THE MIDDLE TRAIL INVENTORY:
Evidence for Pueblo IV Presence
North of the Colorado River

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ABSTRACT

Reported here are a series of petroglyph panels found along a route with pecked hand and toe holds which crosses “The Dive” of Buckskin Gulch - a slot canyon tributary to the Paria River in southern Utah. Evidence for Pueblo IV Hopi use along the trail includes; an associated camp with 14th Century yellow ware ceramics and the analysis of an associated obsidian flake which was obtained from a source in northern Arizona. A review of other sites with yellow ware north of the Colorado River suggests that the evidence for prehistoric Hopi use north of the Colorado River, based on the presence of yellow ware, is rare and frequently ambiguous.

INTRODUCTION AND SETTING

Buckskin Gulch holds one of the more spectacular slot canyons in southern Utah. “The Buckskin” itself is a short, 12 mile long segment of a much larger drainage system which heads on the Paunsagunt Plateau near Bryce Canyon National Park. As it flows southward, the drainage constantly changes character and consequently is known by several names: As it cuts through the cliff-lines of the Grand Staircase (Stokes 1986) the main tributaries of Park Wash and Deer Springs Wash converge to form Kitchen Corral Wash.; downstream from Kitchen Corral, the segment known as Kaibab Gulch cuts a deep “V” shaped gorge through the uplifted limestone of the Kaibab Anticline (Doelling and Davis 1989); emerging briefly, the drainage crosses the strike valley feature known as Coyote Valley: the Buckskin Gulch segment cuts through the Cockscomb (the Kaibab Monocline according to Doelling and Davis 1989) and re-immerses itself into the highly erodable, Jurassic age, Navajo Sandstone which forms a deep, convoluted, vertically sided B even undercut - canyon over 200’ deep and, in places, only an arm spans width. This segment of the Buckskin, called “The Dive”, bisects a tableland defining West Clark Bench on the north and the Paria Plateau on the south. Downstream four miles from the Middle Trail, Buckskin Gulch enters the Paria River. The Paria River Canyon, an important travel corridor, emerges at Lee’s Ferry on the Colorado approximately 30 miles downstream from its confluence with the Paria. (Figure 1 )

While the Paria Plateau was densely populated during Pueblo II times (Mueller 1968), and the upper terraces of the Grand Staircase were intensely farmed by the Virgin Anasazi, the Buckskin and Paria Canyons have only limited potential for agriculture. Indeed, the primary use of the canyon appears to have been as a travel corridor through this agriculturally marginal area. In the vicinity of the Buckskin, the average elevation of the tablelands above is 5,000’. Modern annual precipitation at Church Wells, 6 miles to the northeast, averages less than 7” (Ashcroft et al 1992). The region, if marginal for agriculture is spectacular, displaying dramatic exposures of Navajo Sandstone forming buttes, fins, and other erosional features. Droughty aeolian soils permit only sparse vegetation. Scattered juniper, sand sage, scrub oak, ephedra, sand dropseed, Indian Rice Grass and Blackbrush make up the primary vegetation in this marginally Upper Sonoran lifezone.

The Middle Trail crosses The Dive, it is a precarious route enhanced by hand and toe footholds that were initially noted by Neil Judd during his archeological explorations early in the 20th century (Judd 1927). This is
Figure 1. View from head of Middle Trail south towards the Buckskin Gulch
an exotic route presently used by hikers to access the canyon or cross over to the Paria Plateau. The series of petroglyphs on situated on each side, within the canyon itself, and the presence of a Pueblo IV camp suggests that the route was used prehistorically by puebloan travelers (Figure 2).

PREVIOUS AND RELATED RESEARCH

A brief review of literature in the region that has reported either Yellow Ware or Hopi rock art motifs is presented here. While it is not exhaustive, it indicates that evidence for a Pueblo IV presence in the study area is scant. Because Yellow Ware is rare north of the Colorado River, most researchers have considered its presence to be a result of trade (Colton 1956; Lister 1963; Gieb 2001; Mueller 1968; Wintch 2002 and Wells (1990) provide good examples for Yellow Ware in a Numic context. Most sites with Yellow Ware however, although usually camps, do not have Paiute diagnostics and therefore at least have the possibility of being true Hopi sites.

