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# POTS, PARTIES, AND POLITICS: COMMUNAL FEASTING IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

James M. Potter

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*Communal feasting is evaluated as a political resource in the northern Southwest from A.D. 850 to present along three axes: scale of participation and finance, frequency and structure of occurrence, and the resources used. Feasting is a recurrent social practice that has consistently facilitated social integration within Southwest communities, but has shown considerable variation through time. Prior to about A.D. 1275 communal feasting appears to have been more of a source of differentiation within communities than it was after this date, when feasting became truly communal and integrative, as it is today within Puebloan communities. At the same time, feasting also became inter-communal in scale and apparently played a role in the ritual differentiation of individual communities within larger clusters. It is suggested that these changes in the role of feasting had little to do with ecological or environmental variables, but instead reflect the pervasive cultural, social, and religious changes that occurred at this time throughout the Southwest.*

*Las cenas comunales han formado parte de las estrategias políticas en el norte de la región Suroeste de Norteamérica desde 850 D.C. hasta el presente. Estas estrategias se pueden medir usando tres ejes: la escala de participación y la labor necesaria para proveer las cenas, la frecuencia y forma de los eventos, y los recursos utilizados. Las cenas comunales fueron dadas repetidamente y siempre facilitaron la integración social en las comunidades de la región, pero con gran variación al pasar del tiempo. Antes de 1275 D.C., las cenas comunales sirvieron para definir diferencias internas en las comunidades. Después de 1275 D.C., tales cenas alimentaron y unieron a la comunidad entera, como ocurre con los indios Pueblos modernos. Al mismo tiempo, las cenas comunales se transformaron para integrar múltiples comunidades del área inmediata. Estos cambios en las cenas comunales no fueron adaptaciones ecológicas a cambios ambientales, sino reflexiones de los grandes cambios culturales, sociales, y religiosos que ocurrieron por todo el Suroeste de Norteamérica.*

Over the past decade archaeologists have become increasingly interested in communal feasting as an aspect of social inequality in small-scale societies. High-profile ethnographic examples of elaborate feasting behaviors in New Guinea and Africa, on the west coast of North America, and elsewhere have contributed to this intensification of interest. Not surprisingly, recent archaeological literature concerning the origins of social inequality is replete with reports of competitive forms of communal feasting as a crucial component in promoting, maintaining, and challenging the differential distribution of social power in middle-range societies. Indeed, feasting has become the *sine qua non* for many archaeologists seeking to understand the development of incipient forms of complexity and inequality in human societies (Clark and Blake 1994; Dietler 1990, 1996; Friedman and Rowlands 1978; Hayden 1995, 1996; Hayden and Gargett 1990).

However, as Hayden (1995) and others have shown, not all feasts are created equal. While some of these social gatherings primarily promote competition within and among communities, others foster solidarity. Moreover, the universality of feasting as the *modus operandi* of incipient social hierarchy development has not been demonstrated. Indeed, under certain conditions, feasts may be associated with, but subordinate to, other power resources, such as the control of labor (Arnold 1993, 1996; Dietler 1990), the control of technology (Arnold 1995; Grier 1996), the control of rituals and ritual knowledge (Aldenderfer 1993; Brandt 1994; Potter 1997a; Rappaport 1984 [1968]), the control of production and exchange (Gosden 1989; Strathern 1971), and success in the conduct of warfare (Chagnon 1983; Feil 1987; Johnson and Earle 1987; Rappaport 1984 [1968]).

In this paper I explore 1) the potential conditions under which feasting may be important for under-

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standing social differentiation in small-scale societies, 2) some of the aspects of feasts that contribute to temporal and cross-cultural differences, and 3) how to recognize the various combinations of these different aspects archaeologically. The primary focus of the paper is the practice of feasting in the American Southwest from the earliest villages to the present. Feasting has consistently facilitated social integration within Southwest communities but has shown considerable variation through time. Prior to about A.D. 1275 communal feasting appears to have been more of a source of differentiation within communities<sup>1</sup> than it was subsequently, when this social practice became truly communal and integrative, as it is today within Puebloan communities. I suggest that this variation is less related to ecological variables such as environmental productivity, population density, or the capacity to generate food surpluses (*sensu* Hayden 1996), and more to the sudden and pervasive social organizational and ideological changes that occurred at this time. While environmental productivity and the potential for food surplus accumulation may place certain constraints on the occurrence of feasting, the actual form the feast takes, the scale of its financing, and its ultimate political ramifications depend more on the social, cultural, and historical context of the feast in the overall ritual structure and socioeconomy of the system in question.

The paper begins with a discussion of feasting in small-scale societies and suggests that recognizing the manner of articulation of three particular variables—the scale of participation and financing, the frequency and structure of occurrence, and the food resources used—is an effective starting point for gauging how politically charged feasts may have been, the actual social role feasting may have played, and the variation in feasting practices across space and through time. I then present the evidence for feasting in the Southwest from A.D. 850 to present, focusing particular attention on these three variables. I conclude the paper with a case study that highlights feasting as a political resource that is linked with, but subordinate to, other resources of power, especially the control of rituals and of the knowledge necessary to perform them.

### Feasting in Small-Scale Societies

There are two sides to all communal behaviors: one that integrates and one that differentiates (Potter

1997b, 2000; Potter and Perry 2000). Communal feasts are no exception. By their very nature, feasts bring people together to experience one of life's biological necessities in a communal, *social* manner. The communal exchange and sharing of food may be considered one of the most fundamental human transactions that, through social interaction and exchange, promotes social integration. This integrative aspect of feasting can have significant social and economic consequences. As Rappaport (1984 [1968]) and Ford (1972) have noted, feasting can be an important mechanism for redistributing food among community members, and thus can be instrumental in promoting economic and social interdependence among community members.

At the same time, to varying degrees, feasting can be an active context in which social hierarchy is established. Indeed, the hosting of feasts may be a particularly effective means through which to demonstrate one's economic and political abilities, and to engender prestige and the support of followers. Numerous aspects of feasting operate as public counting and ordering devices, which in turn reduce the vagueness of a social and political situation by promoting social comparison. For example, depending upon the quantity and quality of resources mobilized for communal feasts, and the frequency with which they are mobilized, feasting can be a quantitative measure of the abilities of the host as an efficient, skillful, vital, and generous leader (Blackburn 1976; Brandt 1994:16; Clark and Blake 1994; Rappaport 1979:184; Riches 1984; Wiessner 1996:6). Since organizing and financing communal feasts often involves the cooperation of multiple individuals (e.g., communal hunts or large-scale domestic animal slaughters often precede communal feasts), large and elaborate feasts indicate that the host has control over the labor of others and is an efficient mobilizer of cooperative effort and, thus, a potential leader (Hayden 1996; Johnson and Earle 1987:160-161). Moreover, the degree to which the host successfully coordinates *intercommunity* participation at feasts is a particularly strong incentive for community allegiance and support, especially in situations involving supra-community alliances, exchange and marriage relations, conflict, and competition (Clark and Blake 1994; Johnson and Earle 1987; Kelly 1991; Rappaport 1984 [1968]; Spencer 1994; Strathern 1971). As Wiessner (1996:6) notes, "when food distributions are financed from outside,

such as in many Highland New Guinea Big-man societies, abundance of food also is an indicator of a broad network of supportive social ties." Finally, if rare, exotic, or highly valued resources are presented and consumed in a feast, both the host's success as a procurer of these resources and, potentially, the host's control of sacred knowledge (i.e., the knowledge of how to acquire the exotic or rare resources) may be demonstrated by hosting a particularly successful feast.

These display/performance aspects of communal feasting that promote social comparison operate in tandem with feasting's more fundamental capacity as a vehicle for engendering political support by creating debt-obligations through the unequal imparting of gifts and food (Bender 1985; Clark and Blake 1994; Gosden 1989; Hayden 1995, 1996; Riches 1984; Sahlins 1972). The creation of debt obligation is, in many anthropologists' eyes, a fundamental aspect of feasting that makes it a potent political vehicle (Clark and Blake 1994; Gosden 1989; Hayden 1995, 1996; Lightfoot and Feinman 1982:66; Mauss 1967; Walens 1981).

The Entrepreneur/Big Man organizers benefit by establishing a wide network of contractual debt relationships that motivate people to produce and surrender surpluses that Entrepreneurs can disproportionately control. If successful, Entrepreneurs therefore exert more control over labor and also obtain direct material profits in the form of increases in wealth (Hayden 1995:25).

