'ki by the Yuchi Indians (Gatschet 1893:282). Judaculla not only guarded and released animals, but also taught Indians various aspects of life. In his transformed horned-serpent manifestation, however, the being tended to devour game as they came drinking water at the edge of river pools (Swanton 1928b:494) and even killed Indians for transgressing his rules. In this regard then, a cycling of game animals and people occurred through the underworld; animals dragged into river pools or erring people killed by Uktena were released from mountain-side boulders and cavernous spring heads by Judaculla (Mooney 1900:339-340).

The horns and crystalline scales obtained from the Uktena by powerful medicine people while visiting the underworld pools in an altered state were used as medicines to aid warriors when they went on raids or hunting (e.g., Hawkins 1982:79-80, Mooney 1900:349). Underwater snakes in general (e.g., Grantham 2002:28, 220-227) were believed to help warriors defeat their enemies on dry land.

With this relevant background information in mind, the discussion turns to petroglyph boulders and how ethnographic accounts link them to Judaculla and Uktena.

PETROGLYPHS DEPICTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH GOING-TO-WATER TRANSFORMATIONS

Instead of petroglyph boulders directly expressing going-to-water rituals or being a one-to-one recounting of associated mythical stories, indigenous remarks concerning petroglyphs, and their placement and content indicate that the modified boulders are related to the goals and altered states of religious practitioners involving going-to-water rituals.

As mentioned above, southeastern Indians fasted and went-to-water during every transitional period in their lives, such as ensuring success with pregnancy, birth, hunting, war, and shape-shifting. A story concerning a female medicine woman from Kanuga Town (Garden Creek Mound site in western North Carolina) shows how her quest for game and offspring involved her successful adoption of Judaculla as her spirit guide. This adoption necessitated that the medicine woman marries Judaculla and accompany him to his mountain-top townhouse. Her re-location in the husband's spirit-world abode was the reverse of the normal matrilineal residence custom among southeastern Indians. The reversal of everyday practice is characteristic of recollections concerning the spirit world; water-filled drainages change into a dry trails, winter changes into summer, scarcity changes into abundance, famine changes into feast, infertility changes into fertility, lonely people acquire multiple friends, single people acquire partners, and humans acquire animal guides or change into animals. Crossing the veil that separates the physical and spiritual worlds and dragging things through the veil were considered as self-sacrifice and death on behalf of the medicine person. Of central relevance to this article, on her journey to her new husband's mountain top townhouse, the medicine woman from Kanuga and her family produced petroglyphs, at the interface between the physical and spiritual worlds.

Only those Cherokees who were willing to go into an *âsî* or townhouse and fast seven times were given "new dresses" by Judaculla to put on so that they can "see" him (Mooney 1900:340). Belief in Judaculla must have covered a wide area and probably had a long history, considering, for example, that mid-eighteenth century Cherokees, living near the current Tennessee/Georgia line, wanted to be "adopted by Tuli-cula [Judaculla]" (Haywood 1823:280). Fasting in her *âsî* hothouse in western North Carolina, the female medicine woman of Kanuga successfully managed to see Judaculla in the night (Mooney 1900:338). The giant Judaculla was lying like a fetus "doubled up on the [*âsî*] floor, with his head against the rafters in the left-hand corner at the back, and his toes scraping the roof in the right-hand corner by the door" (ibid.). During his nocturnal visits, Judaculla supplied the medicine woman and her mother, a medicine woman of lesser ability, with abundant deer.

The medicine woman claimed to have had a baby from her menstrual blood being thrown into the nearby river. Menstruating women have particular supernatural potency among the southeastern Indians and can interact with the spirit world on par with powerful medicine men (Mooney 1900:319-320), even to the extent of shape-shifting into rocks (Wagner 1931:70). The menstruating medicine woman could successfully interact with the river, who was a "Long Man, a giant with its head in the foothills of the mountains and his foot far down in the lowland, speaking in murmurs only a shaman [medicine person] can understand" (Mooney



1982:30). Having a spirit lover is a fairly widespread phenomenon among the southeastern Indians (Mooney 1900:430, Swanton 1928a:70) and menstrual blood that falls into river water or a wet trail is commonly claimed to incubate babies (Mooney 1900:242, 339, Speck 1909:103, Swanton 1929:10, 15). Upon having the baby being brought by Judaculla to the *âsî*, the medicine woman married him and left for his townhouse at the headwaters of the Pigeon River. On their journey along the Pigeon River, the Judaculla family stopped to rest at seven boulders. While resting at each boulder, the medicine woman left vulva imprints and her husband and child left their footprints on the rock surfaces. In a similar story recorded by Haywood (1823:280) more than a century before, Judaculla and his medicine woman wife and son “made the tracks in the rocks,” within Track Rock Gap, which is located at the headwaters of Brasstown Creek, between the Indian town of Brasstown (Peachtree Mound) in North Carolina and Judaculla’s townhouse within Brasstown Mountain in neighboring Georgia (Figure 3).

