American Antiquity (2025), **90**, 113–128
doi:10.1017/aaq.2024.43

SAA
Society for American Archaeology

ARTICLE

Positions of Power: Situational Flexibility in Mimbres Society

Kathryn M. Baustian[1] and Barbara J. Roth[2]

[1]Department of Anthropology, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY, USA; and [2]Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV, USA
Corresponding author: Kathryn M. Baustian; Email: kbaustia@skidmore.edu

(Received 16 January 2024; revised 4 June 2024; accepted 15 June 2024)

Abstract
Social power establishes and legitimizes actions for individuals within a society who accept the structures that create that power. Differences in power can develop without strict hierarchies, however. Here, we explore the power differences among groups living in the Mimbres Mogollon region of southwestern New Mexico using bioarchaeological data and a case study from the Harris site, a Late Pithouse period village occupied circa AD 550–1000. Aspects of mortuary practices and supporting archaeological data offer nuanced interpretations of individuals with situational power linked to social practices that both solidified and maintained power by particular households. The power differences documented here are not based on coercion; instead, they are tied to cooperation and engagement with the community. For small-scale communities such as Harris, situational power is interpreted for individuals with access to prime agricultural land and/or ritual, or by association with certain land-holding lineages. This system is consistent with a heterarchical structure that embraced flexibility in the use of power.

Resumen
El poder social establece y legitima acciones para los individuos dentro de una sociedad que aceptan las estructuras que crean ese poder. Sin embargo, las distinciones de poder pueden desarrollarse sin jerarquías estrictas. En este artículo, exploramos las diferencias sociales relacionado a poder entre los grupos que viven en la región de Mimbres Mogollon en el suroeste de Nuevo México utilizando datos bioarqueológicos y un estudio de caso del sitio Harris, una aldea del período Tardío Pithouse ocupada desde ca 550–1000 dC. Algunos aspectos de las prácticas funerarias y los datos arqueológicos que las respaldan ofrecen interpretaciones matizadas de individuos con poder situacional vinculado a prácticas sociales que solidificaron y mantuvieron el poder de grupos residenciales particulares. Las distinciones de poder documentadas aquí no se basan en la coerción, sino que están ligadas a la cooperación y el compromiso con la comunidad. Para comunidades de pequeña escala como Harris, el poder situacional se interpreta como individuos con acceso a tierras agrícolas de primera calidad y/o rituales, o por asociación con ciertos linajes terratenientes. Este sistema es consistente con una estructura heterárquica que abrazaba la flexibilidad en el uso del poder.

Keywords: Mimbres Mogollon; power; status; heterarchy

Palabras clave: Mimbres Mogollon; poder; estatus; heterarquía

Power structures have taken many forms in past societies in the way they were configured, maintained, and passed on. Through time, as groups aggregated and intensified their subsistence practices, different social configurations developed that enabled groups to interact and cooperate. Much research has addressed power structures tied to socially complex societies, often with an emphasis on the factors that led to the development of inequality (Adams 1966; Carneiro 1970; Flannery 1972; Fried 1967).

These studies generally focus on factors that influenced the development of emergent leaders—including wealth differences tied to differential access to land, other resources, or exotic goods—and they often emphasize the role of individuals in aggrandizing behavior. Many of these studies also focus on the different strategies that emergent leaders and their kin used to maintain their status and facilitate buy-in by others in their community. Power in these situations was achieved through various means, but it was maintained through activities pursued by the leaders that benefited the community, including rituals and protection, or, in some cases, through coercion.

In the US Southwest, these social forms were not always strictly hierarchical (Feinman et al. 2000; Lipe 2002), nor were they based solely on unequal access to resources or knowledge. Instead, they were often more nuanced and tied to particular circumstances—what we have elsewhere referred to as "situational power" (Baustian and Roth 2020). Fleisher and Wynne-Jones (2010), working with African societies, have argued that "non-essentialist conceptions of power" can help us understand the subtleties of different power structures. The means for obtaining power and "alternative pathways" leading to differences in power (sensu Mills 2000) have also been of interest to researchers who seek to evaluate the dynamics involved in the emergence, maintenance, and sometimes quashing of power differences. Social power can be an important component of community and individual relations because it establishes and legitimizes actions. Reconstructing this power in prehistoric communities can be difficult for those groups who maintained more egalitarian political structures, however.

Feinman and colleagues (2000) discussed the development of power differentials in the Southwest by examining the different social strategies used by individuals and groups to obtain and maintain power. They noted that many groups in the Southwest had multiple impermanent leaders who derived their power from ritual rather than strictly economic means. They also noted that some societies exhibited internal differences in power, often along clan and lineage lines. Ritual knowledge and control of certain aspects of ritual played a critical role in the formation and maintenance of these power differentials while allowing for flexibility in social situations that precluded the development of formal hierarchies (Arakawa 2012; Lipe 2002; Russell and Hegmon 2021; Schachner 2001; Ware 2014). Differential access to ritual knowledge and control of ritual items was one of the primary means of wielding power documented ethnographically in Puebloan groups (Brandt 1994; Ortiz 1969; Parsons 1939).

In this article, we explore the development of power differences among groups living in the Mimbres Mogollon region of southwestern New Mexico using bioarchaeological data and a case study from the Harris site, a Late Pithouse period village occupied circa AD 550–1000. Our premise is that power differentials developed without strict hierarchies and that these often formed along lineage or clan lines, as has been documented ethnohistorically and in later Puebloan groups (Dozier 1970). The lack of obvious hierarchy in the archaeological record of the Mimbres region (Gilman 1990) does not negate the possibility that certain individuals held power in these societies. For Mimbres groups, we use the term "situational power" to describe this occurrence, given that certain groups began to attain different levels of social power, and yet none of the more rigid social structures that we see in other areas associated with the development of hierarchical leaders are present. Instead, power was accrued through land management and ritual. It was actively negotiated, and it waxed and waned depending on the social circumstances of village life. Despite this level of flexibility in the power structure, it represents a form of power differential that could, in some circumstances, lead to more rigid hierarchical structures.

We argue that these kinds of situational power differentials were likely common among groups who were aggregating, intensifying agricultural production, and incorporating ritual to facilitate cooperation. Consequently, as others have suggested (Creel 2006; Diehl 2006; Russell and Hegmon 2021; Shafer 2006, 2022), these cases can provide important insights into the diverse ways that inequality and power played out in the past.

We explore the development of power differences using two lines of evidence. First, we use mortuary and bioarchaeological data from a large sample of sites in the Mimbres region to identify those individuals who were able to amass power that could be used in specific situations but perhaps not in all of their interactions with the community at large. Through identification of grave goods, body

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

positions and grave placements, social identities linked to family lineages, and skeletal markers of competition and status, we present traits that can be used to assess power in nonhierarchical societies or those with subtle indicators of stratification.

Second, we use data from the Harris site, a large Late Pithouse period village located in the Mimbres River Valley of southern New Mexico, as a case study to explore the development and maintenance of situational power. Evidence from domestic and mortuary contexts are used to identify individuals and households with identities that, at times, were associated with power and influence. Collectively, these data simultaneously demonstrate a cooperative and competitive social structure, but one that was able to successfully maintain a cohesive village.

Power in the Past

We define an individual as holding power when they can influence others or exert change (Lipe 2002). Our decoupling of power from status is intentional, because we argue that the situational nature of power in the Mimbres region meant that there were not always formal lines of inequality. Therefore, an individual or segment of society (e.g., household) could have status or a recognized social position within the community, but this did not always coincide with the power to influence or bring about change.

Power differentials could potentially derive from multiple factors (Mills 2000), but we see three factors—ritual access, agricultural land, and household or lineage membership—as being most influential in the development of power differences in the Mimbres region. Many researchers have addressed the important role that access to ritual and control of ritual knowledge played in social dynamics in Southwest societies, and in general, these are seen as promoting power differences (Clayton 2006; Lipe 2002; Mills 2000; Potter and Perry 2000; Russell 2016; Russell and Hegmon 2021; Ware 2018). Roth and Romero (2022) discuss the role of rituals conducted within great kivas during the Late Pithouse period in the Mimbres region as a means for legitimizing social power and promoting community solidarity. Fleisher and Wynne-Jones (2010:179) note that power requires a means to be translated into authority, and ritual would have served this role, providing a means to legitimize power.

