

WHERE THE  
RED-WINGED  
BLACKBIRDS SING

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*The Akimel O'dham and Cycles of Agricultural  
Transformation in the Phoenix Basin*

J E N N I F E R B E S S

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## Introduction

The name “Pima” was given to the tribe in a peculiar way. It is said that at one time some Spaniards came to an old woman and talked to her, probably asking her the name of the tribe of Indians, but the old woman, not understanding, only shook her head and said “pimatch,” or in English: “I don’t know.” This, I presume, the Spaniards took as the name of the tribe and so they are now known as the Pima Indians.

—*Mary Breckenridge, “The Pima Indians,” in The Native American, 1912.*<sup>1</sup>

With their poetry and artwork, Akimel O’odham or Pima students celebrated “PIMA LAND,” home to their people since time immemorial (figure 0.1). Murray Pachecho illustrated the broad valley dotted by the Sonoran Desert’s characteristic saguaro cacti and agave as Uretta Thomas’s poem brought the landscape alive with the sounds of birdsong, drums and rattles, and the life-sustaining water of the Gila River. At the time these students were attending the Phoenix Indian School, the Salt-Gila or Phoenix Basin had also become home to Phoenix, Arizona.<sup>2</sup> The city had a population topping 65,000 and

was unknowingly growing toward an explosion of aviation-related development sparked by World War II.<sup>3</sup> As ancient features of the landscape were being destroyed or obscured by development, the students sought traces of the past and strove to understand the environment that sustained the Akimel O'odham (River People) and their ancestors, the Huhugam. Translating Huhugam as "those who have perished," today's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Barnaby V. Lewis emphasizes that, while archaeologists tend to mark the beginning of Huhugam tenure in the Gila River Valley c. 300 CE, the O'odham believe their ancestry dates much earlier.<sup>4</sup> The "O'odham tradition," he details, "is that they have lived on this land since the time of the first humans, a period that for archaeologists extends from the present back to at least 10,000 B.C."<sup>5</sup> At the peak of their irrigation culture, c. 800–1100 CE, the Huhugam constructed a network of canals branching from the Gila River and its tributary, the Salt River, into over 100,000 acres cultivated with food and fiber crops. In the centuries following a downsizing of the local prehistoric culture (c. 1100–1450), descendants living in small villages met late seventeenth-century Spanish missionaries with fine cotton blankets and ample supplies of food. By the mid- to late eighteenth century, the Akimel O'odham had added the cultivation of Spanish crops such as winter wheat and melon varieties to ancestral crops including corn, squash, tepary beans, and cotton.

Since the Gila River remained at the edge of the Spanish frontier, the Akimel O'odham were free to choose how best to express their collective identity in relation to new opportunities, and they chose growth. So rapid was their restoration of Huhugam irrigation canals in enabling the expansion of their agricultural production that eighteenth-century missionaries lavished praise on their wheat fields. Two to three generations later, Akimel O'odham farmers were able to feed approximately 60,000 argonauts passing through their villages on their way to California between 1848 and 1854.<sup>6</sup> By 1859, the Phoenix Basin had come into American jurisdiction, and Congress established the Pima and Maricopa Indian Reservation (also called the Gila River Indian Reservation or the Gila River Reservation and, today, the Gila River Indian Community) as the home to approximately 3,770 Akimel O'odham and 472 Pee Posh (Maricopa).<sup>7</sup> Although the Sonoran region had attracted its earliest Anglo-American residents for its mining possibilities, by the 1860s, Arizona's first Territorial Assembly was promoting the agricultural potential of "the fertile and well watered valleys" of the Gila

and its tributaries.<sup>8</sup> Military detachments had appeared during the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and the gold rush had brought the Phoenix Basin to federal attention as a strategic respite for migrants. The first step in the transformation of Anglo settlement from a cluster of modest hay camps growing alfalfa for soldiers' horses into a center of commercial agriculture arrived soon thereafter with the coalescence of public and private interests embodied in legislation such as the Desert Land Act of 1877.<sup>9</sup>

