

# CHEYENNE SHIELDS

and

## Their Cosmological Background

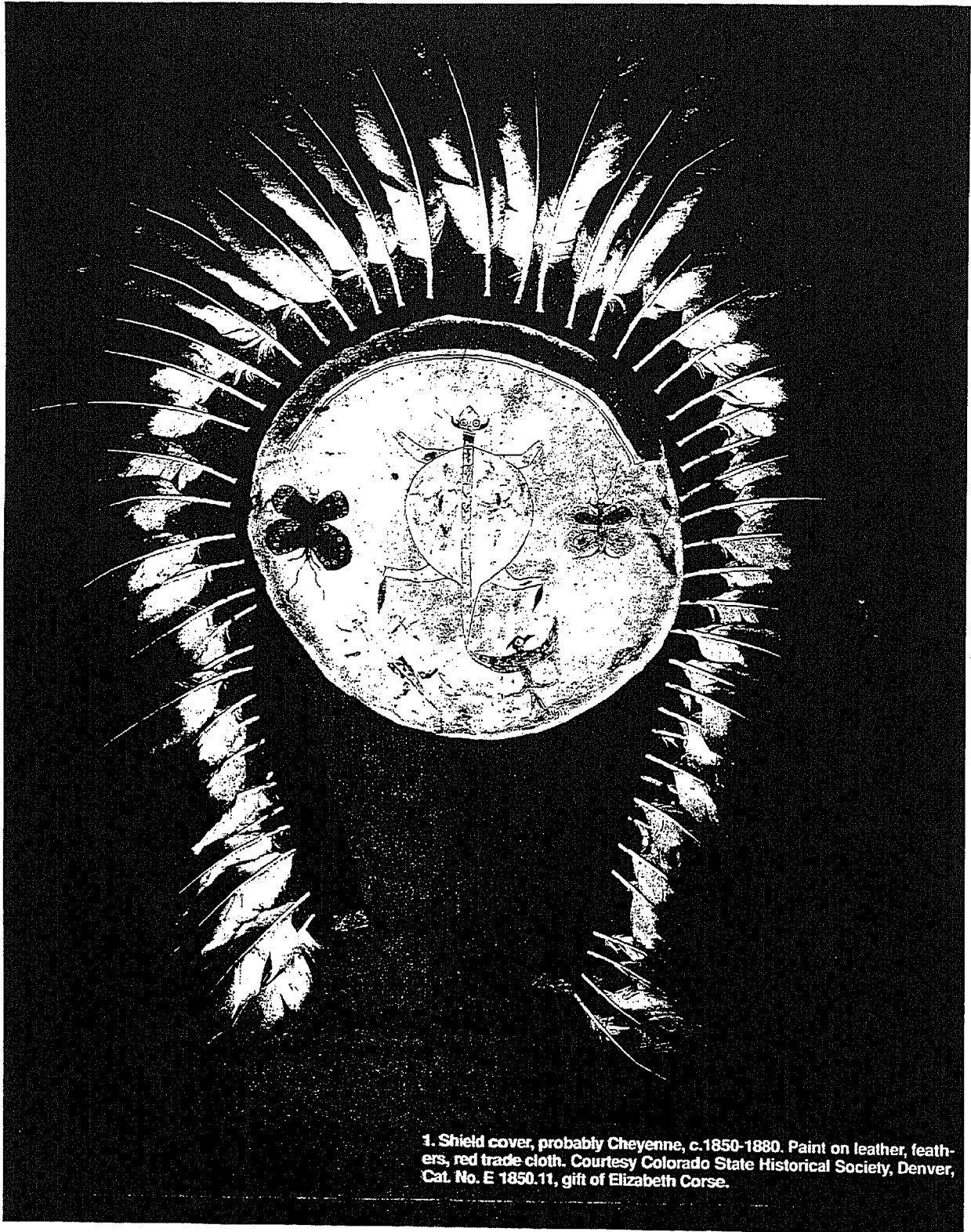
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Until the past decade, different areas of specialization in the study of Plains Indian art and culture were generally separated. Ethnographic research and art studies were conducted in separate departments and by different scholars (Schneider 1980). The results of their research were published independently, and the conclusions of ethnohistorians and ethnographers had little influence on historians and scholars of Plains Indian art. As Native American art studies have challenged earlier interpretations of material culture objects, and art history has become a history of visual expression, the depth of the research has increased. Some art historians have called this development "new art history" (Vastokas 1986-1987:13; Phillips 1989:5-13), while others note that there is nothing especially new about it (Penney 1992:25). New art history avoids the dichotomy between formal and iconological analysis, thus emphasizing the relationship between form and context.

This paper illustrates the utility of combining classic art historical typology and iconography with the sociocultural approach of new art history, and applies this method to a single Plains Indian tribe, the Cheyenne. My purpose is to illustrate that by employing both art historical methods and ethnographic data we will be able to understand the meanings of some "visual representations." More strictly speaking, I shall explore the layer of "decoration" on some selected objects of material culture that the English art historian Ernst H. Gombrich has called the "dominant meaning, the intended meaning or principal purpose of the picture" (1972:15-16). A comparative analysis of tribal myths and legends, as well as rites and ceremonies, may help us to reconstruct the intricate web of a complex belief system and its visual manifestations. I make no claim at all to reveal what was in the Cheyenne artists' minds, but only what is expressed graphically, and occasionally verbally. Doubtless, the artists' intentions were broader than we can ever appreciate, but this does not prevent us from recognizing the general content of their work.

