

# Ceramic Distribution Within the Upper Gila Region

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## Introductions

The Upper Gila Region is home to some of the Southwest's earliest sites dating back to the Late Archaic period (6000 B.C - A.D 200), well into the Cliff phase (A.D 1300-1400). Throughout this time, the Upper Gila Region and the Indigenous peoples has seen multiple changes throughout its course, and is reflected through their architecture, immigration patterns, stone tool making, and through ceramics and their distribution.

The focus of this presentation aims to analyze just one focus of ceramic distribution, in this case, we'll be looking at the types of Salado Polychrome ceramics across the Mimbres-Mogollon Area. We'll then compare this with the Tonto Basin using an extensive Neo4j cyber database to form a spatiotemporal map of where ceramics are being made and where they are being distributed to.

## What is Salado Polychrome?

Salado polychrome were a variety of the Roosevelt Red Ware that were prominent during the Classic period (A.D 1275-1450). Salado polychrome included different types of ceramics such as Gila, Pinto, Tonto, and later influenced more sub-regional polychrome styles. The Salado polychrome ceramic began manufacturing itself from the Salado platform mound communities within the Tonto Basin in central Arizona, but its influence spanned north into the Little Colorado River, east into the Rio Grande, and south into Sonora and Chihuahua.

## Salado Polychrome

Roosevelt Red Ware  
(A.D 1275)  
(Photo courtesy of NPS)

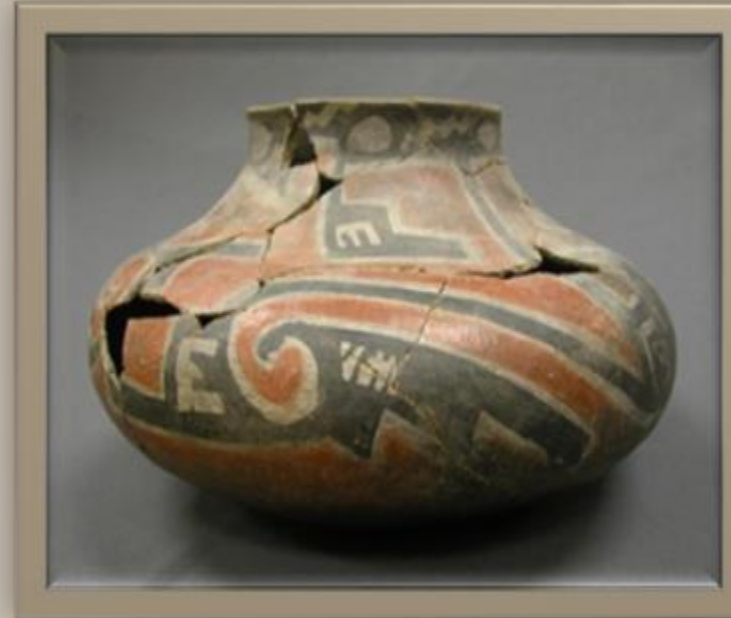
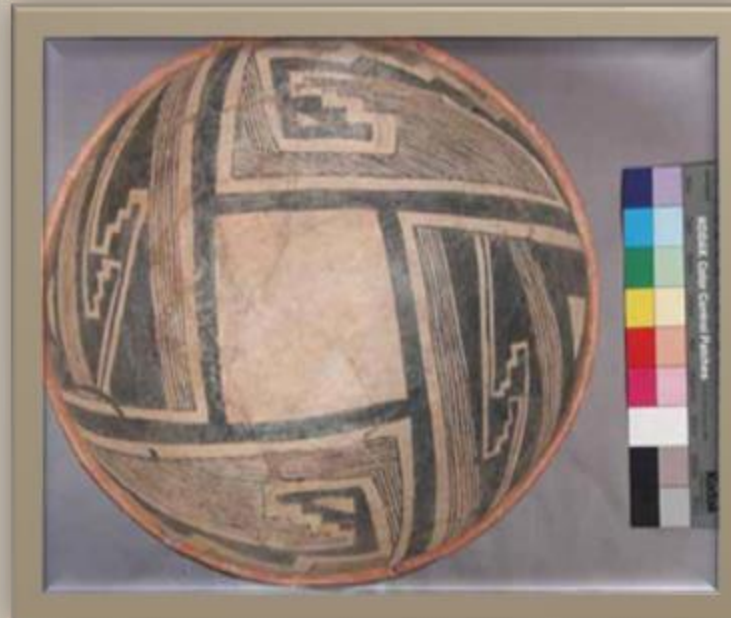
## Tonto Basin Salado Polychrome

