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INTRODUCTION

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Papers of the 16th Biennial Southwest Symposium

STEPHEN E. NASH AND ERIN L. BAXTER

THE SOUTHWEST SYMPOSIUM

The first Southwest Symposium took place at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, in 1988. As described on its website,

the goal of this first conference was to create a venue where archaeologists working in the greater Southwest could gather to present and discuss work focused on broad questions of regional, theoretical, and methodological significance facing the field as a whole . . . It was designed to spur archaeologists working in the region to broaden their horizons to consider the Southwest as a whole and to recognize the similarities in the processes and trajectories marking the long and diverse occupation of this region. (Anonymous 2019)

The Southwest Symposium has been held in every even-numbered year since 1988 in cities across the greater Southwest from Albuquerque (1990, 2012) to Tucson (1992, 2002, 2016), Santa Fe (2000) to Las Vegas (NV; 2014), Hermosillo (Sonora, Mexico; 1998, 2010) to Chihuahua City (Chihuahua, Mexico; 2004), and from Las Cruces (NM; 2006) to Tempe (1994, 1996, 2008).

Southwest Symposium organizers and volume editors have assiduously published the symposia in complex, multidisciplinary, and important volumes that document and shape the direction of our discipline (see Fish and Reid 1996; Harry and Roth 2019; Hegmon 2000; Herhahn and Ramenofsky 2016; Lekson

1995; McBrinn and Webster 2008; Mills 2004; Minnis and Redman 1990; Nelson and Strawhacker 2011; Schlanger 2002; Spielmann 1995; Villapando 2002; Villapando and McGuire 2014; Walker and Venzor 2011; Wills et al. 1994).

Although each of the Southwest Symposium publications contain chapters on a wide range of specific, thematic, and relevant topics, volume themes have focused mostly on regional archaeology and interactions (see Harry and Roth 2019; Hegmon 2000; Villapando 2002; McBrinn and Webster 2008; Nelson and Strawhacker 2011; Villapando and McGuire 2014). Other volumes have focused on identity and feasting (Mills 2004), ancient communities (Wills et al. 1994), migration (Lekson 1995), and gender archaeology (Spielmann 1995), to name a few. Southwest Symposium edited volumes therefore offer a fascinating smorgasbord of archaeological topics. It is not a stretch to say that these volumes could form the basis for a compelling series of graduate-level seminars. Their legacy endures and continues to be negotiated.

RISING TIDES?

In a 1963 speech, President John F. Kennedy declared “a rising tide lifts all boats,” a pithy phrase speechwriter Ted Sorenson adopted from the New England chamber of commerce, which apparently acquired the phrase from northeastern anglers. At the time, Kennedy and Sorenson hoped to persuade skeptical constituents that the construction of a controversial dam was not simply a matter of pork barrel politics; it was going to enhance the regional economy as well.

Kennedy and Sorenson’s metaphor rests on a commonsense but simplistic understating of tides—everyone knows that tides either rise or fall. What they fail to acknowledge is what all sailors know: oceans are dynamic entities with variously (un-)predictable waves, crests, swells, chops, and currents that complicate the effect of any given tide, whether rising or falling.

A similarly reductionist and commonsensical understanding of science would have it that the development of knowledge, method, and theory is inexorable, for science is cumulative. As sociologists of science, epistemologists, and historians know all too well, science, like any other human endeavor, is subject to the whims, fancies, biases, agendas, and insecurities of its practitioners. As such, the progress of science, and by proxy archaeology, necessarily ebbs and flows. Complicating matters, research follows money, so we know more about topics, sites, and regions that obtain funding (Killick 2008; see Nash, chapter 3 in this volume). Progress happens, but it happens in fits and starts.

As previous Southwest Symposium volumes attest, Southwestern archaeology is a wonderfully multidisciplinary science willing to adapt and adopt analytical methods, techniques, and theories from a wide range of disciplines so long as they advance our understanding of the pre- and post-Columbian regional history.

Returning to Kennedy and Sorenson’s maritime metaphor, and while fully acknowledging the irony in our beloved, landlocked, semiarid region, there is and has been no great, singular tide lifting Southwestern archaeology over the last 150 years. Instead, our discipline advances in fits and starts through conceptual

and analytical waves, crests, swells, chops, and currents (see Webb 2002). When a radically new analytical technique, such as tree-ring or radiocarbon dating, is added to our intellectual repertoire, the effects can be immediate, dramatic, and long lasting; the analytical tide lifts the entire discipline (Nash 1999; Taylor and Bar-Yosef 2014). (Other dating techniques, such as obsidian hydration or archaeomagnetic dating [see Blinman and Cox, chapter 7 in this volume], can suffer an opposite fate.) The analysis of legacy collections and archives can lead to new and re-interpretations of important archaeological sites in light of new theoretical developments. For instance, reanalysis of archives and collections from Aztec Ruin illuminates a more nuanced understanding of the turbulent last days at that site and the collapse of the Chacoan system writ large (Baxter 2016; see Mattson, chapter 12 in this volume, and other chapters in part III). These are indeed specific case studies but each can form an important wave in a rising tide of archaeological understanding.