However, indebtedness may not be an effective political resource unless there are social or technological mechanisms in place that allow for the monopolization of the resources necessary to finance a feast so that a number of potential followers incur debt without the means for repayment by either paying off the debt or financing their own feast. It is only under these conditions that feasts may be used effectively to amplify and maintain social differences over the long term (e.g., a generation), regardless of the productivity of the environment. In addition, financing a feast may place the host in considerable debt to the host's supporters, a situation that may actually lessen the status of the host as an independent leader. These points are addressed below.

There is tremendous variation in what has been termed feasting in middle-range societies. Most discussions of this variation have been couched in terms of ideal "types" (e.g., Dietler 1996; Hayden 1995,

1996). The approach taken here, while not denying the utility of types as analytical constructs, focuses more on three particular dimensions of feasting that can combine in a number of ways to produce a variety of social and economic effects: 1) the scale of participation and financing; 2) the frequency and structure of occurrence; and 3) the food resources used.

### *Scale of Participation and Finance*

Communal feasts can range in scale from those in which a single household sponsors a feast for bilateral relatives or other households to those hosted by entire villages and offered to members of multiple communities. The scale of most communal feasts ranks somewhere between these two extremes. Among the Mae Enga and Chimbu of Highland New Guinea, feasts may be hosted by tribes (made up of clans), clans, subclans, or lineages (Brown 1972:46). Many feasts in Puebloan communities are sponsored by multiple households within a community, with much of the community invited (or obligated) to participate (Ford 1972). To a large extent, the means through which a feast is financed, and ultimately the purpose of the feast, determines its scale. Here it is useful to distinguish between household-level finance and supra-household finance (cf. Strathern 1971). Assuming there are inherent limits on home production as a means of expanding the resource base of a feast, the establishment of social relations outside the lineage or household through sodality membership, marriage, exchange, or indebtedness all become paramount to hosting and financing large-scale feasts. Postcontact Mae Enga big men of highland New Guinea, for example, may draw upon upwards of 2,000 followers for a single feast (Lederman 1990). The greater the scale of the feast, the greater the potential for prestige enhancement on the part of sponsors. Moreover, using feasting as a recurrent social practice to enhance prestige usually requires financing on a larger scale than that of the single household or lineage (Young 1985).

Scale also may relate to whether feasts are primarily "intra-communal" or "inter-communal" affairs (although this distinction is often hard to make ethnographically.)<sup>2</sup> Hayden (1995), for instance, delineates within-group feasts, which he terms "solidarity feasts," and between-group feasts, which are either "reciprocal" or "competitive" feasts. Reciprocal feasts function primarily to create alliances and

promote cooperation among groups, while competitive feasts are hosted primarily to enhance the prestige, and political and economic support, of an aggrandizer and his/her followers or to negotiate and reaffirm extra-community political ties and agreements (Hayden 1995:27, 31).

Many within-group feasts have the principal effect of facilitating social integration or redistributing food among households within the village (Brandt 1994; Ford 1972; Poyer 1991). Feasts of this type are usually financed by multiple households (often anonymously) and tend to be relatively non-competitive in nature. Compared to situations in which sponsors compete to enhance their prestige by contributing more to a feast than other sponsors, the inherent anonymity of, and lack of direct competition for, prestige in many intra-community integrative feasts tends to limit the quantity of resources mobilized.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, when feasts involve more than one community, cooperative effort on the part of village co-residents often facilitates the financing of larger and more elaborate feasts than is possible in intra-village contexts. It is in the context of inter-community (or large-scale) feasts that the prestige of aggrandizers becomes greatly enhanced relative to their followers (Clark and Blake 1994; Hayden 1995; Kelly 1991; Spencer 1994).

#### *Frequency and Structure of Occurrence*

Much of the variation in occurrence of feasts is related to the degree to which feasting is regulated by the structure of ritual. Feasting often is associated with calendrical rituals that occur at prescribed times of the year. The *kyanakwe* feasting ceremony of the Zuni, for example, is held four times a year (Parsons 1918:173). Many feasts are held only once every several years. The *Kaiko* ritual of the Tsembaga of New Guinea may take place only once every 7 to 15 years (Rappaport 1984 [1968]). The scale of these feasts is smaller than that of unregulated or *ad hoc* (Spielmann 1991:76) feasts. *Kaiko* ritual feasts involve the participation of hundreds of people from several communities. Yet, over a year-long period of ritual feasting, only a hundred or so pigs may be killed by members of a single community (Rappaport 1984 [1968]:57). In contrast, the highly competitive, "less regulated" (in terms of scheduling) feasting of the Mae Enga of Highland New Guinea may involve the killing of up to 240 pigs *per feast*, and there may be several feasts per year, depending

upon the productivity (and production) of feasting resources, as well as the number of aspiring leaders competing for prestige (Lederman 1990). Thus, *ad hoc* feasts are often geared more toward the enhancement of prestige than are feasts that are highly structured by a ritual cycle. Moreover, the feasibility of *ad hoc* feasts as aggrandizing vehicles may be restricted by the potential of the subsistence economy to generate a surplus (Hayden 1996). Societies with seasonally structured subsistence abundances may be restricted to feasting in the contexts of seasonally structured ritual feasts. This is especially the case in the context of the unpredictable yields of hunting and gathering and dry-farm agriculture.

The scheduling of feasts associated with rite-of-passage rituals, such as weddings and initiation rituals, and with life-crisis events, such as mourning rituals, may not be "regulated" to the same degree as feasts connected with a ritual cycle. Mourning rituals, for instance, can take place months or years after a death, allowing a family to collect the necessary food and goods. Mortuary feasts are indeed prime aggrandizing events in various parts of North America and Melanesia (Spielmann 1991). Initiation rites also may be postponed until there are enough initiates (i.e., the wherewithal to hold appropriately elaborate ceremonies) (Barth 1975; Bloch 1992; Young 1971). On the other hand, male initiation rites in many large-scale New Guinean societies were highly regulated in the sense of occurring at regular intervals (Bateson 1958:244–246; Forge 1970; Roscoe 1990).

Communal feasting also may be part of healing ceremonies, which are not usually structured by ritual cycles but which must occur on a fairly regular basis to prevent or cure illness.<sup>4</sup> The Blessingway ceremony of the Navajo, for example, involves the feeding of the audience, which can sometimes number in the thousands. These ceremonies are conducted by part-time ritual specialists (*hatahli*) but are hosted by the patient and the patient's family. Thus, this feasting is not competitive, but an obligation of the patient and his entourage. In contrast to feasts hosted by self-selected aggrandizers, the fact that the host is "chosen" more or less randomly (i.e., whoever gets sick) creates a situation in which feasting operates to distribute rather than consolidate responsibility, and perhaps prestige,<sup>5</sup> and serves as an element in a larger ritual structure that operates to maintain community and tribal integration (Brugge and Gilpin



2000). In contrast, in New Guinea, feasts associated with healing ceremonies can be an avenue for prestige-enhancement on the part of big men. The relatives of the “victim” may organize and finance the feast, and particularly competitive individuals can search out opportunities (i.e., sick relatives) to exploit by feasting (Paul Roscoe, personal communication 1999).

### *Resources Used*

Recent literature concerning feasting and its role in the origins of social inequality emphasizes the use of resources that are abundant and whose productivity may be effectively intensified by aspiring leaders (e.g., r-selected plant and animal resources) (Hayden 1990, 1995). Arnold (1996:61) notes that, along the Northwest Coast, particularly effective feasts involve the presentation and consumption or destruction by leaders of labor-intensive foods (such as prestige items from elite gardens, domestic dogs, tobacco, or fermented beverages). Alternatively, the consistent use of relatively rare resources may be an additional means through which to gain prestige and place individuals in contractual debt (Hayden 1996:130). Feasting resources that must be obtained through exchange (Kelly 1991), resources requiring new technologies for their processing (Clark and Blake 1994), and relatively rare, large-bodied hunted game (Kent 1989) may play an important symbolic role in prestige-enhancement, especially if consistent access to these resources is restricted within or among communities.