Due to the success and generosity of the Akimel O'odham, whom weary forty-niners called the "Good Samaritans of the desert," the town of Phoenix rose from the metaphorical ashes of Huhugam irrigation technology, and Anglo settlers began diverting upstream water from the Gila and Salt rivers, depriving Akimel O'odham farmers of the natural resource critical to arid-land farming.<sup>10</sup> In his memoir, *A Pima Remembers*, George Webb eulogized the transformation that took place between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries: "The green of those Pima fields spread along the river for many miles in the old days when there was plenty of water. . . . Now you can look out across the valley and see the green alfalfa and cotton spreading for miles on the farms of white people who irrigate their land with hundreds of pumps running night and day." Increasingly aware of the potential of this desert oasis, by 1900, Anglo agronomists compared the Gila River to the Nile and labored to convert its ancient irrigation canals into the bloodstream of Arizona agribusiness. Referring to the riparian birds that had serenaded his people's fields in the days of his grandfather, Webb continued, "Some of those farms take their water from big ditches dug hundreds of years ago by Pimas, or the ancestors of Pimas. Over there across the valley is where the red-wing blackbirds are singing today."<sup>11</sup>

A partnership between the Indian Office of the US Interior Department and the newly formed Bureau of Plant Industry of the US Department of Agriculture marked a major advancement in the development of the local agricultural economy that separated Webb's age from his grandfather's. In 1907, the two federal agencies established a jointly managed Cooperative Testing and Demonstration Farm, located in Sacaton, Arizona, home to the Pima Indian Agency located on the Gila River Reservation. This cooperative farm, known as the US Experimental Station or Field Station, was a prototype for further efforts coordinated by the two agencies on reserved Native American lands, and its success depended upon skills the Akimel O'odham

had developed over centuries of cultivating staples such as native cotton.<sup>12</sup> Cotton, as the botanists of the Bureau of Plant Industry believed, was to be the white gold of the Southwest, and the quest for new, marketable varieties lured plant hunters to arid regions around the world. The collaboration led to the development of Pima cotton, an American-Egyptian variety still celebrated today for its strength and softness. Its genesis provides a focal point to the following study and one of many chapters in the ongoing story of an adaptive, resourceful people able and eager to change in ways that were consistent with O’odham *himdag*, the Piman lifeway.

As is the case in many Native American languages, O’odham (or O’otham) translates as People; *himdag* (or *himthag*) denotes a way of life or culture and bears additional resonances of Indian Rights or Human Rights, worth or dignity.<sup>13</sup> As defined today by the Gila River Indian Community’s Huhugam Heritage Center, “Our Himthag teaches us to respect all things; the rivers, the mountains, all plants and animals, rain, dust storms, the heat, the cold, the earth. It teaches us to respect our elders, our spouse, our children, our relatives and non-relatives. It teaches us to walk this world in a humble way and to give thanks for the crops and animals that give us nourishment and our entire O’otham Universe.” The Heritage Center’s definition, with its emphasis on actions (respecting, walking, thanking), evokes additional meanings of *himthag*, or *-thag*, which include being able to walk or accomplish work with the hands—both being characteristics of being human, moving through the world with intentionality and performing one’s labor in ways that actualize the values of dignity and humility.<sup>14</sup> More specifically, the O’odham worldview links their origins with their responsibility to farm the Gila River Valley and to honor their history of adaptation and their obligations as world-builders.

### **World-Building and the Akimel O’odham Agricultural Economy**

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The Akimel O’odham agricultural economy shaped and was shaped by the opportunities and adversities brought by Europeans and Euro-Americans. To do justice to the ways in which the Akimel O’odham acted as agents of change in the agricultural economy of the Gila River Valley and beyond, the following story strives to live up to two imperatives: first, to begin with the Huhugam–Akimel O’odham relationship with their homeland and the values

