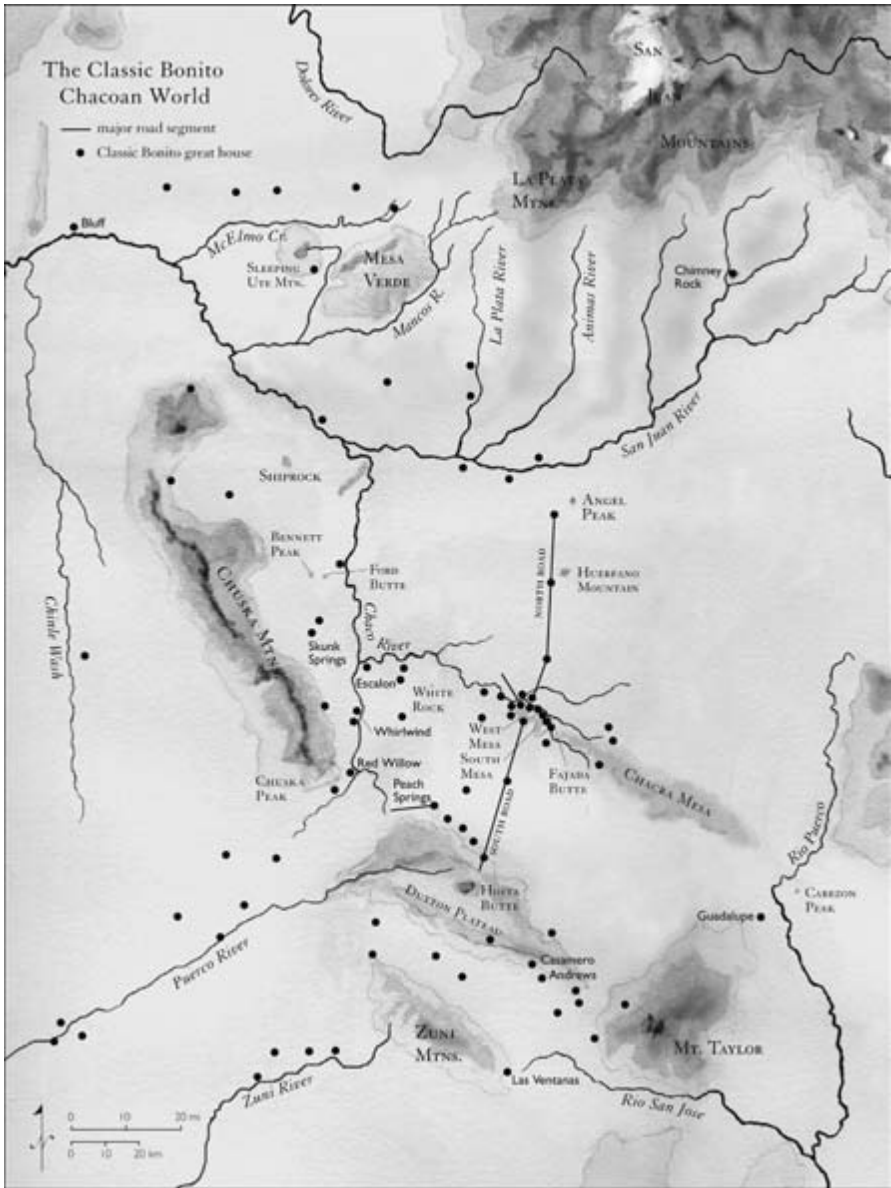


Materialities of Place

IDEOLOGY ON THE CHACOAN LANDSCAPE

Landscape is the spatial milieu within which bodies and the social and material worlds intersect. Landscapes involve the archaeologically familiar environment of sites, features, topography, and resources, but they also have sensual and ideological dimensions. The term *place* emphasizes the lived experiences and meanings bound up in a particular space. In his Apache ethnography *Wisdom Sits in Places*, Keith Basso (1996) employed the term *sense of place* to describe the ways humans imbue their surroundings with memories, meanings, and aesthetic resonance. Place making—the construction of a meaningful landscape—is a sensual experience involving sight, sound, smell, emotion, and memory. Lived, spatial experiences help affirm and challenge ideas about the world and our place in it. Landscapes also constrain and order—they are the spaces through which identities and power are negotiated. Because worldviews and ideologies are negotiated within a complex web of the social and the material, they are at least partially accessible to archaeologists willing to take an interpretive approach to the past.

Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico is an aesthetically powerful place, in part because of the sky-filled horizontal topography of the Colorado Plateau. The canyon—in the center of the vast dish of the San Juan Basin—contains hidden spaces, but the mesas that bound it are high places (figure 1.1). Fajada Butte,



1.1. *The Classic Bonito phase Chacoan world and the greater San Juan Basin. Map by Molly O'Halloran, Inc.*

Chacra Mesa, and West Mesa can be seen for miles to the north, west, and south of the canyon. From Chaco, these mesas offer spectacular views in nearly every direction toward distant peaks such as Huerfano Mountain, Shiprock, the Chuskas, Hosta Butte, and Mount Taylor.

At the heart of Chaco Canyon lie twelve massive great houses constructed between AD 860 and 1130 (Lekson 1986; Lekson, Windes, and McKenna 2006). The Chacoans crafted these buildings at an exaggerated scale, with formal symmetry, according to specific designs. Over the course of three centuries they stacked hundreds of very large rooms—many devoid of hearths or other indications of use—in rows up to four stories, or 8 meters, high. The rooms surround blocked-in kivas, and they embrace plazas toward the east or the south. The Chacoans built circular, masonry-lined, semi-subterranean great kivas according to formal guidelines for size, layout, and orientation. They modified the landscape in other ways as well, building earthen mounds, ramps, staircases, and road segments. *Bonito style architecture* refers collectively to all these architectural elements (Gladwin 1945). Bonito style architecture contrasts dramatically with the many small domestic pueblos that form clusters of low mounds along the south side of Chaco Canyon.

The Classic Bonito phase (AD 1020–1100) was Chaco’s heyday; during that time, the canyon’s influence spread across the surrounding San Juan Basin. Cleared linear alignments, or road segments, extended from the canyon toward the north, northwest, and southwest. Across the basin’s buttes, dunes, and drainages, ancient Puebloans built Bonito style architecture in nearly 100 outlier communities. Great houses, great kivas, road segments, and earthworks are usually surrounded by thirty to forty small domestic sites (Fowler, Stein, and Anyon 1987; Kantner and Mahoney 2000; Marshall et al. 1979; Marshall and Sofaer 1988; Powers, Gillespie, and Lekson 1983).