Judd’s Reconnaissance 1915-1920: The first mention of the Middle Trail route across the Buckskin was made by Neil Judd in the account of his explorations in western Utah and northwestern Arizona undertaken for the Bureau of American Ethnology during the years 1915 to 1920 (Judd 1927). In the spring of 1920, during his investigations on the Paria Plateau, Judd made the following observation:

“Buckskin Gulch proved an effective barrier in ancient times and forced primitive man to make his way around it. As he passed its less formidable head he pecked a series of pictographs on a _ed cliff; below its mouth he pounded out holes for toes and fingers as he marked (one of) several pathways across Paria Canyon” (Judd 1927: 130).

Hand and toeholds carved into sandstone occur over much of the Colorado Plateau and are generally assumed to be associated with Puebloan culture. They are found on both isolated expanses of slickrock as well as on sheltered architectural sites. The actual association of these features, however, with prehistoric behavior, rather than historic, is often difficult to determine. Judd’s description, early in the 20th century, lends considerable authenticity to the Middle Trail as a prehistoric route across the Dive of the Bucksin.

Research Summaries

Paria Plateau Inventory. The Museum of Northern Arizona, under contract to the Arizona Strip BLM office, conducted a sample archeological inventory of the Paria Plateau during the 1967 - 1968 field seasons (Mueller et al 1968). A substantial Late Pueblo II occupation was documented by a ceramic assemblage dominated (somewhat ambiguously) by Kayenta Series Whitewares and Virgin Series graywares. Of interest here is the presence of 13 sherds of Jeddito Yellow Ware; 12 Jeddito B/Y and 1 Jeddito Plain. All of these sherds came from a rockshelter (NA 10,154). They were considered to be “evidence of a single late intrusion by the Hopi, or a trade piece to the locality” (Mueller et al 1968:54).

East and West Clark Benches Garkane Powerline Inventory (Nielson 1993) Limited excavations at 42Ka3426, a camp with three hearth/fire cracked rock concentrations, located on East Clark Bench, yielded a variety of pollen types and most notably bean (Phaseolus) pollen. Radiocarbon dates suggest the site was occupied 520+/-60 BP and yielded a calibrated date age of AD 1330-1430. Beans are a staple food of Pueblo Indians.

East Clark Bench Sample. (Collet and Spurr 2002) NNAD/NAU conducted a sample inventory of ten 160 acre units and a reconnaissance of a 19,360 acre study area on East Clark Bench. No yellow ware sherds or evidence of PIV was encountered.

Glen Canyon Inventory. In her summary of Kaiparowits prehistory Lister (1963) reports a total of seven sites and 40 sherds with Hopi P IV aged pottery (Lister 1963:60). She also reports three sites with only Southern Paiute pottery. (Lister 1963:61). Five sites (3 camps and one open architectural site) yielded a total of 19 Jeddito B/Y sherds. A single camp (in Halls Creek) yielded 20 Jeddito Corrugated sherds. One site yielded a single Homolovi Corrugated sherd. All of the sites are said to have had earlier sherds on them. It is interesting to note that of four sites with Southern Paiute pottery recorded during the inventory Yellow Ware was present on none..
Figure 2. Locations cited in text
Lower Glen Canyon Benches Survey (Geib 1989) Sixteen 160 acre units were inventoried yielding 58 sites. No yellow ware sherds were reported.

The Shivwits Plateau Inventory: This inventory of 1,469 acres on the lake Mead National Recreation Area portion of the Shivwits Plateau recorded 73 Archaic, Virgin Anasazi and Paiute sites. A single Jeddito Black-on-Yellow sherd was collected in association with a Desert Side-Notched projectile point suggested to the authors a Southern Paiute affiliation.

The Kaiparowits Plateau Sample Survey Geib et al (2001:278) found two sites on the Kaiparowits Plateau with Jeddito Yellow Ware sherds. A small bowl or dipper rim and four fragments recovered at 42Ka4827. The rim was identified as Awatovi Black-on-Yellow. 42Ka4572 yielded a single rim sherd identified as either Awatovi or Jeddito Black-on-Yellow.