Before considering our subject in detail, it will be helpful to summarize Cheyenne cosmological beliefs briefly. The Cheyenne worldview has been discussed in detail by Peter J. Powell (1969), John H. Moore (1974, 1984, 1986) and Karl H. Schlesier (1987). Here follows a condensed form of this cosmology after Moore (1984:294-301): The Cheyenne universe might be arranged along a vertical axis and two horizontal axes, each perpendicular to the other. At the zenith of the vertical axis, within *Otatavoom*, the Blue Sky-Space, is the spiritual realm of *Ma'heo'o*, the All-Father, while the nadir within *Nsthoaman*, the Deep Earth, embodies *Heestoz*, the female principle. The female principle is emphatically not spiritual, however, for the vertical dialectic of cosmology is played out between spirit/male-ness at the zenith and matter/femaleness at the nadir. The spatial zones between zenith and nadir are tiered, and all witness, in various ways, the interaction between male energy and female substance. Male energy is represented by such spiritual entities as *Atovsz*, the Sun; *Ameonito*, the Moon; *Nemevota*, the Rain; *Nonoma*, the Thunder; and *Vovetas*, the Tornado. The material manifestations of femaleness include not only the sterile Deep Earth, *Nsthoaman*, but also the zone of fertile soil, *Votostoom*. The



1. Shield cover, probably Cheyenne, c.1850-1880. Paint on leather, feathers, red trade cloth. Courtesy Colorado State Historical Society, Denver, Cat. No. E 1850.11, gift of Elizabeth Corse.



2. Ghost Dance dress, Southern Plains (probably Cheyenne), c.1890. Paint on leather, silk ribbon. 56" long (130 cm). Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming, Cat. No. NA 204.1, gift of J.C. Kid Nichols.

next tier above *Votostoom* is *Taxtavoom*, the atmosphere, then follows *Setovoom*, the Nearer Sky-Space, and *Otatavoom*, the Blue Sky-Space, at the very top of the cosmos.<sup>1</sup> All entities of the universe, except *Ma'heo'o* (all spirit) and *Nsthoaman* (all matter or substance) represent some organic composition of spirituality and substance. Entities within zones are entitled to more or less respect depending on how much spirit and how much substance they embody. For example, three categories of birds occupy the three upper zones of the upper world — the Atmosphere, the Nearer Sky-Space and the Blue Sky-Space — depending on their sacredness and role in Cheyenne cosmology (Moore 1986:179-187).

The horizontal axis of the universe, the four directions, are related to respective colors, social structure and personal ritual paraphernalia, so the symbols related to these directions are more ambiguous than those of the vertical axis.

Several previous scholars have presented graphic charts of the Cheyenne view of the cosmos (Comba

1987:19; Moore 1974:147; 1984:295; Schlesier 1987:5), but none of these serves our purpose. I offer another graphic scheme which is applicable to most Cheyenne heraldic images. This chart (Fig. 5) provides a place in which we can place all of the biological and spiritual entities that appear in Cheyenne heraldic art.

In the collection of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York, is a decorated war shield attributed to the Sioux (Fig. 8; illustrated in Bergs 1968:3, and Rose 1983:back cover). As I have noted elsewhere (Nagy 1994), we have every reason to doubt this attribution, since the shield was collected by George H. Brodhead at Camp Supply, Indian Territory, hundreds of miles south of Sioux country. Since the fort was abandoned in 1895, the shield has been dated by Lilita Bergs to that year or earlier (1968:3). Besides being collected far from any Sioux people, the design categories employed by the shield's Native American artist suggest a reappraisal of its origin. According to my Cheyenne shield typology this design fits into the category of "four spots, with a central element," with the central element in this case the head of a bald eagle. A pair of swallow-tailed birds can be seen on either side, in a bilaterally symmetrical composition. Blue zigzag lines connect one of their legs to the turquoise field, and fourteen buffalo hoof prints circle the designs on either side. The most puzzling elements are eleven blue lines ending in red circles, which are centered at the upper circumference of the shield. Alternating groups of eagle feathers and horsehair locks are suspended from the outer edge of the shield cover by rawhide thongs. Brass hawk-bells are attached to various parts of the central design.

My purpose is to prove that this painted design not only fits into a particular Cheyenne shield typology, but that the overall composition and the depicted entities and symbols are also in accordance with general Cheyenne cosmological beliefs. Before attempting a step-by-step interpretation of the painted designs, however, we must understand that native artists converged the elements of the horizontal plane and vertical axis on only a single plane, the circular surface of the shield. Thus, we may reasonably suspect that elements belonging to both the horizontal and the vertical planes can be found among the painted designs. Further, we should not forget that these designs often have a "polysemic" function. This phrase, borrowed from linguistics, indicates that a certain element is capable of expressing many meanings at the same time (Powers 1987:88).

As I have already pointed out, I interpret the basic meaningful unit of this shield as "four spots, with a central element." These four spots are certainly connected with *Votostoom*, the fertile soil, and can be placed in the Middle World. Fortunately, there is another well-documented Cheyenne shield in the collection of the Foundation for the Preservation of American Indian Art and Culture, Chicago, which until 1972 belonged to the Mu-

seum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, New York. This shield was described by George B. Grinnell (Fig. 10). The maker and original owner of this shield was Whistling Elk, a Northern Cheyenne, father of Spotted Wolf. At the time of its loss, the shield belonged to Spotted Wolf, who had lent it to his adopted son Yellow Nose, a Ute captive, for the Battle of Rosebud, June 17, 1876. Yellow Nose lost it from his saddle sometime the following day. The origin story of this shield is as follows:

