

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Mortuary analysis has provided some of the most fertile ground for theoretical debate in archaeology. Despite this, O'Shea (1984:xi) has stated that no coherent archaeological theory of mortuary differentiation has emerged. Nevertheless, the potential inherent in the analysis of mortuary remains is great: human burials are one of the few cases in which the archaeologist is directly confronted with the purposive behaviour of past peoples. Furthermore, the variability expressed represents some of the most concentrated data available in the discipline, with information on demography, paleopathology, nutrition, environmental stress, material culture, trade, ritual, ideology, and social organisation.

There exist two main trends in mortuary analysis and interpretation. The first of these may be identified with the processualist position. The second approach to mortuary analysis is more eclectic. It may be loosely identified with the post-processualist position in current theoretical debate. Both processualists and post-processualists agree that mortuary remains provide one of the most productive sources for inferences about past social systems (Bartel 1982; Binford 1971; Bradley 1984; Chapman and Randsborg 1981; Morris 1987; O'Shea 1984; Pader 1982; Parker Pearson 1984; Renfrew and Shennan 1982; Saxe 1970, 1971; Tainter 1975, 1978). The departure comes in how the data are to be interpreted and what questions are taken to be of the greatest interest.

Renewed interest in mortuary studies, at least in North American archaeology, can be traced directly to the so-called New Archaeology. Seminal works by Binford (1971) and Saxe (1970, 1971) have been particularly influential in most if not all subsequent studies of mortuary analysis and can be viewed as having defined its basic theoretical underpinnings.

The basis for both Binford's and Saxe's approach is found in Goodenough's (1965) discussion of social role theory, incorporating the concepts of *social identity* and *social persona*. Social identity is roughly equivalent to a social position (such as father, hunter, shaman), while social persona refers to the composite of social identities which are relevant in any given social interaction. Briefly, the processual approach holds that social position in life is more or less isomorphically related to the treatment received upon death (Binford 1971; O'Shea 1984; Saxe 1970, 1971). Mortuary behaviour is neither static nor does it change as "fashion" dictates (*contra* Kroeber 1927), if by fashion we mean something whimsical and removed from the structure of a society. Direct positive correlations are expected between the rank held by the deceased and the number of persons having duty-status relationships with the deceased (Binford 1971), which in turn determines to a large extent the nature and degree of societal involvement in the mortuary ritual.

O'Shea's (1984) *Mortuary Variability: An Archaeological Investigation* offers one of the best and most detailed discussions, combined with a case study, of the processualist programme. O'Shea (1984:10) writes: "... it is reasoned that patterning in the variability of mortuary remains will reflect a consciously selected set of distinctions that will be congruent with the social positions held by the deceased in life". This is reiterated more formally in three important principles (O'Shea 1984:21): 1) mortuary differentiation is patterned, and its elements are integrated with other aspects of the sociocultural system, 2) mortuary differentiation, though not necessarily isomorphic, is consistent with social position in life, and 3) complexity of mortuary differentiation will increase with complexity of society at large. It is this last proposition that Binford (1971) tested with a random sample of 42 ethnographic societies drawn from the Human Relations Area Files. Societal complexity, however, was approximated by subsistence strategy (hunter-gatherer, pastoralist, shifting agriculturalist, and sedentary agriculturalist), which introduced the confounding variable of sedentism (cf. O'Shea 1984). Nevertheless, most researchers have pointed to Binford's study as providing strong support for the proposition that mortuary complexity increases with social complexity, and this position is accepted in principle here.

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Various refinements have been made on this approach since its inception in the early 1970's. The majority of these, however, have involved the development and elaboration of techniques of analysis designed to quantify the variability observed in mortuary assemblages in a way that extracts the most and the most reliable information on past social organisation (cf. O'Shea 1984).

More general to the processualist programme, there is an emphasis on generating valid cross-cultural generalisations as an essential step in scientific explanation. O'Shea (1984:47) states: "... the success of the analysis is related directly to the specificity of the generated expectations and their suitability for testing with archaeological evidence". The validity of cross-cultural generalisations is another major point on which those espousing post-processualist views strongly differ (Hodder 1986, 1984, 1982). Such "tests" are seen by them as very misleading, as they fail to take into account the historically contingent nature of culture.

Goodenough's ideas on social roles, and by implication their use by researchers such as Saxe and Binford, have been criticised by, among others, Pader (1982), who suggests that people do not always abide by the "rules", as is assumed by the models. Roles in this context are only models, and have an associated range of variability. Any model is only an approximate framework within which to begin work, a starting point. If large discrepancies are noted, the model must be modified for that particular situation, or, if enough such discrepancies are found, a new model generated. This, of course, is nothing other than the procedure by which any science or discipline as a whole progresses. Morris (1987) responds well to this criticism when he states that forms and conventions of expression are part of any social structure; the breaking of rules is "noise", a constant which is filtered out. It is also important to consider the level at which analysis is being undertaken (Hayden & Cannon 1982). A study aimed at investigating patterning within large groups should not be subject to the criticism that it may misinterpret individual cases.

The emphasis in what can be broadly defined as the post-processualist approach is on the potential for material culture to be used in ways that either actively create and perpetuate the ideologies of the dominant group within a society, or purposely misrepresent relationships. Mortuary practices in this view are not seen as a direct reflection of social organisation but as a material representation of idealised relationships formulated about the dead (Parker Pearson 1982). In one sense this is a caution against assuming an overly simplistic relationship between mortuary remains and the structure of the society that produced them. But in another sense this perspective can also provide some more constructive ways of thinking about mortuary data. Hodder (1986, 1984, 1982) advocates a detailed consideration of the particular historical position of a society and its use of symbolism within that context.

While individuals act within "historically contingent ideologies" (Hodder 1986), their actions must be at some level rational—ultimately this can be reduced to the need for the continued existence of the social group. And as the archaeological record is largely the result of group rather than individual behaviour (Hayden and Cannon 1982), the sum of individual actions are amenable to generalisations which do help to "explain" the behaviours, in the sense that they expose underlying rationales that are valid cross-culturally. Thus an understanding and explication of group behaviour is possible through a materialist paradigm. At the same time, it is also recognised that this type of investigation by no means exhausts the range of interesting questions that can be asked concerning human behaviour and culture (see especially Hodder 1984)—a simple shift of perspective, and it is just the idiosyncratic and historically contingent form a behaviour takes that becomes of primary interest, rather than its broad commonalities with the functionally equivalent behaviours seen in other cultures.

The oft-mentioned caution that mortuary ritual can misrepresent "true" social organisation (Braithwaite 1984; Hodder 1982; Parker Pearson 1982, 1984; Shennan 1982; Shanks and Tilley 1982; Bradley 1984), while valid, has probably been overemphasised, at least in terms of its ability to confound the "processualist" programme. There are examples in mortuary analysis in which social inequalities have been downplayed (e.g. Bradley 1984; Morris 1987; Shanks and Tilley 1982), and it is easy to imagine cases wherein inequality would be exaggerated (cf. Randsborg 1982). And it is even possible to envision a scenario in which real inequalities would be reversed, so that the elite would be made to appear "poor" and vice versa (Cannon 1989), although this would seem to be unlikely in pre-state level societies. Even if the relationship between mortuary behaviour and living society is not always straightforward, however, there is no need to abandon the underlying premise of mortuary analysis—that mortuary treatment informs on the living social structure of a society. Contrary cases are in themselves of great interest, but there is every reason to expect that they can be detected by a careful examination of context and other lines of evidence, especially settlement data (cf. Bradley 1984; McGuire 1992a) and the analysis of prestige items and trade networks. The potential for material culture to be manipulated to express or undermine

(see Braithwaite 1984) the dominant ideology can be recognised without invalidating either the value of cross-cultural generalisations or the need for rigorous (at least as rigorous as possible given the nature of the questions being asked) hypothesis building and testing. Indeed, the conditions under which such situations occur can be incorporated into a research design, rather than simply serving as cautionary tales, as so often seems to be the case.

