Beyond the Grave: Burials that distinguish social status in Pre-Hispanic American Southwest Communities

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Introduction

The pre-Hispanic American Southwest was once a thriving region for human activity that included creating impressive and massive structures that still exist today. Within this region, complex social structures appeared within communities in the Ancestral Pueblo area, including villages at Arroyo Hondo, Aztec, Chaco Canyon, and Pueblo Bonito. Also, in the south portion of Arizona the Hohokam community would spread, with many sites including the site of La Ciudad. Different aspects of social identity, hierarchy, and status within these communities are reflected in the burials of their people.

The ancient peoples of the American Southwest created communities sustainable for life. They would build complex structures with hundreds of rooms, ready to house the people of the community. They practiced hunting and gathering for food but also establishing agricultural fields to feed the population. Within these communities, they would produce amazing pottery technology, jewelry, beliefs, rituals, and customs. Pottery technology was vital to the community but would also be helpful to archaeologists in determining periods of occupation. Food production technologies, such as ground stone, would be equally important in these communities as a means to provide for the large population sizes. Tools and weapons would also be produced in these communities to further their abilities to sustain life. The Ancestral Pueblo time period between 600-1150 C.E. is generally thought by archaeologists to represent the earliest demonstrable link with modern Pueblo populations. But for this study a representation through time from 300-1420 C.E. will be explored.

Cultures, customs, and beliefs would also develop just as quickly for the ancient peoples as would their communities. These cultures, customs, and beliefs would be passed down through generations and enacted through mortuary practices. Burials play a significant role in the understanding of the ancient peoples of the Southwest. This is due to how burials are performed by the living to honor the dead of the community. Burial practices are crucial because the social systems that structured these people's lives may be revealed through their treatment at death. Mortuary studies remain a primary source of information for learning about the populations of the past and how they interacted. What is unknown about this topic is how we can presently determine social status within these groups using only mortuary data. Therefore, studies on burials by Judd (1954), McGuire (1992), and Palkovich (1980) are appropriate for the purpose of examining social identity. This study aims to explore the topic of burial practices mainly within three Ancestral Pueblo communities in New Mexico, and with a comparison to one Hohokam community in Arizona, to better understand and determine social status in the pre-Hispanic communities of the American Southwest.

Research Question/Prediction of Outcomes

This research examines a sample of burials from the American Southwest with respect to social status. The focus of this study is centered on burial data from previous excavations at different pre-Hispanic communities and how attributes of these interments reflect individuals' lives, beliefs, rituals, and ultimately their position within their community. The underlying assumption of this research is that a burial represents an individual's social status, through their

burial placement within the community, their physical remains' condition, their body and head position, and most importantly, the grave goods associated with them. Some key terms that are essential to the understanding of this information include *burial factors* that look at the recognizable attributes such as placement of the body or burial offerings. *Grave goods* are all the items that were placed within a burial as an offering to the dead that can include either perishable or non-perishable gifts. Another key term is *factor code,* which refers to the data of the burials and codes given to the grave goods found within those burials. By examining the cultural background and the theoretical background provided by archaeology, this research gains insight into how ancient Southwestern communities differentiated themselves in terms of social status.

Above all, it is important to note that there are protection acts for burials in the Southwest. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was enacted on November 16, 1990, and aims to protect the burials of Native Americans and the treatment of human remains and cultural items. This also includes repatriation of culturally affiliated Native American human remains, associated funerary objects, unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony in the possession or control of federal agencies and museums prior to the Acts passage. Also, it is for the protection of these cultural items, if excavated or removed from their disposition, on federal or tribal lands after the Act's enactment. The purpose of this research is purely for educational purposes only and the burials that were examined in this study abide by the protection and respect for the human remains under NAGPRA. All burial data was collected from published information produced by previous excavations and no physical human remains were handled or used for this research study.

Cultural and Theoretical Background of the Main Communities

The mortuary practices of a prehistoric society, observed as patterns of burials, can provide valuable information about the group's ceremonial practices, worldview, and social organization. This section summarizes the cultural background of the archaeological burial assemblages used in the study, including information on social organization, settlements, and status in each of the communities. In addition, I provide a general theoretical background, informed by the approaches of previous archaeologists and their excavations of these sites. The Ancestral Pueblo region will be examined first in the time sequence of their cultural developments: Chaco Canyon/ Pueblo Bonito, Aztec, and Arroyo Hondo. This is followed by a comparison and examination of the Hohokam community that included over 15 sites major sites such as Snake town, Grewe-Casa Grande, Pueblo Grande, Mesa Grande, Las Colinas, Los Hornos, and for this study La Ciudad. All Hohokam sites were established in similar time to the Ancestral Pueblo communities.

