

The Archaeology of Chaco Canyon

Chaco Matters

An Introduction

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Chaco Canyon, in northwestern New Mexico, was a great Pueblo center of the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. (figures 1.1 and 1.2; refer to plate 2). Its ruins represent a decisive time and place in the history of “Anasazi,” or Ancestral Pueblo peoples. Events at Chaco transformed the Pueblo world, with philosophical and practical implications for Pueblo descendants and for the rest of us. Modern views of Chaco vary: “a beautiful, serene place where everything was provided by the spirit helpers” (S. Ortiz 1994:72), “a dazzling show of wealth and power in a treeless desert” (Fernandez-Armesto 2001:61), “a self-inflicted ecological disaster” (Diamond 1992:332).

Chaco, today, is a national park. Despite difficult access (20 miles of dirt roads), more than seventy-five thousand people visit every year. Chaco is featured in compendiums of must-see sights, from AAA tour books, to archaeology field guides such as *America’s Ancient Treasures* (Folsom and Folsom 1993), to the *Encyclopedia of Mysterious Places* (Ingpen and Wilkinson 1990). In and beyond the Southwest, Chaco’s fame manifests in more substantial, material ways. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, the structure of the Pueblo Indian Cultural

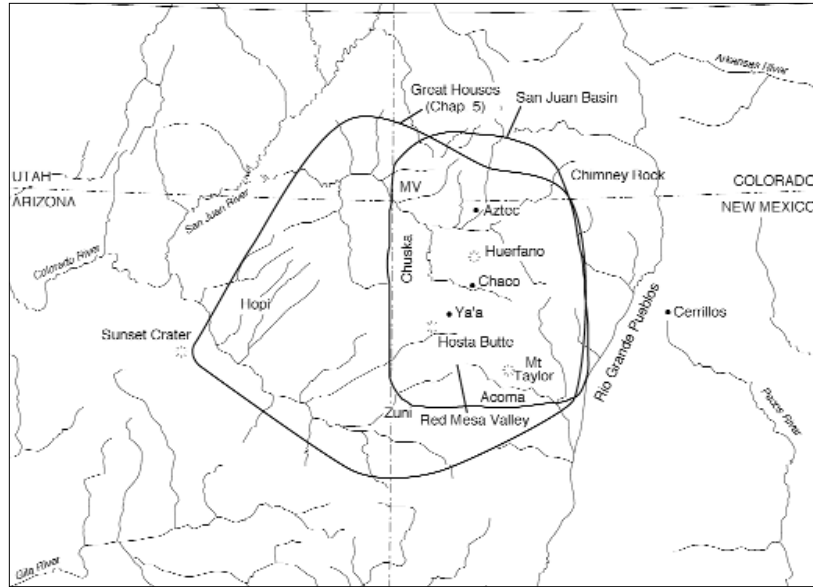


Figure 1.1
The Chaco region.

Center mimics precisely Pueblo Bonito, the most famous Chaco ruin. They sell Chaco (trademark!) sandals in Paonia, Colorado, and brew Chaco Canyon Ale (also trademark!) in Lincoln, Nebraska. The beer bottle features the Sun Dagger solstice marker, with three beams of light striking a spiral petroglyph, presumably indicating that it is five o'clock somewhere. Videos, books, New Age pilgrimages, décor in high-end Santa Fe restaurants—Chaco is a famous place, officially inscribed in the roll of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Chaco was also an important place in the development of Southwestern and American archaeology (Lister and Lister 1981; Mills 2002; Wilshusen and Hamilton, chapter 11 of this volume). This book is about Chaco's archaeology: how it was done, what it tells us, how we should think about it. We have, perhaps, conducted more archaeology per square kilometer or per century of sequence at Chaco than at any comparable district in the United States—and far more, to be sure, than at many more impressive and important sites around the world. The last, largest, and most expensive field campaign at Chaco Canyon

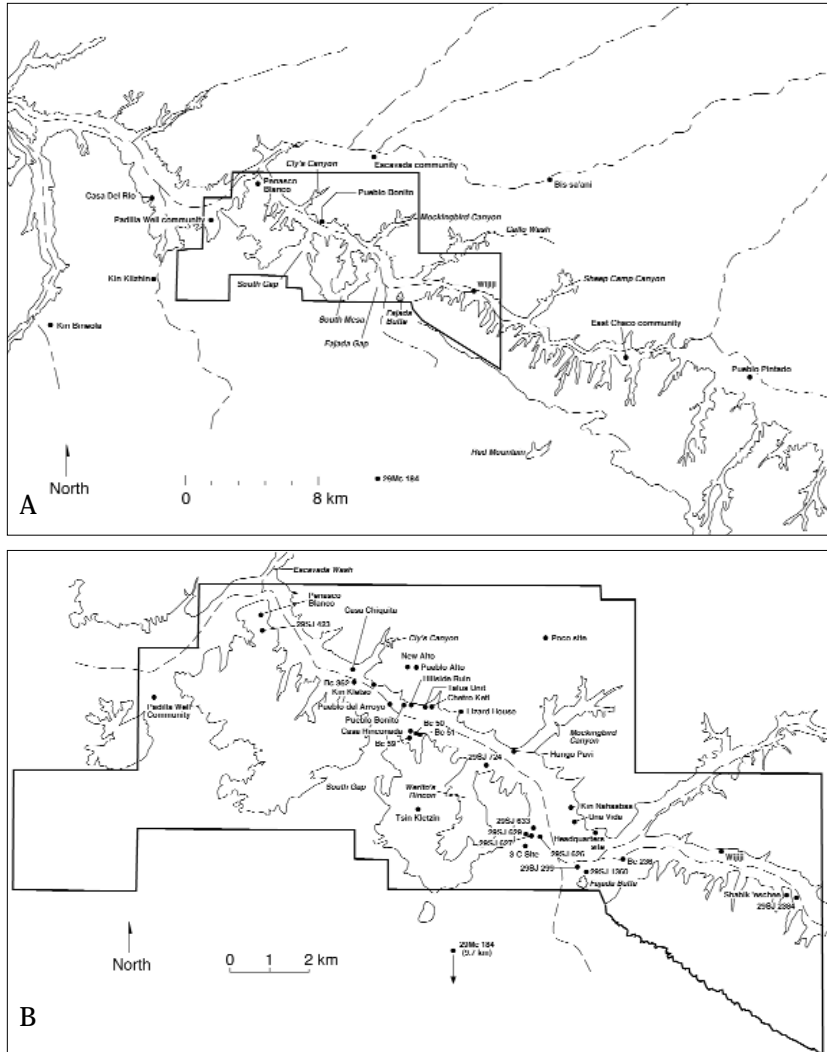


Figure 1.2

(a) *Chaco halo, or core* (redrafted from Windes 1993:figure 1.1), (b) *Chaco Canyon* (redrafted from Windes 1993:figure 1.2).

was the National Park Service's Chaco Project in the 1970s and early 1980s.

In this volume, you will find papers from our recent effort to synthesize the archaeology of Chaco Canyon, particularly the fieldwork

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of the Chaco Project (a list of participants, conferences, and products appears in appendix A, “Chaco Synthesis meetings”). The Chaco Synthesis—the results of which you are reading—was a series of small working conferences from March 1999 to October 2002, twenty years after fieldwork ended at Chaco. In addition to chapters from the Chaco Synthesis (chapters 2–6 and 12), chapters 7–11 provide temporal and spatial context for Chaco Canyon and its archaeology.

In this introduction, I briefly explain Chaco (“What Is Chaco?”) and its marque archaeology (“The Bonito Phase”). I then describe the 1970s research that generated the data (“The Chaco Project”) and our turn-of-the-millennium efforts to understand those data (“The Chaco Synthesis”). Finally, I address two issues, one of general interest and one of personal interest, respectively, in “Where Are the Indians?” and “Where Is Lekson?”

WHAT IS CHACO?

Of the various phase or stage sequences proposed to describe Chaco’s history, we seem to use the Pecos System most widely (figure 1.3). The term specific to Chaco Canyon at its height is the *Bonito phase*, divided into three subphases: Early Bonito phase (850–1040), Classic Bonito phase (1040–1100), and Late Bonito phase (1100–1140). The Bonito phase is roughly equivalent to the Pueblo II (PII) period of the Pecos System. In this volume, *Pueblo I (PI)* often describes the archaeology of Chaco Canyon before the Bonito phase, and *Pueblo III (PIII)*, the archaeology of the Four Corners region after Chaco. (For more extended treatments, see Lister and Lister 1981; Mathien 2005; Vivian 1990; for shorter, more accessible reviews, see Frazier 1999; Noble 2004; Vivian and Hilpert 2002. For an excellent review of recent research, see Mills 2002.)

Anasazi is an archaeological term, anglicized from a Navajo phrase, for the ancient peoples of the Four Corners region in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. For many decades, technical and popular writing has widely used the word *Anasazi*; we use it here in its archaeological sense. Many archaeologists and Natives prefer *Ancestral Pueblo*, so that term appears here also.

A prime object produced by the Chaco Synthesis, specifically by its leader Lynne Sebastian, was a chronological chart dubbed “The Chaco

Pecos Stage	Phase	Period	Ceramic Assemblage	Major Architectural Events	Demography
Late PIII	Mesa Verde	1200–1300	Mesa Verde B/w, indented corrugated (rock & sherd temper)		Major re-population.
PIII	McElmo	1140–1200	McElmo, indented corrugated (rock/sherd/ sand temper)	Major population decrease.	
Early PIII	Late Bonito	1090–1140	Chaco-McElmo/Gallup B/w, indented corrugated (sand temper)	Major Great House construction north of San Juan River.	Population increase, then decrease.
Late PII	Classic Bonito	1040–1110	Gallup B/w, indented corrugated (sand & trachyte temper)	Major Great House construction at Chaco. Kivas appear.	Population decrease.
Early PII	Early Bonito	900–1040	Red Mesa B/w, narrow neckbanded, neck corrugated (sand temper)	Small house aggregation & increase in number.	Major population increase.
Late PI	Early Bonito	850–925	Kiatuthlanna & Red Mesa B/w	Aboveground slab house sites; small to moderate size.	
Early PII	White Mound	800–850	Lino Gray & Kana'a Neckbanded	Aboveground slab row house sites; small to moderate size.	
PI	White Mound	800–850	White Mound B/w, Lino Gray	First Great Houses. Major increase in storage facilities.	
Early PI	White Mound	700–800	White Mound B/w, Lino Gray	Deep pit houses, dispersed. Limited storage facilities?	
Late BMIII	La Plata	600–700	La Plata B/w, Lino & Obelisk Grays	Shallow pit houses, dispersed. Storage facilities (cists).	
BMIII	La Plata	500–600	La Plata B/w, Lino & Obelisk Grays	Shallow pit houses. Storage facilities (cists).	
Late BMII	Brownware	400–500	Obelisk Gray & brownware	Two large, aggregated communities with Great Kivas.	
Archaic	-	pre-A.D. 1	none	Unknown.	Unknown.

