



TUZIGOOT

Tuzigoot: Trade and Social Ties

Tuzigoot Pueblo, located on the Verde River near Clarkdale, Arizona, was a thriving community for 400 or more years. Built by the Southern Sinagua—people who shared architectural, ceramic, and various other aspects of prehistoric life with others in the Verde Valley and with the Northern Sinagua of the Flagstaff area—Tuzigoot was home to perhaps 250 people at its peak. Artifacts found within the dwelling during excavation in the 1930s hinted at diverse cultural influences and social ties with people to the north, south, and west, and new research has begun to refine our understanding of Tuzigoot's trade and social relationships.

Excavation

Tuzigoot Pueblo was excavated between December, 1933 and June, 1934, during the height of the Great Depression. Led by University of Arizona graduate students Louis R. Caywood and Edward H. Spicer and funded through the Civil Works Administration, the project provided employment to nearly 50 local workers and remains one of the most extensive excavation projects ever completed in the Verde Valley.

The Pueblo

Tuzigoot Pueblo sits atop a tall hill overlooking the Verde River to the south, Tavaschi Marsh to the east, and Peck's Lake to the north. The earliest rooms, located on the northwest edge of the hill, were built around A.D. 1000, with rooms slowly added to the south and east until A.D. 1300, when the majority of the outlying rooms were added in a relatively short period of time. Construction continued until at least A.D. 1386 (the latest tree-ring date for the site), but by ca. A.D. 1400, the residents of Tuzigoot had moved on, heading perhaps to the Winslow area to the northeast, where they appear to have had long-standing trade and social ties.

Trade

The people living at Tuzigoot between A.D. 1000 and 1400 had a vast and intricate trade network likely facilitated by their position on the Verde River, which would have served as a con-

Tuzigoot is the anglicized form of an Apache word meaning "crooked water." The name was suggested by Ben Lewis, a Tonto Apache man who worked on the 1930s excavation project, and is a reference to Peck's Lake to the north of the site.

OVERVIEW



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Tuzigoot Pueblo, 2010.

duit between the southern deserts and the Verde Valley, which in turn may have been a hub of sorts for trade north and west.

Pottery has long provided the strongest evidence for trade, as the Tuzigoot residents imported nearly all their painted wares—Prescott Black-on-gray and Verde Red-on-buff came from the west, and Flagstaff and Walnut black-on-whites from the north. Later, even greater quantities of early Hopi wares, including Jeddito Black-on-yellow, Homolovi (Winslow) Polychrome, and related types, were brought to Tuzigoot from the northeast, and possibly traded further from there.

Shell, macaws, turquoise, and at least some projectile points (arrowheads) made their way to Tuzigoot via southern routes. In return, Tuzigoot and others in the Verde Valley supplied argillite, which they worked into beads, pendants, and other ornaments, copper ores, salt, and perhaps woven textiles (Houk 1995).

Social Ties

Their choice in pottery provides an indication of Tuzigoot's social ties. Hohokam pottery, for example, appears to have had





The most common decorated pottery types found at Tuzigoot were northern wares. Obsidian used to make projectile points also came out of the north. Artifact images courtesy of the American Southwest Virtual Museum, <http://www.swvirtualmuseum.nau.edu>.

no place at Tuzigoot. Likewise, Salado pottery from the south-east, although widespread through much of the Southwest, was also rare at Tuzigoot. Decorated wares from immediately west were comparatively abundant (11 percent), but painted pottery from the north and northeast was always the most common, accounting for a full 68 percent of the decorated ceramics found at Tuzigoot (Caywood and Spicer 1935).

Recent research focusing on the projectile points found at Tuzigoot also suggests ties to communities to the north. Stylistically, the Sinagua points from Tuzigoot are similar to those found in the Elden and Wupatki pueblos of the Flagstaff area. More importantly, when made of obsidian, nearly all derived from *northern* sources of the material rather than those locally available (Bryce and Bailey 2012). The preponderance of northern material may have been the result of direct procurement or trade, but either way, it would seem that the Verde Valley residents had good access to the northern sources “and/or good relationships with groups that may have controlled the sources on the Coconino Plateau” (Shackley 2009:345).

Ceramics and stone artifacts alike, therefore, suggest that the people of Tuzigoot were intimately connected to people living

to the north and northeast. The latter is also most likely the direction in which they went when leaving Tuzigoot in the early 1400s—first to Nuvakwetaqa or Chavez Pass, and then on to Homolovi near modern-day Winslow (Houk 1995)—following the distribution paths of Jeddito Yellow Ware (Bernardini 2005).

Jeddito Yellow Ware and the “Gathering of the Clans”

Jeddito Yellow Ware, the type of decorated pottery most common at Tuzigoot after A.D. 1300, was made exclusively on the Hopi Mesas, but widely distributed throughout the northern Southwest and found as far afield as northern Mexico, California, Utah, and the Great Plains (Bernardini 2007). At Tuzigoot, however, this ware was found in such abundance that it could only have “resulted from frequent, face-to-face interactions with Hopi residents” (Bernardini 2005:84-85).

