

**Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want: Apaches and the Inversion of the
Colonial Encounter in the Chihuahuan Borderlands, 1581-1788**

by

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For Tom and Lei, my parents

&

for Claire, my wife

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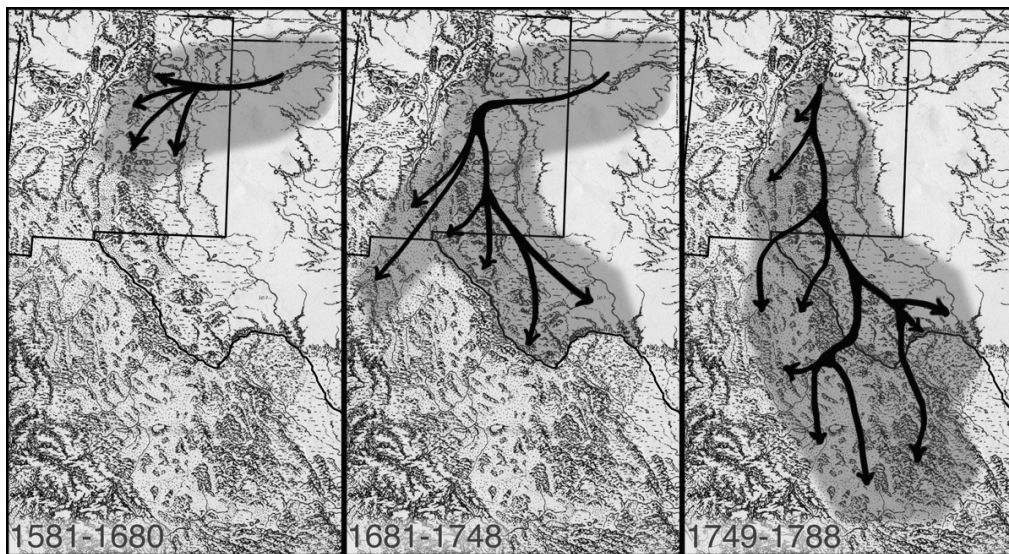
Abstract

“Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want” is an environmental history of the Chihuahuan Desert as reflected through Faraon, Natage, and Mescalero Apache mobility, environment, and inter-ethnic competition, from 1581-1788. It is the story of Apaches who constructed powerful and elastic indigenous landscapes at the same time that they deconstructed sclerotic European landscapes. Methodologically, this dissertation combines critical assessment of Spanish archival documentation, environmental research concerning xeric ecologies, and economic and biological game theory. The two principal questions that direct analysis are: How did Apaches of the southern Great Plains and northern Chihuahuan Desert invert the vectors of imperial domination and directionality? How—when most indigenes experienced European empire through displacement, destruction, and exploitation—did these Apaches counter-invade the northern frontier of New Spain, and thrive within an indigenous territoriality—Apacheria—that was, geopolitically and eco-economically, often more expansive and successful than Spanish provinces?

Apaches inverted the colonial encounter almost as soon as it began, and initiated a two century long project of counter-expansion and counter-colonization. Within a decade of the establishment of New Mexico in the Middle Rio Grande Valley in 1598, Apaches learned to exploit the structural deficiencies of the Spanish riparian colony and had plundered horses, guns, and grains. Control over these tools of empire empowered Apaches to experiment with expanded mobilities and with emergent environmental economies. In the course of their experimentation, Apaches discovered and exploited ecoregions of the Chihuahuan Desert, such as the Trans-Pecos, La Junta de los Rios, and the Bolson de Mapimi. The Spanish had believed these areas to be wastelands and had shunned them, but Apaches found oases and mesopotamias that nourished and grew their transhumant, nomadic societies. From these landscapes Faraones, Natages and Mescaleros developed complex modalities of competition that empowered them to bend imperial economies towards their own indigenous territoriality, and to counter-colonize lands held by regions’ previous indigenous inhabitants. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Apacheria and the Chihuahuan Desert were fast becoming coterminous, and together the two represented the powerful function that space and place played within borderlands encounters.

Introduction: The Power of Chihuahuan Borderlands; Faraon and Mescalero

Apacherías and the Inversion of the Colonial Encounter



Map 1: The Progression of Chihuahuan Desert Apacherías, 1581-1788. First panel: Middle Rio Grande Valley and southern Great Plains, 1581-1680; second panel: Trans-Pecos, 1681-1748; third panel: Bolsón de Mapimí, 1749-1788.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America* (New York: Columbia University, The Geographical Press, 1948).

It happened quickly, and not in the way it was supposed to. Spanish missionaries, militia, and colonists began a series of invasions of what is today New Mexico, Texas, and northern Chihuahua in 1581. These agents of empire and colony came from the province of Nueva Vizcaya, a relatively young place (established only 19 years earlier). Soon they had a new colony to call home, and they named it Nuevo Mexico (New Mexico). In addition to horses, mules, cattle, bibles, and guns, they

brought with them the expectation that Spanish culture and Spanish institutions would soon crowd the landscape as a testament to the irresistible power of New Spain. Their expectations, however, were soon dashed, and many of them could only look on in horror as the colonial encounter—as they had come to expect it from their conquests over Aztecs and Incas—became inverted. These Spanish colonists had succeeded in extending European empire in 1598, but within a decade a new, dangerous, and seemingly unassailable indigenous counter-territory began to take shape around them.

In the beginning there was hardly a warning; just a quotidian report delivered to a bureaucrat in Mexico City. Viceroy Zúñiga y Acevedo was curious to know more about the new colony of New Mexico, founded three years earlier by don Juan de Oñate, in 1598. He tasked a member of his court, don Francisco de Valverde y Mercado, with questioning two people who had just arrived from New Mexico, Ginés de Herrera Horta and Juan de Ortega. Horta and Ortega spoke similarly about the estimated population of Puebloans, and about the agricultural potential of the river valley into which the Spanish had settled, the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Other than the fact that many colonists were disappointed in the climate, there was nothing about their report that was too exciting. Towards the end of the interviews, however, they both relayed one more detail. Puebloans were in the habit of receiving visitors from the prairies to the east. Sometimes *Vaquero* Indians came to certain pueblos, like Pecos or Taos, and traded a variety of bison-derived products like meat, fat, or tallow in exchange for blankets, grain, or pottery. They brought shaggy dogs with them, and these were used to transport their goods; the *Vaqueros* themselves came on foot.¹

¹ *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, George P. Hammond, trans. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953): 647, 660.

This detail garnered almost no interest at the time, but that changed quickly. By 1672 these *Vaqueros* made a distinctly different impression on New Mexico. In that year Franciscan missionary Francisco de Ayeta wrote to the viceroy that 6 pueblos had just been destroyed on the eastern and southern sides of the colony. Apaches, mounted on Spanish horses, had devastated two basins and daily added to the poverty and misery of the region. Governor Antonio de Otermín, expelled from the Middle Rio Grande Valley during the 1680 revolt, set out the following year to try to retake New Mexico for New Spain. The earth smoked with warning fires all around him. The Spanish refugees awoke to realize that these *Vaqueros* (or Apaches, as they had come to be called) had followed them south over 300 miles from Santa Fe, the colony's lost capital, and were even then watching them from the mountain heights all around. Within three years it became obvious that, while Spanish imperial territory was momentarily contracting, indigenous territory was expanding. Field Marshall Juan Dominguez de Mendoza ventured out from the New Mexico refugee camp at El Paso and traveled down the Rio Grande to investigate rumors that included Apache invasions. In 1683 he arrived at La Junta de los Ríos, a place south and east of El Paso; Apaches were there too, harassing the local indigenes and circling the Spanish.²

The eighteenth century brought no relief. Don Diego de Vargas, the Spaniard who retook New Mexico for New Spain in 1692, died on a spring day in 1704 along the foothills of the Sandia Mountains. He had been conducting one last campaign against

² Francisco de Ayeta, 1678, Petición tocante a Nuevo México y la ayuda dada por el rey; las cuentas del padre, Legajo 138, Parte 2, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico (CSWR).

Juan Dominguez de Mendoza, 17 December 1683, Description of the journey made by Juan Dominguez de Mendoza to Texas, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, Archivo General de la Nacion (AGN), CSWR.

these same Apaches, now called Faraon Apaches, across the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Vargas perished knowing he had failed. Meanwhile, Faraones continued to find their way farther and farther south. Over four decades later, in 1748, Captain Joseph de Berroterán, writing from the presidio of Mapimí, 500 miles south of El Paso, issued a warning. The Faraones who had penetrated down to El Paso and along the Rio Grande had passed south of the river, and they were quickly infesting the lands that lay immediately to the east of Nueva Vizcaya. Berroterán feared that, although these mounted and armed Natagés and Mescaleros (as Faraones this far south were called) were currently peaceful, they would soon subject Nueva Vizcaya to the same punishment that New Mexico had experienced.³ He was right. Twenty-three years later Brigadier General Hugo de O’Conor lamented at the deplorable state of Nueva Vizcaya and at the entrenched menace that Mescalero Apachería had become. Since they were

³ A few words on the terminology I have chosen: Ethnic designations like “Faraon” and “Mescalero” are Spanish-produced words. It would, of course, be preferable to draw upon Native-produced lexicons, but evidence for Athapaskan names is virtually non-existent until late in the eighteenth century.

In 1777, Brigadier General Hugo de O’Conor composed a sweeping report on the northern frontier of New Spain, and with it provides the first glimpse of the ethnographic texture that cut across numerous Apache groups. He listed Faraones as “Selcaisanende,” Mescaleros as “Zetozendé,” and Natagés as “Zetocende.” In 1796, a Spanish lieutenant colonel, don Antonio Cordero, stationed at El Paso, performed another round of ethnographic research into Apache peoples. Cordero named Faraones as “Yuntajen-ne,” Mescaleros as “Sejen-ne,” and Natagés as “Cuelcajen-ne” (he mistook this group as a component of Plains, or Llanero, groups). The similarity between the 1777 and 1796 terms for Mescaleros is plain to see.

It is important to appreciate that terms like these are more likely how indigenous peoples thought about their own identities. Nevertheless, the Spanish and Athapaskan terms perform similar functions as lexical designators, and for ease of indexing across established historiography, I have elected to acknowledge these indigenous terms but to utilize the more commonly handled Spanish epithets.

Hugo de O’Conor to Teodoro de Croix, 22 Julio 1777, Informe sobre las Provincias Internas, Folio 38, Expediente 15, Legajo 57, Biblioteca Nacional, AGN, CSWR.

For Cordero’s 1796 report v. Manuel Orozco y Berra, *Geografía de Las Lenguas Y Carta Etnográfica de México: Precedidas de Un Ensayo de Clasificación de Las Mismas Lenguas Y de Apuntes Para Las Inmigraciones de Las Tribus* (México: Impr. de J. M. Andrade y F. Escalante, 1864): 369. For an English translation, v. “Cordero’s Description of the Apache,” Daniel S. Matson and Albert H. Schroeder, eds., *New Mexico Historical Review* 32:4 (1957): 336, 354-355.

described by Horta and Ortega in 1601, they had come almost 1,000 miles and were closing in on Mexico City.⁴

These early missionaries and colonists had set the geographical reach of the northern Spanish frontier by 1598, but within decades indigenes, Faraon Apaches specifically, seized horses, weapons, and information, and began a counter-invasion that expanded deep into the Chihuahuan Desert, alongside and inside of New Spain. How did the Faraon, Natagé, and Mescalero Apaches of the southern Great Plains and northern Chihuahuan Desert invert the vectors of imperial domination and directionality from 1581 until 1788? How—when most indigenes experienced European empire through displacement, destruction, and exploitation—did these Apaches counter-invade the northern frontier of New Spain, and thrive within an indigenous territoriality that was, geopolitically and eco-economically, often more expansive and successful than Spanish provinces?

Scholarly literature has been building towards answers to these questions for decades. Monographs like Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, Kathleen DuVal's *The Native Ground*, Ned Blackhawk's *Violence Over the Land*, and Michael Witgen's *An Infinity of Nations* have evolved the study of the *history of empire*, and expanded the spatial and processual capacity of analytics like 'borderland' and 'frontier' to make room

⁴ Diego de Vargas, 27 March-2 April 1704, Campaign journal, Account of operations against Faraon Apaches, Document 99, Spanish Archives of New Mexico II (SANM II), New Mexico State Records Center and Archives at Santa Fe (NMSRCA).

Joseph de Berroterán, 17 April 1747, Informe de 1748 sobre Nueva Vizcaya, Legajo 41, Expediente 8, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Hugo de O'Connor, 6 September 1788, Informe general sobre el estado deplorable de las Provincias Internas, crueldad de los indios y total destrucción de las haciendas, por la guerra comenzada en 1748 por la nación apache, Legajo 1363, Civil, AGN, CSWR.

for indigenous presence, agency, and power. Histories of European colonialism and imperialism in North America cannot now exist without meaningful analysis of the myriad ways that Native America entered into dialogue with the threats and opportunities intrinsic to the colonial encounter.

Across the revised history of empire two forms of analytical structure that privilege indigenous contributions are dominant. One, encapsulated by *The Middle Ground*, interrogates the constructive nature of processes like ‘accommodation’ and ‘cooperation.’ This analytical structure typically deals in borderlands where cultures, ethnic identity, and political economies are formed through (mostly) non-violent means between dissimilar peoples who meet upon the landscape of colonialism. The vectors of power are neither stark nor explicitly coercive, and it is rare that one group completely dominates another, although there may be discernible asymmetries in how groups give meaning to political economy. Scholarship of this ilk does marvelous work in recovering indigenous agency. The other analytical structure, embodied in *Violence Over the Land*, emphasizes the ways indigenous societies co-opted the imperial process and foisted their own political economies onto their Native and European neighbors, often by violent means. Indigenous power as a function of violence and coercion is at the heart of this analytical structure. Needless to say, the processes and categories of each structure are not exclusive to one another, but often cross over and blend. In fact, there is almost a sense that the very analytics and methodologies of borderlands and frontier studies themselves exist in an intellectualized borderland all their own: Scholars constantly stretch, squeeze, and question the dividing line between *cooperation* and *conflict*.

It is between this division over processes of cooperation and conflict that my own analytical structure lies. In one sense, Apachería existed because of horses, which were themselves a product of Apache raiding, plundering, and violence; in another sense, Apachería could not have grown to its climax state if Apaches had not also committed to creative adaptation with the ecological and geopolitical circumstances that surrounded them. In order to better understand how my argumentations concerning Apacherías exhibit features of both cooperation and conflict, we should spend a short time tracing how *ideas* of Native-produced territories have been developed within the literature over the past 25 years.

Richard White introduced the idea of the “middle ground” in *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* as a way to describe the shared construction of space at the crossroads of the colonial encounter. At its heart, the middle ground is the “process of mutual invention by both the French and the Algonquians.” This process was characterized by the need of these two cultures to interact in order to find some kind of common understanding because neither one could wholly dominate or avoid the other. More often than not, misunderstanding riddled these interactions and it was only through repeated meetings that a set of shared meanings evolved. A key feature of this model is that French and Algonquians became bound by, as White puts it, fictive kinship, an idea he borrowed from the discipline of anthropology. Fictive kinship both demanded and reflected reciprocity between the cultures, and was the socio-political basis for accommodation and cooperation. In this model, Native peoples had much more agency to place demands on French agents and to shape the contours of their experience than most previous scholarship had reckoned.

The idea of the 'middle ground' exploded the predominance of the idea of 'frontier' as a space and process that presupposed straightforward EuroAmerican ascendancy over indigenous cultures and their homelands. Suddenly, 'frontiers' could be nebulous, shifting, and contested spaces, and many historians rushed to investigate the many ways that other indigenous societies similarly mediated empire and colony.⁵

Leading off of White's analysis, Gary Clayton Anderson's *The Indians Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* took up the tropes of kinship and mutualism and used them to elaborate upon borderlands of the Southwest. Anderson's lead

⁵ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 50-52.

v. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1947 [1920]) for the idea that the American frontier, as a function of space, moved from east to west as much of North America fell to the United States; and, as a function of process, how the frontier embodies the sense of unique individualism that was thought—at the time—to be emblematic of the white male citizen.

cf. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987) for one of the most well-known critiques of the Turnerian Frontier Thesis.

When White demonstrated how fully the 'line' of a frontier could be smeared, the idea of an indefinite 'borderland' came into vogue amongst historians of empire. The term itself, however, has long roots, reaching all the way back to Herbert Bolton's 1921 monograph *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*. Bolton's formulation was directly informed by the Turnerian Frontier Thesis. But Bolton could not ascribe the same mythology of success and individualism to the Spanish as Turner had to Americans, and so he chose to avoid the term frontier. Instead, he latched onto the notion of the borderland in order to, at once, extol on the worth of Spanish imperialism at the same time that he acknowledged its failure to fully dominate the Southwest within a coherent, linear political structure. Bolton might have investigated the deeper meaning behind Spanish difficulty in the Southwest, but he was a product of his era's prejudices, and *The Spanish Borderlands* became little more than a history of *conquistadores* and Spanish empire, a place and a process where indigenous peoples mattered little more than as reflections of the efficacy of colonial institutions. Herbert Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921).

The Boltonian model of the borderlands persisted through the decades of the twentieth century. One of the most salient later examples of it comes with John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier: 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), where Bannon mostly replicates Bolton's analysis, but is much less laudatory of Spanish institutions and instead questions *why* missions struggled as much as they did to maintain order within a world of indigenous chaos.

v. David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) as a final corrective to the Boltonian model. Weber adopted the spatial categories of Bolton, as well as his periodizations, but then integrated into them the (then) recent innovations concerning race, gender, and ethnohistory. Weber wanted to keep the Boltonian *idea* of borderlands alive for the sake of analytical coherency, and his synthetic analysis represents his best effort, but ultimately he only succeeds in imploding Boltonian categories. The idea of a transcontinental borderlands and the monolith institutions that glued it together are, essentially, Spanish categories that cannot accommodate the diversity and complexity inherent to the many forms of indigenous resistance, survival, and success.

analytic is the process of 'ethnogenesis,' the process of creating new ethnic identity from preexisting ethnic identities whose populations had been ravaged by disease and war. *The Indian Southwest* considers how a kind 'middle ethnic ground' formed between scattered, (semi-)nomadic societies. Anderson's analysis features the sense of creative agency that featured prominently in the *The Middle Ground*, but also moves beyond it in order to find creative power in the practice of certain indigenous societies (e.g. Jumano, Apache, and Comanche) to compel indigenes around them to assimilate into new ethnic identities. Sometimes the formation of these identities entailed coercion, meaning that, despite its emphasis on mutualism, *The Indian Southwest* reads a higher degree of violence into the Southwest than White did in the Great Lakes. Anderson weaves a compelling argument that privileges the world that Natives made amongst themselves in response to imperialism, but in the process sometimes under-privileges the importance of the Spanish-Native interchange. While it is true that the Spanish were far less determinative of the arc of history than previously thought by the Boltonian model, the exclusion of the important Middle Rio Grande Valley comes often enough in the course of Anderson's analysis that we are sometimes left wondering how it figured into the 'reinvention' of the southwest.⁶

A response to this omission within *The Indian Southwest* came with James Brooks' *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. Brooks builds on White and Anderson while simultaneously flipping their

⁶ Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

v. Edward Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest; the Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962) for the notion that there was often persistence of indigenous ethnic identity despite the successive waves of empire and colony.

emphasis on cooperation. *Captives and Cousins* argues that “rituals of violence, exchange, and redemption were central to the men whose societies met in the Southwest Borderlands during the colonial era.” Within the act of exchanging people and materials across cultural boundaries, violence often typified a variant of the ‘middle ground’ where new communities emerged from brutish circumstances, and produced a unique system of slavery in the borderlands predicated on “patriarchal structures of power and patrimony.” *Captives and Cousins* describes a borderlands where community is the product of violence and alienation. It is a compelling model that is limited only by its strong emphasis on male agents as the initiators and benefactors of captive-exchange within the Middle Rio Grande Valley. There is the sense throughout *Captives and Cousins* that most colonial actors, in fact, have little to no agency or power because of their forcible abduction into a specific market, controlled by specific agents. Brooks’ work is as much a study of the causalities behind slavery in the Southwest as it is an exploration of the limits of ‘middle ground’ in colonial New Mexico. Nonetheless, Brooks’ monograph makes an important contribution in the analysis of a system that was cruel and violent, yet that also produced new and meaningful social units.⁷

In counterpoint to Brooks dystopic model of the borderlands, Susan Deeds’ *Defiance and Deference in Mexico’s Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* tracks and measures the persistence of indigenous societies in Nueva Vizcaya, a province that lay immediately south of New Mexico. Deeds asks how the many (semi-)nomadic groups that inhabited the spaces between the present-day cities of Chihuahua and Durango fought back, each in their own way, against pressure to

⁷ James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Omohundro Institute, 2002): 4, 65.

assimilate into missions or to labor in mining camps. Deeds characterizes acts of resistance by Xiximes, Acaxees, and Tarahumares, and others through the analytical construct of 'mediated opportunism.' Mediated opportunism is the "crossroads between cultural and environmental opportunism on the one hand and moral boundaries and biological barriers on the other." Through the construct of mediated opportunism, *Defiance and Deference* reveals that a range of heterogenous outcomes were possible as a result of encounter with the Spanish, from defeat and assimilation to enduring independence. Other historians, of course, have noted that different groups of indigenes experienced empire differently, but Deeds was the first to emphasize this difference by means of cultural contingency in complement with environmental context. In this way she makes her strongest contribution to the borderlands ideology that informs this dissertation. Whereas Anderson and Brooks conceived of monolithic processes that seemed to work almost homogeneously over various indigenous and European populations, Deeds gives us a model where disparity, flexibility, and surprise feature prominently in the analysis. In a way, *Defiance and Deference* keeps the idea of a collaborative 'middle ground' alive in the borderlands by finding those unexpected and elusive opportunities whereby indigenes preserved their cultural integrity.⁸

Deeds gestured towards the re-empowerment of Native agents to negotiate the colonial encounter by means which were intrinsic to their own cultures and their choices over mobility and economy. Kathleen DuVal's *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* took this turn even further by suggesting that Native agents had the means not only to negotiate the colonial encounter, but to guide and shape it to

⁸ Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003): 6.

their own ends through means that were not explicitly violent. Within the Mississippi and Arkansas River Valleys, DuVal finds that groups such as Quapaws, Osages, Caddos, and others snatched the initiative from the French and succeeded for centuries in instilling their own political economy atop the spaces of French empire. In doing so, these indigenes effectively reversed the power dynamic that we have come to expect from the European-Native encounter. This idea inspired me to look for similar markers of hegemony and dominance in Apaches over the Spanish, and to wonder, in the vein of *Defiance of Deference*, how the environmental contexts of the Mississippi Valley and the Chihuahuan Desert produced similar outcomes through dissimilar settings.⁹

We should pause here to take stock of the literature so far, because the progression from White to Brooks to Deeds to DuVal is crucial: White provided a model of cooperative meaning-making that redefined European power as European agency, while it simultaneously elevated Native resistance to Native agency; Brooks counterposed another cooperative model, although it was steeped in violence and alienation; through rituals of captive-exchange Brooks demonstrated that we should search out social constructions in even the unlikeliest of places. Both White and Brooks furthered our ability to imagine the imperial period as something other than outright domination by Europeans, but Deeds and DuVal's monographs took this revision one step further by arguing that indigenes frequently appear in positions of power, while Europeans appear with no more than agency. Fifteen years after *The Middle Ground*, it became possible to conceive that Native peoples could subvert empire and force colonists to serve a political economy that was more Native than European.

⁹ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

The idea that Native societies could co-opt empire nearly completed the shift towards a borderlands ideology that inverted the traditional roles built into histories of imperialism and colonialism, but some historians questioned whether it was possible to go one step farther, and find indigenous imperialism that existed apart from European formations. Ned Blackhawk's *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* demonstrates the shift of analytical focus to indigenous imperialism and the violence that accompanied it. For Blackhawk, Utes stand out in the Great Basin as a critical example of an indigenous group performing the violence of empire on neighboring indigenes—namely, Paiutes and Shoshones—long before the Spanish themselves came to the Basin. Blackhawk's work aligns with DuVal's in that both analyses deconstruct the binary of Natives-as-colonized and Europeans-as-colonizers, but both also demonstrate that indigenous societies often perpetrated imperial violence against other indigenous societies. In this way, *Violence Over the Land* uncovers another layer of fracturing within the dissimilitude of Native America. Ideologically, we see in DuVal, and more so in Blackhawk, that the emphasis on a balanced, mutualistic borderlands as outlined in *The Middle Ground* began to transform back into a study of empires and frontiers, although ones that were Native-produced or Native-dominated rather than European-dominated.¹⁰

Hämäläinen pushed this shift towards indigenous imperial power farther still with his model of 'reversed colonialism,' found in his monograph *The Comanche Empire*, and through two of his articles: "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures" and "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power

¹⁰ Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

in the Southwest Borderlands.” Hämäläinen tracks the stunning rise and eventual decline of Comanchería, the territory of Comanche power that was located throughout the Arkansas River Valley in the southern Great Plains from the time just before contact with the Spanish in 1706 until their demise in the 1870s. Hämäläinen’s scholarship weaves analysis of plains horse culture with a close study of the mammoth trade-empire of animals and captives that Comanches controlled. The facticity of Spanish empire is not disputed, but Hämäläinen argues persuasively that, in revision to Brooks, the Southwest was more than a borderlands of violent community: it was also an indigenous reverse-frontier. Blackhawk and Hämäläinen’s ideas are linked in that both analyses find that the basis for indigenous power, even empire, rested with the co-option of imperial tools and their successful deployment against weaker neighbors. New Mexico may have been a borderlands owing to the fierce contests waged over community and political economy, but beyond the small colony of New Mexico, Blackhawk and Hämäläinen’s borderlands look more like frontiers that were constructed and performed by a select few indigenous groups.¹¹

Building on White, DuVal, and Hämäläinen is Michael Witgen’s *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America*. This monograph charts the ways that Anishinaabeg peoples participated in a process of ‘mutual discovery’ with the French that allowed them to evolve a new political economy and to negotiate the challenges and opportunities of the colonial encounter. Witgen handles

¹¹ Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” *Journal of American History* 90:3 (2003): 833-862.

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67:2 (2010): 173-208.

some of the same geography and periodizations as *The Middle Ground*, but whereas the idea of the ‘middle ground’ requires that participants seek out creative cooperation as a consequence of their mutual weakness, Witgen finds that creative social and political transformation occurred within indigenous societies from positions of strength, and that indigenous social formations persisted well into the American era. In this way, *An Infinity of Nations* takes on White’s ‘middle ground,’ but folds into it DuVal’s ‘native ground’ and Hämäläinen’s ‘reverse colonialism.’ Witgen provides a model of non-violent, indigene-centric, adaptation that inscribes Native North America with the power to form meaningful spaces that were resistant to colonization for over a century. More than any other scholarship cited here, *An Infinity of Nations* describes a world where indigenous creativity had the power to devise social formations, political economies, and territorialities that, in turn, constitute a separate but equally significant process of discovery and conquest over the continent.¹²

Brian DeLay has demonstrated that the violence-laden (de)constructions of the ‘southwest borderlands’ were just as enduring and significant as those of *An Infinity of Nations*, and that they too served indigenous ends, albeit obliquely. Predating Witgen’s

¹² Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nation: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

cf. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104:3 (1999): 814-841 for the controversial idea that borderlands should be thought of as “contested boundaries between colonial domains.” Adelman and Aron posit that interactions between Europeans and Natives are “frontiers” whereas engagement between two or more European empires is required for a “borderland.” This argument has been widely criticized for its implicit dismissal of the indigenous ability to pose meaningful challenges to colonizers. Adelman and Aron fall into a teleological trap when they insist that only European empire has the agency to evoke borderlands. This argument presupposes the inevitable ascendancy of European polities and their conversion into EuroAmerican nation-states. But the scholarship of DuVal, Witgen, Hämäläinen, and Blackhawk have all rebuked this idea and demonstrated the colonial history was deeply contingent and that there were many opportunities for indigenous ascendancy. Indeed, the categorical intervention shared by these authors’ works is that Native agents often did a better job of performing the work of empire than Europeans.

work, Brian DeLay's *War of Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* takes a cue from *Captives and Cousins* and analyzes a world where mutual destruction between the Spanish, Comanches, Apaches, and Utes produced shared landscapes of ruination all across the southwest and northern Mexico. *War of a Thousand Deserts* finds that raiding and assault undid the work of colonialism and empire, and emptied the land of dwellings, churches, fields and ranches. The destabilizing effects of such ubiquitous conflict emaciated Mexico and prepared it for American invasion during the U.S.-Mexican War, where the visual evidence of decades of violence inspired racial and nationalistic prejudices in Anglo-Americans who made the mistake of thinking that the 'thousand deserts' were a reflection of Mexican backwardness and Native barbarism. *War of a Thousand Deserts* argues that the destruction built into the northern frontier of New Spain and Mexico had far-reaching consequences, only one of which was that indigenes remained at liberty well into the nineteenth century because nation-building by the United States and Mexico struggled in the borderlands. DeLay's work, chronologically, is concerned with the second half of the nineteenth century, and so it falls outside of my time frame; yet it has informed my project by posing the question: How had Natives in this region come to wield such tremendous power against Spanish imperialism by the middle of the nineteenth century, and why did complete devastation only come then, as opposed to decades or centuries earlier?¹³

To answer these questions I look to William Carter's *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750*. *Indian Alliances* tracks the mutualistic relationship that developed between Apaches and Puebloans in the Middle Rio Grande Valley

¹³ Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

previous to Spanish contact and in the century and a half afterwards. Carter argues that ideology, kinship, and environmental conditions bound Puebloans and Apaches into a common experience, and that as a result of this commonality they formed alliances that were firmly in place by the time the Spanish began to arrive in 1581. These alliances were so strong, in fact, that Carter argues that they survived the brutalities of Spanish imperialism during the seventeenth century and formed the basis for the cooperation and conspiracy that produced the 1680 revolt, among other moments. *Indian Alliances* enriches both Brooks and DeLay by suggesting that the internecine violence of captive-exchange networks and endemic raiding had roots in interdependency. Taking a cue from Witgen, we should wonder how enduring these early moments of mutualism were. *Indian Alliances* offers only hints of an answer to this question because deep analysis stops with the coming of Vargas to New Mexico (1692-1704). Although the periodization of *Indian Alliances* does not overlap substantially with *Captains and Cousins* (1710s-1880s) or *War of a Thousand Deserts* (1830s-1860s), the fact that Apaches continued to enjoy success throughout the eighteenth century begs the question: How did seventeenth century mutualism contribute to their capacities of agency and power.¹⁴

Carter's work stands as a model for how, as he puts it, historians should conceive of interdisciplinary work that bridges "perspectives of the natural and social sciences with those of the humanities into a multilayered, coherent explanation of

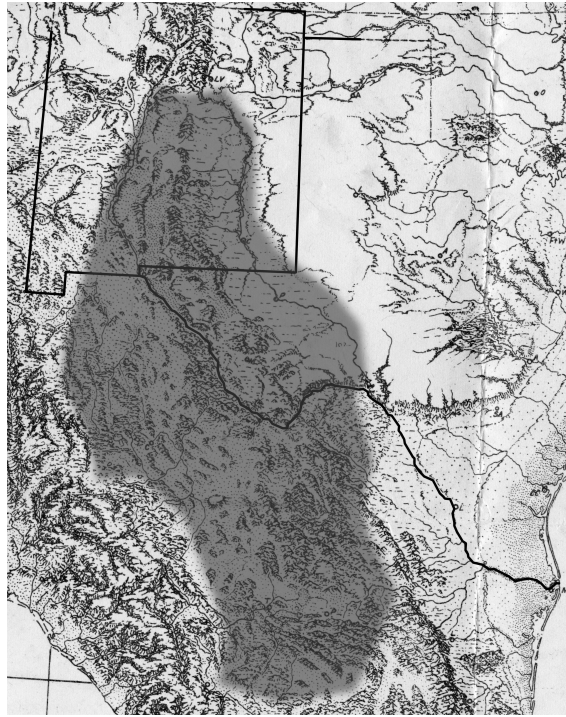
¹⁴ William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

cf. Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) for a process community-making during the seventeenth century that came about through the meeting of zealous Franciscan missionaries, lascivious soldiers, and Puebloans. The community produced was one steeped in sexual violence and gendered domination, but, Gutiérrez argues, it was unsustainable and exploded with the 1680 revolt. This argumentation of violent meaning-making predates Brooks' periodization by over 100 years.

historical events and social change over centuries.” Carter’s work, in conjunction with that of Hämäläinen’s, Witgen’s and, to a lesser extent, Anderson’s, points the way to the methodology that informs this dissertation.

Following Witgen’s example, I have found that Apaches mutually discovered their new Spanish neighbors, and ecologies that had previously been closed to them, shortly after contact. During the seventeenth century, just after co-opting the horse, these Apaches perpetrated tremendous violence in ways that were similar to *Violence Over the Land*. Soon, however, these same Apaches revealed themselves to be geopolitically sophisticated and the degree and intensity of destruction diminished. As often as they could, and in many different places, these Apaches also constructed shared meaning and forged cooperation, in the spirit of ‘middle ground.’ They were obliged to do so for environmental reasons. Although the ecological landscapes of the northern Chihuahuan Desert were fecund spaces for nomadic peoples who functioned in small social units, the desert was not an environment that encouraged exercises of domination on par with that of the Comanche in the southern Plains. The protean character of the environment and its historical role deserves more of our attention. The next step to understanding the

historiographical underpinnings of this dissertation requires that we take a brief tour of the *study of environmental history* as it relates to the history of empire.¹⁵



Map 2: The Chihuahuan Desert.

¹⁵ For an introduction to the field, its concerns, methods, and problems, v. William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78:4 (March 1992): 1347–76; William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Environmental History* 1:1 (January 1996): 7–28; Paul Sutter, “The World with Us: The State of American Environmental History,” *Journal of American History* 100:1 (June 2013): 94–119; Richard White, “American Environmental History: The Development of a New Historical Field,” *Pacific Historical Review* 54:3 (August 1985): 297–335; Richard White, “Environmental History, Ecology, and Meaning,” *The Journal of American History* 76:4 (March 1990): 1111–16.

For other works that treat on the subject of the American West, Southwest, or Indian history, v. Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, Studies in Environment and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); William Eno DeBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920*, Studies in Environment and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1999); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.¹⁶

William Cronon's *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* popularized environmental history in ways that have reverberated through my project. Cronon questioned the causes behind shifts in the landscapes of New England, as well as the displacement of indigenous cultures, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. He delivered his analysis by means of an interdisciplinary methodology that joined archival research with environmental science. *Changes in the Land* finds that Indians and colonists formed different reciprocal relationships with the land that, in turn, returned different yields. Indigenous produced "edge" habitats—spaces that were neither one type of landscape or another, but a hybrid—through controlled burns that encouraged the flora and fauna of both forests and fields. New England indigenous used these spaces to hunt and forage in common with one another, sharing the land and working to maintain its future viability. Colonists, on the other hand, commodified the terrain as private property and assimilated it into the colonial market economy. In the process they rapidly destroyed those same edge habitats because they were easy targets for logging, hunting, and deforestation in the creation of agricultural fields. Cronon makes many interventions, but the one most relevant to my work is that indigenous actors did not exist in total equilibrium with the landscape. Before, during, and after the colonial encounter Natives continued to participate with ecology in ways that often had unforeseen consequences. The manufactured landscapes of "edges" are

¹⁶ This description of the area of the Chihuahuan Desert comes from David J. Morafka, "An Interdisciplinary Definition of North America's Chihuahuan Desert: Is It Desirable and Obtainable?" *Yearbook, Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers* 15 (1989): 23-24.

v. also Esteban H. Muldavin, "Some Floristic Characteristics of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert: A Search for its Northern Boundary," *Taxon* 51:3 (2002): 453-462 for additional evidence supporting the assertion that the Chihuahuan Desert extended into the area of colonial era New Mexico.

demonstration enough of that fact. And while the notion of an indigenous-ecological dialectic now seems like a commonplace idea, the ascendancy of that idea into a prominent position within the historiography has its roots in *Changes in the Land*.¹⁷

Monographs like Cynthia Radding's *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* and Pekka Hämäläinen's *The Comanche Empire* have taken up Cronon's call and have written the environment into historical analysis. *Wandering Peoples* questions the mediative role of the environment in colonialism and extends it to the Native Sonoran-Spanish interchange. Radding's thesis concerns "the persistence of indigenous peasant nations in Sonora during the transition from the Spanish Imperium to the Mexican Republic." In order to execute here analysis, Radding deploys a concept that she calls *social ecology*: the "complex of relations that developed historically among diverse human populations and with the land they occupied..." Radding builds on Cronon by emphasizing that Sonorans' engagement with their landscapes was itself a demonstration of agency that ultimately afforded them the means to persist. But *Wandering Peoples* also builds beyond *Changes in the Land* by looking to *The Middle Ground*, and finding that Native Sonorans, for a while, negotiated the colonial encounter through creative meaning-

¹⁷ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

v. William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82:3 (1992): 369-385 for the extension of this idea to the entire North American continent. Whereas Cronon argues that the colonial market economy changed the land and, in many ways, degraded its diversity, Denevan takes the argument one step further. "The Pristine Myth" speculates that North America at 1492 was a vast collection of landscapes that had been heavily modified by tens of millions of indigenous actors who all farmed, hunted, and collected. But epidemic disease, imperial violence, and new economies all had the effect of undoing the work of the previous centuries so that, by 1750, European imperialism had actually produced more of a 'wilderness' than was present in 1492.

making within the spaces of Spanish missions, effectively counter-claiming Spanish institutions for their own ends.¹⁸

The environmental component of *Wandering Peoples*—“social ecology”—is more *social* than *ecology*, however, and Radding does not draw as heavily on the toolbox of the environmental scientist as Cronon does. Whereas the physical landscape played almost no role in *The Middle Ground*, it headlined in *Changes in the Land* before retreating to the backstage in *Wandering Peoples*. Still, Radding’s notion of agency and resistance as a product of the environment opened the door to the analyses that would appear in Deeds, DuVal, and Witgen. Radding made it possible to imagine that Native societies could continue to use the landscapes around them to negotiate and, sometimes, prevail against the forces of market economies and religious acculturation.

Hämäläinen’s *Comanche Empire*, as already discussed, has taken the idea of Native empowerment-through-environment the farthest. *Comanche Empire* is unlike *Native Ground* or *Infinity of Nations*, however, because Hämäläinen assigns much more agency to the *land itself*. For DuVal and Witgen, the environmental component of indigenous power rests more with the geographical position of colonial encounter, rather than with the physical engagement *with* landscapes as a function of that encounter. In some ways, the success of Anishinaabegs and Mississippi Valley Natives rests with fact that they were located far from the prominences of European empire, like Montreal or Paris, leaving them free from the constraints of the Atlantic World. Hämäläinen too

¹⁸ Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997): 3. The intellectual underpinning of Deeds’ ‘mediated opportunism’ come from Radding’s ‘social ecology’ and its insistence that indigenous agency influenced outcomes, and that that agency was intimately tied to the relationship with the environment.

recognizes the importance of the physical distance between Comanchería and Mexico City. Much of the reason why Comanche political economy so often trumped that of the Spanish was because Comanches could offer (or force) an eastward plains-based economy upon New Mexico more easily than New Spain could mandate a southward facing imperial economy. Hämäläinen builds on Radding and Deeds by blending ‘social ecology’ with ‘mediated opportunism’ as a way to characterize the origins of Comanches’ prairie-based empire. At the same time, he also answers Cronon’s call to use environmental science as a tool to understand *how* indigenes engaged their ecosystems in ways that brought surprising benefits and consequences.

Hämäläinen accomplishes this by tracking the ecological consequences brought by Comanche horse culture over the grasslands of the Great Plains. The ‘reverse colonialism’ that Comanchería performed came as a direct result of the explosion of ungulate populations over the Great Plains. Horses were capable of evolving mobilities, leveling the battlefield, and conferring vast wealth upon those who owned them. Comanches instantly realized their value as symbols of wealth, as instruments of defense and attack, and as valuable trade commodities. But, unaware of the carrying capacity of the plains, Comanches grew their herds over the eighteenth century until they became unsustainable during periods of extended drought, when there was too much competition between horses and bison for the same pastures. Horses were both the means of Comanchería’s ascendancy and one of the ultimate causes of its decline. Hämäläinen’s “Politics of Grass” makes this case most clearly, and demonstrates as Cronon first did 25 years earlier that landscapes changed, sometimes slowly, sometimes dramatically, in response to indigenous choices. The tools of empire allowed

Native societies to reimagine the relationship with their habitats in radical new ways. Sometimes, as in the case of Comanches, the strategies they adopted proved unsustainable over time.¹⁹

Some critics might think that the strong role of the environment within analyses such as Hämäläinen's, or mine, verges on *environmental determinism*—the theory that environment dictates the character, state, and success of differently located societies. The care taken in recent scholarship, however, to acknowledge ethnographic profiles, to account for multiple choices, and to trace environmental-societal dialectics deflects this criticism. “Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want” avoids the pitfall of environmental determinism by understanding the colonial encounter as a series of moments that were full of experimentation, accidents, and surprises. And while I deploy ecological categories and processes to help delineate the world in which actors performed, these factors only ever serve to frame the scope of possibility, rather than to determine outcomes. In this formulation I am following in the footsteps of Deeds' ‘mediated opportunism,’ Radding's ‘social ecology,’ and White's ‘middle ground’ in a sense that blends cultural creation with ecology.²⁰

¹⁹ Hämäläinen (2010), 193-196.

²⁰ v. Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995): 16-17 for an insightful critique of environmental history that warns scholars from “creating an elaborate metaphor that assimilates the social to the natural.”

Richard York and Philip Mancus, “Critical Human Ecology: Historical Materialism and Natural Laws,” *Sociological Theory* 27:2 (2009): 122-149; James Malin, *History and Ecology: Studies of the Grasslands*, Robert Swierenga, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) for the idea that ‘critical human ecology’ should embrace the notion of human choice as delimited by biological and ecological context. v. also Dan Flores, “Place: An Argument for Bioregional History” *Environmental History Review* 18:4 (1994): 1-18 for scholarship that embraces environmental history with the trouble of determinism in mind.

For examples of famous work that exhibit environmental determinism, v. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1931); & Ross Calvin, *Sky Determines* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948 [1934]).

“Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want” is an environmental history of the Chihuahuan Desert and the significance of its landscapes *as reflected by* its usage and inhabitation by Faraon, Natagé, and Mescalero Apaches. I have studied hydrological systems of rivers, the paleoclimatology of both broad regions and micro-ecosystems, and the physical responsive characteristics of certain flora. This orientation towards the hard data of environmental science puts me in direct dialogue with *Changes in the Land, Wandering Peoples*, and *The Comanche Empire*. Just as these works trace the creative possibilities inherent to the protean relationship between indigenes and the environment, I too have measured and analyzed the practices and strategies of Apaches within the Chihuahuan Desert as a demonstration of their ability to survive and thrive during the age of colonial encounter. I draw upon the mutualistic tendencies of *The Middle Ground and The Indian Southwest* while simultaneously acknowledging that violence was often the primary meeting ground, as demonstrated in *Captives and Cousins* and *Violence Over the Land*.

My analysis suggests that Apaches were remarkably creative and that they adapted to the opportunities and challenges of colonial encounter more quickly, and more successfully than many other groups, the Spanish included. As such, I have read a high degree of plasticity into their culture. Unlike the Spanish, who adapted to the challenges posed by indigenous ethnicities slowly and only with authorization from the administrative authorities in Mexico City or Madrid, Apache practices indicate that they evolved their mobilities, economies, and subsistence practices constantly, and in the process reinvented themselves as a people who had the power to exploit the most

glaring shortcomings of European empire. It is because of the plasticity and adaptability that I have attributed the Apache experience that I de-emphasize ethnographic argumentation in favor of economic, game theoretic argumentation.²¹

Ethnographic theory implies a certain level of cultural stasis, and as such that theory struggles to coexist with the degree of plasticity that I read into Apache culture. One of the central thrusts of my argument is that Apaches were as successful as they were because they were able, socially and economically, to modify and evolve themselves in ways that defied expectation or prediction. By the time that ethnographic data was being collected for Mescaleros many of the processes I will trace had already resolved into established cultural features. One of the core aims of “Deserts of Plenty,

²¹ Ethnography and its historical counterpart, ethnohistory, have been conceived by anthropologists and historians as a way to assign cultural motivation and markers to peoples of the past who did not leave evidence of their cultures. Typically, historians ‘up-stream’ in order to include ethnographic research into their narratives. Up-streaming is the process of taking information that describes a culture from a later period, and reading it ‘up’ and back in time in order to ascribe socio-political characteristics and motivations to groups who left no contemporaneous data in the primary record. Writers of Native histories understand that there is an inherent risk to this practice because it implies that indigenous cultures are somehow static enough that they can be read as so many equivalencies over a huge breadth of time. Of course, scholars know that this is not true, and so they take great care to mediate the inferences of ethnographic data with the circumstantial context within which distant Native cultures existed. Wonderful work has been done with ethnographic up-streaming—it figures strongly into virtually every work that I have discussed—and it holds a prominent place in the methodologies of the literature that brings to life the rich cultural worlds of Comanches, Anishinaabegs, Utes, and the many bands of Nueva Vizcaya.

An additional problem is that the ethnographic data for Mescalero Apaches (who were descended from Faraon and Natagé cultures) is dated. Much of the data is cursory, broad, nonspecific, or too clearly rooted in the post-American reservation period, when the geographical scope of Mescalero homeland was greatly decreased to a few specific landscapes in New Mexico.

For the best examples ethnographic data on Chihuahuan Desert Apaches, v. Albert H. Schroeder, *A Study of the Apache Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974); Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974); Morris E. Opler, “Mescalero Apache” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983).

The idea of ‘upstreaming’ was coined in William Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830, Needs & Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957). For criticisms and cautions about the use of upstreaming, v. William Fenton, “Ethnohistory and its Problems” *Ethnohistory* 9:1 (1962): 1-23; William Sturtevant, “Anthropology, History, and Ethnohistory,” *Ethnohistory* 13:½ (1966): 1-51; & James Axtell, “Ethnohistory: An Historian’s Viewpoint,” *Ethnohistory* 26:1 (1979): 1-13. cf. John R. Wunder, “Native American History, Ethnohistory, and Context,” *Ethnohistory* 54:4 (2007): 591-604 for a current perspective that argues for the essential place of ethnography within the study of history of Native America.

Rivers of Want” is to uncover the origins of adaptive behaviors and to characterize the contingent nature of their development. In order to do so, I have devised a different sort of interdisciplinary methodology for this project that capitalizes on the notion of social evolution. There are three elements: archival research, environmental science, and economic theories regarding games and competition (game theory). I propose that the colonial encounter was composed of a *series of encounters* where creative misunderstanding and mutual discovery produced geopolitical structures, or *conventions*, that were more often than not Native-produced. As such, game theory is an excellent interpretive and analytical framework with which I can narrate and assess the efficiencies and successes of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, this methodology allows me to ‘level the field’ and to treat Apaches as players (or agents) that were every bit as sophisticated as the Spanish because game theory is concerned with outcomes, results, and the countervailing *cost of competition*, and not with the specific motivations of players (or agents). I denude the Spanish of assumed political sophistication merely because of their centralized governance and landed institutions. I find, in the same vein as DuVal and Witgen, that indigenous structures were surprisingly equivalent, if not superior to, European structures.

This application of game theory does not take the place of ethnography. I draw upon ethnographic scholarship throughout the dissertation, wherever I feel it becomes vital as generalized cultural context to round out the core arguments that are informed by primary documentation, environmental science, and game theory. Of course, game theory applied to history, like ethnographic upstreaming, is not without problems. Game theory is a product of twentieth century economic analysis; more specifically, from the

study of competition and payoffs that has occurred within the context of market capitalism, and the contest between capitalism and communism in the postwar world. As such, I have taken great care when applying game theory so that I do not embed modern occidental culture into the indigenous cultures of the past.

The literature of game theory that informs my dissertation includes four monographs. Each monograph represents a prominent node of the theory that is extrapolated upon in numerous articles and books that also find their way into my analysis. A compelling feature of all these monographs is that they already feature into the literature of empire and Native North America discussed above. For decades historians have been using constructs and theories borrowed from anthropology that are nearly identical to those of game theory. With game theory, however, I have the opportunity to address a different set of gaps in the primary record.

John Maynard Smith's *Evolution and the Theory of Games* questions how fields like "contest behavior and reciprocal altruism have contributed to what [was then] emerging as a universal way of thinking about phenotypic evolution." By phenotypic evolution, Smith is talking about the observable characteristics that come from organisms competing and profiting from a series of contests. The Dove-Hawk game best typifies how Smith approaches the question of contest. In this model, players approach a contest over a resource and, at its simplest, behave in one of two ways, as a 'hawk' that will fight for the object of the contest until the resource is won or the player is dead, or as a 'dove' a player who will lay claim to the resource, but who will then abandon it at the first sign of conflict. Depending on the worth of the resource and the cost of conflict (in terms of injury, death, damaged material, lost time) Smith comes up

with elaborate matrices that pick apart the utility and efficiency of different strategies. Within these matrices adjustments are made to account for asymmetries within contests, such as whether or not a player is the current owner of the resource, if a player bluffs, bargains, or changes strategies in the middle of play. All of these behaviors modify the worth of the resource and adjust the cost of conflict. Although competition had not been described in these terms before, the idea of games and phenotypic evolution appear throughout the literature on Empire and Native North America. Specifically, the arguments of *Wandering Peoples* and *The Comanche Empire* depend on the ability to demonstrate that, over repeated encounters and contests over resources such as labor, land, or horses, Sonorans and Comanches were deliberate when they engaged the Spanish, and that their strategies were built around manipulating the colonial moment so that they could extract as much benefit from a costly encounter as possible. The same holds true for the Chihuahuan Desert. That ecology was always marginal, and because there were not enough resources to adequately enrich every group, a series of competitions ensued. The colonial encounter was the *experimentation* of encounter and the *development* of strategies.²²

The Comanche Empire tacitly makes use of another hallmark of game theory that features in “Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want.” Thomas Schelling’s *The Strategy of Conflict* is a product of Cold War diplomacy. Schelling was concerned with how to treat with the Soviet Union at a time when it was already known that outright, unrestrained (nuclear) warfare would annihilate every player. Schelling’s strategy of conflict, then, “is not concerned with the efficient application of force but with the *exploitation of potential*

²² John Maynard Smith, *Evolution and the Theory of Games* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982): vii.

force. ... To study the strategy of conflict is to take the view that most conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations.” *The Strategy of Conflict* balances the high cost of conflict with the ways that players attenuate the amount of risk to which they are exposed. Like Smith, Schelling then wonders at the efficiency and utility of different strategies of conflict-avoidance. *The Comanche Empire* features elements of this game theoretic approach across numerous episodes. For example, Hämäläinen describes the calamity that befell Comanches in 1779 when a leader of theirs, Cuerno Verde, died in battle against the Spanish, and when, a year later, a smallpox epidemic ravaged the continent. Responding to this situation, Hämäläinen writes, “Comanches finally began to reassess their policies toward the Spaniards” and signaling their willingness to *bargain*. During episodes such as this one, Comanches were forced to acknowledge that they were vulnerable to total defeat, that total war could translate in their destruction, and that conflict was an unacceptable risk. I will later argue that Apaches likewise engaged in conflict-bargaining after Vargas retook New Mexico in 1692 and it became apparent that, although the Spanish and Apaches could do tremendous damage to one another, neither side could wholly prevail. In response to that intelligence, Apaches adopted a strategy of negotiation and threats that I will call ‘symbiotic bellicosity.’²³

Robert Axelrod’s *The Evolution of Cooperation* furthers the inquiry posited in Schelling and Smith by asking: When “should a person cooperate, and when should a person be selfish, in an ongoing interaction with another person?” Axelrod takes as his assumed context that players are not cooperative, and that there is no central authority

²³ Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 5 (emphasis mine).

Hämäläinen (2008), 110-111.

to compel mutualism; circumstances that match the colonial encounter. Ultimately, Axelrod argues that “[w]hen the interaction is likely to continue for a long time, and the players care enough about their future together, the conditions are ripe for the emergence and maintenance of cooperation” in the form of reciprocity. *Evolution of Cooperation* finds that when there is a even just a slight material advantage to limited cooperation the players will choose to cooperate rather than pay the high cost of violence, where one player *might* prevail, but at a cost that nullifies the worth of the resource. Consequently, cooperation emerges out of experimentation between threat and cooperation. This idea is not only present in White and Witgen’s monographs, but it is crucial. Within the Great Lakes region the tropes of mutualism and reciprocity loom large, and go directly to the assessment by indigenous actors, as well as Europeans, that within the violence and the uncertainty of the colonial encounter it was often materially advantageous to cooperate. By better understanding the process that leads to reciprocity and cooperation, we can better understand the moments of vulnerability and confidence that colored indigenous choices of strategy.²⁴

Finally, Robert Sugden’s *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare* expands on the theory of cooperation, and the manner in which social routines (or, conventions) arise in a state of anarchy. Taking a cue from Schelling, Sugden expands on the idea of ‘prominence’—the idea that in a sequence of games a certain feature or specific location might take on meaning and influence the outcomes of future games. In this way, prominences set a precedence of the outcome in certain games, and compel players of those games to replicate previous strategies. When this happens

²⁴ Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984): vii, 182.

'conventions' develop and that particular game (marked by its prominences) tend to play out the same way over and over until a new prominence emerges that alters the efficacy of the original convention. Asymmetries, as a measure of competitive advantage over other players, are critical as the means by which one player can tacitly coerce other players into participating in a convention, despite the fact that the profits accruing to the coerced players are quantifiably less. This model appears, in ethnographic guise, throughout the works of White, Brooks, DuVal, and Witgen, among others. Most pointedly, we see it in Brooks' monograph. In *Captives and Cousins* the practice of captive-exchange became a ritual (a convention) as a byproduct of cycles of conflicts (game series) that were rooted in violence, domination, and power (asymmetries). The linked ideas of 'conventions' and 'prominences' build on the literature of game theoretics; these categories contribute to an analytical framework that allows me to articulate Apache geopolitical structures, and to describe them in terms of efficiencies and payoffs relative to those of the Spanish and of indigenous neighbors.²⁵

Chapter one analyzes the riparian empire the Spanish built around the Middle Rio Grande Valley and its epistemological origins; the asymmetries woven into the fabric of the colony that exposed New Mexico to the hazards of climate; and the exploitation of those asymmetries by Apaches who, within the first decade of the seventeenth century, seized the tools of empire and began counter-claiming the region. Contrary to the dominant trends of colonial New Mexico historiography, the troubles of

²⁵ Robert Sugden, *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 33, 51.
Brooks, 7.

the colony were not limited to Puebloan-Spanish tension over labor, culture, and power, nor to animosity between secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Rather, the declension of New Mexico to the revolt of 1680 had much to do with the forming indigenous territoriality that would be known as *Apachería*, and the colonial and imperial overtones that it carried.

Chapter two examines the period of the Spanish interregnum, that 12 year period between Spanish expulsion from New Mexico in 1680 until their restoration to the Middle Rio Grande Valley in 1692. These twelve years typically drop out of historiographical chronology because the Middle Rio Grande Valley remains the primary analytical focus—despite the fact the the Spanish, and the colonial encounter, shift southward by about 300 miles. But if we accept that New Mexico was a socio-imperial construct that was incongruent with the geopolitical and ecological reality of the larger ecoregion, we allow ourselves the ability to move south with the Spanish and, more to the point, with the Faraon Apaches who followed and surrounded them. This period was something akin to an Apache-produced *reconquista*, both of New Mexico as well as the lands that led up to the very borders of Nueva Vizcaya, an interior province of New Mexico. “Deserts of Plenty, Rivers of Want” examines the Spanish experience at El Paso del Norte as a reflection of the expanding counter-territoriality of *Apachería*.

Chapter three proposes that Faraones after 1692 learned that it was next to impossible to annihilate the Spanish completely from the Middle Rio Grande Valley, as evidenced by the revolts and conspiracies of the previous twelve years. But in their failure to exterminate them, Faraones realized that regular, persistent attacks on the Spanish yielded payoffs nonetheless. These Apaches used this knowledge to develop a

set of strategies for engaging the Spanish in productive conflict; I call this set of strategies 'symbiotic bellicosity' and explore its functionality as a convention that provided benefits to both the Spanish and Faraones, but with a distinct advantage going to Faraones. At the same time, I question why Faraones and Jicarillas, their ethnic kin, experienced this period so differently. I propose that the invasion of the Trans-Pecos by Faraones diversified the kinds of eco-economies that those Apaches could imagine, and conferred upon them a degree of elasticity that went far beyond that of Jicarillas.

Chapter four analyzes the intersection of Faraon Apaches with the Trans-Pecos and La Junta de los Ríos regions of the Chihuahuan Desert, from 1683 until 1748. During this time Faraones reinvented themselves, and became known by the Spanish as Natagés and Mescaleros. Whereas the previous three chapters analyzed the interface between Apaches, the Spanish, and certain indigenous groups, this chapter considers what the interior of Apachería may have looked like through a close analysis of river hydrology, xeric flora, and the conversion of agricultural centers into grain resource depots. The rapid and efficient adaptation of plains Faraones to the ecological profile of the Chihuahuan Desert represents the emergence of far-flung ecological economy that provided the means for Apachería to challenge New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya economically and geopolitically.

Chapter five charts the expansion and denouement of Apachería south into the Bolsón de Mapimí, a central region of the Chihuahuan Desert that bordered Nueva Vizcaya, Coahuila, and the provinces immediately north of the heart of New Spain. With this surge southward, Mescaleros further counter-invaded New Spain and continued to develop shunned space into fecund habitats that doubled as a passive weapon against

Spanish empire. Within the massive Bolsón, Apaches transformed Apachería into a counter-territoriality of immense size—a space of scattered resources populated by relatively few people. At this time Apachería climaxed geographically, and it bridged the Bolsón de Mapimí and the Trans-Pecos. From myriad hidden havens and *ranchería* sites Mescaleros relentlessly converted yet more Spanish fields and ranches into Apache grain and livestock depots. During this period Apaches seemed poised to complete the reversal of directionalities that had inscribed power and empire over the land. They nearly succeeded in pushing south far enough to install indigenous territoriality on the very doorstep of Mexico City. Had they accomplished this feat, Mescaleros would have found themselves in control of a broad north-south corridor that cut across North America through the landscapes of the Chihuahuan Desert. I question the imperialistic tone of Apachería as a space of domination during this time, and renew questions about the ecological underpinnings that made it possible.

The epilogical conclusion examines the geopolitical decline of Apachería as a counter-territoriality at the same time that the landscapes of the Chihuahuan Desert were desiccated by drought and scorched by violence. I question to what extent Apachería, predicated since its inception on marginal ecologies, finally reaped the consequences of almost 200 years of intensive exploration and experimentation that colonial tools such as horses and intensive agriculture had made possible. I also question how the meteoric rise of Comanchería affected Apachería. With the sacking of San Sabá in 1758 Lipan and Natagé Apaches crowded south and west, spilling over into the Chihuahuan Desert, where they overloaded the fragile ecosystems of the Trans-Pecos and Bolsón de Mapimí. My final questions concern the ecological means by

which Apaches survived their most daunting challenge to date: the desertification of the Chihuahuan Desert.

Chapter 1

Discovery: Riparian Empire in the Chihuahuan Desert; Ecological Asymmetries around New Mexico

On August 10, 1680, pueblos across New Mexico erupted in rebellion. In unison, rebel Puebloans surprised and slaughtered 422 Spanish colonists and Franciscan friars. The remaining 1,946 colonists, friars, allied Puebloans, and slaves were subsequently hounded southward out of the province, towards a backwater settlement called El Paso del Norte. Fifteen months after this humiliation at the hands of the very people he was tasked with ‘civilizing,’ the deposed governor of New Mexico, Antonio de Otermín, decided that it was time to retake the derelict colony for the Viceroy of New Spain and the Spanish King. He had spent months in his refugee barracks composing letters, petitions, and investigative reports. His persistence paid off, and he had convinced the *fiscal* (royal attorney to the viceroy) and the exchequer to release enough cash to allow him to purchase new guns and supplies for his refugee militia. Governor Otermín set out from El Paso del Norte on November 5, 1681 with confidence, hope, and optimism. He fully intended this journey to be celebrated as an *entrada*—an expedition of colonial discovery and of imperial dominance. He might have imagined that he was following in the footsteps of don Juan de Oñate, that Spaniard who had founded New Mexico in

1598, and who had claimed every drop of water, every tree, and every rock north of the Rio Grande for King Philip II.¹

Events did not unfold as desired. Over the next two days and one night Otermín led 290 people and 948 animals over 32 leagues (83 miles) of some of the driest, most featureless land in the northern Chihuahuan Desert.² His aspirations for the re-conquest of New Mexico were still nothing more than wet ink on parchment when Otermín ordered his men off their horses, and insisted that they scrounge the desert floor for puddles of precious water. For days the Spanish and Puebloan auxiliaries wandered across the northern Chihuahuan Desert and scavenged for moisture. Only once, around a place called Perrillo, did they come back with something potable for both humans and animals. The Spanish, literally and figuratively, were on their knees and in over their heads. They were far from the nourishing Rio Grande and its tributaries, and they were entering a landscape that they neither understood geopolitically, nor appreciated ecologically. Since they had set out, the Spanish had encountered large fires that had been set all across the landscape, presumably by Apaches, as a notice to other indigenes that the Spanish were coming, and to the Spanish that they were ever being watched. Everywhere these fires burned into the horizon and everywhere they found footprints and horse tracks. In addition to the cold and thirst, the fear of impending attack was visceral. The rear guard stayed vigilant, and roaming detachments of militia looked for insurgents or raiders. When, eventually, Otermín came to the first pueblos of

¹ Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991): 133-135.

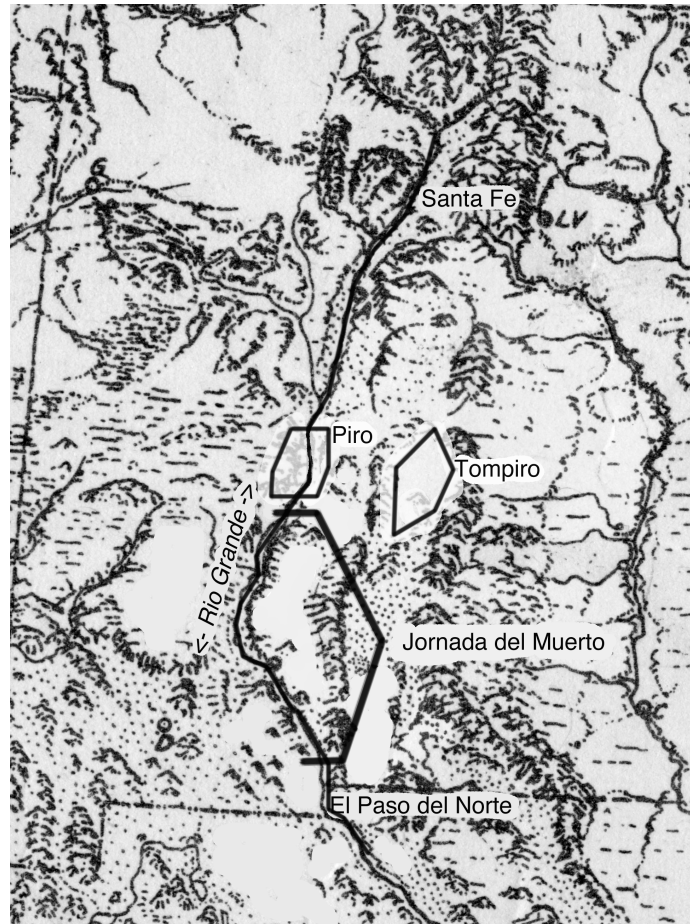
² A league was a unit of measurement equivalent to about 2.6 miles.

the Middle Rio Grande Valley—over which New Mexico as a colony had existed—the situation did not improve.³

Otermín traveled the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, the royal road that came from Nueva Vizcaya (the province to the south) and passed north towards Santa Fe. But he had just traveled a portion of that road known as the Jornada del Muerto (“Journey of Death”), so-named because of its perennial scarcity of water, lack of trees for cover or fuelwood, and its exposure to raids and attacks. The Jornada was 83 miles long, and when he finally exited it, Otermín came to the pueblos of Senecú and Socorro, the latter aptly named to mean “Succor.” He had rejoined the Rio Grande and arrived at the first places where he could expect shelter and maybe some more supplies. But Otermín discovered these two pueblos deserted and ruined, corpses strewn about. The next three and half months, from November 5 until after February 11, 1682, freezing weather, treacherous roads, starvation, ambush, and resistance greeted Otermín at nearly every pueblo as he made his way north along the Rio Grande towards Santa Fe. Ultimately, Otermín’s expedition failed; he never made it much farther than the pueblo of Isleta, about 80 miles south of Santa Fe.⁴

³ Francisco Xavier, 5 November 1681, Reporte de una salida de reconocimiento del gobernador con las compañías de guardia, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Center for Southwest Research (CSWR), University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

⁴ Francisco Xavier, 26 November 1681, Avance de las tropas hasta el pueblo de Senecú, que hallan quemado y despoblado con huellas de apaches, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.



Map 3: The Area of the Jornada del Muerto, with Surrounding Puebloan Linguistic Groupings.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Why did Otermín struggle so much in 1681, even before he had reached the first pueblos almost 100 miles away? Who lit the fires around El Paso del Norte? When revolt came in 1680, the only Puebloans who went south were those the Spanish took as refugees and auxiliaries. Who then followed Otermín, and what part, if any, did they play in the 1680 revolt? More broadly: How did the Spanish come to put themselves at such a disadvantage, and why had they not remedied their situation during the first 80 years of colony?

Within the literature of New Mexico history, this story of Otermín's failed *entrada* of 1681-1682 is only a little less treated than the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. Within scholarly monographs and articles, the revolt and the *entrada* work as analytical milestones of the trajectory of seventeenth century Spanish colonialism; they function as proofs of the abuses inherent to European empire, and of the enduring identity, agency, and resistance of Puebloan peoples. Historians have produced rich and nuanced renderings of this narrative that analyze subtle and shifting processes. Gender, sexuality, labor, ethnicity, and culture are just a few of the analytics that historians have used to illuminate New Mexico and to track how stressors like epidemic, famine, physical and cultural coercion, and bloodshed mediated the forced conjunction of Spanish and Puebloan societies. The Middle Rio Grande Valley looms large in the literature. Although it is seldom described as such, this section of river valley *was* New Mexico; nearly every pueblo, mission, and *villa* was situated upon riparian lands and dependent on river-fed irrigation. This geographical area has long been a convenient frame for analyses of New Mexico and Spanish-Puebloan dynamics.⁵

⁵ v. Ramón Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: University of California Press, 1991) for a study of gender and class drawn from the practice of marriage between the Spanish and Puebloans; John Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: the Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987) for a study of the economic abuse at the hands of the presidials, encomenderos, and settlers, combined with social and culture abuse at the hands of friars and the Inquisition, compounded with the pressures of disease, starvation, and the clear lack of coherent policy coming from the internecine relationship of the Catholic Church and the secular state; James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) for a fascinating account of captive-exchange networks and the "communities of interest" that they spawned, primarily in the headwaters and northern tributaries of the Rio Grande valley during the eighteenth century between the Spanish, Puebloans, Comanches, and Jicarilla Apaches; Andrew Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) for a revision of the seventeenth century that departs from previous scholarship to invest Puebloans with much more agency to isolate and exploit their Spanish colonizers through the use of intermarriage and by means of their superior numbers.

But the Middle Rio Grande Valley has been over-privileged; or, rather, the lands beyond the valley have been under-privileged. Histories of New Mexico and moments like the revolt and the *entrada* are tethered, analytically and geographically, to the Rio Grande, to its physical waters and banks. As an analytical category, we should understand that the Middle Rio Grande Valley by itself does not feature the depth and scope necessary to engage the many overlapping landscapes within which it was, and is, a part. True, to study Spanish New Mexico is to study the Middle Rio Grande Valley in the sense that the riparian lands were the *locus* of Spanish power in the region, but these geographical borders cannot support the complexity of the moment. Rather, Spanish New Mexico was a riparian empire that existed in context with adjoining ecoregions, such as the northern Chihuahuan Desert, the southern Rocky Mountain Steppe country, and the southern Great Plains. People from those other ecoregions also worked upon, sweated over, and bled onto the earth. Their labor and their mobilities transcended riparian empire and the river valley, and gave meaning to economies, societies, and territories. This analysis takes up the intersection of the Middle Rio Grande Valley with the northern Chihuahuan Desert, and, less so, with the southern Great Plains.

Historians of the borderlands, and historical geographers of the colonial era, have already made similar calls for this kind of argumentation. They rightly point out that the discursive and cartographical categories that the Spanish imagined, and that are implicitly written into the documents they left behind, have shaped and limited our analyses. When, in April of 1598, Juan de Oñate claimed for King Philip II everything north of (what would become known as) El Paso del Norte, he did so through the

ritualistic Act of Taking Possession. This Spanish invader of the northern Chihuahuan Desert proclaimed that the king's domain spread beyond the Rio Grande to encompass "without limitations,...the mountains, rivers, valleys, meadows, pastures, and waters...from the leaves of the trees in the forests to the stones and sands of the river, and from the stones and sands of the river to the leaves of the forest." It was an exercise in place-making that was more wishful than real. Oñate the *Adelantado* (authorized *conquistador* and prospective governor of New Mexico) was tasked with identifying and making legible a new province of New Spain that could be charted, measured, controlled, and worked. In the ensuing decades of the seventeenth century, however, the Spanish narrowed their geographical gaze. We should not do the same. Even while we acknowledge his obvious problems as an agent of empire and colonialism, we should embrace Oñate's open-ended sense of space and consider the many landscapes that stretched far beyond the Middle Rio Grande Valley. In doing so,

we will come to broader, more inclusive, and more complex critiques of the colonial encounter.⁶

A first step in the construction of this analysis is to understand the unintended linkages through which the Middle Rio Grande Valley stayed connected to neighboring ecoregions. Spanish colonialism in seventeenth century New Mexico was economically weak, geographically exposed, and ecologically dysfunctional. A close study of the late sixteenth century *entradas* into the Middle Rio Grande Valley illuminate why the Spanish honed in on the Rio Grande instead of the Pecos River, the region's other major waterway, as the exclusive site of colony. Using Puebloan settlement patterns as their guide, the Spanish shunned the nearly pueblo-less Pecos River and turned wholly to the riparian habitats of the Rio Grande. In addition, these sixteenth century *entradas*, together with the seventeenth century development of the province, delineate the asymmetries that the Spanish suffered and that upland Natives, like Apaches, enjoyed. These asymmetries manifested in three ways: 1) sedentarism along the Rio Grande

⁶ Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68 (2001): 30-31, 38.

Also see Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empire in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008); and Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 25-27 argues that the European notion of "discovery" masks what really happened: "mutual discovery." The journals, itineraries, and maps of Europeans create a discourse that was inept in describing Native social formations and the complex responses they developed to contact. Initial Spanish explorers wandered without focus or recognition about the world that existed beyond the settled, agricultural river valleys.

In this vein I am following in the footsteps of other borderlands historians who critique the idea that 'borderlands' were meeting places of peoples who negotiated and disrupted the imperial encounter, but who were ultimately powerless to halt the ultimate domination of space by European empire. v. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104:3 (1999): 814-841.

Juan de Oñate, 30 April 1581, Testimony of the taking of possession of the provinces of New Mexico by the Governor don Juan de Oñate in the name of King Philip III, Legajo 22, Parte 6, Patronato, Archivo General de Indias (AGI), CSWR.

Raymond B. Craib, "Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain," *Latin American Research Review* 35 (2000): 7.

intensified, limiting Puebloan mobility and thus their access to multiple resource sites; 2) riparian ecology was over-utilized to the point of dependence, and eventually to the point of exhaustion during drought years; and 3) dependence on irrigation tied the fortunes of New Mexico to the fickle nature of the Rio Grande's flow. When the Spanish built these asymmetries into their colonial architecture, they unwittingly left the door open to exploitation at the hands of indigenes living upland; specifically, Faraon Apaches from the southern Great Plains.⁷

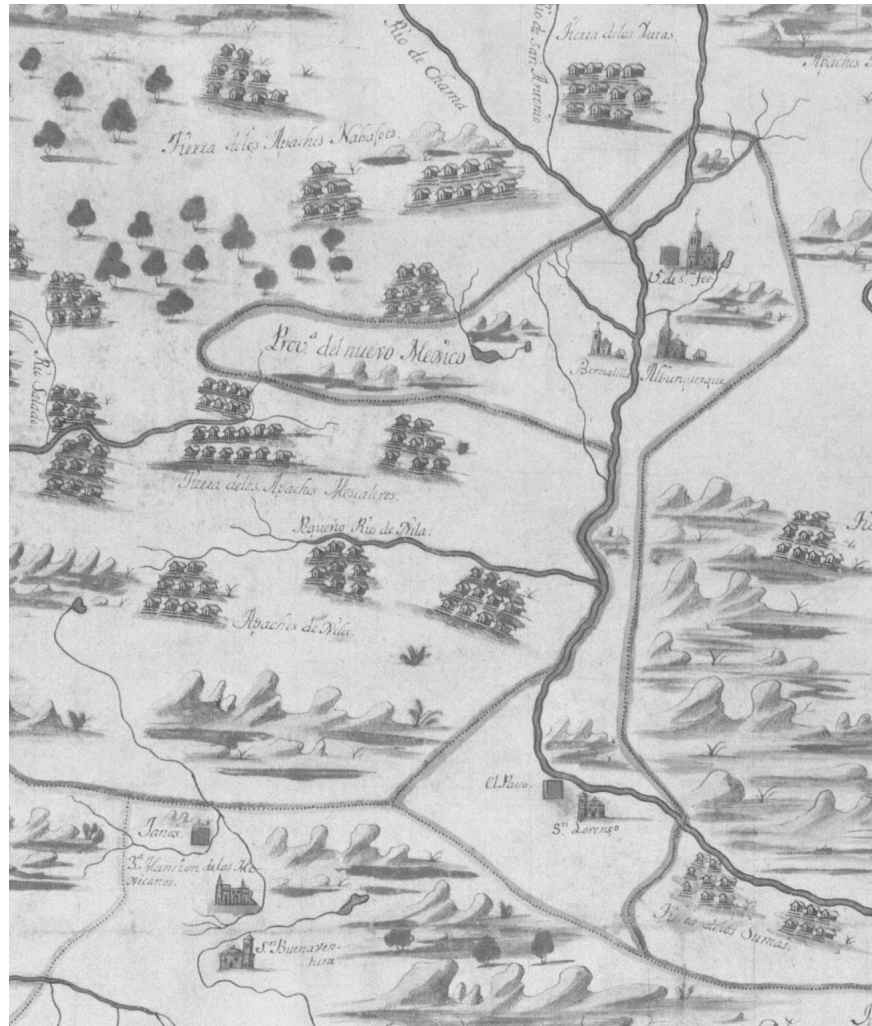
If we appreciate *how* and *what* the Spanish learned about the xeric landscapes of King Philip II's new "domain," we can better appreciate *why* the Spanish embraced certain omissions and oversights into their political knowledge base. After all, early Spanish explorers, invaders, and *conquistadores* traveled over swathes of what are today the states of New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas, but they *chose* to concentrate their attention on the Rio Grande between Senecú and Taos pueblos, along a north-south axis about 200 miles long. In addition, they also focused on two latitudinal axes that joined the Middle Rio Grande Valley to Acoma pueblo (to the west) and to Pecos pueblo (to the east); about 70 and 20 miles, respectively. The

⁷ "Faraon" does not appear in primary documentation until after 1692, but its usage here is not anachronistic. The Apaches who traded at Pecos pueblo, and who lived in the southern plains and northern desert, were almost certainly identical to the Faraones Apaches. It is possible that more detailed documentation of these peoples existed before the colony-wide revolt of 1680, but the carnage of that moment destroyed much of the archives at Santa Fe. After the Spanish re-established New Mexico in 1692, they began to pay more attention to the indigenous world around them. One of the details that they noted was that Faraon Apaches often visited Pecos, with whom they had a long-standing trade relationship.