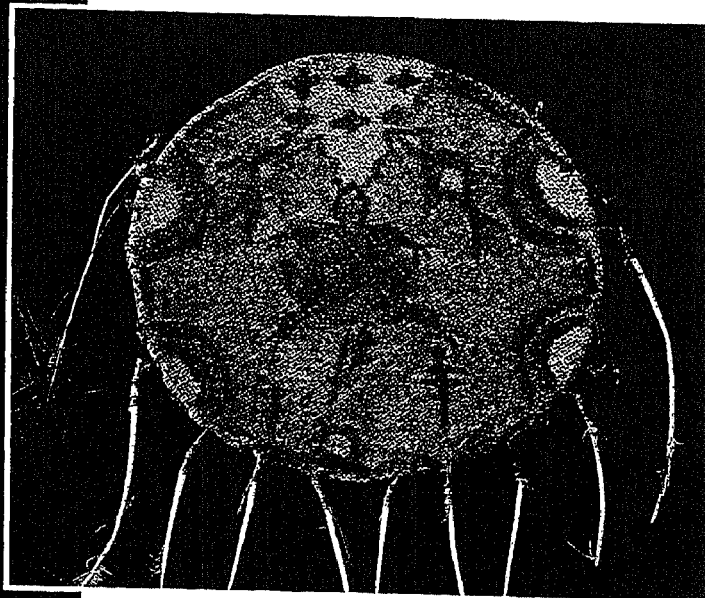
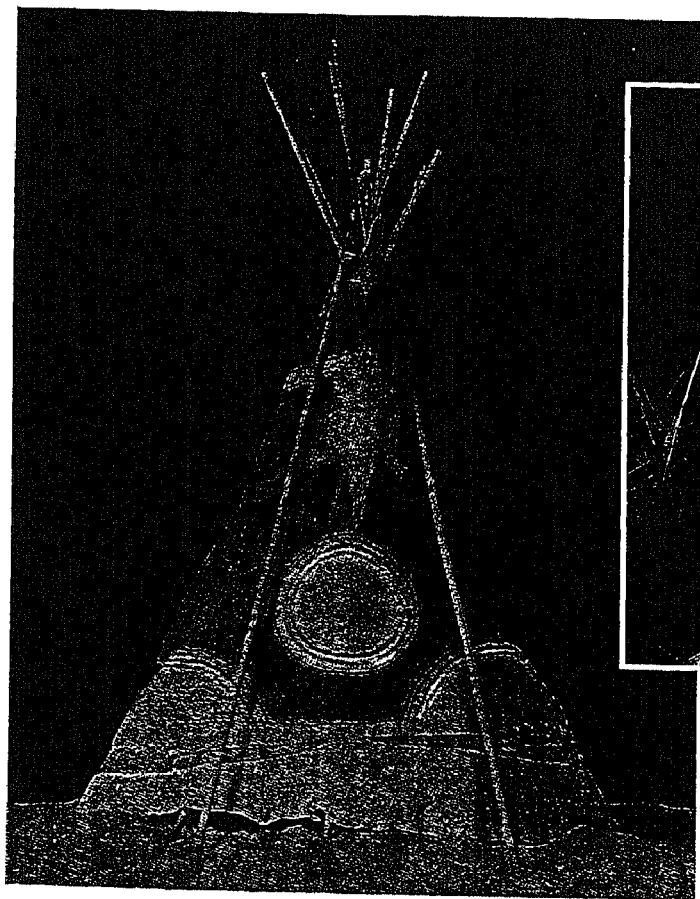
When a young man, Whistling Elk went to a certain lake, and out on a rocky point running into the water. He carried with him a buffalo-skull, and putting it on the ground, lay down by it, and there fasted and prayed for five days and five nights. On the morning of the fourth day, a buffalo raised its head above the water and sang a song, directing Whistling Elk to make this shield and describing how it should be made.

The painting on the shield consists of a pair of long, slender, upward-directed horns, a little above the center of the shield; below them is a large disc surrounded by dots; between the horns is a red disc also surrounded by dots, and there are four dark discs evenly distributed near the border of the shield. These discs on the outer rim represent the four directions; the disc below the horns is the moon; the red disc between the horns, the sun; and the dots are stars. The horns represent the animal that took pity on Whistling Elk and taught him how to make this shield. The moon is the spirit that during the night protected the brave who carried the shield, and the sun protected him during the day. The upper round spot to the left of the horns represents the wind which comes from the setting sun. The upper spot at the right of the horns represents the

wind from the north, the lower spot on the right, the wind from the east, and the lower spot on the left, the wind from the south. The spirit which controls the south wind is supposed to have the greatest power when prayed to for help (Grinnell 1923, Vol. 1:196-197, emphasis added.)

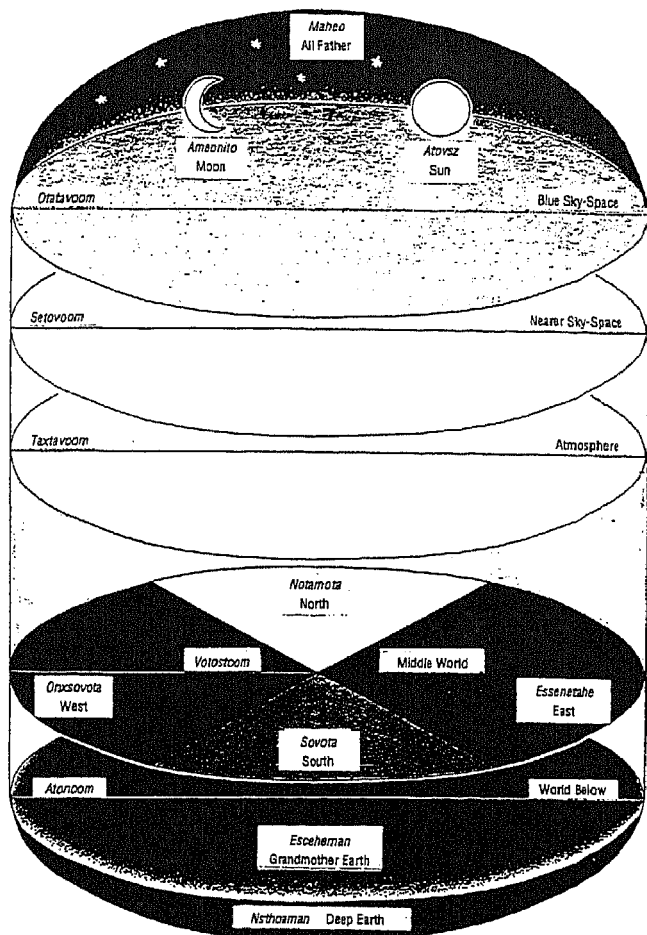
From Grinnell's description we can conclude that the four spots on the shield collected by Brodhead (Fig. 8) also represent the four directions. Additional features of the origin story which deserve attention are the "rocky point running into a lake,"<sup>2</sup> "a buffalo-skull" and "a buffalo from the water," all of which shall be addressed below.