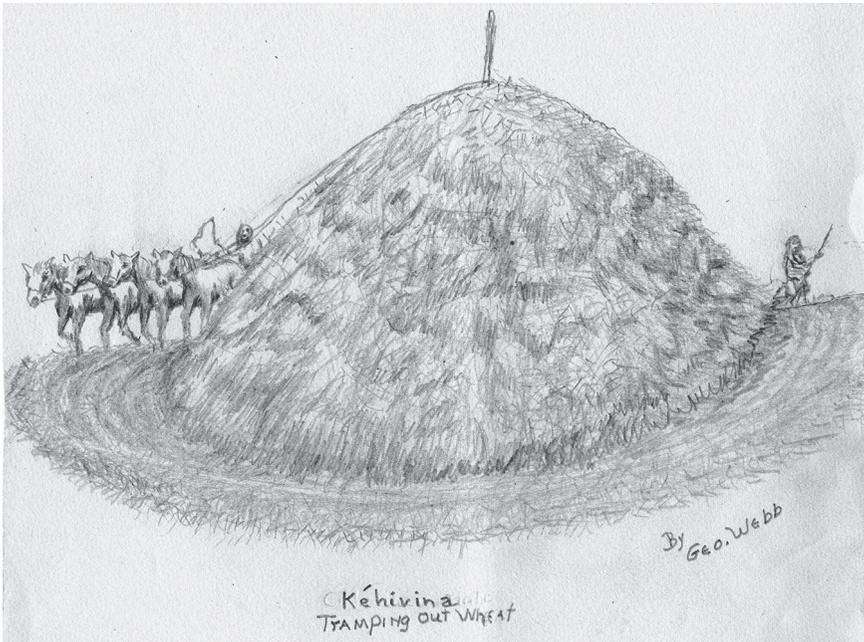
of adaptation, innovation, and co-creation that are fundamental to their worldview and revitalized, defended, and advanced through their lifeways; and, second, to demonstrate Akimel O’odham contributions to American history. Regarding the first imperative, the present study builds on Donald M. Bahr’s emphasis on the theme of “world-building” as conveyed in O’odham oral tradition, extending the idea to their collective identity as world-builders in story, in ideology, and in history, all of which evidence their experience of cycles of expansion and contraction and their commitment to self-renewal and self-determination.<sup>15</sup> In addition to introducing the ancient history of the peoples of the Phoenix Basin, then, the first chapter endeavors to live up to the call to action articulated by Polly Stewart, Steve Siporin, C. W. Sullivan III, and Suzi Jones in *Worldviews and the American West*: “To appreciate, acknowledge, and value the multiplicity of worldviews . . . is one of the highest goals we can ethically aspire to in the world of scholarship.”<sup>16</sup> This study thus begins not with settler-colonialism, but with the story the Akimel O’odham tell of their ancestors’ relation to the Phoenix Basin, its waterways, and the lifeways they evolved to actualize and reenact their values.<sup>17</sup> The O’odham worldview as articulated in sacred story will be presented not only as history, but as “an analytic tool” as valuable to making sense of the past and understanding the present as are Western heuristic lenses.<sup>18</sup>

After the first chapter, with its multiple functions, subsequent chapters examine the historic period that began in the sixteenth century with Spanish penetration into the Southwest. Regarding the second imperative, each begins with some background regarding the colonial, national, or international trends relevant to understanding the ways in which the Akimel O’odham—with their responsibility as world-builders—participated in the changing economic landscape. In the early historic period, Akimel O’odham interaction with the Spanish introductions, contextualized by the experiences of their linguistic and cultural relatives throughout the Pimería Alta (the northern region of the Sonoran Desert), provides insight into their acts of resistance, self-advocacy, and self-reinvention in the face of adversity, as well as their attempts to foster culturally relevant growth through the Hispanic and early American periods (see figure 0.2). The story then follows the tensions, conflicts, and synergies of the American period in the Phoenix Basin. After a brief Golden Age of agricultural productivity in the mid-nineteenth century, water shortages and the Forty Years of Famine between 1870 and 1910

subjected the Akimel O’odham to environmental and economic challenges to which they responded with strategies inherited and adapted from their ancestors throughout the Pimería Alta. Complementing previous scholarly examination of the ways in which they negotiated their exclusion from the dominant economy by re-creating economic niches for themselves, chapters covering the period between the mid-nineteenth century and World War II will explore a suite of strategies employed by the Akimel O’odham farmers, wage workers, and leaders aiming to maximize the opportunities afforded by Anglo-Americans and minimize or mitigate threats to their lifeways.<sup>19</sup>