Figure 1.3
Chaco chronology (Thomas Windes).

Timeline” (following page 392). The timeline covers Chacoan prehistory from 800 to 1300, but in this volume we pay particular attention to the span from about 850 to 1140, the Bonito phase. During this phase, Chaco reached its height with the construction of Pueblo Bonito and the other Great Houses and with its development as a center place.

Archaeologists have excavated at Chaco Canyon for more than a century (Frazier 1999; Lister and Lister 1981; Mathien 2005). That large investment of time and money has returned remarkable results, multiplied and compounded by several factors: arid climate and consequent good preservation; visibility, with scant plant cover, minimal soil development, and almost no later cultural superimposition; tree-ring dating, making Chaco the best dated prehistoric site anywhere; and a short, simple sequence (compared with Troy or Copán). Doing archaeology at Chaco is relatively easy, and many excellent archaeologists worked there over a long time. With all that high-quality work at an advantageous site, we should know a *lot* about Chaco. Thanks to those early archaeologists and Chaco’s remote location and aridity, we do.

Richard Wetherill, the cowboy-archaeologist who discovered Mesa Verde, initiated excavations at Chaco in 1896, at its marquee site of Pueblo Bonito. His was the first of several major field projects sponsored by a variety of institutions: the American Museum of Natural History (with Wetherill) at Pueblo Bonito (1896–1900), the Smithsonian Institution and National Geographic Society at Pueblo Bonito and Pueblo del Arroyo (1921–1927), the Museum of New Mexico and the University of New Mexico at Chetro Ketl (1920–1934), and the National Park Service (NPS) at Kin Kletso (1950–1951). The last major field program, the NPS’s Chaco Project, worked at Chaco from 1971 to 1982. Subsequent analytical work ended about 1986, although report writing continues to this day.

Chaco Canyon is at approximate latitude 36 degrees north, 108 degrees west, in the northwestern quarter of New Mexico, a piece of old Mexico acquired by the United States in 1848 (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). At Pueblo Bonito, the elevation is about 1,865 m (6,125 ft) above sea level. The canyon is near the center of the San Juan Basin (see figure 1.1; refer to plate 1). Archaeology borrowed the canyon’s name from geology and refashioned it to indicate a region about 100 km in radius around Chaco, comprising the Chaco River drainage and

nearby portions of the San Juan River (into which the Chaco flows, when it flows at all). The San Juan Basin is centered in the southeastern quarter of the Colorado Plateau, a vast uplifted region of canyons and mesas around the Four Corners.

The very largest Great Houses were concentrated in a 2-km-diameter “downtown” zone at the center of Chaco Canyon (see figure 1.2b; refer to plate 4). These include Pueblo Bonito (described below), Pueblo Alto (Windes 1987a, 1987b), Chetro Ketl (Lekson, ed., 1983), Pueblo del Arroyo (Judd 1959), Kin Kletso (Vivian and Mathews 1965), and many other monuments and smaller structures (Stein, Ford, and Friedman 2003). Architecture extends beyond this central zone. Doyel, Breternitz, and Marshall (1984) have proposed the “Chaco Halo,” an oval area with a maximum radius from Pueblo Bonito of about 8.5 km, for the Chaco area beyond the immediate confines of the canyon. Many archaeologists extend the halo to encompass Great Houses up to 15 km or more from the park boundaries. Gwinn Vivian and others, in chapter 2 of this volume (refer to figure 2.1), refer to this as the “Chaco core.” Forty to fifty km beyond the Chaco halo, or core, lie the boundaries of the San Juan Basin (described above; see figure 1.1), often considered more or less coterminous with the Chaco region. The scale of geographic interest for the Chaco world is perhaps even larger, however, extending over much of the Four Corners region (see figure 1.1; Kantner and Kintigh, chapter 5 of this volume).

Chaco Canyon’s environment was harsh—a description overused in Southwestern archaeology but singularly applicable here. Summers are blisteringly hot; winters are wretchedly cold. The growing season is short, and rainfall uncertain. Indeed, water for basic domestic needs is (and was) a concern. The canyon contained little wood for building or burning and no outstanding local resources besides sandstone. At the turnoff from paved to dirt road, miles away from the canyon, a park service sign warns, “No wood, no food, no services at Chaco Canyon.” Other necessities could be added to that list.

Why did the Bonito phase flourish in this desert canyon, when well-watered valleys lay to the north and south, closer to mountains and forests? Chaco’s environment seems an unlikely setting for what happened there. Opinions on its import range widely: some archaeologists feel that Chaco’s particular environment more or less explains the

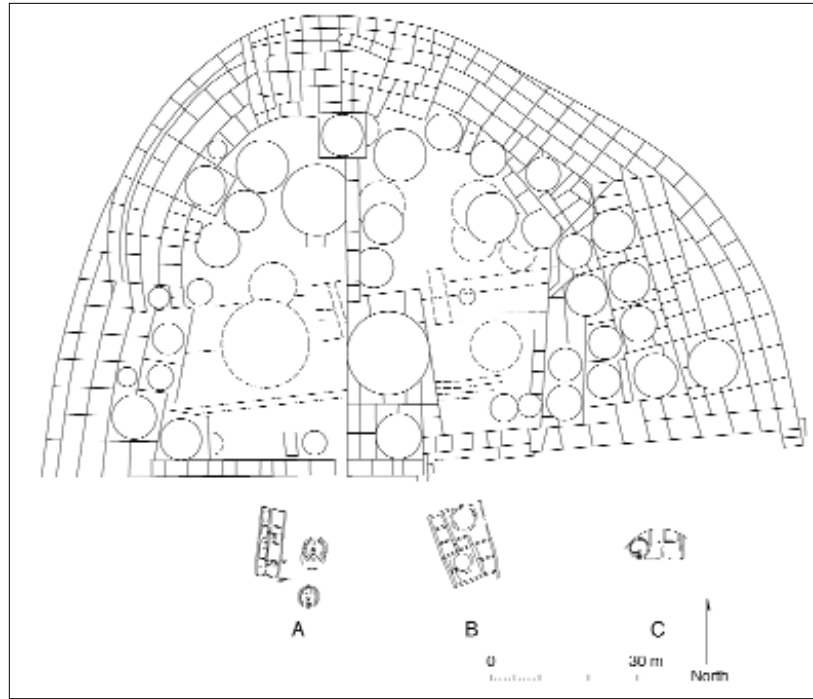


Figure 1.4

Pueblo Bonito and unit pueblos: (a) Three C Site, early 1000s, (b) Bc 126, late 1000s to middle 1100s, and (c) Gallo Cliff Dwellings, 1200s. (Redrawn from plans in Lekson, ed., 1984a and McKenna and Truell 1986)

Bonito phase, and others think that the Bonito phase shaped that environment to its needs. In any event, Chaco is a place where one cannot ignore nature. The environment, described in this volume by Gwinn Vivian and others (chapter 2), is critically important to our understanding of the Bonito phase.

THE BONITO PHASE

The archaeology of Chaco Canyon centers on a dozen remarkable buildings called “Great Houses”—a motif of every chapter in this volume, but the particular theme of Lekson, Windes, and McKenna (chapter 3). Great Houses at Chaco (figures 1.4 and 3.1; see plates 5 and 6) began in the late ninth century as monumentally up-scaled versions of regular domestic structures—the small, single-family unit

pueblos (see figure 1.4), also called “Prudden units” (Lipe, chapter 8) or “small sites” (McKenna, chapter 3), of the Pueblo I and Pueblo II periods. Shortly after 1000, Great Houses took a canonical turn in form and function that distinguished them thereafter from normal residences. An entire unit pueblo would fit in a single large room at a Chaco Great House.

In approximately one century, from 1020 to about 1125, the people at Chaco Canyon built the Great Houses, but each Great House has a unique construction history and several started much earlier. Pueblo Bonito was one of these early Great Houses (Judd 1954, 1964; Neitzel, ed., 2003; Pepper 1920) and is typical, perhaps archetypal, of Chaco Canyon Great Houses (see figure 1.4 and plate 5).

Pueblo Bonito took almost three centuries (850 to 1125) to build (Windes and Ford 1996). The “roads” of ancient Chaco (described later in this chapter) led viewers to the edge of Chaco’s sheer sandstone cliffs, where they could behold the D-shaped ground plan. The building began as a huge version of Pueblo I unit pueblos, built three stories tall (normal unit pueblos were one short story). Pueblo I masonry was inadequate for multiple stories, so, when the rear wall of Pueblo Bonito began to fail in the early eleventh century, Chaco architects buttressed the old building by enveloping it in an exterior curtain wall of superior stonework. In many cases, they razed existing sections of Great Houses, including parts of Pueblo Bonito, to make way for new construction, but “Old Bonito” remained at the heart of the structure throughout its long history.

Beginning about 1020, the architects of Pueblo Bonito started a series of six major additions, each of which was enormously larger than anything previously built in the Pueblo world. At the culmination, about 1125, almost seven hundred rooms, stacked four and perhaps five stories tall, covered an area of about 0.8 ha. Only the outermost of Pueblo Bonito’s rooms had sunlight; most of the interior rooms were dark and had limited access, suited (presumably) for storage. We now believe that only a score of families lived in this huge building (Bernardini 1999; Windes 1987a:383–392). They were very important families who controlled, or at least had access to, enormous numbers of large storage rooms.

Like other Great Houses, building Pueblo Bonito was expensive or

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laborious. That is, the labor-per-unit measure of floor area or roofed volume far exceeded that for unit pueblos. What distinguished Pueblo Bonito and the other Great Houses were site preparation (leveling and terracing); extensive foundations; massive, artfully coursed masonry walls; overtimbered roofs and ceilings (hundreds of thousands of large pine beams brought from distant forests); skillful carpentry, which can only be appreciated today from masonry remnants of elaborate wooden stairways, balconies, and porticos; and other features and furniture unique to these remarkable buildings. Among these last were colonnades (a Mesoamerican form, found at Chetro Ketl), unique raised platforms (for storage? sleeping?) within rooms at most Great Houses, and large sandstone disks (approximately 1 m diameter and 30 cm thick) stacked like pancakes as foundations or dedicatory monuments beneath major posts of Great Kivas (described later in this chapter).

