

**ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY: A HOPI INTERPRETATION
OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD**

by

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Introduction

The skepticism and distrust that has traditionally existed between Native Americans and Archaeologists is in part a result of the development, in the later part of the nineteenth century, of the disciplines of Anthropology and Archaeology within the United States, its reflection of U.S. policies toward the American Indian, and a general trend away from reconstructing cultural histories to addressing broader issues of cultural systems processes and dynamics. This focal shift in archaeology created a situation where archaeologists very rarely consider Native American traditional perspectives and oral histories as a useful data base. Compliance with newly enacted federal legislation and the re-evaluation of existing historic preservation legislation has necessitated that a dialogue between archaeologists and Native Americans be established. One Native American group, the Hopi Tribe, has actively pursued the opportunities presented by these recent federal legislations. Participation in archaeology has taken the

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form of consultation concerning ancestral and sacred sites located within the Hopi aboriginal land base. Moreover, as a result of this active participation, the Hopi Tribe has been able to express concerns and comments on methods and procedures that ensure appropriate treatment and disposition of their ancestral, sacred materials.

Americanization of the Southwest: Archaeology and Native Americans¹

Toward the later half of the nineteenth century deplorable incidents, such as the massacres at Sand Creek and Wounded Knee, ignited eastern public opposition to the then current federal policy of extermination of the American Indians . This public pressure, coupled with the ineffectiveness of the government's policy (Utley,1953), forced the United States Government to revise its strategy from one of extermination to one of assimilation. This resulted in the public perception of the American Indian, their cultures, and the products of their cultures as a vanishing chapter of American history.

Concurrent with this policy shift, territorial expansion by white settlers and the resultant seizing of Tribes' aboriginal land areas was often accompanied by a widespread denial of a connection between living Native Americans and archaeological remains. This repudiation is best exemplified by the "myth of the Moundbuilders",

¹ This following section does not attempt to give an exhaustive presentation of the history of American Archaeology in the Southwest, rather, it is to provide the reader with a general background for the purposes of this paper. For a indepth discussion of this topic, please see McGuire (1991).

which attributed the prehistoric burial mounds and earthworks found in the eastern United States to virtually anyone (lost tribes of Israel, Phoenicians, etc.) except the ancestors of living Native Americans, who were seen as too barbaric to have created such works (Silverberg, 1968).

The perception of the vanishing indigenous American cultures and the desire to substantiate no connection between the living Indian cultures and the prehistoric sites spurred the actions of the scientific community. In 1868, the Surgeon General of the United States directed Army personnel to procure native skulls and other remains for research. Skeletons were consequently taken from burial grounds, battlefields, prisoner of war camps, and hospitals for shipment to the Army Medical Museum in Washington, D.C.

This treatment or policy is not surprising given that during this time decisions by the United States Supreme Court described Native Americans not as people, but as a barbaric race of savages.

These types of rulings and policies advanced and justified the "right" of Euro-Americans to collect relics, destroy sites, and develop the land in the interest of "God, Progress, and/or Manifest Destiny (Fowler, 1986:137). It wasn't until 1879 that a Federal Court ruled that an Indian was a person.

The scientific world of the nineteenth century responded to the perception of the vanishing Native American culture by sending anthropologists and archaeologists to the west to record their lifeways and rituals. Many of the archaeologists of the period were greatly influenced by the emergent scientific study of geology

(e.g., Lyell's Principles of Geology) and Darwinian evolutionism which resulted in a classificatory-descriptive approach to their archaeological research (Willey and Sabloff 1980).

In 1879, John Wesley Powell founded the Bureau of American Ethnology and began anthropological research founded on evolutionary ideas coupled with geologic notions of uniformitarianism. During this time, ethnologists and archaeologists made their study of the American Indian as part of the larger study of natural history. They treated Indians as objects of nature, their remains to be collected the same as fossils, plants and animals (McGuire 1991,p.4).

Toward the end of the 1880s, archaeology shifted from being primarily a affluent white man's hobby to a white man's professional career, and this was accompanied by a shift toward specialized technical training and academic credentials. Archaeologists, at this time, also began to lay professional claim to the control of archaeological sites. These claims were based on a reasoning that only trained archaeologists had the special skills and knowledge required to investigate these sites. Thus, archaeological sites were viewed as "data" and as such could be used by the scientist however they chose; a sort of "Scientific Manifest Destiny!"

