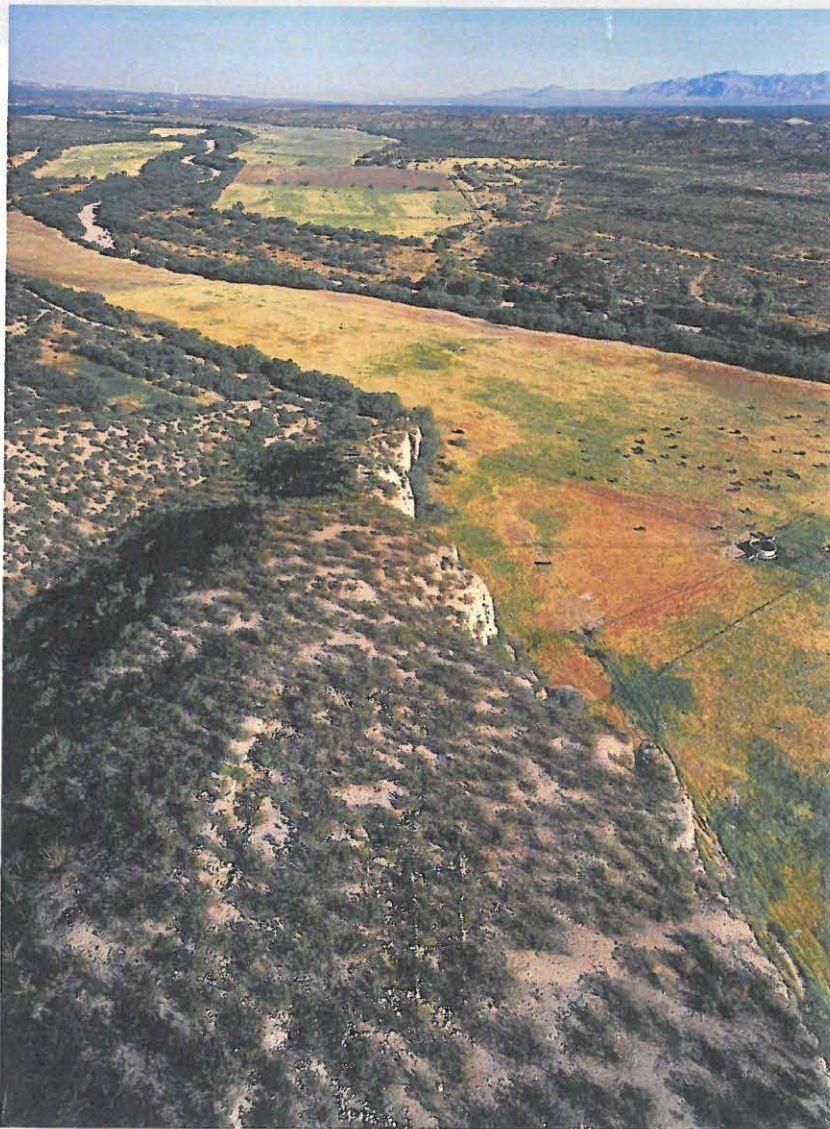




Migrants and Mounds: Classic Period Archaeology of the Lower San Pedro Valley

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Edited by:

*Jeffery J. Clark
Patrick D. Lyons*

*With a foreword by
William H. Doelle*

Contributions by:

Jenny L. Adams
Jeffery J. Clark
Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh
Mathew Devitt
Michael W. Diehl
William H. Doelle
Samantha Gallop
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FOREWORD

*William H. Doelle, President and CEO
Archaeology Southwest*

The San Pedro Valley is a little off the beaten path, which is one reason why archaeology is generally well preserved there. From Benson north to Winkelman, the valley is served by two-lane roads, and for nearly half of that distance, the roads are unpaved. High mountains to the east and west clearly define the valley, and cottonwoods or dense stands of mesquite reveal places where the river's waters flow above and below ground. This valley truly is a special place—for visitors and archaeologists alike.

When I arrived in Tucson in 1972, to attend graduate school at the University of Arizona, I met fellow students who were studying artifacts from San Pedro Valley excavations. However, my first field trip to the San Pedro only occurred a dozen years later, and my field notebook indicates it was another five years before I fully engaged with the valley. I made three visits in the final two months of 1989, and I will never forget New Year's Day, 1990, when Henry Wallace and I departed for the valley at sunrise.

Since then, I have visited the San Pedro Valley more than 100 times—sometimes alone, but more often, with others. On the first Saturday in February of 1990, 10 volunteers initiated the Center for Desert Archaeology's Lower San Pedro Survey, which covered 75 miles along the river over the ensuing four-and-a-half years. Volunteer crews did all of that work. Diverse goals—surveying, mapping, training site stewards, visiting landowners, leading tours—motivated my subsequent visits. With each visit, I learn more, my sense of connection to the San Pedro deepens, and, over the course of day-long tours, I see the compelling effect this special place has on visitors. I am not surprised it played a formative role in the development of two archaeological institutions, the Amerind Foundation and Archaeology Southwest (formerly the Center for Desert Archaeology).

