

WHO WERE/ARE THE "ANISHINAABE"?

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It is becoming increasingly common for archaeologists to speak of the Anishinaabe people (plural, Anishinaabeg) of Manitoba. Who were/are these people? To cut to the quick – when I read it in the local literature I have to assume that they were/are Ojibwas, but some archaeologists are inclined to avoid this latter term in favour of "Anishinaabe."

The problem with archaeologists' using the term "Anishinaabe" is, it can be ambiguous in some situations. It's ambiguous because it's inclusive, rather than specific, and that can make for difficulties. There is no question that it's an Indigenous term that Aboriginal people apply to themselves; nor is there any question that at least seven (there may be more) distinguishable Algonquian peoples - Saulteaux, Potawatomie, Odawa, Oji-Cree, Nipissing, Algonkin, and Mississauga - all use "Anishinaabe" as a self-identifier.

In the very early 19th Century CE, there were Saulteaux, Nipissings, and Odawas -- Anishinnabeg all living in southern Manitoba.

When an archaeologist uses the term "Anishinaabe," is (s)he referring to one, or some, or all of the above-named peoples? If one or some of the above, which one(s)? In the cultural and political here-and-now of modern-day Winnipeg, "Anishinaabe" may be entirely sufficient because it's locally regarded as synonymous with "Ojibwa" and "Saulteaux" (also synonyms hereabouts); within the context of historical narrative or discourse, however, it may be desirable if not essential to specify to which of the Anishinaabe people(s) one is referring.

If the archaeologist expressly wants to keep it generic, then of course "Anishinaabe" is the way to go. But if s(he) wants to articulate, say, the hypothesis that the Ojibwa in particular were in Manitoba before the advent of the Europeans, "Anishinaabe" may not quite serve the purpose. On a similar plane, if I have a need to identify myself, and to be identified, specifically as a Manitoban, calling myself "Canadian" won't do the trick.

But it gets even more complicated if we take into account the understandings of certain modern-day Elders. In 2014 the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat co-published a book titled *Untuwe Pi Kin He -- Who We Are: Treaty Elders' Teachings Volume 1*. In a statement attributed to Sagkeeng Elder Ken Courchene, the Navajos and Hopi are alluded to as Anishinaabe (p. 34). I take this to mean that "Anishinaabe" can also refer to non-Algonquian peoples as well. In other words, it's a synonym for "Indigenous."

Nowadays, archaeologists are becoming increasingly empathetic and terminologically sensitive toward Aboriginal people, and they (the archaeologists) make a point of using the Aboriginals' own self-identifiers in their writing and dialogues. However, "Ojibwa" in its numerous spelling variations

began its career, and also persists, as an Indigenous self-identifier; and if a writer has Ojibwas specifically in mind, and not Potawatomes, or Odawas, or Zunis, why not use "Ojibwa"? The Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council doesn't seem to have a problem with it.