Chacoan archaeology has attracted generations of scholars (Lekson 2006; Lister and Lister 1981; Mathien 1992; Mills 2002; Vivian 1990:37–78). Although archaeological interpretations for Chaco are sometimes conflicting, scholars agree that planned, massive Bonito style structures required a substantial investment of labor and design. Bonito style architecture “exceed[s] the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform” (Trigger 1990:119). Large-scale, long-term construction projects suggest the presence of social inequalities and institutionalized leaders, yet the evidence for sociopolitical hierarchy in the canyon is ambiguous. As a result, Chaco has great appeal for scholars of prehistoric sociopolitical complexity.

Most current explanations for Chaco revolve around the idea of the canyon as a central place for ritual gatherings, with leaders’ power legitimated through exclusive access to ritual knowledge (Judge 1989; Kantner 1996; Saitta 1997; Sebastian 1992; Toll 1985; Wills 2000; Yoffee 2001). But how did ritual leaders come to power? Why was their authority perceived as legitimate? The concept of ideology can help us understand why people would agree to act as subjects—that is, to participate in a situation that was to their social or material disadvantage. The Chacoan

landscape, with its formally constructed, carefully situated architectural features, is charged with symbolism (Fritz 1978; Marshall 1997; Stein and Lekson 1992). This landscape can reveal much about the nature of Chacoan worldview, social relationships, and ideology.

In this work I use phenomenological investigations tempered with ethnographic data to construct an interpretation of the Chacoan landscape. I argue that the Chacoan landscape can be understood as the large-scale spatial representation of a worldview shared by ancient Puebloan inhabitants, builders, and visitors. Chacoan architects actively designed a landscape that elicited a powerful emotional response in visitors. This worldview revolved around interrelated spatialized themes, including visibility, directionality, balanced dualism, cyclical renewal, social memory, and center place. When those who shared this worldview moved through the buildings and across the modified landscape of Chaco Canyon, the experience actively reaffirmed their beliefs about the nature of the world and their place in it. Architecture and worldview were transformed into a powerful Chacoan ideology. Leaders' authority was naturalized and legitimated by spatial messages that celebrated Chaco Canyon as the center of the Puebloan cosmographic, social, and ritual world. It seemed inevitable and desirable for visitors to travel to Chaco for periodic ritual events and to contribute labor and resources toward the ceremonies necessary for continuation of the Puebloan way of life.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES ---

Over the past two decades, landscape has emerged as a unifying concept for the archaeological study of place and social reality (e.g., Ashmore 2002; Ashmore and Knapp 1999). Many current areas of archaeological interest—including identity, ethnicity, ritual, power, and ideology—intersect at the nexus of landscape. In the southwestern United States, the term *landscape* is invoked by archaeologists straddling a wide range of epistemological positions. Some equate landscape with settlement patterns, examining the changing and variable distributions of people and resources across space. Some explore “cultural landscapes,” investigating the links—which may involve oral traditions as well as archaeology—that connect indigenous groups with specific places. Still others view spatial experiences as reflexively constructed over time and landscape as a window through which to investigate less tangible aspects of ancient life, such as meaning and ideology. While each of these approaches has different theoretical roots, they can be complementary. Material remains, ethnography, and cognitive perceptions can all have a place in well-rounded interpretive analysis.

Settlement pattern studies have enjoyed a long popularity in cultural ecology and processual archaeology. Horizontal and vertical measurements describe

relationships between people and natural or cultural resources, and landforms provide raw materials or opportunities to engage in various kinds of subsistence behavior. Traditional settlement pattern studies tend to view space as a neutral container for action. Clearly, ancient peoples were concerned with factors such as the presence of competitive neighbors and the availability of arable land or water, but landscapes are more than backdrops or sets of resources waiting to be exploited. (For examples of absolutist approaches to landscape, see Hodder and Orton 1976; Steward 1955; Washburn 1974; Willey 1953. For detailed critiques, see A. Smith 2003:33–54; Thomas 1993; Tilley 1994:7–11; Wagstaff 1987.) While measurements of physical distances among populations and resources can constitute useful information, reducing landscape to material patterning leaves the meaningful and experiential aspects of place unexplored. People have reactions, perceptions, opinions, and experiences of their constructed and natural spatial surroundings.

During the 1980s and 1990s, geographers, philosophers, and anthropologists began to move beyond “space as container” models, developing a holistic concept of space as a socially produced, relational medium vital to the construction of identity and society (e.g., Davis 1992; Harvey 1989, 1996; Jackson 1984; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1988, 1996; Tuan 1974, 1977). (Some influential anthropological landscape investigations include Altman and Low 1992; Basso 1996; Feld and Basso 1996; Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995; Ingold 1993; Lawrence and Low 1990; Ucko and Layton 1998.) Archaeologists seeking ways to move beyond the limitations of settlement pattern studies began to focus on landscape as a way to integrate human perceptions and relationships into the picture (Anschuetz, Wilshusen, and Scheick 2001). In the southwestern United States and other postcolonial settings, archaeologists working with indigenous peoples developed the concept of cultural landscapes to weave together oral histories, migrations, and traditional land use (e.g., Carroll, Zedeño, and Stoffle 2004; David, McNiven, and Barker 2006; Ferguson and Anyon 2001; Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006; King 2003; Morphy 1993; Snead 2008; Taçon 1999; Zedeño 1997).

