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HUMAN EFFIGY VESSELS FROM CHACO CULTURE OUTLYING COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

Ceramic human effigies were made by potters in many places and times across the Southwest. Some of the first items, made of fire-hardened clay during the Late Archaic and Basketmaker II periods, were human figures. Some were elaborately decorated with incised designs. They occurred in every major branch of Southwestern culture, as summarized by Hammack (1974) and Ellwood and Parker (1993), but remained a relatively rare pottery form. Most are small female figures; however, during the height of the Chaco Culture period in the Four Corners region, human figures took on more elaborate forms. In contrast to the earlier figurines, the detailed Chacoan effigies include mostly male figures. This paper illustrates the occurrence of such effigies at some of the larger outlying towns of the broader Chacoan sphere. While it would be impossible to inventory all that have been encountered, both at Chaco itself and its far flung satellite colonies, we can at least review some of the better-reported ones.

We start with developments in Chaco Canyon, the place of origin for at least some of these effigies and the probable inspiration for others. Ceramic production during the florescent period of Chaco culture (ca. AD 1000-1150) included an unusually wide variety of vessel forms, some of which evolved from earlier prototypes in the Cibola Whiteware series, and some were apparently new creations during this epoch. Pitchers with globular bases and cylindrical jars were added to the existing inventory of open mouthed bowls, tall necked ollas and canteens with strap handles on the sides. Scoops, ladles, and animal figurines depicting dogs and wild animals such as mountain sheep and bears were produced. Birds, including macaws, were also subjects of artistic modeling and painted decoration. Pipes, cloud blowers, perforated disks and pot rests appeared in the ceramic inventory. Included in this ceramic realism, and the subject of our research, are effigy vessels depicting humans.

By comparison to this creativity in vessel form, there was little innovation in painted decoration. During this time painted decoration was rather structured, including repetitious frets and panels of hachured or opposing solid vs. hachured, design. Historically, classic Chaco Black-on-white motifs were a refinement of the earlier and more generalized and widespread Gallup Black-on-white and Escavada Black-on-white. These formalized and refined hachured panels and flags of classic Chaco Black-on-white may have been produced for a short time, and possibly for limited purposes, with decorations carrying social implications (Washburn 2008).

Some vessel forms seem to have had specialized functions; the use of cylindrical vessels for consumption of cacao and caffeine-based drinks has been demonstrated recently (Crown and Hurst 2009; Crown et al. 2015). These distinctive vessels have been discovered in caches at Pueblo Bonito (Crown and Hurst 2009). Other “exotic” forms such as globular based pitchers and human effigy vessels have been located within certain rooms, particularly at Pueblo Bonito, implying specialized or possibly high status usage (Judd 1954). The non-random distribution of such specialized ceramic vessels and figurines, both between Chaco sites, as well as within their

internal architecture, implies that certain individuals, families, or social groups possessed these items. The fact that most were found within Pueblo Bonito, and only in caches in specific rooms, tends to support this pattern. On the other hand, Pueblo Bonito received the earliest and most intensive attention by archaeologists, perhaps skewing the perception of their actual distribution.

Human Effigies at Chaco Canyon

The occurrence of human effigy vessels within Chaco Canyon sites can now be briefly reviewed.

Chaco Effigy Recognition, George Pepper (1906)

George Pepper (1906) described and speculated about a number of human effigy fragments that had appeared from the Hyde expedition investigations at Pueblo Bonito. At that time, there were seven known, all from Pueblo Bonito except one from Peñasco Blanco. They came from different rooms at Pueblo Bonito; Room 38 had several human effigy vases in a cache, one was from a burial association. There was no special association with other vessel types such as cylindrical jars. Where the sex was shown, there was one female, the rest were male.

Where preservation allowed a determination, they were seated with arms folded; facial features and decoration were clearly evident (e.g. Pepper 1906:325), as seen in Figure 1. No technical analysis was mentioned, but the illustrations show typical late Chaco motifs painted in classic style. Although the unique figures are not assignable to “pottery type,” they display traits typical of Chaco Black-on-white or Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white.



Figure 1. Human effigy “vase” from Pueblo Bonito (Pepper 1906:325).

Pepper speculated about resemblances to Casas Grandes in Chihuahua, but noted differences as well. It was further noted that in this long tradition, human and animal figurines “were in use in Mexico in very early times” (Pepper 1906:333). He also saw possible similarities to certain modern Pueblo Katchinas (Pepper 1906:329).

Pueblo Bonito, George Pepper (1920)

A long detailed description of each of the excavated Pueblo Bonito rooms of the Hyde Expedition was provided by Pepper in 1920. Little summarized data were provided, and few general conclusions were offered. However, the room-by-room listings do mention fragments of human and animal figurines as they emerged during excavations. Excavators encountered parts of animal and human effigies (none whole) almost randomly as they unearthed rooms and kivas. No special association of effigies with particular rooms or room types can be gleaned from the data given in 1920.

