

***Aztec, Salmon, and the Puebloan Heartland of the Middle San Juan.* Paul F. Reed and Gary M. Brown, editors. 2018. School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, New Mexico; University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. xiv + 114 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover) ISBN 9780826359926. \$29.95 (e-book), ISBN 9780826359933.**

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This award-winning book is the most recent volume in the long-standing Popular Archaeology series from the School for Advanced Research (SAR). Its contributing authors make the complex histories of the Aztec and Salmon pueblos and the Middle San Juan (MSJ) region of northern New Mexico widely accessible by presenting their nuanced understandings of what it was like for the Pueblo people who lived there. The volume focuses on the history and establishment of Aztec and Salmon in the MSJ and day-to-day life from AD 1050 to 1290. However, a full regional history is presented in a useful chronology after the preface (though a notable omission there is the date at which construction and occupation of Aztec North was started).

A critical aspect of the book is its accessibility and synthesis of over 100 years of research. Writing for the public is particularly challenging for archaeologists because it is difficult to concisely describe how their work builds on decades of prior research, how data have been recovered and analyzed, and what the significance and broader relevance of those data and analyses are. Yet, translating our jargon and minutiae is essential to communicating effectively why our work matters. Popular accounts also help archaeologists keep “populating the past” at the forefront of our efforts (Paul F. Reed, Chapter 3). Considering the challenges and necessity of popular writing, I especially commend all authors for their effort to make their contributions engaging and relevant. What they produced does more than present the archaeological information; it provides a more complete understanding of people, connection, history, and the way archaeology is done. The authors also effectively use themes to explain archaeological processes, ancestral Pueblo lifeways, and Pueblo connections today. Their approach makes it a great book for undergraduate classes, as well as anyone interested in the northern US Southwest.

Using the device of a traveler who ventures from Chaco and that individual’s experiences upon arriving at Salmon and Aztec, Reed and Gary M. Brown introduce the setting and histories of these important places in Chapter 1. They stress that the MSJ was distinctive, even as it is strongly linked to Chaco and Mesa Verde. Much of its distinctiveness relates to its cultural diversity and their compelling case that Salmon and Aztec were built by colonizing Chaco immigrants. Reed and Brown further argue that local people had likely attended gatherings at Chaco and would therefore have allowed Chaco immigrants to settle the most fertile land along the Animas River. Their interpretations leave one wanting to know more about how and why this initial colonization happened, especially considering research revealing an earlier occupation underneath Aztec. Gaining a better understanding of the role that conflict and violence played is also important. The authors suggest that Aztec was established through mutual collaboration, but colonization can be an assertive and aggressive process, and probably not everyone was happy about it.

Using the theme of layers, H. Wolcott Toll (Chapter 2) not only illustrates archaeological methods by focusing on what was learned about a Jackson Lake Community pit structure in La Plata Valley but also connects its residents to other communities and the sociopolitical layers of the MSJ and Chaco. Reed’s (Chapter 3) efforts to populate Salmon Pueblo’s past provides details about what life was like for the inhabitants of one of the largest great houses outside Chaco Canyon. Brown (Chapter 4) draws on the impressive architecture of Aztec to discuss its development, which involved orienting buildings along solstice and cardinal alignments as this Chacoan great house evolved over time. The role of

Aztec's leaders across the region, and the reason they decided to orient their buildings around Aztec North, if it was a local construction, are unclear.

What a gift to have one last essay from the late Florence Lister (Chapter 5), a historian, archaeologist, and wonderful storyteller. Her posthumous account of Earl Morris's work at the Aztec West Great Kiva reads as if one were sitting there with Florence and her husband and fellow archaeologist Robert H. Lister, as she recounted their time with Morris. Larry L. Baker (Chapter 6) elaborates on the importance of astronomical observations to ideological beliefs and architectural design at Salmon. Kathy Roler Durand and Ethan Ortega (Chapter 7) skillfully discuss the animals relied on for food, and why and how Pueblo people hunted them. An important trend is how reliance on big game declined, and how turkeys became crucial for sustenance and rituals.

Laurie C. Webster's chapter on perishables and weaving expertly explains the complexity and colorfulness of the past through the clothing worn by Pueblo people at Aztec and Salmon. She shows how their clothing was initially more similar to styles popular in Chaco, but after AD 1150, Mesa Verde styles became common, providing important insight into changing social organization and identity. While describing what ceramicists do, Lori Stephens Reed (Chapter 9) shows how pottery production and exchange involved local emulation of Chaco pottery. Additional compositional work has also shown strong connection to the Mesa Verde cuesta. Mark Varien (Chapter 10) thoughtfully examines how regional dynamics between Mesa Verde and Aztec emerged and changed over time, involving both conflict and cooperation. Generously sharing her personal memories and connections to Aztec as a living and sacred place, Theresa Pasqual (Chapter 11) shows us how core values, ancestral knowledge, and being in and with a place are part of the deep continuity and resilience of Pueblo peoples today. This volume clearly establishes Aztec as an important center place, and it demonstrates the importance of the MSJ in shaping the Puebloan world. It also reveals that more attention is needed to understand the sociopolitical and economic significance of Aztec to the rest of the northern Southwest, and why Pueblo people ended up leaving Aztec.

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***The Davis Ranch Site: A Kayenta Immigrant Enclave in Southeastern Arizona.* Rex E. Gerald and Patrick D. Lyons. 2019. University of Arizona Press, Tucson. xv + 807 pp. 824 pp. \$80.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-81653-854-6. \$80.00 (e-book), ISBN 978-0-81653-993-2.**

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The 2019 publication of *The Davis Ranch Site: A Kayenta Immigrant Enclave in Southeastern Arizona*, as part of the Amerind Studies in Anthropology series by the University of Arizona Press, addresses an injustice more than 60 years old. Despite the fact that the late Rex Gerald's work at Davis Ranch has had a substantial influence on the interpretation of southern Arizona prehistory, the results of his 1957 excavations at the site have not previously been published. Although the monograph describing the results of investigations was completed not long after his fieldwork, it was not released to the public, apparently because of disagreements regarding interpretations of the data. Regrettably, the questions that guided Gerald's investigations remain largely unresolved, including the issue of what caused material culture changes that occurred during the Classic period (ca. AD 1150–1450). These include the appearance of polychrome pottery (Roosevelt Red Wares), inhumation burials, and compound architecture with surface structures (i.e., the Salado phenomenon). Roosevelt Red Wares are one of the most