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Carrie C. Heitman

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, cheitman2@unl.edu

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“A MOTHER FOR ALL THE PEOPLE”: FEMINIST SCIENCE AND CHACOAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Carrie C. Heitman

In 1997, Alison Wylie outlined an epistemic and ontological critique of archaeological inquiry to advance feminist science studies. Wylie's work, I argue, remains relevant and potentially transformative for analysis of the cultural florescence that took place in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, during the ninth through twelfth centuries A.D. Archival, archaeological, and ethnographic data presented here suggest that women had important and undertheorized roles to play in the social transformations that defined emergent Chacoan society. Legacy data made available through the Chaco Research Archive provide evidence in support of Lamphere's (2000) ritual power model interpretation of the Chacoan florescence. The advent of such open-access resources allows for a critical analysis of gender ideologies and praxis through aggregated legacy sources that augment analyses based on surviving, institutionally curated artifact collections and published sources.

En 1997, Alison Wylie delineó una crítica epistemológica y ontológica de la investigación arqueológica para promover los estudios científicos feministas. Yo planteo que el trabajo de Wylie aún es relevante y potencialmente transformativo para el análisis del florecimiento cultural que tuvo lugar en el Chaco Canyon, New Mexico desde el siglo 9 d.C. hasta el siglo 12 d.C. Los datos de los archivos, arqueológicos y etnográficos presentados aquí, sugieren que las mujeres jugaron papeles importantes que han sido insuficientemente considerados desde la teoría, en las transformaciones sociales que definieron a la sociedad emergente del Chaco. Los datos tradicionales que están disponibles a través de los Archivos de Investigación del Chaco, proveen evidencia que apoya el modelo interpretativo de Lamphere (2000) sobre el poder ritual en el florecimiento del Chaco. El advenimiento de estos nuevos recursos de acceso abierto permite un análisis crítico de ideologías de género y praxis, por medio de las fuentes agregadas al legado tradicional que amplían los análisis previos basados en las fuentes publicadas y en las colecciones de artefactos supervivientes que están muy seleccionadas por las instituciones.

In *The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies*, Alison Wylie (1997) outlined epistemic or “content” and ontological or “equity” critiques of archaeological inquiry. Her content critique “draws attention to erasure, to ways in which the choice of research problem or the determination of significant sites or periods or cultural complexes leaves out of account women and gender even when they are a crucial part of the story to be told” (Wylie 1997:81). In addition, it focuses on “how women and gender are represented and when they are taken into account,” on how specific genders are associated with sites and artifacts, and on how “presentist, ethnocentric, and overtly androcentric assumptions about sexual divisions of labor and the status roles of women” are projected onto the past (Wylie

1997:82). Equity critiques, on the other hand, are directed at the “substantial and largely independent body of literature concerning the demography, institutional structures, funding sources, training, and employment patterns that shape archeology” (Wylie 1997:83), a topic that has continued to garner concern (e.g., Bardolph 2014; Clancy et al. 2014; Goldstein et al. 2014). Here I focus on a content critique of Chacoan archaeology.

Wylie's critiques remain relevant and potentially transformative for studies of the cultural florescence that took place in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, during the ninth through twelfth centuries A.D. and for contextualizing the historical entry of women into circumscribed sectors of professional archaeology. Legacy data, including unpublished archival sources, document the initial seg-

Carrie C. Heitman ■ Department of Anthropology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 833 Oldfather Hall, P.O. Box 880368, Lincoln, NE 68588-0368 (cheitman2@unl.edu)

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regation of women into particular areas of archaeological practice (equity critique) and help to place contemporary issues of gender segregation into historical context. Archival, archaeological, and ethnographic data also provide evidence that women made important and undertheorized contributions to the social transformations that defined emergent Chacoan society (content critique).

Evidence for this study comes from legacy data that consist of archival documents and images publically available through the Chaco Research Archive, or CRA (chacoarchive.org). Started in 2004, the goal of the CRA is to aggregate and make accessible the extraordinary array of primary data collected and preserved in repositories, archives, libraries, and museums across the United States.¹ The archive also helps give voice to the generation of women who attended the University of New Mexico/School of American Research (UNM/SAR) Chaco Canyon field schools in the early 1900s. The CRA contains over 18,000 historic photographs of the original excavations and has made them available online. Scholars can also search over 31,000 artifact records from different sites and construct cross-table queries enabled by the relational database structure. Tree-ring samples and records from site stabilization activities are available, as well as over 10,000 original documents that can be accessed as PDFs. Almost all search results can be downloaded in the form of spreadsheet files for individualized analysis. Research resources like the CRA provide new analytical pathways to explore the content and context of archaeological practice during the first 100 years of Chacoan research. These data, as I will argue, can be used to provide a more complete picture of archaeological assemblages recovered during historic-era excavations in Chaco Canyon. Furthermore, the advent of such open-access resources allows for a critical analysis of gender ideologies and praxis through aggregated legacy sources that augment analyses based on surviving, institutionally curated artifact collections and published sources.

Content Critiques of Chacoan Archaeology

Between A.D. 850 and 1150, a complex sociopolitical entity flourished in Chaco Canyon, in northwest New Mexico's San Juan Basin, marked by

the dense clustering of numerous, large masonry pueblos (great houses) constructed within the canyon along with roughly 200 scion communities and roads scattered across a geographic area the size of Ireland. How this social formation came about is a matter of considerable debate. Following Wylie's (1997) framework, I begin with a content critique of a recent interpretation of Pueblo social history and its largely male perspective on social transformations in Chaco Canyon. Using this critique as a point of departure, I discuss the distinction between ideologies of gender and praxis of gender with regard to both ethnographic and archaeological interpretations of gender (in)equality in the greater Chaco region. Lastly, I utilize the CRA's legacy archaeological data to present an alternative model for examining women's lives in Chacoan society.

Pueblo Social Histories

In *A Pueblo Social History: Kinship, Sodality, and Community in the Northern Southwest*, Ware (2014) presents his "avunculate sodality hypothesis" for the reconstruction of Pueblo social history to explain "why sodalities are embedded in descent groups among the Western Pueblos" (Ware 2014:96). Ware's interest in specifically male sodalities connects the genesis for their disengagement from descent groups among the Eastern Pueblos back to Chaco Canyon and provides a plausible social reconstruction for their Chacoan development and divergence (Ware 2014:114–131) from Western Pueblo patterns of social organization. Ware's (2014) monograph is an example of how sophisticated discussions of kinship are being reintegrated into archaeological analyses (e.g., Beck 2007; Ensor 2013; Fowles 2013; Heitman 2007, 2011, 2015; Heitman and Plog 2006; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Whiteley 2015). His work, however, also requires us to think more critically about the genesis of magnified gender inequalities as described ethnographically among Eastern Pueblo (Fowles 2005) relative to Western Pueblo groups.