Despite the concentration of carefully cached cylindrical jars in Rooms 28 and 39b, these loci were not accompanied by human figurines. Nor did any caches of them appear from any room excavated. Table 2 (Pepper 1920:359) lists counts of pottery items by room (no totals given). Here, separate columns list “vessels”, “animal forms,” and “effigies” (presumably taken to mean human). Review of these data shows a total of 68 human effigy fragments from 23 rooms. All were fragmentary and none were illustrated, although Pepper referred back to his 1906 article on the subject. The general impression is that many small fragments were encountered in many separate types of locations, not correlated with kivas or other room types, or with human burials. Instead, they might appear in many contexts across the site and rarely together.

Pueblo Bonito, Neil Judd (1954)

Judd’s description of the material culture from Pueblo Bonito noted that the prevalence of human effigies at Pueblo Bonito was much greater than at other Southwest ruins. He stated that, “Our collection includes fragments of 41 distinct vessels and half a dozen additional questionable pieces” (Judd 1954:222). Their context comprised “3 from kivas, 8 from 6 separate dwellings, and others in refuse.” All were broken and “casually tossed aside” (Judd 1954:222). It would appear that they sometimes occurred in clusters, but not noticeably cached. Furthermore, they were not necessarily with other vessel forms such as cylindrical jars and some appeared just randomly scattered.

Excellent line drawings in Judd’s volume depict both animal and human effigy vessels, all fragmentary (Judd 1954: 225-227). In appearance, these are very similar to the ones initially described and illustrated by Pepper (1906), complete with detailed visages displaying facial decoration of vertical and horizontal lines, ornamentation, jewelry, and clothing. Again, the seated male figure is prevalent, but some are depicted standing. No two are identical. As with Pepper’s descriptions, there is no technical information about paints, slips, pastes or tempers, but they all appear from the illustrations to be natively “Chaco” in production.

Judd’s interpretations included speculation about the connection between Chacoan human figures and those with northern Mexico, although only a general resemblance was noted. The presence of copper bells and macaws pointed to a trade connection with Mexico, and some architectural features bear a Mexican resemblance. However, Judd did not conclude that the human figures of Pueblo Bonito were directly derived or copied from Mexican prototypes.

In terms of their purpose, Judd observed that their use as utilitarian vessels would be very limited. Although there was no evidence from their contexts that they were “ceremonial,” they might have “served in rituals” (Judd 1954: 227). As a further disclaimer, Judd commented that “nowhere do I find record of an earthen ware figure, male or female, unquestionably associated with Pueblo religion, past or present” (Judd 1954:227).

Other Chaco Canyon Localities

Kin Kletso, the late “McElmo Phase” site near Pueblo Bonito, evidently yielded no human (or animal) effigy pots (Vivian and Mathews 1964). Despite the identification of the ones at the outliers (herein) as being “Cibola Carbon” or “Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white,” ironically none seem to have appeared at the Chaco Canyon type locality for this ceramic type expression.

The National Park Service Chaco Project carried out extensive investigations at a variety of sites in the Canyon during the 1970s and 1980s. However, Toll and McKenna (1997:70) state that “the Chaco Project assemblage contains no recognizable pieces of human effigy vessels.” There were, however, 43 animal effigy forms found at diverse locations. Since there were 12 sites investigated (including Pueblo Alto), comprising different types, this statement holds some relevance. Based on the general lack elsewhere in Chaco Canyon, Toll and McKenna (1997:70) observed that Pueblo Bonito “has a concentration of human effigy forms which are found at few other sites.” Although it is true that Pueblo Bonito has received more and earlier attention by archaeologists, it is beginning to appear that the negative evidence from numerous other investigated sites in the Canyon carries some importance. Coincidentally, the same pattern holds for cylindrical jars. Toll and McKenna (1997:69) state that “200 of 210 known cases come from the core canyon and 192 of those come from Pueblo Bonito.” By extension, it seems logical that any verifiable Chaco-affiliated human effigies found elsewhere might be traceable to the Chaco core communities and to Pueblo Bonito in particular.

