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The Origins of Plains Mescalism

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THE appearance in recent years of several articles dealing with the ceremonial use of the mescal bean as a narcotic among various Plains groups indicates that there is a rising interest in this practice and in the problem of its origin. La Barre (1959) was the first to draw attention to this phenomenon in 1938, when he suggested that it may have been antecedent to the peyote cult. The matter was left there until Howard (1957) attempted to show that a "mescal bean cult," which apparently originated among the Pawnee or Wichita and preceded the peyote cult in the Plains area, was the source of many elements in Plains peyote ritualism. La Barre (1957, 1960) agreed with the precedence of the mescal bean, but rejected the influence of mescal bean ritual on the peyote cult, and suggested that the origins of both cults should be sought in southern Texas and northern Mexico, where the plants are indigenous. In support of La Barre's view, Campbell (1958) noted archeological occurrences of the mescal bean in southwestern Texas and drew attention to similarities between pictographs from that area and ritual paraphernalia used in the mescal bean ceremonies cited by Howard.

The present paper[1] will contribute new data on mescal bean usage among Indian groups south of the Plains and will critically re-examine previously presented data and conclusions. By the analysis and comparison of these data it is hoped to define the principal form of Plains mescalism[2] more exactly and to demonstrate its relatively recent development as a synthesis of several independent complexes. An attempt is made herein, on the basis of the ethnographic and archeological evidence available, to reconstruct the ultimate origin of mescalism, as well as its subsequent diffusion and transformations. Finally, the relation of mescalism to peyotism will be considered and, it is hoped, clarified in the light of the new data.

CLASSIFICATION OF CEREMONIES

The mescal bean, the seed of the Texas mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*), was used in a ceremonial context by a number of Plains tribes, including the Apache, Comanche, Iowa, Kansa, Omaha, Oto, Osage, Pawnee, Ponca, Tonkawa, Wichita, and perhaps the Arapaho; the Delaware may also have adopted its use after they settled in Kansas and Oklahoma (Howard 1957). Howard (1957:76, 85) has ascribed all of these ceremonies to a single "cult," of which there "seem to have been two principal forms," one resembling the Algonkin Midewiwin and the other resembling the modern peyote rites. However, when Howard's data are examined more closely, it becomes possible to classify these ceremonies even further into four fairly distinct complexes. This

fact raises a strong doubt that use of the mescal bean alone constitutes adequate evidence for the existence of a unitary "cult." These four complexes are:

(1) Transitional peyote-mescal bean ceremony: This is reported for the Apache, Ponca, Tonkawa, and perhaps the Delaware, in the accounts cited by Howard. Most of these seem to be essentially peyote ceremonies in which the mescal bean was used as a substitute or supplement.

(2) Algonkin "shooting" ceremonies: As La Barre (1957) has pointed out, mescal beans were not the only objects used for "shooting," which is a more general trait associated with the Algonkin Midewiwin. Howard cites shooting only for the Delaware and Omaha. This trait therefore cannot be considered an integral part of a specifically mescal bean "cult."

(3) Mescal bean medicine society: Some form of this society existed among the Iowa, Kansa, Omaha, Oto, Osage, Pawnee, Wichita, and perhaps the Arapaho and Ponca, according to the accounts quoted by Howard. In most cases it seems to have been a fairly typical Plains medicine society, distinguished principally by the ritualistic use of the mescal bean, often in association with deer ceremonialism. This is probably what Howard had in mind as the "cult." This complex will be treated in more detail below.

(4) Deer dance: Several mescal bean medicine societies include a dance with deer symbolism as an integral part of their ceremonies. The Comanche are reported to have had a "deer dance" (Howard 1957:77) which featured shamanistic feats with the mescal bean, in a manner similar to the Pawnee. Since Howard gives no indication that the Comanche dance was associated with any particular organization, it is here treated separately.

These four complexes differ considerably in type and in ritual; the first three have little in common except the mescal bean. However, it is apparent that the mescal bean was never actually treated as the object of worship in any of the ceremonies. Since the term "cult" usually implies the worship of the thing designated, it seems inappropriate to refer to any of these complexes as a "mescal bean cult." In fact, James Murie (1914:605) described the Pawnee society as a "general animal cult," while noting that "the fundamental elements of the ritual seem to be based upon the mescal bean." From the data presented in Howard's article, it appears that most of the individual societies involved a deer, animal, or hunting cult, though not exclusively so. Thus, even if the mescal bean medicine society complex is considered to be a cult, it was not a cult of the mescal bean.

THE MESCAL BEAN MEDICINE SOCIETY

Of the four ceremonial complexes involving the use of the mescal bean, the mescal bean medicine society was by far the most elaborate and important. Like other Plains medicine societies, it had its own distinctive bundles, rituals, and paraphernalia. This complex is represented by the Pawnee Deer Society, the Wichita Deer Dance, the Iowa Red Bean Dance, the Kansa and Osage Red Medicine Dance, the Oto Red Bean Medicine Lodge, and the Omaha Wichita Dance Society. The Oto (and perhaps the Arapaho as well) apparently

had this society as early as 1820 (Howard 1957:80). The individual societies had many characteristics in common, although there were differences among them as well.

The mescal bean was fundamental to the ritualism of this complex. The Pawnee and Wichita had an initiation ceremony in which the candidate was given a drink made from mescal beans; the effect was to induce prolonged unconsciousness and visions, by which the candidate gained the animal power and songs which brought him into the circle of medicine men (Murie 1914:605–608; Dorsey 1904:16–17). The Omaha initiation ceremony was secret and details concerning it are lacking.

