

Trails of Tradition:
Archaeology, Landscape, and Movement

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Pre-Symposium draft of 22 May, 2006

Prepared for the Symposium "Landscapes of Movement," organized by James E. Snead, Clark Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling. To be held at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, May 29-31, 2006.

“Every path I knew there too, and every little track running off from the paths, the width of a single footstep, by which children ran to gardens of their own, that they had found or made among weeds; but some of these paths had altered in the long time since I was there. It was a long time.”

- Lord Dunsany, *The Return*. In *The Sword of Welleran and Other Tales of Enchantment*, p. 173. The Devin-Adair Company, New York. 1954.

Introduction

High above a bank of the Huron River in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a substantial boulder with a plaque bolted to one side marking a trail and ford once used by indigenous peoples traveling through the upper Midwest. The pathway has been supplanted by a busy modern avenue, and the ford by a bridge. Pedestrians are few, and the marker sits precariously in a strip of grass alongside the pavement. Barring the occasional anthropologist, the drivers passing this spot are oblivious to the boulder and the history it represents even while their own travel - for a few blocks, at least - follows the same patterns as that of the ancestral inhabitants of the land. The landscape of movement that they have created is simply one of many that have been inscribed into the terrain through which they pass.

There are several fundamental incongruities in the archaeological study of such “landscapes of movement.” The first is the conundrum represented by using a static, material signature to represent the active passage of human beings through the world. Traditionally archaeologists avoided this entirely by emphasizing “routes,” logical topography for long-distance travel through which people *must* have ventured, if they ventured at all. Since the hypothesis could be confirmed by the presence of similar artifacts at either end, there was little need to search for actual evidence of the process (i.e. Davis 1963; Farmer 1935).

We’ve typically been interested in what happens at either end of the journey, anyway. Serious archaeological treatment of the spatial dimensions of human society is remarkably recent, and our heuristic devices - transects, sites - present considerable obstacles. Thus even when we acknowledge movement we’re still often more concerned with how it *may* have happened - using network analysis and similar strategies (i.e. Santley 1991) - rather than trying to seek out evidence for movement itself. Even when we acknowledge the sterility of such approaches - Tim Ingold, for instance, remarks that “there can be no places without paths, along which people arrive and depart; and no paths without places, that constitute their destinations and points of departure” (1993: 167) - this usually comes in the form of an aside.

When archaeologists look at movement of this type they usually gravitate towards “roads,” in part due to a perception that they’re better preserved. We also place roads in a different conceptual category, since as constructed features they’re seen as reflections of “intent,”

with all that it entails, rather than of motion itself. The ephemeral, redundant qualities of casual shortcuts across grassy university quadrangles are extrapolated onto anything that isn't built, as we define it (i.e. Jackson 1994: 22). Among the many problems with this approach is that it strips movement of political or ideological significance unless it occurs along a road. Since construction of these systems is usually associated with more "complex" societies, we're left with the untenable stereotype that politics are only expressed by humans who live in chiefdoms and states.

The conundrums of strategy and perception that challenge archaeologists studying landscapes of movement have recently begun to yield in the face of new theoretical approaches and creative fieldwork (i.e. Bell and Lock 2000; Bell et al 2002; Coles and Coles 1986; Darling and Eiselt 2003; Fleming 1988; Fowler 1988; Mills 2002; Pignuolo et al 1997; Sheets and Sever 1991; Snead 2001; Von Werlhoff 1988 Zedeño and Stouffle 2003). Just as we've begun to take landscapes as a whole more seriously, we're also understanding the rich potential for analysis provided by their component parts. Paths and trails are everywhere, when we take the time to look, and they provide an empirical means of approaching the movement of people across the earth in ways that continue to surprise.