The theoretical position adopted here is that processualist and post-processualist approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive (cf. Bradley 1984 and Morris 1987). They merely emphasise different aspects of human behaviour, and because of this they employ different methods and theoretical constructs as being more appropriate to their goals. The way in which material culture is used in mortuary ritual can best be viewed as a form of communication, in which certain symbols are employed to convey information (Hodder 1986; Parker Pearson 1982; Peebles 1971; Tainter 1978). The debate centres to a great extent around how to interpret what it is that is being communicated; nevertheless, it remains largely one of emphasis rather than content (Morris 1987).

What suffices as explanation also differs between the two theoretical approaches: processualists seek to understand and explain through the use of cross-cultural generalisations, often within a cultural-ecological framework, while post-processualists tend to emphasise particular historical contexts. And it is here, despite their mutual antagonism, that it may be possible to achieve some synthesis of the two approaches (cf. Wylie 1989). Each can offer new insights and suggest relationships that the other may have overlooked, and so can increase the range of questions asked by both, at the same time serving as a check against the always dangerous assumption that knowledge can be complete and that nothing remains to be asked. Functional and symbolic interpretations may be not only non-contradictory, but complementary (Hodder 1984, 1986). Recent work by scholars such as Bradley (1984), McGuire (1992a), Morris (1987), and Randsborg (1982) demonstrate a healthy trend in the discipline; one which recognises the strengths and value of both approaches in our explanation and understanding of the past.

The integration of Marxist concepts with the study of the archaeological record has been especially productive (McGuire 1983; 1992a, 1992b; Parker Pearson 1984; see also Trigger 1989). The attraction is fairly obvious, given the archaeologist's emphasis on material remains and the Marxist's emphasis on differential control of and access to wealth and the "means of production". Indeed, Marxist concepts of control and exploitation and the use of ideology to rationalise the existing power structure are perhaps becoming the dominant view on how and why social stratification evolved (see papers in Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Earle 1977). At least I have the impression that such concepts have recently been cited more frequently than the competing view that the elite perform a necessary function in society and are being reasonably compensated for this role. Allowing for their Marxist vocabulary and framework, discussions of how material culture in general and ritual surrounding death in particular can be used to legitimise the existing social order are not far removed from many "processualist" views. A model incorporating dynamic conflict within societies can in many cases be more illuminating than a model treating societies as coherent single entities. The combination of both perspectives is particularly powerful. At some level society as a whole must adapt to its natural and cultural environment, but it does so within a context that includes the different and possibly conflicting interests of groups within the society. Thus there are two levels of analysis especially relevant to archaeology—the relationships between groups within a society and the relationships between different societies. The relationships between individuals, on the other hand, are usually not accessible in the archaeological record.

These ideas are worth considering in some detail in that they are directly relevant to the present work. Given the premise that mortuary behaviour is used, along with other means, to establish and reinforce social relationships, including social inequalities, it becomes important to ask at what level this communication occurs. Is the display of wealth and status in the funerary context intended for other individuals in the deceased's immediate family, for all individuals in the community, for the deceased's social class within the community, for all classes within the community, for the deceased's social class in a number of outside communities, and so on. It is fairly obvious that there are a number of levels at which it might be useful to emphasise one's social position and status. It is unrealistic to expect that one or another of these levels can be isolated from all the rest and labelled as *the* correct one. Still, it is entirely valid to investigate which levels receive more emphasis than others and the situations under which this occurs.

How can the group(s) at which the funerary display is directed be detected in the archaeological remnant of mortuary behaviour? From what can be gathered from specifically Plateau ethnographic accounts and from general ethnography on mortuary behaviour in societies of comparable complexity, it

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may be assumed that the group "doing the burying" was in most cases the deceased's family. "Family" is of course a relatively imprecise term, and can refer from anything to a single individual to an extended group of related kin. In the case of the death of an infant, only the very immediate family might be involved, possibly only the mother in the case of stillbirth. It is unlikely that such an event would call for wider participation, and thus the display of status in this context would be essentially pointless as regards communication to other individuals. With an older child or adolescent, the resources of a larger family group would likely be involved, while the entire community might participate in the event itself, if only as witnesses. With this larger group participation comes the potential to establish and reinforce social relationships. The inclusion of burial offerings with the deceased is observed by those present, who in turn might communicate their observations to other individuals not attending, both within and outside of the immediate community.

But unless a substantial outside contingent is present, such as may indeed occur with the burial of a particularly important individual, grave inclusions have only limited utility in communicating status outside of the community. A more appropriate means of communicating status at this level involves the erection of a permanent or semi-permanent marker over the grave, in conjunction with the placement of the grave itself in a conspicuous location. This not only has the ability to be seen by individuals of other groups passing by, but also greatly strengthens the message of differential status within the community, since it remains as a visible reminder of the funeral and reaches beyond to the next generation who did not even attend the event itself. Even if the name of the specific individual is lost within a few generations, family or corporate group affiliation can be preserved for very long periods, making this a very effective means of communication, one which can lead to the naturalisation of social inequalities. In its developed form this leads to the establishment and maintenance of discrete cemeteries for the exclusive use of corporate groups, a phenomenon discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The hierarchy of levels is increasingly inclusive as one moves outside of the group. Thus if an elaborate grave marker is erected, capable of displaying the wealth and prestige of an individual and/or group for an extended period of time, we would expect that the grave inclusions incorporated at the time of actual burial and the associated funerary feast were also more elaborate than average, communicating a similar message to the participants at the funeral (with the proviso that the use of grave inclusions is a culturally accepted means of displaying status). In some cases, such as the long barrows of Neolithic Britain, it may be that monuments are erected solely to communicate power relations to outside groups (Bradley 1984)—in such cases group solidarity appears to be the most important factor, and displays of individual status within the collective burial monuments may be suppressed.

Inequality and Status

The term "status" itself has perhaps been used overly loosely in the context of mortuary analysis, and in anthropology in general. As stated earlier, Goodenough's (1965) discussion of the concepts of status and social role has been very influential among processualist-inclined archaeologists interested in mortuary analysis. The concepts "status" and "role" as used by Goodenough are intended for use in defining and investigating interactions between individuals or groups in given situations, a set of duties and obligations. This situation clearly has parallels with what we generally mean by status in an archaeological context. Status can be operationalised when dealing with archaeological mortuary data by observations on the treatment of the deceased. An individual of high status participates in a wider network of obligations than one of lower status; this is reflected at death by increased community energy expenditure in the mortuary ritual (Binford 1971; O'Shea 1984; Tainter 1978; Tainter and Cordy 1977).

A complementary approach that has received somewhat less attention is found in the work of sociologist Peter Blau. Blau, in his seminal 1977 work *Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure*, introduces a number of concepts and measures of social inequality that are in many ways directly applicable to questions of status and inequality in an archaeological context (cf. McGuire 1983). One of the most important contributions of Blau's work is in his clear and concise definition of terms. *Social differentiation* is defined as the distribution of a population among its social positions. *Inequality* and *heterogeneity* are the two forms that this differentiation assumes; the fundamental character of social structure is defined by the degree to which the two in their various possible guises intersect (Blau 1977).

The difference between inequality and heterogeneity depends on whether the positions among which people are distributed constitute a rank order or are inherently unordered categories, respectively. Thus "...the theoretical concept of status refers to a continuous gradation, whatever the nature of the empirical measures" (Blau 1977:8). That is, there is an underlying independent gradation of the parameter

in question that may be only roughly reflected in ordinal scale measurements. For example, the ordinal positions of colonel and general are seen as essentially arbitrary divisions of an underlying and theoretically continuous gradation in military authority. Status is understood to refer to "...all attributes of people that exhibit gradations, not only those associated with prestige or power" (Blau 1977:8). Status, then, applies to age, intelligence, income, and so on. Every analytical dimension of status is also one in inequality (Blau 1977:45). In contrast, heterogeneity deals with those positions in society that are in and of themselves unordered. This includes categories such as religion, sex, occupation, and the like. Of course, these categories may become strongly associated with status in practice, such as when a high socioeconomic group within a society identifies itself through religious affiliation, but the two things remain logically distinct nonetheless.