Differential access to and sharing of hunted resources is an important source of prestige in all small-scale sedentary societies. Moreover, the more scarce large-bodied mammals are on the landscape, the more prestige they confer on the hunter or hunt organizer (Kent 1989). In such situations, *public display* of sustained and successful access to, and the sharing of, hunted game by an individual is one of the principal ways status may be achieved and reproduced (Hawkes 1990; Kent 1989). Although this is particularly true of hunter-gatherer groups, success in hunting is also an important element of prestige-building in small-scale farming communities (Brandt 1994; Godelier 1982; Kensinger 1983, 1984; Kent 1989). Although differential access to hunted resources *among* communities may relate to variability in access to prime hunting grounds, variable access *within* small-scale communities often relates

to differential abilities to organize communal hunts. This difference may arise from varying abilities to organize a following within a community (or co-opt the labor of community members), or from differential access to the technology or ritual knowledge necessary to conduct a communal hunt (e.g., Grier 1996; Potter 1997a).

### *Summary*

In summary, while feasting may be an effective means for enhancing prestige, and for incurring debt obligations on the part of aspiring leaders or “aggrandizers,” hosting a feast also may be an obligation that places the host in considerable debt to family members or others who supported the feast with commodities or effort (cf. Sahlins 1963). Moreover, not all feasts are created equal. While feasts operate to foster both solidarity and competition at some level, in many contexts feasts primarily promote solidarity, while in others competition and prestige enhancement are emphasized. The contexts of feasting that provide the greatest potential for enhancing social differentiation are those in which the sources of financing are extensive, participation is multi-communal (or involves substantial segments of very large communities), the frequency and timing are not highly structured by a ritual cycle, and the resources used are themselves highly valued, rare, and prestigious.

### **Feasting in the American Southwest**

#### *Historic and Modern Pueblo Communities*

In contrast to many other regions of the world with long histories of ethnographic research, detailed ethnographic accounts of feasting in the Southwest are relatively rare. It is difficult to know whether the paucity of detailed accounts is due to ethnographer bias or to the lack of overt, large-scale feasts in historic Puebloan society. Today, behaviors in Pueblos that might be regarded as feasting are quite variable in their structure, but all are relatively de-emphasized as political vehicles. During Niman ceremonies of the Hopi, for example, Kachinas distribute anonymously contributed food within a communal setting, but this food is consumed, for the most part, in the privacy of individual homes. Hopi weddings usually last at least a week, during which time huge amounts of food are mobilized, and much of it is presented and consumed during associated feasts. The bride’s

family provides hearth-oriented goods, such as flour, cornmeal, and baked goods. The groom's family supplies meat for the feasts and weaves the wedding robes. Financing the wedding feasts is an obligation, and the amount of corn required not only for the feasts but also for payment for the woven robes to the groom's family, may place the bride's family in debt for up to three years, even if surpluses have been accumulating for over two years (Walker 1999).

At Zuni, feasting occurs during Shalako dances. Food, usually consisting of mutton stew and bread, is set out for guests visiting the ceremonies being conducted at each of the new homes. Yet the feasts are small in scale (sponsored by the individual household), involve resources that are not particularly high in social or economic value (domestic sheep and bread), and, like Navajo feasting ceremonies, are hosted by different people each year. At Zuni, the host of a Shalako feast is selected by, and obligated to, the community (Kroeber 1917).

Feasting in Eastern Pueblo communities is quite variable as well, and in contrast to the Western Pueblos, often occurs during Christian-influenced ceremonies. On Feast Day at Santa Ana Pueblo, one of five Keresan-speaking pueblo communities, dancers place food (again, anonymously contributed) in the center of the plaza to be distributed to individual households. At Zia and Santo Domingo Pueblos, also Keresan-speaking communities, during the Feast for the Dead, which occurs on November 1, food is prepared for the souls that will return on that day. Women from the community take food to the ceremonial houses, where the men make prayer sticks. However, the food placed in the ceremonial houses remains untouched. In the afternoon the men return to their houses and eat, after which any remaining food, and the dishes, are cleared away (White 1935:148–149; 1974:263–264).

At Tewa-speaking Santa Clara Pueblo, feasts take place in and are hosted by individual households, often the most politically influential households. At San Juan Pueblo, another Tewa-speaking community,

a feast is an occasion when all *matu'i* [bilateral relatives] eat together in at least one household. Feasts are held for baptisms, marriages, deaths, anniversaries of deaths, new officers, special saints' days, moiety ceremonies, and after certain dances, especially the Turtle Dance on December 26<sup>th</sup>. . . . During a feast on a public dance day visitors to the village are invited to homes to eat. These visitors include other

Indians, Spanish-Americans, and Anglos. By day's end some families have fed more than fifty persons and some individuals have eaten in at least ten houses [Ford 1992:101–102].

In each of these cases, feasts may be considered what Hayden (1995) refers to as "solidarity" feasts, operating to reinforce social integration and to redistribute food within communities from the "haves" to the "have nots" (Ford 1992:207). They are primarily intra-community feasts, many are structured by a ritual cycle, and they are contributed to anonymously, are hosted by one or a few households, or restrict participation to bilateral relatives. While some feasts, such as those associated with weddings, may be inordinately large in scale, they may be considered more an obligation to community members and more related to proving communal worthiness than an opportunity for prestige enhancement and placing "followers" in debt. Indeed, financing large feasts often places the host and his or her family in considerable debt for many years, which can have the effect of actually lowering status. All of these aspects tend to maximize the communal integrative effects and minimize the political effects of feasting in modern Puebloan society.

### *Prehistoric Communities*

The lack of a strong ethnographic analogue for competitive forms of communal feasting in the Pueblos ironically has allowed for some very sophisticated archaeological studies of feasting in the prehistoric record. Rather than relying on a single historic analogue, these studies tend to be founded on robust and highly diverse cross-cultural and archaeological data. Indeed, the focus of archaeological studies of feasting has ranged from the earliest villages in the Southwest to late prehistoric communities that are large enough to be considered "towns." As might be expected, these studies vary tremendously in their approaches and in their conclusions. However, there are some important similarities across time as well. In an attempt to highlight and explain these differences and similarities, a brief summary of these studies is presented here.

*Pueblo I Period—The Earliest Villages.* Some of the earliest true villages in the Southwest appear in the Dolores area of southwestern Colorado during what is known as the Pueblo I period, from about A.D. 750 to 900. One of the largest and best-documented villages of this time is McPhee Village, con-

sisting of a number of contemporary room blocks with associated pit structures. Wilshusen (1989) has described a range of ritual features evident in the pit structures and has argued that different combinations of these features define a hierarchy of ritual activity within villages. Pit structures at the apex of this hierarchy have floor areas greater than 60 m<sup>2</sup> and have elaborate ritual features, such as central vaults (possible foot drums), sipapus, benches, and holes that may have been for altars and prayer sticks.

Moreover, Blinman (1989) has demonstrated a significant correlation between relatively high frequencies of redware bowls, which were imported to the area during the ninth century A.D., and McPhee Village room blocks associated with over-sized pit structures that contained the most intricate ritual features. He concludes that it is the communal ceremonial behaviors associated with these structures that account for the inflated frequencies of redware bowls, both because of their high value as imported commodities and because of their range of functions in serving and consumption related to feasting. He notes that feasting was likely more of a “potluck” rather than a “potlatch” situation, since it appears that surplus cooking, evidenced by a high proportion of large cooking jars, occurred at many room blocks, while communal consumption, evidenced by a surplus of bowl sherds in the refuse of the host room block, occurred primarily at the room blocks with the largest and most elaborate pit structures.

Building on these earlier studies, Potter (1997b) examined the published faunal data from the site and noted a surplus of lagomorphs (primarily jackrabbits) and ritual fauna (wild birds and carnivores) associated with one of the most elaborate pit structures. These data support the ritual function of the structure and suggest that if communal feasting did occur there, as the ceramic data suggest, then jackrabbits were a primary feasting resource. Ethnographically, historic Pueblo groups commonly hunted rabbits and hares communally prior to and specifically for communal feasts (Anell 1969; Beaglehole 1936; Gnabaskik 1981; Parsons 1918; White 1932). Since lagomorph populations renew themselves quickly and are usually not restricted by the seasonal constraints of their environment, they are considered an ideal ritual food, either to feed the performers in a ceremony or to “feed” the fetishes used in rites (Tyler 1975).

Other game is seasonal in nature and may not be at hand when needed for a ceremony held on a particular date, as we saw when a deer had to be conjured up by magic at Isleta. A supply of rabbit meat, on the other hand, can be brought in for any given date of the year [Tyler 1975:134].

