NEW EXCAVATIONS IN SCOTT STATE PARK: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM 14SC409

SARAH TRABERT
University of Oklahoma

MATTHEW E. HILL, JR.
University of Iowa

DELANEY COOLEY
University of Oklahoma

Since 2013, researchers from the University of Iowa and University of Oklahoma have been investigating site 14SC409, located in Lake Scott Park, Scott County, Kansas. Originally tested in 2009 by the Kansas Archeology Training Program, site 14SC409 has yielded important information on the occupation of the region by Dismal River aspect (Plains Apache) groups and how this occupation was related to the nearby Scott County Pueblo (14SC1). Although new excavations at the site are planned, the authors have completed the analysis of existing artifact collections, and this paper summarizes these results and our preliminary findings regarding the nature and identity of the site’s occupants.

In the summers of 2013, 2014, and 2015, University of Iowa (UI) and University of Oklahoma (OU) faculty and students conducted archaeological investigations at a Protohistoric (A.D. 1400–1750) Dismal River aspect site (14SC409) in Scott State Park, Scott County, Kansas. This work was part of a long-term project that explores the nature of Dismal River occupation on the High Plains. The 2013 field season focused on relocating and expanding the excavation area from the 2009 Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP) investigations. The 2014 field season concentrated on investigating features identified in the 2009 and 2013 excavations but ended early, following the discovery of a human burial at the site. The 2015 field season largely focused on investigating the surface artifact expression of the site.

This paper summarizes the results of the UI 2013–2015 work at 14SC409 and the analyses of artifacts collected from this site. While investigations of this rather large site are not finished, the discovery of the human burial did require rethinking the investigations and summarizing the findings to date. Therefore, the authors present the results from the site, although these findings likely will change as future work progresses. The analyses of ceramics, lithics, and faunal remains, as well as the limited data collected on burial practices present at the site have provided significant insights into the identity of the people who lived and died at 14SC409 and the role that they may have played in the larger community of Dismal River farmers living in the region (Trabert and Hill herein). People occupied this site during a time when they likely were experiencing profound social, demographic, and economic changes, and data from this site has much to contribute to better understanding of the occupation of the High Plains during the Protohistoric period.

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL SETTINGS

The High Plains of western Kansas have been occupied for at least 11,500 years (Blackmar and Hofman 2006; Hoard 2009). Early Archaic (Logan Creek), Late Archaic, Early Ceramic (Plains Woodland), Middle Ceramic (Upper Republican), Late Ceramic (Dismal River), and Historic Euroamerican sites have all been identified in Scott State Park (Hoard 2009). The focus of this report is on the Late Ceramic period in Scott County, Kansas.

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The Dismal River aspect is an archeological complex that includes sites in western Kansas, western Nebraska, eastern Colorado, and southeastern Wyoming (Trabert 2015). This group occupied the High Plains from approximately A.D. 1400–1750 (Gilmore and Larmore 2012; Scheiber 2006). Dismal River peoples in the western Plains lived in short-term rockshelter and open camp sites and maintained a principally hunting and foraging lifeway (Brunswig 1995; Cassells 1997; Gunnerson 1960). In contrast Dismal River peoples in the eastern Plains often lived in larger five-post wickiup-like structures, used outdoor baking pits, and relied on horticulture in addition to their hunting and gathering (Champe 1949; Gunnerson 1960, Hill and Metcalf 1942; Wedel 1959).

The Dismal River occupation around Lake Scott is quite extensive. At least 17 sites contain ceramic assemblages with diagnostic Dismal River ceramics, and 2 additional sites probably are associated with the Dismal River complex because either they have small assemblages of sherds similar to Dismal River types or are thought to be contemporaneous with nearby Dismal River sites (Hoard 2009). A number of Dismal River sites in Scott County have evidence for the use of masonry structures (14SC1), wickiup style structures (14SC1, 14SC106, 14SC304), baking pits (14SC1, 14SC301, 14SC320, 14SC325), and human burial (14SC301, 14SC409) (Gunnerson 1987; Wedel 1959; Witty 1973, 1985). The remaining sites likely represent either shorter term camp-sites (14SC104 and 14SC302) or ephemeral artifact scatters (14SC5, 14SC105, 14SC107, 14SC316, 14SC317, 14SC320, 14SC403, 14SC427, 14SC434, and 14SC450). The density of Dismal River sites in and around Lake Scott is greater than in any other part of the Central Plains (Trabert 2015). Hoard (2009) suggested that the unique geological features around the park made the area very attractive to Dismal River occupants.

Dismal River groups, like those living in western Kansas, are thought to be Athapaskan-speakers and affiliated with later Apachean communities. Although some scholars disagree with this assessment (see Opler 1982 and Gulley 2000 for alternatives), most cite similarities in mobility, architectural styles, tool types, use of outdoor baking pits, mortuary customs, general geographic location, and chronology between Dismal River and later Apache groups support the cultural connection (Brunswig 1995; Gunnerson 1960, 1968, 1987; Schlesier 1972; Trabert 2014; Trabert and Hill herein; Wedel 1959). Many Athapaskan groups (notably the Navajo and Jicarilla Apache) also maintained close ties with indigenous groups in the American Southwest (Anderson 1999; Eiselt 2012; Kulisheck 2010), another point of commonality with Dismal River.

Dismal River peoples were participants in broader social and exchange networks that connected them with neighboring Plains groups, such as Great Bend aspect and possibly Middle Missouri tradition groups, and with Puebloan peoples living along the Rio Grande River in northern New Mexico (Trabert 2015). Similar connections served as a means of ensuring mutual survival during times of environmental or social change across the North American continent. Following years of Spanish persecution, some Puebloan people fled their homeland in the seventeenth century and traveled to western Kansas to seek refuge with Dismal River groups that were living around what is now Lake Scott. These migrants built a seven-room masonry pueblo, known as the Scott County Pueblo site (14SC1) or El Cuartelejo, on a terrace overlooking Ladder Creek. This site has been of interest to avocational and professional archaeologists since the late nineteenth century and has been excavated on several different occasions (Gunnerson 1998; Hawley 2005; Wedel 1959; Williston and Martin 1900; Witty 1971, 1975, 1986). El Cuartelejo is not the only location where Puebloan and Dismal River peoples and their descendants lived in the area, and other sites, such as 14SC409, provide additional information about the multi-cultural (and possible multi-generational) community that formed in the region during the Protohistoric period.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AT 14SC409

Site 14SC409 is located on a terrace formed by overbanking flooding from Ladder Creek to the east and partially up the toe of the bluff slope to the south (Figure 1). It was recorded originally in 1976 as a small artifact scatter, covering approximately 9,400 m² on the west bank of Ladder Creek. At the time the surface expression of the site included two ceramic sherds, a small quantity of chipped stone tools and debitage, and a few bone and shell frag-
ments (Hoard 2009; 14SC409 site file). In 2009 a KATP crew surveyed the entire terrace that contained the site and excavated 18, 1 x 1-m test units in the southeastern portion (Figure 2). Their work greatly expanded the size of the site to approximately 36,600 m$^2$ and documented at least one intact buried component that yielded 1,837 artifacts.

The KATP excavations recovered both Dismal River and Puebloan artifacts (Hoard 2009). The vertical artifact distribution indicated a single Dismal River occupation at 17–22 cm below ground surface (bgs), although the presence of at least a few artifacts and pieces of bone at greater depths (~60 cm bgs) suggested that other components might be present. While the 2009 researchers did not attempt to radiometrically date the Dismal River component at 14SC409, discovery of a French gunflint, made from translucent honey-colored flint, with the Dismal River material indicated that the site was occupied between A.D. 1675 and 1800 (Hoard 2009).

KATP workers uncovered a pile of large rocks, identified as Feature 246, which extended into a roughly 1 x 1-m area at the western edge of the excavation block. The rocks were not thermally altered, and the limited excavation area did not permit a full determination of the feature’s shape, extent, or purpose. Thus, Hoard (2009) did not classify it as a cultural feature in the project report. The crew removed the rocks from the excavation units at the end of the project, leaving an uneven surface that was covered with plastic before backfilling.

Trabert’s (2011) analysis of the ceramic artifacts from the 2009 work revealed that the “local” Dismal River Gray Ware made up only a minority (n = 106; 35 percent), while most of the assemblage (n = 174; 57 percent) consisted of Puebloan...
types, such as Tewa Red, Kapo Black, and Penasco or Tewa Micaceous. Subsequent characterization analyses of these ceramics, however, indicated that the “Puebloan” ceramics likely were made locally, rather than being produced the Rio Grande Valley (Trabert 2015). Nevertheless, the 14SC409 ceramics provide evidence for potters living in this part of western Kansas who locally were manufacturing well-made copies of Northern Rio Grande wares (see discussion of ceramics below). Other Puebloan artifacts recovered during the KATP excavations included two *Olivella* shell beads and a fragment of a square-stemmed decorated pipe. A similar pipe was recovered from Pecos Pueblo (Kidder 1932).

**CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS AT 14SC409**

The recent round of excavations at 14SC409 is part of a larger research program that focuses on better understanding the nature and extent of interaction between Dismal River and Puebloan migrants in what is now Scott State Park. This broader project involves reanalysis of artifacts from 14SC1, systematic dating of several sites within the park, and geophysical and topographical surveys around the pueblo. Construction of a seven-room masonry pueblo, contemporary local manufacture of Rio Grande-style pottery, and use of Northern Rio Grande culinary vessel forms strongly indicate the presence of Puebloan migrants living in the area after A.D. 1600 (Beck and Trabert 2014; Beck et al. 2016). A Dismal River baking pit found under the pueblo and a large quantity of Dismal River Gray Ware at 14SC1 (Beck and Trabert 2014; Witty 1975) signify interaction between local and migrant groups at the site. The results of the 2009 excavations at 14SC409 pointed to the presence of more than one site potentially related to the Dismal River/Puebloan community, leading to continued excavations at 14SC409 in the summers of 2013 and 2014, with follow-up work at the site in 2015.

The goals for fieldwork at the site were 1) to enlarge the available sample of artifacts and possible features from the Dismal River component, 2) to collect samples, such as charcoal, diagnostic arti-
facts, or bones, for chronometrically dating the site, 3) to determine if other components are represented at the site, and 4) to ascertain the function of Feature 246, the enigmatic rock feature identified during the 2009 KATP excavation.

**SURFACE EXPRESSION OF 14SC409**

Each year of fieldwork included a systematic pedestrian survey of 14SC409, with the crew walking transects at 5-m intervals. This survey was simply a walk-over inspection of the ground surface and did not include any shovel testing or augering. The terrace containing the site was covered by dense native grasses, so most of the area had moderate (~40 percent visibility) to poor (<25 percent visibility) surface visibility. In addition, in the northern portion of the site, three large piles of wood deposited by the park personnel and local residents obscure ground visibility and were not surveyed even though they are areas that potentially contain artifacts. In total, the survey examined approximately 64,000 m² area (see Figure 1). The survey area was intentionally larger than the prior defined limits of 14SC409 in order to determine whether the artifacts continue beyond the established site boundary.

A total of 175 artifacts (158 chipped stone flakes and shatter, 9 ceramic body sherds, 4 bone fragments, 2 pieces of fire-affected rock, 1 shell fragment, and 1 piece of adobe/burned earth) were recovered from a roughly 45,000 m² area. The majority of surface artifacts were recovered within a roughly 190 x 70-m area, centered on the main excavation space. This is not surprising, as the original KATP excavation area was chosen because it had the highest concentrations of surface artifacts. Also, a railroad cut ran through this portion of the site, and erosion along the back dirt piles mark the edge of the railroad.

**SITE EXCAVATION**

The original plan for the 2013 investigation was to continue hand excavation begun by the 2009 KATP crew in a 3 x 4-m area (12, 1 x 1-m units) that encompassed a number of the KATP excavation units. However, it soon became apparent that a number of the 2009 excavation units were not square or oriented to true north. Therefore, the KATP grid system was abandoned and a new grid system, oriented to true north, was created. As a result, a 2 x 3-m excavation block (six 1 x 1-m units) was established, positioned along the western edge of the 2009 KATP excavation block (Figure 3) in order...
to include portions of six of the 2009 excavations units. In 2014 the excavation was expanded with an additional three 1 x 1-m units immediately east of the 2 x 3-m block. The expanded excavation block included portions of two additional KATP excavation units. As will be discussed below, the discovery of human remains resulted in a premature halt to the 2014 fieldwork. Accomplishments of that field season were limited to excavation of three new levels in unit L17, opened in 2013; excavation of three levels in the new unit L8; and removal of KATP back dirt from the new unit L13.

Excavations were done by hand-troweling, using 5-cm-thick excavation levels (Table 1). The fill from the 2009 KATP excavations, as well as the backfill from the 2013 UI excavations during the 2014 field season, were excavated separately from the undisturbed sediments and screened. The fill from the older KATP excavations was easily identified because of color and textural differences compared to the intact sediment. Additionally, the KATP crew had placed white plastic at the bottom and partially up the sides of its units. The volume of all excavated sediment was measured in liters (L) and screened through 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth in 2013 and through 1/8-inch mesh in 2014. In total, the excavation of seven 1 x 1-m units, including partial units, removed 2,729 L of sediments, comprising 913 L of former back dirt and 1,816 L of newly excavated sediment.

All but two units (L8 and L13) were excavated below the depth of the KATP excavations, which generally stopped at 23–38 cm bgs. The one exception was the two units (N1036E1029, N1036E1030) that contained the large rock feature, which ended at the bottom of the rock pile at approximately 45 cm bgs (~999.63-m elevation).

**EXCAVATION RESULTS**

Overall, the 2013 and 2014 excavations produced fairly modest results in terms of the artifact quantity. In fact, the recent round of excavations produced a much lower quantity of cultural material than was recovered from the 2009 KATP excavation. Only 396 artifacts, consisting primarily of small pieces of unidentifiable bone and lithic debitage, were collected (Table 2). Of the artifacts collected, a substantial proportion (n = 412 artifacts; 36 percent of all artifacts) was recovered from the back dirt of either the original 2009 KATP or the 2013 UI excavations. The back dirt screening procedure was instituted in order to identify any artifacts that might have been missed during the original excavations. While the quantity of artifacts recovered from old excavation back dirt might appear high, this number is probably artificially so because the specimens are very small and fragmented. In terms of overall density of artifacts, the degree of uniformity in distribution of artifacts across the excavation units was surprisingly high. Most units had densities between .11 and .16 artifacts per liter of excavated sediment.

When examining the vertical artifact distribution, a clear pattern for clustering emerges. As shown in

**Table 1.** Key Information for University of Iowa’s 2013 and 2014 Excavation Units and 2009 KATP Units Encountered during UI excavations. Grid coordinates and elevations used here are from the UI arbitrary grid system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Number</th>
<th>SW Corner Coordinates</th>
<th>Number of 5-cm Levels</th>
<th>Elevation Range of Excavations (m)</th>
<th>Total Depth below Surface (cm)</th>
<th>KATP Units Encountered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>N3014 E2984</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1000.126 – 999.692</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>N1038 E1030; N1037 E1029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>N3014 E2985</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1000.104 – 999.792</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>N1038 E1030; N1037 E1031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8</td>
<td>N3014 E2986</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1000.052 – 999.974</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>N1037 E1031; N1036 E1032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>N3013 E2985</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1000.114 – 999.702</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>N1037 E1031; N1036 E1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L15</td>
<td>N3013 E2984</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1000.119 – 999.69</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>N1037 E1029; N1036 E1030; N1036 E1029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L16</td>
<td>N3012 E2984</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1000.139 – 999.665</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>N1036 E1029; N1036 E1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L17</td>
<td>N3012 E2985</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1000.124 – 999.59</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>N1036 E1030; N1035 E1031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L18</td>
<td>N3012 E2986</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Only removed KATP back dirt</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>N1035 E1031; N1035 E1032; N1036 E1032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3, levels 3 and 4 have the highest concentrations when considering either the absolute artifact count or the artifact density per liter of excavated sediments. Moving through the profile, a gradual increase in artifacts occurs in levels 1 and 2, and then a dense concentration of artifacts appears in levels 3 and 4. A fairly sharp decline in artifacts follows in levels 5 through 8. No artifacts were recovered from either level 9 or 10, although it must be acknowledged that these levels were minimally investigated.

This bell-shaped distribution of artifacts, centered on levels 3 and 4, may indicate that the original occupation surface at the site is associated with the elevation range of levels 3 and 4. Hoard’s (2009) report on the KATP excavation came to a similar conclusion, stating that most of the artifacts were recovered between 17 and 22 cm bgs. In this case the decline in artifact numbers immediately above and below this surface probably represents the relocation of artifacts from the occupation surface through natural disturbance processes, such as rodent burrows and root action. As discussed below, the features encountered in 2013 and 2014 were found in levels below 3 and 4, probably because the lowest portions were excavated below the original occupation level.

Table 3. Artifact Counts by Level and Artifact Density. Elevation measurements used here are from the UI arbitrary grid system.
**ARCHEOLOGICAL FEATURES**

Four possible features were encountered during the excavations. Three (features 1–3) are newly identified and tentatively described as postholes (Figure 4). The fourth feature is the rock feature, identified as Feature 246 during the 2009 KATP excavation.

**Features 1–3**

The three possible postholes were subcircular features, measuring from 11.5 x 10.5 cm to 12 x 12 cm in diameter and ranging in depth from 5 to 11 cm (Figure 5). No artifacts were present in the fill, all of which was processed through flotation. The nature of the fill, which was obviously lighter in color and looser in consistency than surrounding sediments, suggested that features 1–3 were cultural features. They are not interpreted as filled krotovinas because of their regular shapes and clear edges. Furthermore, the color and texture of sediments within the features were different than that of rodent burrows observed in other areas of the site. In fact, a krotovina dissected the base of feature 1.