But landscapes are not only culturally constructed; they are also inherently ideological. Landscapes comprise the spatial milieu within which bodies and the social and material worlds interact and intersect as identity and power are negotiated. Highly visible monumental architecture is often employed in the construction of identity or the legitimation of power. The commercial skyscrapers that form the nucleus of the urban landscape can be seen as embodiments of the dominance of capitalism and capitalists, towering over (yet based in) the wreckage of the inner-city poor (Zukin 1991). Landscapes do not simply evoke meanings; they also constrain and order (Foucault 1977). Spaces are both the site and the stake of social struggle (Harvey 1989, 1996). An investigation into space must extend beyond

“the relationship between bodies, forms, and elements” to include “the product of negotiations between an array of competing actors with varying practical capacities to transform relationships” (Smith 2003:72). Archaeologists working on monumental landscapes in Mesoamerica (Ashmore 1989; Ashmore and Sabloff 2002), Andean South America (Moore 1996, 2004), the Mediterranean (Alcock 1993), and Neolithic Britain (Barrett 1991, 1994; Bender 1993; Bradley 1998, 2000; Thomas 1991, 1996; Tilley 1994, 1999) have turned their attention to landscape as a way to think about ancient ideologies, worldviews, and power relationships. The ranks of this genre of landscape studies are increasing exponentially (e.g., Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Bowser 2004; Glowacki and Malpass 2003; Inomata 2006; Johnson 2007; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Khatchadourian 2007; Leone 1988; Parker Pearson and Ramilosonina 1998; Williams and Nash 2006; Yekutieli 2006).

INTERPRETING SENSUAL PLACES _____

Landscapes are more than reflexive representations of social or political relationships. Much of the potency of spatial experiences for enhancing or challenging power relationships comes from the fact that landscapes are also inherently sensual. Place making—the construction of a meaningful landscape—involves sound, smell, taste, touch, sight, and emotion. Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Topophilia* (1974), today a classic geography text, was the first book of its kind to deal with the aesthetic and sensual dimensions of landscape. Tuan (1974:27) pointed out that spatial experiences can elicit powerful emotions, particularly when multiple senses are involved. Cathedral interiors provide a familiar example. The exaggerated height and emptiness of the space, the shadowy light shot through with stained glass beams, the suffused odors of incense and candle wax, the blurry echoes of chants or organ music, and the coolness of marble underfoot combine to create strong aesthetic and emotional responses.

Landscapes can be thought of as multidimensional, encompassing the material spaces of the physical environment, the represented spaces of the imagination, and the perceived spaces of the senses (Lefebvre 1991:38–46; Smith 2003:73–75). The material dimension involves the archaeologically familiar patterning of sites, features, topography, and resources. This physical landscape is invested with meaning through representations and perceptions. Spatial representations refer to the ways people draw, describe, and imagine landscape through art, texts, photographs, maps, or cosmographic schemes. This dimension may be accessible to Southwest archaeologists through rock art, pottery motifs, and indigenous oral traditions and histories. Spatial perceptions encompass the sensual, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of landscape, involving such archaeological factors as visibility, memory, and iconic symbolism.

This tripartite organization can be seen as somewhat analogous to the ways archaeologists have conceived of landscapes—as settlement patterns, as traditional cultural places, and as material windows into reflexively constructed pasts. My interpretations of Chacoan landscape are similarly woven from three interrelated kinds of evidence—archaeological data, ethnographic information, and phenomenological research. Archaeological data are composed of architecture and features positioned on the topography. Ethnographic information details historic and contemporary Puebloan cosmographies and spatial meanings. Phenomenology provides one route of ingress into the sensual and experiential dimensions of past landscapes.

Phenomenology—an approach grounded in existentialist philosophy—has recently gained attention among some British archaeologists as a useful way to apprehend past meanings and social forms (Gosden 1994; Thomas 1996; Tilley 1994). Phenomenological philosophers see the human body as the point of dialectical mediation between consciousness and the physical world, subject and object (Casey 1996, 1997; Heidegger 1962; Merleau-Ponty 1962). Place plays a critical part in human understanding of existence because all bodily experiences are spatially situated. People actively construct knowledge of the world by moving through places (De Certeau 1984:91–130). Because the configuration of the human body is universal, it is possible to assume that all humans have generally similar spatial perceptions of such body-relevant experiences as directionality and scale. The human body organizes spaces into up and down, front and back, left and right. If we accept these premises, then a phenomenological approach to archaeology can allow us to think about the ways prehistoric peoples experienced, perceived, and represented landscapes, working from the starting point of contemporary bodies in the same spaces. By moving through ancient landscapes and architecture as prehistoric peoples did, phenomenological archaeologists can gain insights into past worldviews.

My phenomenological investigations suggested that some of the dimensions important to Chacoan builders were visibility, movement, and memory. Visibility was likely important to ancient Pueblos living on the open, exposed, sky-filled horizons of the arid Southwest (Lekson 2002; Tuan 1974:79–83). Iconic high places such as Fajada Butte and Hosta Butte were likely storied, meaningful places for Chacoans. Chacoans often positioned Bonito style structures to create intervisibility with one or more prominent, isolated peaks. The builders of Chacoan monumental architecture intended for their work to be highly visible. Bonito style architecture fits Jerry Moore's (1996) criteria for public buildings designed for high visibility: the structures have clear forms, contrasting backgrounds, vertical prominence, and solid mass. But visual perception changes as the viewer moves across the landscape and through buildings. We experience the world and inscribe it with

meaning as we move through it (De Certeau 1984:91–130; Tilley 1994:27–31). Roads, pathways, and other access routes can provide indications about the ways movement was culturally prescribed in the past.

Most contemporary Chacoan pilgrims arrive at the canyon by automobile. But ancient visitors to Chaco arrived on foot and entered the canyon through formalized access routes designed by Chacoan builders to emphasize particular structures or features. At least six major formal routes lead into Chaco Canyon (Kincaid 1983; Vivian 1997a, 1997b; Windes 1987, 1991). The Great North Road arrives at Pueblo Alto on North Mesa, where it converges with a number of shorter segments. The Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Road approaches Chaco Canyon from the northwest. The South Road passes into Chaco through South Gap. A second southern road segment enters through Fajada Gap. The Chacra Face Road traverses the south side of Chacra Mesa before entering the canyon at Fajada Gap. An East Road leaves Pueblo Pintado and descends into Chaco Canyon by a series of cut steps. Although evidence for a continuous West Road is more tenuous, Chaco Canyon and the Chaco River provided a natural conduit. A large cairn or shrine complex on the west end of West Mesa suggests that the river was a major access route.

Chacoan builders constructed formalized access into the canyon proper by means of road segments, ramps, and staircases. In some cases these features enhanced or facilitated access over natural routes. In other cases the construction of staircases and ramps created access points across the prohibitive barriers of sandstone escarpments. Jackson's Staircase, which connects the upper two terraces in the tributary drainage behind Chetro Kettle, is just one well-known example. A foot traveler could use the staircase to drop off the uppermost bench of North Mesa and proceed down to the canyon floor by means of a ramp. At least five other, similar staircases are near great houses in the canyon core. Road segments and prescribed pathways likely existed within Chaco Canyon as well, but centuries of environmental and cultural impact to the canyon floor have made it virtually impossible to identify them (Vivian 1997a, 1997b). Great house layouts nonetheless suggest that there were formal approaches to these buildings.

