An Introduction to Gallina Archaeology

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As we have seen, there are only three first-hand sources, Castro and Morejon, Ondegardo, and Santillan, which deal with the system of land tenure in Peru during the Pre-Inca period. The first-hand information recorded by these four early Spanish chroniclers, although meager in quantity, is clearly to the effect that individual land tenure prevailed among the people, at least in certain localities, of the Pre-Incaic era. Nothing whatsoever in the material available to the present writer affirms or indicates communal or allotment systems of land ownership during this period.

From the evidence we have, it cannot be rigidly demonstrated that a system of individual land tenure prevailed among the Pre-Inca people of Peru. The present writer feels that the evidence is far too meager for such a conclusion. The evidence available does, however, point strongly to this conclusion. One point is significant; in the material at hand there is not the least indication that the system during the Pre-Incaic period was communal or of the allotment type.

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In north central New Mexico a small tributary of the Rio Grande, known as the Gallina, flows by a circuitous route into the Chama. This is the center of an area long known as the “Gallina country.” The area is roughly bounded on the north, east, south, and west by the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, Chama River, Jemez and San Pedro Mountains, and the Continental divide respectively. A vast stretch of canyon and upland country, lying for the most part in the transitional zone of pine-covered mesas and sage-covered valleys and canyons, the Gallina country remained in archaeological oblivion until the last few years.

At first the excavations were carried on under a partial grant from the University of New Mexico through the courtesy of a National Forest excavation permit. Both Cuchillo and Nogales Cliff-House, two of the larger Gallina sites, were excavated by the author and Mr. Carroll Burroughs under the direction and sponsorship of Dr. Frank C. Hibben. A complete report of the excavations is now in preparation by Dr. Hibben.

The archaeological character is given to this area by numerous remains of single unit surface houses. These houses are large, averaging 18 by 20 feet, lofty (at Cerrito some 12 feet of standing wall is

1. Curator of the Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico. The author is indebted to Dr. Hibben for his suggestions and cooperation in the preparation of this material.
present 2), and tower-like in shape. A site usually consists of a group of three or four house units but single house units are common. The house walls average three to six feet in thickness.

A north-south orientation is universally present. At the cliff-house site of Nogales, the loss of several possible room sites is explained only by the fact that the north-south orientation could not be carried out. In the south wall of each house a cist, with a wooden lintel, resembling the ventilator shaft of a kiva is directly behind a U shaped fire screen. To the east and west of the fire screen are two-compartment storage bins while directly in front of the screen is a stone or adobe lined fire pit and, occasionally, an auxiliary ash pit.

The bins were provided with close fitting sandstone covers and sets of plugs which were plastered into the bin wall, on the north side, when the bin was not in use. Removed, the plugs permitted the entrance of air and prevented the fermentation of the stored corn. The space between the bin and the house wall was used as a storage area.

In most cases the roof was supported by four wooden beams, but six supports are known. Banquettes occur in many of the houses on the north side of the bins. These may be continuous or may occur only along one or two walls. Some of the more elaborate specimens are hollow, having been used as auxiliary storage bins. Occasionally a panelled mural of peculiar design begins on one bin wall, makes a circuit of the room and ends on the other bin wall.

Accompanying every Gallina surface house unit are one or more pit houses located near the surface unit. Usually because of their location, at the foot of a slope, the pit houses are filled with hard, packed adobe. The pit houses are circular in shape and except for the fact that they are subterranean, are circular models of the surface houses. In all probability the Gallina pit houses were occupied earlier than the surface houses and would, therefore, represent an earlier culture horizon.

Occasionally suitable cliff caves occur in the sandstones or conglomerates of the Gallina area. Where conditions were such as to make cliff-houses feasible, the caves were utilized by building houses of the regular Gallina type but with much thinner walls, in a cliff location.

Small unit pueblos consisting of numbers of house units and usually several pit houses occur occasionally throughout the area.

During the summer of 1937 five of the eight houses of a large unit located on the northern side of the Gallina river were excavated by Dr. and Mrs. Frank C. Hibben. This group was named Cerrito. The site is located some two and one-half miles from the junction of the Gallina and Chama rivers. Cerrito was built approximately four hundred feet from the canyon floor on a very inaccessible ridge. Large quantities of pottery, stone implements, and many antler pieces were recovered by the excavators.