Construction required a much larger, far more complex organization of labor than the family economy of unit pueblos. Life, too, was different. At Pueblo Bonito and other Great Houses, gangs of grinders prepared meals for larger groups in rooms devoted to batteries of corn-grinding *metates* fixed in bins. Archaeologists found huge ovens in Great House plazas where, presumably, people cooked for larger groups. The few families who actually lived in Pueblo Bonito could not have built it themselves. Likely, others built the huge structure and did much of the domestic work (grinding corn, cooking).

Pueblo Bonito was only one of a dozen Great Houses at Chaco. Great Houses were part of a large, sprawling, complex settlement. These massive buildings were clustered in downtown Chaco, and the cultural landscape included many other elements, such as roads, mounds, Great Kivas, and small sites.

Roads appear much as their name implies. Long, straight, wide (typically 9 m) engineered features linked sites to other sites and to natural places, simpler in construction but not unlike the causeways of La Quemada (Nelson, chapter 10 of this volume) and the *sacbe* of the ancient Maya. The Chacoans designed the roads for foot traffic. Where roads met cliffs, they constructed elaborate ramps or carved wide stairways out of the living rock. They valued the symbolic or monumental aspects of roads, however, as much as transportation. The dense network of roads in downtown Chaco, for example, created redundant,

parallel routes clearly unnecessary for efficient pedestrian use. Roads were meant for something beyond simple transportation. This conclusion is probably also valid for roads running out from the canyon. Several are known to run many kilometers to the north, southwest, and west, but these roads may run to symbolically important natural features rather than to other sites (as Kantner and Kintigh note in chapter 5 of this volume; see plate 3). Other roads may be formally constructed only at their termini, where they approach or enter Great House complexes (Roney 1992).

Mounds encompassed a range of earthen structures with (presumably) a variety of purposes (figure 3.14). Most mounds are oval, sculpted accumulations of earth, trash, and construction debris. A few mounds have very formal geometric shapes. In front of Pueblo Bonito were two large, head-high, rectangular, masonry-walled, platform mounds, each larger than a basketball court. Stairs led up to their heavily plastered surfaces. We do not know what structures, if any, stood on these platforms. Other earthworks include large berms running alongside roads and huge “trash mounds” at some (but, importantly, not all) Great Houses (Windes 1987a, 1987b; Wills 2001).

Great Kivas were large, round, subterranean chambers up to 20 m or more in diameter; each was a single large room with an encircling bench, presumably to seat audiences for ritual or other performances (figure 3.8). Great Kivas had a very long history in Anasazi building, both before and after Chaco, but at Chaco Canyon and related sites they were built with the monumental technologies and scales of Great Houses. Great Kivas were not exclusive to Chaco, but Chacoan Great Kivas formed a class apart.

Small sites (unit pueblos, or Prudden units, and aggregates of several such units) were the final major element of Chaco Canyon architecture (see figures 1.4 and 3.11). Hundreds of small sites, clearly residential, line the canyon, particularly along the south cliffs. As discussed by Peter J. McKenna in chapter 3, the archaeology of small sites is critical to our understanding of the Bonito phase, and that archaeology is complex.

The artifacts of Chaco Canyon, with some very notable exceptions, resembled other contemporary Anasazi pottery and lithic industries. Chacoan artifacts and the organization of production are the themes of

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Toll's chapter 4 in this volume. Many artifacts were actually manufactured in other Anasazi districts; for example, Chaco-related communities up to 50 to 60 km distant made most of the pottery found at certain Great Houses in Chaco. Conversely, at least one intriguing class of ceramic vessels existed almost exclusively at Chaco. Two rooms in Pueblo Bonito contained almost all of about two hundred known cylinder vases (resembling Mesoamerican forms; see Toll, chapter 4, and Nelson, chapter 10, of this volume).

Chaco Canyon, particularly Pueblo Bonito, is notable for long-distance imports, for example, about thirty-five copper bells and about thirty-five scarlet macaws, all presumably from western Mexico (Toll, chapter 4, and Nelson, chapter 10, of this volume). Chaco contains more of these "exotica" than any other eleventh-century Pueblo II site and, indeed, more than all other excavated Pueblo II sites combined. Turquoise, too, is conspicuous at Chaco Canyon and at Pueblo Bonito. Some estimates place the number of recovered pieces at more than one hundred thousand, mostly in the form of small discoidal beads. Many small and large sites at Chaco Canyon contained workshops for the manufacture of turquoise beads, but the source(s) of the stone was not local. The huge Cerrillos turquoise mines, 190 km southeast of Chaco near Santa Fe, New Mexico, are clearly implicated in Chacoan production of turquoise (Mathien 1986; Weigand and Harbottle 1993).

Whatever the nature of the Bonito phase, the context for our understanding must extend beyond the confines of Chaco Canyon. Chaco was the geographic (if not geometric) center of a large regional system marked by about two hundred smaller Great Houses (sometimes called "outliers") and roads (see figures 1.1 and 5.1). The nature of that regional system (even its reality) is a matter of much debate and the focus of Kantner and Kintigh's chapter 5 in this volume. The builders applied the same techniques and design principles for these smaller Great Houses, which are typically about one-twentieth the size of Pueblo Bonito or Chetro Ketl, as for the Chaco Canyon Great Houses. Usually, scattered communities of unit pueblos or small sites surround the Great Houses in this region.

At many outlier Great Houses, there are clear indications of roads, often pointing towards other Great Houses or to Chaco Canyon. Whether all road segments at outlier Great Houses actually continue the

many miles to Chaco Canyon (or other destinations) is not clear, however. Most roads appear to be formally constructed only at their ends and are either less formal or completely absent in the stretches between termini (Roney 1992). Paralleling the roads (real and projected) was a remarkable network of fire-signal or mirror-signal stations, typically represented by large, formal masonry fireboxes placed on pinnacles or high spots (for example, Hayes and Windes 1975). This line-of-sight signaling network remains understudied but may extend (with one or two “repeater” stations) to the most distant Great Houses. The geographic distribution of Great Houses, Great House communities, road segments, and signaling stations extends over 80,000 sq km. Some archaeologists believe, however, that Chaco Canyon during the Bonito phase directly influenced only the immediate San Juan Basin or a small radius immediately around the canyon itself. Almost every chapter of this book discusses the nature of the Chacoan region and the canyon’s role there.

What was the Bonito phase? How should we characterize it as a society and polity? Archaeological interpretations of the Bonito phase have altered greatly over the past hundred years. Interpretations change with new data, and we have indeed learned much about Chaco. But evolving interpretations also reflect the fluid nature of American archaeology. The intellectual framework of archaeology is not static; ideas about the past reflect the archaeological knowledge and theory of their times. Chapter 6, by Judge and Cordell, presents a reconstruction of Chaco that favors ritual over political (congruent with many archaeologists’ current ideas). Other chapters in this volume offer views ranging from a centralized political hierarchy to a ceremonially based pilgrimage center, or even a hierarchically organized rituality.

In assessing our arguments, the reader should recall the history of changing interpretations of the Bonito phase. The first excavators of Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl, working long before the development of tree-ring dating, looked on these sites as early versions of modern pueblos, that is, as prehistoric pueblos before colonial impacts. Neil Judd (at Pueblo Bonito) and Edgar Hewett (at Chetro Ketl) turned first and foremost to Pueblo colleagues for interpretive counsel. The equivalence of past and present was direct and unquestioned. During an era when archaeology was essentially culture history, the Bonito phase seemed to fit in to a steady historical progression of the Pecos System,

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within the “Great Pueblo” (Pueblo III) period. Great Houses compared well with the large sites of Pueblo III and Pueblo IV.

Tree-ring dating, developed in the 1920s, revealed that the Bonito phase dated instead to Pueblo II. That created a quandary. Compared with unit pueblos, Great Houses were remarkably, even disturbingly, large. Moreover, tree-ring dating demonstrated that the Bonito-phase Great Houses were contemporary with much smaller sites in Chaco Canyon. That is, at least two styles of architecture existed in Chaco Canyon during the Bonito phase: monumental Great Houses and smaller, less formal sites typical of Pueblo II throughout the Anasazi region. Some interpreted Chaco as a multiethnic community, with Great Houses representing one ethnic group (or more) and small houses, another (Kluckhohn 1939; Vivian and Mathews 1965; Vivian 1990).

The early dating of the Bonito phase (Pueblo II, not the expected Pueblo III) prompted other archaeologists in the 1950s and 1960s to question the Bonito phase’s place in the Anasazi (Ancestral Pueblo) sequence. Was the Bonito phase the result of influence or import from the high civilizations of Mexico? Many archaeologists, including key Chaco Project archaeologists (Hayes 1981; Lister 1978), concluded that the Bonito phase was the result of Mesoamerican influences. Opinion was sharply divided, and James Judge (1989:233) could accurately summarize Chacoan thinking of that time as either “Mexicanist” or “indigenist.”

The New Archaeology of the 1970s and early 1980s favored local adaptation over diffusion, migration, and extraregional influences. In that intellectual atmosphere, researchers rejected Mesoamerican explanations in favor of the evolution of the Bonito phase as a “complex cultural ecosystem” (Judge 1979). New Archaeology posited complex political structures, locally developed but still out of place in a gradual culture history from ancient Anasazi to modern Pueblo. Managerial elites, chiefs, and other complex political structures went far beyond conventional, egalitarian Pueblo models. Again, opinion was divided. The most heated debates centered on sites in Arizona; Chaco was (generally but not universally) accepted without undue cavil as a “complex” society, that is, a centralized political hierarchy (for example, pro: Schelberg 1984; Wilcox 1993, 1999; Vivian 1990).

Postprocessual approaches of the 1990s and early 2000s reconfigured Chaco to fit postmodern tastes. Influenced by European revision

(and rejection) of Neolithic chiefdoms, Southwestern archaeologists began to explore and extol ceremony at Chaco, favoring rituality over polity (Mills 2002; Wills 2000, 2001; Yoffee 2001; and Judge and Cordell, chapter 6 of this volume). Postprocessual approaches also reestablished culture history and contingency as equally important as, or more important than, the evolutionary generalities of New Archaeology. As discussed in following sections of this introduction, regulatory requirements for “culture affiliation” reinforced historical interests. The congruence of postprocessual historicity and legally mandated affiliation studies encouraged an archaeology not unlike culture history of the 1940s and 1950s, but with greater methodological sophistication (we hope).