Access to arable land was another potential variable resulting in power differences. Competition over the best plots of agricultural land could lead to conflict that had to be mitigated through social means, including ritual and structured paths for land ownership and continuity through time. This may have been one of the primary ways for specific lineages to gain social power, as has been demonstrated ethnographically (Dozier 1970). The clan or lineage often owned fields, which limited the power of individuals but still ensured differential access to prime agricultural land. For example, at Hopi, the earliest residents claimed the best agricultural lands, thereby producing more than later arrivals who had access to less productive land (Russell and Hegmon 2021). The products of these fields and their distribution was another venue for power differences; supporting those with highly productive fields was potentially a way to ensure access to those products and formed a subtle means of control by the landowners.

The final means for obtaining power was through clan or lineage association. Ware (2018) has argued that kinship is critical for understanding social relations in nonstate societies, with ritual authority generally passing through the maternal line in most Western Puebloan societies. These descent groups were often ranked, with high-ranking groups controlling the best farmland and important communal ceremonies (Ware 2018:644). Clayton (2006) has argued that corporate household control of ceremonial spaces was a means of socially differentiating Mimbres Puebloan groups. Lineages also controlled both ceremonial knowledge and paraphernalia for many contemporary Pueblos, although some control was also held by nonkin sodalities (Ware 2014). Shafer (2003, 2006, 2022) has been the main proponent of lineage control in the Mimbres region (see below).

Ethnographic data from Puebloan groups in the Southwest document the interconnectivity of ritual, lineage composition, and agricultural success. Dozier (1970) describes the distinct roles of men and women within lineage groups as instrumental in managing ceremonial activities and ritual paraphernalia in Western Puebloan groups. Within their lineages, men were able to take on ritual

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

responsibilities that gave them power over others, and they maintained that power through secrecy and control of ceremonial knowledge (Brandt 1994). Outside of these rituals, however, they lacked that power (Hieb 1972). Concurrently, women in the community controlled the items used in ceremonies (Griffin-Pierce 2000) and owned houses and land, which gave them access to power through lineage membership and agricultural opportunity.

In the Eastern Pueblos (and a few Western Pueblos), non-kin-based sodalities such as medicine and hunting societies cross-cut kin groups and served as a means for integrating large aggregated multiethnic pueblos. These sodalities operated independently of lineage groups and maintained authority over aspects of social, political, and ceremonial functions (Griffin-Pierce 2000; Mills 2014; Ware 2014). Whereas lineages controlled ceremonial knowledge and ritual paraphernalia, sodalities were not tied to specific lineages, and this allowed for flexibility during times of change or stress. The cyclical nature of ceremonial systems created a shift in leadership throughout the year, and this prevented the concentration of power for long periods of time. In some contact period Eastern Pueblos, especially those in the Rio Grande region, ritual sodalities replaced kin-based corporate groups in leadership roles. We do not see evidence of sodalities in the Mimbres region, given that pueblo organization appears to have been organized along kin lines throughout the occupation sequence (Shafer 2003). Nonetheless, it is possible that non-kin groups formed to further facilitate community cohesion.

In addition to the sources of power discussed above, a final factor that can be useful for examining power differences in the Mimbres region is the concept of heterarchy. Heterarchy encompasses societies that lacked formal hierarchies but had multiple horizontal sources of power that came into play under particular situations (Crumley 1995). Power relations could be ranked and re-ranked as conditions changed. Rautman (1998) has argued for the usefulness of this concept in Southwest societies because it recognizes that social power could be constructed in different ways. Similarly, Dorland (2015) has used the concept in his analysis of the Ancestral Wendat in the Mississippi region, arguing that power structures in this area were "dynamic and fluid, contextually based, and constantly negotiated" and that heterarchy allowed for strategies for reinforcing community identity. We see it as potentially useful because it recognizes different forms of social power and the potential that sources of power can be ranked in different ways depending on the situation.

Mimbres Background

Located in southwest New Mexico (Figure 1), the Mimbres region was occupied from approximately AD 200 to 1450 (Anyon et al. 2017). Sites were predominantly located along the Mimbres and Gila Rivers prior to AD 1130 and near the Rio Grande after AD 1130. The Mimbres people maintained a mixed hunter-gatherer and agricultural subsistence strategy through their early chronology but transitioned to a more intensified agricultural lifestyle around AD 800 (Diehl 1996; Roth et al. 2018). As these changes occurred, there were opportunities for shifts in social interactions and structure as well.

The growth and expansion of Mimbres communities was a steady process throughout the Late Pithouse period (AD 550–1000), which accelerated into the early part of the Classic (Pueblo) period (AD 1000–1130). Agricultural intensification appears to have been the driving factor in transforming the landscape in the Mimbres and Gila River Valleys and was associated with social and ritual practices that could ensure its success. Productive agricultural land is limited in the Mimbres region and—as documented for the Hopi and argued by Russell and Hegmon (2021)—the earliest land-holding occupants would have claimed the best agricultural lands, with later arrivals left with less productive fields.

The development of extended-family corporate groups during early phases of growth has been linked to an increasing commitment to irrigation agriculture in the region (Creel and Anyon 2003; Roth and Baustian 2015; Shafer 2006). This may have significantly influenced communal interaction, particularly when crop surpluses occurred. Some leadership roles would have been necessary for overseeing irrigation systems to ensure access to water and to mitigate competition. Growth in agricultural management tasks may have reinforced these positions within extended family corporate groups. Social pressures likely developed as land was increasingly limited, and rituals to reinforce group cohesion would have become important.

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

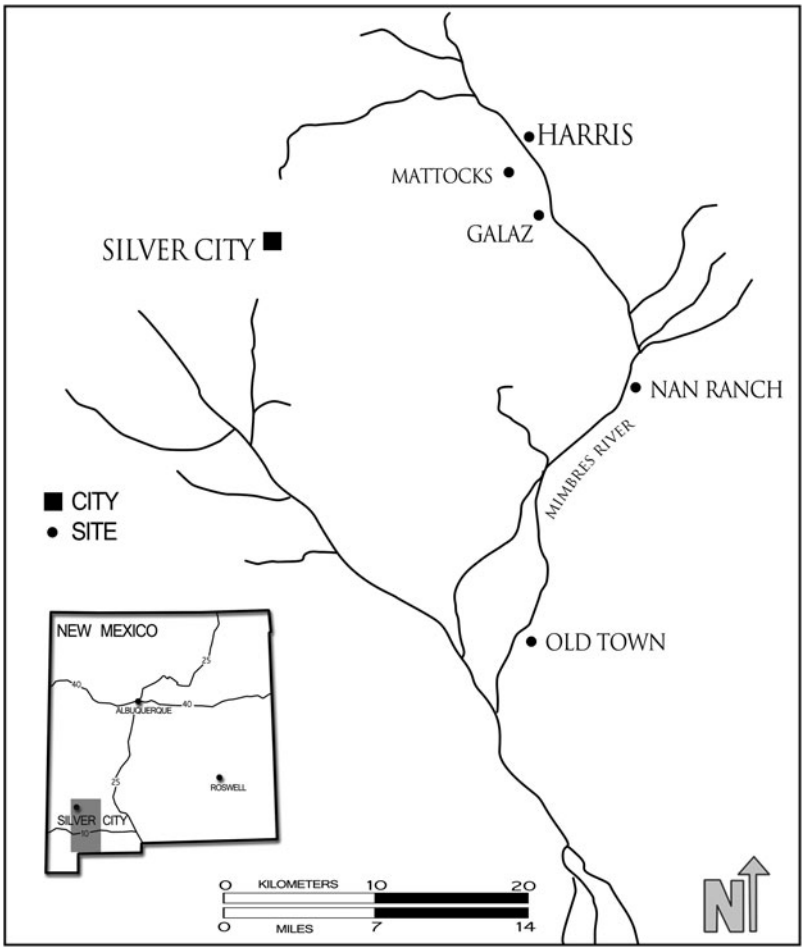

Figure 1. Mimbres cultural area and relevant sites. Map by Skidmore GIS Center for Interdisciplinary Research.