![Figure 4. Features 1, 2, 3, and 4.](image-url)
These features are tentatively interpreted as postholes because of their size and circular shape when viewed in plan view. However, their shallowness and basin shape make this interpretation more problematic. Possibly these features were present in overlying levels with their upper sections associated with the main occupation surface, but they were not recognized because of ubiquitous rodent disturbance throughout this unit. Therefore, the observed features simply may be the bases of much larger postholes.

Assuming features 1–3 are cultural in origin, and this is not definitively the case, their function is not clear. Their small size and close proximity to one another probably indicates that they did not serve as supports for a structure. Given that they were located along an arc alignment, together they might have been part of a small wind/sun block. However, without more excavation it may not be possible to determine the function of these enigmatic features.

**Feature 4**

The final feature investigated in 2013 was renamed feature 4, although originally designated Feature 246 in 2009 (Hoard 1995; Trabert and Hill herein). To investigate the feature, four excavation units (L14, L15, L16 and L17) were positioned immediately on top of the original rock feature. After removing the KATP back dirt, which included a substantial quantity of large rocks that likely were part of the feature, the feature boundary was easily observed (Figure 6). After exposure, the area proved to be an irregular oblong depression with distinctly gray sediment. The feature also was defined by a number...
of partially buried large rocks, which presumably were part of the rock concentration and left in place by the KATP crew. Along the western, northern, and eastern edges of the feature, excavation uncovered a dispersed scatter of small- to medium-size rocks. New excavation units L16 and L17 indicated that the feature was not fully excavated in 2009, and it extended farther south than previously thought.

In the two southernmost units were large rocks that were an original part of the feature excavated during the 2009 KATP. In L16 these rocks were first encountered at 10 cm bgs (~1000.00 m elevation), while in L17 the large rocks were first exposed at approximately 20 cm bgs (~999.87 m elevation). By 35 cm bgs the rock clusters in L16 and L17 merged to form a continuous arc-shaped rock pile. The lack of large rock south of this concentration indicated that the feature ended at this point; had this been a natural feature, such a clear boundary would not be anticipated. More importantly several of the rocks along the southern margin of the concentration were oriented with their long axes sticking vertically out of the ground at an acute angle. Because of limited time during the 2013 field season, the decision was made to leave all the large rocks in place to be excavated in 2014.

As work resumed at 14SC409 in 2014, initial focus was outside of feature 4. This approach was to confirm the earlier hypothesis that it represented a rock filled pit, which site occupants had excavated, placed large rocks inside along the outside edge, and filled with smaller rocks. However, after removal of only 2 cm of sediment from the feature interior, a portion of a human cranium was exposed. The identification of the bone as human was without a doubt, as key diagnostic features, such as the supra-orbital notch, external auditory meatus, squamosal suture, and coronal suture, were readily identifiable. Following the Kansas Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Act (75-2741 through 75-2754) and recommendations of Dr. Robert Hoard (Kansas Historical Society) and the Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Board, all work at the site stopped and the individual was carefully reburied. A full description of the burial and Dismal River mortuary practices can be found in Trabert and Hill (herein).
SPECIALIZED ANALYSES

All of the ceramics, lithics, and faunal remains collected from 14SC409 to date have been analyzed by the authors. In addition, two new radiocarbon dates were obtained. The results of these analyses are described below, along with the key interpretation of findings. The social implications and preliminary conclusions about the site and what the artifacts can reveal about the people who once lived at 14SC409 are discussed below.

RADIOCARBON DATING

The age of the 14SC409 was determined through two accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dates on bone collagen (Table 4). The two bone samples were collected from the 2013 excavation unit L16 but were vertically separated by approximately 30 cm. One sample (PD23 – FS14) was taken from a left radius shaft fragment of a pronghorn, recovered from the top of level 3 (999.995 m elevation). This is approximately 15 cm bgs at the approximate level believed to represent the Dismal River occupation surface. The other sample (PD 75 – FS3) was from a left radius shaft fragment of an artiodactyl, likely a deer, which was collected from the top of level 9 (999.69 m elevation) and was immediately adjacent to the rocks forming feature 4, although clearly outside this feature. Even though the two samples were vertically separated by more than 30 cm, they produced similar ages: 125±25 (Aeon-1656) and 120±25 (Aeon-1657) radiocarbon years old. Using the chi-square test function in

Figure 7. Reconstructed feature 4 with rocks removed by 2009 KATP and rocks still in place during UI excavations. Star represents location of KATP core with possible human remains.
OxCal 4.2 (Bronk Ramsey 2001), these two dates were determined not statistically different \((T=0.02 \ [95\% 3.8], \text{df}=1)\). The value given for \(T\) is the chi-squared value calculated in the comparison of these two dates. As long as the \(T\) value is less than the value given in the bracket, the two dates are unlikely to be different at a .05 \(p\)-value. The degrees of freedom are given by df. For the date of 125±25, the three calibrated ages ranges are A.D. 1679–1764 (\(p = .35\)), A.D. 1801–1894 (\(p = .50\)), and 1904–1939 (\(p = .16\)). For the date of 120±25 there are four calibrated age ranges of A.D. 1681–1739 (\(p = .29\)), A.D. 1744–1763 (\(p = .04\)), AD 1802–1896 (\(p = .52\)), and 1902–1938 (\(p = .15\)). The identical radiocarbon dates for bones separated vertically is probably due to disturbance processes, such as the rodent burrowing pervasive at the site.

Using several lines of evidence, it can be inferred that the most likely dates for 14SC409 fall between approximately A.D. 1680 and A.D. 1760. First, no historic metal has been recovered from the site; if the site dated in the 1800s, the presence of metal objects would be expected. Second, the French gunflint recovered from the site matches the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century age range (Hoard 2009:70; Kenmotsu 1990). If the A.D. 1680–1760 date range is correct for the 14SC409 occupation, the site was occupied roughly contemporaneously or slightly later than the nearby pueblo at 14SC1. Furthermore, it coincides with the time period when residents of Picuris and other New Mexico pueblos abandoned the Southwest in 1696 (Thomas 1935).

### CERAMIC ANALYSIS

As already discussed, the 2009 KATP excavations at 14SC409 recovered 280 ceramic artifacts. During the 2013 and 2014 surface surveys of 14SC409, 6 body sherds were found, and 23 body sherds and 1 rim sherd were recovered during excavations. Of these 30 sherds only 15 (14 body and 1 rim) were large enough (larger than 1 cm²) for further analysis. Based on temper identification, surface treatment, and color, Trabert estimates that at least five different vessels are represented in this small assemblage.

The rim sherd was recovered in an undisturbed area of L17, approximately 5 cm bgs. It came from a slightly flaring jar that was tempered with quartz sands, was dark gray in color, and had smooth surfaces. The sherd interior was lightly burnished near the top of the rim. No evidence of coiling, slip, paint, or decoration is visible. The interior burnishing, fine paste, and color are similar to Kapo Black pieces, discovered during the 2009 KATP excavations. Although they do not cross fit, this rim sherd is likely part of the same vessel as one body sherd that shares the same characteristics. The 2014 investigations yielded three body sherds that do not match expectations for Dismal River aspect Gray Ware. One surface-collected body sherd is light brown in color, is tempered with medium sand, and has an exterior surface that is slipped (brown) and burnished. A second body sherd, recovered from the KATP back dirt (UI units L8 and L13), has a slightly burnished exterior and a bright red slipped

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### Table 4. Results of AMS Radiocarbon Dating for Three Bone (Gelatin) Samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab Number</th>
<th>Excavation Unit &amp; Provenience</th>
<th>C:N Ratio</th>
<th>Yield %C</th>
<th>(14^C) Ages (\text{Cal Age Ranges (A.D.)}^1)</th>
<th>95.4% (\text{[2σ]})</th>
<th>Relative Area under Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeon–1656</td>
<td>L16, PD23-FS14</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>(-7.6) 125±25 (1679–1764)</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1801–1894)</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1904–1939)</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeon-1657</td>
<td>L16, PD75-FS3</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>(10.5) 120±25 (1681–1739)</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.289</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1744–1763)</td>
<td>.036</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1802–1896)</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1902–1938)</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 Calibration of radiocarbon dates were performed with the CALIB 7.0.4 program (Stuiver and Reimer 1993) using the IntCal13 calibration curve (Reimer et al. 2013).
interior and is tempered with sand and caliche. The third sherd dissimilar to Dismal River aspect Gray Ware was recovered in an undisturbed portion of L8, approximately 5 cm bgs. This sherd is tempered with medium sand and has a brown-slipped and burnished exterior surface and a bright red interior slip.

The remaining 11 body sherds, although small (between 1 cm² and 5 cm² in size), fits expectations for Dismal River aspect ceramics. Sherds range in color from light brown to black, and none is decorated, slipped, or painted. All except one of the body sherds were tempered with fine to medium quartz and feldspar sands, while four had larger quartz inclusions, and three had caliche inclusions. One body sherd, found on the surface, was tempered with very fine micaceous sands, but it does not appear to be one of the identifiable Southwestern micaceous types, as it probably was not made with micaceous clays. All body sherds have smooth surfaces with no evidence of simple stamping. Four of the sherds have lightly burnished exteriors, and two have lightly burnished interiors. Maximum thicknesses range from 4.2 to 8.1 mm with a median of 5.1 mm.