Among their leaders, Head Chief Antonio Azul (Uva-a-Tuka, Spread Leg, or Mavit-Kawutam, Puma Shield) stands out not only for his long tenure as chief of the Pee Posh and Akimel O’odham (1855–1910), but for the significance of his adaptive and multifaceted means of negotiating change. Today the Gila River Indian Community’s Governor Stephen Roe Lewis honors him as “A warrior, a statesman and ambassador and a person of moral authority.”<sup>20</sup> Speaking at the Third Annual Antonio Azul Day in 2018, Lewis praised the many roles Azul played in defending the autonomy of his people. Whether cooperating with allies, practicing self-advocacy, challenging injustice, or, potentially, enabling the acts of resistance organized by his contemporaries, Azul protected, advanced, and reinvented O’odham lifeways for generations to come.<sup>21</sup> As Lewis elaborated before the crowd gathered at Azul’s gravesite, “It’s important what Chief Azul left for us his teaching, his example of traditional O’odham leadership that sometimes we don’t see very often. We commit ourselves to not forget about those teachings.”<sup>22</sup> Azul embodies O’odham values that unite the past, present, and future of a people who navigate periods of expansion and contraction with hope, adaptivity, and tenacity. During his tenure, the 1870s brought resource deprivation that resulted in extreme hardship, including water shortages that left fields barren for decades to come and, by the mid-twentieth century, led outside observers to conclude that Akimel O’odham farmers had become “as rusty as their farm tools.”<sup>23</sup> But even in times of famine, the Akimel O’odham eschewed presenting themselves as victims and instead continued to strive to live up to their responsibilities as world-builders, emphasizing their agency and their rightful role in America’s economic network.

The stories of individuals like Jabanimó, Antonio Azul, Koovit Ka Cheenkum, Chir-Kum, Hugh Patten (or Patton), Lewis D. Nelson, Lloyd Allison, Manuel Lowe, Anna Moore Shaw, George Webb, and so many others



**FIGURE 0.2.** “Kéhvina: Tramping Out Wheat,” by George Webb. The Akimel O’odham adopted Spanish wheat-threshing techniques. Courtesy of George and Hattie Webb’s descendents, including Robert P. Johnson, and the University of Arizona Library, Special Collections. From George Webb, “A Pima Remembers,” c. 1958–1959, AZ 154, University of Arizona Library, Special Collections.

bear witness to the ways in which the Akimel O’odham have acted as agents of change in the Southwest. In specific reference to its agricultural economy, as summarized by the Button family, who own and operate Ramona Farms in the community today, “the farming traditions of the Akimel O’otham must be acknowledged for their importance to the development of this great country we live in. This has been left out of the history books.”<sup>24</sup> In response, this history of south-central Arizona’s agricultural economy highlights Akimel O’odham actions and voices, traditional ecological knowledge, innovations, and interpretive strategies.<sup>25</sup> As self-fashioned world-builders, the River People have demonstrated their ability to negotiate and initiate change in ways that revive and reinvent their vision of themselves as co-creators of an ever more life-sustaining environment and as participants in flexible networks of economic exchange. From their ancient histories as told

in sacred stories, through their adaptations of Spanish crops, to their increasingly multifaceted efforts to preserve their natural resources and augment their self-determination, the Akimel O'odham have actualized their skill in "survivance," a term coined by Gerald Vizenor to signify the reciprocal relationship of survival and resistance characterizing Indigenous victories over the forces of settler-colonialism and its long wake.<sup>26</sup> While an examination of Akimel O'odham history from World War II into the twenty-first century merits a study of its own, the following study of their agricultural economy from prehistory through the implementation of the Indian Reorganization Act ends with a concluding chapter intended to provide a snapshot into some of the forms that O'odham values and lifeways are taking today.

### **Economic Anthropology and the Peoplehood Matrix**

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This economic history is indebted to several heuristic lenses. As indicated above, these include the analytical tools articulated in Akimel O'odham sacred stories and expressed through time-tested values including adaptation, innovation, co-creation, generosity, and reciprocity. The whole of chapter 1 will be devoted to exploring their story and their history of world-building. Additional interpretive strategies are drawn from economic anthropology and the Peoplehood Matrix. Economic anthropologist Stephen Gudeman developed a general economic anthropology that knits together the concept of culture with the study of economics by drawing from André Gunder Frank's dependency theory, which described the unequal flow of goods and services as the "Development of Underdevelopment."<sup>27</sup> Gudeman also expanded the work of Marshall Sahlins, who argued: "Structurally, 'the economy' does not exist. Rather than a distinct and specialized organization, 'economy' is something that generalized social groups and relations, notably kinship groups and relations, *do*. Economy is rather a function of the society than a structure."<sup>28</sup> Synthesizing these materials, Gudeman then detailed the relationship between the making of culture and the making of value or surplus and focused his argument on the role innovation plays in wealth, emphasizing that the creation of new value occurs within the context of human relationships, community, and networks of communities.