In addition to visibility and movement, landscapes are experienced through the sensual, emotionally charged dimension of memory (Connerton 1989; Halbwachs 1975 [1925], 1992 [1950]). People develop a sense of place through a history of social engagement with the landscape (Altman and Low 1992). Like us, past peoples reconfigured and reinterpreted the more distant past, selectively remembering and forgetting people and events to serve the interests of the then-present (Alcock 2001, 2002; Bradley 2002; Bradley and Williams 1998; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003). Although in archaeological contexts it is easiest to see the top-down machinations of elite groups invoking memory to legitimate authority or consolidate identity, multiple and conflicting versions of events coexist. The past may be accessed and

constructed, dismantled and rebuilt. Buildings, shrines, rock art, and iconic natural features are some of the places likely to be symbolically charged in the construction of social memory. Past peoples dwelt within landscapes reoccupied time and again. The juxtaposition of new and old sites or buildings creates a powerful connection with the past. Materials from older sites can be reused or incorporated into new constructions. Ancestors' buildings may become residences of mythic or remembered ancestors, or they may be remodeled or demolished as a way to transform ancestral connections. Phenomenological investigations cannot reveal past meanings, but they can help us determine whether ancestral buildings, shrines, or other features were regarded as important.

Armed with a 35 mm camera, a digital video camera, and a notebook, I made formal and informal data-gathering forays in Chaco Canyon and across the San Juan Basin, visiting great houses, great kivas, shrines, stone circles, small sites, road segments, and high places over more than a decade. I walked the last few kilometers of the major road segments and access routes that lead into Chaco Canyon, and I visited over fifty outlier communities across the San Juan Basin. Along the way, I asked specific questions about spatial and sensual perceptions and the ways they were directed and enhanced by Bonito style architecture.

One serious problem with any phenomenological interpretation, however, is that spatial perceptions emerge not only out of bodily experiences but also out of situated cultural knowledge (Brück 2005; Fleming 1999; see also O'Donovan, this volume). Archaeologists are not Chacoans; we come with our own sets of preconceptions, experiences, and beliefs about the world. Phenomenological interpretations run the risk of expressing nothing more than naive universalism or, worse, the archaeologist's own culturally situated perceptions. In the Pueblo Southwest, contemporary and historic Pueblo ethnography can help mitigate this problem.

For many modern Pueblo peoples, the social, ritual, and mythic worlds are expressed and represented by physical and imagined landscapes. Landscape and architecture carry symbolic meaning and, together with myth and ritual, form an interconnected whole. The social and the supernatural are expressed in topographic features, paths of movement, and locations of settlements. Contemporary Pueblo people are not living ancestors; many changes and events have transformed the Pueblo world over the past millennium. Nevertheless, some core ideas derived from recent and historic ethnography are plainly visible at Chaco, and we can learn much about Chacoan ideology by following these threads back into the past. Overlapping ideas drawn from Puebloan ideologies and cosmographies include:

1. Symbolically laden horizontal and vertical directions converge at a center place.
2. Balance is maintained by the dualistic juxtaposition of opposites.

3. The past is repeatedly revisited in a pattern of cyclical renewal.
4. Individual and mythic life may be experienced as a journey.

The shared presence of these themes among contemporary Pueblo groups who speak different languages and otherwise have different ritual practices speaks to the antiquity of these belief systems among Puebloan peoples (Dozier 1960). Within the Chacoan world of a millennium ago, archaeological indicators clearly signal that similar worldviews were present (Swentzell 1992). As in contemporary pueblos, these beliefs were represented spatially, on the landscape.

LANDSCAPE AND THE CHACOAN WORLDVIEW _____

Elements of the Chacoan worldview are represented in archaeologically accessible material spaces, in the architecture and on the landscape. Both phenomenological perceptions and ethnographic representations provide lenses through which to construct one interpretation of that worldview. Phenomenology encourages us to think about visibility, movement, and layered emotional connections to places. Ethnography indicates the importance of sacred geography, balanced dualism, journeys, and cyclical renewal. As I began my research, I considered that the Chacoan worldview would likely be concerned with one or more of these themes:

1. Sacred geography. Unusual or highly visible natural places, such as mountain peaks or springs, might have been the sites of shrines or votive deposits.
2. Visibility. A concern with visibility might have been expressed through architectural prominence, site positions, and line-of-sight connections between buildings and features, and topographic landmarks. Sacred places might have been linked to Chaco through lines of sight or roads.
3. Movement. Roads, ramps, and staircases in Chaco Canyon and near outlier great houses might have enhanced or restricted access and visibility, and they might have served as routes for ritual processions.
4. Memory. References to the recent past and to more distant ancestors might have been incorporated into buildings and features.
5. Cosmography. Cosmographic ideas such as cardinal directions, balanced dualism, and center place might have been represented in Chacoan architecture and landscape. These ideas might have been tied to the movements of the sun and moon.

As I examined canyon and outlier architecture and site positions and moved across the landscape, I investigated these interrelated themes, answering specific questions about the relationships among perceptions, representations, and material spaces.



1.2. *Fajada Butte at sunrise. Photo by author.*

Sacred Geography and Visibility

The open horizons of the San Juan Basin heighten the drama of elevated or oddly shaped, highly visible landforms, such as Huerfano Mountain, Shiprock, Bennett Peak, Ford Butte, Fajada Butte, Hosta Butte, Mount Taylor, and Cabezón Peak (figure 1.2). Mountain peaks topped with shrines mark the boundaries of the Tewa (Ortiz 1972) and Keresan (White 1960) worlds. R. Gwinn Vivian (1990:35), Alden Hayes and Thomas Windes (1975), Stephen Lekson (2002), and many others have noted the views of prominent peaks from Chaco Canyon. Hayes and Windes (1975) documented the existence of a canyon-wide shrine network and postulated that intervisibility was important across the San Juan Basin. My findings also support the importance of sacred geography and visibility at Chaco. Chacoan shrines, road segments, and strategically placed sites all suggest that distinctive volcanic plugs, buttes, and mountain peaks held special significance across the Chacoan world, from the Basketmaker III through Pueblo III periods.