Avunculate sodalities animate Ware's reconstruction of Pueblo social history. "Reduced to their core process," Ware (2014:124) states, "sodalities are male interest groups attempting to enhance their status within and beyond their community." In an effort to explain evident differences

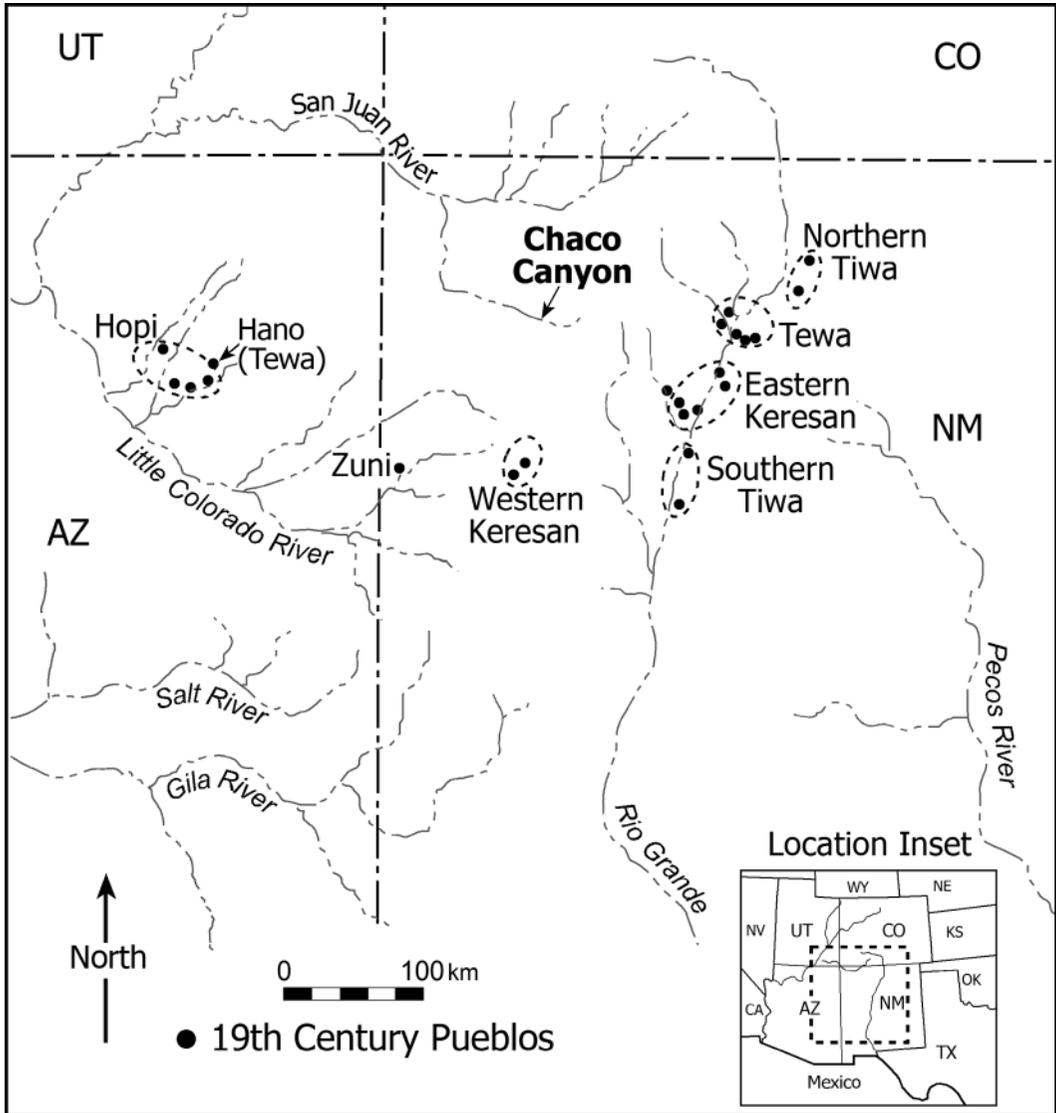


Figure 1. Historic distribution of Puebloan language families in the Four Corners region. (Phil R. Geib)

in sodality forms between Eastern Pueblos along the Rio Grande and the Western Pueblos (Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, Laguna) (Figure 1), Ware rejects prior accounts that argued for a late development after A.D. 1300 (e.g., Adams 1991; Duff 2002; Fowles 2004; Schaafsma and Schaafsma 1974) and instead contends that they emerged in much earlier Puebloan communities (A.D. 700s or early 800s). According to Ware (2014:97), proto-kivas and later kivas (subterranean or semi-subterranean circular structures) were the nexus of descent group ceremonies and “began as places where

ceremonies could be performed out of view of in-laws and where secret knowledge could be handed to a new generation.” Such architectural forms provide one line of evidence in his argument for the growing importance of these overtly religious male sodalities seeking to operate away from prying eyes (Ware 2014:94). In his reconstruction, sodalities began as kin-based (more specifically, avunculate-based) groups that subsequently detached from descent groups. This shift, he argues, is evident in changes in Chacoan architecture and other material remains after A.D. 1040. With the

growth of nucleated communities, and as “avunculate-based male interest groups created fault lines within communities” (Ware 2014:97), alliances based on fictive kinship were forged to extend interest group memberships across the community (Ware 2014:97). This social history, according to Ware, allows us to account for the presence of Western Pueblo sodalities embedded in descent groups in contrast to dis-embedded Eastern Pueblo sodalities.

Ware’s focus on sodalities necessitates a preferential analysis of men in Puebloan societies (past and present) given the dominant association of men with such groups. From a feminist science perspective, however, Ware’s account privileges male power and authority and presumes gender stratification in which there are separate spheres of action: where the female sphere is a natural substrate of society (domestic) with a supporting role in politics and religion, and the male sphere is overtly political and religious, equated with kivas and proto-kivas, and exerts economic control (e.g., Ware 2014:32, 94, 96–98). Ware’s perspective is a compelling piece of the larger historical puzzle of Pueblo social history. Although not his stated aim, Ware’s work pushes us to engage with issues of gender when modeling the social transformations that occurred in Chaco Canyon. Were kivas and proto-kivas male spaces that fomented male authority or might there be alternative ways to access divergent gender ideologies and female praxis dating back to the Chacoan era?

Alternative Models

Kiva/koye. Fowles (2005, 2013) and Mobley-Tanaka (1997) have argued that material evidence for gender complementarity among some prehispanic Pueblos of the northern Southwest can be found in paired architectural kiva/mealing room configurations. This pattern endured in the Kayenta region of northern Arizona from A.D. 1050 until the region was abandoned by A.D. 1300 (Geib 2011:328). According to Mobley-Tanaka (1997:443), spatially linked subterranean mealing rooms and kivas were a dominant pattern in the Montezuma Valley of southwestern Colorado until the mid-1100s and were perhaps part of the broader Pueblo II tradition. This configuration, she argues, reveals the importance of women’s roles centered on food preparation as

ritual participation (Mobley-Tanaka 1997:438) and the pairing of these specialized spaces “may indicate both a more prominent role for female ritualism at this period and the initial crystallization of gender specific roles in ritual as separate and clearly defined” (Mobley-Tanaka 1997:445).