Escalante River/The Gulch Inventory: Keller reported no Yellow Ware from his intensive inventory of the Gulch (2002). Two sites with Yellow Ware were reported in his inventory of the Escalante River canyon; 42Ga4525, an historic cabin and 42Ga4537, a campsite with “prothohistoric Hopi” sherds reported to have been observed by Grant Johnson (Keller 2000).

Escalante Drainage Project Brigham Young University’s extensive multi-year inventory in the Escalante Region has yielded no yellow ware sherds to date (Talbot various and personal communication 2002).

The Escalante Project (Kearns 1982) This sample inventory of 15,200 acres in south-central Utah reported no Pueblo IV Yellow Ware sherds.

Southern Coal Inventory: Hauck’s (1979) extensive Class II inventory in Kane, Garfield and Iron Counties examined 27,680 acres and yielded only a single sherd of Jeddito Black-on-Yellow (Hauck 1979:309).

Random Yellow Ware Finds. One sherd of Pueblo III negative style B/W was collected on Spencer point (Tank Hollow Burn Report; in preparation). A single Yellow Ware sherd was collected during the 1970’s from the Coyote Buttes area (La Mar Lindsey, personal communication 1979).

South Fork Indian Canyon: 42Ka1576, a Basketmaker II site near Kanab, displays a range of early pictograph styles and a single series of “masks” that are similar to Hopi iconography (Cole 1992:126; 1994). The possibility exists that the “masks” are a later addition to the panel.

Kenny Wintch, Utah State Trust Lands (personal communication 2002); recovered yellow ware from a C14 dated proto-historic (Numic?) camp located near Teasdale in Garfield Co.

Arizona Strip: Although a file search of the Arizona Strip BLM records was not made, Diana Hawks, an archaeologist with considerable experience in the area, is not aware of Yellow Ware being found on the Arizona Strip (Personal communication 11/02). Hawks did report that katsina mask petroglyphs, similar to those at The Wall, did occur in the Paria River drainage. Her observation was that they were heavily patinated and associated with Gen Canyon Style 5 style sheep and were therefore unlikely to date to the Pueblo IV period.

Fairley (1989), following Baldwin 1944 and Schaefer 1969, observed that Asherds of Jeddito Black-on-yellow are sometimes found in association with Southern Paiute Brown ware; even when found in isolation, these widely traded Hopi sherds area probably indications of Southern Paiute activity A (Fairley 1989:151).

Discussion: The above survey of archeological investigations in southern Utah demonstrates that sites with Hopi Yellow Ware, particularly the black-on-yellow type Jeddito B/Y have a widespread distribution but are extremely limited in terms of overall numbers and the types of sites they occur on; the vast majority of yellow ware sherds are from camps and are frequently found in ambiguous contexts. No actual tradeware vessels, or sizable portions thereof, have been reported, only small numbers of sherds – often from multiple vessels. In similar fashion, it is worth noting that Anasazi sherds, from all periods, are frequently found on Paiute sites in the region. This suggests that during the proto-historic period it was not vessels that were traded amongst groups but simply sherds that were transported and curated.
INVENTORY METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The goal of the Middle trail inventory was simply to describe a series of interesting, and possibly related, sites located along a logical route that crossed the Buckskin drainage from East Clark Bench on the north to the Paria Plateau on the south. No attempt at conducting either a sample inventory or blocking up a tract was made. Site types presently known to occur in the general area are restricted to limited activity areas, rock art sites and camps (Figure 3).

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

42Ka5722 The Crack
Site Type: Petroglyphs (Figures 4 & 5)
Site Description: Petroglyphs located in one of the few available well-protected shelters on the bench above The Dive - actually a one meter plus wide “crack” between two large outcrops. On the surface below the petroglyphs are several hammerstones. Symbols are all geometric with lines, squiggles, concentric circles/spirals, tick marks, hoof prints and hachures. The crack is oriented east-west.