Shifts in ritual behavior during the Late Pithouse period are apparent in the use of increasingly large and complex great kivas, which further presented opportunities for individuals or groups to emerge with power (Roth and Romero 2022). We argue that ritual access and management was one of the main ways that individuals or households gained power within Mimbres society. Our prior research at the Harris site has documented changing power differentials through architectural patterns, burial placements, and mortuary items (Roth and Baustian 2015; Roth and Romero 2022). Shafer (2003, 2006) and Creel (2006; Creel and Anyon 2003) have argued that religious shifts observed during the latter part of the Late Pithouse period, such as the dramatic ritual retirement of great kivas at the largest Pithouse period sites in the valley in the early AD 900s, continued to have impacts on prestige and power into the Classic period.

The Classic period (AD 1000–1130) represents a time of both continuity and change in the Mimbres region. The shift to aboveground architecture, manifested in pueblos of different sizes and configurations throughout the valley, may have been related to social and ideological changes tied to the expansion of extended family groups (Shafer 1995, 2003). The largest pueblos are located along the Mimbres and Gila Rivers (see Figure 1), and most of these exhibit evidence of extensive and long-term remodeling, indicating strong ties to specific locations. Shafer (2003, 2006) has discussed the important role of "prime families" at NAN Ranch—and by inference, at other large pueblos. These represent initial land-holding corporate groups that had access to the best fields and laid claim to

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

residential space via remodeling and burial practices (Shafer 2006:18). Gilman and colleagues (2014) argue that important ritual changes occurred during the Classic period, reflected in the incorporation of Hero Twin iconography on ceramic vessels and the use of macaws and parrots, possibly leading to differences in ritual power for those who raised these birds and distributed their ritually important feathers. Changes in ritual space are apparent with smaller, more exclusive kivas and central plazas replacing the large great kivas of the Pithouse period (Creel and Anyon 2003; Creel and Shafer 2015; Creel et al. 2015).

Social Power in the Mimbres Region

To date, few studies have addressed social structure in the Mimbres region. In general, archaeological and bioarchaeological data do not demonstrate obvious social stratification that led to differences in resource access and overall health for specific individuals. Some scholars have identified site-specific indicators of potential differentiation of individuals or subgroups, however. Shafer (2003, 2022) has suggested that the South Roomblock at NAN Ranch was occupied by a wealthier lineage represented by the internment of groups of individuals within habitation rooms. He observed more architectural investment and burials with higher counts of grave goods, especially ceramics, in the South Roomblock compared to the East Roomblock. Shafer (2022) used these data to discuss the role of lineages in power structures at NAN Ranch. He views the shift to intramural burials during the early Classic period as tied to ancestor rituals that invoked the power of the ancestors, which in turn "legitimized resource rights through lineal descent" (Shafer 2022:177).

Within either roomblock at NAN Ranch, Shafer (2003, 2006) described a few individuals whose burials may reflect power differences within the community. Burial 127, for example, has been argued by Shafer (2003:162) to represent a "shaman/oracle." This was an adult male buried in a sitting position in a "specially prepared crypt" (Shafer 2003:162). He was buried with a quartz crystal, cloud blower pipe, and turtle plastron—items that Russell (2016) classifies as restricted ritual paraphernalia. Burial 86 at NAN included a woman who, based on the pottery production items found with her, was a potter (Shafer 1985). Neither of these examples demonstrates extreme hierarchical positions within the NAN Ranch community, but both offer identities associated with different social realms of daily activity.

Gilman (1990) has explored mortuary indicators of status among Classic period Mimbres burials and reported that most burials did not indicate the presence of vertical status hierarchies. Her study identified a few "wealthy" burials (i.e., those with several mortuary goods) that could have held some horizontal status associated with more powerful families or individuals (Gilman 2006:72). Both Creel (2006) and Shafer (2006) have argued that some status differences existed during the Classic Mimbres period, although they do not see these as developing into rigid social hierarchies. Creel (1989; Creel and Shafer 2015) notes that cremations may have been important individuals, given their location in specific households and plazas, and the inclusion of grave goods such as projectile points and jewelry.

At Galaz, one of the largest and most complex of the Classic Mimbres pueblos in the Mimbres Valley, Anyon and LeBlanc (1984) did not find any significant differences in wealth in the recovered burials. However, Livesay and Gilman (2020) used ceramic counts from mortuary contexts as indicative of ritual importance regionally and found that Galaz had 11% more burials with multiple ceramic vessels than NAN Ranch. They used their findings to argue that the Galaz community was an important ritual center during the Classic period. The high proportion of macaw burials at Galaz supports this idea (Creel and McCusick 1994; Gilman et al. 2014). As noted previously, macaws and parrots have been interpreted as highly important to the ritual system during the Classic period, and their association with both male and female burials offers a way to interpret power through ritual access (Gilman et al. 2014; Munson 2000, 2006).

Russell (2016; Russell and Hegmon 2021) has explored the presence of inequality within and between Mimbres communities by comparing burial patterns, ritual paraphernalia, and architecture. His findings highlight the interconnectivity of ritual, agriculture, and lineage that we have discussed. His data indicate low-level social inequality in the Mimbres region in terms of hierarchy, but they also

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

show that status and power differences were highly fluid across communities and through time. He suggests that power was accessed by having longer connections to the land—what he terms "antecedence"—but it was especially associated with households and lineages with access to ritual facilities and objects. Using ceremonial architecture and restricted ritual paraphernalia such as quartz crystals, fossils, cloud blowers, ceramic ladles, and turtle plastrons as markers of this access, he found evidence for competition over ritual access over time. Privileged ritual knowledge was signaled by 16 burials (of 3,143 burials from seven sites) that contained restricted ritual paraphernalia. Both male and female adults were among these burials, but so were children under the age of two years, which suggests hereditary lineage links to power positions associated with ritual. Three of these 16 burials were in the same pithouse at the Galaz site, suggesting that this may have been the residence of a ritual specialist lineage (Russell 2016:278). Based on this study, Russell argues that ritual inequality—what we describe here as differences in social power—increased through the Late Pithouse period and then dramatically decreased during the Classic period (AD 1000–1130).

These examples provide an opportunity for further exploration of power differentials in Mimbres communities to understand how smaller-scale societies operate with people in nuanced and situational roles gaining power without strong hierarchical social structures. Our approach is to highlight examples of the contexts in which Mimbres people held social power, which allowed them to navigate the needs of their community but did not result in extreme differences in power and status. Following Lund and colleagues (2022), we argue that social relations and collective consensus were an important way in which power was created and maintained in the Mimbres region.

Mortuary and Skeletal Data

Mortuary treatments and skeletal data reveal individuals and groups with identities that, at times, were associated with power and influence. The following sections address examples of mortuary and skeletal data that differentiate individuals within the larger community. The specific context of each presents an opportunity to interpret unique identities or roles within society that might have been imbued with power.

Mortuary Indicators of Power Differences

The ways in which the dead are disposed of can vary immensely within highly stratified societies. The archaeological record of Mimbres sites has not revealed extensive evidence of social stratification, but the mortuary features and human remains have not usually been the primary focus of research; instead, emphasis has been placed on ceramic vessels recovered from them. Based on numerous excavations of Mimbres sites, scholars have most frequently observed flexed or semiflexed inhumations in extramural areas during the Pithouse period and subfloor inhumations during the Classic period (see Anyon and LeBlanc 1984; Creel 2006; Gilman and LeBlanc 2017; Shafer 2003). Ceramic vessels were placed near or inverted over the head in varying frequencies, and other material items have similarly varied across demographic groups. Aspects of mortuary practices in the following case studies offer nuanced interpretations of individuals with differential status or power within Mimbres communities.