Fowles (2005:32; 2013:175) pushes this interpretation further still, arguing that Chacoan migrants to the Northern Tiwa region expressed a similar pattern of paired male/female spaces that lasted until the early fourteenth century. Builders of the Northern Tiwa village of T’aitōna, Fowles argues (2013:174), were perhaps “consciously mapping out the relation between male and female, between the kiva and what was still referred to at Taos in the 1930s as a *koye* (mealing room, Parsons 1936a:47).” In both cases, Fowles (2005:37–45, 2013:172–177) and Mobley-Tanaka (1997) argue against an exclusive characterization of kivas as sacred spaces (see also Lekson 1988) in opposition to mealing facilities as profane, domestic spaces. As part of a larger counterargument, Fowles (2013:175–176) poses the following questions:

who is to say that food preparation—in this case, corn grinding—is any more basic than prayers or dances? Who is to say which of these practices is any more basic than prayer or dances? Who is to say which of these practices is more fundamental to bodily nourishment? Or which is more deeply enmeshed in larger understandings of the cosmos? Indeed, upon what grounds can we say that an ear of corn is any less a “ceremonial object” than a kiva vessel or a katsina mask? Surely it is unacceptable to immediately locate corn grinding in the profane simply because it was a female practice.

By both accounts, Fowles (2005, 2013) and Mobley-Tanaka (1997) provide evidence of a gender praxis that is consistent with broader Puebloan ethnographic evidence for ideologies of gender complementarity (discussed below), which appear to have been reconfigured in later centuries. Their work reinterprets “female” grinding spaces and activities not in opposition to sacred space/ritual action, but as integral and enmeshed in religious practice. When, where, and how then did inequalities in gendered praxis develop among Eastern Pueblos? And at what point were symbols of fe-

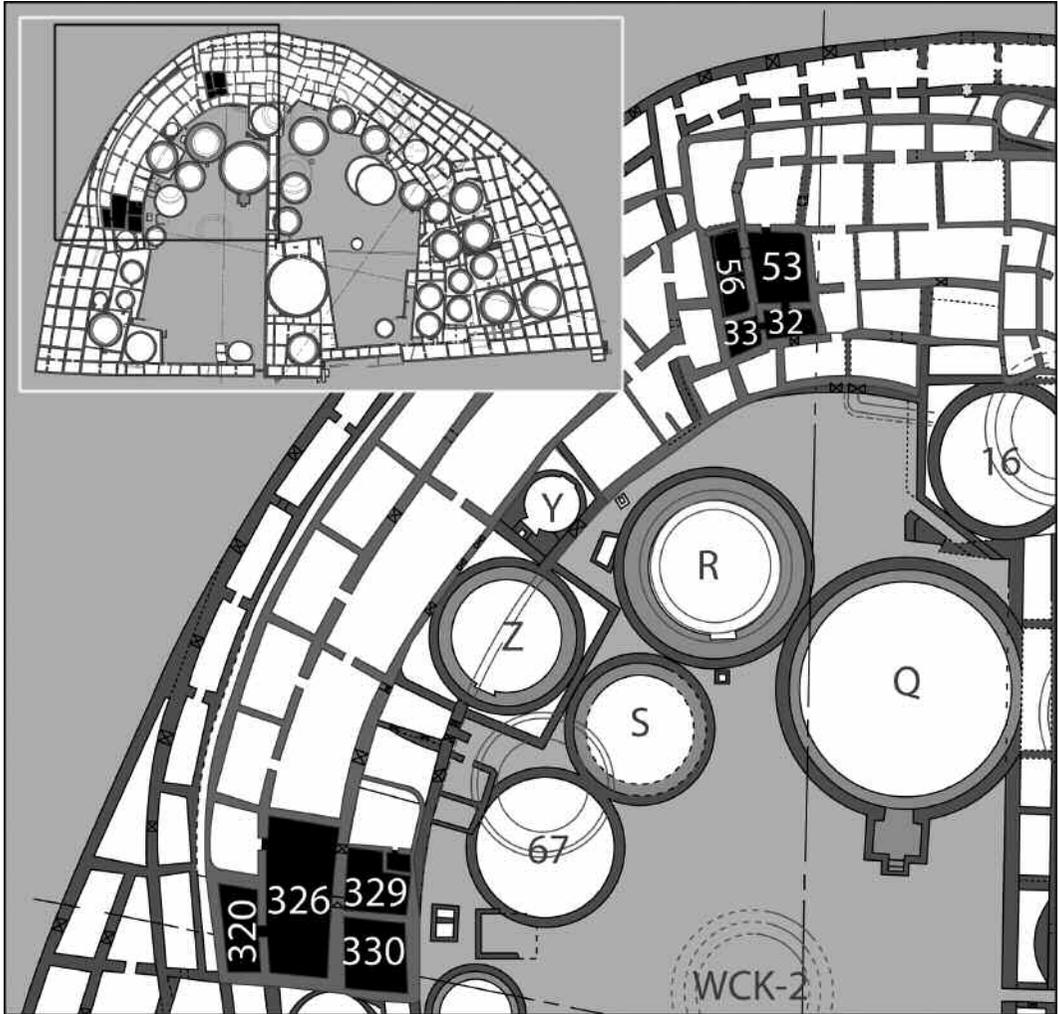


Figure 2. Plan view of Pueblo Bonito highlighting the locations of the two major burial crypts. (from Plog and Heitman 2010: Figure 2)

male fertility and procreation co-opted by men (Babcock 1988:373; Hays-Gilpin and Hill 1999; Robins and Hays-Gilpin 2000), and limiting women's ritual participation (Fowles 2005)?

Captives, Slaves, and Violence. Cameron's analysis of the evidence for slaves and captives among prehistoric Puebloan societies, including Chaco Canyon, opens new frontiers by addressing undertheorized and underanalyzed aspects of women's lives and by exploring captives as agents of culture change (Cameron 2011, 2013). Cameron's work, along with studies by Kohler and Turner (2006), Martin et al. (2010), and Harrod (2012, 2013), offers opportunities to explore

gender inequalities during the Chacoan era. Martin et al. (2010), for example, identify a subclass of battered women from the La Plata area of north-west New Mexico (part of the Chaco region). These women "experienced more work-related skeletal trauma as well as evidence for cranial injuries that effectively subdue the women" (Martin et al. 2010:14).