Ancestral Pueblos

In Chaco Canyon, a series of massive masonry structures were built that reflect the complexity of the social developments occurring from 850-1150 C.E. This makes the sites in the canyon exceptionally important for descendant communities, as it preserves the original beliefs and customs of the Ancestral Pueblo people. Furthermore, the largest of the sites, Pueblo Bonito, is especially important to the Ancestral Pueblo community as it served many purposes

throughout its occupation. With its D-shaped plan, it consisted of 600 rooms, 35 kivas, and two great kivas. Two main excavations of Pueblo Bonito took place, one in the late 1890s called the Hyde Exploring Expedition sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History. The second was in the 1920s by Neil M. Judd sponsored by the National Geographic Expedition and co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. Although an official cemetery has never been found for Pueblo Bonito, Heitman (2011:294-295) identified a number of potential house societies including ones centered on two prominent burial clusters located in the foundational northern arc of the structure. Direct dating and archaeogenetic analyses of the skeletal remains from the northern burial cluster, including two material-rich articulated burials found below a plank floor, have established that matrilineal hereditary inequality was present at Pueblo Bonito by the ninth century (Bishop 2018:294-295). The Chaco system, centered at Pueblo Bonito, has evidence for social ranking in its mortuary practices, differential access to food and certain material goods, and a clear settlement hierarchy.

The Aztec community began in 1085 C.E. and 1120 C.E. with large multi-story structures, including 400 masonry rooms, 12 kivas, one great kiva and a D-shaped site plan. This site contains all of the classic features of Chacoan culture, which is not surprising as it is thought to have been built by Chaco Canyon immigrants during the last stages of the Chaco cultural system. Aztec was occupied until the last part of the 13th century CE. Studies of Aztec by archaeologists began in 1916 and have had four excavations completed, two excavations by Earl Morris in the 1920s and two in the 1930s conducted by the National Park Service. But work at Aztec has continued and is still a well-studied site presently. Currently, the Aztec Ruins National Monument encompasses several structures, that is comprised of Aztec West, Aztec East, Earl Morris Ruin, the Hubbard Tri-wall structure, as well as several unexcavated mounds in the eastern portion of the site and several sites on the terrace north of the main ruin. Parallels between West Ruin and Pueblo Bonito in architectural construction techniques, settlement layout, and materials included in ritual and high-status burial context suggests that elements of Chacoan ideology and identity persisted at Aztec (Mattson 2023:4).

The Arroyo Hondo community was founded in 1300 C.E. and lasted until about 1420 C.E. when a catastrophic fire destroyed a large part of the village and drought reached an ultimate high. Studies and excavations at Arroyo Hondo were first done by Nel Nelson in 1914 but records were not published. Interest and excavations were reinitiated in 1970 and continued into the early 1970s. These excavations were funded by the School of American Research Board, the National Science Foundation, and the National Geographic Society. Douglas Schwartz had conducted excavations that revealed the Arroyo Hondo Pueblo was a 1,000-room settlement that had grown rapidly. It also included several room blocks and at least eight Kiva depressions. Ann Palkovich supervised the excavations of all human skeletal remains in 1973-74. Palkovich's (1980) monograph thoroughly describes, analyzes, and interprets these skeletal and mortuary remains from Arroyo Hondo. These burials were accompanied by hide blankets, jewelry, food, and other grave goods. Burials beneath the floors of rooms tended to be subadults and adult females. According to Palkovich (1980:28), more than half of the burials contained some mortuary items or grave goods. Similarly, in the Arroyo Hondo community it is believed that burials have their heads directed to the east, the direction in which the individual's journey to the

underworld begins, items that the person once owned is among the burial, all clothing is torn and reversed as are other items symbolizing the revered nature of the spirit world. A bowl and some food may be placed with the individual for the journey to the underworld, the bowl being broken first and the food placed on the left side or in the left armpit (Palkovich 1980:50). The burial and mortuary data provided by Palkovich (1980) provides important insights into the social organization at Arroyo Hondo Pueblo.