Research on Classic period Mimbres burials has revealed few indicators of strict status hierarchies based on the number of grave goods (Gilman 1990). Although the majority of graves are consistent in quantity and type of items included with the dead, a closer examination of those with abnormally high (sometimes referred to as "wealthy") numbers of goods may be necessary to fully assess differences in power and/or status. For example, Burial 15-105 at Galaz contained the most ceramic vessels of all excavated mortuary features. Twenty vessels were interred with a young child (approximately five years old). This burial was beneath the floor of Room 84A, which is within the post-retirement fill of 42A, a great kiva with 50 post-abandonment burials. Consequently, the placement of this grave and the high number of ceramic vessels prompts us to consider that this child, and probably the child's lineage, had some power or status. Given that the child was quite young, association with an important family is the most likely scenario.

Similarly, the location of a grave at Old Town offers insights into social power by virtue of its association with ritual structures. Burial 18 was an adult male, with red staining applied to his forearms,

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

whose body was in indirect contact with the floors of two earlier great kivas. Creel (2006) suggests that this man may have had a special role in maintaining the agricultural and ceremonial calendar for the community. Creel cites historic Puebloan data on pekwins and caciques, who held important duties of tracking astronomical events for their matrilineal clans. This responsibility had implications for subsistence productivity and therefore provided an opportunity for religious and political power as the man directed how and when agricultural activities took place.

The way in which the physical body was positioned can also indicate power differences within Mimbres society. The majority of burials at Mimbres sites are flexed and semiflexed, but some variation exists. For example, bodies placed in upright, seated positions have been documented at many Mimbres sites (Baustian and Roth 2013), and this placement may represent significance for family associations or ritual activities. Previously discussed Burial 127 at NAN Ranch is one such example. Shafer (2003) describes this adult male's upright, seated position within a wall crypt as intentional. The grave goods placed in the burial (quartz crystal, cloud blower pipe, turtle plastron) are consistent with ritual paraphernalia (Russell 2016), and he likely held power in ritual contexts.

Power and status can also be observed in the location of graves within a collective. Shafer (2003, 2006) has proposed that corporate family lineages used common cemetery plots within long-occupied rooms as a way of maintaining connections with their physical place on the landscape. Elsewhere, we have suggested that this was happening at the Harris site in superimposed rooms that we infer to be the heads of households of extended-family corporate groups (Roth and Baustian 2015). Others have explored family connections to roomblocks at Galaz (Anyon and LeBlanc 1984) and Swarts (Darrell Creel, personal communication 2023). Membership in socially prominent families may have offered opportunities for individuals to gain status and power within their community.

Finally, there are other, less frequently observed considerations for interpreting power from mortuary treatments in Mimbres communities. For example, occasionally burials present unique or atypical grave goods. Burial 2-85 at Galaz featured an adult female (30–40 years old) interred with a macaw/parrot at the time of her death. Gilman and colleagues (2014) have examined the role that macaw handlers may have played in providing macaw feathers and live birds for shifting ritual activities. Munson (2000) suggests that women were the ones taking on the difficult tasks of transporting macaws/parrots from Mesoamerica and also raising them within Mimbres sites. The woman in Burial 2-85 having a final disposition with the macaw may therefore signify her power within the realm of ritual practice.

Cremation was practiced in the Mimbres region, but this mortuary treatment was not nearly as common as primary interments during the Late Pithouse or Classic periods. Less is known about the frequency of cremations, however, because excavations have not often targeted the extramural areas in which these practices would have occurred. Creel (1989) and Anyon and LeBlanc (1984) have both discussed unique cremation deposits (both primary and secondary) and interpret many as being associated with rooms with special meaning or significance. Burial 175 and the large cremation cemetery at NAN Ranch are also distinct in their divergence from typical mortuary patterns and may signify unique identities for those individuals (Creel and Shafer 2015). Furthermore, Creel (1989) has demonstrated patterns in the specific grave goods (often projectile points and jewelry) found in cremations that support social identities that may have held power within Mimbres society.

One last mortuary factor for interpreting power would be placement of a grave with others in a grouping that is intentional. Shafer (2003) observed a pattern of burials within specific rooms or roomblocks at NAN Ranch that he interprets as lineage cemeteries. These private interments were placed beneath room floors both during and after occupation of the space, marking persistence of place and links to households that may have held power within the community. The burials represent membership in a corporate group with access to restricted resources such as land or ceremonies (Shafer 2003), and this is consistent with ethnographic accounts of acquiring situational power (Dozier 1970).

Skeletal Indicators of Power Differences

Analysis of Mimbres human remains has provided important information regarding the health status of individuals and communities, but it has also been helpful in investigating differential access to resources and experiences over their life course. Access to resources and economic roles are vital

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

components of power structures, so evidence of health patterns that resulted from unequal treatment or resource access is necessary to understand Mimbres society as a cooperative or a competitive one.

Baustian's (2015) research traced stature, rates of pathology, traumatic injuries, and robusticity patterns to assess stress and well-being within Mimbres communities and over time. Using stature and diseases associated with nutritional deficiencies among 247 individuals from 18 sites, she demonstrated that most Mimbres people were healthy. Very few individuals showed evidence of iron deficiency anemias, which would be associated with a lack of protein. Rather, the increasing dependence on maize and depletion of large game over time (Cannon 2000) did not contribute to declining health. Dental pathologies were consistent with heavy maize consumption but did not reveal differences between demographic groups. Stature was used as an indicator of the ability to achieve maximum growth potential during childhood and adolescence, which in turn is linked to access to resources. Accounting for expected differences between the sexes, neither males nor females showed changes in stature over the course of Mimbres chronology. This suggests that all individuals had similar access to food. No subgroups within the overall sample (e.g., community, sex, time period) demonstrated a lack of resources either.

Skeletal data showing physical robusticity were also examined to investigate different activities. This included muscle attachment sites of the arm and leg bones. Musculoskeletal stress markers of both areas were observed to be developed at fairly equal rates for all subgroups in the sample. This indicated that both males and females were experiencing similar levels of physiological stress in their activities, whether they were related to craft production, agriculture, or other daily tasks (specific reconstruction of tasks for individuals was not attempted due to difficulty in accuracy of such assessments). Research among other ancient Southwest populations has shown that equal robusticity among subgroups is not always the case. For example, Martin (2000) and Martin and colleagues (2010) documented extreme development of musculoskeletal stress markers among members of a subset of the Ancestral Puebloan La Plata population and theorized that they represented captive laborers.

The findings at La Plata were also based on high levels of traumatic injuries (Martin 2008). Data from the analysis of Mimbres skeletal remains are not consistent with this practice. Although cranial fractures (blunt force trauma) related to interpersonal violence were observed on adults (28 individuals, or 11% of the sample of 247), Baustian (2015, 2018) reported that nearly all were nonlethal and small in size (less than 1 cm in diameter). These fractures as a whole are characterized as minor. Cranial fractures were most frequently observed on the forehead and top of the skull, which is consistent with face-to-face conflict rather than flight from attackers. Most were found on males, but some females also had these injuries. These patterns are more consistent with interpersonal violence rather than warfare or raiding, and this is supported by a lack of archaeological indicators of these activities in the Mimbres region.

Postcranial trauma was not observed at high rates and was linked to accidental injury. All of these injuries were nonlethal, but occasionally, some were severe and would result in limited mobility for the part of the body affected. Those individuals with severe healed trauma would have needed some level of care provided by others (see, for example, Tilley 2015).

Collectively, the skeletal data are not indicative of differential status within or between Mimbres groups, nor do they show patterns spatially across the region or temporally. Competition between individuals may have been occasional and sporadic, but the data do not demonstrate large disparities in health or well-being for any subsets of the population. Consequently, if power or status differences existed within Mimbres society, they did not result in increased morbidity or mortality.