Examples from the Northern Outliers

Salmon Ruin Specimen

Salmon Ruin is a large pre-planned classic Chaco outlying community on the San Juan River near Bloomfield, New Mexico. Constructed between AD 1090 and 1118, it was a major outlier of Chaco culture during the peak of Chaco florescence to the south. The occupation of Salmon continued relatively uninterrupted from the Chaco to post-Chaco periods, but with extensive remodeling by later inhabitants. Original excavations and reporting under the direction of Cynthia Irwin-Williams between 1974 and 1980 have been summarized in Irwin-Williams (2006) and by several authors under the editorship of Paul Reed (2008). Chaco and post-Chaco developments in the Middle San Juan area have been summarized by Brown et al. (2013). Ceramics include a wide variety from many regional sources and imported via formalized trading networks. Included in the extensive inventory of the “Primary” (or lowest) occupation are imported Cibola whiteware types of Chaco, Gallup, and Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white, manufactured in and around Chaco Canyon (Franklin 1980, 2006).

The head fragment of an effigy vessel was found at Salmon Ruin, in a Chaco (Primary occupation) level in Room 119W (illustrated in Franklin 1980:561, 563 and reproduced with the help of Paul Reed and the Salmon Ruin Museum). This is a small room just behind one of the main large, front-facing square rooms next to the main plaza. This fragment measures 17 cm maximum width and 4.8 cm in depth. The head shows indications of face paint or tattooing, pierced ears, and hair on the top and sides as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Effigy vessel head from Salmon Ruin (courtesy of Paul Reed and Salmon Ruin Museum).

Eyes and mouth are incised into the clay. Slip is a thin washy matte variety typical of late Cibola Whiteware (Windes 1984). Paint is dense and carbon-based. Firing was controlled, and there are no signs of firing errors. Typologically, the specimen is classified as Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white, dating to about AD 1100-1150. Based on the slip and paint characteristics, it is Cibola Whiteware, and was made in or near Chaco Canyon itself. As such, it is interpreted as intrusive at Salmon Ruin.

Bis sa'ani Ruin Effigy

Bis sa'ani (Navajo for "clay in place") is a late Chaco community about 10 miles (ca. 16 km) from Pueblo Bonito on a tributary of Escavada Wash. Archaeological investigations were carried out in the early 1980s, including limited excavation and stabilization (Breternitz et al. 1982). It is not a distant "outlier," however it is removed from the major centers of the central Chaco Canyon. There are three room blocks containing 35 rooms and a detached kiva but no great kiva. The Bis sa'ani complex dates between approximately AD 1100 and 1150, placing it in the very latest phase of classic Chacoan occupation. The ceramic assemblage is dominated (ca. 80% of decorated) by Cibola Whiteware typical of Chaco Canyon at this time, predominantly Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white, Gallup Black-on-white and Chaco Black-on-white in descending frequency (Franklin 1982:894).

During archaeological investigations in the early 1980s, a human effigy head was discovered at Bis sa'ani. It was found in an arroyo between two of the site clusters, and had probably eroded away from one of the nearby room blocks. The effigy represents only the head

portion of a vessel, the remainder of which was not found as shown in Figure 3. The orifice is at the top of the head, and the hollow neck formed the connection to the rest of the body. The figure is shaped in full round, with clearly modeled facial features. Eyes, ears and nose are made from fillets of clay and incised. Facial decoration is shown by horizontal and vertical lines at the level of the eyes and the mouth, similar to the Salmon Ruin specimen. Ear lobes are perforated, as indicated by a painted dot on each ear, but no earrings are indicated. The object was illustrated in the site report (Franklin 1982:905); Figure 3 herein is a separate photo by Franklin.

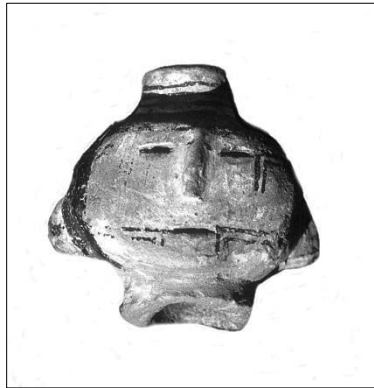


Figure 3. Effigy vessel head from Bis sa 'ani Ruin (photo by H. Franklin).

Based on its materials, it was identified as typical of Cibola-Chaco production. “The whole specimen is covered by a thin, white, eroded slip, and is painted with carbon paint. The paste clay is fine-textured and is tempered with crushed potsherds. Typologically, the piece is classified as Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white, and thus dates between A.D. 1100 and 1150” (Franklin 1982: 906).