Movement, Meaning, and Place

I'm particularly attracted to the relationship between trails and meaning. Origin myths in many cultures describe creator beings walking through empty space, giving shape and meaning to the void as they passed. Forever after, the movement of the people echoes these primal journeys. The Comanche culture hero, for instance, is called Sokeweki, "land searcher," emblematic of what Daniel Gelo has called "an abiding interest in the landscape, navigation, topography, and spatial relations" in Comanche society (2000: 273). According to the Cahuilla people of California, the Milky Way is the dust kicked up by a footrace (Nabokov 1981: 23). Fred Myers describes such cultural aspects of movement as socializing the world; writing about the Pintupi of central Australia, he points out that "people who move and shift so regularly from place to place have truly culturalized space and made out of impersonal geography a home" (Myers 1986: 54). Movement and creation are fundamentally intertwined, a process within which experience - whether structured by the human body (Casey 1996), cultural perceptions (Myers 2000), or history (Bell and Locke 2000) - is central.

Of course people have to get from point to point, and human beings approach such problems in common ways. No special infrastructure is necessarily required to walk from campsite to campsite, and what may be an expedient route for Neolithic villagers probably works as well for modern hikers. Yet considering movement as exclusively driven by "rational" concerns such as the minimization of cost is often to reduce it to insignificance. Acknowledging the importance of studying the relationship between movement and meaning in archaeological contexts - "to see the valley and meadow from the Indian's points of vantage," as one early commentator (Hulbert 1900: 36) - is critical. The approach to such a question is obviously complex. Working within an established ethnographic framework, where such a structure can be established, is obviously compelling. Many of the ethnogeographies produced by Boasian anthropologists working in North America documented trail systems (cf. Harrington 1916; Loud 1918; Waterman 1920), but detailed commentary is scarce.

My current strategy regarding the issue of meaning and trails is to approach them as *places*, with all that such a definition implies (i.e. Agnew 1989; Barrett 1999; Carson 2002; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2002; Malpass 1998). Wendy Ashmore has recently called for archaeologists to construct “life histories of place” (2002: 1178), which requires examining complex relationships between function, meaning, and time.

One of the challenges that reexamining trails and paths as places is that ideas of place are profoundly associated with lived space, or, in John Barrett’s oft-cited terms, *inhabitation* (i.e. 1999: 260). And yet movement is obviously a part of living; our thinking in this regard reflects our own cultural dichotomy between stability and mobility, and would have made little sense to people whose relationship to their surroundings was profoundly different. At one level, moving through a landscape is a process of engagement. As landmarks of topography and the built environment come into view, the traveler reaffirms relationships with those landmarks, and whatever associations come with them. Thus Keith Basso describes Western Apache cowboys reciting place names under their breath as they ride through the countryside, a process that makes reference to the entire complex of meaning associated with them (1996). It seems inevitable that the trail itself, which in effect makes it possible for that engagement to occur, would take on some related significance itself. I’m not advocating a strict phenomenology of trails - since I follow Fred Myers (2000) in believing that landscapes are overwhelmingly social constructions - but that culture and movement must share roles in interpreting trails, what I’m calling *contextual experience* (Snead n.d.).

Secondly, as Mary Helms (1998) has documented, there are strong cross-cultural patterns in the way that travel and distance are perceived, and it’s likely that the physical correlates of journeying also have shared significance (cf. Bradley 2000: 28). In cultural terms trails - at least those of medium distance - are liminal zones, with familiar associations interwoven with the possibility of something entirely new and unpredictable. Literature is filled with accounts of meetings along pathways, with associated risks and opportunities. Referring to seasonal travel, Barbara Bender writes that “a person part-knows the way, part-knows that each time of return there will be change and unfamiliarity; part-fears, part-revels in the chance encounter, the possible adventure. Arriving is important but so are the stories woven around the traveling” (2001: 84).

Trails would also, of course, be distinguished by unique cultural referents. “Trackways,” note Bell and Locke, “...have biographies based on people, events and places associated with them. endowing the route with cultural meaning and significance” (2000: 86; cf. Darnell 2002: 114). The “corpse roads” of sparsely-inhabited parishes in northern England, along which were carried the bodies of the dead to isolated churches are pathways of such distinctive meaning (Hindle 1998: 10) that lingers in historical memory despite changes in function over time. Named trails in Canyon de Chelly are associated with the origins of particular Navajo ceremonials (Jett 2001), and some of the Chemehuevi trails described by Carobeth Laird (1976: 130). All of these indicate the rich cultural context for paths and trails as well as their nature as places in their own right.