In a similar study comparing skeletal trauma for individuals recovered from Pueblo Bonito (Figure 2) (center of Chaco Canyon) with those from Kin Bineola (slightly outside the canyon), Harrod (2012, 2013) found that 64 percent of the women and 20 percent of the men exhibited cra-

nial and facial trauma; the opposite pattern was found at Pueblo Bonito. Males at Pueblo Bonito exhibited the highest incidence of cranial and facial trauma, whereas women exhibited a low frequency (Harrod 2012, 2013).² Harrod argues that Pueblo Bonito men “were competing for status and women were buffered from violence” (2013:131). At a more basic level, we also see a greater frequency of female skeletal remains interred within Pueblo Bonito (45 individuals) compared to male skeletal remains (24 individuals) (Akins 1986:Appendix B1; see also Marden 2011). These studies yield new insights about the diverse life histories of women within the Chacoan world and provide evidence that women living in the heart of Chaco Canyon at prominent great houses (such as Pueblo Bonito)³ were of a privileged social status and were perhaps protected from violence by virtue of their elevated status.

In the next section, I provide complementary ethnographic and material culture analyses to reveal the processes by which women may have gained power and prestige in Chacoan society. Below I will argue that additional lines of archaeological evidence from Chaco Canyon and ethnographic data suggest greater patterns of gender complementarity and mutual necessity than have previously been discussed. Moving forward, we need more nuanced ways to comprehend notions of power and prestige and analytical methodologies that take complementary as well as gender-specific forms into account. In Lamphere’s (2000:383) terms, we “need to think about how to measure notions of value...we need models relating productive control, power, and value (prestige) to gender.” Wylie’s (1997) content critique provides an avenue to address issues of erasure of alternative forms of female power and prestige in the archaeological record.

Indigenous Perspectives and Ideologies of Gender in Ethnographic Context

In southwestern indigenous culture, power was not tied to the secular world but rather to ritual and the supernatural world. “Power derived from knowledge acquired directly through visions, dreams, or techniques of divination or through learning the proper ritual actions, the proper ways to construct ritual objects, or the songs and prayers that brought the aid of supernatural beings” (Lam-

phere 2000:384). Both Native and non-Native scholars articulate this perspective in different ways. According to Glowacka (1998:389), “Ritual knowledge is a source of instrumental power over life-activating forces in the world.” In Whiteley’s (1998:93) words, “control of material wealth is simply not the measure of power in the Pueblos. Ritual knowledge serves as the same ‘scheme’ of value, the ‘currency,’ perhaps, of power.”

Fowles (2013) proposes that analyses of “religion” in the prehispanic Southwest should be recast as an archaeology of “doings” (see also Keallino-homoku 1989). Such an approach, Fowles (2013:107, 67) argues, curtails the “anthropological diplopia” where religion is often conceived as signifier of the political signified instead of as a totality of social action. In operation, this theoretical shift replaces analysis as religion *qua* religion and pursues “Pueblo doings as practices characterized by a heightened awareness of interconnectedness and the relations between things” (Fowles 2013:103). Fowles (2013:xii) proposes a “post-secular archaeology of premodern religion” that focuses on the concept of “doings” in part because he sees this concept adhering more closely to Puebloan conceptions as opposed to the imposed Western category of religion. His approach also attempts to dissolve the opposition of domains—including conventional gender oppositions—by focusing on these processes of interconnection (see also Heitman 2011:60–81). Though I do not pursue the full scope of Fowles’s theoretical reframing of Pueblo religion here, I will return to his key concepts of interconnectedness and the participatory entanglement of people, things, and cosmos (Fowles 2013:103–104) with regard to female praxis below.

The important roles of women—including religious power and prestige—are often overlooked by archaeologists. “In our communities,” Naranjo (2008:257) states, “we have always known about the power of women in all domains of life. Archaeologists, in their writings, often do not seem to notice the gendered world that our ancestors and we have created.” Naranjo points to the importance of women as life givers and stories that reveal the sources of power for women (from corn-mother deities to clan mothers). Naranjo (2008:258–259) notes the encapsulating and symbolic importance of female gender: “the cacique,

who, as Alfonso Ortiz (1969) noted, is 'a mother for all the people' despite the fact that he is a man"⁴ (see also Babcock 1988:373–374; Parsons 1939:192–193).

Schlegel (1977:262) and Young (1987) emphasize the important connection between women and the reproduction of life in their discussions of Western Puebloan women. Young (1987:436) argues that although "women are seldom physical participants in the formal religious rituals, they are central to the ideological basis of this religion. This centrality is underscored by the fact that much of the ritual behavior of the men is imitative of the reproductive power of the women." Such observations from and about descendant communities led Lamphere (2000:389–390) to define the antecedent Chacoan social transformation as a "ritual power model." Counter to Ware's assertions, Lamphere (2000:385) argues that the post-A.D. 1040 transformation apparent in the Chacoan built environment was a reflection of the widening social differentiation between "ordinary" and "important people"—a distinction clearly evident among contemporary descendant communities.

In the ritual power model, Lamphere (2000:389) argues, "notions of ritual power are hegemonic, and the importance of ritual power undergirds the higher social honor or prestige afforded ritual practitioners (heads of sacred societies, heads of kin groups that hold society paraphernalia)." Lamphere's (2000) theorization resonates with many explanations for Chaco Canyon, which revolve around the idea of the canyon as a central place for ritual gatherings, with leaders' power legitimated through exclusive access to ritual knowledge (Judge 1989; Kantner 1996; Plog 2011; Saitta 1997; Sebastian 1992; Stein and Lekson 1992; Toll 1985; Wills 2000; Yoffee 2001). Likewise, Van Dyke (2007) argues that the experience of the Chaco landscape served to legitimize social and political power of canyon ritual leaders. For Lamphere (2000:389–390), however, the ritual power model expands beyond what we generally consider "ritual" activities to include complementary divisions of labor between males and females and how those divisions can become hegemonic and support social differences between "important people" and "commoners." Craft production (turquoise bead manufacture, pottery), Lamphere (2000:389–390) points out,

"could be focused on display for ritual occasions, and agricultural work, hunting, and food processing would often be harnessed for ritual feasting." In short, Lamphere's (2000) theorization takes us some of the distance towards Fowles's (2013) archaeology of "doings."

The collective research of Hays-Gilpin (2000), Hegmon et al. (2000), Crown (2000), Mills (2000) and Neitzel (2000) paints a complex picture of gender relations in the American Southwest through time. The ritual power model posited for the period of Chacoan social transformation was one in which prestige and power for women might have been gained through women's work groups, production of socially valued goods, participation in trade networks, and contributions to ritual activities "through the provision of food or the care of ritual paraphernalia" (Lamphere 2000:390–391). In order to understand the complexity of gender relations, we must, according to Donovan (2001:202), move away from traditional labor assumptions about public versus domestic or political versus non-political and strive to understand gender complementarity. By my analysis (below), Puebloan women are embedded within this ritual power model in both symbol and practice. These potential avenues of prestige and power must be closely analyzed if we are to fully understand the social transformations that, in part, defined the Chacoan era.