Of these 15 sherds, 6 might be nonlocal (the potential Kapo black rim, the slipped body sherds, and the sherd tempered with micaceous sands), but their small size limits conclusive statements about their origins. Similar ceramics have been recovered from the nearby Scott County Pueblo site, and a sample of these supposedly “Puebloan” ceramics from 14SC1, 14SC409, and 14SC304 (another Dismal River aspect site near Lake Scott) were thin sectioned and petrographically analyzed. Petrographic microscopy is the study of translucent slices of ceramic sherds when viewed under a microscope with cross-polarized light. Petrographers can identify the minerals present in the slides by examining how light passes through the minerals present (Rice 1987; Stoltman 2001). Dr. David Hill, an expert in petrographic analysis, examined the sample of nonlocal sherds recovered from these sites, as well as samples of sand collected within Scott State Park (Hill 2014).

Hill (2014) classified six red-slipped and one polished black sherd as locally made, as they contained minerals and inclusions common to material available in the area. Hill did not identify any significant volcanic inclusions, as one would expect with ceramics manufactured in northern New Mexico. These results are highly significant because they indicate that people at these western Kansas sites were manufacturing pottery that was similar in paste, surface treatment, and form to ceramics made in New Mexico. These locally made copies of Puebloan vessels are very well made, not simply imitations, which means that Puebloan potters and their descendants made these vessels in Kansas in a style that they themselves or their immediate ancestors learned in the Pueblo communities of New Mexico (Beck et al. 2016). These results support earlier conclusions, drawn by Beck and Trabert (2014), that Puebloan women lived in the area and crafted vessel forms (bowls and short-upright jars) commonly made and used in New Mexico that were associated with foodway practices not common to Plains groups.

LITHIC ANALYSIS

The 2009, 2013, and 2014 investigations at 14SC409 yielded a total of 1,001 lithic artifacts: 729 from the KATP and 272 from UI investigations. Of these, 602 artifacts collected from excavated contexts were chosen for further analysis; surface artifacts are not discussed here. In addition to the analysis of the 2013 and 2014 artifacts, Cooley also reanalyzed the lithics collected during the 2009 KATP excavation. Data were collected on a number of attributes, including material (color and type), thermal alteration, presence of cortex, type of object (flake, shatter, or tool), and measurements (platform width and depth, overall length and width, thickness, and weight). Comparative collections from the University of Iowa and Oklahoma Archeological Survey were used for raw material classifications.

Most of the 14SC409 lithic artifacts are made from locally available Smoky Hill chert (n = 438; 73 percent) with lesser frequencies of nonlocal Florence chert (n = 64; 11 percent), chalcedony (n = 45; 8 percent), Edwards (n = 3; <1 percent), quartzite (n = 7; 1 percent), and basalt (n = 3; <1 percent) (Table 5). A total of 42 lithic specimens come from currently unknown sources. While Smoky Hill cherts are considered more “locally” available, the nearest source of these materials is 80 km away from the Lake Scott area (Butler 1997). A small number of lithic flakes recovered from excavations at the site...
showed evidence of thermal alteration (n = 116; 19 percent); however, a lack of comparable data from other Dismal River sites makes it difficult to determine if this is a low or high proportion of the assemblage.

Data collected on the number of dorsal surface flake scars, bulb of percussion size, and amount of cortex present on the flakes indicate that people living at 14SC409 were using primarily soft hammer percussion to complete late stage bifacial reduction and tool retouch. Most of the flakes recovered from the site are small (average length of 14.5 mm), and 85 percent do not have any cortex present, pointing to predominately bifacial reduction rather than early stage cobble reduction.

Very few stone tools have been recovered from excavated contexts at the site (n = 38), with scrapers being the most common tool form (n = 21; 55 percent). Bifaces are the next most common (n = 8; 21 percent), followed by drills (n = 2), projectile points (n = 2), sandstone abraders (n = 2), spokeshaves (n = 2), and a mano (n = 1). The projectile points are triangular, and side-notched with concave bases, which is consistent with other Dismal River assemblages and a Late Ceramic period occupation (Gunnerson 1960; Hoard 2009; Wedel 1959). The frequency of scrapers is also consistent with Dismal River groups, as hide production was an important economic activity for many Great Plains groups during the Protohistoric period (Hoard 2009; Vehik 2002).

**FAUNAL ANALYSIS**

The UI investigations at 14SC409 yielded a total of 198 faunal remains, of which 116 specimens (59 percent) came from intact excavated contexts. The remaining faunal remains include 72 specimens (36 percent) recovered by screening back dirt from previously excavated units and 10 potential archeological specimens (5 percent) collected from the surface. Because of the small size of the UI faunal assemblage, this analysis also incorporates faunal remains from the 2009 KATP excavation. This faunal assemblage consists of 1,635 specimens, including 10 objects from the surface. The following analysis does not consider material recovered from the surface or from the excavated back dirt.

The analysis of the 14SC409 faunal remains utilized detailed taphonomic observations that identified specimens to class (either taxonomic identification or a body size category), element (skeletal bone), portion (subdivision of bone), and segment designation (subdivision of portion) (Todd 1987). Taxonomic identification (species or genus) was made using UI’s comparative faunal collections.
for the larger and identifiable specimens. Observations also were made on the presence, type, and location of subaerial weathering, carnivore and rodent gnawing, burning, rootlet etching, bone breakage, humanly induced impacts, and human butchery and other striations.

Overall the 1,645 faunal specimens (1050.6 grams) analyzed in this study are highly fragmented; bone specimens have an average mass of just 1.8 grams, and the largest weighs less than 50 g. Because of this high degree of fragmentation, only about 3 percent (NISP = 56) is identifiable to genus or species level (Table 6). As a result, a majority of the assemblage was coded either as very small unidentifiable fragments (n = 1,274; 73 percent) or mammalian remains identified to general mammal body size (i.e., very small-, small-, medium-, or large-bodied mammals) (NISP = 648; 24 percent). This body-size classification was assigned based on bone thickness and morphology of the specimens.

Although the 14SC409 assemblage consists primarily of small, hard-to-identify fragments, a surprising diversity of animals was recognized. Eight genera were identified; however, it cannot be established definitively that more than one individual was represented in each. Furthermore, it is unlikely that all of these taxa were utilized by humans. In particular, it is suspected that all the rodent and rodent-size remains, including prairie dog and very small mammal, were incorporated in the site by accident. A portion of a modern 13-lined ground squirrel skull, collected from a filled rodent burrow during the UI excavations, is not included in this analysis.

Two species of carnivore, fox (Vulpes vulpes) and an indeterminate canid, were recovered from 14SC409. Much of the small-size mammal remains (NISP = 48) likely represent carnivores, as bone thicknesses suggest species larger than rabbits or hares. What species of canid is uncertain, but a medium-size animal, such as a small domesticated dog or coyote, is suspected. Even though the identified fox and canid remains do not show evidence of human alteration, the presence of burning and impact marks on a number of the small-size mammal remains opens the possibility that site occupants utilized these carnivores for food. A larger sample of material would be necessary to support this statement, however.

A significant portion of the 14SC409 collection consists of artiodactyl remains. Bison, pronghorn, and deer remains make up a significant segment of the identifiable species. Also, these taxa probably are primarily responsible for the majority of material categorized as indeterminate medium-size mammal (i.e., deer and pronghorn) (NISP = 233) and indeterminate large-size mammal (i.e., bison)

| Table 6. Summary of Number of Specimens [NISP] for Identified Faunal Species and Key Taphonomic Observations. |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Species                    | Iowa NSP | KATP NSP  | Total NSP   | Total MNI     | Green NSP      | Burn NSP      | Impact NSP    | Cut NSP         |
| Prairie dog                | 3         | 3          | 3            | 1              |                |                |                |                |
| Unidentified rodent        | 1         | 1          | 1            |                |                |                |                |                |
| Fox                        | 1         | 1          | 1            |                |                |                |                |                |
| Canid                      | 1         | 2          | 3            | 1              |                |                |                |                |
| Deer                       | 2         | 1          | 3            | 1              |                |                |                |                |
| Pronghorn                  | 1         | 1          | 1            | 1              |                |                |                |                |
| Bison                      | 1         | 13         | 14           | 1              | 11             | 1              | 3              |                |
| Very small mammal (rodent size) | 4         | 14         | 18           |                |                |                |                |                |
| Small mammal (rabbit to canid size) | 11       | 37         | 48           |                | 7              | 12             | 1              |                |
| Medium mammal (deer or pronghorn size) | 21       | 212        | 233          |                | 37             | 30             | 1              | 2              |
| Large mammal (bison size)  | 1         | 115        | 116          |                | 31             | 4              | 5              |                |
| Unidentifiable (likely mammal) | 72       | 1202       | 1274         |                | 3              | 13             | 1              |                |
| Mussel                     | 1         | 20         | 21           |                |                |                |                |                |
| Turtle                     | 4         | 4          | 4            |                |                |                |                |                |
| Totals                     | 116       | 1625       | 1741         | 90             | 60             | 11             | 2              |                |
(NISP = 116). Not surprisingly, the artiodactyls appear to be important economically to the 14SC409 occupants.