Frames of Reference

Evaluating trails as places in archaeological contexts is enhanced by consideration of the two linked concepts of *inscription* and *materialization*. Inscription, used by various landscape

theorists (e.g. Aston and Rowley 1974; Wilson and David 2002), describes the “marking” of landscapes both as an inadvertent result of people going about their daily lives and as a product of conscious action. Over time the landscape becomes a complex overlay of different marks from different eras that have been “overlain, modified or erased by the work of another” (Aston and Rowley 1974: 14). This dynamic setting in turn exerts its own influence, less a passive “stage” for human activity and more an actor in the process.

Materialization, as formulated by Demarrais et al (1996), is directly concerned with the relationship between ideology and material culture, of which landscape is a critical element. Through the construction of monuments and related features perceptions of space can be shaped to highlight particular social and political relationships, thus linking the conceptual and physical worlds. Materialization is thus a tool used by community leaders to naturalize their positions, serving to “strengthen the association of a group and a place” (1996: 19). Although such investments may transcend time, then, they are particularly linked to specific circumstances and ambitions.

Both inscription and materialization have direct relevance to the understanding of paths and trails. As movement through the land becomes more deeply inscribed views and perspectives along the way become fixed, in effect framing the experience of the traveler. Over time this experience becomes more complex and more laden with meaning. Landscapes of movement offer particular opportunities for materialization. De Marrais et al present the example of the Inka road system, argued to be both part of “the essential infrastructure of conquest” (1996: 29) and symbolic of the threat of force that was part of imperial ideology. It is clear to me that constant movement along the roads served to reinforce their symbolism, as did the involvement of local communities in constructing and maintaining the road network as part of their labor tribute to the state. In such a way did the “hundreds of rock cairns” erected along the Bad Pass trail in Montana structure the experience of the generations of indigenous people who passed among them (Loendorf and Brownell 1980: 11; cf. Blakeslee and Blasing 1988). Since a rock cairn is as tangible as a Roman milestone, ideology is as imbedded within paths and trails as in imperial highways. In fact, I think it is only by looking at trails and paths through frameworks that allow them to be considered as influencing experience and as potential materialized ideology that we can more fully appreciate their nature.

Trails in the Pajarito Landscape

For a more detailed look at the way meaning can be examined through the archaeology of paths and trails, I’ll turn to the Pajarito Trails Project, which I began in 1991 as an exploratory survey of Ancestral Pueblo trail networks on the Pajarito Plateau of north-central New Mexico. The Plateau itself is a consolidated pyroclastic flow of Pleistocene date (Ross et al 1961). Erosion of this friable bedrock has created a topography of flat-topped, steep-sided “portreros” descending from the Jemez mountains to the west and separated by sheer-walled canyons. These conditions have also proved beneficial for the preservation of trails, which in many instances have been worn into the rock by the passage of feet.

Although the Plateau has seen human use for thousands of years, the trail system is generally associated with Ancestral Pueblo people, who began to move to the Pajarito in large

numbers during the AD 1100s. Over the subsequent centuries a considerable population developed, farming the canyon bottoms and mesa tops. An initial pattern of dispersed small residences close to the fields evolved into one characterized by a few large “community houses” surrounded by hinterlands with seasonally-occupied field houses (for an overview, see Powers and Orcutt 1999). By the 1600s most of the permanent population had shifted a few kilometers eastward to the Rio Grande lowlands. At present the descendant communities of Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, and Cochiti retain ownership of large parts of the Plateau, which is also under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (Bandelier National Monument), the U. S. Forest Service, and the Department of Energy (Los Alamos National Laboratory).

The spectacular preservation of the archaeological landscape of the Pajarito has attracted considerable interest over time, and the trails have had their share of attention. A letter written by Col. James Stevenson of the Smithsonian’s Bureau of Ethnology in 1880 describes “a path worn deep in the rocky shelf” near the Puyé community house (J. Stevenson to J. W. Powell, 27 October 1880. BAE), while Adolph Bandelier’s Cochiti guides used the old trails to take him through the region in the same era (Bandelier 1892: 147). Remarks on the Pajarito trails are commonplace in the work of Edgar Lee Hewett and others over the next few decades (Hewett 1908, 1909) Harrington 1916; Prince 1903), although interest faded thereafter (see Snead 2002c).