Blood on the Boulders: the Journals of don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico, 1694-97, Vol. 1, John L. Kessell, Rick Hendricks, and Meredith D. Dodge, eds. (Albuquerque: New Mexico 1998): 218-219.

Morris E. Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and Its Origins," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, Alfonso Ortiz, ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 390.

process by which colonizers made distinctions between landscapes has everything to do with the construction of riparian empire and the asymmetries that were built into the ensuing encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples.⁸



Map 4: The Colonial Borders of New Mexico. Although this map dates from 1728, the boundaries of New Mexico had not changed. Note the close adherence to the Rio Grande, with bulb extending west to Acoma, and northeast to capture the Santa Fe River Valley and Pecos pueblo. The uplands are firmly outside of the borders of the province.

Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, "Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728" (New York, N.Y: Hispanic Society of America, 1992).

⁸ Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 11-13.

Captain Francisco Sanchez “Chamuscado” and Fray Agustin Rodriguez set out in 1581 with a small group of soldier and friars to investigate accounts of Natives who farmed and wore cotton clothing. This *entrada* was to be the first since Don Francisco Vázquez de Coronado had entered what would become New Mexico in 1540, on a treasure hunt for Cíbola, the fabled cities of gold. But his expensive failure and discouraging reports had disabused the Spanish from the idea that there was anything of worth in that land. Four decades later the Catholic Church led the way in a fresh assessment of the terrain. A flagship institution of imperialism, the church and its Catholic missionaries and missions provided cultural and political validation to the project of conquest and subjugation. From the reports that had trickled down from the Middle Rio Grande Valley, many Franciscans were excited at the prospect of proselytizing indigenes who already looked and behaved the way converted Natives should.⁹

Rodriguez and Chamuscado set out on June 6 from the mining area of Santa Bárbara in Nueva Vizcaya (near present-day Parral, Chihuahua) and went north along

⁹ Hernán Gallegos, 12 May 1602, Certified copy of the relation of the entrada made by Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado to New Mexico in June of 1581, Legajo 22, Parte 1, Patronato, AGI, CSWR.

James M. Daniel, “The Spanish Frontier in West Texas and Northern Mexico” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71 (1968): 485-486.

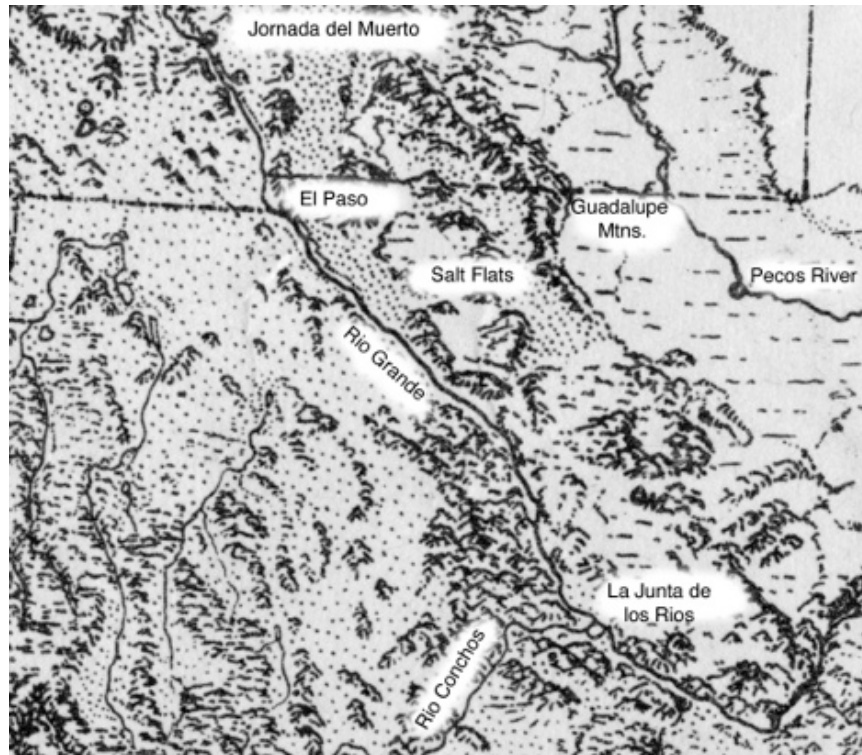
Gutiérrez, chapter 2 for the argument that 1581 to 1680 was the “Franciscan Century” in New Mexico, and that during this time Franciscan missionaries inflicted social, cultural, and sexual violence upon Puebloans through their institutions and through their religious culture of gendered domination.

v. Herbert Bolton, “The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies,” *American Historical Review* 23 (1917) & France V. Scholes, *Church and State in New Mexico, 1610-1650* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1937) for thorough, if older, syntheses of the place and character of the Catholic Church in New Mexico.

v. Herbert Bolton, *Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949); George P. Hammond, *The Adventure of Don Francisco Vasquez de Coronado* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1938); Richard Flint & Shirley Cushing Flint, eds., *The Coronado Expedition to Tierra Nueva: The 1540-1542 Route across the Southwest* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997); & Stan Hoig, *Came Men on Horses: The Conquistador Expeditions of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Don Juan de Oñate* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013) for more detail on the Coronado expeditions.

the Rio Conchos until they came to the Rio Grande, striking the confluence of the two rivers near present-day Ojinaga, Chihuahua. This confluence, important as a dependable water source in a particularly arid part of the Chihuahuan Desert, would soon become known as La Junta de los Ríos. The path from Rio Conchos to Rio Grande subsequently became a logical pathway for cautious invaders who often needed plenty of water, wood, and pasturage to support their retinues. From La Junta the Spanish continued north along the banks of the Rio Grande. Unlike Otermín, they avoided the waterless plain that would earn the moniker 'Jornada del Muerto,' but they struggled greatly to find a pass for their mules and carts through the sierras of Caballos and Fra Cristobal. Eventually, Rodriguez-Chamuscado emerged from the Fra Cristobal Mountains, the river opened up before them, and they were astonished to see 20 or so pueblos belonging to Piro Puebloans. It was August 21, and they had been traveling for ten weeks so far (a slow pace). With their supplies running low, they pressed on northward until they found more pueblos, this time of Tiwa Puebloans. The rumors had been true. Rodriguez and Chamuscado everywhere saw people tending crops and emerging from their impressive, multi-story pueblos. Eventually they noted pueblos and peoples like this all over the Rio Grande Valley.¹⁰

¹⁰ Hernán Gallegos, 12 May 1602, Legajo 22, Parte 1, Patronato



Map 5: The Path Down the Rio Conchos to La Junta de los Ríos, and up the Rio Grande.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Just south of the place that would become Santa Fe in thirty years, Rodriguez and Chamuscado heard telling news from Puebloans in the Galisteo Valley. Not far to the east there reportedly lived more people who were aggressive, and who lived by moving regularly across the landscape without any permanent abodes or structures. Galisteo Puebloans reported that these bellicose Native hunted the countless 'shaggy cows' (bison) for their sustenance, and enjoyed bountiful water. This news piqued the curiosity of the Spanish, and they soon departed for their first experience of the southern Great Plains, on September 28. Over the course of 9 days they wandered over 25 leagues (65 miles), but they encountered nothing consistent with what their Puebloan informants had indicated—no abundant water, no rich grass, and no bison. In

fact, during those 9 days the expedition diarist only noted finding adequate water three times. In addition, the Spanish they also found and drank from sporadic depressions of pooled, alkaline rainwater that seemed barely potable to the invaders. Once they struck of river of “brackish water” that they named the Rio Santo Domingo. Given their heading and the distance they had traveled, this was likely the Pecos River. These scattered and wanting sources of water were just enough to keep the men and the horses alive. By the time they returned to the pueblos on the Rio Grande the fear that they might have perished for lack of water was palpable within the journal.¹¹

If the Rodriguez-Chamuscado *entrada* had not yet convinced these European interlopers to tether themselves to the Rio Grande before, then their harrowing experience with dehydration and aimlessness beyond the river valley gave them many reasons to establish that tether. They could not have known it, but when the Spanish company departed east from the Galisteo Valley they left behind the relatively fecund riparian lands of the Middle Rio Grande Valley; soon they found themselves in an arid, or xeric, landscape that featured characteristics of both the southern Great Plains and the northern Chihuahuan Desert. This space of ecological overlap—an “edge” landscape—presented Rodriguez and Chamuscado with fauna they could not locate (bison) and flora that was less plentiful and edible than what they were used to in Santa Bárbara. Desert scrub covered the mesas and mountains while mixed, short-grass prairies blanketed the ground. These prairies were excellent pasturage. Desert grasses like black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie grasses like buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) meant that at least the horses and

¹¹ *ibid*

D.L. Strayer, et al., “A Classification of Ecological Boundaries,” *BioScience* 53:8 (2003): 726.

mules had plenty to eat. But where forage for ungulates was plentiful, water seemed alarmingly elusive.¹²

These Spanish also found other, sociopolitical, reasons to tether their future travel to the Rio Grande, and to shun the uplands. On the sixth day of their nine-day misadventure into the edge landscape of the desert and plains, the Spanish were traveling down the Rio Santo Domingo when a *ranchería*—a collection of portable wickiups—appeared on the horizon. Rodriguez and Chamuscado found the bellicose, nomadic people of whom the Galisteo Puebloans had spoken. These were probably Apaches, most likely Faraon, living around the Pecos River. Chamuscado led the approach towards the 40 dwellings with caution, but was soon face to face with 400 men armed with bows, arrows, and suspicion. The Spanish numbered 12, including the friars. Even though the Spanish had arquebuses with them—long-bore, flintlock shotguns that made a calamitous racket when discharged—they must have known that no amount of technical superiority would save them in a violent conflict. Through signing and gesturing, Rodriguez persuaded these Apaches to admit the Spanish to peace. It was trust misbegotten. Two days later the Spanish, after they shattered the quiet of the prairie with a arquebus shot, caught this group by surprise, and demanded one of these Apaches serve as a guide. The situation threatened to explode at any moment, but somehow the Spanish convinced their newfound foes to acquiesce to their demands, and their reluctant guide agreed to take the invaders to water and to bison, two days away. Almost certainly this was an attempt by Faraones to be rid of the

¹² Ecoregions do not have rigid boundaries because their status is defined by the presence of certain keystone plant species which often extend into micro-environments where markedly different flora are present. v. Esteban H. Muldavin, “Some Floristic Characteristics of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert: A Search for its Northern Boundary,” *Taxon* 51 (2002): 453-462.

Spanish and to expose them to further danger in the edge landscape between the Rio Grande Valley and the arid uplands. But Rodriguez and Chamuscado were already on the retreat. They followed their guide to some bison, slaughtered them for their meat, and then returned to the Rio Grande without delay. They never set foot beyond the Rio Grande Valley again. Soon they made their return journey south to Nueva Vizcaya along the same path as they had come: downriver along the Rio Grande to La Junta de los Ríos and back upriver along the Rio Conchos. By April of the following year, 1582, most of them were back at Santa Bárbara.¹³

This *entrada* laid the groundwork for the others that followed. For future Spanish invaders the *Relación* (journal) of Rodriguez's and Chamuscado's chronicler, Hernán Gallegos, became foundational as a means to intellectually and ideologically organize the bewildering set of landscapes north of Nueva Vizcaya. Gallegos' *Relación* became the epistemological frame from which New Mexico would be conceived of as a colonial province—but it also limited the Spanish, and implicitly discouraged exploration beyond the Middle Rio Grande Valley. In fact, the *entrada*'s strict adherence to the Rio Grande Valley and its dependence on pueblos for food and for guides should be read as proofs of the Spanish failure to create meaningful connections to ecologies and cultures that existed beyond the *milpa*—the cropland. Rodriguez and Chamuscado were almost

¹³ v. Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *The Mescalero Apache, 1653-1874* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959); Albert H. Schroeder, *A Study of the Apache Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974); Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974); & Opler (1983) for more information on Faraones. As this literature suggests, the tribal designation of Mescalero was derived from Faraon peoples.

Basehart, 93.

J. Daniel Rodgers, et al., "Seasonal Protein Content of Four Southern Mixed Prairie Grasses," *Journal of Range Management* 20 (1967): 177-178.

Karl H. Schleppey, "Rethinking the Dismal River Aspect and the Plains Athapaskans, A.D. 1692-1768," *The Plains Anthropologist* 17 (1972): 111-112.

wholly dependent on others for their survival. The only advantage they had came in the form of their weaponry and diplomacy, the latter of which was all but abandoned by the end of the *entrada*. Future incursions replicated many of these shortcomings, and it fast became routine to exploit both the ecology and the societies of the Middle Rio Grande Valley as the means by which Spanish imperialism propped itself up.

Less than seven months after the Rodriguez and Chamuscado *entrada* returned to Santa Bárbara, Antonio de Espejo mounted a second *entrada*, on November 10, 1582. This second *entrada* was organized as a rescue mission for two of Rodriguez's friars who had remained behind at the pueblo of Puaray to begin missionary work. Rumors had trickled south for some months that the friars had quickly run afoul of their hosts and had been struck down almost as soon as Chamuscado left the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Nevertheless, Espejo used the imperiled missionaries as an excuse to re-enter these fresh landscapes, perhaps with the greedy hope that he would find his way to becoming the founder of a new colony and province. Espejo retraced almost exactly the route of Rodriguez and Chamuscado and he soon found himself among the Rio Grande pueblos, and then at Puaray pueblo where the Spanish Religious had long since been killed. It was February, deep winter, and the pueblo was deserted. The Puaray Puebloans had left en masse because they feared Spanish reprisal; several thousand of them hid in the Manzano and Sandia Mountains. Espejo waited to see if they would come down to greet him, but they dared not. He and his men helped themselves to the emergency stores of corn, squash, and beans that the Puebloans had ferreted away for the winter. The rescue mission was over, but Espejo was not ready to go home. He and his 14 men spent the remainder of 1582's winter, spring, and early

summer—five whole months—traveling among the Rio Grande pueblos as far north as the Jemez Mountains and as far west as Acoma pueblo. On July 3 Espejo decided it was time to go back to Santa Bárbara, but not the same way as Rodriguez-Chamuscado had traveled. Perhaps wanting to best Chamuscado, he elected to re-enter the desert-plains edge in a search for that river that lay to the east (the Pecos), and to try to blaze an alternate route back to La Junta and into Nueva Vizcaya.¹⁴

Espejo left the Middle Rio Grande Valley and immediately resolved that, if he should meet those bellicose and nomadic Natives, he would not curry favor with them, but would instead immediately take what he needed in the way of supplies and guides. In fact, Espejo made good on this resolve even before he left the pueblos behind for good. Pecos pueblo was the easternmost pueblo of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and sat at the gateway to the southern Great Plains (it was a favorite place for nomadic plains groups to congregate for trade fairs). When Espejo entered the pueblo, 2,000 armed Puebloans greeted him. Intimidated, Espejo ordered that torches be lit and he made it clear that he would burn all of their homes unless they consented to his will. The people of Pecos relented and Espejo robbed them of their food. He also kidnapped two of their number and enslaved them as his guides. These were ruthless tactics that featured no diplomatic finesse, but they allowed Espejo to quickly locate the Pecos River (called by him the Rio de las Bacas). Once he had moored his party to this river's banks, he departed south, out of the southern Great Plains, down into the northern Chihuahuan Desert, and homeward. With the aid of his guides Espejo encountered

¹⁴ The principal document for this expedition is: Martín de Pedraza, 14 May 1602, Relation of the entrada that was made for New Mexico by Antonio de Espejo in the year 1582, Legajo 22, Parte 1, Patronato, AGI, CSWR.

watering holes and bison aplenty, and his group did not suffer nearly as much as Rodriguez and Chamuscado's. Late in the summer Espejo arrived at a *playa*—a surface depression where rainwater pools—that is now known as Toyah Lake, near present-day Pecos, Texas. Here the expedition met Jumano Indians, a group vaguely known to the Spanish owing to their traffic at La Junta. At this point Espejo realized that the Pecos River had begun coursing too far eastward, and that he was in danger of becoming lost. Consequently he took on three Jumanos to act as guides to La Junta de los Ríos. These guides delivered on their promise and the Spanish struck La Junta in two weeks.¹⁵



Map 6: The Path of the Pecos River.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

¹⁵ Martín de Pedraza, 14 May 1602, Relation, Legajo 22, Parte 1, Patronato.

v. John Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Washington: National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1979) for a thorough narrative of Pecos pueblo during the seventeenth century. Kessell thoroughly explores the relationship between the Spanish and these Puebloans, with less attention given to the strong Apache influence that continued to hover over this region.

Both Espejo and Rodriguez-Chamuscado ventured into the desert-plains edge landscape during monsoon season—a period of heavy rains that lasts from July to October; during these months the region receives roughly forty-five percent of its total rainfall of about 15 inches. Although tree-ring data indicates that this was a period of long-term drought, the local watershed would have been an active place just then, and whatever precipitation there was drained into the rivers and the many *arroyos* (deep gouges across the landscape cut by water erosion). In all, the Pecos River Valley drains about 45,000 square miles from its headwaters to the confluence with the Rio Grande. Of this amount, just over 20,000 square miles are drained along the lower Pecos River, that portion located in the present-day state of Texas. Near the juncture of the Rios Grande and Conchos the tributaries of the Pecos River become plentiful: Delaware River, Toyah Creek, Independence Creek, in addition to other creeks and draws, swell the river by over 50%. Many of these tributaries trace their origins to mountain ranges, such as the Guadalupe or Davis mountains. Although they both experienced the southern Great Plains and northern Chihuahuan Desert at the same seasonal time, Espejo fared much better than Rodriguez and Chamuscado because he actually pierced into the landscape and was aided by the expert knowledge of Pecos and Jumano guides. In a way, Rodriguez and Chamuscado left the Rio Grande watershed without entering the Pecos watershed. They had only wandered for 65 miles before they turned back. Espejo on the other hand, traveled hundreds of miles into the Chihuahuan Desert and experienced the landscapes much more fully. The many *ojos*—water holes—that Espejo encountered were more likely *playas* that had just been replenished by the rains. Also, Espejo might have just been luckier in his day to day timing. Whereas

Rodriguez and Chamuscado reported no difficulty in crossing over and up the Rio Conchos, when Espejo gained La Junta de los Ríos he was ultimately unable to cross it and re-enter Nueva Vizcaya because the rivers were too swollen.¹⁶

Espejo experienced the possibilities of the Pecos River and the northern Chihuahuan Desert, yet his *entrada* did nothing to reverse the building focus on Rio Grande-riparian imperial strategy. Instead of being a gateway to ‘seeing’ and ‘knowing’ the Pecos River landscapes that adjoined the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Espejo’s *Relación* actually discouraged Spanish exploration and investment of the those very same landscapes even further. Along the entire course of the Pecos River the Spanish had not found a single pueblo (aside of Pecos pueblo near the headwaters). From a missionary point of view, there seemed to be too few souls over too wide an area who lived too little like ‘civilized’ peoples. Additionally, there had been no exploration of the uplands between the Pecos River and the Rio Grande, or of the uplands to the east of the Pecos. That was still *tierra incognita* to the imperial architects who closely correlated Spanish colonialism to the availability of water, wood, and arable lands. Espejo’s chosen route through the desert-plains edge landscape did not represent a genuine interaction with the broader ecology, but even if it had, it is almost certain that he could not have sold the landscape as a viable platform for colonization.

Another reason for the devaluation of edge landscapes of the northern Chihuahuan Desert was their unsuitability for cart-passage—a feature of Spanish empire almost as necessary as missions or *villas*. Carts were the vehicles whereby colonizers

¹⁶ New Mexico State Engineer Office, *Water Resources in New Mexico: Occurrence, Development, and Use* (Santa Fe, State Planning Office 1967): 61, 67.

Texas Water Resources Institute, et al., *A Watershed Protection Plan for the Pecos River in Texas*, (October 2008), accessed August, 2012, <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/assessment-program/>: 4-10.

transported themselves as well as the tools of empire: guns, metal tools, bibles, sacred hosts, and woven cloth. Without them the Spanish economy ground to a halt and the trappings of domination vanished. Espejo had labored greatly over the leagues of mountainous and craggy foot-trails until he hit the Rio Grande seven weeks after he had set out. The recorded observations are anything but detailed, but there was enough information for colonial readers about the rockiness of the trails that the idea of taking caravans or supply trains would have been met with derision. The lands just north and west of La Junta de los Ríos are the most difficult, and are riddled with canyons and narrow valleys that pose serious challenges for horseback riders, let alone bulky carts. Whereas the Rio Conchos was useful for traveling north out of Nueva Vizcaya towards the Rio Grande, Espejo taught future Spanish that the Pecos River was not a viable river for north-south travel between the Rio Grande pueblos and Nueva Vizcaya. The fact that numerous mountain ranges divided La Junta from the upriver portions of the Pecos River closest to the pueblos came as a strong discouragement. It was almost ten years after Espejo's trip before a Spaniard recommitted to exploration of the Middle Rio Grande Valley—and his *entrada* was illegal.¹⁷

Espejo's return journey strongly suggested to colonial authorities that the middle reaches of the Pecos River and the desert-plains edge landscape were unsuited to imperial projects, but the experiences of the next invader, Castaño de Sosa, exposed the difficult conditions along the Pecos River nearer to its headwaters, east of the

¹⁷ Nancy Stotz, *Historic Reconstruction of the Ecology of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Channel and Floodplain in the Chihuahuan Desert* (Las Cruces, NM: Desert Scribes, 2000): 5.

Frederick R. Gehlbach, "Vegetation of the Guadalupe Escarpment, New Mexico-Texas," *Ecology* 48:3 (1967): 406-407.

Robert T. Bean, *Geology of the Roswell Artesian Basin, New Mexico, and its Relation to the Hondo Reservoir* (Santa Fe: Technical Report 9, State of New Mexico State Engineer Office, 1949): 5.

Estancia Basin and Galisteo Valley. In 1590 Lieutenant Governor Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, of the province of Nuevo León, initiated an unsanctioned *entrada*. Although he believed that he had viceregal authority to explore and conquer, and had sent messengers to Mexico City to verify his rights, his expedition was never endorsed by the viceroy or his deputies. Sosa made it to the Middle Rio Grande Valley and was actively gathering intelligence when he was arrested at Santo Domingo pueblo late in March of 1591. His “*Memoria*,” written in the months following his incarceration reads like a swashbuckling affair full of suspenseful Puebloan stand-offs and dedicated Catholic zeal. Sosa likely crafted the *Memoria*’s tone and content with an aim to persuading his prosecuting court that he had acted with piety, fealty, and good faith. Regardless of its theatrical context, however, Sosa’s *memoria* adds to the impression that the upper Pecos River watershed was just as harsh and rugged as the lower watershed—a place where cart-travel was slow, perilous, and expensive.¹⁸

Sosa had departed from Monclova, Coahuila on July 27, 1590 with 160-170 people, herds of cattle, and 10 carts of maize. Sosa’s started his trip much farther east than Rodriguez-Chamuscado or Espejo, and it made no sense for him to try for La Junta de los Ríos. Instead, he forded the Rio Grande and made for the Pecos River (the ‘Rio Salado’ to Sosa); these tasks were made daunting by the fact that he undertook them during monsoon season, when flow was high and rapid. His difficulty explains why it took him three months to strike the Pecos River, probably around the area of present-day Sheffield, Texas. Sosa knew enough from the Espejo trip that this river would get

¹⁸ The authorship of Sosa’s *Memoria* is unclear, but most agree that it was composed by his expedition secretary, Andres Pérez. Albert H. Schroeder & Dan S. Matson, *A Colony on the Move: Gaspar Castaño de Sosa’s Journal, 1590-1591* (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1965): 17.

him to the Rio Grande pueblos, and so he began to travel upriver. Handicapped by their carts, the Spanish traveled about 5 to 8 miles a day over 500 miles of riverine terrain that was alternately muddy or sandy, and where forage for animals, and food for humans was in precious short supply. After two more months Sosa reached Pecos pueblo, on December 30. He visited a number of pueblos where the Spanish exacted loyalty to the Spanish King and erected crosses and appointed *alcaldes*—town council members.¹⁹

We should not be distracted by Sosa's antics in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but rather should turn our attention to the *Memoria's* details concerning cart travel along the banks of the Pecos River. As a portent of what lay ahead, Sosa encountered difficulty almost from the moment he struck the Pecos River near present-day Sheffield, Texas. The river's flow at this point cuts across a landscape composed of dry, sandy, and alkaline soils that are prone to erosion. Steep slopes require careful maneuvering to reach the water below safely. Sosa, perhaps over-elated at finding the body of water that would deliver him to the pueblos, hazarded to navigate his draught animals down to the water's edge, but the rough terrain proved too much for the carts and many were damaged. Sosa could not afford to lose these transports; they bore food, supplies, and the 'royal fifths,' meant as tribute to the viceroy and king. He was forced to pause and

¹⁹ George P. Hammond & Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1966): 245-275.
Schroeder, 11, 55.

repair them before he could proceed. It was an ignominious beginning that immediately cast the Pecos, yet again, as an inhospitable river.²⁰

The situation did not improve as the Spanish journeyed upriver, and by the time they had gained the pueblos the *Memoria* worked more like an advisory against the Pecos than as any kind of boosterism. On December 24 Sosa's *maestre de campo* (literally: master of camp, a field marshal), Cristobal de Heredia, arrived from his reconnaissance mission of Pecos pueblo. Heredia found the Puebloans there to be very hostile, probably because of their memory of Espejo's coercive means of procuring food and guides. Sosa expected this, and had come prepared for it. But there was additional bad news that gave Sosa pause inasmuch as it jeopardized his ability to transport the tools, and so the means, of empire with him. The path ahead to the pueblo was a broken land, gouged by numerous gullies and *arroyos* that Heredia felt would surely ruin the carts. Sosa could not risk arriving at the pueblos in a position of weakness, with no supplies or materiel to back up his claims to dominance. He halted the carts on December 26 just south of a place called Urraca (near present-day Ribera, New Mexico; about 20 miles southeast of Pecos pueblos) and set out with a vanguard of soldiers. Eventually, when Sosa felt confident in his promises of peace with wary Puebloans, the carts rumbled out, but whereas it had taken Sosa one day to gain Pecos pueblo, it took the carts two weeks to navigate the exit from the Pecos River and to enter the Middle Rio Grande Valley. So treacherous was the path and so battered were

²⁰ Hammond, 255-256.

A Watershed Protection Plan for the Pecos River in Texas, Lucas Gregory & Will Hatler, eds. (Online: Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, 2008), <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/media/1923/pecosriverwpp.pdf>

the carts that they kept breaking down, and the Spanish could only manage one league of travel a day.²¹

Late sixteenth century Spanish *entradas* into the Middle Rio Grande Valley via the Rio Conchos and the Rio Grande recorded travel conditions and landscapes that elicited fear, thirst, and hunger in the Spanish invaders. Neither the Rodriguez-Chamuscado nor the Espejo *entrada* inspired easy confidence in would-be *conquistadores* of the Rio Grande pueblos. If those parties had had such a difficult time ascending the Rio Grande, then what would colonial audiences have made of the stories brought back by Sosa's tale of the Pecos River? Travel up the Pecos had been so brutal and slow that those Spanish had debased themselves by eating grass seed, mesquite bark, or seed grain in order to survive. Colonial architects who studied the Rodriguez-Chamuscado, Espejo, and Sosa *entradas* would have read the Pecos River Valley and the desert-plains edge landscape as places that were logistically challenging and ecologically lacking. Before New Mexico was even founded as an official colony of New Spain, the Pecos became an imperial backwater. Had the Pecos River been dotted with pueblos to furnish colonizers with supplies, the problem of rugged travel might have been overlooked, but the Spanish only documented one pueblo (Pecos) and many nomadic bands who seemed too ephemeral, poor, and bellicose to be relied upon as a resource. And although both rivers drain about 26,000 square miles, the Pecos River Valley was a less bountiful river because its origins were in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, a much smaller and drier range than the San Juan Mountains that fed the

²¹ Hammond and Rey: 255-287.

Rio Grande. Using Puebloan settlement as their guide, the Spanish learned from them that the Pecos River was insufficient to support sedentary, agricultural living.

The last *entrada* of the sixteenth century drew upon the experiences of the three previous *entradas*, and finally codified Spanish empire in the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Don Juan de Oñate's 1598 entry into the Middle Rio Grande Valley defined: the path that would become the *camino real*; the geographical shape of Spanish colony; and, consequently, the structure of the imperial economy. The (Spanish) father of New Mexico left from the Valle de Santa Bárbara in January of 1598, during one of the coldest and driest seasons of the Chihuahuan Desert. The timing was inconvenient, and not of his choosing. He had actually amassed enough supplies and attracted enough volunteers to begin his trek in 1596, but the business of Spanish empire was already encumbered by excessive bureaucracy, and two royally mandated inspections had delayed him. Oñate suffered attrition of men and supplies as a result of delays. To make the most of what he had left, he blazed a more direct trail to the Middle Rio Grande Valley than Rodriguez-Chamuscado and Espejo had done. Instead of departing to the northeast down the Rio Conchos to La Junta, and then traveling up the Rio Grande northwest, Oñate set a heading for due north, and struck out overland. He arrived at the Rio Grande near what would become El Paso del Norte and performed the ritual ceremony of formal possession for King Philip II on April 30. Staying true to his northward heading, Oñate became the first Spaniard to push his caravan across the arid plain that would become the Jornada del Muerto. His carts took over a month to make the distance over unfamiliar and waterless land, and when he emerged among the Piro pueblos only 21 carts remained of the 43 that he had set out with from Santa

Bárbara; the rest had been abandoned to help preserve the strength of the oxen. The path that Oñate chose became *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, the route by which future colonists and supplies caravans made the journey to and from Santa Fe.²²

What can we learn about the Spanish experience traveling to, and living in, the Middle Rio Grande Valley from Oñate's *camino real*? This was an expensive route that privileged expediency over ecological caution. Oñate shunned the route that went by La Junta because it was too far east, and he likewise shunned the Rio Grande itself just north present-day Las Cruces, New Mexico until present-day Socorro because it jogged too far west and passed through difficult mountain terrain. But when Oñate chose to hasten across the land, he *de facto* devalued certain landscapes within the Chihuahuan Desert. Granted, by avoiding the Rio Conchos and La Junta de los Ríos and making straight for the future site of El Paso del Norte, he avoided the alternating canyons and gorges that make travel difficult up the Rio Grande—but at the cost of ignoring an unusually fertile landscape of the Chihuahuan Desert. Every Spanish chronicler who had passed the confluence in the sixteenth century noted the pueblos and the bountiful fields of maize, squash, and beans of La Junta. This area was a small-scale Middle Rio Grande Valley in terms of arable land and perennial water resources, but it would be almost 100 years before it again received the attention of the Spanish empire. In the meantime, this breadbasket within the Chihuahuan Desert passed outside the scope of Spanish economy and influence.²³

²² *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, Vol. 1, George P. Hammond, trans. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953): 311-335.

Michael C. Meyer, *Water in the Hispanic Southwest: A Social and Legal History, 1550-1850* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984): 28.

²³ Russell J. Gardinier, "The Physical Geography of a Significant Border Region, La Junta de los Rios," *The Journal of Big Bend Studies* 1 (1989): 42.

In addition to depriving future Spanish travelers of access to pueblos and riparian crops at La Junta, the *camino real* that Oñate founded north of El Paso del Norte was riddled with danger and risk. From the northern parts of the Mesilla Valley, north of El Paso, Oñate diverged from the Rio Grande and travel northward across the Jornada del Muerto. Reporting back to officials in Mexico City about the new colony of New Mexico, Juan de Ortega, a captain of cavalry, reported in 1601 that the Jornada del Muerto was 40 leagues long (about 90-100 miles) over a flat, waterless plain composed of sand, clay and gravel. During the colonial era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when climatic conditions were cooler and drier than they are today, the average annual precipitation was probably less than 9 inches. The Jornada was firmly situated within the Chihuahuan Desert and offered little more to travelers than desert grasses, like black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), that had long since evolved tolerances to drought. As the name suggests, passage along this portion of the *camino real* caused Spanish travelers anxiety, despair, and occasionally deaths. If the *camino real* had instead followed the river, there would have been much greater access to shelter, water, and forage, but at the risk of lost time, longer distances, and exposure to attack or cart breakages. As long as it took carts to travel across the Jornada del Muerto, it would have taken them longer to pass through the rugged foothills of the Caballos and Fra

Cristobal Mountains. Oñate set a precedent wherein the practicalities—and limitations—of Spanish transportation technology overrode ecological considerations.²⁴

Oñate, as *adelantado* and first governor of New Mexico, cemented the Spanish empire as a set of institutions and peoples that existed almost exclusively along the Rio Grande. Granted, Oñate's choices formed a significant and lasting extension of Spanish empire along the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but this was a riparian empire that manifested in disjunctive ways to the complex interconnectivity of adjacent edge landscapes, ecoregions, and the peoples who inhabit them. Read this way, New Mexico was from its beginnings ecologically isolated as a direct result of the Spanish cultural and political preference for riparian places and sedentary, agricultural indigenes. The 'Chihuahuan borderlands' of the Spanish and Apaches can be traced to this moment, when the Spanish turned away from the hundreds of thousands of square miles of the northern Chihuahuan Desert and southern Great Plains to focus on 200 miles of river.

After Oñate's time in New Mexico had come to a close (he departed in 1608 or 1610), future governors and Franciscan missionaries continued to construct Spanish empire as a riparian colony, and to overlay their European culture, political, and economic structures atop the world of Puebloans. Quickly, institutions like missions and *encomiendas*—labor camps means to acculturate the laborers—sprang up across the

²⁴ *Don Juan de Oñate*, 320, 658.

Elbert L. Little Jr. & Robert S. Campbell, "Flora of Jornada Experimental Range New Mexico," *American Midland Naturalist* 30 (1943): 627-628, 634.

Dan Scurlock, "Through Desierto and Bosque: The Physical Environment of El Camino Real," in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, June-el Piper & LouAnn Jacobson, eds., (Santa Fe: Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, 1993): 6.

New Mexico State Engineer Office, *Water Resources of New Mexico: Occurrence, Development, and Use* (Santa Fe: State Planning Office, 1967): 100.

valley and among the pueblos. Quickly these institutions set about converting (or attempting to convert) Puebloans to Catholicism and coercing them into functioning as agents of mercantilistic agricultural economies. The idea was to transform Puebloans into *vecinos* (colonists) and to task them with performing empire and populating colonies. Ironically, these strategies of control worked against the Spanish almost from the start. Although the Spanish stimulated the economic profile of the Middle Rio Grande Valley by introducing horses, cattle, metal goods, and harquebuses, the abusive imperatives of empire strained the social and economic fabric of the valley. After all, the newly arrived capital was not intended to better the lives and material fortunes of Puebloans, but was intended as an investment that would ultimately benefit New Spain. The problem that the Spanish did not anticipate—and that they were at a loss to answer—was that many indigenes (Puebloans and non-Puebloans alike) wanted to seize parts of this new economy for their own ends. It was at this moment that a longtime inhabitant of the desert-plains edge landscape, Faraon Apaches, found themselves both imperiled and empowered by the colonial encounter. Soon, they began to experiment with ways to access and subvert this new imperial economy.²⁵

Before we analyze Faraon engagement with New Mexico, we should give our attention to the ways that the Spanish altered the demographic profile of the Middle Rio Grande Valley because of the direct bearing that it had on inter-regional encounter. In July of 1601 Captain Joseph Brondate, a seasoned cavalry officer in Oñate's troop,

²⁵ From the establishment of the colony by Oñate until the 1680 revolt, Puebloans widely despised the Spanish practice of forcing them to work long hours on fields owned by the Spanish (*encomenderos*). This egregious commandeering of indigenous labor was made worse by the circumstance that Puebloans tending Spanish fields were often kept from home for so long that their own fields failed, meaning that their families starved. v. H. Allen Anderson, "The *Encomienda* in New Mexico, 1598-1680," *New Mexico Historical Review* 60:4 (1985); & Lesley Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain; the Beginning of Spanish Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

reckoned that 130 pueblos dotted the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and that inside them dwelled 50,000 to 60,000 Puebloans. Twenty-nine years later, fray Alonso Benavides counted approximately 44,000 Puebloans farming in about 70 pueblos. Benavides was the *custo* (superior, or chief administrator) of the Franciscan Order of New Mexico from 1626-1629, and he was in an excellent position to compile information regarding the region from the many friars and colonists there. These figures, although not part of a sophisticatedly executed census, strongly suggest that the number of Puebloans in New Mexico probably declined by approximately 20% between 1601 and 1630.²⁶

The loss of 6,000 to 16,000 Puebloans in the space of 29 years is drastic. Although the Spanish were often brutal in their treatment of Puebloans (as in the case of Oñate's slaughter of men at Acoma pueblo in 1599), there is no evidence that violence reached such a fevered pitch that thousands were put to the sword. More likely is that epidemic disease, brought on by sustained contact with colonists, ravaged the colony. Furthermore, the only reason why the decline in population was not greater was because many thousands of Puebloans had probably already perished as a result of disease borne by the first three *entradas* of 1581 to 1591, or that of Coronado's. Whatever the cause of so many thousands dead, what is clear is that the number of inhabited pueblos shrank by about 45%. Whether the Spanish combined populations of multiple pueblos into one pueblo for administrative purposes—*congregación*—or because

²⁶ Alonso de Benavides, *The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630*, Mrs. Edward E. Ayer, trans. (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1965): 19-26.

Daniel T. Reff, "Contextualizing Missionary Discourse: The Benavides 'Memorials' of 1630 and 1634," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 50 (1994): 59-61.

Elinore M. Barrett, *Conquest and Catastrophe: Changing Rio Grande Pueblo Settlement Patterns in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2002): 53-62, although Barrett appears to underestimate the number of extant pueblos by about 40 in the time of Oñate. *Don Juan de Oñate, 629-639*.

a number of the 1601 pueblos had existed as alternative agricultural stations, the effect was the same: concentrated, ultra-sedentary riparian settlement that strained local resources and intensified the effects of periodic droughts. Actually, concentration of Puebloans into fewer pueblos may have contributed to population decline because common water wells and food storage rooms would have been more vulnerable to microbial infection and transmission.²⁷

The social and economic threat posed by population concentration becomes apparent when we consider the importance of water. There were few *acequias*—irrigation canals—in the Middle Rio Grande Valley when the Spanish first made contact. Pueblos typically practiced dry-farming—they relied on seasonal rainfall to water their crops of maize, squash, and legumes; sometimes they also used rough ditches alongside the Rio Grande to capture the periodic overflow from spring thaw freshets, or monsoon season floods. When the Spanish arrived, Puebloans had successfully cultivated approximately 15,000 to 25,000 acres of land, and from that the early *entradas* estimated that most pueblos could afford to store 2 to 3 years' worth of food—an impressive surplus. If rains failed and dry-farming collapsed, archaeological data suggest that pueblo populations may have also migrated in times of climatic stress to other settlement sites, a kind of flexible sedentism. This kind of limited mobility provided crucial elasticity to Puebloan societies to answer the challenge of finding water in a xeric environment where moisture did not always appear in the same place. The permanent

²⁷ Barrett, 67-78.
Meyer, 49.

v. Winifred Creamer, "Re-examining the Black Legend: Contact Period Demography in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 69:3 (1994): 263-278 for analysis on the many factors which make demographic estimation particularly difficult for New Mexico.

abandonment of alternate pueblo sites and the concentration of populations around missions, pueblos, and *encomiendas* of the middle Rio Grande valley would have laid hardship on Puebloans and the Spanish alike in times of localized drought. Whereas Puebloan practices, developed over hundreds of years before empire, reflected the marginal nature of agriculture in the northern Chihuahuan Desert, Spanish policy represented a shift to an engagement with the local ecology more rooted in the presumed efficacy of irrigation technology rather than the reality of a variable climate.²⁸

The Spanish realized early on that the Middle Rio Grande Valley could easily leave them impoverished and famished, and so almost immediately *vecinos* began to build *acequia* networks. The Spanish desired more arable lands around inhabited pueblos so that they could establish Spanish *encomiendas* and *ranchos* in order to increase agricultural yields. Over time, *acequias madres*, or mother canals, appeared across the Rio Grande Valley. These large canals tapped into Rio Grande tributaries like the Santa Fe, Chama or Puerco Rivers, and into springs, or sometimes into the Rio Grande itself at some point far above the settlement. The canals were oriented in a north-south direction (as were the irrigated fields) so that gravity corralled the water into the countryside, at which point *sangrías*, or secondary canals, carried the water to the fields, where a farmer working wooden head-gates could irrigate 5 or 6 acres a day. Usually the residual canal waters were then directed back into to the river farther downstream of the settlement. Often the *acequia madre* needed to be serviced each

²⁸ Dan Scurlock, *From the Rio to the Sierra: An Environmental History of the Middle Rio Grande Basin* (Fort Collins: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, 1998): 94.

Ira G. Clark, *Water in New Mexico: A History of its Management and Use* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987): 7.

Charles Kelley, "Factors Involved in the Abandonment of Certain Peripheral Southwestern Settlements," *American Anthropologist* 54 (1952): 363-364, 378-380.

Barrett, 49.

spring and its fallen banks excavated. Stone diversion points and wooden gates also needed vigilant maintenance because they were prone to breakage. Spanish reliance on canal irrigation is in the numbers: in 1600 there were 22 or so ditches irrigating about 25,555 acres of land. By 1700, there were 61 ditches irrigating 73,580 acres of land.²⁹

To better understand the transactional dividends of dry-farming versus *acequia* irrigation, we should step back and consider the environment and climate of the Middle Rio Grande Valley since both systems were only as effective as the waters that sustained them. The Rio Grande begins in the high and complex San Juan Mountain range of the southern Rocky Mountains, in present-day Colorado. The snow that falls and piles on the rock and trees during the winter thaws during spring and summer, creating runoff that courses down slopes and feeds the headwaters. These waters run southward through the canyons and gorges of the Colorado Plateau Shrublands (a sub-ecoregion of the Colorado Rockies Forests ecoregion north of the Chihuahuan Desert) and coalesce into a river. Eventually the Rio Grande winds its way past Taos pueblo, and at an elevation of 7,000 feet, where it then enters the Middle Rio Grande Valley. This section of river valley was often referred to as the *rio abajo* in colonial times; above Taos the Rio Grande was the *rio arriba*. The Middle Rio Grande Valley itself is an ecotonal space, carrying a rich variety of flora and fauna from the Chihuahuan Desert as well as the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains. The northern boundary of the Chihuahuan Desert can be discerned somewhere near or just north of the Albuquerque and Belen sub-basin, near the present-day cities of those names, owing to the presence

²⁹ Meyer, 41-42.

Marc Simmons, "Spanish Irrigation Practices in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 47:2 (1972): 139-143.

Scurlock, 115.

of Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentata*), a woody, xeric plant, and black grama grass, both keystone species. The Colorado Plateau Shrublands extend as far south as two of its keystone species: blue grama and buffalo grass, to the Jornada del Muerto in some cases.³⁰

The Middle Rio Grande Valley is situated within the Rio Grande Basin, that topographical formation defined by the presence of tributaries and springs that feed the Rio Grande. Those tributary waterways, as well as the Rio Grande itself, constitute the region's hydrology—the course and nature of water flow over the land. The Rio Grande flows about 470 miles through New Mexico; the Rio Grande Basin captures about 160 miles of that flow and drains 24,760 square miles with direct tributaries draining about 12,800 square miles. Sub-basins within the Rio Grande basin, like the Española or Albuquerque basins, are set apart by narrows that restrict the watershed to narrow valleys. These basins are not large: they vary from 30 to 100 miles in length and 10 to 35 miles in width. The width of the basin is set by natural borders, such as mountain ranges, volcanic uplifts, or volcanic flow fields. Inside the sub-basins natural features such as alluvial fans (the fan-like spread of a fast-moving source of water from a canyon or an arroyo onto flat land), or bajadas (the compounding of such alluvial fans when abutted against a mountain or mesa slope) provide a kind of natural canal from which to compose irrigation networks, although the sources of those flows are much more dependent on local, seasonal rainfall.³¹

³⁰ *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province*, Michael P. Marshall & Henry J. Walt, eds. (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984): 3-5.

Water Resources in New Mexico, 129, 143.
Muldavin, 458-460.

³¹ *Water Resources of New Mexico*, 129-144.
Scurlock, 181-184.

If the Rio Grande's average annual flow was consistent and if agriculture alone was practiced over the land, these figures might seem impressive enough to argue that the Spanish model of riparian empire was sustainable. After all, the Spanish were themselves not many and the indigenous population of the valley had declined by as much as 20% by 1630, meaning that there were far fewer mouths to feed than the region had previously supported. There is a problem with making that claim, however. The flow rates of the Rio Grande were widely variable, and the Spanish soon learned that disappointing rainfalls were a typical feature of life in New Mexico. Additionally, waters derived from *acequias* was not utilized solely to produce food for human consumption. Pastoralism formed around European species of livestock constituted a novel, vital, and problematic feature of Spanish empire. As sources of meat, milk, wool, and transportation, European animals bore on their backs and in their udders the promise that the Rio Grande Valley could be self-sufficient. Architects of Spanish empire, like Oñate, must have felt that there was little need to sustain the trading relationships external to the Middle Rio Grande Valley since husbandry and agriculture promised to yield all the protein and carbohydrates that they needed. Furthermore, *entradas* to the Great Plains had been humiliating endeavors to find water, bison, and friendship from nomadic tribes like Apaches. Independence from the Puebloan-Apache trading relationship appeared as a gateway to superiority over both: starve the former of control and ration animal protein; starve the latter of grain carbohydrates through restricting trading in the pueblos.

But the combination of agriculture and pastoralism proved contentious from the start. In fact, news of trouble between crop and hoof reached Mexico City often enough to elicit a *cedula*—a royal order. On March 10, 1620 Viceroy Don Diego Fernandez de Cordoba sent regulations to the still fledgling colony entitled “Pastures of *Encomenderos*.” This *cedula* dictated that Spanish livestock be kept at least three leagues clear of *milpas* lest their hooves ruin crops, especially those of Puebloans. Even the horses of presidials had to be hobbled by day and corralled by night if they were absolutely needed within three leagues of *milpas*. Later, when the Spanish found themselves crowded and huddled against the Rio Grande at El Paso del Norte—refugees of the 1680 revolt—strict orders were again given that livestock be kept from fields and canal ways lest their hooves cave in the banks. Given that many of the arable lands situated around pueblos, missions, and other Spanish institutions were fed by the growing network of canals, the problem of animal hooves and irrigation was a recurrent problem that threatened to overtax riparian lands.³²

The fact that many animals were attracted to the lush banks of the Rio Grande only added to the strain. The absence of domesticated animals before the Spanish meant that hardy, protein-rich and sodium-heavy riparian grasses like desert saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) were abundant and attractive sources of pasturage. Desert saltgrass had been grazed upon before the Spanish, but only by small game, like deer, or—less

³² Lansing Bloom, “A Glimpse of New Mexico in 1620,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 3 (1928): 368-369. Simmons, 145. Meyer, 50.

v. Wilma Wetterstrom, *Food, Diet, and Population at Prehistoric Arroyo Hondo Pueblo, New Mexico* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1986): 49-51 for quantifiable data suggesting that this crowding of riparian environments could have seriously undermined Puebloan’s ability to grow enough foodstuff, and provide enough calories, for subsistence. For instance, if pastoralism claimed lands 1.25-2.5 miles from the pueblo, then average crop yields and caloric requirements suggest that production would not meet more than 50% of caloric need.

often—by bison that might wander over during especially wet years. This grass was and is ideal for pasturage along the river banks of New Mexico. Its pointed, rhizomatous roots—horizontal, underground stems—can press across water, clay, and shale in order to establish new plots, and thereby expand the size of the pasture. In addition, these pastures of saltgrass were more evolutionarily suited to riparian lands than crops or other grasses. Increased salinity was a perennial problem along the Rio Grande because periodic flooding or irrigation, once evaporated, often left deposits of salt on the earth that built to toxic levels for most flora. Desert saltgrass, however, had evolved to use the intense solar radiation common to the northern Chihuahuan Desert to offset high saline levels. Even after the Spanish invaded the region and converted many of these riparian pastures into croplands, there must have been an ecological tendency for saltgrass to recolonize the banks. To counter the threat of livestock among the crops, the colony’s sizable animal population was forced far from riparian pastures towards upland pastures—where they were more exposed to harsh elements, less nutritious grasses, and the danger of raids.³³

But how many animals were likely in New Mexico? At his second royal inspection, Oñate was required to account for every pound of material committed to the *entrada*. These records contain rich, detailed inventories of the materials that the Spaniard amassed. Oñate reported during the winter of 1597 and 1598 that his men had with them a staggering 5,600 head of livestock. Three years later, it appears that

³³ D.J. Hansen, et al., “Ecological Adaptations of Salt Marsh Grass, *Distichlis spicata* (Gramineae), and Environmental Factors Affecting its Growth and Distribution,” *American Journal of Botany* 63 (1976): 647.

Paul R. Kemp & Gary L. Cunningham, “Light, Temperate and Salinity Effects on Growth, Leaf Anatomy and Photosynthesis of *Distichlis spicata* (L.) Greene,” *American Journal of Botany* 68:4 (1981): 507.

Meyer, 80.

Scurlock, 205.

there were as few as 2,350 to as many as 6,500 animals actually present in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Benavides' observed that, by 1630, livestock populations in New Mexico were increasing by leaps and bounds as a result of the virgin pastures that nurtured them. Regardless of exact livestock figures, it is enough to note that thousands of domesticated animals had abruptly appeared in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, feeding ravenously on riparian grasslands. The sudden presence of so many new organisms within the ecosystem, feeding upon finite resources, came as a shock to the system; a shock made worse by the tremendous volumes of water that these animals needed to stay hydrated and functioning. Within sub-basins that were only 15 to 35 miles wide, the need to remove so many animals from *milpas* must have come as a hardship that naturally led to crowding, and to conflict over land assignment.³⁴

We can gauge the level of tension between the practice of agriculture and of pastoralism if we can grasp the historical climate and weather of the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Dendrochronology—tree-ring research—makes it possible to reconstruct approximately the average annual rainfall of an area: dendroclimatology.

³⁴ *Don Juan de Oñate*, 215-226.

Benavides, *The Memorial*, 37-38.

v. Richard H. Hart, "Plant Biodiversity on Shortgrass Steppe after 55 Years of Zero, Light, Moderate, or Heavy Cattle Grazing," *Plant Ecology* 155:1 (2001): 111 for data suggesting that these riparian grasslands, if overgrazed by the sudden arrival of so many ungulates, could have reduced plant cover by as much as 90% and reduced the biodiversity of the ecosystem.

Dendroclimatology is a boon to historical research because it provides a historical context where the primary records might be silent.³⁵

Two seasonal periods feed the Rio Grande watershed. The most plentiful rainfall comes during the summer monsoons, from July through September, that dump localized rainfall into the valley and into the watershed, forming runoff and swelling the flow. These rainstorms are often short, torrential, and frequent. During the winter snowfall in the mountainous areas of the watershed, mostly from December through February, adds moisture to the watershed that will become available after the spring thaw. Anywhere from 43-54% of annual rainfall, 15 inches, occurs during the summer monsoons; wintertime snowpack provides anywhere from 1-40% of annual rainfall (this wide range correlates to drought); and the remaining moisture comes in more or less regular quantities throughout the year. Puebloans learned this watershed over centuries of experience, and wisely chose the 200 miles of the Middle Rio Grande Valley as their habitat because the vast majority of perennial tributaries are north of their position. On the surface, then, it appears that a robust hydrology is at work in the Middle Rio Grande Valley: snowmelt during the spring and early summer swells the river from March through May, and summer monsoons comes from July through September. Early historical reports, however, reveal that prolonged droughts were common to the area.³⁶

³⁵ For the basic methodologies behind dendrochronology, v. R. G. W. Ward, *Applications of Tree-Ring Studies: Current Research in Dendrochronology and Related Subjects* (Osney Mead, Oxford, England: B.A.R, 1987); James H. Speer, *Fundamentals of Tree-Ring Research* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); & Richard Van Ness Ahlstrom, "The Interpretation of Archaeological Tree-Ring Dates" (dissertation: University of Arizona, 1985).

For the basic theory behind dendroclimatology, v. *Climate from Tree Rings*, M. K. Hughes, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Harold C. Fritts, *Reconstructing Large-Scale Climatic Patterns from Tree-Ring Data: A Diagnostic Analysis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991); & Harold C. Fritts, *Tree Rings and Climate* (Caldwell, N.J: Blackburn Press, 2001).

³⁶ Scurlock, 11.

Water Resources in New Mexico, 129.

While the colony was still in its embryonic phase, Oñate was trying to articulate the potential of the new colony to the viceregal court, and he often painted it in glowing terms, but suspicion was mounting that his reports to Mexico City were less than complete. Oñate was the *adelantado* of New Mexico, and he had made a significant investment of his personal fortune into the enterprise. Officials desired a more impartial assessment of the venture than Oñate could be expected to offer. In 1601 don Francisco de Valverde y Mercado, of the viceregal court, was tasked by the viceroy with interviewing recent arrivals from New Mexico for a more honest picture. Two of the people he interviewed were chief auditor and legal assessor Ginés de Herrera Horta, and captain of the cavalry Juan de Ortega, both late arrivals in New Mexico and not part of Oñate's original party. They each gave accounts of conditions in the new colony that diverged from Oñate's. Horta told his questioner that almost all of the colonists in New Mexico wanted to leave and to return south because the climate froze them with brutal cold for 8 months, and then baked them alive for the next 4 months. Food had become such a problem that 7 cattle were being slaughtered a week, a high figure, and the herds of cattle that came with reinforcements were already being eyed for the plate. Valverde must have been alarmed to hear that Oñate's party had even slaughtered and eaten some of their draught animals—oxen—before resupply came with more cattle.³⁷

Valverde's next respondent, Ortega, corroborated Horta's account. For his part, Ortega claimed that even the reinforcement cattle could have been totally consumed by the time of Valverde's questioning because they were being butchered so quickly by starving colonists. This accelerated rate of consumption, and the low supply of

³⁷ *Don Juan de Oñate*, 651-656.

foodstuffs, augured trouble for an environment where Puebloans preferred to keep 2 to 3 year's worth of food tucked away in case of drought. Ortega indicated that these emergency supplies were rapidly being eaten as well—a fact which suggests that the next drought would have immediate and devastating consequences, when food production collapsed. Ortega echoes Horta's observation that most colonists wanted to leave New Mexico because of the extreme climate and the sterility of the land.³⁸

Ortega was right to be concerned: drought in the Middle Rio Grande Valley was always just around the corner. The trees that have been standing since the time of Oñate tell a painful story about the aridity of the ecosystem. Dendroclimatology suggests that cycles of drought far outnumbered periods of wetness. From 1598 to 1680, annual rainfall was below average 68% of the time. During the same period wet years account for just 15% out of the 82 years. The remaining 14 years experienced average annual rainfall at about 13-15 inches. Over two-thirds of the time the Spanish first practiced empire in the Rio Grande Valley dry to extremely dry conditions prevailed. Conditions might have actually been worse during the colonial era: The Little Ice Age—a global cooling event lasting from about 1450 to 1850—brought lower temperatures and less rainfall to the northern Chihuahuan Desert, further increasing its propensity to drought. The structure of the Rio Grande basin had all the mechanics to provide for a

³⁸ *Don Juan de Oñate*, 660, 665.

robust riparian empire, but the realities of local climate defined the structure in ways that were severely disadvantageous to the Spanish and Puebloans alike.³⁹

Population concentration coupled with heightened sedentarism and dependence on the fickle flow rates of the Rio Grande ultimately proved less than ideal for the kind of empire that Spanish colonials fantasized for themselves. The intertwined practices of pastoralism and agriculture exposed Middle Rio Grande Valley inhabitants to climatic vicissitudes, and made periods of drought much more painful. Oñate and his successors tethered Spanish empire to the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and thus isolated it in ways that served to impoverish its economies and societies. And yet the Spanish persisted, and their imperial economy continued to reorganize the landscape and to introduce new flora and fauna to the region. At the same moment this was happening, indigenes from the uplands saw an economic opportunity in New Mexico that could drastically contribute to their lives, and they quickly found ways to access it.

The Spanish implicitly shunned the broader ecoregion when they focused solely on the Middle Rio Grande Valley as the seat of northern colony and empire. In

³⁹ Scurlock, 24, 40.

Barrett, 16-17.

Harold C. Fritts, "Tree-Ring Evidence for Climatic Changes in Western North America," *Monthly Weather Review* 93:7 (1965): 432-442.

v. also Jeffrey S. Dean & William J. Robinson, *Expanded Tree-Ring Chronologies for the Southwestern United States* (Tucson: Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, University of Arizona, 1978): 43-52 for much of the original data upon which these determinations rest.

Douglas B. Bamforth, "An Empirical Perspective on Little Ice Age Climatic Change on the Great Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 35:132 (1990): 359-363.

v. Brian M Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History 1300-1850* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) for general overview of this global, climatic event. Be aware, however, that Fagan's focus is largely on Europe, where decreased temperatures were also experienced, but with an increase of rainfall.

v. Wetterstrom, 106-107 for analysis tables that suggest that in years of drought, Puebloans would have had to farm well over 2.5 miles from the pueblo in order to achieve more than 35% of the population caloric need.

consequence, they left indigenes from upland ecotonal spaces free to negotiate the colonial encounter on their own terms and under circumstances that more often benefitted them. Faraon Apaches, specifically, who moved between the southern Great Plains and the northern Chihuahuan Desert quickly explored the opportunities offered by their geographical position within the colonial encounter. Through raiding and trading Faraones frequently forced their way into the daily life of New Mexico. Their deliberate behavior compels us to decenter the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the Spanish-Puebloan dynamic from our narrative, and to move towards an analytical frame that acknowledges the contributions made from the upland landscapes. Apache claims to space and resources rang out from the beginning of the seventeenth century and point to a world where non-Puebloan indigenes utilized Spanish-shunned landscapes to reshape the vectors of domination and to turn the moment to their advantage. Through actions that date back to Oñate's time and that continued for nearly 200 years, Apaches set about isolating and exploiting Spanish empire and turning the strategies and tools of the Spanish against them in ways that would reverberate within and beyond New Mexico.⁴⁰

Trading rather than raiding seems to have initially typified Faraon engagement with the pueblos. Puebloans at Pecos and Taos were especially accustomed to trading blankets and grain with *Vaqueros*–Apaches–from the Great Plains, who in turn supplied Puebloans with bison products like meat, tallow, and hide. In mid-September, one of Oñate's sergeant majors, Vicente de Zaldívar Mendoza, accidentally found himself in

⁴⁰ Compare Witgen, 113-115 and the ways that the Anishinaabeg were “elusive targets” for the empire of New France because of physical dislocation, small social enclaves, and wide-ranging, seasonal mobility. Anderson, 105.

the middle of this Apache plains-based economy. Mendoza ventured out from Oñate's headquarters at Santo Domingo pueblo in search of bison at nearly the same moment as Oñate created the province of New Mexico on paper. It was late summer when Mendoza passed by the pueblo of Pecos and proceeded eastward to the shortgrass prairies where he soon found vast herds of bison. The sergeant major tried for nearly two weeks to herd these undomesticated animals towards the pueblos for further study, but he failed utterly. He was unaccustomed to hunting beasts that seemed like little more than shaggy cows but that were very much wild and could defeat any corral he built in their way. Finally, he gave up his hunt after he narrowly missed a large herd because they had been pursued by "Vaqueros," as his guide told him. Mendoza learned that these Apaches had recently passed through the area from trading at Picuríes and Taos (making them Jicarillas, probably), where they exchanged bison products and salt for cotton blankets, pottery, maize, and some turquoise.⁴¹

Nearly two and a half decades later, fray Andres Juarez provided a closer view of this indigenous economy. Juarez was serving as a missionary at Nuestra Santa de Los Angeles, by Pecos pueblo, when he witnessed Apaches approach from the prairie. Pecos pueblo was situated on a mesa near Glorieta Pass, near the headwaters of the Pecos River and removed to the east from the Rio Grande Valley itself. It was a place that existed in the heart of edge landscapes: part Chihuahuan Desert, part Great Plains, part Rio Grande Valley. Faraon Apaches often came to this pueblo to trade.

⁴¹ September 1598, Relation of the Journey of the Cows of Cibola as made by Sergeant Major Vincente Zaldívar Mendoza, Legajo 22, Parte 7, Patronato, AGI, CSWR.

Veronica E. Tiller, "Jicarilla Apache," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, William C. Sturtevant, ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 447.

cf. Thomas A. Britten, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009): 51-53 for the idea that these Apaches were Lipanes, or, less likely, Faraones. Basehart, 19-25.

When they came again in 1622, Juarez noted that they brought their wares stacked on polls that were pulled by little shaggy dogs. Juarez immediately saw that the Puebloan-Apache exchange was mutualistic and lucrative; a trade that provided both parties with food and wares that the other could not easily produce for themselves. This mutualism was not, however, strictly required. Before the introduction of Spanish livestock, Puebloans could usually find protein from the turkey, deer or other small game along the Rio Grande; likewise, Apaches sometimes planted maize for carbohydrates, but their *milpas* were dry-farmed, and were often left unattended until harvest time.⁴²

Even though there was no explicit need for nutritional interdependency, Puebloans and Apaches had chosen to exchange resources for decades, if not centuries. But with the arrival of the Spanish, so too arrived a sense of protectionism that compelled the colonizers to regulate Apaches' access to pueblos, a disruption to the valley-plains trade. Apaches were understandably annoyed. The Spanish, through horses, mules, guns, and other items, diversified and expanded the Rio Grande Valley economy, but then made it difficult for Apaches to participate in the exchange of these attractive new goods. Over time, capricious regulations and outright abuses by the Spanish made Apaches desperate enough to raid, and, later, powerful enough to plunder. The problem was that Spanish protectionism had a fatal flaw: it was almost unenforceable because Spanish governors and Franciscan missionaries could seldom

⁴² Fray Andrés Juárez, 2 October 1622, Pueblo de los Pecos Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles, Legajo 77, Expediente 14, Civil, AGN, CSWR.

Benavides, 55.

Opler, 433.

Katherine A. Spielmann, "Late Prehistoric Exchange Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 28:102 (1983): 268-269.

cf. William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009): 70-72 for the idea that, before the Spanish, there was sufficient rainfall for nomads to dry-farm and for riparian pueblos to attract game, thus obviating the overt need of mutualism.

afford to back up their interference with Puebloan-Apache trade because the colony was too weak. From its inception, riparian empire and its economy seldom yielded as much wealth as the Spanish had hoped; although they would have been loathe to admit it, the Spanish suffered without the plains trade. In response, Faraones forged asymmetrical gains over the Spanish through raiding, and in the process placed the Spanish on unsteady ground. This process—where the Spanish proclaim an exclusive imperial economy only to see it sucked into larger, irresistible indigenous economies—is a theme that we will revisit frequently and in many different places until the late 1780s.

In Oñate's time raiding was already beginning to become an important strategy within the Apache and Spanish-Puebloan relationship. Alonso Benavides, Ginés de Herrera Horta, and Juan de Ortega all commented on the regularity of trade between pueblos and "*Vaqueros*" from the plains, but another of Valverde's 1601 respondents, Marcelo de Espinosa, went one step further. He characterized that trading relationship as one that sometimes devolved into a raid. At these times, Apache fighters typically attacked the pueblo, commanded acquiescence, and took what they wanted or needed. Whereas the entire pueblo population might be caught at home and off guard, Apache women and children remained safe, hidden in nearby mountains.⁴³

The Spanish arrival magnified the Apache impetus to raid, not only for the crops and wares produced by pueblos but also for newly arrived technology and animals from New Spain. Spanish arquebuses and horses were an attractive target to populations who immediately saw their utility within marginal edge landscapes. The Spanish feared that if imperial tools should become widely available to their enemies, then their

⁴³ Hernán Gallegos, 12 May 1602, Patronato.

technological advantage would be neutralized, or erased. Faraones were no less perceptive and soon it became apparent that horses were the leading target of raids. The enhanced mobility that came with these animals would soon refashion the relationship of Apaches and other indigenes with their environments.⁴⁴

In March of 1608 Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco, on behalf of fray Lazaro Jimenez in New Mexico, wrote to King Phillip III in Spain. Unusually, the viceroy's letter was not a cool, level-headed summary of colonial affairs. Rather, his missive was terse, its tone imbued with panic and doubt. New Mexico, it seems, was already imperiled, and Oñate had not even left the Rio Grande yet. The colony was barely 10 years old and already scores of adobes stood in ruins throughout the Middle Rio Grande Valley, burned by the same Apaches who were wont to assault and raid the Spanish and Puebloans. Most alarmingly, horses, the "nerve" of war and domination, had vanished by the herds into the upland landscapes of Apaches. The royal court in Madrid must have also been disturbed by these accounts that hinted at the impending loss of significant investment capital as well as territory. Velasco's request for more soldiers and supplies was approved at breakneck speed. Spanish imperial architects like Oñate, fray Jimenez, and

⁴⁴ D.E. Worcester, "The Spread of Spanish Horses in the Southwest," *New Mexico Historical Review* 19:3 (1944): 225, 227.

Albert H. Schroeder, "Shifting for Survival in the Spanish Southwest," *New Mexico Historical Review* 43:4 (1968): 297.

cf. Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008): 240-241 where Hämäläinen makes a similar case for the importance of horses to the formation and ascendancy of Comanches empire. "The horse was to Comanches what ships, guns, and gold were to European imperial powers—a transportation device that compressed spatial units into conquerable sizes, an instrument of war that allowed them to wield much more power than their numbers would have suggested..." (240). Also v. Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006): 38-39 for the observation that Utes were also empowered by acquisition of horses, after 1692, to begin attacking and raiding neighboring indigenous groups as well as the Spanish. Both Comanches and Utes were enacting a set of practices that they almost certainly learned from Apaches, who had begun to use horses almost 100 years earlier.

the viceroy were under no illusion; they knew that it was by force of guns and horses—and the occasional germ—that so few colonists could, most times, defeat such large numbers of indigenes in battle. This technology edge, however, was already eroding, and to the royal and viceregal courts New Mexico seemed to be crumbling at the same moment that it was forming. The political fantasy of riparian empire was already coming apart when faced with the larger ecological and economic realities of a landscape still dominated by indigenous actors.⁴⁵

By 1610 Oñate had been replaced as governor and New Mexico lingered on as a province dedicated to the missionary effort, heavily subsidized by the rest of New Spain. The poverty of New Mexico soon received regular attention through relief brought by the mission supply service, a caravan that came to New Mexico every three years laden with necessities. Many in New Mexico came to cherish the supply service as a lifeline that connected the interior of New Spain to a province that could barely subsist. But this tenacious measure did not make up for the asymmetries that the Spanish had created for themselves. Thirty-two years later, in 1640, Spanish riparian empire was still being forced to acknowledge indigenous geopolitical imperatives when Apaches stormed down from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains around Santa Fe and attacked horse herds along the Santa Fe River. Raids like this had begun the year before and carried on almost without pause. In 1653, Capitán General Hernando de Ugarte y la Concha struggled to find accomplishment during his decade-long struggle to minimize losses from Apache raids. He complained once in a letter to the king that his men were at a

⁴⁵ Viceroy Luis de Velasco to King Philip III, 6 March 1608, Letter to King Phillip III relaying an account of Fray Lázaro Ximénez, on the constant attack upon the Natives and Spanish of New Mexico by the Apache Indians, Legajo 27, Audiencia de Mexico, AGI, CSWR.

hopeless disadvantage. Apaches were mounted, and had become excellent riders. The only chance he had to punish the raiders came when mounted militia acted quickly, and even then only if they also had enough arquebuses to guarantee a martial advantage. On one particular occasion, Ugarte y la Concha's militia was successful in catching and killing many of the Apaches, and Spanish horses were "captured with valor on the enemy rivers." These "enemy rivers" must be in reference to the Pecos or Canadian River, or to some perennial tributary located at a higher elevation of the Pecos watershed. This is a telling detail. The Rio Grande was clearly privileged by the Spanish, but Ugarte y la Concha's recapture of stolen horses on another, "enemy," river demonstrates that Apaches actively utilized waterways beyond the *rio abajo*—the shunned spaces—and were already deploying those resources against the Spanish of New Mexico.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, this intelligence did not alter how the Spanish countered threats posed by Apaches, or compel them to rethink the riparian focus of their colony. Juan de Medrano lived these lapses firsthand, and he must have been grievously frustrated. Not eight months into his appointment as governor of New Mexico he reported on the dire situation of the colony, in early summer of 1669. In his short time in Santa Fe, 6 soldiers had been killed, a high figure considering the low population of New Mexico at this time and the lack of men-at-arms. Additionally, 300 colonists and 73 Puebloans had been relieved of 2,000 head of horses and 2,000 head of cattle, along with all the nutrition and

⁴⁶ Hernando de Ugarte de la Concha, 13 September 1653, Report concerning the defense of the populations against the attacks of the Apaches, Legajo 37, Parte 5, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

v. The three-part article: France V. Scholes, "The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century," *New Mexico Historical Review* 5:1; 5:2; 5:4 (1930) for a detailed breakdown of the schedule and inventory of the mission supply service.

labor that they represented. Pueblos became so strapped for livestock that Medrano was forced to look to fray Joseph Trujillo, of San Diego de los Jemes mission, to bail out the affected people with a gift of 20 fanegas of unleavened bread, 200 young cattle, and 24 mature cattle. No doubt Apaches had long benefited from Viceroy Francisco Nunez Basurto's *cedula* of 1620—the regulation that required livestock be kept at least 3 leagues (about 8 miles) away from *milpas* and *acequias*. Spanish crowding and the destruction of pasture on the Rio Grande's banks forced these animals into the uplands, and made them easy targets as a commodity that could seldom be attained at the over-regulated trade fairs.⁴⁷

The pressure that Apaches applied over the Middle Rio Grande Valley intensified during the decade leading up to the 1680 revolt. *Custo* Francisco de Ayeta became apoplectic with the “mountain-borne and heathen Apaches” who had ravaged the Tompiro pueblos of the Estancia Basin and the Piro pueblos of the lower Middle Rio Grande Valley to the point of ruin. Before 1672 the Estancia Basin had supported nearly 1,500 families in 5 pueblos: Los Humanos, Chilili, Cuarac, Las Salinas, and Abó. This basin was targeted because it was an eastern outlier of the Rio Grande Valley and because it lay across the northern border of the Siete Rios region, what we now call the Central Closed Basin—a place that had probably become an Apache stronghold by this point. The Central Closed Basin was an arid, enclosed geographical niche that offered nothing to the Spanish, and so became shunned and was consequently available to

⁴⁷ Juan de Medrano, 16 June - 4 July 1669, Reports concerning the incursions of the Apaches, Legajo 1, Parte 2, Documento 32, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico, AGN, CSWR.

