

*Dating the Occupation of Site Bc-50
in Chaco Canyon National Monument*

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Bc-50 (Tseh So) is a small site in Chaco Canyon National Monument, almost directly across the wash from Chetro Ketl. It was excavated in 1936 by the University of New Mexico and the School of American Research (Brand *et al*, 1937). Since that time there have occurred arguments both as to the time of occupation as well as to its relationships to the big pueblos on the north side of Chaco Wash.

A collection of potsherds from the original excavation of Bc-50 received concentrated attention recently in the hope of at least partially solving some of the problems remaining. These sherds had not been studied previously, nor had they even been washed. Accompanying notes stated that the collection did not represent a random sample of Bc-50 potsherds; rather, that they were sherds selected for their size and the presence of painted design. The majority appear to be from the late occupation of the site. A sample of 500 of these sherds clearly showed a number of distinct sources of manufacture. As the sample is not random, the frequency of each sherd type has little significance. The pottery types present, however, are of great importance in dating the site and in comparing it with other sites in the vicinity. Separation of these types was made on the basis of surface finish, temper, firing technique, slip, paint, and design. Descriptions of the pottery types mentioned below are to be included in two forthcoming site reports.

Sources of the pottery are as follows:

1. Indigenous Cibola White Ware, primarily Gallup Black-on-White, with lesser amounts of Red Mesa, Escavada, and Chaco Black-on-Whites. (Late Cibola types have a slip that is thin, in part, transparent; sherd temper; high temperature firing).
2. Introduced Mesa Verde White Ware from the San Juan River west of Bloomfield, New Mexico, including McElmo, Mesa Verde, and earlier carbon-painted Black-on-Whites. (Slip is even and opaque; temper is mostly sand; firing is lower temperature than in Chaco Canyon).

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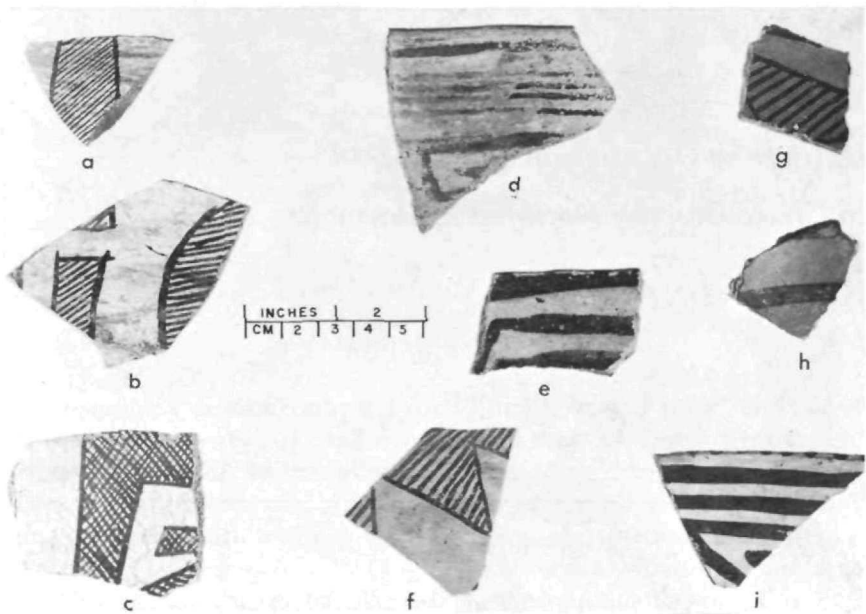


Figure 1. Representative sherds from Bc-50: a. Chaco Black-on-White; b. Gallup Black-on-White; c. Aztec Black-on-White; d. Mesa Black-on-White; e. McElmo Black-on-White; f. Mancos Black-on-White; g. Wingate Black-on-Red; h. Puerco Black-on-Red.

3. Introduced iron-painted types from the same area as above, including Cortez, Mancos and Aztec Black-on-Whites. (Aztec Black-on-White is derived from Mancos Black-on-White and is a type of McElmo Phase).
 4. Local copies of carbon-painted types from the San Juan, using local Chaco paste and firing techniques with northern painting and slipping techniques. (Even slip, sherd temper, good to excellent polish, high firing temperature). [Werito Black-on-White and Aztec Black-on-White are new pottery types recognized by, and eventually to be described by Dr. Shiner. Included in this Group # 4 is Werito Black-on-White, a local copy of McElmo Black-on-White. Editor.]
 5. Local copies of San Juan iron-painted types with Chaco paste and northern slip and surface finish.
 6. Introduced pottery, both carbon- and iron-painted, from along Highway 666, between Shiprock Peak and Naschiti. (Crushed dark igneous rock temper).
 7. San Juan Red Wares, such as La Plata and Bluff Black-on-Reds.
 8. Miscellaneous intrusives from the south and southeast (including Socorro Black-on-White and smudged types).
- Red Mesa and Cortez Black-on-Whites argue for an early date, while Aztec and Mesa Verde Black-on-Whites indicate a later date. A careful

analysis of the collection results in the opinion that most of the pottery referred to above was made between A.D. 1075 and 1125. Absence of polychrome pottery would seem to preclude an occupation much later than A.D. 1125. The ceramic types are quite similar to those found in contemporary occupation at Pueblo del Arroyo, Pueblo Bonito, and Talus Unit. There is nothing here to suggest major differences in culture. As to the dating, Gladwin appears to have been correct when he criticized the classification as a Pueblo II site (Gladwin, 1945, pp. 81-94). The late occupation at the site clearly lasts well into the Bonito Phase, which is characterized by the large pueblo villages at Chaco Canyon and dates from about A.D. 1080 to 1225 (Gladwin, 1945, p. 129).

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