

Preliminary Program

20th Biennial Southwest Symposium

Continuities & Transformations

El Paso, Texas

February 18-20, 2027



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PRELIMINARY PROGRAM: PRESENTATION ORDER AND TIMES MAY CHANGE

CONTINUITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Thursday, February 18th

Registration table opens at 5.

Welcome Mixer 5:30 to 8, cash bar, Sky Lounge

Friday, February 19th

OPENING COMMENTS (Friday morning, Franklin Ballroom)

SESSION I (Friday morning, Franklin Ballroom)

PLACE-MAKING AND THE ENDURING POWER OF PLACE: MEANING, MEMORY, AND LIVED EXPERIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE

Place-making is the process through which people create meaning in the world around them, expressing beliefs, values, traditions, and experiences across locations at all scales—from offering places, rooms, and pueblos to landscapes, landmarks, and entire cultural regions. At its core, place-making theory distinguishes between space and place. While space can be understood as a physical environment, place emerges when people imbue that environment with meaning through lived experience, knowledge, memory, emotion, and social relationships. Place is therefore more than a location; it is a setting shaped by activities, histories, identities, and connections to others (Bowser and Zedeño 2009). This perspective is rooted in humanistic geography, where place is sometimes described as "space made meaningful" (Tuan 1977), and lived experience, attachment, and belonging are considered to be fundamental to people's relationships with their environments (Relph 1976). Together, these perspectives remind us that places are not inherent features of landscapes but are continually created and renewed through human engagement. In archaeology, anthropology, and heritage studies, place-making provides a valuable framework for understanding how places and landscapes acquire and maintain significance. Practices such as place naming, resource gathering, travel, ceremony, storytelling, craft production, and stewardship connect knowledge and memory to particular locations, creating enduring relationships between people and place. Thus, places are never static; they are continually reshaped through movement, interaction, and changing social and historical relationships (Massey 1994, 2005). This session explores the diverse ways places are created,

maintained, transformed, and remembered, as well as the challenges that emerge when new layers of meaning, use, and occupation are added to—or sometimes obscure—earlier ones. Contributors examine how changing land tenure, evolving traditions, technological developments, and shifting social and political contexts shape and reshape places over time. The session also considers how these perspectives inform contemporary heritage management and land stewardship, influencing the ways significant places are recognized, protected, interpreted, and sustained for future generations.

Place Making and the Enduring Power of Place: Meaning, Memory, and Living Histories in the Tigua Landscape and Beyond

Maren P. Hopkins (Anthropological Research, LLC) and Ricardo Quezada (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo)

Nearly two decades after the publication of *The Archaeology of Meaningful Places* (Bowser and Zedeño 2009), we reflect on the continuing evolution of place-based research in archaeology, anthropology, heritage studies, and Indigenous scholarship, with a particular emphasis on the U.S. Southwest and northern Mexico. While archaeology remains an important avenue for understanding how places acquire and retain significance, we also recognize that the histories and meanings of landscapes are expressed through many forms of lived experience. Oral traditions, place names, language, knowledge about the natural world, resource use, craft production, ceremony, movement across landscapes, and other cultural practices reveal human relationships with place that are essential to understanding the deep connections communities sustain across generations. The papers in this session demonstrate that places are not simply archaeological phenomena but dynamic cultural processes continually created, experienced, interpreted, and renewed through everyday life. Significance of important places often persists time, shaping identity, memory, and belonging while also informing many of the preservation, interpretation, and management challenges we confront today. To introduce these themes, we begin with examples from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in the El Paso region, illustrating how relationships with place continue to shape Tigua cultural identity, heritage, and stewardship.

Place Before Time: Indigenous Place-Making and the Archaeology of Enduring Landscapes

Joseph Aguilar (Pueblo of San Ildefonso)

For Pueblo people, there is no clear distinction between place and time. Our world in the present is inextricably linked to the world of our ancestors, and the values of both are imbued in shared landscapes. An emphasis on place, rather than time, maintains that connection. Archeology is inherently fixated on time and, as a result, has often overlooked the importance of Indigenous constructs of place. A place-based approach attempts to deconstruct the artificial barriers of “history” and “prehistory” and rejects the false assumption that places in “history” are only linked to entangled European/Indigenous encounters, while places of “prehistory” are only linked to a purely Indigenous past. From this perspective, the “Southwest” is not an Indigenous marker of place, but is rather a North American spatial category, characterized as part of the national project of replacing Indigenous societies with settler colonial ones. This paper explores Pueblo Peoples’ lived relations with land which are borne by stories, histories, and enduring traditions and offers perspectives from archaeology and tribal historic preservation. Such approaches contribute to the fields of archaeology and historic preservation through its emphasis of connecting Indigenous people to not only their pasts, but to places that transcend time.

Tracing the Path of the Hemish Arrow and Eagle Warrior Societies

Christopher Toya (Pueblo of Jemez, Tribal Historic Preservation Office) and Barry Price Steinbrecher (Anthropological Research, LLC)

For the *Hemish* of the Pueblo of Jemez, New Mexico, migration is an important historical process that interweaves processes of transformation and conservation of group identity. Today, the people of Jemez Pueblo maintain intricate migration histories in a variety of traditions, including through the rituals and songs of the community’s religious societies. These histories weave an ancestral landscape through descriptions of events and their setting, often using descriptive place names that can be linked to geographic landmarks. The songs of the *Hemish* Arrow and Eagle warrior societies performed by members of the Pueblo of Jemez today describe the migrations of their warrior progenitors from northern New Mexico to the area of El Paso, Texas; the ancient pueblo of Paquimé in Chihuahua; and beyond, before many of the warriors returned to reunite with their *Hemish* kin in the Jemez Mountains of north-central New Mexico. This paper explores the significance of the migrational landscape of the Arrow and Eagle warrior societies—defined through place names passed down through generations—and explores implications of these migrations on *Hemish* identity, traditions, and affiliations through both ethnographic and archaeological lenses.

Intertwined Histories: Hopi and Zuni in the Petrified Forest

Greg Schachner (University of California Los Angeles), Joel Nicholas (Hopi Cultural Preservation Office), Octavius Seowtewa (Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Team), Maren P. Hopkins (Anthropological Research, LLC), Reuven J. Sinensky (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center), and Jon Harges (National Park Service)

Petrified Forest is one of the most iconic landscapes of the American Southwest and a central setting in the intertwined histories of the Hopi and Zuni. Recent collaborative work in the region offers an opportunity to re-examine and reinforce these ancestral ties, which extend back millennia, persist in the present, and will continue into the future. The Hopi and Zuni people and their ancestors have left enduring marks on this landscape through petroglyphs, trails, resource gathering, ceremonies, and settlements, shaping Petrified Forest into a culturally significant place for both Tribes. In this paper, we examine the social histories and practices underlying this long-term, dynamic process of place-making. Ultimately, we argue that landscapes are best understood as being continually created, maintained, and transformed through the intertwined histories of multiple social groups and institutions. This perspective not only clarifies the deep-time connections embedded in Petrified Forest, but also supports efforts to preserve and strengthen these relationships for future generations.