The next motif on the Brodhead shield that can firmly be placed on my cosmological chart is the bordering row of buffalo hoof prints, representing the buffalo herds. The buffalo's role in Cheyenne cosmology is related to the earth, to food and to shelter (Moore 1974:247), so we can place the row of buffalo hoof prints firmly on the level of the middle world. The common appearance of the hoof prints and the directional spots, however, refer to another important Cheyenne belief. According to several Cheyenne tales, the buffalo originate and live in great caves (*heszevox*)<sup>3</sup> under the surface (Grinnell 1926:154-157, 161-167, 244-252), and they present themselves to be killed whenever *Ma'heo'o* wants to bless the Cheyenne (Moore 1974:163). That the four red circles are bounded by perimeters of contrasting color (white and black) suggests that these four spots refer not only to the four direc-



3. Painted tipi model, Southern Cheyenne, 1901-1902. Paint on leather. Collected by James Mooney. Courtesy Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Cat. No. 96902.

4. Model shield, Cheyenne, c.1900. Metal base, canvas cover, paint. 3 1/4" diameter (9 cm). Courtesy Arizona State Museum, Tucson, Cat. No. 26424.



5. Diagram of the Cheyenne cosmos. Author's drawing.

tions, but some "place of power," as well (Cowdrey 1993). This concept is shown more graphically on the front of a figurative parfleche at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York (Fig. 6).<sup>4</sup> Here, in the corners of the design, the striped mounds — which bear the colors of the four directions — are surmounted by figures having buffalo horns and buffalo tails. These seem to represent the *Ma'heono*, the spirits of the four directions; and the mounds represent their abodes at the four corners of the middle world. Thus, on the Brodhead shield, the red circles bordered with white and black perimeters represent the sacred mountains extending upward into the realm of the Nearer Sky-Space, where the guardians of the four directions dwell. Four black circles, outlined in red, are lined up on both sides of the front of the parfleche. These represent the entrances of those caves under the surface from which the buffalo herds overrun the world at appropriate times. Their presence is indicated by fifty buffalo hoof prints arranged in two groups of twenty-five in the middle section of the bag. The central green circle might represent either the sun or the central cave, also the underground home of the buffalo.<sup>5</sup> The same concept is illustrated by a drawing from an unpublished Cheyenne ledger, now in a private collection, where four buffalo figures are emerging from the central

circle, while thunderbirds, lightning lines and buffalo hoof prints remind us of the design on the Brodhead shield.<sup>6</sup> This ledger drawing sheds light on the presence of zigzag lines on the Brodhead shield, too. The distinction between the zigzag lines with buffalo hoof prints and those without them clarifies that both lightning and thunder might be symbolized by these power lines. The plain power lines issuing from the wings of the thunderbirds represent lightning, while the power lines with buffalo hoof prints issuing from the beak of the birds represent thunder. Thus the association of buffalo with underground caves, with hoof prints of running animals, and with the thundering sound of stampeding buffalo herds are all a permutating association represented on this shield, and on other Cheyenne heraldic objects as well.

One can hardly avoid the impression, however, that the turquoise field at the lower part of the shield represents water, and that the bald eagle is emerging from it. We know that American bald eagles eat mainly fish, which fact reinforces such an association. If this blue field represents water, however, the buffalo hoof prints are leading from it, and two "places of power" have gone underwater. Cheyenne legends, though, seem to explain these apparent anomalies. The tale "The Turtle Man" published by George B. Grinnell (1926:161-167) tells us much about the Cheyenne — or old Algonkian — belief that buffalo are controlled and owned by the underwater people.<sup>7</sup> This story, which explains the origin of the sweat lodge ceremony, describes a turtle benefactor who revives a young drowned Cheyenne man by treating him in four sweat lodges, one after another. The Cheyenne then marries the daughters of his benefactor, establishing the sexual compact which permits transfer of the sweat lodge ceremony to the Cheyenne people, now blood kin of the turtle. The man has a turtle son, and is tested by his turtle father-in-law, who sets a trial the Cheyenne must pass in order to obtain the turtles' power. "After three days' starving, he saw a person's head come up in the middle of the lake, and...he knew that it was the head of his son. The boy spoke to his father" and explained the terms of the quest, at which the Cheyenne, on the fourth attempt, was successful:

At one side of the lake was a great wall of rock coming down to the water's edge, and under this wall, deep water; and in the wall below was a hole. The son said to his father, "Now, father, you take hold of my tail, and I will lead you to where your relations all are. All of them stay in that deep water under those rocks." The man did as his son told him to, and held on by his tail, the turtle dived into the lake, and they went deep into the water, and at last they reached the place where lodges were standing; but here there was no water. At these lodges he found his father-in-law and his wives (Grinnell 1926:166).

At the end of the tale we are informed that "it is because the underwater people [turtles] had [controlled] buffalo that the buffalo's head is put before the sweat lodge" (Grinnell 1926:167).<sup>8</sup>

Several features of the tale are reminiscent of the origin story of the Whistling Elk shield, and explain some

elements of that story. Now we understand that Whistling Elk went to the "rocky point running into the water," because "under this wall, [was] deep water, and in the wall below was a hole," the entrance to the underworld, and to the home of the underwater people, that is, the controllers of the buffalo. The buffalo skull Whistling Elk brought with him to the edge of the water is his meditation object, which helped him to concentrate on the buffalo guarded underwater.