Aztec Ruin Effigies

Aztec Ruins is a great house complex in the Animas River Valley situated on the north side of the Animas River. The complex includes three great houses: West Ruin, East Ruin, and North Ruin, along with numerous tri-wall structures, kivas, and small community sites (Paul Reed et al. 2010). West Ruin is by far the best known great house in the complex as a result of Earl Morris’s (1919, 1921, 1924, 1927, 1928) excavations and the National Park Service’s stabilization and showcase of West Ruin for visitation. Through the work of Morris and subsequent park service stabilization, West Ruin is probably the best dated site in the Southwest with more than 1500 tree ring dates showing the sequence of construction and remodeling (Brown et al. 2008:233-234; Stein and McKenna 1988; Wharton et al. 2015). Morris (1928:417-420) theorized that Aztec West was built by Chaco people who, after a short occupation, left the great house standing empty until it was reoccupied by Mesa Verde people from the north. Recent research, however, has demonstrated that Aztec West, Salmon, and other great houses in the Middle San Juan were built by Chacoans but did not experience a complete abandonment as Morris proposed (Franklin 1980, 2006; Brown et al. 2013:438-439; Lori Reed et al. 2015). Rather, local Middle San Juan populations continued to occupy the great houses and community sites into the subsequent McElmo and Mesa Verde phases.

Although Morris published his work at Aztec, he did not complete a comprehensive description of the excavations and, as a result, information regarding the kivas at Aztec West is scant. In his room descriptions, Morris (1924, 1928) identified deposits and associated artifact collections from the Chaco and Mesa Verde periods. Based on Lori Reed's (2007) analysis of ceramics from a sample of Morris's Chacoan contexts, his designations of Chaco versus Mesa Verde deposits are accurate and provide the only temporal context for material recovered from Morris's excavations.

Morris's excavations recovered fragments of at least six separate human effigies from Chaco contexts at Aztec West (Judd 1954:224; Morris 1919:82-83). Most of the effigies are from the east wing of the great house and kivas in the northeast plaza that are part of the earliest Chaco construction sequence for Aztec West. None of the effigies were whole but two were reconstructed with missing portions filled in with plaster to provide a representation of the original form. The first of these was recovered from Chaco phase contexts in Kiva Q and was typed by Lori Reed (Reed et al. 2005) as Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the effigy is a hunchbacked form with designs executed in organic paint. During Reed's (Reed et al. 2005) analysis, she notes several issues with this particular effigy, indicating that the head and body are mismatched and are actually from two different effigies. First, the head has mineral-painted designs, but the body has designs executed in organic paint. Second, there is abrasion on the exterior of the head that is inconsistent with wear expectable on a hunchbacked body shape. It appears that the mineral-painted effigy from which the head originated was laid or reclined on its back so that the back of the head has a visible wear pattern. Dimensions of the mineral-painted head include a maximum orifice diameter of 1.6 cm, a full rim circumference of 360°, and a wall thickness of 3.7 mm at the rim. The organic-painted effigy body measures 15.5 cm in maximum diameter and the height of the reconstructed figure is 15 cm. The figure body is hollow and has three holes in the arms and one leg to facilitate airflow during the firing process. The presence of three air holes suggests that the figure was not meant to be a container for liquids. The head has a molded face with a prominent nose and narrow slits for the eyes and mouth. Both ears are perforated and protrude prominently. The top, back, and sides of the head are painted solid, but the face has single narrow lines extending from the corners of the eyes and mouth to the side of the head. There are sets of three parallel lines extending down the face from the eye and mouth corners, possibly representing face paint or tattooing. The organic-painted body and appendages have designs that may also represent body paint or tattooing. The chest, back, arms, and legs all have painted designs. Of particular note, is the band encircling the left forearm probably representing a bow guard consistent with a male figure. The arm and foot of a second human figure were also found in Kiva Q deposits. Also recovered from Chaco phase deposits of Kiva Q were fragments of animal effigies, including parts of a single deer effigy that Morris reconstructed along with legs and paws of at least two other animals.

The second human effigy that Morris reconstructed is also a Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white figure from Rooms 47 and 54 (Figures 6 and 7). The body fragments of the figure were found in the Chaco deposits of Room 54 and the head was found in similar early deposits of Room 47. These fragments were reconstructed with plaster filler to form the human figure shown in Figures 6 and 7. The surface of the original fragments has a washy slip and organic-painted designs consistent with Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white. Similar to the other effigy from Aztec,

the face has a painted design representing either face paint or tattooing. The ear fragment is perforated and the sides and back of the head were likely painted solid. In contrast to the first effigy described above, it has a straight back with painted designs consisting of checkerboard patterns and a thick solid line extending down the spine. Morris's reconstruction of the figure is about 20 cm in height, but there are too few fragments to obtain an accurate height for the original effigy. Most of the head is a plaster reconstruction and there is no evidence that the original effigy had an orifice.

Fragments of other human figures were recovered by Morris in Chacoan deposits of Rooms 5 and 103 of the south wing of Aztec West, Room 49 of the east wing, Kiva I in the north wing, and Kiva R in the northeast corner of the plaza. Based on Lori Reed's analysis (Reed et al. 2005) of ceramics from Kiva R, the human effigy fragments recovered from the kiva are likely from Chaco period deposits.