Jack D. Forbes, “The Appearance of the Mounted Indian in Northern Mexico and the Southwest, to 1680,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15 (1959): 195-199.
Bloom, 369.

v. Barrett, 65 for a table of approximate populations for New Mexico during the seventeenth century.

upland, nomadic groups. Average rainfall is just less than 14.5 inches and, although it drains nearly 15,000 square miles, the only sources of water are mountain streams that typically percolate or evaporate before they reach the valley floor. Sometimes monsoon rains produce temporary lakes—*playas*—in the depressions of the valley floor. Agriculture and pastoralism on the Spanish scale would have been intensely difficult, or impossible. Another pueblo, belonging to Piro Puebloans, was also destroyed that year: Senecú. Senecú was the southernmost of the Piro pueblos and was situated at the northern gateway to the Jornada del Muerto. It is impossible to know exactly what Apaches were up to with the destruction of these 6 pueblos because most the documentation from these years would soon be lost in the violence of the 1680 revolt, but it is telling that only pueblos that lay on the southern and eastern periphery were targeted, while Pecos pueblo (the easternmost pueblo with long ties to Faraones) passed virtually intact. By all appearances, Faraones were working to isolate New Mexico, to compress it, and to bleed off some of the colony's few precious resources. The year after Ayeta documented these Apache-sponsored removals, 1679, New Mexico erupted in revolt. Apaches participated heavily. One wonders if the destruction of the Tompiro pueblos

and a Piro pueblo were not the early salvos that presaged an indigenous war of extermination upon the Spanish and their collaborators.⁴⁸

An additional irritant to Apaches that may have prompted this escalation in violence was Spanish slave-raiding. As early as 1625 Spanish governors led Puebloan auxiliaries on sporadic raids to the near plains to attack and enslave Apaches for use as laborers within the colony. This practice was officially illegal and was the source of much distress between the Church in New Mexico and the secular governorship. Rare until the late 1650s, Spanish attempts to enslave Apaches intensified in the years immediately preceding the sacking of the Estancia Basin and the 1680 revolt. For example, in 1659 Governor Mendizábal captured scores of Apaches on the plain and sent 70 to work as slaves in Parral, Nueva Vizcaya. The following year Mendizábal sent 30-40 more to Sonora. Finally, in the year of the revolt, 1680, Francisco Xavier lured Faraones to Pecos pueblo with the promise of a trade fair. Once everyone had arrived, Xavier gave the order to attack and captured dozens of Apaches. Some persons he

⁴⁸ *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Vol. II, Charles W. Hackett, ed. (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926): 285-287.

Water Resources in New Mexico, 99-100.

Barrett, 63-65.

v. Carter, 188 for the idea that the destruction of the Tompiro pueblos was perpetrated by Apaches as preparation for the coming revolt.

Faraones had been noted in the Siete Rios as early as 1663, when Nicolás de Aguilar ventured there on an errand from Governor López de Mendizábal to punish them. These Apaches had recently begun attacking the Tompiro pueblo of Cuarac, likely the opening salvos in their long campaign to dismantle Spanish influence there. v. "Case against Nicolás de Aguilar of New Mexico, 1660–January 17, 1664" in *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Vol. III, Charles W. Hackett, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937): 143. This episode, along with the larger career and infamy of Aguilar is detailed in John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002): 118.

cf. Anderson, 27 for the alternate perspective that prolonged drought, and not Apache depredations, caused the abandonment of the Tompiro pueblos. A compelling argument, it nonetheless does not address why so many pueblos that had perviously survived longterm drought found this one onerous enough that such drastic action was required.

enslaved for his personal use; the rest he sent to Parral to his friends. Apaches had plenty of rational, geopolitical reasons to co-opt the economy of New Mexico into their ecotonal spaces, but slave-raiding added a personal dimension to the violence.⁴⁹

People staggered and stumbled down the path. Nearly 1,000 of them; mostly women, children, and men who could not put up much of a fight even if their lives depended on it—as was the case, actually. Surrounded by only skinny and lame horses, and with almost no supplies except for what they carried on their backs, they walked with quiet intensity. They were trying to reach some kind of haven before the ground gave way. It would have been hot, very hot, in August, when temperatures in the northern Chihuahuan Desert climb into the 90s and low 100s. The summer monsoon rains, if they came that day, would have probably dampened their blisters and their meager stores of grain. They trudged along river banks, took some refuge in the stands of cottonwood, willow, pinyon, or juniper, but they dared not linger for long in any one place. They were escaping from horses and harquebuses, but they would not be fast enough. Before long, the roads behind and the hills around would shake with armored horses carrying armored men holding loaded guns. They would have to forsake a

⁴⁹ David M. Brugge, “Captives and Slaves on the Camino Real,” in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Vol. 2, Gabrielle G. Palmer & Stephen L. Fosberg eds. (Santa Fe: BLM, New Mexico State Office, 1999): 104-105.

Carter, 171-173, 188.

v. James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Omohundro Institute, 2002): 49-55 for a treatment of the Spanish slave-trade of Apache bodies. Brooks sees the enslavement of Apaches as a product of the legal protections afforded to Puebloans. Those indigenes were protected under royal decree, and could only be coerced into labor through *encomienda*; Apaches, on the other hand, were not protected by law, although the practice of slave-raiding was. The analytic of captivity does not figure prominently within this study of indigenous counter-territoriality and economy. Of course, captives were always present in Apache *rancherías* and they were an important part of this indigenous economy, but their presence and exchange did not appreciably alter where Apaches chose to go or how they chose to experiment with their environment.

number of their party to the riders. They found themselves on the wrong side of the colonial encounter. The Spanish could barely hope to escape the Apache.

On August 10, 1680 Puebloans and Apaches across Spanish New Mexico rose up as one body and killed friars, colonists, and militia in the pueblos around Santa Fe. Over 400 were killed before Otermín and his lieutenant governor, Alonso Garcia succeeded in escaping from Santa Fe and Isleta, respectively, and leading the nearly 2,000 refugees south to El Paso del Norte, where Ayeta was waiting for them with supply carts that had been previously dispatched for New Mexico. The Spanish had just been expelled from New Mexico, and the Middle Rio Grande Valley would not return to the imperial orbit until Don Diego de Vargas' *reconquista* of 1692. During those twelve years the Spanish fortified their position at El Paso del Norte with what paltry supplies they had with them and with what they were able to wrangle from the parsimonious exchequer. When Spanish empire finally succeeded in returning to Santa Fe in 1692, the strategy of colony and empire had changed fundamentally. The hated *encomienda* system was abolished; Puebloans were freed from slave-labor that kept them impoverished and their own *milpas* untended; and the cultural violence perpetrated by zealous missionaries was curbed so as to not alienate entire indigenous societies.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ For the Pueblo Revolt, see: Andrew L. Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) where Puebloan proximity to and acculturation with the Spanish gave them the will and the knowledge to rise up in the midst of resource abuse and church-state conflict; John Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1987) where the social and cultural abuses of the Spanish Inquisition is the driving stressor upon the abuses already present under rapacious missionary work and insatiable encomenderos; Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); and *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt of 1680?* David J. Weber, ed. (Bedford: St. Martin's, 1999) for a selection of essays on the eponymous event.

For the nature and abuses endemic to the *encomienda*, v. Anderson (1985), 359-362; & Barrett, 68-69.

There is a problem within the historiography, however. Most literature handles the 1680 revolt as a strictly Spanish and Puebloan event that took place wholly within the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but this formulation uses a geographical and political frame that was produced by Spanish colonists to describe a Native-produced moment. The fact that Spanish institutions and observers failed to anticipate or counter the 1680 revolt suggests that the revolt has its roots in peoples and geographies that transcend the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Indeed, historians have recently begun to question if Apaches did not play a much larger role in framing, preparing, and executing the uprising. Apaches had much to gain from the Spanish expulsion from New Mexico (access to horses and guns), less to lose than Puebloans (their habitats were not the site of conflict), and much greater means to inflict pain (they were already mounted). The revolt appears to have had wide ranging implications for the uplands, strengthening the Apache position in ways that were not incidental. Perhaps most important, this was not the first revolt. Apaches and Puebloans had been conspiring for decades to kill or expel the Spanish, but all their pre-1680 attempts had failed. The fact that these prior attempts had taken place—and the nature of those earlier conspiracies—offers a picture of Puebloan and Apache resistance that was both systematic and deeply rooted. This resistance, and Apache contributions to it, expands the meaning of the revolt to include the edge landscapes and the peoples beyond the Rio Grande Valley, and situates it among broader strategies of indigenous counter-claim.⁵¹

⁵¹ v. Carter, 184-186 for the most recent and strongest case for Apache involvement with the Pueblo Revolt. Carter argues that “Apaches...played central roles in Pueblo insurrections throughout the seventeenth century, beginning with rebellions in the Oñate era, and were vital to the success of the 1680 uprising.” The centuries-long alliances that had bound Puebloans to Apaches before Spanish colonialism had not been severed with the coming of New Mexico; rather, the kinships and socio-economic linkages persisted and served as the basis for cooperation, often covert, and conspiracy against the Spanish.

When Otermín finally escaped Santa Fe on August 21, 1680, he had to work hard to guard his nearly 1,000 wards with the few soldiers and mounts left to him. He set out for Isleta, 50 miles south, where he hoped to rendezvous with Alonso Garcia and find reinforcements. Otermín had already survived 11 days at Santa Fe while the revolt raged around him. He had had time while he was besieged to study the situation around him. Soon the governor became chagrined to learn that “Apache infidels” had worked in unison with Puebloans from Taos to Isleta in order to kill every Spanish colonist in New Mexico. But this was intelligence that Otermín was not able to elaborate upon as he was soon forced to flee Santa Fe when the insurgents sabotaged Santa Fe’s *acequia*. The road south was treacherous. A few days after leaving Santa Fe, Otermín ran into a group of mounted Natives herding a large number of animals on the opposite bank of the Rio Grande. When one of his soldiers approached to learn their identity, they fired on the soldiers with harquebuses, whereupon more mounted Natives appeared, also armed, and many more on foot. Otermín gave the signal and the retreat hastened southward, but the Spanish were harassed for several more leagues.⁵²

Similar accounts of the revolt across New Mexico echo the usage of horses and guns by insurgents. *Alcaldes* (councilmen), also from Santa Fe, despaired that pueblos, missions, and *encomiendas* were all looted. These Spanish could only watch in anguish as valuable horses, cattle, and guns were whisked away into the steep and impassable mountains around. They could not imagine putting up a fight against well-armed and

⁵² Antonio de Otermín, 21 August 1680, Report of the battle wherein 300 Indians dies; of the Puebloans confederation with Apaches; of the total dearth of Spanish and Religious from Taos to Isleta over 51 leagues; and the Order of the Governor to reunite with other survivors at Isleta before the next attack, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Antonio de Otermín, 24 August 1680, Report of the Governor on the successes, injuries and deaths at Santo Domingo while en route south from Santa Fe, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

positioned Apaches when all that had been left to them were skinny horses and poor firearms. Powerfully, these *alcaldes* lamented that over the course of 80 years of dealing with the Spanish, Apaches had become so agile on horses and well-versed in harquebuses that they dominate the landscape “from Veracruz to Sonora.” Hyperbole aside, the sentiment that their enemy was so powerful and wide-ranging is not surprising. Accounts like these, drawn from the immediate moment of an incredible shift in the geopolitics of the region, drill home the argument that Puebloans and Apaches, but Apaches in particular, had long been co-opting and learning Spanish technology in a protracted bid to make counter-claims to territory and economy. Apaches used the tools of empire to tighten their grip over the upland landscapes and to project their own political economy over the Middle Rio Grande Valley.⁵³

Almost a week before Otermín abandoned Santa Fe, Lieutenant Governor Alonso Garcia panicked at Isleta pueblo. By August 14, only four days into the revolt, he had received shaky intelligence that led him to suspect Otermín was already dead and that Santa Fe had been overrun. He immediately prepared his troops, as well as colonists and willing Puebloans to travel south to meet *Custo Ayeta* with the supply carts from the Holy Office. In the south, from a position of safety, Garcia hoped to resupply and take stock of his options. The lieutenant governor was afraid for his life, but that fear had less to do with possible Puebloan attack than Apachean. He knew that he was legally obliged to remain in New Mexico until officially ordered or relieved, but he did so anyway, and justified his actions by referencing Apaches as “those who give us

⁵³ Francisco de Velasco, et al., 3 October 1680, Declaration of the *alcaldes* concerning the uprising; that on August 9 they took up arms; petition to the king and viceroy for aid for the refugee families to the south, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

D.E. Worcester, (1944), 232.

war.” Recent intelligence from northwards had convinced Garcia that Apaches had used the revolt as an opportunity to seize 150 harquebuses with enough powder and shot to pose a definite risk to Spanish forces. In addition to guns, Garcia reckoned that Apaches had enough horses and enough cattle to support a four month siege of Isleta pueblo, should he be trapped there.⁵⁴

So he fled, and ten days later he was not much better off. Around the Piro pueblo of Socorro he stopped to take stock of his situation. The refugee party felt that Apache eyes were on them constantly at Socorro, roaming the banks that bordered the Magdalena Mountains to the west and the southern tip of the Manzano Mountains to the northeast. Socorro would not have been a difficult place to reach for Apaches who had spent time in the Central Closed Basins and who had recently depopulated the Estancia Basin to the north. Coming from the southern Great Plains or the Pecos River basins, they would have encountered virtually no resistance since the Spanish were in full retreat. At some point, a Puebloan from Jemez, undoubtedly a prisoner, was brought before Alonso Garcia for interrogation. The Puebloan refused to answer questions, but instead sang a song about the eventual victory of the Puebloans and the slaughter of all the Spanish. This demonstration of indigenous pride, confidence, and disregard visibly shook the refugees. Instead of fearing Puebloan assault, however, the group of friars, women, children, and men feared Apaches most of all. As he prepared to continue the journey to El Paso del Norte, Alonso’s agitation took on fantastic qualities. The *camino real* was said to have shaken under the weight of mounted “infidel Indians”—the term used to denote Apaches. While Spanish women and children doubled over with pain

⁵⁴ Alonso Garcia, 14 August 1680, Letter of the Maestre de Campo and Lt. Governor explaining his actions, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

from hunger, the Apaches—like “demon weeds” sown into the land—seemed to sprout from the earth as some kind of chthonic doom.⁵⁵

This image is powerful. The idea of the earth trembling with Apaches who choke the land like weeds exposes the fragility of Spanish fantasies about empire and their own position in the ecoregion. The cumulative impact of violence and privation suffered during the previous eighty years, topped off by a revolt that fell like a hammer stroke, must have made the Spanish feel isolated and weak. Since 1672 the Spanish had been hemmed in from the east and the south with the taking of the Estancia Basin and the destruction of many Piro pueblos; now, eight years later, they were being squeezed out altogether. It is profound the way that Alonso’s language inverts the typical ways we think about European-Native relationships in the early years of contact. Instead of Puebloans fearing horses and scuttling away to hide or put up puerile resistance, it is the Spanish who feared horses and the guns, and who desperately sought refuge as the net seemed to close all around them. Apaches were close competitors of the Spanish, and they required only a small edge of revolt and displacement to level the playing field, or even tilt it to their favor.⁵⁶

The usage of “demon weeds” as an analogy is also fascinating in regards to the evolving geopolitics of New Mexico. Catholic faith provided the Spanish with a preferred model for how the world would look, work, and serve them. The continual referencing of Apaches as infidels hints that Franciscan inability to induce these nomadic populations into mission lifestyles made them dangerous outsiders whose very existence, let alone

⁵⁵ Alonso Garcia, 24 August 1680, Continuation of the letter of the Maestre de Campo regarding the preparations made to help those fleeing the Rio Arriba, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

⁵⁶ Thomas F. Schilz & Donald E. Worcester, “The Spread of Firearms among the Indian Tribes on the Northern Frontier of New Spain,” *American Indian Quarterly* 11 (1987): 1-2.

actions, imperiled the colony. By conferring the title of “demon” indirectly onto Apaches, via the analogy, Alonso empowers their presence in history by identifying them as the arch-foes of the Spanish, immortal and ubiquitous, evenly set against all their efforts at “civilization” and “faith.” The lieutenant governor was merely being flippant when he used the term “weeds” to describe Apaches. He was probably just trying to denigrate their humanity and to place them firmly outside of civilized society. Nevertheless, this term resonates ecologically. Given the troubled environmental base upon which the riparian empire had built itself, the meaning of “weeds” is doubly significant. Weeds, after all, are not cultivated but grow naturally over a variety of landscapes, and often choke out more desired flora if unchecked. As such, Garcia’s statement can be read as a suggestion that the sudden ascendancy of Apaches as “weeds” points to a broader rebuttal of Spanish environmental practices: that irrigation, agriculture, and pastoralism had faltered, perhaps fatally. Garcia phrasing augurs that the Apaches who inhabited the northern Chihuahuan Desert and the southern Great Plains would continue to compete ecologically, politically, and economically with Spanish designs through their “weed”-like influence.

Garcia had good reason to believe that Apaches would continue to meddle and interfere with Spanish empire and colony. After all, they already had. Revolts and conspiracies had been attempted before. They had been found out and quashed just as the 1680 revolt itself had almost been put down. (Originally, it had been scheduled to commence on August 11, 1680, but Otermín had been made aware of it on August 9, so insurgents induced revolt the very next day.) Since at least the 1640s a pattern of Puebloan-Apache complicity repeatedly tried to find ways to exterminate and remove

the Spanish. The fact that the 1680 revolt succeeded and the previous attempts failed is immaterial to the observation that in every case there was Apache complicity. Whatever internal political and social squabbling may have occurred within the Rio Grande between the pueblos and the missions and presidios, it was clearly not insulated or hidden from the view of the larger ecoregion. Apache participation means that the uplands were concerned and involved in reshaping the riparian settlements to serve broader geopolitical ends.

The evidence for pre-1680 attempted revolts is scattered. But as early as the governorship of Don Fernando de Arguéllo, in the year 1645, there had been conspiratorial rumblings. That year Arguéllo had whipped, buried, and hanged twenty-nine Puebloans in the pueblo of Jemez for confederating with Apaches to target and kill Spanish targets. Not ten years later, in 1650, during the time of General Hernando de Ugarte de la Concha, there were hanged many Puebloans from Isleta, Alameda, San Felipe, Cochiti, and Jemez for likewise confederating with the Apaches. That plot was bold, and illuminating. Certain Puebloans contrived to earn the trust of Spanish pastoralists so that they would hand over a herd of mares for safe-keeping. The Puebloans were then to deliver those horses to Apaches in order to make a general mounted assault on the colony. But a presidial, Captain Alonso Baca, followed the Puebloans and found them out, thus giving the Spanish ample time to preempt the revolt. Sergeant Diego López de Zambrano, a contributor to this account, noted that the 1650 conspiracy was especially dangerous because of the possible delivery of horses—the “principal nerve of war”—to Apaches. Some time later, another conspiracy unfolded during the governorship of Fernando Villanueva (1665-1668), but it came to naught and

nine Puebloans were hanged for helping Apaches stage ambushes. They operated from the Magdalena Mountains (near the Piro pueblos), and killed five of the Spanish before they were stopped. Unfortunately, Zambrano provided no other specific information about this incident.⁵⁷

These conspiracies did not mature much past the planning stages, and much of their primary documentation was lost when Santa Fe was burned during the 1680 revolt, making it impossible to accurately estimate their scope, character, and intent. Nevertheless, these conspiracies demonstrate a linkage between Apache and Puebloan resistance in seventeenth century New Mexico. The similarity between the earlier conspiracies and the 1680 revolt cannot be understated. Apaches, horses, and mountains formed a constellation of factors that were necessary to any assault on the Spanish position. It is likely that Puebloans would not have attempted to fight the Spanish if they did not have at least some guarantee from Apaches that there would be aid and refuge in the mountain havens that had for so long thwarted militia. Read this way, the fact that the Spanish were ousted for twelve years becomes almost incidental in light of Apaches' extended efforts to isolate the Middle Rio Grande Valley and to reorient its economy towards their own geopolitical claims. Such was ostensibly the

⁵⁷ When the revolt kicked off and the Spanish fled, archives in Santa Fe and missions were looted and a tremendous amount of documentation was lost. Although first hand documentation of these earlier conspiracies is lacking, in the immediate aftermath of the revolt Otermín, with *Custo Ayeta*, conducted numerous interviews in order to understand the nature and scope of the rebellion, as well as its history. The evidence for much of these early conspiracies and would-be revolts comes from:

Antonio Otermín, 20 December 1681, Interrogation by the Governor of the Maestre de Campo, don Juan Dominguez de Mendoza regarding what happened in Cieneguilla de Cochiti with the rebel Indians and about the Indian uprisings that occurred in the times of prior governors, Legajo 26, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Antonio Otermín, 22 December 1681, Continuation of the interrogation of Sergeant Diego Lopez de Zambrano and the details of the uprising under Governor General Concha, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Carter, 173-174.

point in 1645 and 1650, and during Villanueva's tenure, and such was the still the point in 1680.

When Otermín labored up the *camino real* late in 1681 he was trying to reintegrate a a lost province that was built upon a geopolitical fantasy. New Mexico represented over eighty years of colonial investment, and the Spanish were loathe to imagine that their mission churches, proselytized Puebloans, and all their irrigated *milpas* and herds were lost forever. But when Otermín made his doomed *entrada*, he modeled it on the *entradas* that had preceded him by exactly 100 years. Of course, the Rodriguez-Chamuscado party had included only 12 men, whereas Otermín had nearly 300, but traveling over landscapes that offered only marginal resources with large retinues was hardly an innovation. The character of Otermín's *entrada* demonstrates that the Spanish had learned almost nothing from 100 years of exploration and 82 years of colony of the ecological and geopolitical realities that permeated the northern Chihuahuan Desert and the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Early Spanish invaders had perceived the desert and the valley as two distinct landscapes that could be divorced and engaged individually, when in fact the entire area had long since functioned as one edge landscape of engagement and exchange. But Spanish missionaries and *vecinos* were singularly interested in investing in those areas where they could convert sedentary peoples to Catholicism, and practice *acequia* agriculture and pastoralism simultaneously—the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Their focus on riparian landscapes produced a riparian empire—an anomalous construct that did not fit the indigenous world into which it was dropped. The consequences of this fantasy were manifold and severe.

The revolt of 1680 was only the clearest indication of the political and economic price that the Spanish were constantly paying.

The world beyond the Middle Rio Grande Valley, although implicitly shunned by Spanish disinterest, would not be ignored and it frequently bumped into the economies and societies of the Rio Grande. These 'bumps' came, periodically, in the form of trade fairs involving plains groups, or they came, more frequently, by way of raids that emanated from the many mountain ranges that bordered and defined the Rio Grande Basin. The Spanish were at a loss to respond to challenges to their vision of geopolitical landscape. The colonizers had put their full faith in the perceived fecundity of the Rio Grande watershed as a source of water that would allow them to sow crops, raise livestock, and become economically self-sufficient. The Middle Rio Grande Valley, however, carried many features of the arid Chihuahuan Desert, and the Spanish quickly realized that they were dependent on a watershed that was more frequently mired in drought than not. Still, these grave miscalculations about the ecological profile of the area went uncorrected for as long as Spanish New Mexico existed, with the result that powerful asymmetries found their way into the basic architecture of the empire. These asymmetries, in turn, produced opportunities for Apaches, specifically Faraon Apaches, to exploit Spanish empire and to seize upon the tools of empire at an early date.

As the seventeenth century came to a close and the eighteenth approached, the Spanish were consumed with the question of their failure in 1680 and with the riddle of how to regain their lost province. Apaches meanwhile continued to use the northern Chihuahuan Desert and its edge landscapes as a place to experiment economically and to create new sense of geopolitics and territoriality. Faraones had seen in New Mexico

an extension of European imperial economy that was weak, and that was vulnerable to indigenous counter-claims. They seized the moment and initiated a set of processes that would soon carry them deeper into the Chihuahuan Desert, closer to New Spain, and nearer to a redoubtable Apachería.

Chapter 2

Invasion: Faraon Reconquista and Spanish Interregnum Reinterpreted

Antonio Otermín sat inside a small adobe room within the battered pueblo of Isleta. He was far from the governor's residence in Santa Fe—his ultimate destination—and he knew that he would not get there. It was late December of 1681 and the first serious frosts of winter picked at the landscape. Otermín must have been annoyed and, almost certainly, miserable. In August of the previous year Puebloans across the Middle Rio Grande Valley had united and made a spectacular surprise attack on the Spanish, forcing them to flee south to El Paso del Norte. Humiliated and furious, Otermín had lobbied the viceregal court for guns and supplies and, having got them, began his attempted *reconquista* of New Mexico in November of 1681. Success and victory, however, never materialized, and Puebloans were only slightly less indignant towards the Spanish as they were in August of 1680. His *entrada* had already come apart at the seams. Hunkered down fifteen miles south of present-day Albuquerque, Otermín could only look northward wistfully. In a tepid attempt to save face, he abandoned the original mandate of the *entrada* and used his time at Isleta to interrogate Puebloans for fresh intelligence, perhaps hoping to gain information for a future *entrada*. In addition, he sent *Maestre de Campo* (Field Marshall) Juan Domínguez de Mendoza out on a misguided campaign north into the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but that failed as well. Soon

Dominguez returned and there was no one left to interrogate, and so he turned back south, back to the refugee camp that was El Paso—empty-handed.

Otermín soon came to the northern edge of the Jornada del Muerto. He departed from the ruined pueblo of Senecu on January 19, 1682, but he was no more the master of the Jornada than he had been two months earlier. For days he lumbered with his carts and struggled with buckled loads that became mired in snow. His party found little surface water for two weeks (typically, precipitation at this time and place equaled less than a third of an inch). Instead, man and beast scrounged the ground for snow to melt. Thirty-seven pack-mules and seven soldiers' horses went lame because of the loads that they bore during this punishing time of year. Daytime temperatures probably reached no higher than the low 50s, Fahrenheit, while at night temperatures fell into the 20s or the 10s. Whatever pasturage there was would have been buried underneath this snow and required time and work to dig out. And even if they managed to find feed for the horses, these grasses were dormant, and protein and minerals were lacking. Spanish travelers typically tried to take no more than 24 hours to cross the Jornada del Muerto, but Otermín took much longer. For over two weeks he journeyed across the waterless and treeless plain until, on February 4, he emerged and started for the Órganos Mountains (located just north of present day Las Cruces, New Mexico).¹

¹ Antonio de Otermín, 19 January 1682, Report of the march to the south from Senecu to San Cristobal and through Jornada del Muerto, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

W. Scott Morris, et al., *New Mexico Climate Manual: Solar and Weather Data: Final Report* (Albuquerque: New Mexico Energy Research and Development Institute, 1985): 472.

J. Daniel Rodgers & Thadis W. Box, "Seasonal Protein Content of Four Southern Mixed Prairie Grasses," *Journal of Range Management* 20:3 (1967): 177.

Dan Scurlock, "Through Desierto and Bosque: The Physical Environment of El Camino Real," in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Vol. 1 (Santa Fe: BLM, New Mexico State Office, 1993): 10 holds that carts traveled an average of 12 miles a day on the *camino real*. That it took Otermín 14 days to make the 90 miles meant that he was traveling much more slowly, at about 6.5 miles per day, over a stretch that most Spanish spurred their animals to cross in 48 hours.

Otermín left the main body of his expedition to investigate the Órganos. He needed to find fuelwood to alleviate the hypothermic condition of his men and animals. The snow covered plain of the Jornada del Muerto had offered nothing to the expedition, and over those two weeks they must have depleted their own stores while they tried to stay warm in the sub-freezing temperatures. But he also planned to search the Órganos for timber that would serve as building material at El Paso del Norte. The *entrada* a failure, Otermín must have sensed that the Spanish presence at El Paso del Norte would last much longer than he had reckoned, and that it was prudent to begin scouting for resources that would make El Paso more sustainable. But disappointment heaped upon disappointment, and he spent only three days in the mountains before returning to his expedition with news that only a few pines, almost certainly Ponderosa Pine, were on those rugged slopes, nearly inaccessible and inadequate anyway for Spanish purposes.²

Otermín resumed his march but almost immediately had to pause near a place called Estero Largo (near present-day Las Cruces). His animals were fatigued and could travel no further. It was probably just as well since he needed to await the coming of five carts and seventeen cattle that he had left straggling along the path coming out of the Jornada. The waters of the Rio Grande were again within sight, and the refuge of El Paso del Norte lay close at hand. During this intermission, Otermín might have pondered how he would form his report for the viceroy and the *junta general* (the viceregal court). “New Mexico” was no more in Spanish hands after the 1681 *entrada*

² Antonio de Otermín, 1 February 1682, Report of turning from the place of Robledo to encounter the Rio Grande; arrival at the place of Doña Ana; departure of the governor to the Órganos to look for wood, but finding nothing good, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

than it was on August 11, 1680. Suddenly a rider appeared on the frozen horizon, coming towards them at a gallop. This lone horseman was no raider, however, but a messenger who soon arrived in the camp. Dutifully, he delivered news from the royal settlement of San Lorenzo, where most of the Spanish survivors were concentrated, about 32 miles south of El Paso del Norte. Dated January 3, 1682, fray Nicolas Hurtado wanted Otermín to know that Apaches had come while the governor was away, and that they had taken 200 animals from the refugees.³

Before Otermín could rush back to San Lorenzo to launch missives to Mexico City for more supplies and men enough for a presidio, he most likely had another thought: the Órganos. The Órganos Mountains, standing almost as a turret over the southern access point of the Jornada del Muerto and the northern Chihuahuan Desert generally, held much more than just pine trees. Although Otermín had not found the wood and timber he sought, a cave set into the mountain caught his eye. He approached cautiously. Though abandoned, the governor found recently snuffed campfires across the floor. Evidence of *rancherías* appeared everywhere around the Spanish, doubtlessly alerting them to their danger. The guides confirmed what Otermín had suspected upon setting out for the mountain: Apaches had been there, and recently—perhaps the very same ones who had raided El Paso del Norte. It seems Otermín had just missed them.

This final detail about Otermín *entrada* and the events at San Lorenzo suggests that Apaches were present south of the Jornada del Muerto and down around El Paso

³ Otermín, 1 February 1682, Report that in Estero Largo the troop received notice from *Custo* fray Nicolas Hurtado had stolen their cattle, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

del Norte. Apache activity like this was unheard of before 1680, and so its occurrence so close on the heels of the Pueblo Revolt raises important questions: How did Apaches insert themselves into a new geopolitical setting so far from Rio Grande Valley places, like Pecos and Taos pueblos? Why had Apaches bothered to follow the Spanish? If the point of the 1680 revolt had been to punish the Spanish, or to expel them from Middle Rio Grande Valley, then had success not already been attained? Finally, what does it mean that Apaches migrated south and continued their raiding campaigns of the seventeenth century? The entire sequence of events had a cryptic and mysterious air about it. Otermín had not been at San Lorenzo on January 3 to witness the raid on cattle, nor did he cross paths with the dwellers of the Órganos mountains. Yet the episode was also deeply familiar: Raiders had appeared from nearby mountain heights, struck *haciendas* and *ranchos* quickly, and withdrew to those same montane havens before a Spanish counter-attack could be mounted. This event could just as easily have occurred at Santa Fe or Santo Domingo pueblo instead of San Lorenzo. Although the Spanish had fled New Mexico to escape indigenous violence, certain elements haunted them.

Still, this detail of Apache presence around El Paso—so soon after the 1680 revolt—has not received extensive treatment in scholarship. Instead, historians have tended to analyze other important topics, such as the Spanish-Puebloan dynamic within the shifting balance of power between secular and religious authority. As the Spanish learned more and more about the 1680 revolt, consensus quickly formed that antagonisms perpetrated by zealous friars upon Puebloan religiosity must shoulder a hefty portion of blame for creating the crisis. *Encomiendas* and the abusive labor

practices that often prevailed on them also came under fire as a cause of the revolt, but that problem was handily solved by simply outlawing what had become a feudal practice. Arguments like these make valuable contributions: they track the changing relationship that colonizers formed with the colonized in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and mark off a defining moment in the way that the Spanish altered the ways in which they imagine empire. Because of them, we have better understanding of how Puebloans and the Spanish alike adjusted their expectations of the colonial encounter and entered into new, if still asymmetrical, systems of reciprocity as the eighteenth century approached. Two of the shortcomings of this approach, however, are that only a few moments of the interregnum receive analysis (the beginning and end), and—even though the Spanish had just transitioned to an entirely new landscape at El Paso—the geographical focus remains fixed on the Middle Rio Grande Valley.⁴

What happens if we take a deeper look at what was happening around El Paso during the interregnum? If we linger a bit longer at places like the Órganos Mountains, the Hueco Basin (the basin that houses El Paso), and the Rio Grande *downriver* from the refugee Spanish, then another narrative begins to emerge. It is a narrative that

⁴ For historiography that privileges the Spanish-Puebloan dynamic, v. John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier: 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); John Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Washington D.C.: National Parks Service, Department of the Interior, 1979); Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); & Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), specifically for the Julime-Spanish dynamic.

cf. William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009); Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); & Maria F. Wade, *The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau: 1582-1799* (Austin: UT Press, 2003) for more modern arguments that more closely approximate mine: that Apaches predated the Spanish in the Trans-Pecos and that the choices that they made largely defined the developmental trajectories that were available.

Carter, 184-185.

H. Allen Anderson, "The *Encomienda* in New Mexico, 1598-1680," *New Mexico Historical Review* 60:4 (1985): 372.

complements and enriches analyses of Spanish-Puebloan dynamics by highlighting the importance of the interregnum for Apaches, who were then still vigorously exploring the best ways to negotiate the colonial encounter. Those twelve years, it turns out, reflected a period of Spanish declension *at the same time* that it signaled the ascendancy of Apache power throughout the Trans-Pecos, the northernmost ecoregion of the Chihuahuan Desert. Until 1680, Apaches had exploited the ecologically inferior position of the Spanish riparian empire from upland places that they had called home for decades, if not centuries. After the revolt, it appears that they did something entirely new: they capitalized on the interregnum to begin reconnoitering and counter-discovering the Chihuahuan Desert, reversing the directionality of empire. The years 1680 to 1692 represent the beginnings of Apachería, that Apache-produced territory that existed where xeric ecology and creative indigenous adaptability intersected.⁵

Reports from captured or errant Puebloans during Otermín's interrogations of 1681 paint a picture of aggressive Apache exploitation. Immediately following the 1680 revolt, Faraones intensively raided Piro and Tompiro pueblos, just north of the Jornada del Muerto. These pueblos had already been sacked in the early 1670s by Apaches, and their worth as raiding targets could not have been great. Nevertheless, Faraones would have had political and geographical reasons to raze as much of them as they

⁵ v. Colin Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003): 11 for the notion that Native-created ideas of space, mapping, and territory need to be heavily weighted as historians of the West and the borderlands seek to enlarge the membership and geographical reach of their analyses.

Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nation: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 25-26.

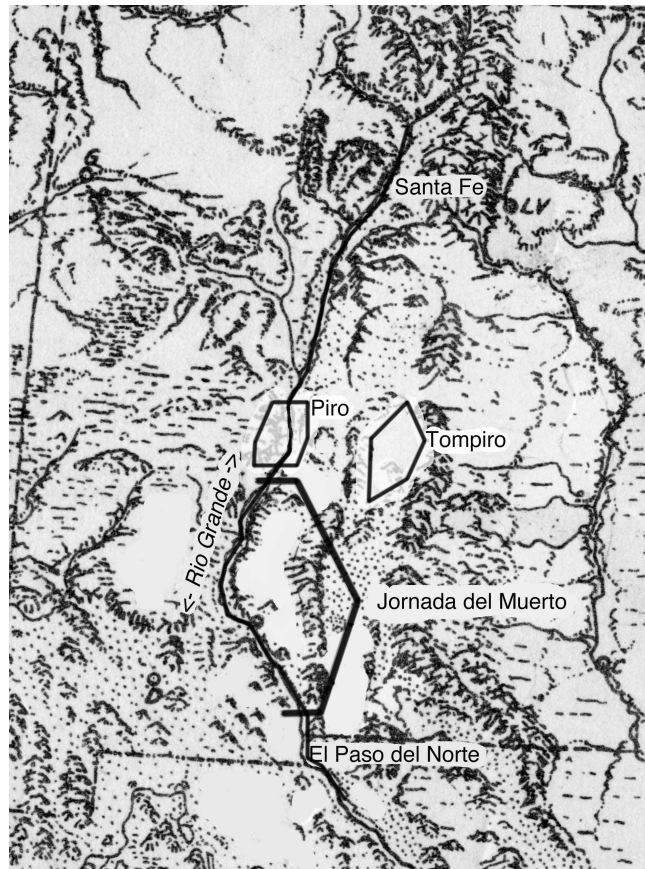
Carter, 199.

Anderson, 3-4, 117 for the ways that riparian empire in the seventeenth century contributed to the decline of Spanish and Puebloan societies alike, but left room for dispersed nomadic groups to advance.

could. Historically, Piro and Tompiro pueblos had cooperated closely with the Spanish. During the worst days of the rebellion, for example, when Lieutenant Governor Alonso Garcia fled south with a mob of colonists, these pueblos had sheltered them for a few days while they gathered the strength to press on. Geographically, these pueblos were closest to the Spanish at El Paso, and thus were the nearest places where the Spanish might re-invade and gain a fresh foothold to the valley. Faraones wiped these places and, in the process, assured that an attempt at Spanish re-entry would be vastly more difficult. In addition, they reestablished trading relationships among the northern Tiwas, most notably those around Taos pueblo, and the Towas, around Jemez and Pecos pueblos. In the years before 1680 trade had been restricted by a complex maze of laws and regulations issued by Spanish secular authorities; with the Spanish gone, indigenous peoples could reform markets that were defined by their own cultural mores. In this economic revitalization, Faraones joined the Jicarillas, their Athapaskan-speaking kin, who dwelled north and east of Taos into present-day central Colorado.⁶

⁶ v. Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974): 93-96 for overview on the importance of a raiding economy to Faraones.

Forbes (1960), 164, 188-190.



Map 7: The Jornada del Muerto and Location of Piro and Tompiro Pueblos.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Meanwhile, the fragile inter-pueblo cooperation that had made the revolt feasible quickly unraveled. The nominal leader, Popé, soon became despotic and was deposed and killed. In his place two leaders arose, Tupatú and Alonso Catití, although Tupatú seemed to enjoy slightly greater authority. This change in leadership, however, could not allay the effects of a severe drought that struck in 1681 and lasted until 1686. The fields and herds of pueblos diminished and people began to starve. Normally, pueblos held stores of food as a safeguard against eventualities such as this drought, but the valley had for years been operating at a deficit where *encomenderos* and friars took far more than Puebloans could produce. As grains harvests fell, Apache-Puebloan trade fairs

suffered, and these two groups began to turn on each other in their efforts to find enough material to support the societies and economies that they had developed while the mission supply service still ran.⁷

By 1681, then, long-term drought had made the effects of the violent rebellion painfully felt across the valley. Faraon raiding along Piro and Tompiro places had further reduced the number of sites that might produce grains or raise livestock. Yet it was Otermín's *entrada*, ironically, that most likely tipped the region into ruin and invited Faraones, in a way, farther into the Trans-Pecos. During the governor's marches along the Rio Grande pueblos, he had ordered the destruction of all stores of maize, so that rebels and Apaches could not use them. Otermín ecologically and economically damaged the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Faraones watched this happen, and then they watched Otermín return south. They followed him back to fresh colonial settlements like El Paso del Norte or Casas Grandes, where Spanish materials and livestock could be found aplenty.⁸

Otermín's *entrada* northward in 1681 reads like a catalogue of desertion and ruination, but it also provides the first post-1680 clues that Faraones were counter-invading territory south of their usual habitat in the southern Great Plains. Just before the crush of winter, in late November, Otermín exited the Jornada del Muerto to reach

⁷ Jane C. Sanchez, "Spanish-Indian Relations During the Otermín Administration, 1677-1683," *New Mexico Historical Review* 58:2 (1983): 133.

Dan Scurlock, *From the Rio to the Sierra: An Environmental History of the Middle Rio Grande Basin* (Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1998): 24-27.

⁸ Antonio de Otermín, 1 January 1682, Auto de determinación de pareceres de la Junta de Guerra al virrey. Otermín manda que se lleven consigo a los indios de Isleta con todo lo que puedan cargar, y que se queme el pueblo y todo lo que quede en él una vez hayan salido, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

the Piro pueblo of Senecu, located on the western side of the Rio Grande. He found it ruined and littered with corpses—at least some appeared mutilated. He surveyed the wreckage of the church, noted the desecration of the host and the structure, and then he ordered the march to resume. Before long he encountered similar conditions at the now-ruined pueblos of San Pasqual, Socorro, Alamillo, and Sevilleta. He was forced to seek shelter in these ruined pueblos, where he and his men were surrounded by horse tracks that were rumored to belong to Apaches. The hoof-prints were fresh and served as a constant reminder to the Spanish that they were never alone, and that their mounted adversaries watched them from nearby. Only when he drew near to the pueblo of Isleta on December 5 did he find signs of life. Warily, Otermín divided seventy men into four squadrons and approached the pueblo at dawn. Their harquebuses were loaded, cocked, and ready to fire. The Spanish were unused to a leveled playing field, and Otermín's abundance of caution is telling. From the time of Oñate until 1680 the Spanish had come and gone from pueblos with impunity, and without fear of assault. But the geopolitical landscape had convulsed in the past fifteen months, and fear and doubt now nettled their confidence. Otermín was reluctant to approach what might be an *ad hoc* Apache campsite, or more rebel Puebloans.⁹

⁹ Antonio de Otermín, 26 November 1681, Report of the advance of the troops to the pueblo of Senecu, that was found ruined and deserted with Apache tracks all around, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Antonio de Otermín, 27 November 1681, Report of the advance of the troop to San Pascual; footprints of Apaches; the following day the advance to the pueblo of Socorro, deserted, and its church burned, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Antonio de Otermín, 30 November 1681, Report of the difficult road from Socorro to the pueblo of Alamillo, thick with snow; Alamillo deserted and its church burned, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Michael P. Marshall & Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984): 252-253 and generally for geographic information on pueblos.

His forces fanned out and blockaded the pueblo, covering the routes to the uplands as well as up and down the river. When the light of dawn began to reveal the world beyond the pueblo's walls, the Isletans inside gave a cry and unleashed a volley of arrows. None of the shafts pierced the Spanish and, seemingly in the next breath, the besieged recognized the Spanish, checked their fire, and welcomed them. The governor of New Mexico was understandably irritated at being attacked and demanded answers once inside the pueblo. Isletan leaders immediately apologized for making an attack on Otermín, and excused themselves by claiming, suspiciously, that they had mistaken the Spanish for Apache raiders. The Spanish soon understood that Faraones had been particularly active around the pueblo recently and had menaced its people on numerous occasions. Otermín believed, them, but just to be sure he relieved the Puebloans of their bows and arrows. This event occurred quickly—in the space of minutes—and one gets the sense that disaster was only narrowly averted. If we clear away the misidentification and the hastiness, and elaborate on the factors that motivated Isletans, then what insights can we gain about Faraones and the changes in the geopolitical landscape?¹⁰

The first clue came as soon as Otermín and Ayeta entered Isleta. To their horror, they discovered that the pueblo had been sheltering its cattle in the ruins of a mission church. The Spanish rebuked the Isletans severely for this practice, as it was a gross sacrilege to their Catholic faith. Indeed, it seems strange that Isletans would repurpose the church as a make-shift corral given the fact that the pueblo sat on the western bank

¹⁰ Antonio de Otermín, 2 December 1681, Report of the march in the area of Acomilla; the passage by the pueblo of Sevilleta, deserted because of fear of Apaches; the dispatch of 70 men by the governor to Isleta, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

of the Rio Grande, where pasturage should have been plentiful. *Bouteloua eriopoda* and *Bouteloua gracilis* would have grown in the uplands, above the floodplain, while along the riparian sections desert saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) would have thrived. As its name implies, saltgrass is a grass species that is suited to the increased alkalinity that is often found along rivers such as the Rio Grande. Alkaline conditions prevailed wherever the river rose above its banks and then receded; after the flood waters evaporated or percolated sodium remained that eventually formed a share of the soil profile. Typical grama grasses would have withered there, but not saltgrass. This is an unlikely explanation, however. Desert grasses are known for being drought-tolerant and that Isletans almost certainly did not possess enough cattle to overgraze anyway. Rather, the most likely reason for keeping cattle in the church had geopolitical, not ecological, roots.¹¹

Francisco de Ayeta caught a glimpse of that geopolitical causality. Sensing the impending failure of the *entrada*, he began interviewing Isletans and gathering intelligence late in December of 1681. He knew that the viceroyalty would be furious that Otermín had met with disaster considering the expense on supplies and men, and that the court would demand an explanation. Ayeta found that most people across the Middle Rio Grande Valley regretted the revolt, but not out of love or fealty towards the Spanish. Puebloans still remembered well abuses at the hands of *encomenderos* and

¹¹ *Ibid.*

D.J. Hansen et al., "Ecological Adaptations of Salt Marsh Grass, *Distichlis spicata* (Gramineae), and Environmental Factors Affecting its Growth and Distribution," *American Journal of Botany* 63:5 (1976): 647-648.

James E. Sherow, "Workings of the Geodialectic: High Plains Indians and Their Horses in the Region of the Arkansas River Valley, 1800-1870," *Environmental History Review* 16:2 (1992): 69-71.

S. Miyamoto, et al., *Landscape Plant Lists for Salt Tolerance Assessment* (El Paso: Texas A&M University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 2004): 4.

vicious individuals like *Maestre de Campo* Francisco Xavier. (Ironically, Xavier was then at Isleta and it was to him that Ayeta dictated his thoughts. His presence aggravated Isletans greatly.) Puebloans rather expressed that they regretted the revolt because newly armed and mounted Apaches were in the habit of surrounding them and enacting “atrocities” and “maladies” upon them. The Spanish had been a buffer against these kinds of attacks, but now pueblos like Isleta were naked in their defense. It must have hurt Ayeta’s pride to hear that most Puebloans still preferred that the Spanish stay expelled, even if Apaches sometimes treated them like slaves and took women and children at will.¹²

Perhaps it was pride, and disbelief in Spanish inequity, that led Francisco Ayeta to dismiss many of these reports. He believed that this pandemic fear of Apaches was a smokescreen, merely designed to be exculpatory of Puebloan reluctance to be rid of whatever biblical demon must have possessed them to become apostate. He took as evidence the recalcitrance of nearby pueblos to treat with Otermín. Puebloans north of Isleta had declined Otermín’s invitations and instead opted to take refuge in the nearby

¹² Francisco de Ayeta, 23 December 1681, Testimony given to Francisco Xavier by fray Ayeta, *comisario* of the Holy Office, *procurador*, and *visitor general*, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN CSWR.

Sanchez, 137.

Carter, 188.

v. David M. Brugge, “Captives and Slaves on the Camino Real,” in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Vol. 2, Gabrielle G. Palmer & Stephen L. Fosberg eds. (Santa Fe: BLM, New Mexico State Office, 1999): 105 for an account where Xavier also earned the enmity of Faraones by ensnaring them into the slave trade. Xavier connived to draw these Apaches to Pecos on the promise of a trade fair, then attacked them and enslaved the survivors, keeping some and sending most to Parral. v. also Jack D. Forbes, *Apache Navaho and Spaniard* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960); chapters 7 and 8; and, James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Omohundro Institute, 2002) chapter 4, “Los Montañeses,” and chapter 5, “Elaborating the Plains Borderlands” for a fuller elaboration on how Apaches fit into broader practices of captive-taking and -making across the region.

Much of the analysis concerns events that occurred later in the eighteenth century or into the nineteenth, but it is telling that Apaches would have had personal rationales for hating the Spanish and for expanding aggressively into New Spain—they sought their lost kin.

mountains, despite freezing winter temperatures and heavy snow. Ayeta missed the mark. His fixation on phantoms, biblical causation, and the Puebloan-Spanish dynamic kept him from interrogating broader regional trends. In his haste to displace blame for the failure to retake New Mexico, Ayeta failed to assess the complex political landscape into which the pueblo world had emerged. Instead of seeing a complicated matrix where Puebloan factions, divergent Spanish interests, and Apachean expansion twisted and contorted against one another as so many causalities, Ayeta saw little more than the Spanish-Puebloan binary. It would take two more years, until *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez led an expedition into present-day west and central Texas, in 1683, for the Spanish to comprehend the divided world of the pueblos, where linguistics, culture, and geography created divisions that superseded the political fiction inherent in Spanish categories of 'apostasy' and 'province.'¹³

Fortunately, we do not have to skip ahead two years to find evidence of geopolitical change. The very next day, less than twenty-four hours after Ayeta had officially blamed demons for Puebloan behavior, an Isletan named Juan de la Cruz, well-versed in the Castilian language, rushed to Otermín with news. During the previous night, unknown to the Spanish, the pueblo of Alameda had been surrounded by fifty Natives on horseback who harangued them for cooperating with the Spanish, and who had threatened to kill the women and children of the pueblo. Otermín immediately dispatched twenty men to ride to Alameda and to assess the situation. They reported back that the enemy escaped as they drew near the besieged pueblo and that they had evacuated the settlement and brought the people of Alameda to Isleta. De la Cruz

¹³ Ayeta, 23 December 1681, Testimony given to Francisco Xavier, Historia, AGN CSWR. Sanchez, 138-144 for a fuller account of the Spanish infighting.

stayed behind with Otermín as an informant, and handed the governor an advantage when he pointed out a rebel Indian already at Isleta pueblo, the *curandero* Pedro Naranjo. Naranjo was brought before Otermín and questioned about the nature of the rebels and their future plans. The *curandero* warned the Spanish that rebels from Taos planned to launch an attack on Isleta pueblo soon. The Tiwa and Tewa apostates intended to kill the men and the elderly, and to sell the women and children to Apaches. The plan to surrender so many people to Faraones was part of a larger plan to mollify Apaches for the losses that they had suffered in their wars with the Spanish, and also to cement their friendship.¹⁴

It is impossible to know if the armed riders around Alameda pueblo, scarcely 25 miles north of Isleta, were Apaches or if they were Puebloan rebels. But this ambiguity really does not matter because, regardless of the identification, it appears that the demands of Apaches or the potential threat of their raiding determined choices over what to do, and to whom, in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. If the riders around Alameda were Apaches, then the reason for keeping cattle in the church at Isleta and for mistaking Otermín's party as Apaches reflects the palpable fear wrought by Faraones. It would mean that Apaches were trimming and constricting the southward reaches of the pueblo world in order to keep the Spanish out and to consolidate their access not only to Puebloan goods and wares, but also to Puebloan bodies and labor. Even if the riders around Alameda had actually been northern Tiwas or another group of Puebloan rebels, de la Cruz's and Naranjo's testimonies indicate that their choices were circumscribed by

¹⁴ Antonio de Otermín, 24 December 1681, Report of the governor receiving an Indian from Isleta who came to ask for help, because there was a group of mounted Indians in the area, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

the imperatives of an Apachean political economy. Naranjo's account delineates the limitations of autonomy for the Puebloans: though they may ride horses and attack and pillage, it was key for them to trade some of the most valuable plunder—people—with Apaches in order to win their friendship and to “repay” them for the dead that they suffered during the revolt and the years leading up to it. This word choice, *recompensa* in the original Spanish, is important. It carries the sense that Puebloans were, at best, engaged in reciprocity with Apaches or were, at worst, subordinate to them. Either way the identity of the fifty riders around Alameda is formulated, Apaches emerge as irresistible players in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.¹⁵

When Fray Nicolas Hurtado wrote *Maestre de Campo* Francisco Xavier on January 3, 1682, it was to inform him that Apaches had penetrated the El Paso del Norte area while he was away, and that they had taken about 200 animals. The raiders had likely taken advantage of the fact that El Paso was not a single settlement that could be easily defended by refugee militia. One *villa*, one presidio (yet to be built), three missions, and three pueblos comprised El Paso del Norte and were spread out leagues from one another. These places were grouped into the Hueco Basin that stretches from present-day Las Cruces, New Mexico downriver on the Rio Grande to present-day Fabens, Texas, about thirty miles southeast of El Paso. The basin is bordered on the north by the Órganos Mountains; east by the Hueco Mountains; on the west by the Potrillo Mountains; and on the south by the Sierra de Guadalupe. This was

¹⁵ Antonio de Otermín, 24 December 1681, The Indian servant Juan de la Cruz certified as true what he knows about those Indians around Isleta; that he there met a medicine man name Pedro Naranjo; and that the plan was to kill the men and give the women and children to Apaches, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

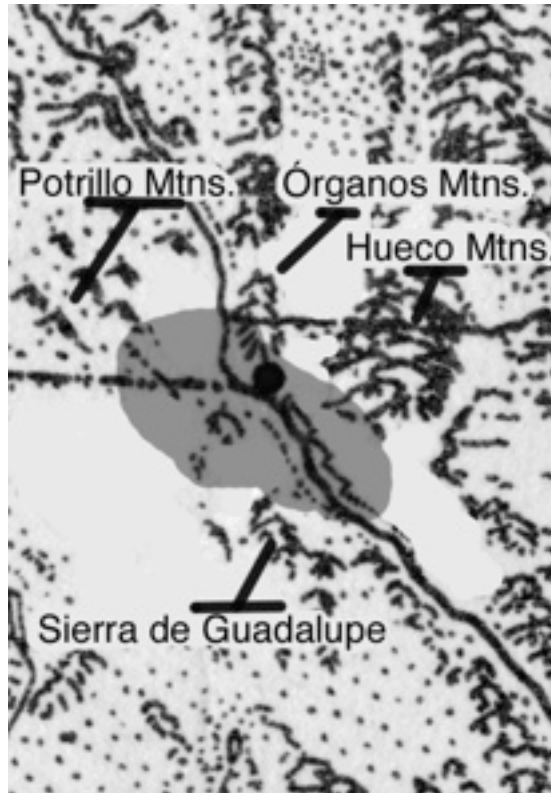
an arid basin that has historically received less than ten inches of rain per year. During these early years of Spanish investment, from 1680 to 1684, the area was gripped by drought similar to the one Middle Rio Grande Puebloans suffered through. Ironically, the recent Apache raid had targeted a new pueblo named Isleta del Sur—Isleta of the South—the refugee counterpart to the New Mexico pueblo where Otermín was then positioned. But whereas Otermín’s *entrada* had only confirmed what the Spanish already suspected about Apache and rebel Puebloan depredations in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Hurtado’s letter came as more of a shock. It revealed that the Spanish were not alone in the Hueco Basin—Faraones had followed them. Soon, attacks and thefts like the one at Isleta del Sur would soon become commonplace. These raids came as unwelcome reminders of what the final years in New Mexico had been like, and they would destabilize the settlements of El Paso del Norte while they were still in their infancy. The question left for the Spanish was why had Faraones come over 300 miles south from Pecos pueblo, and to what end?¹⁶

¹⁶ Nicolas Hurtado to Francisco Xavier, 3 January 1682, Expressing joy that they were bringing people back from Isleta and that Apaches had taken 200 animals in one month, Legajo 26, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Dan Scurlock, “Rio, Mesa, and Sierra: An Environmental History of the Greater El Paso Area, Part I,” *Password* 44:2 (1999): 81, 83-84, 86, 90.

Anne E. Hughes, *The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement in the El Paso District* (El Paso: Press of El Paso Public Schools, 1935:): 309, 322-323.

Michael E. Whalen, *Settlement Patterns of the Western Hueco Bolson* (El Paso: University of Texas at El Paso Press, 1978): 2-4.



Map 8: The Hueco Basin and its Mountain Borders.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

By March Otermín had arrived back at San Lorenzo, and to a camp that was worse off than when he left it in November, owing to the loss of cattle. Supplies were dangerously low. To make matters worse, Otermín returned to El Paso with more than he left. About 385 Puebloans from Isleta and Alameda came with him, and they too needed immediate food and shelter. The 1681 *entrada* that was purposed to retake New Mexico had instead placed an even heavier strain on resources. The surviving member of the Santa Fe *cabildo* and other *vecinos* balked at the *entrada*'s failure, the loss of cattle, and the arrival of so many more mouths to feed. The former *cabildo* members wasted no time in initiating proceeding that would allow them to abandon El Paso and to retreat into Nueva Vizcaya, leaving New Mexico behind as a discarded idea. They were

prepared to quit. As the powder-keg beneath his feet rumbled, Otermín took the drastic step of publishing a *bando* (writ) stipulating that anyone caught leaving El Paso without his permission would be executed as a traitor to king and country. The disgraced governor was making enemies faster than he could defeat them, and starving all the while.¹⁷

In fact, food soon became a more pressing cause for alarm than the threat of raids. The prospect of physical violence seemed always to hang on the horizon like a fist, but famine's teeth were already sinking in at home. The Spanish and Puebloans could not sufficiently acquire or produce enough basic carbohydrates and proteins to stay nourished. Otermín took additional steps to temper the frustration of his countrymen and to alleviate their hunger by seizing some private property of the wealthier refugees. On March 7, the same day that he issued his *bando*, he issued an emergency executive order that appropriated some of the cattle of *vecino* Jidoris Alonso del Rio La Ignacio. This solution was a short-term fix at best. Otermín and everyone else must have known that cannibalizing existing resources instead of producing new ones was a game that could only be played briefly. The Spanish had yet to devote the time and resources to the establishment of infrastructure. There existed at this time no means for collecting and storing monsoon rainfall, or diverting river flow in *acequias*. Importing food was not an easy alternative, either. Since December, the number of draft animals had declined so precipitously that it became, physically, impossible to fetch

¹⁷ *Cabildo* of Santa Fe, 7 March 1682, Petición del Cabildo, Justicia y Regimiento de la villa de Santa Fe presentada al gobernador en El Paso, Legajo 53, Parte 3, Audiencia de Mexico, AGI, CSWR.

Antonio de Otermín, 7 March 1682, Bando, Legajo 53, Parte 3, Audiencia de Mexico, AGI, CSWR.

Vina Walz, "History of the El Paso Area, 1680-1692," (dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1951): 74, 78.

grain and meat over the 375 miles of harried *camino real*. Even if Apaches had left enough oxen and mules for the refugees, there was also a dangerous shortage of carts—most had been lost in the winter-time travel of the 1681-1682 *entrada*. Otermín tasked his Secretary of War and Governance, Francisco Xavier, with begging around Nueva Vizcaya for enough carts so that their few mules could at least attempt to bring food. The governor armed Xavier with the promise that any lent carts would be returned in April of 1683—provided they could be successfully guarded. Faraones, probably unintentionally, had precipitated a food crisis at El Paso that distracted Otermín from the task of waging war or mounting resistance.¹⁸

At the same time that the governor admitted that the refugees could barely meet their subsistence needs, he also confessed to the viceregal court that he had been unsuccessful in finding a satisfactory site for a presidio. Earlier in 1681, Otermín had received permission to establish a garrison at El Paso del Norte and was guaranteed that it would be staffed by fifty soldiers who would offer protection for the pueblos, *haciendas*, and *ranchos*. Otermín had been remiss in establishing this presidio, however, probably because he had high hopes for his forthcoming *entrada*. Subsequently, when Otermín began to search for a suitable spot in earnest, he found that he faced formidable environmental obstacles. Seasonal flooding of the Rio Grande was violent, and regularly gushed with enough force to destroy crops and nearby buildings. Sometimes, in major floods, the river jumped its banks altogether and shifted into another bed, in a process known as avulsion (though this was less common around

¹⁸ Otermín, 7 March 1682, Bando, Audiencia de Mexico .

Antonio de Otermín to the viceroy, 29 March 1682, Report that a suitable site has not been found to found a new population on the banks of the river, and that there is extreme hunger owing to the theft of cattle by Apaches, Legajo 53, Parte 3, Audiencia de Mexico, AGI, CSWR.

El Paso). Without an effective means of water control and *acequia*-structure, any plans for sowing subsistence crops or erecting an earthen fort were dead on arrival. But Faraon depredations necessitated that there be a presidio and that fields and settlement be clustered around it, lest crops and livestock vanish into the Trans-Pecos. For now, however, Otermín could only watch as *vecinos* instead fanned out across the basin to find arable land. Although the flood plain and the quality of the soil demanded that settlements be widely dispersed, the geopolitical reality of an expanding Apachería meant that a thinly distributed population was dangerously exposed. Finding the balance between ecological stricture and Faraon pressure would have to await Otermín's successors.¹⁹

We should not over-focus on El Paso del Norte, however; Faraones certainly did not. Soon after Otermín's arrival in the Hueco Bolsón, Spanish reports began to trickle, then stream, in that Faraones had added other sites to their repertoire of targets farther down and along the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. Three *vecinos* from Casas Grandes, a Nueva Vizcayan settlement about 140 miles southwest of El Paso, relayed that raiding was taking part all over the northern borderlands of New Spain. Or, to categorize the space from the perspective of Athapaskan-speakers: the expanding southern edge of Apachería. While Otermín and the viceregal court were still taking stock of how to reclaim old territory to the north, Apaches had attacked to the south. Raiders killed a small number of herders and took nearly every horse and cow that

¹⁹ Otermín, 29 March 1682, Audiencia de Mexico.

Wilbert H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, University of El Paso, 1990): 25.

Walz, 74.

Dan Scurlock, "Floods, Fords, and Shifting Sands," in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Vol. 2 (Santa Fe: BLM, New Mexico State Office, 1999): 43-44

belonged to the area. The exact number of livestock taken was not recorded but the haul was large enough to be distributed amongst the eighty-odd Athapaskan *rancherías* that were believed to dot the horizon. At first the Casas Grandes *vecinos* did not know what hit them. Clues as to the specific identity of the raiders finally came from Janos Indians in the area who had witnessed that assault and who had managed to capture a few raiders. Under interrogation the invaders spoke an Athapaskan language, and revealed that they were from hundreds of leagues to the north. They had traveled at speed by horse and were using the Florido and Gila Mountains as bases. Eventually these newcomers and their successor kin would become known as Gileño Apaches, but for now they were still Faraones from the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the southern Great Plains.²⁰

Otermín could do little. His tenure as governor of a province that nearly ceased to exist was coming to a close. Under different circumstances he might have understood his enemy better, learned more about his complicated environment, and figured out a way to fit the idea of New Spain into the xeric reality all around him. But he was oriented towards a different time and place. Otermín's time in New Mexico reflected the end of that period during which Church-State conflict hoarded Spanish attention, and prevented a thorough understanding of the landscapes beyond the riparian. In a time when the world outside the Middle Rio Grande Valley was exploding, Otermín, in a way, never left the idea of the governor's residence in Santa Fe. True, he identified Apaches as enemy number one and saw them everywhere he looked, but he failed to attach

²⁰ Otermín, 29 March 1682, Audiencia de Mexico.

Jack Forbes, "The Appearance of the Mounted Indian in Northern Mexico and the Southwest, to 1680," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15:2 (1959): 202.

enough significance to the fact that Apaches who had been known to ride one hundred leagues by horse to attack and sack the Tompiro pueblos of New Mexico were now riding two or three hundred leagues for the same purpose. As Otermín's successors prepared to reform and adapt to new geopolitical demands, Faraones continued their practices: they counter-explored and raided Spanish imperial places, and slowly choked off colonists' access to animal, mineral, and plant resources.

Puebloans of the Middle Rio Grande Valley could have told anyone that during the seventeenth century—and probably earlier—Faraones were not part of a simplistic binary, a Native versus European battle. Apaches targeted non-Athapaskan indigenes just as often as they targeted the Spanish. Of course, Apaches had allies—like those in Pecos pueblo and at Taos—but even friendly status was not an absolute immunity from raiding. From Oñate through the 1680s the Spanish documented the attacks by Apaches on pueblos and mission alike in the regions of the Middle Rio Grande Valley. It appeared as if Apaches capitalized on the tumult of the colonial encounter to reimagine all of their relationships and how they could best navigate and access new economies, and how to best dodge new stressors. This process of counter-discovery never ceased. Soon after 1680, the Spanish began to document raids in the Hueco Basin and its environs and the neighborhood around Casas Grandes, near present-day Nuevo Casas Grandes, Chihuahua. By 1683, it also became glaringly clear that that Faraones were also making aggressive inroads far to the east of the Spanish, to the Pecos River and beyond, among Native groups with whom the Spanish had little to no experience. We know now what the Spanish could not have known then: Faraones had begun the long

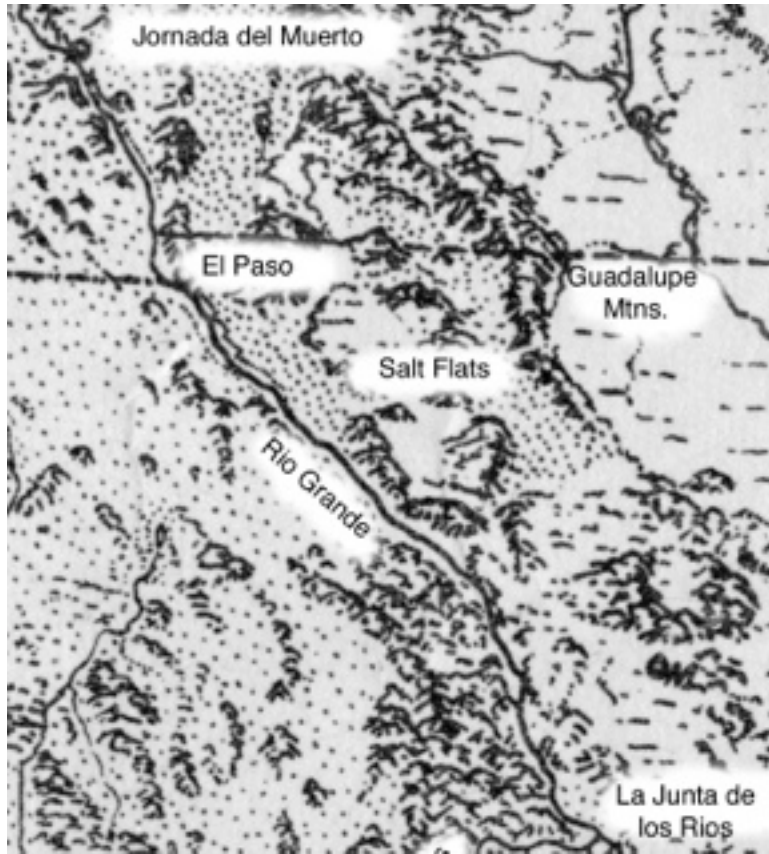
and hard work of reorganizing a seminal region of the northern Chihuahuan Desert: the Trans-Pecos.²¹

Juan de Sabeata arrived at San Lorenzo from La Junta de los Ríos on August 11, 1683 with eleven other Jumano leaders. A native of New Mexico, born in the Tompiro pueblo of Las Humanas, but long exiled from that place, Sabeata came to El Paso to ask for help from the Spanish. Apaches, it seems, had overrun their territory around the confluence of the Rio Conchos and the Rio Grande, and were then harrying their people from all sides. Otermín empathized with Jumano starvation at the hands of Apache raids, but he was disinclined to pledge aid given his own impoverished situation. Jumano leaders, in a gesture towards reciprocity, then presented ten *vecinos* whom had been rescued from New Mexico during the preceding three years. These people had, ostensibly, been captives and were held at the pleasure of Puebloans or Apaches. Jumanos made a calculated plea that was designed to entice the Spanish into a partnership that would see liberated more of their kinsmen (Jumano and Spanish alike) who were being held throughout the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the Trans-Pecos. Sensing that Otermín was still reluctant, the captains dangled in front of the Spanish governor the prospect of establishing new missions among the Julimes, a people who were settled in pueblos at La Junta. Shrewd and determined, these Jumanos invited the Spanish to settle in their territory by promising conditions similar to those of the Middle Rio Grande Valley Puebloans.²²

²¹ Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68:1 (2011): 29-30.

Dan Flores, "Place: An Argument for Bioregional History," *Environmental History Review* 18:4 (1994): 8-9.

²² Antonio de Otermín, 11 August 1683, Act in which the Jumanos report on their wars with the Apaches and request aid from the Spanish, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.



Map 9: Relative Locations of El Paso, La Junta, and the Jornada del Muerto.
Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Jumanos had long been known as preeminent traders who operated a trade network that reached from the headwaters of the Pecos River to La Junta, and whose *rancherías* dotted the Trans-Pecos. They were producers, warehousemen, and traveling traders of everything from pelts to acorns and nuts, serving lands as far east as the Mississippi and as far south as the Rio Grande Valley at the Gulf of Mexico. Into Oñate's time they were still in control of the Trans-Pecos and its northern boundaries, but almost immediately began to bleed territory when Faraones began to turn the tools of empire against neighboring indigenes. Most Jumanos became refugees from the Great Plains, and subsequently permitted Franciscan missionaries to relocate them to the Tompiro

pueblos by the late 1620s and 1630s. Others, also fleeing the Apache advance, found their way to the early, and abortive, efforts at missions around what would become El Paso in the 1650s. During the seventeenth century theirs was a story of declension: their homes in the Tompiro pueblos had been wiped out by Apaches by the 1670s, sending survivors to La Junta. Now that La Junta de los Ríos was under attack, Jumanos again tried a defensive pact with the Spanish. Sabeata's pitch reflects the Jumano feeling that their world was shrinking dangerously fast, and to just a few spots along the lower reaches of the Rio Grande.²³

Ultimately, Otermín disappointed them when he replied that any action would have to await the new governor, don Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, who would be in El Paso del Norte, the new de-facto capital of New Mexico, within three months. Sabeata left disappointed, but arrived again at El Paso with another Jumano delegation later that October. This second Jumano attempt again requested missionaries be sent to La Junta de los Ríos so that they might set up Spanish institutions there. Their interests were not completely ecclesiastical, just as before: Granted, Jumanos may have been genuinely interested in proselytization. Perhaps they believed that a new kind of faith that featured a salvation-oriented theme that might help them cope with the difficult situation within which they found themselves. But in addition to socio-cultural concerns, Jumanos were also eager to establish the kind of trade and military linkages

²³ Nancy Hickerson, *The Jumanos: Hunters and Traders of the South Plains* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994): 106-107, 116-119, 215-219.

Carter, 68, 128.

Other scholarly sources framing the debate on Jumano identity, territory, and history include: J. Charles Kelley, *Jumano and Patarabueyes: Relations at La Junta de los Ríos* (Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 1986); Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): chapters 1 and 2; and David La Vere, *The Texas Indians* (College Station: A&M University Press, 2004): chapters 3 and 4.

that mission life would bring. With missions came the chance for a presidio, and with both came Spanish agents of empire, with horses and harquebuses, and their need to attain regularly supplies from the interior of New Spain. The Jumanos were bidding on access to the broader trans-regional economy that existed to the south for reasons of protection and enrichment. Faraones had blocked Jumano access to economies in the north, and the Spanish represented one of their last opportunities to turn the colonial encounter to their advantage. Thus, they might let the Spanish walk in their territory and convert among their number, but they were counting on getting something out of the arrangement too: protection and wealth.²⁴

Sabeata was (he thought) more lucky this time around. Governor Jironza saw an opportunity in the Jumano leader's words. When Jironza had arrived at El Paso he had found himself saddled with factional strife; a rotten leftover from some litigation that had festered between some of the camp's most powerful players. Perhaps it was to defuse the situation and be rid of the key figures on one side of the intra-Spanish quarrel that he decided to send *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez and fray Nicolás López, Dominguez's Franciscan ally, to La Junta de los Ríos. Sabeata gave Jironza the perfect pretext for dividing his fragile forces: the Jumano leader had promised that there would be a grand gathering of nations far to the east, on the present-day Texas Edwards

²⁴ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 20 October 1683, Act concerning the petition of the Jumanos to be baptized, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006): 2-4 where Quapaws in their dealings with French traders coming down the Mississippi River in 1673, jockey the dialogue and diplomacy so that they can gain access to European wares and protection against their enemies, the Tunicas and Yazoos. This archetypal example of Natives creating a "Native Ground" whereon they control the material distribution of European goods closely resembles what Jumanos were doing: attempting to gain privileged access to Spanish technology in a place becoming overrun with their enemy, the Apaches.

Wade, 75.

Plateau, who were eager to establish relationships with the Spanish. There had also been a few whiffs of rumor about French exploration in that vicinity, and thus the threat of European imperial competition also allowed Jironza to justify an *entrada* at an otherwise dangerous time. Finally, the Jumano chief promised that the expedition would provide an opportunity to attack Apaches, thus allowing the Spanish a chance at revenge for decades of abuse and the humiliation of the revolt. On Jironza's orders, *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez set out with seventeen soldiers in mid-December of 1683, a short time after fray López had departed for the pueblos at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos. Jironza would have more than one occasion to regret the absence of so experienced an officer and so many men in the six months they were away.²⁵

The events of Dominguez's journey to La Junta de los Ríos and the Texas Edwards Plateau are no less significant than what concurrently occurred at El Paso del Norte, but the two events represent different processes. Dominguez was not the first Spaniard to travel downriver along the Rio Grande to La Junta, or to see the southern reaches of the Trans-Pecos area of the northern Chihuahuan Desert. The *entradas* of the 1580s had come up that way from the Valle de Santa Bárbara in Nueva Vizcaya, as detailed in chapter one. The *maestre de campo*, however, was the first to document the ecology and topography such that it is possible to reconstruct how Faraones colonized certain areas of the landscape, accessed portions of the ecosystem, and related to other groups of indigenes. The Mendoza-López journey sheds light on processes that reorganized the Trans-Pecos geopolitically as a domain of Faraon Apachería over other

²⁵ Sanchez, 143-144.
Wade, 70, 77.

Native societies. This dimension is distinct from that which evolved among heavy Spanish surveillance or presence in places like Santa Fe, Casas Grandes, or El Paso. For now, we need to remain with Jironza in the Hueco Basin so that we can understand the different strategies that Faraones devised to deal with their Spanish competitors who were still, relatively, better armed and resourced than indigenous competitors.