Thus, from a theoretical standpoint, there are any number of types of status possible within society. Of these, only a few may be relevant to a particular research question. For the purposes of the present work, status differentiation refers mainly to differentiation along socioeconomic lines. Status, unless otherwise specified, is to be understood to refer to socioeconomic status throughout the body of this work. Furthermore, relative, rather than absolute, status is referred to, since it is the more robust and intuitively acceptable means of defining status (Blau 1977:57). Socioeconomic status is in itself a rather broad concept, and can easily be viewed as consisting of separate kinds of status as defined here. While this may be true in theory, these conceptually distinct kinds of status are in practice highly intercorrelated; that is, different dimensions of status frequently tend to co-occur within the same individual or group. Superior status entails superior social resources, which in turn have "... general validity in social interaction as a currency that can be exchanged for services or other resources" (Blau 1977:104).

The term "elite" is occasionally used in this work to refer to the subgroup in which most of the economic and political power in a social group is invested. Blau (1977:47) defines the elite as the top stratum of any status dimension. In small-scale societies there is typically far less separation of conceptually different status dimensions, especially in the economic and political spheres, so that it is possible to speak of an overall elite without reference to a particular status dimension. Blau (1977:47, 70) arbitrarily operationalises the elite broadly as the top 1% of the population in question along any given status dimension; clearly this is overly restrictive in terms of the scale of sociopolitical organisation on the Plateau—in many groups there would be no identifiable elite if such a criterion were used (the basic sociopolitical unit on the Plateau was the village/band, which in many cases would number fewer than 100 individuals). The actual figure used is not important in any case; the underlying idea is that the elite refers to some small *constant* fraction of the population (Blau 1977:70). I therefore take the liberty of defining the elite as approximately the top 10% of the population in question. A more precise definition is neither necessary nor desirable for the contexts within which the term will be used.

Stratification generally can be taken to refer to the unequal distribution of socially valued goods and roles in a society (McGuire and Netting 1982). Thus, in the classic Weberian sense, stratification is equated with inequality. And stratification always tends to have an economic aspect, in which scarce goods and services are selected as symbols of status (Fallers 1973).

The Basis of Inequality

Inequality is everywhere. The forms it takes from place to place and from time to time may vary, but the heterogeneous nature of people assures that it will always exist at some level. In certain contexts, particular manifestations of inequality may be minimised or entirely suppressed. It seems to be the case that, in simple foraging societies such as the !Kung, competitive, self-aggrandising behaviours are maladaptive, and thus resisted in deference to the immediate goal of survival of the group as a whole (Price and Brown 1985:12; Cashdan 1980; Layton *et al.* 1991). As Hayden (1990b) has emphasised, the nature of the resource base that foragers subsist on tends to be vulnerable to overexploitation. The amassing of a surplus by an individual or a group is not socially acceptable under these conditions, since such behaviour entails a clear threat to the group's survival as a whole. The end result is that, far from being some kind of natural human state, social "leveling mechanisms" are actively imposed on the ambitions of more competitive individuals (Cashdan 1980; Flanagan 1988). Thus, rather than being considered generous or acquiring prestige through sharing game, !Kung hunters are publicly mocked for the small size and poor quality of their kills, regardless of how large and fat the animal is in reality.

Under conditions of more abundant and predictable resources quite a different set of behaviours come into play, particularly when those resources are storable. Individual initiative and efforts to amass resources are now extolled as great virtues. The group is not threatened by these activities, since there is,

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under normal circumstances, enough food for all. And it is under these conditions that territoriality and boundary defence can be expected to appear in hunter-gather societies (cf. Dyson-Hudson and Smith 1978; Layton 1986; Layton *et al.* 1991; see also Chapters 4 and 5). There are, of course, limits on the extent to which any resource may be exploited, but largely due to technological constraints these limits are only rarely reached in small-scale societies.

The distinction between K- and r-selected species is a useful one to make here (Hayden 1990b). While K-selected species can be easily overexploited even with relatively simple technologies, r-selected species, with their high reproductive and growth rates, are extremely resistant to such overexploitation. Of the three most important food resources on the Plateau—salmon, roots, and ungulates—two (salmon and roots) are practically invulnerable to overexploitation with the available aboriginal technologies. Two of the most important root resources on the Plateau, camas and bitterroot, may be what are referred to as “increasers”: that is, to a certain point, yield actually increases as a result of harvesting (Ames and Marshall 1980; Marshall 1991). Ungulates, a K-selected group, may have been another matter. Certainly intense pressure was put on the large ungulates such as elk after the gun was introduced, and the range of this species greatly contracted, including local extinctions, as seen in the Nicola Valley by the 1830's (Teit 1900; Wyatt 1972).

The role of storage in the development of complex hunter-gatherer societies is difficult to overemphasise. A number of researchers (Ames 1991a; Ames and Marshall 1980; Hayden 1990b, 1992b; Keeley 1988; Price and Brown 1985; Testart 1982) have argued convincingly that the capacity for storage is a necessary prerequisite for the development of socioeconomic inequality in hunter-gatherer-level societies. The relative importance of salmon and roots in the development of the ethnographic Plateau pattern have recently been debated in the literature (Ames and Marshall 1980). This is likely to have varied considerably through time and space. But in either case, the Plateau can certainly be characterised as an area in which delayed return, as opposed to the immediate return system of classic foragers, predominated in the subsistence strategy (Woodburn 1982). The potential to store resources in excess of immediate subsistence requirements provides the incentive for individuals and/or groups to expend greater time and energy on food collecting. And once the value of foods has been increased through the intensive preparation often needed for storage, the question of ownership looms large. Testart (1982:527) suggests that storage is often, though not always, associated with a tendency towards the development of individual ownership. This could perhaps be modified to encompass increasing ownership at the family level as well.

This leads us directly to the important relationship between wealth and prestige in complex hunter-gatherer societies. Stored food beyond subsistence needs is a form of wealth. It may be exchanged for other, perhaps more desirable, foods, luxury goods, and services. All of these can in turn be used to acquire additional prestige, power, and status through competitive feasting or feasting of supporters (Hayden 1990b, 1992b, *in press*; see papers in Brumfiel and Fox 1994).

More or less equidistant between small-scale societies' two extremes of egalitarianism and hereditary chieftainship lies a peculiar social system in which wealth is accumulated only to be given away. This is the classic “Big Man” system, the anthropological recognition of which was first inspired by fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. It is through the distribution of wealth that an individual or group acquires and increases their prestige and power. Naturally, there exists a continuum among societies regarding the proportion of surplus that is given away and that which is kept for the individual's or group's own use. In some societies, those with the greatest prestige work the hardest yet are among the poorest members of their communities in material possessions—they have given away all of their wealth to gain social standing (Werner 1981). But even in such extreme cases, it is reasonable to assume that these individuals have the greatest amount of credit and debts owed to them, and so to represent them as “poor” may be misleading. In any case, on the Plateau such an extreme was rarely, if ever, seen. While generosity was considered a virtue throughout the Plateau, the wealthy were still distinguished from their poorer fellows by the quality and quantity of their possessions (see Chapter 5). At the same time, one of the most important uses of accumulated wealth was its “free” distribution at feasts. These feasts were held in recognition of many major life events—birth, naming, puberty, marriage, and death (Anastasio 1985). Men, and possibly sometimes also women, in some Plateau groups could acquire the title of “chief” through their repeated generosity in hosting feasts, even though they were of no relation to the family of the (loosely) hereditary political chief. Yet those who became “chiefs” in this way also acquired a degree of influence in the affairs of their communities (see ethnographic accounts in Chapter 5).

A key point to be made here involves the interrelatedness of different dimensions of status common in small-scale societies. There are a number of mechanisms responsible for this phenomenon.

Human psychology is clearly one factor; a series of very interesting studies cited in Berger *et al.* (1985) suggest that, independent of actual performance, high-status individuals of modern hunter-gatherer societies are typically perceived (emically, i.e. by the group itself) as performing better than low-status members of the same group in a variety of tasks. The linking of wealth and status has been criticised by McKay (1988:9), who refers to it as an "ideological commitment" on the part of modern scholars. There is, however, abundant ethnographic support, both specific to the Plateau (see Chapter 5) and cross-culturally, to the effect that the two are often strongly associated. Leadership, even in societies in which it is largely achieved, is generally "multiplex" (Meggitt 1967:22), status in one activity carrying over into another (see also Werner 1981 and Watanabe 1983). Wealth, or economic status, can be manipulated to gain prestige, or social status, which in turn can lead to influence over others in the community, or political status (cf. Blau 1977:105). Nor is the religious sphere separate from this system. The shaman in small-scale societies worldwide, including those of the Plateau, was often a figure of considerable political influence. Thus, it is not surprising that the position of shaman frequently tends to be monopolised by higher ranking families within a community (see for example Walker 1968:17 regarding the Nez Percé). Indeed, the entire guardian spirit complex on the Plateau can be interpreted, at least at one level, within a context of socioeconomic status differentiation. This idea is explored further in Chapter 4.