In order to assemble all the pieces of this puzzle, we must now discuss another object, a painted tipi model commissioned by James Mooney for the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition of 1904 (Fig. 3). We learn from James Mooney's unpublished notes that this design was first dreamed and made by Msianiaw, or Old Tipi, the grandfather of Sutaya Woman and Small Woman, Mooney's informants on this piece. Old Tipi belonged to the Masikota band, and had six wives and thirty children. His name, or more properly the name of his tipi, literally means old tipi but is understood as brown from usage.<sup>9</sup>

A description of the tipi model has been published by Nancy L. Fagin (1988:268-269), although it is incomplete. The background color of the entire cover is orange brown. At the bottom there are two horned, underwater monsters (*mihn*; Grinnell 1923, Vol. 2:97), each facing the door, that is consequently east. Above them are four multicolored arcs distributed evenly around the perimeter of the tipi and painted with red, yellow and blue lines. A thin, purplish blue border connects the arcs. On the back side of the tipi, a similar line borders the large, white disk which is also circled with red, yellow and blue lines. Above the disk is a large turtle, painted in purplish blue. A blue zigzag line emanates from the nose of the turtle, which with the bordering purplish blue lines separates the top section of the tipi cover from the central zone. Above this line is a white four-pointed star, outlined with the same purplish blue. A yellow crescent moon is painted above the door, bordered by red on its convex, and blue on its concave curves.

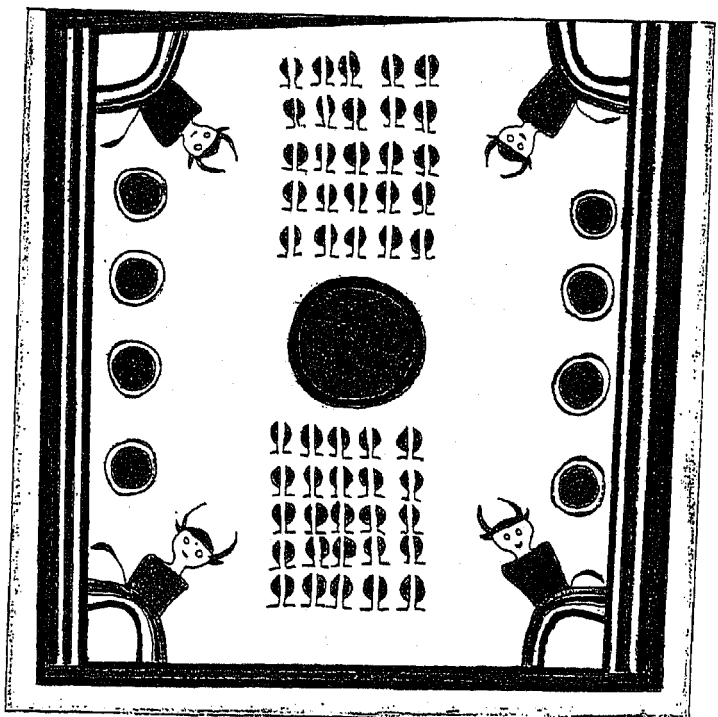
The painting on this tipi cover is almost a literal illustration of the Turtle Man tale. The presence of the two horned underwater monsters indicates that we are looking underwater. The blue horizontal lines from which the head of the turtle emerges indicate the surface of the water. The turtle is the son of the hero of the tale, coming to help his father. The four multicolored arcs represent the four dome-shaped sweat lodges which were used by the turtle benefactor to revive the drowned Cheyenne. The central circle, while a representation of the sun, is also the hole to the underwater world through which the Cheyenne is transported with the aid of his turtle son.

The design of this tipi cover may be transposed into a shield design.<sup>10</sup> A surprising parallel is provided by a model shield in the collection of the Arizona State Museum (Fig. 4).<sup>11</sup> The turtle on this model shield occupies a central position, while the placement of four arcs, a white disk and four-pointed star(s) is almost identical to

the design on the tipi model commissioned by Mooney. Here lines emanating from the head of the turtle are flanked by two swallow-tailed birds; and two dragonfly figures appear on either side of the white disk. This model shield has no documentation but its iconographic relation to the model tipi is apparent. Further, this comparison has illustrated that we may interpret the turquoise field on the Brodhead shield as a body of water while associating the accompanying symbols with the Middle World.

The Brodhead shield design can also be turned upside down. In this inverted position, the turquoise field becomes *Otatavoom*, the Blue Sky-Space, which is the domain of all the *maheonevekseo*, the Cheyenne holy birds (Moore 1984:298; 1986:179-184). The bald eagle head, also painted in turquoise, might invoke either *Nonomavecess*, the Thunderbird, or *Maheonevecess*, the Bird Father who strikes down from the uppermost region of the universe, bringing spiritual/male energy to the surface of the fertile soil. Even the shape of the turquoise field gives the impression of the extended wings of the bald eagle. At the same time, this dual interpretation (body of water/blue sky) is within Cheyenne theology, as deep waters are associated with the starless night sky — both representing *Otatavoom*, the Blue Sky-Space (Moore 1974:158).

We can interpret three-fourths of the surface of the shield as the region *Setovoom*, the Nearer Sky-Space — that is, the region below the Blue Sky-Space. The *maxevkseo*, or great birds which, roughly speaking, are



6. Drawing of parfleche case, Cheyenne, c.1860. Reproduction from National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York, Cat. No. 13/5303. Author's drawing.