When *Maestre de Campo* Juan Dominguez de Mendoza finally turned back towards El Paso in May of 1684, the news that trickled back to him along the Rio Grande was bad: Mansos housed in pueblos all around San Lorenzo had revolted, and Sumas and Apaches were participating fully in the uprising. Dominguez wisely elected to avoid the Rio Grande and instead traveled up the Rio Conchos until he could cut due west across land and reach the site of present-day Ciudad Chihuahua, where he mounted the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* and proceeded almost due north. He opted to approach El Paso from one of the only directions that he felt was secure, although it meant he had to pass over 45 miles of hard waterless plain and another 97 miles over fine sand that would have made his mules and horses strain under their bison hide loads. He took much longer to reach El Paso than he or Jironza would have liked, but he had good reason to be afraid. Not only was the rebellion gaining momentum even then, but Dominguez had left crosses on a hill every time he came to a stop during his journey. Meant both as markers for future expeditions as well as signs of Spanish faith and power, these hilltop crosses also gave detailed information to aggressors in the area about which routes the Spanish preferred and what campsites were popular. For

months Dominguez had been giving away Spanish positions. He was probably right to believe that his enemies were lying in ambush.²⁶

As for those Jumanos who had beseeched the Spanish for aid, they soon faded from the historical record, ostensibly annihilated by Apaches or subsumed by them. If so, it was a long time coming. One of Oñate's sergeant majors, Vincente de Zaldívar Mendoza encountered Apaches (whom he named Vaqueros for the bison they hunted) in 1598 on the southern Great Plains, probably in present-day Oklahoma or the panhandle of Texas. Ironically, almost a hundred years before Sabeata asked Otermín and Jironza for help with a war against the Apaches, the "striped ones" whom Zaldívar met asked for help with their war against the "Xumanas," to the south. Like Jironza and Dominguez, Oñate and Zaldívar did nothing for their petitioners. Instead, they shunned the contest for territory and power in the uplands, but, again, at a price. The destruction of the Tompiro pueblo Las Humanas by the Apaches during the 1660s and 1670s, followed by their incursions over the La Junta de los Ríos by the 1680s testifies to the sharp ascendancy of the striped Vaqueros over the "Xumanas," and the looming genesis of Mescalero Apachería.²⁷

²⁶ Scurlock (1993), 9.

²⁷ Vincente Zaldívar Mendoza, September 1598, Relation of the Journey of the Cows of Cibola as made by Sergeant Major Vincente Zaldívar Mendoza, Legajo 22, Parte 7, Patronato, AGI, CSWR.

Anderson, 54.

Thomas A. Britten, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning* (Albuquerque; University of New Mexico Press, 2009): 63.

Carter, 68.

Hickerson, 202.

v. Kelley, *Jumano and Patarabueyes: Relations at La Junta de los Ríos* for a better sense of the fragmentary evidence laying out the case for Jumano annihilation or acculturation and that of their more sedentary neighbors, the Patarabueyes.

Mescaleros, however, as a people and as an appellation, were still over fifty years in the future. For now, Faraones performed the heavy lifting that would make future iterations of Apachería possible. Juan Dominguez de Mendoza was still camped out on the Middle Conchos River, awaiting the nations that Sabeata said would come and regal the Spanish, when El Paso erupted into revolt. For the second time in four years the Spanish of New Mexico were again confronted with what seemed like overwhelming indigenous hostility. Not long before midnight on the evening of March 14, 1684, the cold slumber of the refugees was shattered by the whisper of conspiracy. The governor of the Tiguas, Francisco Tilagua, his lieutenant, and twenty Piros had summoned Governor Jironza de Cruzate to an emergency meeting. They brought a fantastic report: the neighboring Mansos had been fomenting rebellion and were actively recruiting; Apaches figured into the plans; outbreak was imminent. Jironza must have started, and probably thought to the conflagration at Santa Fe in August of 1680 at the same time that he thought of *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez all those hundreds of leagues to the east, unable to help. Jironza was not six months into his first year as governor, but it must have seemed that time was already running out.²⁸

But Jironza could not have been taken totally by surprise. Even before his arrival he knew he was walking into a bees' nest and had had the foresight to request from Martín Solís Miranda, the *fiscal* (the viceroy's attorney), 3,000 pesos for a strong presidio, 100 more harquebuses, gunpowder and lead, and carts to haul all his supplies. Faraones had recently become so adept at scouring the settlements that horses could

²⁸ Domingo Jironza de Cruzate, 15 March 1684, Testimony transcribed verbatim from the criminal cases prosecuted against the Manso apostates and their allies, in *Investigation of the Rebellion of the Manso Indians and their Allies 1684*, John H.R. Polt, trans. (Berkeley, Research Center for Romance Studies, 2008): 64-65.

not be left in the fields overnight, but instead had to be tethered to the dwellings where the Spanish slept. Miranda, perhaps viewing El Paso as an expendable collection of *vecinos* and Puebloans, refused Jironza's request. The two had dueled with petitions and proclamations, but in the end Jironza had to make due with only 2,000 pesos, fifty harquebuses, 100 pesos for lead, some carts, and whatever was left over from the shipment of goods sent to Otermín for the 1681 *entrada*. On his way to El Paso late in 1683 he spent some of his own money to procure a few more arms and soldiers from Zacatecas, but word had gotten around and he found few volunteers.²⁹

When Jironza got to El Paso he quickly set about the task about which Otermín had failed: situating the presidio near enough to the river that it could be supported with fields and supplied with water, yet also sitting close enough to nearby *haciendas* and *milpas* as to be effective. He finally decided to situate the presidio halfway between the riparian mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and San Lorenzo, twelve leagues southward. The presidio was called Nuestra Señora del Pilar y el Glorioso San José. Jironza's achievement was nothing short of remarkable considering that his ability to organize militias, build *acequias*, and muster enough bodies to work fields and grow crops was much reduced. In 1681 Otermín had recorded 1,946 persons; later, in 1684, Jironza would record only 1,051. Despite being forbidden to abandon the province and the settlements of El Paso, nearly one in two had fled the troubled place. Puebloans returned north and colonists dispersed to Casas Grandes, Parral, or elsewhere. It is

²⁹ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate to the viceroy, 30 October 1683, Report concerning the request of Jumanos to be baptized and helped by the Fathers, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Hughes, 325.
Walz, 106-113.

also likely that many of those missing in 1684 simply died, given that many had long been famished or perhaps carried old injuries. The new governor nevertheless managed to achieve more with less.³⁰

Thus, Jironza, despite being a new governor, had a few advantages over those enjoyed by Otermín. When Francisco Tilagua, governor of the Tiguas, apprised the governor of conspiracy on the night of March 14, 1684, Jironza heard that Mansos had been attempting to recruit Natives for a rebellion and that they planned to attack them no later than Easter Day when the Spanish guard would be down. They would emulate their Puebloan comrades to the north, kill as many Spanish as possible, and force the rest to run for their lives. The rebels then planned to turn their attention to Casas Grandes and the mission at Janos immediately after destroying El Paso. Jironza capitalized on this intelligence and quickly arrested the majority of the alleged conspirators, including the ringleader, don Luis of the Mansos. He desired to execute them immediately as a message to other rebels, but delayed until Dominguez could return from the east, with the seventeen badly needed soldiers. In the meantime, the governor gathered all the Spanish and friendly Puebloans to within five miles around the mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the nearby presidio. In doing so, he gambled that he could preserve the majority of El Paso's population and stock, but at the cost of placing his wards under siege.³¹

³⁰ Hughes, 327, 368-369.
Timmons, 18-21.
Walz, 158-161.

³¹ Hughes, 338-342.
Walz, 144-146.

Living in siege conditions at this time would have put the Spanish and their Puebloan counterparts through tremendous suffering and hardship. Evidence suggests that there was sustained drought from 1681 to 1686. In terms of grains, the land around Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the presidio was not sufficient to produce enough food to support a high population density for long. Stores would have been soon depleted and would have had to be replenished by more from Nueva Vizcaya or from the holdover seeds meant for the next sowing. Water-borne illness would also have risen as more people depended less on the Rio Grande or on alternate sources, and instead crowded around ponds or wells that were prone to contamination. In terms of livestock, palatable grass populations could have been seriously depleted under intensive grazing by horses, mules cattle, sheep, and goats. The only thing that may have spared the grasslands within the siege zone from such heavy grazing might have been, ironically, that Apaches had taken so many animals that the livestock population was much reduced. In any event, Spanish suffering increased dramatically as hunger and illness afflicted so many people competing for the same scant food and water sources.³²

The siege began quietly enough, however, and April went by without so much as a hiccup. Stunned that their plans had been betrayed, the insurgents regrouped and considered their next move. The hammer fell on May 6 with two major attacks across the region. Diego, don Luis' lieutenant among the Tigua, organized the Sumas and Janos groups to attack La Soledad, a mission near Casas Grandes, killing the

³² Jerry Holechek, et al., "Moderate and Light Cattle Grazing Effects on Chihuahuan Desert Rangelands," *Journal of Range Management* 56:2 (2003): 138-139.

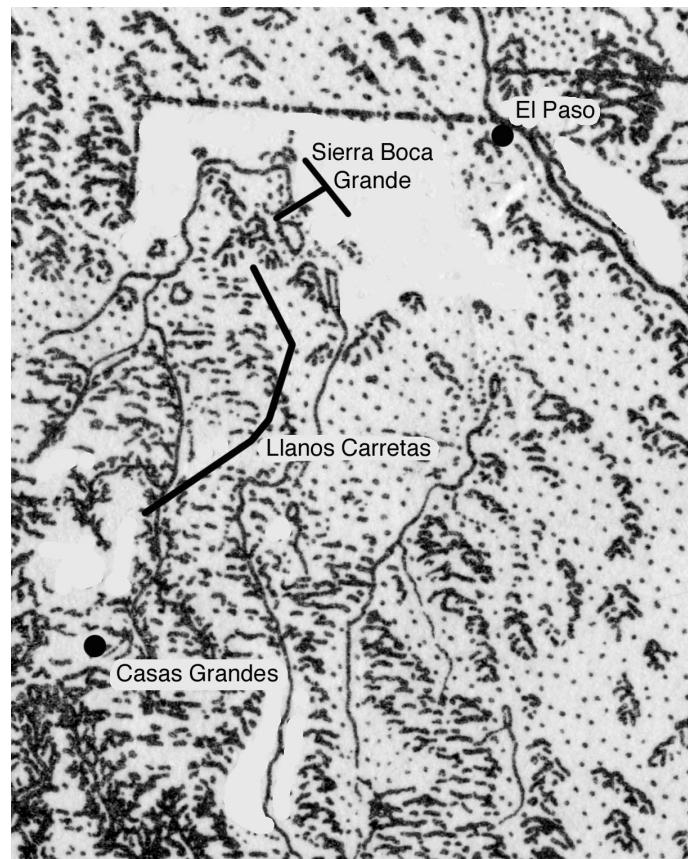
Scurlock (98), 40 for evidence that the Rio Grande watershed, at least to the north, would have been in the grips of drought conditions.

Franciscan along with his guard. The rebels seized the stores of the Nueva Vizcayan mission. In a coordinated movement, the Sumas around the mission of Santa Gertrudis del Ojito also revolted, killed a Spanish family there, robbed the church, and burned the New Mexican site. Shockwaves reverberated at Casas Grandes and El Paso. The rebellion had arrived.³³

The next direct blow came almost a month later. On June 2 *Maestre de Campo* Alonso Garcia, Otermín's former lieutenant governor, helped Francisco Ramirez de Salazar, the *alcalde* at Casas Grandes, repel 2,000 attackers who included Mansos, Janos, Sumas, and Jocomes in their ranks. Casas Grandes was under siege for almost a week before *Maestre de Campo* Garcia and *Alcalde* Ramirez rallied enough strength to mount an unexpected counterattack. The rebels retreated north from Casas Grandes and made for the Rio Grande, towards the area of the Órganos Mountains and Faraon country. But their retreat was easily tracked because they traveled over a wide valley called the Llanos Carretas. Mounted militia and armed *vecinos* were, for once, unhampered by rocky or harsh terrain and were able to catch up and engage the their enemy in the Sierra del Diablo (present-day Sierra Boca Grande), 78 miles north of Casas Grandes. The Spanish caught sight of the siege force just as it ascended the foothills, and although they attempted rearward attack, they failed to halt the rebels before they made it to a mountain basin haven. A protracted battle followed and, although the rebels did not escape cleanly, clear victory evaded the Spanish. One militiaman died along with several Puebloan auxiliaries—enough of a sting to force the Spanish to withdraw. It was just as well; the conflagration was spreading. At that same

³³ Hughes, 343, 346-347.

moment, to the east, Julimes and Conchos of La Junta de los Ríos joined the revolt in retaliation for one of their own being executed in Parral on charges of inciting revolt.³⁴



Map 10: Casas Grandes and the Sierra Boca Grande, with Llanos Carretas.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

The Spanish were reeling. El Paso del Norte was still under siege-like conditions, Casas Grandes had only just emerged from siege, and now the missionaries at La Junta de los Ríos were feared dead because violence had erupted there too. Governor

³⁴ Jack D. Forbes, "The Janos, Jocomes, Mansos and Sumas Indians," *New Mexico Historical Review* 32:4 (1957): 323 wonders if the Jocomes were not actually a different band of Apaches, the Chiricahua, because both were operating out of the same spaces. Evidence for this is too scant, however, and it is more likely anyway that Apaches were either allied to them or absorbed them over time.

Oakah L. Jones, "Settlements and Settlers at La Junta de los Rios, 1759-1822," *Journal of Big Bend Studies* 3 (1991): 47.

Hughes, 343-345, 357.

Jironza and his Nueva Vizcayan counterpart, Bartolomé Estrada de Valdéz y Ramírez Jove, had thought that the vectors of violence lay to the north and ran longitudinally until the Jornada del Muerto, but now it became clear that similar violence has spread latitudinally all across the frontier, both east and west. *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez, apprised of the dire situation from downriver on the Rio Grande, arrived in El Paso del Norte on July 18 from his long detour up from the south on the *camino real*—the only safe passage. With a veteran officer and survivor of the 1680 revolt at his side, Governor Jironza felt safe enough to execute don Luis, his lieutenant, Diego, and other rebels at the start of August. Jironza wanted to make a demonstration out of these leaders to everyone in the region, but his message must have seemed feeble considering that it came a full five months after hostilities had begun. Indeed, retaliation came quickly. In early September Jironza found himself sitting with a Manso informant, named Juan, bearing alarming news: ten nations were gathered in a Suma *rancheria* somewhere farther down the Rio Grande. These indigenes, from all over the Trans-Pecos and beyond, plotted to kill every single one of the Spanish at El Paso and to seize every scrap of food and every head of livestock. Then they planned to impale Jironza's head on a stake—as a 'demonstration' to all the other Spanish and their allies. The governor immediately dispatched one of his captains, Roque Madrid, with seventy soldiers to depart eastward with orders to eradicate the rebels.³⁵

³⁵ Hughes, 349-352.

Carroll L. Riley, "The Pre-Spanish Camino Real," in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Vol. 1 (Santa Fe: BLM, New Mexico State Office, 1993): 15. Faraones and Mansos were essentially using the north-south *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* to access older east-west indigenous road, forged by thirteenth century Jornada-Mogollon peoples, to access places that spanned the Rio Grande.

But the Spanish were deceived. On September 15, while Captain Madrid was off down the Rio Grande to the east with 70 men, those ten rebel nations launched an attack on Casas Grandes to the west. They did not kill every Spanish, but they did burn many homes and reserves of food; they carried off herds of horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. They had almost certainly orchestrated the moment to divide the Spanish forces with a decoy before they targeted another spot. It was a simple yet well executed piece of strategy. The outrage felt by the Spanish, however, escalated the conflict and precipitated a rebuke that would hasten the decline of the revolt. One month after Casas Grandes was sacked, in the middle of October, *Alcalde* Ramirez attacked rebels about 21 miles outside of Casas Grandes. Ramirez achieved a decisive victory. He killed many men, took dozens of women and children captive, and recovered or stole much property. This moment signaled the beginning to the end of the 1684 revolt and demonstrated to Mansos, Sumas, and Apaches that the Spanish, though weakened and isolated, would be a lasting and powerful foe. Analytically, the end of the 1684 rebellion is probably more important than either 1680 or 1692 because it was at this precise moment that indigenes 'learned,' finally and totally, the deep, transcontinental character of their foes the Spanish. After this moment many Puebloan peoples, and Faraones as well, broke off from strategies oriented towards total annihilation and began experimentation with more mixed and subtle strategies that—while still hostile to the Spanish—concurrently acknowledged their political and geographical permanence.³⁶

Rebels launched no more serious attacks after their October defeat outside Casas Grandes. After the long dry winter of 1684-1685, most groups requested peace,

³⁶ Hughes, 355-357.

citing hunger, fear, and internal discord. As far as Mansos and their allies were concerned, the revolt was over by March of 1685. Mansos, Sumas, Janos, and Julimes had risked everything to revolt, on the chance that they might gain control over arable fields, access to water, and, to a lesser extent, ownership of horses and metal goods. These groups, like the Puebloans to the north, were motivated by a desire for autonomy and the means to implement their own political economy, rather than that of the Spanish. For seven months these rebels managed to decoy and besiege the Spanish, and they seemed to be gaining over the colonists. But then the victory of *Alcalde* Ramirez came at a bad time: the onset of autumnal and winter weather when precipitation was down, harvests were over, and frigid high desert temperatures arrived. These indigenes did not have the means to regroup, socially or materially, and to escape the hardships of the season. The loss of so many rebels, community members, and stores of goods crippled their ability. This situation was made worse by the reality that Mansos, Sumas, and others never possessed enough horses or mules to repopulate or grow their own stock. Without the ability to pick up and move across the terrain to new resource depots, they could cover only a fraction of the terrain on foot and they would have felt more acutely the effects of drought that racked the area from 1683 to 1685. Whereas Apaches could still raid or trade at pueblos of the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the La Junta de los Ríos for carbohydrates, Mansos and Sumas would have been at a loss unless they procured grain through trade.³⁷

April 1685 found the region in devastation. At least three missions had been burned, two pueblos sacked, and franciscans and *vecinos* killed. The losses of livestock

³⁷ Hughes, 360-361.

were severe. Casas Grandes lost an estimated 2,000 horses and mules in addition to 2,000 of sheep and cattle. Fray López estimated that between El Paso and Parral about 6,000 horses vanished from Spanish hands. El Paso weathered the raids with surprising success: their meager herds remained more or less intact. Jironza's concentration of people and resources around Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and the presidio had worked.³⁸

We cheat ourselves out of a more complex analytical moment, however, if we mark the start and finish of the 1684 revolt too neatly. It is true that something happened in March of 1684 that signaled the beginning of a series of future attacks that resembled rebellion; likewise, after March of 1685 there was a noticeable downturn in violent confrontations following the defeat of a large group whom the Spanish regarded as being homogenous with the previous year's rebels. But across and outside of these dates there occurred other events that tease us with a larger picture. Specifically, Faraon raids, assaults, and conspiracies preceded and followed the Manso Rebellion, just as they preceded and followed the Pueblo Revolt. Apaches were co-actors, and likely co-creators, of each rebellion, and as such it is worth reorienting our perspective to better understand how these moments fit into larger Faraon projects. Apache movement southward and eastward reveals that there was an inter-regional dimension to it that ties the experience of El Paso in 1684 to that of Santa Fe in 1680 and to that of La Junta in 1683. Viewed within the larger context of pre-1680 conspiracies around the Middle Rio Grande Valley, El Paso and the Manso Rebellion appear less and less like

³⁸ Hughes, 362-363.

parenthetical episodes and more like clarion signals of deeper, if more obscure, trends.³⁹

Jironza witnessed evidence of the transcendancy of Faraones' presence early in his administration. It was administrative protocol across the provinces of New Spain that outgoing governors remained in their province upon the arrival of incoming governors, who would then conduct a review, a *residencia*, of their predecessor's administration, its flaws and successes. When Jironza arrived as the new governor of New Mexico in the autumn of 1683, he did not need to labor hard during his *residencia* of Otermín's term to figure out what was wrong with the refugee site and why. When he arrived he felt that "there is not any tongue that can describe the necessities that have passed." The *vecinos* were malnourished, having survived on a shocking diet of mesquite bark and cowhide. The horses and cattle had lost so much weight that Jironza thought they looked more like furry bones than beasts of burden or war. Everywhere he turned it seemed that the poverty he witnessed was down to the Faraon attacks that nettled the area. So beleaguered, wary, and dejected were the Spanish that the few horses left to them had to be physically secured to the shacks where people slept, lest they be stolen under the refugees' very noses. Disallowed to roam and graze on grasses (that were already desiccated following the drought), the health of the horses, cattle, and other livestock suffered, and the entire camp felt the degeneration of animal labor and protein. The diligence and tenacity of Faraones guaranteed that the theft of livestock that had

³⁹ Some scholars have called the 1680s, generally, the "Great Southwestern Revolt," as a reflection of the interconnectivity of these rebellions and wars; the idea, however, does not enjoy widespread adoption. v. Forbes (1960), chapter 10 & Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003): chapter 4. Carter, 152-174 for an update chronology of New Mexico conspiracies and Athapaskan complicity. Chapters One and Four, *infra*.

greeted Otermín on his February 1682 return to El Paso had only accelerated by the time Jironza arrived.⁴⁰

Jironza desired to demonstrate to the refugees, his enemies, and the vicegeral court that he was a force to be reckoned with. He gathered what fresh forces and supplies he had brought with him and conducted an *entrada* into the countryside against Faraones. It was a bold move for someone with no experience in the region. There is no evidence of the specific route he took or what exactly happened among the mountains and *rancherías*, but the new governor apparently scored an early victory. In a rather canned recitation of the day's events, he boasted to the viceroy that he had routed the Apaches in their homes, killed many, and captured twenty-two. One of the captured Faraones confessed to Jironza that their principal aim was to root out and destroy all the Spanish. Congratulating himself on his success, and eager to be the one to put Santa Fe back into Spanish hands, the governor was probably hasty when he claimed that he had cowed the Apache groups and was ready to attempt a *reconquista* of New Mexico. Otermín had once had fresh arms and more than a handful of soldiers, but withering raids and an inhospitable terrain whittled down his forces until they were in the same deplorable state in which Jironza found them. In any event, Jironza soon learned that the Faraon problem extended beyond a few *rancherías* that he chanced upon in the Hueco Basin.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 30 October 1683, Provincias Internas. *Juan Domínguez de Mendoza: Soldier and Frontiersman of the Spanish Southwest, 1627-1693*, France V. Scholes, Marc Simmons, & José Antonio Esquibel, eds., Eleanor B. Adams, trans. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012): 40, 334-335.

v. Rick Hendricks & Gerald Mandell, "Allegations of Extortion: New Mexico Residencias of the Mid-1600s," *New Mexico Historical Review* 80:1 (2005) for a general overview of the *residencia* process and its abuses within the history of New Mexico.

⁴¹ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 30 October 1683, Provincias Internas.

Juan Facestado Guaptido was born in New Mexico before 1680. It appears that he adopted Catholicism and dwelt in one of the pueblos, acting as a servant to a Spanish *vecino* before joining the ranks of the apostates in the general rebellion. At virtually the same moment that Jironza was apprising the viceroy of his exploits over Faraones in the field, Juan Guaptido arrived on the banks of the Rio Grande. He was fresh from the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and his coming presaged a sobering revision for the new governor.⁴²

Guaptido entranced Jironza with a captivity narrative that also served as tantalizing evidence about what was happening farther north along the Rio Grande. The pueblos of Jemez, Taos, and Pecos were still the principal headquarters of the rebellion, and they remained in alliance with Apaches. Otermín would have likely met with disaster had he managed to make it that far north, where anti-Spanish sentiment was still virulent. Eventually, for reasons that Guaptido did not make clear, he one day decided to travel southward to El Paso, but he met with misadventure almost immediately. Apaches (Faraon or Jicarilla) who patrolled the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe captured and enslaved him. These Athapaskans held him prisoner for three years, and continuously threatened to kill him. (In this Guaptido seems to reflect the harsh exchange in bodies that Otermín and Ayeta discovered in their interviews with Isletans two years previously.) Eventually, these Apaches gave him to Pecos pueblo where he found sympathy with some Christian Natives, who had managed to hide their faith well enough to survive. These Puebloans, in turn, sent him to El Paso as a messenger to the

⁴² Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate to the viceroy, 31 October 1683, Intelligence that he [Jironza] has received notice that Apaches want to kill the Spanish, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Spanish. The Catholic elements of Pecos pueblo wanted the governor to know that crops were being sown and that the area was not completely lost to ruin, but that the entire region was locked down by Plains Apaches. It is likely that Faraones were working with their kin the Jicarilla, located north of Taos pueblo, to enforce this lockdown, but the fact that this news came out of Pecos pueblo strongly suggests a Faraon attitude. These Apaches, then, seemed to dictate the foreign policy of the Middle Rio Grande Valley: People like Guaptido were not permitted to move about freely and the fruits of agriculture would remain firmly attached to Apache-Puebloan trade linkages.⁴³

Thus, even if Jironza somehow managed to crush Faraon populations in the Hueco Basin area, it appears that he had only scored a victory in the southern tip of a much larger force that was, at that very moment, strong in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and probably down through the Jornada del Muerto, and across the Trans-Pecos. Faraones lacked any kind of centralized authority, yet the trade fairs that they attended every year at places like Pecos pueblo served as a platform for the exchange of information, the coordination of their future campaigns, and the territory of individual *rancherías*. An elastic network of so many small to medium-sized *rancherías* thus comprised wider Faraon Apachería; where there was weakness or setback in one sub-area, another *ranchería* could have learned of it and quickly taken its place. For Jironza, it soon became clear that there would be no attempt at a *reconquista* in 1683: the viceroy's *fiscal* would not fund it and the New Mexico governor should have known that

⁴³ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 30 October 1683, Act concerning the uprising according to the declaration of Juan, and Indian from New Mexico, who was held by the rebels and who fled to El Paso for refuge, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

such a military excursion would be premature given the decrepitude of El Paso del Norte. Perhaps he realized that he was about to engage the same foe who had harried Otermín and Alonso Garcia south along the Rio Grande; who had watched and harassed Otermín later on his failed *entrada*, clouding the horizon with smoke from their fires; who had terrorized the pueblos just north of Jornada del Muerto; who were known to dwell in the many mountain ranges surrounding El Paso; and who had been raiding that the camps were on the verge of starvation.⁴⁴

There is also evidence that Apaches had influence within El Paso del Norte as well. The day after Jironza learned of the initial Manso plot to rebel, on March 15, he discovered that there was present in the area an ethnic Apache from one of the pueblos, who was complicit in the revolt. Jusepillo had likely been captured as a boy during an engagement with Apaches and had been raised in the pueblos, learning about Spanish and Puebloan culture and, equally likely, keeping up ties with his kinsmen through the many trade fairs that occurred between the Rio Grande pueblos and Plains Indians. He was in a perfect position to dialogue between cultures and societies. Jironza interrogated Jusepillo for ten hours, then decided that he was complicit in the plotted rebellion. As evidence he cited reports that Jusepillo was an iniquitous person who had participated in various schemes against New Spain. Unfortunately, the nature of these schemes has not survived in the primary record. Jusepillo's moment in the sun faded quickly. Jironza, after he had hanged the Manso conspirators, got back around to the

⁴⁴ Correspondence between Domingo Jironza de Cruzate and *Fiscal* Pedro de Bastilles, 1682, De Jironza al fiscal de la Real Hacienda, pidiendo licencia para hacer entrada a Nuevo México para intentar la reducción de los alzados, Legajo 35, Parte 1, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR. Basehart, 106, 144. Carter, 7.

Apache and ordered him executed along with another Athapaskan for the theft and slaughter of livestock in El Paso. This other Apache was likely Jusepillo's brother, a person alluded to in the secondary plot that Jironza learned of on March 16.⁴⁵

Faraones pop up in enough places and at enough times that their conscious and deliberate involvement in conspiracies and revolts is probable. But the records that reveal these events are fragmentary, anecdotal, and vague, especially regarding Apaches. Considering that the Spanish seldom missed a chance to brand them as the principal stressor in the region, colonial authors did a remarkably poor job in documenting the subtleties of their activity. It is impossible to document precisely how explicitly Faraones grafted themselves over the political agenda of the rebels. Conspiracies, by their nature, usually passed in whispers and shadow, and rumor often decoyed the truth. The constellation of violence that conspiracies produced, however, provides clues as to the membership and their interests. Faraones were part of a larger strategy that was framed by some kind of centralized understanding, most likely formed around lines of kinship and seasonal meetings. The evidence of Apache activities during the revolt combined with what we know about their movements beforehand strongly suggest that they played a significant role in organizing certain pueblos and semi-sedentary tribes against the Spanish to their own benefit. In doing so they were continuing their work of the Middle Rio Grande Valley and La Junta de los Ríos in the Hueco Basin.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate to the viceroy, 15 March 1684, Trial of the Apache, Jusepillo, and others for sedition, El Paso del Norte, Spanish Archives of New Mexico II, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

⁴⁶ Britten, 14-15.
Forbes (1957), 325-326.

Even during the time frame of the Manso Rebellion, Faraones could never be ignored or discounted. More than once these Apaches forced their way to the foreground despite the overwhelming threat posed by Mansos. The earliest instance came at a momentous time in the rebellion. Manso conspiracy swirled around the *villa* of San Lorenzo and the missions along the Rio Grande and rebel-Puebloan attacks pricked the landscape. Governor Jironza was pinned down inside of battered adobe walls, and had, so far, survived 15 withering attacks. When he and his presidial guard peeked over the ramparts, however, they did not see so many Mansos or Sumas, but rather Faraones. During this time the governor did not dare to leave the walls of shelter without the company of presidials, or militia, and it was only at great peril that he permitted animals to be grazed, or crops tended. If he looked south then it was to do so dolefully. The *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* leading into Nueva Vizcaya offered little hope for aid or reinforcements: travelers were just as likely to be cut down in ambushes as they were when Otermín was still dusting himself off in 1681. Even the return of *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez and his troop to El Paso on July 18 did not produce an advantage for the Spanish. If anything his men were tired, their horses spent, and their supplies low. The governor hoped for reinforcements from the presidios surrounding him in Nueva Vizcaya, and thus inked a missive to Viceroy Tomás Antonio Manuel Lorenzo de la Cerda y Aragon on July 24, 1684 wherein he summed up what he knew about the rebellion.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate to the viceroy, 25 July 1684, An account of the uprising of the the Manso Indians against the occupants of El Paso del Norte, in alliance with the rest of the subversives, Legajo 35, Expediente 2, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Rattled at the reality that he had been held prisoner by the very same peoples he had boasted of subjugating on last October, Jironza wrote that the “Christian” Mansos, having been taken by a “demon,” were in league with “all the infidel nations that are many and who surround[ed them] with their people.” Here the governor referred to Faraones. The usage of the phrase “infidel nations” is crucial because it is the same language used to describe Apaches in the Middle Rio Grande Valley in the decades leading up to 1680 and subsequently. Whereas settled Natives who had converted to Catholicism but who later revolted are invariably described as ‘apostates’ or ‘traitors,’ the designation “infidel” is always reserved for groups who have never come under the supervision of the Franciscan Order; groups like Apaches. At this time the only other groups that could have earned the title of infidel would have been Tobosos or Tarahumaras who were in revolt to the south in Nueva Vizcaya, but they are not noted in New Mexican reports. Furthermore, Jironza’s description of the infidel nations as a “demon” is strongly reminiscent of the phrasing provided by Lieutenant Governor Alonso Garcia on his August 1681 retreat from New Mexico when he excoriated Apaches as “demon weeds.” The Spanish seamlessly co-identified Faraones, demons, infidels, and weeds into one bursting idea that had little explanatory worth, but that nonetheless communicated the perceived power and ubiquity of Apachería.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 25 July 1684, Provincias Internas.

cf. Alonso Garcia, 24 August 1680, Continuation of the letter of the Maestre de Campo regarding the preparations made to help those fleeing the Rio Arriba, Legajo 26, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR for the description of Apaches as “infidels” and “demon weeds.”

Daniel, 482-483.

v. Oakah L. Jones, *Nueva Vizcaya: Heartland of the Spanish Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988) for a fuller understanding of the Spanish-Native dynamic in Nueva Vizcaya and the likelihood that Apaches and Tarahumares cooperated in raiding activities.

Faraones continued to exploit the climate of rebellion to assail the Spanish. In August of 1684, Jironza again diverted resources to confront Apaches. He sent Captain Madrid out with fifty soldiers—nearly the entire complement that he had brought to El Paso del Norte—to attack Apache *rancherías*. Even accounting for militia leftover from the Otermín years and some help from Casas Grandes, this decision represents a dangerous gamble to find an elusive enemy while putting the besieged people of El Paso at even greater risk. After all, the rebellion at this moment showed no signs of abatement, and *Alcalde* Ramirez hallmark victory outside Casas Grandes would not come for another two months. The New Mexico governor had no way to know that the decline of the revolt was at hand. Nevertheless, Jironza felt that the Apache threat had reached such a frenzy and that without immediate relief the revolt—and Apaches—would further prevail. Ultimately, Captain Madrid was unlucky and his troop came back empty-handed with nothing more to show for their labor than lame horses. The impetus for the action was that four Faraones had been captured the month before, and the prisoners supplied provocative intelligence. The month following Madrid's failed expedition, on October 17, Jironza executed two of these Apaches. There is no direct evidence here that Mansos and Faraones were coordinating their activity such that Spanish forces were constantly divided and chasing ghosts, but it is hard not to see it this way. The combination of actual attacks, decoy attacks, and false intelligence suggests that there was a choreography inherent to Manso-Suma-Faraon activity that goes beyond coincidence.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Hughes, 358.

When Jironza first arrived at El Paso, Guaptido made it clear that the Faraon world was at that time much larger than Spanish New Mexico. By the time the Manso Rebellion came to a close, Jironza learned that this larger geopolitical reality had not changed. On February 12, 1685, a month before the Manso and Suma components of the rebellion would come to terms with the Spanish, an apostate Isletan named Lucas was dragged before Jironza. Lucas was a fugitive of the Isleta pueblo there at El Paso, and had earlier absconded upriver with a few paltry supplies in a bid to reach his kin and to learn the news of the Puebloans in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. In the Piro areas of the valley, not much had changed since Otermín passed through. At San Felipe Lucas found poor and dejected people who expressed sadness and disappointment that the Spanish did not try to re-enter New Mexico and save their pueblos from the Apaches. Faraon pressure, it seems, had never relented in the lands north of the Jornada del Muerto. Just as Isletans and Alamedans had complained of, Faraones were wont to take captives, pilfer of crops, and seize what little livestock remained.⁵⁰

Lucas was disheartened, and perhaps so too was Jironza. Standing in half ruined pueblos and talking to a destitute people, the Isletan probably felt that the Spanish offered at least a semi-functional aegis to Puebloans like himself, whereas Faraones offered only greater subjugation. He turned back from the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but as he wound his way back down the Rio Grande and through the Jornada del Muerto he ran into Apaches. At this point Jironza halted the interview, and expressed amazement that the man had lived to tell the tale, prompting his fourteenth question to the

⁵⁰ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 12 February 1685, Testimonies taken regarding the founding of El Paso del Norte, rebellions of Indians, and the removal of military posts from El Paso del Norte to Ysleta, Legajo 37, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

respondent: how did he survive the Apaches? Unexpectedly, Lucas narrated, he was allowed to pass and they even went so far as to guide him back, leading him as far as nearby grove of Cyprus nuts.⁵¹

Why would Apaches guide him back? It seems surprising that they would not have captured or killed him. After all, Lucas had been formerly with the Spanish and had recently fraternized with his home pueblo of Isleta, which was a known target to Faraones. He was their enemy; but he was also their tool. The idea that Apaches were working constructively to build their own world in the Chihuahuan Desert by deconstructing the Spanish imperial landscape is just as demonstrable through their moments of diplomacy as much as through their practice of violence. It is possible that these Faraones spared him for his worth as a messenger, and that his escort to El Paso was meant to guarantee that Lucas would relay to Jironza that the Middle Rio Grande Valley was still Apache-controlled; nothing of Apachería had diminished in the past four and half years. Following their defeat at the hands of Jironza in October of 1683, Faraones might have been experimenting with softer forms of power, such as the use of Puebloans as diplomatic instruments.⁵²

The conclusion of the Manso Rebellion in March of 1685 had little effect on the raiding practices of Faraones. The Spanish had only enough time to begin reorganizing El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes for successful and profitable agriculture before Apaches intensified their assaults and reopened fresh wounds. Captain Madrid reported with chagrin in the first part of April 1685 that he had been unsuccessful in preventing

⁵¹ Jironza, 12 February 1685, Provincias Internas.

⁵² Anderson, 105.

raids, finding aggressors, or protecting property. Sometime in late March or early April he had marched with twenty-five soldiers north along the Rio Grande above the Jornada del Muerto, eager to punish Faraones on their own turf. Jironza himself funded and supplied the excursion, but it was money poorly spent. Near the pueblos of Senecu and Isleta, barely outside of the dreaded and waterless Jornada, Captain Madrid found himself outmaneuvered and unable to proceed. He had traveled too heavy and perhaps too quickly, resulting in the death or crippling of a significant number of his animals. Deciding that even the provisions granted by his governor were insufficient to fight Apaches, he turned back. There would be no victory over Faraones to match that over Mansos and Sumas.⁵³

When Captain Madrid returned, Jironza again called on him to lead fifty soldiers and 170 Puebloan auxiliaries to Casas Grandes to “punish the Apaches, and attack the apostates and their allies.” The Spanish had recently learned that an indigenous coalition was planning to attack El Paso, despite the fact that the rebellion had ended. Details of the route are missing, but the soldiers ranged over the area of the Hueco Basin, staying in the field long enough to find a few *rancherías*, deserted and full of snuffed out fires. Unable to locate the enemy or uncover a conspiracy, they returned empty-handed to Casas Grandes. But when they entered the settlement, they were greeted with a grim surprise. Madrid and the others found that Faraones had visited in their absence, that they had raided the area and taken most of the horses and cattle. The similarities to the decoy attacks that occurred in January of 1682 and September

⁵³ Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate, 12 April 1685, Testimonies taken regarding the founding of El Paso del Norte, rebellions of Indians, and the removal of military posts from El Paso del Norte to Ysleta, Legajo 37, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

1684 make this more than a coincidence. What is more, Apaches were the only group specifically mentioned during the April 1685 humiliation—a fact that bolsters the notion that they were complicit in the acts of rebellion from early on. Spanish gullibility is the only surprising element to this story. Seven months had passed since the Manso named Juan had convinced Jironza to make an identical blunder. There is no evidence directly linking Juan to Apaches, but the congruity between the two episodes suggests that a common membership was pursuing the common interest of raiding for Spanish goods and animals.⁵⁴

Alcalde Francisco Ramirez was convinced that Apaches were the master architects of the region. Corroborating Captain Madrid's account, he penned a letter to the viceroy on April 14, 1685, lamenting his efforts and failures as a loyal vassal to the king. He briefly chronicled the desperate straits that the people of Casas Grandes and El Paso del Norte had found themselves in since May 6 of the previous year; the frantic shuffling of troops; the poverty of so few horses and cattle; and their near-destruction at the ramshackle defenses of El Paso, when arrows rained down on them. During one assault their defenses were so compromised that every Spanish feared they would be dragged away and killed—such a fate actually befell a few soldiers. These descriptions of brutal wartime scenes served only as a preamble to the broader assertion that the enemy that he and Governor Jironza knew under the appellation “Apache” were a populous people who swarmed over the land at will. Attempts to find and destroy them led to disappointment and humiliation because Faraones hid themselves well inside the mountain basins all around. Hidden among the precipices above the Spanish, Faraones

⁵⁴ Jironza, 12 April 1685, Provincias Internas.

could track their foe and, at the opportune moment, strike with precision and efficiency. They swarmed the roads with impunity, attacking travelers, taking their animals and wares, and finding refuge easily once militia or presidials gave chase. Ramirez gave up on Nueva Vizcaya, and although he never came out and said so directly, the purpose of the *alcalde's* letter was to seek permission to abandon Casas Grandes.⁵⁵

There were three more attempts on El Paso and Casas Grandes before Vargas attempted a *reconquista* of New Mexico in 1692. The first effort was somewhat lackluster. The virtually unknown don Pedro Reneros de Posada, the next governor of New Mexico, made an attempt to reconnoiter up the Rio Grande in 1687, a year into his administration. While he was away, the Mansos around El Paso del Norte revolted but little came of the action in the form of either success or documentation. The second attempt came during the second administration of Jironza, from 1689 until the start of 1691. The governor was eager to use the energies of his second term to attempt an *entrada* into New Mexico in May of 1690. Jironza felt that the Manso Rebellion had cheated him out of the opportunity to garner the prestige that would come with successfully restoring Santa Fe to the Spanish empire. That never happened, however, because a Piro Puebloan reported to the governor that Faraones were again collaborating with Sumas, Conchos, and others at La Junta de los Ríos to attack El Paso del Norte while Jironza was away, and that they planned for nothing less the total destruction of the Spanish.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Francisco Ramirez de Salazar to Cruzate, 14 April 1685, Testimonies taken regarding the founding of El Paso del Norte, rebellions of Indians, and the removal of military posts from El Paso del Norte to Ysleta, Legajo 37, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR. Daniel, 483.

⁵⁶ Walz, 259.

Jironza resigned himself to the exigencies of the situation, and reluctantly diverted resources meant for the expedition northward for an emergency excursion to the southeast. By the time his soldiers arrived at La Junta de los Ríos the rebels had gone, vanished into the mountain chains that surrounded the confluence. It is unclear whether Jironza interrupted a genuine conspiracy to attack El Paso del Norte or if the Spanish were again decoyed by Apaches and their allies, just as had happened in September of 1683 and April of 1685. If the former, then this example demonstrates Spanish clumsiness in surveying and traversing Apache territory (one thinks of the many crosses left by *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez across the Spanish route to La Junta). Just as in Oñate's period, the Spanish privileged superiority in armor, arms, and supplies over nimbleness and the ability to live off of the land. Just as Oñate had experienced, the dividends of such a strategy were often slim when the Spanish took the offensive.

If, however, the ruse at La Junta de los Ríos was a decoy, then it strongly suggests that the acumen of these Faraones was far more sophisticated than the Spanish ever gave them credit. The implication from such a maneuver would not only mean that Apaches had outcompeted the Spanish in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but also that they had also acted with deliberateness and intelligence in the prevention of a Spanish return northward for nearly twelve years. Faraones had kept the Spanish poor and busy with a cat-and-mouse game of attrition that prevented them from amassing the kinds of supplies and energy required of an *entrada*. These Apaches were more than simple raiders who happened to be in the right places at the right times, colluding with Puebloans and semi-nomadic peoples opportunistically. Faraon activity before and

during the interregnum suggests that these Apaches acted deliberately, and developed a concerted and imperialistic strategy that utilized the tools of empire within a wide and shifting web of inter-indigenous alliances.⁵⁷

One more episode deserves note. Later, while don Diego de Vargas was governor but had not yet begun his *reconquista*, the Hueco Bolsón again came alive with raids and fires. In July of 1691 Faraones and Sumas struck the El Paso pueblos of Socorro and Ysleta del Sur, thirteen miles apart. They captured the entire horse herd from each. Immediately Vargas set out with two squadrons of cavalry to capture them before they could make it to the Hueco Mountains. At first he thought that Apaches alone were responsible, possibly with the help of other Apache groups like the Siete Rios, or Salineros—peoples identified with the Central Closed Basin and the Pecos watershed. But over the course of a night's riding and searching he learned that Sumas, gathered at the mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, were also complicit. He set an ambush for them and continued his pursuit of Apaches, but all his canvassing and searching came to naught.⁵⁸

Ironically, Vargas' reference to the Hueco Mountains is the first we have during the whole interregnum, although Otermín and Jironza were doubtlessly familiar with this nearby mountain range. The Huecos lay northeast of El Paso del Norte and, as they name suggests, were named for the many 'hollows' or 'tanks' that are all around and that are known for capturing and storing rainwater. The historical significance of this

⁵⁷ Anderson, 106.
Carter, 138.

⁵⁸ Forbes (1957), 321, 325-326.

Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 30 March 1692, Informa sobre los indios del pueblo de Socorro que y sus gestiones con los apaches y sumas que se roban la caballada, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Historia, AGN CSWR.

place is just as much a mystery as every other mountain range that Faraones possibly used but left no documentation about. Fortunately for this history, however, this sierra has recently become the subject of archeological analysis. One particular study site, Cerro Rojo, located deep in the heights, contains enough material artifacts and structural ruins that some have suggested that a huge *rancheria* existed there, capable of housing hundreds of people and sporting defensive stone walls and earthen ramparts. Archaeologists generally agree that Cerro Rojo was an inhabited site during this time, and that Apaches were so dominant in the area, which makes it probable that this was a place known to them. Perhaps it was to Cerro Rojo that Faraones escaped once Vargas gave chase. The celerity with which the Spanish cavalry pursued these Apaches, and their subsequent failure, strongly suggests that their havens and bases were nearby. Alternatively, the veteran inhabitants of the region, the Mansos and Sumas, most likely knew about any habitations in their immediate vicinity and would have passed that information on, willingly or not, to Faraones—their known collaborators.⁵⁹

The Manso Rebellion of 1684 is the most analyzed event of the interregnum. This insurrection, more than any other moment during those twelve years, came the closest to inflicting terminal damage to the Spanish, and it threatened to destroy New Mexico and to amputate parts of northern Nueva Vizcaya. It very easily could have been another August 1680 for the Spanish. Indeed, it is typically perceived that way in

⁵⁹ Deni J. Seymour, "A Ranchería in the Gran Apachería: Evidence of Intercultural Interaction at the Cerro Rojo Site," *Plains Anthropologist* 49:190 (2004). For criticism of her methodology and alternative interpretations of this site, v. Nancy A. Kenmotsu and Myles R. Miller, "Re-evaluation of Cerro Rojo: A Response to Seymour," *Plains Anthropologist* 53:206 (2008).

scholarship. Native actors from across the region banded together and made surprise, coordinated, and sustained assaults against Spanish settlements and interests. Even the causalities that we understand behind this event echo the kinds of antagonisms that plagued the Middle Rio Grande Valley and produced the revolt of 1680: Food scarcity and privation; a lack of basic protection and stability; and Puebloan-*vecino* friction regarding land and culture. But there was no mass slaughter of the Spanish and certainly no quick victory for the insurgent indigenes. El Paso del Norte was not isolated in the same way as Santa Fe; there was no Jornada del Muerto or Rio Grande dividing this settlement from the rest of New Spain. The interior garrisons of Nueva Vizcaya were still far enough away, but there was more of a Spanish military presence than New Mexico ever had. Finally, rebels and would-be rebels did not have as much time to synchronize their plans and their means as did the long-suffering Puebloans of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, who had had decades to prepare and rehearse resistance. With these factors in mind, the Manso Rebellion begins to look less and less similar to the Pueblo Revolt, and echo of common causality begins to elongate away.⁶⁰

The 1684 revolt, rather, should more properly be viewed as continuous with the 1680 revolt as a reflection of the high level of Apache manipulation of the geopolitical landscape. Just as the *rio abajo* Puebloans had not been alone in the planning and casting out of the Spanish, neither were the rebels who rose up around El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes. They were aided and possibly also guided by Faraones who

⁶⁰ *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1570-1700*, Vol. 1, Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J., eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986): 483-485.

v. John L. Kessell, "A Long Time Coming: The Seventeenth-Century Pueblo-Spanish War," *New Mexico Historical Review* 86:2 (2011): 153, for the idea that Puebloan success in 1680 can be adduced to their long history of suffering at the hands of Spanish agents and their repeated attempts to conspire against them.

developed complicated alliance networks among Manso, Sumas, and perhaps even Piros and Jumanos, in order to destabilize the Spanish imperial structures of the region. At El Paso and Casas Grandes, it seems incredibly likely that Faraones purposefully mimed the stressors that had precipitated the 1680 revolt around Santa Fe. Faraones had seen firsthand the success that was possible in 1680, and so it seems natural that they would attempt a similar blow that would force their most serious competitors further to the margins and to claim for themselves even more sites and tools of empire. In this rethinking, the provenance of imperial momentum and movement rests just as much in Native actors as in European ones, with the contest always far from settled.⁶¹

The activities and movements of Apache peoples from 1680-1692 reflect continuity within a much broader timeline that reached backwards and forwards. Faraon Apaches (Athapaskans from east and south of Pecos pueblo) continued the strategies that had worked so well for them before 1680: they seized the physical tools of empire (e.g. horses and harquebuses), and forged advantages for themselves. The appearance of Faraones outside the Middle Rio Grande Valley in 1681 signaled the start of their expansion into the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Well armed and well mounted thanks to the 1680 revolt, Faraones passed with relative ease across the landscapes east of the Rio Grande and south towards Nueva Vizcaya. In the process they became the first indigenous group in what we know call the borderlands to invert

⁶¹ Carter, 140.

cf. Calloway, 172-185 where Apaches are not complicit in the conspiracies and rebellions of the late seventeenth century. Calloway thinks that Puebloans inspired Apaches to raid south towards El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes, in a sense making the case that their 'resistance' against the Spanish begins at 1680. Evidence of endemic raiding of Spanish and pueblos alike through the long seventeenth century, however, together with the Athapaskan hegemony that appeared to spread over the Middle Rio Grande Valley after 1672, suggests an inverse narrative.

the colonial encounter. In the process Faraones formed a redoubtable Native space—Faraon Apachería—that carried with it distinctly imperialistic markers. Although Faraones never formed colonies or governed from a central authority, they succeeded in claiming a disproportionate share of resources in the region and did a better job of coercing their neighbors into their own political economies than the Spanish could. Many of these developments, however, would come in the future, after 1692, but for now it is enough to say that the beginnings came during the interregnum.⁶²

This chapter is concerned with *Reconquista*—but not that of Vargas’. Eighteen months after August 1680 and nearly twelve years before don Diego de Vargas would “restore” New Mexico to the crown, the ecoregion had already been reconquered, in a way. Apaches had reasserted their trading privileges with certain pueblos and consolidated their access to those markets by ruining other pueblos that were politically or geographically closer to the Spanish, specifically the Piro pueblos of the lower reaches of the Rio Grande and the Tompiro pueblos that were east of the Manzano Mountains. Additionally, at the same time that the Spanish were trying to figure out how to get back into New Mexico, it is likely that Apache interests were behind the failed Manso rebellion of 1684 and at least one subsequent conspiracy around El Paso. It would appear that Governors Otermín, Jironza, and Reneros were matched in their

⁶² Barr, 9-15.
Britten, 61.
Calloway, 167.

attempts to retake New Mexico by indigenous groups who themselves were trying to keep and consolidate the Chihuahuan Desert.⁶³

Spanish imperialism actually funded this Apache-sponsored *reconquista* by means of the broad, inter-continental economy that kept faraway and insolvent places like Santa Fe or El Paso afloat. When Faraones had attacked the Spanish from Sangre de Cristo mountain havens around Santa Fe before 1680, they inadvertently furthered the need of, and demand for, the mission supply service that had been to keep New Mexico stocked and alive with basic supplies that could not be produced locally. Admittedly, the need of the refugees at El Paso was already great when they arrived, but that need only intensified under the pressure of Faraon raids from the mountains that made up the basin inside of which El Paso rested. Faraones tried to take all they could, and annihilate the Spanish if possible. It is all but certain that this was their intention both during the 1680 revolt, and during the revolts and conspiracies that were to follow during the interregnum. They failed. Spanish empire was remarkably durable and although places like New Mexico might exist as provinces on the edge of poverty they nonetheless persisted as subsidized outposts of a much broader network. But Faraon failure to eradicate the Spanish was actually a boon. Spanish survivors were repeatedly faced with supply shortages, and subsequently petitioned for aid from Nueva Vizcaya, and Mexico City. When fresh wealth arrived in El Paso, it had the effect of buoying the Spanish at the same time that it provided a fresh and lucrative target. Thus

⁶³ Forbes (1957), 325.
La Vere, 90.

Karl H. Schlesier, "Rethinking the Dismal River Aspect and the Plains Athapaskans, A.D. 1692-1768," *The Plains Anthropologist* 17:56 (1972): 111-113 for a breakdown of the divisions of Apache groups.

Alfred Thomas, *The Mescalero Apache, 1653-1874* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959): 3.

when Apaches took wealth from El Paso, they indirectly continued siphoning wealth from sources of aid farther south, places like Casas Grandes and Parral in Nueva Vizcaya. Apaches may not have realized it, but their failure to totally remove the Spanish prompted influxes of livestock and metal goods into the region, making available the tools to maintain and grow their world, Apachería.⁶⁴

Acting out this process, Apaches forged superior access to and control over local resources, in effect creating a Native empire. Apache political, economic, and social systems never recalibrated the political economy of the region, thus their societies did not do the kind of work we typically expect from “empires”—that term for space and process defined after Euro-American manifestations of state and power. But accounts of Faraones from Pecos Pueblo south to El Paso and east to La Junta de los Ríos indicate that there existed no other group or state at this time that could challenge them. Despite the difficulty inherent in attaching the political category of “empire” to Apaches, there are environmental ways to describe their brand of territorial domination, and these will lead us back, eventually, to a discussion of “empire.” Apaches were the “keystone group” of the northern Chihuahuan Desert, affecting the region’s character far out of proportion to their numbers: They outcompeted the Spanish and Puebloan groups and shaped the material wealth and the military reach of those societies. Although I derive the term keystone from the ecological notion of “keystone species,” I also use the term politically and economically. Apache raiding and trading practices fundamentally circumscribed what kinds of political and economic (and social) formations could occur. Although their language did not become the *lingua franca* of the region and their cultural customs and

⁶⁴ Barr, 18-19.
Britten, 48.

mores did not graft themselves atop Spanish and Puebloan ones, they maintained such a strong presence in the ecoregion that every group who bordered them was necessarily and profoundly affected.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Duval, 7-10 for her thesis that Natives like Osages and Quapaws in the Arkansas River Valley maintained sovereignty and superiority over Europeans until the nineteenth century, thereby turning the notion of Euro-American “borderlands” on its head and exocitizing the colonizers instead of the colonized. Although I call “imperialistic” what DuVal calls “Native ground,” the substance of our arguments is very similar: Natives controlled the space of colonial encounter long after initial contact.

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008): 1-17 for the lexical evolution of DuVal’s *Native Ground* thesis.

Witgen, 216-217.

Barr, 36-38, for a powerful call to historians to begin rethinking senses of territoriality and power across a Native landscape defined by the position of *rancherías* and seasonal migrations of nomadic groups.

Anderson, 105-106.

Chapter 3

Experimentation: Faraon Apachería During the Second Era of Colonial Encounter

Antonio de Valverde y Cosío was many things over the decades. He was a soldier for don Diego de Vargas in the 1690s, a presidio captain at both Santa Fe and El Paso, and, finally, the governor and captain-general of New Mexico from 1718 to 1721. His most important role, however, has passed largely unnoticed: that of a witness. More than Vargas (who died abruptly in 1704), more than Otermín (who departed El Paso for Mexico City, without reluctance, in 1683), and more than any other literate person in the northern reaches of the Chihuahuan Desert, Valverde was a witness to the increasing sophistication of Faraon politics, to the broad expansion of their territory, and to their eventual recession in the *rio arriba* of the Rio Grande.

For instance, Valverde was there when Faraones consumed the final years of Vargas second term as governor of New Mexico. As a soldier who had been brought to New Mexico by don Diego de Vargas, he was nearby, if not present, when the architect of the official *reconquista* rode off for the last time to the Sandia and Manzano Mountains east of the new *villa* of Bernalillo to punish the Faraones, in 1704. Valverde would have heard that the Faraones left little more for the Spanish to fight than recently extinguished campfires; that they had baited—dared—the Spanish to follow them east

over the arid plains and mesas; that Vargas had died without achieving any success in reducing them.¹

Valverde, as captain of 49 presidials at El Paso's Nuestra Señora del Pilar y el Glorioso San José, was there again in 1707 when Apaches watched from the edges of the Hueco Bolson; when they peered down from the Franklin and Hueco Mountains, watching for any sign of laxity, weakness, or distraction on the part of the soldiers. When, inevitably, Valverde was forced by regulations to send squads out as escorts for traveling missionaries or merchant caravans, or when royal military service around Santa Fe came due, he was there when Faraones swooped down and attacked. In times like those, and they came often, Valverde face his opponent on two fronts. Often out-maneuvered and decoyed, the Valverde watched many horses and cattle vanish into the mountains.²

Almost ten years later Valverde was still in New Mexico, and about to take up the mantle of acting-governor, when his colleague Juan Páez Hurtado mounted a campaign against Faraones in 1715, this time in a locale more north than ever before noted, in the *rio arriba* region of the Tiwa pueblos, where Taos and Picuris Puebloans traded with Jicarilla Apaches and other northern Athapaskan-speakers. Valverde might have handled the paperwork that found its way to the vicegeral court in Mexico City. He undoubtedly was familiar with his colleague's expedition diary. In any event, Valverde would have known that the only thing Hurtado's soldiers rode upon were Faraon tracks

¹ Governor Vargas, 27 March-2 April 1704, Campaign journal, Account of operations against Faraon Apaches, Document 99, Spanish Archives of New Mexico (SANM) II, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives (NMSRCA).

² General Antonio Valverde et al., 3-8 October 1707, Testimony Regarding the Defense of the Santa Fe and El Paso del Norte Presidios, Document 135, SANM II, NMRCA.

that had long ago gone cold. Ironically, while Hurtado hunted in the north and Valverde was present in Santa Fe, Faraon spies had actually surveilled Hurtado's movements and had felt confident enough to double back to Pecos for a bit of trading. Faraones were engaging the imperial economy and drawing wealth from the Middle Rio Grande Valley—right under the governor's nose and free from presidial oversight.³

Finally, in the penultimate year of his governorship, 1720, Valverde wrote to the viceroy in Mexico City, the Marques de Valero, to complain that the “Apache tribe of Faraones invade the kingdom with death and robbery. They dwell within the territory around this *villa* [Santa Fe] as far as the jurisdiction of the Paso del Rio Norte [El Paso] and La Junta de los Ríos.” The governor did not report that Faraones were present in the *rio arriba* around Taos, Picuris, or the riverine spots that were the typical haunts of Jicarilla Apaches, in present-day south-central and southeastern Colorado. Valverde knew this because he had led a campaign the previous year that was nearly identical to Hurtado's 1715 campaign. Just as Hurtado had done, Valverde too answered the call of Jicarillas begging for help against a mounted scourge that was wiping them from their *rancherías* and gathering horses, bison, and corn all around them. Like Hurtado, Valverde soon found that his efforts came to naught. Nevertheless, at the same moment that Faraones infiltrated and exploited the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Valverde witnessed events on his 1719 campaign that signaled the first series of setbacks that were just then affecting Faraon Apachería.⁴

³ Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., *After Coronado: Spanish Exploration Northeast of New Mexico, 1696-1727, Documents from the Archives of Spain, Mexico, and New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935): 94-98.

⁴ Governor Valverde, September-October 1719, Expedition journal, PE 43, Pinart, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley (microfilm housed at Center for Southwest Research-UNM [CSWR]).

This period, from 1692 until 1720, more than any other before it, reflects the ambitious and sophisticated capacities of Faraon geopolitical strategy to dominate territories and economies that have typically been reckoned as components of New Spain. To Franciscan *Custo* Francisco Ayeta and Governor Antonio Otermín in the 1670s and early 1680s; to Governor Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate in the 1680s; and to Vargas through the first years of the 1700s, Apaches must have seemed like an unstoppable force, adapting quickly and efficiently to the perils and possibilities offered by the first era of colonial encounter: Within a decade of colonization, they had mastered new technology like horses and guns within a mosaic of distinct ecologies. Since then, they had frequently outcompeted the Spanish on eastern, southern, and northern fronts. What Valverde was witnessing, on the one hand, was the florescence of an ethnically distinct Apachean strategy that had been maturing for nearly one hundred years. On the other hand, Valverde also witnessed the withering challenge offered to Faraones by Comanches and Utes, and the former's retreat to the Chihuahuan Desert by the 1720s; there, Apache culture and politics adapted to the landscape and set them on the path that would lead to the Mescalero identity and a reformulation of their power.

Somewhere between 1691 and 1694 Faraones—the keystone group of southern Athapaskans—and Jicarillas—their counterparts to the north—parted ways in terms of both strategies and fortunes. Although these Apaches had been ostensibly aligned (or at least not antagonistic) through most of the seventeenth century, these two ethnicities began to negotiate the second era of colonial encounter, ushered in by Vargas, in new ways. The consequences of this divergence shaped not only the region but should now

also reform our ideas and beliefs about the role of the northern Chihuahuan Desert and its inhabitants within larger questions of colonial history. Although little had changed in terms of Apaches' ability to engage the ecoregion more efficiently than the Spanish in order to feed and outfit their population, the means by which Faraones exploited that advantage evolved into novel modes of competition that were more efficient than ever before.

For its part, Jicarilla competition was a faithful continuation of practices that had been occurring all throughout the seventeenth century. In that sense, these Apaches' practice of frequently raiding the fields and *ranchos* of the Spanish *vecinos* in the Middle Rio Grande Valley from their habitations in present-day southeastern Colorado did not resemble a noticeable deviation. It seems that the motivation behind Jicarilla competition was not only to procure more material than the Spanish (and at Spanish expense), but also to cripple the Spanish colonists' ability to survive on the land—to eradicate them and seize their property completely, just as in 1680. And just as in the 1650s, 1670s, and 1680s Jicarillas would soon conspire with Puebloans in 1696 to wipe out the Spanish and retake the territory above the Jornada del Muerto for themselves. Jicarillan competition resembled a zero-sum game where the winner would eventually take all. There was no room for extensive mutualism or coordination of interests.

It appears that Faraones, on the other hand, abandoned their attempts to eradicate the Spanish soon after Vargas made his official *reconquista*, but before the 1696 uprising. Instead of attempting to extract, completely, the resources of the Spanish empire, Faraones contrived to transform Spanish colonial places into renewable resource depots. I call the Faraon system that developed during this time “symbiotic

bellicosity.” Symbiotic bellicosity ritualized cyclical modes of engagement as the normative feature of the Spanish-Apache interchange from about 1694 until 1720, producing benefits to both participants in the process. The system was bellicose because the use of violence or the threat of potential violence carried it through the full cycle of modal engagements. It was a form of competition that immediately benefited Faraon raiders, who received heightened access to local resources, and that belatedly benefited Spanish colonists, who then had justifiable recourse to petition for material aid from the interior of New Spain. It was, however, a system that did not yield equivalent dividends; Faraones retained the advantage.

It is worth defining this concept in more detail since it represents a new interpretive framework that helps to shape our understanding of eighteenth century engagement. The first mode of engagement in the cycle was usually initiated by Faraones. First, Faraones approached the Spanish, usually at Pecos pueblo or Albuquerque, with the promise of peace in order to initiate a cycle of low-risk trading. When yield from trading became meager, whether because of political or climatic reasons, Apaches reverted to the second phase: raiding and pillaging, thereby catalyzing the shift to the next phase. Third, in response to privation and poverty owing to the Apachean attacks, governors petitioned Parral or Mexico City for additional supplies which would then be sent via caravan up the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*—right through Faraon territory and back into their orbit of their Native economy. This influx of livestock, metal tools, foodstuff, and other items rejuvenated the local economy. Faraones were then inclined, as in phase one, to forsake the inherently risky venture of raiding for the low-risk, modest-yield activity of trading, and thus the cycle started anew.

There is little indication that any of the historical actors involved consciously realized that their behavior fell into the pattern that I have termed symbiotic bellicosity. Additionally, there is, of course, no surviving evidence produced by Apaches of this period that unequivocally corroborates these assertions. Nevertheless, practices that are sustained and coordinated do not seem to be aberrations of isolated phenomena but reflect a sense of intent and intelligence. What their exact thinking was we will probably never know, but symbiotic bellicosity takes their sophistication into account and provides a workable model for historical analysis.

Symbiotic bellicosity is a historical process defined by causality, but the traditional tool-bag of the historian comes up short in the analysis of this period. Analytics like race, gender, agency, and power do not provide sufficiently deep insight into how and why Faraones and Jicarillas weathered so differently the post-Vargas period and the coming Comanche period. Environmental science, the interdisciplinary linchpin of this study, does not provide the answers that were so important to chapters 1 and 2. In order to supplement the gaps left by documentation and traditional analysis, I have drawn on the economic study of game theory. This theory and its models offer a heightened level of quantitative assessment upon the histories of different populations. The study of games and their outcomes can help us understand more concretely why Faraones did as well as they did while Jicarillas seemed to suffer, and why the Spanish only seemed to find tentative gains. The northern Chihuahuan Desert during the start of the eighteenth century was still full of relatively fresh encounters and rapidly changing economies; people still migrated within new geographies while they tried to understand and interact

with a new world where horses, guns, and imported commodities radically changed what one could expect from contests. As such, the idea of game theory works well as a way to measure how and why certain strategies fared better than others and why certain political economies came to be privileged as successful.⁵

At its heart, game theory allows economists to ask questions about how different players choose different strategies based on expected payoffs, and then to analyze the utility, or efficiency, of their chosen strategies in relation to the choices of the other player(s). The 'games' reflect the competitions entered into between the historical actors of the northern Chihuahuan Desert. The payoffs could be many things, from horses, maize, and captives, all the way to complete domination of the other player's territory, populations, and economic means. Games, at their most basic level, involve two types of players, named 'hawks' and 'doves.' Hawks always compete with the purpose of claiming the entire resource over which the competition depends, and will only concede defeat when beaten in violent confrontation. Doves would prefer to share the resource equally, but will abandon the resource if challenged by a hawk. There are vast intricacies to game theory and its applications—far too many to review here. There are a few, however, that specifically reflect on asymmetries that refine the ways that players behave. This point is crucial since, historically, there is really no group or individual who completely embodies the 'hawk' or 'dove' strategy. In reality, players almost always adopted mixed strategies that vacillated between hawk and dove many times in any given game and series of games. These refinements to our understanding of games are

⁵ As an aside, the application of game theory within this study actually splices well the deployment of environmental science because competition for natural resources among biotic entities resembles many of the contests analyzed by economists. Since the early 1970s, biologists have been quick to capitalize on this fact and have produced significant work on what they term "evolutionarily stable strategies."

critical since game theory would mean little if it could not account for things like deception, perseverance, reputation, prior ownership, and other asymmetries.⁶

Specifically, the ideas of a player acting as a 'retaliator' or 'assessor,' and of adopting 'bargaining' or 'threats' into their strategies refines how the game is played and what outcomes are statistically likely and desirable. A retaliator is a player who begins play as a dove but may end play as a hawk. They will gladly share the resource if the other player is amenable, in dove fashion, but will switch to play like a hawk when challenged for a resource. An assessor observes the opponent and chooses a strategy according to the asymmetries within the game, like prior ownership (of land, for instance) or superior armament (harquebuses versus arrows). The ability to assess is simply the ability to learn and develop. Bargaining is the process whereby players attempt to gain advantages, and thus a larger share of the contested resource, by negotiation and communication; in this way they bypass the costly effects of violent conflict over a resource, which takes away from the net gain they would otherwise receive. Threats occur when players bluff their way into convincing their opponents to behave like doves without incurring the actual cost of behaving like a hawk.⁷

Generally, it is better to act like a hawk than a dove, and better to act as an assessor or retaliator than to act as either a hawk or a dove. The reasoning that

⁶ Robert Sugden, *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 12-14.

Jean-François Laslier, Richard Topol, and Bernard Walliser, "Behavioral Learning," in *Advances in Self-organization and Evolutionary Economics*, Jacques Lesourne and André Orléan, eds. (London: Economica, 1998): 380.

John Maynard Smith, *Evolution and the Theory of Games* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 11-12.

⁷ Maynard Smith, 18, 108, 151-155.

Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): chapters 2 and 5.

produces these observations follows this line: Doves concede the contest too often and fail to gain advantages over hawks in nearly every case. Hawks succeed in every case except when they meet another hawk, because then only one player eventually prevails while both endure the expensive cost of fighting (i.e. injuries, deaths, broken weapons). Retaliators and assessors usually do better than hawks because they mix their strategies and, by avoiding or delaying the expensive violence of hawk-ish play, increase their gains by minimizing their exposure to risk. As I proceed with my analysis I will revisit these ideas and apply them to the scenarios at hand.⁸

For Faraones, symbiotic bellicosity helped transform the New Mexican branch of the Spanish empire into something akin to a renewable resource, almost like an *acequia*. Its inter-continental, imperial markets produced and transported goods and wealth that the places and inhabitants of the northern Chihuahuan Desert could not have produced independently. When, as an *acequia*, the Spanish network of empire was properly tapped or pumped it nourished Apachería with resources that were deliverable via the oceans, ports, and up the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. Apaches could have easily learned this about the New Spain through their experiences of the previous twenty years. Since the 1670s, when they obliterated the Tompiro pueblos of the Middle Rio Grande Valley and then, during the interregnum, when they tried repeatedly to annihilate the Spanish presence in major uprisings, they had witnessed the incredible tenacity of these newcomers—their ability to survive like no other indigenous population could have under similar circumstances. By the start of the

⁸ Maynard Smith, 14-16, 18.
Sugden, 63.

eighteenth century Apaches had ample evidence that the Spanish investment in the Middle Rio Grande Valley would not be allowed to wither and recede.⁹

It is worth pausing here to ask: why did Faraones bother to raid at all, and not use trade as their exclusive strategy? Raiding was dangerous and risked valuable members of an already small social group. Part of the answer lies with James Brooks' monograph *Captives and Cousins*. Brooks' work is mainly concerned with socio-economic questions of masculine honor and captive-exchange networks as a way to understand the linkages between borderlands communities. *Captives and Cousins* describes a system of violent reciprocity as the principal means of exchange between multiple cultures that desperately needed to interact but were prevented from peaceably doing so because of social and cultural distance. The Spanish, despite their interest in Plains products and annoyance with the persistent raiding by non-Puebloans, stayed tethered to riverine places and were unwilling to find a permanent cultural bridge between their society and Native ones. They would have probably preferred to be isolationists. In spite of that, the effects of their imperial economy rippled out and touched everyone in the region, regardless of location or status, and this had the effect of forcing interest and attention back upon the Middle Rio Grande Valley. For Natives, refusal or inability to connect with that economy was a damning handicap. The tools of resistance and domination came through the colonial exchange; Native groups equipped with horses, and harquebuses could compete on a more or less level field

⁹ William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009): 164.

Schelling's "theory of interdependent decision" sits closely to my idea of symbiotic bellicosity. It is mainly concerned with "the employment of threats, or of threats and promises, or more generally of the conditioning of one's own behavior on the behavior of others..." It does not consider pure conflict, such as that which occurred between Jicarillas and the Spanish through 1696, because those games are relatively simple, if highly destructive. Schelling, 15-20.

with Europeans. But the Spanish did not make Athapaskan-Spanish/Puebloan trade easy. Regulations were often changed at the caprice of the governor, for example. Considering the reluctance of the Spanish to participate in a regional economy that non-Spanish and non-Puebloan players might find equitable, Apaches quickly found that raiding was often necessary as the means of inter-ethnic exchange.¹⁰

The games that these two Apache groups developed were not confined to play with the Spanish alone. There was no binary whereby Natives, writ large, pitted their collective will against Europeans's, writ large. False binaries like these do not describe the complexity of creative meaning-making and nuanced competition. Beginning in the 1710s, the documentary record for New Mexico becomes crowded with examples wherein Faraones play competition games with Jicarillas, to the lasting detriment of the latter. After 1696, when Vargas roundly crushed the rebellion of which Jicarillas were a part, these Apaches settled into distinctly more peaceful, even docile, relations with the Spanish. Vargas would have regarded Jicarillas as "reduced," the Spanish term that connotes an understanding of imperial subjugation and an implied promise to fealty on

¹⁰ James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute, 2002): 4, 5-7, 30-33 for thesis paragraphs. Brooks' analysis does not extend Apachean participation in this dystopic system of violent exchange, and therefore cannot really speak to the opportunities that they seized nor the successes they achieved. Brooks privileges the capture and exchange of human bodies, and sheep. As a consequence, Apaches often figure as little more than slave-raiding targets whose economy based in the seizure of carbohydrates, cattle and horses, as well as some persons is under studied. As an inversion of Richard White's "Middle Ground" thesis, Brooks' contribution is significant and his model is persuasive, but his modeling of the colonial world misses elements that this study hopes to address.

On a side note, it is interesting to note that Brooks' study is essentially centered around a game theory approach that queries the founding of social conventions, no matter how irrational or inefficient, among populations who repeatedly compete with known opponents. v. Sugden, 8, 149.

v. also Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) where Utes and Paiutes see the social and cultural distance between their two ethnic groups increase following the introduction of horses, firearms, and disease. These factors unsettled the delicate equilibrium that had existed before and allowed Utes to conduct asymmetrical warfare on their indigenous neighbors.

Schelling, 77-80.

the part of the Native group. In game theory terms, when Jicarillas began trading peaceably at Tiwa pueblos, they settled into an economic model of competition that provided fewer dividends than the one adopted by Faraones. Essentially, it was dove strategy with slight retaliator tendencies. That is, Jicarillas adopted a less aggressive strategy and began conceding the advantage in the contest more often, but that is not to say that they could not be roused to violence if attacked and challenged to give up all of their advantage. Faraones appear to have realized quickly that their kin were in a weakened position and this is perhaps why they aggressively expanded their targeting of places and resources to include non-Spanish targets, such as Jicarilla *rancherías* in the *rio arriba* all the way up to the Canadian River Valley.

Faraones, a people who had been expansionistic for at least twenty years by now, labored to outcompete Jicarillas and to assimilate their environments, and possibly their bodies, into the Faraon political economy. Faraones did not have to practice symbiotic bellicosity with Jicarillas because Jicarillas never evinced the same ability to regenerate their population and their wealth via distant networks. Whereas Faraones had Albuquerque, El Paso del Norte, and La Junta de los Ríos to fall back on, to speak only of settled agricultural spaces, Jicarillas had recourse only to Taos and a handful of northern pueblos. Faraon competition with Jicarillas took on a hawk strategy with assessor qualities. That is, Faraones consistently claimed the entire resource in the games, or contests, entered into with Jicarillas and, knowing from recent experience that they held an asymmetric advantage over Jicarillas, they exploited that population's

propensity to retreat. Eventually, Jicarillan space imploded as it became increasingly isolated from the resource-benefits of the broader Apachería that Faraones controlled.¹¹

In contrast, the royal provinces of New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya were part of a more politically stable, inter-continental network that stretched down into South America and east to the Caribbean and Europe. Even amid the strong Native presences that mediated the forces of Catholic culture and monarchical politics, places like Santa Fe and El Paso survived just the same as Mexico City and Veracruz because they were parts of a premodern empire. New Mexico could rely on supplies coming from the south through Nueva Vizcaya and the interior of New Spain, even if the regularity of delivery and the quantity of aid often left much to be desired. Unlike Jicarillas, who might only be able to try their hand at subsistence living if all else failed (assuming that they were not being attacked), the governor could always petition the viceroy who could petition the king for relief. The intercontinental network of ships, ports, roads, and wagons meant that the Spanish empire was elastic in the availability and deliverability of resources.¹²

Vargas' *reconquista* was less a clarion victory for Spanish imperial hegemony and more a reintroduction of Spanish political interests to the larger geopolitical arcs of

¹¹ v. Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006): Chapter One. Generally, this chapter gives an analogous example involving eastern groups of Utes who had procured Spanish technology by the 1650s and used it to perpetrate a kind of indigenous-spun imperialism on their neighbors in the Great Basin.