In *The Anthropology of Economy*, he explained that wealth is created when aspects of a community's "base" (foundation or commons) are transformed

into items of exchange, commodities and capital.<sup>29</sup> The base, for Gudeman, “consists of a community’s *shared interests*, which include lasting resources (such as land and water), produced things, and ideational constructs such as knowledge, technology, laws, practices, skills, and customs.”<sup>30</sup> As his theory emphasizes that local human and natural resources, technologies, and ideas share equal places in affording opportunities to develop wealth and augment collective well-being, Gudeman offers one alternative to dualistic core/periphery or Western/non-Western paradigms that pose a dilemma to scholars who seek to de-center Europe without mimicking its traditions of historiography.<sup>31</sup> In Native American studies, Tressa Berman’s examination of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara women’s work complements Gudeman’s studies by illuminating multiple dimensions of Sahlins’s claim: as an economy is a function of culture, so is culture reenacted, made visible, and reinvented, through the economic exchanges, mechanisms of wealth redistribution, and relationships of reciprocity typical to Indigenous communities. Duane Champagne has called such reenactments “tribal capitalism,” emphasizing the ways that wealth is used to strengthen relationships.<sup>32</sup> The Akimel O’odham, as Barnaby V. Lewis emphasizes, are not interested in the acquisition of wealth for its own sake; their base consists of their ideas of world-building, their agricultural economy, and the networks of exchange it has afforded over time.<sup>33</sup> World-building, in other words, is relational.

Scholarship focusing on the political economy has been able to highlight Indigenous persistence and influence without minimizing the violence of war, colonization, and resource extraction. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz has insisted that Native American scholarship acknowledge the “colonial framework” of US history and document the ways in which “Native nations and communities, while struggling to maintain fundamental values and collectivity, have from the beginning resisted modern colonialism using both defensive and offensive techniques.”<sup>34</sup> Indigenous adaptations, as demonstrated in works such as Pekka Hämäläinen’s *The Comanche Empire* and Michael Witgen’s *An Infinity of Nations*, have shaped economic development at local, regional, and national levels.<sup>35</sup> Taking a regional approach to economic power analysis, Thomas D. Hall traced the local manifestations of capitalistic growth in the Southwest in the context of the transition of the United States from a peripheral into a core economy as defined by Immanuel Wallerstein. In addition to providing a discussion of a continuum of economic incorporation, he acknowledged

the ways in which Indigenous southwestern economies affected global markets and thereby demonstrated that the world-system paradigm is not limited to top-down or unilinear examinations of divestment: smaller, marginal economies, he insisted, “play a more active role in the process [of incorporation] than is typically accorded them.”<sup>36</sup> In allowing for a dialectic notion of regional development and uncovering the previously invisible ways that smaller communities have contributed to and shaped the global economy, Hall’s work joins forces with more specific case studies of Native American negotiations with the national economy, all of which reveal the ways in which the warp of colonial power and the weft of self-determination and resistance have intertwined to create the fabric of America’s development.<sup>37</sup>

For the Akimel O’odham and their sense of peoplehood, that weft of self-determination is rooted in O’odham *himdag*, which, as detailed by O’odham scholar David Martínez, is “more than the set of customs” outlined by early twentieth-century ethnologists. It is a specific, place-based collective identity invented and reinvented as the River People “adapted to their desert environment,” developed their traditional ecological knowledge, and passed it on in their sacred stories and lifeways. “Most often,” continued Martínez, “himthag is translated as ‘a way of life,’ ‘culture,’ or ‘tradition.’ However, in the case of O’odham Himthag, the concept becomes more specific to a people and a place.” He points out that the stem *-thag* “signifies ‘belonging to’ or ‘being related to’ a group,” emphasizing the essence of learning in, with and about people-in-place.<sup>38</sup> Their *himdag* defines, grounds, and expresses their peoplehood in constant relationship with the Gila River.