Thus, within the Pueblo I village, feasts were intra-communal affairs; they were financed and consumed communally. The resources used were not of high value, nor were they particularly monopolizable. Moreover, feasting appears to have been linked with and structured by the rituals conducted in over-sized pit structures, and financed by most or all of the participants. All of these contextual aspects suggest that feasts operated less as a competitive arena and more as an integrative medium. What is particularly intriguing about the Pueblo I situation, however, is the association of *communal* “potluck” feasting with particular room blocks (i.e., habitations) within the community. While the political ramifications of the differential hosting of communal ritual feasting among households is difficult to assess, it is interesting that these early villages were short lived (e.g., fewer than 50 years). And although there is strong climatic correlation (drought and cold) with the end of the Pueblo I period of aggregation (Orcutt et al. 1990), the integrative effectiveness of the rituals and associated feasts may have been limited as well, contributing to the collapse of aggregated villages at about A.D. 900.

*Pueblo II Period—The Chaco Phenomenon.* There has been considerable debate as to the nature of the sociopolitical organization of the Anasazi Southwest from A.D. 900 to 1150 (Doyel 1992; Judge 1979; Judge et al. 1981; Lekson et al. 1988; Potter 1992; Sebastian 1992; Toll 1985; Vivian 1989, 1990). An exhaustive review of these arguments is beyond the scope of this paper; however, the level of feasting has been a particularly integral component of some interpretations, especially those arguing against large-scale redistribution of resources within Chaco Canyon. For example, the ceramic evidence from Pueblo Alto, a large town site on the mesa overlooking Chaco Canyon, indicates the likelihood of periodic large “consumption events” rather than periodic redistributive events (Toll 1984:132). Evidence appears not only in the sheer quantity of material at Pueblo Alto (i.e., ceramic deposition far outweighed the population of the site), but in the high proportion of utility wares, primarily cooking jars, the extremely



high proportion of imports, especially Chuskan graywares, and the low diversity of ceramic forms in the Trash Mound at Pueblo Alto (although see Wills [1998] for an alternative interpretation)<sup>6</sup>.

In a similar vein, Lekson et al. (1988) have suggested that the extraordinary number of artifacts associated with Pueblo Alto, the large size of the Trash Mound relative to the habitation area at this site, and the stratigraphic layering of the mound (as if trash were deposited intermittently rather than daily), is evidence of seasonal gatherings of large numbers of people who participated in feasting. The location of the Trash Mound in proximity to two exterior plazas at the juncture of several prehistoric roads further supports this interpretation. Moreover, a primary resource of these feasts appears to have been deer imported from the Chuska Mountains (Akins 1982, 1985). The Trash Mound at Pueblo Alto yielded the highest proportion of deer, which were relatively scarce in the local environment, and the most high-meat-bearing portions of the deer of all sites within Chaco Canyon. The non-local provenance of deer meat and many of the ceramics at Pueblo Alto suggests that feasts were financed to a large extent by visitors/pilgrims to the site.

Compared to the Pueblo I example, feasting at Pueblo Alto appears to have been large in scale, was multicommunal in both participation and financing, and featured highly valuable exotic, large-bodied game as a primary resource, all of which potentially allowed for much greater prestige enhancement for hosts. However, it is still not clear why the feasts occurred at Chaco Canyon, nor the extent to which the local resident population participated in financing these feasts. While a full understanding of the Chaco phenomenon has yet to be reached, current thought views the greathouse communities in the canyon as voluntary creations by outlying regional communities rather than as groups of laborers enticed or coerced from those communities by a centralized power. Thus, even if the gatherings were primarily ceremonial in nature and structured by a ritual cycle, as has been argued (Lekson et al. 1988; Toll 1984), competitive feasting for prestige among outlying groups may have occurred at Pueblo Alto.

Interestingly, Chaco Canyon is in one of the harshest environments in the Southwest. As Dean (1992:35) suggests, "lying in the rain shadow of the Chuska Mountains, Chaco Canyon seems an unlikely spot for the most spectacular fluorescence of the

Anasazi cultural tradition." The scale of feasting thus was unrelated to local environmental productivity and was more a component of a highly developed political and ritual system that incorporated participants from a wide area, potentially providing the opportunity for considerable prestige enhancement. The large scale of the feasts, the use of exotic, highly valued food resources, and the multicommunal participation and financing suggest that these events were more than solidarity feasts. In many small-scale agricultural societies, feasts are used for mobilizing communal labor (Dietler 1990:366). Indeed, feasts at Chaco may have played a role in provisioning the communal labor necessary for much of the large-scale construction evident throughout the canyon. "It is of great importance to the understanding of Pueblo Alto's place in the canyon, that the apparently massive deposition in the Trash Mound was contemporaneous with building peaks in the canyon" (Toll and McKenna 1987:217).

*Pueblo III Period—The Great Pueblo Period.* Evidence for feasting during the late Pueblo III Period (A.D. 1225–1280) is just now coming to light. Excavations conducted by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center at Sand Canyon Pueblo and Castle Rock Pueblo, two late Pueblo III aggregated settlements in the Mesa Verde area of Southwestern Colorado, have yielded data suggesting that feasting occurred differentially within and among communities, and in association with communal architecture. At both Sand Canyon Pueblo and Castle Rock Pueblo, ceramic rim arc data indicate a bimodal distribution of bowl sizes, with five small bowls roughly equaling the volume of one large bowl. Such distinct size modes were not emphasized in the pottery of contemporaneous and earlier thirteenth century hamlets in the Sand Canyon locality (Ortman 1999). This finding suggests the possibility of two very different scales of preparation/serving/consumption, one probably domestic and one probably communal and occurring at the larger villages within communities.

Sand Canyon Pueblo in particular, the central village of a dispersed community, may have been the locus of some fairly large-scale feasting. This site yielded by far the largest proportion of large cooking vessels within the Sand Canyon locality, which includes numerous contemporaneous hamlets. Additionally, the large ceremonial room (or great kiva) at Sand Canyon shows the highest bowl-to-jar ratio within the site, and the diversity of bowl designs is

greater than would be expected given the sample size, suggesting that a variety of people across the community, or perhaps even from outside the community, participated in the consumption of food at this communal structure (Nicklaw 1995; Ortman 1999).

Moreover, Driver (1993) has observed that the proportion of deer associated with Sand Canyon Pueblo is high in comparison with the proportions at small contemporaneous habitations in the surrounding area, and suggests as one of several hypotheses that this may reflect the use of deer by elites for public ceremonies. However, recent work by Muir (1999) indicates that deer remains are in fact quite spottily distributed within the site and appear to be associated with specific, noncommunal areas, perhaps elite residences, rather than public areas that would lend themselves to communal feasting.

Thus, while the ceramic data suggest that communal feasting occurred at the larger aggregated villages, the faunal data are more equivocal, and we thus have little to suggest what particular food resources were communally consumed. However, the differential distribution of feasting within the larger community or locality of Sand Canyon is intriguing and may relate to the fact that Sand Canyon Pueblo is the largest site within the community or locality, and the only site that has a great kiva and a plaza.

*Pueblo IV Period—The Central Rio Grande.* The Pueblo IV Period was a time of migration and reorganization across the Southwest (Spielmann 1998a). The large-scale movement of populations across the landscape, the aggregation of populations into nucleated, plaza-oriented pueblos, and the apparent spatial clustering of these large pueblos designates a major transformation in systems of social relations within and among communities. The appearance of central plazas also marks a major shift in ritual practice. Prior to 1275 unroofed and roofed great kivas were the focus of much communal ritual activity (Kintigh 1994). With the advent of central plazas, new, more inclusive ritual forms, such as Kachina religion, emerged (Adams 1991).

The beginning of the Pueblo IV period also witnessed an increase in the specialized production and long-distance exchange of goods in many areas, and the introduction of new iconographies across the Southwest. These changes are especially evident in the production, distribution, and decoration of pottery. By the fourteenth century, bichrome and polychrome vessels with red and yellow slips were

adopted throughout most of the Southwest (Crown 1992). Many of these pottery vessels exhibit glaze paint and are in the Pinedale style, characterized by interlocking solids and hatched motifs (Crown 1992). Later Pueblo IV glaze-ware ceramics were less geometric in design and layout, and incorporated more representational and free-flowing designs. In many areas, such as the Rio Grande, these new ceramic types represent a radical departure from the previous black-on-white ceramic aesthetic of the Pueblo III period (Crown 1992; Montgomery and Reid 1990; Snow 1982).