Figure 4. Reconstructed human effigy figure AZRU29-3209 V41 C (front) from Aztec Ruin (photo by Lori Reed and courtesy of American Museum of Natural History).



Figure 5. Reconstructed human effigy figure AZRU29-3209 V41 A (back) from Aztec Ruin (photo by Lori Reed and courtesy of American Museum of Natural History).



Figure 6. Reconstructed human effigy figure AZRU29-6991-7321 V32 B (front) from Aztec Ruin. (photo by Lori Reed and courtesy of American Museum of Natural History).



Figure 7. Reconstructed human effigy figure AZRU29-6991-7321 V32 C (side) from Aztec Ruin. (photo by Lori Reed and courtesy of American Museum of Natural History).

Examples from the Four Corners Region

The geographic spread of human effigy vessels extended far to the north of Chaco Canyon. Winston Hurst (personal communication 2015) is currently compiling data on human effigies from southern Utah and Colorado. A brief review of some of these is provided here.

Alkali Ridge

Winston Hurst (1994) described two human effigy vessels from Alkali Ridge, Utah. Affectionately named “Old Character,” and “Little Man,” they were discovered by local residents in disturbed open field contexts. Both were relatively complete and represented females (despite their nicknames). Their seated poses with arms on knees, as well as the facial details of hair and paint, resemble the ones from Chaco Canyon to the south. Both are about 17 cm high. The objects were disassociated from habitation sites and there is little information about their original manufacture or use. Hurst noted the presence of carbon paint and that the finish and paint were consistent with trends during the period of AD 1150-1250 in that district (Hurst 1994:48). Hurst also observed a strong similarity of these to one of the Aztec effigies recovered by Morris regarding naturalism and decorative details (Hurst 1994:51). Hurst (1991) also documented an effigy from San Juan County, Utah, classified as Puerco Black-on-white (a mineral painted type).

Yellow Jacket

One female human effigy was studied by Ellwood and Parker (1993). Together with two Mancos Black-on-white bowls, the object was located in a burial. The realistically shaped seated female lacked facial painting, and the arms were painted not modeled. Technical analyses of paste and temper proved that the materials matched natural resources in the vicinity, and all the vessels were undoubtedly made locally (Ellwood and Parker 1993:84). Mineral paint on all vessels indicated Mancos Black-on-white as the pottery type. The site was tree ring dated to AD 1052 (Ellwood and Parker 1993:81), within the general late-PII range of the examples to the south.

Although technical analyses have not been carried out on these northern specimens (except for the one from Yellow Jacket), it initially seems that there may be a mixture of actual Chaco-made effigies, together with some that may have been made in similar style by northern artists. This may also mean that, in addition to actual trade in Chaco items to the north, local potters as far north as the four corners area were also inspired to replicate human effigy vessels based on prototypes from Chaco centers to the south. Dating contexts appear to be uniformly Late PII or Early PIII (ca. AD 1050-1150).

Interpretation

Construction Materials and Manufacture

The attributes of the examples we have studied indicate that they were manufactured in the Chacoan ceramic tradition, and were produced with the same raw materials employed for other ceramic vessels in the usual Chaco assemblages. Fine white paste, sherd/sand temper, thin white slip and lack of reflective polish are all typical of the effigies, and relate them to general Chaco-Cibola ceramic manufacture. All four of those in this study have carbon paint, although paint composition was not studied in earlier collections from Chaco. Despite their unique painted motifs, their slip, paint and polish suggest contemporaneity with Chaco Black-on-white or more commonly, Chaco-McElmo Black-on-white types that were in production during the period of AD 1100-1150. Therefore, it is probable that all of these were made in and close to Chaco Canyon proper, and the ones located to the north at outliers on the middle San Juan and Animas Rivers were imported from Chaco Canyon.

Context and Function at Chaco Canyon

Despite their obvious concentration at Chaco “greathouses,” most effigies are fragmentary. Their concentration in “downtown Chaco” and Pueblo Bonito in particular appears correlated with their simultaneous appearance at Salmon and Aztec Ruins. Nevertheless at present there is a lack of consistent compatible information from Chaco affiliated sites in the region. At present the sample size of these human effigy vessels, aside from Pueblo Bonito, remains small.

Published data on Pueblo Bonito by Pepper (1920) and Judd (1954) show a general pattern of almost random intra-mural occurrence, contrary to the concentrations of cylindrical jars and pitchers in certain few rooms. Moreover, they are not strongly connected to kivas or burial contexts that might suggest sacred qualities. This lack of patterned associational context is puzzling. Why would such presumably important effigy vessels, requiring substantial workmanship, and presumably having ritual significance, not appear in consistent contexts by room type, or with other “high status” ceramic forms that were clearly protected and stored in designated rooms? Furthermore, although obviously of a fragile nature by definition, essentially all were broken, into several pieces judging by the fragment sizes, implying intentional destruction.