42Ka5723 The Wall (Figures 6, 7, & 8)
Site Type: Petroglyphs
Site Description: A large and complex petroglyph panel situated on the south face of a patented Navajo Sandstone cliff face above the Middle trail crossing. As impressive as its size is the height of many of the figures. What appear to be discrete groupings of similar motifs are located as high as 7 meters or so apparently the result of a now deflated dune. Faint figures occur below the projected dune line as well as a few very recent looking anthropomorphs etc at the very base of the panel. Assuming the uppermost are Pueblo IV, determining the relative ages of the different styles, is difficult. This is a complex panel however there does seem to be some repetition in the uppermost groupings which consist of 4 or 5 “faces” in a line and a couple of sheep. The sheep include a variety of styles - some similar to Glen Canyon Linear. On the north edge is a signature” C J Henderson June 8 1923. No artifacts are associated with the panel

42Ka5724 Middle Trail Camp (Figure 9)
Site Type: Lithic Scatter, Ceramic Scatter, Groundstone; Camp
Site Description: This site consists of a dispersed scatter of lithics, groundstone and a small concentration of unidentified gray and Jeddito Yellow Ware sherds and obsidian scattered over a sandy south aspect slope. The proximity of this camp to “The Wall” rock art panel to the north is significant given the possibility that the panel has Hopi stylistic elements. The site is also associated with the Middle Trail crossing of the Dive of the Buckskin down slope about 100 meters. Groundstone fragments, a slab milling stone and several hammerstones define the overall site area but a ceramic and scatter of corrugated and Hopi Yellow Ware (Pueblo IV) is restricted to the south end of the site. In good association with the sherds are several small, tertiary obsidian flakes. A tiny polished bone fragment was also noted in this area. In general, the site shapes up well as a Pueblo IV camp - possibly associated with the Middle Trail and nearby rockart.

42Ka5725 Two Sheep Panel (Figure 10)
Site Type: Petroglyph
Site Description: Site consists of two small sheep petroglyphs on the canyon wall accessible via a ledge and visible from the north side of the canyon. The panel is accessible from the canyon bottom via the Middle Trail.

42Ka5726 Perched Petros & Falling Man Panel (Figures 11, 12, & 13)
Figure 4. 42Ka5722 “The Crack.” Petroglyphs are on the right.
Figure 5. 42Ka5722 “The Crack.” Petroglyphs

Figure 6. 42Ka5723: “The Wall” View to east
Figure 7. “The Wall.” Detail

Figure 8. 42Ka5723: Detail
Figure 9. 42Ka5724 Middle Trail Camp. Note The Wall site in background
Figure 10. 42Ka5725: Sheep petroglyphs
Figure 11. 42Ka5726 Perched Petro Site. Panel is on upper left
Site Type: Petroglyphs
Site Description: Located in an unusually inaccessible situation on a ledge above the gorge of the “Dive of the Buckskin”. Two panels are visible from some distance: an apparently composed anthropomorph, two sheep, a circle and zig-zag are located on one side of an angular rock on the other side is a horizontal human figure.

42Ka1966 The Stoney Stairs (Figures 14, 15, 16, & 17)
Site Type: Hand and toe holds, petroglyphs
Site Description: This site, both the hand/toe holds and the petroglyphs, were initially noted by Neil Judd (1927) The site was recorded by the BLM and assigned a Smithsonian number in the 1970’s These “hand and toe” holds are pecked into the Navajo sandstone on both the north and south sides of the Middle Trail. They are functional and are still used by hikers to aid in crossing the slot canyon (Buckskin Gulch). Two small “rocker bellied” sheep petroglyphs are located along the trail on the north side.

42Ka5820 The Other Wall
Site Type: Rockart, petroglyphs

Site Description: The setting for this petroglyph panel is very similar to that of “The Wall” which is visible on the opposite side of the canyon 650 meters to the north. The panel itself consists of a series of “masks” very similar to those at 42Ka5723. Other figures include animals (sheep?), two series of “tally” marks and also several series of long parallel lines. Presently the petroglyphs are about 4 meters above the ground due apparently to a ledge having broken away. Historic dates are located on east side “1924 Feb 2, 1929”.

