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EXOTICS, EXCHANGE, AND ELITES: EXPLORING MECHANISMS OF MOVEMENT OF PRESTIGE GOODS IN THE INTERIOR NORTHWEST

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Colin Patrick Quinn

ABSTRACT

Prestige items likely had an important role in the social, economic, and ritual lifeways of prehistoric people on the Plateau. Investigating how they move through the landscape can provide insight into trade patterns and elite control. This work investigates the movement of prestige items in an attempt to discover possible mechanisms for trade and exchange of rare goods throughout the Interior Northwest. Based on presence and absence data at numerous Late Archaic (2500–200 BP) sites on the Plateau, it is argued that the distribution of prestige items is not due to elite control and a “Plateau Interaction Sphere,” but rather can be explained using evolutionary perspectives on the benefit of prestige items as primary exchange goods.

INTRODUCTION

Prestige items, as defined by Hayden and Schulting (1997), are items that can be viewed as elite goods, based on rarity in terms of the raw material, or the amount of labor and skill involved in their manufacture. The determination of artifacts as prestige items is predicated on differential access to those items. Due to the fact that these goods can be used in ritual activities, as markers of cultural identity, and as indicators of wealth and status, an understanding of how and why they move throughout the Interior Northwest can provide important insights into prehistoric economic and social systems. In this paper, two primary mechanisms of movement of prestige items are explored; elites attempting to create a “Plateau Interaction Sphere” (Hayden and Schulting 1997) and trade and exchange (Galm 1994). Based on the spatial and temporal distribution of prestige items at sites throughout the Plateau, it is argued that trade and exchange, along with the evolutionary benefits of participating in trade and exchange systems, provided the main mechanism for movement of prestige goods in the past. Many authors have argued for food as the primary resource for the initiation and enhancement of trade and exchange networks (Baugh and Swenson 1980; Spielman 1991) while others have noted the importance of non-food resources in trade systems (Galm 1994; Hayden and Schulting 1997; Vehik 2002; Blake 2004). This study provides both archaeological data to argue the importance of non-utilitarian item exchange for the creation of exchange networks as well as the theoretical underpinnings that make such trade systems evolutionarily stable.

MECHANISMS FOR MOVEMENT OF PRESTIGE ITEMS

This study is primarily interested in finding the mechanisms responsible for the movement of exotic and prestige items throughout the Interior Northwest. Investigating the movement of exotics is not new to Plateau research (Stryd 1983; Blake 2004), though systematic statistical assessments of prestige item distributions are rare. Prestige item distribution data can evaluate two competing hypotheses for the movement of prestige items throughout the Plateau: elites versus trade and exchange. Hayden and Schulting (1997) argue for a "Plateau Interaction Sphere," one that is controlled by elites, as a mechanism for the movement and distribution of prestige items. In this paper, the term "elites" refers to individuals and groups of individuals who monopolize control of access to resources. Elites differ from "Big Men" and aggrandizers in the fact that elites have the economic means and institutionalized social support to dominate exchange systems, marginalizing the role of non-elites in trade networks. This is paramount in the discussion of prestige item exchange and movement, because non-elites would have different payoffs from exchange. With regard to the Plateau Interaction Sphere, prestige item distribution must be controlled by elites and non-elites must not be an integral part of the trade network (Hayden and Schulting 1997). An interaction sphere, as defined by Caldwell (1964), involves several different cultures that may retain their distinctiveness at the level of subsistence technology and local craft goods, however, they share a common set of supralocal values, rituals, behavior, styles, and raw materials. According to several researchers, attributes of social, ritual, and economic lifeways in the Plateau, are relatively homogeneous throughout the region (Kroeber 1939; Ray 1939; Swanson 1962; Willey 1966; Sanger 1968; Wood 1980), yet the cultural origin and language groups are varied (Hayden and Schulting 1997). This hypothesis argues that the homogeneity is attributable to an elite controlled Plateau Interaction Sphere. A second and competing hypothesis for the movement of prestige items is that of pure trade and exchange (Galm 1994; Blake 2004), with all of the possible evolutionary benefits gained from engaging in such an activity. Prestige items can be used as proxy markers of status, wealth, and resources, signaling to other individuals their potential advantages as a mate. Additionally, immediate and delayed return exchange transactions can provide other resources and social capital with which people can use to attract mates. For both the producers and consumers of prestige items, the evolutionary benefits in terms of increased reproductive fitness would initiate and propagate the movement of prestige items throughout the Plateau. To evaluate these two competing hypotheses, we will look at three theoretical expectations, along with their archaeological correlates, to determine which hypothesis best explains the movement and distribution of prestige items in the Plateau.

Elite Control

The expectations of the elite controlled Plateau Interaction Sphere are drawn from the arguments made by Hayden and Schulting (1997). First, if elites controlled prestige item distribution, the richest communities would have the most diverse prestige items, meaning that the regional centers of the Lillooet-Lytton area, Kettle Falls, and The Dalles-Deschutes area should have more prestige items than outlying areas. The second attribute of the Plateau Interaction Sphere, a supralocal set of values, rituals, and beliefs, would be evidenced by similarities in prestige item distribution throughout the Plateau. Finally, as prestige item movement is controlled by elites in the Plateau Interaction Sphere, it would be expected that the presence of these items would not extend prior to the emergence of semi-sedentary hunter-gatherer communities 3500–4000 years ago on the Plateau (Prentiss and Kuijt 2004).