¹² France V. Scholes, "The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century," *New Mexico Historical Review* 5:4 (1930): 400-402. The mission supply service that delivered goods every three years had ended by 1680, when Custo Francisco de Ayeta conducted the last shipment up the camino real, but was blocked at the Rio Grande, both by flooding and by news of the general revolt. The supply service did not pick up again after the *reconquista* and thus there was no regularity or absolute certainty as to when aid would come. Still, the viceregal court was at this time consumed with anxiety about French encroachment from the Great Plains and the Gulf of Mexico and this condition, if no other, guaranteed their commitment to sustain New Mexico as a buffer province.

the region. It was a field full of competition. Apachean imperialisms, Puebloan grievances, and French mercantile expansion all competed to varying degrees with Spanish political interests. Imperial politics and celebratory myths aside, the most that can be said about Vargas' so-called bloodless *reconquista* is that it was an economic refertilization of the Middle Rio Grande Valley—at the expense of the Spanish. During the interregnum goods and animals had ceased to travel above El Paso, but Vargas' return of the Spanish to Santa Fe and the Rio Grande pueblos allowed grains, cattle, horses, mules, and other animals and wares to again flow up the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. Faraones might have been pleased to see the caravans move out north from El Paso del Norte for the Jornada del Muerto and the *rio abajo*. This merchandise was destined to revitalize pueblos, *haciendas*, and farms that were materially valuable to Apaches. The river that was the Spanish province of New Mexico was flooded anew, so to speak, and the uplands and all its inhabitants were nourished, however unintended, as a consequence.¹³

On a side note, the re-entry of the Spanish into the Middle Rio Grande Valley marks the beginning of an unusual kind of borderland. Instead of a European-oriented system where Apaches or Comanches delicately balanced multiple empires against

¹³ For the myth of the 'bloodless conquest' v. Angelico Chavez, *Our Lady of the Conquest* (Santa Fe: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1948): 27 for some of the earliest academic criticism of this myth. v. also John L. Kessell, et al. *By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1691-1693* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Sarah Horton, "Where is the 'Mexican' in 'New Mexican'?: Enacting History, Enacting Dominance in the Santa Fe Fiesta," *The Public Historian* 23:4 (2001); and Matthew Liebmann, *Revolt: an Archaeological History of Pueblo Resistance and Revitalization in 17th Century New Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012) for similar criticisms.

Michael Witgen, "The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America," *Ethnohistory* 54:4 (2007): 640-642. Witgen makes the claim that French imperial discourse and ritual enactment vastly overestimated the limits of their sovereign power over indigenous peoples and their lands. Apaches, like Algonquins, similarly stood as a rebuke to the hollow claims of their imperial competitors over space and economy.

each other in order to carve out a niche for themselves—following the typical formulation of a borderlands as an analytical category—this period marked the beginning of a Native-oriented contest. In a fascinating inversion, it was the Spanish who struggled to locate and retain spaces of survival amidst the carnage of coming Apache-Comanche fighting. This borderlands would not mature for another thirty to forty years, and it is the subject of chapter five, but it is worth noting that it had its beginnings here, during a period that has been traditionally set aside as representative of Spanish glory and might.¹⁴

The Captain General made a diplomatic, fast, and peaceful tour of the Middle Rio Grande Valley in the autumn of 1692. Perhaps because of bison hunts, the reaping of maize, the weather, or the curiosity of observing just what the Spanish were up to, Vargas encountered virtually no resistance, least of all from Apaches. He secured peace with Tapatú, leader of the northern pueblos, just outside of Santa Fe and was back in El Paso by December to conduct a census of that area as well as to report on the numbers observed around the Middle Rio Grande Valley pueblos. Before he got back to El Paso, however, Vargas stopped at the ruined pueblo of Socorro on December 10, 1692. He was poised at the northern edge of the Jornada del Muerto. Indicative of the Little Ice Age, that global climatological event that lasted from about 1550 to 1850, temperatures were depressed across the region and the Rio Grande was frozen over. Snow and hail battered the soldiers. Although he believed that certain pueblos in that vicinity should be repopulated with *vecinos*, he adjudged that the southernmost abandoned pueblo of Senecu should be left abandoned, for that was “Apache country.” This observation, later

¹⁴ v. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *The American Historical Review* 104:3 (1999) and the articles accompanying it for perspectives on how to define the place and process of borderlands.

communicated to the viceroy, the Conde de Galve, constitutes a significant acquiescence on the part of the Spanish. By forfeiting serious competition for control over the *camino real* between El Paso and the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Vargas made a kind of inverted Act of Possession; he certified that the Jornada was, and would remain, Apache country.

Beyond the Jornada, Faraones continued to make claims to the El Paso del Norte/Casas Grandes area far to the south. Again, Vargas did not seem very concerned. The real focus of his attention was firmly set on the holy grail of gubernatorial ambition: permanent recapture and reoccupation of Santa Fe. He said as much to King Carlos II in the spring of 1693 when he apologized, somewhat shrewdly, for not having taken New Mexico a full two years sooner. That had been his wish, but he had been forced to rescue the province to the south and west from Apaches and Pimas instead. Despite the many complaints by the displaced *cabildo* of Santa Fe and the officials of Nueva Vizcaya, Vargas only initially deigned to conduct a few punitive expeditions that produced negligible results. Again and again he chose to undervalue the territory around El Paso and to underestimate the peoples there, and thus he declined to compete for the Trans-Pecos during his tenure. The Faraones in the Trans-Pecos were, in his eyes, a problem for the presidio at El Paso and the forces of northern Nueva Vizcaya; a problem and solution distinct to that of Santa Fe. Spatially and politically, this decision to not compete for the Trans-Pecos—when compounded with Spanish ineptitude at negotiating the range and basin area of the northern Chihuahuan Desert—produced important consequences. The choices that Vargas made make it clear that, implicitly, he devalued huge chunks of geography east and south of Santa Fe

as *despoblado*, or wasteland, and effectively surrendered them to Athapaskans for generations to come. He avoided the game altogether, epitomizing the dove that walks away from contest and leaves the payoff completely to the opponent. Vargas' choices produced powerful opportunities for indigenous groups like Faraones. Across landscapes where Spanish imperialism either failed or dared not engage, actors like Faraones found the time, the means, and the space to refine their strategies for survival, exploitation, and success. The political consequence was concomitant with the spatial consequence.¹⁵

The Spanish maintained a presidio of fifty soldiers at El Paso, just enough, as Brigadier General Pedro de Rivera found in September of 1726, to maintain an imperial presence, but not enough to make a persuasive case for presidial control beyond the immediate area of the fort. The site would never be overrun or fade from the landscape of European settlements. The other prominent place of the northern Chihuahuan Desert, where the Rio Conchos and the Rio Grande met at La Junta de los Ríos, would not receive a presidio until the late 1740s. That entire stretch of the Trans-Pecos, with its linkages to Nueva Vizcaya and the Central Mexican Plateau, was left to Apaches as a land un-competed for, and so beyond the enforceable boundaries of Spanish empire. Apaches moved across it and exploited it at will, with only rare rebuke from El Paso and Casas Grandes. Captain Juan Fernández de la Fuente from the Janos presidio in Nueva Vizcaya knew this. Guarding territory southwest of Vargas' position, he was not enthralled with the impending exit of so many soldiers from his vicinity. On February 27

¹⁵ Governor Vargas to the King, 16 May 1693, Autos de Vargas referentes a la reconquista de Nuevo México, Legajo 139, Parte 4, Documento 5, Audiencia de Guadalajara, AGI, CSWR.

Félix D. Almaráz, Jr, "An Uninviting Wilderness: The Plains of West Texas, 1534-1821," *Great Plains Quarterly* 12:3 (1992): 169.

he had been shared into intelligence gained from a Jumano that Apaches were amassing to destroy the Spanish at El Paso, the presidio included. Fernández and others considered that the Janos, Sumas, and Jocomes were the equivalent to Athapaskan because they acted “as one formidable body.” As for Vargas’ mission, the captain was skeptical. New Mexico, he relayed to the governor of Nueva Vizcaya and the viceroy, was firmly in the “shackles” of the Apaches and “not with 100 soldiers could you easily enter that realm and then leave again without a presidio.”¹⁶

Vargas knew this too in the course of his penultimate *entrada*. He spent the spring of 1693 in Zacatecas, from where he sent letters to the viceroy, the Conde de Galve, and king, asking for supplies and providing advisory information. In May he requested twenty quintals of gunpowder, along with four artillerymen, and six to eight artillery pieces from Veracruz with four-pound shot. (The Royal Spanish Academy defines one quintal as roughly 46 Kg, which means that a whopping 2,030 pounds of gunpowder was requested.¹⁷) There is good reason to believe that he intended all along to use it against the Apaches. Indeed, he relates in a letter just fifteen days later to the king, Carlos II, that he was forced to leave behind a sizable rear-guard, 25% of his 59-strong troop, with the supply train when he ventured out around Santa Fe, even erecting palisades against the threat of Apache raiding. He might have felt a little like his predecessor, Otermín, at that point. All around them on the horizon smoke rose from the mountains, making it clear that they were noticed, and their presence was being actively ‘discussed’. Shortly thereafter, he arrived at the pueblo of La Cieneguilla in the Galisteo

¹⁶ Juan Fernández de la Fuente, 29 April 1692, Interrogatorio sobre la reconquista de Nuevo México por don Diego de Vargas, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

¹⁷ Real Academia Española, <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=quintal>, visited 2 May 2013.

Basin, just south of Santa Fe between Pecos pueblo and the Rio Grande. He found Puebloans from Cochiti, San Marcos, and San Felipe who, much like the Spanish at El Paso, were themselves concentrated and huddled about this one habitation, located on a steep mesa. When asked why they gathered there when the land was arable and apparently vacant all around them, the Puebloans replied that it was the only defensible place left to them following repeated Apache incursions that left many dead and much property missing or ruined.¹⁸

Perhaps Vargas had more reason to fear Apaches than he was willing to reveal in correspondence to his superiors, for in the months before his final *entrada* he made an assertion that was utterly baseless and that would come back to haunt those in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. From the safety of Zacatecas, surrounded by the trappings of war, he opined that the mesas and the sierras to the east of the Rio Grande were impregnable to Spanish conquest, and implied that indigenes in those regions were all but irreducible. This Apachería was seemingly without sufficient water supplies—a strange observation that totally overlooked the presence of the Pecos River and all its tributaries, not a day’s ride east from Santa Fe! He rationalized that this aridity prevented a war party such as his from easily sustaining itself over the land, evoking the difficult journeys that militaries had had since the days of Rodriguez-Chamuscado. Perhaps he was seeking to narrow the scope of his task and was thus making the case to ignore the uplands and to focus his resources on the pueblos. Vargas must have known that his observations were spurious, for earlier that year he had been led by a

¹⁸ Governor Vargas to Conde de Galve, 1 May 1693, Testimonio de las cartas ..., Legajo 139, Parte 5, Documento 6, Audiencia de Guadalajara, AGI, CSWR.

Governor Vargas to the King, 16 May 1693, Autos de Vargas, Legajo 139, Parte 4, Documento 5, Audiencia de Guadalajara, AGI, CSWR.

captured Apache through the Hueco Mountains and to the area of the Guadalupe Mountains on one of the few trips he took east from El Paso del Norte. There he had seen and drunk from springs and *ojos*, as well as that of *playas*. The Pecos River headwaters, located in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, as well as all the other rivers of the Trans-Pecos, originating to the west, had their sources in mountain streams. Surface flow and other resources in the Trans-Pecos were not only sufficient, but plentiful, in some cases. But Vargas, just as he had done with his consideration of the Jornada, Senecu, and the so-called *despoblado* conceded that space to Apaches.¹⁹

Vargas' reentry was a boon for the Middle Rio Grande Valley economy, elevating it from one of paucity to one of limited means and potential. *Vecinos* and friars who returned with Vargas brought fresh food, animals, tools, and the promise of productive enterprises like *haciendas* of horses, cattle, and sheep, and *milpas* of maize and wheat. In this way, the Spanish *reconquista* of New Mexico, so long associated with European dominance, instead resembled an injection of resources into the Middle Rio Grande Valley region. During the interregnum horses and cattle had all but vanished from southern pueblos and those that existed in the north were concentrated around San Ildefonso pueblo where Jicarillas and Tiwas likely controlled them; those from the south had likely gone to Faraones and other groups who rode, traded, and perhaps consumed them. Decline in agricultural yield caused by a drought that lasted from 1681 to 1686 compounded the scarcity of animals during the 1680s. Increased aridity, fractured

¹⁹ Governor Vargas to the King, 16 May 1693, Autos de Vargas..., Legajo 139, Parte 4, Documento 5, Audiencia de Guadalajara, AGI, CSWR.

Michael P. Marshall and Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984): 259.

societies, and the loss of life and social disruption owing to revolt would have put considerable stress on pueblo fields, preventing them from producing sufficient quantities of maize and other grains for trade by as much as fifty percent. This recession in trade and the shortages of goods that Apaches experienced must have come as an unwanted check on the development of their burgeoning horse culture, both in the Trans-Pecos and in the area of present-day southern Colorado.²⁰

As Native groups readjusted to life with the Spanish, a cleft appeared in the broader Apachería that hints at how and why Faraones and Jicarillas would find such radically different fortunes in the colonial encounters of the eighteenth century. Whereas before Vargas there was seldom explicit mention of inter-Athapaskan enmity—owing to Spanish ignorance of precise ethnicities and a lack of documentation—there is evidence that by 1693, at the latest, a split either formed or intensified between Jicarillas and Faraones. Whereas the narratives of the 1680 and 1684 revolts indicate that seizure of Spanish goods and annihilation of the colonists were hallmark features of Apache groups across the many ecoregions of contact, Faraones and Jicarillas had participated in these revolts differently: the former were present both in 1680 and in 1684 while the latter were present only in 1680. Jicarillas continued the previous century’s ‘hawkish’ practice of heavy raiding, conspiracy, and rebellion with a view to exterminating the Spanish and again seizing all their materials. Faraones, on the other hand, had learned much from their time observing and battling the Spanish around El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes. They began to explore alternate strategies that were predicated on

²⁰ Dan Scurlock, *From the Rio to the Sierra: An Environmental History of the Middle Rio Grande Basin* (Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1998): 40.

Wilma Wetterstrom, *Food, Diet, and Population at Prehistoric Arroyo Hondo Pueblo, New Mexico* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1986): 106-107.

'hawkish' attributes, such as raiding, but that were now tempered by the advantages that come with assessment. As they did so, they broadened their repertoire of choices from which to choose how they might play games against the Spanish. Symbiotic bellicosity began here and now.²¹

The first clear sign of Faraon-Jicarilla divergence came in the spring of 1694. Juan de Ye, a Pecos Puebloan, arrived at Santa Fe on March 27 in company with three Apaches to see Governor Vargas. Although the new governor of New Mexico had not been in the Middle Rio Grande Valley long, he had already met and conferred with Ye, the governor of Pecos pueblo and a cultural go-between, on other matters during the previous winter and he apparently trusted him. Governor Ye acted as interpreter and facilitator for the three Plains captains. Through Ye, these Apaches approached Vargas and offered their friendship and promised to visit Pecos pueblo in October to trade some of their stores of bison products. Vargas rejoiced at this opportunity and at the chance to begin his tenure in Santa Fe by establishing peaceful relations with a group that had previously been a perennial thorn in the side of the empire. (As a sign of the Spanish's enthusiasm, it is worth noting that an adjutant of Vargas' at the time, none other than Antonio de Valverde, "happily bought the bison meat and robes off of them.") Contented, these Apaches departed with Ye for Glorieta Mesa and Pecos pueblo. Spanish documentation does not firmly denote what ethnicity these Apaches were at the March meeting, but when they came again just over a month later, on May 2 and again with Juan de Ye, they were positively identified as Faraones. Vargas, perhaps believing that

²¹ Hélène Tordjman, "Evolution: History, Change, and Progress" in *Advances in Self-organization and Evolutionary Economics*, Jacques Lesourne and André Orléan, eds. (London: Economica, 1998): 26.

he sensed an earnest willingness on the Faraones' part to recast their relationship with the Spanish, ventured to open the possibility for an even firmer commitment of friendship than he had ventured during the March meeting. He asked them why the Faraones were not Christians. The captains made a provocative, and calculated, reply.²²

They had come specifically for the purpose of baptism, he said, and they would love nothing more than to dwell among the Spanish, in pueblos—provided that the Spanish first wipe out the rebels around Taos and release their dwellings to the Faraones! There is no evidence that Vargas laughed in their faces or dismissed their proposal out of hand, but it must have struck him as surprising. Spanish-Apache collusion and the prospect of Athapaskan *reducción*, reduction, into missions flies in the face of expectation. But why offer any sense of mutualism or cooperation now, and why suggest that violence against fellow Athapaskans was permissible? It seems absurd given the incessant forays that Faraones had made against El Paso and Casas Grandes over the past fourteen years.²³

²² Governor Vargas, December 1693-May 1694, Campaign journal from Autos de guerra de la reconquista de Nuevo México por don Diego de Vargas Zapata Luján Ponce de León, Legajo 38, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Schelling, 142-145 and compare to Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) where she centers analysis around the game theory-idea of bargaining through the medium of a mediator or delegation as a means to facilitate and legitimize communication.

John Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Washington: National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1979): 256-270 for a narrative account of don Juan de Ye's record of aid to the Spanish and the part and his son played in factional strife within Pecos pueblo concerning cooperation with the Spanish.

²³ Governor Vargas, 2 May 1694, Campaign journal, Legajo 140, Parte 5, Documento 5, Audiencia de Guadalajara, AGI, CSWR.

Dolores A. Gunnerson, *The Jicarilla Apaches: A Study in Survival* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974): 114-117 for other instances of Apaches wooing the Spanish at Pecos.

Whatever Vargas personally felt regarding this proposition on the part of Faraones, he must have noticed that these people stood in stark contrast to their kin, the Jicarilla. During the previous winter of 1693 and 1694, Vargas had been parrying the first threats of conspiracy, ambush, and rebellion to the reestablished colony. In fact, since November friendly Puebloans, usually Keresans, had relayed reports that a combination of Tanos, Tewas, Tiwas and Apaches was forming in the north with plans to take all the Spanish horses from the Santa Fe presidio and to drive the Spanish from New Mexico once again, in a grim reenactment of 1680.

A piece of detailed intelligence came on December 17 from the nigh ubiquitous Pecos Governor, Juan de Ye, whose reports were endorsed by the local missionary to Pecos, fray Salvador de San Antonio. He stated to Governor Vargas that the would-be rebels were amassing on San Juan Mesa in the *rio arriba* (located near the spot where the Rio Chama enters the Rio Grande from west) and that they had plenty of Spanish swords and lances, leather jackets for themselves, and armor for their horses. They apparently lacked harquebuses, but Vargas must have nonetheless been aggrieved to hear that he was facing an indigenous armored cavalry from lands that were only leagues from the province's capital.²⁴

Reports and rumors continued to fly well into January of 1694, but nothing came of them...yet. If rebels were not said to be materializing on San Juan Mesa it was only because they were instead gathering on San Ildefonso Mesa, even closer to Santa Fe. For the time being, nobody flinched and rebellious activity remained dormant while the

²⁴ Governor Vargas, December 1693-May 1694, Campaign journal, Legajo 38, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 20 January 1694, Autos de guerra..., Legajo 38, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Spanish war machine tensed around Santa Fe. In one sense this episode is a prelude to the outbreak of revolt that would come in 1696, but in another more immediate and important sense this moment brings into focus just how much Faraon and Jicarilla strategies had diverged in the wake of Spanish reintroduction.²⁵

A good clue that offers insight into the nature of inter-Athapaskan differences comes from their associations with pueblos. The Tiwas from Taos and Picuris pueblos were ethnically distinct from the Towas at Pecos pueblo. The former were long-time allies to Jicarillas and located in the *rio arriba*, just north of Santa Fe along the Rio Grande near its confluence with the Rio Chama. The latter were historically tied to the Faraones and were located east of Santa Fe, on Glorieta Mesa, away from the Middle Rio Grande Valley and near the headwaters of the Pecos River. Faraones, Jicarillas, and other Apachean groups had long jostled for superior access to the Middle Rio Grande Valley by tapping different pueblos, and different ecologies, in their endeavors to cultivate opportunities during the first era of colonial encounter. In this way the end of the seventeenth century was not dissimilar from the beginning: these were periods of adjustment to the arrival of still-new ethnic populations (the Spanish) and the challenges and opportunities that accompanied them. One clear difference, however, between the first and second eras of colonial encounter were the demographic factors involved. Pueblo populations, for instance, had by this point sunk to between 7,000 and 13,000 in 1660, down from a possible high of 60,000 in 1601. The number of people at Pecos itself fell from between 1,500 and 2,000 in the 1670s and 1680s to about 800 persons in 1694. Declining Puebloan numbers must have disrupted the quantity of goods and

²⁵ Governor Vargas, December 1693-May 1694, Campaign journal, Legajo 38, Parte 3, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

foods that could be produced and, thereby, increased the perceived contest between Apaches for access to the products of riverine habitation. As the Faraon need for maize, pottery, and other items held steady, or grew, demand for wares from Pecos outstripped supply and possibly sent them looking for alternative outlets from other, outlier, pueblos such as Taos and Picuries.²⁶

While Faraones spent 1694 quietly, cautiously assessing their competitors and eyeing fresh economic linkages, Jicarillas began working in tandem with “apostates,” as the Santa Fe *cabildo* put it, to keep the province on the brink of ruin. *Vecinos* of the colony’s capital could only despair as a blitz of raids and nocturnal thefts removed nearly all of the cattle, oxen, and horses that had been brought north from El Paso del Norte for the resettlement of New Mexico. The exact number of animals taken is unclear, but the fact that the *vecinos* and the friars complained of having only 500 left to them suggests that at least as many animals had been stolen. *Cabildo* members

²⁶ John Kessell, “A Long Time Coming: The Seventeenth-Century Pueblo-Spanish War,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 86:2 (2011): 142.

Carter, 139-140.

Elinore Barrett, *Conquest and Catastrophe: Changing Rio Grande Pueblo Settlement Patterns in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002): 64, 86.

Gunnerson, 125.

Wetterstrom, 49-51, 106-107 for formulae and math behind this assertion. Basically, drought conditions during the end of the seventeenth century and the turn of eighteenth would have guaranteed low returns for pueblos in the Glorieta Mesa area. Additionally, with a diminished population, they could not have farmed, and protected, fields very far from the actual pueblo. It is likely that they farmed within a mile or two of their dwellings and a hectare yielded about 200 or 300 Kg of maize. For a population of about 900, and assuming that each person needed 2,000 calories a day, they would have needed 657 million calories. Even accounting for the consumption of prickly pear, muledeer, and wild fruits and nuts Towas would have been operating at a deficit and would not have been in a good position to trade.

Kessell (1979), 489-490.

Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936: The Mission Era: The Winning of Texas, 1693-1731, Vol. 2, Carlos E. Castañeda & Paul J. Foik, eds. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936): 330.

It is equally likely that Faraones were suffering from the effects of a decade long drought that stretched from 1689 to 1699 and were looking to supplement their economies by less risky means. These meetings between Vargas and Faraon leaders occurred from March to May, before the monsoon season and so before the watershed would have been super-recharged. It was not an ideal time to raid around the riparian settlements because the routes between there and the mountain basins would have crossed desiccated terrain. Scurlock (1998), 24-27.

complained to the viceroy, the Conde de Galve, that not even their grain was safe; whatever maize they still possessed was theirs through force of arms alone. The elite of Santa Fe lamented that the few families that had survived at El Paso del Norte for twelve years had suffered so much between that place and the capital that Apaches and apostates “could make a road of [their] blood.”²⁷

The *cabildo*'s statement to the viceroy reflects truth as well as ignorance. On the one hand, it correctly summed up the situation south of the Middle Rio Grande Valley pueblos that had been extant since 1680. Faraon raiding around El Paso and Casas Grandes had not abated and the stretch of *camino real* that joined those places to Santa Fe was firmly clutched within the Faraon grip. Fourteen years of violence at the hands of Athapaskans and their Suma, Manso, and Janos associates led the *cabildo* to be mistrustful of the dialogues that Vargas was entertaining with Faraones. It was knee-jerk response to blame this group of Apaches for the woes of 1694, but the *cabildo* were mistaken. Jicarillas—who were never noted south of the Jornada del Muerto—were responsible for the most recent bouts of raiding. Careful ethnic distinctions eluded the Spanish who were still coming to terms with the social complexities of a dynamic colonial world that kept shifting beneath their feet.²⁸

Faraon amenability to peace and settlement with Vargas, meanwhile, in the spring of 1694 represented something new: the diversification of Apachean foreign policy and the beginnings of a more sophisticated effort at expanding territory and

²⁷ Santa Fe Cabildo, 3 June 1694, Sober los robos de ganado cometidos por los apaches, Legajo 39, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

²⁸ Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 20 May 1694, Testimonio de los autos de guerra que don Diego de Vargas remite al Virrey Conde de Galve, oidores y ministros de Nueva España, Legajo 139, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

securing Spanish resources. Even as Jicarillas prepared to replicate the recent past, Faraones were fast moving beyond a strategy predominated by tactical maneuvers (hawk-oriented raiding and pillaging) and instead began experimenting with a dual-purpose approach. The first prong is reflected in the episode when the Faraones attempted to jockey the Spanish, in the spring of 1694, to eliminate Tiwa and Tewa Puebloans and their Jicarilla allies. Whereas the interregnum years of New Mexico had been characterized by drought, the concentration of remnant European resources into fortified pockets, and the cessation of fresh imports of grains or livestock (except what was taken through raiding at El Paso or Casas Grandes), Faraones now prioritized gaining access to the imperial economy that came up the Rio Grande and the *camino real*. In all likelihood, they calculated that if Vargas and the Spanish dealt a heavy enough blow to the rebels around San Juan and San Ildefonso Mesas, then Jicarillan access—and competition—would be eradicated along with their most dedicated Puebloan allies, leaving the remainder population exposed to assimilation or acculturation into Faraon social, political, and economic structures without incurring any cost.²⁹

The second purpose of this strategy concerns the expansion of Faraon Apachería. All appearances suggest that Faraones planned to expand their population around the northern edges of the province's borders by laying claim to the southern edge landscapes of the Rocky Mountains. Although it is impossible to say how they would have actually capitalized on this advantage since they never succeeded in taking the *rio arriba*, it seems likely that they would have used it to advance their exclusionary

²⁹ Laslier, et al., 382-384.

Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 105-106, 112.

access to the Middle Rio Grande Valley economy as well as to mediate its access for the Native groups who had to trade through intermediaries in order procure horses and metal goods, just as they had done with the Jumanos in the 1670s. If access and control to the newest resource of south-central North America was indeed their project, then this effort to expand Faraon Apachería to the northeast would almost certainly have not represented an abandonment of the Trans-Pecos territory and its access to El Paso del Norte and La Junta de los Ríos. Instead, it would have merely expanded the scope of Faraon presence within, influence over, and access to the imperial economy.³⁰

The idea of increasingly sophisticated Faraon diplomatic strategy and territorial ambition finds some corroboration in the administration of Antonio Valverde y Cosío at the end of the 1710s, when hostility between Faraones and Jicarillas and Tiwas erupted into open conflict after the Spanish hesitated and ultimately declined to participate in Faraon geopolitical designs. Where the Spanish failed to enact Faraon designs by proxy, Faraones eventually attempted to incorporate this territory by their own means. Before that happened, however, Faraones seemed content to sit and wait to see what happened when Jicarillas would eventually provoke Vargas' wrath in response to their collaboration with upstarts and rebels. In this way they minimized the costly damages that often accompanied violent action and instead watched, almost as a third party, while Jicarillas and the Spanish waged a war of attrition against each other.

³⁰ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006): 2-5. In contrast to her argument that the early French in the Arkansas River Valley sought to embed themselves into the indigenous structures of property and power (9-10), I find that the Spanish were more forced into a Native ground whereas the French were duped by promises of participation. The Spanish ignored Apaches as serious candidates for colonial administration fairly soon, well before the 1680 revolt, and they never made serious efforts to participate in the environments where power and place were ultimately defined and exercised. Her chapter two, "Hosting Strangers," makes this very same point regarding the early conquistadors of the sixteenth century.

The rebellion of 1696 was disorganized, poorly executed, and brief in comparison to the one of August 1680. It began on June 4 when rebels swiftly dispatched five missionaries and twenty-one *vecinos*. This event was the first, and most severe, setback suffered by the Spanish. Just four months later, in October, Vargas broke the rebellion's back and, although he would occasionally mop up pockets of resistance for months to come, the immediate threat of widespread and coordinated violence was ended almost as soon as it began. The pueblo of Cochiti, for example, an area especially intense rabble-rousing, was defeated early on, in July 23. A Spanish soldier pleased Vargas when he decapitated the rebel leader there, Lucas Naranjo, and placed his head on a stake as a warning to others. Picuris pueblo fell on October 26 and Vargas took many captives while most of the remaining Tiwas fled to Cuartelejo to eek out a new life with Jicarilla Apaches. By November Vargas felt so assured of his superior position that he not only attacked and dispersed a rather insignificant camp of Tewas, Tiwas, and Jicarillas in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe, but he also pursued them for 65 leagues (about 169 miles) into present-day southern Colorado, where he defeated them and seized most of their property. Vargas reckoned, in a letter to the viceroy, then the Conde de Moctezuma, that he had humiliated them and bred a profound fear in them that the Spanish were capable and willing to attack them in their own lands.³¹

The short-lived rebellion was a non-event for Faraones. Their role was limited to some stirrings around Pecos and Bernalillo that concerned local missionaries but that

³¹ *The Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1696 and the Franciscan Missions in New Mexico: Letters of the Missionaries and Related Documents*, J. Manuel Espinosa, ed., trans. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988): 50-55.

Governor Vargas to the Conde de Moctezuma, 24 November 1696, Document 60, SANM II, NMSRCA.

never amounted to anything. They stood firmly outside of the rebellion and weathered the event without appreciable diminishment of their population or their material goods. Conversely, the failed rebellion cost Jicarillas dearly. Vargas wrought crushing defeat on Jicarillas, Tiwas, Tewas, and others, and forced the former into a position of weakness that would open the door to their further exploitation by Athapaskan, as well as by Ute and Comanche expansionism. Jicarillas and their Puebloan allies had challenged the Spanish with an almost pure hawk strategy and the Spanish had met the challenge by also 'playing' hawk. When Vargas escalated the conflict to a degree that was insupportable for the indigenous players, Jicarillas lost the contest and suffered the high cost of violent competition. In terms of game theory, this rebellion was a so-called war of attrition, a particular kind of game given to hawk-hawk play, where both sides harm each other over a long period of time; where only one side can afford the time and resources to win; and where neither side can recoup the losses incurred during the violent game. The Spanish of New Mexico, connected as they were to the vast imperial network of New Spain, could weather the high cost better than the relatively isolated Jicarillas could.³²

It is an attractive impulse to imagine that Faraones masterminded the degeneration of the region as a means to deal with their enemies by proxy because it would find a political vector for early Apachean domination that would match the ecological one that I have analyzed over the previous chapters. It is too much of a reach, however, to construct the available evidence so generously. The most that can

³² Sugden, 66-69.

Schelling, 200 for the idea of 'brinkmanship,' the uncontrollable risk of threatening all-out war, and the inefficiency of such a strategy.

be said is that Faraones were disinclined to openly engage Vargas because they had access already to a much broader territory to satisfy their societies' needs. The risks of open warfare outweighed the benefits of a more measured trade-and-raid approach. Jicarillas, on the other hand, did not have the same magnitude of access to alternate ecologies and Spanish places. Their fight for access from the northern borders of New Mexico was their only chance at participation in the broader colonial economy and so they, tragically, took a calculated but high risk in a relatively unknown market (Vargas') and found that disappointment was their return.

The chronology provided here is a sampling of a much broader sequence of events. I have culled these moments out as representative of how Tiwas and Jicarilla Apaches fared poorly in the face of prepared Spanish resistance. Vargas's administration signaled the reversal to the bureaucratic atrophy that had precipitated Otermín's fall in 1680 and the anemia that had allowed for the rebellion in 1684. No Athapaskan or Puebloan group could have known that the game had changed, but the enduring Spanish commitment to the Middle Rio Grande Valley and Vargas' tenacity were clear signs. If Faraones were looking for a gauge of Spanish political and military capability, then the three years from 1694 through 1696 provided an abundance of intelligence to be used in future strategizing.

Following the November conclusion to the revolt, Faraones reemerged into the foreground. In December of 1696 Captain Lázaro de Mizquía addressed the Santa Fe *cabildo* and recommended a sweeping plan: Remove the Tiwas, Tanos, and Keres from the pueblos at Picuris, Taos, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, and Jemez; relocate them to the south (presumably in the abandoned Piro areas); assign presidials to the area to

oversee the dislocated Puebloans; and use them as a human buffer against Apache incursions that came from the southeast. Once the relatively greater threat offered by Jicarillas and Tiwas evaporated, Spanish attention swiftly turned back to Faraones. Events did not pan out as Mizquía would have liked, but his report betrays a much broader and more durable reality that underlay the storm of revolt and war that had raged over much of 1696. Faraones, Apaches of the Jornada del Muerto and the Trans-Pecos, continued to siphon and sap the resources of the colony from the south while Vargas fought in the north.³³

Immediately on the heels of the 1696 rebellion Governor Vargas was replaced, despite his best efforts to secure a second appointment. His successor, Governor Cubero arrived in Santa Fe in 1697, and immediately exercised his right to conduct a *residencia* of Vargas' term. The man who had finally taken back the Middle Rio Grande Valley for New Spain was made to suffer the humiliation of being locked up in Santa Fe, going from the palace to shackles in a matter of days. Cubero soon had charges laid against him over his handling of the province and the 1696 revolt. Vargas' son, Juan Manuel de Vargas Pimentel, was outraged. As the proceedings wore on he petitioned the Mexico City *junta* in 1700 to allow his father to travel to the imperial capital. To do so Pimentel requested that his father's bond be waived by the government and that an armed escort be provided. The escort seemed especially crucial because, Vargas' son complained, there had been a number of deaths recently that had gone unreported.

³³ Lázaro de Mizquía to Santa Fe Cabildo, December 1696, Autos sobre las proposiciones que hace Lázaro de Mizquía, procurador mayor de la villa de Santa Fe de la Nueva México encaminadas al mayor aumento y conservación de aquellas provincias, Legajo 35, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Pimentel could have been lying; he could have been making a bid to get his father some protection not from Native groups but from Cubero's forces. But surrounding evidence suggests otherwise. Making the trip from Santa Fe to El Paso del Norte and down through Parral on the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* involved passage through Faraon territory. Recently, those Apaches had been responsible for an attack on a courier traveling south on the *camino real* and they had cut down two of the Spanish. Months earlier, Apaches around El Paso del Norte had also taken a widow, Maria Parea, captive.³⁴

Vargas was eventually cleared of wrongdoing by the *junta general* in Mexico City, given a new title (Marques de la Nava de Barcinas) by the Crown, and returned for a second term as governor in 1703. Although he was undoubtedly glad to return to Santa Fe despite Cubero's best efforts, he immediately found his administration challenged by Faraones in the Albuquerque-Belen Basin, just west of the Sandia and Manzano Mountains and dangerously near to Santa Fe. This area had historically been dotted with southern Tiwa pueblos—the very ones that Otermín had noted as being diminished, abandoned, or ruined in 1681. During his first administration, Vargas had fretted over the reduced numbers of Puebloans in the area and the perceived Spanish need to populate it as a means of defense. Sometime just before the 1696 event, Vargas granted Captain Miguel Garcia and don Fernando Duran y Chaves lands there and

³⁴ Juan Manuel de Vargas Pimentel, May 1700, Petición, Autos hechos sobre causas criminales contra General don Diego de Vargas, Gobernador, y José Luis Valdez y Alonso de Rael de Aguilar, ayudantes del Gobernador, por haber querido tumulto el reino de Nuevo Mexico, Legajo 14, Expediente 2, Vínculos y Mayorazgos, AGN, CSWR.

Alfonso Real de Aguilar, 3 March 1700, Auto, Autos hechos sobre causas criminales..., Legajo 14, Expediente 2, Vínculos y Mayorazgos, AGN, CSWR.

these veteran Spanish soldiers immediately started *haciendas*. Duran y Chaves' house was at the outpost of Bernalillo, just north of where the villa of Albuquerque would be founded, in 1706. Since Bernalillo's inception, reports had been steadily streaming in that Faraones (or Siete Rios Apaches, as they were sometimes named) had been pillaging horses and cattle. What had begun as a minor irritation was fast becoming a biting nuisance and Vargas prepared a response, perhaps make a demonstration of his power following his return.³⁵

On March 29, 1704 Vargas met his troop in the *plaza de armas* at Bernalillo. He had fifty presidials with him and 116 Puebloan auxiliaries. Vargas set out from his villa on March 30, but unlike his rugged forays into the Hueco Mountains and beyond in 1692, the captain general hugged the Rio Grande and its *bosque*, preferring to stay close to water, and he grazed his horses on saltgrass beneath the shade of cottonwood trees. In lieu of firsthand soldiering, he relied heavily on scouts from the Tewa and Keres pueblos, chaperoned by Spanish captains, to locate and engage the Faraones. Over the course of the expedition he ventured only a little over 15 leagues (39 miles) downriver—and paltry distance—and abstained from montane travel or combat.

The very next day, March 31, Captain Jose Naranjo, the Spanish leader of the scouting party reported that Apaches were moving south and east out of the Sandia Mountains and into the vicinity of Abó, one of the ruined Tompiro pueblos located in the Estancia Basin. The Spanish and auxiliaries had fought them, without success, around

³⁵ Governor Vargas, 27 March-2 April 1704, Campaign journal, Account of operations against Faraon Apaches, Document 99, SANM II, NMSRCA.

Albert H. Schroeder, *A Study of the Apache Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974): 491-492 thinks that these Faraones were previously those noted as Sierra Blanca Apaches, a denomination that fell out of use at the same time that Faraon came into vogue. This identification is corroborated in Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *The Mescalero Apache, 1653-1874* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959), 1-2.

a watering hole that was dubbed “Carnuel.” The Estancia Basin forms the northern border of the Central Closed Basin, the larger topographical land form that comprises the mountain ranges east of the Jornada del Muerto and extending eastward to the watershed of the Pecos River. Naranjo probably did not realize it, but the Faraones were retreating through territory that was very familiar to them. The Spanish, however, were not nearly so familiar and risked much at the prospect of leaving their riverine haven. Furthermore, this was a dry time of year during a long-term drought that stretched from 1700 to 1709. The average rainfall in this area during the month of March or April would have been about half an inch, if the Spanish were lucky, and it would have been cold: an average of 57° F. Wintertime snowfall would have delivered some high-elevation snowpack, but that had yet to thaw; significant rains would not come again until July and the next monsoon season. Apaches were luring the Spanish into treacherous conditions. Strategically, their escape path from the Middle Rio Grande Valley invited the Spanish to dare passing through an improvised “Jornada del Muerto.”³⁶

Vargas smelled the trap. Disregarding the eastward slopes of the mountains and the approaches to the Pecos watershed, he instead dispatched scouts to reconnoiter the mountains and the watering holes that were nearer to him. For example, the *Cañada del Infierno*, the Canyon of the Inferno, on the westward slopes Manzanos near the pueblo of Isleta received considerable attention although there was little indication

³⁶ “Carnuel” was most likely located near the present-day community of Carnue, on the southwest slopes of Sandia near the pass where the Manzano Mountains pick up and extend to the south.

Scurlock (1998), 24-27, 40.

New Mexico Climate Manual, Solar and Weather Data, W. Scott Morris & Keith W. Haggard, principal investigators (Albuquerque: New Mexico Energy Research & Development Institute): 240.

that it was a viable site of recent Apachean activity. Vargas was most likely reluctant to engage Faraones who, by this point, had moved south and east...into the shunned spaces of the Trans-Pecos and back to the havens of other *rancherías* on other rivers and into labyrinthine mountain basins with snowpack, fuelwood, and wild game. These resources would have provided sufficient subsistence in addition to the calories derived from the pillaged cattle and horses. Vargas continued south along the river for another 10 miles before he gave up the mission and turned back on April 2. He was in his early 60s, a ripe age, and his energies had waned. The project came to an abrupt and definitive end on April 8 when he died in Bernalillo, his final task truncated and incomplete. Like the anticlimactic Dominguez-Lopez journey to the Edwards Plateau in 1683, Vargas had accomplished little more than to pass through a corridor of space where Spanish power was heavily tempered by its transience.

These accounts of Apaches on the *camino real* and their role in the lackluster end of Vargas are almost anecdotal. They speak to presence, to action, and to tenacity, but there is little in them that is new. Indeed, these examples harken back to patterns that date back to the 1670s, perhaps even the 1650s. A third example, however, provides a connective tissue to the ways that the Middle Rio Grande Valley after 1692 was a distinct geopolitical theater compared to that prior to 1680. Beginning with the 1690s Apachean foreign policy crystallized and became more sophisticated and advantageous than what had existed even during the so-called Manso Rebellion of 1684. In contrast to Jicarilla policy in 1696, Faraon strategy shifted beyond its earlier stages of endemic raiding and Puebloan conspiracy to embrace strategies that were

much more nuanced; the hawk strategy of the previous century that was almost purely antagonistic gave way to a mixed strategy where violence was always an option, but it was seldom the first choice. From 1692 to 1707, and arguably through 1721, Apaches practiced symbiotic bellicosity. They alternately baited the Spanish into resupplying New Mexico through low-intensity violence and offered trade in places like Albuquerque, using tropes and narrative devices that would have appealed to Spanish ears.³⁷

After Vargas' first term, a figurative winter settled over New Mexico. Famine and privation hit the colonists hard and *vecinos* had resorted to eating gruel made from their household pets, horses, grass seed, leather, and bone, much as they had done during the 1670s. Back when he was certified by the Santa Fe *cabildo* in 1702, Cubero was treated to glowing praise and was credited with quickly "reducing" certain groups of Apaches who were thought to be serial raiders, including Faraones and Jicarillas. One of the key ways Cubero accomplished this so-called reduction was to import vast quantities of material goods, including 300 mules, 100 oxen, and enough horses and cattle and other supplies to last the colonists for two full years. Cubero did the work that Oñate had done upon the colony's founding and that the Franciscan mission supply service had done throughout the seventeenth century: he injected imperial wealth into New Mexico and made it attractive as a newly diversified product to Apachean economy. When he did that, he probably did more to "reduce" Apache groups than any military campaign might have done. (Considering that Apaches had thwarted veteran governors for long periods of time, the *cabildo's* praise should be read with a grain of

³⁷ Sugden, 84-85 for a study on Games of Commitment as mixed-strategy where contests are decided in public and with a consideration of reputation and threats. In many ways this reflects what Faraones were beginning to practice with the Spanish.

salt.) More probable is that Cubero did not subordinate Apaches, but instead created enough wealth that New Mexico could afford to trade with Apaches and, through peaceful exchange, win a respite. In leaner times *vecinos* must have been less likely to trade their few meager possessions and, as a consequence, they were raided and plundered. The New Mexico Spanish misunderstood their role in the larger, Apache-led economies of the region. The arrival of Cubero and his supply trains from the dusty Jornada del Muerto merely made New Mexico attractive to Apache traders and allowed trade to become possible again for *vecinos*.³⁸

Regardless of lingering questions over the efficacy of Cubero's martial reduction of Native groups, *vecinos* and Puebloans were again starving in 1705, as they had in 1702, as they had in the initial moments of Vargas' resettlement project, and as they had during the entire span of the 1680s, and before. People were impoverished and could be found naked in the streets, in the plazas, and in the countryside. The lean times that Cubero had remedied with his stimulus of livestock, seed, and material goods had returned with a vengeance. Before Governor Cuervo y Valdez had even been able to take the seat of power in Santa Fe the *cabildo* despaired at their condition. In the spring of 1705 they begged the viceregal court for horses, lead, and gunpowder because there had been none for them to defend themselves or mount escorts since 1703. If the new governor wondered at what kind of legacy Vargas had left him, he did not have to wait long. Soon, Faraones descended from the Sandia and Manzano Mountains in broad daylight and took eighty cattle from Bernalillo. Afterwards they celebrated in the mountains with great smoking fires, no doubt barbecuing the freshly

³⁸ Santa Fe Cabildo, 20 January 1702, Certificación de Pedro Rodríguez Cubero, Legajo 14, Expediente 2, Vínculos y Mayorazgos, AGN, CSWR.

taken meat. They did not deign to conceal their fires or withdraw out of eyesight from the Middle Rio Grande Valley because they knew that New Mexico's government was in transition and correctly gauged that the Spanish were, at that moment, impotent to challenge them.³⁹

By the winter of 1705-1706 Cuervo y Valdes became desperate. Despite his best efforts he failed to secure the province's capital and had to entrust the defense of Santa Fe and Bernalillo to his inferiors so that he could rush to El Paso del Norte and stave off imminent Faraon Apache attacks there. If Faraones were trying to squeeze blood from a rock it worked, but only because of New Spain's vast inter-continental network. In February of 1706 the *junta general* in Mexico City took note of the situation and authorized the transmission of relief aid. The governor himself had already purchased 500 hundred head of cattle and tons of grain from Nueva Vizcaya in an effort to plug the sieve. In addition to that this incredible influx of foodstuff and livestock, the *junta* authorized materiel and personnel. There was a catch, though. These supplies were meant to be used in a purely defensive posture: Cuervo y Valdez was not allowed to fight back. Apaches had succeeded in securing additional wealth for New Mexico without incurring the risk of offensive warfare, in spite of the fact that Vargas had only just weathered a serious rebellion reminiscent of 1680. Faraones, intentionally or not,

³⁹ Santa Fe Cabildo, 8 May 1705, Petition to the Viceroy, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

Governor Cuervo y Valdez to the Viceroy, 18 May 1705, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

If Cubero had, in fact, brought two years worth of supplies when he came in 1702, then the return to famine three years later was almost dead on cue. If this is an accurate assessment then it also suggests that New Mexico as an agricultural venture was highly unproductive during this time.

had measured out just enough violence to win, but at a lower cost. This is classic hawk plus assessor play; the Spanish could only act, by decree, as doves plus assessor.⁴⁰

Unwittingly the new governor sweetened the deal for Apaches by concentrating much of this newfound wealth in a new villa named Albuquerque. No doubt using some of the fresh supplies sent up the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, Cuervo y Valdes located 252 persons in about 35 families in 1706. He had the *vecinos* sow fields that were watered by new *acequias* and build houses and corrals of sturdy material. Tano Puebloans, displaced from their original habitations by earlier raiding, supplemented the Spanish population with a new, nearby mission between Santa Fe and Albuquerque: Santa Maria de Gracia de Galisteo. Before the adobe had time enough to dry, though, fray Juan Álvarez was again writing from San Pablo to request that even more materials be injected into the region. Specifically, he also wanted to enrich the Galisteo Basin and the Tanos there with more herds of cattle and soldiers enough to protect them.⁴¹

Faraones noticed the swollen economy and took advantage of the situation: they scaled back their raiding operations and instead entered into peace with the Spanish in order to receive gifts and to trade. Given that Cuervo y Valdes made no serious punitive expeditions against these Apaches it is unlikely that they were coerced into peace.

Unlike Navajos to the north and west who did enter into peace after devastating attacks

⁴⁰ Junta General, 26 February 1706, Regarding the need for supplies in New Mexico and the Apache Indians, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

⁴¹ Governor Cuervo y Valdez, 23 April, 1706, Certification to the King and Viceroy, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

Fray Juan Álvarez, 16 April 1706, Certification to the King and Viceroy, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

The Galisteo Basin is that space that lies between Glorieta Mesa (of Pecos pueblo) and Santa Fe and the Rio Grande to the west. Galisteo Creek gathers surface water from the basin and delivers it southwest by west into the Rio Grande.

on their *rancherías* and fields, Faraones appear to have been driven by other motivations. During the late winter and spring of 1706 they entered into peace both at Santa Fe and Pecos pueblo, receiving gifts of cloth, flannel, knives, tobacco, ribbon, and valuable animal hides.⁴²

At Albuquerque, a detailed account of one of these meetings exemplifies how Apaches made themselves politically and economically attractive to the Spanish when they so desired. Faraones rebranded their group as one that was compatible to imperial places...and the economy that came with them by appealing to Catholicism's predilection for supernatural visions and the Spanish's agrarian fixation on maize. One day, just before the summer solstice, there came from the Sandia Mountains a Faraon leader with a Tigua interpreter named Andres, along with a handful of other Faraones. They met with the *alcalde mayor*, Captain Martín Hurtado.

They had a fantastic story to share with their Spanish neighbors that was carefully engineered for a European audience. Apparently the people of a Faraon *ranchería* in the mountains had been going about their daily affairs when, suddenly, a specter appeared before them. Quickly the visage of a man took shape before them and immediately arrested their attention. The Faraones surmised that he was a spiritual embodiment of their people. Equipped with a spectral bison hide—a mark of power, wealth, and accomplishment—the spirit proceeded to speak, and admonish them. He told them that their lives in the mountains produced nothing but evil and destruction, and that they lived as animals in the wilderness. The phantom counseled them that they should acknowledge the god of the Spanish as the one true god and to live in peace

⁴² Santa Fe *Cabildo*, 23 February 1706, Certification to the King, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

with them. No miracles occurred in relation to this sighting, but the account probably brought to Hurtado's mind the story of Juan Diego and his 1531 account of seeing a phantom girl on the slopes of Tepeyac, the Lady of Guadalupe. This story was in wide cultural currency among the Spanish and these Faraones, through captives and through their exchanges at trade fairs, had doubtless become familiar with it. These Apaches knew their audience well and spoke to religious concerns, as well as secular ones. When they claimed that they had been told that they lived like beasts causing destruction, they spoke to the practical project of missionary work that franciscans since Alonso de Benavides had spoken of since 1630. They were carefully prompting the Spanish to believe that there was a sense of mutualism and progress at play. It worked. Hurtado's report of the encounter suggests he was riveted.⁴³

The Apache captain, sensing that the *alcalde mayor* was hooked, proceeded with cues that would have then appealed to Spanish worldly concerns: Apparently, the specter ended his presentation by giving *atole*, a hot drink made from maize, to the Faraones of Sandia. Maize was, of course, a staple crop for the pueblos and the *vecinos* alike. Its consumption as a liquid speaks to themes of baptism and voluntary dependence on the foods of the river valley and the ways that it is processed. If Faraones were beguiling the Spanish into accepting peace and allowing them access to trading opportunities, their choice of narrative and allusion was excellent and well-

⁴³ For the cult of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, v. Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: the Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813*, Benjamin Keen, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Victor Alejandro Sorell, *Her Presence in her Absence: New Mexican Images of La Guadalupana* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, Southwest Hispanic Research Institute, 1994), and Stafford Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: the Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531-1797* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).

Laslier, et al., 384 for the role of learning and 'testing' in the playing of games and the refinement of strategy.

placed. Hurtado certainly was persuaded, for he reported immediately to Governor Cuervo y Valdes that he believed that the Apaches of Sandia and the Manzanos could be settled into pueblos and assimilated into colonial life with “a little diligence and fortitude.” Just two years after Vargas met his end nearby, and two years before similar raids and pillaging would again wrench much wealth from this valley, Hurtado, and possibly the governor, were eagerly grasping at fantasies of peace at Faraon prompting. The Faraones had just bargained their way into a commitment not to depredate over Albuquerque and Bernalillo, but had secured a promise of future financial dealings.⁴⁴

The prospects for trade were bright during this time. The prior autumn’s harvest had yielded surplus grain, some of which would be available for barter, and *vecinos* were commonly in possession of powder, bullets, tobacco, chocolate, and sugar. The Spanish relaxed their fears of imminent attack. Juan de Ulibarri, a Spanish military man and part of the Santa Fe *cabildo*, relocated just ten soldiers to Albuquerque to protect Spanish interests in what was now the southeastern frontier against Faraones and Chilmos. This relatively light commitment of Spanish military muscle speaks to the detente that Apaches had offered, and which the Spanish had bought. These were robust times when trade was more lucrative for all. Pillaging and open aggression would have been potentially more effective in obtaining wealth, but at a risk that was disproportionately high.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Martín Hurtado, 19 June 1706, Certification concerning the vision of some Apaches, Legajo 36, Parte 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.

Martín Hurtado to Governor Cuervo y Valdes, 20 June 1706, Information on the Apaches around Albuquerque, Legajo 36, Parte 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR.
Schelling, 21-22, 28.

⁴⁵ Governor Cuervo y Valdes to the Viceroy, 26 April 1706, Legajo 5, Parte 4, Documento 8, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

The pattern that exists here reaches back at least ten years through the administrations of Cuervo y Valdes, Vargas, and Cubero. During this important time of Spanish reintroduction and the ostensible *reconquista* of New Mexico, Apaches influenced the Spanish politically, economically, and spatially. They systematically baited the colonizers into sending more and more supplies into the Middle Rio Grande Valley as a means to diversify and enhance the resources that were available. Faraones alternately traded and raided, in effect re-channelling the wealth and clout of New Spain far beyond the river valley and into the ranges and basins of the Trans-Pecos. It is impossible to say with certainty how much of this practice was deliberate because Apaches did not leave records behind and it would be an extreme undertaking to find, let alone corroborate, any oral history that speaks to the question. Even still, for ten years, at least, an unmistakable pattern existed that points to an *Apachería* that was grown and maintained through manipulation of Spanish political and economic structures.

In the decades that passed between 1692 and the 1720s Faraones variously harried or courted the colony and, by doing so, worked it like a resource that had the unmistakable advantage being able to consistently regenerate itself no matter how much it was drained or pruned. The cycle that was first witnessed through Vargas' and Cubero's tenures was replayed during the administrations of Governors Francisco Cuervo y Valdez and Jose Chacón Medina Salazar y Villaseñor. Despite the fact that Jicarillas and Navajos each endured targeted military action that greatly reduced their ability to dictate the perimeters of their Native space, Faraones negotiated this period with exceptional dexterity. They siphoned wealth from the Spanish through low-intensity

violence and cyclic pillaging. Essentially, Faraones played the game aggressively as long as the costs were low and the payoffs high, but whenever the Spanish escalated the conflict and began to respond in with retaliation, Faraones switched to diplomatic and peaceable strategies and were able to accrue modest gains without the diminishment of the cost of warfare. In the course of their manipulation, Faraones gave life and meaning to Apachería; they converted the Spanish Middle Rio Grande Valley into an artificial resource and used it in complement with the natural resources of the northern Chihuahuan Desert and its edges.⁴⁶

Early in 1714 the northern edge of the Jornada del Muerto buzzed with activity. On the slopes of the Fra Cristobal Mountains scores loitered and conversed, passing the day, until they finally decided that it was time to start the trip up the Rio Grande. They lit upon their horses, organized their groups and ranks, and set out on the *camino real*, dominating the official pathway of imperial New Spain. The ground shook beneath them and no one dared, or could, stand in their way...including the Spanish. These Faraones rode with impunity and seized Spanish horses wherever possible. So great was their ability at this moment that they could afford to play asymmetrical games with the Spanish, both threatening them and then delivering on the threat. They dared to ambush armed escorts of Spanish militia when the opportunity arose and the seized horses from Bernalillo, again. But this was not a case of Faraones directing high-

⁴⁶ For evidence of raiding around Albuquerque and Santa Fe through the 1710s, see "Memorial de méritos y servicios presentado por el capitán Félix Martínez, del presidio de Santa Fe, Nuevo México" in Legajo 377 of Audiencia de Mexico, AGI, CSWR. An article that clearly narrates these events and provides modest analysis is: Ted J. Warner's "Don Felix Martinez and the Santa Fe Presidio, 1693-1730" in *New Mexico Historical Review* 45:4 (1970).

Maynard Smith, 154-155.

intensity violence against the Spanish, as if inviting war. Granted, these riders plucked what low-hanging fruit *haciendas* and *ranchos* offered, but they blazed past Santa Fe and made for the *rio arriba*, deep into Jicarilla territory.⁴⁷

These Apaches were heading for the *rio arriba* area to challenge their ethnic cousins, Jicarillas, for access to the grasses and river valleys of the upper Rio Grande, the Canadian, and the Arkansas Rivers because these spaces were well suited to horse pasturage or to the dry-farming of maize. But why, and why did they wait twenty years after they first suggested such a scheme to Vargas, in 1694? Although the inner socio-political reasoning and justification for aggressive maneuvers against fellow Apaches has not survived in documentary form, climatological modeling and peripheral history offers persuasive clues.

From 1714 to 1738 drought gripped the Bernalillo area. Since 1706, at the latest, Apaches had habitually worked the Albuquerque-Belen basin for the stores of horses, cattle, grain, and other raid-worthy goods from the new *villa*. Evidence handed down by Vargas, Hurtado, Felix Martinez (long-time captain of Santa Fe presidio), and other Spanish in the area attest to the fact that this area had emerged as a focal point in the economy of Faraones. The drought presented a complication, however. Although Faraones had the ability to pick up stakes and go elsewhere for subsistence purposes, the Spanish inhabitants of the basin could not, and the reduced rainfall would have reduced the quantity and quality of crops and the lack of moisture for riparian grasses would have reduced the quality of livestock. In this way Faraones may have begun

⁴⁷ Juan Ignacio Flores Mogollón to the Viceroy, 14 September 1714, Report concerning the campaigns made against the Faraones, Gilas, Navajos, and other matters, Legajo 6, Parte 4, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

looking elsewhere to supplement the income lost from this area, although there is no indication that they were actively hurting for the means to subsistence. After all, this is still the period when they would have been obliging the Spanish to continually import fresh goods up the *camino real*.⁴⁸

The effects of drought in and around Bernalillo should not be overstated in light of the account from March 1694 when Faraon captains attempted to entice Vargas to vacate the pueblos of the *rio arriba* and give them to their own Apache groups. The sustained nature of the Faraon attempt to absorb *rio arriba* territory does not reflect a need to defray the incidental consequences of a drought. Although Faraones likely missed the produce that they would have otherwise raided or traded for from Bernalillo and Albuquerque, the fact that they returned to this particular span of territory speaks to the reality that they were likely striving to diversify the types of territory over which they held dominion in 1714 just as in 1694. Concomitant with this reason was their strategic elimination of a competitor and potential rival to the opportunities and benefits of Spanish presence in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Just as had been done with the Jumano kin of the Tompiro pueblos in the 1670s, whom Apaches had expelled from their trade linkages with the pueblos, Faraones were likely attempting to cut off other groups, however ethnically related, from enriching their stores of horses, metal goods, or weapons. In addition, there was an economic incentive. If Faraones displaced Jicarillas, they would gain dedicated access to trade with pueblos in the Jemez Mountains and with Navajo peoples.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Scurlock (1998), 18.

⁴⁹ This suggestion of Faraon motivation is drawn from DuVal's thesis in *Native Ground*, as found in chapter 4, where she discusses the Osages manipulation of the French and Spanish to gain predominant access to the means of power and aggression to the exclusion of surrounding tribes.

From 1714 to 1715, Faraones attacked Tiwa and Jicarilla lands, but declined to give sufficient cause to New Spain to launch an offensive war. Instead, a repeat of what had occurred during the Cuervo y Valdes administration occurred. On November 3 of 1714 the *Fiscal*, in response to petitions from Santa Fe, authorized the quick release of 25,000 pesos to go to the presidio of New Mexico—a vast figure that would have translated into the purchase and importation of more horses, tools, cows, mules, and munitions. And like before, the *Junta General*, together with Viceroy Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y Silva, ordered in January of 1715 that these monies and the materials that went with them could only be used defensively, to “persuade” Apaches to peaceful ends lest aggravating these Athapaskans spark a regional pan-ethnic war. The official Spanish response to Faraon activities in 1714 and 1715 offered little competition for the actual control of physical spaces. Instead, Governor Mogollón, the viceroy, and the *Junta General* merely fattened the potential targets found in Spanish and Puebloan places.⁵⁰

By late July of 1715 the lieutenant governor of Taos, don Geronimó, was regularly informing Mogollón of Faraon incursions against Jicarilla *rancherías* and against the horse herds held by Tiwas at the pueblo of Picuris. The New Mexico governor seemed to have figured out that Faraones were rapidly expanding into the territory of the Jicarilla and their Tiwa allies, perhaps seeking to place that block of geography and the Great Plains economy that went with it under their aegis. If

⁵⁰ Doctor Espinosa, 3 November 1714, Opinion of the Fiscal, Legajo 6, Parte 4, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

Junta General, 22 January 1715, Official Act of the Junta General, Legajo 6, Parte 4, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, AGI, CSWR.

successful, their domination would form a contiguous cord from the northern borders of New Mexico all the way down its eastward side into Nueva Vizcaya.⁵¹

Compounding this worry was the prospect that French imperialism, creeping down the Great Plains, would somehow exploit, use, or be aided by Faraon ascendancy. Since 1695 Vargas had sent detailed accounts to Mexico City of the periodic forays of French traders and exploratory groups into the area of present-day southeastern Colorado and their encounters with Jicarillas. Jicarillas, for their part, consistently represent themselves as being friends of the Tiwas and the Spanish, and they appear to have rebuffed any attempts at engagement with the French. The Spanish might have feared that Faraones would be more amenable to French overtures considering the French propensity to sell firearms and the Faraones penchant for using them. Although Mogollón never explicitly expressed alarm at the prospect of a Faraon Apachería becoming overtly imperialistic through access to French empire, this brief and quiet moment, from 1714 until 1724, represented the height of Apachean ambition.⁵²

⁵¹ Don Geronimo, Lt. Governor of Taos, 20 July 1715, Official Testimony, PE 42, Coleccion de Documentos Sobre Nuevo Mexico 1681-1841, Pinart Collection (Pinart), Bancroft Library, University of California Berkley (UCB). {Pulled from the microfilm copies at CSWR, Reel 5.}

Governor Mogollón, 22 July 1715, Order, PE 42, Pinart, UCB.

Translations of the documents concerning the administration of Governor Mogollón and the expedition of Hurtado in the years 1714 and 1715 can be found in Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., *After Coronado: Spanish Exploration Northeast of New Mexico, 1696-1727, Documents from the Archives of Spain, Mexico, and New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935).

⁵² For the history of the French presence on the Great Plains and their part in regional trade, v. William E. Dunn, "Spanish Reaction Against the French Advance Toward New Mexico, 1717-1727," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 2:3 (1915); Elizabeth A.H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975); Daniel H. Unser, Jr., "The Frontier Exchange Economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the Eighteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44:2 (1987); and Calloway, Chapter 5.

But it was not to be. What might have been a Faraon empire that spanned the Chihuahuan Desert, the Great Plains, and the Rocky Mountains instead found itself confined to the desert with only constricted access to the Great Plains. The reasons behind the failure of Faraones to make good on their momentum makes sense of why the expansion of their Apachería ceased and instead rededicated itself to operating from the desert. They had, simply put, explored more than they had exploited, and the long-term payoff fell short of expectations. Faraones had learned much about Spanish tenacity and the material wealth around El Paso del Norte during the interregnum and they applied this new knowledge to try to apply new strategies to the Middle Rio Grande Valley and the *rio arriba* post-Vargas. They had found some success with what I term symbiotic bellicosity but they were unsuccessful in their bid to find a strategy that was stable enough to work against the Spanish and the Jicarillas once Comanches and Utes appeared from the north. Their ensuing spatial contraction did not signal the decline of Apache geopolitical power, however, but rather its plateau. The significance of Apachean choices and opportunities in the Trans-Pecos area and beyond would reverberate for another century and a half, but their clout in terms of circumscribing and exploiting Spanish empire was eroded by the powerful competition offered by Uto-Aztecan speakers. A detailed account of these ten years is better suited to an analysis of Jicarilla or Comanche history. For the purposes of charting Apachean history and the powerful role played by arid geographies it is enough to outline what happened in the *rio*

arriba from 1714 to 1724 and to define the arena of Athapaskan–Uto-Aztecan competition.⁵³

Eventually, Mogollón sent General don Juan Páez Hurtado to investigate and pursue damages inflicted upon the Picuris as well as Jicarillas around the Canadian River. The expedition, seemingly in contradiction to the directive issued by the *junta general* of Mexico City on 22 January 1715, resembled the Dominguez-Lopez expedition of 1683 that ventured through the Trans-Pecos and onto the Edwards Plateau of present-day Texas. Like the Jumanos who had come to Otermín and Cruzate for aid against Apaches, Jicarillas now came to Mogollón for succor against Faraones. And like the Dominguez-Lopez expedition, Hurtado typically found only tracks, remains, and the frustration of wandering in a land that was thoroughly surveilled and dominated by other groups.

In typical Spanish fashion, Hurtado possessed a large retinue. Traveling with him were 36 presidials, 21 *vecinos*, 151 Puebloan auxiliaries, and 388 horses, of which about half belonged to the auxiliaries. Strikingly, there were thirty Pecos Puebloans present, with harquebuses and horses of their own. The Spanish were understandably suspicious of these people as auxiliaries because they were historically known to fraternize with Faraones. It is possible that they were actually willing to assist in relieving the pressure on Tiwas since Faraon creation of alternate, and nearby, markets would have hurt their own pueblo's access to the Plains economy. For sedentary groups

⁵³ Paul Bourguine, "The Compromise Between Exploration and Exploitation: From Decision Theory to Game Theory" in *Advances in Self-organization and Evolutionary Economics*, Jacques Lesourne and André Orléan, eds. (London: Economica, 1998): 397.

Sugden, 22.

the imperial economy of the Middle Rio Grande Valley was still shaky after all, riddled with droughts, raids, shortages, and dwindling indigenous populations. The Pecos contingent might have been using the Spanish to remind the Apaches where their proper trading venues were. Or, reasonably, they could have been spies.⁵⁴

A *junta de guerra* held in Santa Fe the previous summer surmised that Faraones would be harvesting the maize at that time from riparian areas where they had planted seeds the previous spring, and so Hurtado set out at the tail-end of August to try to intercept them before they could disperse over the Plains and the Trans-Pecos. For the next fifteen days he marched about 300 miles over the lands east of Taos and Picuris pueblos, and reached just past the Canadian River. This effort failed utterly and by September 13 he was low on supplies and even lower on morale. His troop, desperate for some kind of success found itself traveling in the final days about fifteen leagues, over double its typical distance, but in no particular direction. Having traveled 42 miles in a day, he echoed one of his predecessors, Maestre de Campo Juan Dominguez de Mendoza, and berated his guide as worthless and deceitful. Unlike Mendoza, however, who was content to part company with the Jumano leader Sabeata, Hurtado gave physical expression to his rage and he whipped his guide, making a scene and undoubtedly alienating many of the Puebloan auxiliaries. The very next day, his spies approached him and reported that the Faraones had gone to Pecos, as they were fully apprised of the Spanish expedition. He made a beeline for Santa Fe, arriving there on September 30.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Juan Páez Hurtado, 30 August 1715, Review of forces and equipment at Picuris Pueblo, PE 42, Pinart, UCB.

⁵⁵ Governor Mogollón, 23 July 1715, Council of War, PE 42, Pinart, UCB.
Juan Páez Hurtado, August-September 1715, Expedition journal, PE 42, Pinart, UCB.

Thus, the Faraones prevailed over the Spanish and the Tiwa in the sense that their transhumant activities, their maize harvesting, and their designs on Jicarilla and Tiwa country proceeded without interruption. But it was a short-lived advantage. Four years later, the Spanish found the upward trajectory of Faraon Apachería reversed by the time Governor don Antonio Valverde Cosio undertook another expedition, in 1719. The Faraon reversal, however, could not be attributed to the Spanish, who served only as witnesses. Actually, Utes and Comanches were responsible this time. In response to a 1716 attack by Utes on Taos and news from Madrid that France (and England) had declared war on Spain, the governor was ordered to win Jicarillas over to the Spanish cause and to neutralize the French threat. Leaving again in the autumn, Valverde spent nearly two months of 1719 tracking over nearly the same route as Hurtado. Again he had a disproportionate number of Puebloan and Jicarilla auxiliaries; there were 645 Natives compared to 60 presidials and 45 *vecinos*. Eventually Carlana Apaches, led by their eponymous leader, joined their Jicarilla kin and the Spanish, bringing 69 fighters with them. Over the 315 miles that he traveled, Valverde heard new and surprising stories of the devastating attacks of Comanches and Utes on northern Apaches. Valverde recorded such reports on at least ten occasions. Significantly, an important interpreter and cultural go-between on this trip was don Geronimó, the same lieutenant governor of Taos who had alerted Mogollón to the Faraon threat in 1714. In the intervening five years it seems that the Uto-Aztecs had reconnoitered the area well: they knew enough about the location and defenses of Jicarilla and Carlana *rancherías* that nearly every one that the Spanish encountered had either been burned or had a story of recent hostilities. Like Dominguez, and like Hurtado, Valverde was ultimately

unsuccessful in his bid to catch the raiders. The difference this time was that the pursuit aimed not at Faraones, but at Comanche and Ute *rancherías*.⁵⁶

It should come as a shock that there is not one mention of Faraones in the *rio arriba* region and in present-day eastern Colorado during Valverde's 1719 expedition. Although Spanish documents do not explicitly narrate how their absence came about, it appears that, within a five-year period, from 1714 to 1719, Faraones had ended their bid and allowed the entire geography to fall under Ute and Comanche power. This acquiescence constitutes a baffling shift of trajectory for Faraon Apachería as a Native space that was expanding deep past the northern Chihuahuan Desert and into the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains region. If Faraones had successfully dislodged Jicarillas and compelled Tiwas and Tewas into becoming dedicated trade partners, then they might have been able to go to the Spanish for aid and adopt, essentially, the same posture that Jicarillas were now adopting. But Faraones had been unsuccessful and could not reasonably seek Spanish aid or asylum in a land that was still, demonstrably, not their own. They had little recourse but to fall back to more familiar territory. We can better understand some of the reasons for this dramatic change in regional geopolitics by turning to an event Valverde witnessed on the banks of the Arkansas River towards the end of October, just before he turned back for Santa Fe.

On October 22 the Spanish and their allies were encamped near a place called Cuartelejo, the site of a massive concentration of Apaches that had been known to the Spanish for decades, but seldom visited. There, on the banks of the river, Valverde might have felt himself transported to another world where preconceptions about

⁵⁶ Governor Valverde, September-October 1719, Expedition journal, PE 43, Pinart, UCB. Gunnerson, 183-184.

Spanish empire and the nature of Athapaskan living were shattered. He had good reason to feel that way. As he walked among the 200 tents that sheltered over 1,000 people he came across a scene that made concrete the reality that Spanish dominion ended much sooner than anyone cared to imagine. Here was a whole town of people living life outside of imperial jurisdiction. Touring the camp, he approached an Apache leader who was wounded and, upon closer inspection, found that the man had been shot. Athapaskans with firearms was a reality of the northern borderlands since before the time of the 1680 revolt, but this was different. This man was bleeding because of a French bullet, fired from a French gun, by Native groups allied to the French who were nearby.

Valverde soon learned that Pawnees were closely aligned to the French and were regularly being supported by French arms and mounts. This open dispersal of European materiel to Native groups was something that the Spanish had never dreamed of doing—but that could now be credited for militarizing the southern Great Plains. From Pawnees, French arms passed easily to Comanches and Utes who sometimes traded for them, but more often procured them through violent means. Faraon Apaches, on the other hand, were limited in their access to harquebuses and horses through what they could find, seize, or surreptitiously trade for around Spanish hubs. In terms of supply they could not compete with a foe who was armed more easily and with better weapons. Additionally, Apaches had a much more difficult time outmaneuvering or escaping Comanches and Utes because they were similarly nomadic, light in traveling weight, and inured to long-distance travel. Thus, Comanches

and Utes, armed by the French via Pawnees, had the technological edge to explode onto the scene and offer a more symmetrical, and lethal, competition to Faraones.⁵⁷

The New Mexican governor, meanwhile, was understandably stricken with panic. Deeming the French and their arms trafficking to be the core threat, he made for Santa Fe immediately and prepared another expedition, this time to be led by one of his lieutenant generals, don Pedro de Villasur, who was tasked with finding and neutralizing the French threat. This choice and the ensuing moments had profound implications for the future of Comanchería, and Apachería, and New Mexico.