“For Hopi, Tuzigoot is a place to reconnect with the past. It reminds us we survived, and we became a better people for it. We all need these types of places.”
~ Micah Loma’omvaya, Hopi Tribe

Hopi histories identify Tuzigoot and other Verde Valley villages as places built and occupied by clans migrating in waves from *Palatkwapi*, “the Red Land to the South” a path that for many meant traveling along the Verde River (*Payunawit*, “Back and Forth Beside the River Along), one of the primary south-to-north migration routes. Archaeologist Wesley Bernardini came to a similar conclusion, describing places like Tuzigoot as staging area where clans could prepare to continue their migration to the Hopi Mesas.

Tuzigoot, therefore, may have been an important place in the “gathering of the clans.” Such places, according to Bernardini (2005:85) and the Hopi people with whom he consulted, would have functioned as way-stations and places where migrants hoping to gain entrance into a Hopi village could attain information and perform the ceremonies that might ultimately allow them to undertake the final set of migrations.

People did not necessarily migrate as unbending, tightly-knit groups. Instead, as told by the Hopi, and as is evident in the archaeological record, there was more fluidity to coming and going. Choice was at play—individuals, family groups, and portions of clans made different decisions, splitting and joining up here or there, sometimes for short periods and sometimes for generations (Hays-Gilpin 2008). These people were also not of a single ethnic or cultural background; they were instead drawn together from diverse locations and backgrounds by a shared destination and the social and ritual aspects of achieving entrance to the Hopi Mesas.

Those that Remained

Not all the residents of the Verde Valley appear to have participated in the 15th century migrations, and those that remained also passed down the record of their past to modern descendants. Yavapai oral history, for example, tells of the *amis-awhata*, or “red bird that travels around”—a reference to the scarlet macaws traded into the region from Mexico far to the south. (The skeleton of one such bird was found at Tuzigoot during excavation in the 1930s).

Yavapai people were living in the Verde Valley some time prior to the final migrations out of Tuzigoot and consider Montezuma Well, not too far to the southeast, their place of origin. According to their traditions, some Sinagua people stayed in the Verde Valley, intermarrying with Yavapai ancestors who maintained ties with the Hopi Mesas via trade relationships (Verde Valley Archaeology Center 2014a).

Others may have participated in parts of the migrations or in migrations of their own. The O’odham (Pima) and Piipaash (Maricopa) of southern Arizona, for example, have oral traditions linking them to the Verde Valley through their own past movements and interactions, and baskets similar to those

made by Pima women are known in the Hopi area after A.D. 1300 (Hays-Gilpin 2008).

Today, the Wipukpaia (Northeastern Yavapai) and Dil zhé’é (Tonto Apache) still live in the Verde Valley. While the Apache may have entered the area somewhat later than the Yavapai, they too consider the Verde Valley their homeland. Both tribes were present when Spanish explorer Antonio Espejo traveled through the Verde Valley in 1583, and they remained when EuroAmericans began to enter the region in the 1860s (Verde Valley Archaeology Center 2014b). Forced out of central Arizona in 1875, members of the Yavapai and Apache tribes returned after 25 years of being removed, ultimately becoming the Yavapai-Apache Nation. They remember their removal as the “Exodus,” and commemorate their

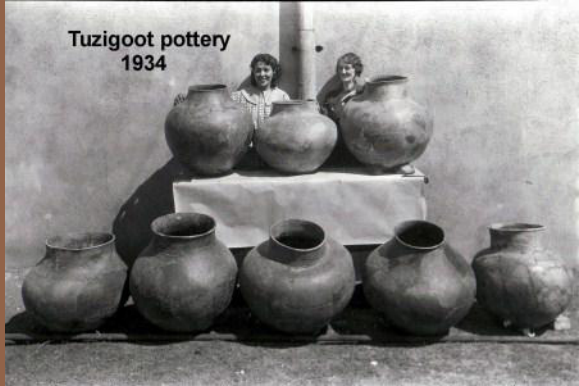
The Concept of Wealth

Caywood and Spicer (1935) speculated that the people of Tuzigoot were “too ‘wealthy’ in worldly goods and products...to attempt to make beautiful pottery,” and were instead “able to import those fine northern wares in quantity.”

In some ways, Caywood and Spicer were right. Tuzigoot Pueblo was situated in an environment comparatively rich in resources, including those they traded—salt, copper ores such as malachite and azurite, argillite, and potentially cotton textiles.

However, based on more modern interpretations, it seems that Tuzigoot’s material wealth was secondary to their knowledge and social ties. The abundance of Jeddito Yellow Ware found at the site, for example, can now be viewed as a result of Tuzigoot’s role as a gate-way community in which people learned and demonstrated their readiness to join the Hopi communities to the northeast.

Caywood and Spicer also glossed over the abilities of Tuzigoot’s potters, who made extremely large plainware vessels that took incredible skill to shape and fire. Such vessels were very likely used to store food and water for not only the residents of the pueblo, but also the ever-shifting influx of migrants.



NPS Photo



This stunning photo, taken by George A. Grant in the 1940s, shows how Tuzigoot may have appeared to travelers coming up the Verde River (NPS photo).

tribes' survival and successful return to the Verde Valley each February. Modern tradition, therefore, continues to record and incorporate the past.

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2014a Early Inhabitants of the Verde Valley. Available online at: <http://www.verdevalleyarchaeology.org/EarlyInhabitants>.

2014b The Yavapai-Apache in the Verde Valley. Available online at: <http://www.verdevalleyarchaeology.org/YavapaiApache>.