The principal ceremony of the mescal bean medicine society was a dance in which the participants decorated themselves with white paint, carried a bow and arrow and gourd rattle, and blew on long whistles to imitate the elk. Foxskins were often worn. When the dance was held as part of a first-fruits ceremony, and apparently at other times as well, a drink made from the mescal bean was taken as an emetic to purify the participants.

The following chart, based principally on information contained in Murie (1914), G. A. Dorsey (1904), Howard (1957, quoting J. O. Dorsey and A. Skinner), and Whitman (1937), summarizes the occurrence of significant features shared by the several societies for which adequate data are available.

TABLE 1. OCCURRENCE OF SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF MESCAL BEAN MEDICINE SOCIETY

	Pawnee	Wichita	Iowa	Omaha	Oto
Dance	X	X	X	X	X
Deer/elk ceremonialism	X	X	X		
First fruits		X?	X	X	X
Purification (emetic)	X[3]	X	X	X	
War/Hunting connection	?	?	X	X	X
Regalia:					
White paint	X		X	X	X
Bow, gourd rattle	X		X	X	
Fox skins	X			X	X
(Long) Whistles	X			X	X
Sage	X		X		
Bundle	?	?	X	X	
Shamans only members[4]	X	X			
Special initiation	X	X		X	

From the chart is is evident that the Wichita share mostly general features with the Siouan groups, while the Siouans and Pawnee share mainly detailed features of dance paraphernalia. This disparity is due in part, at least, to the nature of the data available. When Dorsey (1904:16–17, 20) described the Wichita society it had been inactive for over 30 years, and he obtained only somewhat general information. The Pawnee ceremony survived much longer,

however (Howard 1957:82), and was discussed by Murie (1914) in more specific detail.

It is perhaps necessary to emphasize the distinction between the mescal bean medicine society complex and mescalism per se. As stated above, the former constituted the principal form of Plains mescalism, though not the only one, as may be seen from the discussion on classification of ceremonies. Plains mescalism, in one form or another, not only survived the disappearance of the society complex among those groups where it had existed, but ultimately was more widespread in the Plains than this particular shamanistic organization had ever been. As it is hoped to show below, the mescal bean medicine society complex was of relatively late origin and confined to the Plains, whereas mescalism itself has a far longer history, primarily in the area south of the Plains.

ADDITIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

Previous discussions of the origin and diffusion of mescalism have been handicapped by the lack of ethnographic data from areas other than the central and southern Plains. However, ethnographic sources also attest to the widespread use of the mescal bean in the area south of the Plains. References to its use among the Caddo, Tonkawa, and Coahuiltecans have been brought together here, along with information regarding certain non-mescal bean ceremonies among these groups and the Arikara. These additional data extend the known use of the mescal bean as far as southern Texas, well within the natural range of the plant. Taken together with the suggested reclassification of mescal bean ceremonies and the discussion of the mescal bean medicine society given above, these data contribute new perspectives on the origin and history of Plains mescalism.

Caddo

According to the missionary Francisco Hidalgo, the Caddo in East Texas used the mescal bean (called *frixolillo* or *frijolillo* in Spanish) as early as 1716:

> . . . in the dances which they have, the Indian man or woman who is intoxicated with the peyote or *frixolillo*, which they prepare for this purpose, tells them what he [or she] has seen, [and] they believe everything (Swanton 1942:267; translation mine).

It is noteworthy that peyote and the mescal bean were both recognized and classed together here as intoxicants, and that they were used in dances to secure visions. From the context, it appears that these dances were of a general communal sort, and Hidalgo seems to imply that the two intoxicants may have been used interchangeably.

The Caddo may also have used the mescal bean in the initiation of a new medicine man, according to an account by the missionary Isidro Felix de Espinosa, who worked among the Caddo from 1716 to 1721. He reported that the candidates were young men about 20 years old, who had spent some time in training for their chosen profession. When the appointed day arrived,

> Many of the old reciters or hypocrites, with a crowd of surgeons, gather together, dressed up for

a fiesta in whatever they have; they give their drinks to the new charlatan and they offer him much tobacco. This, together with the drinks, makes him lose his reason, make faces, and fall to the ground like a drunk person. He remains, either in reality or in pretense, and thus he is considered dead for twenty-four hours, until he feels like coming to, breathing. He tells what he dreamed, or what his imagination suggested to him; and they say his soul went very far away. Afterwards he begins his song and discordant music, which continue for eight days, assisted by another such surgeon, while the assembled women interpolate confused howls. Between these songs they assault the pots on the fire, which they never cease to stir, and feast their bellies, while the new doctor pleases the gathering with his dances and songs (Swanton 1942:284–85; translation mine).

The long period of unconsciousness induced by the drinks strongly suggests that they were prepared from the mescal bean rather than the milder pey[illegible]. Although the Texas mountain laurel is not native to East Texas, the beans could easily have been obtained in trade with the Jumano of the Pecos River country, or with Tonkawan and Coahuiltecan bands to the west and southwest (Swanton 1942:36–37).

Espinosa's account bears an interesting resemblance to Murie's (1914:605) description of the Pawnee Deer Society initiation ceremony:

. . . this society teaches that all animal powers were learned through the power of the mescal bean. . . . Tea made from mescal beans by a definite formula is given the candidate and when he falls unconscious, the leader tests him by rasping down his spine with the toothed jaw of a gar fish; if he moves or flinches in the least, he is rejected once for all.