Pecked vulva-forms and footprints can be seen to this day on various boulders within Track Rock Gap, north Georgia. Additional boulders with pecked vulva-forms and footprints can be found along the Choestoe Trail, which follows Brasstown Creek, between Peachtree Mound and Brasstown Mountain (Ledbetter et al. 2013). Pecked handprints, reminiscent of the footprints at Track Rock Gap, occur on the massive Judaculla Rock in western North Carolina (Loubser 2009b). Located between the Cullowhee Town Mound (also known as Judaculla’s Place), on the Tuckasegee River, and Judaculla’s mountain top townhouse at the Tuckasegee headwaters, Judaculla Rock is the place where the giant Master of Game marked the boundary into his domain by scraping «with the nail of his right finger... across the face of the rock... to remind the Cherokee that death would come to all who crossed it [without first fasting, purifying in a nearby stream, and/or saying the necessary prayers]» (Parris 1950:37). Cherokees who did not properly fast and purify in a river before visiting Judaculla ran the risk of either failing to have a vision of the deity or worse, being pursued by the vengeful giant. On one occasion an irate Judaculla left a claw-like handprint in the rock, which can still be seen there today (ibid. 36) (Figure 4).

Prior to its destruction by railway construction activities, a petroglyph boulder near Kadua Mound on the Tuckasegee River contained footprints and tracks left by Judaculla and his deer from the underworld (Mooney 1900:410). Of note in all these accounts is that Judaculla, his medicine woman wife, their conjuror children, and his game animals are believed to have left their marks on specific boulders; in the world-view of southeastern Indians, petroglyphs were produced by both spirit beings from the underworld and associated medicine people from this world.

Occurring among the human footprints, deer tracks, and vulva-forms on the boulders are spiral, concentric ring, and cross-in-circle designs. In terms of stylistic cross-dating, the similarity between these petroglyph designs with radio-carbon dated ceramic designs from the same region suggests that the petroglyphs date to anywhere between the Middle Woodland and terminal Late Mississippian periods (AD 800 – 1800) (e.g., Ashcraft and Moore 1998). Because at least some of the petroglyphs have been produced during the historic period (Loubser 2009a), it is valid to use ethnographically-derived accounts for interpreting this rock art.

In terms of southeastern Indian thought and practice, spiral, concentric ring, and cross-in-circle designs signify a number of different features, all of which are related conceptually. Spirals are mentioned in accounts concerning whirlpools (Swanton 1928a:71), townhouse smoke holes (Mooney 1900:347), actual townhouses (ibid 70), townhouse fires (Bartram 1955:358), and snakes coiled up within townhouses or at the bottom of whirlpools (Swanton 1929:32). Concentric ring designs are mentioned in accounts concerning the outward ripple movement of water when a river cane is inserted or a snake is entering (Wagner 1931:68) or to describe the overall alignment of roof-supporting posts around the central fire within a townhouse (Bartram 1955:297). Cross-in-circle designs are mentioned where menstrual blood gave rise to life (Mooney 1900:245), to describe the layout of the Creek square ground, and the placement of four logs for the annual busk renewal fire at the center of each square ground (Bartram 1955:358). To better assess the literal and metaphoric connotations of the terms, it will most probably help to know their root meanings in Iroquoian and Muskogee languages. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this article it is at least known that these circular designs signify portals into other-worldly experiences and as places of death and re-birth.