JEDDITO YELLOW WARE

The following section describes Pueblo IV ceramic wares, their temporal range and distribution; a description of the ceramic types found during the Middle Trail Inventory; and a consideration of the implications for their presence north of the Colorado River (Figure 19). Colton (1956) provides an excellent introduction to Jeddito Yellow Ware:

“Probably no ware of Pueblo Pottery is admired as much as is Jeddito Yellow Ware. Not only are vessels of this ware conspicuous for beauty of form and for elaborate designs, but probably are admired as much for the clear, bright yellow tones of the vessel surface. Hargrave (1935, a, p. 20) has suggested that the vessels of gold that lured the early Spanish explorers into the Southwest, easily could have been pottery vessels of Jeddito Yellow Ware that were commonly traded throughout the Southwest To natives who did not refine metals, “gold” might refer to color.

The ware developed late. Its appearance does not mark a great change or special advancement in techniques since early examples of this ware do not differ greatly in form or finish from vessels made long before. The same materials used in manufacturing vessels of Awatobi Yellow and Jedditoo Yellow Wares were used in vessels of the earlier orange, gray and white wares of the same region. Where vessels once were white or orange, later they were shades of yellow. The chief ceramic change was in the black paints; a shift from manganese and carbon to iron and carbon” (Colton 1956).

The Middle Trail Ceramics: A sample of 7 sherds collected from 42Ka5724 were examined by Kelley Hays-Gilpin of Northern Arizona University. Hays-Gilpin’s observations (personal communication 2002), are presented below (Figure 20):
Figure 14. Dive of the Buckskin
Figure 15. 42Ka1966 (above): Hand and toe holds, north side

Figure 16. 42Ka1966 (below): Hand and toe de-
Figure 17. 42Ka1966 Hand and toe holds, south side

Figure 18. 42Ka1966: Petroglyphs on north side
Figure 19. Jeddito Yellow Ware sherd from the Escalante

Figure 20. Ceramics from 42Ka5724 Jeddito Corrugated and Jeddito Black-on-Yellow ceramics
“You have three Jeddito Corrugated sherds, a rim, a neck, and a body sherd. The rim and neck sherd plausibly could be from the same vessel, but the body sherd is different, so at least two different vessels are represented, both jars. The rim form is typical of Jeddito Corrugated vessels from the mid to late 1300’s through at least the early 1400’s. I draw no conclusions from the style of corrugation - these sherds are typical and fall well within a pretty wide range of variation. These sherds have iron-poor clay, coarse sand temper, and a yellow color that is typical of coal-fired Hopi pottery. I think the thin orangish color on the surface is probably soil stain. Colton called this type Jeddito Corrugated and placed it in the Awatowi Yellow Ware. You could drop these sherds at Homol’ovi, Awat’ovi, Bidahochi or any number of other 14th century sites at or around the Hopi Mesas, and they’d be right at home. We also find sherds like this in the Verde Valley, and along the Mogollon Rim, together with decorated ware like yours.

You have four sherds of Jeddito Yellow Ware. I would type all of them as Jeddito Black-on-yellow, and place them between about 1350 and 1450, though they could be a little later. They would be right at home at Homol’ovi, which was apparently no longer occupied by 1400. All four are bowl sherds; two rims and two bodies. They could all come from the same vessel, but probably represent at least 3 different bowls. The fine paste, S-shaped rim and low banding line suggest they do not date prior to 1350. Again, I think the orange tint is probably do to soil stain.

All these sherds without a doubt were made on the Hopi Mesas. Yellow ware pottery was widely traded from southern Arizona to Wyoming, California to Kansas.”

Hays-Gilpin’s analysis and observations suggest at least the possibility that the ceramics at 42Ka5724 do not represent vessels used and broken on-site. The sherds represent as many as 2 jars and probably 3 bowls. Given the type of site they occur on (a minor camp), and the small number of sherds present on it, is it reasonable to assume that 5 whole vessels were originally present, subsequently broken, and the majority of body sherds lost? A second observation relates to the origin of the sherds. 42Ka5724 lies on aeolian sand derived from Navajo Sandstone. Does the apparent soil stain on the sherds derive from this deposit or from some other (off-site) context?