G. A. Dorsey (1904:20) attributes a similar ritual to the Wichita and adds the following information, which shows an even more striking similarity to the Caddo practice:

Thus, in the ceremony of the medicine-men, after the novitiate has been placed in a trance, he usually holds speech with some fierce wild animal, who visits him and instructs him—should he prove brave and not become scared. Thus he obtains power which he uses in doctoring, and in his songs, sung during the medicine-men's ceremony, he tells of his experience with the animal.

The Caddo ceremony so closely parallels the Pawnee and Wichita medicine society initiation rites that there can be little doubt of their fundamental historical relationship. The resemblances become all the more remarkable when it is remembered that nearly two centuries separate Espinosa's account from the others. This initiation procedure seems to have been limited to Caddoan groups (among whom the society was composed of shamans) and it could represent an old Caddoan ceremony.

The Caddo may have also used the mescal bean as a means of obtaining divinatory visions in a war-preparation ceremony. Espinosa describes it as follows:

When they go to war they have general meetings in the house of a captain and give drinks to one of those considered most valiant until he loses or pretends to lose his reason; and after a day and night this [person] says [that] he saw where the enemy were, and if [they were] prepared or not; and from this they foretell their pretended victories. They do the same on the road, when they go on their journeys . . . (Swanton 1942:286; translation mine).

In this connection it should be noted that the mescal bean was also associated with success in war and hunting among the Iowa, Omaha, and perhaps the Wichita and Oto (Howard 1957).

More recently, Parsons (1941:34, 36) collected valuable new data no

Caddo use of the mescal bean from two Caddo informants, Ingkanish and Pardon. They gave the Caddo term for the mescal bean as *daitino*, which is described as a "Mexican bean 'next to peyote'." Ingkanish mentioned a Kiowa-Apache doctor who wore a necklace of daitino, and added, "This *daitino* plant is used for medicine by Caddo also." However, according to Pardon, "this red bean is only worn nowadays for beads, nobody knows how to use it for medicine."

Ingkanish (Parsons 1941:34) stated that Caddo medicine men or doctors were divided into "bands"; these were probably informal groups of specialists, although further information about them is lacking.

> The Beaver (*t'ao*) doctor is the "strongest" (i.e. most powerful). He is a *daitino* (mescal-bean) doctor. . . . He mentioned three "bands"—Beaver, Mescal-bean, *yuko*, and there were three or four other "bands" also.

The apparent contradiction in these statements might be the result of a loss of the earlier distinction into "bands," and a merging of the functions of the Beaver and Mescal Bean doctors. Pardon (Parsons 1941:34) knew of Beaver and *dai'tono* (sic) doctors merely as names, but he was more familiar with the Beaver medicine dance, which was apparently not connected with the mescal bean.

The information just cited from Parsons appears to indicate that Caddo use of the mescal bean may have been continuous from before the time of Spanish contact down to the present century. Her data also shed new light on the possible context for the initiation ceremony described by Espinosa. It seems likely that the ceremony pertained only to the "band" of mescal bean doctors, rather than being a general ceremony for all medicine men. This conclusion is by no means certain, however, for 18th century accounts do not unequivocally attest to the existence of such "bands," and even at the beginning of this century Dorsey (1905:22–23) seems to imply that only a single "society" of medicine men existed among the Caddo. The question of whether Caddo medicine societies were indigenous or borrowed from neighboring tribes (such as the Wichita[6]) during the reservation period needs to be investigated. If the mescal bean division of Caddo medicine men was actually indigenous and pre-Contact, the contribution of the Caddo to the development of mescal bean ceremonialism may well have been much greater than previously recognized.

Arikara

Robert H. Lowie, in *Societies of the Arikara Indians* (1915), compared the Arikara organizations with those of the Pawnee and concluded from the number of close parallels that most Pawnee and Arikara societies had a common origin. He did not attribute a Deer Society to the Arikara, nor did he relate any Arikara organization to the Pawnee Deer Society. However, in discussing the Arikara Hot Dance Society, which he identified with the Pawnee Iruska Society, he stated (1915:668):

The Hot dancers also, though rarely, performed the Elk dance, but then they arrayed themselves in a different fashion, painting themselves, carrying their weapons, and using whistles. . . .

It seemed to Bear's-teeth that the members tried to mimic all the animals. Sometimes a special day was set aside for the celebration of the Elk dance. The Elks used a long whistle. From the elbows and knees downward, they painted themselves with dark paint, and likewise from the collar bone to the chest; the rest of the body was painted yellow, with patches of white. White clay was used around the eyes. Sometimes they painted in imitation of bears, sometimes to resemble crows.

The musical instruments employed in dancing were a drum and a pumpkin-gourd rattle.

This may be compared with Murie's (1914:605–8) description of the Pawnee Deer Society:

While the name of the society is taken from the generic term for deer (ta), the dancers imitate many kinds of animals, suggesting that we have a general animal cult instead of a specific [illegible]. . . . The regalia peculiar to the society are large whistles, to symbolize the elk. . . . In front of the permanent leaders are laid four bows and four gourd rattles, the latter painted white.

It is evident that the Arikara Hot Dance Society corresponds not only to the Pawnee Iruska Society, but to the Deer Society as well. The Elk dance is clearly the same as the dance of the Pawnee Deer Society, even to the carrying of a bow and the use of a long whistle. This identification suggests that the existence of the Elk dance among the Arikara probably antedates their separation from the Pawnee.