Both Shabik'eshchee Village and Site 423, two large Basketmaker III villages in Chaco Canyon, are situated on high places (Windes 2007). By the Early Bonito phase, the ancients were systematically situating great houses and great kivas within sight of iconic landforms. Nearly all major Early Bonito settlements can see one or more



1.3. Hosta Butte, South Gap, and Pueblo del Arroyo from a stone circle on the north rim of Chaco Canyon, with colleague Joshua Jones. Photo by author.

isolated peaks. At the outliers of Morris 33 (Morris 1939:75–85; Wilshusen and Blinman 1992), Willow Canyon (Marshall et al. 1979:91–94), Kin Bineola (Marshall et al. 1979:69–72), and Peach Springs (Powers, Gillespie, and Lekson 1983), builders positioned community architecture to create lines of sight to landmarks such as Shiprock, Bennett Peak, Hosta Butte, and Huerfano Mountain. Peñasco Blanco, arguably the most important Early Bonito great house (Windes and Ford 1992), sits on a high place with line-of-sight connections to Huerfano Mountain and the Basketmaker III Site 423.

During the Classic Bonito phase, Chacoans transformed Peñasco Blanco into a highly visible great house. They positioned Pueblo Alto atop North Mesa with spectacular 360-degree visibility, and they sited Pueblo del Arroyo to align with Hosta Butte through South Gap (figure 1.3) (Judd 1959; Lekson 1986; Lekson, Windes, and McKenna 2006; Windes 1987). Road segments and other features underscore the importance of these site locations. Pueblo Alto and Pueblo del Arroyo were situated to maximize viewer impact when approaching the canyon from the north and south, respectively. A stone circle atop the north rim of Chaco Canyon aligns with Pueblo del Arroyo, South Gap, the South Road, and Hosta Butte (Hayes and Windes 1975). Roads not only emphasize the importance of certain highly visible great houses, they also link Chaco Canyon with potentially significant topographic features. The Great North Road heads to Kutz Canyon, while the South



1.4. *West Mesa shrines overlooking the Chaco River and the western San Juan Basin, with the Chuska Mountains on the horizon. Photo by author.*

Road points to Hosta Butte (Marshall 1997). The Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Road extends to Black Lake, while the Chacra Face Road trends toward Cabezon Peak (Marshall and Sofaer 1988; Nials, Stein, and Roney 1987:120–126; Roney 1992; Stein 1983).

Classic and Late Bonito phase shrines demarcate points of visibility along Chacra Mesa, South Mesa, and West Mesa (Hayes and Windes 1975). They connect sites in the canyon as well as outlying areas of the Chacoan world. The cairn-like shrines atop West Mesa might have facilitated communication between Chaco and outliers in the southern and western San Juan Basin (figure 1.4). Some shrines strategically created line-of-sight connections with significant landforms—for example, a shrine near the southern outlier of Las Ventanas is positioned to create a visual link with Hosta Butte. Just as people at shrines or elevated great houses could see vast distances, the sites could be seen from afar by outlier dwellers and Chacoan visitors. Chaco Canyon is itself both a low and a high place—although the canyon’s interior is protected from view, Chacra Mesa is visible at great distances across the southern San Juan Basin, and West Mesa is visible from the flanks of the Chuska Mountains.

Canyon great houses in both high and low locations exhibit the solid mass, verticality, contrasting backgrounds, and clear forms characteristic of architecture

built to be viewed, following tenets set out by Moore (1996; see also Higuchi 1983). Outlier great houses also contain most of these characteristics, but there are interesting differences among them. Builders clearly meant for outlier great houses to be viewed (Stein 1987; Stein and Lekson 1992). There is no such thing as a small, inconspicuous great house in a low place. However, no straightforward, inverse relationship exists between great house mass and verticality. Outlier great house builders often used more than one device to enhance visibility, including massive construction, vertical locations, and associations with dramatic landforms.

Outlier great house builders frequently exploited natural topography to heighten visual drama. Red Willow (Marshall et al. 1979; Van Dyke 2003) and Skunk Springs (Marshall et al. 1979) are massive great houses atop high mesas. Kin Bineola and Peach Springs are massive great houses that are not elevated but that provide line-of-sight connections to iconic landforms. Chimney Rock (Eddy 1977; Malville 2004), Escalon (Marshall and Sofaer 1988), Guadalupe (Baker 1983; Pippin 1987), Bluff (Jalbert and Cameron 2000), Lowry (Martin 1936), and Whirlwind (Marshall et al. 1979:87–89) are relatively small great houses in elevated locations—the former three are associated with distinctive, oddly shaped peaks. Andrews (Van Dyke 1999), Casamero (Harper et al. 1988; Sigleo 1981), and Las Ventanas (Marshall et al. 1979:187–193; Powers and Orcutt 2005) are associated with highly visible geologic formations. Builders positioned most outlier great houses with lines of sight to Chaco Canyon or to iconic Chacoan high places. In some cases, as at Las Ventanas and Kin Bineola, shrines facilitated these links.

The different methods builders employed to enhance the visibility of outlier great houses provide clues to different kinds of community interactions and relationships with Chaco. Andrews and Casamero, although neighbors, were visually isolated from one another, suggesting two independent communities. Although the Red Mesa Valley provided less opportunity to create line-of-sight connections to significant peaks, a stone circle above the Andrews great house provides a view of Hosta Butte. Casamero contains no such line-of-sight connections—together with other aspects of its architecture, this suggests that Casamero might have been a colony once or twice removed from Chaco, with less close connections to the canyon or incomplete participation in a Chacoan sacred geographic schema. Most outlier great houses loom over their surrounding communities, but Whirlwind is visible only from afar, suggesting that visitors or neighbors, rather than local residents, were the intended audience. The original settlers at Kin Bineola positioned the great house looking south, through the Kim-mi-ne-oli Valley, at Hosta Butte on the horizon. Two hundred years later, Late Bonito builders bulked up Kin Bineola, perhaps competing with Chaco or perhaps attempting to confirm and solidify influence over the valley's inhabitants. They not only built a huge structure with hundreds of rooms; they also used double walls along the exterior to increase

apparent mass. Nearly 200 km north of Chaco Canyon, the colonial Lowry great house provides a 360-degree view of surrounding landmarks, including the La Plata Mountains and Sleeping Ute Mountain—both with visual connections back to Chaco. Chimney Rock great house is positioned beneath Chimney Rock and Companion Rock to facilitate observation of the major lunar standstill; viewers at Chimney Rock can also see Huerfano Mountain far to the south. Although each of these great houses presents a unique situation, visibility is always a common denominator.