Place as Kin: Maintaining and Sustaining Balance in an Unbalanced World

Nicholas C. Laluk (University of California Berkeley)

Ndee (Apache) perceptions of place and the dynamics of place-based affiliations are deeply intergenerational and experiential. In his seminal publication *Wisdom sits in Places* (1996), anthropologist and linguist Keith Basso discusses *Ndee* cultural, moral, and social obligations tied to place and the topographical environment. However, beyond natural topography being our teachers that underpin *Ndee* moral and social well-being, how do we maintain place-based connections with technological advances and capitalistic developments that threaten ongoing connections to place? How do we sustain connections that are a part of our overall *Ndee* birthrights? Drawing from Kanngieser and Todd's (2020) research on "environment as kin," and attunement this paper challenges the structural nature of assessing significance of "place" by foregrounding ongoing relationality, as well as *Ndee* clan and kinship obligations to place.

"Shall We Sit and Sing?": Placemaking and the Ritual Use of Metates in the Casas Grandes and Puebloan Worlds

Michael D. Mathiowetz (Getty Research Institute)

Maize agriculture has been a fundamental part of life in the US Southwest and Mexican Northwest (SW/NW) since the Early Agricultural period around 3000 BC. Stone tools that aided people in caring for, harvesting, processing, and serving maize are prominent in the archaeological record of societies across the region. Studies often focus on metates for insight on economic and domestic behaviors. Less well studied is the cosmological significance of corn grinding and its change through time. Puebloan ethnology indicates that grinding is an ideologically loaded activity with layers of metaphors linked to the sun, rain, the ancestors, fertility, and more. Metates bring those metaphors to life when used in certain spaces, thus serving as important tools for converting such spaces into meaningful places. Grinding activities are anchored to the landscape, but are also conducted on rooftops and in public plazas, private mealing rooms, and musical grinding parties. Patterns in mano and metate deposition (e.g., in shrines) can provide insight on cultural meanings. In the Casas Grandes region, continuities in maize agricultural practices occurred during a period of disruption in sociopolitical and religious organization between the Viejo (AD 700–1200) and Medio (AD 1200–1450) periods. Examining grinding and metates in Puebloan cosmology and society sheds light on continuities and disjunctions in maize-agricultural practices and social-political and religious organization in the Casas Grandes world, thereby revealing the deep history of placemaking practices. While there is long-term continuity in grinding and maize agricultural practices, the development of Medio period solar and maize ritualism signified a regional cosmological shift in which grinding practices took on new meanings that persist in the present.

Making with Place: Embodied Expertise, Place-Based Knowledge, and the Archaeology of Craft

Kelsey E. Hanson (University of Texas at Arlington)

How are places represented in craft technology, and how do material practices create and sustain relationships between people and places across generations? Technologies such as pottery, paint, dyes, and textiles require sustained engagement with landscapes and their materials. Through this engagement, practitioners develop sensory, tactile, and experiential knowledge grounded in particular places. In this paper, I consider craft technologies as material outcomes of place-making, examining how they embody the technological practices through which people engage with particular places. I explore how this embodied expertise creates, communicates, and nurtures relationships with place, and how those relationships in turn shape tradition, innovation, and identity. Drawing from archaeological and contemporary examples, such as paint traditions in the Chaco World and pottery traditions among Mata Ortiz potters, I explore how the selection and transformation of raw materials reveal ways in which technological practices communicate and sustain relationships with place. By integrating archaeometric methods with ethnography and place-based knowledge, I offer ways in which archaeologists can better recognize the spatial and embodied dimensions of craft technology. I conclude by considering how attending to these relationships can inform contemporary approaches to Indigenous heritage management and stewardship.

Enduring Places of Salt: Memory, Labor, and Collective Power in the Chihuahuan Desert

Natalia Martínez-Tagüeña (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos) and Jaiber Alberto Orozco Sánchez (Instituto Potosino de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica)

How do meaningful places endure through periods of profound historical transformation? This paper explores the long-term production of place at Laguna de Palomas (Bolsón de Mapimí, northern Mexico), where salt extraction has undergone political, economic, and technological transformations—from pre-Hispanic use through colonial exploitation and industrial management to contemporary ejido governance—yet the lagoon continues to function as a meaningful cultural landscape whose significance extends beyond its role as a productive space. Drawing on archaeological perspectives, historical sources, and ethnographic research, we argue that place-making is continually reproduced through labor, collective organization, and productive infrastructure that anchors memory, materiality, and lived experience. Abandoned buildings, transport routes, and workspaces actively mediate identities and understandings of the landscape. Socioenvironmental variability, shifting political regimes, and changing markets have repeatedly transformed salt production. Yet these disruptions have reinforced forms of place-making that allow the landscape to remain meaningful across generations. Continuity emerges through the enduring capacity of collective labor, memory, and power to reproduce, negotiate and redefine relationships with the landscape. Moreover, community efforts to develop ecotourism illustrate how the salt landscape is being reimagined as living heritage, reflecting local aspirations for stewardship, sustainable livelihoods, and the intergenerational transmission of place. Our study contributes to archaeological discussions of place-making, cultural landscapes, and the heritage stewardship in drylands.

Kéyah Bahané – Diné Stories from the Land, Past, Present, and Future

Wade Campbell (Boston University), Erik Stanfield (Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department), and Richard Begay (Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department)

Oral traditions recounting *Diné* connections with the landscape of *Diné Bikéyah*, the now-U.S. Southwest, have been recorded for over 100 years and continue to be passed down today. Frequently transmitted through ceremony and song, these accounts describe an array of place-based interactions spanning multiple dimensions: historical-mythical, personal-divine, palpable-intangible, subsistence-esoteric, etc., often at the same time! Looking further into the 21st century, governmental chaos (both federal and Tribal) coupled with language preservation struggles, necessitate that *Diné* place-based knowledge take center stage. We share here a series of case-studies—material, historical, and regional—that speak both to the depth of *Diné* place-based knowledge as well as the challenges it faces today.