Social Power at the Harris Site

At the Harris site, a large Late Pithouse period site in the north-central portion of the Mimbres Valley, we have found evidence of the kind of situational power described here, which we infer to be directly linked to social practices designed to both solidify and maintain social power by particular households. Excavations of pithouses, great kivas, extramural features, and burials[1] have provided data that have allowed for investigating the social strategies used to support, maintain, and legitimize this power. This case study of the Harris site is used to demonstrate how a small-scale society negotiated the

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

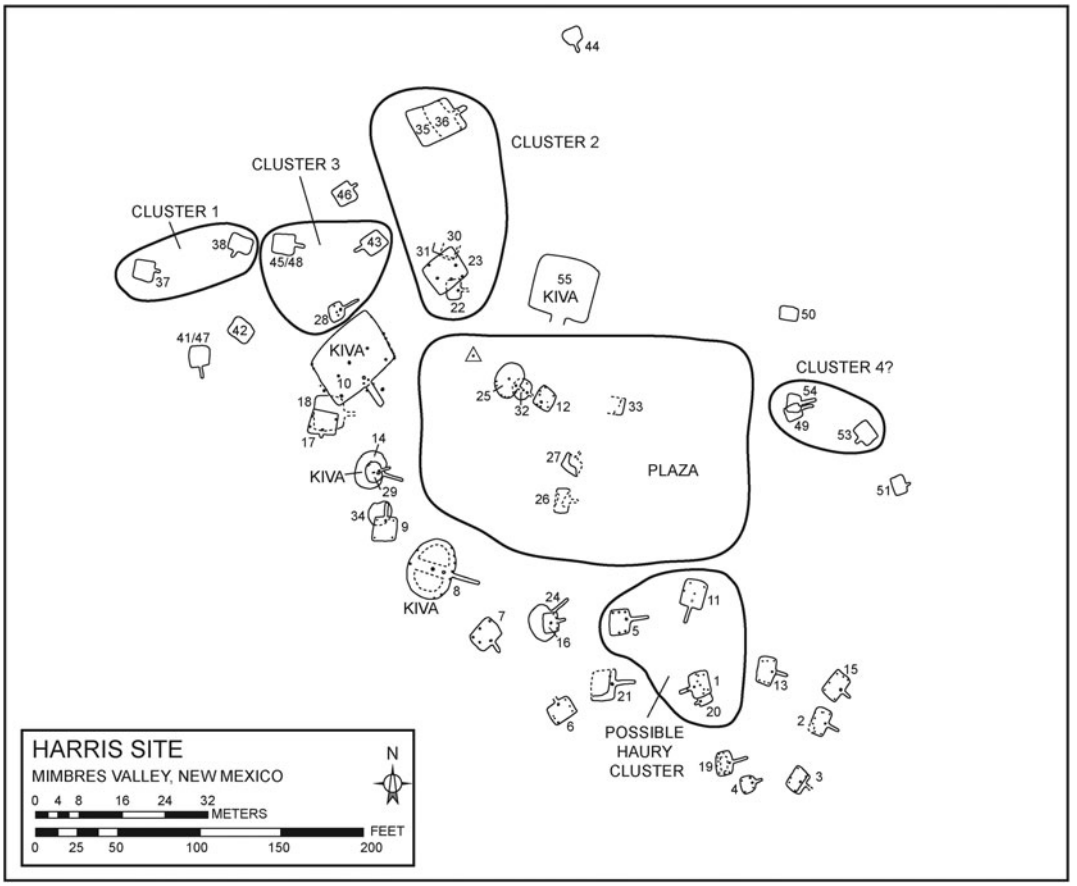

Figure 2. Family clusters identified at the Harris site. Map by Russell Waters.

structures and practices that allowed for some individuals to use power in specific situations. Here we summarize data that can shed light on power relationships through time.

The initial development of differences in social power is seen during the San Francisco phase (ca. early AD 700s), as site occupants became increasingly sedentary and agriculturally dependent. These changes are observed in the presence of initial extended family households at the site—one to the north of the central plaza (Cluster 3 on Figure 2) and the other to the south. These households are represented by clusters of pithouses surrounding common work areas with shared traits that indicate that they were interacting families. The cluster to the south was excavated by Emil Haury during his work at the site in the 1930s, so data on that inferred extended family is less robust than the cluster to the north. The proximity of the houses and the similar nature of the burials and burial goods associated with them suggests that they represent an initial extended household. Elsewhere Roth and Baustian (2015; Roth 2019) have suggested that these social changes were tied to the use of irrigation agriculture, which resulted in different labor requirements and elevated the importance of land tenure.

Both the northern and possible southern household clusters surround extramural areas containing burials; during the San Francisco phase, groups were not yet burying their dead in house floors. The burials have a large number of grave goods, and the types of goods recovered from them suggest that the family members buried here were important figures within the village. Cluster 3, the north cluster, had three extramural burials that were some of the wealthiest burials recovered at the Harris site in terms of grave goods. All of the burials were semiflexed on their backs. Burial 9 was an adult male (18–25 years) who was buried with four pots, a white chert arrow point, a *Glycymeris* shell bracelet on his left arm, and a piece of turquoise tessera. Burial 10 was an older adult female (50+ years)

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

buried with four pots. The final burial from this cluster, Burial 13, was an adult male (25–30 years), buried with 14 shell beads across his chest. Roth (2015) has interpreted the shells as part of a sash similar to one found in a burial at NAN Ranch in the southern valley and another possible sash associated with a male burial in the central plaza at Harris that was excavated by Haury. We interpret this sash as illustrating that this individual was important in the village, in part because ethnographic data indicate that sashes were signs of status in later pueblos (Roediger 1991). Burial 13 also had three *Glycymeris* shell bracelets stacked near his pelvis, a white chert dart point, and a small pecking stone. A white chert projectile point was found in the center hearth of a retired Three Circle phase great kiva at the site, and the placement of this projectile point in the hearth ash has been interpreted as part of the ritual retirement of this great kiva (Roth et al. 2023). The fact that both males in Cluster 3 were buried with white chert projectile points suggests that these artifacts were important markers, perhaps indicting family affiliation and association with ritual activities (which may further be supported by the shell sash). The age distribution—with two adult males and an older adult female—burial location, and the similarities in pottery vessels recovered from these burials indicate that these individuals were related.

In addition to the extramural burials, one of the houses in Cluster 3—Pithouse 45/48—had a burial that indicates that this extended family household was marking its social power within the village using social memory (Roth and Baustian 2015). This structure had two superimposed floors, with the occupation spanning the late San Francisco to early Three Circle phase (ca. late AD 700s). A burial of a child (12–15 months) was found beneath the floor near the entryway of the lower house (Pithouse 45; Burial 15). The child was buried with many grave goods, including four pots, two *Glycymeris* shell bracelets, and two turquoise pendants. The shift from extramural to intramural burial reveals changes in the way that households marked their association with particular areas within the site and, by extension, land holdings. This was later an important practice during the Classic Mimbres period. Elsewhere in the Mimbres Valley, the shift to burying beneath house floors occurred late in the Three Circle phase (Shafer 2003), so the child burial in Pithouse 45 and several others within Three Circle phase houses at the Harris site (Roth and Baustian 2015) represent the beginning of this practice. INAA data revealed that one of the vessels recovered from Burial 15, a Style I Black-on-white bowl with hachure, came from the Galaz source area (Creel 2022). This along with the shell and turquoise in this burial suggest that interaction with other communities was becoming more important through time. Finished shell products were traded with the Hohokam to the west and then probably through intervalley exchange networks, and turquoise is relatively rare in the valley, despite its local availability. Social and economic exchange may have been one of the ways that this extended family established and maintained its social power. All of the burial data suggest that this family played an important role in the developments that occurred later during the Three Circle phase.

By the Three Circle phase, several other extended family households exhibiting evidence of social power were present at the site. We have documented the association of these houses with ritual activities (Roth and Romero 2022), so social and ritual power appear to have become intertwined through time (Potter and Perry 2000). These extended family households are represented by superimposed structures sharing the same architectural footprint surrounded by other pithouses with shared traits; all of the related structures surround a central work area with evidence of communal storage. The superimposed structures in these clusters contain evidence of specialized activities, including possibly fermenting and processing agave (Cluster 4). Roth and Baustian (2015) refer to these as "anchor" households for the extended families and argue that they represent the residences of heads of the corporate household.