However, there are a number of important differences between the Elk dance and the Deer Society rituals. Use of the mescal bean is not mentioned for the Arikara, and with it the purification motive is absent, as well as the special vision-quest initiation ceremony of the Pawnee, Wichita, and Caddo. Membership is not restricted to medicine men, though this is probably not significant in view of the absence of purely shamanistic societies among the Arikara (Lowie 1915:656).

This isolated occurrence of the Elk dance suggests that it could be the remnant of a former mescal bean medicine society which suffered attrition of membership and was merged with the Iruska Society. The survival of other Pawnee societies among the Arikara favors this hypothesis. However, an obvious and perhaps overwhelming objection, particularly in view of the close similarity of other Pawnee and Arikara societies, is the absence of the mescal bean and other associated ceremonial features found in the Pawnee Deer Society.

As a more plausible alternative hypothesis it may be proposed that the mescal bean medicine society did not come into being among the Pawnee until after the separation of the Arikara from the Skidi. The Elk dance could thus represent an old Pawnee-Arikara ceremony which was subsequently integrated into different complexes among the two groups after they split. The Elk dance would therefore antedate the development of the Pawnee Deer Society. As a corollary to this hypothesis, it may be inferred that the mescal bean medicine society complex (as distinct from mescalism per se) was a recent Pawnee-Wichita innovation and that it represents a syncretism of elements from diverse sources. This possibility will be discussed further after additional data on the Tonkawa and Coahuiltecans have been considered.

Tonkawa

An important, though not unequivocal, reference to the use of the mescal bean among the Tonkawa occurs in the notes made by Albert S. Gatschet[7] when he visited them at Fort Griffin, Texas, in 1884. In a list of Tonkawa dances he records the following (Gatschet 1884:82):

> 'Awemalo, "deer dance," the red bean of the wild mesquite (a-utchólĕk, w. m.) is eaten at that dance. Men *and* women.

The "red bean of the wild mesquite" is undoubtedly an erroneous attribution, since the mesquite does not have a red seed. It may be plausibly assumed that the red mescal bean was meant, especially in view of the association with deer ceremonialism. In keeping with the less complex social organization of the Tonkawa, the dance was a communal one rather than the property of a ceremonial society. Sjoberg (1953) makes no mention of any societies or elaborate rituals among the Tonkawa prior to their final settlement in Oklahoma.

This reference may provide a significant datum for the presence of a simple mescal bean-deer dance complex in the southern Plains, which may be related to the Comanche Deer Dance noted by Howard (1957:77). Unfortunately, the date is too late to permit the assumption that this dance was definitely aboriginal among the Tonkawa. It could indeed have represented the survival of a simple archaic prototype which tribes to the north and east adopted and endowed with a richer ceremonial context.[8] Conversely, the Tonkawa could have borrowed the dance in such an attenuated form as this after their contact with Caddoan groups on reservations in Texas and Oklahoma (Sjoberg 1953:284). However, since the mescal bean is particularly common in the area of Central Texas originally occupied by the Tonkawa, it seems unlikely that they would have been unacquainted with its properties, especially as they must have been one of the sources of supply for the Caddo.

Gatschet also makes reference, again not unequivocally, to a pre-cult use of peyote among the Tonkawa. He describes another dance as follows (Gatschet 1884:82):

> Temkwémalo, "wild hog dance," eat medicine nónshxän, grows in Mexico, a bulb growing underground. okmíllo shukapai *wild hog*, in Concho and Mexico. Men *and* women participate in it.

The description of the "medicine" used in this dance strongly suggests peyote. The identification is strengthened by the term given for "peyote" in Hoijer's Tonkawa dictionary (1949:25, no. 272.1), /nenxasˀan-tatalmaˀay/ "many round medicines." The first part of this compound, defined by Hoijer (1949:25, no. 272) as "herbal medicine," is probably the same as the term recorded by Gatschet. Sjoberg (1953:300) has pointed out that the association of peyote with the "wild hog" (javalina, peccary), which ranges primarily in southern Texas, may reflect Tonkawan cultural ties with Coahuiltecan groups to the south. It is especially noteworthy that this use of peyote differs sharply from the "cult" of a few years later (Opler 1939; Howard

1957:84) and lacks the deer association of Mexican peyotism (La Barre 1957:711).

Coahuiltecans

Although the mescal bean is native to northeastern Mexico and southern Texas, there are very few references to its use by the Coahuiltecan Indians of this area. The missionary Bartholomé García (1760:15) implied its use among the Coahuiltecan bands in the San Antonio missions, for he referred to it specifically in his confessional. It is interesting to note that he classed it together with peyote as an intoxicant.

> Have you eaten peyote?
> Did it intoxicate you?
> Have you eaten *frixolillo?*
> Did it intoxicate you?

The Coahuilteco terms given for these are /paxē/ and /samīn/, respectively. The Comecrudo, another Coahuiltecan group, were seemingly also acquainted with peyote and the mescal bean. In 1886 Gatschet secured the Comecrudo words for peyote and frixolillo from the last remnants of this group on the Rio Grande; the terms are, respectively, *kôp* and *patolíto* (Swanton 1940:74, 89).