There will always remain a tension between the forces for egalitarianism and those for stratification. Usually the elite, who have both the most to gain under the *status quo* and the most to lose should it change towards greater equality (Blau 1977), will at the same time continually push the boundaries, attempting to maintain or increase the social distance between themselves and the rest of society. This second group, on the other hand, will attempt to minimise this distance. Fallers (1973:31) refers to this situation as a "battle of wits" between the elite attempting to preserve their symbolic priority and low-status persons attempting to devalue the status-symbolic currency. The dynamic equilibrium that is achieved will be the result of many factors, including: 1) the nature of the resource base, 2) the available technology, and 3) the "storability" of the resources given the technology.

Conspicuously absent from the discussion thus far are social and ideological factors (see Bender 1985, 1989). In general, social and ideological factors are seen as shaping the ways in which a society adapts to the restrictions more or less imposed upon it, as well as the potential offered, by the nature of the resource base and the available technology. This is certainly not a new idea, and can be traced directly to the influence of Leslie White (1949, 1955; see also Harris 1979). It is important, however, to expand this view somewhat to recognise that the cultural environment needs to be adapted to as much as the biophysical environment. A society's relationships, both within itself and with other groups, can have a great impact on the level of social complexity that is actually, as opposed to potentially, achieved (cf. Bender 1985). Trade and warfare provide two important examples of ways in which societies interact at this level that have frequently been implicated in cultural developments (Carneiro 1970; Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Redmond 1994). Both of these factors are particularly relevant during the contact period between indigenous and European peoples throughout North America, or at least evidence for them becomes more visible. Trade, and in some areas warfare, likely also played an important part in the development of social inequality prehistorically. But characteristics of the resource base are primary: "Resource availability and productivity determine the potential levels of accumulation for social display and competition" (Clark and Blake 1994:18).

Achieved vs. Ascribed Status

There has developed within the last decade or so in archaeology a great interest in documenting the emergence of sociocultural complexity. Chiefdoms are societies of intermediate complexity, and may be operationalised as exhibiting all or most of the following characteristics: ascribed status differentiation; regional economic organisation; relatively large populations and high density together with some form of regional sociopolitical integration; and the presence of individuals (i.e. chiefs) with the power to manipulate labour of supporters (Arnold 1992; Peebles and Kus 1977). Arnold (1992) identifies the key distinction between big man societies and chiefdoms as the extent to which ascribed status is present, marking a degree of permanence in the power of the elites. Because of its contribution to this research programme, the detection of hereditary inequality is often seen as one of the main objectives of mortuary analysis (Brown 1981; Peebles and Kus 1977). Thus, the study of the mortuary remains of infants and young children becomes of special interest due to its potential to differentiate achieved versus ascribed status. Despite this interest, there has been surprisingly little work focusing specifically on subadult remains. In an important and influential paper, Peebles and Kus (1977) outline a set of criteria for distinguishing from archaeological

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mortuary data societies in which status was probably achieved from those in which it was probably ascribed. Briefly, two major dimensions along which variability is organised are recognised, the subordinate and the superordinate. The subordinate dimension refers to those indicators of status structured along the lines of age/sex classes. In general, status is expected to increase as age increases, since in a society in which status is achieved, the older one gets, the greater the opportunity for achievement. Often, in societies of this sort, changes in status are automatic when an individual reaches certain stages in his or her life history (cf. David 1992). Of course, the model takes into account gender-based differences in status, so that male and female subgroups are treated separately, since sex and age are probably the most basic lines along which inequalities are expressed in any society. In Fried's (1967:33) classic formulation of an egalitarian society, "...there are as many positions of prestige in any given age-sex grade as there are persons capable of filling them." Nor need there be any implication that all adults of a specified age and sex will have equal status in the community; some may have through their actions achieved higher standing than others. Relating this to mortuary behaviour, then, we can expect the number of grave inclusions (for example) *on average* to increase as age increases within male and female sub-groups.

The superordinate dimension refers to indicators of status that cross-cut age/sex classes. In general, all age/sex classes are expected to be represented at each status level with the exception of the paramount category, which is expected to contain only adults, and usually only adult males (i.e. chiefs). The number of individuals at each progressively higher rank is expected to decrease, presenting a characteristic pyramidal structure, with the paramount rank constituting the apex (cf. Blau 1977:48).

In egalitarian societies (which seem to be becoming increasingly rare as what were previously termed "simple" societies are reexamined and redefined), sex and age are the major dimensions along which status is expressed. As Binford (1971:22) states: "When a child dies within a society in which social position is not inherited, very few duty status relationships outside of the immediate family are severed". But when a child dies in a society in which position is at least partly ascribed, a different set of criteria come into play. No longer is only the immediate family affected; the child has become a member of a larger social unit with more complex relations with other segments of society. And it is the role with the widest social significance, that affecting the largest section of the community, that is frequently emphasised in the mortuary ritual (Binford 1971; Goodenough 1965; Morris 1987). The child's membership in a high status family, lineage, or corporate group will be symbolised in the mortuary treatment accorded it.

In simple terms, the assumption is that the occurrence of some "rich" child graves is indicative of a society with some degree of ascribed status as opposed to purely achieved status (Binford 1971; Peebles & Kus 1977; Rothschild 1979). Peebles and Kus (1977) provide more explicit and specific expectations in this regard: in a society in which status is ascribed, there should be some subadult burials with more wealth than some adult burials. Furthermore, special status items usually reserved for adult males could be seen in a limited number of subadult burials and adult female burials.

Pader (1982) is often credited with one of the first systematic critiques of the basic processualist approach to mortuary analysis. She notes, among other things, that "rich" child burials are not necessarily always good indicators of ascribed status, since it is the parents that are doing the burying and that it is their status that is being communicated through the funerary medium. But this difficulty was in fact acknowledged by the very studies that first outlined the approach (see Saxe 1970). In a society in which status is primarily achieved, adults, usually "parents" in some sense or other, may utilise the occasion of the death of an infant or a child for aggrandising or "advertising" behaviour. Thus what is being reflected in the burial wealth in such a case is not the subadult's ascribed status, but rather the achieved status of another individual or group (Charles and Buikstra 1983; Pader 1982; Saxe 1970; see also Winters 1968). The presence of objects indicative of wealth in child graves has also been interpreted simply as an expression of grief on the part of parents (McKay 1988). Such reasoning ignores Binford's (1971) work and the more than two decades of subsequent mortuary research in favour of a return to psychological "explanations". Presumably the parents of those children whose graves lack inclusions did not particularly care for them.

Braun (see also Rothschild 1990), through his work on Hopewellian mortuary practices, has contributed some useful insights on identifying ascribed status through mortuary remains: If the burial treatment of children may be expected to follow the social position of its surviving family, then at some point in the life history, treatment of an individual must shift to the representation of that individual's own personal social identities. Ethnographically, this social shift universally occurs sometime during the age of biological puberty.... (Braun 1979:72). Braun did indeed find that in the mortuary population of the Hopewellian Klunk-Gibson mounds, adolescents had fewer artifacts than any other age group. A similar

pattern seems to appear at Indian Knoll, a Midwest Late Archaic cemetery analysed by Winters (1968). In this case, newborns were interred with few shells, infants and young children with moderate numbers, older children and adolescents with fewer, and adults with the most. This, then, is one potentially very useful way of differentiating between achieved and ascribed status.

McGuire (1992b:143,152), puzzled by the richness of Hohokam subadult burials, presents quite a different perspective on the position of older adolescents and young adults. He notes that young adults were of special status in Yuman society, since they were as productive as full adults, but were not yet married and so were unattached to any specific household group, and were relatively free to move between kin. Households desiring to attract their labour, then, would "woo" these individuals with expensive gifts, including ornaments that might be included with the individual upon burial.