Hohokam

Finally, in comparison to the Ancestral Pueblo sites, the Hohokam site of La Ciudad will be examined here. The Hohokam region encompasses the area of the Gila and Salt River in south-central Arizona. The Hohokam community has a long chronology that spans from 300 B.C. to 1400 C.E. and includes four periods and nine phases (McAllister 1976:5**).** Excavation of La Ciudad began in 1982-83 and was funded by the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The excavation of La Ciudad recorded a total of 2,933 features and sub features. This included 205 pithouses, 26 activity surfaces, 17 ovens, 189 trash-filled pits, one ball court, two canal gradients and 254 burials (McGuire 1992:11). Social organization in the Hohokam communities was complex, as evidenced by elaborate irrigation canal networks, settlement hierarchies, and regional exchange systems. The rivers provide water and irrigation for agriculture as well as wildlife food sources for the community. Important to this research is that the disposal of the dead was deliberate and consistent. Cremation was the most widely practiced means of disposal for the dead and offerings were typically placed with the cremated body. In most cases, the bone fragments and any artifactual materials would be collected and taken to another location where they were buried either in a trench with other cremated remains or individually in a small pit (McAllister 1976:12). Additionally, inhumations have also been found in Hohokam sites; the body is typically buried along with accompanying offerings. The key underlying assumption is that burial rituals were a manifestation of Hohokam ideology and that they played an active role in the negotiation of power in Hohokam society.

Data and Methodology

The data gathered for this project is derived from excavations that took place in the late 19th century and into the 20th century. For burials from the Ancestral Pueblo sites, published information for Pueblo Bonito came from, “The Material Culture of Pueblo Bonito” by Neil M. Judd published by the Smithsonian Institution on December 29, 1954. Pueblo Bonito is especially interesting as the estimated size and population of this site would have resulted in nearly 4,700 to 5,400 burials. Yet, the four excavations by Hyde, Moorhead, Morris, and Judd found less than 100 burials. Of these burials, only 38 were used in this research, due to incomplete records. The bulk of the information comes from work done by the School of American Research/ University of New Mexico, the American Museum of Natural History, the National Geographic Society, the National Park Service Ruin Stabilization Unit, and the Chaco Project. Documentation of the SAR/UNM and NPS work is largely archival and often contains conflicting information concerning dating, the age and sex of the individual, positioning, and objects associated with the burial. The burials that were the most complete according to Judd (1954:325-339) were used for this data collection.

Also, for the Chaco Canyon sites a list of excavated burial reports came from, "A Biocultural Approach to Human Burials from Chaco Canyon, New Mexico" by Nancy J. Akins published by Branch of Cultural Research, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service in 1986. This data was extremely helpful to show differences in the Chaco sites furthermore adding details in burial preparation and grave goods found at Chaco Canyon. Eight sites were used to collect burials from Chaco Canyon and that included BC 50- Tseh So, BC-51, BC 52- Casa Sombreada, BC 53- Robert's site, BC 54- Corn Mother site, BC-55, BC-57, and BC-59. Hundreds of burials were recorded in this collection but for this research 120 burials were used. Many burials had offerings of the same kind, but an occasional inclusion of an ornament was considered a token of high esteem or affection.

For Aztec Ruins, published burial information is derived from the Anthropological Papers of The American Museum of Natural History, "Burials in the Aztec Ruin, The Aztec Ruin Annex" by Earl H. Morris published by the American Museum Press in 1924. The Aztec Ruin had a considerably larger number of burials recorded than what was found at Pueblo Bonito. Of the over 140 burials that were meticulously recorded, only 100 burials were used in this research. This data from Aztec Ruin was extremely valuable to this project, as burials had abundant grave goods, and the sample included a warrior's burial, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

The Arroyo Hondo burial data is from the published monograph, "Pueblo Population and Society: The Arroyo Hondo Skeletal and Mortuary Remains" by Ann M. Palkovich published by the School of American Research Press in 1980. Palkovich (1980) did an incredible job with this burial data, providing a clearly understandable and organized list of burials. The mortuary information includes dates, age, sex, pathologies, location, position, associated artifacts, and burial reconstruction when appliable. Additionally, Palkovich (1980) includes a table that analyzed Tewa age grades and acquired statuses, which helped my comprehension of status within these burials. For this research, 118 burials were used in this data collection from Components I and II. Palkovich's (1980) burial remains data was invaluable and vital to understanding Ancestral Pueblo burials through time.

The burial data for the Hohokam region is derived from, "Death, Society, and Ideology in a Hohokam Community" by Randall H. McGuire published by Westview Press in 1992. McGuire's collection of burial data of La Ciudad is extensive and has a great deal of detail that went beyond the scope of this research but could potentially be useful for future research. This includes data on the burial size, shape, bone weight, disturbance, and type of disturbance, as well as a grave lot value. For this research, I primarily included data from 100 La Ciudad burials.