It wasn’t until the inauguration of systematic archaeological survey on the Pajarito in the 1970s that more formal documentation of the trail system began (Steen 1977; Hill and Trierweiler 1986; Van Zandt 1999). The sheer complexity of the archaeological landscape, however, limited further analysis. Site-level recording strategies were particularly inefficient for trails, for instance, given their extent and association with numerous other features. Property divisions on the plateau also created obstacles, since paths rarely stopped at the edge of sample units or at modern boundaries. If the Pajarito trails were to contribute to our understanding of the Ancestral Pueblo world, then a new effort would have to be developed to address the issue directly.

The Pajarito Trails Project was designed to address this issue by making trails the focus of research and working within all the various jurisdictions of the Plateau. Over the course of the 1991, 1999, and 2001 field seasons and numerous spot visits a body of methods for the recording of trails has been established. In the process 173 trail segments totaling more than 11 kilometers in length have been documented across several different study areas. This represents only a fraction of the total system, which must extend for hundreds of kilometers.

My discussion here represents a decade of looking at and thinking about the Pajarito trails, a process that can be tracked in associated publications (Snead 2002a, b, 2005). I’ll focus on what is known as the Tsirege group, a settlement cluster of the central Pajarito (figure 1). Approximately 10 kilometers from north to south, the Tsirege Group is dominated by the Classic-period community houses of Otowi, Tsankawi, Navawi, and Tsirege, each a multistoried masonry structure containing hundreds of rooms. These and the associated field houses, petroglyphs, gardens, and other associated features date to the post-AD 1300 era, but many smaller residential groupings from the preceding centuries can be found nearby. Trails are also a dominant feature of the central Pajarito landscape, and to illustrate my point about trails and meaning I’ll look at two well-documented examples: the North Mesa trail, in the vicinity of the Tsankawi community house, and trails directly associated with the Tsirege community house.

Trails, Time, and Movement

Tsankawi is one of the most prominent archaeological sites on the Pajarito, a masonry community house on a high mesa with wide views in all directions. Tsankawi is also famous for its trail network, preserved in detail because of wide exposures of friable tuff bedrock in the community core. The area is administered as part of Bandelier National Monument; an intensive survey of the vicinity in the late 1980s provided many lessons in understanding Ancestral Pueblo trails and recording them as archaeological features (Van Zandt 1999).

In addition to the maze of local, redundant trails associated with Tsankawi itself, there are several longer-distance trails within the surveyed area that offer opportunities for addressing the topic of meaning. Our first assignment in 1988 was to survey North Mesa, a high, narrow portrero separated from Tsankawi Mesa by a flat-bottomed valley (figure 2). Despite significant petroglyph panels and cavate pueblo groups along its southern face, North Mesa hadn't previously attracted much archaeological attention. We quickly noticed several trails running up to the mesa top, which was confusing since - despite stands of juniper and piñon pine - it was largely exposed bedrock, without obvious attractions. In fact, the only sites we recorded on the summit was a another trail, which appeared intermittently through the trees and was reached by several shorter trails rising up from the valley.

So why were they climbing up there? Some of the trail segments we recorded on the mesa top, particularly toward the east, were quite formal in appearance, with short sets of steps and some notable wearing. Eventually it became clear that the trail itself *was* the point, and that the summit of the portrero had served as a conduit for travel. In the late Pre-Columbian era, the surrounding valleys would have part of the central, lived space of the various nearby communities. Travel through any such socialized terrain - complete with dogs, children, and cornfields - would have been complicated, a problem not presented by the relatively empty summit of the portrero. We use the valleys because of the requirements of horses and wheeled vehicles, but for the indigenous inhabitants the mesas of the Pajarito would have been more ideal routes (Tom Lynch has made similar correlations about Inka routes in the Atacama. Personal Communication, 1994). In addition to more unrestricted surroundings, the portreros also offered commanding views of the countryside, with associated implications for observation and vigilance.