Camped near a river in present-day Nebraska in the middle of August, Villasur took him time fulfilling his mandate from Valverde. He rested comfortably on the assumption that Spanish arms, once deployed to the field, commanded respect. He probably also assumed that any French presence among the tribes would guarantee the chance to parlay. The sun rose high in the sky and the presidials and *vecinos* loitered about camp perhaps enjoying the hot breeze through the tall-grass prairie. In a moment of hubris or blunder, Villasur inexplicably let the troop's horses loose to graze on the buffalo grass and blue grama. Valverde learned what happened next from the few bedraggled survivors who managed to make it back to Santa Fe under the protection of Carlana and Jicarilla Apaches. Over 200 Pawnee and French fighters rushed the camp and fell on Villasur's troop and massacred 45 of the Spanish, including Villasur himself, three Spanish captains, 19 soldiers, 11 auxiliaries, and one missionary. It was an utter

⁵⁷ George Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974): chapter 3 provides a good summary of the Pawnee experience with French traders during the first third of the eighteenth century. v. also Gunnerson, 187-199 for a narrative of this moment, and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008): 34-35 for an updated telling of the Spanish-French-Pawnee collision in the 1710s and 1720s.

disaster for New Spain and especially for New Mexico. Such an extensive loss of experienced personnel crippled the practice of empire and immediately set back most Spanish designs in the region by decades. Valverde came under fire for this debacle almost as soon as the reports could be written and the threat of French-sponsored arms-trafficking went unchallenged for the time being.⁵⁸

The Jicarillas gained no respite from Comanches and Utes through Spanish intervention and by 1723 they were actively campaigning for missions and a presidio to be located among the core locus of their population, some 160 miles north of Santa Fe. Despite having been deeply complicit in 1680, 1696, and other conspiracies and uprisings, this group of Apaches found themselves so hard-pressed that they petitioned for Spanish protection at the cost of their independence and traditional way of life. This was a stunning reversal not just for Jicarillas, but for the geopolitical calculus of the entire region. Comanches and Utes, armed like no other Native groups before them, continued to pound into Jicarilla habitats with such regularity that rapine and death became common in the *rio arriba*. The Jicarillas grew impatient and desperate with Spanish promises and threatened to move west to live with Navajos, a prospect that distressed the Spanish. By this point Santa Fe valued Jicarillas, ironically, as a buffer population. The governor of New Mexico at that time, don Juan Domingo de Bustamante, favored the idea of situating a presidio among them and entreated the

⁵⁸ Governor Valverde to Viceroy Valero, 8 October 1720, Autos de lo consultado por los gobernadores del Parral y Nuevo México sobre los designios de los franceses y el establecimiento de los Apaches en el Valle de la Jicarilla, Legajo 394, Documento 20, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

v. Fiscal to War Council, 27 December 1719, La información que le envía desde Nuevo México el Capitán Balverde Cosío sobre la cercanía de los franceses, unidos con algunas naciones indias hostiles, y lo mal preparados que se encuentran en Santa Fe para defenderse de un posible attack, Legajo 299, Historia, AGN, CSWR for evidence that the peril of New Mexico became a talking point in the highest circles of the viceroyalty immediately following news of Villasur's death.

viceroy, the second Marques of Casa Fuerte, to reallocate presidials meant to form a garrison at La Junta de los Ríos to a proposed presidio, “La Jicarilla,” instead. The Uto-Aztecan ascendancy had turned foe into friend and sent Jicarillas and Spanish into each other’s arms; meanwhile, Faraones dug deeper into the Trans-Pecos and most likely began to seriously consider expanding farther to the south, below La Junta de los Ríos and El Paso del Norte, as they would do by 1740s.⁵⁹

For Jicarillas, resolution did not come until 1727 when don Pedro de Rivera y Villalón weighed in on the matter. He had been sent on a royal-backed inspection of the northern edges of New Spain and so had the ear of the viceroy as well as the court in Madrid. Although there had been much correspondence that seriously entertained a third New Mexico presidio, when Rivera lambasted the idea, the issue was dropped. Rivera was no doubt cognizant of the straits that Spanish imperial resources were in following the Villasur massacre. Consequently, instead of enacting empire through the establishment of presidio to the north, the Spanish instead further consolidated their resources to the Middle Rio Grande Valley. The Jicarillas were instead settlers in ranchos just south of Taos pueblo, well within the Spanish orbit but far removed from their indigenous settings. The decline of Jicarillas came about swiftly, buried in the

⁵⁹ José Naranjo et al., 2 June 1720, El acuerdo con el gobernador Antonio Balberde Cosío en que el nuevo presidio se sitúa en el Valle de la Jicarilla, para mejor protección contra los yutas y comanches que vienen del Nordeste, lo cual le hacen saber al Virrey Marqués de Valero, Legajo 299, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Governor Bustamante to Viceroy Casa Fuerte, 10 January 1724, Autos de lo consultado..., Legajo 394, Documento 20, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Governor Bustamante to Viceroy Casa Fuerte, 30 May 1724, Autos de lo consultado..., Legajo 394, Documento 20, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Veronica E. Tiller, “Jicarilla Apache” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, William C. Sturtevant, ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 449-450.

considerations of bureaucratic paperwork. Generations of agitation and the fiery Faraon-Jicarilla competition ended with a whimper.⁶⁰

This recounting and analysis of events in the *rio arriba* and the Plains might seem like a digression, but it helps to explain why Faraon Apachería took the shape and location that it did. The Faraones might have become an inter-regional force that tapped multiple ecological zones and pincerred Spanish New Mexico from the south, east, and north. But that did not happen. Instead, Comanchería was born and soon dominated the Canadian and Arkansas River watersheds, entrenching itself over the southern Great Plains. Soon it dominated the northern access routes into the Middle Rio Grande Valley via Tiwa pueblos and thereby gained access to the important imperial economy of New Spain.⁶¹

In response to the emergence of a new and powerful player on the geopolitical landscape, Faraones shifted to the northern Chihuahuan Desert and the short-grass prairies of its northern edge landscapes. There, they used the land in creative ways to manifest an Apachería that was efficient, redoubtable, and significant. At the same time, they coalesced their ethnic identity with those of Gileño and Natagé peoples until the compound identity of “Mescalero” was borne into the documentary record. This Apachería would survive the Spanish empire, the Mexican republic, the Texan republic, and last well into the American period before it, and Comanchería, finally succumbed to external pressure late in nineteenth century. Xeric landscapes became sites of

⁶⁰ Pedro de Rivera to Viceroy Casa Fuerte, 26 September 1727, Autos de lo consultado..., Legajo 394, Documento 20, Historia, AGN, CSWR.
Gunnerson, 200-202.

⁶¹ Hämäläinen, 36-40 agrees that this was a pivotal moment in the history of Jicarilla Apachería and that from this point forward lands north of the Canadian river were firmly within Uto-Aztecan territory.
Anderson, 205-206.

entrenchment where advanced knowledge of landforms and resources allowed them to outmaneuver the better-armed Comanches and Spanish for decades to come.⁶²

For the time being Faraones carried on much as they had before, not appreciably vexed or humbled by their expulsion from the *rio arriba* by Comanches and Utes. The grand project of symbiotic bellicosity ended without morphing into a strategy that could maintain the same level, and kind, of competition. Comanches and Utes could afford to play hawk more often and, armed with firearms, with less cost, than Faraones or the Spanish could afford to match. Faraones continued to siphon wealth from New Mexico and to develop their practices of resource extraction from the desert. Governor Bustamante was painfully aware of this fact. When he diverted resources to the *rio arriba*, he had been preparing for some time to travel south, not north, to the Albuquerque-Belen Basin. He was set to hunt out and engage Faraones who were still pillaging goods and livestock from Albuquerque, using the Sandia and Manzano Mountains as cover. But when Jicarilla captains arrived in Santa Fe and threatened to abandon the area unless the Spanish sent immediate aid, Bustamante redirected his fifty presidials to rendezvous with Jicarillas, leaving on November 17, 1723. Apparently there was a benefit to the expansion of Uto-Aztecan groups: they at least attenuated imperial resources and kept the Spanish from focusing too much on Faraones who continued their practices all along the Trans-Pecos.⁶³

⁶² Anderson 112-116.

⁶³ Governor Bustamante to Viceroy Casa Fuerte, 10 January 1724, Autos de lo consultado..., Legajo 394, Documento 20, Historia, AGN, CSWR. Schroeder, 503, 508.

In conclusion, the Spanish ultimately failed to dislodge Faraones from the *rio arriba* but they did not have to wait long before those Apaches were displaced by a new, and more menacing, foe. By the early 1720s Comanches and Utes armed with French guns and on French horses had interrupted Faraon designs and fast became the preeminent source of expansion and aggression in the southern Great Plains around present-day southeastern Colorado. Comanches and Utes had come a long way very quickly since 1706, when Sergeant Major Juan de Ulibarri de la Tornada first noted them in an expedition north of Taos. By all accounts it was just ten years before they and their Ute allies exploded onto the scene and caught the Spanish, Faraones, and Puebloans by surprise.⁶⁴

Spatially, Faraon Apachería plateaued in the 1720s when expansion of its northern borders was checked by fresh, inter-regional competition. Uto-Aztecan-speaking groups successfully jimmed their way into New Mexico and gained access to the pueblos and *ranchos* of the Middle Rio Grande Valley. By the 1720s Pecos pueblo represented their northern reaches and Faraones do not again appear in the *rio arriba* in any appreciable way. In all, they lost much of their access to Taos and Picuris pueblos, places for which they had been maneuvering since the 1710s, but they kept their hold on the Galisteo Basin, the Albuquerque-Belen Basin, and the entire Trans-Pecos, just as they had for the past forty years and as they would for about fifty more years. Faraones may have been seeking to add the *rio arriba* and the fecund valleys of present-day southern Colorado to their list of granaries just as they had done with El

⁶⁴ The diary of this expedition is located in Legajo 36, Parte 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR. A good translation can be found in Thomas (1982).

Thomas (1959), 4.

Paso and La Junta, but they were thwarted from this northward expansion despite the sophistication of their policies.

Economically, Faraon wealth became less diversified because a subset of specialized goods that were found only in *rio arriba* places were now more difficult to procure. They could still count Pecos, Albuquerque, (sometimes) Santa Fe, and many other Spanish places in New Mexico as part of their network, but the new Spanish villa of Santa Cruz de la Cañada, the pueblos north of Santa Fe, and those in the Jemez Mountains were now fraught with risk. In response to this diminished access to manufactured goods, crops, and European livestock, Faraones intensified exploitation of the natural resources of the northern Chihuahuan Desert, the subject of chapter four. The north-south orientation of the colonial world—with its longitudinal stretches of mountains and rivers—that had obliged the Spanish to move northward now lay open for Faraones to venture south, deeper into the province of Nueva Vizcaya. They would move via the *camino real* and the Rio Conchos, the former departing from El Paso del Norte and the latter from La Junta de los Ríos. Eventually, they tapped into the Bolsón de Mapimí, an ecologically distinct area of the northern Chihuahuan Desert in present-day Chihuahua and Coahuila. But that evolution was still a generation in the making, and is the subject of chapter five.

The next chapter steps away from themes of expansion and competition in order to focus on how Faraones were equally creative and adaptive when negotiating the ecological offerings of their new homeland, the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Despite the violence of symbiotic bellicosity and the aggressive expansion of Faraon Apachería,

there was always a core to Apachería that existed beyond raids, seizures, and captive-taking.

Chapter 4

Emergence: Faraones in the Trans-Pecos and La Junta

In 1686 fray Alonso de Posada, former *custo* of New Mexico and now *procurador-general* of the Franciscan Order in Mexico City, found himself playing the part of a geographer. It was an unexpected and *ad hoc* project designed to address a problem that was even more surprising and immediate than the one (still) posed by rebel Puebloans of the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Three years earlier, in 1683, news had come to El Paso that the French explorer René-Robert de LaSalle had appeared on the shores of present-day Texas, bringing with him men, arms, supplies, and the threat of a French counter-imperial attack. Fear crushed atop fears at El Paso, and the beleaguered Spanish refugees now found themselves faced not only with insurgent Puebloans to the north and harrying Faraones and Mansos all around, but now also the fear that the French would soon arrive from the rear and lop off the northern portions of the empire. Indeed, even as Posada worked, LaSalle was still wandering in what is today eastern Texas (although he would soon be killed in a mutiny, in 1687). On top of that, a former governor of New Mexico, don Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa (1661-1664), had defected from Spain after a falling out with the Inquisition and had recently curried favor in Parisian courts, where he supplied intelligence regarding New Mexico and two other provinces adjacent to New Mexico: “Quivira,” to the east, and “Teguayo,” to the west.

Embarrassingly, Posada and other Spanish investigators were largely clueless about Quivira and Teguayo. As we know now, both were part historical anachronism and part political fiction. Nevertheless, the Spanish were terrified that the French knew something that they did not, and so Posada combed through the archives in the hopes that he would discover something that would defuse the damage done by Peñalosa. In the end, Posada seized on Alonso de Benavides' 1630 *Memoria* for much of his information. From the geographical descriptions in Benavides' work, Posada wove an intricate geography full of rivers, mountains, and expansive Native-controlled territories.¹

Posada's *Informe* is lengthy and attempts to account for lands that reach from the Gulf of Mexico all the way to California, with a northern latitude that terminates just above Taos. Posada conceived of Teguayo as a place that stretched far north and west of Santa Fe, in the Great Basin and then on to the Californias, whereas Quivira occupied the southern Great Plains reaching into present-day central Texas. In his attempts to describe what Quivira might look like and its significance for New France, Posada unwittingly described parts of North America that were already being claimed colonially, and even imperially, but not by French or Spanish agents. In fact, a Native-

¹ The tales of the fabled cities of Quivira had been dispelled in the time of Oñate at the turn of the seventeenth century, when that Spaniard could only find grass, bison, and nomadic groups on the Great Plains. As for Teguayo, it was a wholly novel concept.

Alonso de Posada, 14 March 1686, Report on the exploration, geography, and Indians of the southwest and New Mexico, Legajo 43, Estado, AGI, CSWR.

For an English translation of this fascinating document and a biographical sketch of Posada, v. Posada, Alonso de. *Alonso de Posada Report, 1686: A Description of the Area of the Present Southern United States in the Seventeenth Century*, translated and edited by Alfred Barnaby Thomas (Pensacola: Perdido Bay Press, 1982): 1-2. v. also Nancy Parrott Hickerson, *The Jumanos: Hunters and Traders of the South Plains* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994): 152-155 for a recent scholarly survey of Posada.

John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier: 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974): Chapters six & eight provide a useful narrative of the appearance of French agents to the east and north of New Mexico from 1680 through the latter half of the eighteenth century.

produced territoriality was just then forming, but Posada could not “see” it because it was not a European creation.

Indeed, Posada soon made clear that all of Quivira seemed overrun by Apaches: “There is already a nation that is the master over all the Plains, *and they are called the Apache.*” Posada elaborated further on these Apaches of the Great Plains:

“This nation occupies and has their own lands and they defend it, *400 leagues long west to east, and 200 leagues from north to south*; and in some parts more: and the center is the Plains of Cibola, sharing land to the east with Quivira, with whom they always make war” and “that on many and diverse occasions they have entered into their [Pecos pueblo] lands...a mass of Apache *rancherías*, to sell their hides and chamois, and they trade Indian children from the Quivira nation for horses, where are they are known to make assault in their lands.”²

It appears that Posada imagined a space over 1,000 miles east to west and over 500 miles north to south that would have embraced the Mississippi River and the course of the Rio Grande in present-day Texas. At this time in the seventeenth century, Apaches were still among the handful of Plains groups who could have habitually raided groups so far east, captured “Quivira” children from the Mississippi valley, and then traded them for horses in the pueblos. As such, this practice represent a vector of Athapaskan expansionism which cannot be treated here. When Posada hinted at these events occurring far to the east, he was describing the activities of Jicarillan, Lipan, and other Plains groups such as Pawnees and Kiowas. The story of these eastward-leaning Apaches ranging into Oklahoma and Louisiana is one of resources, bodies, and energy flowing latitudinally. Faraones likely participated in this west-east economy through their

² Posada, folios 12-13, Estado, emphasis mine.

Several monographs that have been repeatedly cited by this study have paved the way for the revision of the long colonial encounter and that provide the framework for “reverse colonialism.” For recent examples, v. Kathleen DuVal’s *The Native Ground* (2006); Ned Blackhawk’s *Violence Over the Land* (2006); Pekka Hämäläinen’s *The Comanche Empire* (2008); and Michael Witgen’s *An Infinity of Nations* (2012).

participation at trading fairs, but primarily their attention was oriented longitudinally into the economic heart of New Spain. These two directionalities had different life spans: Plains Apaches' latitudinal territorialities would continue to expand until the 1720s, when Comanches from the north, armed with French guns, began to encroach and compress their Apacherías westward and southward. Faraon Apachería expanded until the 1740s, but maintained vast holdings throughout the Chihuahuan Desert well into the nineteenth century. This analysis is chiefly concerned with Faraon Apachería.³

In addition to assigning over 500,000 square miles to Apaches, Posada also gave clues about the character of their power. No doubt influenced by the events of the Manso Rebellion, the status of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and the documented practices of Faraones, he correctly updated Benavides' *Memoria* with the observation that the

“Apache nation hold as pacified those [groups] in the Rio Grande district for about 100 leagues, and from these nations, there follow those of the Jumana [sic] with the rest of those mentioned in the La Junta de los Ríos of the Rio Grande and Conchos and they [the Apache] hold these captive in this place...until the mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe [at El Paso].”⁴

In this Posada is clearly thinking about Faraones, since no other group ever had a documented presence that far south. There were no illusions. The Spanish were surrounded, at least on their northern and eastern flanks, by Apaches. Posada noted that these Apaches

“have given such great war to the Spanish who are common and have hand weapons, making many assaults and ambushes in the pueblos of

³ Scholarship of Lipan Apaches will most likely provide the best way to characterize these landscapes via the populations who utilized them. v. Thomas A. Britten's *The Lipan Apaches* (2009) and Sherry Robinson's *I Fought a Good Fight* (2013).

⁴ Posada, folio 13, Estado.

the Indians, savagely killing the men and carrying away the women and the living children, taking them as legitimate captives, trading them for corn seed by day, and Spanish horses by night, and taking all the rest of the damages that they commit as the industry of their arrogant strength;... they boast that they dwell in the mountains all around New Mexico and make war on the Spanish, and that they possess all the Plains of Cibola.”⁵

The textual cartography of Alonso de Posada makes clear that, by 1686, the Spanish had codified information regarding the strong position that Apaches occupied in the northern Chihuahuan Desert and its northern ecotonal reaches, as well as their expansion southward and their aggressive posture towards neighboring indigenes. The significance of an enlarging Apachería was lost on his Spanish audience, however, because of fixation on the French, ignorance of Native cultures, and bureaucratic misdirection. Posada’s *Informe* did little to alter Spanish preconceptions of the relationship between environmental variance and geopolitical vectors of power. Had Posada and the viceregal court acknowledged concerted agency within indigenous actors (like Faraones) and perceived their practices as part of deliberate and competitive strategies—not just an accident of location—they might have realized sooner the hidden value of much that they shunned. As it was, they were over-focused on the French and the threat that emanated from LaSalle; they never translated the ‘information’ of the *Informe* into ‘knowledge’ of Athapaskan geopolitical reality. The fact that Posada’s text did not lead to a revision of Spanish-Apache foreign policy or a reassessment as to the fecundity and utility of certain landscapes suggests that Faraones were not taken seriously. Whatever inroads these Apaches were known to have made were likely thought to be incidental to the 1680 revolt, and probably

⁵ Posada, folio 15, Estado.

Thomas Britten, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning* (Albuquerque; University of New Mexico Press, 2009): 53.

impermanent. After all, how could an indigenous group be performing the work of empire and colony when their place on the ground was not anchored in permanent adobe walls, like those of missions and presidios?

Forty-two years later, in 1728, Francisco Álvarez Barreiro produced another map of the northern frontiers of New Spain that laid bare the strides Faraones had made. What is more, Barreiro's cartography utilized the most recent intelligence. Where Posada had based his textual geography on antiquated data and did not provide a physical map to illustrate his findings, Barreiro's cartography was informed by a wealth of information learned while he and Brigadier General don Pedro de Rivera toured the frontier from 1724 until 1728. Barreiro had accompanied Rivera on the latter's official *visita*, or inspection, and had served as the company's engineer and cartographer.⁶



Map 11: Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, "Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728."⁷

⁶ v. Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, "Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728" (New York, N.Y: Hispanic Society of America, 1992) generally for the following, image-based, analysis.

⁷ Additional versions of this map can also be found in the Audiencia de Guadalajara, Legajo 144, Parte 1, AGI, CSWR.

Barreiro's illustrations are startling. The labels "Tierra de los Apaches Pharaones," or, simply, "Apaches Pharaones" fill nearly every blank space between Santa Fe in the west, San Antonio de Bexar in the east, the Rio Medina (the Colorado River, almost certainly) to the north, and the Rio Grande to the south. Between landscapes that are dotted with trees, representing prairies, or landscapes full of rocky outcrops, representing mountain ranges, a tremendous amount of space is taken up with these labels and with the illustration of so many little huts or houses, representing Faraon *rancherías*. Five of the *rancherías* are located just east of Pecos pueblo and demonstrate that these Apaches were still considered an anchor of inter-ethnic presence and exchange in the region; another *ranchería* is just east and south of Albuquerque and likely portrays the Faraon presence that was so conspicuous during the immediate post-Vargas period of Spanish re-occupation. Three more *rancherías* exist farther down on the Pecos River and suggest that Faraones were thought to dominate that waterway's entire stretch. In all, Barreiro's illustration corroborates Posada's text and seems to assign to "Pharaones" the entire breadth of the *despoblado* that existed between the Spanish outposts of Santa Fe and San Antonio.



Map 12: Territories within Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, “Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728.”
 (1: Faraon Apachería; 2: Natagé Apachería; 3: New Mexico; 4: Suma Territory; 5: Nueva Vizcaya; 6: Coahuila; 7: Bolsón de Mapimí)

“Pharaones,” however, are missing from the south central portion of the *despoblado*. In that place, immediately to the northeast of La Junta de los Ríos, Barreiro illustrated six *rancherías* for “Apaches de Natagé.” These Apaches were almost certainly Faraones or closely aligned with them. There are three ways to arrive at this conclusion. Linguistically, Natagé is an Athapaskan-derived term for mescal-eaters; this would seem to firmly place Natagés under the larger appellation of Mescalero. In turn, there is broad consensus that Faraones were predecessors to Mescaleros, the Spanish term for mescal-eaters. Barreiro was speaking of a people who were undergoing a sweeping lexical shift within the written record in response to their new horticulture and diet along the Trans-Pecos. Just as Faraones had initially been called “Apaches

Vaqueros” by early seventeenth century Spanish to reflect their bison diet, so too did Faraones become named after their consumption of mescal agave in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.⁸

Faraon is a useful term that I have adopted to discuss an ethnic grouping of Apaches, but etymologically it does not appear until after 1692, when the Spanish paper trail picks up again in earnest, and the archival obliterations of 1680 begin to recede in importance. It appears that it was a politically-charged appellation, on the part of the Spanish. There is no evidence that the term is Athapaskan or that it holds any particular relevance to Apache societies today. The “Pharaon” spelling seems to be a straightforward orthographic allusion to the widely accepted belief that this indigenous group had made a reputation of besting Spanish militia, *vecinos*, and presidials. To the Spanish the Faraon Apaches seemed to exist over the land as ‘heathen’ overlords, just as they imagined the pharaohs had done in ancient Egypt. The daily reality of their many smoke columns, their scattered horse- and footprints, and their demonstrated willingness to disrupt peaceful living—as seen in the Manso Rebellion—defined the contours of their identity. As the eighteenth century wore on, however, the name “Pharaon” was gradually replaced by terms that were rooted in observation of domestic economy rather than perceived and actual political practice. These Apache people would have been seen as still relevant, still powerful, but situated now in a place in

⁸ Albert H. Schroeder, *A Study of the Apache Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974): 534. Morris E. Opler, “Mescalero Apache” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 438.

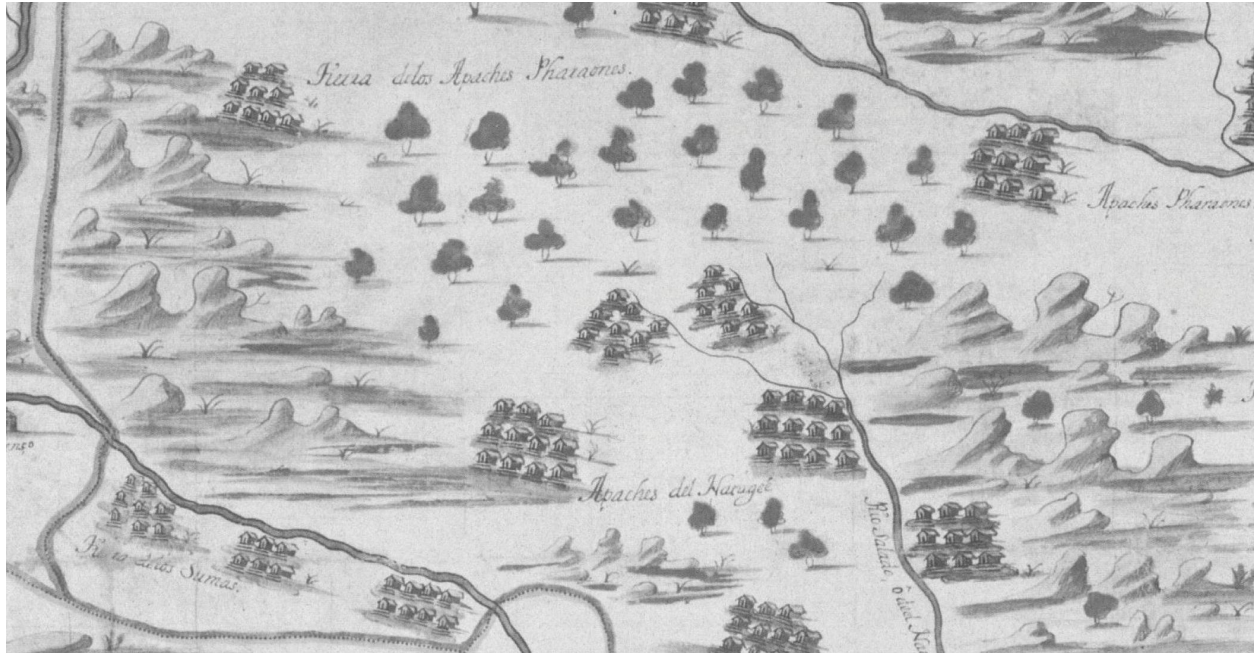
which the epitome of their ethnic identity revolved around the act of harvesting, roasting, and consuming mescal agave.⁹

Finally, if we read the map as a diachronic illustration of ethnogenesis, and set that alongside the snippets of historical documentation available, we get a picture of Faraon engagement with the xeric ecology of the Trans-Pecos and with the horticultural practices of their Suma neighbors. Cartographically, Faraones and Sumas are illustrated on opposite ends from each other, the former all around the northern Trans-Pecos, the latter between El Paso and La Junta, and Natagés in between. Faraones around Pecos pueblo represent a Plains bison economy; Sumas between El Paso and La Junta represent a horticultural economy centered around mescal agave cultivation, as noted by Dominguez in 1683. Between the two is situated the label “Apaches del Natagée.” Barreiro could not have been aware of it, but he was cartographically visualizing the progression of cultural adaptation between prairie and desert environments that historians would arrive at, through different means, hundreds of years later. Throughout this chapter, I will show that the Natagé label represents the adoption by Faraon Apache culture of the agave plant, through Suma influence, as a significant source of carbohydrates. While Sumas may or may not have been Apaches in the strict sense of shared ethnicity, Barreiro’s map seems to make a compelling case for seeing Natagés as an ethnogenetic product of Faraon-Suma encounter.¹⁰

⁹ Schroeder, 491.

Morris E. Opler, “The Apachean Culture Pattern and its Origins” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 390.

¹⁰ Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 105-106, 112.



Map 13: Excerpt from Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, “Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728.” “Tierra de los Sumas” is in the lower left, “Apaches Pharaones” are located in the top center and top right, and “Apaches del Natagee” are low center.

There was a certain myopia that plagued the Spanish and that kept them from apprehending the world around them and the interconnectivity of events that they themselves were often swept up into. The reason behind this is twofold. First, and simply, this was a geography that was always of secondary interest to the larger requirements and thrusts of empire. The French were meant to invade from farther east, if they were to invade at all, and San Antonio de Bejar and the missions of present-day eastern Texas were designed to allay that risk. La Junta de los Ríos seemed to be a geopolitical backwater of indigenous people who did not appear to threaten the larger continental stability of New Spain. As we shall see in chapter five, however, this was a badly drawn assumption. Eventually, the Trans-Pecos became so much more than a powerful new appendage of Apachería—it became a gateway to the Bolsón de Mapimí,

an internally draining, or 'endorheic,' basin deep within Nueva Vizcaya, and hundreds of leagues nearer to Mexico City than the Spanish ever wanted their enemies.

Second, Spanish myopia was also caused by the political and economic prejudices of Spanish imperial paradigms that were, in turn, a subset of *environmental* prejudices. Although Posada vested Quivira with meaning through Apache presence, ultimately its status as a *despoblado*—a wasteland—decided its discursive fate. One gets the impression that no matter what Faraones were doing, the Spanish would have undervalued them because they existed in the *despoblado*. These environments were anathema to the cultural preferences of the Spanish for well-watered, arable land with forests and extractable resources nearby. To Posada and others, the idea of *despoblado* adjudged the land to be of almost no worth, and no degree of alchemy could redeem it—or its inhabitants—from discursive purgatory.¹¹

The term *despoblado* is, however, totally inappropriate as an ecological assessment of the region. If the term does any kind of work it is merely to elaborate upon the same ecological prejudices and blind-spots of the Spanish that we witnessed in chapter one, when we considered the reports of the first *entradas* into the area. Actually, the Trans-Pecos is something of a *mesopotamia*. Within its tributaries, desert grasslands, and mountain basin oases are diverse resources such as potable water, nutritious pasturage, carbohydrate-rich *Agave* species, and access to bison populations.

¹¹ Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68:1 (2011): 7.

The term *despoblado* implies that the area did not conform the normative requirements of Spanish colonization laws, such as the proximal and abundant access to timber, plentiful and year-round potable water, and the presence of arable land, as required. Dan Flores, *Horizontal Yellow: Nature and History in the Near Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999): 18-19. Also regarding the idea of the *despoblado* and its historical function, v. James M. Daniel, "The Spanish Frontier in West Texas and Northern Mexico," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71:4 (1968): 481; and Félix D. Almaráz, Jr, "An Uninviting Wilderness: The Plains of West Texas, 1534-1821," *Great Plains Quarterly* 12:3 (1992).

The Trans-Pecos was perfectly adequate, if not abundant, for nomadic or semi-nomadic populations who had the social and structural elasticity to range over the landscape on seasonal quests for resources. The wealth of resources over the landscape is produced, in part, by the Pecos River that forms the eastern border of the Trans-Pecos. It originates just north of Pecos pueblo, in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and historically coursed over rich grasslands populated by bison and other wild game. Nearly all of its tributaries are drawn from mountain springs or basins to the west of the river, and thus lay over the Trans-Pecos like a spiderweb of minor, life-giving waterways. Although Posada may have come just short of realizing it, the barely understood watershed that he touched upon was a powerful ecoregional resource that Apaches would long develop. The Pecos River was and is a pivotal feature of the ecoregion, transcending and connecting forests, grasslands, and empires. Posada may have named this area “Quivira,” after the Spanish fantasy of riches upon the Plains—but we should now call it by a differently descriptive name, Faraon Apachería.¹²

How did Faraones turn the northern Chihuahuan Desert to their advantage and construct an imperialistic Native space that outshone the Spanish? Typically, the historical trajectory of colonial encounters has it that Europeans seamlessly expanded across space, conquering it, while indigenous groups fell back into enclaves of resistance. This process was the reverse, however. The world-with-Apaches that Posada had noticed in 1686 changed radically in the following decades, and by the time Barreiro drew his maps in 1728, it had largely become a Faraon world. Posada’s and

¹² Rurik List, et al., “Historic Distribution and Challenges to Bison Recovery in the Northern Chihuahuan Desert,” *Conservation Biology* 21 (2007): 1489-1490 for a discussion of the far-ranging territory of bison in the historic period.

Flores (1999), 20.

Barreiro's maps gesture at the story of Faraon Apachería and its rapid, ambitious, and creative expansion before, during, and after Spanish reintroduction under Vargas and Comanche ascendancy in the 1720s. Spanish colonial documentation, coupled with current work in environmental science—and sometimes triangulated with ethnographical study—can provide us with a richer history of the period and the region than has previously been imagined. In this way we can leave, figuratively, the few geographical places—like Santa Fe and El Paso—that are consistently privileged in historical documentation, and begin to reorient our analytical gaze onto entire landscapes and populations that have passed under-noticed.¹³

The transformation of Faraon Apachería into a space that was coterminous with the northern Chihuahuan Desert happened concurrently with the refinement of Faraon strategies for competition and encounter in the Middle Rio Grande Valley (otherwise known as “symbiotic bellicosity,” the subject of much of chapter three). In other words, the wealth derived from raiding over the seventeenth century and the success of the 1680 revolt produced the kind of momentum that Faraones needed to expand into the Trans-Pecos. Faraones built their counter-territory with the blood, animals, and tools of Spanish empire. The twin processes of environmental adaptation and political refinement were heavily interwoven; symbiotic bellicosity was made possible by Trans-Pecos expansion. In that sense, this chapter is both complementary and antecedent to the arguments of chapter three: it was because of the developments that occurred

¹³ Barr, 9, 30-31 for the idea that historians should read cartography produced during the colonial era in light of Native ethnographies in order to move beyond European constructions of space and to realize the Native spaces that were in play.

across the Trans-Pecos from 1683 until 1748 that symbiotic bellicosity became a workable strategy in New Mexico from 1692 until 1720.

It is useful to think of the period from 1685 until the 1748 as *the second era of colonial encounter*. Earlier, and at the end of the *first era of colonial encounter*, Faraones had learned that they could not defeat the Spanish outright and eject the invaders from their colonial outposts, as demonstrated in the revolts from 1680 to 1685. Armed with this knowledge, Faraones began to experiment with new ways to conceive of their world and their strategic place within it. What followed was the emergence of a complex system engineered by Faraones and practiced across vast territory that dwarfed New Mexico and rivaled Nueva Vizcaya. Over the course of sixty-three years, until Comanche ascendancy around 1748, Faraon Apaches developed sophisticated strategies that gave their territory an imperialistic tone, and that helped them to recalibrate the Trans-Pecos socially, economically, and politically. With amazing celerity, Faraones investigated and colonized new landscapes such the Guadalupe Mountains, the Hueco Tanks, La Junta, and the many mountain basins of present-day western Texas, just as they had done in the Central Closed Basin near the Jornada del Muerto before 1680. Along the way, Faraones encountered a bevy of indigenous groups, like Jumanos or Sumas, and sometimes cooperation and mutualism developed—as in the case of Sumas—other times not—as in the case of Jumanos. Always, however, Faraones grafted their transhumant calendar over the terrain and repositioned the political economy of the region to their advantage. In that process, they enlarged Apachería and developed a kind of indigenous imperialism.

It was this exploration and exploitation of Trans-Pecos resources and new, mutualistic strategies that afforded Faraones the means to play the Spanish less hawkishly, and to thus avoid the high cost of violence. Now, Faraones switched effortlessly between the dove-hawk spectrum of strategies—efficiently ‘assessing,’ ‘retaliating against,’ ‘bargaining with,’ or ‘threatening’ their Spanish and indigenous neighbors. More than ever they could exploit the *threat* of violence rather than violence itself. Given the opportunity, other Native groups might have behaved similarly, but the course of history had allocated a disproportionate share of horses and European weaponry to Apaches, thereby setting the stage for a conflict where the Spanish and Faraones were principal opponents, with others struggling to compete or survive. Within this contest, Faraones outstripped the Spanish and accomplished more in sixty-three years than the Spanish had in over twice that, because Apachean culture and society featured greater plasticity, and thus a superior ability to adapt to novel encounters and challenges. In place of governance by strong leaders with sprawling tenures, Apaches governed themselves through persuasion and a revolving array of local, well-known, participatory leaders whose tenure and reach were always contingent on their ability to assess imminent situations and to articulate compelling responses. The problem for the Spanish was that the structure of empire was an alien concept birthed without regard to the novel ecosystems of North America. This structure was conceived of in Mexico City, or Madrid, where scant knowledge of local, protean circumstances produced verbose regulations of colonization that hamstrung local Spanish agency. Small, nomadic bands of Faraones, on the other hand, were not bound by centralized government or a set of institutions, like the mission and presidio, that would so narrowly dictate their

relationship to the land or its inhabitants. Instead, these Apaches constantly moved about a set of landscapes that frequently brought groups into contact with one another, such that resources could be exchange, news shared, and coordination perfected. Seen from this angle, the elaborate structure of Spanish civilization came up short against the responsive and creative culture of Faraon Apachería. Faraones diversified their economy and advanced politically in ways that the Spanish could not have imagined under the surveillance of the Catholic Church, and viceregal and royal courts.¹⁴

This chapter leaves the Middle Rio Grande Valley and turns to the Trans-Pecos ecoregion of the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Within this area, I privilege the rather special area known as La Junta de los Ríos, an unusually wet and productive area located at the confluence of the Rios Conchos and Grande, near present-day Presidio, Texas. In that place Puebloans, often termed Julimes (or, less commonly, Patarabueyes), worked fields and riverbanks with minimal Spanish surveillance or presence. It is within La Junta and the mountains and basins of the Trans-Pecos that we can gather a fuller picture of what Faraon Apachería looked like beyond the Spanish encounter and how these people were able to build a strong position for themselves. Faraones colonized an area that had never been heavily grazed or over-burned, and consequently found grasslands that were intact and free from woody plants, or forbs

¹⁴ Stephan Harrison, Doreen Massey, & Keith Richards, "Complexity and Emergence (Another Conversation)" *Area* 38:4 (2006): 467, 470.

Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984): 12, 68-69.

Robert Sugden, "Spontaneous Order," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3:4 (1989): 93-96.

Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 5.

James H. Gunnerson & Dolores A. Gunnerson, "Apachean Culture: A Study in Unity and Diversity" in Keith H. Basso and Morris Edward Opler, eds., *Apachean Culture History and Ethnology*, Anthropological Papers of the University of Arizona, No. 21 (Tucson, Ariz: University of Arizona Press, 1971): 21-22.

Harry W. Basehart, "Mescalero Apache Band Organization and Leadership" in *Apachean Culture History and Ethnology*, 42-44.

Anderson, 105, 117.

unpalatable to ungulates. It was remarkably analogous to the Great Plains and was thus supportive of their nomadic horse culture.¹⁵

Argumentation concerning events that mostly occurred far from Spanish eyes requires interdisciplinary work. Historical documentation concerning this geography and this topic is sparse and does not easily yield a narrative structure to complement analysis. But what scattered and fragmentary documentation does exist provides indications about where and when Apaches were present and it offers clues as to what might have been happening. Thus, historical documentation functions in this chapter as a kind of sputtering spotlight that periodically and momentarily illuminates certain sections of the Trans-Pecos. These flashes of illumination form an evidentiary base upon which to build broader analyses that are buttressed by other disciplines (namely, environmental science and, less so, ethnography). This analysis reveals that Faraones experienced the Trans-Pecos in multitudinous ways; historical documentation is the first step to triangulating their social and economic behaviors with ecological possibilities, and ethnographic likelihoods. The limited reconstruction that I am about to offer stands as a conservative estimation that almost surely falls short of the full scope of practices that occurred nearly 300 years ago. My hope is that this analysis opens the door to what

¹⁵ v. Robert R. Humphrey, "The Desert Grassland: A History of Vegetational Change and an Analysis of Causes," *Botanical Review* 24:4 (1958): 193, 214-217 for a general idea of the great wealth of grasses that covered the Trans-Pecos, making it, at this time, much more analogous to the southern Great Plains than it is today.

Richard York and Philip Mancus, "Critical Human Ecology: Historical Materialism and Natural Laws," *Sociological Theory* 27:2 (2009): 135 for the idea that historical materialism, with its emphasis on contingency and the emergence of systems, should guide our understanding of societies and worlds that cannot be encompassed within the dominant ideologies of academia, such as neo-Marxism and its emphasis on ahistorical factors.

Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006): 7, 9-10.

Apachería was beyond the violent colonial encounter, and beyond the discursive limitations that the ethnocentric Spanish gaze can provide.¹⁶

The emergence of new and complex systems for ecological and social engagement within Faraon and other proto-Mescalero cultures is crucial to a more complete understanding of what happened and why during the colonial era. Scholarly analysis is often overladen with accounts of raiding, thieving, mutilation, and murder because the Spanish sources on which we depend are predominately filled with the those kinds of episodes. While it is true that violent encounter shaped the colonial moment and affected indigenous peoples in powerful ways, violence did not constitute every modality of survival or proliferation. What follows in this chapter is an analytical framework that is complementary to, yet distinct from, that of ethnography. Analysis of Faraon history through the lenses of competition over spaces and resources center the narrative around ethnicity and its culture, and is not dependent on the sustained and fraught colonial encounter to give it direction and meaning. Yet this was a time of cultural flux, when new practices were being investigated, evolved, and perfected; as such a close study of the series of interactions between Apaches and their environments is the best way to access the nature and course of change. In this case, an analysis of the domestic side of Faraon Apachería makes it possible to corroborate Posada and Barreiro, and to expand upon them, in ways that they never intended.

Sometime just before March in the year 1692 the snow pack from the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo mountains of present-day southern Colorado and northern New

¹⁶ Deni J. Seymour, "Distinctive Places, Suitable Spaces: Conceptualizing Mobile Group Occupational Duration and Landscape Use," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 13:3 (2009): 259-260.

Mexico began to thaw. When that happened water cascaded off of the mountains and tumbled into the watershed, charging the Rio Grande anew. Despite being in the grip of a La Niña cycle dry spell since 1689, the floodwaters were sufficiently ferocious, and Rio Grande freshets coursed with enough power that they crashed into El Paso and washed away, and all but ruined, the *salinas* (salt flats), that the Spanish and Puebloans depended upon. This was a potentially catastrophic problem because salt was needed to preserve certain foods, such as butchered meat, and to replace electrolytes lost in the bodies of humans and livestock alike. For Vargas, the problem took on expeditionary dimensions: The ability to carry salt as both a nutritional supplement and as a preservative was vital to the Spanish, because it freed them from dependence on local ecological resources outside of El Paso. Freedom from the need to hunt fresh meat or find sodium saved numerous hours and calories for the troop on their marches through lands that were hostile, unfamiliar, and unpredictable. Diego de Vargas knew this and it complicated life for him greatly. He had never really taken his eyes off of the holy grail that was a successful *entrada* into New Mexico and a reclamation of Santa Fe. But no amount of eagerness, drive, or leadership could obviate the demands of practical means. Before he could seriously entertain plans to leave El Paso del Norte for Santa Fe, he needed salt both to maintain what was essentially still a refugee settlement and to ensure his men's health.¹⁷

The exact route that Vargas took to find salt flats is not clear. His itinerary does not provide precise directions and did not consistently report the distances traveled.

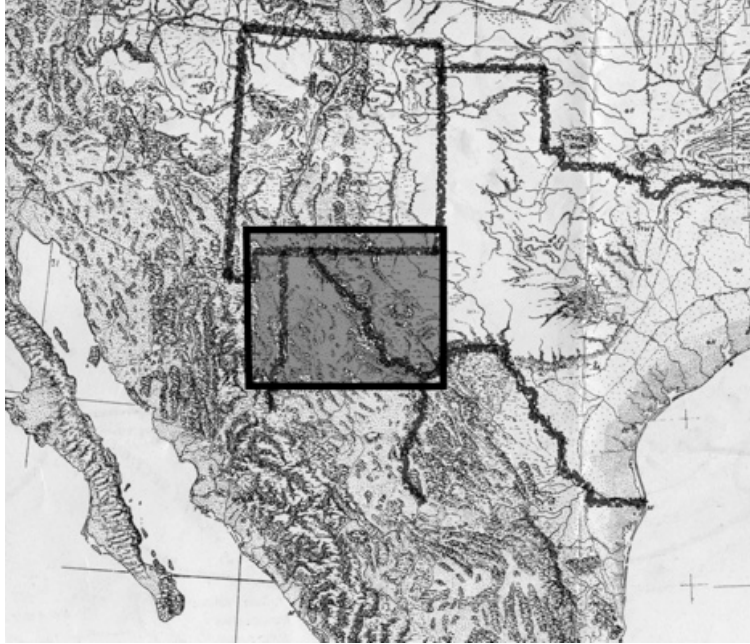
¹⁷ Dan Scurlock, *From the Rio to the Sierra: An Environmental History of the Middle Rio Grande Basin* (Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1998): 24.

Jack D. Forbes, *Apache Navaho and Spaniard* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960): 232-233.

Still, he appears to have gone no less than 62 leagues (161 miles) and trended mostly to the east, towards the Guadalupe Escarpment of present-day New Mexico and Texas. In this terrain his pack train labored and lumbered over the craggy, rugged, and nearly impossible trails. He had with him an Apache guide, captured during an earlier expedition, who led him through gaps and passes to find small watering holes that were often insufficient for Vargas' troop of 20 soldiers, 60 auxiliaries, and a handful of *vecinos* and servants. The Apache guide, never named, quickly earned the suspicion of the Spanish by never leading them through easy paths or to large populations of his people. As Vargas followed him to what is today known as Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the troop would have climbed atop Permian limestone to about 3,000 feet. There, on the geologic barrier between the Great Plains and the Chihuahuan Desert Vargas could have surveyed the rich ecotonal space that was firmly situated within Apachería.¹⁸

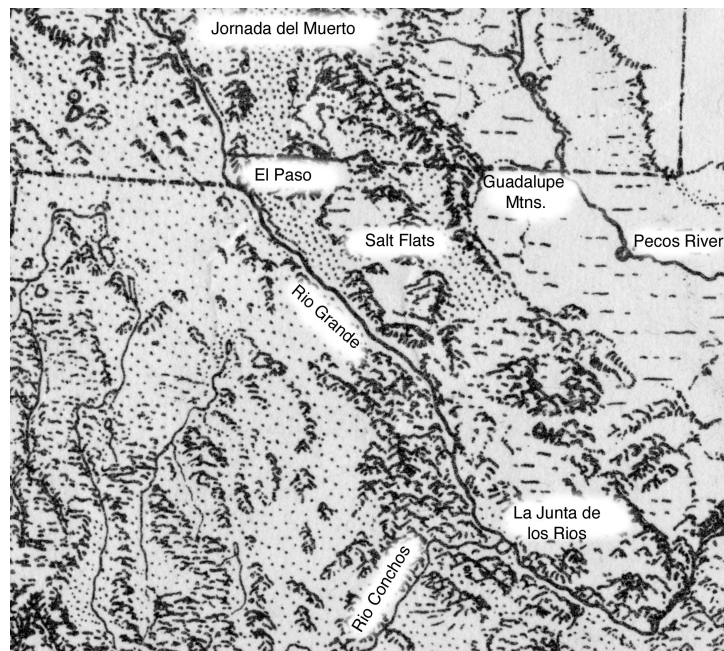
¹⁸ Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 7 April 1692, Sobre las salinas que están en poder de los apaches y la dificultad de llegar a ellas por falta de aguajes en el camino, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Frederick R. Gehlbach, "Vegetation of the Guadalupe Escarpment, New Mexico-Texas," *Ecology* 48:3 (1967): 406.



Map 14: The Trans-Pecos and the Lands South and West of El Paso.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.



Map 15: The Area of Vargas' 1692 Journey to find Salt Flats.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

To the north the land was carpeted with Chihuahuan grasslands full of tobosa (*Hilaria mutica*), sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), and burrograss (*Scleropogon brevifolius*)—all plentiful and nutritious for grazing. The odd creosote bush may have dotted the landscape but grazing at this time was not so strong as to privilege this woody and shrub-like species. His gaze might also have been drawn to the various *Opuntia* species, like prickly pear and chollo, and their menacing spines may have caused him to overlook the importance and plentiful *Agave lechuguilla* that dotted the landscape and held within its stalks a rich trove of carbohydrates and moisture. To the south he might have seen much of the same vegetation in addition to many depressions scattered over the level portions of land, some filled with water, others likely not.¹⁹

Eventually, the Apache guide led Vargas and a smaller contingent of soldiers and auxiliaries down a difficult road, passing a handful of watering holes, *ojos*, and to the salt flats. It was uneventful. Vargas encountered a few Apaches along the way but he never engaged them in battle (although he marked them out both before and after this event as manipulators and destroyers of the whole province and region). He was probably wary of making an attack because he only had a small force, and he was constantly reminded that the harsh landscape was unfamiliar and not easily defensible. Perhaps seizing on Vargas' hesitation or doubt, his guide consistently hinted that there were many Apaches in the surrounding peaks, just beyond, ready to attack. Vargas

¹⁹ Gehlbach, 409-412.

New Mexico in Maps, 2nd edition, Jerry L. Williams, ed. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1986): 71.

Glenn Griffith, et al., *Ecoregions of Texas* (Corvallis, Or: Environmental Protection Agency, Western Ecology Division, 2007): vi, 4-11.

knew this to be true because their smoke filled Spanish nostrils. The new governor, true to his mandate for salt harvesting, declined to compete for total knowledge of, and control over, the local natural resources. He drank from the mountain-top watering places, had his troop pack up as much salt as they could carry, and then hustled back to El Paso, arriving there on March 18. He risked being in the field only ten days, four of which were used to rush back to El Paso.²⁰

We should linger a little longer where Vargas dared not, because there is evidence that Faraones had thoroughly infiltrated the region, either taking it from Sumas or co-opting them into their ranks. On March 12, while resting in his tent, Vargas interrogated his Apache prisoner. Vargas quizzed the guide about the surrounding mountains, the existence of water sources, and the presence of other Apaches. The Apache replied that

“the mountains separate us from the bulk of the Apache peoples, who live beyond towards the salty river that is distant...and the mountain is the Black Mountain, where it is patchy, and ahead water is found, and it is good for a *ranchería*.”

The reference to the salty river must correlate to the Pecos River, frequently termed the Rio Salado (Salty River) by the Spanish. Vargas was most likely camping in the Guadalupe Mountains. The *salinas* that he had found were so thick and hard that men could break off chunks of salt with their axes. This description strongly suggests that

²⁰ Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 17 April 1692, Informa de las incursiones que se han hecho al Nuevo México, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR. This document is important because it is one of the first explicit indication that Faraones (along Siete Rios, Salineros, Chilimos, and other Apaches) “of the Pecos River” have recently commanded New Mexico as a part of their territory.

Vargas reached the lands just southwest of the Guadalupe Mountains where there are still many large salt flats.²¹

Vargas judged the area as unsuited to agriculture because water sources were insufficient for *acequia* irrigation, a requirement of the *Recopilación de Leyes*, the body of laws governing the placement and manner of settlement. He left quickly and the Spanish never made a serious effort to settle this space, let alone control it. It was a shunned space even more than the Pecos watershed, yet it was replete with sweet water, grasses, salts, and wood in certain places—Vargas and others of the Spanish just did not know where to go to find it. The documentary record does not clearly relay Vargas' directionality, but it appears that the Apache guide was leading Vargas along the southwestern margins of a mountain system that trended north-south. Along this route, Vargas would have encountered much more xerophytic flora (requiring little water) than he would have if he gained a northern position, where greater precipitation had allowed for less xeric plant life (requiring an environment that is between arid and hydric). Additionally, Vargas was led to no springs during his journey...only *ojos* of water that would have been brackish and stagnant, yet potable. It is reasonable to guess that the Apache guide knew better: at least ten springs, many of them with fresh water, run at varying elevations all along this range. In fact, there is enough moisture that grama

²¹ Governor Vargas to the Conde de Galve, 17 April 1692, Informa de las incursiones..., Legajo 37, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Letters from the New World: Selected Correspondence of don Diego de Vargas to his Family, 1675-1706, John L. Kessell, Rick Hendricks, Meredith D. Dodge, eds., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992),: 221, n. 85.

grasslands grow from 4,500 to 7,500 feet, but the guide never took Vargas there. These were tributaries of the Pecos River, and that was Faraon territory.²²

Vargas' journey introduces many elements of the Pecos watershed and the Trans-Pecos into the historical record, but it cannot begin to cover the enormity of that ecoregion. It is necessary to buttress historical documentation with more recent analysis of the region in order to shed light on the spaces that the Spanish did not see, but that certainly mattered to indigenous inhabitants and that had almost identical ecological characters and processes then as now.

The Trans-Pecos region, as defined in this analysis, is that space between the Pecos River and the Rio Grande. Contrary to popular usage, I understand the Trans-Pecos as extending above the present-day boundary of the state of Texas to include the Pecos River all the way up to its headwaters near Santa Fe. (There was, ecologically and geopolitically, much overlap between the Trans-Pecos and the riparian empire of the Middle Rio Grande Valley.) The watershed of the Pecos River stands alongside that of the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos as the principal systems for water catchment and delivery in the Chihuahuan Desert.²³

²² Almaráz, 169.

Richard E. Greenleaf, "Land and Water in Mexico and New Mexico, 1700-1821," *New Mexico Historical Review* 47:2 (1972): 1-2.

Gehlbach, 404-405.

A Watershed Protection Plan for the Pecos River in Texas (Online: Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, 2008), visited September 10, 2012. <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/media/1923/pecosriverwpp.pdf>: 5-7.

²³ Britten, 12.

cf. Almaráz, 169-170 where he defines it more narrowly, as a place that is bounded on the east by the Caprock escarpment, on the west and southwest by the Pecos Lowland, on the southeast by the Edwards Plateau country, and on the north by the Canadian River.



Map 16: The Area of the Trans-Pecos in the Chihuahuan Desert.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Headwaters for the Pecos River lie in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and flow to the south and east where the northern Chihuahuan Desert meets the southern Great Plains. In all, the Pecos river courses for about 926 miles through New Mexico and western Texas, draining 38,000 square miles before meeting the Rio Grande near present-day Del Rio, Texas. In all, it falls from around 13,000 feet to 1,050 feet. The Roswell Artesian Basin, extending on the west from the Sacramento and Sierra Blanca Mountains east to the Pecos continually discharges fresh water from the shallow aquifer into the river. Despite this influx of freshwater, and unlike the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos, Pecos water has much higher levels of salinity owing to the fact that it runs on the southwest border of the Permian Basin, an inland sea extant 250-300 million years

ago. When that sea evaporated it left salts like halite and gypsum in layers as thick as 1,000 feet.²⁴

The salinity of the Pecos River, while noticeable enough during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to earn it the name Rio Salado, or “Salty River,” was not so alkaline as to make the water lethal to plants or not potable to animals, except for one stretch near the site of present-day Girvin, Texas where the river becomes highly saline. Salt Creek, aptly named, feeds the Pecos from tributaries to the west, deep in the Apache and Delaware Mountain ranges. The creek delivers, per annum, 45,700 tons of sodium into the river, altering the chemistry of the river so that there is over 1,000 parts per million (ppm) of sodium, or 12,000 milligrams per liter. Usually anything below 1,000 ppm of sodium is considered freshwater, but levels during colonial times must have regularly reached levels well in excess of 1,000 ppm. Before there was a town called Girvin, this stretch of the Pecos was referred to as “Horsehead Crossing” and was one of the most fordable spots on the river; it could be anywhere from sixty-five to one hundred feet across with a fast current of water seven to ten feet deep. Horsehead Crossing earned its moniker owing to the litter of horse, bison, and cow skulls lying all around—bleached out proof that water there was salty enough to kill.²⁵

²⁴ Robert T. Bean, *Geology of the Roswell Artesian Basin, New Mexico, and its Relation to the Hondo Reservoir*, Technical Report 9 (Santa Fe: State of New Mexico State Engineer Office, 1949): 20-21, 30.

The Influence of Human Activities on the Waters of the Pecos Basin in Texas: A Brief Overview (Online: Texas Water Resources Institute, 2006), visited September 10, 2012. <http://pecosbasin.tamu.edu/reports/2006/sr2006-03.pdf>: 1.

A Watershed Protection Plan for the Pecos River in Texas, 18. For a general overview of the Trans-Pecos see also pages 13-20.

Scurlock, 84.

²⁵ *Watershed Protection Pecos River*, 3, 6, 8.

Human Activities on the Waters of the Pecos Basin, 1-2, 6-7.

But Apaches and other groups accustomed to using the river would not have had to go far to avoid excessive salts. Just downriver, at the confluence of the Pecos River with Independence Creek the volume of the river increases by over forty percent and the salinity, accordingly, is halved. This juncture occurs about 40 miles southwest by west of present-day Ozona, Texas. The distance between the massive influx of salt and its dilution from Independence Creek is a scant 75 miles. Independence Creek draws its incredibly fresh water from a collection of springs to the west that act as so many tributaries. The most productive spring produces a staggering three to five thousand gallons of fresh water every minute. Even with rates of evaporation of seventy-five to 105 inches per year, the quantity of water available would have been a boon to people who did not depend on irrigation networks for crops or fixed settlements.²⁶

The edaphic profiles—soil types—of the Pecos River watershed consisted of mostly well-drained aridisols (alkaline soil) and entisols (soil that is slightly differentiated from its parent material). Soils in the riparian zones were mostly alluvial. These soil types, combined with annual precipitation that ranges from 18 to 20 inches in the mountains around present-day Fort Davis to 10 inches at present-day Pecos, Texas, are more than sufficient to support stands of grama grasses such as black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*). Overgrazing in the Texan and American periods has left much of the land devoid of grasses, but it is likely that in times before intensive cattle ranching the grasses carpeted the land up to 7,500 feet. Certainly, above 4,000 feet increased snowfall and decreased temperatures keep more moisture in the soil, making stretches

²⁶ *Watershed Protection Pecos River*, 4, 10, 19-20.

of grass there particularly bountiful. The presence of nutritious grasses along the banks of the Pecos ensured that there existed suitable pasturage for roaming horse cultures as well as for seasonal bison herds. These riverine conditions, so conducive to the success of natural flora and Apache nomadism, were not so well adapted to the water needs of the Spanish. As noted in chapter one, the Spanish insisted on irrigating arable lands with *acequias*, but even on the Rio Grande the damming of water increased soil salinity that, in turn, was damaging to crops of maize and wheat. When the slightly alkaline water of the Rio Grande inundated fields, and subsequently evaporated or percolated, it left behind salt deposits that eventually built to levels that destroyed crops. Armed with the experience of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, Spanish likely knew that the *acequia* model would have failed miserably, and quickly, on the much more saline Pecos.²⁷

Faraones were free to engage this environment in creative ways in order to offset increased competition offered by an entrenched Spanish empire, and the juggernaut that would soon become the Comanche empire. The Pecos River was a viable option as a means to procure water and thus provided Athapaskans with an avenue of southward expansion in just the way that the Rio Grande had offered the

²⁷ Almaráz, 171.

Richard H. Hart, "Plant Biodiversity on Shortgrass Steppe after 55 Years of Zero, Light, Moderate, or Heavy Cattle Grazing," *Plant Ecology* 155:1 (2001): 111, 113.

J.L. Gardner, "Effects of Thirty Years of Protection from Grazing in Desert Grassland," *Ecology* 31:1 (1950): 45-48.

v. also Frederick B. Lottspeich and Marion E. Everhart, "Climate and Vegetation as Soil Forming Factors on the Llano Estacado," *Journal of Range Management* 15:3 (1962): 137-139 for a breakdown of the dominant flora within a variety of edaphic profiles. In nearly all soil types, buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) paired with grama grasses (*Bouteloua gracilis*, and *Bouteloua eriopoda*) provides rich pastures throughout the area.

Griffith, 10-11.

Watershed Protection Pecos River, 17-18.

Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974): 19.

Spanish an avenue northward. A key difference is that Apaches were also using the Rio Grande for southward expansion whereas the Spanish had passed over the Pecos River as a suitable site for movement or habitation. In all, the Pecos River Valley and all its tributaries provided water, carbohydrates, protein, and salt. These are key fuel elements that were highly desirable to a rapidly developing horse culture pushing the limits of its territory. In turn, that horse culture would have had access to desert grasses that were well adapted to arid and semi-arid conditions. Fluctuations in the timing and magnitude of annual rains would have had little effect on their soil and its ability to foster plant life. That the Spanish shunned the region is only a commentary on the inability of their imperial strategy to model itself in terms of ecological realities. The Trans-Pecos was, in fact, a sufficiently rich and fertile place more than capable of supporting groups like Apaches.²⁸

The Espejo expedition of 1583 provided the Spanish with the first, albeit dim, sense of the Pecos watershed. Discussed in chapter one, this expedition was one of the first to explore the interconnectivity of the Pecos and the Rio Grande rivers. At that time, Espejo ventured up the Rio Grande on the way to the pueblos, but he came down the Pecos (about as far as present-day Roswell, New Mexico) on the return to Santa Bárbara in Nueva Vizcaya. Espejo's chronicler did not record much information about the river valley and, in the end, the expedition's account did not sell the Pecos as a viable means to access the Middle Rio Grande Valley—the only other Spaniard to travel

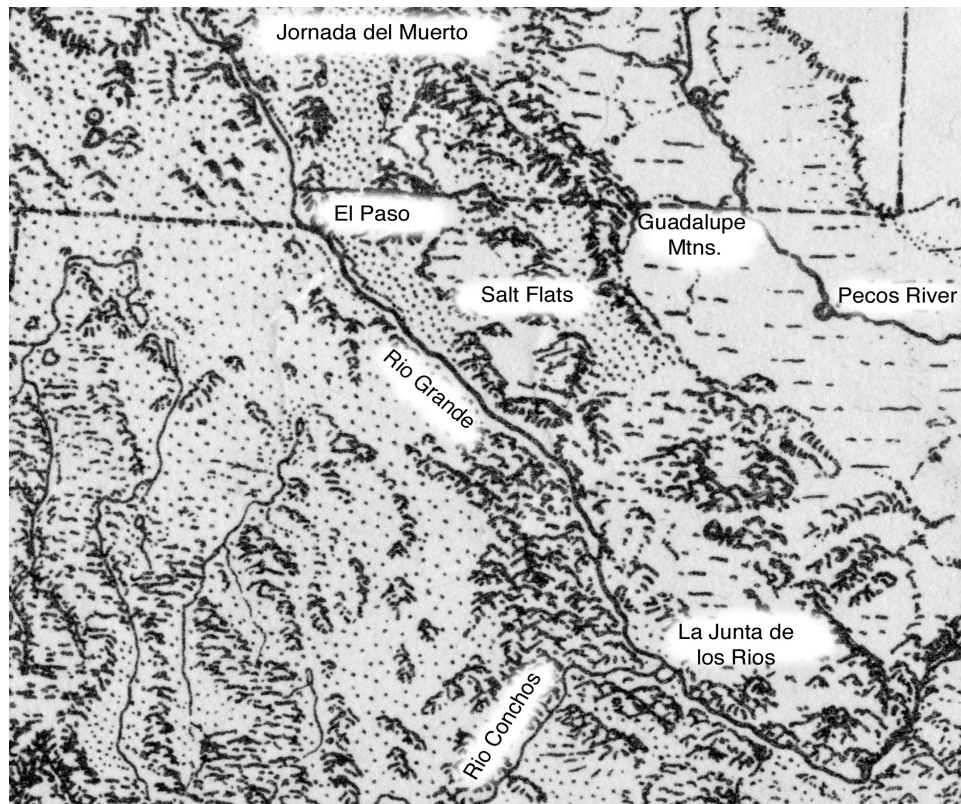
²⁸ O.W. Archibald, *Ecology of World Vegetation* (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1995): 128.

Colin W. Bell, et al., "Linking Microbial Community Structure and Function to Seasonal Differences in Soil Moisture and Temperature in a Chihuahuan Desert Grassland," *Microbial Ecology* 58 (2009): 838. Humphrey, 214-215.

the Pecos was Gaspar Castaño de Sosa—and that was on an illegal expedition in 1590. Almost exactly 100 years later, another expedition occurred that provides better documentary insight into what the seventeenth and eighteenth century Trans-Pecos region looked like. It was undertaken by *Maestre de Campo* Juan Dominguez de Mendoza, the ubiquitous soldier of seventeenth century New Mexico, and by fray Nicolas Lopez, the *Custo* of the Franciscan order in New Mexico at the time.

The impetus for this excursion was borne of entreaties made by Juan Sabeata, the Jumano leader, who came from La Junta to Governor Otermín and then to Governor Cruzate in the summer and autumn of 1683, respectively. He complained of European peoples (whom the Spanish assumed were French) who wandered present-day eastern Texas and of the rapacious Apache who pressured their borders. Perhaps sensing the beleaguered attitude of the Spanish, he also tantalized them with accounts of Puebloan populations who so desired to become Catholic that they had erected their own makeshift churches in anticipation of missionaries. Sabeata was a good pitch-man for the Jumanos and Julimes of La Junta, and Governor Cruzate dispatched Dominguez and some presidials in the late fall of 1683 to catch up to, and provide escort for, *Custo* Lopez and two other Franciscans, who had eagerly gone on ahead. The *maestre de campo* traveled the banks of the Rio Grande downriver, attempting to navigate through rough, canyon-filled terrains that were not easily passable to heavy Spanish riders and loaded carts. His trek was often serpentine and this fact forced Dominguez to experience more of the region than direct travel required, thus allowing a broader view of the region. Unfortunately, this indirect method of travel also contributed to poor record-keeping and there is some confusion about the exact route that Dominguez took.

Nonetheless, the *maestre de campo*'s account suggests how and where Apaches were establishing themselves and how they might have sustained themselves.²⁹



Map 17: The Area of *Maestre de Campo* Juan Dominguez de Mendoza's 1683 Journey from El Paso del Norte to La Junta de los Ríos.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

On December 17, just a couple of days and 20 leagues (about 52 miles) into what would become a five month journey, Dominguez and his men stopped at a campsite near a Suma *ranchería* on the Rio Grande. They named the spot Nuestra

²⁹ Carlos Castañeda, editor, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, vol. 2, *The Mission Era: The Winning of Texas, 1693-1731* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936): 313.

For English translations of this important journey through present-day western Texas and northern Chihuahua and Coahuila, v. *Spanish Exploration of the Southwest, 1542-1706*, edited by Herbert E. Bolton (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916) and Wade, *The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau: 1582-1799*.

Anderson, 36-38.

Señora del Pilar de Saragossa. This was the second of about eighteen Suma *rancherías* that they would encounter as they ventured down the craggy banks of the Rio Grande until they reached the pueblos of the Julimes and the two friars. As Dominguez reined in his horse Sumas crowded around him, begging for aid and claiming that they were already forced to concentrate their numbers into smaller and smaller places because of incessant Apache assaults. This should have come as an alarming surprise to Dominguez since he was still so near to El Paso, but he ultimately did nothing about it. Soon, laments and protestations like the Sumas' became familiar refrains on (mostly) deaf Spanish ears. Geopolitical nuances aside, however, Dominguez noticed something here that would soon become significant. Sumas, Dominguez noted, privileged "mescal," a kind of agave, as a foodstuff, much like Jumanos. This particular horticultural practice was crucial to indigenous subsistence in the Chihuahuan Desert, and by the 1720s the practice had taken such a prominent place in another's groups economic practice that the Spanish began to call them "mescal-eaters": Natagés or Mescaleros—the ethnogenetic successors to Faraones.³⁰

The adoption of mescal agave as a principal foodstuff by Faraones probably derived from a sense of mutualism that joined Sumas to the newcomers from the Plains. Soon after Dominguez departed the area (and probably because of his apathy) these two groups put aside their differences and found grounds for cooperation. In fact, it

³⁰ Juan Dominguez de Mendoza, 17 December 1683, Description of the journey made by Juan Dominguez de Mendoza to Texas, Legajo 37, Parte 2, Expediente 4, Provincias Internas, AGN, CSWR: folio 1.

David La Vere, *The Texas Indians* (College Station: A&M University Press, 2004): 69-70.

Morris E. Opler and Catherine H. Opler, "Mescalero Apache History in the Southwest," *New Mexico Historical Review* 25:1 (1950): 2.

Maria F. Wade, *The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau: 1582-1799* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003): 84-85.

Basehart, 30-33.

appears the period of Suma-Apache enmity was short, lasting just from 1680 to 1683, when Sumas were harassed and crowded by Faraones who had moved south with the Spanish. Upon their arrival in the Trans-Pecos, Faraones had wasted little time in counter-colonizing Sumas' lands. The reason that Sumas had turned to *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez for assistance in defeating these Apaches was because they were unable to compete with Faraones who were only recently armed with the booty of the 1680 revolt. When Dominguez, although generous with his promises, provided no material aid, Sumas wasted little time in learning and accepting the new geopolitical reality of their situation. Survival dictated they join with Faraones, as well as Mansos, in the common cause of ejecting the Spanish. The Manso Rebellion of the following year, 1684, stands as the first moment of documented, concrete mutualism between Sumas and Faraones. Afterwards, Sumas maintained a limited degree of autonomy in regards to their identity, as evinced by the continued mention of them in the documents of El Paso and La Junta, where they were sometimes gathered into missions. Beginning in 1712, however, and continuing through two more periods (1745-1752 and 1772 or 1773) they frequently joined Faraones in raiding exercises and were eventually identified as coterminous with that group.³¹

Whereas mutualism endowed Sumas with a network capable of resisting the Spanish, Faraones were treated to an intimate lesson in how best to survive in this xeric landscape. The most important lesson was the cultivation of agave. The agave species that Sumas consumed were probably *Agave lechuguilla*, *A. americana*, or *A.*

³¹ Bill Lockhart, "Protohistoric Confusion: A Cultural Comparison of the Manso, Suma, and Jumano Indians of the Paso del Norte Region," *Journal of the Southwest* 39:1 (1997): 117. Forbes, 332.

neomexicana. Positive identification is difficult, but it is possible to tease out some data given the similar character among the species. Those data can, in turn, suggest what kinds of resources were readily available in the Trans-Pecos. For example, the base of most agave species is known as the inflorescence peduncle—the flowering “century plant” stalk that emerges from the center of plant where it meets the leaves—and it is highly nutritious. For every one pound of cooked agave, Sumas would have taken in about 135 grams of carbohydrates and nearly 300 grams of water, in addition to about 5 grams of protein and a host of vitamins and minerals. The protein that Sumas were missing from agave was most likely supplemented by bison flesh, to which they would still have had limited access, even if only as a trade commodity with Apaches or Jumanos (the latter had given hides to Otermín at their August meeting, suggesting their ability to continue at least some hunting).³²

Agave species played an important part in the livelihood of Trans-Pecos dwellers. Agaves’ ability to survive and thrive in xeric and alkaline soil conditions provided Sumas, Faraones, and others with carbohydrate- and water-rich sustenance. They thrive in the kind of saline, or brackish, riparian system that the Pecos River offers and in the aridisol soils of the Trans-Pecos. *A. americana* represents the species of agave most adapted to highly alkaline conditions. Whereas even hardy species like *A. lechuguilla* can tolerate about 50 ppm of alkaline soil, already an appreciable quantity, *A. americana* can tolerate up to 144 ppm of salt. Processed by Apaches and other Native groups into foodstuff, agave plants would have provided excellent carbohydrates as well as sodium in soluble and digestible levels to humans. Given that most of the tributary arroyos to

³² Patricia Cologne-GarcíaMarín, et al., “Agave Studies in Yucatan, Mexico. II. Nutritional Value of the Inflorescence Peduncle and Incipient Domestication,” *Economic Botany* 47:3 (1993): 332-333.

the Rio Grande (below El Paso) and Pecos derive from mountains that were in turn caked with sodium from the Permian Sea, it is no wonder that *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez saw so many agave plants littering the hillsides and the ground as he ventured across the Trans-Pecos. In the coming days, within 150 miles of the camp Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Saragossa, Dominguez would note twice more extremely dense communities of agave plants prospering in the hills and mountain sides.³³

Geographical expansion worked to bring Faraones into contact with many indigenous neighbors. The number and range of these diverse encounters appear to have had the effect of multiplying the kinds of behaviors that Faraones thought were possible. For example, Jumanos were widely known to be adroit traders and brokers who operated over a broad territory. Prior to the 1670s, when Apaches dismantled Jumano access to the Middle Rio Grande Valley through their destruction of the Tompiro pueblos, Jumanos had been known to tie, economically, the Middle Rio Grande Valley pueblos to La Junta to present-day eastern Texas. Mutualism and a heightened sense of cooperation typified their society and, although they could not resist the armed and mounted attackers who eventually wrecked their trade network, it appears that the material benefits of mutualism were not lost on Apaches. If the Jumano were victorious over Faraones in any regard, it is in the success of their strategic model to influence Faraon modes of competition. In this way we can begin to make better sense as to how Faraones were able to engineer something like symbiotic bellicosity so soon after they

³³ Park S. Nobel and Wade L. Berry, "Element Responses of Agaves," *American Journal of Botany* 72:5 (1985): 693.

For mention of thick stands of agave, v. De Mendoza, Description of the journey made by Juan Dominguez de Mendoza to Texas, Provincias Internas: folios 2-3 for the 21 December and 25 December 1683 journal entries.

colonized the Trans-Pecos and began revisiting the Vargas-era Spanish of New Mexico. The Jumano inclusion into Apachean society functioned as an ethnogenesis, in the sense that new ethnic identity categories were forming out of the shards of so many more fragile identities that had been fatally fractured during the colonial encounter. Clearly this was a not a world where Apaches ruled indomitably and where their culture encapsulated all others; as soon as the two groups met, tinges of Jumano practice appeared in Faraon behavior as far as Santa Fe and Albuquerque.³⁴

Returning to the 1683 expedition: on December 29 Dominguez met fray Lopez at La Junta de los Ríos, near present-day Ojinaga, Chihuahua and Presidio, Texas. He had traveled just over 280 miles down the Rio Grande through difficult canyons but also along riparian woods of cottonwood and mesquite where they had found more than enough water for his men and their animals. They paused for two days where the Rio Conchos met the Rio Grande, doubtless to assess the prospect of the missions. Dominguez remarked on the good quality of the lands, the favorable weather, and the rich supplies of wood and water. Within three days of travel farther downriver, however, the environment and the experience of the troop reverted back to what it had been

³⁴ Ronnie C. Tyler, *The Big Bend: A History of the Last Texas Frontier* (Washington D.C.: Office of Publications, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1975): 26, 28-29.

Axelrod, 159-160.