Below, I discuss the current division of opinion between rituality and polity at Chaco (see also Sebastian’s concluding chapter 12 and several other chapters in this volume). Unlike the stark dichotomy of Mexicanists and indigenists in the 1970s, both ritual and political are important in understanding the Bonito phase. Few researchers would claim one to the exclusion of the other; it is a matter, rather, of degree. To view Chaco data with both ritual and political emphases is legitimate and appropriate, for the data sustains both interests.

We focus on the Bonito phase because the Chaco Culture National Historical Park was created to preserve and display the monumental ruins of the Bonito phase and because the Bonito phase and its contexts largely structured the Chaco Project’s research. There would be no park and no Chaco Project absent Bonito-phase ruins. People used Chaco Canyon in the Archaic many centuries before Pueblo Bonito, and people called Chaco home long after, evidenced by Navajo homes and Navajo names for Bonito-phase ruins: Kin Kletso, Tsin Kletzin, Wijiji. The Chaco Project investigated earlier and later periods at Chaco but sought principally to understand Chaco’s *raison d’être*, the Bonito phase. And so do we, here.

THE CHACO PROJECT

The Chaco Project was almost certainly the last major archaeological research program at Chaco of our lifetimes (or at least my lifetime—I am feeling pretty feeble, so, younger scholars, take hope). The NPS continues to do exemplary work at sites threatened by natural or human impacts, but the era of large-scale research programs—and

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particularly major excavations—has passed. This makes the Chaco Project's work all the more significant.

The Chaco Project spanned interesting times in American archaeology. It was conceived as culture history; the fieldwork and laboratory analyses developed as New Archaeology. The research was largely completed before the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), but that law (discussed below) deeply affected the present volume. To varying degrees, the interpretations of Chaco (and of the Chaco Project) presented here reflect postprocessual sensibilities adapted to Southwestern practices (as exemplified by Hegmon 2003).

Because the history of the Chaco Project is well told by Joan Mathien (2005; see also Frazier 2005) and summarized by Wilshusen and Hamilton (chapter 11 of this volume), I give a very brief review of that story here. During the late 1960s, just as the huge Wetherill Mesa Project was winding down at Mesa Verde, NPS archaeologist John Corbett first advanced the idea of a large field project at Chaco. Corbett asked the School of American Research in Santa Fe to host a three-day planning conference, January 8–11, 1969. From that conference, Wilfred Logan and Zorro Bradley developed a research *Prospectus* (National Park Service 1969) for a multidisciplinary partnership between the University of New Mexico and the NPS. The *Prospectus* was wide ranging, addressing not only archaeological research but also NPS needs (for example, preservation of structures) and an admirable variety of natural science studies. The project began in 1970, intended to last ten years. It officially ended in 1986, and, thirty years after its inception, several reports are still in preparation.

Fieldwork began in 1971. Initially, Robert Lister and Alden Hayes directed the research. The project expanded significantly in scale with the excavation of Pueblo Alto (Windes 1987a, 1987b), which coincided roughly with the retirement of Lister and the arrival of W. James Judge as director. At one point (in 1977), more than thirty people were working on Chaco Project field research, including part-time field labor. Judge brought New Archaeology credentials to the Chaco Project and subsequently modified the research goals. Work at Pueblo Alto, the last major field project, ended in 1979. (Minor field projects continued sporadically and, even today, have not quite ceased.)

Analyses and writing reached a crescendo about 1986, when staffing was cut and the office moved from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque to Santa Fe. But work still continues. A small but dedicated team of NPS archaeologists is completing technical reporting of the project. The cost of fieldwork, analysis, publication, curation, and other matters totaled more than six million dollars.

The Chaco Project was a multifaceted affair including many natural science studies, remote sensing projects, Navajo archaeology and history, and cultural resource management in and around the park. We are concerned here with the archaeological program. After completing archaeological surveys, the Chaco Project excavated more than twenty prehistoric sites from all time periods, culminating in work at Pueblo Alto (one of the largest Bonito-phase sites). Excavations recovered 1.5 million artifacts and produced 150 linear feet of field notes, thousands of maps, and more than forty thousand photos. Twenty technical monographs were published in two series and sent to most university and many city libraries: *Reports of the Chaco Center* and NPS's *Publications in Archaeology*. (With the exception of two titles reprinted by the University of New Mexico Press and widely available, Chaco Project reports are of readier access than conventional "gray literature" but less widely distributed than real books.) Journal articles, book chapters, theses, dissertations, and other shorter, "official" Chaco Project contributions numbered more than sixty. During the Chaco Project's salad days, media coverage was heavy, including PBS documentaries and trade books (Frazier 1986, 1999). But there was never a final synthesis to evaluate and discuss the manifold findings of the Chaco Project.

THE CHACO SYNTHESIS

In 1996 Robert Powers of the NPS asked me to consider how a final synthesis might look. My credentials were a ten-year association with the Chaco Project (1976–1986) and famously poor judgment regarding foolish risks. I accepted Bob's challenge, and the result is this book. A complementary effort was already underway: Joan Mathien's (2005) volume on the history and results of the Chaco Project detailed site excavations and what they produced. Mathien's book was to be volume one of a two-volume set, of which the present book is the second.

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I suspect that Bob Powers anticipated my offering to author that second volume alone, much as Mathien authored volume one. But I felt strongly that I feel too strongly about Chaco. Lekson's Chaco (despite the fact that it is gospel truth) is not widely accepted. The Chaco Project's work was too important for me to control, intellectually, a final synthetic effort. Instead, I proposed a series of small thematic conferences mixing Chaco Project staff and other Chaco "insiders" with interesting and/or influential "outsiders." From the beginning, I insisted that the conferences focus *inside the canyon* (because that is where the Chaco Project spent your money and did its work) and on the Bonito phase (the central matter of both park and project).

The Chaco Synthesis, as it ultimately evolved, was complex and moderately elaborate (refer to appendix A). After many meetings with Bob Powers, Dabney Ford, and NPS staff, after long conversations with Chaco specialists, and after planning palavers with several Distinguished Conference Organizers, we settled on structures and themes for the conferences: "Economy and Ecology" would deal with environment and subsistence; "Organization of Production" would cover artifacts; "Architecture" would go beyond the Bonito-phase buildings to consider the landscape; and "Society and Polity" would aim at these aspects of the Bonito phase. (There were other, ancillary conferences and activities, too, discussed below.) We added one more working conference, "Chaco World," addressing the Chaco beyond the canyon. Despite our focus inside the canyon, synthesizing Chaco without some formal reference to its region seemed reckless. The Chaco Project did a bit of work outside the canyon (and we wish that we had done more). More important, young scholars are currently paying much attention to the Chaco regional system and outliers, and those fresh voices should be heard (for example, Kantner and Mahoney 2000). Therefore, we decided to have a Chaco World conference, organized not by Chaco Project staff or senior Chaco scholars but by younger researchers conducting fieldwork on outliers.

For each conference, I recruited two insider organizers: Chaco specialists, usually but not always Chaco Project staff. To work, I thought, each conference should be small, six or seven people at most, ideally with three or four insiders and three outsiders (discussed below). I

recused myself on the question of who would be invited, but in practice I was often consulted. I would then work with the organizers to support the logistics of their conference and the publication of the results. Each conference would produce a half-dozen papers, which we would financially support and assist into appropriate journals or books. Each conference would produce insights that were to be translated, somehow, up to a final capstone conference. The form of that translation and, indeed, the nature of the final conference itself (which generated this book) developed over many months. I will discuss the capstone after briefly evaluating the six working meetings that led up to the capstone, as well as the ancillary activities that paralleled those meetings.

The plan had political and geographic dimensions. I wanted to involve most or all major archaeological institutions in the Southwest as host institutions. We held sessions at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, the University of New Mexico, Fort Lewis College, the University of Colorado, and the School of American Research (and, of course, at Chaco Canyon). I had hoped to have a session at the Museum of Northern Arizona, but that did not work out.

Although this volume focuses on the Chaco Project, it borrows heavily from other, earlier projects. Despite our program's name, *Chaco Synthesis*, we cannot synthesize (in a comprehensive sense) the Chaco Project, much less the enormous contributions of other Chaco research programs. Gratefully and humbly, we do acknowledge past research and the ongoing work of researchers not directly involved in this volume. A glance at our references will indicate the depth and breadth of our debt to other archaeologists.

I tried to include all the major thinkers on Chaco, in one capacity or another. The insiders were supposed to be Chaco Center staff (and, alas, only selected members of that staff, to keep things small), but we enlarged that list to include a few people who were obviously essential, such as Gwinn Vivian, Lynne Sebastian, and others who co-authored chapters here. A few very important Chaco scholars did not participate in the project; offers of various roles were made and (for various reasons) declined. Still, I knew that hurt feelings and annoyance were inevitable reactions, so I told conference organizers to blame exclusions on me and my insistence on small meetings. That avoided, I hoped, undue blame and calumny for hard-pressed conference organizers.

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Outsiders were the key part of the program. I did not envision the customary discussant role; I wanted outsiders to really engage the data. Insider organizers would, ideally, lead our guests through the relevant publications long before the meeting. I wanted fresh eyes and fresh ideas to break us out of internal bickerings.

Also, I was quite open about using the project to advertise Chaco data to a larger world via outsiders. I hoped that they would broadcast the potential of these data to their personal circles and networks. Southwestern archaeology is choking on its own overabundant data (compared with other regions of the world) and is perhaps too provincial (we seldom compare our sites with other regions of the world). To me, exporting data or rumors of data via outsiders seemed to be one solution.

Outsiders certainly made things interesting for insiders. Many insiders were tired of Chaco (more accurately, bored to tears)—including me, perhaps particularly. The chance to work with interesting outsiders, though, revved up recalcitrant organizers for yet another round of Chaco.

Almost every working conference included open sessions or public presentations, which were well attended. For two reasons, I was also interested in extending the scope of the synthesis to the arts and humanities: first, this might move Chaco out of anthropology and Native American studies and into other disciplines, and, second, this might address humanistic yearnings so evident in contemporary American archaeology. I proposed two events, one focusing on words and another on arts. The former, titled (for political reasons) “Chaco, Mesa Verde and the Confrontation with Time,” was organized by Patricia Limerick and me. It brought together essayists, historians, poets, and journalists. The session was great fun, but no product has appeared. A parallel event, tentatively titled “Seeing Chaco,” would display and discuss fine art (photography, easel art, computer graphics, sculpture). I planned it as an adjunct activity for the capstone conference, but I ran out of time and energy. “Seeing Chaco” never happened, but it should.