Of the identified species only the bison remains show evidence of burning and impact damage. However, the indeterminate medium- and large-size mammal specimens also exhibit abundant evidence of cultural modification. It is important to understand that the observed level of cultural modification greatly underestimates the true intensity of human alteration. In particular, a large portion of this assemblage is heavily impacted by root etching, which can obscure 75–100 percent of the exterior bone surfaces and makes detecting cut or impact marks very difficult. Of the 261 specimens coded for root etching, nearly 65 percent (n = 170) of specimens are affected.

While only a small number of artiodactyl skeletal elements could be distinguished, those that were identified are mostly major limb elements, such as humerus, radius, femur, and tibia (Table 7). Only two small enamel fragments, both likely from deer, were recognized, despite the fact that teeth are highly identifiable when present. Also, small quantities of broken rib and vertebral bones were recorded. Overall, it appears that site occupants were focused primarily on the economically valuable (i.e., meat and fat-rich) limb portions of artiodactyls.

While most of the faunal species observed at 14SC409 were terrestrial species, the site occupants probably used some aquatic species. Four turtle shell fragments, likely box turtle, and numerous small fragments of freshwater mussels were recovered. As with the mammal remains, all turtle and mussel fragments could have originated from single individuals. No evidence of burning or other forms of human modification were observed, so it is uncertain if these resources were used as food.

In conclusion, the 14SC409 occupants apparently used a fairly wide variety of animals, even given the relatively small size of the faunal assemblage. The low quantity of faunal remains normally would suggest a fairly short occupation. However, it seems that this group spent time finding and acquiring a number of different taxa, rather than preferentially focusing on any one taxon. This behavior implies that the people made considerable effort to forage for or collect animal resources as they became available, indicating that they made an extended stay at the site or repeatedly visited the locality.

**SUMMARY AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR 14SC409**

The 2009 and 2013–2015 investigations at 14SC409 yielded artifacts that are consistent with a Dismal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skeletal Element</th>
<th>Bison NISP</th>
<th>Pronghorn NISP</th>
<th>Deer NISP</th>
<th>Large Size NISP</th>
<th>Medium Size NISP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cranial-mandible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vertebrae</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rib</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scapula</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humerus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radius-ulna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metacarpal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carpals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innominate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Femur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tibia</td>
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<td>Tarsal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phalanges</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
River or Apache occupation (Hoard 2009). The 2009 KATP excavations yielded evidence of Dismal River and Puebloan objects (Olivella shells and Puebloan-style pottery) but no hearths, roasting pits, or other features (Hoard 2009). Based on the disproportionate number of scrapers in the 2009 lithic assemblage and the lack of identifiable cultural features, Hoard (2009) suggested that the site represented a short-term occupation, possibly for butchering animals. Subsequent analyses of all artifacts from 14SC409 points to either an extended residence at the site or repeated use of the locality. The diversity of faunal remains, as well as numerous non-lithic artifacts (ceramics, clay pipes, ground stone, and shell beads), do not support a specialized butchering focus for the site. Rather, the diversity and abundance of artifacts and faunal remains, along with a human burial and possible small wind/sun shelter, suggest that 14SC409 was used as a short-term residential camp where a number of subsistence and non-subsistence activities occurred. At this point it is difficult to say in what season or seasons the site was used.

The requirement to cease investigations upon the discovery in 2014 of human remains results in a very limited understanding of the nature of the burial and makes inferences about associated burial practices quite difficult. The brief investigation of this burial offered an intriguing glimpse into Protohistoric burial practices, but many more questions remain. As only the cranium was uncovered, the exact orientation of the body and the individual’s sex, age, ethnicity, and cause of death are uncertain. However, other data sources could assist in understanding this burial. In Trabert and Hill (herein) the authors review the archeological and ethnographic literature for contemporary Puebloan and Apache groups to learn more about their burial practices. Puebloan groups tended to bury their dead near their living areas and did not commonly cover graves with rock and brush piles (Brugge 1978; Kidder 1958). Athapaskan (Apache) mortuary practices did include the use of shallow pits for internment, which were then often covered with rocks and brush (Carlson 1965; Hester 1962; Opler 1941, 1959). Athapaskan-speaking groups commonly burned the belongings of the deceased and abandoned structures and campsites where a death occurred (McAlister 1937; Opler 1941, 1983).

The location and types of burial practices shown at 14SC409 share similarities with Athapaskan burial practices, providing a link between site occupants and other Apache peoples. However, it is important to note that this site also likely was connected to the occupation of the pueblo at 14SC1. 14SC409 was occupied around the same period as 14SC1, and given the proximity of the two sites, it is doubtful that the Puebloan migrants living at the 14SC1 pueblo had no influence on or interaction with those living at 14SC409. Additionally, the high frequency of locally made copies of Puebloan ceramics—the red wares in particular—found at 14SC409 further demonstrate that Puebloan preferences in ceramic vessel style and foodways were present there. It is impossible to know if the people living at 14SC409 considered themselves Apache, Puebloan, both, or neither, as the customs of the living group, and not necessarily the individual, are reflected in burial practices.

While very few Dismal River sites have been dated chronometrically, it appears that the Dismal River/Puebloan occupation of 14SC409 and other sites in the immediate area, dating between A.D. 1680 and A.D. 1760, probably represents the terminal occupation of the Central Plains by this group. Additionally, these Scott County, Kansas, sites present a unique glimpse into broader social and economic exchange networks between peoples living on the Plains and those in the American Southwest. Not only were goods moving along exchange networks, but migrants as well, and this Plains-Pueblo relationship certainly influenced the lives of 14SC409 inhabitants. Sites like this continue to provide invaluable insights into the complexities of Protohistoric communities, as intersecting peoples, identities, technologies, and practices connected, continually shaping and reshaping the occupation of the Central Plains.

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WHEN ETHNOGRAPHY AND ARCHEOLOGY MEET: A DISCUSSION OF DISMAL RIVER ASPECT MORTUARY PRACTICES

SARAH TRABERT
University of Oklahoma

MATTHEW E. HILL, JR.
University of Iowa

Human burials are not commonly recovered from Protohistoric era (AD 1450–1700) sites on the Great Plains. The recent accidental discovery of a burial at a Dismal River aspect site (14SC409) in Kansas provides an opportunity to investigate the mortuary practices of this archeological culture. Understanding social identity during this time on the Central Plains is problematic, as the residents of 14SC409 were living in dynamic communities composed of members who likely held direct cultural ties to indigenous Plains populations and migrant Puebloan communities from the American Southwest. Ethnographic and archeological information on contemporary Central Plains, Puebloan, and Athapaskan mortuary practices were analyzed to compare to the limited data collected from this newly discovered burial. Comparisons between ethnographic burial practices and limited archeological remains are one way to make meaningful inferences concerning past burial rituals and this work indicates that the 14SC409 burial shares similarities with seventeenth through nineteenth-century Athapaskan mortuary practices.
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system, and archeologists can examine culturally distinct practices to better understand who was living and dying in prehistoric and historic communities (Bourdieu 1990; Carr 1995; Emberling 1997; Jones 1997). Individuals, however, can hold multiple identities, and in highly interactive, multiethnic settings new identities can be constructed and practices transformed to reflect fluid social environments (Ferguson 1992; Lightfoot 1995; Mullins and Paynter 2000). The potential for multiple identities might be quite significant to this study, as historic accounts and archeological evidence suggest that

Figure 1. Location of 14SC1, 14SC301, and 14SC409 in relation to the distribution of indigenous groups discussed in the text (base map from ArcGIS ESRI USA Topo Map; group locations from Blakeslee and Hawley 2002:175; Ferg 2004:33, Levy 2001:907; Opler 1983; Parks 2001:515).
during the late seventeenth/early eighteenth centuries western Kansas, including site 14SC409, was an area of residence for a pluralist community of indigenous peoples (Beck and Trabert 2014; Beck et al. 2016; Opler 1982; Trabert 2014, 2015). This community consisted of Puebloan migrants from the Rio Grande valley of New Mexico, living alongside indigenous Dismal River people for several generations. This multicultural and multiethnic community likely formed in response to changing social, economic, and political upheavals created by the Spanish occupation of the American Southwest, and as an outgrowth of generations-old trade and intermarriage partnerships between Southwestern and Great Plains groups (Baugh 1991; Spielmann 1983; Vehik 2002).