The placement of a pecked concentric ring design near the bottom section of Judaculla Rock coincides with the location of Cullowhee Mound (Figure 4). There is indeed compelling evidence to propose that Judaculla Rock is a three-dimensional picture map of the surrounding Balsam Mountains. First, the natural orientation of the soapstone boulder on which the petroglyphs have been pecked coincides with the orientation of the Balsams. Secondly, the orientation of the two most prominent rill-like lines on the boulder coincides with the orientation and location of the Tuckasegee River and Caney Fork Creek. Thirdly, places associated with Judaculla can be seen pecked on the boulder, more-or-less where they occur on the landscape. These include Cullowhee

Town, Judaculla Mountain, Judaculla Rock, Judaculla Ridge, Tannasee Bald, Devil's Courthouse, and Track Rock and Kanuga Town on the opposite side of the ridge line (Figure 5). Modern-day Cherokees identify concentric ring designs and arcs as depicting settlements and/or townhouses within settlements. Research based on historic period Indian maps on ceramics, parchment, animal hides, and rock surfaces similarly shows that picture maps are common across North America (e.g., Lewis 1989, Norris and Pauketat 2008, Sucec 2001:46-47, Waselkov 1989).

A feature shared by many petroglyphs within the region under consideration is that they were made with the petroglyph producer having had to stand in water. Being located at a spring head, Judaculla Rock simply could not have been pecked without the producer's feet getting wet (Figure 6). The petroglyph boulders along the Hiwassee River and other drainages in the region are next-to or within a river, so that the petroglyph producer had to stand at least waist-high in the water.

One of the petroglyph boulders at the confluence of the Hiwassee River and Brasstown Creek succinctly shows how its placement amplifies its significance. A pecked mammal with a curly tail resembles Mississippian period depictions of water panthers on mollusk shells (e.g., Fundaburk and Fundaburk Foreman 1957:plate 26), while the juxtaposed coiled snake with horned head is most likely a horned-serpent (Figure 7). As already mentioned, the horned-serpent was a reptilian version of a feline, both in Cherokee (Zeigler and Grosscup 1883:22) and in Creek (Swanton 1928a:70-71, Swanton 1929:21-22) traditions. Numerous southeastern Indian accounts mention that the favored abodes of water panthers and horned-serpents are river pools, very much like the one in which the petroglyph boulder is located. In Muskogee Creek traditions, both the water panther (Swanton 1928a:70-71, Swanton 1929:21-22) and horned-serpent (ibid. 71-72) caused the square ground and townhouse of Coosa Town to be flooded. Ever since the flooding event, the medicine woman spouse, medicine person offspring, and medicine people affiliated to the water panther and horned-serpent have made the submerged townhouse their home.

Across the southeastern woodlands powerful and qualified medicine people went to the edges of river pools that contained submerged townhouses similar to that of Coosa in order to make a water panther or water-serpent to appear (e.g., Grantham 2002:26). Bones that these medicine people allegedly collected from water panthers or horns cut from horned-serpents were considered to be war medicine with great potency (e.g., Hawkins 1982:78-80, Mooney 1900:300, 396). The belief that panthers and snakes see well at night or below water probably has something to do with their potency in war-time conjuring. According to Mooney (1900:458-459), the name Uktena is derived from *akta*, or eye, and implies being a "strong looker," as everything is visible to it (i.e., it can see thoughts). From the same root is derived *akta ʔi*, "to see into closely" which is also the Cherokee word for a magnifying lens and telescope. So the name Uktena implies that it sees thoughts and it does so in an accurate way; knowledge that comes in useful to predict enemy tactics. The horns and crystal on the Uktena's head are called *ulstʔli*, literally "it is on its head," but when they are in the hands of the medicine person it becomes *ulʔnsʔi ʔi*, or "transparent." So considered together, the changing names and contexts for Uktena horns and crystals imply that the thoughts on the head of the snake became transparent to the person who possessed it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Southeastern Indians viewed painting or incising their own bodies as a sacred act, one which was normally accompanied by prayers, often also involving fasting and going to water in a fairly isolated setting (Mooney 1900:469). Knowing that the Indians did the same when quarrying rock for ocher or chert (ibid. 455), the act of pecking or even visiting select boulders was accompanied by a similar set of ritual observances (see Parris 1950:36). That the southeastern Indians conducted their petroglyphs at transition points on the landscape, normally along old trails or river corridors (Loubser 2009a), re-enforces other transformative acts associated with such liminal locales. Whereas imprints of feet and vulvas at Track Rock signified fecundity and abundance, an imprint of Judaculla's hand in Judaculla Rock warned hunters that they should properly fast and go to water before entering his domain farther up the mountain. Depictions of water panthers and horned-serpents signified the potentially destructive side of the spirit beings, the places where they lived, and the objects they were associated with. Similar to powerful medicine people and menstruating or pregnant women, things such as panther bones, serpent horns and crystals, and places such as petroglyphs and associated mountains and pools, were only beneficial to those who had proper training, experience, and observance of proper ritual conduct. It is for this reason that these powerful people, artifacts, and places were usually kept slightly apart, lest they come into contact with everyday people and wreak havoc. Overall, the normally hidden underworld domain of the potent spirit beings was made visible for all to see through the pecking of pertinent designs onto rock surfaces; petroglyphs gave shifting inner mental experiences a fixed outer physical appearance.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scott Ashcraft, Lorie Hansen, James Wettstaedt, Pamela Baumann, and the late John Carney are thanked for enabling me to work on petroglyph sites in Georgia and North Carolina. The ongoing intellectual influence of David Lewis-Williams, David Whitley, and Brett Riggs is appreciated. The wisdom and patience of numerous Cherokees and Creeks also do not go unrecognized. Emmanuel Anati is thanked for soliciting this article. Any interpretive errors are the responsibility of the author.