More broadly, theoretical debates can rage for decades on topics that arguably (and empirically) should have been settled rapidly. As but one example, the debate regarding the legitimacy of “Mogollon” as an ancient culture group should not have taken decades to resolve (see Haury 1985; Whittlesey et al. 2010). The debate’s staying power says more about individual and institutional rivalries and power structures than it does about the archaeological record (see Snead 2000). The Grasshopper–Chavez Pass debate of the 1970s and 1980s, which pitted the University of Arizona against Arizona State University, was as much about the institutions and personalities involved as it was about Mogollon social organization (see Reid and Whittlesey 2005). Similarly, debates about the “New Archaeology” raged for decades but eventually faded (more or less) into oblivion. Now some of the central tenets of the New Archaeology (e.g., hypothesis testing, statistical analysis and reasoning, and cultural ecology) are de rigueur and unstated gospel today in Southwestern archaeology (see O’Brien, Lyman, and Schiffer 2005). That said, thirty-two years after the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the discipline is slowly but surely embracing a greater emphasis on collaboration with tribes that should arguably have occurred long ago (Nash and Colwell 2020).

THE 2018 SOUTHWEST SYMPOSIUM: PUSHING BOUNDARIES

This volume presents twenty chapters resulting from the 16th Biennial Southwest Symposium held at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (DMNS) January 4–6, 2018 (Nash 2018). By any stretch of the measuring tape, Denver lies outside the presumptive, if not de facto boundaries of the American Southwest. Disciplinary lore suggests the American Southwest extends from Durango, Colorado, on the north to Durango, Chihuahua, Mexico, on the south and from Las Vegas, Nevada, on the west to Las Vegas, New Mexico, on the east. Denver is more than 300 mi. from the closest of those cities; it is decidedly not within the traditional geographic boundaries of the American Southwest or the Cartesian network of previous locations for the Southwest Symposium.

Nevertheless, Denver enjoys a certain pride-of-place within the history of Southwestern archaeology, and DMNS in particular has helped push the boundaries of Southwestern archaeology for nearly a century. On August 29, 1927, paleontologists from the Colorado Museum of Natural History (now DMNS) discovered a projectile point embedded in the ribs of an extinct form of bison at Folsom, New Mexico. A coterie of famous archaeologists, who happened to be less than 200 mi. away attending the first Pecos Conference in Pecos, New Mexico (see Woodbury 1993), verified the Folsom discovery in the field, confirmed that Native Americans were present in North America during the last Ice Age. A chronological and disciplinary boundary was broken.

In 1935, the Museum hired Hannah Marie Wormington, a BA degree–holding archaeologist from the University of Denver. Over the next three decades, Wormington established herself as a central scholar, sage, and broker of Paleoindian research across the American West. She served in that capacity until her death in a house fire in 1994. She pushed Paleoindian, Archaic, and gender-related archaeological boundaries across North America (Nash 2013); Cynthia Irwin-Williams served as a teenage volunteer for Wormington in the 1950s before going on to push gender- and research-related boundaries of her own (Nash 2014).

Fast forward to 2014, when DMNS opened the Morgridge Family Exploration Center, a 120,000 ft.² expansion on the south side of the main Museum building. Aboveground, the addition includes classrooms and workshops, a new entrance for schoolchildren, the Discovery Zone for young children and their families, and a new temporary exhibition gallery. Belowground, the new building contains the 60,000 ft.² Avenir Collections Center, a state-of-the-art facility for DMNS's entire scientific collection, including anthropology and archaeology. Simply put, DMNS archaeologists believed it was time to share this wonderful new collections facility with our archaeological colleagues, so we offered to host the 2018 symposium. The Southwest Symposium board of directors readily agreed to the proposal and allowed us to pursue a theme focused on “Pushing Boundaries.”

SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

In keeping with the “Pushing Boundaries” theme of the Symposium, the first session of presented papers focused on “Expanding Perspectives on Plains-Pueblo Interaction,” organized by Scott Ortman of the University of Colorado Boulder and Michele Koons of DMNS. The Plains region has traditionally not received its fair share of attention from Southwestern archaeologists even though scholars have long known that Plains and Pueblo folk interacted and that those interactions were extensive and have great time depth. The Plains-Pueblo session contained ten papers, five of which are included in this volume.