Possibly the seemingly random spatial occurrence is a clue in itself. Are these then household fetishes or lineage icons pertaining to disparate residential groups throughout the town? Did they depict venerated ancestors or parts of household shrines? And were they intentionally broken on certain occasions? And, most obviously, what did they hold, if anything? Residue analysis would be required to determine if they held liquids, or if they just functioned as empty decorative impersonations.

Context at Outlying Communities

This brief review recorded effigy distributions across a few known sites of northern Chacoan affiliation. The distribution is evidently restricted to Bonito phase sites in Chaco Canyon or major Chaco culture satellite communities. At outliers which were reoccupied at later dates by Northern San Juan-Mesa Verdean peoples, these effigies were recovered from the earlier (Chaco-affiliated) stratigraphic contexts. At least it has been determined that some of the larger outlying towns of classic Chaco times utilized these effigy vessels, and that they appear to have been manufactured in and around Chaco Canyon itself. As such, they are intrusive at the northern outliers. In research conducted to date, all specimens from outliers have only been obtained from sites with strong architectural and ceramic affiliations with Chaco Canyon. Although provenience data are not always the most precise, all these objects were located in Chacoan depositional contexts within those sites (Salmon and Aztec). Their use and disposal contexts appear to be similar. Additional animal effigies were sometimes found in the same proveniences, as at Aztec. Obviously, small sample sizes hamper a complete functional interpretation at these outliers. Presumably they would have been used in the same social contexts as at the great houses of Chaco Canyon.

Representation

All these figures are shown quite realistically; facial features, painting, hair arrangement, and ear ornaments are depicted in detail. The posture is typically a relaxed seated pose with the arms crossed. As such, the overall impression is of a personage, real or imagined, or possibly an important high status individual. They do not appear to be Katchinas or dancers of any kind, although Pepper (1906) thought he saw some resemblance. Any resemblance to Katchina figures is probably coincidental. There are no headdresses, feathers or tablitas suggesting supernatural or ritualistic persona. Nor are they dancing or in motion. Not only are they not dancers, but the cult of the Katchina is thought to have permeated the Pueblo world at a later date. The figures were possibly owned and used by leaders or powerful individuals. Perhaps they were representations depicting those personages? Similarly, they may be stylized images of deities or shamans. Such iconography would be analogous to depictions of saints in Catholicism.

Origin and Distribution

To place these objects in perspective, it should be remembered that representational ceramic art involving birds, animals, and humans has a long history in the Southwest. Of course, there is also the prolific petroglyph art illustrating many of the same themes. Depictions of animals by painted decoration or sculptured effigy vessels occur in virtually all cultural districts of the prehistoric Southwest and over spans of centuries.

In New Mexico, vessels in the shape of stylized animals, especially “ducks” or other birds, date back to at least PI times. They are most prevalent in the wider Cibola-San Juan Basin tradition, where they were produced in mineral painted types of Red Mesa and Escavada Black-on-white of Cibola Whiteware. Production of effigy vessels in Cibola Whiteware thus preceded the advent of these specific human figures in the classic Bonito phase. However, proliferation of

life forms and production of the human effigies falls into this relatively brief florescent period, about AD 1050 to 1150. Almost all display the carbon paint typical of the latest local manufacture. Therefore, they belong to a relatively short period and limited production sphere, but with deeper roots in a Southwest regional practice. These specific human effigy vessels were made primarily at large Chaco Canyon centers and distributed to at least some major centers to the north with Chaco affiliation. Moreover, local potters in the northern periphery evidently were also inspired to make similar ones. Whether these northern analogs retained the same social meaning as the Chaco ones is unknown. Despite poor dating on some, even those in the “hinterlands” were apparently made between AD 1050 and 1150. Classic Late PIII Mesa Verde Black-on-white assemblages lack these vessels nor do they appear later in the Rio Grande Glazeware manufacture of PIV times.

Comparison to Effigies of Mexico

These effigy vessels also bear at least a superficial resemblance to those of the Casas Grandes culture in Chihuahua, Mexico (Di Peso 1977). Certain similarities link the Chaco and Casas Grandes effigies. The Casas Grandes figures are mostly male, seated with arms crossed, and sometimes smoking similar to those at Chaco. Females are sometimes depicted. Similarly, eye style, facial decoration and clothing are depicted in some detail at both Chaco and Casas Grandes. This realistic aspect again suggests portrayal of actual individuals or stylized icons (Phillips and VanPool 2009). Even the work of individual artists (specialists?) may be recognized by the recurrence of certain painted motifs on different vessels. Phillips (PowerPoint presentation 2009) has further suggested that the seated male figures of Casas Grandes represent actual individuals or stylized qualities of character types (such as the “Elvis” and “Feather Face” figures). As their appearances group themselves into several categories, it is tempting to think of them as semi-formalized depictions of honored figures, as statues of saints might adorn a Christian church. On the other hand, Chaco examples are too few, seemingly unique, and do not thus far fit easily into stylistic categories. It may well be that they do represent actual individuals or generic groups of religious or political figures with associated personalities or personal attributes but detailed study of a larger sample will be necessary. (For example, hunchback males occur both at Chaco and Casas Grandes). Clearly we do not fully understand the subtle cues of the iconography at either location.