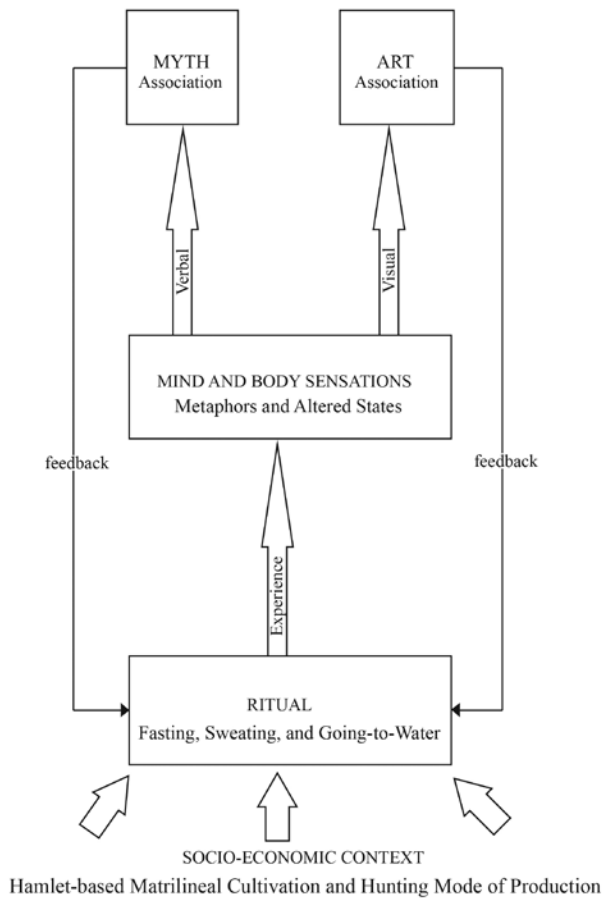


Fig. 1 Representation of relationship between southeastern Indian ritual, myth, and petroglyphs.

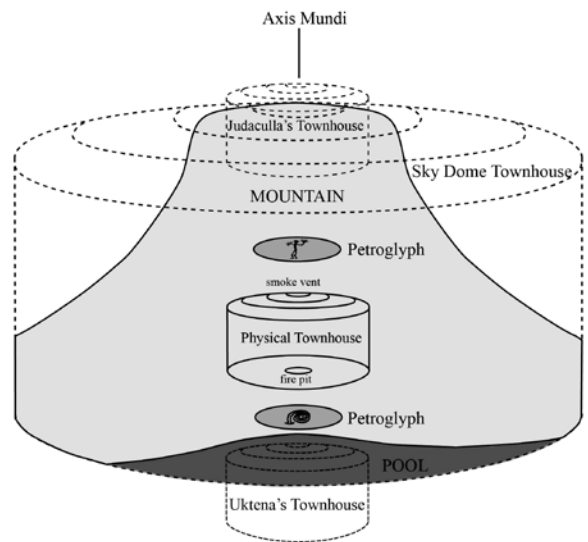


Fig. 2 Representation of nested townhouses on the southeastern Indian landscape.