Data from a total of 476 burials was analyzed. To examine patterns across these different datasets, I needed to use a consistent set of attributes related to status. I did this by creating a set of analysis codes called *factor codes* (Table 1). As mentioned earlier, these factor codes are the recognizable attributes that are found within a burial. This includes the geographic location of the burial, if the individual was identifiable by sex and age, burial condition (i.e., inhumation or cremation), body position, head position/direction, grave goods, and any other important details that should be noted. Furthermore, for the grave goods, specific categories were used including,

plainware vessels, other vessels, marine shell, turquoise, ground stone, jewelry, tools, weapons, animal remains, blankets/wrappings, baskets/mats, food, exotics, projectile points, and other. Also, a category called inalienable possessions was included which are objects made to be kept (not exchanged), have symbolic and economic power that cannot be transferred, and are often used to authenticate the ritual authority of corporate groups (Mills 2004:238). Some examples of inalienable goods in Ancestral Pueblo are alter furniture, ceremonial clothing, and wands/staffs of office. While ritual deposits in the Chaco area have been found at many of the sites, prehistoric vandalism, deterioration, and incomplete records account for the lack of findings of inalienable possessions in this study.

Results

The data collected from the sites was compared in a few different ways. Within the sites, analysis included age vs. sex, sex, age, the number of categories present, count of burial position, and count of remains condition. Other comparisons include sex vs. the number of categories present, age vs. the number of categories present, age vs. pottery, and burials vs. number of factor codes. Chaco Canyon sites and Arroyo Hondo display additional, interesting patterns. For example, in the Chaco data, occupation periods 980-1150 C.E show a noticeably higher number of categories. Similarly, in the Arroyo Hondo data for time period Component I, there is a considerably higher number of categories present in burials within Plaza G than in other burial locations. Table 2 is a summarization of all data gathered for this research. Separated by sites and all categories that were analyzed. For geographic location, time period, sex, age, burial body condition, body position, head position, factor codes, and number of categories displaying the most common attribute along with the percentage of that attribute is recorded. Followed by each grave good category of present or not present goods with a plus/minus and percentages.

Table 1. Key to Factor Codes.

Age Key	Burial Remains Condition Key	Sex Key
1 = Infant (0-6yrs)	1 = Inhumation	1 = Male
2 = Juvenile (7-14yrs)	2 = Cremation	2 = Female
3 = Subadult (15- 21yrs)	3 = Indeterminate	3 = Unknown
4 = Adult (22+yrs)		
5 = Indeterminate		

Head Direction Key	Burial Body Position Key
1 = North	1 = Right Side- Fetal
2 = East	2 = Left Side- Fetal
3 = West	3 = Back- Flat
4 = South	4 = Stomach- Flat
X = No Information	X = No Information

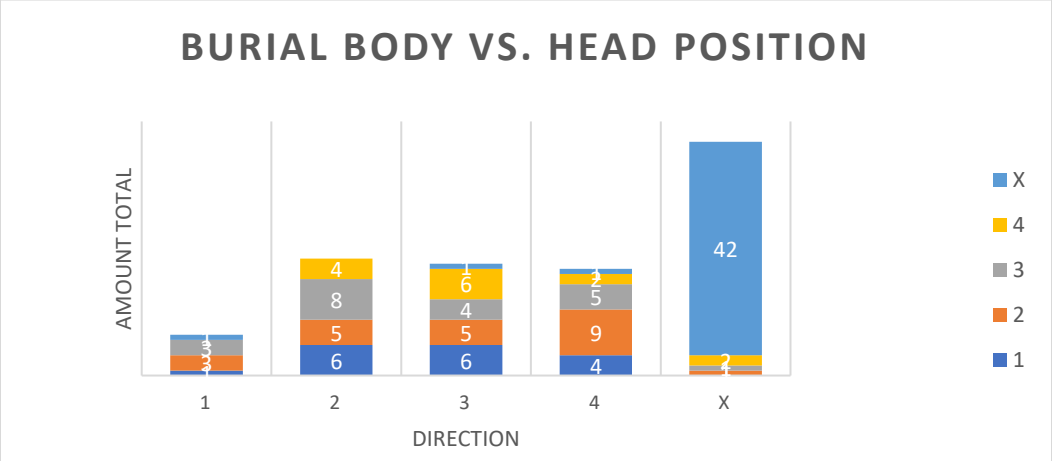
Grave Goods Key

1 = Inalienable Possessions	9 = Weapons
2 = Plainware Vessels	10 = Animal Remains
3 = Other Vessels	11 = Blankets/ Wrappings
4 = Marine Shell	12 = Baskets/ Mats
5 = Turquoise	13 = Food
6 = Ground Stone	14 = Exotics
7 = Jewelry	15 = Projectile Point
8 = Tools	16 = Other