Corn Mother Effigies. Let us consider the role of religious effigies among descendant Puebloan communities as one dimension of Puebloan ideologies of gender. There are various forms of religious effigies (sometimes referred to in early literature as "fetishes") described ethnographically (See Heitman 2011:Table 5.1 for summary), the most important of which are the corn mothers. Corn mothers are apical ancestors and progenitors broadly worshiped throughout the Pueblo world, and are perhaps the most important, powerful, and sacred of all Puebloan effigies (Parsons 1939:182, 319, 354). Representations of corn mothers come in various forms, ranging from highly embellished corn ears to unelaborated ones used to protect newborns (Parsons 1939:322), and as life-long personal fetishes.

Paramount religious effigies like corn mothers can have complex layers of ownership in Puebloan societies. There is often a distinction between those

Table 1. Pueblo Paramount Religious Effigy Terms and Corn Mother or Earth Mother Terms.

Pueblo/ Linguistic Source	Paramount Religious Effigy Term(s)	Corn Mother/Earth Mother Term
Keres	<i>Iariko</i> [maize effigy]	<i>Iyatiku</i> or <i>Utstet</i> [corn mother]
Hopi	<i>Tiponi</i> [maize effigy]	<i>Tuwapongyatsumi</i> [Childbirth Water Woman]; or <i>Tiikuywuuti</i> [Sand-Altar Woman]
Zuni	<i>e'tone</i> or <i>e'to:we</i> [reed effigy] <i>mi:le</i> [feathered ears of corn]	<i>a'witelin tsit</i> [earth mother]
Isleta	<i>Iemaparu</i> [maize effigy]	<i>Iemaparu</i> [corn mother]
Tewa	<i>Yiya</i> [maize effigy]	<i>Yiaku</i> [corn mothers]

who care for a paramount effigy and those who are authorized to use it in religious practice. Ownership is generally ascribed to the latter, though the former is clearly a critical component for maintaining and animating the effigy (Parsons 1939:350, 482). Ethnographers have also noted the use of parent/child kinship terms whereby the effigy caretakers are referred to as father/mother and the society members as children (Parsons 1939:160). All effigies require special care. They are carefully nourished (Parsons 1939:303, 304, 324) and stored. In the west, this is done primarily by women (Parsons 1939:118)—specifically the custodian is a maternal relative of a male ritual specialist. Generally speaking, sacrosanct objects are communally owned (Parsons 1939:182), utilized by a ritual specialist, and cared for by either the specialist himself or by his maternal relative.

A “paramount fetish” (Parsons 1939:118, 354) gives title (Parsons 1939:182) to the owning group. Paramount effigies are often said to have come up with the people at the time of emergence (Parsons 1939:219, 247, 251–252, 255, 324) and are thus an emblem (Voth 1912:16) or palladium (Voth 1912:Pl. XXX), and a mark of title (Parsons 1939:182, 269) or authenticity for the owner group and demonstrate their autochthonous connection to the supernatural realm (Parsons 1939: 260). According to Bunzel:

These *e'to:we*, are the most sacrosanct objects of Zuñi worship. They were brought from the innermost depths of the earth at the time of the emergence and are kept in sealed jars, from which they are removed only for the few secret rites in which they are reemployed. In these *e'to:we* rest the power of the priests [Bunzel 1932:56].

In ritual practice, paramount effigies are not the only source of religious power, but they are the

most precious and sacred of all the different types of ritual sacra (Parsons 1939:319). Working in concert with other sacred objects, paramount effigies are the “presiding” (Parsons 1939:354) piece of altar furniture into which a spirit is called. If not properly used, the power and efficacy of these objects can be equally dangerous (Parsons 1939:167).

In many cases, Pueblo origin stories describe the creation and importance of the corn ear effigy via its representation of the corn mother around the time of emergence (Table 1).⁵ Houses where paramount effigies are kept may be given special compensation by the Pueblo (Bunzel 1933:35; Parsons 1939:156, 159) as well as public recognition. Community members know which houses contain which powerful objects. At Jemez Pueblo, for instance, dancers perform in front of houses containing important effigies (Parsons 1939:385–386). Given the reluctance to disturb effigies, when objects must be moved to a new house it is done at the end of a ceremony to avoid unnecessary disturbance (Parsons 1939:427; see also Parsons 1925). At Zuni, possessing a major effigy “gives you something to pray for and makes the house valuable” (Bunzel 1932:491); the effigy also protects the house (Parsons 1939:419). Knowledge of who owns a major effigy is preserved in the public process of initiation, wherein ceremonial paraphernalia are passed on (Parsons 1939:118). Such objects are also readily recognizable in ceremonial processions in that they must be carried in a prescribed way: for the Zuni and Hopi, in the crook of the left arm (Parsons 1939:392, see also Benedict 1935:I, 189, footnote I). Here again, compensation may be accorded to the owner (Parsons 1939:156) and ownership is publically acknowledged on ceremonial occasions in which dancers perform in front of such houses (Parsons 1939:385–386). The corollary

of this is that those societies not endowed with, or not actively called upon to use, their sacred objects are referred to as "poor persons" (Parsons 1939:221, footnote 2) or considered not valuable (Parsons 1939:112).

In the preceding discussion, we see widespread ethnographic evidence from descendant communities of the importance of women both in symbol and action: the association of women as symbols of origin and fertility (corn mothers), women as caretakers for these animate, paramount effigies, and the persistent and extensible symbol of women as life givers. The social differentiation between those considered "ordinary" and those considered "important" does not cleave along lines of gender but rather, as Lamphere (2000:390) points out, along lines of religious knowledge and ritual custodianship. We see in these examples the ability of women to gain and maintain forms of religious power and prestige accorded to those who possess or are custodians of important sacred objects and, among many Puebloan communities, the fundamental requirement that women sustain these animate objects by providing corn meal and feeding the effigies. Thus, the female labor required for grinding corn meal and prayer meal is not simply an economic act but also a liturgical act (or a series of rites) that enables religious practice (Heitman 2013; see also Geib and Heitman 2015).

The preceding content critique also highlights various lines of evidence to advance feminist science in the context of Chacoan archaeology. These include patterns of gender complementarity and arenas for women's power and prestige that include custody of ritual sacra and the liturgical act of grinding corn meal and prayer meal (Geib and Heitman 2015) to animate and sustain those objects of religious practice. Recognizing these generalized Puebloan dynamics allows for a more nuanced understanding of gender complementarity within both religious practice and everyday life and helps reframe archaeological research on women and gender-based inequalities in ancestral Puebloan societies. In the following section, I use contemporary and legacy archaeological data from Chaco Canyon in conjunction with the ethnographic data outlined above to reconsider women's participation in the social transformations that defined emergent Chacoan society.