Trade and Exchange

The expectations of trade and exchange networks, as well as their archaeological correlates, vary from those of elite control. First, trade centers would likely have the most diverse prestige item assemblages, meaning that the regional centers of the Lillooet-Lytton region, Kettle Falls, and The Dalles-Deschutes area (Galm 1994) should have more diverse prestige item assemblages than outlying areas. Secondly, the distribution of prestige items will be based on exchange routes, allowing for variance in the spatial distribution of prestige goods. Finally, trade and exchange networks are argued to have existed for as long as trading prestige items was evolutionary beneficial. The Plateau, therefore, should have evidence of prestige item movement throughout prehistory.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The area of primary concern for this study is that of the Interior Northwest Plateau (Fig. 1). Many researchers have divided the Plateau into northern and southern subareas based on cultural as well as physiographic differences (Ray 1939; Sanger 1970; Rice 1972; Richards and Rousseau 1987). In their original analysis of Plateau prestige item data, Hayden and Schulting (1997) did not adhere to this division, instead lumping the entire Plateau under the veil of the Plateau Interaction Sphere. Work by Galm (1994) on trade and exchange routes also considered the Plateau as a single area, not separating the Interior Northwest into northern and southern subareas. As these authors' views provide the theoretical basis and data for this study, the entirety of the Interior Northwest Plateau is included. The cultural and physiological attributes that have driven many archaeologists and anthropologists to divide the Plateau into the Northern Plateau (Canadian Plateau) and Southern Plateau (Columbian Plateau) are important, however, in assessing the validity of a Plateau-wide homogeneity of prestige item assemblages. Therefore, the Northern/Southern Plateau distinction is included in this analysis (Andrefsky 2004; Rousseau 2004).

This study focuses on 23 artifact types, each defined in detail by Hayden and Schulting (1997) as prestige items including: dentalia, incised dentalia, nephrite, copper, digging stick handles, gaming pieces, pipes, obsidian, steatite, graphite, galena, marine shells, dogs, whalebone clubs, bone/antler combs, bones tubes, L-shaped awls, sculptured clubs, ground-slate pendants/effigies, serrated chipped stone pendants, eccentrics, sculptured pestles, and stone sculpture. This analysis uses presence/absence data compiled by Hayden and Schulting (1997) for 23 prestige items from 113 Late Archaic (2400–200 BP) sites (Table 1). The data were analyzed using one sample t-tests, chi-squares, and Fischer's test of exact significance. The data were also grouped by certain spatial attributes. The sites were assigned to either the Northern (Canadian) Plateau or Southern (Columbian) Plateau. The sites were also divided into near trade and elite centers as well as outliers based on an arbitrary visual assessment of its proximity to Lillooet-Lytton area, Kettle Falls, or The Dalles-Deschutes region (Galm 1994; Hayden and Schulting 1997).

Problems with using prestige item data, especially with Plateau assemblages, include variable recording and reporting of possible prestige items in addition to contextual issues. For example, a nephrite adze found near a nephrite source is not likely to carry as much prestige value as a nephrite adze found hundreds of kilometers from a nephrite source. This analysis assumes that these 25 artifact types are prestige items. Though the author believes that the "prestige-ness" of many of these artifact types can and should be questioned, this is not the forum for such a discussion. Looking beyond possible interpretive problems with prestige data as recorded by Hayden and Schulting (1997) and used in this study, the distribution of these artifacts throughout the Interior Northwest may prove valuable for evaluating social and economic lifeways of prehistoric peoples.

