

# Verified Human Agency in Prehistoric "Portable Rock Art" (Figure Stones)

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Still unpopular among mainstream North American archaeologists, and dismissed as pareidolia ("seeing images in clouds"), small effigies carved and ground in stone are increasingly gaining both public recognition and verification as artifacts by physical scientists including geologists/petrologists and forensic specialists. Shown here are just a few such authenticated Figure Stones, mostly from my own archaeological site 33GU218 (likely Early Archaic through Middle Woodland) in Guernsey County, Ohio, as well as one from another Ohio site, and two each from North Carolina and Texas. These artifacts are an almost unrecognized part of the archaeological record, but often an index to a prehistoric human presence in locations where popularly recognized Native American relics do not appear.



Limestone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Length 80 mm.



Limestone, from Muskingum County, Ohio. Length 81 mm. Nine separate highly polished facets, one bifacial edge.



Solid quartz, Wake County, North Carolina. length 93 mm. Bipolar reduction and direct percussion.



Limestone, from the Gault site in Texas. Length 102 mm.  
Photo by Peter A. Bostrom, Lithic Casting Lab



Steatite, from Ashe County, North Carolina. Length 41 mm.



Left, limestone from Gault site in Texas. Width 75 mm. Right, limestone from 33GU218 in Ohio. Width 89 mm.



Limestone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Height 45 mm. Two views of same polymorphic/polyconic stone.



Nonlocal quartz sandstone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Height 35 mm. Right, the highly polished base, planed through the quartz grains.



Sandstone, 33GU218 in Ohio. Rock width 22 mm.



From 33GU218 in Ohio. A small petroglyph on a fragment of sandstone bedrock approx. 60 cm down. Incised enhancement of natural rock features. Height of figure appr. 70 mm.



The petroglyph shown above is on the opposite (cortical) surface.

From 33GU218 in Ohio. Red ochre on edge of sandstone fragment bearing petroglyph above. Height of figure 18 mm.



From 33GU218 in Ohio. Red ochre on limestone. Length of rock 78 mm.



Limestone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Length 82 mm.



Sandstone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Micro-sculpture in 5 mm diameter drilled cavity, finished with very fine nonlocal sand.



Sandstone, from 33GU218 in Ohio. Diameter 20 mm.



From 33GU218 in Ohio. Red ochre on limestone. Length of rock 84 mm.