Distribution and Temporal Span: The early Pueblo IV Period (AD 1275 B 1400) has been characterized as a time of population aggregation, increased site size, growing social complexity and, notably, the introduction of the Katsina Cult (Dosh and Adams 1986). It is during this period that Jeddito Yellow Ware replaced traditional Anasazi ceramics. The principle sources for Jeddito Yellow Ware were at three population centers; the vicinity of the Hopi Mesas, the sites near Winslow Az, including Homol’ovi, and possibly a third center at Bidahochi Pueblo north of Holbrook Arizona (Dosh and Adams 1986 ).

The Homolovi and Bidahochi sites were apparently the principle distributors for Yellow Ware prior to A.D. 1400 (Dosh and Adams 1986). Jeddito Yellow Ware, the principle type identified in the study area and at Middle Trail Camp, has been dated to A.D. 1300 B 1350 in its place of manufacture (Kelly Hays-Gilpin in Geib et al 2001).

Although the production of Yellow Ware was geographically restricted, its distribution was not: Dosh and Adams point out that Jeddito Yellow Ware is widespread and has been found in California, northern Mexico, Utah, New Mexico and most of Arizona (Dosh and Adams 1986:6).

THE YELLOW WARE PROBLEM

Do Yellow Ware sherds found in southern Utah represent an actual Hopi Pueblo IV presence or, are they a result of trade? Because Paiute sites dominate the protohistoric period and are distributed across the entire
study area and beyond, trade has consistently been the favored explanation. A Hopi presence, limited as it may have been, has rarely been considered. Three possible explanations for the distribution of Yellow Ware can be:

1) Tradewares/curation with Paiute during (restricted to) the 1300-1350 period when Jeddito Yellow Ware was produced.

One perspective on the Paiute trade ware is distributional - both geographical and temporal; if the Southern Paiutes did trade with the Hopi, or otherwise curate yellow ware, it should be found throughout their range in the St. George Basin, High Plateaus and beyond. At this point it appears not to be reported beyond the study area. Arguing for a Hopi origin, yellow ware tends to be found in areas bordering known Hopi occupation and in areas previously occupied by the Anasazi (and perhaps Fremont) (but see Cole).

Actually there is little evidence for actual “tradewares” per se. Yellow Ware “sherds” are found in very small quantities and no restorable vessels have been reported. In terms of temporal distribution, why would curated sherds (those simply collected from previously occupied Hopi sites) be restricted almost exclusively to Jeddito B/W? Curated artifacts, including Anasazi sherds, are common on Southern Paiute sites. Although Southern Paiute occupation in southern Utah begins about the same time that Hopi Yellow Ware began to be produced along the Little Colorado River (circa A.D. 1300 -1400) allowing for a Paiute mode of introduction, Paiute occupation continues into the historic period. If curation of Hopi ceramics was a consistent, long-term, Paiute practice we might expect a variety of post A.D. 1400 Hopi wares to be found on Paiute sites in southern Utah. It should also be pointed out that rarely are Yellow Ware sherds found associated with contemporary Numic Brown Wares. And conversely, we might ask: Are Paiute Brown Wares ever found at the major Hopi centers of Yellow Ware production?

2) The “straggler hypothesis”, proposed by Dosh and Adams suggests the possibility of “Proto-Hopi” populations living in the northern frontier, if only on a seasonal basis, during the period A.D.1300 - 1350 (Dosh and Adams 1986:7)

3) Limited Use Hypothesis. The study region has a well documented puebloan (Anasazi and Fremont) presence until A.D. 1250/1300. It is reasonable to assume that some sort of use in the region would continue after its depopulation. Hunting, gathering, procurement of rare resources, trading and religious pilgrimages all could have occurred on a sporadic basis.