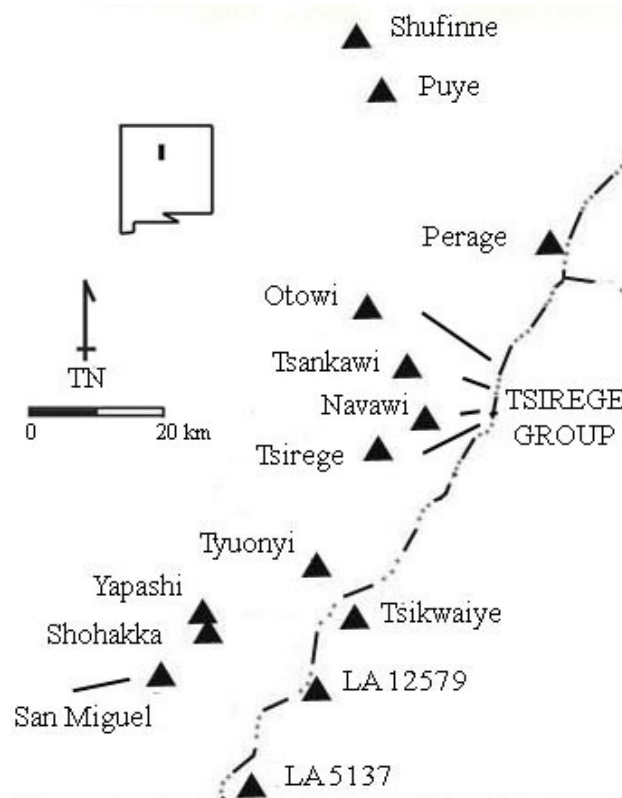


Figure 1. The Pajarito Plateau of New Mexico, illustrating large sites and their spatial relationships.



Scale (approximate): 1 Km

figure 2. The vicinity of Tsankawi from the air, illustrating the relationship between community houses/residential areas and elements of the trail system. Photo: H. Wright



Figure 3. Trail on the mesa W. of Tsankawi, illustrating deeply worn, parallel grooves.

What remained confusing, however, was the direction of movement. People would have traveled east-west along North Mesa, while Tsankawi was to the south; there was a notable feeder route that headed that way, but the mesa-top trail continued west. This was difficult to understand, since we assumed that Tsankawi - as the major center of population in the vicinity - would have exerted an attraction on movement. In other words, we expected the trails to go to the center, People *were* clearly going to Tsankawi, when it was inhabited, but they were also going elsewhere - beyond the limits of the Tsankawi subsection, which bounded our survey area.

Two additional surveys beyond the Park Service boundaries - one in 1991, the other in 1999 - clarified this picture. Brief reconnaissance to the east of North Mesa confirmed that the trail continued in that direction, probably connecting to the Rio Grande several kilometers further. The North Mesa Trail could thus be more clearly defined as a route of regional importance, running from the river to the mountains, linking all the resources - natural and human - along the way. The implications were that such a route went deep into time.

Subsequent survey further west clarified the onward progress of the route and validated its' antiquity. On the open mesa three deeply-worn, parallel trail grooves imply long centuries of use. Here, too, a trail heading back toward Tsankawi is discernable but clearly secondary. That the trail was older than Tsankawi itself is indicated by the direct association between the trail and a settlement, LA 394, dated to the 13th century AD and apparently empty in the following century when Tsankawi was paramount. That use of the trail postdated the abandonment of Tsankawi and the depopulation of the Plateau is suggested by a bedrock pit or "game trap" cut into one of the staircases, implying the presence of hunting partings in relatively recent times when there was little local traffic.

Our work on the North Mesa trail and its feeder routes provides evidence for patterns of trail use over time and a complex relationship between movement and settlement on the Pajarito. Most of the evidence I've presented pertains to movement, strictly speaking, rather than any more intentional manipulation of space and place. There are additional nuances to the argument, but first I'll turn to another aspect of Ancestral Pueblo paths in the Tsirege group, that of "gateway trails."