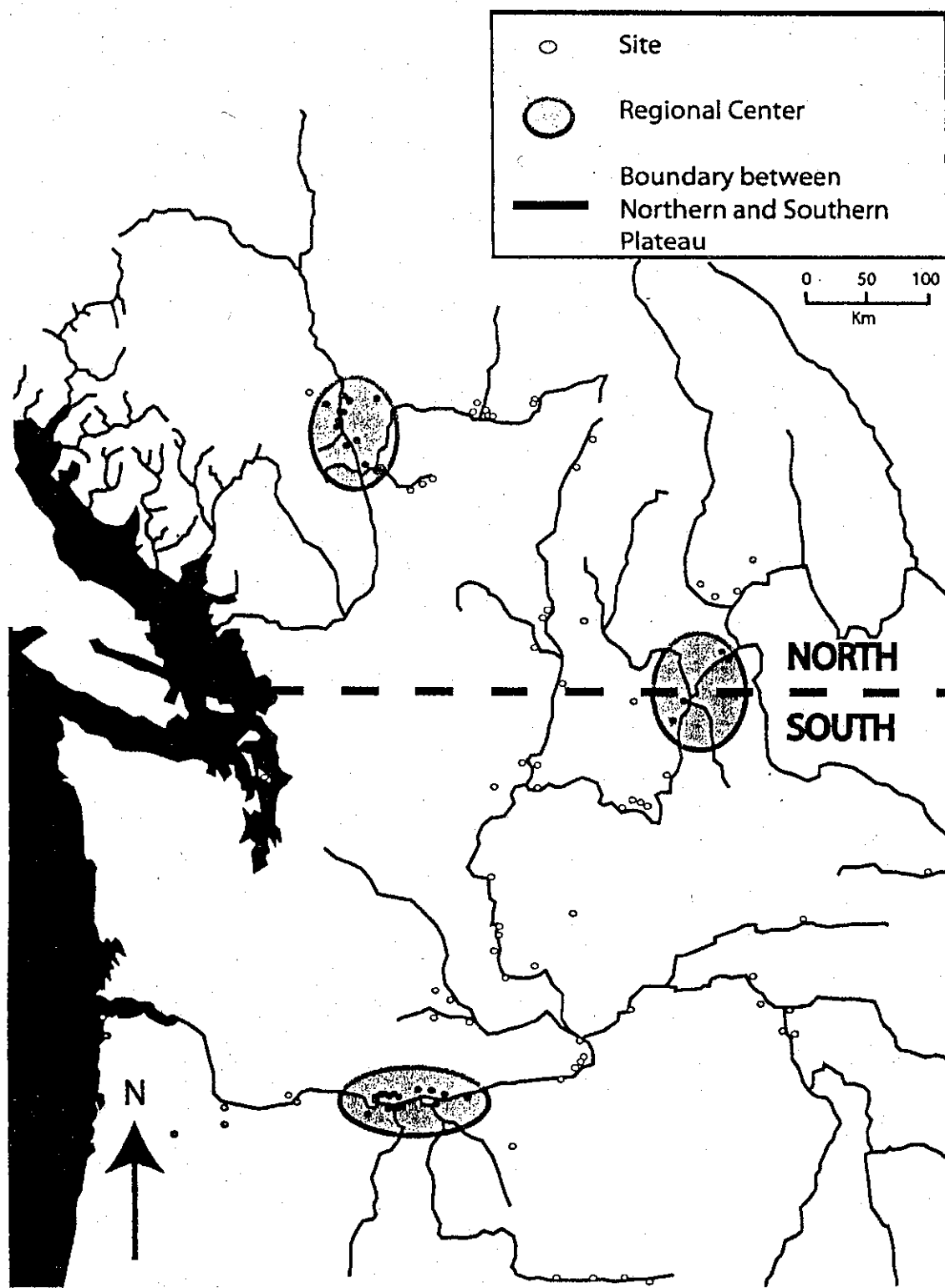


Fig. 1. Northern (Canadian) and Southern (Columbian) Plateau with regional centers (Lillooet-Lytton, Kettle Falls, and The Dalles-Deschutes) plus sites used in this analysis.

TABLE 1. PLATEAU SITES USED IN THE ANALYSIS

45AS2	Government	Old Umatilla, 35UM35B
45FE7	Grand Forks	Oliver, DhQv26
45OK112	Green Acres, EeQw6	O'Sullivan Reservoir, 45GR27
45OK66	Hayes Island	Page
45SJ24	Herzog	Palouse River
45ST47	Humboldt Cave	Potholes, 45GR131
Arlington	Indian Well, 45KL42	Preist Rapids
Atlatl Valley	John Day	Priest Rapids - Wanapum
B. Stewart	Kamloops	Rabbit Island, 45BN15
Basket Maker II	Kamloops, EdRa9	Republic
Bead Patch	Kamloops, EdRb10	Roaring Springs Cave
Beek's Pasture	Keatley, EeR17	Rock Creek
Bell, EeRk4	Keller Ferry, 45LI27	Sahhalkum, EeQw30
Berrian's Island, 45BN3	Kouse Creek	Seaside
Big Leap	Ksunku, 45FE45	Selah
Bonneville	Large	Sheep Creek, 45ST46
Botticelli Creek, EfQw21	Lillooet	Sheep Island, 45BN55
Bradford Island	Lochnore-Nesikep locality	Shuswap
Bridge River	Lower Arrow Lake, DIQm4	Shuswap, EfQv19
Cache Creek, EeRh1	Lower Nicola	Shuswaps, EeQw15
Captain John Creek	Lytton	Skaha Lake
Chase, EeQwl	Maybe	Skwaam Bay, EgQw1
Chief Joseph	McMinnville	Snehumpton Creek
Coeur d'Alene River	McNary Reservoir, 45WW6	Sntl'exwenewixwtn, 45OK355
Colowesh Bottom/Leachman	Mile 28 Ranch, EdRk3	Spences Bridge
Congdon II, 45KL41	Miller's Creek	Sundale
Crab Creek	Miller's Island	Tampico
Dalles	Moha Mile 8	Texas Creek, EdRk1
Dalles Cremation	Monte Creek, EdQx15, 43	Tucannon, 45CO1B
Deer Park, DiQm4	Murray Ranch, EeR118	Vallicam, DjQj1
Deschutes area	Narrows, 45OK11	Vantage
DhQj1	Natches	Wahluke, 45GR306
EcRc44 (Kamloops)	Neah Bay	Wakemap, 45KL26
EdR110	Nicoamen, EbR17	Wells Reservoir
Fish Hook Island, 45FR42	Nicola Lake	Whitstone Creek, 45FE24
Fountain Bar	North Yakima	Wildcat Canyon, 35GM9
Freeland, 45FE1	Okanagan area	Willamette Valley and Pleasant Hill

From Hayden and Schulting (1997)

RESULTS

Based solely on total counts of prestige items, there was no statistical difference between Northern and Southern Plateau sites ($F=1.61$, $p=.207$) (Table 2) or between sites that were close to regional centers and those sites that are outliers ($F=2.30$, $p=.132$) (Table 3). Such a homogenous prestige good distribution initially appears to support the presence of a Plateau Interaction Sphere (Hayden and Schulting 1997). By looking at the distribution of each prestige item independent of the others, however, the apparent homogeneity of Plateau prestige item assemblages is called into question.