Chaco Canyon

The results from Chaco Canyon were intriguing as the time periods between 980-1150 C.E had a noticeably higher number of grave good categories than other periods. The grave good codes 11 and 12 are found to be within the highest number of burials. Which is typical for Pueblo burials as these were common items to include in a burial. Around 46 percent of adult burials contained grave goods, while 30 percent had at least one category and 19 percent of burials had none. As far as burials that contained plainware vessels this was 10 percent of the burials. The importance of grave goods within these burials comes from vessels being the main resource for dating Chaco burials (Akins 1986:79). Also, 53 percent of burials are adults regardless of sex, but 58 percent of burials are of indeterminate sex. The high percentage of indeterminate sex may be the result of inexperienced students making the determination or from interpretations based more on the burial goods than on the remains (Akins 1986:79). Although from this study, 33 percent of all burials examined were infant burials. Due to the importance of head direction in the Ancestral Pueblo burial rituals, Figure 1 shows Burial Body vs. Head Position, and that 42 percent of burials have no data for this, but 23 percent of burials have their head direction pointing to the east.

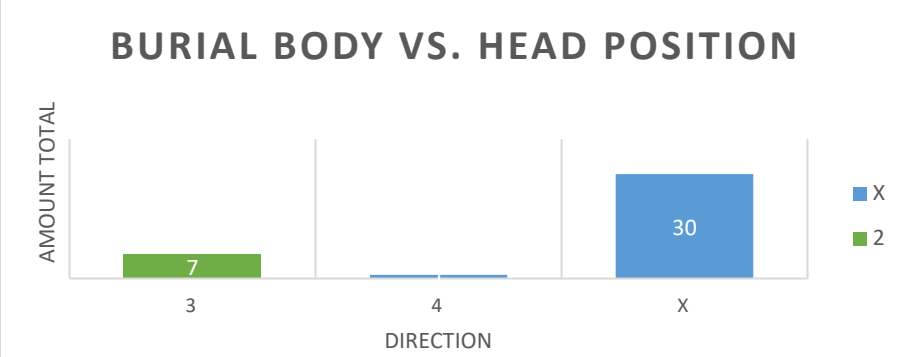
Figure 1. Chaco Canyon Burial Head Direction.



Pueblo Bonito

Although Pueblo Bonito is one of the most important sites in the Chaco Canyon, it yielded the least amount of data due to the smaller number of burials examined in this study. As reported by Pepper (1920:376) in his evaluation of Pueblo Bonito burials, "the inconsequential number of bodies found in Pueblo Bonito naturally prompts the question as to where the general cemetery wherein were buried the hundreds who must have died there" Looking back to the burials used in this study, 34 percent of the burials were of indeterminate ages, while 29 percent were adults followed by 27 percent being infants. Indeterminate sex scores the highest among all ages at 63 percent. As far as grave goods are concerned, 31 percent of burials analyzed contained at least one category and 26 percent contained none. Although, in Rooms 32 and 33 there is evidence that members of founding lineages or at least, people of great importance were buried there due to the nature of the grave goods that accompanied them (Pepper 1920:376). Furthermore, 13 percent of burials contained plainware vessels. Figure 2 below demonstrates that 79 percent of burials do not have data for whether head direction was considered important for the burials at Pueblo Bonito. This is most likely due to the lack of data and the lack of reliable burial data from past excavations.

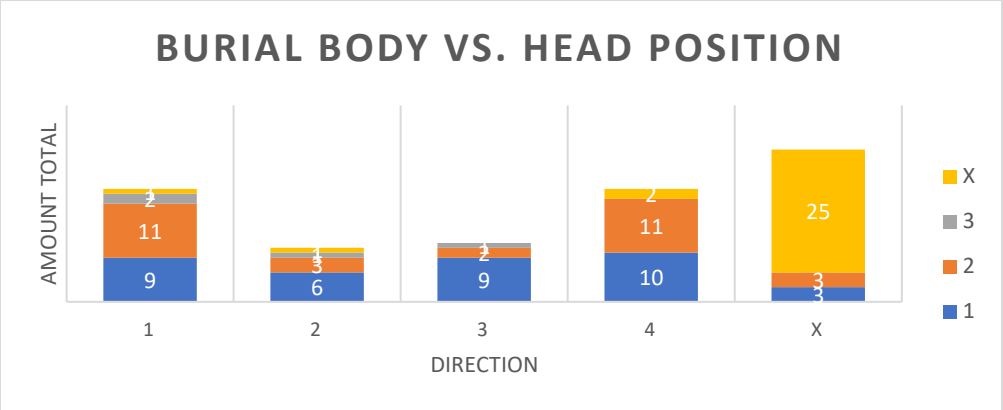
Figure 2. Pueblo Bonito Burial Head Direction.