Place, Trails, and Materialization

One of the most prominent features of Pajarito trails are elaborate, constructed stairways. More than a dozen have been recorded, with the majority being directly associated with the 14th century community houses. These stairs have several elements in common, including formality, associated iconography, and what appear to be multiple episodes of construction. Much of this labor strikes modern observers as counter-intuitive; in some cases parallel stairs climb steep faces only a few meters apart, or formal steps were constructed on relatively gentle slopes where they weren't strictly necessary. The large community houses feature numerous, but typically only one of these is highly formal, for which I've used the term "gateway trail" (Snead 2005, 2002a).

The concept of the gateway trail is built from the observation that such features represent the conspicuous investment of labor into an otherwise utilitarian feature. Repetition is a central feature of Pueblo ceremonialism, and I'm persuaded that what appears to be regular reconstruction of these stairways identifies them as a focus of ritual meaning. In other words, building formal staircases is as important for the message it sends to those who would use the stair - residents and travelers alike - as well as for the act itself. Such activity clearly reflects processes of materialization. The fact that these layers of meaning are added onto the trails themselves - rather than, say, to the construction of other forms of monument or vehicle of symbolism - also alerts us to the concept of trails as meaningful places.

One of the most dramatic gateway trails is associated with the Tsirege community house. With an estimated 600 masonry rooms and 16th century dates, Tsirege is the largest and latest Pre-Columbian residential complex on the Pajarito. Located on a low relatively low, flat mesa overlooking substantial agricultural land, the site is presently administered by the Los Alamos National Laboratories and has received only sporadic archaeological attention in recent decades. One of the earliest reports on the site, however, noted trails associated with the complex (Hewett 1904).

