

Dark Zone Pictographs at Surratt Cave in New Mexico, Southwestern USA

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ABSTRACT

A vertically oriented cavern was primarily used about A.D. 1350-1450, with ritual use in specific areas. Pictographs deep under-ground in the dark zone are located on several panels and in small enclosed rooms. Paintings are believed to relate to seasonal renewal rituals. Painted figures include stencil handprints, stencil of a club or bow, areas of patter, cloud terraces or pyramids, giant serpents, large circular dot alignments, geometric figures, human face masks, bird tracks, groups of multiple and single fingerlines, and other figures in liquid paint, dry crayon, and spatter. Some dark zone caves in the state of New Mexico represent this same kind of use, while paintings in other sites are much older and are associated with other cultures and other kinds of ritual activity.