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Archaeology Southwest Publishes Much-Anticipated “Migrants and Mounds”

*Preservation Archaeology in southeastern Arizona’s San Pedro River valley
reveals a story of migration, tension, and integration in the distant past*

Tucson, Ariz. (November 14, 2012) — Archaeology Southwest is pleased to announce the publication of *Migrants and Mounds: Classic Period Archaeology of the Lower San Pedro Valley*, edited by Jeffery J. Clark and Patrick D. Lyons. The richly illustrated volume presents the results of Archaeology Southwest’s long-term research program in southeastern Arizona’s San Pedro River valley. The National Science Foundation, Salus Mundi Foundation, and private donors funded aspects of the program. Significantly, findings in the San Pedro told a story of migration, tension, and social integration over the course of several generations in the 1300s. Archaeology Southwest’s experiences in the valley also contributed to development of the organization’s identity and mission.

“Our work in the San Pedro brought Preservation Archaeology into focus, and that approach is now central to Archaeology Southwest,” said Dr. William Doelle, the Tucson-based nonprofit’s President and CEO. Preservation Archaeology is the organization’s holistic approach to exploring, protecting, and sharing knowledge about the places of the past. “The San Pedro is where we first engaged our big-picture questions about population and social changes in the southern Southwest in the centuries just before the Spaniards arrived. We expanded our public programs as we worked with valley residents, and looming threats spurred us to active site protection in the region,” Doelle continued. “Today, six of the thirteen sites we protect are in the San Pedro.”

From 1990 to 1995, a team of volunteers and archaeologists from Archaeology Southwest (formerly the Center for Desert Archaeology) undertook systematic archaeological survey of 75 linear miles between the towns of Winkelman and Benson. The team recorded almost 500 sites and revisited previously known ruins.

Between 1999 and 2001, the organization followed up with a mapping and test excavation program focused on large residential sites that dated to the period between A.D. 1200 and 1450. Together with a team of volunteers and interns, and with the permission of federal and state agencies and private landowners, Archaeology Southwest excavated 106 limited-impact units, primarily in trash deposits, at twenty-nine of these sites.

The new volume discusses this fieldwork and related analyses, and explains what these data tell us about people’s social and economic lives in that time and place. Building on earlier investigations by southern

Arizona's prestigious Amerind Foundation, Archaeology Southwest's work resulted in important new insights about late thirteenth-century migrations from what is now northern Arizona into the San Pedro Valley.

"Our research showed how immigrant-local relations changed through time, creating the complicated archaeological pattern known as 'Salado,'" explained Dr. Jeffery Clark, a Preservation Archaeologist at Archaeology Southwest and, with Dr. Patrick Lyons, co-editor of *Migrants and Mounds*. "Understanding where the pottery we recovered had been made was crucial to our interpretation of what happened here," added Lyons.

The archaeologists were particularly interested in determining the production locations of Roosevelt Red Ware, decorated pottery closely associated with the immigrants and their descendants, and ultimately with the mixed Salado culture that developed as local and immigrant groups came together. Analysts gathered samples of sands that valley potters would have mixed into their clays, and then compared the mineralogical properties of the samples with what a special microscope revealed about the compositions of recovered pottery sherds. Researchers found that the distinctive pottery was produced at certain communities and circulated throughout the valley.

Similarly, chemical analysis of recovered obsidian artifacts helped determine the sources of volcanic glass used to make these objects. Together, evidence from pottery and obsidian shows that immigrants and their descendants were not only present, but also economically and socially influential.

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

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Edited by Jeffery J. Clark and Patrick D. Lyons, with a foreword by William H. Doelle

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ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTHWEST

Archaeology Southwest is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Tucson, Arizona, that explores and protects the places of our past across the American Southwest and Mexican Northwest. For three decades, Archaeology Southwest has practiced a holistic, conservation-based approach known as Preservation Archaeology. By conducting low-impact investigations of big-picture questions, sharing findings with the public, and developing powerful site protection strategies, Archaeology Southwest creates meaningful connections to the past and respectfully protects its increasingly endangered resources. Learn more at www.archaeologysouthwest.org.

ABOUT JEFFERY CLARK

Dr. Jeffery J. Clark, a Preservation Archaeologist with Archaeology Southwest, has been conducting research in the southern U.S. Southwest for more than twenty years. His primary research interest is assessing the scale and impact of human migration.

ABOUT PATRICK LYONS

Dr. Patrick D. Lyons is the Associate Director and Head of Collections at the Arizona State Museum, an Associate Professor in the University of Arizona's School of Anthropology, and a Research Associate with Archaeology Southwest. He was a Preservation Archaeologist at the Center for Desert Archaeology (now Archaeology Southwest) from 2000 to 2006.