The Amerind Foundation is located along the eastern boundary of the San Pedro watershed. William Shirley Fulton, Amerind's founder, conducted the institution's very first excavations in the 1930s, on its own property. These excavations drew the new institution into a debate over the nature and extent of the newly defined Mogollon culture, and led to work at the sites of Tres Alamos, north of Benson, and Babocomari Village, west of Fairbank. Building on that work, Charles Di Peso formulated a larger

research agenda that used what he called "archaeo-history" to pursue the linkage between early contact populations and the archaeological manifestations of the 1400s. Work at multiple sites around Fairbank in the early 1950s was followed by work at Reeve Ruin and Davis Ranch in the mid-1950s.

Findings at these two sites raised the issue of migration into the valley, though Amerind did not pursue the topic through further research. The institution thrived as it built on this San Pedro Valley base of experience, ultimately pursuing larger-scale excavations at Paquimé, a unique regional center in Chihuahua, Mexico. Today, Amerind is a museum open to researchers and the public, and it hosts a variety of advanced seminars to synthesize and publish archaeological and anthropological scholarship. An important partner in the present research, the Amerind Foundation retains its institutional connection with the San Pedro Valley.

In many ways, the Center for Desert Archaeology's survey followed the overall goals of Amerind's original archaeohistory program. In 1990, migration was not our primary research focus, but as the survey progressed and we assessed the results, migration drew more of our attention. Changes in population size and distribution and the role of migrants in local history were principal questions for the mapping and limited excavation program we initiated in 1999. The results reported in this volume led us to the Safford, Tonto Basin, Phoenix, and Perry Mesa areas, and then on to the upper Gila. Partnerships involving graduate students funded by the Center's Preservation Fellowship program contributed to this research trajectory as our institution matured. Now in our 31st year, our roots in the San Pedro Valley still inspire the research we pursue as Archaeology Southwest, our new institutional name.

Our work on the San Pedro brought Preservation Archaeology into focus. It is now central to Archaeology Southwest. The San Pedro Valley is where we first engaged our big-picture research questions about precontact regional migration and population collapse in the southern Southwest. Working with dispersed valley communities prompted us to expand our public programs. Looming threats accentuated the need for active site protection in the valley. Our first conservation easement developed there. Today, our site protection program has full-time staff, and the number of sites under our protection is growing. Six of these are in the San Pedro.

I have witnessed how the stories of this special place significantly affect those who experience it directly. The final stop on the day-long tour I have given to many people is the Davis Ranch ruin. Over the course of the day, we visit several platform mounds, walk through extensive nonriverine fields of rock terraces and rock piles, see 1,000-year-old pithouses, and ponder the subtle ovals of embedded stones that mark Sobaipuri dwellings Father Kino might have passed by in 1697. Although we experience some places lost to the destructive forces of vandalism, erosion, or development, our experience of the many places still preserved is a much stronger one. By the time we reach Davis Ranch, even first-time visitors have gained a sense of this dynamic landscape and the complex history etched into it.

At Davis Ranch, we observe a surprisingly deep hole that is actually a kiva constructed by Kayenta migrants around A.D. 1300. Subtle remnants of the first 10 rooms these migrants built after their arrival are also visible. As we gaze across the river, we see the steep cliffs that helped to protect another migrant settlement, today called Reeve Ruin, only 400 yards away. It is easy to imagine a village dog barking on a quiet morning, awakening the residents of both settlements. Although today's river is usually dry, visitors can distinguish a rock outcrop that would

have pushed groundwater to the surface just a scant half-mile to the south. We easily picture canals tapping that water and nurturing lush fields where, today, we see green pastures and grazing cattle. As we look westward, toward the Reeve Ruin, we make out the low pass between the Rincon and Catalina mountain ranges. Redington Pass reminds us that a very different landscape inhabited by nearly a million people lies just 20 miles away, in the Tucson Basin.

The San Pedro Valley has significantly affected all of us who have worked there. We have come to know many landowners, some of whom have given us permission to survey or excavate on private land. Many of these ranching families have been on the front line of preservation, protecting these important places for generations. How fortunate we have been to research ancient communities, work with modern residents, and explore the complex ways in which nature and culture interacted to create this remarkable landscape.

Publishing the results of our San Pedro Valley research is a source of great satisfaction. Our work continues, but now, the details of these efforts are available for others to review and assess. Just as we built on important work by the Amerind Foundation and others, we hope that new researchers with new questions find answers in this special place.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Archaeology Southwest (formerly the Center for Desert Archaeology) has spent more than 20 years investigating and protecting the cultural resources of the Lower San Pedro Valley. The region has become the keystone of our research program and the showcase of our preservation efforts. Our initial interest in the region was fueled by the informal explorations of Henry Wallace and James Holmlund during the 1980s. Wallace, then an employee of the Arizona Division of the Institute for American Research, brought the rich archaeological record of the region to the attention of William Doelle, the Division Director of the Institute, and subsequently, president of Desert Archaeology, Inc. Doelle initiated a more formal investigation of the region in 1990, as part of the Center for Desert Archaeology's Lower San Pedro Survey. This volunteer survey was conducted during non-summer weekends by a varied cast of supervisors and volunteers until 1995.

