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New Mexico and the Pimeria Alta: The Colonial Period in the American Southwest

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New Mexico and the Pimeria Alta: The Colonial Period in the American Southwest, edited by John G. Douglass and William M. Graves, 428 pp., 73 figures, 4 tables, forward, preface, index. Boulder, The University Press of Colorado, 2017, \$85.00 (Cloth). ISBN: 978-1-60732-573

Winner of the 2017 Arizona Literary Award (Published Nonfiction)
Finalist for the 2017 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award

Small Worlds, Large-Scale Processes of the Colonial Period Southwest: A Review

This volume focuses on two disciplinary divisions that also reflected administrative regions in Spanish Colonial times: New Mexico and the Pimería Alta. Chapter 1, written by the editors, provides background, setting the stage for the volume. Here and in the chapter selections themselves, New Mexico receives the greatest emphasis. Eight of the 15 chapters are on New Mexico (which in the Colonial period included northern Arizona), while four focus on the Pimería Alta. The final two chapters are more general and theoretical in nature, comparing certain themes to Colonial California and the Southeast. As with most edited volumes,

the quality, coverage, and comprehensiveness are uneven. Those chapters that cite the latest scholarship and incorporate more than one line of evidence are the strongest, thereby contravening disciplinary, regional, and institutional insularity.

The volume covers a vast area, characterized by very different periods, influences, and Native cultures. Seemingly owing to scholarly interest, Puebloan examples continue to be used as a proxy for the Colonial Southwest. It was therefore refreshing to see discussion of Colonial period New Mexico expanded beyond the Pueblos in two papers on the Vecino population and one on the Comanche. Addressing mobile groups and engaging with the existing extensive literature (as in Seymour [2017], a contemporaneous volume published the same year) advances the discussion substantially, allowing for a more nuanced and meaningful analysis and interpretation. Two of the papers effectively interface with growing information that indicates how important these non-farming groups were to the outcome of events leading up to and in influencing the First Contact and the Colonial periods. This interactive aspect is discussed in the lucid and interesting contribution by Darling and Eiselt that characterizes the development and nature of the Vecino occupation of New Mexico, including the importance of indigenous interaction in the shaping of Hispanic identity.

It was a delight to read this chapter and other fresh studies in the New Mexico section of the volume, such as those by Leckman, Webster, and Leibman et al. These are good examples of using past and contemporary work to argue for new conclusions and present fresh interpretations. This New Mexico section is represented by a diverse assortment of topics including Leckman's discussion of the adaptive cultural interpretation and merging of space within Puebloan communities. This is akin to O'odham construction and use of adobe-walled structures and canes of office (and even the trinkets mentioned by Thomas), as discussed for the early Colonial period in southern Arizona, that were adapted for their own purposes within their world view, while concurrently colonial representatives perceived or conveyed their acceptance and use as signs of conversion and assimilation. Webster engages effectively with other scholars in her study of changes in Hopi weaving, pointing out differences in interpretation and the basis behind her inferences. In this sense and in its compelling argument, this chapter represents an example for others of borderland scholarship. Because of the distant position relative to Spanish presence, Webster argues that Hopi were not subject to many of the transformative forces so prevalent along the Rio Grande. Leibman et al. combine ceramic studies and other evidence to explore changing relations within and among pueblos following the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. For the 1680–1692 period, they use material culture to track alliances and factionalism in ways that challenge and augment customary historical accounts.

Three of four chapters in the Pimeria Alta section focus on a subset of the O'odham. A rich and abundant literature is available for consideration that in many instances and ways changes the nature of the discussion. Broadening the conversation to include citations to and comparative discussions of this other contemporary Pimeria Alta work would have expanded the comparative framework and referential documentation of these chapters. Like an earlier publication of O'odham interaction, political alliances, and exchange with other farming and mobile groups (Seymour 2007, 2008, and 2011 among others), Jelinek and

Brenneman similarly discuss such interaction, but with a narrower scope and a Western focus. Consulting the breadth of current literature, which disambiguates and disentangles the varied adaptations of different O’odham groups, would have strengthened discussions considerably. Another example, Strawhacker extrapolates to all O’odham in southern Arizona a decades-old interpretation of the Gila O’odham adaptation. This then serves as the basis for her argument and which results in demonstrably incorrect statement that “no canals are known to have been constructed anywhere in southern Arizona from about 1450 until 1744.” A more comprehensive examination of the current literature might have clarified, for example, that there is in fact published evidence that a sizable number of ancestral O’odham were irrigation farmers with extensive canal systems recorded both in early documentary sources and archaeological contexts on the San Pedro and Santa Cruz rivers. These O’odham had productive fields laid out adjacent to permanently organized settlements, predictably positioned along river segments where irrigation farming was possible, long before the Europeans arrived.

New Mexico and the Pimería Alta have very distinct histories, which can make for interesting contrasts and comparisons, and is likely one reason the editors separated sections of the volume. Discussions of themes raised and relevant to the New Mexico literature will in the future be enhanced when supplemented with parallel and ongoing discussions in the Pimería Alta literature. Many of the identified informational gaps have, in fact, already been extensively researched, with, for example, a growing literature on the native political economies and indigenous landscapes, distinguishing temporally distinct contexts on multicomponent sites, a comparison of changes, including in the faunal record, between early (Jesuit) and later Franciscan Colonial period indigenous sites, and visibility of violence and evidence of rebellion in the archaeological record.

Chapters throughout the volume read easily, and given new insights that broaden the New Mexico context, this edited volume is a solid contribution to the growing literature on this period.

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