Data from two pithouse clusters on either side of the central plaza reveal evidence of the sponsorship of ritual activities (Roth and Romero 2022; Roth et al. 2023). Superimposed Pithouse 41/47 is located on the west end of the plaza and is inferred to be the anchor household for extended family Cluster 5, along with two unexcavated pithouses (Figure 2). This house (and household) contains clear evidence of association with ritual activities at the site. In Burial 11, an adult female was found in the trash fill of the upper house, Pithouse 41. The burial pit extended through the floor, and the woman was seated on the floor of the bottom house (Pithouse 47). She was buried with four Black-on-white

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

vessels and a bone pendant. One of the vessels found with Burial 11 is very similar to a vessel recovered from a pit located in front of an early Three Circle great kiva (Kiva Pithouse 55). The latter vessel was likely used in feasting activities that took place when the kiva was ritually retired (Roth and Romero 2022). We infer these to mean that this household was sponsoring rituals that took place in the great kiva and its associated plaza. The literal connection between the burial and the house through different phases of occupation indicates that it also served to mark social connections through time; we infer that this was intentionally placed to physically demonstrate the importance of lineage continuity for this household and, therefore, access to ritual power.

Superimposed Pithouse 49/54, located on the east side of the plaza, is part of Cluster 4 along with Pithouse 53 (Figure 2). This house had five of the eight tabular knives recovered during University of Nevada, Las Vegas's (UNLV) excavations at the site, and Pithouse 54 also had a large jar with evidence of pitting that has been tied to fermentation elsewhere in the valley and in the Jornada Mogollon region (Miller and Montgomery 2018; Shafer 2012). We think that this household was sponsoring rituals and perhaps feasts associated with the great kiva, Kiva Pithouse 55 (Roth and Romero 2022).

Haury (1936) excavated portions of the central plaza at the Harris site, which is surrounded by sequentially used great kivas (Figure 2). He uncovered three burials of males, whom we interpret as ritual leaders. Burials 29, 31, and 32 were accompanied by grave goods that signify association with ritual, and two of the three individuals were placed in seated positions (a less common body position). Burial 29 was buried with four ceramic vessels and a piece of worked bone. Burial 31 had 19 *Glycymeris* shell bracelets, nearly 100 *Agaronia* shells (perhaps a sash), additional shells (some beads), a redware bowl, and a quartz crystal. Burial 32's grave had six *Agaronia* shells near his waist. Given that these burials differ quite strikingly from most of the other extramural burials at the site, we suggest that these men held identities that were significant to the ritual processes taking place in the plaza space.

How does this relate to social power? These households surrounding the central plaza may have served multiple roles within the village that presented them with the opportunity to gain social power within the community. Their emphasis on demarcating social memory through architectural super-positioning—and in one case, through burial practices—suggests that this was an important aspect of signaling and perpetuating their power. If we are correct that these households also had control of agricultural land, then competition over land and resources had to be averted if they were to maintain their social prominence. We think that these households mitigated these tensions by sponsoring communal rituals in the great kivas and large central plaza (Roth and Romero 2022). This would have served to support and solidify their prominence within the village, and it may also have given them access to other social interaction if visitors from surrounding communities attended the ceremonies.

Discussion

The nature of power that we are seeing in the Mimbres Valley during the Late Pithouse and Classic periods illustrates the kind of nuanced power structures observed by other researchers working with nonhierarchical societies. Fleisher and Wynne-Jones (2010:283) have argued that political relationships in some regions are "situational, agenda based and multiscalar," and we see power differences in Mimbres society as related to this kind of situational power. The power differences documented here are not based on coercion; instead, they are tied to cooperation and engagement with the community (Lund et al. 2022). Social distinctions arose in part from resource access, especially to arable land, but were maintained by an emphasis on public good versus private gain. We see the important role that ritual played in this process in the ritual practitioner buried at NAN Ranch, the physical linkage of the higher-status male at Old Town with communal structures, and the connections between powerful extended households at the Harris site with the great kivas and plaza. We think that the roles of organizing, coordinating, and sponsoring rituals likely fell to these individuals and families, giving them a kind of situational power that emphasized the importance of community buy-in to this process. It illustrates that these groups likely had social strategies emphasizing the formation of alliances and collective consensus rather than conflict and coercion (Lund et al. 2022).

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Power in Mimbres communities was accessed by individuals in situational contexts that did not lead to hierarchy, but it could also be held by groups on a more collective level. Following Shafer (2003) and Russell (2016) in the premise that founding families had early access to land tenure and therefore ritual power, we demonstrate a similar pattern in our work at the Harris site (Roth and Baustian 2015).

During our work at the Late Pithouse period Harris site, we uncovered burials of individuals in founding households and ceremonial spaces, and varying mortuary treatments for some individuals within proposed lineage groups that indicate power asymmetries. We interpret power for those who belonged to founding families during situations pertaining to agricultural land management. This is demonstrated in the burials of (1) the woman in Pithouse 41/47 with clear ties to both her lineage and ritual activities in the central plaza and (2) infants with numerous grave goods within superimposed pithouses. Males buried in seated positions (Burials 29 and 32) in the central plaza support ethnographic evidence of privileged ritual knowledge. Our ongoing analysis of mortuary trends across space and time in the Mimbres region will continue to investigate these relationships.

Competition for ritual access (à la Russell 2016) did not seem to trigger violence at the Harris site or elsewhere in the region (Baustian 2018). Although some individuals or families may have held power in specific contexts, our data do not suggest that vertical hierarchies were constant at Harris or broadly across the Mimbres region. A competitive system for access to agricultural land and ritual knowledge did not result in stringent resource inequality. The skeletal data showed adequate access to nutrition across all demographic groups and through time (Baustian 2015). Furthermore, traumatic injury related to violence was minimal, there were no major differences in physical stress, and the presence of disease was low, so factions within Mimbres communities are not supported (Baustian 2015). Our research therefore supports findings of other researchers that have used other forms of data to show a lack of elites or hierarchical status (Anyon and LeBlanc 1984; Creel 2006; Gilman 1990; Ham 1989; Hegmon 2002; Hegmon et al. 2008; Shafer 2006) and are consistent with a more cooperative approach to competition.

Cooperation was also interpreted through feasts and ritual sponsorship. The use of ritual as an integrative process was key to mitigating conflict or dissent as Mimbres communities grew in size and agricultural needs intensified. The individuals or families most engaged with these ritual activities held power when they organized them and brought community members and those outside the community to these events.

Crumley (1995) recognizes that the values within a society will establish opportunities for power within individuals or groups in different ways and at different times given that those values are ranked and re-ranked in importance for daily life. When those values include an emphasis on cooperation, the system of power embraces flexibility and a mode of checks and balances. This flexibility is a key component of a heterarchy. Instead of demonstrating permanent leaders, our data show that power can simultaneously be associated with different aspects of society (e.g., ritual, land tenure, family identity), and that competition did not escalate to violent conflict. Heterarchy may, therefore, be appropriate for describing the Harris site and other Mimbres communities.

Conclusions

The transition from small to large communities during the Pithouse period in the Mimbres Valley required many adaptations: adaptations to growing populations, food and resource needs, agricultural plots, and ritual function. The Mimbres people needed to be flexible in their responses to the needs of the community, negotiating between structures that embraced powerful leaders and those that rejected them. Multiple forms of archaeological data can be used to interpret the systems of power within ancient societies and our work has illustrated nonhierarchical communities with situational power.

Individuals navigate different identities with different levels of power and authority on a regular basis. Power is relative to the situation and can only exist when others accept it. Situational power exists for everyone everywhere, but when a society lacks vertical hierarchies, these power dynamics become more obvious. For small-scale communities such as Harris, situational power is interpreted for individuals with prime agricultural land, ritual access, or association with anchor families. Outside of these contexts, these individuals did not necessarily wield authority over others. Rather, they played

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a role within a cooperative (perhaps heterarchical) system of interactions that benefited everyone in the community.