After a lapse of one season, formal work was renewed in the summer of 1939 on a smaller site of the same nature situated on the southern bank of the same stream near the town of Costilla. In this group a single house site and nearby pit house were excavated. The name Cuchillo, suggested by the workmen, was given this group. Great quantities of pottery, stone artifacts, woven materials and implements of various categories were recovered from the main house. Textiles and other perishables were preserved when the roof caved in, smothering the fire that consumed the house. Pottery that is identical with that from the main house was removed from the pit house. The scarcity of artifacts, wood and other cultural material from the pit house seems to indicate that the people moved to another location and did not abandon their home because of an enemy attack.

The skeletal material from Cuchillo consists of portions of sixteen very badly charred individuals. Arrowpoints in situ give further proof that the inhabitants were destroyed by an enemy attack.

A somewhat larger cliff-house ruin, located in Nogales or Spring Canyon was also excavated during the 1939 season. The name Nogales Cliff-House was adopted by us during the excavation since the site is located in a small side rincon off the larger Nogales Canyon. Some eleven houses and thirteen storage rooms or cists were excavated during the season. As in all Gallina sites, the amount of material recovered was tremendous although the cliff-house showed signs of having been abandoned rather than sacked. In House 5 the remains of some nine individuals were uncovered, the majority of which were children. In various locations near the unit seven burials were excavated. Beams taken from the balcony house give a date of 1264 A.D. for Nogales.

Several other sites in addition to those excavated by the University have been opened. A few known sites have been dug into in the usual search for hidden treasure, but, due to the fact that most of the Gallina territory is within the boundaries of the Santa Fe National Forest, very few sites have been destroyed by treasure hunters.

The Gallina phase is indeed interesting insomuch as it is in reality intrusive in the otherwise solid Anasazi area of New Mexico. The occurrence of *cucurbita pepo*, flint corn, and pottery vessels with pointed bottoms all point to an eastern affiliation, probably Nebraska, through eastern Colorado. Likewise the extensive use of antler implements; the presence of paddle and anvil finished pottery; the three-notched axe; broad bladed arrowheads of chert, obsidian and chalcedony; clay elbow pipes; sandals and baskets of several different weaves and types; and medicine bag caches of unusual minerals also indicate an intrusive culture.

In addition to the above outstanding characteristics, Gallina archaeology is further noteworthy for the occurrence of several distinct types of pottery. These include: Gallina decorated Black on Gray, Gallina plain, undecorated, Gallina utility (the pointed bottom
vessels fall in this group), Gallina coarse utility, Gallina punched ware, Gallina cord marked, and eastern Colorado maize marked.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF A CRANIAL SERIES FROM NORTH CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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The cranial material summarized in this discussion was obtained from four sites in the area known as the Gallina region lying in north central New Mexico.

These four sites, with the corresponding catalogue numbers assigned them by the Museum of the University of New Mexico, are as follows: Cuchillo (Bg2 60/1-16), Nogales (Bg3 60/1-18), Gavilan (Bg4 60/1-2), and Tapecitoes (Bg5 60/1-2). A fifth site at Cerrito (Bg1 60/x) yielded no skeletal material.

The skeletal remains form a part of the material obtained from a series of excavations in the Gallina area under the direction of Dr. Frank C. Hibben of the University of New Mexico during the summers of 1937, 1938, and 1939.

While the number of burials, thirty-eight in all, resulted in a cranial series which is admittedly of doubtful statistical importance, the homogeneity of the group causes it to be of greater interest and value than would ordinarily have been the case in such a small series. This summary may then be regarded as purely an introduction to the physical anthropology of the Gallina region, rather than any conclusive, or statistically important, contribution. In the light of the present data, it seems very probable that with further additions this series will represent an important adjunct to the physical anthropology of the Southwest.

The condition of the crania, and other skeletal material, varies quite widely. Several crania were in very good condition while many of them were fragmentary and yielded only a few valid observations and still fewer valid measurements. The sixteen burials from Cuchillo were badly charred and fragmentary, and these accounted for many of the lacunae in the tabulations. In compiling summaries and drawing conclusions, the observations and measurements of all immature individuals (under sixteen years) and those of questionable accuracy were omitted. This, in the majority of instances, gave a frequency of from three to twenty items, usually about twelve.

Differentiation was also made in regard to sex. Here, cranial criteria were checked by those of the pelvic bones, with the latter receiving preference in case of any doubt. Five adult burials were entered as “Uncertain” in regard to sex, and the measurements and

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the aid and cooperation of Dr. Hibben in the study of this material.

2. Skeletal material, other than crania, was studied by R. E. Bell, University of New Mexico, who also aided in checking sexing criteria.