The spatial variation of prestige items from regional centers to outlying areas on the Plateau has statistical significance when applied to individual artifact types rather than the total number of prestige items. Nephrite (Fischer's exact $p=.043$), copper ($\chi^2=6.05$, $d.f.=2$, $.05>p>.025$), pipes ($\chi^2=6.52$, $d.f.=2$, $.05>p>.025$), galena ($\chi^2=11.66$, $d.f.=2$, $p<.001$), stone sculptures ($\chi^2=8.29$, $d.f.=2$, $.025>p>.01$), and steatite ($\chi^2=22.64$, $d.f.=2$, $p<.001$) are more likely to be found at sites near regional centers than sites further away from those cultural centers (Fig. 2). This evidence supports both the elite and trade hypotheses, as both would suggest that sites near elite or trade centers should have more prestige items than outlying areas. On the Plateau, prestige items likely entered regional centers and were then dispersed to outlying areas. Even if goods originated in outlying sites, moved to the central "cache" sites, then dispersed back into outlying areas, those outlying sites would not have the prestige item assemblage diversity of the regional centers. The majority of items likely stayed in these regional centers, however, leading to spatial distribution differences.

When comparing the Canadian Plateau to the Columbian Plateau, the distribution of dentalium ($\chi^2=6.26$, $d.f.=2$, $.05>p>.025$), nephrite ($\chi^2=9.91$, $d.f.=2$, $.025>p>.01$), marine shell (Fischer's exact $p=.0462$), eccentrics (Fischer's exact $p=.04988$), and stone sculptures ($\chi^2=5.20$, $d.f.=2$, $.05>p>.025$) are significantly segregated by regional location, with dentalium, nephrite, marine shell, and eccentrics being present at more sites in the north while stone sculptures are found at more Southern Plateau sites (Fig. 3). Such spatial variation supports the theoretical expectation of the trade and exchange hypothesis, while it does not support the elite control hypothesis. With dentalium and nephrite, the sources of the raw material are more abundant on the Canadian Plateau. As people move through the landscape, aggregate and disperse, and engage in trade activities, prestige items can travel great distances. In a simple diffusion model of trade goods, it is expected that the locations closer to the sources of raw materials will be more likely to have that raw material while the further the sites are from the source, the less likely it is that they will be present. In this case, with dentalium, marine shell, and nephrite, we see that this model is manifest in the Plateau.

While Hayden and Schulting (1997) focus only on Late Archaic sites, prestige items have been found with great antiquity throughout the Plateau. For example, at Marmes Rockshelter, dentalium dating to 10,000 BP has been recovered (Rice 1969, 1972). Additionally, obsidian has been moving throughout the Plateau since the Early Archaic as evidence of obsidian in the Lillooet-Lytton region (Sanger 1970; Borden 1975; Nelson et al. 1975) as well as The Dalles (Cressman 1960; Galm 1994). Further exploration of the time depth of prestige items and their distribution is a worthy goal (Hayden and Schulting 1997), though it is beyond the scope of this analysis. Nonetheless, early evidence of prestige item raw materials suggest that the movement of prestige items throughout the Interior Northwest predated the emergence of cultural complexity and elites, thereby supporting the trade and exchange hypothesis and contradicting the hypothesis that elites are solely responsible for the movement of prestige items throughout the Plateau. As a result, all three of our trade and exchange expectations were met, while only

TABLE 2. AVERAGE NUMBER OF PRESTIGE ITEMS AT PLATEAU SITES
IS NOT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT

	Number of Sites	Average Number of Prestige Items Per Site	Standard Deviation	Levene's Test For Equality of Variance	
				<i>F</i>	<i>Significance (p)</i>
Northern Plateau	48	4.0208	3.71019	1.608	0.207
Southern Plateau	65	3.6	3.09637		

TABLE 3. AVERAGE NUMBER OF PRESTIGE ITEMS LOCATED CLOSE
TO REGION CENTERS IS NOT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT

	Number of Sites	Average Number of Prestige Items Per Site	Standard Deviation	Levene's Test For Equality of Variance	
				<i>F</i>	<i>Significance (p)</i>
Near Regional Center	35	4.8571	3.76628	2.3	0.132
Far from Regional Center	78	3.2949	3.06683		