Aztec

The next Ancestral Pueblo site analyzed is Aztec as the data was fascinating. Around 51 percent of burials were that of infants followed by 31 percent being adults. Indeterminate sex and infant burials scored the highest among all other categories when age and sex was compared. Observed by Morris (1924:225), 50 percent of burials are those of infants and children. When analyzing grave goods 33 percent of burials regardless of age did not contain any grave goods, while 41 percent contained at least two categories of goods. On Morris's (1924:225) report 44 percent of burials did not contain any burial goods. As far as sex, only three percent of male burials contained grave goods with 11 percent of female burials contained goods and 53 percent of indeterminate burials contained goods, which can mostly account for child burials, as they are too young to fully determine sex. Likewise, 18 percent of burials contained plainware vessels. As analyzed in Pueblo Bonito and Chaco Canyon head direction is demonstrated in Figure 3 and shows that 11 percent of burials have their head direction to the east. This corresponds to Morris's (1924:225) findings where around 16 percent of burials were found with their head direction to the east.

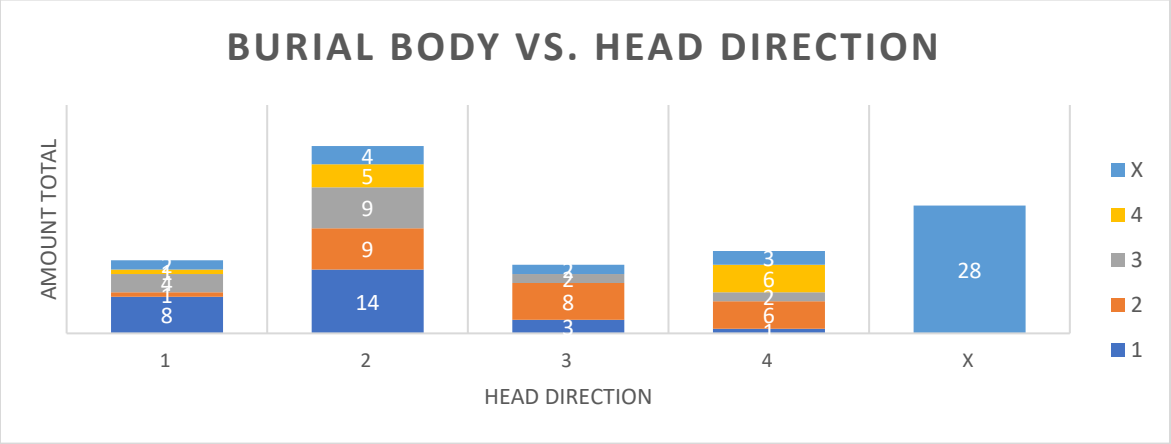
Figure 3. Aztec Burial Head Direction.



Arroyo Hondo

The data analyzed from Arroyo Hondo showed that the geographic location Plaza G has a noticeably higher number of categories of grave goods. Additionally, 59 percent of burials are indeterminate of sex, with 26 percent being female and only 15 percent being male. When age is compared, 47 percent of burials are infant, and 39 percent are adult burials. This analysis aligns with Palkovich's (1980:69) assessment that during the first occupation of Arroyo Hondo individuals buried were typically under the age of 15. In a like manner, when grave goods were analyzed 69 percent of burials contained goods and 43 percent of those burials were infant, scoring the highest among all age categories. This correlates with Palkovich's (1980:71-72) findings as it was stated that 63 percent of all individuals were accompanied by mortuary items. With only nine percent of burials containing plainware vessels. According to Palkovich (1980:68) it was typical of these burials to have their head direction pointing east, which Figure 4 establishes with 41 percent of the burials having their head direction to the east. This furthermore verifies the importance of head direction in the Ancestral Pueblo burial traditions at Arroyo Hondo.

Figure 4. Arroyo Hondo Burial Head Direction.