It is evident from García's questions that the Coahuiltecans used the mescal bean, as well as peyote, as an intoxicant, thus establishing an ethnographic datum for mescalism in southern Texas. Although several writers have mentioned the use of peyote in Coahuiltecan ceremonies, there are no accounts of mescal bean ceremonies from this area. However, in view of the lack of ceremonial elaboration in Coahuiltecan culture (Ruecking 1954), it may be suggested that the two intoxicants were used interchangeably in their simple communal rites, depending perhaps upon availability. What we know about the subsistence level of the Coahuiltecan economy (Ruecking 1953) makes this suggestion entirely plausible. By extrapolating from extant descriptions of peyote ceremonies, then, something of the probable ritual context surrounding the use of the mescal bean may be inferred.

Alonso de León (1649:44–45) has left the following description of a Coahuiltecan ceremony involving peyote:

> . . . the Indian men and women begin to dance in one or two circles around the fire . . . until the night is already dark, singing in their fashion whatever words they want, without having meaning, only harmony, and they sing them so harmoniously that one [person] is not discordant from another, but [rather] it seems [like] a single voice. Everyone who wants to, joins in this group: sometimes a hundred, at other times more or less. They drink the peyote ground up and dissolved in water; this drink intoxicates in such a manner that it makes them lose consciousness and they remain, from the movement and the wine, on the ground like dead persons. They choose among two or three of such as these, and with some beaks from a fish called *aguja* . . . they scratch them from the shoulders to the ankles and to the wrists, from whence flows a quantity of blood, and with it they smear them all over the body. They leave them in this condition until they are over their drunkenness. (Translation mine.)

According to Santa María (ca. 1795:406–8), the Indians of Tamaulipas had similar dances in which peyote was taken in an intoxicating drink.

Ceremonial patterns among the Indians of southern Texas and northeastern Mexico were of a rather simple and generalized nature, largely due to the restrictions of the nomadic life imposed by their environment. The ritual context for the use of peyote (and, by inference, the mescal bean) was limited to the communal dance, in which it served primarily as an intensifier and intoxicant, with perhaps a secondary function of inducing visions. The extant ethnographic sources do not suggest any ceremonial specialization around either of these intoxicants, though this impression may be due to inadequate data. However, it is in keeping with Coahuiltecan culture that such specialization might have been lacking, or at most, minimal.

It may be recalled that Hidalgo mentioned the use of peyote or frixolillo in general Caddo dances both to intoxicate and to produce visions. This generalized use among the Caddo may be an archaic form related to the Coahuiltecan usage. The Coahuiltecan practice of scratching intoxicated persons with a fish jaw recalls the previously mentioned test for eligibility in the Pawnee-Wichita medicine society initiation, but the resemblances may be fortuitous. Certainly the partial skin anesthesis caused by peyote (La Barre 1959:19) helps to account for the Coahuiltecan practice.[9]

By comparing the ethnographic data presented by Howard with the data from the Caddo, Arikara, Tonkawa, and Coahuiltecans given above, it is possible to arrive at some conclusions regarding the origin of the mescal bean medicine society, the origins of mescalism, and the relation of mescalism to peyotism. Each of these will be discussed in detail below.

ORIGIN OF THE MESCAL BEAN MEDICINE SOCIETY

The unity of this society as a complex is clear from the trait-comparison of the Pawnee, Wichita, Iowa, Omaha, and Oto societies made earlier. It is fundamentally a bundle society of medicine men in which the mescal bean is used for a variety of ritualistic purposes, including intoxication and purification, and in which a deer or elk dance, sometimes associated with hunting and first-fruits ritualism, forms the principal ceremony.

The resemblances among these societies is so great that there can be little doubt of their derivation from a single source, or a common prototype. This conclusion is supported both by the internal similarities of the societies and by historical information about the Siouan groups. The Iowa credited the origin of their bundle to the Pawnee; the Omaha called their lodge the Wichita Society; and the Oto were said to receive their beans in trade from the Wichita (Howard 1957:78, 79, 81). On the basis of this information, Howard (1957:84; 1960:85) ascribed the probable origin of the mescal bean "cult" to the Pawnee and Wichita. His conclusion seems the most plausible one in the light of our present knowledge and accounts well for all the available facts. However, it should be noted that Howard merely identified these tribes as the immediate source for the diffusion of this complex in the central Plains and did not concern himself with the actual origin of the complex among them.

Eighteenth century accounts of the Caddo show that they used the mescal

bean as a vision-inducing intoxicant in their general dances, in the initiation ceremony of the medicine men, and in a war-preparation ceremony. Modern sources indicate that the Caddo used the mescal bean as medicine and that they formerly had a class of mescal bean doctors. The association of the mescal bean with the vision-quest initiation ceremony, with animal power, and perhaps with war and hunting ritual, was shared by the Caddo with the Pawnee and Wichita, thus pointing to the Caddo as the probable source of these traits. The more southerly location of the Caddo, closer to the natural environment of the mescal bean, as well as the existence of a special class of mescal bean medicine men among them (if this was indeed aboriginal), strengthens their position in the chain of diffusion of mescal bean ceremonialism. It seems likely, in fact, that the Caddo originated many features of the mescal bean medicine society complex.

However, the Caddo are not known to have had the institution of bundle societies in historic times. Therefore it seems almost certain that the combination of the above-mentioned elements with elk ceremonialism, and their incorporation in the bundle-society pattern, must have taken place among the Pawnee-Wichita. Consequently the mescal bean medicine society complex itself must be considered a Pawnee-Wichita innovation.