Presented as a forum rather than a series of formally written and presented papers, the second session focused on “Bears Ears [National Monument]—Stories of an Effort to Protect Heritage on a Landscape Scale.” The Bear Ears boundaries are quite literally being pushed and pulled by politicians and the courts as we type. Organized by Bill Doelle of Archaeology Southwest, the Bears

Ears session pushed all of our epistemological and ontological boundaries by demanding that we consider the political, cultural, legal, ethical, and moral underpinnings of our work and the sites, resources, and people whose archaeology we wish to protect.

The third session of presented papers, entitled “A Return to Context: Advancing Collections-Based Research in the U.S. Southwest,” offered just that: a series of collections-based archaeological research papers. It would have been unseemly for us to convene archaeologists in a major natural history museum for two days while ignoring the vast and still often untapped research potential of previously excavated museum collections. Crow Canyon Archaeological Center laboratory director Benjamin Bellorado and his colleague and friend, the late Saul Hedquist, organized the symposium; seven of these papers are included in this volume.

The fourth and final symposium session focused on “Chronological ‘Big Data’ and Pre-Columbian History in the Southwest.” Almost a century after the first Pecos Conference, it is remarkable that the Pecos Classification remains mostly intact, especially given the fact that its architects did not have absolute calendar dates available to guide their work. It is equally remarkable that we sometimes forget the exquisitely rich archaeological record in the American Southwest can lull us into a sense of complacency with respect to chronometry and chronology. Myles Miller of Versar, Inc., and Steve Nash of DMNS challenged archaeologists to consider the potential for chronometric “Big Data” to affect archaeological inquiry. Nine papers were presented in the symposium; six are included in this volume.

Beyond the formal, oral presentations, two poster sessions offered eighteen groups of symposium participants a chance to present updates on collections- and field- or site-based research.

Finally, during lunch each day of the symposium, we offered practical workshops. Professional comedian and public-speaking consultant Jay Mays and comedian Ben Kronberg, both of PitchLab, Inc., offered a workshop on effective public speaking. Allyson Carter of the University of Arizona Press and Jessica d’Arbonne of the University Press of Colorado offered a workshop on “Getting Your Book Published.” Amanda Mascarelli, managing editor of *Sapiens.org*, and Susan Moran, a freelance writer from Boulder, Colorado, offered their insights on writing for the public, a topic that becomes more and more important by the day. If nothing else is evident as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, it is clear that the nature of scholarly communication has changed, and changed radically, especially since the introduction of the first iPhone on January 9, 2007. These three professional skills workshops pushed boundaries by helping archaeologists develop the tools they need to communicate in new, different, and more effective ways.

THIS VOLUME

As we compiled these papers for publication, we realized that we needed to change the publication sequence from the order in which the papers were presented orally (Nash 2018). In order to privilege Indigenous perspectives, we decided to put the Bears Ears contribution first, followed by chronology papers

second, collections-based papers third, and Plains-Pueblo interaction papers last (see interchapters between each section).

CONCLUSION

This volume presents twenty research papers resulting from the 16th Biennial Southwest Symposium. One section focuses on the status, history, and prospects of and for Bears Ears National Monument, thereby examining the push-pull of regulatory and political boundaries that may, or may not, have to do with the nature and integrity of the archaeological record. Six chapters push the boundaries of chronometric analysis by testing where, and when, we can make sound, empirically derived interpretations about events and processes in the past. Seven chapters push us back into the collections and repositories that we never should have left behind. Finally, five chapters in the Plains-Pueblo section remind us yet again that geographic boundaries, particularly modern ones, need not be absolute; rather, they are permeable like membranes, with an ebb and flow through time and across space.

Does a rising tide lift all boats? Yes, it does, but the development of archaeological knowledge, method, and theory enjoys the waves, crests, swells, chops, and currents that make the scholarly enterprise so interesting and challenging. We believe the twenty chapters in this volume build on archaeological precursors and raise the collective tide and push the boundaries of Southwestern archaeology. We hope you agree.

Acknowledgments. Many institutions and individuals came together to ensure this Southwest Symposium was a success. Taylor Foreman and Nash of DMNS did the heavy lifting of symposium organization and logistics. Frank Krell of DMNS edited and designed the symposium program (Nash 2018). DMNS senior leadership provided space-fee waivers and other measures of support. Benjamin Bellowado, Bill Doelle, Saul Hedquist, Michele Koons, Myles Miller, Steve Nash, and Scott Ortman organized and managed the various symposium sessions.

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