



## Glossary for Southwest Comet/Supernovae Research

“[A]ny writing [or informational] system produced by humans can be read by humans.” (paraphrase of Michael D. Coe 1999:146, Breaking the Maya Code)

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The author of this glossary for her independent avocationalist research into visual-astronomy, celestial-events meanings of certain petroglyphs and ceramic designs in the American Southwest has ascribed certain imagery as specific and historically datable comets and other transient apparitions of the past which have been recorded textually in many other ancient cultures using written records. During this research into what might be called a Visual Symbols Language in the ancient American Southwestern, it was helpful to create and accentuate certain terms and meanings which plausibly became apparent through her studies.

ArtistRecorder = one who made a petroglyph, pictograph, or ceramic design, oftentimes of a transitory celestial event, working at her or his own volition or perhaps at the behest of a community leader or a perceived community need or service

Astronomist = concept more interactive than the term “sky watcher,” a visual astronomer who both noted the transitory celestial apparitions and recorded them on stone or in ceramic designs (in representational manner or in geometric or metaphorical symbols or patterns) in the American Southwest

Bent-Inward = The unnaturally bent-inward legs of certain Mimbres critter motifs which show flying entities or celestial constellations, aka *non-feet-in-the-mud* critters—sometimes paired with a comet motif when a noted comet travels through noted constellations.

Bolide = a meteorite accompanied by noise or explosion such as was described in ancient texts as thunder when not a cloud was in the sky

BrightConcentricCircles motif = oftentimes the concentric-circles motif (with variations) has been labeled as a “sun” symbol, but this truncates our ability to see that the Ancient Ones were commenting on *transient celestial entities*: (1) bright, tailless comets--the Chinese called them “guest stars” along with supernovae, or (2) exploding meteor strikes (“bolides”) such as memorable fireballs, especially during the fireball-flux in the 11<sup>th</sup> century--see the chart from Bailey, Clube and Napier 1990:74 at the end of this glossary\*). This term is written together to remind us that such a symbol might mean a bright celestial entity which was not a normal activity of the sun but an aberrant activity in the skies felt by astronomers of the past to be worth noting on ceramics and stone.

CenterSunBreak = an observable aspect of a great comet’s migration (for persons close to the quieter times and darker skies of the past) is the sometimes positioning that the comet is lost in the glare of the sun for a few days or absent and behind the earth, reappearing at the opposite horizon from several days before. The bright, migrating comet might be seen near the sun in the morning at dawn, be gone awhile, and then reappear near the sun in the evenings at sunset. This whiplash effect was noted by many ancient writers and a way to show this in a visual symbols language is to have a break in the center of an interlocking scroll pattern.

Ceramist = one who makes and/or paints a ceramic vessel, often a keeper of oral tradition and observations in an immutable, lasting art form

Close-Approach comet = a comet closer to earth and more interactive than usual