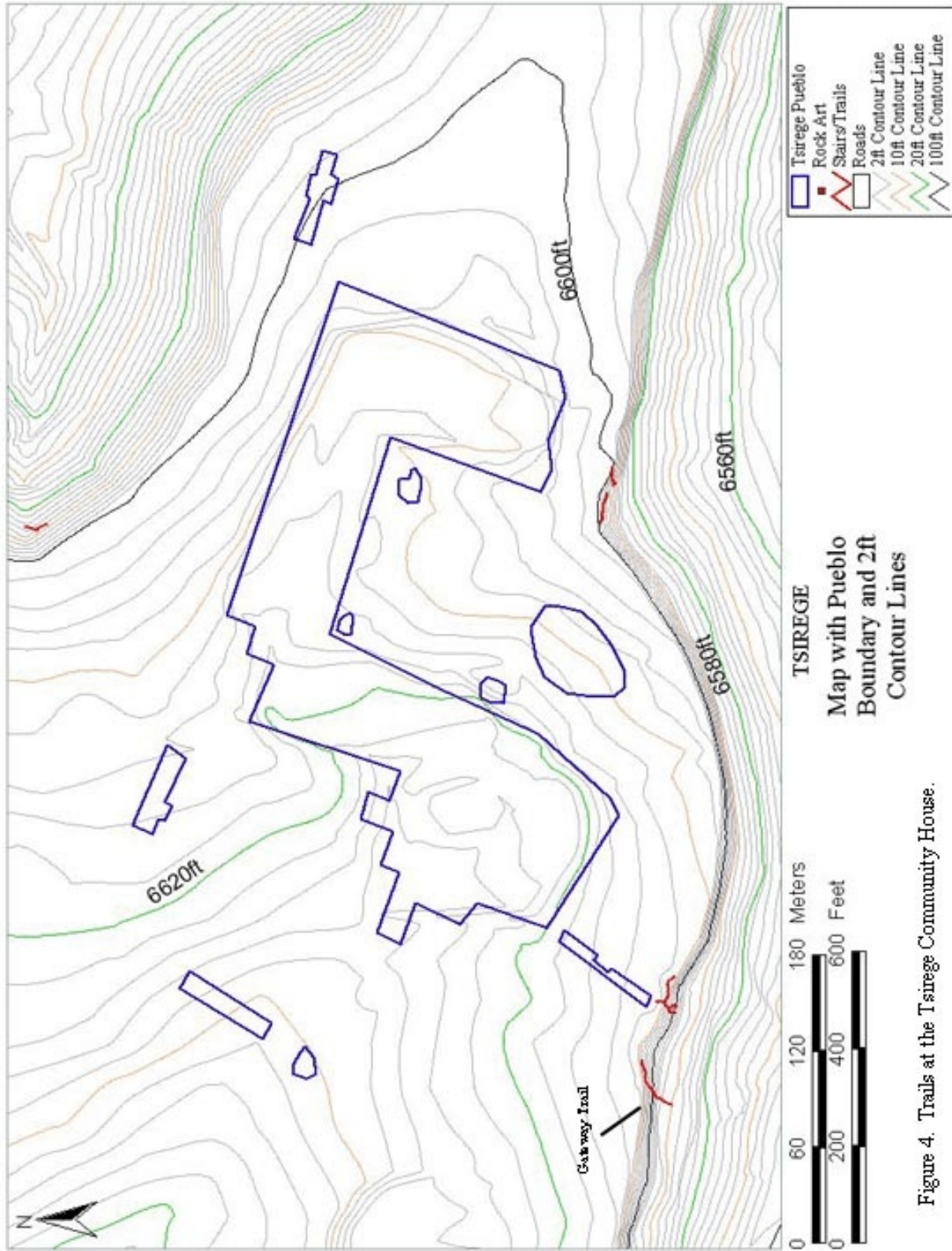


Figure 4. Trails at the Tsirege Community House.



Figure 5. The gateway trail at Tsirege, illustrating the awanyu trail marker and the formal “treaded” steps. Photo: J. Sneed.

In the course of a brief reconnaissance in 2004 the rim of Tsirege Mesa was examined for the presence of trails and associated stairs (fig. 4). Several of these features were found, most relatively informal, linking the mesa top with cavate structures that had been built against the @ 6-meter cliff face. One, at the low, eastern end of the mesa, appeared to provide expedient access to other segments of the community.

Particularly prominent, however, was a major gateway stair near the southwestern corner of the community house, featuring constructed features and associated “trail marker” petroglyphs. These include a spectacular 2-meter awanyu (or horned serpent) that has frequently been remarked upon by rock art specialists. Not previously described is a series of formal, tread-like steps cut into the rock that ascend from the valley floor and pass between the awanyu on the cliff face and an outlying outcrop also featuring a snake-like petroglyph before reaching the mesa top (fig. 5). Unique in the Tsirege context, this stair is clearly analogous to the gateway trails recorded

elsewhere and even - given passage between cliff and outcrop - resembles an actual “gate.” It’s also worth noting that people climbing the stair would face the high, western wall of the community house, which does not appear to have had entrances. There is also a low masonry wall separating the route of the trail from Tsirege’s more open easterly plaza; although this feature hasn’t been dated, it contributes to the general impression that the approach provided by the gateway trail was protected - in effect, the type of entry permitted to outsiders rather than required of residents.

The gateway trail at Tsirege confirms the impression derived from elsewhere on the Pajarito - that these features are not simply functional aspects of the local trail networks. Instead, they are carefully-constructed routes that channel traffic along specific routes and were invested with specific meaning aimed at that traffic. A traveler approaching Tsirege from the south would not only be directed as to the proper way to approach the community house but would be have no doubts as to the nature of the place itself.

Discussion

There are two straightforward conclusions to the pattern of archaeological evidence for the North Mesa trail. The longevity of the pathway is important, since it indicates a notable conservatism in the pattern of movement across the plateau over time. We had expected, in ways described by other researchers, that Tsankawi would have attracted considerable foot traffic beginning in the 14th century AD and “‘dragged’ its connections with it” (Dowdle 1987: 280). This occurred, in part, but the process was obviously more complex, and swiftly reverted to the traditional path once Tsankawi became depopulated.

Change *was* part of the context of movement along the North Mesa trail over time, but at different scales and with different implications. Major topography would not have changed at all. If we presume - as I do - that the Ancestral Pueblo inhabitants of the region had a spatial world view similar to that of the historic Tewa, then landmarks on the horizon and nearer at hand would have been fundamental to cultural orientation. Walking the trail would have been an experience of continuity with the natural order. The human contribution to this landscape would have been far more mutable, so that people climbing up towards the Jemez would walk past pueblos teeming with life and through grass-filled plazas of older, “empty” settlements.