Archaeologists are often quick to identify individuals who achieved or acquired high-ranking power and status through their mortuary contexts, bodies, and site indicators of differential treatment. Assessing power dynamics within nonhierarchical societies is complicated and requires a more nuanced approach to highlight subtleties marked by individuals and groups. The complexities of interactions between individuals and groups can be revealed when multiple forms of data are assessed with an eye toward situational variability. We urge scholars investigating power structures in small-scale societies to consider corporate organization and kinship constraints as major factors in the way power is acquired, maintained, implemented, or lost on a situational or temporary basis.

Acknowledgments. We thank the dedicated field school students and volunteers who helped with the excavations. We also thank Sara Becker and Sara Juengst for the invitation to participate in a Society for American Archaeology (SAA) session on nonhierarchical power that inspired this research. Many thanks to Heather Hurst for the Spanish translation of the abstract, and to Maggie Carmody, Sam Haas, and Charlie Bettigole of the Skidmore GIS Center for Interdisciplinary Research for map creation. Finally, we thank Harry Shafer for comments on an earlier draft of this article.

Funding Statement. Funding for excavations at the Harris site was provided in part by a National Science Foundation grant (#1049434).

Data Availability Statement. Data from UNLV's excavations at the Harris site are available from the authors and in Roth (2015). Data from analysis of human remains are available by request from Baustian and in Baustian (2018).

Competing Interests. The authors declare none.

Note

1. Here, we use burial data from Haury's 1934 excavations at the Harris site, which predated NAGPRA regulations. Burials examined as part of UNLV's work at the site were done under a burial permit from the State of New Mexico, with engagement of relevant tribal groups.

References Cited

Adams, Richard M. 1966. *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico*. Aldine, Chicago.

Anyon, Roger, Darrell Creel, Patricia A. Gilman, Steven A. LeBlanc, Myles R. Miller, Stephen E. Nash, Margaret C. Nelson, et al. 2017. Re-Evaluating the Mimbres Region Prehispanic Chronometric Record. *KIVA* 83(3):316–343.

Anyon, Roger, and Steven A. LeBlanc. 1984. *The Galaz Ruin: A Prehistoric Mimbres Village in Southwestern New Mexico*. Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, Albuquerque, New Mexico; University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Arakawa, Fumiyasu. 2012. Cyclical Cultural Trajectories: A Case Study from the Mesa Verde Region. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 68(1):35–69.

Baustian, Kathryn M. 2015. The Bioarchaeology of Social Order: Cooperation and Conflict among the Mimbres (AD 550–1300). PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Baustian, Kathryn M. 2018. Violence and Social Structure in the Mimbres Region of Southwest New Mexico: Interpretations from Bioarchaeological Data. *KIVA* 84(4):440–460.

Baustian, Kathryn M., and Barbara J. Roth. 2013. Mimbres Seated Burials: Indicators of Social Memory and Family Land Tenure. Poster presented at the 1st Annual Meeting of the Western Bioarchaeological Interest Group, Berkeley, California.

Baustian, Kathryn M., and Barbara J. Roth. 2020. Situational Power in Cooperative Communities: Indicators from Bioarchaeology in the Mimbres Region of Southwest New Mexico. In "Vital Topics Forum: Cooperative Bodies: Bioarchaeologists Address Nonranked Societies," edited by Sara K. Becker and Sara L. Juengst. Special issue, *American Anthropologist* 122(4):901–904.

Brandt, Elizabeth A. 1994. Egalitarianism, Hierarchy, and Centralization in the Pueblos. In *The Ancient Southwestern Community: Models and Methods for the Study of Prehistoric Social Organization*, edited by W. H. Wills and Robert D. Leonard, pp. 9–23. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Cannon, Michael D. 2000. Large Mammal Relative Abundance in Pithouse and Pueblo Period Archaeofaunas from Southwestern New Mexico: Resource Depression among the Mimbres-Mogollon? *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 19(3):317–347.

Carneiro, Robert L. 1970. A Theory of the Origin of the State. *Science* 169(3947):733–738.

Clayton, Sarah C. 2006. Ritual and Residence: The Social Implications of Classic Mimbres Ceremonial Spaces. *KIVA* 72(1):71–92.

Creel, Darrell. 1989. A Primary Cremation at the NAN Ranch Ruin, with Comparative Data on Other Cremations in the Mimbres Area, New Mexico. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 16(3):309–329.

Creel, Darrell. 2006. Evidence for Mimbres Social Differentiation at the Old Town Site. In *Mimbres Society*, edited by Valli S. Powell-Marti and Patricia A. Gilman, pp. 32–44. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Creel, Darrell. 2022. *The Production and Distribution of Mimbres Pottery*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Creel, Darrell, and Roger Anyon. 2003. New Interpretations of Mimbres Public Architecture and Space: Implications for Cultural Change. *American Antiquity* 68(1):67–92.

Creel, Darrell, Roger Anyon, and Barbara J. Roth. 2015. Ritual Construction, Use and Retirement of Mimbres Three Circle Phase Great Kivas. *KIVA* 81(3–4):201–219.

Creel, Darrell, and Charmion McKusick. 1994. Prehistoric Macaws and Parrots in the Mimbres Area, New Mexico. *American Antiquity* 59(3):510–524.

Creel, Darrell, and Harry J. Shafer. 2015. Mimbres Great Kivas and Plazas during the Three Circle Phase ca. AD 850–1000. *KIVA* 81(3–4):164–178.

Crumley, Carole L. 1995. Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 6(1):1–5.

Diehl, Michael W. 1996. The Intensity of Maize Processing and Production in Upland Mogollon Pithouse Villages A.D. 200–1000. *American Antiquity* 61(1):102–115.

Diehl, Michael W. 2006. Material Differences and Social Differentiation in Mimbres Mogollon Prehistory. In *Mimbres Society*, edited by Valli S. Powell-Marti and Patricia A. Gilman, pp. 177–188. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Dorland, Steven. 2015. Complexity through Alternate Lens: An AD 15th–17th Century Wendat Case Study. Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Ontario Archaeology Society Symposium, Midland, Ontario.

Dozier, Edward P. 1970. *The Pueblo Indians of North America: Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York.

Feinman, Gary M., Kent G. Lightfoot, and Steadman Upham. 2000. Political Hierarchies and Organizational Strategies in the Puebloan Southwest. *American Antiquity* 65(3):449–470.

Flannery, Kent V. 1972. The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 3:399–426.

Fleisher, Jeffrey, and Stephanie Wynne-Jones. 2010. Authorisation and the Process of Power: The View from African Archaeology. *Journal of World Prehistory* 23(4):177–193.

Fried, Morton H. 1967. *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology*. Random House, New York.

Gilman, Patricia A. 1990. Social Organization and Classic Mimbres Period Burials in the SW United States. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 17(4):457–469.

Gilman, Patricia A. 2006. Social Differences at the Classic Period Mattocks Site in the Mimbres Valley. In *Mimbres Society*, edited by Valli S. Powell-Marti and Patricia A. Gilman, pp. 66–81. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Gilman, Patricia A., and Steven A. LeBlanc. 2017. *Mimbres Life and Society: The Mattocks Site of Southwestern New Mexico*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Gilman, Patricia A., Marc Thompson, and Kristina C. Wyckoff. 2014. Ritual Change and the Distant: Mesoamerican Iconography, Scarlet Macaws, and Great Kivas in the Mimbres Region of Southwestern New Mexico. *American Antiquity* 79(1):90–107.

Griffin-Pierce, Trudy. 2000. *Native Peoples of the Southwest*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Ham, Elizabeth J. 1989. Analysis of the NAN Ruin (LA15049) Burial Patterns: An Examination of Mimbres Social Structure. Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, Texas A&M University, College Station.

Haury, Emil W. 1936. *Mogollon Culture in Southwestern New Mexico*. Medallion Papers No. 20. Gila Pueblo, Globe, Arizona.