In the Southwest, Frank Hamilton Cushing helped pioneer a direct-historical approach to archaeology by combining both ethnography and archaeology in his work. Specifically, Cushing tried to arrive at a functional explanation of prehistoric

artifacts by comparing them with those of their presumed tribal descendants; the Zuni. Cushing also believed that Zuni clan migration histories could be traced and documented through archaeological excavation and analysis (Cushing 1890).

Following a similar methodological approach as Cushing, Jesse Walter Fewkes, after working among the Zunis and Hopis in the late 1880s, turned his attention to prehistoric sites in Arizona and southwestern Colorado. Much of his interpretation concerning archaeological ruins drew heavily on what he had learned of Western Pueblo traditions (Schroeder, 1979). In an article entitled "Tusayan Migration Traditions", Fewkes (1900) published his views on the relationship between Hopi clan oral history and the location of archaeological sites. In this article, Fewkes states:

"There remains much material on the migrations of the Hopi clans yet to be gathered, and the identification by archeologic methods of many sites of ancient habitations is yet to be made. This work, however, can best be done under the guidance of the Indians by an **ethno-archaeologist**, who can bring as a preparation for his work an intimate knowledge of the present life of the Hopi villagers" (ibid,579).

This is the first coinage of the term "ethno-archaeologist"; Fewkes used the term to identify a research approach that applied ethnography of the living descendants of a prehistoric culture as a vehicle for interpreting the archaeological record.

Fewkes, like other early investigators recognized the

existence of regional variations in the prehistoric architectural and material remains of the Southwest, all of which they identified with one culture, Pueblo. The differences noted were attributed to migrations based on oral histories or environmental factors.

Although these early archaeologists in the Southwest paid attention to Hopi and Zuni oral histories, they applied it somewhat naively in their research. As a result, subsequent generations of archaeologists responded by ignoring the relations that exist between the archaeological culture history and Native American oral traditions (Dongoske et.al., 1992).

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1940s, increased numbers of archaeological surveys and excavations, with a emphasis on classification, resulted in refined distinctions of regional variations in material culture and temporal sequencing (Morris 1921, Martin 1929, F.H.H. Roberts 1930). By the middle 1930s, through the works of A.V. Kidder (1924), the Gladwins (1934), Emil Haury (1936), and Martin (1940), distinct, regionally constrained, prehistoric cultural groups were defined [e.g., Basketmaker (later to be called Anasazi), Mogollon (originally designated Caddoan), Hohokam, and Patayan] to replace what formerly had been considered overall regional variations (see Figure 1). These demarcated prehistoric cultural areas continue to be utilized and studied by modern archaeologists. Typically, the designing and development of research questions used to investigate archaeological sites today are predicated on perspectives of prehistoric culture regions that were delineated four to five decades earlier.