The absolute time of this development cannot be determined with certainty, but Arikara data suggest that it may be assigned to the late prehistoric period. The similarities noted between the Arikara Elk dance and the Pawnee Deer dance are so close that there can be little doubt of their common historical derivation. The ultimate origin of this elk symbolism (clearly a localized substitute for deer symbolism) probably must be ascribed to a northern source; this is a matter which deserves further investigation. However, as the Elk dance lacks all of the mescal bean associations of the Pawnee ceremony, and even belongs to a different society, it may be inferred that the formation of the mescal bean medicine society among the Pawnee followed their split with the Arikara. Thus, the development of this society must have been a relatively recent event.

The association of the mescal bean with the elk (deer) by the Pawnee and Wichita could well have been due to influence or stimulus diffusion from the Tonkawa. Before they moved south into Texas the Wichita necessarily obtained their beans in trade from the Caddo, Tonkawa, or Jumano. Just as such features of the society as the initiation ceremony were derived from the Caddo, the deer-mescal bean association could have been borrowed from the Tonkawa and fitted into an extant elk ceremonialism by the Pawnee and Wichita. The possibility cannot be excluded that the Caddo were the immediate source for this deer-mescal bean complex among the northern Caddoans. However, neither alternative can be substantiated until more is known about Caddo and Tonkawa mescalism.

The use of the mescal bean as a purifying emetic in the first-fruits ceremony was undoubtedly a substitution for the "black drink" of the Southeast.[10] There is no evidence at present to indicate what tribe was responsible for this substitution, though it was probably one of the Caddoan groups.

THE ORIGINS OF MESCALISM

Although the Caddo may have originally endowed the mescal bean with many of its ritual associations, they themselves must have been recipients in the diffusion of mescalism since the plant was not native to their area. Aside from their annual trips westward to hunt buffalo (Swanton 1942:136–37), they could only have obtained the beans by trade with tribes to the west and southwest. There seems to have been a "fair" on the borders of the Caddo country in the 18th century, in which various tribes gathered to barter and trade goods (Kelley 1955:988). The Tonkawa undoubtedly participated in these events, and the Jumano travelled from beyond the Big Bend to trade with the Caddo (Kelley 1955:988). The Jumano Indians, who ranged throughout southwest Texas in historic times, are almost unknown ethnographically, but archeological occurrences of the mescal bean in this area (Campbell 1958) show that they or their predecessors were at least acquainted with it. The antiquity of such trading relations cannot be ascertained, but the Caddo were evidently well acquainted with the mescal bean by the time Espinosa reached them in 1716.

The unfortunately fragmentary nature of our information about Tonkawa mescalism makes it difficult to determine how much it may have contributed to Caddo mescalism beyond mere knowledge of the bean's narcotic properties. It is probably not insignificant that both groups apparently shared with the Coahuiltecans the use of the mescal bean as an intoxicant in communal dance ceremonies. However, the specialized Tonkawa mescal bean-deer association, perhaps connected with a hunting cult, is not definitely reported for either the Caddo or Coahuiltecans. This association could have originated with the Tonkawa, but there are indications that it may have been part of a more widespread and ancient complex in southwest Texas.

Campbell (1958) has demonstrated that the history of mescalism may extend back several thousand years in southwest Texas. He has documented the occurrence of mescal beans in eight sites of the Pecos River Focus, which has an antiquity of 5000 B.C. or more; in addition, four nearby sites of the contemporaneous Edwards Plateau Aspect were found to contain mescal beans. He also drew attention to pictographs from Pecos River Focus sites, near the confluence of the Pecos and the Rio Grande, which show men and animals in "hunting scenes." These have been interpreted as evidence of a prehistoric hunting cult (Kelley 1950). Campbell suggested that this hunting cult may have involved the use of the mescal bean. If these interpretations are correct, the archeological data would appear to establish the great antiquity of mescalism in this area, and to associate it with hunting ceremonialism.

Ethnographic confirmation is wanting, unfortunately, since information on the groups living about the mouth of the Pecos is almost totally lacking, but probably the local cultures did not differ basically from the historic Coahuiltecans or Tonkawa. The archeological data, however, strongly suggest that the Pecos River area may have been the cultural "climax" of what Newcomb (1956) has called the Western Gulf area[11] of southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. A more plentiful food supply, with consequently greater population

concentration, could have produced social conditions which favored the evolution and maintenance of more elaborate ritual patterns than were possible elsewhere in the area. The simple, generalized Coahuiltecan communal dances utilizing peyote and the mescal bean could have developed specialized forms such as found among the Tonkawa and gained associated ritual paraphernalia such as shown in the pictographs. From this source, on the edge of the south Plains, the developed ceremonial pattern could readily have spread northward and eastward through the trading contacts of such groups as the Jumano.

It is a plausible hypothesis that some connection existed between this mescal bean-hunting ceremonialism and the mescal bean-deer dance complex of the Tonkawa. Archeologically, the closest ties of the Pecos River Focus are with the Edwards Plateau Aspect of central Texas (Suhm, Krieger, and Jelks 1954:52). In the historic period the Jumano were active in carrying on trading activities between the two areas (Kelley 1955). Thus the Tonkawa, along with other groups of southwest Texas, may have known and used the mescal bean in their deer dance-hunting ritual ceremonies for as long as several thousand years, while a simpler and perhaps even more archaic ritual continued in use among the Coahuiltecans.