These observations reinforce the notion that sacred geography and visibility were key components of a Chacoan worldview. They also suggest ways we might explore the different intentions of great house builders and, by extension, different kinds of outlier communities and relationships with Chaco.

Dualisms and Oppositions, Visibility and Movement

Balanced dualism is an organizing principle in many pueblos, particularly among the Tewa, Tiwa, and Rio Grande Keresans (Fox 1972; Ortiz 1969; White 1942). At Chaco, architectural symmetry may be traceable back as far as Shabik'eshchee Village, and it is strongly in evidence at the northern San Juan Pueblo I period site McPhee Village (Wilshusen and Ortman 1999; Windes and Ford 1992). Dualistic symmetry is one of the guiding principles for the layout of Classic Bonito great houses and great kivas, and it can also be seen in the paired opposition between the two. The vertical great house and its subterranean great kiva counterpart further represent a type of dualism that is pervasive on the Chacoan landscape—an opposition between the visible and the hidden. Great houses such as Pueblo Bonito were highly visible, yet many interior spaces, including kivas and the oldest part of the pueblo, were restricted from general view.

Tower kivas such as those found at the outliers of Kin Klizhin and Kin Ya'a consist of a series of up to four enclosed kivas vertically stacked on top of one another (Marshall et al. 1979:18). Tower kivas are a dramatic representation of balanced dualism. The kiva, a circular, subterranean, womb-like space, is juxtaposed with the tower, a rectangular, vertical, phallic-like space. Tower kivas symbolically balance up and down, light and dark, sky and underworld, and possibly male and female. The structures might represent the vertically stacked worlds of Ancestral Puebloan origin stories (Fewkes 1917:14–15; Marshall et al. 1979:204) (figure 1.5).

An opposition between the visible and the hidden is represented at a meta-level by Chaco Canyon itself. While Chacra Mesa is visible for many kilometers across the San Juan Basin, the canyon interior is protected from view. Chacoans used road segments to emphasize this vertical-visible and subterranean-hidden juxtaposition across several dimensions. The two major road segments extending



1.5. The tower kiva at Kin Ya'a. Photos by author.

from Chaco—the Great North Road and the South Road—balance one another in terms of direction and also in terms of the hidden (Kutz Canyon to the north) and the visible (Hosta Butte to the south). A similar hidden-visible dichotomy might be represented by the Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Road (Black Lake) and the Chacra Face Road (Cabezón Peak), although these termini are less certain. Roads undoubtedly had cosmographic and symbolic purposes, but they also directed movement into and away from Chaco. It is easier to walk on road segments than on adjacent, unmodified terrain. In the canyon and at outliers, road segments were likely used for processions. As they led travelers to sites such as Pueblo Alto (in a high place, with excellent visibility) and Pueblo del Arroyo (in a low place, with more restricted visibility), road segments prescribed movement, creating spatial experiences that emphasized the visible and the hidden. Travelers moving across the dunes experienced an interesting “now you see it, now you don’t” phenomenon when following prescribed approaches to Chaco along the roads. During the Late Bonito phase, builders seem to have taken this visible-hidden juxtaposition to yet another level, positioning great houses on the canyon landscape to exhibit either high visibility (New Alto, Tsin Kletsin) or invisibility (Wijiji, Casa Chiquita) (Van Dyke 2004).

The formal dualisms embodied by major Chacoan roads suggest that north, northwest, and south roads into Chaco Canyon may have been formal procession routes. These roads created specific kinds of visual experiences that culminated in the dramatic spectacle of particular great houses. The visible-hidden opposition may be echoed in other arenas of the Chacoan material world, such as rock art (Kelley Hayes-Gilpin, personal communication, August 2006).

Directionality and Celestial Events

Cardinal or inter-cardinal directions are important for all contemporary Pueblos, so it is not surprising that directionality has a deep history reaching back at least as far as Chaco. Archaeologists have long recognized a north-south organizing principle in Chaco Canyon (Fritz 1978; Lekson 1999; Marshall 1997). Chacoan directionality may have emerged out of concerns with sacred geography, visibility, and balanced dualism. The relationship among all these concepts is well illustrated by the Great North and South roads. The celestial and subterranean directions correlate with visible and hidden architectural elements and are strongly represented at Chaco. Chacoans used cardinal or meridian orientations for some great kivas and great houses. East and west are less formally expressed on the Chacoan landscape, although they might be captured by the east/west-trending canyon itself.

Directionality is linked to the movements of celestial bodies. Cardinal alignments are also astronomical alignments, bisecting the movements of the sun and stars. Like farmers everywhere, ancient Pueblo peoples were undoubtedly acutely

aware of the sun's daily and seasonal peregrinations across the sky. Many Pueblo peoples—including the Hopi, Zuni, Tewa, Jemez, and Zia—follow with interest the peregrinations of the sun and moon (Harrington 1916:45–48; McCluskey 1977; Parsons 1939:212; Stevenson 1894:29; Tedlock 1983). Anna Sofaer and her colleagues (e.g., Sinclair, Sofaer, and McCann 1987) have demonstrated that Chacoans were concerned with solstices and equinoxes. More recently (Sofaer 1997, 2007, this volume), she has argued that Chacoans marked lunar standstills as well. This latter interpretation is more controversial, yet it seems borne out by rock art, by some great house alignments, and—perhaps most compelling—by the position of the Chimney Rock outlier great house (Malville 2004). If Chacoans were keeping track of the movements of the sun and moon on the horizon, solstices, equinoxes, and standstills might have signaled occasions for people all over the basin to gather in the canyon. There might also be another juxtaposition here between accessible-visible and restricted-hidden ritual knowledge. Solstices and equinoxes are fairly easy to anticipate on an open horizon, but lunar standstills require tracking over 18.6 years. Chacoan lunar knowledge is more likely to have been the purview of specialists, and, as Sofaer (1999) notes, it served no useful agricultural purpose.