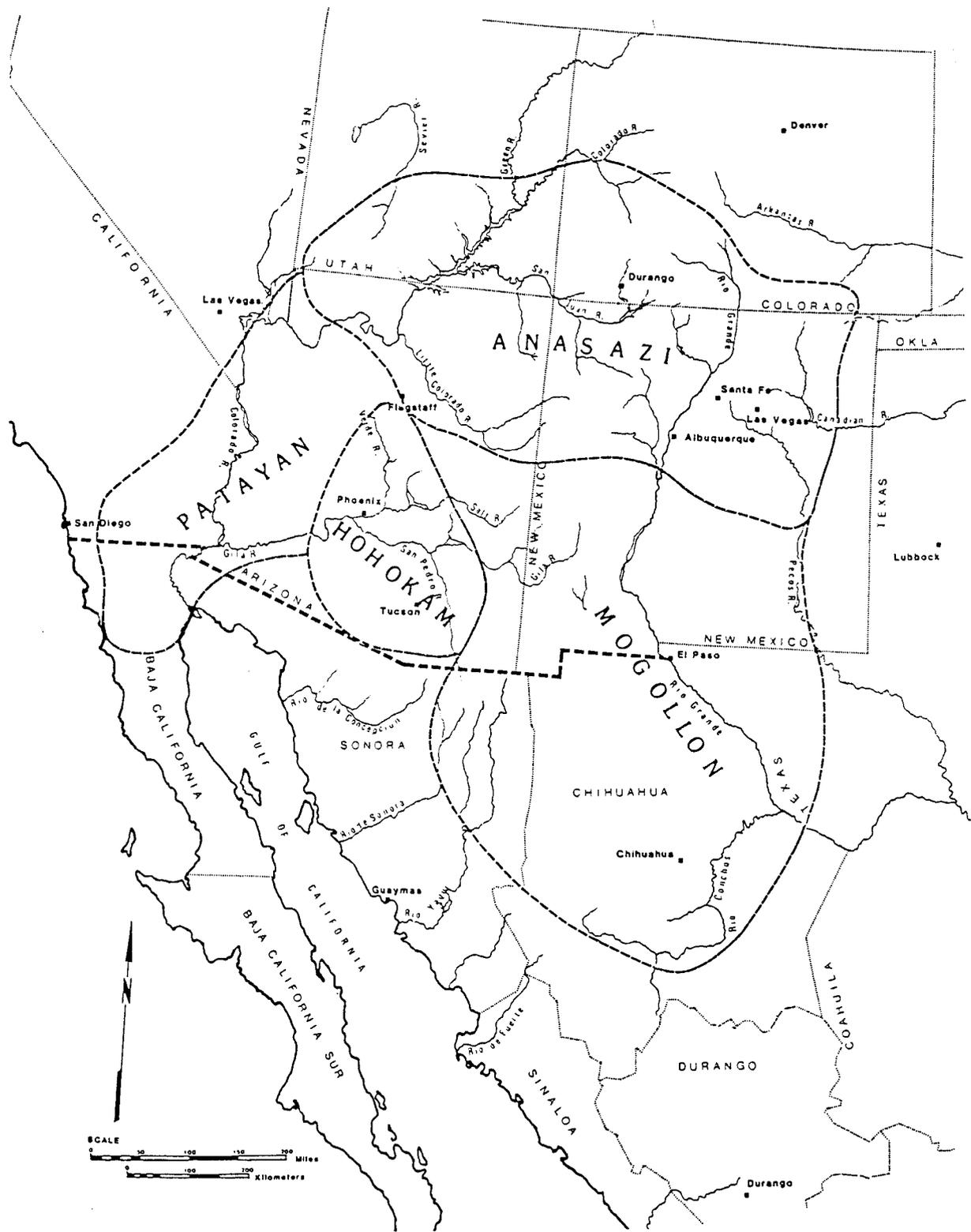


FIGURE 1. Archaeologically defined prehistoric cultural distribution. (From Cordell 1984)

Beginning in the 1940s and continuing into the 1960s is a time period viewed as transitional for the guiding paradigm in American archaeology. Changes occurred that led from an archaeology concerned almost wholly with limited descriptive histories to one involving historical contexts and cultural processes. This had the effect of history being expanded from its minimal archaeological definition of a chronicle of potsherds and artifacts, to a definition embracing contexts of social behavior, cultural institutions, and natural environmental settings. This era also witnessed the rise of the large-scale archaeological syntheses, and was characterized by a trend from what was essentially a descriptive-historical orientation to a historical-developmental orientation (Willey and Sabloff, 1980). This period set the stage for the development of the "New Archaeology" of the 1960s and 1970s.

The "New Archaeology" strove to study the processes by which cultures changed and adapted in order to develop processual explanations; thereby, arriving at "laws of cultural dynamics" (Binford 1968). Moreover, one concern of the "New Archaeology" was on identifying the operant cultural and natural processes involved in the development of the archaeological site.

Throughout the 1960s, efforts by archaeologists such as Deetz (1965) and Longacre (1968) attempted to delineate behavioral processes in the archaeological record through the use of ethnographic and ethnohistorical data. In general these studies reflected the general positive attitude in American archaeology

towards ethnographic analogy.

The use of ethnographic analogy in archaeology has been employed within a specific historical context and recently, is generally used as a broad comparative analogy in the sense that its points of reference are located in observed human behavior. Its interpretations of the past are projected through broadly comparative and essentially universalistic observations and generalizations about human cultural behavior (Willey and Sabloff, 1980).

Today, this type of general comparative analogy is often referred to as Ethnoarchaeology. Ethnoarchaeology, then as it is commonly applied today, is the study and documentation of production, use, and discard of material culture by a **technologically analogous** living culture existing within a similar environmental habitat, in order to explain patterns seen in material culture at archaeological sites and relate these to possible behavioral activities. Underlying this approach is the assumption that technologically similar material culture equates to behaviorally similar responses.