Hohokam- La Ciudad

The results analyzed from Hohokam's La Ciudad burial site revealed that 100 percent of burials analyzed are cremation burials. This is important because cremation in Hohokam culture was very prevalent and was the majority of the burial tradition. According to McGuire, secondary cremations dominated the burials with 97 percent of the cremation sample (McGuire 1992:58). As shown in Figure 5, 100 percent of burials do not have data for head direction as they were all cremation burials. Noticeably 74 percent of burials are indeterminate sex, while 20 percent are male, and six percent are female. In connection to this McGuire (1992:96) states that the higher frequency of males in identifications results from the male bones extreme robustness and does not represent burial populations. When age is compared 54 percent of burials are adults with 17 percent indeterminate, 15 percent juvenile, nine percent subadults and only five percent being infant. Importantly, when grave goods are analyzed 41 percent of burials do not contain any grave goods regardless of age and only 20 percent contained one category of grave goods. Interestingly, 32 percent of adult burials have one or more categories of grave goods and 27 percent of burials contained plainware vessels. This percentage varies slightly from McGuire's (1992:104) analysis where it is stated that 53.7 percent of cremations contained artifacts within burials.

Figure 5. La Ciudad Burial Head Direction.

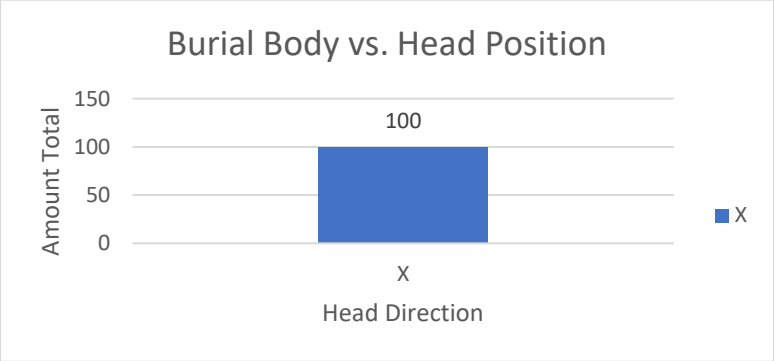


Table 2.

	Chaco Canyon	Pueblo Bonito	Aztec	Arroyo Hondo	La Ciudad
# of Burials	120	38	100	118	100
Geographic Location	Refuse- 15%	Burial Cluster Room 330- 26%	North Wing- 41%	Plaza G- 32%	Belleview- 34%
Time Period	Gallup- 43% 980-1150 CE	Phase II- 100% 828-1126 CE	Phase III- 100% 1200-1300 CE	Comp: I- 87% 1300-1400 CE	UNKN- 57%
Sex	3- 58%	3- 63%	3- 82%	3- 59%	3- 74%
Age	4- 53%	5- 34%	1-51%	1-47%	4- 54%
Burial Body Condition	1-100%	1-100%	1-99%	1-100%	2- 66%
Body Position	X- 38%	X- 79%	1-37%	X- 33%	X- 100%

Head Position	X- 38%	X- 82%	X- 31%	2- 35%	X- 100%
Factor Code	3- 23%	NONE- 26%	NONE- 33%	NONE- 42%	NONE- 41%
# of Categories	1-36%	1-32%	NONE- 33%	NONE- 42%	NONE- 41%
Inalienable Possessions	- 100% + 0%	- 100% + 0%	- 99% + 1%	- 99% + 1%	- 100% + 0%
Plainware Vessels	- 90% + 10%	- 87% + 13%	- 82% + 18%	- 99% + 1%	- 73% + 27%
Other Vessels	- 44% + 66%	- 84% + 16%	- 71% + 29%	- 91% + 9%	- 82% + 18%
Marine Shell	- 93% + 7%	- 76% + 24%	- 95% + 5%	- 97% + 3%	- 64% + 36%
Turquoise	- 94% + 6%	- 76% + 24%	- 96% + 4%	- 97% + 3%	- 93% + 7%
Ground Stone	- 87% + 13%	- 95% + 5%	- 99% + 1%	- 97% + 3%	- 82% + 18%
Jewelry	- 93% + 7%	-71% + 29%	- 92% + 8%	- 97% + 3%	- 81% + 19%
Tools	- 89% + 11%	- 92% + 8%	- 97% + 3%	- 98% + 2%	- 97% + 3%
Weapons	- 97% + 3 %	- 97% + 3%	- 97% + 3%	- 98% + 2%	- 98% + 2%
Animal Remains	- 100% + 0%	- 100% + 0%	- 94% + 6%	- 97% + 3%	- 96% + 4%
Blanket/Wrappings	- 97% + 3%	- 95% + 5%	- 64% + 36%	- 80% + 20%	- 100% + 0%
Basket/Mats	- 67% + 33%	- 79% + 21%	- 53% + 47%	- 75% + 25%	- 100% + 0%
Food	- 89% + 11%	- 100% + 0%	- 98% + 2%	- 92% + 8%	- 100% + 0%
Exotics	- 100% + 0%	- 100% + 0%	- 100% + 0%	- 98% + 2%	- 99% + 1%
Projectile Point	- 99% + 1%	- 97% + 3%	- 99% + 1%	- 99% + 1%	- 87% + 13%
Other	- 80% + 20%	- 95% + 5%	- 86% + 14%	- 82% + 18%	- 89% + 11%