The problems with differentiating achieved versus ascribed status are not only methodological; the entire issue is in fact reminiscent of the reaction by many archaeologists and cultural anthropologists against the simple application of Fried's (1967) and Service's (1962) typological schemes of level of sociocultural complexity (Brown 1971, 1981; Fallers 1973:82; Goldstein 1981; Peebles and Kus 1977; Renfrew and Shennan 1982; Whallon 1982). The problem with any typology is that too often the means come to be identified with the end. Thus some archaeological studies endeavor to place a particular culture into a typological scheme as an end in itself, and in doing so give the impression that no further questions remain. Questions concerning the context in which ascription occurs and its correlates are certainly of interest, but the mere labelling of a particular society into one form or the other does not itself achieve this end, and frequently it is at this point that the analysis ends. In response to this unsatisfactory situation, Plog and Upman (1983) advocate using continuous variables whenever possible, in order to realise more fully the range of past human sociopolitical organisation. This statement has equal relevance to the achieved versus ascribed status debate.

There is a widespread tendency to equate mortuary indicators of ascribed status with stratified or chiefdom-level social organisations, and, in this sense, rich child burials alone may not always be a good indicator. Rich child burials often appear to occur at lower levels of complexity than this (Hayden in press). Rather than argue in this all-or-nothing fashion, I suggest that the occurrence of rich burials does indeed indicate the presence of some level of ascribed status, but that this need not necessarily carry with it the common anthropological baggage associating ascribed status with a specific level of sociopolitical organisation. The dichotomy equating achieved status with egalitarian organisation and ascribed status with stratified organisation is probably too simplistic. It ignores the range of variation observed both ethnographically and archaeologically, and leaves little room for the investigation of how and why one mechanism of status comes to be emphasised over the other. It fails to recognise the transitional state between these two extremes.

Hayden (in press) presents a useful model attempting to account for the occurrence of rich child burials in the archaeological record. He points out that child growth payments, associated with public feasts and gift-giving marking important stages in a child's life cycle (birth and/or naming, ear piercing, puberty, etc.), involve an investment of wealth that might be expected to be mirrored in the child's burial should he or she die prematurely. In death as in life, this advertises their greater worth relative to other children in the community, making them more desirable as mates for children of other high status families (marriages were often arranged at a young age in these systems—this is documented for the Plateau [Teit 1900, 1906, 1909]), and giving them a "head start" in the social, economic, and political life of the community. And, most importantly, this can occur in the absence of formal, recognised rules for the inheritance of wealth and position (cf. Spencer 1994).

I therefore suggest that the theoretical debate over the identification and interpretation of rich infant/child burials is largely misdirected. Rather than being viewed as problem cases, I propose that it is just in these borderline situations that there exists the potential to investigate the interaction between material culture and the development of increased sociocultural complexity. This is nothing other than a part of the very process by which ascribed differentiation in various social systems evolves. When the surviving members of the family or lineage expend greater than average wealth on a member child's funeral, the community as a whole is given the impression that the death of a child in certain families is more momentous than in other families. When the wealth expended exceeds that for some adults, it sends yet a stronger message on the privileged position of some families or groups over others. Yet, were the question to be posed from a *emic* perspective, the answers received might very well indicate that status was not considered to be "ascribed" in the sense usually meant by anthropologists. The society might still hold to a more or less egalitarian ideology, but the behaviour of its members indicates an evolving tension

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between ideals and practices. As status differentiation becomes more firmly established, a nonegalitarian ethic can be expected to be more explicitly expressed.

Enough cautionary tales have been told (see for example Ucko 1969) to make it clear that any simple reading of mortuary behaviour is unlikely to be satisfactory. In societies in which lines of inheritance are firmly defined, for example, there would seem to be little point in destroying large amounts of wealth through burial that could otherwise be passed on to increase the wealth of the lineage (on the other hand, the need to curb inflation and maintain the system may account for the removal of wealth under such conditions). As Randsborg (1982) and Cannon (1989), among others, have pointed out, mortuary display seems to be at its greatest when the concept of inheritance is accepted, but not the specifics: just exactly to *whom* is the estate to be passed down? When this is a contentious issue, it becomes important to legitimise one's claim, and to advertise one's success in order to attract supporters, by the increased expenditure of wealth, beginning at the occasion of the death of the individual to whom one looks for legitimisation. This then acts as a kind of contract among the participants, who implicitly accept the validity of the claim.

Such a situation is not necessarily in the best interests of the elite, who might prefer to keep the wealth in their possession. At one level, it can be seen as a leveling mechanism, whereby discrepancies in wealth are moderated by the perceived need to remove or destroy wealth as part of the funerary rites. On the other hand, the situation is certainly not altogether without benefit to the elite, who acquire what has been referred to as social capital from their actions (Brown 1981). Social capital is not merely an abstraction—it imparts a degree of influence in the affairs of the community and often involves receiving support and services. Indeed, and this is an extremely important point, it is largely for prestige and power that big men or aggrandisers compete in the first place, rather than for physical resources as an end in themselves (Clark and Blake 1994:18). Thus, in many complex hunter-gatherer societies, it is possible to become known as a “chief” and to gain political influence within the community through the generous distribution of food and gifts, even if an hereditary chieftainship also exists. As shall be shown in Chapter 6, this situation certainly held for much of the Plateau. It is the ability to mobilise and manipulate wealth—in the form of foods, desirable prestige items, ritual, and sometimes women—that *defines* the elite (cf. papers in Brumfiel and Fox 1994). And in this sense, the expenditure of wealth may not be avoidable, at least at the level of the chiefdom (cf. Anderson 1994). This is what Hodder (1982) has referred to as the active role that material culture takes in creating inequality, rather than just passively reflecting it.

Emulation

A number of assumptions must be made explicit regarding how, and why, material objects are used to make symbolic distinctions in mortuary contexts. It is suggested that, during the late prehistoric period on the Plateau, and indeed throughout most of North America, symbolic status distinctions could be made using the presence of relatively rare items, often exotic and exhibiting labour intensive properties, such as elaborate carving. The situation in the protohistoric period is likely to have been somewhat more complex, as processes of acculturation interacted with the still-dominant Native value system (cf. Linton 1963). The introduction in the protohistoric period of the horse, together with the formation of new trade relationships and the availability of new sources of wealth, are widely thought to have been the catalysts for important social changes, changes that occurred, however, *within* the context of existing social systems on the Plateau (cf. Stapp 1984). Under such conditions one can expect a degree of instability caused by increased affluence, socioeconomic flux, and related status uncertainty. These effects would have been enhanced by the concomitant drastic demographic decline (see Spier and Sapir 1930; Teit 1900; Boyd 1990; Campbell 1989). The simple presence of certain artifact types in such a situation may become less effective as a means of differentiating socioeconomic status. Rather, an increasing spiral in the *amounts* of specific wealth items might be expected, especially if such wealth items were already recognised in the traditional status system. Cannon (1989:438) refers to this phenomenon as an “...inflationary spiral of display fueled by emulation...”. The most ambitious efforts towards ostentatious display arise when there is potential uncertainty in the reckoning of relative status positions within a society (Cannon 1989). Such a scenario not only has intuitive appeal, but has been fairly convincingly demonstrated cross-culturally (Cannon 1989; Randsborg 1982). One need only look to the situation on the Northwest Coast during historic times to see an example of a pattern of escalating competitive display. This is felt to be a useful theoretical model for looking at changes in the patterning of grave inclusions during the protohistoric period on the Plateau. It carries with it the implication that late prehistoric and protohistoric mortuary assemblages

must be analysed using somewhat different approaches and with different models in mind (see Schulting 1993a). This is done to only a limited extent in this work.