From my perspective it was the trail that made these places - separated by time but contiguous with the broader landscape and linked by movement - into a cohesive whole for those who passed along it. Richard Parmentier has noted that seemingly disparate elements of the cultural landscape on Palau - "sacred stones, trees, valuables, place names, and titles" - are made into comprehensible systems by the paths that connect them (1987: 109). In this regard the inscription of the North Mesa trail - the deeply worn ruts, tangible footsteps of the ancestors - would have been a particularly powerful symbol of that whole. What might otherwise appear to be historical breaks and discontinuities were instead made logical and even ordinary.

In this way the North Mesa trail and others like it would have been “trails of tradition,” representations of order that - because they effectively shaped the experience of movement - reified that concept for all who used them. This tradition would have been generated not through individual intent but by the cumulative impact of the inscribed landscape. The trails originated through the use of human logic to move through difficult terrain, and eventually became actors themselves.

Order was more than simply received wisdom, however, and could be created through action and intent. Naturalizing human motivation by linking it to the natural order - embodied by historicized topography - is a broadly cross-cultural strategy (for example, Ashmore 2004: 104; Grove and Gillespie 1992: 18; Sahlins 1992). A widely cited southwestern example is provided by “roads” associated with the Chaco system, built features that sometimes link places occupied in different times that have been referred to as “roads through time” and “roads to ruins” (Roney 1992; Van Dyke 2003: 192; see also Kantner 1997). Although there’s disagreement on their significance, such features are widely seen as attempts to ground local ambitions in the landscape context.

Such materialization associated with landscapes of movement is present in the Pajarito trails as well. The trail markers seen widely across the plateau are an example of the overt construction of symbols that were thereafter indelibly associated with the trail passing by.

In this regard I'd like to return to the gateway trails at Tsirege and elsewhere, considering them as simply a more labor-intensive version of the same symbol-making process. Constructing such elaborate monuments materialized the ambitions of the builders, linking those motivations to the tradition represented by the pathways. Such invented traditions (cf. Hobsbawm 1983) related to paths are predictable if rarely documented, although in one case it has been argued that an entire trail network was "captured" for such a purpose (Johnston 1999). In the Pajarito case the building of gateway trails would have been a literal association with tradition, since the constructed stairways physically resemble the worn trail segments produced by generations of movement.

The investment of effort into stairs that symbolized relationships between the social and natural orders are particularly interesting because they're associated with an overall transformation of the settlement system. Tsankawi, Tsirege, and the other new community houses that arose in the 14th century and thereafter, are often described as part of a widespread process of "aggregation" that was widespread in the Southwest (cf. Cordell et al 1994). For the present purposes, however, it's interesting that multiple lines of archaeological evidence are indicating that this period was characterized by increasing levels of competitiveness between communities (i.e. Powers and Orcutt 1999; Snead et al 2004; Vint 1999; Walsh 1998). This is supported by the reorganization of the trail network of the period, which included the construction of guard pueblos at strategic junctions (Snead 2002, 2005).

Whatever the interpretation of this social transformation, placing the gateway trails in a competitive context clarifies the symbolism of their construction. It was an uneasy time, and it's easy to imagine the friction involved with the removal of large parts of the population into new centers. Justification for such a shift to those enduring it - and the defiant symbolism of its' merits to those outside - can be seen in the new entrances. Walking up the trail to Tsirege it would have been forcibly apparent that the former easy gradation from countryside to community had been discarded in favor of an overtly stylized transition, one that was couched in the symbolism of the trail.

Considering trails as places through such theoretical constructs as inscription and materialization provides one avenue for addressing the question of meaning in landscapes of movement. Working in a context associated with a living tradition - such as the Pueblo Southwest - and in a setting that has been well-documented by archaeologists in particular offers the opportunity to take such an approach. The Pajarito trails, and the thousand other pathways slowly vanishing in the wind and rain, offer us the opportunity to glimpse what Kathleen Stewart has described as "the past and present as sensed, tactile places that remember and haunt" (1996: 148).

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