Spielmann (1998b:258) has recently argued that “during the fourteenth century in the Rio Grande, large glaze bowls were used in a new ritual context for communal feasting, with each household contributing to the feast.” Similarly, she suggests that during the fifteenth century, the bimodal distribution of Rio Grande glaze-ware bowl sizes represents their use both in ceremonial feasting (large bowl size) and domestic food consumption (small bowl size). The demand created by this new ritual system contributed to the rapid and widespread distribution of glaze-ware bowls in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Graves (1996) also has argued for the occurrence of communal feasting at large Pueblo IV villages along the Rio Grande. He found that one community in the Salinas region, Gran Quivira, hosted large-scale, multicommunal feasts far more frequently than other communities, and that this same “central” community participated in long-distance exchange more intensively than other communities. The evidence for feasting includes an extraordinary abundance of cooking pots at Gran Quivira relative to other sites (Graves 1996). Evidence for long-distance exchange includes the diverse and distant provenance of many glaze-ware bowls (Graves 1996) and the high relative abundance of bison meat obtained from Plains Indians (Potter 1995). Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest what primary food resources were consumed in communal feasts at Rio Grande pueblos.

The multicommunal scale and association of tradewares with feasting at this site suggests the potential for prestige enhancement on a par with the classic big man system. As Spielmann (1998c:15) notes, “competition among individuals probably led to some degree of personal aggrandizement not unlike that witnessed in big man systems.” At this point, however, this is simply a highly plausible model that awaits confirmation with independent data.

Interestingly, Pueblo IV sites within the Salinas area were not situated in agriculturally poor areas. Although water was not locally abundant at any site, floodwater farming appears to have been feasible at each of the communities (Hill 1998). Likewise, overhunting of the local environment appears to have been effectively dealt with at each community, through either increasingly intensive processing of hunted carcasses or exchange with Plains Indians for bison meat (Potter 1995). Thus, there is no local environmental reason for feasting to have been more common at one site than at others. It is fairly apparent, however, that one pueblo, Gran Quivira, dominated the ritual and political arenas in the Salinas Pueblo cluster (Graves 1996; Mobley-Tanaka 1998; Potter 1995; Spielmann 1998b). Again, then, feasting was not an environmentally driven phenomenon, but one that was structured by the contingencies of the local political history of the communities in question.

This example also highlights a fundamental difference between Pueblo IV period feasting and feasting prior to A.D. 1275. Although feasting during the Pueblo IV period may have facilitated the aggrandizement of individuals in some parts of the Southwest, it is also apparent that at this time the *community* became the primary political vehicle rather than a constituent of the community, such as the household (as in the Pueblo I McPhee Village example), or central village of the community (as in the Pueblo III Sand Canyon Pueblo example). During the Pueblo IV period the location of feasts—the central plaza—became more communal and inclusive and not spatially associated with particular segments of the community. In this way, feasting became more a force for communal integration and less a source of differentiation within the community.

The following more detailed case study focuses on the role of feasting in large Pueblo IV communities in the Zuni area. In contrast to the eastern Pueblo example, long-distance exchange did not occur on a large scale in the Zuni area, and the “central pueblo” concept was not as well developed. Large feasts in this context appear to have played a minimal role politically and to have operated to reinforce both ritual integration within the community and ritual differentiation among communities.

### Late Prehistoric Feasting in the Zuni Area

The Zuni area is in the heart of the Southwest, in west-central New Mexico near the Arizona/New

Mexico border (Figure 1). The sites included in this study are at the base of the Zuni Mountains in the El Morro Valley, the easternmost portion of the Zuni area. The El Morro Valley is a high, broad valley that lies at about 7,000 feet elevation. Water is fairly plentiful in the form of springs and natural catchments, and the broad, flat plains are well suited to runoff agriculture. Game animals, especially deer, are fairly plentiful in and around the Zuni Mountains. The primary limiting subsistence variable is the short growing season, which averages about 113 days. Nevertheless, several very large communities were occupied in the valley from about A.D. 1250 to 1350, including Scribe S, Tinaja, Cienega, Mirabal, Pueblo de Los Muertos, and Atsinna (Figure 2). These sites were excavated in the early 1970s as part of the Cibola Archaeological Research Project (CARP) (Watson, LeBlanc, and Redman 1980).

At about A.D. 1275, Zuni-area populations abandoned settlements of multiple, loosely clustered, separately constructed buildings (e.g., Scribe S and Tinaja) and constructed larger, single-building, inward-facing settlements organized around plazas (e.g., Pueblo de los Muertos, Cienega, Mirabal, and Atsinna) (Figures 3 and 4). Reorganization into nucleated, plaza-oriented settlements at this time signifies the beginning of the Pueblo IV period and marks a major shift in ritual practice. Prior to 1275 great kivas, both unroofed and roofed, were the focus of much communal ritual activity (Kintigh 1994). After 1275, large, enclosed plazas replaced great kivas as the predominant locus of communal ritual.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, compared to the formally defined spaces of earlier Chacoan and Mimbres sites, as well as the large central spaces of Pueblo IV sites such as Grasshopper Pueblo, the early Pueblo IV plazas of the Zuni area were unique in that they were completely defined and enclosed by the entire community, and they were planned and enclosed during their initial construction (Potter 1998). This new, communally defined, formal space provided the ideal context for communal activities, such as feasting.

### Faunal Evidence of Feasting

Intrasite patterning of the faunal remains at Pueblo de los Muertos, the most extensively sampled Pueblo IV site in the El Morro Valley (Figure 4), indicates that turkeys were the primary resource associated with public space. Figure 5 presents a plot of the first two components of a Correspondence Analysis<sup>8</sup> per-

