How Great Were the Cedar Mesa Great House Communities?

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SAA 76th Annual Meeting, Sacramento, 2011
Outline

• Review Pueblo II and Pueblo III great house settlement patterns in the Northern San Juan basin

• Make expectations for what the Et Al and Owen Severance communities may have looked like

• Discuss the social implications for these organizational patterns
Defining Community

• Group of people who lived in close enough proximity that individuals would come into face-to-face contact with each other on a regular basis (Murdock 1949; Murdock and Wilson 1972)

• Spatial clustering of settlements around an associated community center - in this case, a great house

• 2 km radius; 12.6 km² (Varien 1999)
Et Al site (42SA18431)

- Pueblo II-III
- Multi-story masonry great house style roomblock
- Two kiva depressions
- Possible great kiva
- Several mounded midden areas
- Potential road segment

Graphic by Morin, Dickie, and S. Matson 2009
Owen Severance site (42SA24584)

- Pueblo II
- Large rubble mound
- Small unit pueblo with kiva depression
- Pitstructure depression
- Small surface structure
- Several midden areas
- Potential road segments

Graphic by Morin, Dickie, and S. Matson 2009
Community Centers in the Northern San Juan

From Varien and Wilshusen 2002: Figure 1.3
Bluff Great House

- 7 sites in community core
- Delimited by floodplains and canyons

Jalbert and Cameron 2000: Figure 6.4
Edge of the Cedars

- Five associated houses

- Additional undocumented nearby households

Hurst 2000: Figure 5.2
Cottonwood Falls

- 14 km$^2$ area surveyed around the great house
- 33 residential sites
- Similar spatial patterning as the Bluff great house

From Mahoney 2000: Figure 2.3
Lowry Pueblo

- 14.5 km$^2$ block survey centered on Lowry
- Chaco era Lowry community- 65 habitation sites
- Dense community

Kendrick and Judge 2000: Figure 9.10
Escalante Pueblo

- Associated community limited to small sites on the surrounding slopes
- 12 habitations within a 300-meter radius
- Site density better reflects that of Lowry Pueblo

Hallasi 1979: Figure 6
Examples from the Cibola Region

Cox Ranch and Cerro Pomo

- Dense, yet confined communities
- 231 sites, majority date to the late Pueblo II period
- 100+ residents at any one time
- Tight boundaries
- May have been one community
- Residents likely interacted
Cedar Mesa Community

Upper Grand Gulch/ Owen Community

- 32 sites/km²
- Pueblo II sites account for 7%
- 5 habitation sites
- Estimate 62 contemporaneous sites with Owen--7 might be habitations
Cedar Mesa Community

Bullet Canyon/ Et Al Community

- 48 sites/km²
- Pueblo II-III sites account for 32%
- 11 habitation sites
- Estimate 200 contemporaneous sites with Et Al--54 might be habitations
Social/Biological Reproduction

- Residential and sustainable units
- Residential communities- spatially distinct clusters or residences
- Sustainable communities- spatial and demographic scale of a social network needed to maintain residential communities
- Minimum of 475 people
- Larger, sustainable communities essential to community maintenance (Mahoney 2000)
Resource Allocation

- Community centers as physical manifestations of social organization
- Ritual practices
- Institutionalized mechanisms for settling land disputes and resource allocation

Escalante Ruin (Photo from the Anasazi Heritage Center)
Future directions

- Population estimates
- Sustainability (economically and biologically)
- Hierarchy/ political control
- Spatialization of habitations and field houses

View over the Bluff community