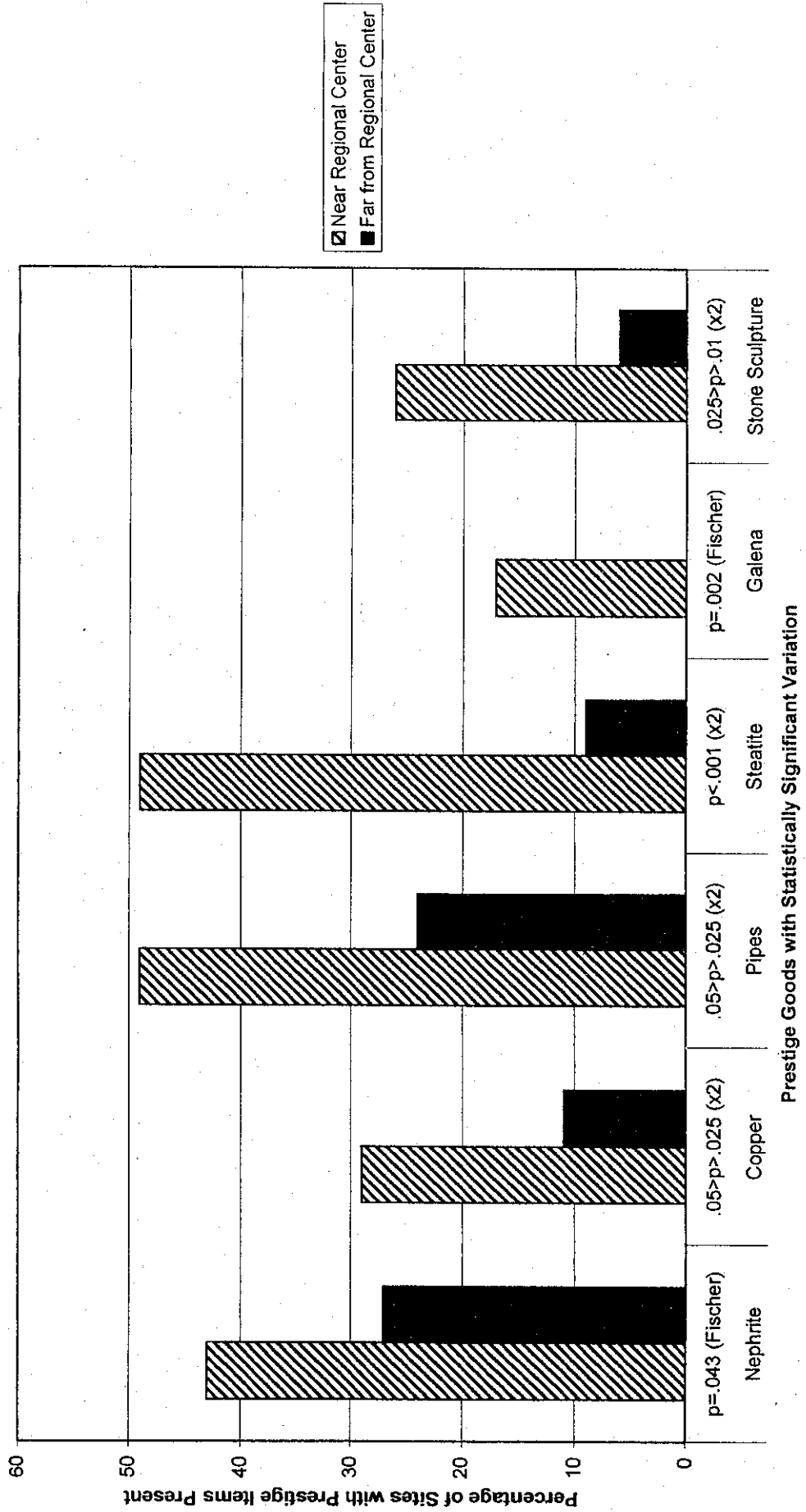


Fig. 2. Distribution of prestige goods of sites located near regional center and those located away from regional centers.