As their availability increased, prestige goods could be obtained by more and more members of a society, at least in small amounts. Successively lower social groups tend to adopt the material culture of high status groups (Morris 1987). This process of emulation would tend to undermine the value of a class of goods for acting as symbolic indicators of social standing (Cannon 1989; Morris 1987). In order to maintain the integrity of the symbolic system, the elite have two possible responses. The first is to prevent or slow down emulation by severely curtailing the availability of status items. One way of accomplishing this is through the removal of goods from circulation, either through burial in graves or hoards, or by destruction in some other context (Bradley 1984). Placement of goods with the dead offers an excellent opportunity for just this sort of behaviour; not only are goods removed from circulation, but the reputation of the family or lineage is strengthened at the same time. Parker Pearson (1984) refers to the need of elite classes to consume increasing quantities of surplus and prestige items as fundamental for the maintenance and/or advancement of prestige and power. As mentioned above, the "destruction" of goods has the concurrent function of accumulating what Brown (1981) and Parker Pearson (1984) refer to as social or symbolic capital rather than the economic capital seen in present industrial societies. In this sense, grave wealth can be seen as an investment (Brown 1981).

As a class of items becomes increasingly plentiful, a point is reached where this behaviour is no longer practical. The second response, then, is simply to adopt a new class of rarer items to indicate social status (Bradley 1984; Randsborg 1982). This pattern of innovation adoption by the elite has been widely recognised in the literature on mortuary analysis (e.g. Cannon 1989; Shennan 1982) and elsewhere (Fallers 1973). It is attested to by the occurrence of long-distance trade in luxury items so frequently seen in the archaeological record. Items made of exotic materials, even when superficially utilitarian in form, frequently exhibit no use-wear and occur in burial and/or ritual contexts, suggesting that they may be considered as functioning primarily as prestige items (cf. Binford 1962; Winters 1968). This option was limited on the Plateau by the continuing demographic and economic decline experienced in the later historic period.

The removal of wealth through burial or destruction also results in a continual demand for new wealth. It is possible that this in itself plays an important function in, to use an expression that may not be entirely inappropriate, "stimulating the economy". The need for new wealth stimulates the production of surplus goods and the development of trade networks. The elite, more specifically big men or aggrandisers, strive to achieve control over this surplus and to manipulate exotic wealth and prestige items obtained through trade in order to attract supporters. These in turn provide services and support. The support of a big man is shifting. If he (for they are almost invariably male) cannot continue to demonstrate his ability by providing feasts and prestige items, his followers will simply change their allegiance to someone who can (Anderson 1994; Spencer 1994).

Dimensions of Mortuary Variability

A number of dimensions of mortuary variability have been recognised in the literature; these are summarised in Table 2.1. The decision as to which of these dimensions to include in an analysis is greatly influenced by the nature of the data at hand as well as by the questions being asked of it. On the Plateau, mortuary variability is expressed in a number of forms, not all of which are relevant to the research questions being investigated here. Nevertheless, as these dimensions form the basic data from which any analysis must begin, they are briefly discussed below.

The biological variables of age and sex define the primary referents, or "subordinate dimension" in Peebles and Kus' (1977) terminology, of a mortuary population along which status differences may be expressed. All of the remaining variables are potentially able to inform on socioeconomic status, although in practice the majority often relate to other factors.

While not generally treated as a dimension of mortuary analysis, physical anthropology has much to offer beyond simple mortality profiles (Chapman and Randsborg 1981; Larsen 1987; Willems 1978). Analysis of human remains can provide information on relatedness, pathologies, stress markers, diet, occupation, and cultural modifications of the human body, all of which may be differentially distributed along lines of socioeconomic status. A number of important contributions in areas outside of the Plateau have been made relating socioeconomic status to life histories as provided by the analysis of human remains (Allison 1984; Coe 1959; Cook 1981; Haviland 1967; Mays 1989; Schoeninger 1979; Schurr 1992; Tainter 1980; White 1988). Osteological studies of metric and non-metric traits and dental studies, through

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the identification of family groups in cemeteries, and the inference of residence pattern, have enormous potential for mortuary analysis (Lane and Sublett 1972; Bentley 1991; Mays 1989). While there has been no comprehensive study of Plateau skeletal material from this perspective, a number of site reports have demonstrated what are likely genetic links between individuals buried in close proximity to one another (Sprague and Mulinski 1973; Skinner and Copp 1987), indicating the potential usefulness of this avenue of research.

Skeletal evidence can thus be used as an independent test for inferences derived from other mortuary variables (O'Shea 1984). In addition to serving as a check, the analysis of human remains provides insight into what the observed status differences actually meant in terms of past behaviours. Did higher status groups have a different, perhaps more nutritionally adequate, diet? Were they subject to more or less stress at different times of their lives? Did the elite belong to a different biological population? The answers to these questions and others are becoming accessible, and will serve to flesh out the picture provided by more traditional mortuary analysis. This having been said, the scope of the present work unfortunately does not permit an in-depth analysis of biological variables and their relationship to status differences as determined through mortuary treatment.

Table 2.1: Dimensions of Archaeologically Visible Mortuary Variability

<i>General category</i>	<i>Major dimensions</i>
1) Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demographic (age and sex) b) pathology (disease, trauma) c) nutritional data ($d^{13}C$, stature, etc.) d) genetic relationship (non-metric traits, DNA studies) e) cultural/behavioural modification of the skeleton
2) Preparation and treatment of the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) degree of articulation of the skeleton b) disposition of the burial (flexed on left side, etc.) c) number of individuals per burial d) orientation of long axis of the skeleton e) postmortem modifications of the skeleton/body
3) Mortuary facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) type of burial (inhumation, cremation, tree, etc.) b) type of receptacle (cist, box, basket, canoe, etc.) c) shape and dimensions d) raw materials used e) orientation of the facility f) depth of grave g) form of the burial area (cemetery, mound, etc.)
4) Grave inclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) type b) quantity c) source/raw materials used d) placement in relation to body
5) Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) location of burial area in relation to settlement and/or to other relevant features (monuments, geographical features, etc.) b) location of grave within burial area c) location of body within grave

* - Table 2.1 is taken in part from O'Shea (1984:39) and Goldstein (1981:59).

The theoretical basis underlying the remaining variables as regards their relevance to the study of status differentiation lies mostly in either considerations of energy expenditure (Tainter 1975, 1978; Tainter and Cordy 1977), and/or with means of physically and symbolically differentiating social groups (Binford 1971; Goldstein 1980, 1981). Measures of energy expenditure have been strongly advocated by Tainter (1975, 1978; Tainter and Cordy 1977) as indicators of societal involvement in the mortuary ritual and hence of social rank. One frequently mentioned problem with this approach is that only a small part of the entire mortuary ritual is accessible, and thus measurements of energy expenditure based solely on archaeological remains may be misleading. The redundancy built into most symbolic systems of communication, however, suggests that what is preserved in the archaeological record can be used, with appropriate caution, as a fair indication of the entire energy expenditure at the time of death (cf. O'Shea 1984; Morris 1987).

Variables such as orientation of the body may predominantly relate to factors other than socioeconomic status differentiation, such as ideology (cf. Nassaney 1989; Ucko 1969), or, in the possibly common case of solar-determined orientations, ideology in combination with season of death (Saxe 1971). Preliminary investigation reveals that the variables of body position and orientation are probably not related to socioeconomic status differentiation in the Plateau assemblages investigated here. (Orientation may not be related to season either—one of the only palynological analyses that have been attempted at a Plateau burial site did not find a correlation between season of burial and body orientation [Sprague and Mulinski 1980]). They are therefore dealt with only superficially, except where they have potential to inform on possible confounding factors, such as the presence of two or more burial components at a site.

Burial form, often combined with location, can be a powerful way in which status differences are portrayed. Following the energy expenditure model, burial forms and facilities requiring more effort are considered on principle to be likely to reflect higher status. Non-burial (by which I mean simple abandonment of the body, and not, for example, cremation or above-ground box burial) is expected to always reflect a lower status form of body disposal than any form of burial. The ethnographic record suggests that non-burial is a common method of body disposal for slaves and the very poor and unaffiliated. Non-burial is, by definition, difficult to recognise in the archaeological record. But the absence of a particular age/sex class within a mortuary population, given adequate spatial coverage of the burial area, can be used to infer non-burial. Burial in another location is an obvious alternative to non-burial, but, as the range of variability in the age/sex structures of mortuary populations within the region becomes known, the relevance of this alternative can usually be addressed.