Discussion

My results indicate both similarities and differences between each of the burial populations included. Social status within each of these burials is independent and unique to time and geographic location. During specific occupation periods, a higher number of goods existed within burials such as at Aztec where 41 percent of burials contained at least two grave goods. At other times, mostly children and some adults would have grave goods. Due to unsystematic

and/or antiquated recording methods, indeterminate sex accounts for a large percentage of burials, which could be corrected with new technologies for identifying sex. On average, 70 percent of burials throughout all the sites contained at least one grave good offering, with the Chaco Canyon sites scoring highest with 81 percent of burials and Hohokam scoring lowest with 59 percent. Child burials account for a large percentage of the burials that were analyzed with averages between a third and a half of all the burials. The Hohokam sample was among the lowest in this category, with only five percent of the burials being children.

Specific burials clearly reflect higher social status in their communities. For example, at Aztec Ruin, a warrior's burial was found that contained specialized items reflecting this individual's status. This special burial was an adult male interred with ten distinct categories, the highest among all burials analyzed. This burial's grave goods include an inner wrapping of a feather cloth, an outer covering of rush matting, a shield (coiled basketry technique), a small bowl-shaped coiled basket, a small bowl containing a mug, three large bowls, a fine globular vase and a covering to it, five bone awls, the prong of an antler, a sandstone rasping implement, an incomplete chipped knife blade, several flakes of an arrow stone, two axes (appear as weapons rather than tools), a long knife of red quartzite, a spherical ornament of lignite, a strand of beads (17 white disks; eight lignite disks; two red disks; two oval pieces of turquoise), and three wooden objects: one resembles a sword, one is sharpened on each end, and one flattened to a blade at the larger end. This is unquestionably a show of status within a burial context and certainly represents Chacoan identity based on the style of the grave offerings.

Material indicators of status appear to change throughout the occupation of the sites. Some grave goods such as blankets, mats, and wrapping are very common grave offerings throughout the burial sample but do not necessarily reflect the unique status of individuals. Similarly, burials that contained plainware vessels or other types of vessels such as pitchers, mugs, and ladles are common. However, the addition of specific grave goods such as turquoise, jewelry, and other offerings show that certain individuals either possessed this object in life or were conferred the offering as a sign of their importance or status within the community. For example, a ceremonial axe considered an inalienable possession was buried with an individual in the Arroyo Hondo community and a copper artifact considered an exotic artifact was buried with an individual in the Hohokam community.

Alternatively, a comparison between the Ancestral Pueblo sites and Hohokam's La Ciudad site shows that varying communities display their status differently for their burials. For example, the Ancestral Pueblos did not participate in cremation of their dead like the Hohokam. Therefore, head direction did not have importance in the burial process for the Hohokam like what it did for the Ancestral Pueblos. Comparably, the Ancestral Pueblo burials on average only contained nine percent of marine shell while the Hohokam contained 36 percent. This may of course have contributing factors such as the Hohokam region being closer to the Pacific coast.

Conclusion

To summarize, the analysis did support my expectation that the burials of the Southwest communities prior to European contact had specific beliefs and practices surrounding treatment

of the deceased. As a result, I interpret this as evidence that the individuals were buried according to their status within their communities. This analysis demonstrates that these burials have many recognizable attributes associated with status within a community. Complex communities such as these developed hierarchies that would be materialized in the burials of their people through placement, direction, and grave offerings. Thanks to the excavation work conducted in previous archaeological projects, it has provided significant published records of these diverse mortuary practices that made this project possible. In conclusion, this research paper explored the burial practices of several different pre-Hispanic Southwest communities and examined how those burials distinguish social status of the deceased within their communities.

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