Anderson, 3-4.

v. Hickerson, generally, but chapters 9 & 10 specifically, and J. Charles Kelley, *Jumano and Patarabueyes: Relations at La Junta de los Ríos* in *Anthropological Papers* 77 (Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 1986) for ethnographic detail of Jumano peoples.

cf. Britten, 63 where he argues that Lipanes, not Faraones, absorbed Jumanos, Chisos, and Tobosos (from Nueva Vizcaya) into the ranks of Athapaskans. This is an unusual construction; usually the fate of Jumanos is tied more to the activities of Mescaleros, or Kiowas. v. Herbert Bolton, "The Jumano Indians in Texas, 1650-1771" *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 15 (1911): 80-82 for historiographic support of Britten's Lipan focus. Given the poorly documented onomatology of most Athapaskan names, it is possible that Faraones were also the predecessors to Lipanes, and that at this time the two ethnic groups had not yet become distinct. v. also Anderson, 112-113 where he too surmises that Lipanes were derived from Mescaleros.

before the approach to La Junta. Worse, there was now, for the first time, a real shortage of wood for campfires and for Catholic monuments (Dominguez usually erected a wooden cross on a hill nearby his campsites). January 3, 1684 found the party camped at a place they named San Nicolas, at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Alamito Creek, in present-day Texas. They had come about 55 miles downriver from La Junta de los Ríos and canyons were rising before them that made access to water difficult and that would be nigh impassable to loaded horses and carts. The challenges of local topography meant that Dominguez abruptly found himself in ecological and logistical trouble, and was forced to change his course.³⁵

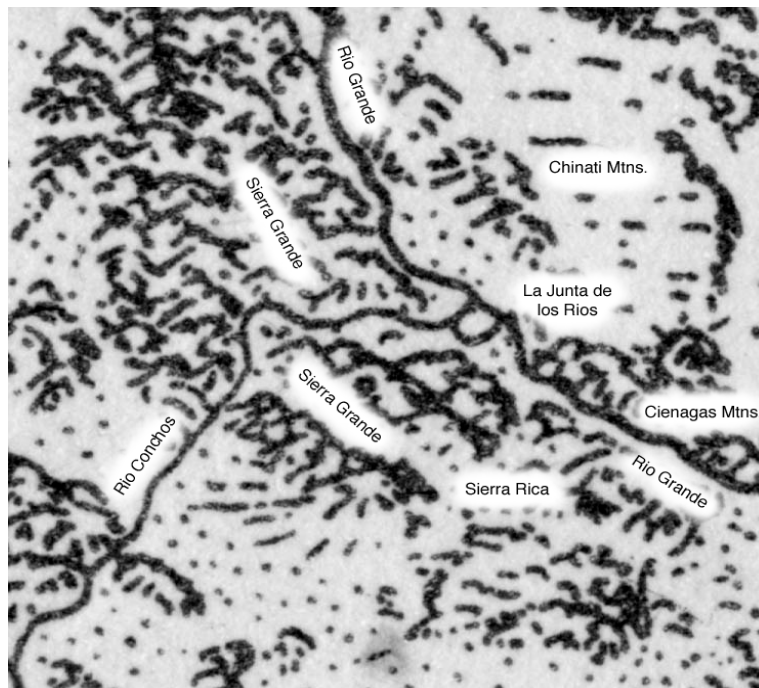
This was a minor irritation for Dominguez, and it does not make much of an impression in his itinerary. But as an historically documented boundary marker for the La Junta de los Ríos area, however, it is a useful signpost. Again, it is worth stepping away from Dominguez for a moment to consider the confluence of the Rios Conchos and Grande in ecological terms. At La Junta, habitation, refuge, and exploitation were possible on a scale not common in the Chihuahuan Desert, except in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and a few other locales.

³⁵ De Mendoza, folios 3-4.



Map 18: The Regional Location of La Junta de los Ríos.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.



Map 19: The Area of La Junta de los Ríos.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Seated at about 2,500 feet above sea level, La Junta de los Ríos is surrounded by mountain ranges. The Chinati Mountains (7,800 feet) sit on its northern edge; to the east are the Cienagas (up to 4,600 feet); to the south are the Ricas; and the Sierra Grande (5,250 feet) is to the west. Dominguez might have viewed these ranges as similar to those surrounding the pueblos of New Mexico and the *villa* of Santa Fe that he knew so well, but if so then he certainly realized that they stood out as a liability. Time and again the Sangre de Cristo, the Sandia, and the Manzano ranges, to name but three, had served as bastions of Apache offensives. Seen this way, the mountains around La Junta appeared less like defensive bulwarks and more like extensive liabilities, especially in light of Sabeata's pronouncements of Apache attacks. The terrain was also difficult. The foothills and passes now known as Forgotten Reach and Presidio Valley challenged Dominguez and other Spanish travelers with their heavy carts and heavily packed horses and mules. The 135 miles of Rio Grande that led to La Junta de los Ríos are nettled with blocked off canyons and extraordinarily rugged approaches. Ascending rocky slopes of gravel or cacti would have been both unpleasant and dangerous to soldiers and Franciscans hauling supplies like candles, sacred objects, food, salt, metal tools, as well as armor and weapons. Only in the last 50 miles did the valley widen to a mile wide, offering slightly easier cart passage to the Julimes of La Junta.³⁶

³⁶ Russell J. Gardinier, "The Physical Geography of a Significant Border Region, La Junta de los Rios," *The Journal of Big Bend Studies* 1 (1989): 29.

Charles Kelley, "Factors Involved in the Abandonment of Certain Peripheral Southwestern Settlements," *American Anthropologist* 54:3 (1952): 363-364.

Charles Kelley, "The Historic Indian Pueblos of La Junta de los Ríos," *New Mexico Historical Review* 27:4 (1952a): 260-262.

Nancy Stotz, *Historic Reconstruction of the Ecology of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Channel and Floodplain in the Chihuahuan Desert* (Las Cruces, NM: Desert Scribes, 2000): 5.

Ecologically, the boundaries of La Junta extend farther than the settlements or the confluence itself. The boundary area is defined by the areas where the rivers' banks are accessible, but not necessarily habitable. In turn, the lack of accessibility after a point is strictly determined by steep canyons that abruptly rise and meet the water at its edge. In all, the Rio Conchos-Rio Grande confluences stretches up and down the Rio Grande for 65 miles, and up the Rio Conchos into present-day Mexico for 40 miles, creating a sizable oasis. On January 3 Dominguez was fast-approaching the southern extremity of La Junta's Rio Grande boundary. He must have noticed that the contributions to the confluence are far from equal between the two rivers. The Rio Grande is much diminished before the confluence. There are no tributaries below the Middle Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico that add a substantial volume of water to its flow. At its best, the Rio Grande is a "top-heavy" river in the sense that its volume is disproportionately large in the area from its source down to the Jornada del Muerto. Water supply comes mainly from summertime rainfall in the higher altitudes of the Middle Rio Grande Valley—usually 20-30 inches—that runs-off into tributaries like the Rios Chama and Puerco. In addition to monsoon rains, snowfall accumulates in the mountains of the southern Rockies during winter. In the spring, this snow melts and creates more run-off that goes to the Rio Grande watershed. The total volume of water that typically went to the Rio Grande would have been plenty to feed La Junta de los Ríos, if not for the high evaporation rates—40 inches to 80 inches a year—and the fact that these sources of moisture are hundreds of miles from La Junta. Even in the infrequent years of plentiful moisture throughout the Middle Rio Grande Valley, evaporation from the surface of the river takes its toll on the long journey of about 500

miles south and southeast. In contrast, the Rio Conchos headwaters are only 200 miles away, in a basin with 15 to 30 inches of rain a year, and there is less impact from surface water evaporation. Climatic analysis conducted from 1900-1913 indicated that the Rio Grande provided average annual runoff of 645,246 acre feet at La Junta, whereas the Rio Conchos provided over three times that: 2,045,769 acre feet.³⁷

These ecological characteristics define La Junta de los Ríos as a place of great opportunity in the Chihuahuan Desert. Water, pasturage, and wood could be found in great quantities. Even for a peoples like Apaches whose horse culture enabled them to go to wet places like mountain springs and *playas* (slight depressions in otherwise flat ground that catch rainwater and hold it until evaporation or percolation dry it again), the offerings of La Junta de los Ríos must have been tempting as a close parallel to the kinds of trading and resource extraction that they knew from the Rio Grande pueblos far upriver. Strategically, the flow of the Rio Conchos up into the Central Basin of Mexico would have provided an excellent pathway for entering Nueva Vizcaya and the interior of New Spain, all the way down to Parral. Otermín complained Apaches were already wont to raid that far south as early as 1683, but these seem to have been exploratory endeavors because Apaches do not often appear in the colonial documents of Nueva Vizcaya until later. Within a generation that would change, and then the riverine pathways that the Spanish had used to invade the Middle Rio Grande Valley in the

³⁷ Gardinier, 42.

Kelley (1952a), 262.

Scurlock (1998), 17.

Jefferson Morgenthaler, *The River has Never Divided Us: A Border History of La Junta de los Ríos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004): 15 has more conservative estimates for the boundaries of La Junta; 45 miles up the Rio Grande, 25 miles down the Rio Grande, and 25 miles up the Rio Conchos.

1580s would become the very same highway that Faraones seized to counter-invade New Spain.³⁸

Let us return to Dominguez's *entrada*, faced as it was with the impassable banks of the Rio Grande. The *maestre de campo* made a ninety-degree turn to the northeast and walked up the waters of Alamito Creek, keeping the Chinati and Davis Mountains on his left. From this time on they would travel mostly north and east, making headway across the Trans-Pecos and Llano Estacado, crossing the Pecos River, on January 13, near present-day Fort Stockton, Texas. They arrived at the end of their eastward exploration, somewhere just east of San Angelo on the Conchos River in present-day Texas on or about February 7, and did not leave until May 1, 1684. Where Dominguez stopped and what he saw for this latter part of the expedition is not entirely germane to the study of the Trans-Pecos, but for the purposes of charting the regional ecology and Apache practices, a few moments require our attention. Through them we see can begin to appreciate the level of sophistication that Apaches had already attained in their ability to turn the environment against intruders at the same time that they drew advantages from it.³⁹

The Spanish crossed paths with unknown Apaches on January 17, near present-day Rankin, Texas. They walked and rode along the Pecos and its adjoining plains for six leagues, the land on either side scorched by fire. Suddenly there appeared a group

³⁸ Griffith, 8.

v. also Hickerson: xxv-xxvii for a discussion of the geographical uniqueness of La Junta and the value that it held for Jumano peoples.

³⁹ De Mendoza, folios 4-14.

Juan Domínguez de Mendoza: Soldier and Frontiersman of the Spanish Southwest, 1627-1693, France V. Scholes, Marc Simmons, José Antonio Esquibel, eds., Eleanor B. Adams, trans. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012): 41.

of Natives, mounted and armed with harquebuses, firing—surprisingly—welcome shots for the Spanish. These were Jediondos, allies to the Jumano nation, known to Juan Sabeata, and also at odds with the newcomer Apaches. Their name translates to “the stinking ones,” probably because they were near a point in the Pecos River that was malodorous because of high sulfur levels. For the next two days Dominguez lingered at this spot, a camp he named San Ignacio de Loyola, perched on a hill above their *ranchería*, awaiting a rumored Apache horse-raid that never materialized. Sabeata joined the Jediondos in complaining that Apaches had been active in the area, making war on them, and that they needed Spanish help to defeat them. Sabeata made his case for Spanish-sponsored Apache removal all the way to the end of the journey and among every friendly group they encountered, fearful as he was that Apaches were about to take over the entire apparatus of Jumanos’ extensive trading network. Mendoza had little time or concern for it, though; he (again) pledged aid and moved on.⁴⁰

It is remarkable that the Jediondos had horses and harquebuses, considering that they did not appear in the record before this and are not mentioned later. Access to, let alone possession of, such valuable technology catalyzed Apachean ascendancy in the same way that it would empower Comanches later in the eighteenth century. Why was this group not more powerful or at least well-known? The answer probably lies in how and when they procured the horses and guns. In terms of horses, it may have been relatively easy to find them. Many mounts that had been lost on *entradas* from 1580 to 1610 were by this time feral and roamed over the land; it would not have been

⁴⁰ De Mendoza, folios 1, 6-7.

impossible to find and capture some. They also could have been traded as commodities with groups like Jumanos, although their frayed commercial network may have been at a loss to come with sufficient supply. More than likely, however, both horses and harquebuses were probably taken from Faraones in one of the many skirmishes about which the Jediondos and Jumanos complained. Certainly, Jediondos behaved as a people at war: their *ranchería* was defensively set against a large boulder for protection. While it is unclear how long the Apaches had been traveling downriver along the Pecos from the southern Great Plains, penetrating this deeply into the northern Chihuahuan Desert, Jumanos and Jediondos believed that there was new, aggressive Apachean expansion taking place. It is reasonable to suspect that repeated Apache attacks in the area had led to at least a few Apache losses, and the losses of their weapons and mounts.⁴¹

More intriguing than the provenance of these European tools is the detail concerning the recently burned plains. Shortly after January 17 and the first scorched field, from January 25 through January 28, Dominguez again found himself on burned grassland, but this time he was looking at recent horse tracks. Alarming, Sabeata insisted they were from Apaches. He was at this time near the headwaters of the Middle Concho River. It is unlikely that these fires were set to stimulate growth. Rather, they were likely set deliberately in an attempt to stymie the Spanish, or Jediondos, through the destruction of pasturelands.⁴²

⁴¹ Wade, 98-101.

⁴² De Mendoza, folio 8

The dominant grass in the area was almost certainly black grama, a highly nutritious grass that usually abounds after a fire because the trash at ground level—detritus—gets burned away and, in the process, fixes fertilizing nitrates in the soil. As a result, its ‘net above-ground primary production’—its individual and community-wide growth—increases. This kind of regeneration through flame only works during certain times of the year, however, when precipitation is soon to follow, providing the moisture needed for photosynthesis. Dominguez saw this in January, when the spring thaw and the summer monsoon were a distant future. Given the lack of moisture, all that the *maestre de campo* would have seen was actual wasteland. It is likely that up to 75% of the edible grasses like blue and black grama, as well as three-awn grasses, would have been scorched away; conversely, disturbance plants such as forbs and shrubs, not palatable to Spanish cattle or to horses, would have increased by over 500%. This maneuver was extremely destructive: it would have taken 2-7 years for these grasses to reach their former levels. Deleterious ecological effects were even more likely because these plains were on the banks of the Pecos River. Located within the flood plain, springtime thaw would have actually further damaged the burned ground by eroding away nutrients and denuding the soil when the snow melted and floods ensued, sometime during the month of April or May.⁴³

⁴³ Gary M. Ahlstrand, “Response of Chihuahuan Desert Mountain Shrub Vegetation to Burning,” *Journal of Range Management* 35:1 (1982): 62, 64.

Robert R. Parmenter, “Long-Term Effects of a Summer Fire on Desert Grassland Plant Demographics in New Mexico,” *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 16:2 (2008): 159.

B.W. Allred and K.A. Snyder, “Ecophysiological Responses of Chihuahuan Desert Grasses to Fire,” *Journal of Arid Environments* 72 (2008): 1993.

J. Daniel Rodgers and Thadis W. Box, “Seasonal Protein Content of Four Southern Mixed Prairie Grasses,” *Journal of Range Management* 20:3 (1967): 177-178.

Despite coming close to Faraones at least three more times, Dominguez was not keen to engage them and Faraones, for their part, declined to challenge Dominguez openly. The *maestre de campo's* reluctance is understandable given the fact that he had only seventeen soldiers with him, he was in unfamiliar terrain, and there had long been mutinous groans from his ranks. He had hesitated at most of the opportunities to follow up on leads, dallying while spies took days to report back or assuming that Apaches had too much of a head start on him. His report of the three Apache assaults are conspicuous for their omission of any retaliatory maneuver. It appears he was rather interested in his chances at (personal) imperial gain at the trade fair Sabeata had promised. He may have also felt unmotivated to lift up the banner of Spanish empire considering the litigation that was looming over him at El Paso (regarding his part in the failed Otermín *entrada* of 1681) and that could ruin his finances and career. Or, as a soldier, he might have reckoned that it was enough to have one province already in the grips of rebels and that opening up a new theater of conquest and war was not the most attractive dispensation of resources.⁴⁴

Hastily, Dominguez abandoned Sabeata's trade-fair and returned to La Junta de los Ríos, the most promising, and nearer, prospect for increasing the reach of New Spain from El Paso. When the *maestre de campo* had first arrived there almost six months before, the Julimes received them well, speaking as best they could in the Castilian tongue. The friars reportedly baptized about 100 people. Crops of maize, wheat, beans, squash, and tobacco must have looked like gilded candy to travelers come from the near-destitution of El Paso. But Dominguez's second time among the

⁴⁴ Wade, 107-109.

Julimes did not elicit much of a diary entry because the journey up to “it [was] rough land, with little water, and almost impassable.” Traveling with armed and mounted soldiers who were weary and a little mutinous, Dominguez’s arrival at La Junta elicited quietude from the Julimes. Dominguez did not tarry and, soon, Julimes—perhaps already wary of their new bedfellows—joined the rebellion of 1684 that was already under way around El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes.⁴⁵

After the 1683-1684 Dominguez-Lopez expedition, there are only a few additional Spanish accounts before 1750 that help us to illuminate the ecological character of La Junta and its changing role within Apachería. The first was the trip undertaken by Sergeant Major Juan Antonio de Trasviña Retis, lieutenant general of Nueva Vizcaya, in the year 1715. Retis had with him a retinue of thirty soldiers, twenty auxiliaries from the Nueva Vizcayan pueblos of San Antonio de Julimes, San Pablo, Santa Cruz, and San Pedro de Conchos, four Franciscans, and enough servants to tend to fifty pack animals. He traveled from deep within Nueva Vizcaya down the Rio Conchos to resurvey the pueblos of La Junta and the peripheral *rancherías* of nomadic groups. The missions that fray Nicolas Lopez had established in 1684 lasted only slightly longer than the water of a *playa*. Disinterest from faraway officials in New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya, pressure from close by Apache groups, and rage over Spanish slave raiding in the area had the

⁴⁵ Oakah L. Jones, “Settlements and Settlers at La Junta de los Rios, 1759-1822,” *Journal of Big Bend Studies* 3 (1991): 46-47.
Wade, 124.

effect of evaporating any sense of mutualism that Jumanos, Julimes, and others had held out to the Spanish.⁴⁶

Retis departed from the Real de San Francisco de Cuéllar on May 23, 1715 and reached La Junta by May 31, traveling over some 85 leagues (about 220 miles). The Spanish saw fields of wheat, maize, and legumes around most of the pueblos, and Retis noted that Sycamore branches, being the most prevalent type of wood, formed the structure of their roofs. There were a few other tree species present in groves and thickets (which speaks to the perennial presence of water), but the lieutenant governor felt that there was little there of secular interest. Of the fifteen settlements that existed in 1683, Retis noted only eight now, a reduction of nearly 50%. The Dominguez-Lopez trip produced no demographic figures for La Junta, but Retis noted that there were about 1,400 people present at his visit. Whether the population had shrunk or it had merely consolidated is difficult to determine. Almost certainly it was a bit of both. At least some attrition must have occurred owing to the violence of raiding and losses from kidnapping and enslavement. Evidence of consolidation came from the sites of two pueblos—Santa Cruz and Cibolo. These two places, noted as populated by Dominguez and Lopez, were now abandoned. Retis' interpreter, don Antonio de la Cruz, reported that the people from those places had fled to other pueblos to try to avoid raiding. Although the name of the group responsible for the raiding is not given, Faraones stand out as the usual suspects. To Retis, La Junta remained conspicuous for its settled peoples and its

⁴⁶ Juan Antonio de Trasviña Retis, Relation by Sergeant Major Retis concerning the *entrada* made on the order of the viceroy, the duke of Linares, to La Junta de los Ríos, accompanying missionaries, as certified by frays Gregorio Osorio, Juan Antonio García, and José de Arranegui, Legajo 6, Parte 4, Documento 19, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico, AGN, CSWR.

Howard G. Applegate and C. Wayne Hanselka, *La Junta de los Ríos del Norte y Conchos* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, University of El Paso, 1974): 20.

richness, but it had clearly been affected by the violence that accompanied recent shifts in local power.⁴⁷

Perhaps sensing an opportunity to expand empire into a troubled and, therefore, weakened area, Retis did not advocate a total withdrawal from the region. He believed La Junta could be consolidated under Spanish power through the proselytization of individuals under the Catholic Church, the primary organ of Spanish cultural indoctrination. By the time he concluded his *entrada* he recommended that two additional missionaries be sent in addition to the four that he left. Furthermore, he felt that 100 cattle, 100 sheep, and agricultural implements should be purchased and sent by the exchequer to further the development of a subsistence economy on the Spanish model.⁴⁸

Retis was likely guided in his thinking through the orchestration of a familiar and tempting scenario at the hands of Faraones. Over a century of Spanish presence and imperial practice had made it plain to every indigenous group in the area that the preferred targets of colonization were sedentary, agriculturalist peoples, just like Julimes of La Junta de los Ríos. Faraones certainly realized this lesson in their close dealings with the Spanish and the Puebloans of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, and I suspect that they exploited that intelligence to create an attractive target for the

⁴⁷ La Vere, 101 puts the population during the Dominguez-Lopez trip at about 10,000, but there is little hard evidence to support this claim. Still, the observation stands that he reads a tremendous loss of population from the record.

Kelley (1952), 367.

Kelley (1952a), 259-260.

Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *The Mescalero Apache, 1653-1874* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959): 3, and Opler, "Mescalero Apache" (1983), 420 hold that these aggressors were Mescaleros, ethnogenetic successors to Faraones.

⁴⁸ *The Founding of Missions at La Junta de los Ríos*, Reginald C. Raindorp, A.M., trans., in *Supplementary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 1:1 (1938): 22-23.

Spanish. Perhaps Retis was meant to feel that he could be another Oñate if only he could rein in La Junta, and make it profitable to Nueva Vizcaya. In any event, by creating a sense of instability and weakness within La Junta, Faraon activity invited Spanish investment and the committed, if infrequent, influx of material and pastoral goods. Low-risk, moderate-yield manipulation like this has all the earmarks of symbiotic bellicosity, with the key difference being that Julimes, and not *vecinos* or Puebloans, were the foils of 'bellicosity.' While the Spanish rushed in, contented with their prospective winning of so many converts, Faraones contented themselves with rejuvenated access to imperial economy. Agents like Retis may have thought that they were building Spanish empire in a backwater zone that was free for the taking, but the region was in fact already firmly embedded with imperialistic Apachería and had been for over thirty years.

Faraones offered subtle, sophisticated, and surprising competition at La Junta. According to the second-hand accounts that Retis heard from certain Puebloans at a place named San Francisco, Apaches were apparently friends of the pueblos, and—furthermore—they had made known, publicly and often, their desire for baptism, just as Julimes and Jumanos had done (and just as Faraones had done at Pecos in 1694)! During his time there Retis never came face to face with any Apaches, but there were rumored to be 60 Apache families living all around La Junta who wanted to meet the Spanish. Rumor had it that they were staying away because of a smallpox epidemic that cannot be verified but that is a distinct possibility given the many inter-ethnic contacts that Faraones were forging at the time. Had Apachean behavior suddenly shifted to dove-oriented strategies in the years following Dominguez's *entrada*? Almost certainly

not. In 1693, while Vargas was renegotiating the place of his people in New Mexico, *Maestre de Campo* Don Joseph Francisco Marín of Nueva Vizcaya was already penning letters to the viceregal court that reiterated more familiar observations. In his letter of September 30 he gave a report of the province of Nueva Vizcaya, its borders, its peoples, and its problems. Among the details was a list that named “unreduced” Native groups, where they were, and if they were dominant. Apaches were mentioned as being pervasive all around La Junta de los Ríos, extending into Texas and upriver into New Mexico. (They are not mentioned in connection with the lands between La Junta and Durango, although there is some doubt that groups such as the Salineros, Jojocomes, and the Chisos were not, in fact, Athapaskan.) In all, Marín mentioned fifteen groups, yet Apaches were the only group mentioned twice and who were singled out especially as “being the sole instigators of violence and war between these otherwise peaceful nations.” For Marín and others in Nueva Vizcaya, Apaches did not fit into the social or political structures sanctioned by the Crown or the Church; on the contrary, their ubiquity was matched only by their aggression.⁴⁹

Another litmus test of the region thirty-two years later further suggests that Faraones, or Natagés, were still imperially exploiting La Junta after Retis. In 1747 Joseph de Ydoiaga, captain of the presidio of San Bartolomé, visited La Junta de los Ríos again. There was still no permanent and stable Spanish presence and this *entrada* was yet another mission to assess the need and suitability of a heavier *vecino* presence and the possible erection of a presidio. By that time only seven pueblos remained, the

⁴⁹ Retis, Relation, Legajo 6, Parte 4, Documento 19, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico, AGN, CSWR. *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Vol. II, edited by Charles W. Hackett (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926): 393-395. Applegate, 11.

rest abandoned or congregated into surviving settlements. Apache pressure had been relentless, but so too was the problem of heavy erosion over the riverine lands. The erosion likely came about in two ways. One, Apaches might have forced the agricultural production of the zone to harmful output levels by the 1740s in their bid to draw grains from places beyond the Middle Rio Grande Valley and El Paso; two, the Pueblos themselves might have caused the erosion by virtue of their population being ever more concentrated and dependent on adjacent plots of land while aboriginal plots went to seed. What makes Ydoiaga's account meaningful is not the familiar descriptions of ruination, consolidation, and all the raiding and violence that produces it. Rather, it is meaningful because of the brief history of La Junta that he provides. On the one hand, Retis was clearly an advocate of the Franciscan Order (many of the supplies and men were personally funded by him) and had delivered a report on the potential of La Junta that bordered on missionary boosterism. On the other hand, Ydoiaga's report relayed the events that occurred after 1715 and raised serious doubts on Retis' acumen as an observer. Apparently, in 1724, Faraones and Sumas instigated revolt and devastated the mission project. Troops from Ciudad Chihuahua put down this revolt, but they were less than thorough in their action because violence broke out again in 1726 and 1727. These revolts occurred at the same time that Brigadier General don Pedro de Rivera was conducting his famous inspection of the terrain north of Nueva Vizcaya. These outbreaks prompted his recommendation that a presidio be located among the pueblos, staffed by presidials drawn from surrounding garrisons. The presidio did not materialize

and by the time Ydoiaga was writing, the *desplobado* was said to support over 400 Apache warriors.⁵⁰

This scattered chronology provides for an interesting analysis of what Retis saw in 1715, when Apaches asked for baptism and were said to treat peacefully with the La Junta puebloans. In fact, the situation looks remarkably similar to what New Mexico Governor Vargas encountered at Pecos Pueblo in 1694 when Faraon captains there asked for baptism and promised trading opportunities. There, just as here, Apaches appear to have attenuated their practices of the seventeenth century and to have adopted a mixed strategy of engagement with the Spanish. Their scouts and spies around La Junta must have known that Retis came with a small but formidable force and that outward aggression would be needlessly costly, especially for Faraones who would likely bear most of the casualties. In any event, there is little evidence that Apaches in the area were desperately in need of resources. By this point they could draw on local, wild, resources, El Paso del Norte, La Junta, and, more distantly, the New Mexico pueblos when needed. With this in mind it appears most likely that Faraones were waiting to see if they could facilitate the conversion of La Junta into a more efficient, higher yield, economic and ecological site. If this was the case, then the Apache promise of baptism and peaceful relations stands as a powerful inversion of the imperial project. Whereas these pueblos might serve the Spanish empire in a purely

⁵⁰ Daniel, 483-484.

Kelley (1952), 367, 370-372, 374-375, although Kelley thinks that primarily poor land and an arid environment were to blame for abandonment, not Apache depredations (378-380).

Joseph de Ydoiaga, 15 October 1747, sobre la frontera norte con las bárbaras naciones de indios, Legajo 52, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

v. Applegate, 21-22 for a summary of Ydoiaga's journey as well as two other joint expeditions that covered similar ground at the very same moment, but that produced journals that are negligible value to this subject.

cultural way, through proselytization, the accompanying expansion of cultivated foodstuffs and the trade linkage with Nueva Vizcaya would have stood as a significant economic boon to Faraon Apachería. In terms of tangible benefits, Apaches stood to gain tremendously, and they apparently did so for almost ten years.⁵¹

While the Spanish hunkered in refugee settlements and established frail outposts, Apaches expanded contiguously eastward and south along the blind peripheries of the Spanish empire. Touchstone dates, extending out over sixty-five years, from 1683 to 1715 to 1747-1748 suggest a continuous, dedicated presence of Apaches and their aggressive, if conservative, effort to retune the indigenous peoples and terrains of La Junta to their own ends. In the absence of any real Spanish competition (Franciscans were only as formidable as their Puebloan militia, if there was one), Apaches were free to enjoy the waters of the Rio Grande, the Pecos River, the Rio Conchos, the fruits of the *rancherías* and pueblos, and both riparian and montane woodlands. The importance of La Junta de los Ríos to Apaches cannot be stressed enough because it would have been a boon as a supply of carbohydrates. Although agave and other wild flora rapidly ascended in importance as a source of carbohydrates—thus negating the need for violent engagement with agrarian centers—Faraones apparently still had a strong preference for maize, and possibly wheat; foodstuffs that had become a staple to their society over the previous hundreds of years. In that sense, Apaches interest in La Junta reflects that they were simply following the grain: first utilizing that of the Middle Rio Grande Valley, then toying with

⁵¹ Thomas Bargatzky, "Aspects of Aboriginal Trade and Communication between Northeast Mexico and Southwest Texas in the 16th Century," *Anthropos* Bd. 75, H. 3./4. (1980): 449-450, 456.

the produce coming up around El Paso del Norte and Casas Grandes, and then, perhaps at the same time, developing grain sources further east of that position at La Junta de los Ríos while they also utilized agave. While the Spanish were contracting and crowding into narrowing slivers and points of empire, Faraones were locating granaries all over the Chihuahuan Desert to supplement their lucrative bison economy.⁵²

More remarkable than diversified access to grain, however, is that the first half of the eighteenth century represents the emergence of a complex system that, over time, transformed Faraones into Mescaleros (or Natagés) and the northern Chihuahuan Desert into a redoubtable indigenous place. This complex system was borne of the processes whereby Faraones transformed their social space—Apachería—to fit the ecological and social landscapes of the Trans-Pecos, and the concomitant recalibration of their society through the evolution of conventions. In turn, these conventions redesigned their relationship to the land and to their neighbors. Unlike the previous one hundred years when raiding, conspiracy, and endemic violence characterized the modalities of encounter, during the subsequent sixty years a fresh sense of mutualism developed between proto-Mescaleros, the Spanish of New Mexico, and certain Native neighbors like Sumas. This occurred because Faraon culture and political economy was not impermeable to the peoples that it encountered. Just as the tools and practices of European colonialism—the horse and the harquebus—had been learned and redeployed almost immediately upon colonial contact, Apaches likewise learned from groups like

⁵² La Vere, 77-78, 89-90 and Hickerson, 202-205 for the tempting argument that Apaches' expansion south co-opted the vast Jumano trade network, plugging Faraones into larger, inter-regional economies. Barr, 34-36.

William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009): 71-79.

Sumas and Julimes. Raiding and violence did not subside, but Faraones learned, adapted, and explored fresh strategies of subsistence that reduced the frequency of costly competition. This development was made possible by the distribution of their economy over a broader geographic area that fostered moments of cooperative encounter.⁵³

This was a powerful moment in the historical arc of the northern Chihuahuan Desert and its edge landscapes. It was powerful because it produced a people and a space, Mescaleros and their Chihuahuan Desert Apachería, that persisted well into the premodern era and, indeed, the modern era. But more than that, this moment is powerful because the socio-ecological learning that Faraon groups exhibited, along with the genesis of strategies like symbiotic bellicosity, represents a degree of plasticity that the Spanish never approached, and that Comanches were only at this moment beginning to realize. Too often historical narrative and analysis had privileged European models and achievements because they occurred within the structure of a centralized,

⁵³ Stephan Harrison, Doreen Massey, & Keith Richards, "Complexity and Emergence (Another Conversation)," *Area* 38:4 (2006): 467, 470.

Axelrod, 12, 68-69.

Robert Sugden, "Spontaneous Order," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3:4 (1989): 93-96. Anderson, 105, 117.

cf. Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67:2 (2010): 176 for a different trajectory of Native engagement with the land. Hämäläinen sees Comanchería expanding under the opportunities afforded by European technology (and pathogens) until their resource base was strained, prompting expansion, which then led to a cycle of resource strain to expansion to resource trade to expansion, broken only by the post Civil War U.S. I do not see Apaches appreciably straining their resource base during the first 150 years of their negotiation with colonialism. But Hämäläinen's argument makes sense inasmuch as Comanches did not practice imperialism within an ecotonal space, where the diversity of ecologies prompts a longer duration of exploration of strategy, as was the case for Apaches. Instead, Comanche dominance over the homogenous grasslands of the Great Plains appears to have prompted them to focus their economic activity around horse pastoralism, to the detriment of the grasslands and the few riverine areas. In a sense, just as the Spanish had over-focused on riparian settlement, Hämäläinen seems to suggest that Comanches were equally inelastic in their over-focus on grasslands.

organized government and an elaborate bureaucracy. But these were actually weakness. Highly complicated structures like centralized government and bureaucracy actually stunted the Spanish and prevented them from competing as efficiently as they could have in the new geographies of North America and inhibited them from negotiating the myriad variables that the colonial encounter produced. Faraones had no such rigid structures to prevent them from learning rapidly and adapting freely to the colonial era. Read this way, in terms of strategies, efficiencies, and pay-offs it is clear that indigenous groups—Apaches being but one—who might have suffered greatly during encounter with Europeans nonetheless retained the advantage of superior social, economic, and ecological plasticity over colonizers.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ cf. Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nation: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 18-19 where he makes similar arguments concerning the dynamism of Native cultures and the ability of Anishinaabewaki groups to evolve social formations in the crux of the colonial encounter.

Chapter 5

Denouement: the Bolsón de Mapimí and Cracks in the System

Not long after the 1740s drew to a close, the ground shifted beneath the feet of Faraones. Over a century had gone into the ongoing development of new and efficient strategies of competition, and Faraones had been tireless in evolving their transhumant mobilities to take full advantage of horse culture. They had claimed vast territories that abutted or breached Spanish places all the way from the Middle Rio Grande Valley southeast to the confluence of the Pecos and the Rio Grande. At La Junta de los Ríos, where the Rio Conchos joins the Rio Grande, the pueblos seemed to be almost in a state of vassalage to Faraones in 1748, providing them with crops of maize, squash, beans, and wheat to supplement their diet of Plains-sourced bison and Spanish-sourced cattle. The Spanish had tried for nearly seventy years to gain a foothold at La Junta and to incorporate it into the architecture of Spanish empire, but it had gone to Apachería instead. So long were the Spanish kept at bay that the presidio that had first been recommended by *Maestre de Campo* Dominguez in 1683 did not appear until 1760, and even then it was not until 1787 that something previously unthinkable happened.

At the Presidio del Norte of La Junta, on a cool March morning, eight Mescaleros arrived, weary and burdened. Leading 200 families behind them, they entered the shadow of the bulwarks to meet the captain, Domingo Díaz. There was no sneak attack and the mountains did not smoke all around the Spanish with portents of assault. These

Mescaleros had come to ask for peace; they had come to ask for an “*establecimiento de paz*”—effectively, a reservation. These peoples—who, since 1581, had been as a phantom menace across an ocean of desert that the Spanish barely understood—signaled to the Captain Díaz that they wanted to quit the desert and live with *vecinos* and friars. If the Spanish had suddenly renounced the sedentary life of their missions and presidios to take up nomadic hunting and gathering, there could not have been such a stark about-face. What then led these Mescaleros to do so?¹

Sixty years before, the world had been a different place. The final expansion and the coming denouement of Mescalero Apachería had not yet begun when Captain José de Berroterán found himself utterly in over his head somewhere near the Rio Grande. It was April 14, 1729 and the commander of the Conchos presidio was adrift in the Chihuahuan Desert, far downriver from La Junta de los Ríos, his intended destination, and undoubtedly anxious about disappointing don Pedro de Rivera, the *visitador* and his superior. For the better part of a month, since March 15, he had done his best to forge a path up the Rio Grande from the Coahuila presidio of San Juan Bautista (present-day Guerrero, Coahuila). But he struggled, and soon he halted his progress in order to take stock of his situation, such as it was, near present-day Langtry, Texas. He was just upriver of the confluence between the Rio Grande and the Pecos River; thirsty, bewildered, paranoid, and exhausted. Morale was low and rations were lower. The brutal landscape of rugged canyons and gorges, agave-choked arroyos, and waterless

¹ Matthew Babcock, “Rethinking the Establecimientos: Why Apaches Settled on Spanish-Run Reservations, 1786-1793,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 84:3 (2009): 364.

Oakah L. Jones Jr., “Settlements and Settlers at La Junta de los Rios, 1759-1822,” *Journal of Big Bend Studies* 3 (1991): 43-70: 56.

plains had taken its toll on hundreds of horses whose dehydration had accelerated their demise.²

When he had begun his trip Berroterán was cocksure. The Conchos Presidio captain had been tasked by Pedro de Rivera with finding an upriver route to connect Coahuila to Nueva Vizcaya, via La Junta. But Berroterán, feeling that this was not enough of a challenge, decided also to seek out and engage enemy Apaches. Once on the Rio Grande, however, he found himself crisscrossing a maze of ridges and doubling back on his old tracks. The early days of the expedition were consumed with sending out wave after wave of spies and scouts to hunt out Apaches. Now, he was focused on locating water. It was with desperate anticipation that the captain awaited the arrival of his spies and any news of moisture that they brought. His journal is laconic in its description of the landscapes through which he passed in his efforts to find enough forage for his surviving men and animals. We know now that he had hit a wall, almost literally, in the form of canyons that ranged from 50 to 300 feet high, and that contained a swift and rapid Rio Grande. Berroterán had traveled about 57 leagues (about 150 miles) from San Juan Bautista to reach the area around Langtry, and now he traveled almost another 57 leagues hither and thither for a few ponds or some remnant puddles in the bottoms of arroyos. Nothing, however, was really enough to quench the thirst of his large retinue of animals and to fuel the expedition towards its goal. Two weeks later, on April 28, he held a meeting with his troop and decided that enough was enough. Berroterán, a young and rising star in the martial establishment of New Spain, had had

² José de Berroterán, 13 January 1729 to 22 May 1729, *Diario de la expedición a La Junta de los Ríos*, Legajo 51, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

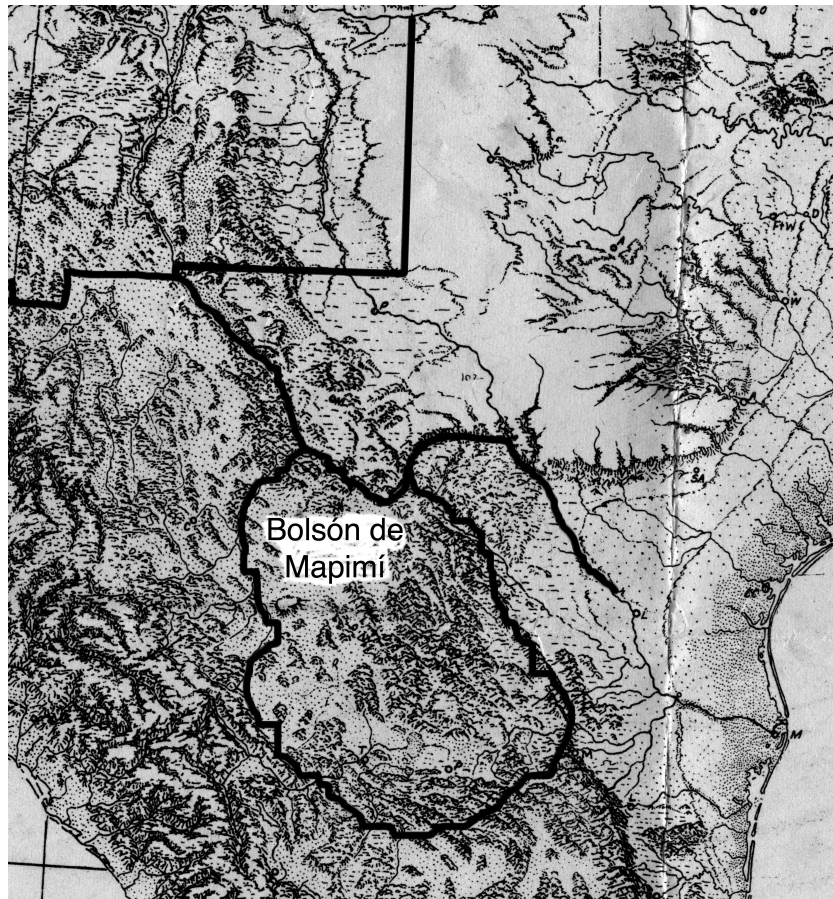
The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1570-1700, Vol. 2, Part 2, Diana Hadley, Thomas H. Naylor, Mardith K. Schultz-Miller, Eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986): 167.

his first taste of the northern Chihuahuan Desert between the Big Bend region and the northern edges of the Bolsón de Mapimí. Bitterness undoubtedly lingered in his mouth as he turned south, away from the Rio Grande and the southern edges of the Trans-Pecos, and beat a hasty march for Conchos presidio deep within Nueva Vizcaya.³

This journey had not been Berroterán's idea. *Visitador* Pedro de Rivera and his cartographer, Francisco Álvarez Barreiro, had planned to go there themselves, but they had not been able to reach La Junta de los Ríos during their *visita*. They, of course, made it to Santa Fe and San Antonio de Bejar because these places stood out as prominences—key localities—that represented significant Spanish investment and, so political and economic interest. But the Spanish empire had developed along a north-south axis, and Rivera had elected to approach Santa Fe and San Antonio de Bejar by forking out from Parral to the south in each case, rather than traversing the space between them from west to east. Desiring to assess the intervening landscape, Rivera had tasked Berroterán with providing intelligence about the area between the two colonial outposts. For Rivera's purposes, Berroterán failed; his diary was a worthless tool for the extension of empire. As a tool for grasping indigenous territorialities, however, Berroterán's accounts are valuable as the first clues to Mescalero Apachería's final elaboration southward into the Bolsón de Mapimí, and the heart of the Chihuahuan Desert.

³ Robert S. Weddle, *San Juan Bautista: Gateway to Spanish Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968): Chapter 19 generally.

Stotz, Nancy, *Historic Reconstruction of the Ecology of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo Channel and Floodplain in the Chihuahuan Desert* (Las Cruces, NM: Online, 2000), visited 25 October 2013. <http://bva.colech.edu.mx/xmlui/handle/123456789/HASH011881a4ea6f4251ce76a0ad?show=full>: 5.



Map 20: The Area of the Bolsón de Mapimí.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

The Bolsón de Mapimí had been a space of indigenous resistance and bellicosity since the middle of the seventeenth century. A brief history of the region reveals its important placement within the larger geographic arc of competing empires and resistances. Toboso attack groups, long associated with the Bolsón, had been lashing out at Spanish attempts to settle them into missions, and to draft them into mining towns, since the 1620s. Although not Athapaskan (they were Taracahitan-speaking), Tobosos are the nearest thing to ethnogenetic ancestors that Mescaleros had. Tobosos and Faraones practiced concurrent wars of attrition against the Spanish, often deploying

similar or identical tactics. Just like Faraones in the Manzano, Sacramento, Fra Cristobal, and Órganos Mountains of New Mexico, Tobosos erupted from the Sierra Madre ranges of the western Bolsón to launch attacks on Nueva Vizcaya. After they had seized grains and horses—typically from *haciendas* on the lower Rio Conchos—Tobosos took to the mountain basins and the concealed *cienegas* (marshes) that were located deep within the Bolsón, thereby eluding the Spanish who were loathe to the rugged and waterless land—just as Faraones had long done. Tobosos frequently traveled to La Junta de los Ríos to trade their wares with Julimes, Jumanos, and (by 1680) Apaches. This group survived within the Bolsón de Mapimí beyond the 1680s, and it is a distinct possibility that they shaped the future course and manifestation of Apachería.⁴

Eventually, around 1680, the Spanish succeeded in crushing these peoples and shipping many off to Monterrey as prisoners and laborers. Into the vacuum swept Tarahumaras, another tribe of Nueva Vizcaya who likewise challenged the claims of Spanish empire. Whereas Tobosos had been a persistent, if somewhat irregular, thorn in the side of the Spanish, Tarahumaras began to attack the settlements along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro with methodical consistency beginning in 1690. In that year they killed many missionaries and they razed numerous churches. When this happened again in 1691 the Spanish mounted annual expeditions in September and

⁴ *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1570-1700*, Vol. 1, Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J., Eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986): the Relación de Diego de Medrano, 31 August 1654, regarding the history of Tobosos, on pages 411-446. Financial power played a significant role in the diverging fortunes of Apaches and Tobosos in their wars against the Spanish. Whereas Governor Jironza could barely scrounge 2,000 pesos for the settlement and defense of El Paso del Norte in 1683, the viceroy allocated 80,000 pesos to Governor Diego Guajardo Fajardo to war on Tobosos in the Bolsón de Mapimí.

The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1570-1700, Vol. 2, Part 2, Diana Hadley, Thomas H. Naylor, Mardith K. Schultz-Miller, Eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986): 10.

Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 25.

October to go out and harass Tarahumaras in the Bolsón. It was no use, though, and the Spanish soon broke off after finding that there was not enough water to support thousands of men and animals. Nearly thirty years went by before the Spanish again tried to assail the indigenous insurgents of this region.⁵

By 1698, however, Tarahumaran power in the Bolsón de Mapimí had begun to wane, and groups of Cocolimes and Acoclames began to flex their muscle in the region. Tarahumares had long harried the Rio Conchos and much of Nueva Vizcaya along the *camino real*, but their numbers had been gradually weakening. Their mission population had sunk from about 80,000 in 1550 to about 3,000 in 1690, a reduction of about 95%. When Tarahumaras rebelled during the summer of 1697, veteran General Juan Fernández de Retana quashed it with unusual venom: the punitive campaign included long lines of summary executions and decapitations. Tarahumaran power, whittled away by over a century of disease, slave-raiding, and war had finally been broken. By 1726, at the same time that Faraones were becoming known as Natagés and Mescaleros around La Junta de los Ríos, Cocolimes and Acoclames continued the Tarahumaran tradition of launching coordinated and sustained attacks along the *camino real*. These aggressions came on the eve of Rivera's *visita* and, based on the priority that he assigned this problem and his redistribution of presidials and monies, the tide soon turned against those in the Bolsón de Mapimí. Rivera's *Reglamento* of 1729 commanded that the "captains of the presidios from Pasaje to Conchos [around the

⁵ José de Berroterán, 17 April 1748, Informe del Capitán Joseph de Berroterán sobre el estado de Nueva Vizcaya, Legajo 41, Expediente 7, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Susan M. Deeds, "Mission Villages and Agrarian Patterns in a Nueva Vizcaya Heartland, 1600-1750," *Journal of the Southwest* 33:3 (1991): 353-354.

Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003): 86-87, 93-95.

Bolsón de Mapimí] will suppress the Cociomes, Acoclames, ...[and others] who continually harass Nueva Vizcaya.” Provided with viceregal mandates and a fresh array of martial resources, the Spanish were able to mount sustained attacks within the Bolsón, where they killed many Cociomes and Acoclames and shipped the captives to Mexico City.⁶

Twenty years after the mop-up, Berroterán witnessed first-hand the cost of Rivera’s success in the Bolsón de Mapimí. Eager to point out the unintended consequence that the 1729 *Reglamento* produced, Berroterán noted, almost in the same breath as when he narrated the victory over the Cociomes and Acoclames, that

“about four hundred Apaches have come into the land [i.e. Bolsón de Mapimí] and overrun it, but have yet to begin killing and stealing because of the good relationship I have with them. We should be cautious of them because once they know the mountains they will come and go at will.”

The Spanish, it seems, had unintentionally swept clear a difficult landscape that was contiguous with La Junta and then left it available to their longtime competitor in the north. Rivera’s policies translated into an invitation for Mescaleros to take up residence in the Bolsón and to extend their imperialistic practices far beyond New Mexico and into Nueva Vizcaya.⁷

This information was contained in a report written in the early spring of 1748 by Berroterán for the viceroy, the Conde de Revillagigedo. Towards the end he gave a

⁶ Berroterán, 17 April 1748, *Informe*.

Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulations for Northern New Spain, 1724-1729: A Documentary History of his Frontier Inspection and the Reglamento de 1729, Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J., Eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988): 278.

Deeds (2003), 76-77, 98-99.

⁷ Berroterán, 17 April 1748, *Informe*.

James M. Daniel, “The Spanish Frontier in West Texas and Northern Mexico,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71:4 (1968): 483-484.

Hadley, 14, 174.

prediction about what the Apache immigration into Nueva Vizcaya meant. If his insights seem unoriginal, given the analogous events that had occurred around New Mexico since the early seventeenth century, their precision is startling:

“Any respites should be viewed as moments of convalescence from a bad sickness and preparation for other and more serious ones threatened by Apaches, who have penetrated the presidios lands.... With these [presidios] eliminated, Apaches would have total and free access to the more than 180 leagues that stretch from the presidio of San José del Paso to that of San Juan Bautista del Rio Grande. This has happened with others who have inhabited that refuge, which shelters thousands of enemies. All the mountains and rough country are impassable to us but are accessible to them. Once they penetrate and move into that long, narrow strip, they will occupy almost all of the eastern side of Nueva Vizcaya and the western side of Coahuila, and will easily destroy both these important jurisdictions.”

But how exactly did Mescaleros come to the Bolsón de Mapimí (outside of an accidental Spanish invitation), and how did they integrate the natural resources of that place into their xeric, geopolitical economy?⁸

The clues that Berroterán gave about Mescalero mobility force us to rethink how we conceive of the directionality of empire. Typically it seems that Europeans do the moving, the exploring, the invading, and the colonizing. In what we call the borderlands, the majority of historiography implicitly argues that the Spanish came from the south and relentlessly pushed north and that Puebloans, Apaches, Comanches, and others resisted, succumbed, or thrived while remaining mostly *in situ*. In this case, however, Mescalero migration lines make it plain that the directionality of the period was far from a European-dominated south-to-north model. Rather, Mescaleros pushed south after contact, and continued to grow and adapt long after Spanish directionality stagnated around Santa Fe. Ironically, the Rio Conchos, that very same river that allowed for the

⁸ Berroterán, 17 April 1748, *Informe*.

initial *entradas* into what would become New Mexico during the late 1500s, was also the riverine pathway that introduced Apaches to the interior of New Spain.⁹

The importance of the Rio Conchos to Mescalero counter-invasions became clear to the Spanish towards the end of May in 1766, when Nicolás de Lafora, the cartographer on the Marques de Rubí *visita*, made a sweeping tour of the region. He was part of a caravan from Durango that was heading north, having just left the derelict presidio of Cerro Gordo in Nueva Vizcaya. LaFora and the rest of the mounted riders passed cautiously over the dry arroyos branching off of the Rio Enmedio, Rio Florido, and the Rio Parral, tributaries of the Conchos. These arroyos were treacherous and carts could be ruined or horses fatally injured if they fell into the deep recesses caused by erosion after over-grazing had left the land too devoid of grass to hold the soil during floods. The riders kept their extra horses, their pack-mules and their carts nearby. The land was parched, water flowed only from a few places and there was not nearly as

⁹ Anderson, 128-129.

Oakah L. Jones, Jr., *Nueva Vizcaya: Heartland of the Spanish Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988): x.

The notion of directionality has not received analytical prominence in the historiography of the borderlands, although its importance in the foundational and survey texts of the field are obvious. Herbert E. Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier: 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); and David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) all conceive of the 'borderlands' as a space defined foremost by the presence of Spanish empire and the intersection of its institutions with indigenous persons and cultures. Even when the theme of Native resistance is foregrounded, as in Weber, the impetus of the narrative derives almost wholly from imperial bureaucracy and Native responses to it.

Work done since 1991 has come a long way to supersede these shortcomings. Texts like Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) challenge the substance, if not the motion, of borderlands studies. This scholarship takes as its subject the creative and powerful means that indigenous peoples developed to counter European colonialisms, but usually the spaces of contest are static, and do not appreciably move against the flow of north-to-south, or east-to-west empire.

Hämäläinen's monograph somewhat moves past this problem through a study of Comanchería's expansion into Texas and Mexico, but the themes of movement and directionality are clearly secondary to the theme of Native-produced empire within the space of initial contact: the Great Plains.

much grama or bunch grasses as they would have liked. But the problems underfoot paled against the dangers away and overhead. Over twenty-six miles these Spanish travelers anxiously eyed the Sierras Baos and Peñoles on their right hand side. These mountains were part of the western boundary of the Bolsón de Mapimí, and the caravan hoped that they would not be attacked by Apaches who were known to issue from mountain passes in order to attack nearby haciendas or travelers, such as themselves.¹⁰

Lafora might just then have been thinking of Governor Otermín and the scene the former New Mexico governor faced in 1681 when he passed by the ruined pueblos of the Piro on his failed *reconquista* of New Mexico. Lafora and his company found themselves traveling through a land also marked by violence: abandoned or damaged haciendas stood alongside pitiful-looking makeshift huts, and much of the livestock was vanished from the area. The situation was not, however, as dire as that following the 1680 revolt—the ground was not littered with the recent dead, and the ashes from the fires in adobe houses and buildings had been snuffed. Indeed, there were still just more than 4,000 *vecinos* living over about 3,000 square miles, and although their agricultural and ranching endeavors had been retarded by raiding, they still managed to produce maize, wheat, and some fruits. Nonetheless, Lafora could tell that this was contested land. Although they noted twenty-six working haciendas spread out over five tributary streams, the number of abandoned ranches must have stood out more. As recently as

¹⁰ *The Frontiers of New Spain: Nicolás de Lafora's Description, 1766-1768*, Lawrence Kinnaird, trans. (Berkeley: Quivira Society, 1958): 63-66. Manuscript copies of LaFora's diary are rare. The only complete diary exists in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (MSS 5963), while partial copies are available at the Biblioteca Nacional de Ciudad de Mexico and at the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. In addition. The first 20 or so *folios* can be found at the CSWR in the "Narratives and Handbook Pertaining to 18th Century New Mexico Presidios" Collections (MSS 658).

1760, and probably earlier, local franciscans observed that Apaches had driven many of the *hacendados* out of the valley, ruining their estates.¹¹

There is no evidence that Lafora actually thought of Otermín—and why should he? He was traveling through the Rio Conchos Valley, deep within Nueva Vizcaya, southeast of La Junta de los Ríos and almost due south of El Paso del Norte. He was comfortably within the established borders of New Spain. He was not following up on a successful pan-ethnic revolt of Native groups and he was not trying to reclaim a lost provincial capital from an entrenched foe. It is likely that Berroterán's prescient thoughts eighteen years earlier, in 1748, regarding the Apache arrival in Nueva Vizcaya, prepared Lafora for what he saw. Nicolás de Lafora betrayed no surprise at Apachean presence and power during his comprehensive inspection of the northern frontier of New Spain from 1766 to 1768. He merely described it. As Barreiro had been for Rivera, Lafora was engineer and cartographer for the Marques de Rubí, the *visitador*, or the royally-appointed inspector of the realms; Rubí was tasked with making recommendations to the Bourbon monarch so that the northern frontiers could be quelled and made safe, and maybe profitable. The task of describing the landscape and the condition of roads, lands and places fell to Lafora.

Regardless of Lafora's lack of surprise at Mescalero activity, this moment of the *visita* is worthy of closer analysis as evidence of Apache counter-invasion. The day that he recorded his anxiety about passing just west of the Sierras Baos and Peñoles—May 20—he was passing through the Valle de San Bartolomé, near the headwaters of the Rio

¹¹ Kinnaird, 65.

Juan Sanz de Lezaún, 1760, *Noticias lamentables acaecidas en Nuevo México*, Legajo 25, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Conchos river valley. The territory should have been as close to “Spanish” as any land in the northern reaches. It had been 195 years since the Rodriguez-Chamuscado expedition had set out from this place to investigate the rumors of clothed and farming peoples along a great river. San Bartolomé, and the nearby villa of Parral, had been the launching board for Spanish invasions of the Middle Rio Grande Valley and for the construction of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. In the late sixteenth century San Bartolomé was considered stable and corporate enough to the Spanish empire that *entradas* and supplies were siphoned off and sent northward regularly to support fledgling New Mexico. By the time of Lafora, however, Spanish impetus for the expansion of territory northward had stalled and Santa Fe still represented the northernmost outpost of the imperial network. For Mescaleros, however, there still existed the means and ability for exploration, invasion, and fresh exploitation. In a reversal of the usual directionality attributed to the borderlands of North America, Mescaleros pushed south, successfully embedded themselves within established provinces, and directly challenged the preconceived spaces of European empire with a territoriality all their own. They had come down the Rio Grande, passed to La Junta de los Ríos, and then passed up the Rio Conchos, mimicking (and mocking, in a way) the route of the first *conquistadores*.¹²

What Lafora saw in the coming two and half weeks made it plain that the situation had become even worse than that communicated in Lezaún’s 1760 report, where that franciscan detailed the flight of *vecinos* from the Rio Conchos valley. In addition to displaced Spaniards, ruined land, and the conspicuous absence of livestock,

¹² Kinnaird, 65-66.

Lafora also found that the region was dangerously understaffed militarily. One week after the *visita* had passed the abandoned presidio of Cerro Gordo it came upon presidio Guajoquilla on May 24, on the Rio Florido, tributary of the Conchos. As they wove through woods of mesquite and acacia they approached the walls of the garrison, established in 1752, with a complement of 66 presidials. Rubí and Lafora must have been surprised to have come from the beleaguered Valle de San Bartolomé and the vacant Cerro Gordo only to learn that months earlier 26 of the presidio's soldiers, just less than half, had been removed. These men had been transferred to the presidio of San Buenaventura, to the west, where they would combat the mounting danger posed by Gileño Apaches, who operated on the western side of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* and in the ecotonal overlap with the Sonoran Desert. As a token to the need for defense the Spanish had situated 300 Tarahumara Natives nearby in the pueblo of Atotonilco, where they cultivated maize and wheat. Ever short on funds and presidials, the vicegeral court was trying to balance tangible urgency with larger policy initiatives like those set out in the now-35 year old 1729 *Reglamento*. It is doubtless that the

Spanish, forced to cede some of their strength to other locales, were attempting to make a buffer of the Tarahumaras against the Apaches.¹³

Fifty-seven miles northward, the Conchos presidio loomed on the horizon, where Berroterán had been captain not long ago. The area was dying a slow death, much like that of Guajoquilla, because this presidio too had been abandoned, its presidials redistributed northward into the so-called *despoblado* to staff the presidio at La Junta. Only 25 families remained there alongside 200 Tarahumaras and Chisos in the mission of San Francisco. For the next two weeks Lafora stepped over dry and parched land, heading northwest, still skirting the mountainous borders of the Bolsón de Mapimí. As he surveyed the tributaries of the Rio Conchos a landscape of Native mule-herders and subsistence fields passed before his eyes, instead of rich *haciendas* and cash crops. Nearing Ciudad Chihuahua, at Chancaple, he came upon a settlement that had been reduced to two or three huts because Apache depredations had frightened off all the others; at La Pastoria de Mapula he found that land tenure had been so disrupted that the thirty people present did not actually live there, but were merely contract laborers

¹³ Kinnaird, 66.

Gileños, or Gila Apaches as they are more commonly called, are widely thought to be the ethnogenetic ancestors to Chiricahua Apaches. These Athapaskans forged their own Apachería in the territory west of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, around river and mountain system named, aptly, Gila, west of El Paso and north of Nueva Vizcaya. By the time that LaFora passed through Nueva Vizcaya, they had been harassing places like Casas Grandes and Janos for over eighty years. Documentation of this group is not as abundant as that of Faraones or Mescaleros, but it appears that Gileños formed an economy of raiding and pilfering that the Spanish could not successfully counter until Rubí's *Reglamento* of 1772. After that, raiding continued, but the strengthening of the presidio at Janos and the commitment of funds for gifts and bribes allayed much of the violence. Gileños used the western edges of the Chihuahuan Desert as a refuge and a weapon against the Spanish, but they did not enjoy the economic and political success of Mescaleros owing to their distance from Plains bison and horse economies.

v. Harry W. Basehart, *Chiricahua Apache Subsistence and Socio-Political Organization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1959); Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *The Chiricahua Apache, 1695-1876* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1959); William B. Griffen, *Apaches at War and Peace: the Janos Presidio, 1750-1858* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Lance R. Blyth, *Chiricahua and Janos: Communities of Violence in the Southwestern Borderlands, 1680-1880*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

sent from Chihuahua to herd cattle. Apache raids had succeeded in disrupting the local economy to the point that it no longer made sense to invest families and serious capital into the area; rather, would-be *hacendados* sent laborers in who could be easily replaced with more if they were captured or killed.¹⁴

Finally, Lafora came to Ciudad Chihuahua after traveling 221 miles. It was June 12, and summer was fast upon the caravan as they passed through the grassy plain called El Bajío, a valley just over two and half miles wide. This bustling *villa* of Nueva Vizcaya boasted of 400 families and commanded agricultural and mining endeavors in a vast perimeter around it. It had remained vibrant and vital to the political and economic structure of the Spanish empire even when places like Parral and Santa Eulalia had faded from importance. Ciudad Chihuahua should have been the throbbing pulse of Nueva Vizcaya, but Rubí and Lafora found it withering in fear and poverty. Soon they learned that the people of the *villa*, along with all of those who had abandoned the Rio Conchos in the days of Lezaún, were in danger of perishing because all of the livestock had been taken. No horses and no mules meant that there was no way to work mines and fields; the economy was frozen in place. Rubí was at a loss as to how such a calamity could befall so major a Spanish place. The troop soon learned that they had witnessed the answer firsthand: The valley of El Bahía was narrow—only a mile wide—and Apaches often used it as a choke point to ambush travelers, taking every animal and more than a few human lives. To make matters worse, there was no pasture for Rubí's animals. The few animals that had remained to the Spanish at Ciudad Chihuahua in the months leading up to this wretched state had overgrazed the local

¹⁴ Kinnaird, 67-69.

pasturage and there was little grass left that was close enough to guarantee the horses' and mules' safety. Robbed of a critical re-supply point, Rubí and Lafora left the next day.

The *visita's* course had passed along the northwestern borders of the Bolsón de Mapimí, composed of the many chains of the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Rio Conchos watershed. What Rubí and Lafora saw confirms that the Spanish of Nueva Vizcaya had clung to a few riparian places like Ciudad Chihuahua, San Bartolomé, and missions, small *villas* or mining centers. Although no rebellion-from-within—like the one that expelled the Spanish of New Mexico in 1680—had occurred, the records of this *visita* suggest that Nueva Vizcaya's situation was similar to that of 1670s New Mexico, in terms of Athapaskan ascendancy and Spanish decline. Mescaleros had ventured into the Bolsón de Mapimí by 1748; had added the Rio Conchos watershed to their cycles of raiding and seizure; and were actively redirecting portions of Nueva Vizcaya's economic wealth into vectors of their own Athapaskan economy. Lafora and Rubí were forced to travel beneath mountain chains that smoked with Mescalero fires; fires that relayed information about the Spanish position and the location of desirable property to the many groups dwelling in the rugged basins and beyond. The Baos, Peñoles, and all the other mountain chains west of the Bolsón de Mapimí were a long way from Los Órganos or the Manzanos in New Mexico, but the well-documented presence of Apaches in Nueva Vizcaya and the mounting evidence of their adroit exploitation of Spanish imperial spaces suggests that the trajectory of New Spain's history in the so-called borderlands of North America should be reimagined. Just as Faraones had forced the economy and material wealth of the Middle Rio Grande Valley into Apachería's orbit as early as the 1670s, their ethnogenetic successors south of the Jornada del Muerto,

Mescaleros, were now integrating the Rio Conchos Valley into similar economic landscapes.¹⁵

As Lafora continued north he ventured closer to the Rio Grande, deeper into country pockmarked with ranges and basins, and farther into the orbit of Mescalero Apachería. Whereas the *visita* had recorded communities of broken and irregular, if sometimes barely functional, *haciendas* and missions around the Valle de San Bartolomé and Ciudad Chihuahua, now the landscape gave way to total devastation and abandonment. Almost a month after leaving Chihuahua Lafora passed by the *haciendas* of Palo Blanco and Hormigas, both abandoned by their owners because of Apache attacks. At Hormigas, a herd of feral cattle remained drinking from ponds, probably left there by Apaches as a source of protein and leather should the need arise. The Sierra Grande loomed to the northeast and beyond that lay La Junta, their next destination and long a focal point of Apache expansion and migration.

But a visit to this sight—known to be of strategic importance to Apaches—was not to be. Just then, at Hormigas, on July 9, Rubí and Lafora learned that the governor of Nueva Vizcaya had abruptly, and unexpectedly, ordered the closure of the Presidio del Norte and that its presidials were then moved to another presidio, Julimes, farther up the Rio Conchos. Rubí decided that to visit Julimes would mean significant backtracking, and there was little expectation that they would learn anything new by

¹⁵ Faraones, as a people and as a category, did not vanish from the landscape during this time. In 1796 the Governor of Coahuila, Manuel Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, remarked in a vast, ethnographic-like, study of Apaches that Faraones still inhabited the lands east of the Rio Grande to the Pecos River, and above the Rio Grande's northwest-southeast flow. In Cordero's time Faraones were still a numerous people who could afford to play diplomatic games with the provinces of New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya. "Cordero's Description of the Apache," Daniel S. Matson & Albert H. Schroeder, eds., *New Mexico Historical Review* 32:4 (1957): 353-354.

v. also Morris E. Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and Its Origins" in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 10, Alfonso Ortiz, ed. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 390.

surveying more of the Rio Conchos Valley. Lafora and the company turned to the northwest, towards El Paso; Rubí's was the second consecutive *visita*, after Rivera's, that failed to visit La Junta de los Ríos. And while it may have made logistical sense to Rubí and Lafora to avoid La Junta, that place's importance as a gateway between ecoregions and between territorialities was actually bespoken by the eleventh hour reshuffling of the Presidio del Norte. Just as it had been since 1683, La Junta was the epicenter of a widening and shifting array of Mescalero pressure points. The Presidio del Norte had been established only seven years previously, but in that short time it had become plain to the Spanish that La Junta, although an important granary to Apaches, was only the most obvious pass out of myriad others. The sudden shift of presidials between garrisons that were so near to each other signals that the Spanish were becoming aware that they were trying to stem a flood that had already breached the imagined walls of their empire. The northern frontier had rapidly deteriorated in twenty years, and Spanish claims were being peeled back across multiple geographies.¹⁶

At the start of the summer season the *visita* company moved north by northwest, paralleling the Rio Grande far off to the east, keeping the Sierras Magdalena and Cascaramusas to their immediate right. Beyond those mountains lay windrows of peaks and basins that led, eventually, to the Rio Grande and La Junta, but knowledge of that space was tenuous and the paths were dangerous. In the thirty-six leagues (about 94 miles) that Lafora traveled to reach Carrizal, the border between Nueva Vizcaya and New Mexico, he passed places like Los Reyes, *ojo* de Jesus Maria, Ojo Caliente, and Agua Nueva. Three haciendas, at least, were scattered along the way but they were all

¹⁶ Jones (1990), 52.

abandoned and fallen into ruin because Apaches had “overrun” the area and did not “permit” Spanish occupation. On July 12, at two springs called Gallego and El Chivato, halfway between Hormigas and Carrizal, Lafora camped at the foothills of the Sierra Magdalena. Apprised by local report and the presence of semi-permanent wickiups across the landscape, Lafora knew that these springs were among the favorite spots where Apaches gathered during their travels into the south. From this place,

“Apaches often meet...and divide up the routes to Encinillas lagoon, Santa Clara valley, and Hormigas. From here they attack Chihuahua at will and, once sated, return to this place and from here take the road to Gila by way of Cerro del Chile or Sierra Blanca, then Siete Rios by Agua Amargosa, the plains of Los Castillos and San Elceario. From these ranges they always find safety and return to their *rancherías* unharmed.”¹⁷

The porosity of this 280 mile gap between El Paso and La Junta was obvious to the Spanish. So much so that the governor of Nueva Vizcaya tried to bridge that gap by placing a troop of presidials adjacent to El Chivato and Gallego, at a spring called Nueva Agua. A garrison of 50 presidials, as many as were at El Paso, were stationed there for a time, but there were no silty banks or woodlands there to support long-term residence. The garrison was too far from either the Rio Grande or the Rio Conchos, and it soon withered. In these desert lowlands soils were dry and sandy; there was little wood for shelter; less land for gardening; and only brackish *ojos*. Besides their own horses, all the presidials had to eat was what grain they brought with them and the *Agave lechuguilla* all around. It was with disdain and disgust that the presidials eventually left to be distributed to other garrisons and presidios—they demolished many

¹⁷ Kinnaird, 73-74.

For a better idea on the construction and function of wickiups, v. Deni J. Seymour, “Cycles of Renewal, Transportable Assets: Aspects of Ancestral Apache Housing,” *Plains Anthropologist* 55:214 (2010).

of their buildings before they left, both to make sure that Apaches could not use them as well as to mark out how unsuited the terrain was permanent residence.¹⁸

Interestingly, after Rubí and Lafora passed through this area and critiqued the decay of Spanish interests in the region, the Nueva Vizcayan governor tried to retake it from the Apaches by sending another, smaller, garrison back to Agua Nueva. But whereas 50 presidials could not sustain themselves on the land—let alone block Apache encroachments—the new troop of 30 presidials found themselves unable either to sustain or defend themselves. Within a short time, Mescaleros succeeded in taking every single horse from this troop (probably about 900-1,200 horses, at the typical 3-4 horses per soldier), leaving the Spanish to fight on foot; a death sentence. Indeed, many presidials were killed in the ensuing skirmishes and many more wounded in the daily attacks. Agua Nueva was, again, soon abandoned.¹⁹

As Lafora and Rubí proceeded on to El Paso and farther up the Rio Grande into the Middle Rio Grande Valley, they witnessed and recorded many of the same occurrences that had colored those regions since the 1670s. Apaches still used El Paso as a gateway and inhabited all the Trans-Pecos, specifically the Siete Rios areas of the Central Closed Basin. The Órganos Mountains, called Los Mansos by Lafora, were still a place of Apache *rancherías*. Places like Perillo and Roblerito, immediately antecedent to the Jornada del Muerto from the south, and the Jornada itself were all firmly within the orbit of Mescalero power, and travelers traveled at great peril (the *visita* was attacked no fewer than three times here). Interestingly, Lafora made a significant

¹⁸ Kinnaird, 73-74.

¹⁹ Kinnaird, 73.

geographical mistake and claimed that the Los Mansos (Órganos) Mountains extended past the *villa* of Albuquerque up to Sandia pueblo. In reality, he had passed at least three major mountain chains: the San Andres, Manzanos, and Sandia. His confusion is revealing in that he had firmly placed Apaches within Los Mansos Mountains and then continued to identify their ubiquity with that specific mountain range all the way to the lands just short of Santa Fe. This array of Apache presence and the nature of their activities does not bear close scrutiny; previous chapters have analyzed Apache expansion into and manipulation of these territories. It is enough to say that the Comanche pressure that had forced Faraones and Mescaleros almost south of Pecos pueblo in the 1720s had not sufficiently intensified in the ensuing four decades to dislodge Apache interests.²⁰

Lafora summed up his experiences in the northern Chihuahuan Desert with powerful statements that listed the ways in which Apaches seemed to prevail over the Spanish in place after place, and time after time.. Regarding Nueva Vizcaya especially, Rubí's engineer stated, unequivocally, that the

“Apache Indians are the only ones who commit hostilities against this province [i.e. Nueva Vizcaya]. They are situated along its entire frontier from the province of Coahuila to Sonora.”²¹

²⁰ Kinnaird, 82-88.

Interestingly, Lafora uses “Pharaones” to describe Apaches north of El Paso. This is undoubtedly because of Faraones’ long ties to the region, which would have constructed their identity differently to New Mexican observers and authors. Lafora was certainly describing the same peoples based on how he describes mobilities and the proximal locations of places, but in New Mexico Mescaleros were still sometimes called Faraones because mescal had not engendered itself as a prominent marker of that ethnic identity.

²¹ Kinnaird, 76, emphasis mine.

And: “The attacks of the Pharaones Apaches, either from Sierra Blanca or Siete Rios [that part of the Trans-Pecos just northeast of El Paso], occur in the neighborhood of the presidio of El Paso del Norte.”²²

Lafora believed:

“...all these attacks could be prevented if the presidios of Janos and Paso del Rio del Norte did their duty, for the places mentioned are behind them, as are also the sierras of La Magdalena,...and others where the enemies take shelter, and from which they sally forth to attack *haciendas* and travelers.”²³

Lafora’s harsh criticism of the Janos and El Paso presidios dovetails with the frustration he had expressed on July 9 regarding the administration of the presidial company that seemed to dither somewhere between La Junta de los Ríos and Julimes, to no great effect. This criticism came as a refrain to the many calls for stronger presidial presence at the Rio Conchos-Rio Grande confluence that had come down from various Spanish authors since the revolts of the 1680s. At its base, Lafora’s critique addressed a problem that the Spanish did not fully grasp (Mescalero modalities of mobility and competition) and offered solutions that had virtually no chance of practical success. Mescaleros moved across the landscape with much more agility and portability, both economically and socially, than the Spanish could. Mescaleros could locate and process resources to support their society and culture from a broader array of landforms and

²² Kinnaird, 77.