The radical material culture and adaptive changes documented for the Protohistoric period, as well as the ethnographic presence of Numic peoples, argues against the “straggler hypothesis” for the region north of the Colorado River (but see Paria Plateau data). While the “trade ware hypothesis” accounts well for some, perhaps most, of the data presented in the literature, the multiple lines of evidence at the Middle Trail sites suggest that Proto-Hopi populations may have visited the Paria Plateau and West Clark Bench area during the 14th century.

OBSIDIAN SOURCING

Most obsidian found on the Grand Staircase Section of the Colorado Plateau occurs on limited activity and camp sites of Numic, and possibly Archaic, cultural affiliation. The vast majority of obsidian flakes analyzed are from sources in the Great Basin (Nelson 2001). Great Basin sources are considered consistent with the overall distribution of Paiute sites in the region. Of 44 obsidian flakes, collected from 36 sites recently analyzed on the Grand Staircase section, only three of the obsidian samples were from northern Arizona sources (Nelson 2001). Each of the three samples was from a separate limited activity site; two of the three sites had apparent associations of Virgin ceramics, one site also yielded a Paiute Brown Ware sherd. Although Great Basin sources for obsidian, i.e. the Modena and Mineral Mountain localities, are considered consistent with the overall
distribution of Numic sites, it appears that a small percentage may originate in northern Arizona.

The presence of a few tertiary flakes of obsidian found at the Middle Trail Camp, 42Ka5724, offered the possibility of determining a geographical association; if the obsidian source was from the Great Basin, it would appear that the site was likely a Numic camp while a source in northern Arizona would argue that the associated Yellow Ware was Pueblo IV Hopi. A single sample was submitted to A&G Analyses for sourcing.

Nelson (2001) compared the sample with three potential sources: Government Mountain, Coconino County Az.; Modena, Iron County Utah and Schoo Mine, Mineral Mountains, Beaver County, Utah. The source of the obsidian was determined to be from Partridge Creek (Figure 21) in northern Arizona (Nelson 2001).

“The Partridge Creek geologic obsidian source has been reported by Shackley (1988,1995,1998). He locates the source in the Mt Floyd Volcanic Field and it includes Sections 28, 33, 34; T24N., R4W, USGS Mount Floyd 7.5’ Quadrangle, in southwest Coconino County, Arizona. The primary source is located on the southeast flank of Round Mountain and secondary deposits occur along the Partridge Creek drainage for at least 15-20 km (Shackley 1988:754-755).” (Nelson 2001).

THE ROCK ART

The systemic approach to defining culture holds that rock art styles and motifs, considered as symbolic expressions that reflect a cultures ideology, can be deeply entwined with other subsystems of culture B the sociological and the technological (White 1949). Taking this to its logical extreme Binford, a student of Whites, once suggested that artifacts such as rock art might even be considered “ideofacts” that reflect a cultures ideological subsystem, just as a tool relates to the technological subsystem (Binford 1972). In practice however, these are assertions that can rarely be proved. Even demonstrating the association of rock styles with a particular temporal period and culture is notoriously difficult. Occasionally, however, favorable circumstances arise that permit rock art to be assessed more rigorously than is normal. Cole’s (1992) study of Homolovi rock art is just such a case.

Cole (1992) is concerned with the identification of Katsina Cult iconography in prehistoric rock art that she believes dates to the Pueblo IV Period (AD 1300-1400). This is the period when several types of Yellow Ware were being produced. Her research compares modern clan symbols, considered to be “signatures”, with rockart found at Homolovi during the Pueblo IV Period.

Cole identifies petroglyph symbols at Tutuventungwa, (in Az about __ kilometers from the Middle Trail) an historic site with Katsina Clan and Maasaw Clan symbols. She notes that some of the many representations may be prehistoric (Cole 1992:39). Similar symbols occur at sites 42Ka5723 “The Wall” and 42Ka 5820, the “Other Wall” which occur within sight of one another on opposite sides of the canyon. Coles description is worth quoting in its entirety:

“Petroglyphs at the Hopi shrine of Tutuventiwingwu exhibit symbols of Hopi clans that possibly date from the prehistoric period into historic times (Titiev 1937; Michaelis 1981:8. Included among the 2,178 symbols at the shrine (Michaelis 1981:5) are pictures of masks symbolic of the Katsina Clan and the Maasaw Clan (Figures 2.4 and 2.5). Members of these and other clans have pecked rows of repetitious symbols on sandstone boulders to record their presence during successive trips to gather salt and yellow clay in the lower reaches of the Little Colorado River. The ceremonial expeditions are part of Hopi Soyal ceremonies in which the yellow clay is used for paint.” (Cole 1992).
Figure 21.
Coles Figures 2.4 and 2.5 are similar to those at the Middle Trail. In the above passage Cole not only identifies clan symbol rock art, but describes the circumstances under which they were produced i.e., ceremonial expeditions to gather specific resources. The observations at Tutuventiwingwu compare favorably with the Middle Trail petroglyph layouts as well as their exotic settings:

“Juxtaposed symbols at Tutuventiwingwu represent a pictorial narrative of clans that have made the journey over time and associate the clans with each other and with activities and mythology of the katsina cult.” Cole 1992:38-39).

Coles account of the Little Colorado journey is relevant to the possible mythic context of the Middle Trail sites: “Not only does the trip from the Hopi villages to the salt deposits involve physical danger, there is spiritual danger as well, as the depths of the canyons are symbolic of the underworld, home of the dead. The salt deposits are located beyond the site of the sipapu, mythic hole in the earth from which the Hopi people emerged to the upper world and where they return after death. The exit from the sipapu is guarded by Maasaw who lives in the underworld. To look upon this god can mean death.” (Cole 1992:39).

The Middle Trail symbols and those at Tutuventiwingwu compare quite well (Figures 22 & 23). The comparison is all the more striking when the repetitive nature of the motifs is considered and the canyon setting is taken into account.

CONCLUSION

The Middle Trail Inventory recorded a series of potentially related sites along a route passing through the Dive of the Buckskin connecting West Clark Bench and the Paria Plateau. Rock art styles (albeit with varying degrees of patination) and the presence of Pueblo IV yellow ware ceramics suggested that the trail may have been used during the 14th century by the proto-Hopi. A review of other sites with yellow ware north of the Colorado River suggests that its presence could be a result of: 1) Trading vessels with local Paiute, 2) the result of “straggler” Pueblo III populations who remained in the area (Dosh and Adams 1986), and 3) a result of limited special use by small groups from one of the Pueblo IV population centers to the south.

William Lucius recently described an experience that suggests a fourth possibility. During an inventory on Black Mesa Lucius and his colleges noted the occurrence of yellow ware sherds on otherwise Pueblo II era sites. Lucius was later told by Hopi Elders that they had placed the sherds on the sites to “…make them Hopi” (Lucius 2002).

The Middle Trail sites seemed to offer a rare opportunity to combine the results of obsidian sourcing, ceramic analysis, and the use of Hopi iconography to interpret who, and when, this well defined route was used in the prehistoric past. These multiple lines of evidence suggested that the latter “limited/special use” hypothesis was most in-line with the data. Ultimately however the data proved to be ambiguous: The rockart, although some is similar to Hopi Katsina iconography, appears to associate with much earlier styles. The most recent appearing (i.e. least patinated) seems to be at 42Ka5726 and at the very base of 42Ka5723. Neither does the yellow ware ceramics, although obviously Hopi in origin, necessarily imply Pueblo IV era use of the area. It could in fact be a more recent addition to the site.

In light of the Middle Trail study, it should not be assumed that the presence of Awatovi B/Y is the result of trade - nor can we even assume it reflects an accurate temporal placement. In the future, each occurrence of
Figure 22. Petroglyph symbols of Tutuventiwngwu, Arizona

Figure 23. 42Ka5723 Selected “mask” motif.
this rare ceramic type should involve a detailed consideration of their site context, artifact associations, and an examination of the sherds themselves for evidence of secondary placement.

Even though (or perhaps because) the actual association of the various Middle Trail sites could not be demonstrated, such ambiguous situations offer an opportunity to engage contemporary Hopi with the ambiguities of the archeological record north of the Colorado River and, conversely, allow archeologists to become more conversant with Hopi perspective and tradition.

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