From Creation to Conservation: Quechan Place-Making at *Avi Kwa Suen* and Beyond

Manfred Scott and Lena Ortega (Kw'atsán Cultural Committee, Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe)

For the Quechan people, meaningful places are not simply settings where history unfolded—they are enduring expressions of Creation that continue to shape identity, memory, and cultural responsibility. Our paper examines *Avi Kwa Suen* (Cargo Muchacho Mountains) as one of many sacred mountains that, together with ancestral sites, trails, and other culturally significant places, form an interconnected web of power extending across the Quechan homeland. According to Quechan oral traditions, these places were brought into being through the actions of the Creators, and they continue to embody teachings about history, spirituality, morality, and the responsibilities bestowed upon the Quechan people to care for the land. Together, they constitute a living repository of cultural knowledge. We argue that place-making is not confined to the distant past but remains an ongoing cultural practice. Through the preservation of Quechan religious beliefs, the use of traditional place names, storytelling, ceremony, and the interpretation of archaeological places, Quechan people continually renew the meanings embedded in the land, and sustain enduring relationships with their cultural landscape, despite generations of displacement and changing land tenure. Our paper further considers contemporary efforts to establish the proposed *Kw'atsán* National Monument as an extension of these enduring relationships. The monument proposal represents more than a conservation initiative; it is a means of recognizing the places where Creation unfolded, ancestors traveled, and generations of Quechan people forged lasting relationships with the land, plants, and animals. In this way, the proposed monument represents not only the protection of a significant Quechan cultural landscape, but also an affirmation of Quechan history and a commitment to ensuring that future generations can continue to learn from, experience, and care for these places.

Finding a Place for Cultural Landscapes in Heritage Management

Michael C. Spears (MOS Research), Sean M. O'Meara (MOS Research), and John R. Welch (Archaeology Southwest)

The pace and scale of human-driven land alteration is straining meaningful places tied to local and Indigenous communities across the globe. Responses by nation states to these pressures and an interest in promoting national identities tied to cultural heritage have led to the creation of laws and policies that call for the consideration and recognition of culturally significant places. In the United States, this has resulted in protections for huge swaths of land and laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act that require consideration and recognition of meaningful places. This has led to the preservation of many places of cultural significance, particularly spatially discrete archaeological sites and historic buildings. Nonetheless, cultural landscapes, whose significance often lies in relationships among places and the ongoing practices that sustain them, continue to be threatened with fragmentation and destruction. Two case studies from the United States Southwest illustrate how cultural heritage management laws, policies, and practices are being applied to cultural landscapes. We find that cultural landscapes have been overlooked not because of the absence of legal avenues for their consideration, but because their scale and complexity do not fit neatly within the procedural, one-size-fits-all approach that largely defines present-day cultural heritage management practices.

SESSION II (Friday afternoon, Franklin Ballroom)

CONTINUITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF BELIEF AND PRACTICE IN THE SOUTHWEST

Southwest archaeologists tend to focus on periods of disruption and change in religious practice, often by referencing the more visible manifestations of change in architecture, material culture, or iconography. Yet, evidence of continuous, long-term practices also exists that may provide insights into the historical contingencies and preconditions underlying episodes of change and their aftereffects. Change in religious practice may have arisen through social and ecological circumstances—internal, external, both—or changes in religious practice may have been a causal factor in new social and political arrangements. Additionally, episodes of change may have had connections to deeper foundational beliefs and practices and through time those beliefs were manifested through differing material expressions due to historical circumstances. The scope and scale of analysis for the session is broadly envisioned, including iconography expressed in ceramics, perishables, and rock imagery and the shifting social and landscape contexts of image creation; stability or variations in kiva and plaza use; or ways in which new religious practices and their iconographic or material expressions were integrated within traditional ones. Continuity and change in the relational aspects between communities and landscapes are of particular interest. In relation to other sessions of the symposium, this session will examine how periods of religious continuity and/or transformation were manifested across the Southwest to provide broader diachronic contexts for study.

Hot on the Heels of Leadership and Ritual Practice: Tracking Continuity, Change, and the Movement of Elite Footwear and Religious Practitioners Before, During, and After Chaco

Benjamin A. Bellorado (Arizona State Museum)

Southwest archaeologists have increasingly recognized that transformations in religious practice were rooted in longer histories of continuity, even as new social and political arrangements emerged. This presentation examines these processes through twined yucca sandals, tracing changes in their construction and design from commonplace footwear to specialized regalia associated with religious practitioners. Building on evidence for the development of new social organizations during the emergence of the Chaco regional system, I use select sandal attributes to identify community affiliations, reconstruct the movements of prominent matrilineages and the establishment of restricted sodalities, and trace changing ceremonial relationships between communities before, during, and after Chaco. These patterns reveal how established practices were selectively transformed as new forms of religious authority and social organization developed. I also examine how changing sandal traditions and their associations with religious leadership were represented in iconography, helping materialize, legitimate, and reinforce evolving religious doctrines and elite authority. By following continuity and transformation in a portable form of material culture, this study explores how religious practices, identities, and intercommunity networks were maintained, reorganized, and expressed within changing social and landscape contexts, revealing how portable ritual objects connected people, places, and practices across the Chaco World.

Aniconism at Chaco Canyon

Robert S. Weiner (Macalester College)

Why did the ancestral inhabitants of Chaco Canyon depict so few human figures? In this paper, I consider what Chaco's aniconism reveals about its religious and political system, and more broadly, shifting relationships between aesthetics and religion across Pueblo history. Despite intense archaeological focus on Chaco over the last century, there has been relatively little attention to Chacoan visual culture and the paucity of human and anthropomorphic depictions specifically. When human forms do appear at Chaco, they are few in number and often take the form of highly individualized effigy vessels. In contrast, Chaco's neighbors and contemporaries in the Mimbres region to the southwest are famous for their rich iconographic corpus, and various Mesoamerican cultures with whom the Chacoans interacted were also keen to sculpt and paint human forms. Later Pueblo traditions of kiva mural painting and rock art, often identified as evidence of the emergence of the kachina cult, are a marked departure from Chaco's visual culture. Drawing on Chacoan material culture and Indigenous oral traditions, I argue for centering the role of the image in rethinking the "emergence" of kachina ceremonialism in the Pueblo world.