The survey results and the abrupt destruction of a platform mound site prompted more thorough examination of late precontact ruins in the valley. Funded by a private foundation with additional financial support from the Amerind Foundation, the test excavation component of the San Pedro Preservation program sampled many of these ruins on temperate weekends from 1999 through 2001.

Neither project would have been feasible without the spirited efforts of a veritable army of volunteers. These included avocalists from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, student interns, and professional archaeologists. The first table in the volume (see Table 1.1) is an exhaustive attempt to thank everyone who volunteered for the survey, excavation, and postfield analyses over this 20-year period. Some people on this list were one-timers; however, many were repeat weekenders who participated in both survey and excavation. A few truly dedicated souls helped with the postfield analysis. Individual contributions are impossible to list in detail, but we extend a special thanks to that indefatigable cadre who were with us throughout much of our "San Pedro decades." On the other hand, memories fade over 20 years, and the directors changed from the survey through the test excavations and analysis. As a result, a nagging feeling remains that some deserving names are missing in Table 1.1. To those hopefully few individuals, we extend a heartfelt thanks and an apology for the omission.

The test excavations would also not have been possible without the permission of a plethora of government and private landowners who owned or

managed late precontact sites in the Lower San Pedro Valley at the turn of the millennium. The former included the Bureau of Land Management, the Arizona State Land Department, Pima County, and the City of Tucson. Large private landowners included ASARCO, BHP Copper, The Nature Conservancy, the Smallhouse (Carlink Ranch) and Ronquillo ranching families, and the C-Spear Ranch owned by the late Hope Jones. Residential landowners with sites literally in their backyards include Harold and Mignon Elliott, Vera Hill, Sam Rhodes, Eileen Hollowell, Lonnie Hicks, and Christine Curtis. The Elliotts established a conservation easement on the important sites on their property shortly after the excavations. Thanks to Sam Rhodes and Vera Hill, Lost Mound will never again be misplaced by archaeologists. The Smallhouses have been friends of archaeology since the first recorded excavations in the region by William Duffen in the mid-1930s.

As in most projects, the analyses, writing, editing, and revisions were much more onerous than the fieldwork. Many archaeological endeavors start with the best intentions, but ultimately languish in various incomplete stages of postfield purgatory. Although it has taken more than a decade, we have finally emerged from this limbo with a sense of closure and satisfaction. During the first decade of the new millennium, other work often pulled us away from completing this volume; however, the San Pedro Valley was always close to our hearts and never far back in our minds. We drew inspiration from the tireless efforts of our volunteers, several who have since passed away. In addition, a new cast of characters emerged to help us cross the finish line after the digging stopped. Paramount among these was the staff of the Production Department at Desert Archaeology, Inc., led by Emilee Mead, whose favorite line is "We can do that." In particular, we would like to thank Andrea Mathews for her devotion in exorcising all those "little devils hiding in the details" and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

When the prose becomes a little too dense or detailed, the reader can always gaze at pictures and ponder maps. No effort was spared in creating aesthetically pleasing graphics in this volume. We took full advantage of Adriel Heisey's talents, using aerial photographs he shot from precarious positions above the San Pedro Valley in a hand-built "airplane" that is the embodiment of minimalism and that still manages to defy gravity. Although her name does not appear on her creations, Catherine Gilman's tasteful touch can be found on many of

the maps and illustrations. Catherine brings simple elegance to the most complicated maps while making the most mundane artifact scatters appear intriguing. In addition to his role as an author, J. Brett Hill was the project GIS wizard and a number of Catherine's figures are artistic renditions of Brett's algorithmic alchemy.

Sites in Chapter 3 that received what we call the deluxe cartographic treatment were generated by Robert Scott of Western Mapping, Inc., headed by James Holmlund, who is also a consummate perfectionist. These detailed and informative maps are seamless fusions of stereoscopic aerial photographs and architectural maps made with a total station. Specific credit for ceramic photographs in Chapter 4 (Figures 4.2-4.4, 4.6, 4.25, and 4.27) is given to Jack Ramsey. The original illustration for Figure 3.20 was

produced by Susan Hall and for Figure 4.28 by Marina Sergeyeva; both subsequently revised by Catherine Gilman.

The National Science Foundation (Award No. SBR-990332) funded the development of a petrographic model of the San Pedro Valley. This model allowed us to determine where many of the ceramics recovered from the test excavations, especially Roosevelt Red Ware, were produced, an important research goal. We are also greatly indebted to the Amerind Foundation and the Arizona State Museum for granting us virtual carte blanche in reproducing and adapting unpublished and previously published maps and illustrations. Finally, we thank the Salus Mundi Foundation for awarding Archaeology Southwest a grant to print the volume that you hold in your hands.

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