Hegmon, Michelle. 2002. Recent Issues in the Archaeology of the Mimbres Region of the North American Southwest. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 10(4):307–357.

Hegmon, Michelle, Matthew A. Peeples, Ann P. Kinzig, Stephanie Kulow, Cathryn M. Meegan, and Margaret C. Nelson. 2008. Social Transformation and Its Human Costs in the Prehispanic U.S. Southwest. *American Anthropologist* 110(3):313–324.

Hieb, Louis A. 1972. Meaning and Mismeaning: Toward an Understanding of the Ritual Clown. In *New Perspectives on the Pueblos*, edited by Alfonso Ortiz, pp. 163–195. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Lipe, William D. 2002. Social Power in the Central Mesa Verde Region, AD 1150–1290. In *Seeking the Center Place: Archaeology and Ancient Communities in the Mesa Verde Region*, edited by Mark D. Varien and Richard H. Wilshusen, pp. 203–232. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

Livesay, Alison K., and Patricia A. Gilman. 2020. Of Change and Tradition: Examining Mortuary and Ceramic Patterns in the Mimbres Region of Southwest New Mexico. In *Ancient Southwestern Mortuary Practices*, edited by James T. Watson and Gordon F. M. Rakita, pp. 209–230. University Press of Colorado, Louisville.

Lund, Julie, Martin Furholt, and Knut Ivar Austvoll. 2022. Reassessing Power in the Archaeological Discourse: How Collective, Cooperative and Affective Perspectives May Impact Our Understanding of Social Relations and Organization in Prehistory. *Archaeological Dialogues* 29(1):33–50.

Martin, Debra L. 2000. Bodies and Lives: Biological Indicators of Health Differentials and Division of Labor by Sex. In *Women and Men in the Prehistoric Southwest: Labor, Power and Prestige*, edited by Patricia L. Crown, pp. 267–300. School of American Research, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Martin, Debra L. 2008. Ripped Flesh and Torn Souls: Skeletal Evidence for Captivity and Slavery from the La Plata Valley, New Mexico, AD 1100–1300. In *Invisible Citizens: Captives and Their Consequences*, edited by Catherine M. Cameron, pp. 159–180. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

Martin, Debra L., Ryan P. Harrod, and Misty Fields. 2010. Beaten Down and Worked to the Bone: Bioarchaeological Investigations of Women and Violence in the Ancient Southwest. *Landscapes of Violence* 1(1):Article 3.

Miller, Myles R., and John Montgomery. 2018. Plant Baking Facilities and Social Complexity: A Perspective from the Western Jornada and Southeastern New Mexico. In *Late Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherers and Farmers of the Jornada Mogollon*, edited by Thomas R. Rocek and Nancy A. Kenmotsu, pp. 224–248. University Press of Colorado, Louisville.

https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mills, Barbara J. 2014. Relational Networks and Religious Sodalities at Çatalhöyük. In *Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters*, edited by Ian Hodder, pp. 159–186. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Mills, Barbara J. (editor). 2000. *Alternative Leadership Strategies in the Prehispanic Southwest*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Munson, Marit K. 2000. Sex, Gender, and Status: Human Images from the Classic Mimbres. *American Antiquity* 65(1):127–143.

Munson, Marit K. 2006. Picturing Differences: Gender, Ritual, and Power in Mimbres Imagery. In *Mimbres Society*, edited by Valli S. Powell-Marti and Patricia A. Gilman, pp. 85–108. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Ortiz, Alfonso. 1969. *The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in a Pueblo Society*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Parsons, Elsie Clews. 1939. *Pueblo Indian Religion*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Potter, James M., and Elizabeth M. Perry. 2000. Ritual as a Power Resource in the American Southwest. In *Alternative Leadership Strategies in the Prehispanic Southwest*, edited by Barbara J. Mills, pp. 60–78. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Rautman, Alison E. 1998. Hierarchy and Heterarchy in the American Southwest: A Comment on McGuire and Saitta. *American Antiquity* 63(2):325–333.

Roediger, Virginia More. 1991. *Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians: Their Evolution, Fabrication, and Significance in the Prayer Drama*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Roth, Barbara J. 2015. *Archaeological Investigations at the Harris Site, LA 1867, Grant County, Southwestern New Mexico*. Report on file, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Roth, Barbara J. 2019. Pithouse Community Development at the Harris Site, Southwestern New Mexico. In *Communities and Households in the Greater American Southwest: New Perspectives and Case Studies*, edited by Robert J. Stokes, pp. 183–200. University Press of Colorado, Louisville.

Roth, Barbara J., and Kathryn M. Baustian. 2015. Kin Groups and Social Power at the Harris Site, Southwestern New Mexico. *American Antiquity* 80(3):451–471.

Roth, Barbara J., and Danielle Romero. 2022. Great Kivas and Community Integration at the Harris Site, Southwestern New Mexico. *American Antiquity* 87(4):743–757.

Roth, Barbara J., Danielle Romero, and Ashley Lauzon. 2023. Pipes, Palettes, and Projectile Points: Great Kiva Rituals and Ritual Paraphernalia at the Harris Site. In *Mogollon Communal Spaces and Places in the Greater American Southwest*, edited by Robert J. Stokes, Katherine A. Dungan, and Jakob W. Sedig, pp. 48–60. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

Roth, Barbara J., Patricia A. Gilman, and Roger Anyon (editors). 2018. *New Perspectives on Mimbres Archaeology: Three Millennia of Human Occupation in the North American Southwest*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Russell, Will G. 2016. Social Inequality in the Mimbres Region of the U.S. Southwest, ca. 200–1130 C.E. PhD dissertation, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, Tempe.

Russell, Will G., and Michelle Hegmon. 2021. Status Competition in the Ancient Past? Tracing Antecedence in the Mimbres Region of the US Southwest. In *Consumption, Status, and Sustainability: Ecological and Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Paul Roscoe and Cindy Isenhour, pp. 87–113. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Schachner, Gregson. 2001. Ritual Control and Transformation in Middle-Range Societies: An Example from the American Southwest. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 20(2):168–194.

Shafer, Harry J. 1985. A Mimbres Potter's Grave: An Example of Mimbres Craft Specialization. *Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society* 56:185–200.

Shafer, Harry J. 1995. Architecture and Symbolism in Transitional Pueblo Development in the Mimbres Valley, SW New Mexico. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 22(1):23–47.

Shafer, Harry J. 2003. *Mimbres Archaeology at the NAN Ranch Ruin*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Shafer, Harry J. 2006. Extended Families to Corporate Groups: Pithouse to Pueblo Transformation of Mimbres Society. In *Mimbres Society*, edited by Valli S. Powell-Marti and Patricia A. Gilman, pp. 15–31. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Shafer, Harry J. 2012. Possible Archaeological Evidence for Classic Mimbres Use of Tesquino at the NAN Ranch Ruin, Southwest New Mexico. In *Collected Papers from the 17th Biennial Mogollon Archaeology Conference*, edited by Lonnie C. Ludeman, pp. 109–118. Friends of Mogollon Archaeology, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Shafer, Harry J. 2022. Some Thoughts about Mimbres Pottery and Mortuary Customs. In *Making "Meaning": Precolumbian Archaeology, Art History, and the Legacy of Terence Grieder*, edited by James Farmer and Rex Koontz, pp. 169–194. University of Houston Libraries, Houston, Texas. https://uhlibraries.pressbooks.pub/makingmeaningterencegrieder/chapter/251/, accessed September 9, 2024.

Tilley, Lorna. 2015. *Theory and Practice in the Bioarchaeology of Care*. Springer, New York.

Ware, John A. 2014. *A Pueblo Social History: Kinship, Sodality, and Community in the Northern Southwest*. School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Ware, John W. 2018. Kinship and Community in the Northern Southwest: Chaco and Beyond. *American Antiquity* 83(4): 639–658.

Cite this article: Baustian, Kathryn M., and Barbara J. Roth. 2025. Positions of Power: Situational Flexibility in Mimbres Society. *American Antiquity* **90**(1):113–128. https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2024.43.