Movement, Social and Ceremonial Transformation, and Becoming the Tewa World

Samuel Duwe (Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma) and Kurt F. Anschuetz (Rio del Oso Anthropological Services, LLC)

The social and ceremonial organization of all Pueblo peoples emerged through historically contingent processes of movement, aggregation, and reorganization. In this paper, we ask why Tewa Pueblo organization differs so sharply from that of neighboring Pueblo peoples. Rather than clans, Tewa communities organize life through moieties, societies of the Made People, and *maatui'in* (households), integrating village life through sodalities and *maatui'in*. We argue that Tewa history, cosmology, and organization are grounded in mobility at multiple scales, including migration, pilgrimage, seasonal movement, residential mobility, and interannual shifts that continually transform natural, social, and ideational environments. Tewa organization is structured such that communities can fracture and reconstitute, while ceremonial space can be reproduced wherever people establish center places. The Tewa face fewer demographic, social, and ideational constraints on moving, coming together, and building new center places than do other Pueblo peoples. This system was born of disparate peoples coming together in new landscapes. We show how Tewa ceremonialism and society have deep continuities with the past and with other Pueblo peoples, while also expressing continual transformation through the present day.

Closure as Continuity of Care and Care as Continuity of Community: Depositional Practice in the Northern Southwest

Samantha Fladd (Department of Anthropology, Washington State University) and E. Charles Adams (Arizona State Museum)

Closure practices—the use of materials or structural alterations to demarcate the cessation of occupation for an individual space, structure, or site—provide a tangible record not only of material culture but of sustained interactions with and care for spaces and communities. In the northern Southwest, such practices occur frequently in the archaeological record but often receive little attention in the literature. In this presentation, we examine the detailed depositional histories from the Homol’ovi Settlement Cluster to understand the transformation and continuation of belief and practice through relationships with rooms and structures over time. Specifically, we consider the material signatures of closure that speak to expressions of the accumulation of localized identities such as gender and more diverse social roles. This influences interactions with spaces that connect past, present, and future community members. Using these data, we consider closure practices both as an act of continuity of care for physical and social spaces and as an act of care for communities amid movement and migration.

Undercurrents of Traditional Religious Continuity from the Viejo to Medio Period in the Casas Grandes Region of the Greater Southwest

Michael T. Searcy (Department of Anthropology, Brigham Young University)

While significant changes in population, political power, and societal organization are evident after 1200 AD in the Casas Grandes region of northern Mexico, some religious practices appear to have begun in the Viejo period (700-1200 AD) and continued with modifications into the Medio period (1200-1450 AD). This paper explores archaeological evidence, such as the veneration of the dead and the valuation of marine shell, that suggest continuities related to cosmological traditions that endured over 700 years. These phenomena highlight how agents practicing the Casas Grandes tradition perceived their familial relationships and the possible links these beliefs had to the environment.

Time and Space in Tonto Basin Mounds

Katherine Dungan (Arizona State Museum)

Architectural mounds, that is walled spaces filled to create a raised surface, first appear in Central Arizona's Tonto Basin during the Classic Period. While some are platform mounds strongly resembling those of the Phoenix Basin—which presumably inspired the Tonto Basin mound tradition—others show a range of applications of mound technology, including “tower mounds” and filled spaces within roomblock architecture. This architectural diversity played out within a context of social change, population movement, and diverse regional connections. Particularly extensive data are available for Tonto Basin Platform mounds from a series of mitigation excavations (the Roosevelt Platform Mound Study and Roosevelt Community Development Study) carried out in the 1990s. While studies of these data were published at the time and have been revisited since, much remains to be learned from these immense projects, particularly in this era of archaeological synthesis. This paper will explore variation and change in both the process of mound creation and in the built space ultimately constructed, exploring Tonto mounds within their local context and in relationship to the platform mound tradition throughout central and southern Arizona.

Anthropomorphic Representation in the Prehistoric Borderlands: New Data and New Interpretations of Jornada and Mimbres Mogollon Iconography

Scott Andrew Nicolay (State Parks Division, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, New Mexico)

The prehistoric societies that inhabited the borderlands of the United States Southwest and Northwest Mexico produced two of the largest, most complex, and most important bodies of prehistoric iconography that remain available to researchers: Jornada Mogollon rock art and Mimbres Black-on-white ceramics. What makes these traditions especially significant is the early and abundant appearance of anthropomorphic imagery, whose origins an array of new dates have pushed back as far as the seventh century CE. Although facial imagery dominates the Jornada corpus, and Mimbres ceramics are more distinctive for full-bodied anthropomorphs, stylistic analysis suggests that both are part of a single large southern Mogollon tradition that varies over time and from east to west consistent with other cultural traits associated with ritual and cosmology. Recent work by the authors and other have revealed previously unrecognized geographical and chronological distribution trends that can enhance our understanding of this neglected cultural region.

Accommodating Intersecting Cycles of Change through Transformations of Belief and Practice in the Mimbres Valley

Darrell Creel and Roger Anyon

Re-evaluation of sites in the Mimbres Valley, particularly Galaz and Swarts, reveal previously unrecognized aspects of fluctuating ritual differentiation and group memberships associated with the waxing and waning influence of different corporate descent groups between approximately CE 880 and 1180. These fluctuations reflect times of changing religious practice, capricious ecological conditions, the upheavals of the pithouse to pueblo transition, and the collapse of Classic Mimbres society followed by renewal. Throughout these tumultuous challenges, societal cohesion, continuity, flexibility and stability allowed the old and new to meld. Cycles of construction, purposeful burning and demolition, then rebuilding are coupled with other changes in material culture ranging from minor to the dramatic. While most Mimbres communities demonstrate long term capacity to accommodate centuries of change, some do not, each conditioned by different historical contingences, decision making, and actions at various levels within each community.

Enduring Beliefs, Changing Practices: Expressions of Jornada Mogollon Iconography in Varied Media through Time and Place

Myles R. Miller (Versar)

Direct chronometric dating of Jornada Style iconography, including masks, zoomorphs, stepped fret designs, and google-eye images, establishes that the style appeared between CE 700 and 900. These and the other constituent elements of the Jornada style endured through the following five to seven centuries, but their expression in rock imagery, ceramics, or other media varied through time, most notably a two to three century gap between the first appearance in rock imagery and later expression in ceramic design. The practices in which the images were created, presented, and viewed in different media, spaces, and places changed in response to shifting economic and settlement configurations and new social arrangements resulting from such changes, yet the foundational relational aspects between communities, landscapes, and spirits remained constant. Understanding these changes requires a consideration of historically contingent transformations of iconographic expression, including where, why, by whom, and for whom images were created within specific social and landscape contexts and through media appropriate to such contexts. This presentation explores how visual expressions of belief were negotiated and modified among Jornada communities over several centuries through the interplay of mobility, residence, landscape, and social organization.