The temporally extensive and intimate contact between groups on the Plains and the American Southwest might have resulted in many different configurations of multiethnic communities, such as at 14SC409, where residents likely carried and exhibited several identities (Trabert et al. herein). The “problem” with social identity in this situation arises from the fact that, while the 14SC409 burial is located at a Dismal River site, an archeological culture that is traditionally inferred to have direct affiliation with Apachean groups (e.g., Gunnerson 1969, 1987; Gunnerson and Gunnerson 1971; Schlesier 1972; see alternative perspective in Gulley 2000 and Opler 1982), it cannot immediately be assumed that the individual was ethnically Apache, as he could have been Puebloan, or both/neither. Individuals living in plural (creolized) communities made decisions to accept or reject certain cultural norms and practices while they are alive (Cusick 2000; Stojanowski 2005). Likewise, important social ritual, such as burial rites, result from intentional decision making on the part of surviving group members on to how reflect the identity of the deceased. Given the social complexity that might be involved in creating Dismal River burials, this paper does not focus on whether to this particular individual held an Apachean or Puebloan identity. Instead, the analysis here focuses on the ways by which the site occupants, living in such a dynamic community, “created” identity through mortuary behaviors. As it is generally accepted that Dismal River peoples were ancestral to later Apachean groups, the creation process may involve decisions to 1) follow “traditional” Apachean or Puebloan practices, 2) combine practices from both traditions, or 3) create entirely new practices. Data on how Dismal River people “structured” their mortuary practices is an important, but so far missing, element in studies of how these groups conceptualized their own identity.

This paper begins with a summary of what is known about Dismal River burials and highlights the complex relationship between the different groups living on the Central Plains during the Protohistoric period. The discovery and nature of the 14SC409 burial is then described and the findings compared to the only other known Dismal River burial. Drawing on archeological and ethnographic descriptions of mortuary practices from the Central Plains and American Southwest, direct comparisons are made to available data from Dismal River sites. The 14SC409 burial is most consistent with historic accounts of Athapaskan mortuary practices and archeological evidence for Apache burials with little obvious evidence for blended practices.

**DISMAL RIVER ASPECT**

The Dismal River aspect is an archeological complex dating between the late fifteenth to early eighteenth centuries, with associated sites located across eastern Colorado, southeastern Wyoming, western Kansas, and western Nebraska (Gilmore and Laramore 2012; Gunnerson 1968; Scheiber 2006) (Figure 1). Many researchers have argued that these sites represent a distinct group of people unified by a common Athapaskan heritage (Brunswig 1995; Gunnerson 1960:239; Schlesier 1972:101; Trabert 2014; Wedel 1959, 1986). Problematicizing the direct link between Dismal River sites and later historically known tribes is the variation that archeologists see in terms of site architecture and organization, subsistence practices, and material culture. Much of the variation in the archeological expression of Dismal River relates to adaptational differences in geographic variability of the environments that these groups occupied.

Dismal River people living in modern-day Kansas and Nebraska resided in semi-permanent horticultural settlements whose subsistence also relied heavily on bison hunting (Brunswig 1995; Champe 1949; Gunnerson 1968; Hill and Metcalf 1942; Strong 1935; Wedel 1959).
western Dismal River areas (i.e., Colorado and Wyoming) utilized short-term camp or limited occupancy rock shelter sites. Here people were focused on seasonal hunting and gathering activities rather than horticulture (Cassells 1997; Gilmore and Larmore 2012).

The geographic distance between many Dismal River settlements, combined with their mobility, led to interaction and exchange with different neighboring groups. Northern Dismal River groups likely traveled between areas of western Nebraska and southeastern Wyoming, potentially putting them in contact with High Plains Upper Republican, Northeast Shoshone and Apsaalooke, and Middle Missouri tradition peoples (Aikens 1966, 1967; Gunnerson 1969; Schleisier 1972; Trabert 2014). Dismal River communities in the southern portion of their territory (southeast Colorado and western Kansas) were in position to potentially interact with Great Bend (ancestral Wichita) groups in eastern Kansas and Oklahoma (Figure 1).

As stated above and elsewhere in this volume (Trabert et al. herein), there is definitive evidence for sustained contact among Puebloan peoples from northern Rio Grande villages and Dismal River communities in western Kansas (Beck and Trabert 2014; Beck et al. 2016; Opler 1982; Trabert 2014, 2015) (Figure 2). The connection between the American Southwest and the Great Plains likely existed for centuries or perhaps millennia prior to the appearance of Dismal River groups (Brosowske and Bevitt 2006; Kidder 1932; Scheiber and Finley 2010; Spielmann 1991; Wedel 1982). Ancestral and early modern pueblo peoples exchanged a number of goods with various Plains tribes, including bison products, obsidian, ceramics, and agricultural products like maize. Historically, due in part to their mobility, Athapaskan groups bridged the gap between major resource regions and acted as agents in multicultural exchange involving multiple pueblos and Caddo-speaking people (Eiselt 2006). Various forms of mobility were used in the Southwest in response to environmental or social stress (Stark et al. 1995; Zedeño 1995). Spanish interference in Puebloan communities led many people to leave their homes along the northern Rio Grande and travel west, east, and north to escape colonial activities (Kulisheck 2003, 2010; Spielmann et al. 2006). The Lake Scott area in western Kansas was one of these destinations for some Puebloan migrants as pueblo architecture and Puebloan ceramics at 14SC1 can attest (Beck and Trabert 2014; Beck et al. 2016; Trabert 2015; Witty 1983) (Figure 2). Site 14SC1 includes a seven-room masonry pueblo and evidence of the local manufacture of Rio Grande style pottery and the use of Northern Rio Grande culinary vessel forms (i.e., emphasis on bowls). This evidence indicates that Puebloan migrants lived in the area and continued ceramic manufacturing and foodways practices they learned in their homeland. Additionally, the pueblo was built on top of an earlier Dismal River component, and Dismal River pottery was recovered in large numbers in direct association with Puebloan artifacts from 14SC1, indicating that Dismal River people also lived at the site (Beck and Trabert 2014; Witty 1975). Other sites in the Lake Scott area, which likely date slightly older than 14SC1, also have yielded evidence for direct interactions between Dismal River and Puebloan peoples.

**DISMAL RIVER MORTUARY PRACTICE: THE 14SC301 BURIAL**

Despite evidence for approximately 250 recorded Dismal River sites across the Central Plains (Gulley 2000:Appendix A; Trabert 2015:Table 3), prior to the 2014 work, there is only one published account of a human burial. This site, 14SC301, originally recorded as 14SC103 by Gunnerson (1969), is located in the Lake Scott State Park on an eastern terrace adjacent to Ladder Creek (Figure 2). Several roasting pits have been excavated at the site, including one that contained a human burial (Gunnerson 1969; Hoard 2009; Witty 1973, 1985). In 2009 the Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP) surveyed this site and collected 300 artifacts, including three slipped sherds (one red, one buff, and one black) (Hoard 2009).

The burial was discovered around 1951 by a local collector. Dr. James Gunnerson at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was informed of the burial some time later (perhaps in the late 1960s) and given access to the bones and photographs of the excavations, which he used to prepare a summary report (Gunnerson 1969). The burial reportedly was found in a pit, which had burned walls and fill of abundant ash and charcoal. As the skeletal remains were
not burned, Gunnerson surmised that the pit was a roasting oven that later was converted to a burial pit. The individual was buried in a tightly flexed position on his right side, with his head oriented north and his face directed west (Figure 3). A large flat stone was placed above the skeleton. The deceased was a male in his early twenties and was approximately 170 cm (5 feet 7 inches tall). No cause of death could be determined (Gunnerson 1969:49).

SITE 14SC409 AND THE SECOND DISMAL RIVER BURIAL

Work at 14SC409 is part of a larger research program, focused on better understanding the nature of interaction between Dismal River and Puebloan populations around what is now Lake Scott in western Kansas. It has included field work at the Scott County Pueblo (14SC1) (Beck and Trabert 2014; Martin 1909; Witty 1983) and the nearby contemporary site 14SC409 (Hoard 2009). A complete discussion of the site’s background and the University of Iowa (UI) work to date can be found in Trabert et al. (herein).

EXCAVATIONS OF THE HUMAN BURIAL AT 14SC409

In 2009 KATP investigations at 14SC409 uncovered a rock cluster, subsequently referred to as Feature 4, but time constraints did not allow full excavation of the feature. Feature 4 was described as a scatter of large (i.e., fist-size to 70 cm long) stacked limestone rocks, which covered a roughly 1 x .63-m area

Figure 2. Location of 14SC1, 14SC301, and 14SC409 in relation to Lake Scott and Ladder Creek in Scott, County, Kansas.

Figure 3. Plan view of Plainview burial at 14SC301 with stippling that reflects presumed size of pit [adapted from Gunnerson 1969:Figure 1]. Scale unknown.

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The rocks, which likely came from an outcrop approximately 150 m to the south, were first encountered 8–10 cm below ground surface (bgs), and they continued to a depth of 30 cm bgs. All the rocks were removed during the excavation of the feature. Before closing the units, excavators used a small soil probe to explore below the rock layer and recovered three small pieces of bone. Given the lack of evidence (e.g., burning, artifacts, charcoal) associated with the rock, the original excavators questioned whether the feature was of cultural origin (Hoard 2009:66–67).