Blue field	Blue Sky-Space <i>Otatavoom</i> / body of water	All Father <i>Ma'heo'o</i>	protection against death
Blue eagle's head	Thunderbird <i>Nohomavecess</i> / Bird Father <i>Maheonevecess</i>	spiritual power/ male energy	procreating life/ antagonism to death
Two swallow- tailed birds	swallow-tailed kites <i>otatavoniz</i> / great birds <i>maxevekseo</i> Nearer Sky-Space <i>Setovoom</i>	power to kill	success in battle
Two zigzag lines	lightning and/or thunder <i>nonoma</i>	spiritual power/ male energy	procreating life/ antagonism to death
Eleven lines ending in circles	cosmic potency/ procreative power <i>exhastoz</i> power symbols rain, hail	spiritual power/ male energy  power to crush enemies	procreating life/ antagonism to death  protection against bullets
Twenty-eight buffalo hoof prints	buffalo herds <i>esevone</i> trampling hoofs	earth, food, shelter, coming of buffalo thunder/death of enemies	sustained life  success in battle
Four white-and- blue borders around red circles	places of power	guardians of four directions <i>Ma'heano</i>	power over the whole earth
Four red circles	four directions <i>nevestanevoo'o</i>	Mother Earth <i>Escehemaw</i>	power over the whole earth

7. Author's chart illustrating the three-layered meanings of each design unit of the Brodhead shield.

the predatory birds — including *nizeo* (the eagles) and *aenoo* (the hawks) — populate the Nearer Sky-Space (Moore 1984:298; 1986:184-186). In addition to eagles, two other large raptors are incorporated into the Cheyenne taxon of *niz* (eagle). One of these is the *otatavoniz*, the blue eagle, or American swallow-tailed kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), formerly common along the Canadian and Arkansas rivers (Moore 1986:185). It is recognized by its striking black-and-white pattern and swallow tail (Robbins, Bruun and Zim 1966: Fig. 13). Its representations on the Brodhead shield are recognizable because of the light-colored heads, which for some unknown reason are painted yellow. The kites are striking down from the border of the Blue Sky-Space, into the Nearer Sky-Space, bringing with them the power of thunder, indicated by the blue zigzag lines.<sup>12</sup>

The most intriguing elements on the Brodhead shield are the eleven blue lines ending in small red circles that are arranged in a fan-shaped group near the top center. Searching for parallels among other Cheyenne shields, we find one in the collection of the Naprstek Museum in Prague, Czech Republic (Cat. No. 44,603), which has seven alternating black and pale green lines (also ending in dots) arranged in similar form. Two other Cheyenne shield covers have a turtle design on a yellow background as the central motif (Fig. 1),<sup>13</sup> and the dark arcs at the top circumference have been embellished by short green lines ending in red dots. The deep turquoise color of the arc on one of these shields (unillustrated) reveals that this element symbolizes the most sacred region of the Cheyenne universe, the Blue Sky-Space. Its

color visually represents *Ma'heo'o*, the Supreme Being, from whom emanates *exhastoz*, the cosmic power that permeates and maintains the world (Schlesier 1987:7). This permeating force is again expressed visually on a third shield, which also has a black arc on the upper perimeter.<sup>14</sup> In this instance, the entire surface of the shield is spotted by pale green dots, each trailing a short green line, indicating that they are falling through the Nearer Sky-Space, the domain of raptors. These dots may symbolize green hail, which the Cheyenne believe to be the active agent that stimulates new life each spring (Moore 1974: 154-159). Thus short blue lines ending in red circles on the Brodhead shield may also refer to *exhastoz*, the primary source of energy, coming down from the blue lodge of *Ma'heo'o*, the All Father, bringing power and protection for the bearer of the shield.

Further examples emphasize that these lines ending in dots really are the visual expression of this Cheyenne theological concept. The first is an unattributed Ghost Dance dress from the Southern Plains (Fig. 2). Because of the iconographic characteristics of the decoration on this dress, I consider it to be of Cheyenne manufacture, and I shall interpret its design accordingly. The upper three-quarters of the dress is painted blue, with five-pointed white stars covering the field. A bright green line borders this blue field on the skirt of the dress, and the remaining quarter is painted yellow. Sixteen green lines, each ending in a green circle, hang down from this border. Just above the fringe, a red line runs along the bottom of the skirt, with small red triangles projecting above, and bordered by a thin greenish blue line.

The upper blue field with the stars symbolizes the night Blue Sky-Space; the yellow field, the Nearer Sky-Space; the red line with the red triangles indicates *Ntshoaman*, the Deep Earth; and the greenish blue line above them symbolizes *Votostoom*, the Fertile Soil.

It was recently written "that the little lines with the balls on the ends may be a way to note time" (Josephy, Thomas and Elder 1990:57). This is possibly true, but I think a more plausible explanation is that they represent cosmic power emanating from the Blue Sky-Space to engender life on Mother Earth. In discussing cosmic power, John Moore writes: "In Cheyenne, there are a multitude of expressions for this kind of energy, the most formal being *Exhastoz*, which I translate as 'cosmic potency.' *All forms of power, life, and energy in the universe, however, are of the same sort, and are transmutable one from the other*" (1974:178, emphasis added). This suggests that we might expect to find power symbols radiating from sources other than the Blue Sky-Space.