Any direct historical connection between the artistry of the two cultures is hampered by their time/distance separation. Chaco examples date from about AD 1050-1150, whereas the Casas Grandes examples are from the Medio period (AD 1200-1450). A gap of about 200 years separates their median dates. Furthermore, verified imported examples of the pottery of each center do not occur at the other. Alternatively, seated male effigy vessels also occur in Western Mexico in the states of Colima and Jalisco, possibly providing other prototypes to potters at Chaco. And, of course, the distances involved are vast, suggesting that the similarities may only be of a generalized common nature; our perceived resemblances may actually be only fortuitous. Lekson (1991, 1999) has reviewed evidence of these kinds of north-south spatial/temporal connections along the “Chaco Meridian.”

Rather than requiring direct historical transference, especially where no direct trade and exchange of specific ceramics from Mexico is verified, the process might be viewed as potters sharing in a widespread and generalized technical and creative knowledge base at a similar level of sophistication. Out of this common background, episodes of special creativity emerged under favorable social-cultural conditions. As such, Chaco effigies are only loosely related to those of other neighboring centers.

Historic Perspectives

Although direct evidence of the continuation of the effigy tradition is not abundant after the demise of Chaco culture, it must have continued as a latent aspect of the overall Pueblo ceramic iconography as it reappeared in historic times. Most of the historic Pueblos of New Mexico have produced ceramic effigies of humans or animals sporadically and figurines have been part of the ceramic inventory by the capable potters at Isleta, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, and San Juan (Ohkay Owingeh) communities. However, exceptional emphasis on depiction of life forms has appeared at Cochiti Pueblo. In addition to traditional bowls and jars in the customary black-on-white painting genre, potters of this village have made effigies and effigy vessels in many shapes and forms for many years. The tradition dates to at least the late 1800s and has continued with some fluctuations to the present day. Helen Cordero, a famous potter of Cochiti, was best known for her “storyteller” figures with a seated adult figure recounting tales to several seated children. These popular figures, starting in the mid-1960s and now copied extensively, were motivated in part by cash sales. However, they arose from a long standing tradition of representational pots, figurines and effigy vessels dating back centuries. Especially good illustrations of a variety of Cochiti figures are seen in Hayes and Blom (1996:63, 65). The development of the Pueblo “storyteller” imagery is well documented by Babcock et al. (1986). In many modern cases humorous figures depict tourists with cameras, cowboys, priests, etc., and their sense of whimsy conveys a feeling of playfulness. But the old practice of adorning standard bowls with turtles, lizards, tadpoles, etc. suggests a much older tradition related to water and fertility. Although poorly documented, the long standing practice of creating human and animal representations in clay appears to have persisted in Pueblo culture through the entire historic period. It is tempting to think that the tradition of depicting clay animals, birds, and humans (mundane, earthly, or sacred) has always been part of the wider Pueblo cultural pattern from the inception of ceramic manufacture to the present day. Within this lengthy tradition, the short-lived Chaco florescence witnessed an especially high period of artistic expression in the clay arts.

Summary

To recapitulate, this study calls attention to the appearance of human effigies at some of the major outlying communities affiliated with Chaco culture. Although we have not carried out a complete literature search for effigy specimens at other outliers, surely they exist. This subject may be expanded in the future to cover a wider area and larger number of contemporary sites. Several patterns are now evident. First, these figures are not confined to Pueblo Bonito, although the vast majority were seemingly made, used, and deposited there. Nevertheless, they were also transported to some of the major Chaco Canyon settlements, which had been established as

“colonies” during the classic florescence of AD 1050-1150. Second, they have been recovered from Chacoan contexts at these outliers, even where later reoccupation of the great houses occurred. Third, some of these appear to have been made by potters in and near Chaco Canyon, based on the constituent materials; they are thus “intrusive” in the outlier contexts. Fourth, whether made by Chaco artisans, or inspired by them in the hinterlands, all seem to have been influenced by the same models or prototypes during this same period of time. Last, their detailed appearance, including depiction of facial features, clothing and ornaments, suggests representation of actual individuals or venerated persons, perhaps those of high status. These may have been fashioned as icons of famous, powerful individuals or of specific deities in the communal pantheon.