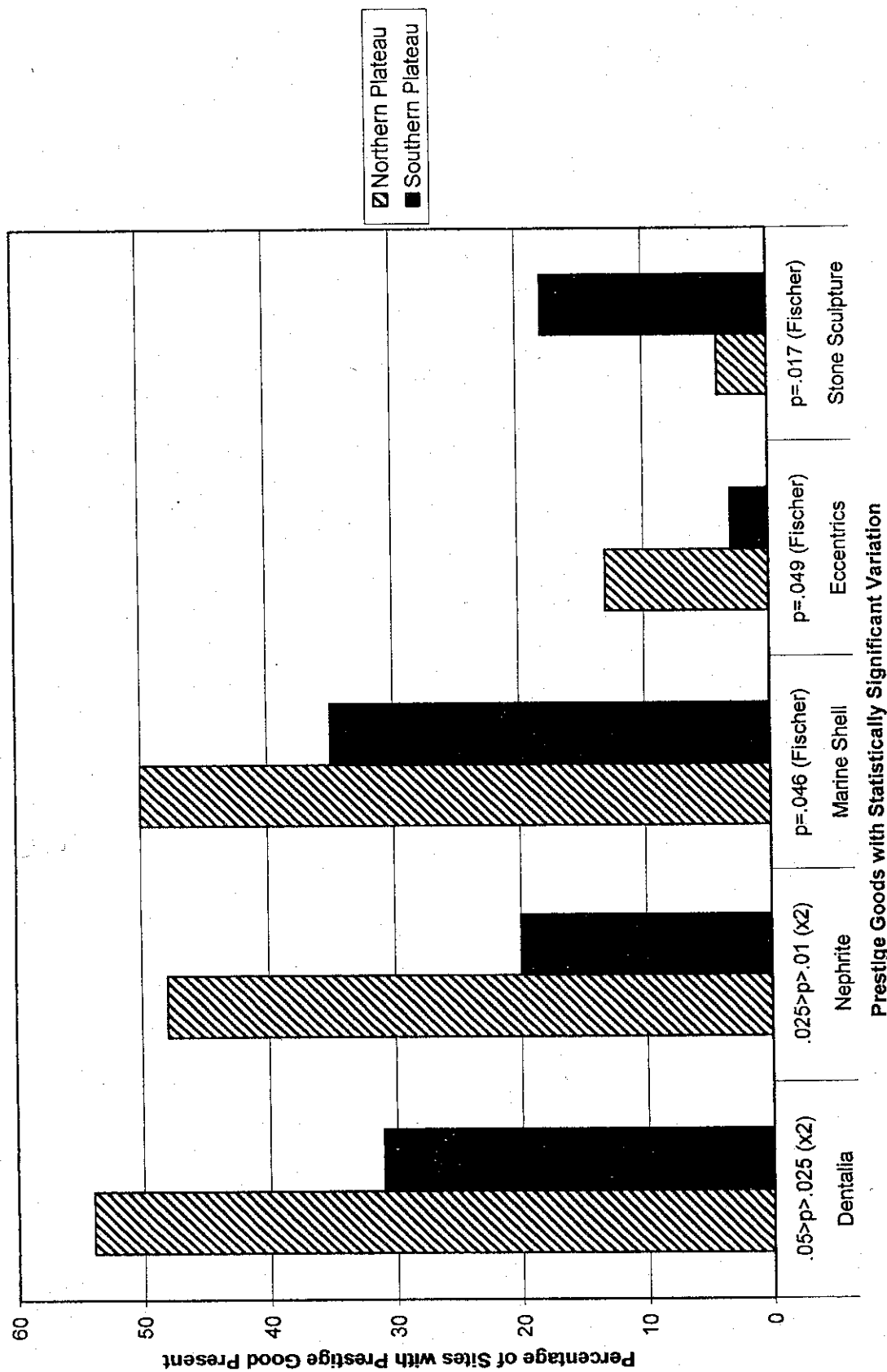


Fig. 3. Distribution of prestige goods of sites located in the Northern (Canadian) Plateau and Southern (Columbian) Plateau.

one of the expectations of the elite control of the Plateau Interaction Sphere hypothesis was met, suggesting the distribution of prestige items is due to trade and exchange systems and not an elite controlled Plateau Interaction Sphere (Table 4). Beyond the archaeological evidence, there are several theoretical arguments that can highlight the evolutionary benefits for individuals who participated in trade and exchange networks.

TABLE 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING TWO HYPOTHESES

<i>Archaeological Evidence From the Plateau Suggests:</i>	<i>Regional centers have more diverse prestige item assemblages than outlying areas</i>	<i>Prestige item distributions are spatially distinct when comparing the Northern and Southern Plateau</i>	<i>Prestige items have been moving throughout the Interior Northwest for almost 10,000 years</i>
Support Elite Controlled Plateau Interaction Sphere Hypothesis?	Yes More elites = more prestige goods	No Plateau Interaction Sphere = uniform distribution	No Elites = last 4,000 years
Support Trade and Exchange Hypothesis?	Yes More exchanges = more prestige goods	Yes Trade = variable distribution	Yes Trade and exchange = always present

Discussion

Archaeologists have previously used Darwinian evolutionary theory to address issues of social, economic, and political organization in the Interior Northwest (Prentiss and Kuijt 2004), though the costs and benefits of trade and exchange during Plateau prehistory have not been adequately addressed. There are many evolutionary theoretical topics that address issues close to the manufacture, sharing, and exchange of prestige items, among them issues of sexual selection and alliance formation. While kin selection and alliance formation for the purpose of risk reduction and through reciprocal altruism was important for many past peoples, another evolutionary theoretical issue, sexual selection, likely played the most consistent role across time and space in the daily lives of individuals on the Plateau, this may provide the causal mechanism for the emergence of trade and exchange networks. Costly signaling theory and the showoff hypothesis are two closely linked evolutionary topics that can help explain the distribution of prestige items on the Plateau through trade and exchange, here joined under the term of "signaling theory" (Bleige Bird and Smith 2005).

Signaling theory combines concepts of costly behavior and public generosity (Mauss 1924; Fried 1967; Veblen 1994) as forms of social competition that provide a way to articulate the notion of intangible social benefits that can be gained through symbolic representations of self with more materialist notions of individuals as self-interested but socially embedded decision makers (Bleige Bird and Smith 2005). Signaling theory proposes that expensive behavioral or physical signals are designed to convey honest information benefiting both signalers and the recipients of the signals (Smith and Bliege Bird 2000). There are two conditions required for evolutionary stability of costly signaling (Zahavi 1975; Grafen 1990).

First, signals must convey reliable information about variation in the underlying quality being advertised, involving such aspects as resource control and competitive ability. Second, the signal must impose a cost on the signaler that is directly linked to the quality being advertised. The payoff to the signaler comes from being chosen as a mate or ally or deferred to as a dominant in mating, cooperative, or competitive contexts (Smith and Bliege Bird 2000). The payoff to the recipient comes from the usefulness of the information being signaled to evaluate the signaler's quality as a competitor, mate, or ally. This is in lieu of more costly interactions, such as direct physical competition, to assess the quality of another individual that brings along the possibility of injury or death. In addition to costly signals, other signals, such as showing off skills, resources, or status, provided similar benefits for both the signaler and the recipient of the signal. Signaling has been tracked in hunting contexts (Smith and Bliege Bird 2000; Hawkes and Bleige Bird 2002; Sosis 2002); Smith 2004; and in exchange contexts (Hawkes 1992; Wiessner and Schiefenhovel 1995; and Boone 1998) in simple and complex societies.

For the prestige items on the Plateau, signaling may have taken a few forms. The communal setting of the manufacturing of trade goods means that the individuals making the items are likely well known to the rest of the community. With such visibility, cheating is almost impossible in relatively small-scale societies. The prestige item producer is signaling that they have 1) access to the exotic raw materials; 2) time to devote to manufacturing these goods, likely implying that they are so adept at food production and taking care of other necessities that they can participate in the manufacture of non-utilitarian items; and 3) sufficient skills to be able to specially produce these prestige items. All of these embed a level of prestige and set of desirable traits upon the producer. Additionally, if the prestige item producers gave their wares away as gifts, it may have been a display of public generosity at a cost that would be repaid, in status, alliances, and deterring competition with other individuals.

For the consumers of specialized prestige good products, an element of signaling theory may also have been in play. Individuals that were able to acquire exotics, through exchange of resources or services, would have signaled wealth and status, as well as other qualities desired by mates. Assuming the cost of the prestige items based on both the scarcity in the archaeological record and the time investment required for their manufacture is high, they would have required surplus of wealth or other resources, or exclusive access to goods or knowledge that could have been given in exchange for prestige goods. Therefore, perhaps individuals would sacrifice resources in exchange for a highly visible sign of their reproductive quality and provisioning ability; such as dentalium beads and other prestige goods.

