

SUPPLEMENT 4. ON THE MISUSE OF CULTURAL ANALOGY

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Even though the comments on the pottery and houses indicate that Wallace is not an Upper Republican site, we also must comment on the use of Pawnee ethnography to interpret aspects of Upper Republican sites. Unfortunately, the equation of Upper Republican, and all of the Central Plains tradition, with Pawnee cannot be accepted as valid but just will not go away. The equation entered the literature in the early 1930s when William Duncan Strong pronounced what he later called Upper Republican culture to be "Prehistoric Pawnee" (Strong 1932:152). A few years, however, he retreated somewhat, adopting the now-familiar geographic name (Upper Republican, for its occurrence in the upper portion of the Republican River basin of southern Nebraska), but suggesting that as more data became available and a clear line of ceramic and development became evident the name could be changed back to Prehistoric Pawnee (Strong 1935a,b). Waldo Wedel grappled with the question in his Ph.D. dissertation, concluding that while Pawnee culture was rooted in Upper Republican culture, historic Pawnee culture also included elements from other cultural traditions, including Oneota and European (Wedel 1936:80). In the following years, all of the Central Plains tradition came to be attributed to the Pawnee. But while both Strong and Wedel are well-known and frequently cited as proponents of the direct historical approach, what often is overlooked is that they never were able to connect historic Pawnee culture any farther back than the protohistoric phase of that culture (the Lower Loup phase). In spite of what Strong (1935a:277) had presumed was a "clear, unbroken line of ceramic and other development" that just was then only partially revealed, a considerable amount

of work accomplished throughout the region in the last 80 years has never established such a line.

A major part of the problem is that these early scholars were seeking to study ethnic continuity by constructing linear sequences of archaeological cultures, all of them established using material culture traits and the principles of the Midwestern Taxonomic Method. This, then, assumed that these cultures could be strung together this way and that it could be done by working progressively back through time. It also assumed that these cultures had one-to-one correspondence to a self-identified society. But we now realize that the cultural and social landscape of the Central Plains, where the historic Pawnee homeland lies, was substantially reshaped in the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries and beyond. Population movements, escalating conflicts, and interactions the nature of which are not at all well understood, reshuffled identities and it was only at this time that Pawnee culture and society began to emerge. Even that occurred over a period of perhaps a century or so and resulted not from a strictly linear ancestry but from a coming together of people of varying cultural traditions, including, but by no means exclusively, Upper Republican and other parts of the Central Plains tradition, in addition to, as Wedel surmised, Oneota and likely European. Moreover, the two divisions of the Pawnee, the Skiri and Kawarahki (South Bands), almost certainly represent not divisions of a former unity but rather a convergence of entities that had separate histories and had emerged separately. The three South Bands differentiated only in the latter third of the eighteenth century, and the Pawnee as a whole never took a single term to refer to themselves although they became a single tribal entity in the mid-nineteenth century (Parks 2001:515). Studies of social organization make clear varying bundle organization and variations

in social roles among the bands (Murie 1914). Interpretations of Pawnee cosmology are usually based on accounts for the Skiri (e.g., Chamberlain 1982) who had ceremonies and cosmological principles that the South Bands did not share (and vice versa). Thus, it is not possible to draw a single cosmological portrait that is universally applicable even for the historic Pawnee.

The time of identity reshuffling also was a time of major change in social organization. The attribution of the Central Plains tradition to the Plains Village Pattern (Lehmer 1954:139-140) to the contrary, it was only in the fifteenth century that true villages began to form on the Central Plains, and even that did not occur simultaneously through the region. Previously, in Upper Republican and Central Plains tradition times, farmsteads may have been organized into dispersed communities that functioned as units for some purposes, but those communities were not rigidly bounded and individual farmsteads retained a large degree of autonomy. Further, the taxa composing the Central Plains tradition, including Upper Republican, are very much arbitrary constructions by archaeologists and bear no relation to social realities of the early second millennium. It also is becoming apparent that individual communities within these arbitrary (and increasingly useless and misleading) taxa had separate histories and may have been differentially constituted. For example, one of us has argued for some transegalitarian behavior in one such community in central Kansas (Roper 2006:316-317), but even that is not necessarily evident in other nearby communities. Thus, when Huffman and Earley (2014) or others (e.g., O'Brien 1986) use terms like "chief," "priest," or "doctor," all of which were roles in historic Pawnee society (chief in the colloquial sense, for the Pawnee did not have a chiefdom organization in the anthropological sense of the word), they are attributing to Central Plains tradition society a degree of social complexity for which there is no evidence. Claims to have discovered such are tautological and provide no means to falsify the argument. The same is true

of claimed evidence for cosmology in the early second millennium. Further, as true villages formed in east-central Nebraska in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century and the people became Skiri and Kawarahki, community size and nucleation increased considerably. It is as such a process unfolds that differentiation of roles typically occurs and hierarchies develop (Kosse 1990). It is probable that this is what happened to create Pawnee social organization and worldview as documented in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century by scholars such as Alexander Lesser (1933), Gene Weltfish (1965), George Dorsey (1904, 1906; Dorsey and Murie 1940), and James Murie (1914, 1981). This development, of course, is a product of a period some centuries *after* the occupation at Wallace. Even without such considerations, their interpretation of the Wallace site is suspect. They argue for the presence of only five houses at the site and attribute one to a priest and two to a chief. This makes for a strangely top-heavy social pyramid.

In sum, Pawnee ethnogenesis is a product of the mid-second millennium coming together of theretofore culturally diverse people, not of cultural development through a single linear sequence. Descendants of some of the people who bore Central Plains tradition culture surely were involved, but these ancestors themselves undoubtedly maintained a far more diverse set of identities and had a far larger set of individual histories than many recognize. In any event, they were not the sole early second millennium cultural tradition involved in Pawnee ethnogenesis. The Pawnee, although occupying a homeland away from the Missouri River, are nevertheless a tribe of the riverine portion of the Plains and elements of that can be seen in their culture. Any ahistorical cultural principles derivable to characterize their world-view have shallow time depth, and are not applicable to approximately twelfth century phenomena, least of all on the High Plains.

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