As one example, a shield cover in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian features a strange animal (Cat. No. 16/2489). At first glance this appears to be a buffalo, but it is very probably a depiction of the *Ahke*, "a four-legged monster which lives in... springs. It is described as being like a bull. Offerings are made at springs supposed to be inhabited by such a



8. War shield, Sioux(?) pre-1895. Paint on leather, horse hair locks, brass hawk-bells. Collected by George H. Brodhead at Camp Supply, Indian Territory. Courtesy Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York, Cat. No. RM 1953. AE 8592.

monster" (Grinnell 1923, Vol. 2:98-99). In his dictionary, Petter gives the name as *Ax'eo*, and further says that not only do the Cheyenne make offerings to them, "but also make images of them, which they worship" (1915:101). The five lines ending in dots on either side of the *Ahke* could represent the inherent potency with which he protects the shield bearer. In a second example (Fig. 9) these lines appear like a corona around a snapping turtle's shell. In both form and function, a turtle's shell is analogous to a shield. These examples suggest that deciphering the short lines with dots as power symbols seems to be the correct choice, and this interpretation is in total accord with Cheyenne theological concepts.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize the powers invoked in the painting of the Brodhead shield (Fig. 7). Following Erwin Panofsky's iconographic-iconological classification (1955), it becomes clear that Cosmic Power, the Thunder and the Guardians of the four directions are the primary forces involved, which in a permutating system of

associations means that the bearer of the shield is capable of repelling the thunders and bullets of his enemies throughout the four corners of the world.

Our analysis of the Brodhead shield and other heraldic objects suggests that Cheyenne religious concepts are expressed artistically. The figures and designs on Cheyenne heraldic objects (shields, painted tipis and figurative *parfleches*) are arranged holistically, as models of the universe. Circular shield designs can be seen as overhead maps of sacred space, while other Cheyenne heraldic objects are equally intended as reflections of the cosmos. Certainly they serve not only as indicators of social status for the individual, but also fulfill a mnemonic and tutorial function, reflecting cosmological traditions for the entire community.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Leman has so far been unable to confirm the existence of this cosmological structure with current Cheyenne speakers (Glenmore and Leman 1984:218-221; Leman 1994). He has, however, found current



makers able to understand and translate these terms to English. aims for the historical (apparently ceremonial) usage of these terms n be found as early as Petter 1915:70.

the unpublished Cheyenne field notes of James Mooney there is a ore detailed description and identification of this lake: "Medicine ke, alias Tipi Pole Trail Lake — Wy. = DeSmet Lake? . . . So called cause lines on rock running into lake as if made by dragging tipi les. South of Powder river and north from *Timshinowi-yohi* = volous (Woman) river. . . . Fasting resort for Cheyennes and other es" (Mooney 1902-1907: MSS 2531, 3614).

Petter's English-Cheyenne dictionary we find under the entry ode": "ve, abode, tipi, dwelling. . . . *Heszevox*, its abode, lair, den/of d animals/lit. 'its hole'" (1915:7).

ish to thank Winfield Coleman, San Francisco, California, for calling / attention to this specimen. Since the parfleche is considered to a medicine bundle, the museum declined to provide a photograph the object. My drawing is as close to the original design as possible. ough the color of the circle (green, outlined in red and yellow) rais- serious doubts about its meaning as the sun, there is a faded green :scent moon, also outlined in red, in the center of the reverse side ich strengthens this interpretation.

ould like to thank Charles Rambow, Sturgis, South Dakota, for his mission to study the ledger.

<sup>7</sup> The fact that several other Algonkian-speaking Plains tribes share the belief that buffalo live in underground caves seriously contradicts Hoebel's supposition (1978:23) that this idea was borrowed from the Mandan by the Cheyenne (Powell 1969, Vol. I:xxiii; Grinnell 1892:25; Trenholm 1970:7).

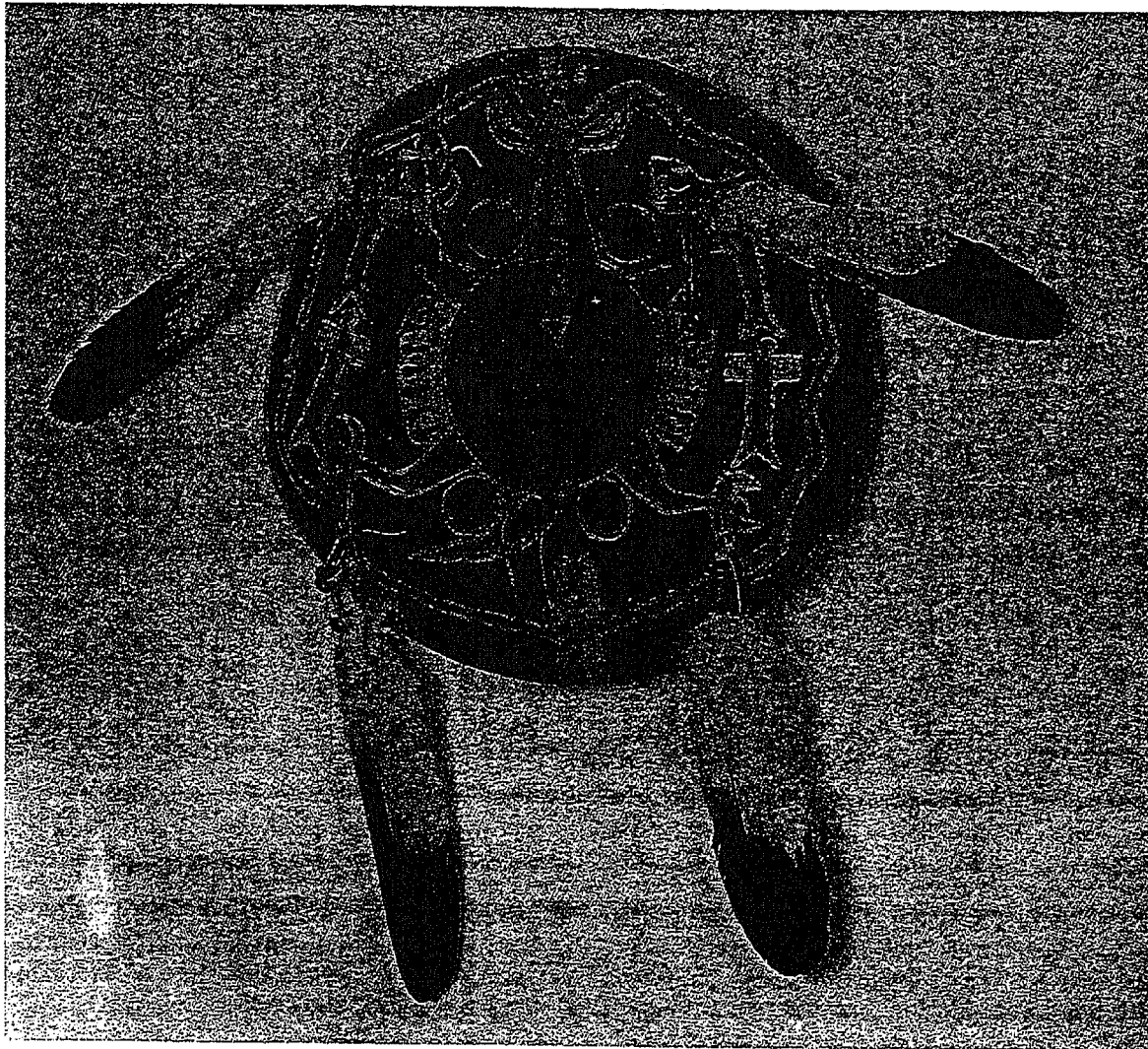
<sup>8</sup> I wish to thank Karl H. Schlesier for calling my attention to the possible differences in the origin story for the sweat lodge among the different Cheyenne bands (Schlesier 1987, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Mooney 1902-1907: MS #2531. Mooney provided two additional forms of the Cheyenne term: *Mosianiow* and *Masianium*. Another form of the term appears in the unpublished Cheyenne field notes of Truman Michelson. He collected the tale called "Story about Otter" in Cheyenne. Here we find the form as *masiskaniuw*, with the meaning given as "yellow lodge" (Michelson n.d.:MS #2798).