This brief survey of the development of American archaeology is not to criticize the development of the theoretical principles and constructs that have comprised American archaeology, but to document how the role of development of the discipline has effectively excluded the contributions and integration of contemporary Native Americans' traditional knowledge of the past into the discipline of archaeology. Unfortunately, this situation

has regularly created an environment where the conducting of archaeological research has been insensitive (unintentionally or otherwise) to the feelings and beliefs of contemporary Native Americans. This insensitivity to Native American beliefs and failure to perceive as valuable contributions by Native Americans of their own historical knowledge has led to a negative image of the archaeological profession to the Indian community.

Today, Archaeologists and Native Americans are cast into situations where they need to deal and communicate with each other, hopefully in a mode of cooperation, because of two recent events. 1) The passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and the passage of similar state legislations (e.g., Nebraska, New Mexico, and Arizona) protecting Native American graves on state and in some instances private lands and, 2) a National Park Service guidelines publication by King and Parker (n.d.) providing direction for the treatment of Native American Traditional Cultural Properties under current federal legislation of the Section 106 compliance process of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Archaeology and a Hopi Perspective

The Hopi people, for over a century, have been the subject of anthropologists, archaeologists, and other scientists' research, recordings, photographs, proddings, and proddings. None of which, however, dealt with Hopi concerns or interests. Due to mounting concerns among the Hopi people about culture and language loss, regulating and controlling individual, academic, and institutional

research at Hopi, and coupled with the need to inventory and manage historic properties on the reservation, the Hopi tribe established the Cultural Preservation Office.

In addition to on-reservation Cultural Resource Management, the Hopi Tribe through the Cultural Preservation Office has been actively responding to requests for consultation on issues ranging from the treatment of human remains to the identification of traditional cultural properties or sacred areas that may potentially be affected by off reservation federal projects. These consultations have largely been due to the enactment of the above mentioned legislations.

The Hopi Tribe has, to date, responded to requests for consultation that range from far southern Arizona, to central New Mexico, to southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah. Archaeologically, this area is marked by the prehistoric cultures of the Anasazi (*Hisatsinom* in Hopi), Sinagua, Salado, Mogollon, Mimbres Mogollon, Hohokam, and the Archaic. The Hopi Tribe's reasoning for responding to such a vast geographical area, outside of their current reservation, is based on Hopi clan oral migration histories.

Briefly, the clans which comprise the Hopi people emerged into this, the Fourth World, from the Sipapuni, a travertine cone located in the gorge of the Little Colorado River near the Grand Canyon. Upon emerging, they encountered Ma'saw, the guardian of the Fourth World. A spiritual pact was made with Ma'saw wherein the Hopis would act as stewards of the world. As a part of this pact,

the Hopis vowed to place their footprints throughout the lands of the Fourth World as they migrated in a spiritual quest to find their final destiny at the center of the universe. Thus, the Hopi clans began a long and complex set of migrations which led them throughout the Southwest, and for some clans beyond. After many generations, these migrating clans finally arrived and joined together as the Hopi people at their rightful place on the Hopi Mesas (Ferguson and Polingyouma, 1992).

Throughout the course of these clan migrations, as directed by Ma'saw, the Hopi clans established ritual springs, sacred trails, trail markers, shrines, and petroglyphs. As the clans continued to move on to new areas, they left behind ruins, potsherds, and other physical evidence that they had vested the area with their spiritual stewardship and fulfilled their pact with Ma'saw (Ferguson and Polingyouma, 1992). The migrations of the Hopi people throughout the western United States and northern Mexico are thus marked by numerous archaeological sites. From the Hopi perspective, these archaeological sites provide the physical evidence verifying Hopi clan histories and religious beliefs.

This perspective is clearly and succinctly expressed in a 1971 statement from the Hopi religious leaders, as part of a prepared lawsuit which challenged the Black Mesa mining leases.

". . . Sacred Hopi ruins are planted all over the Four Corners area, including Black Mesa. . . . the area we call "Tukunavi" is part of the heart of our Mother Earth. Within this heart, the Hopi has left his seal by

leaving religious items and clan markings and plantings and ancient burial grounds as his land marks and shrines and as his directions to others that the land is his. The ruins are the Hopis' landmark" (Starlie Lomayaktewa et al vs. Rogers Morten and Peabody Coal Company 1971).

Therefore, when the Hopi Tribe responds to requests for consultation regarding the identification of traditional cultural properties or the treatment of ancestral remains it is based on their belief that these archaeological sites were not abandoned by their prehistoric ancestors, as archaeologists routinely advance, but rather are places with which the Hopi people retain a strong emotional, spiritual, and ancestral affiliation. The Hopi people believe that their ancestors who were laid to rest at these archaeological sites were intended to and continue to maintain a spiritual stewardship over that particular archaeological site and the extent of the Hopi land claim. Many of these sites are specifically identified and referenced by the Hopi during the imparting of specific clan history by clan elders within the Kiva.