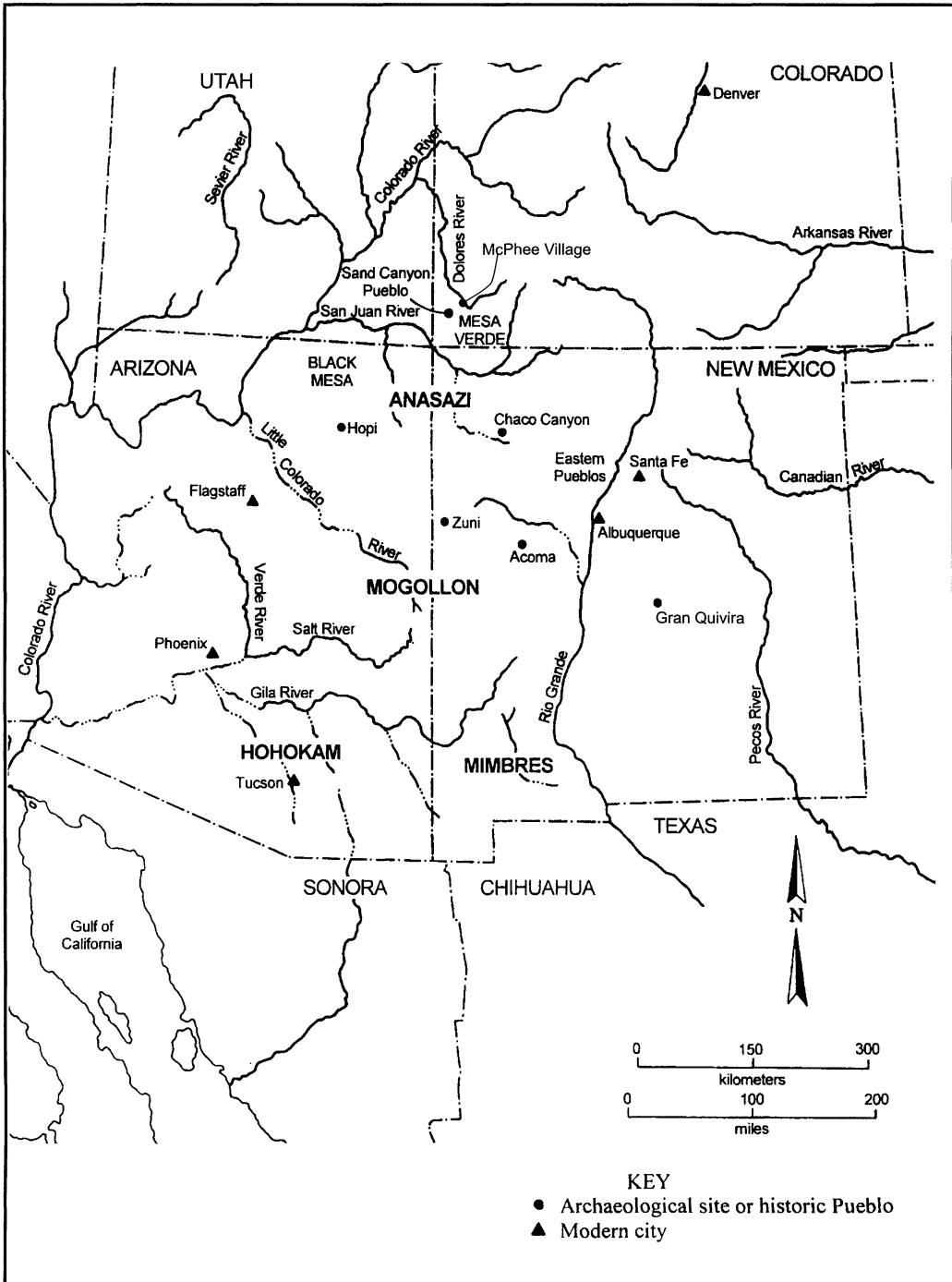


Figure 1. Location of sites discussed in text.

formed on the taxonomic frequency data from the site (NISP = 7456). All of the assemblages from the plaza (Unit Numbers 4612, 5325, 5617, 3813, 4915) exhibit a high proportion of turkey remains. The assemblages recovered from the midden outside the

village (Unit Numbers 2127, 2921, 4733), on the other hand, exhibit a high proportion of cottontail. While sample sizes at other sites are much smaller and less representative of the community as a whole, this pattern seems to be consistent among Pueblo IV



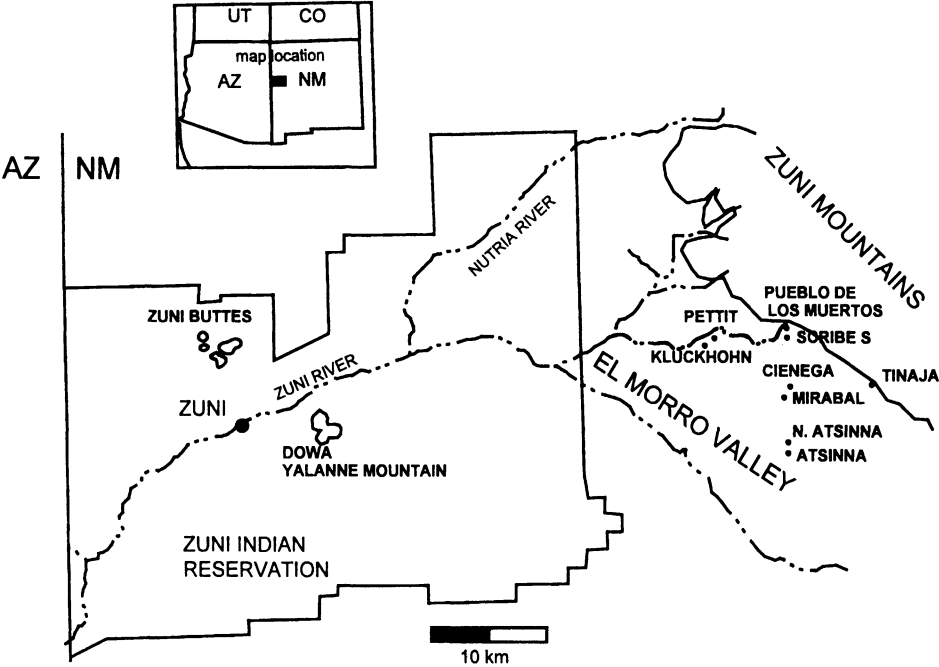


Figure 2. Location of sites in the El Morro Valley.

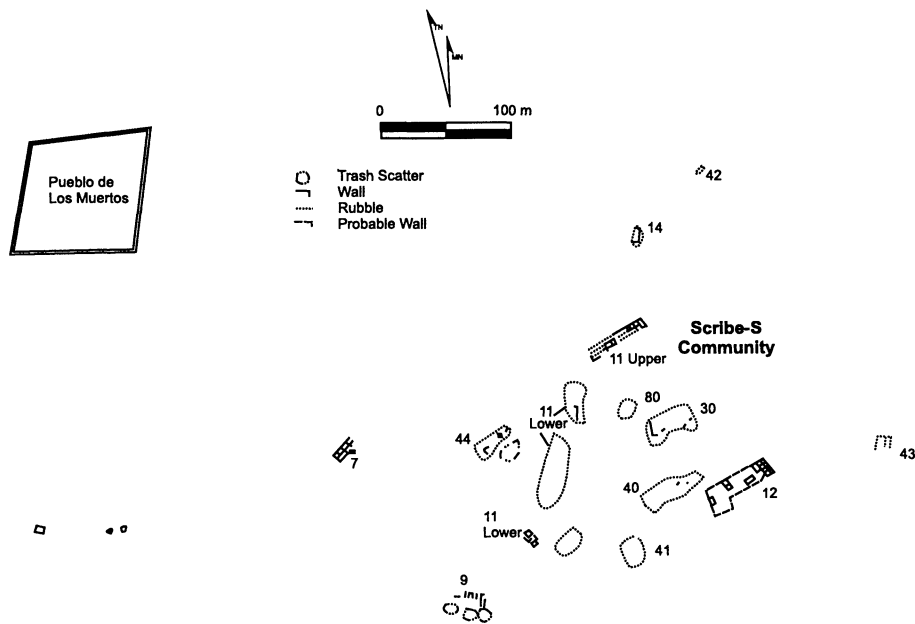


Figure 3. Plan map of Pueblo de los Muertos with excavated areas labeled.

## PUEBLO DE LOS MUERTOS

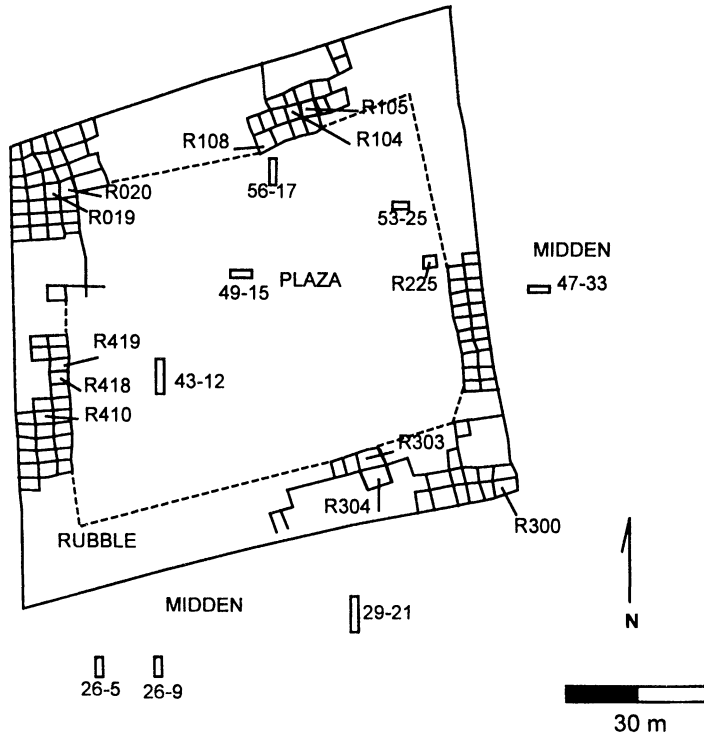


Figure 4. Plan map of Scribe S community with Pueblo de los Muertos in background.

communities in the study area (Potter 1997a).

The discreteness and persistence (e.g., some plaza units date slightly later than others [Potter 1997a:128]) of the spatial patterns generated by the Correspondence Analysis indicate consistent deposition of certain taxa in distinct locales, and that plaza, midden, and room assemblages probably represent different types of faunal consumption. In particular, the distinctiveness of the plaza deposits in comparison to the external midden suggests that plaza assemblages represent something other than simply domestic consumption of fauna. For example, the high proportion of turkey remains associated with plaza deposits may represent turkey rearing, communal feasting on domestic turkeys, or both.

