Ceramic Production and the Development of Salado Identity in the Upper Gila Region of the American Southwest

### The Upper Gila Region
Since 2008, Archaeology Southwest has carried out test excavations in the Mule Creek area, as well as collections-based research at other Upper Gila sites.

The 3-Up site in Mule Creek is a large, multi-component village with Kayenta immigrant and Salado occupations.

### Kayenta and Salado
- **Beginning around AD 1250**, Kayenta groups moved to the southern southwest.
- **Immigrant enclaves** have “northern” architectural characteristics and material culture (Clark 2001; Neuzil 2008).
- **In the Upper Gila region**, immigrant enclaves were built on or near former Mimbres Classic sites.
- **Kayenta immigrants** and their descendants continued their cultural traditions and maintained social ties.

### Maverick Mountain Series and Salado Polychrome
- **Maverick Mountain Series (MMS)** pottery made in 1200s.
- **Kayenta style** using local materials (Neuzil and Lyons 2006).
- **Not common** in Mimbres Valley, located at the southern extreme of the Mimbres River.

### Ceramic Production and Distribution
- **Around AD 1300**, another wave of population arrived in the Upper Gila.
- **Salado, or Cliff Phase**, components are found throughout SE Arizona and SW New Mexico (Lekson 2002; Wallace 1998).
- **Cliff Phase sites** have adobe architecture and Salado Polychrome pottery (also known as Roosevelt Red Ware).
- **“Salado”** represents blending of diverse local and immigrant traditions.

### Salado Identity
- **Patty Crown** (1994) linked the popularity of Salado polychromes with the florescence of a Southwest regional cul.
- This religious movement associated with rain, fertility, and community well-being had deep roots among Southwestern groups.
- Particular design motifs and icons that express this ideology are serpents (both with and without plumes or horns), clouds, lightning, feathers, flowers, and birds.
- We have yet to identify strong regional patterning in design motifs or iconography among Upper Gila sites.
- **Potters** from individual villages appear to have had no clear local preference for particular suites of icons.
- This supports Crown’s interpretation of the integrative nature of Salado polychromes.

- **A closer examination of plots** by region shows less overlap between utility and decorated ware compositions for Mimbres Valley sites compared with the Cliff, Redrock, and Mule Creek valleys.
- **In the San Pedro, Salado Polychrome production** may have been concentrated at sites with 13th century immigrant enclaves.
- **MMS** and Salado polychromes made in 1200s.

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References Cited