Due to this strong affiliation to archaeological sites throughout the Southwest, it is the position of the Hopi Tribe that in order to perform a thorough archaeological investigation and subsequent interpretation, it is essential that ethnographic and ethnohistoric research be conducted with the living descendants of the people who created the archaeological sites.

It is because of this position that the Cultural Preservation Office has been actively involved in pursuing the integration of

Hopi oral histories and traditional perspectives within archaeology through the means allowed for in the Section 106 compliance process of the National Historic Preservation Act. This involvement can be illuminated by examining the Hopis' participation in two large projects, both located off the reservation. These two projects are the development of the Glen Canyon Dam Environmental Impact Statement and the Salt River Project's Fence Lake Coal Mine and associated transportation Corridor. Hopi research and input in these two projects is focused on identification and protection of areas of concern to the Hopi people and to ensure that the interests of the Hopi people are addressed.

The Hopi Tribe is associated with the development of an Environmental Impact Statement for the Glen Canyon Dam, which blocks the Colorado River to form Lake Powell, in north-central Arizona. The Environmental Impact Statement is concerned with the effects the normal hydropower generating operations of the Glen Canyon Dam has had on the down-stream natural and cultural resources within the Glen and Grand Canyons and to select an alternative method of operation that will minimize the adverse effects to the downstream ecosystem. Participation by the Hopi Tribe, as a full cooperating agency, is focused on the preservation of the Grand Canyon as a whole, which is a spiritually central place for the Hopi people, as well as preservation of specific sacred places (e.g., shrines and springs) and traditional use areas contained within the canyon. The second project concerns the Hopi Tribe's involvement in Salt River Project's (SRP) proposed Fence

Lake Coal Mine and associated transportation corridor near the Zuni Salt Lake in New Mexico.

Ethnohistoric research is being utilized, in both of these projects, to identify means of minimizing impacts to cultural resources, both archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties. In addition, procedures for the treatment and disposition of human remains recovered as a result of the proposed development are being generated.

The key to the success of both of these projects is the cooperative interaction between the developers (Reclamation and SRP), the Cultural Preservation Office, and the Hopi people. Rather than viewing the Hopi people as a resource to study, the Cultural Preservation Office researchers are acting as the vehicle by which traditional Hopi knowledge, values, and concerns can be expressed. To this end, a Cultural Resources Advisory Task Team, composed of Hopi Elders and Priests representing the 12 Hopi villages, 34 clans, and 14 religious societies, review and comment on all the reports generated. In addition, they also are indispensable in the identification of traditional and sacred properties during field visits to archaeological sites and project areas. Their knowledge as the living descendants of the people (called *Hisatsinom* in Hopi) who once occupied many of the archaeological sites adds a much needed dimension to the traditional archaeological approach. As such, these Hopi Advisors and other traditionally knowledgeable Hopis are viewed as "professionals or technical experts" because they are supplying a category of information that is necessary to

be in compliance with applicable federal law.

Leigh Jenkins, Director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, actively promotes the necessity for the integration and articulation of Native American perceptions of their past and traditional oral histories with the science of archaeology. Jenkins expresses this need in the following:

"In this day and age tribes must be a real partner and participant in the study of the past, because we are not cultures frozen in time, we are living cultures, we represent, in my opinion, a link to the past. Because all of these sites around here can be tied into clan traditions, into ceremonial traditions. We can assist in identifying the evolution of the Southwest as far as studying petroglyphs, interpreting petroglyphs, interpreting what ritual objects may represent, because we still live that out here (ibid, 1992, personal communication)."

This active participation by the Hopi people within the process of historic preservation as resulted in the protection and preservation of Hopi ancestral, sacred, and traditional properties. Moreover, through the use of Hopi clan oral histories and the interpretation of archaeological sites, features, artifacts, and petroglyphs by Hopi elders, a contribution to the scientific knowledge and understanding of the prehistory of the Southwest is achieved. Of equal importance, this participation has generated a respectful and cooperative relationship between federal agencies,

private industry, and the Hopi Tribe. Through the efforts of the Cultural Preservation Office, the Hopi Tribe has established a positive standard that Native Americans can perform professional and scholarly research that not only addresses topics of concern to the Hopi people, about Hopi history, but also contributes to the broader issues that concern Southwestern archaeologists.

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