Other modern uses of the mescal bean need not be attributed to a single complex or source, since direct aboriginal diffusion through the Caddo, Wichita, Tonkawa, Jumano, and Coahuiltecans was later supplemented by Apache and Comanche incursions. Also, the original patterns of diffusion were vastly changed by the acquisition of the horse among Plains groups, by subsequent migrations, and by the removal of the Indians to reservation areas.[12]

PEYOTISM AND MESCALISM

La Barre (1959:121) was evidently the first to suggest that "the pre-peyote mescal bean cult prepared the way somewhat for the use of the narcotic cactus," peyote. He also cited a number of specific parallels in their use (1959:107–8). In his survey of Plains mescalism, Howard (1957:85) suggested that "the mescal bean cult, in addition to paving the way for the later peyote cult, may also have provided a good deal of the ritual content of the later ceremony." La Barre (1957) has cogently criticized Howard's methodology and his conclusions. However, this problem, as well as the general question of the relation of peyotism and mescalism, may be clarified further on the basis of the preceding discussion.

The hypothetical mescal bean "cult" assumed by Howard has been analyzed in the present paper into four largely unrelated complexes. One of these, Algonkin "shooting" ceremonialism, may be dismissed from further consideration as irrelevant to the peyote ritual. The mescal bean medicine society complex, which is probably what Howard primarily had in mind as the "cult," can most appropriately be compared with his list (1957:86) of peyote cult traits. The only specific similarity is in Howard's category "Use of gourd and bow or staff." This hardly seems adequate to demonstrate a direct deriva-

tion of one complex from another, when all the most fundamental characteristics of the mescal bean medicine society are missing (see Table 1 above). Such generic features as "the ceremonial fire, leader's staff, and drum" (Howard 1957:85) are common to many different Plains dances and cannot be used to establish any specific connection of complexes. At the same time, it is not surprising that a number of characteristic Plains ceremonial traits should carry over and be included in a new ritual. There should be no mystery about why these features are present in Plains peyotism but absent in the Mexican ritual. They certainly do not indicate a derivation of peyotism from mescalism, but simply show that there was a selective adaptation of Mexican peyote cult practices to Plains ceremonial patterns.

Nevertheless, the use of mescal beans in some early peyote meetings deserves some explanation, and further research is needed on the history of this practice. The mescal bean medicine society was an organization of shamans who used the mescal bean in their particular ceremonies. Among those tribes which possessed this society, the mescal bean was presumably not available for general consumption but was confined primarily to use by members of the society. After the various tribes were removed to the reservations most of the medicine societies soon disappeared. Although the intoxicating properties of the mescal bean were undoubtedly not forgotten, the old formal ritual context for its use passed out of existence. When the peyote cult appeared during the period of severe social disintegration in the late 19th century, it would have been easy to associate the effects of peyote with the traditional use of the mescal bean and thus lead to their use together. Such an association would have been furthered by such tribes as the Tonkawa, Caddo, and perhaps the Comanche, who were familiar with both intoxicants and used them in communal rites rather than limiting them to restricted societies. Perhaps in a general way it may be suggested that Plains groups first became acquainted with narcotics through the use of the mescal bean, and that this previous conditioning facilitated the spread of peyotism among them.

Since the origins of Plains mescalism have been fairly well traced through the Pawnee-Wichita, Caddo, and Tonkawa to their ultimate source in northeastern Mexico and southern Texas, Gatschet's (1884) brief descriptions of the Tonkawa deer dance and wild hog dance have an important bearing on the relations of mescalism and peyotism (assuming that these two intoxicants have been correctly identified in his account). The association of peyote with the javelina (peccary) in a communal dance is in marked contrast to the Plains peyote cult found among the Tonkawa a few years later and eliminates them as a possible source of the peyote cult. It is also in contrast to the deer symbolism of North Mexican peyotism (La Barre 1959; 1957:711). On the other hand, the Tonkawa use of the mescal bean in a deer dance, which parallels symbolism found among the Comanche, Plains Caddoans, and southern Plains Siouans, interestingly resembles the peyote-deer association of the "old peyote complex" (La Barre 1957).

It is evident that the mescal bean is simply a functional substitute for

peyote in a basic deer or hunting cult, which was an important element in much North Mexican ceremonialism. The undifferentiated Coahuiltecan ceremonialism, in which both peyote and the mescal bean were probably used, provided the basis for specialization of ritualistic association around one or the other of these intoxicants. The distribution of their known associations in northern Mexico is such as to suggest a regional division between a mescal bean-deer complex in northeastern Mexico and a peyote-deer complex in north-central Mexico. La Barre (1959:137), after discussing the parallels and complementary distributions in the use of datura and peyote, drew attention to the fact that these two narcotics, together with the mescal bean, form a continuous geographical distribution covering the whole of northern Mexico and adjacent parts of the United States. This wide-spread narcotism seems to be fundamental to much of North Mexican ceremonialism and is probably very ancient throughout the area.

Mescalism and peyotism were thus, in their original form and habitat, basically similar regional manifestations of this North Mexican ceremonial narcotism. From similar beginnings these complexes diverged somewhat before being diffused into the Plains area, entering at different times and by different routes. There both complexes were remolded to fit the patterns of Plains ceremonialism, and the modified peyote complex finally replaced the use of the mescal bean.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present paper has attempted to define the principal form of Plains mescalism, the mescal bean medicine society complex, and to clarify the problems of its origin and relationship to the peyote cult. This society, with certain individual tribal variations, was found among the Pawnee, Wichita, Iowa, Omaha, and Oto, and perhaps among the Osage, Kansa, and Ponca. Like other Plains medicine societies, it had its own dances, bundle ceremonies, and paraphernalia. It was distinguished by the ritual use of the mescal bean, often in connection with deer or elk symbolism, war and hunting medicine, and first-fruits ceremonialism. The bean was utilized variously as an intoxicant, an emetic, and as an amulet.