On the Plateau itself, talus burial has sometimes been suggested to be a low status form of disposal (e.g. Sprague 1967, 1971a). This is based both on the intuition that it represents less effort than either pit inhumation or cremation, the other alternatives in the area, and on an ethnographic snippet provided by Curtis (1911a:99), who states that, among the Wishram of The Dalles, the bodies of slaves were "... deposited at the foot of the bluff". Pit inhumations are by far the most common burial form on the Plateau. There are many possible minor variations, including the use of stone cairns and circles, and wooden cists and stakes. These elaborations are expected on average to indicate higher status forms of burial.

Cremation presents what is arguably the most elaborate form of burial visible archaeologically on the Plateau. It is thus expected, on average, to reflect higher status than either talus burial or pit inhumation, regardless of the elaborations on the general theme of the latter, discussed briefly above. Some researchers have suggested that cremation cross-culturally is frequently associated with higher status than other forms of burial (e.g. Hodson 1977; McGuire 1992b). Presumably this can be related to the need to gather large amounts of combustible material, sometimes in areas where such materials are scarce and valued for other uses. The dramatic quality of a burning pyre may also be a factor acting to enhance the potential for public display, essential if mortuary ritual is being used to communicate status differences (cf. McGuire 1992b). There is little ethnographic information concerning cremation specific to the study area. Teit (in Sprague 1967) notes that cremation was largely reserved for high status individuals among the Chilcoltin. Spier provides a relevant account of cremation among the Klamath of Oregon, demonstrating that status differences may be discernible on even subtle evidence:

The pyre of green logs, three or four feet high, stands in a slight depression on the ash-heap... of preceding cremations.... When the fire has burned down, several of the male relatives who stir it with long poles, roll the remains out to be rewrapped in a mat and burned again. It is said that bodies are hard to burn; the fire must be renewed several times.... *Poor people might not be able to burn the whole body* (Spier 1930:72)(emphasis mine).

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I would like to stress that, on theoretical grounds, the above discussion provides an *expected* pattern, i.e. a model. It is important to then test this model against independent data, such as the variety and number of grave inclusions, rather than to simply assume its veracity.

Depth of burial is a simple case in which greater effort is clearly involved, given the same type of soil, as depth increases. Linda King (1982), for example, successfully demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between depth of burial and grave wealth in a late prehistoric Chumash cemetery. Caution must be used when employing this measure in certain environments where the depth of the burial as found archaeologically may not bear a direct relation to that of the original excavation. Unconsolidated sandy soils are particularly prone to movement. Many burials in the Plateau are in soils of this type, making the use of grave depth as a behaviourally meaningful variable questionable in this case.

From a cross-cultural perspective, grave location seems to be most often used to indicate gross divisions of age, with children often being buried outside of the mortuary space reserved for adults. Binford (1971:22) has noted two general patterns: 1) burial of children under house floors with adults buried in a separate cemetery, and 2) burial of children around the periphery of the settlement or adult cemetery. In mediaeval Hungary, for instance, unbaptised infants were buried in the ditch surrounding the cemetery proper (Zentai 1979). Binford (1971:22) suggests that this behaviour can be explained by the different level of corporate involvement generated by the death of a child as opposed to the death of an adult (this idea has already been discussed in some detail earlier in this chapter). The age at which inclusion in the adult mortuary space occurs is itself of interest, since it is likely that this symbolises incorporation into the community (cf. Ucko 1969).

But grave location can also be an important variable reflecting social status. For example, an Act of Parliament in nineteenth century England sanctioned the reservation of the north part of cemeteries, furthest removed from the sun's beneficent rays, for the poor (Ucko 1969). Frequently the use of location to differentiate status is used in conjunction with burial facility. In the American Southeast, for example, prominent burials mounds are spatially segregated from the majority of non-mound interments, and, furthermore, a number of independent variables indicate that status increases as distance to the mound decreases (Peebles 1971, 1977).

It has been frequently suggested in the literature that the maintenance of discrete cemeteries for the exclusive use of one segment of a population is an excellent indicator of the presence of corporate groups. Saxe (1970, 1971) first formally hypothesised that corporate descent groups within a society, having rights and/or control over crucial but spatially restricted resources, will maintain for their exclusive use a bounded mortuary area in a prominent position near the resource in question. These cemeteries act to symbolise the continuity of the descent group and to legitimise its control of resources (Goldstein 1981). This relationship has been demonstrated cross-culturally with some degree of conviction (Goldstein 1981; Binford 1971; Chapman 1981; Charles and Buikstra 1983; McGuire 1992b; Mitchell 1991; Meggitt 1965; Tainter 1978; Tainter and Cordy 1977). As might be expected, it also appears that individuals in bounded cemeteries of this nature have on average more grave wealth than individuals excluded from such cemeteries (McGuire 1992a, b).

The process by which cemeteries come to function as territorial markers has actually been documented in historical cases. The Mbeere of Kenya prior to 1906 practised shifting cultivation in an "unfilled" landscape; during this time the dead were abandoned in no particular place and with little formality (Glazier 1984). Changes wrought at least in part by colonial rule, particularly efforts to create permanent farming settlements, brought about a considerable modification in the treatment of the dead. Glazier (1984:144) states that "... a grave site now establishes a visible connection between a particular territory and forebears within it, thereby forging new and socially valued links between the land and its claimants". A very similar process has been documented for the Temuan of Malaysia (Saxe and Gall 1977). Prior to the second world war land was owned communally, there was little or no shortage of land or other critical resources (i.e. population and resources were in balance), and there were no formal disposal areas for the dead. Again, changes brought about largely by government intervention increased land and resource stress. When the Temuan adopted wet rice cultivation in response, land became a very valuable and limited resource, and formal cemeteries appeared.

Goldstein (1981) proposed a modification of Saxe's hypothesis, pointing out that, while the correlation between the presence of discrete cemeteries and corporate groups exercising some degree of control over a spatially restricted resource seems to hold, the converse does not necessarily follow. That is, the absence of an exclusive bounded burial area cannot in itself be taken to infer the absence of corporate

structure. For various reasons (which Goldstein does not elaborate upon), the corporate group may assert itself through other means.

More recently, Charles and Buikstra (1983) have expanded upon the work initiated by Saxe and Goldstein. They still accept the basic premise that "... the occurrence of formal cemetery areas is associated with corporate lineal inheritance of crucial and restricted resources" (Charles and Buikstra 1983:114), but examine this relationship in more detail, suggesting additional postulates:

- 1) formal cemeteries correlate with semi-/sedentary subsistence strategies,
- 2) the degree of spatial structuring present in the mortuary domain will correlate with the degree of competition among groups for crucial resources,
- 3) within the larger society, corporate groups will be distinguished by inclusion in separate cemeteries or in distinct areas within a single cemetery,
- 4) inclusion of individuals in the cemetery implies inclusion of those individuals in the corporate group.

The intuitive proposition that formal cemeteries will correlate with a sedentary or at least a semi-sedentary settlement/subsistence strategy does not necessarily confound the proposition that such cemeteries reflect corporate group behaviour. The two are not mutually exclusive. Charles and Buikstra (1983:120, 124; see also Hodder 1982:31) note that corporate behaviour is actually a form of territorial behaviour, and as such the ritual affirmation of corporate structure "... is significant only within a context of resource competition". Again we see the emphasis on resource competition as the *raison d'être* of corporate structure: "The relationship among corporate descent, sedentism, and formal cemeteries hinges on the fact that the rights in question involve a resource that is fixed in space, predictable, and in sufficient quantity, such that the group can localise its activities around that vicinity" (Charles and Buikstra 1983:121). As Hofman (1986:49) notes, the presence of formal cemeteries is not expected under conditions of residential mobility where reoccupation loci are not predictable. Hofman cites abundant ethnographic support for this proposition (Radcliffe-Brown 1922:107; Wiessner 1983; Yellen 1976:65; etc.). At the same time, the absence of concentrated, predictable resources obviates the need to assert ownership and/or control of a location.

In a diachronic study of burials in the Illinois Valley, Charles and Buikstra (1983) found changes which they relate to the degree of corporate structure. During the Archaic, artifacts are associated with large multiple burial facilities rather than with specific individuals, thus emphasising the group as a whole. Because of the spacing of the cemeteries, it was suggested that the corporate unit probably corresponded to the village (Charles and Buikstra 1983:134). By contrast, during the Woodland period, artifacts more frequently appear to function as individual status markers, and a much higher degree of internal differentiation is apparent in the cemeteries (Charles and Buikstra 1983:134).

