Readers accustomed to hefty Chacoan tomes should not be put off by Sebastian's slim volume. By succinctly summarizing much background information and citing major sources for additional data, she has managed to concentrate on an alternative to existing explanations for the growth and nature of the Chacoan cultural system and on analyzing the political processes of small-scale sedentary societies. Her original plan was to use the Chacoan data as a case study of evolving socio-political complexity, but as so often happens she found herself drawn more deeply into "things Chacoan," and the case study became the book.

Several concerns structured Sebastian's analysis. She contends that most existing Chacoan models suffer from an overdependence on analogy with ethnographic Pueblos, too-frequent reliance on standard evolutionary typologies that straitjacket use of data, and what she identifies as the circularity of adaptationalist and functionalist thinking--in essence, Chacoan sociopolitical complexity is seen as an adaptive response to coping more effectively with a harsh environment. Sebastian argues that societies do not get complex to cope with problems. Instead, leaders deal with problems and as problems, population, or both become...
In her book, *The Chaco Anasazi: Sociopolitical evolution in the prehistoric Southwest*, Lynne Sebastian examines the transition of the Chaco system from an acephalous society, in which leadership was situational and most decision making carried out within kinship structures, to a hierarchically organized political structure with institutional roles of leadership. She argues that harsh environmental factors did not provide the catalyst for such a transition, as has previously been thought. Rather the increasing political complexity was a consequence of improved rainfall in the region. Prehistoric masonry buildings in Chaco Canyon (NPS photo). Some places have been investigated by archeologists over long periods of time because they are endlessly fascinating. Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico is such a place. L. 1992 *The Chaco Anasazi: Sociopolitical Evolution in the Prehistoric Southwest*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Wills, W. H. 2001 *Ritual and Mound Formation during the Bonito Phase in Chaco Canyon*. 

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