

# UC Santa Cruz

## UC Santa Cruz Previously Published Works

### Title

Douglass, John G. & William M. Graves (eds). New Mexico and the Pimería Alta: the colonial period in the American Southwest. xxiii, 428 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Boulder: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2017. £74.00 (cloth)

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/05q6z9h6>

### Journal

Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 25(2)

### ISSN

1359-0987

### Author

Habicht-Mauche, Judith A

### Publication Date

2019-06-01

### DOI

10.1111/1467-9655.13037

Peer reviewed

DOUGLASS, JOHN G. & WILLIAM M. GRAVES (eds). *New Mexico and the Pimería Alta: the colonial period in the American Southwest*. xxiii, 428 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Boulder: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2017. £74.00 (cloth)

Based on a Society for American Archaeology symposium in 2012, *New Mexico and the Pimería Alta* presents a much-needed update on current research in colonial and postcolonial period archaeology in the American Southwest, from first contact through to the nineteenth century. The introductory chapter, by editors John G. Douglass and William M. Graves, provides an excellent summary of the Spanish colonial enterprise in the American Southwest and a history of its scholarship, offering a solid contextual framework for the contributions in this volume, while standing alone as great overview that could effectively be assigned as background reading in undergraduate and graduate courses on Southwest archaeology, colonial encounters in the Americas, or Spanish borderlands history. The remainder of the book is divided into three sections, which focus, in turn, on the New Mexico colony from the Rio Grande to the Hopi mesas, the Pimería Alta of northern Sonora and southern Arizona, and comparative perspectives from other parts of the Spanish Borderlands.

The New Mexico section, comprised of seven contributions covering the varied responses of the Rio Grande Pueblos (two chapters), the Hopi (two chapters), and the Comanche (one chapter) to the colonial encounter, as well as the emergence of Hispanic *vecino* communities in the eighteenth century (two chapters), is both diverse and comprehensive, reflecting the longer and more extensive history of colonial period archaeology in that area. Nevertheless, the four chapters in part 2 that engage with recent historical and archaeological research on the missions and presidios of southern Arizona and their Native American hinterlands are particularly welcome, since this area is not included in most overviews of the colonial period in the American Southwest. The final two chapters, by Kent G. Lightfoot and David Hurst Thomas, add important comparative perspectives on the archaeology of Spanish colonialism in other areas of the Spanish Borderlands, specifically Alta California and La Florida. Their authors highlight significant similarities and differences in how Spanish policies and institutions were implemented, and variously engaged with, or resisted by, indigenous groups in each of these distinct regions of southern North America, especially in the context of existing indigenous political economies and cultural landscapes.

As noted in the foreword by David Hurst Thomas, this volume self-consciously builds on the legacy of his edited three-volume *Columbian consequences* (1989-91), which is widely credited with transforming historical archaeology's substance and practice in the Americas. As typified by the scholarship highlighted in this ground-breaking collection, contributions to the current book employ a broad range of perspectives, research methodologies, evidentiary sources, and interpretative frameworks to broaden and deepen our understanding of how the legacy of the colonial encounter in the American Southwest continues to shape the histories of, and relationships among, the region's diverse peoples and cultures.

As is now characteristic among the most recent generation of archaeologies of the colonial encounter, the volume's authors contest the simplistic dichotomies of acculturation and resistance in order to examine the creative and practical engagements of both indigenous peoples and settler communities with colonial institutions and processes in ways that were not just responsive but also constitutive. Several contributions also complicate the distinction between colonizer and colonized, presenting missions, presidios, *ranchos* and *estancias*, and even pueblos as multicultural spaces where indigenous and colonial actors interacted on an intimate and daily basis in ways that came to redefine social positions, statuses, and identities. Some authors also challenge our standard notions of 'core' and 'periphery', asking whether the American Southwest in the eighteenth century is best understood as the periphery of either a Spanish colonial empire centred in Mexico City, or of a Comanche empire centred on the Great Plains.

This collection's particular strength lies in the diversity of approaches, data sets, and historical sources that are integrated into these various case studies. While some authors focus on the analysis of specific artefact categories (pottery, textiles, faunal remains), others employ broader site-specific, or landscape-based, approaches. Archaeological evidence is integrated with archival sources, including, in at least one case, detailed genealogical information. Finally, several contributions effectively engage with indigenous voices and perspectives on the colonial encounter, as drawn from contemporary testimonies recorded in Spanish documents, as well as surviving oral histories, especially as preserved among the Hopi. The vividness of these modern accounts of events hundreds of years in the past

emphasizes that despite the practical agency and survival of many Indigenous American communities in the American Southwest, the historical trauma of the colonial encounter is a persistent and ongoing cultural legacy.

]rau[JUDITH A. HABICHT-MAUCHE *University of California, Santa Cruz*