Mimbres in Context: Hohokam, Chaco, Casas Grandes

Free Dinnertime Presentation by Archaeologist Stephen H. Lekson

Online via Zoom (See link below)
Thursday March 18, 2021
7 to 8:30 p.m.

The ancient Mimbres people of southwestern New Mexico were interesting not only for their famous pottery, but also as “players” in the larger history of the ancient Southwest. We consider Mimbres history in context of its times: Hohokam up to about 1000 CE, Chaco from 1000 to 1150, and the run-up to Paquimé/Casas Grandes from 1150 to 1250.

Mimbres began as pithouse villages making red-on-brown pottery (much like Hohokam red-on-buff) and developing Hohokam-inspired canal irrigation systems in the Chihuahua Desert. Around 1000, Hohokam waned as Chaco waxed – the “Pueblo II Expansion” of old textbooks. Emil Haury, long ago, identified 1000 as approximately the time Mimbres was transformed into stone pueblos making black-on-white pottery; he insisted that Mimbres (a subset of the larger Mogollon region) essentially ceased being Mogollon and became much more Anasazi-like.

Mimbres flourished while Chaco flourished, from 1000 to shortly before 1150. Political shifts after 1125 at Chaco were reflected at the same time by mass depopulation and social change in the Mimbres river valleys. Post-Mimbres people moved south into the desert and formed new communities in mud-walled-pueblo villages (some of considerable size) with little or no locally produced painted pottery. Those post-Mimbres societies almost certainly contributed substantially to the base population for Paquimé, the Casas Grandes regional center from 1300 to 1450.

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For more information contact Old Pueblo at 520-798-1201 or info@oldpueblo.org.
Old Pueblo Archaeology Center’s guest speaker Dr. Stephen H. Lekson was Curator of Archaeology at the Museum of Natural History, University of Colorado, Boulder. He received his Ph.D. degree from the University of New Mexico in 1988, and held research, curatorial, or administrative positions with University of Tennessee, Eastern New Mexico University, National Park Service, Arizona State Museum, Museum of New Mexico, and Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.

Dr. Lekson directed more than 20 archaeological projects throughout the Southwest and focused about half of his fifty-year career on Mimbres. His publications include a dozen books, chapters in many edited volumes, and articles in journals and magazines.


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