Cyclical Renewal and Social Memory

Rituals involve formal practices, liturgies, and performances of ceremonies that have been undertaken multiple times in the past (Moore and Myerhoff 1977). Pueblo ritual events are cyclical, repeating at prescribed intervals. Repeatedly touching the past, potentially for the purpose of constructing social memory, is a Pueblo practice that can be traced materially from the contemporary world back into the Basketmaker III period. Representational media such as rock art panels, kiva murals, masks, and pottery show signs of superposition, or repeated obliteration and redecoration (Hibben 1975:34; W. Smith 1952:19–21, 1990; Young 1988:192). Chacoan kivas were frequently remodeled and replastered as well—some have up to thirty-one layers of plaster (Kluckhohn 1939:8). At Zuni and Hopi, katsina masks were repainted and refurbished for ceremonial use (Bunzel 1932:858; Parsons 1939:341; Young 1988:192). Whiteware cylinder vessels from Chaco were repeatedly redecorated, either by washing or scraping away the black-on-white designs or by reslipping, repainting, and refiring (Crown and Wills 2003). Periodic repetitive ritual practices create the illusion of timelessness—as it is now, so it ever was. Thus cyclical ritual is part of the larger process of social memory building. Architecture and landscape indicate that Chacoans referenced the past, both through repeated cyclical events and through more general affirmations of continuity with distant ancestors.

Time and again across the Basketmaker III–Pueblo III sequence, people returned to landscapes occupied by ancestors, building new sites atop or next to old ones or constructing shrines on the locations where ancestors dwelled. Cyclical ritual may have its roots in Basketmaker III solar or agricultural observances. At Chaco, cyclical renewal is expressed in repeated additions and remodelings at great houses, great kivas, and other structures. Additions to great houses in Chaco Canyon over three centuries maintained physical continuity with past events and ancestors. The founders of Peñasco Blanco, and the Classic Bonito builders of a J-shaped shrine atop Site 423, may have wished to associate themselves with Basketmaker III ancestors. Memory lent symbolic power to the conversion of tenth-century domestic space into eleventh-century elite burial rooms at Pueblo Bonito. Mounds and berms may have been a form of constructed memory, standing in for large middens that would have signified long-term occupation. When Chacoans incorporated great kivas into the Bonito style repertoire during the eleventh century, they may have been referencing Basketmaker III oversized pit structures. During the late eleventh century and beyond, in Chaco Canyon and at outliers, ancient Puebloans built “time bridges” linking new buildings to those constructed by ancestors.

Some aspects of memory at Chaco—such as great house additions, great kivas, mounds, and roads—are highly visible, but others are deliberately hidden. Barbara Mills (2008) suggests that votive deposits sealed in great kiva niches or below roof pillars are a form of memory’s counterpart—ritualized obliteration, or forgetting. The elite burial rooms at Pueblo Bonito were screened from general view. As is evident in many other aspects of Chacoan architecture and landscape, Chacoans seem to have juxtaposed both visible and hidden memory references.

Center Place

All of these themes—sacred geography, visibility, balanced dualism, directionality, and social memory—come together to emphasize the most important idea in the ancient Pueblo worldview and the critical facet in a Chacoan ideology: the concept of Chaco Canyon as the center place. Center place figures prominently in most contemporary Pueblo migration stories, with Tewa, Keres, Hopi, and Zuni peoples each contending, for example, that they have now arrived in the center place where each was ordained to live (Dongoske et al. 1997; Ferguson and Hart 1985; Parsons 1939). The idea of the middle or center place clearly has deep roots in Pueblo history. Although from a contemporary perspective, Puebloans do not consider Chaco Canyon the proper center place, a millennium ago the ancients might well have seen it that way.

For people looking outward from Chacoan high places, the canyon seemed ringed with high places—distant, storied peaks that likely held sacred significance.

The canyon juxtaposed high and visible landforms with low and hidden spaces. Chaco Canyon was a hidden, protected space, but Chacra Mesa was a landform highly visible across the southern and western San Juan Basin. Perhaps Chaco seemed to be the point of balance between not only visible-hidden but also directional dualisms. Up and down, north and south, east and west—builders increasingly formalized these relationships on the surrounding landscape. Road segments balanced and connected opposing directions, high and low great houses, and visible and hidden natural spaces. The canyon was a fulcrum, a point of fixity halfway between these geographic opposites.

Perhaps time itself revolved around Chaco. Solar and lunar observations lent weight to the concept of Chaco Canyon as the center of the world, as architecture and rock art marked the ways the sun and moon seemed to revolve around the canyon (Sofaer 1999). The canyon was charged with the memory of Basketmaker ancestors and the tangible, centuries-old evidence of their presence. The repeated cyclical celebration of rituals and traditions would have created a sense of continuity with the past and the future. Chaco Canyon seemed to be the place at which all these ideas intersected, the nexus to which all directions pointed. Perhaps Early Bonito ceremonial gatherings blossomed in Chaco in part because of the ways the canyon's natural topographic properties fit with elements of an ancient Pueblo worldview. By the Classic Bonito phase, Chacoan builders and participants thought of the canyon as the center place, the proper place in which to undertake ceremonies that likely served in part to keep the world in balance.

A CHACOAN IDEOLOGY

From a reflexive, bodily engaged perspective, Chacoan architecture and landscape provide windows into the major social and cosmographic beliefs shared by ancient Puebloans during the Bonito phases. But the point of this exercise is not only to attempt to get at past meanings; it is also to look at power relationships at Chaco, to understand why, and for whom, Chacoans constructed monumental landscapes. Chacoan beliefs revolve around the concept of center place and likely formed the corpus of a Chacoan ideology. Anthropologists may use various definitions of ideology (e.g., Eagleton 1991:1–31; Geuss 1981:4–44; Weber 1947:115–121). Here I follow Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1939) to consider ideology to encompass shared ideas, beliefs, and values that assist in the promotion and legitimation of the interests of some groups and not others, but I diverge from the notion that ideology is wielded as an obfuscatory mechanism by dominant groups (Althusser 1969, 1971; Habermas 1976). Ideology works because some elements of both dominant and subordinate groups' ideologies are shared. Subjects are not dupes, but they consensually participate in unequal social and political situations

because they resonate strongly with ideas shared by the dominant group (McGuire and Wurst 2003).