In addition to expecting feasting refuse to be associated with public, communal space, the condition of the bones themselves should vary according to how they were processed and consumed. Specifically, less intensive processing of communally consumed fauna (i.e., burning and breaking) than of domestically consumed fauna was expected. Animals consumed in communal feasts tend to be roasted

whole (Rappaport 1984 [1968]:180) and processed more expediently and less intensively for marrow and grease (Scott and Jackson 1995) than those consumed in domestic contexts. This appears to indeed have been the case with the Pueblo de los Muertos faunal assemblages. Twenty-four percent of the midden fauna exhibited evidence of burning, while only 13 percent of the plaza trash was burned. Additionally, 67 percent of the midden fauna was less than one-half complete, while only 48 percent of the plaza-derived fauna was fragmented to such a degree. These data strongly support the supposition that the midden represents the accumulation of largely domestic trash, which was more heavily processed, while the plaza deposits represent refuse generated by some combination of domestic trash disposal, turkey rearing, and communal feasting.

The production of turkeys as a resource appears to have been intensified across the Pueblo III to Pueblo IV transition within the El Morro Valley, probably due to the increased demand for turkeys for communal feasts. Turkeys compose 8 percent of Pueblo III faunal assemblages compared to 15 per-



Table 1. Frequencies and Assemblage Percentages of Small and Large Cooking Vessels.

Site	Primary Period of Occupation	Vessel Sizes		Total
		Small (rim diameter $\leq 24$ cm)	Large (rim diameter $>24$ cm)	
Scribe S	Pueblo III	17 (33) <sup>a</sup>	34 (67)	51
Tinaja	Pueblo III	43 (72)	17 (28)	60
Pueblo de los Muertos	Pueblo IV	28 (24)	86 (76)	114
Cienega	Pueblo IV	24 (40)	36 (60)	60
Mirabal	Pueblo IV	40 (56)	31 (44)	71
Atsinna	Pueblo IV	28 (64)	16 (36)	44
Total		180 (45)	220 (55)	400

<sup>a</sup>row percent

munal hunting practices after A.D. 1300 (Potter 1997a). Thus, the increase in turkey proportions does not appear to be related to a decrease in the availability of hunted resources, and is more likely related to increased demand for a predictable and sustainable communal feasting resource.

Finally, if women were involved in animal husbandry to a greater extent than men, as cross-cultural data suggest they probably were (Kent 1989), the association of turkeys with the plaza area and the concomitant intensification of turkey production across the Pueblo III to Pueblo IV period may indicate that the role of women in supplying meat to the Puebloan diet as well as for communal ritual feasts increased in importance. Grinding-bin data collected by Ortman (1998) from across the Southwest indicate that the traditionally female activity of grinding corn moved from within domestic architecture during the Pueblo III period to rooftops and plaza areas during the Pueblo IV period, becoming more visible and public in the process. Ortman suggests that this switch to a more communal setting for corn grinding was partly related to the production of resources for large-scale communal feasts by women, and I suggest a parallel trend for the intensification of turkey production. Bunzel (1992[1932]:501) in fact notes the important role of women in supplying food for ritual occasions at historic Zuni:

Although men offer food and cornmeal, it is always prepared for them by the women. This division in ritual is a reflection of the general economic pattern, in which females supply food and the males the clothing of the household. So also women furnish the food of the gods and men their clothing [in the form of prayer sticks].

In sum, intrasite patterns of fauna support the inference that communal feasting occurred on a fre-

quent and sustained basis within the Pueblo IV community. However, the extent to which communal feasting was a source of social differentiation within the community appears limited. The facts that the communal plaza, rather than particular subsets of the community, was the locus of feasting and that domesticated turkeys appear to have been a primary resource consumed in communal feasts suggest that communal feasting was not a context in which overt competition for status and prestige took place, but was instead a component of communal rituals that operated as a means to integrate these large communities and to distribute food (especially protein) to community members. Moreover, the role of women in supplying meat for communal ritual feasts appears to have increased in importance during the Pueblo IV period.

#### *Ceramic Evidence of Feasting*

While ceramic data are limited, there was some variation in cooking-pot size distributions among the four large Pueblo IV communities sampled. The expectation was that if some communities, or subsets of communities, hosted inter-group feasts more frequently than other communities, then a greater preponderance of larger cooking vessels should be associated with these sites (Blitz 1993; Graves 1995).

Table 1 presents the frequencies of small and large vessels at each site. In an attempt to exclude plainware vessels that had a purely storage function, sherds were selected based on the presence of sooting and association with unburned contexts. Most sherds derived from secondary trash in rooms. Small vessels were defined as those having a rim diameter less than 25 cm; large vessels had rim diameters greater than or equal to 25 cm (see below for empirical break between these two size classes). Importantly, rim diameters on a small sample ( $n = 9$ ) of



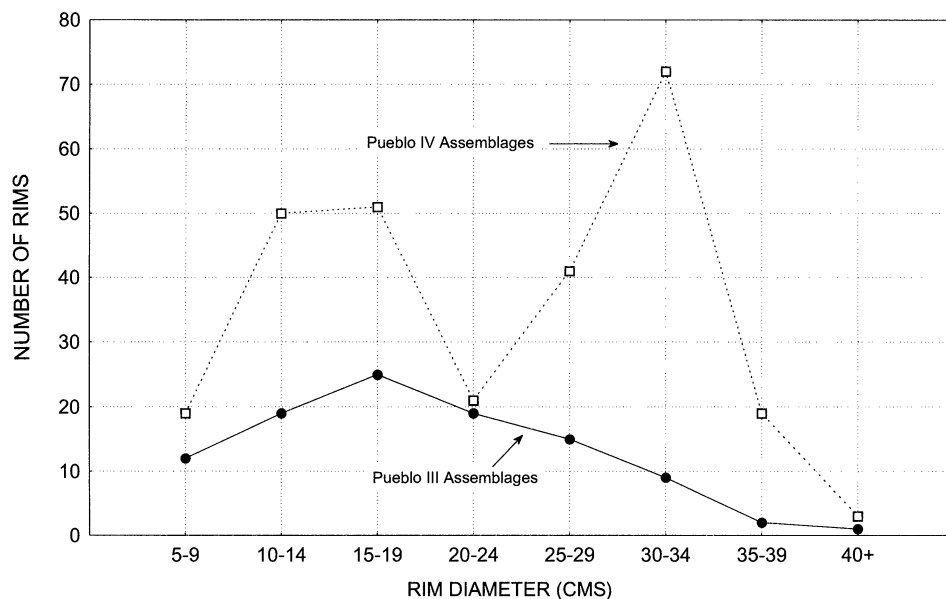


Figure 6. Distributions of cooking pot rim diameters from Pueblo III and Pueblo IV sites in the El Morro Valley.

reconstructed cooking vessels from El Morro Valley sites correlate very strongly with vessel height ( $r = .95$ ) and maximum vessel diameter ( $r = .99$ ), so that rim diameters are expected to estimate vessel volume reasonably accurately. Although counts of rim sherds do not give a precise indication of the quantification of vessel size (e.g., one needs to control for the fact that larger vessels break into more sherds), if the samples are truly random, then patterning in the data may be discussed in terms of general trends. In this vein, among Pueblo IV communities the assemblage from Pueblo de Los Muertos exhibited by far the highest proportion of large vessels (.76), while Atsinna's assemblage had the smallest proportion of large vessels (.36).

I suggest that the variation exhibited in the relative frequency of larger cooking pots among contemporaneously occupied sites is the result of the differential participation in and hosting of large-scale feasts, which may have translated into differentiation in local status among communities. Thus, feasting may have played a role not only in integrating social units within communities, but also in differentiating among communities. Indeed, ritual differentiation among Pueblo IV communities in this region is suggested by their distinctive morphologies (circular vs. square) and their associated ritual fauna (waterfowl vs. raptors) (Potter 1997a).