Archaeological Data from Chaco Canyon

At the largest great house of Pueblo Bonito, both men and women were buried within the confines of two important burial crypts (Akins 1986) (Figure 2), but the overall burial assemblage is dominated by females (46 females, 24 males [Akins 1986:Table B.1]). The northern burial crypt (Rooms 32, 33, 53, and 56) has a roughly equivalent sex ratio. In room 33, however, there were two seemingly high-status males recovered from below the floor, while many of the other human remains were disarticulated (Plog and Heitman 2010). The western burial crypt (Rooms 320, 326, 329, and 330) housed 30 females, 12 of which were found in articulation with grave goods (Akins 1986:Table B.1). (See also the above discussion of bioarchaeological evidence for women buried within Pueblo Bonito perhaps being shielded from violence.)

The two elaborately interred subfloor males in the northern mortuary crypt at Pueblo Bonito date to the eighth or ninth centuries A.D. (Coltrain et al. 2007, Plog and Heitman 2010). Plog and I argue (2010) that these early dates⁶ push the emergence of social hierarchy within Chacoan society back some 150 years earlier than previously thought (see also Watson et al. 2015). Some believe that these high-status burials are indicators of elevated social status and a tiered system of Chacoan social hierarchy (e.g., Akins 1986). The early dates also suggest that members of Chacoan society saw the deaths of these individuals as important moments of transition requiring unprecedented mortuary investment. Such transitions can be manipulated to serve the ends of the living by focusing attention on an ascendant "center" and by maintaining or advancing social standing (Metcalfe and Huntington 1991:144). Parker Pearson (1999) argues that tomb elaborations often appear at moments "of legitimacy crisis," or they affirm social standing during moments of transformation (Parker Pearson 1999:87). Funerals, thus, "are moments when the structure of power may be radically reordered; they are not simply reflections of the social order" (Parker Pearson 1999:86). The skeletal, mortuary, and radiometric evidence from Pueblo Bonito support such an interpretation and suggest that emergent forms of power and prestige were performed within the context of that great house. And while the subfloor male burials

have often dominated discussions of Chacoan inequality, what of the high proportion of female burials and the roles of women during this cultural period of transition and transformation?

Labor, Liturgy, and Grinding Stones. Prior archaeological and ethnographic studies have established the association of women with hearths and grinding equipment in prehistoric Puebloan societies (e.g., Crown 2000; Mills 2000). Grinding tools and mealing facilities are often equated with women's labor, as this association was strongly marked ethnohistorically among descendant communities of the Pueblo Southwest through activities such as grinding corn and preparing prayer meal (Geib and Heitman 2015: Table 3.1). While I recognize that such inferences mapped onto the past presume both temporal continuity and binary male-female gender categories, the following analysis builds from a robust body of data establishing the antiquity of gendered association between women and grinding equipment (e.g., Hegmon et al. 2000; Mills 2000; see also Spielmann 1995). In this section, I expand upon those prior studies by integrating previously unpublished archaeological data culled from archival sources brought to light via the CRA.

Prior studies of Chacoan groundstone from sites excavated by the UNM/SAR field schools or the earlier excavations of George Pepper (1896–1899) and Neil Judd (1921–1927) at Pueblo Bonito have relied on published monographs and/or analysis of surviving museum collections. Pueblo Bonito was perhaps the largest site built in the canyon and its construction spanned three centuries—from the mid-A.D. 800s to the mid-1100s. There is a large discrepancy between published counts and analyses based on surviving collections and those recorded in unpublished archival sources. If grinding tools (especially manos and metates) provide proxy indicators for the presence of women, their labor, labor organization (work groups), and ceremonial engagement (grinding corn, preparations of prayer meal, and the care of ritual paraphernalia), then such data must be closely considered. In many cases, the legacy data are the only records that remain for the existence of these artifacts since they were discarded by the original excavators.

Neitzel (2003) has analyzed Pueblo Bonito room inventories and the distribution of several

artifact classes across square rooms. Neitzel drew her inventories from reports, catalogs, notes, and first-hand examination of existing collections at three museums. In the course of entering data room-by-room and level-by-level for Pueblo Bonito (among other sites) into the CRA, it became clear that there was variability in how and even whether groundstone was recorded by the original excavators (Martin et al. 2012). Groundstone was sometimes recorded in the official artifact lists, but often it was simply noted as being present in a given room and never recorded in any artifact or catalog list and not saved for institutional collections. Using Neitzel's combined category of manos/metates, including only artifacts that have been provenienced to a specific room, and including only square rooms, as Neitzel did, Table 2 shows that the CRA totals are quite different from those previously published.

According to Neitzel's 2003 analysis, 787 manos and metates are provenienced to specific rooms at Pueblo Bonito. By contrast, the CRA online artifact database⁷ gives a total of 1,273 manos and metates with room-specific provenience—62 percent more than Neitzel's amount. This count from the CRA database is actually a conservative estimate. In cases where field notes did not provide specific frequencies and only a generic frequency such as "multiple" was given, these were counted as one. Also, only artifacts explicitly categorized as manos or metates by the original excavators were included in the Table 2 totals. There were, undoubtedly, many more grinding tools from Pueblo Bonito, but artifacts labeled "worked sandstone slab" or "sandstone slab with ground surface" and other more generic descriptors are not included in the counts presented here. If kiva contexts are also included, the total number of manos and metates originally identified during excavations at Pueblo Bonito rises to 1,641. Another significant difference is the number of rooms from which manos and metates were recovered. Neitzel (2003) shows manos and/or metates occurring in 80 rooms, while the CRA database has these tools occurring in 141 square rooms.

The discrepancy in these results is most likely due to the difference in how excavators recorded grinding tools: some artifacts were officially entered into an artifact catalog list, whereas others were only recorded informally in field notes. In

Table 2. Comparison of Pueblo Bonito Grinding Tool Estimates.

Manos/ metates (n)	Rooms where found (n)	Source
787	80	Neitzel 2003:118–119
1273	141	CRA Artifact Query results
62% increase	74% increase	

the earliest excavations of Pueblo Bonito, George Pepper (1920) usually documented all grinding tools in his official artifact catalogs (1897). Many archaeologists have subsequently used these lists to interpret this site. In the later excavations at the same site, Neil Judd rarely recorded groundstone in official catalogs.⁸ Those that were uncovered were often simply recorded as extra “finds” at the end of Judd’s field notes on a particular room. Figure 3 shows one of Judd’s notecards from room 334 at Pueblo Bonito. In this case, 22 manos and metates were found but not cataloged. Judd’s note reads: “Besides cataloged specimens, the following were noted and left at ruin...” This is followed by an extensive list of artifacts that included two metates and 20 manos (among many other discarded artifacts).