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Addendum to Franklin and Reed 2016

Peter J. McKenna

Franklin and Reed draw attention to human effigy vessels in great house contexts, notably at Pueblo Bonito, and at outliers in northern San Juan Basin. These vessels consistently are associated with the late Bonito phase (A.D. 1100-1200, Judge et al. 1981), the Cibola Whiteware tradition, and could have been produced in Chaco Canyon based on technical attributes if not characterization studies. Examples from Utah and Yellow Jacket in southwest Colorado also come from highly structured communities for which “great house” arguments can be entertained in another venue. Franklin and Reed (2016) link Late Bonito phase human effigy vessels with great houses but this comment expands those contexts to contemporary small houses out of downtown Chaco and outlier contexts. A human effigy head fragment (Figure 1) has been located at LA142772 which is one of several small houses of the mid-twelfth century near La Ventana, New Mexico in the Rio Puerco (of the East) valley.



Figure 1. Human effigy head from LA142772, a small house in the Rio Puerco valley.

This figure shows face-paint in styles reminiscent of the vessels from great house contexts with face-encircling paint, horizontal parallel lines under the eyes, and chin adornment. Ears were also present at an angle shown by Franklin and Reed's Figure 3 or 6 with a piercing evident on the face just below the eye-parallels. The eyes and mouth are likewise similar to other effigy figures since horizontal slits and the eyes are partially underlined with paint. The nose differs considerably from other effigy vessels in that it appears "skeletonized" with an exposed septum. Design is executed in mineral paint and a generally thicker slip is evident than is found on other examples. The thicker slip may in part be applied to mask the dark gray paste which binocular inspection shows to be tempered with coarse sub-angular sand and white sherd (grog) as less than half the temper. We, of course, do not know how the vessel body was treated. The jar's orifice (@3cm dia.) is atop the head, like others, but is hidden from view by the face margin. The face is 6.5cm tall and about 6cm wide.

The associated assemblage is largely unidentifiable (that is not typed) but mostly in the Cibola Tradition: 43 plain gray, 12 indented corrugated, 3 PII-III indented corrugated, 4 Mummy Lake Gray Basin variety, 20 whiteware and 1 each McElmo Black-on-white, PII-III m/w and PII-III c/w. The house itself is not the most formal in the settlement and consists mostly of earthen architecture which does not exceed five rooms; no kiva is present. This specimen comes from the midden just southeast of the rooms. This vessel then is in keeping with the possibility it could have been made elsewhere (like Chaco) but surety requires nondestructive characterization methods be brought to bear on these far-flung examples as the observational constituents are as common as dirt. The human effigy sherd from LA142772 expands the context in which such forms might occur. This particular context would seem to strengthen Franklin and Reed's suggestions regarding individualized functions as such things as lineage icons versus overarching ceremonial equipment. But of more immediate moment is that this sherd shows these vessel forms occur in other than great house contexts.

Lastly a quick review of pottery assemblages from other excavated great houses has located but one other vessel, classified as McElmo Black-on-white, at the Wallace Ruin (Bradley 2010). This pot is not as well formed as the examples from Pueblo Bonito or Aztec West but retains the fundamental configurations of molded limbs, face and body painting and gender marking. Because human effigy vessels are so unique, these forms are likely to be mentioned and illustrated (it's the cover image on Bradley 2010) even when analytical approaches focus on other domains than standard Southwestern stylistic typologies. To that end great house excavations, notably to the south of Chaco Canyon, have not produced human effigy forms (Table 1). There are several other excavated great houses, such as Edge of the Cedars, the Hinkson Ruin and Ida Jean, but searching those records awaits another day. Franklin and Reed have taken an important step in reopening the discussion on human effigy vessels and in consolidating and comparing information on these rare and interesting vessel forms.

Table 1. Excavated Great Houses reviewed for the presence of human effigy forms in the Bonito phase style.

Site	Distance to Pueblo Bonito	Number of sherds	Reference
Village of the Great Kivas	117km 34.5°	Not stated	Roberts 1932
Chimney Rock	139km 205.3°	Not stated Not stated 1,029	Jeancon 1922 Eddy 1977 Wilson 2011
Guadalupe Ruin	96km 308.4°	30,225	Pippen 1987
Sanders Great House	156km @52°	1,033	Waterworth 1994
Wallace Ruin	153km 161°	4,616	Bradley 2010:96
Bluff Great House	197km 133.3°	3,741	Blinman 1996
Sterling Site	73km 167°	5,990	McKenna and Franklin 2004

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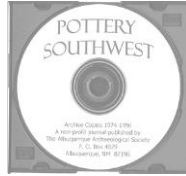
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