Public representation of the Chaco Project was an important goal of the program from its very inception. Indeed, Powers and his NPS colleagues envisioned a single book that would simultaneously appeal to professional and public audiences. I disagreed, and in the end we

produced this book, which (I hope) will have a large professional readership and perhaps appeal to Chaco fans of every stripe. But this is not a coffee table book. My attempts to entice several notable science writers to attend all the conferences came to naught (our schedule was unrealistic for high-caliber writers). We were extremely fortunate in having three parallel, collaborative projects that will provide excellent print products for larger audiences: books by David Noble, Kendrick Frazier, and Brian Fagan. Noble (1984), serendipitously, was considering a revision of his highly successful *New Light on Chaco Canyon*, a well illustrated, well edited collection of chapters by various Chaco scholars. Noble's interest coincided exactly with our capstone conference, from which he recruited many authors for his revision. Under Noble's excellent editorial guidance, these authors summarized their areas of interest in the Chaco Synthesis. (This was doubly happy in that Noble's publisher is the School of American Research, a party to the very beginnings of the Chaco Project and publisher of the present volume.) The resulting volume, *In Search of Chaco* (Noble 2004), is a superb blend of up-to-date archaeology and Native American insights. Ken Frazier (2005) was preparing a third edition of his excellent *People of Chaco* and included a new chapter on the Chaco Synthesis Project (Frazier 2005). At our invitation and with full support of our project, Brian Fagan has written an excellent book titled *Chaco Canyon: Archaeologists Explore the Lives of an Ancient Society* (2005).

Early in the project, Kim Malville (University of Colorado) and Dan Yankofsky began a web page, a "Chaco Virtual Conference." The aim was to engage broader archaeological and nonarchaeological audiences in the synthesis via the web; in the end, that did not happen to the extent we had hoped. Malville's web page remains a useful compendium of preconference and conference data. Another web resource resulted from the Chaco World conference, a web-accessible database of Great Houses (see Kantner and Kintigh, chapter 5 of this volume). Also, serendipitously, Steve Plog (University of Virginia) launched a Chaco Digital Archive project just as the synthesis was winding down. Although the synthesis is not directly involved, we anticipate transfer of our records to Plog's digital archive.

Lynne Sebastian organized the capstone conference. Like the sessions leading up to it, the capstone conference was intended to be

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small (fewer than a dozen participants), but, like those earlier sessions, it grew like Topsy. To keep any of the meetings as small as I had wanted was simply impossible. When the capstone finally convened in October 2002, there were at least forty people in the room, not including a large video team capturing it all on tape. With an audience so large, there was, inevitably, as much presentation as conversation. Sebastian managed it very well, however, and they accomplished much good work (as demonstrated by her chapter 12 in this volume). Understandably, as newly elected president of the Society of American Archaeology, Sebastian demurred from editing the present volume. At the capstone, I was charged to undertake that task.

When I approached the School of American Research about publishing this book, the idea arose of a smaller post-capstone conference at the school. The principals from the first capstone were understandably dubious—what *more* could we say about Chaco? With only one exception, they did agree to reconvene at the school and continue discussions curtailed or constrained by time and tide at the capstone. The School of American Research session—small, relaxed, conversational—was a delightful and extremely worthwhile coda to the long Chaco Synthesis.

The Chaco Synthesis was great fun and (I think) fruitful in its many activities and products. It cost a bit of money. The NPS supported the synthesis generously, to a total of about \$216,000. That figure represents less than 4 percent of the six-million-dollar Chaco Project budget for fieldwork, analysis, and curation. If adjusted for inflation, that fraction would be much lower (dollars in 2000 were worth less than half their 1980 value). We more than doubled the NPS funding through contributions in cash and kind from the institutions that hosted sessions and from University of Colorado grants. Our total expenditures for the synthesis, NPS and contributed, probably represent about 3 percent, or less, of the total funds expended for the Chaco Project, adjusted for inflation.

The Chaco Synthesis's scholarly archaeological conferences were traditional in format and conduct. A new generation would do it differently, perhaps with greater use of the web. I believe that each conference worked very well in its own way; the reader must judge for himself. The papers representing the working conferences (chapters 2–6) and

Lynne Sebastian's "synthesis of the synthesis" (chapter 12) constitute the core of this volume. I solicited additional chapters on contexts of ancient Chaco (chapters 8–10) and the Chaco Project itself (chapter 11).

WHERE ARE THE INDIANS?

None of the authors are Native American. Why not?

The Chaco Project began in the late 1960s. Archaeologists and Indians stood in a very different relationship then than they do today. Many Native Americans worked for the Chaco Project as laborers. Many were valued colleagues, and more than a few became good friends. But no Native Americans were involved in the development and direction of Chaco Project research. This is not a condemnation of the Chaco Project. Few, if any, archaeological programs incorporated Native Americans in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Today, that has changed, and archaeology is better for it.

To redress the past in the present was agonizingly difficult, and, in the end, impossible. Many Native Americans were involved in the synthesis, but I had hoped to have a Native American writer attend all the conferences and "report out" in a chapter or a separate book. That did not happen. I also planned to have a working conference of Native American tribal representatives, scholars, writers, and artists that would address two questions: what do you want the public to know about Chaco? and why? ("Nothing" and "None of your business" would have been acceptable answers, but I had higher hopes.) That did not happen either.

Native American involvement, or underinvolvement, was the single biggest flaw in the project, and the reason was this: a very difficult NAGPRA dispute over Chaco broke out right at the start of the synthesis project. This is not the place to recount specifics; in brief, Hopis and other Pueblos objected to NPS's inclusion of the Navajo Nation in NAGPRA agreements. (My impression is that all concerned are doing the right thing, but the "right thing" is seen differently by the various groups and agencies.)

Because of the significant NPS funds and full NPS backing for the synthesis, our actions were (justifiably) seen as indicative, but not official. If I included Navajos, the Pueblos were alarmed at an evident expert opinion. If I excluded Navajos, the Navajos were understandably disturbed.

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I proposed several individual writers for participation; all were Pueblo. The NPS was wary. I approached several excellent Native American historians from tribes not Southwestern. They were wary. I went several times before Chaco's large Native American Advisory Board, begging guidance. The board was wary. I spoke to individual tribes. The tribes were wary. No solution appeared that would not entangle the NAGPRA situation. After two years, I gave up trying.

In the end, the NAGPRA situation (unresolved even as I write) made it impossible to organize "official" Native American sessions or products. To nearly every conference, we invited Native Americans as individuals (botanists, poets, historians), not as tribal representatives. These people would have been invited in any event because their knowledge and intelligence would have added immeasurably to our work. All of us, though, would have welcomed more formal collaboration with the tribes, Pueblo and Navajo.

Finally, a solution materialized. In a happy coincidence (over three years of opportunistic planning, there were several happy coincidences!), Chaco National Park had collaborated with Gary Warriner of Camera One to create a new eponymous video about the canyon, *Chaco* (Warriner 2000). Production preceded the NAGPRA situation, and Warriner proceeded with a freedom we did not have. The voices on the video are almost entirely Native American. (Archaeology is conspicuous by its absence.) Members of Chaco's Native American Advisory Board appear, and appear very well indeed. *Chaco* is a superb presentation of Indian perspectives on the canyon. Perhaps this is the product my thwarted Native American conference would have produced. I like to think so. The video nearly fills the hole so evident in the synthesis project but was not affiliated in any way with our work. David Noble's (2004) *In Search of Chaco* includes excellent essays by Pueblo and Navajo writers, in addition to chapters by many Chaco Synthesis participants. Again, a happy coincidence.

WHERE IS LEKSON?

A question far less important than participation of Native Americans, I admit, but still of some interest to your author. My role in the Chaco Synthesis was to raise and spend money, organize the organizers, and (for the architecture conference) step in when a proposed

organizer became unavailable. I considered running the capstone conference (a carrot at the end of my personal stick), but I came to my senses and convinced a very busy Lynne Sebastian to do it (and she did a far better job than ever I would). I organized the post-capstone session at the School of American Research because I did not dare ask any of the principals to do that. I had solemnly promised that Sebastian's capstone was our last and final act. Also, I wrote two-thirds of "Architecture" (chapter 3) and a quarter of "Notes from the South" (chapter 9) in this book—the latter, again, after a planned contributor withdrew.¹

Otherwise, I avoided (as far as possible) planning or staging individual meetings and conferences. Given my strong opinions about Chaco, I felt honor-bound not to load decks, rig juries, pull wires, and self-fulfill prophecies. While I helped to shape form, I tried not to meddle with content.

Consequently, I disagree with many statements, conclusions, and interpretations in the excellent chapters that follow (while I very much respect the authors of those opinions). Here is my chance, at last. The sessions are done, the chapters are finished, and what I say cannot bias the outcome. I conclude this introduction with a few calm, dispassionate observations on a Chacoan matter that seems, to me, important.

Matters

What is important is this: Chaco had rulers, leaders, centralized hierarchical decision makers. Why flog that dead horse? Complexity is so seventies. Professors today were bored with complexity before their current students were even born. I drag this shibboleth out from under the carpet where it was swept, because it is important. Explaining why will take some exposition.

Recall Gregory Johnson's (1989) famous pronouncement that "Chaco data can support a basically egalitarian interpretation." I have always wondered what data Johnson was shown, but no matter; his was certainly not the last authoritative deflation of Chacoan hierarchy. Essays reaching similarly nonhierarchical conclusions include those by respected arbiters such as Norman Yoffee (2001; Yoffee, Fish, and Milner 1999; to be fair, Yoffee sees hierarchal structure at Chaco, but not the political hierarchy here termed "complexity") and Collin Renfrew (2001). Warren DeBoer (2001:24), a trenchant and insightful

critic, mocked Southwestern pretensions: “Are Southwestern archaeologists still recovering from Johnson’s devastating critique, trying to reinvent their own brand of home-grown complexity? Why does a regional archaeology wish to find complexity? Is complexity a positively valued polarity? Does it get grants?”

In the face of such formidable opposition, it would seem prudent now for pro-complexity Southwesternists to strike their tents. But I argue, below, that Southwestern complexity is not an empty exercise, a professional brass ring. Claims for complexity at Chaco have consequences for modern political philosophy and, in a small but real way, for the history of the twentieth century—gone these five years, but not forgotten.