POSTER SESSION (Friday late afternoon, Franklin Ballroom)

DETAILS FORTHCOMING, POSTER SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED THROUGH DECEMBER

Saturday, February 20th

SESSION III TITLE (Saturday morning, Franklin Ballroom)

STRATEGIES OF RESILIENCE AND PERSISTENCE IN THE ANCIENT SOUTHWEST

Across the ancient US Southwest and Mexican Northwest, communities continually navigated environmental volatility, demographic shifts, resource shortages, social conflict, and other shocks to existing lifeways. While Southwestern archaeology historically prioritized models of vulnerability and negative outcomes, present approaches reveal a more complex record that highlights examples of structural resilience and adaptive innovation rooted in diverse forms of traditional knowledge and practice.

Contributors to this session draw upon diverse lines of evidence, including regional artifact/feature distributions, paleoethnobotanical and faunal remains, fire and climate histories, and material sourcing data. Methodologies span quantitative modeling to the qualitative integration of oral traditions to extant frameworks. By incorporating traditional knowledge, integrating legacy and newly collected data, and applying emerging quantitative methods, these papers move beyond debates of static continuity versus transformative adaptation. Together, contributors demonstrate how ancestral communities actively managed social and ecological disruptions through interwoven strategies of persistence and innovation, offering critical empirical frameworks relevant to contemporary communities.

The Resilience of Aggregation in the Central Mesa Verde Region

Donna M. Glowacki (University of Notre Dame), Sean Field (University of Wyoming), Grant Coffey (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center), and Katharine Williams (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center)

The process of household aggregation into larger communities and centers brings advantages such as the concentration of social networks, protection, and the potential for resource pooling to mitigate periods of food insecurity, but it can also heighten vulnerabilities by creating risks that rupture social cohesion and lead to community dissolution. Focusing on the largest ancestral Pueblo villages in the Central Mesa Verde region, this study pays particular attention to localized processes by comparing aggregated communities on the Great Sage Plain and the Mesa Verde Cuesta to assess the implications of their contexts and variability in longevity and community cohesion. Analysis involves examining the relationships among geographic contexts, type of aggregated village organization (e.g., nucleated, dispersed, or progressive localized relocation), duration of occupation, and climatic conditions (e.g., periods of acute stress) to evaluate the nature of resilience within and among community centers.

Community Organization and Water Management on the Mesa Verde North Escarpment

Kelsey M. Reese (Los Alamos National Laboratory)

The central Mesa Verde region in the northern US Southwest is a high-desert environment with limited annual rainfall and scarce permanent water resources. Ancestral Pueblo communities within the region engineered water diversion, collection, and storage features that mitigated resource instability during periods of environmental volatility in this arid environment. Recent survey on the Mesa Verde North Escarpment identified four community centers with exemplar water management features. The four community centers on the Escarpment, primarily occupied throughout the Pueblo II and Pueblo III periods, capitalized on the relative degree of water abundance by engineering artificial bodies of water that exemplified the complex relationship between subsistence and society expressed through the repeated construction of reservoirs as a central component in each community. This paper provides an introduction to the complex role of water in Pueblo society, a synthesis of community development and population history of the four Escarpment community centers, and a discussion exploring commonalities in community spatial organization that highlight how reservoir centrality was manufactured, maintained, and reproduced as communities re-negotiated residential, social, and ceremonial spaces through time.

Parched and Resilient: Early First Millennium CE Agriculture and Foodways on the Southwestern Colorado Plateau

R. J. Sinensky (Crow Canyon Archaeological Center)

Archaeologists studying agricultural societies have devoted considerable attention to exploring the Malthusian relationship between agricultural productivity and demographic change. In the Northern US Southwest researchers have particularly focused on the correlation between drought and large-scale population movements. Despite this emphasis comparatively little research has focused on the survivance of Ancestral Pueblo farmers through periods of profound agricultural hardship. The far southwestern portion of the Colorado Plateau witnessed a population boom during the early first millennium CE that corresponds with one of the most prolonged periods of drought in the tree-ring record of the region over the last two millennia. Drawing on a robust sample of recently analyzed botanical remains from well-dated contexts, I explore the drought resilient foodways of early farmers inhabiting a notably arid region during what must have been an exceedingly difficult period for maize agriculture.

Gendered Networks of Persistence in the Western Pueblo Region

Robert J. Bischoff (Center for Archaeology and Society, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University)

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, migration and aggregation transformed where communities lived in the Western Pueblo region without necessarily severing the relationships that sustained them. I use multilayer network analysis of architecture, ceramic types, ceramics sourced through neutron activation analysis (NAA), projectile points, and obsidian to examine how social ties persisted through relocation. The networks appear differentiated by gender. Architecture, NAA sourcing, and ceramic types likely reflect female-associated relationships grounded in households, production communities, and matrilineal residence, while projectile points may trace male-associated networks. If men relocated at marriage, shared projectile-point traditions may indicate enduring connections with natal kin, learning communities, or other partners across residential boundaries. Preliminary obsidian results may reveal ties that cross or mediate these domains. Resilience appears to have emerged through complementary gender-associated networks, each combining local and long-distance ties that sustained households, community identities, kin relationships, and communities of learning as people moved and reorganized.

Persistence in Place: Ancestral Pojoaque Village Sustenance Systems

Kaitlyn Davis (Department of Anthropology and Radiant Center for Remote Sensing, Northern Arizona University), Fermin Lopez (Pueblo of Pojoaque Tribal Historic Preservation Office), and Scott Ortman (Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado Boulder)

Movement is an important part of many Indigenous cultures, including Pueblo culture. Studies and discussions of movement often focus on migrations and longer-distance journeys. At the Pueblo of Pojoaque, while those longer-distance journeys are an important part of the Pueblo's story, recent collaborative research has focused on local movements and adaptations that allowed the Pojoaque community to grow and persist in place in Tewa Country. Over the past few years of field school survey and legacy collections research, we have learned more about the small-scale local dispersals and coalescences and connections among the archaeological villages within and surrounding the Pojoaque Land Grant that are ancestral to the current Pueblo of Pojoaque, as well as the deeper history and prevalence of agriculture at those sites. Paleoethnobotanical, feature remote sensing, and artifact data will be discussed to illustrate these connections and themes.