These findings from Pueblo Bonito only strengthen Neitzel’s interpretation that this great house was not devoid of artifacts outside the few elaborate burial rooms (Neitzel 2003:124). These findings also have implications for long-contested issues such as the amount of food processed at Pueblo Bonito and, by extension, the possible size of the residential population. Given what is known about the dominant association of women with grinding among descendant communities, it seems fair to assume that the high frequencies of grinding tools and the presence of large mealing rooms (Figure 4) indicate some of the ways in which women participated in Chacoan society. The sheer quantities of manos and metates evident in the records show that we must alter existing perceptions of Pueblo Bonito as an empty ceremonial center and give greater consideration to women’s participation in Chacoan society. In light of the ethnographic data from descendant Puebloan communities discussed above, the ritual power model (Lamphere 2000) provides an alternative framework with which to redress the content critique. Following the work of Mobley-Tanaka (1997) and Fowles (2005, 2013), this model identifies some

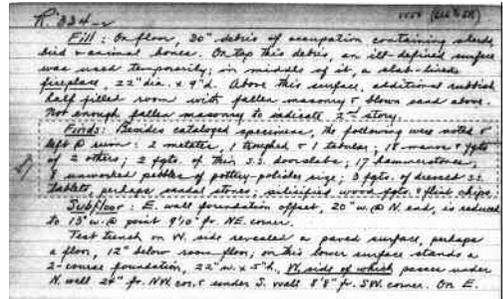


Figure 3. Handwritten excavation notecards from N.M. Judd’s excavation of Pueblo Bonito. CRA Accession #000174: Papers of Neil Merton Judd at the National Anthropological Archives, Box 8. Reproduced courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

of the processes by which women gained power and prestige: through work groups, the production of socially valued goods, and ritual participation (Lamphere 2000:390–391).

The potential for CRA resources to refine our understanding of Chacoan social organization is not limited to great house contexts. Archival images depicting abundant groundstone recovered and discarded during excavations at small house sites (Figure 5) at once testify to their important economic role and are a sad token of the apparent lack of provenience information available for certain artifacts—especially women’s tools (manos, metates, and the hammerstones used to produce and maintain them). Field notes from student excavators available through the CRA provide contextual details for the majority of groundstone artifacts recovered from site Bc 57 (Watson 2012). During the 1941 excavation season at small house site Bc 53 (Figure 6), groundstone was used to construct an ephemeral message on the ground. The display appears to have used roughly 21 metates and 71 manos. This seemingly idle arrangement suggests an equally idle disregard for these heavy, difficult to transport, and difficult to curate groundstone artifacts. Using legacy data, we can sometimes reconstruct provenience for grinding tools. In other cases, we can only get a sense of the overall volume of the discarded artifact classes.

Groundstone in Social Context. The preceding discussion of women’s labor, responsibilities, and ritual participation among descendant communities provides additional social context with which



Figure 4. In situ mealing facility from Room 90 at Pueblo Bonito, Chaco Canyon. Original image caption: “Room 90, from SW corner, shows metate ruins, Pueblo Bonito.” 1898. Hyde Exploring Expedition Photo #354. Image #412080. Reproduced courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History Library.

to refine our understandings of specific practices in Chaco Canyon. Bustard (1996, 1997), for instance, argues that grinding groups in Chaco Canyon were organized at a “larger spatial level” (1997:284) than a dwelling unit and that these supra-household groups may have formed the fundamental social unit of Chacoan small sites. Large-scale communal grinding rooms (10–12 mealing bins) at great houses (e.g., Pueblo Bonito, Aztec West, Salmon Pueblo, Chimney Rock, and Pueblo del Arroyo) indicate that some food preparation was also done at a supra-household scale within great houses (Hegmon et al. 2000:72). Hegmon et al. (2000:73) note that longer-term patterns for specialized mealing bins and grinding rooms in the Southwest reveal contradictory trends. Such spaces, they argue, were subject to increased supervision and monitoring and also suggest “the importance of corn grinding and the power of

women over this increasingly separate realm” (Hegmon et al. 2000:73).

Existing data from Chaco Canyon reveal parallels in spatial organization between great houses and small houses. “The communal grinding facilities in great houses suggest mass preparation of food for rituals and appear to duplicate on the community level the more humble mealing bin complexes found in most unit pueblos” (Hegmon et al. 2000:74). And yet, the complex evolution and reorganization of some great house structures (like Pueblo Bonito) over centuries, and the collapse of upper story rooms, make it difficult to get a full count of these facilities over time. In the Pueblo Bonito case, excavators recorded relatively few in situ grinding facilities (room 90 [10 mealing bins] and 291 [five bins]) and those found intact were in direct association with adjacent kivas (room 90 with kiva 75, room 291 with kiva L).



Figure 5. Photograph from 1942 Chaco Canyon field school showing a mass of discarded grinding tools at small house site of Bc 57 (29SJ397). This image shows mostly manos and metates but also hammerstones or battered cores that were used to form and maintain these tools. Original image caption: "Groundstone recovered from Bc 57, looking south." 1942. Image # 88_43_234. Reproduced courtesy of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.

This is in keeping with the complementary *kiva/koye* spatial logic previously discussed (Fowles 2005, 2013; Mobley-Tanaka 1997). While relatively few large-scale grinding facilities were found in situ, there were numerous manos and metates encountered during the course of excavation. Judd (1954, Plate 31) shows one such example (Figure 7), and his caption again points to the association of such facilities with ceremonial kiva chambers: "Outworn metates found on the east side of Kiva Q and presumably fallen from work rooms partly overhanging the kiva."

Windes (2003) and Heitman (2011, 2013, 2015) have argued elsewhere that the evidence from Pueblo Bonito indicates increasingly ritualized or religious use of that great house through time. In the literature on house societies, other scholars have noted the cross-cultural occurrence of this phenomenon in the creation of "holy houses": the process by which houses in certain

societies accrue cosmological associations over time and thus become sacred spaces. This accretion of cosmological connections can lead to an almost exclusively religious use of a house structure (e.g., Bloch 1995:80–83, Kirch 2000, and Howell 1995:160, 167). An apparently similar evolution in how Pueblo Bonito was occupied and used (Heitman 2011; Plog and Heitman 2010) also supports Lamphere's (2000) ritual power model to account for the widening social differentiation and magnified social inequalities of the Chacoan era.