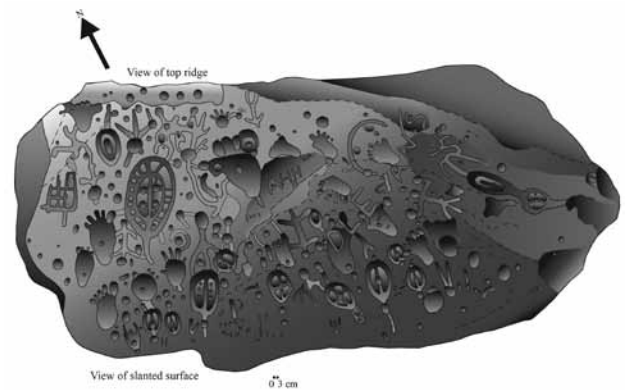


Fig. 3 Re-drawn tracing of Track Rock showing footprints of Judaculla and his family.



Fig. 4 Re-drawn tracing of Judaculla Rock showing his handprint and the Cullowhee townhouse.

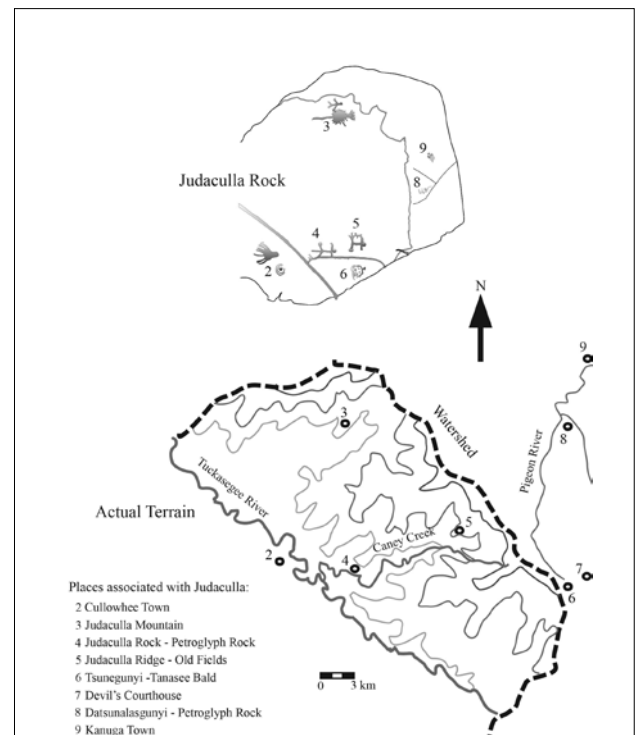


Fig. 5 Comparison of Judaculla Rock with named features on surrounding terrain.

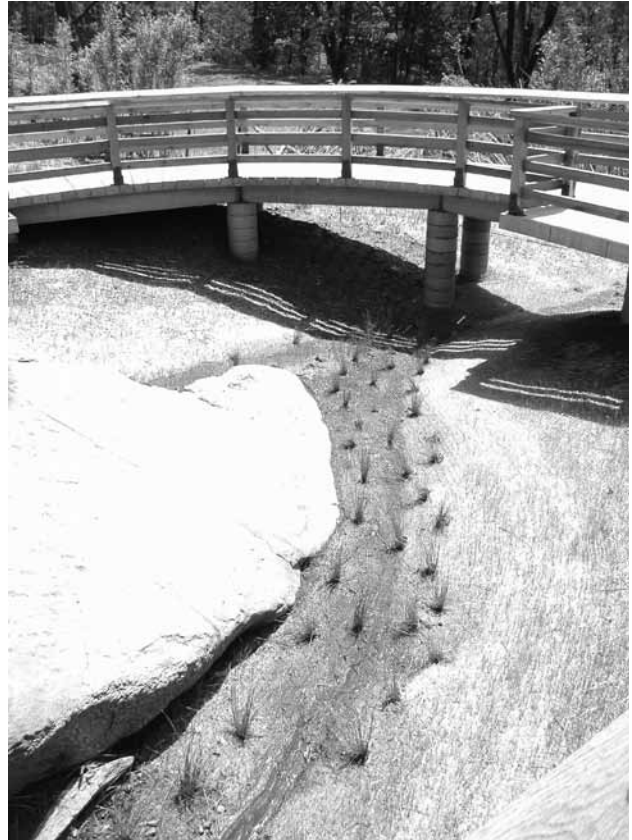


Fig. 6 Photo showing springhead at base of Judaculla Rock (Scott Ashcraft).



Fig. 7 Enhanced photo showing water panther and horned-serpent at the Hiwassee-Brasstown confluence (Scott Ashcraft).