UI reanalysis of those bone fragments indicated that they are morphologically similar to human rib and vertebrae fragments, although their small size necessitated cautious identification. The UI investigations of 14SC409 in 2013 and 2014 were specifically focused on investigating Feature 4, which the authors believed to be humanly produced but of unknown function. The excavation block was 2 x 3 m and positioned so that Feature 4 was at the center of the excavation grid. Excavations revealed that the feature was larger (1.4 x 1.1 m) than previously thought. While most of the limestone rocks were stacked several courses high, many rocks along the margins of the pit had long axes that clearly sloped toward the center of the feature, leaving them sticking vertically out of the ground after exposure (Figure 4). None of the rocks associated with this feature, either from the KATP back dirt or newly exposed UI excavations, showed evidence of thermal alteration, and no charcoal or burned earth was observed in the feature fill.

Not until 2014 did excavation within the feature itself begin. At that time a large bone was encountered at approximately 47 cm bgs (Figure 4). With only minimal exposure of the bone, key diagnostic features of a human cranium, such as the supraorbital notch, external auditory meatus, squamosal suture, and coronal suture, were recognized. The descriptions concerning the nature and size of the cranial features were made with the assistance of UI physical anthropologist Dr. Robert Franciscus. In accordance with the Kansas Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Act (KSA 75-2741 through 75-2754), excavations at the site stopped immediately, and the local law enforcement agency (i.e., the sheriff’s department) was notified. The Kansas Historical Society was notified of the discovery by contacting State Archeologist and chair of the Unmarked Burial Sites (UBS) Preservation Board, Dr. Robert J. Hoard. Following consultations with Dr. Hoard and the UBS Preservation Board, it was decided that all work at the site would cease. The feature was reburied and preserved in place with no further disturbance planned.

The requirement to cease excavation resulted in a very limited understanding of this burial and makes inferences about associated burial practices quite difficult. However, uncovering the cranium in association with the pit feature supports a few reliable statements. First, while it is not possible to know if the burial includes an entire skeleton or only the skull, it was clear that the skull is lying on its left side with its face orientated to the southwest. The cranium’s orientation (anterior-lateral skyward) is what could be expected of the inhumation of a body in a crouched or flexed position. Had it been a prone burial, excavation would have exposed the back of the skull rather than the side, and an extended burial most likely would result in the face oriented skyward. Second, the estimated straight-line distance between the top of the cranium and the southwestern pit edge is approximately 77 cm. A human body in a tightly-couched position could be placed in this pit if oriented northeast-southwest. The pit also extends an additional 50 to 55 cm north of the burial, and it appears that the rock feature was built large enough to accommodate a second individual or grave goods (Figure 4). Finally, as the top of the rock feature begins approximately 8–10 cm bgs, it is very likely that the top of the pit was roughly at the same level as the main concentration of buried artifacts at the site. While rodent activity and other factors appear to have vertically displaced some artifacts, the densest concentration of artifacts was found between 10 and 20 cm below the surface (Hill and Trabert 2014). Assuming that the densest artifact concentration represents the original occupation surface, the top of this feature was roughly at the ground surface at the time of its construction. This would place the burial stratigraphically contemporaneous with the archeological occupation of the site.

In conclusion, investigation of the 14SC409 burial offers some intriguing glimpses into burial practices but gives rise to many more questions than answers. Given that ethical and legal issues
eliminate the capacity to continue excavation, few options are left to make reliable inferences about the burial or the mortuary practices of the site’s occupants. However, a review of ethnographic and archeological data for contemporaneous Puebloan burial practices in northern New Mexico and information on the mortuary behavior of Athapaskan-speaking groups can assist in better understanding the mortuary behavior exhibited at 14SC409.

**COMPARISON OF DISMAL RIVER BURIALS**

The two burials found at sites near Lake Scott, while not identical, do share some similarities. The 14SC301 individual was placed in a previously used baking pit and inhumed in a tightly flexed position, lying on his right side, with his head oriented to the north and facing west. A large stone was placed over the baking pit, and no artifacts were recovered with the individual. Less information is known about the 14SC409 burial, but the individual (or at least its cranium) was placed in a pit. It is strongly suspected that the body was placed in a flexed position with its head oriented to the east and facing south. This pit was then covered with a large quantity of rocks from nearby bluffs. Both individuals were buried in pits, in tightly flexed positions, with rocks covering the opening, near Dismal River campsites. The individuals’ bodies were likely oriented in different directions; however, there is little information to suggest that orientation of the body was culturally significant.
COMPARATIVE BURIAL PRACTICES

While many cultures may share some elements of mortuary behavior, factors specific to each group (e.g., belief systems, mobility, the environment, etc.) lead to variation in burial practices (Carr 1995). This is true for groups of people living on the Central High Plains during the late Prehistoric and early Historic periods, for Athapaskan-speaking peoples, and for Puebloan peoples living along the northern Rio Grande. Dismal River groups may have interacted with and been influenced by a number of roughly contemporary peoples, and the mortuary practices of the Pawnee, Wichita, Apache, and Northern Rio Grande Puebloans bear consideration.

The mortuary practices and beliefs of individual groups often remain distinct even after centuries of interactions and exchange (Brugge 1978; Hester 1962; Kidder 1958). Groups like the Jicarilla Apache and Navajo retained many elements of their mortuary beliefs and practices despite decades and often centuries of interaction with Puebloan people in northern New Mexico (Brugge 1978:310–312; Eiselt 2006:29). Burial practices have been targeted for analysis by ethnographers and archeologists because they often remain conservative and retain traditional elements even after hundreds of years of colonial and assimilation pressures (Jamieson 1995; Shaffer 2005). Ethnographic coverage of indigenous groups in North America is not even, however, and details regarding mortuary practices vary. While ethnographies from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Pawnee and Athapaskan-speaking groups provide a rich record detailing burial practices, similar information on mortuary practices for other groups, such as post-A.D. 1500 Puebloans, is limited.

CENTRAL HIGH PLAINS GROUPS

The Central High Plains was occupied during the Late Prehistoric period (A.D. 900–1450) by a number of groups, classified by archeologists into the Central Plains tradition (CPt) (Steinacher and Carlson 1998). While these peoples likely are not contemporaneous with later Dismal River groups, the variation exhibited in their mortuary behaviors highlights the range of practices present in the region prior to the Dismal River occupation. Mortuary practices include primary and secondary burials, group burials, individual burials, different positions and orientations, and within- and without-site burials. For example, Kivett and Metcalf (1997:157–158) described Upper Republican burials recovered in the Medicine Creek Reservoir, Nebraska. Osuary burials are a distinguishing characteristic of most Upper Republican groups (Strong 1935), and Kivett and Metcalf (1997) reported that disarticulated and fragmentary human remains were found in middens, on house floors, and in pits. In contrast other CPt groups, such as Nebraska phase people at the Doniphan site (14DP2), buried their dead in small groups with individuals lying in supine positions, covered with large limestone slabs (Wedel 1959:669–672).

Later Pawnee mortuary practices varied considerably from earlier CPt behaviors, and Echo-Hawk (1992) used ethnographic data and interviews with his own family members to summarize common burial practices shared by all four bands of the Pawnee. Burials generally took place the same day or immediately after death. A grave was excavated (sometimes half a meter to a meter deep), and the individual was laid inside in a supine position along with a variety of personal objects. Poles were erected on either end of the grave, and grass and dirt were piled on top so that the grave resembled a small house or mound. Traditionally, the Pawnee buried their dead in cemeteries on hilltops or ridges overlooking their towns. In his discussion of the excavation of Pawnee sites, Wedel (1936:91–94) stated that burials were almost invariably on the highest hills near the villages, that individuals were placed in graves covered in soil, and that many were interred with mortuary offerings, including flints and steel, glass beads, lead rings, shell gorgets, and an assortment of European goods.

Ethnographic accounts of the Wichita, a Caddo group living on the Central and Southern Plains, present a similar set of burial practices. Yarrow (1881) described individuals buried in graves approximately 1 m deep that were long enough to accommodate an extended body. The deceased was laid in the grave along with personal items, such as a bow and arrows or firearm for men or cooking vessels for women. The body was then covered with sticks and grass, and soil was placed over the covering (Orser and Mackay 1983; Yarrow 1881).
PUEBLOAN MORTUARY PRACTICES

While Dismal River groups were likely influenced by their exchange with Plains groups, they also were tied into broader networks that connected them to Puebloan peoples living in northern New Mexico. One key location for Plains-Pueblo exchange was at Pecos Pueblo in northern New Mexico. Alfred Kidder’s excavations at Pecos in the early twentieth century provides the most detailed information for northern Rio Grande Puebloan mortuary practices after A.D. 1500. His 1938 excavations uncovered hundreds of human burials within and just outside of the walls of the pueblo, and many were located in midden areas (Kidder 1958). Most of these burials were in small shallow graves just large enough to accommodate a flexed or bundled body, and all were located very close to living areas. Kidder (1958) noted a lack of Christian influences on the mortuary practices throughout the northern Rio Grande pueblos and burial traditions that continued despite persistent Spanish conversion efforts.