Pinto Polychrome  
(A.D. 1270-1300)  
(Photo courtesy of NPS)

Gila Polychrome  
(A.D. 1300-1400)  
(Photo Courtesy of NPS)

Tonto Polychrome  
(A.D. 1300-1400)  
(Photo Courtesy of NPS)

## Photos



## Methods

To better understand the density of Salado Polychrome ceramics within the Mimbres-Mogollon and Tonto Basin regions, I utilize an extensive Neo4j cyber database which allows me to see ceramic density across the region.

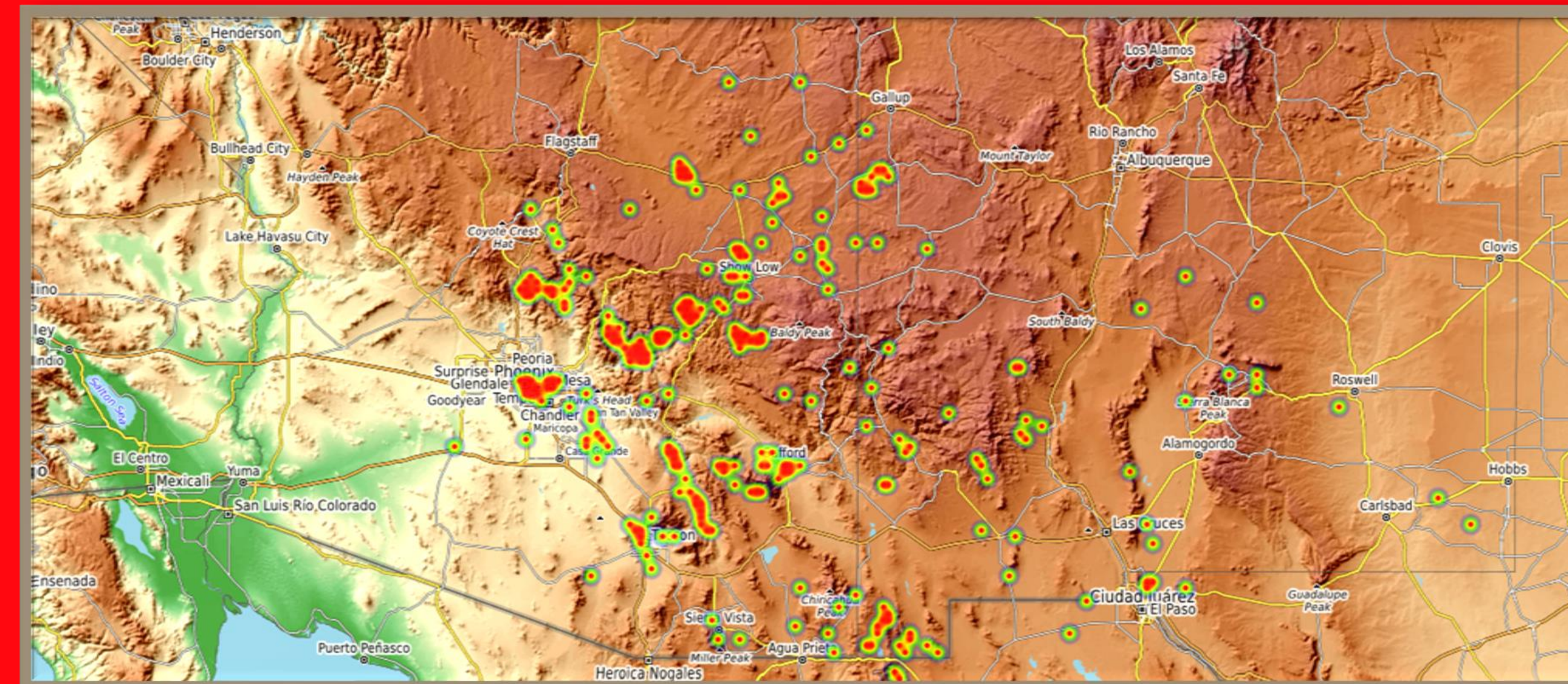
Table 1 below show us the Salado Polychrome concentration across the entire southwest region, from Arizona into New Mexico. Followed below is the region-specific density of Salado Polychrome ceramics of Roosevelt Red Ware, Tonto Polychrome, Gila Polychrome, and Pinto Polychrome.