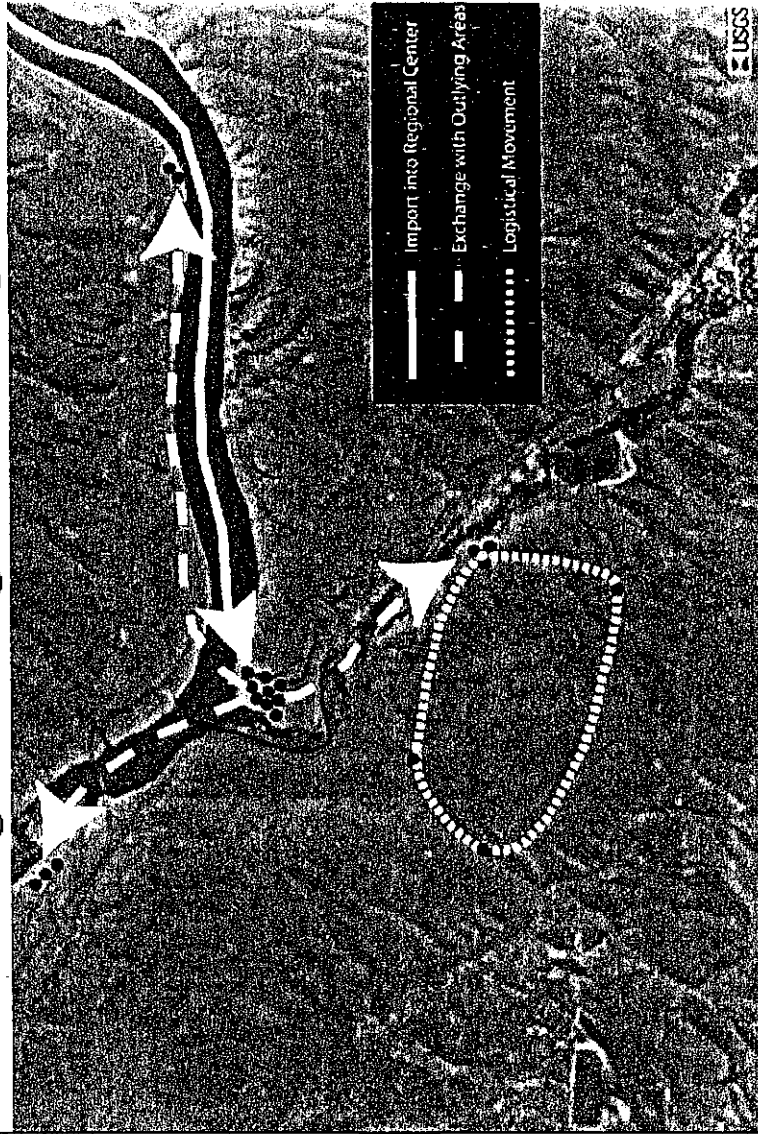
Costly signaling provides the basis for arguing that generosity is one means by which individuals and coalitions of individuals compete for status and, ultimately, for the material and fitness-enhancing correlates of status, such as mates, food, or territory (Smith and Bliege Bird 2000). The benefits from prestige item production and consumption that were signaled to other individuals may provide a mechanism for the creation of Plateau exchange systems.

With the benefits of using prestige items as signals of fitness, status, and access to resources in mind, individuals would somehow have to acquire prestige items. There are two mechanisms with which individuals could have acquired prestige items; immediate return transactions and delayed return transactions. With immediate return transactions, people could exchange prestige goods, non-prestige goods, and other services in exchange for signaling enhancing prestige items. This would benefit the person providing the prestige items by acquiring additional and more diverse resources and services that may increase that individual's survival while the recipient of the prestige items would have the increased signaling benefit that comes from prestige items. Delayed return transactions involve individuals who possess prestige items

The Evolutionary Benefits of

Prestige Items:

Prestige Items in Interpersonal Relationships and
The Emergence of Regional Exchange Systems



Prestige items act in three ways (as signals, immediate return goods, and delayed return goods) and have distinct reproductive benefits for both consumers and producers (left). Regional exchange systems emerge out of repeated transactions of individuals attempting to maximize their reproductive fitness by acquiring prestige goods (above). The prestige items, as finished products or raw materials, are first brought into these regional centers. Once in the regional centers, they are moved through a series of exchange transactions (with benefits as described on the right). Eventually, these items will be exchanged with individuals in outlying areas. In addition to finding prestige items at residence locals in both regional centers and outlying areas, logistical movement, whether they be seasonal residence changes or hunting forays, will further spread items.