Tradition as Innovation: From Stereotypes of Stasis to Adaptability and Change in the Ancestral Pueblo Gallina Culture

Lewis Borck (Department of Native American Studies, University of Oklahoma) and Elizabeth Dresser-Kluchman, Anthropology, UC Berkeley)

Misinterpretations and resulting stereotypes of the Ancestral Pueblo Gallina culture (~1050 - 1300 AD) of northern New Mexico have flourished in archaeology since the late 1800s. These were reified and often became part of just so stories about conflict, violence, and conservatism in Southwestern archaeological histories. In the last fifteen years, though, many of these interpretations have been critiqued and discarded in the midst of a Gallina fluorecence of reinterpretation and reconstruction. In this paper, using paleoethnobotanical, ceramic, ground stone, lithic, GPS, and remote sensing data, we will describe how Gallina politics, technology, and culture are often either 1) innovations that reference historical traditions or 2) innovations in the use of historical technology. Both of these result in an archaeological record that can look static and “traditional” (in the colonial context where it means unchanging). Instead, new data and reevaluations of existing data, indicate that the Gallina people were engaged in the type of traditions that Indigenous scholars like Gregory Cajete and Robin Wall Kimmerer have argued are deeply relational and maintain social connections, while simultaneously allowing for, and even requiring, cultural adaptability and change.

Utilizing cyberSW to Examine Household Inequality and the Persistence of Difference in the Tonto Basin

Joshua Watts (Archaeology Southwest), Alanna Ossa (SUNY Oswego), and Jeffery J. Clark (Archaeology Southwest)

Archaeological studies of household inequality often emphasize intervals when differences increased, but long-term trajectories may reveal deeper structural continuities in the access to valued goods. This paper examines 160 households from 110 sites dating from 700 to 1300 CE in the Tonto Basin of central Arizona. Temporal patterns in assemblage richness are evaluated, as well as access to decorated ceramics, marine shell, exotic minerals, large game, and other material indicators of wealth and status. Using high-resolution intrasite data from cyberSW, we compare ranked household distributions across successive temporal intervals. The shape of inequality curves indicate whether access was distributed (open/market exchange) or concentrated (restricted/tribute exchange). We also examine whether high-ranking households persisted through time or shifted among settlements and neighborhoods. Preliminary results suggest both continuity and transformation: the overall structure of differential access to goods appears relatively stable for centuries while the locations of high-access households were more dynamic

Koahadk O’Odham Perseverance and Resilience to Disruption and Change

Chris Loendorf (Gila River Indian Community Cultural Resource Management Program), Barnaby V. Lewis (Gila River Indian Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office [retired]), Linda Morgan (Gila River Indian Community Cultural Resource Management Program), and Reylynne Williams (Gila River Indian Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office)

The Koahadk O’Odham who lived along the middle Gila River in south central Arizona have previously received comparatively little attention from historians and prehistorians who have studied the region. However, they played an important role in the Phoenix Basin, including for example, the production of many of the decorated ceramics used by the Akimel O’Odham. After centuries of residence along the middle Gila, disease and other pressures forced the Koahadk to relocate to the south. Despite this transformation, the Koahadk O’Odham maintained their cultural traditions including ak-chin farming methods as well as craft specializations. They also retained the name “Koahadk” for their new settlement, and they have preserved knowledge of their relocations on the landscape. These shifts in Koahadk settlement patterns are supported by archaeological evidence, which also suggest their ak-chin farming practices date from as early as AD 650.

Contrasting Patterns of Resilience and Persistence in Northwest Mexico

Matthew Pailes (Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma), Jaron Davidson (Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma), Dakota Larrick (School of Anthropology, University of Arizona), and Guadalupe Sánchez (Centro INAH Sonora)

Northwest Mexico is often invoked in pan-regional analyses of demographic adjustments and political reformulations, but often with little reference to local sequences. Over the last 20 years, researchers have collected sufficient data to begin analyzing demographic and organizational variation within the region. These nascent efforts highlight major distinctions in the trajectories of the traditions that span from the Basin and Range of Chihuahua to Sonora, inclusive of the Sierra Madre Occidental (i.e. Sonora and Chihuahua). Most notably, there are significant late pre-Hispanic demographic inflection points and settlement pattern reformulations visible in the Casas Grandes sequence not replicated in Rio Sonora. We review the existing chronological data in the form of summed radiocarbon frequencies and qualitative assessments of settlement pattern shifts to identify major periods of change. We then consider available data on the periodicity of climatic shocks and against farming approaches to evaluate potential vulnerabilities. We identify major determinants of alternative trajectories emanating from the scale of subsistence infrastructure, relative reliance on direct rainfall production, and patterns of inter-community connectedness.

Indigenous Cultural Burning and Climate Resilience in the Southwest

Christopher I. Roos (Southern Methodist University)

Archaeological and paleoecological research has transformed our understanding of Indigenous cultural burning and its ecological consequences. Here, I synthesize interdisciplinary research from over the past three decades that Indigenous fire stewardship contributed to the climate resilience of Southwestern dry forests by impacting *connectedness* and *response diversity* in these ecosystems. Seasonal climatology and abundant lightning mean that frequent landscape fires were a feature of the historical ecology of these forests with or without the presence of Indigenous people, with non-anthropogenic fire regime variability driven by changes in vegetation, fuels, and climate. Cross-scale analysis of tree-ring fire records indicates that diverse Indigenous populations reduced the impact of interannual climate on wildfire activity at local to landscape scales by reducing landscape *connectedness*. Longer-term sedimentary studies also suggest that Indigenous fire stewardship improved forest resilience to low-frequency climate variations by contributing to *response diversity*. The removal of Indigenous cultural burning from these social-ecological systems via colonialism, population collapse, and confinement to reservations contributes to modern alteration of these fire regimes and a loss of climate resilience.

Resilience and Recovery in Southwestern Large Game Animal Populations

Karen Gust Schollmeyer (Archaeology Southwest), Jeffrey R. Ferguson (Archaeometry Laboratory, Research Reactor Center, University of Missouri; University of Missouri), Virginie Renson (Archaeometry Laboratory, Research Reactor Center, University of Missouri), and Joan Brenner Coltrain (Anthropology, University of Utah)

Studies of long-term trends in large game abundance have tended to emphasize the vulnerability of hoofed mammals to over-harvesting in the arid Southwest, particularly in areas where communities of farmer-hunters placed heavy demands on local game populations for decades or centuries. However, some signals of overharvesting, like transport indicators in element data and changes in diet breadth, are less common or weaker than we might expect in much of the Southwestern archaeological record. Newly available isotopic data also suggest long-range hunting of large game was less common than expected. Case studies from southwest New Mexico and southwest Colorado indicate that not only were large game populations more resilient to human demands than previously thought, but ancient farming communities were also more resilient to local reductions in animal availability than many researchers have assumed.