The Peoplehood Matrix bridges the seemingly disparate interpretive lenses of Akimel O’odham sacred story and economic anthropology by highlighting the significance of place, relationships, and spiritual life or time-tested values as aspects of worldview. Developed by Edward H. Spicer, the concept of “enduring peoples” as defined through connection to territory or homeland, retention of language, and enduring religion or spiritual life illuminates the motives, collective resources, and strengths the Akimel O’odham have brought to the opportunities and hardships they have faced and to their interactions with allies and enemies over the centuries. To Spicer’s model, Robert K. Thomas added a fourth element, sacred history, and coined the term “peoplehood” in order to “transcend the notion of statehood, nationalism, gender, ethnicity, and sectarian membership.” Tom Holm, J. Diane Pearson,

and Ben Chavis then named and advanced the “Peoplehood Matrix” to be used as an epistemological framework in Native American studies.<sup>39</sup> For the Akimel O’odham, peoplehood, especially as related to land and sacred story, is expressed in and through the development and celebration of their agricultural economy and their ability to actualize their worldview.

Pima land, in Webb’s words, gave his forbearers “all they needed. It was easy for them to be generous.”<sup>40</sup> Theirs was an economy of plenty that, by the 1870s, had degraded into an economy of scarcity as Indian agents and settlers were followed by scientists and entrepreneurs who accelerated the extraction of Akimel O’odham natural resources, human resources, and what is called intellectual property today. The Phoenix Basin of the mid-nineteenth century marked a cultural crossroads linking east and west as Anglo-America depended upon the generosity of the Akimel O’odham to feed and protect the flood of gold-seekers heading to California. Soon after the Gila River Indian Reservation was established, forces of marginalization and exploitation devastated its landscape and threatened the survival of the Akimel O’odham; yet they continued to see themselves as farmers and world-builders, as allies in regional economic development, and as innovative co-creators involved in constant processes of adaptation and innovation. Referring specifically to upstream diversions of their irrigation water, anthropologist Frank Russell wrote at the turn of the century, “A thrifty, industrious, and peaceful people that had been in effect a friendly nation rendering succor and assistance to emigrants and troops for many years when they sorely needed it was deprived of the rights inhering from centuries of residence. The marvel is that the starvation, despair, and dissipation that resulted did not overwhelm the tribe.”<sup>41</sup> Their story is one of cultural continuity and economic transformation despite and because of their geographic stability in their desert oasis and their protocols of hospitality, through which generosity functioned to win favor and sustain cooperation among allies.<sup>42</sup>

The Huhugam–Akimel O’odham agricultural economy has played a part in local and regional and, later, national and international history from the extensive trade networks of the Huhugam between 800 and 1100; through the surplus grain and produce production in the Hispanic period and the movement of people and goods across the continent in the nineteenth century; to the Southwest’s entrance into the US cotton industry in the twentieth century. Akimel O’odham collective identity, self-fashioned from history

and story into a set of political strategies, aims, and expectations, reveals not only the strength and fragility of identity through times of plenty and times of hardship, but the multidimensional nature of the Akimel O'odham economy as if it were a verb, as opposed to a noun. Through the centuries, their agricultural economy was something the Akimel O'odham *did*; it was and is an action executed for the sake of their self-interest, their lifeways, their collective identity, and their enduring future. It is an action, in other words, that has actualized their worldview and expressed the values and meaning-making strategies modeled in their sacred stories.