Goldstein (1980, 1981) has advocated a much greater consideration of spatial structure than is generally seen in mortuary analysis. It is proposed that all other variables should be examined in light of spatial patterning. The potential for space to yield information on social status is not limited to cases where such patterning is obvious: "If space was treated differently in life, then space will be treated differently in death" (Goldstein 1980:3). Two levels of analysis are proposed: regional and local. The regional level refers principally to the detection of possible site hierarchies in burial sites, just as seen in settlement studies. The local level refers to intrasite analysis. Goldstein's (1980) analysis of two Mississippian sites in the Lower Illinois Valley revealed complex use of space involving many levels, including the nonrandom placement of graves, orientation, body position, and the placement of artifacts around the body. In addition, many of these variables could be correlated with differences in grave inclusions. Clearly the level of complexity in the society being studied will play a large role in the degree to which space is structured. The differences apparent in Mississippian society may not be seen in what generally may be viewed as the organisationally simpler societies of the Plateau.

Preparation and treatment of the body for burial has been related to status differences in the literature. Increased complexity of treatment directly reflects greater time and energy input (Tainter 1975, 1978; Tainter and Cordy 1977)—thus the more steps that are involved, the greater status is assumed for the individual in question. Cremation with subsequent burial, for example, can be expected in general to reflect a higher status position than simple burial. As always, it is important to consider this not as a given, but as an hypothesis to be tested against other mortuary variables, such as the types and average number of grave inclusions in the different burial forms.

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Reburial, as indicated by the disarticulation of the skeleton in an otherwise undisturbed (i.e. by natural forces or looters) burial, can be suggestive of higher status treatment when not applied to all members of a community. When the practice is intentional, as opposed to reburial of accidentally uncovered remains, the grave location must be clearly marked. While evidence of this marking may not survive archaeologically, this presents at least the potential to differentiate such graves by the elaborateness of their surficial structures. Most importantly, the act of disinterment and reburial is not to be considered in isolation. Rather, in almost all ethnographically known cases, it only acts as the focus for a wider range of activities, often involving an associated mortuary feast, the distribution of gifts, and the "destruction" of new wealth at the grave upon reburial. As seen in Chapter 5, this certainly applies to some ethnographic Plateau groups.

While there exists some theoretical basis for seeing the practice of reburial as a higher status form of treatment, there are a number of other factors to be considered. Hofman (1986) notes that most models of mortuary behaviour for prehistoric groups are predominantly concerned with sedentary societies with well defined cemeteries in which most or all members of society are interred. In contrast, Hofman emphasises the mobility of hunter-gatherer groups and how this can be expected to affect mortuary remains. He writes: "... mobility and organizational flexibility must not be ignored or underestimated when interpretations are made which assign behavioural meaning to the mortuary remains of hunter-gatherer groups" (Hofman 1986:224). Secondary burial must be related first and foremost to group mobility and subsistence organisation before inferences dealing with status are considered. Secondary burial typically occurs in situations of logistic mobility and seasonal aggregation of dispersed groups. The remains of those who die away from a central village will often be brought back at some point after initial soft tissue decomposition. In contrast, formalised secondary burial is rare in groups organised along lines of residential mobility, since in this case there are no central locations to which to return the remains (Hofman 1986:49-51).

While written specifically in the context of the Eastern Woodlands, Hofman's contributions have clear application to the Plateau, an area characterised above all (at least for the last 4000 years or so) by a logistical settlement pattern involving semi-permanent habitation at specific locations in winter in conjunction with dispersal across the landscape throughout most of the remainder of the year. As detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, secondary burial is frequently mentioned in the area ethnographically and can be documented archaeologically as well. Hofman's model is thus worth considering in some detail. A set of expectations can be generated in order to differentiate the context of secondary burial. For logistically organised groups, secondary burials are expected to be proportionally higher in adult males, since this group disproportionately participates in activities such as long distance trade, hunting, and raiding (Hofman 1986:60). These activities can expose the adult male group to greater risk of mortality than experienced by other members of the community, and death, should it occur, is far from the village under conditions which may make it impractical to immediately return with the body. If an effort is to be made to subsequently return defleshed remains, it will result in secondary burial. Thus the mode of burial may be situationally determined.

But as also recognised by Hofman (1986:58-60, 166-168), differential status may also be a factor in the types of adult male-dominated activities listed. Furthermore, the decision of whether or not to make the effort of returning an individual's remains for burial in a centrally located cemetery may depend at least in part on the status of the deceased and that of the surviving family or lineage group (cf. O'Shea 1984:132). Thus, there is no unambiguous relationship between secondary burial and either mobility or status. The way to deal with this potentially complex and confusing situation is to examine carefully the context of secondary burial by evaluating other variables, especially the frequency and type of grave inclusions (Hofman 1986:63).

For aggregation sites of seasonally dispersed hunter-gatherer groups, the importance of burial in the group's cemetery will again depend largely on the deceased's status in the community—the remains of infants and senile individuals may be less likely to be returned than those of productive adults (Hofman 1986:167). In such a situation, the central cemetery should contain a disproportionate number of adolescent and young and middle adult burials, while the very young and the very old should be overrepresented at small dispersed burial sites (Hofman 1986:168).

There can be little question that there is a differential distribution of grave inclusions in Plateau burials. It must be assumed, however, that what is observed in the archaeological record is a fair reflection of the differences accorded to the treatment of the deceased at the times of their deaths (cf. O'Shea 1984). As has been pointed out many times, the actual burial is only part of the funeral, and the funeral in turn is

only part of a wider range of social activities surrounding death (Pader 1982). Each stage of the funerary process offers an opportunity for the direct or indirect expenditure of wealth. Perishable wealth items might have been, and in many instances almost certainly were, included in or on the grave. Wealth may also have been given away at mortuary feasts. The response to these problems is that mortuary ritual tends to show redundancy (Morris 1987; O'Shea 1984; Willems 1978). If something about social status is being communicated in the ritual, then it can be expected to be repeated in several different forms in order to reinforce the message. My working assumption, then, is that in a burial in which many goods were placed on the grave, hung on poles around the grave, or whatever, there would also be relatively many goods interred with the body. The funerary feast for such an individual would also be on average more lavish. Ethnographic accounts specific to the Plateau (Chapter 5) as well as more general ethnographic analogy suggest that this is a reasonable assumption. Similarly, it is unlikely that many burials would contain lavish wealth goods of a perishable sort, while at the same time being impoverished in non-perishable items. Hayden and Cannon's (1984) ethnoarchaeological study of the Highland Maya of Guatemala provides some cross-cultural support to the postulated strong correlation between perishable and non-perishable wealth items. Of course, these assumptions hold only in situations where certain prerequisites are met: grave inclusions must be a culturally accepted means of showing status (at present in European-derived societies they are not); there must be wealth items of a non-perishable sort present in the material culture, and so on. There seems little doubt, based on even the archaeological evidence alone, that these minimum conditions are met on the Plateau. Ethnographic data independently support this position. In general, then, we can expect that the amount of wealth represented by non-perishable grave goods bears a direct relationship to the overall amount of wealth expended on the funeral, as well as overall socioeconomic status differences present in the community.

As I have repeatedly emphasised, it is important to consider as many different possible indicators of status as possible. The possibilities for misinterpretation are far greater when any single dimension, such as the distribution of grave goods, is studied in isolation (Chapman & Randsborg 1981; Goldstein 1980, 1981; Hodder 1982; Hofman 1986). Be that as it may, grave inclusions are one of the dimensions that are commonly highly differentially distributed and most accessible in archaeological reports (cf. Rothschild 1979, 1990). Certainly this is the case in the Plateau, and as one of the most potentially informative indicators of socioeconomic status differences, they merit extensive study. Other dimensions of mortuary variability will also be considered when possible and when relevant to the research. I am not attempting, other than in a very general sense, to demonstrate that differences in wealth existed based on the evidence of Plateau burials—I believe that this is self-evident given my definitions of wealth and socioeconomic status. Rather, I examine the varying degree of the observed differences, and their structure in relation to the subordinate dimensions of age and sex. I also examine in some detail the role of various items of material culture in defining and displaying socioeconomic inequality

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