The Emergence of Cycles in Food Producing Social-ecological Systems

Jacob Freeman (Anthropology, Utah State University), Judson B. Finley (Anthropology, Utah State University), and Grant Snitker (Anthropology, Utah State University)

Food producing archaeological regions display long-term cycles of population and economic expansion and contraction. To help explain these cycles, we present a model of human population and economic growth that archaeologists can calibrate and evaluate against the archaeological and paleoecological records of the American Southwest. We document the usefulness of the model by evaluating one potential mechanism for the emergence of cycles. The hangover mechanism purposes that the growth of efficiency in technology and human reproduction generates population and economic growth, tightly coupling humans and ecosystems. However, growth leads to the emergence of bottlenecks in the flow of resources. This situation makes populations, even in systems with high resilience to climate shocks, vulnerable to population and economic instability. Such instability favors adaptations that reduce the efficiency of technology, reproduction, and human-ecosystem coupling. We evaluate this hypothesis by synthesizing data on economic expansion, maize production, and fire-frequency/intensity on the Northern Colorado Plateau and in the American Southwest. This exercise helps better define the limits of the concept of resilience for explaining long-term cycles.

Investigating Impacts of Social and Environmental Conditions on Community Persistence

Scott E. Ingram (Anthropology, Colorado College)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change investigates social and environmental conditions that affect why some communities persist in place during climate challenges and others do not. Their answers will inform how communities and nations could adapt, or not, to our warming world. In the ancient US Southwest and Mexican Northwest, climate challenges to food production are endemic and archaeological data on settlement longevity are robust. In the research presented here, I use the cyberSW database of almost 5,000 settlements to compare the social and environmental conditions of the longest (> 175 years) and shortest (< 50 years) duration settlements. Conditions investigated include settlement size, watershed population density, precipitation levels, proximity to water, and more. People living in the longest-duration settlements persisted through endemic climate and other challenges; people in the shortest-duration settlements made different decisions. This analysis establishes an empirical framework to evaluate the relative impact of social and environmental factors on community persistence with implications for future climate risk mitigation and adaptation strategies.

SESSION IV (Saturday afternoon, Franklin Ballroom)

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE AT THE EDGES OF THE SOUTHWEST AND BEYOND

One of the four sessions of the 1996 Southwest Symposium was titled “Beyond the Borders of the Traditional Southwest.” During the thirty years that have passed since the 1996 session, our individual and collective knowledge of the many diverse regions positioned adjacent to or beyond the so-called traditional Southwest has advanced considerably, and accordingly the topic merits a contemporary review. New insights and revised perceptions of several regions will be presented in this session. Some are part of the greater Southwest but are often considered as peripheral or marginal, while other regions are “Southwest-adjacent” but nonetheless were both influenced by, and influenced, developments in the Southwest. In the context of the Southwest Symposium theme, this macroscale approach utilizes regional case studies that examine the manner in which periods of continuity and/or transformation were manifested across broad geographic scales. These studies may inspire more nuanced conceptions of migration and diasporas, shifting economies and exchange relationships, and religious and symbolic transformations across the Southwest.

Continuity and Change: Painted Pottery in the Northern Periphery

Katie K. Richards (Department of Anthropology, New Mexico State University)

Contextualizing Fremont continuity and transformation within the larger regional patterns of the northern Southwest provides a more nuanced understanding of the social processes at play in the region. The Fremont Late Period began around A.D. 1000 bringing with it substantial transformations including population increase, aggregated villages, surface architecture, and painted pottery. The painted pottery designs show a clear heritage in northern Southwest, broadly similar to Cortez, Red Mesa, and Black Mesa design styles common during the late Pueblo I and early Pueblo II periods; however, once these designs were adapted into the Fremont design canon, they become most notable for their continuity and persistence. For nearly 300 years Fremont potters painted designs on bowls pulled from a restrictive and standardized design style, all while pottery designs painted by neighboring Southwestern groups went through multiple transitions. Here, I use painted pottery to argue that Fremont peoples, during the Late Period, were using pottery designs to demonstrate their heritage in Southwest, while simultaneously rejecting the contemporaneous changes occurring there.

More Than a Periphery: Reconsidering the Virgin Branch in the Greater Southwest

Karen Harry (Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada at Las Vegas)

Situated along the western edge of the Pueblo world, archaeologists have tended to view the Virgin Branch as a simplified expression of Puebloan society shaped by influences emanating from the Pueblo heartland. Recent research from both the Lowland and Upland Virgin regions, however, suggests a more complex picture. Rather than representing an attenuated form of Puebloan society, the distinctive characteristics of the Virgin Branch are better understood as successful responses to the region's environmental and historical circumstances. While maintaining a distinctive regional tradition, Virgin communities participated in broader Southwestern interaction networks, incorporating and contributing ideas and practices that extended beyond their own region. Taken together, these findings suggest that the Virgin Branch should be understood not merely as the western periphery of the Pueblo world, but as an active participant in Southwestern developments whose history is central to understanding the broader Puebloan world.

A Patayan History for the Twenty-first Century

Aaron M. Wright (Archaeology Southwest)

Pioneering Southwest archaeologists defined Pataya (ancestral Yuman) as one of four principal Indigenous cultural foundations in the North American Southwest—but their enthusiasm never paid dividends and their promise of a Greater Southwest remains to be realized. This is partly due to their successors who, beset with limited data and hampered by a lack of chronological tools, charted culture histories and developmental trajectories for this Patayan tradition based largely on assumptions, many of which are hard to reconcile with contemporary understandings about neighboring Southwest traditions. I use this paper to present new data from archaeological survey along and around the lower Gila River in southwest Arizona that confront those early assumptions, tackling questions of Patayan migration, technological development, and economy. New insights serve to redraw the outline of Patayan history that has implications for neighboring cultural traditions, namely the Huhugam.

A Confluence along the Edges of the Trincheras, Hohokam, and Río Sonora: Interpreting Identity Through Ceramics at La Ciénega

Hunter M. Claypatch (Pima Community College), Cristina García Moreno (Centro INAH Sonora), and Júpiter Martínez Ramírez (Centro INAH Sonora)

Between 2024 and 2025, Centro INAH Sonora conducted an eight-month salvage excavation at La Ciénega (SON G:02:29). The site is situated along Sonora's Cocóspera Valley, a region long interpreted as an important route for precolonial inhabitants. Notwithstanding, formal investigations in the area have been lacking. This paper discusses the analysis of over 250,000 sherds/vessels from the site's thirty-six features. Pottery demonstrates that local inhabitants were at the confluence of Trincheras, Hohokam, Río Sonora, Mogollon, and Casas Grandes cultures for over six centuries. Importantly, ceramic frequencies are temporally sensitive and highlight shifting trade networks over the site's long occupation. The diversity of La Ciénega's pottery is unique and previously unseen along the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. Furthermore, the presence of locally produced pottery highlights local agency and response to external influence. By positioning La Ciénega at the edge of numerous precolonial traditions, we emphasize its regional prominence, local adaptation, and diverse cultural expression.