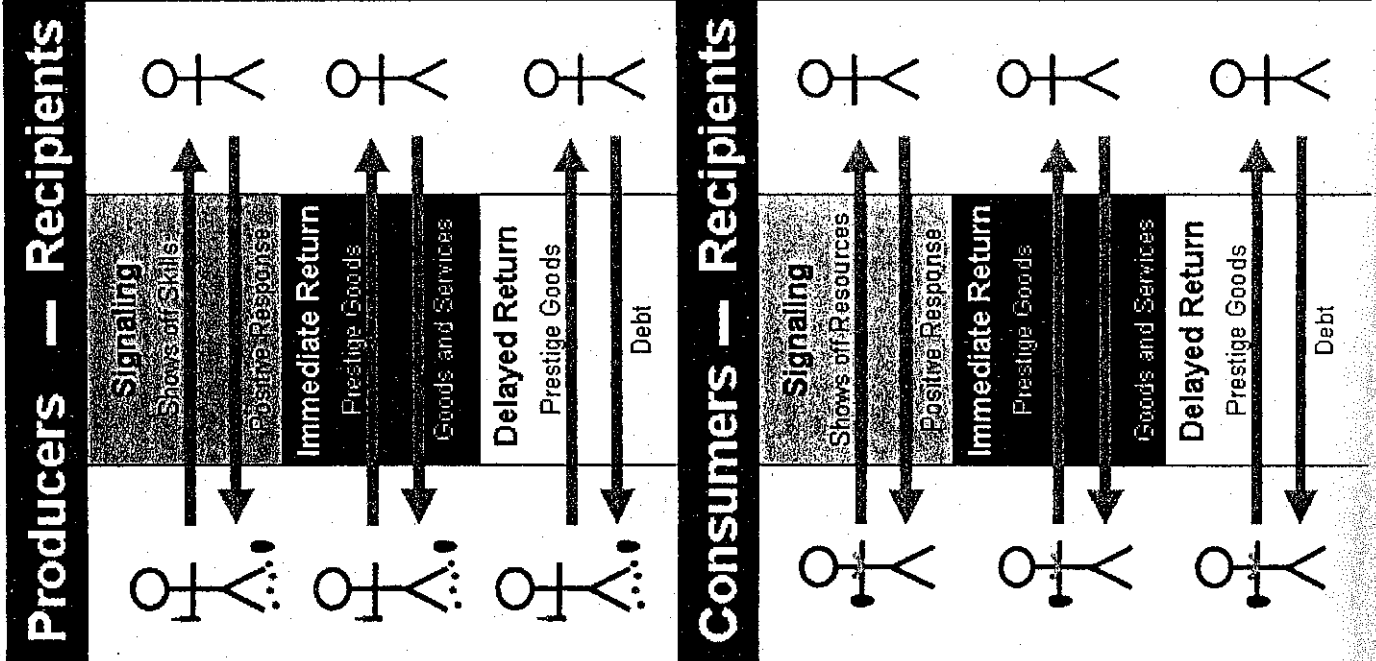


Fig. 4. The evolutionary benefits of prestige items.

that give them to those who desire them without an immediate reciprocated item. The benefit for the recipient of the prestige item is the same as with immediate returns, while the person who gives the prestige item as a gift gains the recipient as a debtor. This debt, in turn, increases the giver's social capital and creates important socio-political alliances. Regional trade and exchange systems are the result of multiple repeated transactions involving prestige items, the people who possess them, and the people who want to acquire them (Fig. 4). Such a system is evolutionarily stable because the benefits of signaling fitness, plus the increased survival as a result of receiving goods and services from other individuals, plus increased social capital which comes from creating debt equals increased reproductive success for individuals who engage in the movement of prestige items.

Certain evolutionary models, such as risk reduction (Cashden 1985; Winterhalder 1986, 1990; Hegmon 1989; Cashden 1990; Smith and Boyd 1990; Kelly 1990, 1995; Gurven et al. 2000; Bliege Bird et al. 2002) and reciprocal altruism (Trivers 1971; Alexander 1979, 1987; Wiessner 1982, 2002; Kaplan and Hill 1985; Cosmides and Tooby 1992; Hill et al. 1993; Bliege Bird et al. 2002), are dependent upon outside circumstances that are often highly variable. In the case of risk reduction, this is only a viable explanation for the emergence of gift giving, alliance formation, and exchange networks when there is a constant threat of food shortage. In locations where there are at least somewhat reliable food resources, which may be the case on the Plateau with anadromous fish populations and root crops, risk reduction may not be the mechanism for movement of prestige items. Likewise, the benefits of reciprocal altruism in terms of alliance formation may be important in areas and times of increased intergroup conflict, but when these conditions are not met, the payoff of reciprocal altruism is diminished. On the other hand, the struggle to find high quality mates, and to make oneself attractive to those mates, is one that transcends space and time. Therefore, signaling theory and other topics of sexual selection explain why and how prestige items start to be traded throughout the Plateau as well as why and how those exchange systems and networks are developed and ingrained within the interpersonal relationships of past peoples.

CONCLUSION

Elites likely had significant roles in trade and exchange networks, especially during the times of increasing social complexity during the Late Archaic. The archaeological evidence, however, does not support the notion that elites standardized their prestige item assemblages in order to create a supralocal set of rituals and beliefs. Additionally, though status is an important part of the trade and exchange of prestige items, non-elites can engage in the same system of costly signaling as elites, thereby expanding it beyond elite control. Elites did not start the movement of prestige items throughout the Interior Northwest, nor are they the primary mechanism for movement of prestige items throughout the Plateau as Hayden and Schulting (1997) argue with elites desiring to create a Plateau Interaction Sphere. In opposition, I argue that such movement can be better supported through evolutionary payoffs of trade and exchange. The distribution of artifacts during the Late Archaic, as well as the time depth with which prestige items were traded throughout the Plateau, suggests that individuals engaged in the exchange of prestige items for the purpose of increasing their reproductive fitness. Prestige items may have been traded throughout the Plateau to establish social networks and alliances, but it is the ability of an individual to signal technological, economic, or political prowess to others in the hopes of boosting one's reproductive success that likely drove the formation of expansive trade and exchange systems in the Interior Northwest.

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Colin Patrick Quinn

Department of Anthropology

Washington State University

Pullman, WA 99189

cquinn329@hotmail.com