

Gallina: Between Pueblo Worlds

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From my perspective, as an archaeologist with 30-years' experience across the Northern Southwest, it's clear the Gallina folks took an approach to living that that was both similar to and yet different from their Puebloan neighbors. The authors here make the case that the relationship between the Gallina and their neighbors was a strong driver of their identity. According to this view, the ordinary, yet distinct Gallina lifeway followed and built upon the trajectory of other peoples of the Upper San Juan—those who encountered Chacoan migrants at Chimney Rock, but retained their own traditions (see pages 20–21).

I agree that similarities to Rosa tradition and earlier peoples—in terms of site layout, construction techniques, and pottery, among other attributes—help explain the emergence of the Gallina (see page 22). Clearly, Gallina's residents had antecedents and did not spring onto the scene from afar. What past and present research indicates, more than anything, is that as different as the Gallina appear(ed) to be, they are historically related to their neighbors. Where they diverged, where differences appear, may not be because they were a forgotten group, but because they rejected many of the dominant Pueblo beliefs and practices of the time (pages 22–24).

One fascinating aspect of Gallina culture is the frequent construction and use of towers. Because of the violence associated with the region, some have proposed that the towers were defensive, but most archaeologists feel that they would not be suitable to this purpose. Storage is another frequently inferred use for towers, not just in Gallina, but across the ancient Pueblo landscape. Because towers project upward, recent research proposes a largely symbolic function with a connection to water in Pueblo cosmology. A combination of different uses, including communication, seems most likely.

Preservation Archaeology is a key aspect of investigation for students of Gallina, as almost all research today (and as reported in this issue) is conducted using existing collections stored across the Southwest. The series of dates reported by Towner and colleagues (see pages 19–20) is interesting, as the dates suggest a degree of residential movement that may have been greater than Gallina's contemporaries. In my opinion, however, the data support a serious residential commitment at many sites in the 1200s, not unlike Gallina's neighbors.

Archaeology in the Gallina region shows unmistakable episodes of violence. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to imagine that the potential for death or grievous injury solely shaped peoples' daily lives. Indeed, the possibility of violence does not seem to have greatly affected economic and subsistence practices at individual communities (see pages 13–14). Closer examination of the social identities of the perpetrators of the bloodshed—whether Gallina residents or other contemporaneous Pueblo groups, or both—is of interest to archaeologists working on this time period across the northern Southwest (see pages 10–11).