Complexity has become unfashionable, out of step with our times. It definitely does not get grants. Many (most?) contemporary Southwesternists are not in sympathy with political hierarchy at Chaco (for example, Mills 2002; Saitta 1997; and Wills 2000, among others). Many favor reconstructions of Chaco that are nonhierarchical, decentralized, pleasantly un-complex. In an important volume on “alternative leadership strategies in the prehispanic Southwest” (Mills 2000), the lead essay is a new reading of Chaco by Chaco Project alumnus Chip Wills. He concludes that, while Chaco “involved leaders,” its glory days were shaped and driven by “communitas or anti-structure” (Wills 2000:41, 43).

Is it that Great Houses happened, happily, communally? Have we come full circle, back to Edgar Hewett’s “ants heaping up great mounds far in excess of actual needs”? No. Wills and other recent authors allow leaders to direct the formic heaping. Chaco was too big to just happen. It is the nature of leadership that is at issue: something political, permanent, and hierarchical or something ritual and ceremonial, spiritual, situational, and evanescent?

Ritual interests are, in part, homegrown (witness the 1980s discovery of a plethora of Southwestern cults) and, in part, an import from European and particularly British archaeologies that, in their Berg and Routledge manifestations, eschew hierarchy in favor of ceremony (witness the rise of Southwestern alternative leadership strategies in the 1990s). The appeal of ritual also owes something, un- or under-recognized, to the relentless, seemingly unstoppable teleology from the archaeological past toward the Pueblo present. To simplify (enor-

mously), Pueblos in the present, we think, are ritual and not political; therefore, the past—and Chaco—should also be ritual and not political.

If modern Pueblos favor ritual and ceremony over political power, that is really interesting. How did that come about, historically? I think that Chaco played a role—a key role—but it was not a step or stage along a gradual road to an egalitarian Pueblo ethos. Pueblos did not *develop from* Chaco; rather, they represent a *reaction against* Chaco. To compress Pueblo accounts, Chaco was a wonderful, awful place where “people got power over people” (according to Paul Pino, in Sofaer 1999). What happened at Chaco was not right for Pueblo people (today), and Chaco is remembered that way (today). The remarkable shifts in Pueblo architecture, settlement, iconography, and society around 1300, when sites begin to look like modern pueblos, represent Pueblo peoples’ conscious, deliberate reaction to and rejection of Chaco, distancing themselves from that bad experience. Pueblos developed new ways and means to avoid anything like Chaco, ever again. These social and philosophical “leveling mechanisms” are remarkable, almost unique, in the anthropology of agricultural societies.

To paraphrase, with apologies, what I have learned from Pueblo people, Chaco was wrong. Modern Pueblos do not do it that way. Yet, many archaeologists look to modern Pueblos and historic accounts of Pueblos for insights, transportable models of how Chaco worked (for example, Stuart 2000; Vivian 1990; Ware 2001; and various chapters in this volume). My question, which comes from my first days of thinking about Chaco, is this: whatever archaeological inspiration may be found in modern Pueblos, east or west, *why did they never build anything like Chaco?* I think that they did not want to; they had been there and done that.

After 1300, Pueblos turned their energies to other matters and never again raised up a city. Later villages were larger than individual Great Houses—a point I made (graphically, two decades ago) by fitting Pueblo Bonito into Taos’s plaza with room to spare—but the peoples of Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and the Rio Grande chose not to build another Chaco. Chaco may have continued in city-size Aztec Ruins and Paquimé—a long story I will not retell here (Lekson 1999)—but that history is tangent or parallel to the path Pueblo peoples chose. Why seek models for Chaco among modern Pueblos? Histories, memories,

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lessons—yes, to be sure, all of those and more. But Pueblo people rejected the incorrect actions and institutions of their errant ancestors at Chaco Canyon and created new, deliberately different societies. Pueblos do not have political leaders (at least, as we recognize political leaders), *but Chaco did*. I now look at three lines of evidence that support this assertion: high-status burials, elite residences, and regional primacy.

We have seen Chaco's rulers, archaeologically, in the high-status burials from Pueblo Bonito and, particularly, the very rich crypt burials of two middle-aged men (Akins 2001, 2003; Akins and Schelberg 1984). I interpret scores of additional bodies piled above these burials as "retainers." These two men were buried in the mid-eleventh century (in my opinion), deep in the much earlier rooms of the original, early tenth-century Old Bonito. Watch them closely; these burials tend to vanish in Chacoan debates. Barbara Mill's excellent summary of "Recent Research on Chaco" dismisses them as "a few unusual burials" (Mills 2002:66). Were there only two such rulers? Perhaps, over a century's span (Chaco's glory days, from 1020 to 1125) two "kings" might be all that were required. More high-status burials might exist in other, partially excavated Great Houses.

These two men may well have been the rulers remembered as "our kings"—a term used by a traditional Native American man from the Chaco area. They may have been principals among those "people at Chaco who gained power over people"—improperly, disastrously, in present Pueblo worldview—alluded to by Paul Pino from the Pueblo of Laguna. Pino said, "In our history we talk of things that occurred a long time ago [at Chaco], of people who had enormous amounts of power: spiritual power and power over people.... These people were causing changes that were never meant to occur" (in Sofaer 1999). Other Pueblo accounts similarly describe stern political leaders and their city, which rose and fell in ancient times (summarized in Lekson 1999:143–150).

Pueblo people tell us that Chaco had political rulers, and Navajos concur. Archaeologists, however, demur. Found anywhere else in the world, the high-status burials of Pueblo Bonito would strongly suggest political power. High-status burials are ripe evidence of elites and leaders. At the capstone conference, I referred to these men as kings

because a Native American colleague (at the Architecture working meeting) told me to call them kings. His point? Europeans have kings, but Indians are allowed only chiefs. I thought about medieval Irish kings and Mississippian chiefs and agreed; *chief* is iniquitous (and, in any event, anthropologically dubious). Let us call them kings and see where that leads. To riot. My use of *king* deeply annoyed my capstone colleagues. Why? We have to call these men something. *Chief* is not a Native American word, nor is *ruler*, *leader*, or *centralized, hierarchical decision maker*, or *shaman* or *priest*, for that matter. If we are to use European terms, why not *king*? If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck...

They had rulers. Not only have we exhumed their bodies, but also we have turned their stately homes into a national park. My second set of evidence consists of Great Houses. The single, central fact of Chaco is Great *Houses*, not Great Temples. (Recall that the Great Kivas are not specific to Chaco; Lekson, Windes, and McKenna, chapter 3 of this volume.) Great Houses are among the most remarkable, unambiguous examples of pre-state stratified housing that I have found in the literatures of anthropology, geography, and architecture. Great Houses were first (tenth century) and foremost (through the eleventh century) elite residences (see also Neitzel 2003). That much of the Chacoan building was ritual and ceremonial I do not doubt (roads, platform mounds, Great Kivas, perhaps waterworks), but monumental elite residences dominated the landscape then (and do now). The same review that dismissed the kingly burials as “unusual” also disposed of Great Houses: “The construction of Great Houses was not accompanied by obvious signs of status and hierarchy, such as social ranking [or] palaces” (Mills 2002:66). Umm, excuse me, Great Houses *are* palaces. Great Houses—elite residences—are monumentally obvious signs of hierarchy, hidden in plain sight. As long as we are getting into trouble with *kings*, let us see what happens when we call them palaces (Lekson, McKenna, and Windes, chapter 3 of this volume). Outrage! *Palaces* imply states, and Native states are not allowed north of Mexico.

I will not fight that fight here. Fine (for now), no states north of Mexico. Perhaps palaces can exist without the state (cities can exist without the state; McIntosh and McIntosh 2003!) The 1980s and 1990s have seen the rejection of conventional, lock-step political taxonomies.

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The old order of band, tribe, chiefdom, and state is confounded, deconstructed. Perhaps the various elements we have used in defining political stages can have lives and histories of their own. Perhaps palaces have a trajectory disentangled from surpluses or armies or writing. That happened, it seems, at Chaco: monumental elite residences, palaces without the state.

The third and final category of data that seems, to me, strong evidence for hierarchy is the regional system—Chaco's place in a region of Great Houses. (Please note that my views contrast in many regards with those of Kantner and Kintigh, chapter 5, and other chapters in this volume.) Chaco sits at the center of a region of remarkable clarity. I use *clarity* in two senses: archaeological observation and prehistoric vision. The Chacoan region is as clear an archaeological signature as we may hope to find in pre-state societies. Chacoan Great Houses are recognizable from Cedar Mesa in Utah to Quemado in New Mexico, from Hopi in Arizona to Guadalupe in New Mexico. It took a decade of hard argument to convince stubbornly local archaeologists that their “unusually large site” was, in fact, one of 150 Great Houses. Most archaeologists agreed, if grudgingly, that there was a pattern in the Pueblo region during the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Great House, mounds, roads, and associated communities of unit pueblos and Great Kivas. I called this pattern Chacoan (Lekson 1991), but it could be called anything if Chacoan offends (should we say ducky? or, more formally, anatidoid?). More important than the name is the reality, the empirical pattern of hundreds of small Great Houses, with Chaco at the center.

Roads are a famous part of the Chacoan regional pattern. Initially, we thought that roads formed a network, an infrastructure for the Chaco region; that does not seem to be the case. Much about the roads remains uncertain; their physical continuity and their functions have come into question (for example, Roney 1992). Some roads apparently are discontinuous; others run visibly for miles. As noted above, most roads were monuments, not solely (or even principally) transportation corridors. The Great North Road is trotted out (and trotted on) as an example of a ritual, nonfunctional road. It reputedly goes nowhere (at least in this world); it is said to end with a stairway into a deep canyon that represents a *shipap* or place of emergence (Marshall 1997). Chaco ritualists repeat this intriguingly symbolic interpretation as gospel. But

it is a canard (speaking, as we were, of ducks). It is simply not true. The Great North Road continues beyond its legendary termination at the lip of Kutz Canyon. Twin Angels Pueblo is obviously a road-related Great House, on the alignment of the Great North Road as it doglegs down Kutz Canyon, more than a mile beyond its descent into the putative symbolic shipap.

Real, tangible evidence in the form of a Great House (with road features galore) demonstrates (as well as any evidence used to substantiate roads) that the North Road continues down Kutz Canyon beyond its famous but false termination at a purely symbolic shipap. Because Salmon Ruins sits a few miles farther down Kutz Canyon, it seems reasonable to project the road beyond Twin Angels to Salmon. For now, the important point is that the North Road does not end at “nowhere.” Ritualists may prefer a road to nowhere, but the North Road’s continuance down through Kutz Canyon is as much an archaeological fact as the North Road itself. I do not doubt that the North Road and all roads were heavily, even primarily symbolic, but the North Road, at least, went somewhere. Maybe other roads did too.