Historical and comparative data from the Iowa, Arikara, and Caddo indicate that the mescal bean medicine society complex originated among the Pawnee or Wichita and that it involved an integration of elements from several sources. This development evidently occurred some time before 1820 and after the separation of the Arikara from the Pawnee. The Caddo were probably directly responsible for the diffusion of mescalism to their Plains relatives, along with much of the ritual context for the use of the mescal bean.

The ultimate origins of mescalism per se unquestionably lie in the area of south Texas and northeastern Mexico where the plant, *Sophora secundiflora*, is indigenous. Ethnographic data from the Tonkawa and Coahuiltecans, together with archeological data from southwest Texas, indicate that the mescal bean may have been used in this area in simple communal ceremonies for as long as

several thousand years. It functioned as a regional substitute for peyote in a basic deer or hunting cult which was fundamental to much North Mexican ceremonialism. Thus the mescal bean, along with peyote and datura, seems to have been part of a widespread and very ancient narcotic complex in northern Mexico.

There is little evidence that the mescal bean medicine society complex significantly influenced the forms and practices of the Plains peyote cult. When the use of peyote spread into the Plains, it was fitted into the prevailing ceremonial patterns of Plains culture as the mescal bean had been before it. Aside from similarities in the purely physiological effects of the two narcotics, most of the similarities in Plains mescalism and peyotism simply reflect characteristic features of Plains ceremonialism shared by both, as well as features derived from their common origin in northern Mexico.

NOTES

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[2] La Barre (1960:56) has justifiably characterized the term "mescalism" as unfortunate and confusing due to the several other applications of the term "mescal," which refers primarily to a distilled alcoholic drink made in Mexico from the fermented sap of the agave. Nevertheless, the term is retained in this paper because it has attained currency in the literature and because I wish to avoid creating further confusion by substituting some neologism which might prove even less satisfactory. I would, however, like to propose the term *sophorism*, derived from the genus name, as more specific and less subject to confusion than "mescalism."

[3] La Barre 1959:26, fn. 17.

[4] Although Howard's (1957:86) chart indicates "Only shamans admitted" for the Iowa, Omaha, Oto, Pawnee, Ponca, Tonkawa, and Wichita, the cited accounts mention this trait only for the Pawnee and Wichita. Apparently the mescal bean medicine society was restricted to medicine men only among the Caddoans.

[5] La Barre (1959:17–22, 139–44) discusses the physiological effects of peyote. He comments (1959:19): "The stimulating effect of peyote may partly account for the holding of meetings at night, for there is no desire or ability to sleep for ten or twelve hours after eating peyote . . . ." Elsewhere he states (1960:45) that it is "non-soporific." On the other hand, the principal alkaloid in the mescal bean, sophorine, is said to produce "convulsions, temporary loss of voluntary movement, and distressing vomiting" (La Barre 1959:126, citing V. Havard, Report on the flora of western and southern Texas, 1886). Half of one bean is said to produce a "delirious exhilaration followed by a deep sleep lasting two or three days" (La Barre 1959:126, citing Havard). Cf. Dorsey's (1904:16) statement that the bean "produced a violent spasm, and finally unconsciousness . . . ."

[6] The Wichita societies, however, had bundles (Dorsey 1904:17; La Barre 1959:120), which are not reported for the Caddo.

[7] I wish to express my gratitude to the Bureau of American Ethnology for permission to make use of Gatschet's unpublished field notes.

[8] In view of the fact that the Tonkawa and Lipan Apache lived in close association for a number of years (Sjoberg 1953), it is interesting to note a Lipan Coyote tale (also the most common type of Tonkawa story) in which Coyote uses mescal beans to make people drunk so that he can rob them (Opler 1940, cited in Howard 1957:77). This mythological reference may imply

some length of time for their acquaintance with the mescal bean and strengthens the inference that the Tonkawa were also acquainted with it. It should be noted however that the Lipans, as well as the Comanche, long raided deep into northern Mexico and thus had ample opportunity to acquire intimate knowledge of both peyote and the mescal bean. Also, Slotkin (1955:212) cites Mooney to the effect that the Lipans had Carrizo (Comecrudo) prisoners from the lower Rio Grande, who were certainly acquainted with the mescal bean (see under *Coahuiltecans* section below).

[9] The Indians of Zacatecas exploited this property of peyote in a similar way (La Barre 1959:19).

[10] Cf. La Barre 1959:26, fn. 17, for a similar suggestion.

[11] A somewhat more geographically accurate and specific appellation might be the term "Nemst area," coined from the initial letters of "north-eastern Mexico and southern Texas." The term "Western Gulf" requires too much qualification and implies an emphasis on the littoral, whereas the area in question was clearly an extension of Beals' "North Mexican Nomad" or Kirchhoff's "Aridamerica."

[12] Driver and Massey (1957:274–75) show a distributional map of the use of the mescal bean. They attribute this trait to the Shawnee, Chiricahua Apache, Kiowa, and Tarahumara in addition to those tribes mentioned in this paper. On the other hand, they do not indicate it for the Osage, Kansa, Ponca, Arapaho, Caddo, or Lipan Apache. Unfortunately, I have not been able to check their sources to determine whether the use of the mescal bean in these additional groups was recent or aboriginal, ceremonial or secular, specific or incidental.

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