Content Critique Conclusions

Alfred Kroeber (1917) argued that the Zuni paramount effigy, the *ettowe* or corn mother, and not the lineage stood at the center of Zuni life. Similarly, Elsie Clews Parsons argued that the clan was a convenience; the ceremony requiring the corn mother effigy was a necessity (Parsons



Figure 6. Three images showing rows of manos and metates displayed on the ground. Each photo was taken from a slightly different perspective and each has a typed caption on the back which reads “Bc 53, Chaco Canyon, 1941.” In aggregate, these images show ground stone objects (especially manos and metates) arranged to spell out “NM” on the top row and “CC” (Chaco Canyon) and “FS” (Field School) on the bottom with a projectile point shape in the middle. Original image caption: (a, b, and c) “Bc 53, Chaco Canyon, 1941.” Papers of Frank H. H. Roberts. Image #: (a) 4851_101, (b) 4851_084, (c) 4851_102. Reproduced courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

1936b:231). These pervasive ideologies of gender have implications for how we conceptualize women’s lives in ancestral Pueblo societies. Ethnographically, women are often the caretakers and *owners* of this all-important class of religious object around which all other religious life revolves. Such ownership confers prestige on the particular house in which it was kept and the women who were known to be responsible for these sacred objects.

Ethnographic data from descendant Puebloan communities of the American Southwest provide us with alternative models of female power and prestige. These data, along with broad temporal and spatial archaeological analyses of women and gender in the region, led Lamphere (2000) to construct a ritual power model to interpret the widening social differentiation and magnified social inequalities that emerged during the Chacoan transformations of the ninth through twelfth centuries. The archaeological data presented above give further support to Lamphere’s theoretical framework and demonstrate the historical processes that have obscured—or at times even omitted—women from archaeological interpretations of Chacoan prehistory through a selective process of archaeological curation and sampling biases. While imperfect, the resuscitated data aggregated within the CRA provide new tools with which to critically analyze these historical processes and, in some cases, re-evaluate gendered assumptions embedded in some contemporary interpretations of Pueblo social history. The alternative interpretations enabled by these legacy

sources provide new lines of evidence for the importance of women’s work groups, the production of socially valued goods, the scale of women’s networks, and their significant ritual participation. Their involvement was neither purely economic nor purely religious and was certainly not devoid of political significance.

Conclusions

Preparation of corn meal is a ritual activity that underlies all Pueblo life. It constitutes a critical component of both ideologies of gender and female praxis. The archaeological evidence for this important process cannot therefore be understood in profane opposition to sacred spaces or as domestic labor in opposition to religious practice. The case study presented here from Chaco Canyon in the Pueblo Southwest demonstrates how Wylie’s (1997) content critique can help redress historical and contemporary issues of gender representation and inequality in archaeological inquiry. New, open-access resources—like the Chaco Research Archive—allow us both to access legacy data and to critically engage with the inequities embedded in the process of knowledge production (past and present).

Issues of gender inequality continue to plague American archaeology (e.g., Bardolph 2014; Clancy et al. 2014; Goldstein et al. 2014). In the Chacoan case, patterns of erasure in how women and gender are represented in archaeological analyses are intimately linked to the context of knowledge production and, as Wylie (1997:83)



Figure 7. Image from Judd (1954, Plate 31) showing metates recovered from Pueblo Bonito. These metates, according to Judd, had fallen from work rooms partly overhanging kiva Q. Photograph by Neil M. Judd, 1924. Papers of Neil M. Judd. Image #: judd_ngs_0345. Reproduced courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

has argued, could be used as a basis for understanding how the content of archaeological knowledge is shaped. Close examination of the artifact collection and curation processes revealed in the archival record expose a perhaps unintended bias against the documentation and preservation of prehispanic women's implements. These biases continue to hinder our ability to fully comprehend the daily lives of women and their participation in the social transformations that defined emergent Chacoan society. As a result, we have underestimated both the significance and signatures of women and gender in Chacoan society.

The legacy data presented in this content critique augment our understanding of the scale of mealing facilities and the frequency of grinding tools recovered from Chacoan house contexts. And while we cannot transcend the selection biases of previous eras, I have endeavored to show one way to productively mine legacy data from Chaco Canyon to further research objectives by exposing new sources of information. Hopefully, open access to Chacoan data will spawn additional

studies and continued interest in the extensive curated collections housed throughout the United States (e.g., Heitman and Plog 2015). The archaeological data presented above, along with ethnographic sources from descendant Puebloan communities, underscore both the symbolic and embodied importance of women to animate and curate important religious effigies. Transforming maize into corn meal and prayer meal was also a form of liturgy, sustaining and animating objects and contexts of ritual significance. These observations give further support to Lamphere's (2000) ritual power model in which the post-A.D. 1040 transformation evident in the Chacoan built environment reflected the widening social differentiation between "ordinary" and "important people"—a distinction clearly evident among contemporary descendant communities (Lamphere 2000:385). New research (Plog and Heitman 2010; Watson et al. 2015) shows that this differentiation began much earlier than the post-A.D. 1040 architectural transformation and requires us to rethink the genesis of social hierarchy in Cha-

coan society. Such social differentiation need not devalue the involvement and contribution of women in Puebloan social histories but may instead respond to Naranjo's (2008) appeal for greater archaeological attention to women and gender complementarity and foreground the undertheorized and underanalyzed importance of women in Chacoan society.

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Notes

1. Creating the CRA required institutional collaborations with more than a dozen anthropological museums and federal agencies as well as support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the University of Virginia, the National Parks Service and the National Science Foundation. Collaborating institutions included: The American Museum of Natural History; Aztec Ruins National Monument; Chaco Culture National Historical Park; Chaco Culture NHP Museum Collection, Hibben Center; Maxwell Museum of Anthropology; Museum of Indian Arts and Culture; Museum of Natural History, University of Colorado; National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution; New Mexico History Museum; The National Museum of the American Indian; The National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution; Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology; Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Philips Andover Academy; Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico; Harvard University; Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Latin American Library, Tulane University; The Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University.

2. Similar patterns were observed at the nearby great house of Pueblo del Arroyo (Harrod 2013:131).

3. Or, perhaps simply affiliated with specific great houses like Pueblo Bonito.

4. For an alternative perspective, see Fowles 2005 and 2013:197.4.

5. While important effigies (especially the corn mothers) are specifically cited in the respective emergence tales, clanship is not. Clans developed and were named after "the people" had emerged and began wandering (Parsons 1939:210 footnote). Some native perspectives on Zuni (though not Hopi) clanship confirm this (Dongoske et al. 1997:604). According to Parsons (1939:228), clanship is secondary. "Clanship is not validated in this way. The clans get their names, i.e., develop, later, while the people are wandering after the Emergence. The kachina also usually derive from this later less significant and less esoteric period. To this period, while the Keres lived at White House, the organization of medicine societies may be assigned. Pekwin (Zuni) and Town chiefs (Isleta, San Juan) are post-Emergence" (Parsons 1939:210).

6. The median date for Burial 13 is A.D. 781, with a 2σ range of 691–877. For Burial 14, the median date is A.D. 873, with a 2σ range of 690–873. (Plog and Heitman 2010:19623)

7. CRA online artifact database can be accessed: http://www.chacoarchive.org/bibl_database/specimens/search?public=true

8. Though Judd is often lauded as the superior excavator of Pueblo Bonito as compared to Pepper, this is an instance in which Pepper's data collection surpassed Judd's.

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