Now I will briefly revisit the history of road research (see Vivian 1997a and 1997b for details). Navajos reported roads to early archaeologists, who scoffed. Roads were then ignored for several decades. In the 1960s, a few intracanyon roads were mistakenly interpreted as canals and subsequently recognized as roads, sparking renewed interest in intracanyon roads. In the 1970s, work by the San Juan Valley Archaeological Project on the North Road, between Salmon and Chaco, drew attention to extracanyon roads. Research by the Remote Sensing Division of the Chaco Project and others put many possible (but unverified) roads on the map. Again, archaeologists scoffed, denouncing roads as pipelines, fence lines, wagon trails, and so on (importantly, some projected roads were later determined to be historic linearities). NPS research at Pueblo Alto confirmed the complex network of intracanyon roads within downtown Chaco and restored confidence in roads. In the 1980s, research by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Solstice Project confirmed the reality of the north and southwest regional roads. Notably, careful study by the BLM also failed to confirm several other projected roads (Nials, Stein, and Roney 1987); that is, the results were negative for several proposed roads.

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The BLM's field research showed that, when the BLM used a variety of techniques (save excavation), some projected roads were not visible on the ground, so those projected roads were judged to be false. Of course, that same research showed that some roads were both visible and real (Nials, Stein, and Roney 1987). In an important paper, Roney (1992:130) concluded that not all projected roads were real and that many "real" roads were discontinuous and therefore not transportation corridors: "Some of the roads, such as the North Road and the South[west] Road, are regional in scale and are clearly associated with the regional center at Chaco Canyon. However, I believe that it is entirely possible that many other Chacoan roads are purely local phenomena. The 'roads,' if that is what we choose to call them, may be seen as but one more embellishment of the local integrative structures, complementing earthworks, Great Kivas, and the other trappings of these buildings [Great Houses].... They might have formalized preexisting routes of transportation and communication, but it is equally possible that they were raceways, avenues for ceremonial processions, or even cosmological expressions." Roney perceptively suggested major symbolic roles for road monuments, and his ideas fell on good ground. The 1990s were a happy time for symbolism.

I honor Roney's insights, but I worry that his conclusions, as interpreted by others, are used to deny the road network through *falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus* logic. Roney's careful observation that some projected roads are probably false has been elevated to a general assertion, negative to regional networks. We could not confirm a few regional roads; therefore, we regard all major regional roads as false—with the constant exception of the North and Southwest roads (the only regional roads intensively studied through their entire lengths). The orthodoxy today runs something like this: a regional road network does not exist, roads are almost purely symbolic, all roads (save two!) are fragmentary and local, and even the two "real" regional roads go to landscape features, not to settlements (for example, Kantner and Kintigh, chapter 5 in this volume). That seems a heavy penalty for two unconfirmed, projected roads, when, in fact, two other projected roads *were* confirmed (North and South) and several other extracanyon roads are widely accepted (for example, the Coyote Canyon or Southwest Road, and the Mud Springs or West Road.)²

It is critical to note that, since the BLM studies, no one has really looked at other regional roads. Full-scale research on regional roads is labor intensive and very costly; no one has mounted research necessary to evaluate major extracanyon roads comparable to earlier efforts on the North and Southwest roads. We have found and confirmed many new roads undreamt of in initial road research of the 1970s and early 1980s, but recent research on roads has been almost exclusively local in scale. Small scales inexorably lead to local interpretations. Therefore, I think it is safe to say of projected regional roads that (1) we know that some are real, (2) we think that at least a few are false, and (3) we need to research the rest. For most major roads, there is evidence, usually indirect, that they exist, and no solid knowledge that they do not. That is, we do not actually know that they are false. Given that at least two regional roads are almost universally accepted as true, it seems prudent to assume that at least some of the other regional roads are or may be real.

Outlying Great Houses themselves also have received welcome critical reevaluation. One result of recent research is that they do not all look alike. I applaud recent research, but, at the risk of curmudgeon-dom (a fair charge, to be sure), I note that from the earliest days of “outlier hunts” we recognized variability within those sites (for example, Lekson 1991:figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, showing highly variable site plans compiled by many archaeologists). We could read maps and recognize that not all Great Houses looked exactly alike. We were impressed, however, that a strong pattern encompassed that significant variability, as any preindustrial archaeological pattern surely must. Today, the simple fact of variability is used to argue that the pattern is weak, the system insubstantial (Mills 2002:82–83; Kantner 1996, 2003a; papers in Kantner and Mahoney 2000; Neitzel 1989, 2000; Vivian 1996; Kantner and Kintigh, chapter 5 of this volume). Recognition of Great Houses is relative and relational, even within Chaco Canyon (Lekson, Windes, and McKenna, chapter 3 of this volume). Few archaeologists, however, who visit Great Houses in various quarters of the Chaco region doubt the reality of the pattern. Why hold Great Houses to an undefined but apparently quite high standard of standardization? After decades spent beating down barriers of antiquated “culture” areas, state lines, and personal research domains, I fear a return of

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provincialism to Chacoan studies, fracturing the region into small units, study areas perceived (as they must be) as wholly or largely independent.

In archaeology, there are (at least) seven sins.³ In the role of angry elder, I preach now against two in particular: *Mono-Arborolatry*, worshiping one particular tree above the forest, and *The Sin of Ockham*, misapplication of the Razor to the question of interest, rather than the logic of its answer. I adjure readers and researchers to see the forest, not the trees (and especially not their particular tree), and to cleave to the fundamental truth that human behaviors were always necessarily more complicated than the simplest account we can write from fragmentary archaeological remains. Trust, like your hope of heaven, that the past was (almost) always bigger than we think and more complicated than we will ever know.

Trust, but verify. One question often (and rightly) asked of the Chacoan regional system is, how could it possibly work? How could Chaco possibly affect, much less control, a Great House 240 km (eight days' walk) distant? This brings us to the second issue of regional clarity: the remarkable clearness of Southwestern skies, its open landscape and broad vistas, and a large, complex line-of-sight communications system postulated throughout the Chacoan region. Since the 1970s we have known about the existence of an elaborate line-of-sight system spanning large portions of the Chaco region (Hayes and Windes 1975); subsequent work has expanded our knowledge of this system to encompass most of the northern San Juan Basin and beyond (Thomas Windes, personal communication 2002). For example, Farview House, a Great House on Mesa Verde, is aptly named; from Far View, they could see Chaco, and Chaco could see them. Chimney Rock, at Pagosa Springs, is another excellent example. We know that the line-of-sight system extends over much of the northern San Juan Basin; I firmly believe that similar linkages existed between Chaco and the most distant outlier Great Houses in all directions. A thoughtful (and very smart) senior archaeologist, when considering this claim, replied, "This communication system would be easier to believe if it was linked to ritual." Why? Why this insistence on ritual over practical?

Many things moved into Chaco; communications moved out, and maybe that is how the regional system worked. I do not specify here *what* the regional system did, or *why*; those are research issues for the

next several generations of archaeologists. We can research those issues *if* we can recognize the nature and scale of the questions. Still, some things are clear, at least to me. Chaco was the central place in a large, well-defined region. Moreover, it was a primary center, unmistakably larger, notably more elaborate, and incomparably more monumental than any other place in its territory. Architectural monuments, (probably) roads, and (perhaps) constant contact via a complex communication system integrated the region.

Alternative leadership strategies of every stripe and nuance undoubtedly characterized many Southwestern societies before and certainly after Chaco. In the rush to embrace ritualities and *communitas*, however, we risk losing one of the Pueblo world's few garden-variety chiefdoms or petty kingdoms or *cacicazgos* or whatever we want to call a centralized political hierarchy. And that is a big loss. My argument is not that all the ancient Southwest was politically complex but rather that, at least once (and perhaps several times, Lekson 1999), social formations developed in the Pueblo Southwest that mirrored or translated into Southwestern terms the political hierarchies so pervasive in North America. During Chaco's era, the Mississippi Valley and the Southeast were rife with chiefdoms (for example, Anderson 1999; Pauketat 2004), and Postclassic Mesoamerica was a complex patchwork of petty kingdoms, states, and empires (for example, Smith and Berdan 2003). Metaphorically, states and polities surrounded the Southwest. Is it so unthinkable that, at Chaco, Southwestern people experimented with centralized political hierarchy? The baby we just threw out with the bathwater might be the Lost Dauphin.

Taken together, kingly burials, palatial Great Houses, and a large (if gossamer) region in which Chaco was a city among villages suggest that Chaco was neither a Pueblo (in the "ethnographic parallel" sense) nor an egalitarian commune. Chaco was the center of a complex polity, suffused with ritual and ceremony but fundamentally political and hierarchical: a chiefdom, a petty kingdom, a *cacicazgo*.⁴ Why harp on this? Because it matters. Chaco plays a role, both direct and diffuse, in modern thought and modern times. Eleventh-century Chaco impacts the twenty-first century (and our lives today) through the nineteenth-century works of Lewis Henry Morgan. Morgan anticipated our current dehierarchizing when he leveled New World monuments in his 1881 *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines*. As an anthropologist, Morgan

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corrected what he perceived as errors made by historians who improperly used European terms for Native formations. Their *kingdom* became his *confederacy*, *king* became *sachem*, and *palace* became *communal house*. Newark, Chaco, and Palenque were communal variations on a theme: “A common principle runs through all this architecture, from the Columbia River to the Saint Lawrence, to the Isthmus of Panama, namely, that of adaptation to communism in living” (Morgan [1881]1965:309).

Morgan made the Southwest and, in particular, Chaco Canyon the prime ur-commune, the source of “primitive communism” from whence came all other communes in ancient North America (Morgan [1881]1965). With regard to the monumental buildings of Chaco, Morgan (310) wrote, “It is evident that they were the work of the people, constructed for their own enjoyment and protection. Enforced labor never created them....they were raised by the Indians for their own use, with willing hands, and occupied by them on terms of entire equality. Liberty, equality, and fraternity are emphatically the three great principles of the gens [clans], and this architecture responds to these sentiments.”

Ancient “primitive communism” was important (for a brief review of primitive communism in contemporary archaeology, see McGuire 1992:181–182). Morgan, of course, profoundly influenced Marx and Engels and the theoretical development of Marxism (Bloch 1983; Krader 1972; among others). In Morgan’s ancient America, primitive communism proved that human beings could do great things and build great monuments (Chaco, Newark, Palenque) without kings. Alas, Morgan’s primitive American communes—Aztec, Iroquois, and the rest—have not survived the scrutiny of more careful, later scholarship. Of all Morgan’s primitive communes—from the Columbia, to the Saint Lawrence, to Panama—only the Pueblo Southwest survives. The (archaeologically) past and (ethnographically) present Pueblos remain astonishingly resistant to intimations of political power. Within both anthropology and the larger world of ideas, the pervasive view of Pueblo societies, past and present, is egalitarian, governmentless, and communal.