## Methods cont.

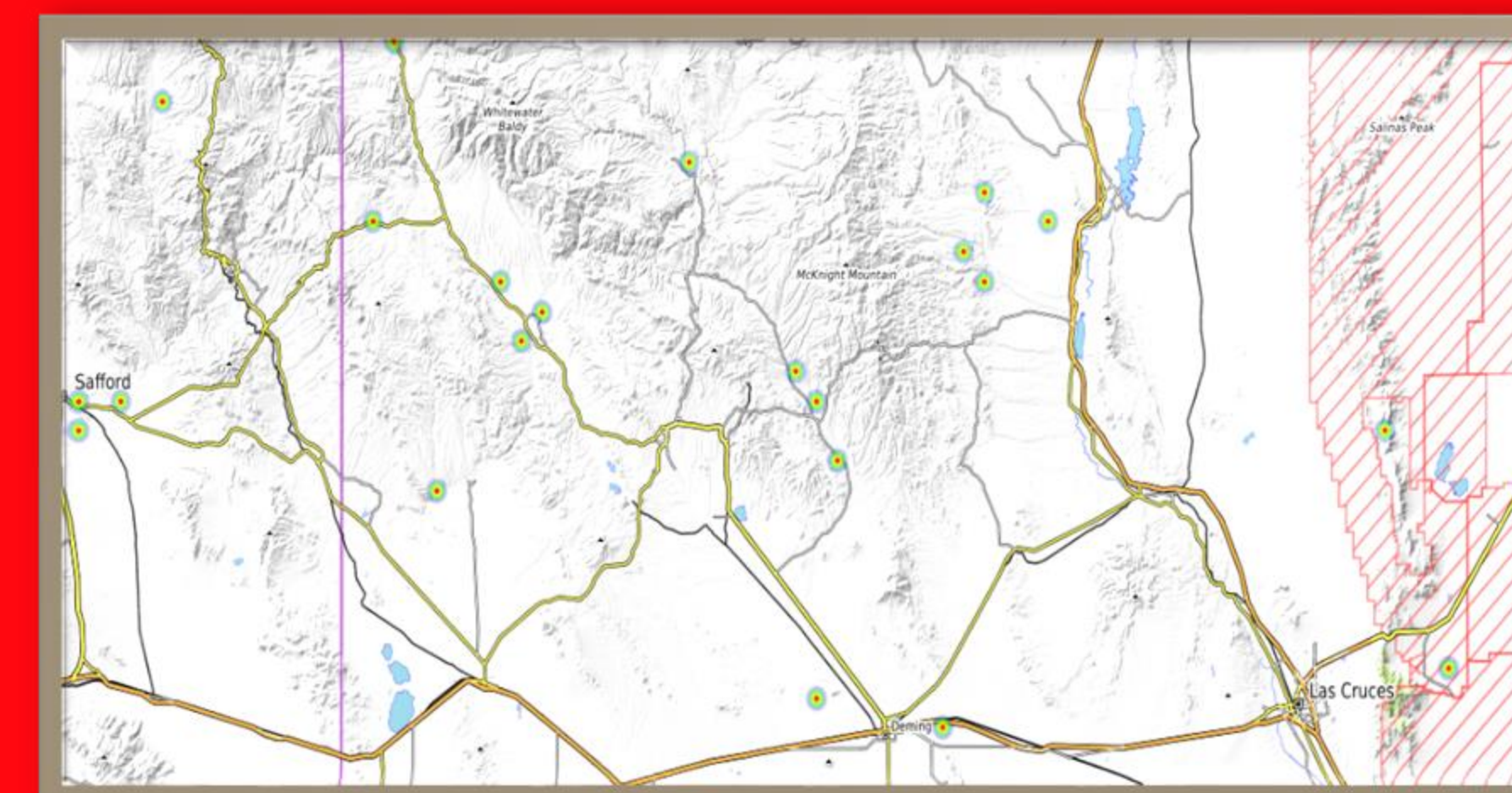
One of the many amazing things about the Salado culture was that it began influencing regional differences across the southwest. Some of these new variations included the Cliff Polychrome, Nine Mile Polychrome, Phoenix Polychrome, Dinwiddie Polychrome, and Los Muertos Polychrome which can be classified as sub-regional polychrome variations which were inspired by the Tonto Basin region.

