

Crow Rock Art in the Bighorn Basin: Petroglyphs at No Water, Wyoming

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Carved in the driest part of the southern Bighorn Basin is a remarkable rock art record attesting to the spiritual use of this area by both Shoshone and Crow people for more than 500 years.

The earliest image is a Shoshone water ghost, or *pa:unha*, carved by a Late Prehistoric period shaman.

The next artists to use the site were women, carving their own images and bison hoofprints to petition the spirit world for power that enabled them to fulfill their culturally sanctioned roles as producers of life and providers for the family. This imagery indicates that No Water had become a special place to women of the Crow tribe, recent immigrants into the Bighorn Basin from the upper Missouri River in present-day North Dakota.

But the site did not stay a woman's special place, soon Crow warriors recognized its power and began to record their brave deeds accomplished in the intertribal wars that characterized the region's Historic Period. These latest images show these warriors' victories over Sioux and Cheyenne enemies who were attempting to take this territory away from the Crow.

In 2007 the No Water site, located east of Lucerne in Wyoming's Bighorn Basin, was documented by James D. Keyser and a group of Oregon Archaeological Society volunteers. This report documents the petroglyphs at this site which include all of the above events and more in the picture-writing of the Plains Indian Biographic Art.

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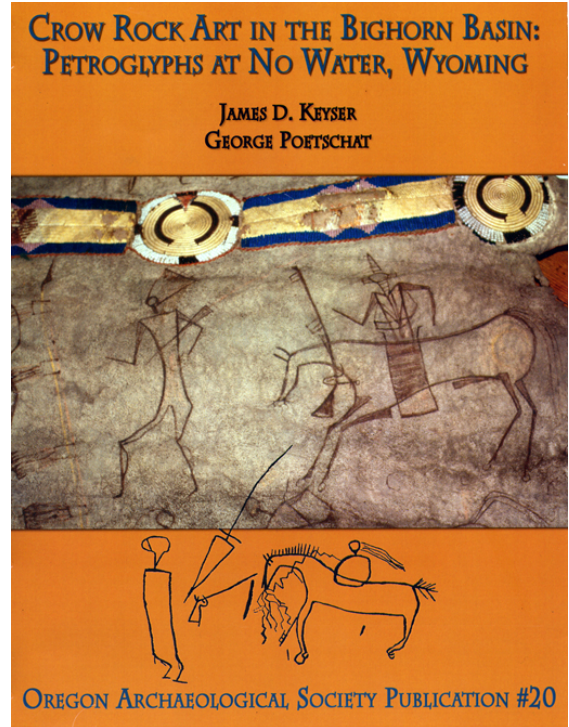
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Shoshone water ghost,
or *pa:unha*