In addition to the variation in cooking-pot sizes

noted among assemblages within each phase, a broad temporal pattern was evident across the Pueblo III to Pueblo IV transition: distributions of rim diameters in Pueblo III assemblages (Scribe S and Tinaja) tend to be unimodal, while Pueblo IV rim diameters (Pueblo de Los Muertos, Cienega, Atsinna, Mirabal) are consistently bimodal in their distribution (Figure 6). The temporal transition from unimodal to bimodal distributions of cooking-pot size may relate to a formalization of the distinction between domestic cooking pots and those used for large-scale feasts during the Pueblo IV period. The unimodal variability of pot sizes during the Pueblo III phase is probably related to a number of factors, including variation in the size of the domestic group (Turner and Lofgren 1966) and the variable hosting of feasts by prestigious households within the community (Nelson 1981). At the transition to pre-planned, plaza-oriented communities, residence groups became more uniform in size (at least architecturally). As a result, one type of cooking pot (that used domestically) became consistently smaller and more uniform in size, while a second type of cooking pot (that used to cook for communal feasts) appears. As certain aspects of communal rituals became more public and larger in scale and as central plazas became the primary locus of ritual performance for these very large Pueblo IV communities, ritual feasts probably grew in scale and formality as well. This newly for-

malized dichotomy between domestic cooking activities and the preparation of large-scale ritual feasts appears to be reflected in the bimodal distribution of cooking-pot sizes in Pueblo IV period assemblages. Smaller vessels were used for domestic cooking, while the larger vessels were used primarily for preparing food for these large, communal ritual feasts.

In sum, communal feasting within Pueblo IV Zuni communities appears to have been associated with and highly structured by communal ritual, and probably became less a source of household differentiation or prestige-enhancement on the part of the individual and more a formal ritual obligation within the Pueblo IV community. Moreover, feasting appears to have simultaneously facilitated both integration within communities and differentiation among communities.

### Conclusions

This study has focused primarily on feasting variation within the northern Southwest, noting how three particular dimensions of feasting—the scale of participation and finance, the frequency and structure of occurrence, and the food resources used—articulate through time. The most striking pattern to emerge from this analysis is the difference between feasting behaviors before and after about A.D. 1275, when domesticated rather than wild animals became the dominant feasting resources, when feasts ceased to be spatially associated with specific segments of the community, and when feasting became much more of a ritual obligation to the community rather than an arena for negotiating household or lineage differentiation. At the same time, feasting also became inter-communal in scale and apparently played a role in the ritual differentiation of communities within larger clusters of communities. Pueblo IV period community differentiation is evident in both the Salinas region of the Rio Grande and the Zuni area. In both cases, one community within a larger region apparently hosted large-scale feasts more than other large communities and also was differentiated from them ritually, politically, and/or economically. While ecological variables such as environmental productivity and predictability undoubtedly placed constraints on the scale of feasting at certain times in the Southwest, I suggest that the changing role of feasting at about 1275 primarily reflected the pervasive cultural, social, and religious changes that occurred

at this time throughout the Southwest, including the introduction of new, more inclusive ritual forms (Adams 1991; Crown 1994), the merging of public and domestic activities such as corn grinding (Ortman 1998), the increase in the size of communities, and the transition to inward-focused, plaza-oriented communities (Potter 1997a, 1998).

The most intriguing aspect of feasting in the Southwest is that we can trace it back through time as a recurrent social practice over a 1,000-year period. And while there is variation through time, there are consistencies as well that set the Southwest apart from other parts of the world. The most persistent element is the communal-integrative aspect of feasting and, with the possible exception of Chaco, the fact that feasts do not appear highly charged politically. This characteristic of feasting in the Southwest may stem in part from the relatively small scale of communities in this region compared with, for example, Polynesian chiefdoms. Integrative or solidarity feasts do seem to be more strongly associated with small-scale, “tribal” societies than they do with larger-scale, more politically complex societies. However, in the Southwest, the most highly integrative feasts appear during a time period in which communities are the largest and potentially the most politically complex: the Pueblo IV period.

Another likely contributing factor to the lack of overt competitive feasting is the marginality of the Southwestern environment compared with, for instance, the Valley of Mexico. However, environmental productivity would probably not be as great a limiting factor on competitive feasting if the social and technological mechanisms for monopolizing feasting resources or for increasing the production of resources through labor intensification were ever established in the northern Southwest. For instance, the primary variable determining the success of one’s agricultural fields has never been either restricted access to the most productive fields or increased labor investment, but rather the stochastic nature of rainfall in this region. If potential aggrandizers had been able to guarantee their success in producing, controlling, and monopolizing an agricultural surplus, social differentiation might have developed more along the lines of differential wealth and debt accumulation than it apparently did, with feasting playing a leading role in propagating this differentiation. In the northern Southwest, luck plays a large role in determining whose fields generate agricul-

tural surpluses and, consequently, who becomes a potential creditor and who becomes a debtor (Robertson 1997). Since food surpluses cannot, in fact, be effectively predicted, controlled, or monopolized, leaders have tended to draw upon a different suite of (monopolizable) resources to establish and maintain their authority and social power (i.e., ritual knowledge) (Brandt 1994; Potter 2000), leaving large communal feasts to operate to even out and make more predictable the distribution of food resources within the community.

The long-term association of feasting with communal ritual is another striking aspect of feasts in the Southwest. As far back as the Pueblo I period, feasts have been intricately linked with communal ritual. And while some ceremonies in middle-range societies actually facilitate competition and aggrandizement, for example, the Tee ceremony of the Mae Enga (Wiessner and Tumu 1998), others stress communal integration and actively restrict competition and suppress social differences. Puebloan Kachina ceremonies are a case in point. Not only are the distributors of the food masked (literally), but the contributors are anonymous as well.

To conclude, feasting is a communal practice with a long history in the Southwest. Although there is considerable spatial and temporal variation in the scale, structure, and frequency of occurrence and in the food resources used in feasts, there is a consistent association of feasts with rituals that stress communal integration. This association, coupled with the environmental marginality of the Southwest and the lack of social or technological mechanisms that allow for the monopolization or intensification of feasting resources, has indeed limited the aggrandizing capacity of feasts in this region. I would suggest that the complex interplay of environmental, social, and cultural variables illuminated by the Southwestern example is not predicted by any materialist model of feasting, and that we must take into account not only ecological variables such as environmental productivity, population densities, and the capacity to generate surpluses, but also the historical and cultural situatedness of feasting when attempting to understand the social and political ramifications of such communal practices.

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### Notes

1. I define a community as a spatially delimited group of people that interacts on a fairly intensive and regular basis (cf. Murdock 1949). As Varien (1997:22) points out, a community possesses temporal, spatial, and social dimensions. The temporal and spatial aspects are fairly straightforward: people must live together at least some of the time in relative proximity in order to interact on a regular basis. The social dimension refers to the fact that community members share access to local material resources, such as land and hunted game, as well as social resources, including labor and communal rituals (Varien 1997:22).

2. In many intertribal feasts in New Guinea, it is not just the tribes that are competing, but their component clans and sub-clans (Brown 1972:43). It is thus difficult in many situations to delineate when a feast is "intra-communal" or "inter-communal."

3. In very large communities (e.g., more than 1,000 people), however, the financing of intra-communal feasts may be quite extensive, and have implications for prestige enhancement.

4. Exceptions to this exist. For example, The Enemyway and Nightway ceremonies of the Navajo are only conducted in the summer and winter respectively.

5. In fact, the social and economic demands of hosting such a large feast can lead to bankruptcy, which can ultimately lower status.

6. Wills (1998) suggests that the volume of grayware jars may be vastly over represented in the literature, and that these jars may have related more to water transport than to cooking for communal feasts. However, recent investigations by Wilshusen et al. (1997) indicate that water transport assemblages are overwhelmingly composed of white ware sherds, particularly white ware jar sherds.

7. While there are exceptions to this (e.g., some later sites, such as the Kluckhohn site and Atsinna had great kivas in addition to large, central, enclosed plazas), it is nonetheless a fairly strong trend in the Cibola region.

8. CA is a technique for data reduction and display similar in many respects to principle components analysis (PCA). However, this technique is superior to other multivariate techniques, such as Factor Analysis and PCA, for discrete (as opposed to continuous) data for a number of reasons (Baxter 1994:100–101). The first is that count data may be analyzed directly, so that the "closed sum problem" inherent in transforming counts into percents may be avoided. Secondly, since CA takes into consideration row and column marginals when generating similarity measures, small and large samples are weighed accordingly, rather than automatically being considered equally, as in the case of percentage data. And thirdly, CA generates eigenvalues for both cases and variables, allowing both to be graphed on the same plot, and making it possible to readily identify which variables are causing the observed patterning among the cases (Baxter 1994).

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