Table 2 on the right shows us the sub-regional polychrome concentration in the Mimbres-Mogollon and Tonto Basin regions for comparison. Which additionally provides context for later distribution.

Table 1:  
Salado Polychrome Concentration



Mimbres-Mogollon Concentration



Tonto Basin Concentration

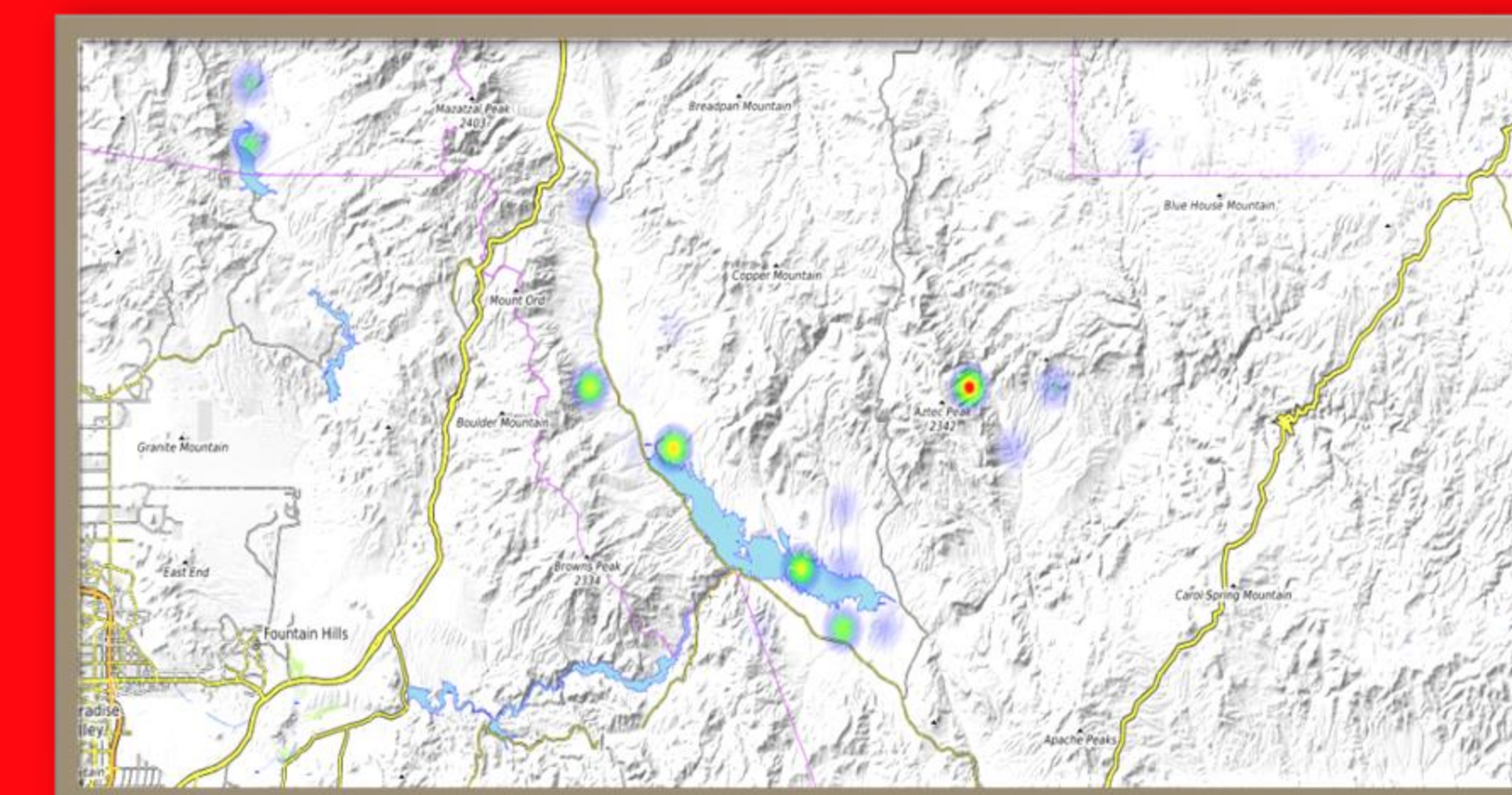
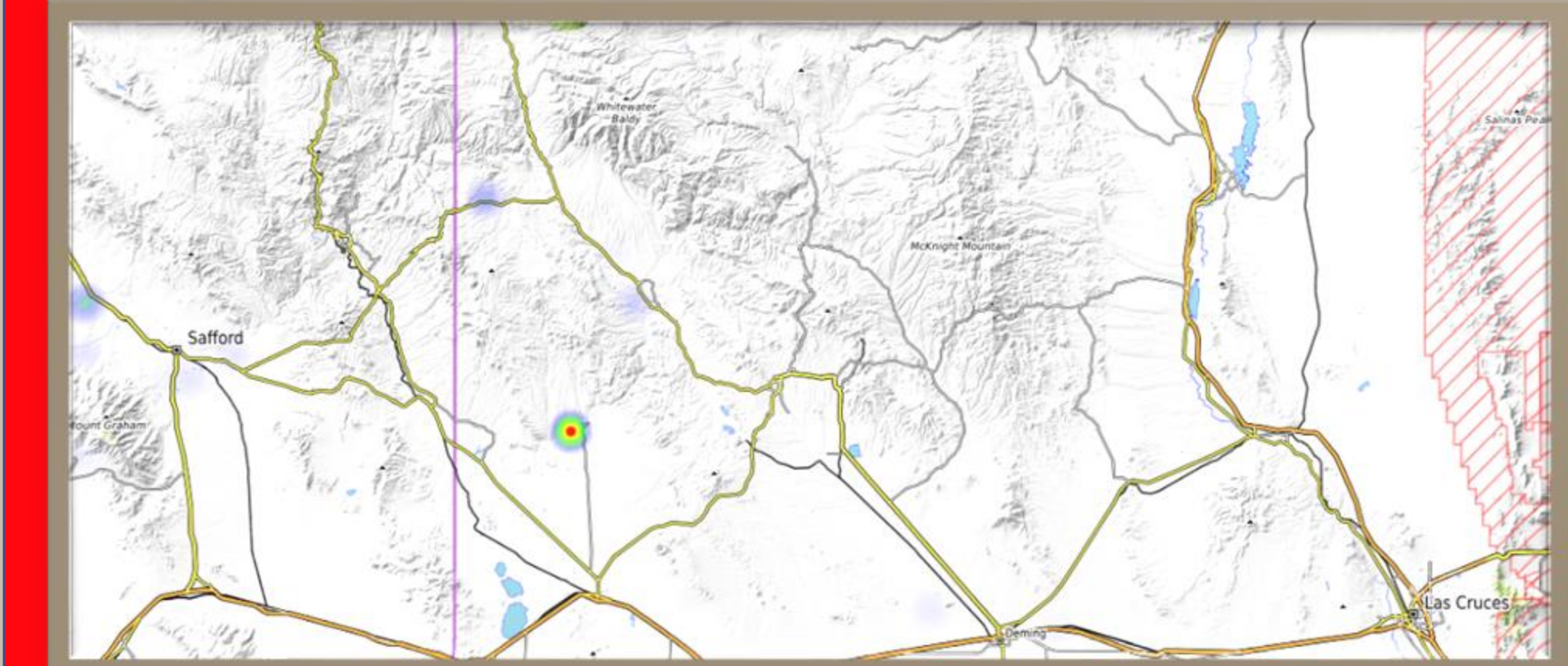
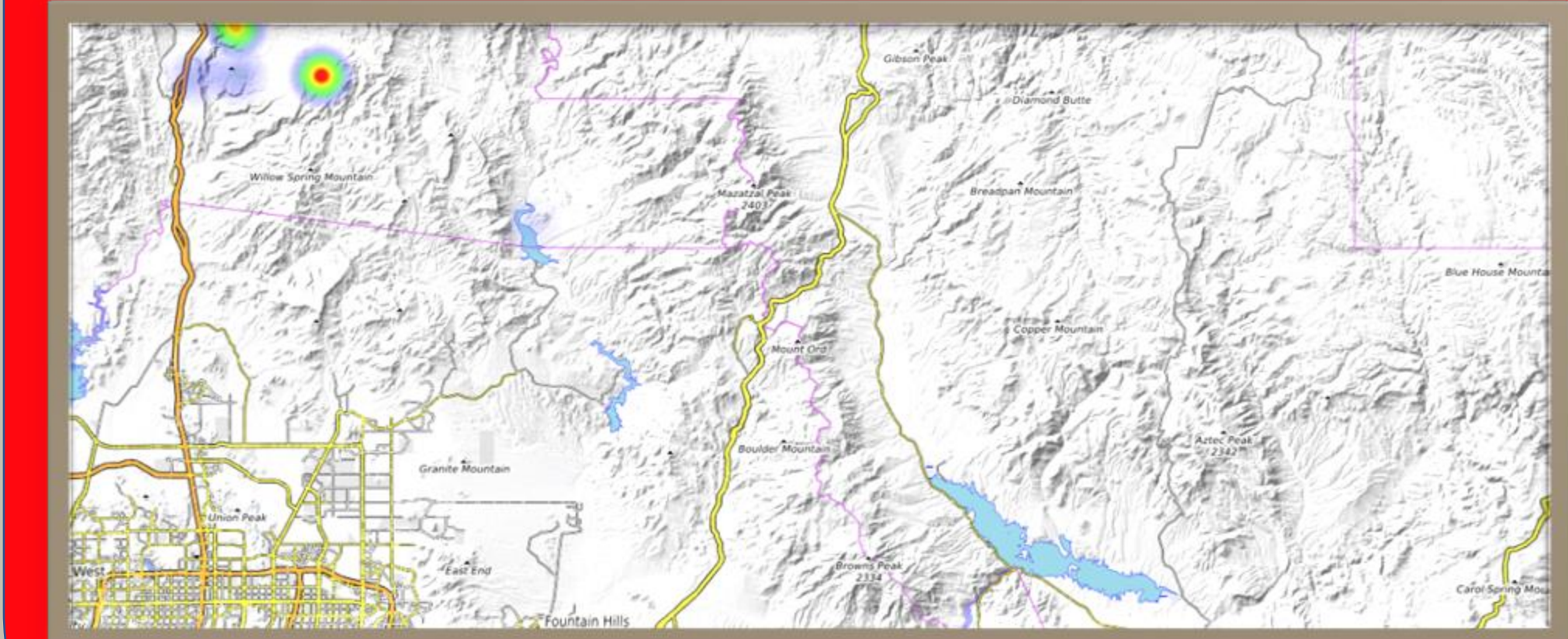


Table 2:  
Sub-Region Polychrome Concentration

Mimbres-Mogollon Concentration



Tonto Basin Concentration



## Conclusion

The ability to cover all of the Upper Gila's ceramic distribution would simply be impossible to fit into only one single poster. However, this is simply a case study of two specific regions (Mimbres-Mogollon and Tonto Basin) to analyze the concentration of Salado Polychromes.

What we predominantly see is the highest concentration of Salado Polychromes starting in Central Arizona, with the Tonto Basin beginning the influence outwards to the sub-regional variations that extend well into New Mexico which we see in Table 2.

Overall, the Salado Polychrome style and its regional variations lead some to believe it as a form of a unified regional cult rather than a preference of a ceramic style of one ethnic community.

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<https://www.nps.gov/articles/polychrome.htm>  
<https://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/2021/02/01/a-tonto-basin-journey/>  
<https://cybersw.org/>

(All images are courtesy of the National Park Service and Cyber Southwest).