Chaco and the Pueblos were exceptions that proved the rule. Chaco justified our hopes for communal utopia, despite disasters in

Russia and China. I do not say that Morgan's mistakes (or Chaco) were responsible for Joseph Stalin and Mao Tsetung, but I do say that, when thinking people ponder the rehabilitation and perfectibility of Marxism, one thing that gives them hope is Morgan's Chaco and its extension into the Pueblos. Chacoan communes—liberty, equality, fraternity—are the answer to a Brave New World that unfortunately was not. (Indeed, in Huxley's novel of that name, a barely disguised Zuni was the antidote, albeit savage, to totalitarian modernity.)

These are simple statements about Marxism, as manifold an admixture of complex and conflicting beliefs as the Bible. Marxist scholarship is densely theoretical, profoundly academic, and staggeringly various. Let us hop the briar patch: engaging that vast literature is impossible and unnecessary. Instead of analysis, I offer anecdote. Edmund Wilson was a sympathetic critic of Marxism and a fan of its eponymous founder. In his influential study of revolutionary communism, *To the Finland Station*, Wilson ([1940]2003:298) discusses Engels's reliance on Morgan and other ethnographers and makes the point clearly: "Certainly, there is some plausibility in the assumption that a primitive community of equals is sounder within its limits than modern society—as the Pueblo Indian villages of the American Southwest have survived with their communist economy in the teeth of their more predatory nomad neighbors and of the massacres and bankruptcies of the white man; and that any society of the future which is to be stable must have gravitated to some such equilibrium."

If we are to credit Marxism as a political program, we must believe that human nature will allow communism. The record of modern Marxist states is not good. Primitive communism is the proof, the warrant, that the program is still possible. Coffee shop conversations with colleagues in political science, philosophy, literature, and the fine arts suggest that Pueblo primitive communism (emerging, unbeknownst to them, from Chaco) remains an inspiration. Morgan's communal Chaco—given new life by recent nonhierarchical, "alternative leadership" interpretations—floats as archetype above the hurly-burly of political philosophy. Whatever went wrong in Russia, we still hope for Hopi.

But a commune did not build Chaco; a complex, hierarchical government (however unsteady or short-lived) directed the construction of its monuments. Chaco had rulers—we have seen their burials

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and Great Houses. The Pueblos learned to live without rulers and Great Houses in historical reaction (and only in reaction) to this brilliant but troubled episode of complexity. Pueblo communism (insofar as it exists) springs not from an earlier primitive communism but emerges, instead, from a difficult history of hierarchy. The Pueblos figured out how to live without leaders because they had seen real rulers at Chaco and did not care for the situation. Monumental architecture at Chaco matters because Morgan's mistake continues to affect our intellectual climate and our thinking about right and wrong.

Anti-Matters

What if I am wrong and ritualists are right? (I have been wrong before; I keep a list, which I consult when I am feeling too cheerful.) In the chapters of this book, you will find thoughtful, logical, and convincing arguments in favor of ritual community over political hierarchy at Chaco. *Communitas* over complexity, anti-structure over structure. Still, complexity *matters*, even in the breach. Southwestern complexity is not an antiquated, academic brass ring, uninteresting, undertheorized. If I am wrong, then Morgan is right and there is hope for humankind.

Removing tongue from cheek, Chacoan complexity and rituality matter, or should matter, through works that escape the confines of anthropological archaeology. Glancing admirations of ancient Pueblo society are myriad in social critiques of many disciplines; I decline to cite a sample here. Let Edmund Wilson (above) stand for all. Instead, I focus here on a single remarkable book written by an archaeologist for the thinking public, for voters, for policy makers: *Anasazi America* by David E. Stuart (2000) of the University of New Mexico. *Anasazi America* tells the story of "seventeen centuries on the road from center place" (its subtitle), and Chaco is the climax of the story, the defining episode. Stuart's Chaco is strongly ritual and communal, but he is not starry-eyed about Chaco's potential for the present: "Perfect egalitarianism in the Pueblo fashion is not achievable in a population of 260 million" (Stuart 2000:199). He draws solid conclusions and workable policies from the story of Chaco and Pueblo peoples. His closing chapters mix analyses of tax revenue and GDP with archaeologies of Chacoan society and Pueblo world formation.

Stuart and I part company in his acceptance of Chaco rituality: "Ritual and religion were *the* organizing principles of Chacoan society"

(Stuart 2000:119, original emphasis). It is possible to consider a society with ritual but no political (some models of Chaco approach that pole), but it is harder to conceive (outside science fiction) a society with political but no ritual. Neither Stuart nor I think that ritual and political are mutually exclusive. Chaco was a mix of both, entirely intermixed, but Stuart sees ritual far higher in the mix, subordinating the political, and he sees that as Chaco's strength—and its weakness. Chaco fell, in part, because its elites became greedy (Stuart recognizes Chacoan elites): “On Wall Street, veterans of the business cycle know that ‘bulls get rich, bears get rich, pigs get slaughtered.’ As Chacoans, too, discovered nearly a millennium ago, greed is not a badge of honor. It is the signature of a dying society” (Stuart 2000:201). Perhaps Stuart and I are not so far apart after all. I will not further summarize his excellent book. Buy it and read it. I hope that his book reaches its intended, wider audience, but I recommend it here for archaeologists.

I have heard *Anasazi America* criticized as undertheorized; Stuart does not cite our favorite Frenchman or the sociologist-du-jour. When theory hits the pavement, though, it is hard to argue with the idea of bears, bulls, and pigs. *Anasazi America* demonstrates what appeals to Bourdieu and Giddens and what Hodder and Binford cannot demonstrate: why archaeology should be suffered to live, why we should be allowed to practice on other people's pasts, why archaeology matters. This is how we should write archaeology, how we should use our work—not to replace site reports or articles in scholarly journals but to demonstrate that archaeology matters, beyond the narrow halls of peer review.

At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted Simon Ortiz, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, and Jared Diamond. Chaco Canyon is more than the arcane focus of archaeologists or even the ancestral homeland of Native Americans. Chaco is a profoundly public place, a historical event increasingly known to poets and policy makers, a place of World Heritage. Chaco matters. It matters, of course, to Pueblo people, for it is their past. But Chaco also matters as a national park, a tourist destination, a New Age harmonic convergence, a setting for historical novels, an inspiration for fine art and essay. Chaco matters in the great wide world as a key episode in political history, a place where people achieved monumental things—with, or without, government. What was the nature of the Bonito phase?

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Notes

This was a long, complicated project and the work of many, many people. My thanks to all those named above and in Appendix A! I have not tried to count everyone involved in the Chaco Synthesis, but I always counted on their expertise, energies, and enthusiasm: thanks to you all, indeed! I particularly recognize and thank the following people and organizations: the National Park Service; the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, especially superintendents Butch Wilson and Stephanie Dubois, archaeologist Dabney Ford, and the wonderful people of the Park staff; and the National Park Service, Santa Fe, especially F. Joan Mathien and Robert Powers.

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1. My opinions and notions, as percentages of the total number of words in the text of the book, break down as follows: chapter 1, "Chaco Matters: An Introduction," about 4 percent; chapter 3, "Architecture," about 7 percent; and chapter 9, "Notes from the South," about 2 percent, for a total of about one-seventh of the book. This fraction could be adjusted downward, I suppose, because I use twice as many words to express a simple idea than do my more concise colleagues. Sorry.

2. Another, practical consideration suggests clemency for regional roads,

dismissed because they could not be seen. Archaeological sites are supposed to be difficult to see. That is why we dig. Should we despair if we cannot see projected roads from the surface? Most archaeologists around the world do not have high expectations for surface visibility of any feature. (If we relied on surface observation only, the archaeology of North America would be rather different than we think it to be.) And it is likely, to the point of certainty, that many roads or road segments, like roofs on Pueblo ruins, are gone. By the same logic, we might note how remarkable that almost no Great House was ever finished, because from the surface we can see no evidence of roofs. Originally, missing roads and road segments were relatively insubstantial (earthen, even subtle, but still monumental). The North Road is far from continuous *as it appears archaeologically*. There are big gaps in the North Road as it appears from surface indications, yet we accept its reality. I have stood right in the middle of (many) road alignments, between known segments, and have seen nothing. Others, far better than I at this business, have had identical experiences. After a thousand years of erosion and aggradation, two centuries of livestock's tender mercies and myriad obliterating "formation processes," roads may not be all that easy to see as we waltz across Totah, march through Chinle, and beat our feet on the San Juan Basin mud.

3. The Seven Sins of Archaeology: (1) *Mono-Arborolatry*. Worshiping one particular tree above the forest. (2) *Timidity*. Mistaking professional safety for good practice. (3) *Solemnity*. Confusing dourness with rigor, from which comes mortis. (4) *The Sin of Ockham*. Misapplication of the Razor to the question of interest, rather than the logic of its answer. To err cautiously in archaeology is to err egregiously. (5) *Jargon*. Babel, speaking in tongues, cabalistic verbiage. (6) *Verblessness*. Undue passivity in the predicate. (7) *Bad Graphics*. The *Apocrypha Archaeologica* lists two more: *xeno-idolatry*, praising prophets who speak French, British English, or German over prophets in one's own land, and *humanist error*, the practice of art history without training or initiation into its mysteries. Generally, we consider xeno-idolatry and humanist errors to be merely annoying and not fully or dangerously sinful.

Catechizing on this list, I see that I dare not toss the first stone (or any stones). Mea culpa.

4. In contemporary Southwestern archaeology, *especially at Chaco*, novel political and social formations spring up like weeds, welcomed like flowers *if they are nonhierarchical*. Anti-structure? Embedded communal hierarchies? Ritualities? Surely this garden of sociological delights has room for a few new hierarchies. Great Houses and rich burials suggest that Chaco was, at least in part, a political

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system—perhaps fledgling, perhaps weak, perhaps not very successful, and perhaps even something new under our sun (doubtful), but a centralized, hierarchical decision-making structure all the same. What to call it, kinda-kings? quasi-caciques? distended political pathologies? *aggrandisements*? Something, *someone* ruled Chaco, lived in grand residences, and won friends and influenced people over a vast region.

Excerpt from

The Archaeology of Chaco Canyon: An Eleventh-Century Pueblo Regional Center

Edited by Stephen H. Lekson

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