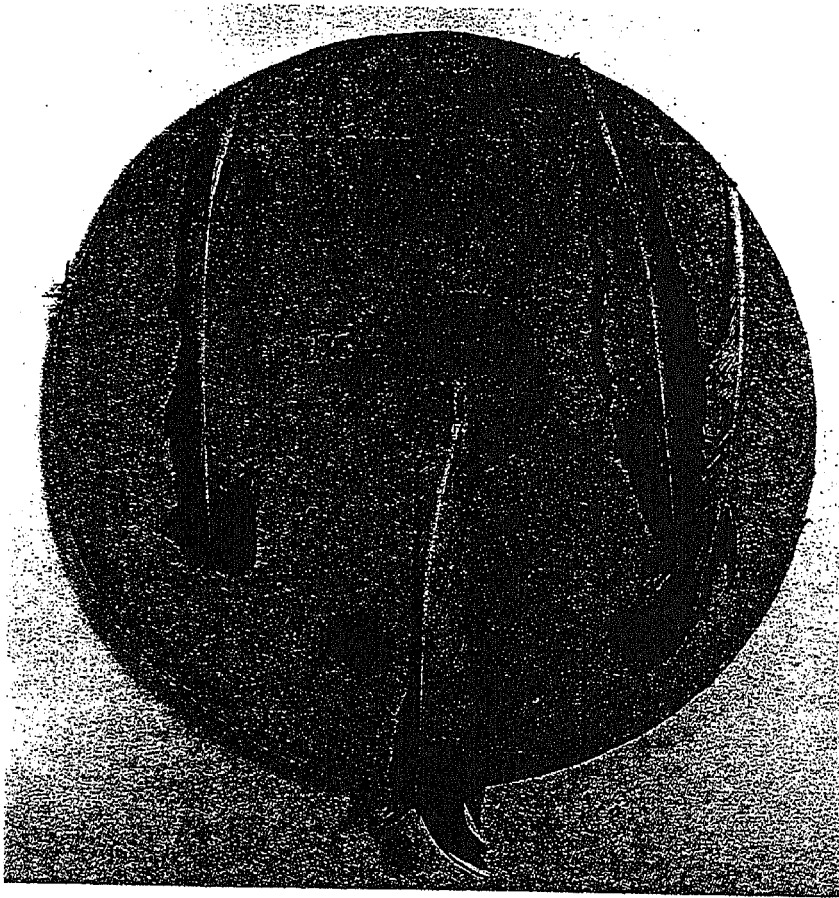
<sup>10</sup> I wish to acknowledge this idea to Winfield Coleman, San Francisco, California, who transposed some tipi designs to shield forms in his book on Cheyenne art (Coleman 1992).

<sup>11</sup> I would like to thank F. Dennis Lessard, Santa Fe, New Mexico, for calling my attention to this specimen. The small model has a circular metal base, and the painting is executed on the canvas cover.

<sup>12</sup> Because of the geographical distribution of the American swallow-tailed kite, we might suppose that the Brodhead shield was made by a Southern Cheyenne. I would like to thank Christian F. Feest,



9. Shield, Cheyenne, catalogued as Mandan/Arapaho, c.1850. Paint on leather, feathers. 19" diameter (47.5 cm). Courtesy National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York, Cat. No. 22/8539.



10. Whistling Elk shield, Cheyenne, c.1800. Paint on leather, feathers. 19½" diameter (49 cm). Collected by John J. White. Ex-collection National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York, Cat. No. 10/4316. Courtesy Foundation for the Preservation of American Indian Art and Culture, Chicago.

University of Frankfurt, Germany, for calling my attention to an early painted buffalo robe in the collection of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris (Cat. No. MH 78.32.134), that also depicts a stylized thunderbird head down — that is, striking down from heaven (Vitart and Horse Capture 1993:120-121, Pl. 14).

<sup>13</sup> One of these Cheyenne shield covers is in the collection of the Colorado State Historical Society (Cat. No. E 1850.11). The present location of the other example is unknown; it was stolen from a United States private collection during the 1980s.

<sup>14</sup> This shield is in a private collection.

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