If Chacoans and participating peoples from across the greater San Juan Basin all shared the belief that Chaco Canyon was the center place, the canyon would have clearly been an important and appropriate location in which to conduct rituals necessary to ancient life. The purposes of these rituals may have been to keep the world in balance and to ensure rainfall and agricultural productivity. Great houses and great kivas were likely settings for these ceremonies, and the buildings housed ritual paraphernalia when not in use. Great house dwellers—descendants of the first settlers at canyon great houses—likely played key parts in the public elements of Chacoan rituals. They may also have maintained ceremonial secrets known only to a few but necessary for proper ritual performance. One of the major ways ideologies are perpetuated is through the naturalization of beliefs so they appear self-evident. By the Classic Bonito phase, it must have seemed natural and inevitable that great house leaders at the center place should be accorded higher status than other Puebloans.

Aesthetic and emotionally charged practices such as ritual are powerful venues for the development and support of ideologies (Bell 1997; Bloch 1989; Kelly and Kaplan 1990). The Chacoan landscape carried emotional resonance for ancient Puebloans that dated back to Basketmaker III times. Emotional connections to place may have been part of the reason Early Bonito peoples settled in Chaco, amid sacred landmarks and ancestral villages. Ritual gatherings in the canyon would have heightened the aesthetic resonance of the place. As social norms and categories are suffused with emotion, meaning is “condensed” (Turner 1967:29), and the distinctions between the poetic and the political are blurred (Geertz 1980). Following Walter Benjamin, Adam T. Smith (2000) terms this process “rendering the political aesthetic.” When people gathered in the canyon, their aesthetic experiences in that place confirmed and reinforced a Chacoan ideology, encouraging them to support the ritual and the social order despite increasingly unequal access to social prestige and resources.

By the final decades of the eleventh century, those who orchestrated and presided over ritual events in Chaco Canyon derived great status and prestige from their positions. Leaders were living in great houses, were buried in great houses, and were directing major building projects. They were better nourished and taller than their small-house neighbors (Akins 1986, 2003). Leaders may have overseen canyon agricultural production, but they likely did not go hungry in years of poor production. Other Ancestral Puebloans lived and farmed at small houses and at outliers. Outlier dwellers brought many things to Chaco—corn (Benson et al. 2003), turquoise (Mathien 2001), wood (Durand et al. 1999; English et al. 2001), pottery (Shepard 1954; Toll 1984, 1985), lithics (Cameron 1984, 2001; Ward, this

volume), labor (Lekson, Windes, and McKenna 2006), and, ultimately, devotion (Renfrew 2001). The canyon's natural topography encouraged visitors to think of Chaco as the center place.

As the people most closely associated with the great houses, Chacoan leaders likely directed monumental construction, including new great houses and additions, great kivas, earthworks, and roads. Skilled, experienced engineers and masons may have carried out the building designs, but Chacoan leaders likely had a strong hand in their creation. On multiple, intersecting, overlapping levels, Classic Bonito architecture and landscape celebrate the ancient Pueblo worldview and emphasize Chaco Canyon as center place. These ideas were not merely symbolized by the buildings. Rather, approaches to Chaco, approaches to great houses, lines of sight, and the positioning of Bonito style structures all worked together to create a specific spatial experience for human bodies moving through this landscape. Traveling to and through Chaco would have been an aesthetically and emotionally powerful journey for ancient Pueblos. As canyon dwellers and visitors viewed and moved through Chacoan spaces, they reciprocally confirmed ideas about the nature of the world and their place in it and willingly transformed themselves into subjects. As they manipulated Chacoan spaces, leaders may have sought merely to celebrate, not to aggrandize. But the ultimate effect was to legitimate leaders' prestige and authority and to encourage followers to continue to contribute their labor and resources. In this way, at Chaco the aesthetic became political.

Chacoan architects created an aesthetic spatial experience for visitors that resonated with core Pueblo ideas. To experience the Classic Chacoan landscape was to connect with the themes of center place, directionality, visibility, dualism, and memory in a spatial and experiential sense. A Chacoan ideology legitimated the authority and prestige held by priestly elites. It also provided a sense of shared purpose and identity among the disparate groups of outlier dwellers who came to the canyon to participate in or observe ritual events and ended up contributing their labor, resources, bodies, and energy to the greater glory of Chaco.

A Chacoan ideology created a sense of shared purpose and identity among the disparate groups of visitors and legitimated the priestly leaders' authority and prestige. The most effective political leaders are those who can win the "hearts and minds," or emotional loyalties, of their subjects. To be at Chaco on high holy days must have been a grand and glorious thing. When people came to Chaco to participate in or observe ceremonies, their emotionally charged, spatially complex experiences confirmed that Chaco was the center of space and time, the intersection of opposing dimensions, a highly appropriate place in which to conduct the rituals necessary to keep the world in balance and to ensure continued agricultural success. In this way, the Chacoan landscape provides us with the material means for understanding the transformation of ancient farmers into Chacoan subjects.

CONCLUSION

Because landscapes encompass the intersection of the social, the emotional, and the material, they can provide archaeologists with a useful window into the workings of ideology. Lived spatial experiences help to affirm and challenge ideas about the world and our place in it. As a case study, Chaco illustrates intersections among landscape, spatial experience, sociopolitical complexity, and ideology. Landscapes both create and reflect ideas about ourselves and our societies, our worldviews, and our ideologies. All human experience is spatialized, and some aspects of Chacoan life may have been deliberately and consciously so. For many contemporary Pueblos, there are interrelated, overlapping spatial dimensions to society, ritual, cosmography, and politics. These ideas likely have a deep history. As Chacoans constructed monumental buildings and positioned structures and features to engage with the natural topography, they communicated aspects of a Chacoan ideology. The Chacoan landscape is laden with meaning, and although we cannot access ancient meanings at a specific level, we can trace the large-scale outlines of a Chacoan worldview.

The Chacoan landscape was created to be experienced. In this study I combined phenomenological research with Pueblo ethnography to create an interpretive understanding of the ways Chacoans perceived and represented landscape. Today, Native Americans, artists, scientists, archaeologists, and tourists are moved in different yet overlapping ways by the Chacoan landscape. As this is true for modern visitors to the canyon, how much more so for the ancient Chacoans, for whom and by whom the canyon architecture, with its multilayered uses and meanings, was constructed?

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