### **Additional Preliminary Comments**

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In relation to worldview-as-history and worldview as an interpretive tool, this study is limited by the fact that I am not an Odham but a Euro-American. My scholarship led to my relationship with the Akimel O'odham rather than growing from previous roots in the Gila River Indian Community. Acknowledging the limitations of a mind clouded by the fog of an Anglo-American education and the assumptions that accompany it, I have undertaken the journey of this scholarship striving to be as conscious as possible of the fact that even the words we use in describing another culture “inevitably recode it to fit our own.”<sup>43</sup> I am indebted to the insight and wisdom of others and imagine the following study as one small piece of an expansive, multi-generational process of learning and sharing. With the aim of minimizing or balancing such bias and recoding, I have endeavored to highlight Akimel O'odham perspectives throughout this study as much as possible within the context of an archival record dominated by Euro-Americans. Storytellers Thin Leather (Kâ'mâl tkâk or Kamal Thak, also translated Thin Buckskin) and Juan Smith tell the prehistory of the Phoenix Basin. In the early historic period, eye-witness accounts of O'odham actions, supplemented by collective memories and O'odham scholarship of today, must suffice to illuminate their aims and guiding principles. But following the turn of the century, the voices of Antonio Azul and his contemporaries, boarding school students, alumni/ae including George Webb, Governor David A. Johnson, and his contemporaries representing the Gila River Indian Community in the 1930s form a chorus of testimonials to the important contributions the Akimel O'odham have made to the Southwest's agricultural development.

Regarding this volume's utility to the Gila River Indian Community today, I hope that it replies to the Button family's call to action regarding documenting the importance of Akimel O'odham contributions to American history. In addition, the final two chapters' coverage of the US Experimental Station from the 1930s through the 1950s responds to the Gila River Indian Community's Cultural Resource Management Program's invitation to future research on the agreement between the USDA and the Indian Office and the reasons for the station's closure.<sup>44</sup>

Before beginning, I will also add that nomenclature posed various challenges. As explained by Akimel O'odham Phoenix Indian School student Mary Breckenridge in the epigraph above, the name "Pima" was given to the Akimel O'odham by the Spaniards and sometimes includes all Pimans or O'odham speakers, although it also refers specifically to the people of the middle Gila River.<sup>45</sup> Today the people of the Gila River Indian Community refer to themselves as Pima or Akimel O'odham. Contemporary historians and linguists tend to use the name "Pima" while archaeologists are more likely to use the Indigenous name. I have chosen to privilege the Indigenous name for the River People, although source use and chronology at times called for the non-Indigenous name, especially in relation to the earlier periods that include discussion of Piman peoples of the Pimería Alta. Similar consideration has gone into the decision to utilize Huhugam over Hohokam when referring to the ancient ancestors. As Lewis has explained, "Huhugam is not the same as the archaeological term Hohokam, which is limited by time periods. And the archaeological term does not acknowledge ancient ancestors nor living O'odham who will become ancestors today or tomorrow." Painting a verbal picture of the relationship, he explained, "The term Hohokam encompasses only part of what O'odham refer to when they refer to their ancestors as *Huhugam*," and as a result, specific descriptions such as "*Hohokam* ball courts" are acceptable and may be clearer in terms of identifying a specific context of time and place.<sup>46</sup> Stressing a cultural continuity integral to enduring peoples, he elaborated: "In the O'odham traditional view, Huhugam refers to O'odham ancestors, identifying a person from whom an individual is a lineal descendent. The O'odham family tree is inclusive of all O'odham. This has been related not by one particular person but has as its basis the Creation story that places the existence of life on earth from time immemorial."<sup>47</sup> This work will maintain the O'odham spelling, emphasizing

these aspects of continuity or “belonging to” as detailed Martínez in his etymological comments.

Since the Sonoran Desert was home to additional Indigenous groups and occupied by Spaniards and Anglo-Americans, chapters below offer clarifications regarding the evolution of ethno-racial categories where appropriate, but the subject has warranted its own studies.<sup>48</sup> I have distinguished between Euro-Americans and Anglo-Americans in order to emphasize the significant role of Anglo-Saxonism in American settler-colonialism. In keeping with my decision to privilege the name Akimel O’odham over Pima, I also have used Indigenous names for the Tohono O’odham (Desert People, whom the Spaniards called the Papago), with whom the Akimel O’odham share a language and a history, and the Yuman-speaking Pee Posh (or Piipaash).<sup>49</sup> I also note that, although the Akimel O’odham and Pee Posh have lived together in the Gila River Reservation since it was established in 1859, this study focuses on the Akimel O’odham. The Pee Posh culture and experience is unique. Finally, since the Akimel O’odham and Pee Posh adopted the name of the Gila River Indian Community in 1939, the year before this study’s principle content terminates, I employ the chronologically appropriate name, Gila River Reservation, for their territory until concluding remarks extend after the name change took place.<sup>50</sup>