Mobility of Semisedentary Groups in the Sonoran Desert: Emphasis on the Production and Archaeometric Determination of Prehispanic Ceramics.

Héctor Javier Matsumiya Ballesteros (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), César Villalobos Acosta (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Alejandra Marisela Gómez Valencia (Universidad de Sonora)

This study investigates mobility strategies through ceramics belonging to the Trincheras and Costa Central (Comca'ac or Seri homeland) traditions in Sonora, Mexico. Materials were collected under the projects *Cambio Climático y Diversificación Cultural en el Noroeste de México*, *Bahía Tepoca*, and *Manifestaciones en La Proveedora, Sonora* at coastal sites between the localities of Desemboque and El Desemboque, as well as at the inland site of La Proveedora and Cerro San José, near the locality of Caborca. Petrological analyses were applied to 80 ceramic sherds and 18 sediment samples, identifying eight petrographic groups (four belonging to Trincheras, and four to Costa Central). Through reference to geological data and ethnographic analogies, this study proposes that Trincheras vessels were manufactured in two distinct regions: inland, in the Río Concepción basin, and near Puerto Libertad along the coastline. It also proposes that Costa Central vessels were manufactured along the Río San Ignacio basin. These data provide a novel means to explore the relationships within and between these distinct traditions alternatively associated with sedentary farmers and residentially mobile hunter-gatherer-fishers.

“Las Ínsulas Culturales”: Middle and Late Formative Period Dynamics in the International Four Corners

Thatcher A. Seltzer-Rogers (Chronicle Heritage)

The International Four Corners area, where the states of Arizona, Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Sonora meet, has long been interpreted in relation to well-established archaeological cultures to the north. Much of this is the outcome of the relatively less substantial or permanent composition of sites in this area as well as the paucity of widespread modern development that would necessitate associated compliance-initiated projects and limited, sustained research endeavors. Yet, the accumulated data demonstrates that throughout the tenth through early fifteenth century CE Madrean archipelago, there existed confounding local cultural transformation, fissioning, and migration. In this paper, I summarize pertinent findings from survey, geochemical sourcing of nonlocal raw materials and ceramics, archival research, and analysis of museum collections from partially to fully unpublished excavations to suggest underlying cultural patterns representing long-term ethnogenesis obscured by three incorporated socio-religious phenomena, localized political experimentation, and the impacts of migrant enclave establishment. I also advocate for archaeologists to expand their discourse to include a more peripheral zone when they seek to explain the development and transformation of socio-economic relationships that spanned from the Ancestral Pueblo, Ancestral O’Odham, and Mogollon cultures of the American Southwest into the Mexican Northwest.

Edgework in the Jornada Mogollon

William H. Walker (Department of Anthropology, New Mexico State University), Judy Berryman (Department of Anthropology, New Mexico State University), and Tuesday Critz (Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri)

The Cottonwood Spring Pueblo (LA 175) exemplifies an edge community of the 14th century Southwest. This aggregated settlement of migrants from across the Jornada region exposes dynamism within Jornada Culture and formation of an internal frontier stretching from the Rio Grande on the west to the Roswell Oasis on the east. The general movements of Southwestern peoples during this period, particularly from the north to south, contributed to this internal frontier process. Northern migrant pressures along the boundary between Ancestral Pueblo and Jornada Mogollon territories transformed the Salinas region. This process encouraged new edge communities there but also provoked others to leave and move deeper into the Jornada to places like Cottonwood Spring. Evidence of these internal and external frontier processes include forms of ceremonial buildings, wall construction recipes, enhanced ceramic exchange between homeland and new settlements, and ritual practices including site closure, and revitalization movements. Such edgework begs for macroscale approaches manifested across cultural boundaries. Through this work we want to encourage more nuanced conceptions of migration, exchange relationships, and religious transformations across the Southwest.

Putting the Southernmost Edge Back Into the “Southwest”

Bridgett Zavala (Universidad de Juarez del Estado de Durango)

In the past thirty years, archaeologists from both sides of the U.S. / Mexico border rose to the challenge of creating and refining the basic cultural histories of the ancient peoples of the vast expanse south of the “Traditional Southwest.” All northwest Mexican states saw the development of multiyear, interinstitutional projects that aimed at testing the models that Di Peso, Haury, Braniff, J. Charles Kelley and their collaborators and students had posited for the region. This process resulted in major chronological refinements that revealed long-term local development with major sites and regional systems present since people arrived in this section of the continent. Despite these major strides, most of the largest projects have focused on and around the major sites of Fin del Mundo, La Playa, Juanaqueña, Casas Grandes, and Trincheras. Now we know the complex roles these places played in the overall histories of the Northwest Southwest. In contrast, the adjacent areas, like the modern day state of Durango, have received limited scholarly attention despite clear evidence of contact and continuity throughout. This paper provides a review of the depth and scope of the archaeology of Durango, Mexico and its place within the greater regional histories. I present data from the Sextin Valley Archaeological Project, including ethnography and the region’s settlement pattern data, to illustrate a much closer shared history with the diverse peoples of the archaeological traditions of the international four corners than had been previously proposed.

Tracing Transformations Among Huatabampo People in Northern Sinaloa

Vivero-Miranda, Rodrigo (Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma)

This paper examines how the incorporation of the Lower Guasave River, northern Sinaloa (A.D. 1022/1100–1460), into the Aztatlán interaction sphere transformed Huatabampo-affiliated communities. Although the region’s participation in broader Mesoamerican exchange networks has long been recognized, little attention has been paid to whether incorporation affected all domains of social life equally. Drawing on new chronometric data, funerary evidence, ceramic paste analysis, and neutron activation data, this study evaluates that question. Results show that the onset of the Aztatlán tradition minimally altered ceramic technological practices. Even locally produced Aztatlán polychromes remained rooted in long-standing technological traditions associated with the Huatabampo period (A.D. 650-1022/1100). In contrast, mortuary practices expanded substantially through the introduction of cremations, funerary urns, and bundle burials. These contrasting patterns suggest that incorporation into broader interaction networks affected domains for social practice unevenly, facilitating innovation in ritual practice while long-established technological traditions remained comparatively resistant to change.

Sunday, February 21st

TOUR: HUECO TANKS (Sunday morning to early afternoon Meet in Hotel Lobby)

Led by Myles Miller, Mark Willis, and Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site Staff.