Brugge (1978) stated that Puebloan people were concerned with the welfare of the departing soul and did not believe that the living needed to fear retaliation. Therefore, many earlier Puebloan groups consistently buried their dead near active living areas, such as within kivas, under the floors of abandoned rooms, in rubbish deposits, and in talus slopes below houses, such as at Chaco and Mesa Verde sites (Akins 1986; Kidder 1924, 1958). The available literature does not describe any Puebloan pueblo excavating shallow pits for their dead, nor does it appear that placing rocks and brush on top of a grave was common practice for Puebloan groups. However, discussions of Puebloan mortuary practices after A.D. 1500 are rare, and little has been published on archeological studies of mortuary practices for this time.

ATHAPASKAN MORTUARY BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In contrast to Puebloan groups, many Athapaskan-speaking groups believed that death and the bodies of the deceased were to be feared and that the topic of death was to be avoided (Opler 1941). Athapaskan concerns about death arose from the belief that a person’s spirit, referred to as a ghost, was released at the time of an individual’s death. This fear of encountering a ghost led to feelings of dread toward the deceased, as the living needed to consider dark forces until the body was disposed of and the surviving members of the group moved away from the place of death. They believed that, unless the person’s spirit quickly traveled to the underworld and remained there, the ghost would do great harm to the living (Brugge 1978; Opler 1983; Opler and Bittle 1961).

The Jicarilla and Lipan Apache believed that the very young and the very old did not release ghosts, but if someone died unexpectedly or in the prime of his/her life, the spirit could become angry and the ghost could pollute and harm the living (Opler 1945, 1959). A ghost was more likely to stay with the living if the body was not promptly disposed of through burial. However, even if the individual was properly buried, ghosts still could return to the death location. The Chiricahua believed that strangers also could be in danger of ghosts if they wandered into an abandoned camp where a death had occurred or if they found the grave. If that person had troubled dreams filled with disturbing apparitions, they could suspect that they were camped near a burial spot (Opler 1941:235).

Significant concern about the dangers brought by ghosts influenced many of the practices and rituals that followed a person’s death. To ensure their safety, surviving family members and associates of the deceased responded to a person’s death in several prescribed ways. A critical treatment of the dead was a quick internment. Burials always took place on the same day that the person died, or, if an individual died at night, they would be buried the next day; burials never took place after sundown (Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1941).

The specific method of disposal for the deceased varied among and within cultural groups. The Kiowa, Jicarilla, Lipan, Chiricahua, and Navajo were reported to bury their dead in mountainous or rocky terrain (Hester 1962; Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1959; Opler and Bittle 1961). Kiowa and Navajo accounts suggested that the burial of the deceased sometimes occurred within his/her home, but these dwellings were then abandoned (Brugge 1978:Table 1). However, the most common burial method apparently was placing the deceased in a rocky crevice or digging a pit and covering the
body with rocks. For example, the Jicarilla and Lipan groups frequently used a natural rock crevice or dug a shallow trench and piled branches, earth, and rocks over the body (Opler 1959). The Kiowa Apache also used natural rock crevices or scooped out shallow graves, laid the body down, and covered the grave with rocks to protect it from animals. Some Navajo groups buried their dead in previously used baking pits with the openings covered by logs or stone slabs (Carlson 1965; Hester 1962).

After the relatives returned to the camp it was necessary to deal with the deceased’s belongings. Since the deceased’s possessions could pull the ghost back from his/her path to the afterlife and because objects stored memories and held sorrow for the living, all of the deceased’s personal possessions were destroyed (McAllister 1937; Opler 1941, 1983). Ethnographers writing about the Kiowa and Chiricahua Apache mentioned that some of the individual’s personal belongings might be interred with the deceased, such as a man’s shield and weapons or a woman’s pottery and baskets. Opler (1945) stated that it was Lipan Apache tradition to kill the dead person’s horse at the gravesite. All the other belongings of the deceased, anything worn, used, or owned, including clothing, tools, utensils, tipi pole coverings, and wickiups, often were burned (Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1941, 1959). Among the Chiricahua, when a woman died, holes were made in that woman’s ceramic vessels and/or baskets as the living did not want to use anything associated with that person by mistake (Opler 1941).

Once the objects and structures associated with the deceased were destroyed, many Athapaskan-speaking groups abandoned that camp and moved to a new locality (Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1941, 1959). Chiricahua groups often burned all the structures in their camps and moved to new places because the relatives did not want to live in a polluted space (Brugge 1978; Opler 1941). Others, such as the Lipan and Navajo, sometimes tried to avoid moving camp following deaths by moving seriously ill and dying people far away from settlements, isolating them until they died. If a death took place within the settlement, the Navajo dismantled the person’s dwelling and used materials from the house to cover the deceased; remaining materials were burned (Brugge 1978). The prohibition against occupying the space of the dead was so strong that even the person’s grave site had to be avoided. Once a person was buried, the grave site was rarely, if ever, discussed and seldom visited (McAllister 1937; Opler 1941).

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our review of the historic literature for Athapaskan mortuary practices yielded a rich record regarding the beliefs, customs, and practices following the death of an individual. Fear of malevolent ghosts encouraged a quick burial, and several Apache groups found nearby rock crevices or excavated shallow pits and laid the individual within (Hester 1962; Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1959; Opler and Bittle 1961). These pits were covered with rocks and brush to prevent animal activity and to mark the grave. These Apache groups did not revisit these burials and actively avoided the areas (McAllister 1937; Opler 1941). Following burial, the deceased’s belongings were burned, the structure where death occurred was destroyed, and the site was abandoned (Lockwood 1938; McAllister 1937; Opler 1941, 1959).

Despite their proximity to and probable contact with other Central Plains groups, the 14SC301 and 14SC409 burials compare favorably with a number of historic accounts of Apachean burial practices. In particular, the placement of the bodies within pits and covering them with rocks are the most direct similarities to Apachean customs that clearly differentiate them from traditional practices of Puebloan or other Central Plains groups. While a sample size of only two makes further comparisons difficult, the Dismal River burials are isolated, placed within the confines of their camps, and contain no grave goods (at least based on the burial at 14SC301). In contrast, other Central Plains practices often incorporate individuals buried in groups (cemeteries), located on hill or bluff tops, and interred with material possessions. Furthermore, 14SC409 was very likely abandoned following the death and burial of the individual, which is not a practice common to more sedentary Puebloan populations, and few Puebloan burials are known to be capped by large quantities of rock and brush. The location of these Dismal River burials also differs in part from Athapaskan practices, as it is more common among many Athapaskan groups to select a burial location outside of the
camp boundaries. In addition, no grave goods were recovered from either Dismal River burial, although the deceased’s property may have been present at 14SC409 but could not be excavated.

Despite similarities with Athapaskan mortuary practices, caution must be applied in assigning a firm Apache affiliation to these burials or the people who lived at 14SC301 and 14SC409. As discussed above, the Dismal River sites in Scott County are situated within a complex social landscape of intersecting identities. The dating of 14SC409 to the closing or just after the closing of the pueblo at 14SC1, paired with ceramic evidence that points to locally made copies of Puebloan vessel types, indicates that the site’s occupants may have been Plains Apache, Puebloan, or of mixed ethnicity. (For additional information see Beck and Trabert 2014; Beck et al. 2016; Trabert 2015.) The presence of a seven-room pueblo at the neighboring site of 14SC1 and the use of locally produced copies of Puebloan vessels at several Dismal River sites in the region provide evidence for expressions of Puebloan identity, while the mortuary behavior at 14SC301 and 14SC409 point to Athapaskan practices, as affirmed by the ethnographic review above.

The goal of this research was not to provide an ethnic identity for the person buried at this site. Instead, the authors are interested in what the material practices could say about how this group’s identity was constructed and expressed in the past. The evidence of Athapaskan mortuary practices, paired with data on local Puebloan architecture and ceramic technology, points to a complex and unique identity for these groups. Migrant Puebloan and indigenous Dismal River groups apparently blended their different practices and belief systems in significant ways, choosing to maintain Athapas
can mortuary traditions and Puebloan technology and foodways. Therefore, those who lived and died at 14SC301 and 14SC409 were very likely neither “Apache” nor “Puebloan,” possessing a distinctive identity specific to their community.

The people who lived and died at 14SC409 and other sites during the Protohistoric period were living in a complicated, pluralistic world. Consideration of larger, more complicated social processes is key when burials are excavated and cultural affiliation must be determined. The authors argue that in these situations archeologists must embrace the complex nature of identity, recognize that people in the past where creative and active participants in the transformation of their social practices, and consider how identity and social boundaries were redefined. Historic documents, especially regarding burial practices, can provide concrete examples of how human behavior makes an impact on the material record. Archeological data can then be reevaluated to consider whether evidence of culturally specific practices are present, which in turn can lead to a clearer picture of the fluidity and construction of new identities, community composition, and social change.

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