²³ Kinnaird, 78.

fauna. Compounding this asymmetry of superior Mescalero maneuverability and ecology-engagement was the issue of access.²⁴

In virtually the same breath as he critiqued the constellation of presidios, Lafora also noted the many mountain passes and basins that Mescaleros used to move south into Nueva Vizcaya. In addition to Gallegos and El Chivato, he also listed no fewer than twenty-eight places, in addition to “several other places which they visit less frequently,” a staggering number that only gestures at the porosity of the northern border. Evidently, where the Spanish saw contiguous and impassable mountain chains there were, in fact, a plethora of access points and the water and fauna to support human and animal movement. We can take it for granted that Lafora could only have learned of a portion of the available entry points—there must surely have been more than thirty. Given the difficult terrain, the agility of attack groups, and the scarcity of presidials, it is no wonder that the Rio Conchos watershed and the Bolsón de Mapimí had been drawn into the orbit of Mescalero Apachería following the long suppression of previous indigenous groups. The decline in Spanish wealth and the diminishment of Spanish places that Lafora witnessed on the *visita* was emblematic of processes that had begun a century

²⁴ Pedro de Rivera was the first to strongly recommend a presidio for La Junta, in 1729, but budgetary and logistical obstacles killed the project before it began. Fray Miguel Menchero, a former *custo*, tried to resurrect interest during the 1740s when he began a reorganization of Spanish missionary interest among the Julimes. v. Daniel (1968), 486 for the thought that *Maestre de Campo* Mendoza probably also recommended presidios for La Junta in 1683.

Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulations for Northern New Spain, 1724-1729: A Documentary History of his Frontier Inspection and the Reglamento de 1729, Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J., Eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988): 146.

Miguel de Menchero, May 1744, Descripción de la Custodia de Nuevo México, con datos sobre número de familias y situación geográfica de las misiones, ranchos y pueblos, Legajo 8, Parte 1, Documento 17, Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico, AGN, CSWR.

Hadley, 154-156.

Daniel (1968), 487-489.

earlier when the inelasticity of Spanish imperial society first began to give way before the robust dynamics of indigenous modalities and mixed competition strategies.²⁵

Lafora did not realize it, but he was looking at the edge of an empire—of sorts. Just as the Middle Rio Grande Valley had functioned as a productive edge to the emergent counter-territory of the Faraones (centered in the Trans-Pecos), providing access to the tools and animals of Spanish empire the Rio Conchos Valley likewise had become the edge of the a similar space of imperial expansion for the Mescalero. As Faraones around and south of La Junta recreated themselves as Mescaleros, they continued the same set of practices that they had developed since the inception of New Mexico in 1608 and the first sustained contact of the Great Plains with Spanish empire. These Apaches negotiated the colonial encounter by risking acceptable loses of life and material in order to gain access to tools and animals. In turn, these resources allowed them to succeed and to thrive in xeric landscapes that had previously discouraged the formation of Native territories owing to the wide dispersal of water, carbohydrates (in the form of dry-farmed maize), and bison protein. The Spanish, for their part, never ceased to shun the Bolsón de Mapimí, an area that abutted significant colonized areas, just as they had shunned the Trans-Pecos adjacent to the Middle Rio Grande Valley. In both cases the diminished competition offered by the Spanish allowed Apaches to form and maintain a competitive advantage.²⁶

²⁵ Kinnaird, 77.

²⁶ Thomas E. Sheridan, “The Limits of Power: The Political Ecology of the Spanish Empire in the Greater Southwest,” *Antiquity* 66 (1992): 168.

But how did Mescaleros locate and maintain this edge—this space of encounter? Mescaleros utilized natural resources from the Bolsón de Mapimí. Specifically, they drew upon *playas*, agave stands, and errant livestock, and transformed this space into a bastion of indigenous power. It helped that the Bolsón is an endorheic basin, meaning that all water that occurs drains internally. Rainfall and river-flow never reach the Rio Grande, the Rio Conchos, or the Gulf of Mexico. Instead, the sierras that gird the Mapimí trap every bit of moisture and send it cascading down mountain slopes, foothills, bajadas, and into *arroyos* or *playas*. Ignoring the high rates of evaporation, the arid Bolsón had this one great advantage: it kept what water it produced. Mescaleros drew this ecoregion, yet another shunned space, but to greater and deadlier effect. Whereas the Trans-Pecos portion of the Chihuahuan Desert had sat adjacent to New Mexico, the absorption of the Bolsón de Mapimí into Apachería threatened to implode Nueva Vizcaya and drive an unassailable wedge between it and Coahuila, to the east. Tactically, this counter-invasion threatened to destroy the underpinnings that held together the imagined landscapes of northern New Spain; strategically, it represented a deliberate and sustained effort to seize upon the opportunities offered by the colonial encounter and to counter-claim large swathes of this North American region away from European colonists. Mescaleros were themselves becoming colonists of the Bolsón and *conquistadores* of places like the Rio Conchos Valley. It was the work of indigenous colonists that made Apachería possible, and it was water, grass, agave, and animal flesh that ultimately supported this final surge of Mescaleros south into the heart of the Chihuahuan Desert.

In terms of historical documentation, an ecological understanding of the Bolsón de Mapimí comes in bits and pieces, since the Spanish declined to settle the region or to describe it in any detail. In 1728, Francisco Álvarez Barreiro felt that neither New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, nor Coahuila could lay claim to it. Whereas thick red lines roughly demarcated the borders of those provinces in his map of 1728, the Bolsón de Mapimí sat beyond them, to the northeast of Nueva Vizcaya, to the west of Coahuila, and contiguous with the similarly borderless Trans-Pecos to the north. All around it Barreiro drew the signs for missions and presidios, but within the space what would have been the Bolsón he merely drew the symbol for *rancherías* and labeled it as “Tierra habitada de los Yndios Enemigos Cocoymes, Acoclames, Tripas blancas, Zizembres, y otras Naciones, quasi estinguidas”—‘land inhabited by the Indian enemies Cociomes, Acoclames, Tripas Blancas, Sisembres, and other nations, (who are) nearly exterminated.’ By the time of the Marques de Rubí’s visita in 1766 Lafora similarly left the area a blank, except for illustrating the isolation of the interior by way of lines of mountain chains all around, and the addition of a few presidios on the Rio Grande to the north. Lafora labeled the space as “Tierra despoblada donde se abrigan lose Yndios enemigos y Apostates de los Misiones y de ella salen a hostilisas a la Nueva Vizcaya y Coahuila”—‘wasteland where are sheltered the enemy Indians and mission apostates, and from where they depart to make hostilities upon Nueva Vizcaya and Coahuila.’ Groups whom Barreiro adjudged to be near extinction in 1728 had either regenerated their numbers or been supplanted by other indigenous peoples, like Mescaleros, in the

intervening forty years. Still, there are few sources from Nueva Vizcaya that shed light on what the Bolsón de Mapimí was like.²⁷

Around 1683, former governor of Nueva Vizcaya don Lope de Sierra y Osorio sent a letter to the viceroy in which he weighed in on what he felt were grave and imminent dangers to Nueva Vizcaya. The 1680 revolt of the pueblos in New Mexico and the failure of Governor Otermín to retake Santa Fe in 1682 were still fresh topics at that time and surrounding administrators were beginning to assess or predict the fallout in their own dealings with local Native groups. Sierra y Osorio had been devastated when in the previous year Tobosos, still the dominant force in the Bolsón de Mapimí at the time, had escalated their violent engagement with the Spanish around Parral. There, near the headwaters of the Rio Conchos, Tobosos had attacked convoys and ranches in late winter and early spring, taking nearly six hundred animals and the material goods from almost ten carts in the process. This locale was the same one that LaFora noted as being beleaguered and depressed owing to the raiding of Mescaleros just over eighty years later. The ex-governor felt sure that these Tobosos had been inspired by the rebels of New Mexico and the incredible license that they supposedly enjoyed after the expulsion of the Spanish.²⁸

²⁷ Kinnaird, back flap (LaFora map).

Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, "Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728" (New York, N.Y: Hispanic Society of America, 1992)

John Maynard Smith, *Evolution and the Theory of Games* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 94-96. The Spanish and Mescaleros were fighting an asymmetrical war of attrition. They were both waiting for the other side to cease hostilities and adapt to their own sense of political economy and geopolitical constructions, but Mescaleros had the slight advantage of *knowing* the Bolsón de Mapimí. As we will see below, however, the Bolsón de Mapimí was not such an abundant resource that its intrinsic value could offset the cost of the violence that was to wash over it. v. Also Robert Sugden, *The Economics of Rights, Co-operation and Welfare* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 65-66 for the irrationality of the 'war of attrition.'

²⁸ *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Vol. II, Charles W. Hackett, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926): 220.

Needling home the urgency of the matter, Sierra y Osorio reminded the viceroy that his court had ordered a Spanish retaliatory force to march out with Tarahumara auxiliaries and one hundred harquebuses to punish the Tobosos, but that they had come back empty-handed, as did three subsequent attempts. Ten years later, when don Diego de Vargas had begun the long and complicated work of reintegrating the Middle Rio Grande Valley back into the imperial network, Nueva Vizcayan *Maestre de Campo* don Joseph Francisco Marín echoed Sierra y Osorio when he wrote, from Parral, that Tobosos and others had made a mockery of the province's 383 presidials by routinely attacking convoys or travelers in order to steal horses. Marín gave a riveting description of the typical act, wherein a group of three or four mounted fighters burst out of mountain passes or ravines, rushed the forward guard of the Spanish travelers, and fell their horses first so as to leave them helpless, and then taking whatever they wish from the defender-less carts and people who remain. Marín despaired that these Tobosos attacked with such celerity that before nearby presidials could even begin to mount a counter-attack they were easily twenty to thirty leagues (52 to 78 miles) ahead of them. Unexpectedly, Marín also noted that when Tobosos retreat to the mountain skirt of the Bolsón, they also return to the company of Apaches, who had already begun their slow reconnaissance of the area and who were the "sole instigators of violence and war between [the] otherwise peaceful nations" around La Junta. These early Apache arrivals, certainly Faraones, could have been advising or aiding Tobosos, or they could have been there simply to observe what possibilities lay beyond the Rio Grande; either

way, Tobosos were already sharing the method behind sophisticated raiding and attacks with Apaches as early as 1693.²⁹

Of course, Tobosos, unlike the New Mexico Puebloans, never defeated the Spanish outright. Rather, just as would be the case in Lafora's day, they forced themselves into the vast imperial economy that the Spanish brought and forcibly concentrated new wealth into indigenous territoriality. It helped that they had a sizable haven to fall back on. Sierra y Osorio noted that the Bolsón de Mapimí was a

"land that is rough and high impenetrable to Spaniards owing to its thick underbrush and aridity. There are no known creeks or rivers there and the Indians appear to live off of *a few lagoons and stagnant ponds*. It is thought that they feed on fruits, roots, and the bark of plants and trees. [...] Entering their country is treacherous and we have little advantage."³⁰

Sierra y Osorio's assessment of the ruggedness and aridity of the Bolsón de Mapimí was, already by now, a familiar refrain that reached back through the sixteenth century. What makes his account useful, however, is the mention of lagoons and stagnant ponds; this is an important clue about how indigenous insurgents thrived. Some of these water sources were almost surely *playas*, temporary ponds or lakes formed in the depressions of flat, desert terrain immediately following rainfall. Berroterán noticed similar features across the northern reaches of the Bolsón when he attempted to reach La Junta de los Ríos from presidio San Juan Bautista in 1729.³¹

²⁹ Hackett, 223-225, 391-397.

Anderson, 116 for the case that Apaches had been incorporating Bolsón groups into Apachería since the mid-1600s, through ethnogenesis.

Deeds (2003), 97.

³⁰ Hackett, 222, emphasis mine.

³¹ Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974): 55.

In mid-April of 1729, Berroterán had been attempting to blaze a trail for more than three months, one month of which had been spent solely on trying to navigate up the canyon-cluttered banks of the Rio Grande. He was in the ecotonal zone where the Bolsón de Mapimí and the Trans-Pecos overlap. Although reports of an elusive and dangerous group of enemy Apaches were regularly fed to him by his spies, Berroterán chose to ignore them. He was already in crisis mode. His supplies were low and he could not really consider martial engagement that could cost him men and resources. Rather, he snatched up any rumor of water that floated his way. He sent wave after wave of Native spies out to locate watering sources—*ojos*, or *playas*. Soon the subject of water came to dominate the final entries of his diary. Berroterán survived this terrain and kept his lagging expedition from expiring by drawing enough moisture from only five ponds, or troughs, spaced not less than ten miles apart. Just before he quit his mission, Berroterán was forced to dart from pond to pond, and he depended on these *playas* for his redemption from the harsh aridity of the Bolsón.³²

As he retreated south, Berroterán ventured deeper into the Mapimí as opposed to swinging out east into Coahuila as was the custom. It is unclear why he chose this route, unless it was to avoid facing certain officials in Coahuila whom he had spurned when they had earlier tried to recall him to help battle Native groups in the area. Regardless of his reasoning, Berroterán's need grew greater the longer he stayed in the Bolsón. On the retreat, scout after scout left the troop to find water; they traipsed over leagues of the Chihuahuan Desert, dodging agave and bridging arroyos while their own gourds began to dry and crack. Eventually, somewhere southeast of present-day Big

³² José de Berroterán, 13 January to 22 May 1729, 13, Diario de la expedición, Legajo 52, Parte 1, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Bend National Park, five out of seven of these scouts collapsed, unable to carry on and resigned to death. The texture of arid soil and the sight of rugged peaks must have bit at their last remaining drops of moisture and hope. Berroterán hastily organized a rescue for these invaluable scouts, but he himself might have endured a similar fate had it not been for a stroke of incredible luck. Near the Sierras Animas (a southern part of the larger Sierra del Carmen just inside the eastern border of the Bolsón) he found immense *playas*, formed when hail filled the large depressions in the land and then melted into water. Berroterán took no chances on perhaps finding more water or losing more men; amazingly, he was able to provision his troop with enough water to last for another 100 leagues (260 miles). *Playas* saved this *entrada* from certain death.³³

Eighteen years after Berroterán, and sixty-four after Sierra y Osorio, Captain Fermín de Vidaurre remarked upon the same landscape, tasked as he was with renewing the quest for a route up the Rio Grande to La Junta de los Ríos. He too noticed these *playas* and made good use of them to resupply his troop. Vidaurre had set out from Presidio Mapimí in the winter of 1747, no doubt hoping to avoid the heat of spring and summer and to take advantage of any snowfall that might occur as a source of moisture that would not evaporate quickly. Still, the journey was difficult. He stuck to basically the same route as Berroterán had, keeping as close to the edge of the Bolsón de Mapimí as he could as he hustled northeast to the presidio Santa Rosa, thence on to the northwest towards La Junta. The snow that was meant to keep him from drying out also blockaded him at certain junctures and prolonged the route. By the time December

³³ Berroterán, 17 April 1748, *Informe*.

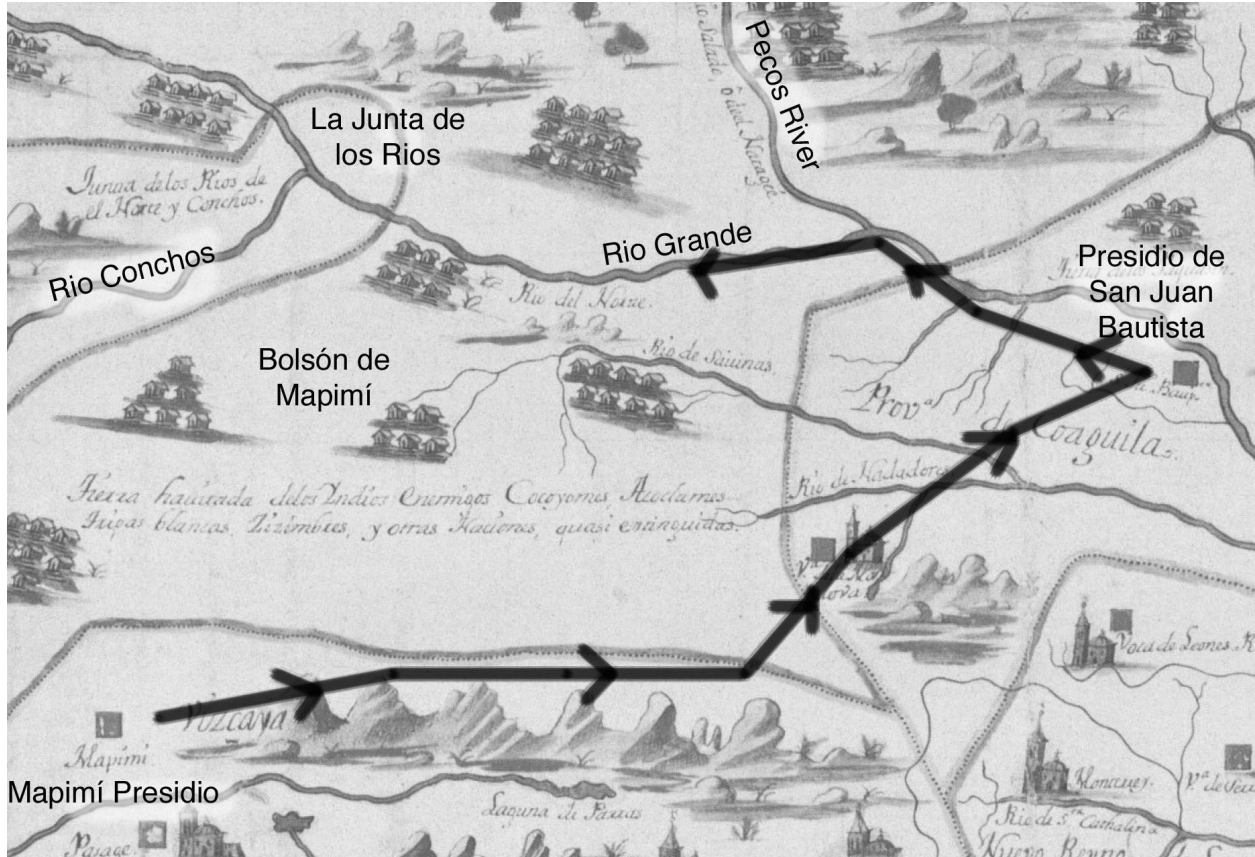
came the expedition was a month old and attempting to negotiate the massive ranges of the Sierras del Burro and Carmen that had blocked Berroterán.³⁴

Vidaurre did not clearly record the distances and directions he traveled, probably owing to the fact that he so often had to serpentine around mountains and cliffs. At the end of 1747, on December 31, he was probably somewhere on the eastern face of the Sierra del Carmen. He had traveled westward for just over nine leagues that day (twenty-four miles), over over hills choked with *Agave lechuguilla* until he came to a *playa* that had formed in the broad depression of an arroyo bed. There, rainwater had puddled from a winter storm. If there was any question about the water's potability, Vidaurre was answered by the presence of Mescalero wickiups—this had been an Apache *ranchería* just days earlier. Two days later Vidaurre had made little progress picking through the canyons and narrow mountain passes when he chanced upon two more *playas* where rainwater had also collected and where there was also evidence of a *ranchería*, just days old. Most of the subsequent details of Vidaurre's expedition are not entirely relevant to an historical discovery of *playas*, especially given the captain's inexactitude about his location at any given time. Suffice to say, he encountered many snowy puddles from which he watered his troop in the course of his march.³⁵

³⁴ Fermín Vidaurre, December to February 1747-1748, Diario de la expedición de don Fermín de Vidaurre, Legajo 52, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

It is difficult to identify habitation sites for Mescaleros in the Bolsón de Mapimí because the Spanish did not visit the majority of their *rancherías*, and only gave poor descriptions of the locations and characteristics of those that they did happen unto. v. Deni J. Seymour, "Distinctive Places, Suitable Spaces: Conceptualizing Mobile Group Occupational Duration and Landscape Use" *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 13:3 (2009) for a general discussion regarding the challenges and pathways to identifying and analyzing landscape usage by nomadic groups.



Map 21: The Probable Route of Vidaurre in 1747, and Berroterán in 1729.

Francisco Alvarez Barreiro, "Plano Corográfico de Las Provincias Del Nuevo México, 1728."

One detail remains, however, that helps establish the relationship between Apaches and *playas*. About one week after he left the wickiups on the *playa*, Vidaurre was spending most of his time traveling north and south in his search for water and a suitable path westward. Eventually he got word from a scout that there was a treacherous mountain pass that would allow him to continue towards La Junta about 9 leagues off, but that there was a sizable gathering of Apaches near it. Vidaurre, although gladdened at the thought of escaping from the labyrinthine mountains, hesitated at the news of a *ranchería* nearby. He advanced cautiously and brought his expedition to a full halt more than ten miles from the Apaches; he then sent ahead a

lieutenant with a small escort of soldiers to learn the mood of the gathering and to parlay. Vidaurre had some cause to believe that this might not be an amiable encounter: he had had over twenty-five horses taken from his troop only days before and everyone suspected that Apaches were responsible; earlier in December, the omnipresent threat of *rancherías* proved so unnerving that a small portion of the troop—*vecinos* from Saltillo—had abandoned the enterprise rather than risk combat.³⁶

In the end, the lieutenant's report was favorable and the Spanish were welcomed in peace, and these Apaches exchanged perfunctory greetings with them. These Mescaleros went so far as to offer themselves as scouts for the Spanish...to help them out of the area all the more quickly. Theirs was a *ranchería* of about 250 Mescaleros about 40 leagues (104 miles) to the west of the last sighting of *playas* and wickiups, probably somewhere between the Sierra del Carmen and the Chisos Mountains. The leader of the *ranchería*, an elder named Luz, who looked to be about eighty years old and was wrapped in a fine bison skin, told them that neighboring Apache peoples were aggressive and bellicose, possessed harquebuses, and also ate agave. Vidaurre did not waste time in leaving the *ranchería* on the next day and putting over 25 miles between him and this area. He wove his way through hills covered in *Agave lechuguilla* and drank from *ojos* and *playas* with his Mescalero guides. Two weeks later he had been successfully escorted out of the area and appeared at La Junta de los Ríos.³⁷

This *ranchería* had enjoyed much company; from all around in the basins and crevices of the mountains "thick smoke" wafted up, surrounding Vidaurre's position and

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* The location of the *ranchería* can be inferred by the fact that immediately after leaving it Vidaurre went to the Animas Mountains, a subset of the Sierra del Carmen on its southern tip.

pointing to the presence of many more *rancherías* with hundreds more Mescaleros. There can be little doubt that these Apaches knew about the *playas* that Vidaurre had visited, and probably utilized them regularly as they cycled through habitation sites all around the Bolsón de Mapimí and its periphery. These Apaches dwelt in close proximity to the *playas*, probably less than fifty miles. The fact that Vidaurre encountered Apaches in the Sierra del Carmen and not at the *playas* themselves only suggests that these Mescaleros had moved on from the locations either because it suited them or because they wanted to make sure that any meeting with the Spanish captain occurred in a setting of their choosing—specifically, deep within the mountains where the Spanish would be on unfamiliar ground and where Apaches already controlled defensible heights.

The recurring mention of life-saving *playas* suggest that pockets of water dotted the Bolsón de Mapimí, and that the Spanish designation of it as a *desplorado* is unfounded and misleading. These *playas* were numerous and sufficient enough to support *rancherías* and to nourish large Spanish retinues. Recent surveys of the Bolsón de Mapimí Biosphere, a small subset of the larger Bolsón located near the center of the region, suggest that *playas* cover at least 24% of the biosphere's 664 square miles. The area of the entire Bolsón is a topic of debate, with various geographers coming to radically different conclusions based on the ecological vectors from which measurements are made, but the range appears to be 50,000 to 59,500 square miles. Mean annual rainfall is about eleven inches—lower than the Middle Rio Grande Valley by

two inches, or 15%—and the majority of precipitation occurs from July to September, during monsoons.³⁸

There are four limitations, however, that should be understood before we overhydrate the Bolsón with *playas*. First, within the Bolsón there was nothing comparable to the Pecos River watershed, with its mountain-spring tributaries that stretched out eastward across the Trans-Pecos; that part of the Chihuahuan Desert was a relative mesopotamia in comparison to the Bolsón. Second, although the plentiful Rio Conchos was accessible from the Bolsón, the mountain ranges which form the westward border of the Bolsón de Mapimí also constituted the absolute eastward barrier of the river. Tributaries for the Conchos came from the west and flowed east into the main body of water, but the Rio Conchos itself had no way to cross the Sierra Madre and enter the Bolsón. For Mescaleros, travel to the Rio Conchos necessarily included an elevated risk of meeting, and confronting, the Spanish. Third, the Rio Grande watershed cannot be considered part of the hydrology of the Bolsón de Mapimí, except for minor and seasonal tributaries that barely extended from within the ecotonal zones between the Bolsón de Mapimí and the Rio Grande. Finally, these *playas* were, by their very nature, seasonal ponds, filled only during the occurrence of rainfall. The Bolsón de Mapimí provided sufficient water resources to support Tobosos, Tarahumaras, and Mescaleros, but in comparison to the Trans-Pecos, it presented a reduced abundance.

³⁸ Carlos Montaña, "A Floristic-Structural Gradient Related to Land Forms in the Southern Chihuahuan Desert," *Journal of Vegetation Science* 1:5 (1990): 669.

Water Resources in New Mexico: Occurrence, Development, and Use, New Mexico State Engineer Office, Comp. (Santa Fe: State Planning Office, 1967): 2.

David J. Morafka, "An Interdisciplinary Definition of North America's Chihuahuan Desert: Is It Desirable and Obtainable?" *Yearbook. Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers* 15 (1989): 27, 31.

Matias Romero, "Mexico," *Journal of American Geographical Society of New York* 28:4 (1896): 331.

Nevertheless, these *playas* were oases, and Mescaleros adjusted their transhumant mobilities to take advantage of the endorheic basin's most common water source. *Playas* filled whenever there was a storm over the basin floor during the summer monsoon season, or whenever rainclouds broke over a mountain and the runoff rushed out through alluvial fans, into bajadas, and into the beds of arroyos (which comprise another 54% of the land area in the biosphere). Granted, it would have been more work for Mescaleros to watch for rain and to reach the sites of precipitation than it was to camp at a river's edge, but over time the locations of major *playas* and the probability and timing of their seasonal filling would have become intuitive cultural knowledge. The success of Mescaleros in dominating the Bolsón strongly suggests that they developed a detailed calendar and cartography, probably in part because they already had some knowledge of *playas* from their time in the Central Close Basin, east of the Jornada del Muerto, where similar ponds are spread out over that endorheic basin's floor and can be as deep as twenty feet. Between the time that Berroterán first noted an Apache presence in 1748 until the first clear signs of difficulty communicated by fray Lezaún and Lafora in 1760 and 1766, respectively, Mescaleros had almost an entire generation to learn the Bolsón de Mapimí without much fear of attack. The internal topography and passes of the Bolsón were almost wholly unknown to the Spanish because of their insistence on only traveling the peripheries. Sierra y Osorio called them "stagnant ponds," but he could not have been more wrong about what

actually existed there. Tobosos and Mescaleros certainly knew better, as did Berroterán and Vidaurre and anyone else who frequented *playas*.³⁹

Once these *playas* filled with water, there is good reason to believe that the water remained long enough to support micro-ecologies at the edge of the pond. The key to understanding how this occurs comes from a knowledge of soil types (edaphic profiles) and xeric grass species. The edaphic profile of desert landscapes contains mostly aridisols. Aridisols have little organic material in them, and they sometimes drain quickly because of their high sand content, but just as often there exist within them properties that retain enough water to support desert grasses. Aridisols are differentiated into two sub-types: argids and orthids. Argids contain a strata of clay within the soil, while orthids can form hard layers of caliche near the surface if mineral levels (e.g. calcium) are high enough. Both aridisol types allow for some percolation of water into aquifers below, but if water hits the surface at speed, or in overwhelming volumes, then the sudden presence of so much moisture creates a semi-dense strata that can keep *playas* filled for weeks. The presence of *playa* waters would have produced two benefits. First and foremost, Mescaleros would have immediately enjoyed stores of potable, if alkaline, water from which they could hydrate themselves and their animals.⁴⁰

Second, we now know that grasses like Tobosa (*Hilaria mutica*) and Buffalo Grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) grow along the margins, and thrive during both wet and dry

³⁹ Montaña, 669.

Edward R. Meyer, "Late-Quaternary Paleocology of the Cuatro Cienegas Basin, Coahuila, Mexico," *Ecology* 54:5 (1973): 982, 994.

Water Resources in New Mexico, 99.

⁴⁰ O.W. Archibald, *Ecology of World Vegetation* (New York: Chapman & Hall, 1995): 100.

cf. Michael E. Whalen, *Settlement Patterns of the Western Hueco Bolson* (El Paso: University of Texas at El Paso Press, 1978): 4, for a discussion of the loamy soils around El Paso del Norte and the presence of *playas* there, in addition to rocky "tanks" that store rainwater.

periods. These grasses would have been a nutritious foodstuff for cattle and horses, or the errant bison herd. *Hilaria mutica* is a perennial grass that, if faced with drought situations, automatically slows down rates of photosynthesis and transpiration, thereby conserving water, to the point that it becomes dormant. Vidaurre likely pastured his horses in stands of Tobosa while he skirted the Bolsón de Mapimí and drank from the pools of water that had collected in the bottomland clay (argids) sites, where *Hilaria mutica* was and is a climax species—meaning that its prominence within the flora of the micro-environment was an inevitability. Tobosa has the added advantage of being a rhizomatous grass. The roots of Tobosa are composed of many rhizomes—subterranean shoots that extend outward from the mother plant until available moisture and germination can produce another instance of the grass. This root structure gives Tobosa the ability to capture and protect moisture underground, even when there is only a light shower near a *playa* that is not sufficient to fill the depression. Typically, water from the light rain “runs-on” into the *playa* and percolates into the ground before the center of the depression can be attained. But that is actually a benefit for Tobosa because the underground, rhizomatous roots stand in the path of the water and take it up without the risk of evapotranspiration. The end result is that this grass is successful at the edge of *playas* when it floods (taking up water as any grass would); in times of light rain (when its root systems capture percolated water); and in times of drought (when it becomes dormant to survive).⁴¹

⁴¹ Leon F. Neuenschwander, Steven H. Sharrow, and Henry A. Wright, “Review of Tobosa Grass (*Hilaria mutica*),” *The Southwestern Naturalist* 20:2 (1975): 257.

Steven M. Wondzell, Joe M. Cornelius, Gary L. Cunningham, “Vegetation Patterns, Microtopography, and Soils on a Chihuahuan Desert *Playa*,” *Journal of Vegetation Science* 1:3 (1990): 409-410.

Ernesto Vega & Carlos Montaña, “Spatio-Temporal Variation in the Demography of a Bunch Grass in a Patchy Semiarid Environment,” *Plant Ecology* 175:1 (2004): 107-108, 113.

Buchloe dactyloides is not as successful at tolerating drought as *Hilaria mutica*, but it is still remarkably drought-resistant, and its presence is noted all around the Bolsón de Mapimí even today. Like Tobosa, Buffalo grass is a perennial, but its root system is stoloniferous, meaning that it too grows by means of shoots that travel aboveground. Whereas Tobosa grows well at the edges of *playas*, Buffalo grass appears to do well towards the center of the depression, where it can collect more surface water through its above-ground roots. During the monsoon season, when the *playas* fill in for weeks at a time, Buffalo grass has adapted to survive even when submerged, showing signs of growth even when it emerges from water after as much as a year.⁴²

Both *Hilaria mutica* and *Buchloe dactyloides* are nutritious grasses, yielding enough protein, calcium, and phosphorus for horses and cattle to live on, although protein levels in times of long drought are usually substandard. *Hilaria mutica*, when tested in the Jornada del Muerto between summer and winter of 1962 and 1963, yielded an average of just more than 8% of its biomass as protein—an excellent figure, while *Buchloe dactyloides* yielded almost 7% during a sample taken from the Llano Estacado from the winter of 1962 until the spring of 1964. When Mescaleros regularly visited their *rancherías* around *playa* sites, or when the Spanish periodically stopped at the same locations along the edges of the Bolsón, they also helped propagate these grass species through the act of grazing. Both Tobosa and Buffalo grass perform reasonably

⁴² Irene M. Mueller & J.E. Weaver, "Relative Drought Resistance of Seedlings of Dominant Prairie Grasses," *Ecology* 23:4 (1942): 397.

Thomas R. Van Devender & Tony L. Burgess, "Late Pleistocene Woodlands in the Bolsón de Mapimí: A Refugium for the Chihuahuan Desert Biota?" *Quaternary Research* 24 (1985): 349.

Hugh G. Porterfield, "Survival of Buffalo Grass Following Submersion in *Playas*," *Ecology* 26:1 (1945): 99.

well when there is little or no grazing, but with regular, semi-intensive grazing, the number of plants increases and covers a wider space. Only during years of prolonged drought and heavy grazing would Mescaleros have contributed to a serious diminishment of the micro-environment.⁴³

The only question that remains is what Mescaleros used for carbohydrates, but the answer is straight forward and simple. The Bolsón de Mapimí is firmly understood to be the geographic center of the Chihuahuan Desert. *Agave lechuguilla*, or mescal, is what is known as an “indicator species” of the Chihuahuan Desert, meaning that populations of this succulent are coterminous with the ecological area of the desert. Vidaurre alone, during his 1747-1748 trek, mentioned stands of agave nearly ten times—a high figure, and more than any other topographical attribute, except water. Later, in the early winter of 1782, Colonel Juan de Ugalde led over 300 soldiers and Lipanes auxiliaries into the Bolsón de Mapimí with one month’s worth of supplies. Two months later his troop returned, arriving at the presidio of Guajoquilla; their overstay of one month would have spelled their demise had it not been for *Agave lechuguilla*. Ugalde also reported that he had found twenty-nine *rancherías* and many more springs during his trek over (by his calculation) about three-quarters of the Bolsón. Mescal populations were just as prolific in the Bolsón as they were in the Trans-Pecos. Mescaleros would

⁴³ Neuenschwander et al., 258, 260.

J. Daniel Rodgers & Thadis W. Box, “Seasonal Protein Content of Four Southern Mixed Prairie Grasses,” *Journal of Range Management* 20:3 (1967): 177.

C.E. Fisher, P.T. Marion, “Continuous and Rotation Grazing on Buffalo and Tobosa Grassland,” *Journal of Range Management* 4:1 (1951): 49.

Jerry Holechek, et al., “Moderate and Light Cattle Grazing Effects on Chihuahuan Desert Rangelands,” *Journal of Range Management* 56:2 (2003): 138-139.

have been well at home in the cultivation and roasting of its leaves and fluorescing peduncle, or stalk.⁴⁴

Playas occurred over a vast territory wherever rainfall occurred, forming in depressions over plains and in arroyo beds. From their *rancherías* situated on basin floors or atop mountain ranges, the storm showers that produce *playas* would have been visible for miles around. In all likelihood, though, Mescaleros did not need simply to watch and wait for rain to appear on the horizon. The fact that their documented presence in the Bolsón reaches back at least to 1683 strongly suggests that seasonal patterns of precipitation, and the location of wide depressions, would have become common cultural knowledge, and *rancherías* would have been situated nearby these hospitable sites to anticipate the moisture. These miniature oases supported ecological micro-communities capable of providing water to small nomadic groups and their livestock, with the added benefit that the edges of *playas* nurtured pastures of Tobosa and Buffalo grass upon which protein-rich ungulates grazed. The bunches of *Agave lechuguilla* that littered the desert floor and the foothills of the Bolsón de Mapimí provided more than enough carbohydrates to a people who had been accustomed to roasting peduncles and stalks from their residence in the Trans-Pecos. This was as far from a *despoblado* as the Trans-Pecos was. In geopolitical terms, the Bolsón de Mapimí

⁴⁴ Morafka, 24.

Esteban H. Muldavin, "Some Floristic Characteristics of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert: A Search for its Northern Boundary," *Taxon* 51:3 (2002): 458.

Pedro Luis Valverde, et al. "Numerical Analyses of Vegetation Based on Environmental Relationships in the Southern Chihuahuan Desert," *The Southwestern Naturalist* 41:4 (1996): 425.

Vidaurre .

Juan de Ugalde, 26 March 1783, Relación de las Campañas del Coronel Juan de Ugalde contra los Apaches Mescaleros [sic], Legajo 29, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

Basehart, 30-33.

v. Chapter 4, *infra*, for a review of the high nutritional load of this plant and the means of its cultivation.

provided sufficient resources for Apachería to thrive and to turn the ethno-utilitarian discourse of Spanish imperialism on its head. More practically speaking, the migration into the Bolsón and the particular usage of resources represents continuity with the previous one hundred years of expansion. Mescaleros still maintained access to the granaries of El Paso del Norte and La Junta de los Ríos, but now they also added the *haciendas* and *ranchos* of the Rio Conchos valley to Bolsón de Mapimí *playas* and basins.

By 1771, Colonel Hugo de O’Conor, the newly-appointed military commander of Chihuahua (Nueva Vizcaya), was perfectly situated to provide a sweeping look at what Mescalero Apachería looked like from the Bolsón de Mapimí. O’Conor was part of a vanguard of high-level administrators who were implementing sweeping imperial reforms, known as the Bourbon Reforms, handed down from Madrid. The Bourbon dynasty had ascended the Spanish throne in 1700 and had immediately begun to reform the empire that they inherited from their Hapsburg predecessors, but it was not until 1770s that King Carlos III addressed the problem of overly-centralized authority under the viceroy in Mexico City, and the lack of efficient policies for the disparate northern provinces of New Spain. Five years after O’Conor’s first observations, the new system would, in 1776, provide for a new administrative structure called “Provincias Internas” that replaced the older notion of ‘provinces.’ In this scheme, authority concentrated in the hands of local governors, but instead of reporting to the viceroy far to the south, these officials were now responsible to an intendant—a kind of sub-viceroy—who was primarily concerned with the security and welfare of the northern frontier. The

intendant was responsible to the king alone. The basic idea was that the administrative body of the northern frontier needed to be more agile and independent so that it could quickly form policies that were suited to the stressors imposed by Apache, Comanche, and British factors.⁴⁵

The royal court in Madrid and the viceroyalty in Mexico City had long known of the calamitous state of their empire along the northern frontier. Accounts by military men like O'Connor drove home just how narrowly the Spanish were maintaining their hold on this region. O'Connor himself was aghast that Nueva Vizcaya had been gripped by almost continuous war for almost twenty-three years, since 1748 (not coincidentally, when Berroterán made his now-infamous prognostication about Mescalero exploitation of the Bolsón de Mapimí). The Rio Conchos watershed, and all of the struggling *haciendas* that Lafora had visited five years earlier, had fallen deeper into ruin and exploitation. Large estates at Encinillas and all along the approach to the Valle de San Bartolomé (near Parral) had been ruined, their elite families displaced and many of *vecinos* and laborers left dead in the fields or on the roads. Just recently, near Ciudad Chihuahua, Mescaleros had attacked and taken nearly six hundred horses and killed almost a dozen men. Even more alarming than these cases for O'Connor, the reach of these attacks was becoming longer and sometimes penetrated down almost to Durango, deep within the empire. This news came in addition to that of the north being as precarious as ever. El Paso del Norte, the erstwhile *villa* of Nueva Vizcaya and closest settlement to the Middle Rio Grande Valley, had not escaped the clutches of these pandemic assaults. Sometime in 1771 Apaches had raided there from the Bolsón

⁴⁵ Jones, 117-118, 150.

de Mapimí and had seized up to 1,000 head of cattle, horses, and mules, and killed seven men. O'Connor included with his account a five-page list of 28 *haciendas*, 23 *ranchos*, and many mission and pueblos, all on the brink of ruin or already destroyed. O'Connor, proceeding with this litany of examples, at one point apologized to the viceroy for burdening him with the details of so many attacks and the casualties involved, but he stressed the important fact that Mescalero depredations occurred on a daily basis and that they acted with near impunity. Colonel O'Connor lamented that presidials seemed impotent in their ability to halt the attacks.⁴⁶

Seventeen years later, in 1788, the violence that washed over the province had crested. Esteban Lorenzo, the bishop of Durango, likely shuddered when he perceived that the predictions of Berroterán in 1748 had come true with a vengeance and that Apachería had encroached into Nueva Vizcaya, virtually unchecked. He blamed an underfunded military and an ever-shifting presidio line for the fact that Mescaleros enjoyed a vast area that was over 1,500 miles east to west, and 780 miles north to south—a suspiciously large territory of over one million square miles. Lorenzo's high estimation of Mescalero space stems from the fact that he counted the area of the Bolsón in addition to raided places as part of Apachería, and because he conflated Gileños with Mescaleros. His focus was, nevertheless, trained upon Mescaleros. In the years since Rubí's inspection, he lamented that Mescaleros had streamed like waves

⁴⁶ Hugo de O'Connor to the Viceroy, 6 September 1788, Durango, Copy of letter written on 20 December 1771, made by the secretary at Durango, on the deplorable state of the province, the cruelty of the Indians and total desertions of the *haciendas*, in the Apache war that began in 1748, Legajo 1363, Civil, AGN, CSWR.

Deeds (2003), 187.

It should not come as a surprise that Mescaleros had managed to pierce as far south as Durango, and to approach the heartland of New Spain. Hämäläinen made similar claims about Comanche war parties raiding from north of the Rio Grande to within 150 miles of Mexico City, in 1846. What is surprising, however, is that Mescaleros achieved the same thing at least fifty-eight years earlier. Hämäläinen, 221.

across the Sierra Grande and the Rio Conchos and that the Bolsón de Mapimí had become a “wide open door that was left for them to approach the *haciendas* stealthily, so they could kill and rob with impunity.” Lorenzo chaffed that retaliation against these Apaches was made extremely difficult because they were in control of “the most rugged places” in the mountains, just as they had done since the seventeenth century, and because Mescaleros were every bit as expert in military matters as were the Spanish. The level of destruction had become so great that the once-great *villa* of Ciudad Chihuahua had become a sepulcher, filled with the *vecinos* and soldiers. In 1766 Lafora had described Ciudad Chihuahua as if it were a city under siege; in 1771 O’Conor noted its vulnerability to withering raids; by 1788 there seemed to be little left worth fighting for.⁴⁷

Almost 200 years earlier Ginés de Herrera Horta and Juan de Ortega stood in an office in Mexico City. Horta was an auditor and a legal advisor; Ortega was a cavalry captain; across the desk sat don Francisco de Valverde y Mercado, an investigator appointed by the then-viceoy. These were unremarkable meetings. Viceroy Zúñiga y Acevedo wanted to know more about the mysterious northern province that don Juan de Oñate had recently founded in the name of the Spanish King. Horta and Ortega both recited demographic figures and described agricultural types and yields. Speaking of the world beyond the pueblos, Horta stated that Puebloans customarily traded with “*Vaqueros*,” or “Apaches,” who moved about the prairies to the east. Ortega added that

⁴⁷ Esteban Lorenzo to the Viceroy, 1787, Informes del Obispo de Durango sobre el Estado de las Provincias de Nueva Vizcaya y Nuevo México, Legajo 1363, Civil, AGN, CSWR.

Esteban Lorenzo to the Viceroy, 9 September 1788, Informe sobre las Provincias Internas, Legajo 1363, Civil, AGN, CSWR.

scores of Apaches often bring meat, fat, and tallow to traded for maize and blankets at the fairs of Pecos and Taos pueblos. These *Vaqueros* stacked their trade goods on polls and attached those polls to little shaggy dogs. They came from 40 to 50 leagues (~100 to 130 miles) across the plains for the exchanges.⁴⁸

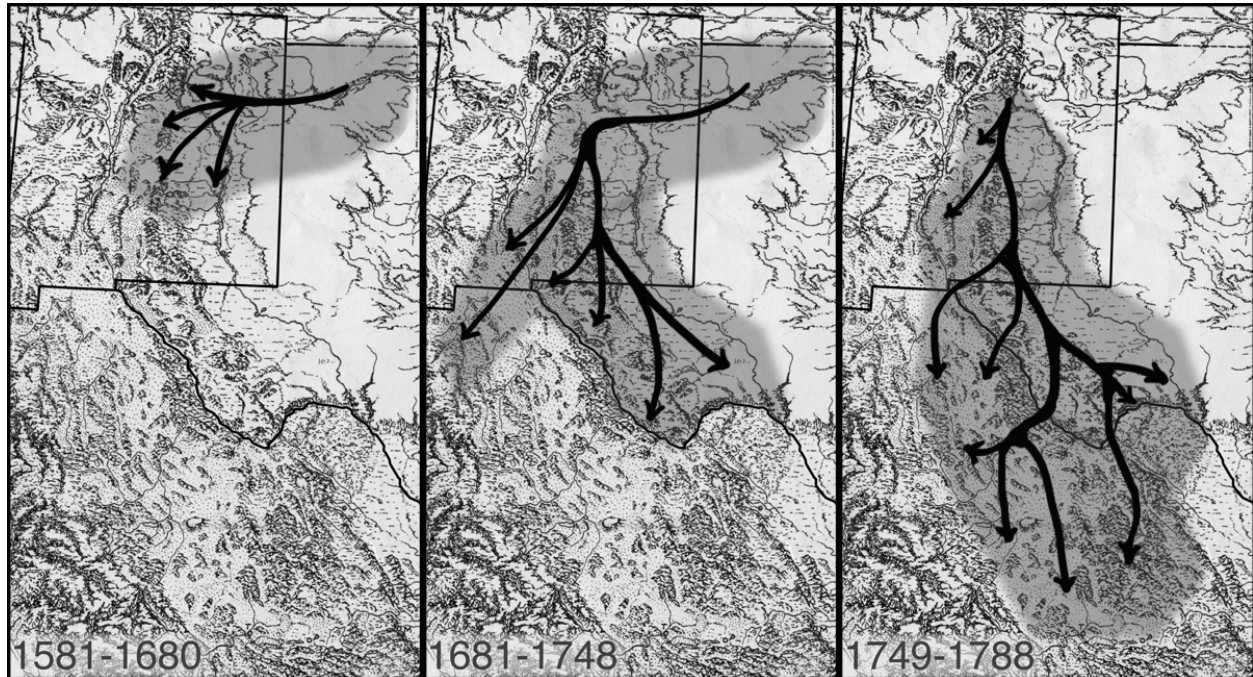
Valverde was unimpressed enough with this information that there is no evidence that the viceroy heard anything about it. After all, *Vaqueros* came off as transient people who ambled across the plains and the mesas over 1,400 miles away. Their lives and their choices seemed immaterial to larger colonial projects. In the intervening 187 years, however, *Vaqueros*, then Faraones and Natagés and Mescaleros closed much of that gap. In terms of physical distance, they shaved off about two thirds. By the time Hugo de O'Connor supplied information to the viceroy again in 1788, Mescaleros were banging on the walls at Durango, just 500 miles from Mexico City. Geopolitically, the gap had narrowed even further. The Chihuahuan Desert that had seemed a barrier to Espejo, Oñate, Otermín, Dominguez, Vargas, Berroterán, Vidaurre, LaFora, and O'Connor had revealed itself to be a highway. But those lands, that had once appeared so irrelevant to the structure of empire that the Spanish turned away almost as soon as they glanced, had been revealed as a highway. Through the Chihuahuan Desert, Apaches supplied and sheltered themselves, and found a beautifully tuned passive-weapon to complement the very active weapon that they exercised through their emergent territorialities.

⁴⁸ *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, George P. Hammond, trans. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953): 647, 660.

Conclusion: Desertification and Mescalero Counter-Territoriality

Ninety-nine, sixty-eight, thirty. Those are the number of years that it took for Faraones and Mescaleros to impose their socio-political territory—Apachería—over the eastern Middle Rio Grande Valley, the Trans-Pecos, and the Bolsón de Mapimí. In the early days of New Mexico, from 1581 to 1660, Faraones fed parasitically off of the imperial economy that was centered out of Santa Fe and fed by the Franciscan mission supply service. By the time that Governor Antonio de Otermín was fleeing south towards El Paso del Norte in 1680, Apachería stretched from the area of Pecos pueblo down through the Jornada del Muerto, to the point where the Rio Grande turns southeast towards the Gulf of Mexico. During the next 68 years, from 1680 until 1748, Faraones doubled the length of the Rio Grande over which they held court. They breached the Hueco Bolsón, counter-claimed La Junta de los Ríos from the Spanish and Jumanos, and consolidated their hold over the Pecos River. In the process of meeting, destroying, and adopting indigenous desert groups (like Jumanos and Sumas) they altered their political economy enough that these Apaches of the Pecos and lower Rio Grande came to be known by new names: Natagé or Mescalero. Since 1683 Faraones had begun to use La Junta as a way-station to travel up the Rio Conchos, where they learned from Tobosos and their century-old war in Nueva Vizcaya. Over the course of the next 30 years, from 1748 until 1788, they filled the Bolsón de Mapimí and colonized its *playa* sites and its basins. The momentum with which Apachería expanded only seemed to

increase over time, and in 1788 O’Conor and Lorenzo might have feared that Mescaleros’ preeminence over the geopolitical landscape would soon reach into the innermost sanctums of New Spain.



Map 22: The Progression of Faraon and Mescalero Apacherías, 1581-1788. First panel: Middle Rio Grande Valley and southern Great Plains, 1581-1680; second panel: Trans-Pecos, 1681-1748; third panel: Bolsón de Mapimí, 1749-1788 (note that by this time the southern Great Plains had fallen to Comanchería, and far central-west had become Gileño territory).

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Nevertheless, those eight Mescaleros, trailing 200 families behind them, arrived at El Paso del Norte in 1787. They petitioned for an audience with Captain Domingo Díaz. They asked for a truce; for peace; for an *establecimientos de paz*. Mescaleros had asked for peace before, had won it, and had flouted it. Díaz likely thought he was going through the motions of a fairly well-established routine. He could not have known

that this time was different, that something had changed, and that the borderlands were about to take on a new geopolitical complexion.¹

To understand motives of these Mescaleros at El Paso, we might ask ourselves how the Bolsón de Mapimí had changed over the previous two centuries. It is worth remembering that the violence that Lafora, O'Connor, and others recorded was more frequent and extensive than anything that Mescaleros had perpetrated since the turn of the eighteenth century. As such, Mescalero behavior in the Bolsón de Mapimí represents a startling alteration to their modes of engagement and competition from the decades before 1748. In the space of a generation a different calculus of risk-assessment and inter-ethnic competition had emerged. After 1740, and within the Bolsón, symbiotic bellicosity or the subtle manipulation of Spanish economic and political structures do not appear as popular strategies for competition. Yet there was something distinctly reminiscent of early seventeenth century New Mexico regarding the way history played out in the Bolsón. Mescaleros utilized high-risk, aggressive strategies like raiding and seizure much more often along the Rio Conchos and around the edges of the Bolsón, just as their Faraon kin had done around the Middle Rio Grande Valley before 1680. These older, but redeployed, strategies were every bit as high-risk as they were before 1694, and carried within them the threat that valuable community members would be killed or injured, that materials would be lost or ruined, or that the Spanish would make immediate or imminent reprisals which carried within them

¹ Matthew Babcock, "Rethinking the Establecimientos: Why Apaches Settled on Spanish-Run Reservations, 1786-1793," *New Mexico Historical Review* 84:3 (2009): 364.

Oakah L. Jones Jr., "Settlements and Settlers at La Junta de los Rios, 1759-1822," *Journal of Big Bend Studies* 3 (1991): 43-70: 56.

yet more threats to life and property. Bolsón Mescaleros either valued their martial and economic capabilities as superior to the Spanish—thus allowing for unchecked, reckless, and hawkish aggression, or these Apaches did not enjoy the same kind of elasticity and material wealth that allowed for mixed strategies of competition that were time-consumptive, yielded less, but that featured lower risk to persons and wealth. The causes of escalated violence reveal much about the denouement of Apachería and its symbol of the manifestation of expansive indigenous power.²

Apaches were never technologically superior to the Spanish—the Spanish always had more guns and at least some horses, even if Apaches had more horses, territory, and greater mobility. Mescaleros knew that open conflict was always a perilous and expensive enterprise that ran the risk of multiple casualties or loss of material. Rather, the ultimate causality behind increased raiding derives from three interrelated factors. First, and already mentioned, the offerings of the Bolsón were less abundant when compared to the Trans-Pecos, with fewer resource sites and marginally lower quality. In their efforts to supplement *playa*- and basin-based natural economies, Mescaleros had recourse to older granaries like those at El Paso, La Junta, and the Middle Rio Grande Valley, but at the loss of increased intra-Athapaskan competition. Bolsón Mescaleros would have had to cooperate, or compete, with Faraones—as they were still called to the north—who had never left the El Paso and Rio Grande areas, while Natagés—as they were still called to the northwest—had already engaged the Julimes pueblos. The next

² Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003): 6 for the idea of “mediated opportunism” as the “crossroads between cultural and environmental opportunism on the one hand and moral boundaries and biological barriers on the other.” This analytical construct could possibly be useful here, leaning more towards biological barriers and less to moral ones.

best supplementation would have been the Rio Conchos Valley and the *camino real*, with all the risk of encounter and conflict that came with it.

Second, when Mescaleros approached Spanish places deep within Nueva Vizcaya, they did so from a position of relatively greater resource-deficiency than their Faraon counterparts had done, and this circumstance narrowed the scope of available strategies. When Faraones had made the choice to practice symbiotic bellicosity (i.e. threatening, bargaining, negotiating) during the early 1700s, they did so because they could *de facto* afford to commit themselves to protracted encounters that would probably yield less material goods than what could be attained through raiding, but that came at significantly lower risk. Supported by backup granaries located across the northern rim of Nueva Vizcaya and within the mesopotamia that was the Trans-Pecos, Faraones possessed the means to cultivate and refine their modes of competition. Mescaleros did not have so many secondary sources of wealth to support their population while encounters played out. If bargaining failed, then the expenditure of time and resources would be a pure loss and potentially catastrophic to their economy. Bolsón Mescaleros accepted the high risks attendant to raiding-based competition because there was less guarantee of access to alternate wealth and because of the increased likelihood of deprivation.³

Third, Comanches had begun to exert renewed pressure on Faraones in the Middle Rio Grande Valley and on Lipanes and Natagés in what is today northwestern and central Texas by the 1750s. In New Mexico, Governor Tomás Vélez Cachupín began to see the tide turning during his administration (1749 to 1754). Cachupín

³ Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960): 22.

believed that Comanches had eclipsed Faraon Apaches to become the preeminent Native group in the region, and he consequently ameliorated violent encounters with Comanches in the hopes of promoting trade and peace while exhibiting a blasé attitude towards Apaches. When, in April of 1752, Comanches rode out from the *rio arriba* to raid a place called La Soledad del Rio Arriba for horses, a militia of *vecinos* immediately set out to punish attackers, losing one of their number in the process. When the *vecinos* returned to Taos with their comrade's corpse, the Comanches who were present in the area were not so much as questioned; quite the contrary, they were given armed escorts back to the Arkansas River Valley so that Jicarilla Apaches would not bother them on their way home. Later, when giving advice to his successor, Francisco Marín del Valle, Cachupín made it clear that Comanche safety, access, and interest must be privileged above that of Apaches and Utes should all three attend trade fairs at Taos at the same time. As for Apaches, Carlanas and Cuartelejos—the same groups who had petitioned for a presidio within the *rio arriba* in the 1720s—had been pushed south into the area of Pecos pueblo. Pecos pueblo and the Albuquerque-Belen Valley had been Faraon territories thirty years earlier; now, in a chain effect, Faraones had been pushed south, into the Jornada del Muerto and the Central Closed Basin to the east. Faraones were still formidable, and Cachupín saw them as a distinct threat, but they no longer wielded sufficient geopolitical clout to ensnare the Spanish.⁴

⁴ Tomás Vélez Cachupín to the Viceroy, 29 September 1752, in *The Plains Indians and New Mexico, 1715-1778: A Collection of Documents Illustrative of the History of the Eastern Frontier of New Mexico*, Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940): 120-124.

Tomás Vélez Cachupín to Francisco Marín del Valle, 1754, in *The Plains Indians and New Mexico*, Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., 135-139.

Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 249.

Albert H. Schroeder, *A Study of the Apache Indians* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974): 379.

The antecedent for Cachupín's favorable treatment of Comanches was a stinging defeat that the Spanish had inflicted upon them in what is today the Texas panhandle the year before. In that engagement the Comanche left hundreds of warriors dead on the field. The Comanches, thanks to trade linkages with the French, were often better equipped with firearms than the Spanish, and they must have thought that it was a rare day that the risk of hawkish play with New Mexico would come back to bite them. That day came, however, and the survivors were forced to pay the high price that came in the form of lost members, destroyed material wealth, and political humiliation. Comanches agreed to Governor Cachupín's peace, but then immediately turned their attention to the east, to Texas, and to the Lipanes relationship with the Spanish around San Antonio de Bejar. The sudden impact of Comanchería upon the Lipan Texas Edwards Plateau sent shockwaves into Apachería south and west, into the Trans-Pecos and, consequently, into the Bolsón de Mapimí.⁵

A detailed treatment of Comanche-Lipan relations in Texas does not belong to this analysis; the long series of threats, attacks, counter-attacks, and reversals before 1788 do not figure into a deep understanding of Mescalero Apachería and the Chihuahuan Desert. One episode, however, stands out as a turning point for Lipanes, and consequently for Natagés and Mescaleros. In 1749, after many years of incessantly raiding Spanish missions and haciendas, Lipan Apaches felt that the pressure exerted by Comanches and their allies from the southern Great Plains necessitated a change of strategy. Lipanes cemented peace with the Spanish at San Antonio and persuaded them to consider erecting a mission and presidio for them somewhere to the northwest.

⁵ Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008): 45-46. Anderson, 207-208.

Eight years later, in 1757, the Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá was established, just outside present-day Menard, Texas. Whereas Jicarilla had tried a similar tactic thirty years earlier in trying to entice the Spanish to set up a presidio north of Taos, Lipanes succeeded in attracting missionaries and presidials to their territory, where they felt they would be guaranteed added protection against the approaching hulk that was Comanchería. It was all for naught, however, and the following year, in 1758, thousands of Comanche and allied Native fighters stormed the mission and destroyed it. It appears that not even the Spanish could stand in the direct path of competing indigenous territorialities. Lipan Apachería was left in shambles, and the survivors fled south. They never regained meaningful control over central Texas or enjoyed broad access to the bison trade of the southern Great Plains. Virtually overnight a diaspora of Lipanes surged into the lower valleys of the Rio Grande and in to Coahuila, crowding the fringe Mescaleros–Natagés—who were already there.⁶

As Faraones from the Middle Rio Grande Valley moved south in a bid to temper the ferocity of Uto-Aztec competition, they joined their Mescalero cousins around the Rio Grande between the Trans-Pecos and the Bolsón. This crowding around El Paso del Norte helps explain why there had been an uptick in violence, since now Mescaleros from the Bolsón, Faraones from the Jornada del Muerto, and Gileños from the west now

⁶ Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67:2 (2010): 182.

Thomas A. Britten, *The Lipan Apaches: People of Wind and Lightning* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009): 103-106.

v. also Robert S. Weddle, *After the Massacre: The Violent Legacy of the San Sabá Mission* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007) for an analytical narrative of this event and the translated diary of the Spanish military commanders tasked with following up this debacle.

Anderson, 119-125.

vied for access to the same granary. When Lipanes moved south and west from Spanish Texas places like San Antonio de Bejar, they too brushed up against the edges of the Bolsón, but on the northwestern and western sides. The consequences of these forced, Comanche-prompted migrations were twofold:⁷

First, these displaced Athapaskans set off a chain reaction that pushed populations farther south, from the Middle Rio Grande Valley into the southern Trans-Pecos and thence into the Bolsón de Mapimí. As the tributaries of the Pecos River and the granaries of the Spanish receded into the northern horizon, new arrivals began to crowd the already marginal resources of the Bolsón and the southern Trans-Pecos. Different and more groups now vied for the same *playas* and pastures, and in the process they strained the ability of xeric-adapted, nomadic horse cultures to make the most out of the Chihuahuan Desert. The system began to overload, and every group suffered. Second, when Bolsón Mescaleros saw their ethnic or linguistic kin come down off of the southern Great Plains, they must have also realized that their access to the bison trade had been reduced if not eliminated.⁸

After access to bison meat via Faraon-Carlana or Lipan Apache lines had been choked by Comanche consolidation over the southern Great Plains, Mescaleros had to become increasingly creative in sourcing protein. Local production was problematic because pastoralism was more difficult in the Bolsón; there were too few pastures that were extensive or durable enough to grow herds comparable in size to those that had

⁷ For additional evidence of aggravated encounter around El Paso del Norte after 1750, v. "Diary of Pedro José de la Fuente: Captain of the Presidio of El Paso del Norte, January-July, 1765," James M. Daniel, trans. *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 60:2 (1956), & "Diary of Pedro José de la Fuente, Captain of the Presidio of El Paso del Norte, August-December, 1765," James M. Daniel, trans. *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 83:3 (1980).

⁸ Anderson, 127.

existed within the Trans-Pecos. Consequently, the importance of haciendas and ranchos as sources of protein grew, and soon overtook the resources provided by wild game and local husbandry. Cattle, goats, and sheep were just as sought after and important as ever, but it also appears that horseflesh became a prevalent item on the Mescalero menu.

“A piece of mule, *horse*, or deer is all the same to them [Apaches], but they prefer to steal mules and horses from the Spaniards, thereby assuring themselves of abundant food with less work than hunting.” Nicolás Lafora penned this faintly ethnographic observation in 1766, once he had finished surveying the wreckage that was Nueva Vizcaya all along the Rio Conchos. To Lafora, the thought of consuming horseflesh was abhorrent, and he likened it to rumors that Mescalero practiced cannibalism and forced Caesareans on captured women, only to perform infanticide on whatever there was of a fetus. Whether or not macabre violence like this actually occurred, or occurred regularly, is as difficult to prove as is the Apache butchering of horses. But the level of implied destruction inherent in Lafora’s observations dovetails with the hypothesis that the ecologies of the Bolsón de Mapimí did not offer Mescaleros the level of resource abundance required to sustain themselves as they had done in the centuries prior. Consequently, new ideas about what food could look like evolved, as did the strategies by which that food could be procured. Additionally, there are historical precedents for Apache consumption of horseflesh in the Chihuahuan Desert.⁹

⁹ *The Frontiers of New Spain; Nicolás de Lafora's Description, 1766-1768*, Lawrence Kinnaird, trans. (Berkeley: Quivira Society, 1958): 79, emphasis mine. Anderson, 123, 130.

All the way back in 1581, when Faraones—or ‘Vaqueros’ as they might have been called in the days of Rodriguez Chamuscado—were first becoming acquainted with the Spanish and their motley array of tools and animals, the consumption of horseflesh was already a developing practice. Sometime in the autumn of 1581, Francisco “Chamuscado” Sánchez led his group of three franciscans and nine soldiers on an investigation of the strange cows that they had heard reports of from Puebloans of the Rio Grande. The Spaniard’s curiosity was piqued, and they decided it would be a good idea to coerce a Puebloan to serve as a guide out onto the prairies. Soon they came across bison (probably somewhere around the Canadian River), and they carefully killed a few animals and butchered some meat before retreating back to the pueblos. Supplies were evidently low, however, and by the time they entered the Galisteo Basin the Spanish were starved of water and grain. In a pueblo that is now difficult to identify, they intimidated the Puebloans with the novelty of their harquebuses and proceeded to pilfer food from each of the three hundred houses.¹⁰

But in a moment of counter-discovery, some of their horses went missing. For the Spanish, this was a calamity. Horses were their principal means of transportation and these animals furnished immediate advantages of mobility and aggression over pedestrian Puebloans. Fearful of setting off a revolt, the Spanish treaded carefully but set out immediately to investigate. They soon came upon a pueblo that they called Malagón (probably San Lazaro of the Galisteo Basin) and found evidence of a slaughter. The horses were gone, and they probably would have been forgotten to the *entrada*’s diary, if the soldiers had not then conducted searches of the Puebloans’

¹⁰ Hernán Gallegos, 12 May 1602, Certified copy of the relation of the entrada made by Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado to New Mexico in June of 1581, Legajo 22, Parte 1, Patronato, AGI, CSWR.

rooms and found horseflesh inside one of them. Whereas the Spanish had just been learning about the edible fauna of the southern Great Plains, Puebloans were no less keen to learn about the value of the meat that could be gotten from these new visitors. The people of Pecos pueblo, about 30 miles east by north, would have learned of this experience immediately and shared it with their longtime Plains trading partners, Faraones.¹¹

After 1610, however, once the Spanish entrenched themselves among the pueblos, surveillance by colonists and domination by the Catholic Church appears to have quashed Puebloan experimentation with horseflesh. Faraones, for their part, probably experimented with it as well (although there is no direct primary documentation of this), but they likely confined their protein resources to bison and other wild game; for Apaches, horses' immediate value was in transportation and as trade commodities. Nonetheless, by the time Faraones began to breach into Nueva Vizcaya after the 1680 revolt, they would have again encountered a landscape where indigenous peoples experimented with horse consumption. Governor Sierra y Osorio noted in 1683 that Tobosos, raiding from within the Bolsón, were especially fond of seizing cattle and horses because of their value both as transportation and as food. *Maestre de Campo* Marín agreed with Sierra y Osorio a decade later when he noted that Tobosos and other raiders were fond of eating horses and mules as food. Marín was disgusted with the idea of eating horseflesh, and he could only imagine that Tobosos must be just as fond of cannibalism. Hyperbole aside, Marín and Sierra y Osorio both mentioned Apaches, whether at La Junta or at El Paso, as being conspicuously present throughout northern

¹¹ *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*, George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey trans. and eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press 1966): 91-97.

Nueva Vizcaya at this time. Observing their Toboso neighbors, and probably noting the absence of bison in the immediate area, it might have made excellent sense to Faraones that horses, being much faster than cattle when running, could be whisked away to guarded mountain havens before the Spanish could mount a reprisal. Once there, whatever horses that could not be traded, used for transport, or pastured could have been consumed rather than going to waste.¹²

Working around the campfire and the spits of their *rancherías*, Mescaleros who prepared and ate horse enjoyed a quality of nutrition that was similar to that provided by bison or beef. Consider the nutritional profiles of bison, beef, and horse based on a one pound raw steak from the thigh muscle, about 454 grams. The traditional protein source, *Bison bison*, yields up about 95 grams of protein and only 5.5 grams of fat. This protein load is nearly twice the amount that would be needed daily by an adult female or male; children require less. Male bison typically weigh between 1,200 and 2,000 pounds, and females between 700 and 1,200 pounds. Bones, viscera, and inedible parts aside, it is no wonder that these hulking mammals were such a nutritional boon to indigenous peoples, to say nothing of their commodity value in terms of hides, tallow, and horns. A similarly sized steak of beef provides comparable amounts of protein, about 94 grams, but much more fat: 13.5 to 21 grams per 454 grams (1 pound). Horse meat provides the lowest ratio of protein to fat, but even that margin is negligible. Per pound of raw horse steak there is about 90 grams of protein and 30 grams of fat.

¹² *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, Vol. II, Charles W. Hackett, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926): 221, 397.

Morris E. Opler, "Mescalero Apache" in *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. X, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983): 431.

Harry W. Basehart, *Apache Indians XII: Mescalero Apache Subsistence Patterns and Socio-Political Organization* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974): 29-30.

Nutritionally, these meats are comparable, and Mescaleros would have enjoyed similar benefits regardless of which they consumed.¹³

When Mescaleros defocused on the bison trade they found themselves cut off from a protein source that was free from countervailing Spanish competition. To defray the lost protein loads, these Bolsón Apaches intensified their seizure of cattle and horses from Spanish corrals and pastures along the Rio Conchos, El Paso, and eastward into Coahuila. From 1778 to 1787 alone, Mescaleros took almost 20,000 animals, and lost nearly 7,000 to the Spanish. Many of these animals were injured or killed in the course of this tug-of-war and represent millions of wasted calories, both in terms of potential protein and in the pastures upon which they grazed. Whatever remained of the equilibrium borne of symbiotic bellicosity vanished beneath the hooves of attacking Mescaleros and counter-attacking Spanish, and frenzied, violent competition signaled the reduction of the array of modalities that had typified competition from 1700-1730.¹⁴

As opportunities for the exploration of new strategies disappeared, the cost of over-exploitation landed on everyone's shoulders. Over time, Mescaleros lost hundreds of people and stores of material wealth as they raided and counter-invaded Spanish places from the 1750s through the 1780s, all for the purpose of retaining control over their shrinking and crowded Apachería, and in a bid to sustain populations that they had

¹³ M.J. Marchello, et al., "Nutrient Composition of Raw and Cooked Bison bison," *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* 2 (1989): 178-179.

Mary Meagher, "Bison bison," *Mammalian Species* 266 (1986): 1.

M.S. Rubio, et al., "Characterization of Beef *Semimembranosus* and *Adductor* Muscles from US and Mexican Origin," *Meat Science* 76 (2007): 440.

A. Badiani, et. Al., "Nutrient Profile of Horsemeat," *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* 10 (1997): 260.

¹⁴ Babcock, 383.

once enjoyed over ecosystems contiguous with the Great Plains. The Spanish, in turn, injected vast sums of capital (in the form of horses, guns, and salaries) and real, kinetic energy into the struggle to reassert their fantasy of imperial dominion, and to try to exterminate Apaches. Neither side seems to have realized it, but they had unwittingly set into motion the long-term deterioration of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem. The tools of empire that had been introduced to the Middle Rio Grande Valley with Oñate and his predecessors had allowed for unprecedented experimentation with the vectors of mobility and of competition. Horses and metal made the world a new place, and no one seemed to understand the limits of new means of production and heightened rates of consumption and waste. Two hundred years after Onate, the ecologies of the Chihuahuan Desert and its edge landscapes betrayed what those limits were to Apaches and Spanish alike in the context of profligate warfare, fire, and long-term drought.¹⁵

Colonel Juan de Ugalde was driven by a bloodlust for Mescalero lives and booty that was unrivaled in his time, or previously. He was, at once, a tireless and respected soldier as well as a duplicitous and vexing rogue who did not shirk from ignoring peace agreements if attacks on erstwhile enemies were possible. He sometimes played the game of inter-imperial competition with Mescaleros with the veneer of a dove, when, in fact, he retained a hawkish strategy at all times. For eight years he cleverly bluffed and

¹⁵ Paul Bourguine, "The Compromise Between Exploration and Exploitation: From Decision Theory to Game Theory" in *Advances in Self-organization and Evolutionary Economics*, Jacques Lesourne & André Orléan, eds. (London: Economica, 1998): 397.

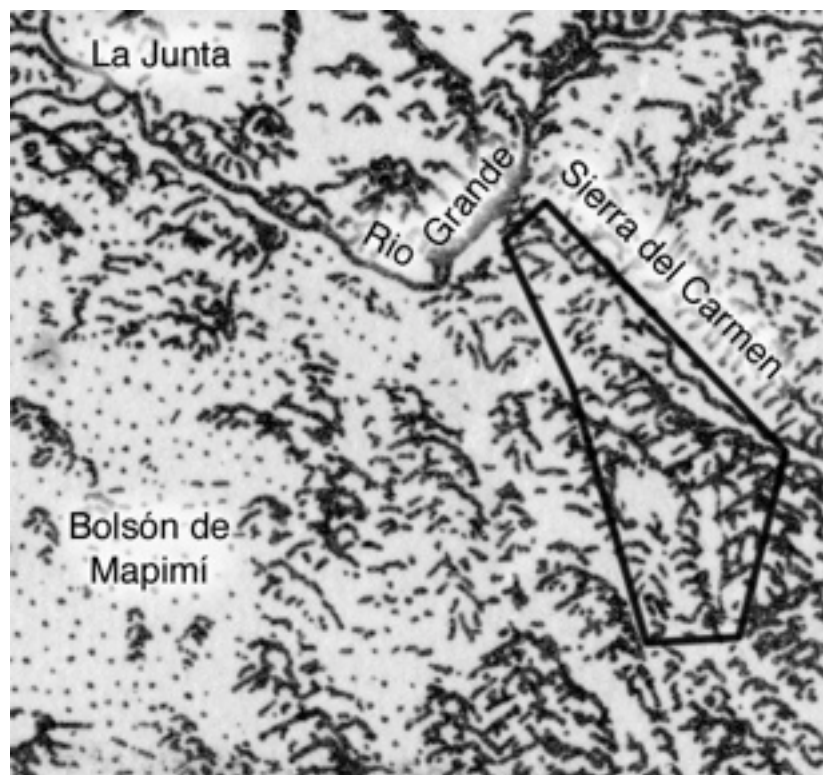
John Maynard Smith, *Evolution and the Theory of Games* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 17.

threatened his way into numerous triumphs over Bolsón and Trans-Pecos Apaches. On February 15, 1783 Ugalde had been five months within the Bolsón de Mapimí, arcing out of the area from time to time to resupply at a mission or *hacienda*. He had been unsuccessful in doing more than chase phantoms and rumors across the mountain tops and the llanos of scrub and agave. In the Sierra del Pino he had almost sacked a Mescalero *ranchería* in October, but failed. He had either wasted too much time dividing his men, and allowed Mescalero spies to find him out, or he was betrayed by his Lipan scouts (the reason that Ugalde favored). Many of his horses had gone lame, some of his auxiliaries had abandoned him, but Ugalde himself was unwavering and undeterred in his craving for combat. With supplies running dangerously low, he decided to make one last attempt to reconnoiter the southern portion of the Sierra del Carmen, a mountain chain that extends from within the Bolsón to the Rio Grande around the area of present-day Big Bend National Park, but even that gamble came to nothing.¹⁶

He rested with his horses and men at the *ojo* known as Guadalupe, near the Sierra del Carmen on March 2. He had had enough. The next day, he saddled his horse and readied his men for their retreat by planning the route to the next known *ojo*. Wintertime precipitation accounts for less than 30% of annual rainfall in the Bolsón, and the Spanish were probably thirsty and a little bit cold as they waited to return empty-handed to Nueva Vizcaya. Suddenly, some of the few Lipan spies that were left to him returned, and reported that they had seen unfamiliar horses not far off. Ugalde seized the chance to attack whomever was out there and immediately cantered off with 80 presidials. As he neared more spies came from the targeted area and said that the

¹⁶ Britten, 142-158.

Spanish had probably been discovered, and that Ugalde should be careful, and to secure the troops' cattle so that a counter-attack did not leave the troop bereft of meat. Ugalde, complied, then divided his men and began climbing back into the Sierra del Carmen until he reached a great height.¹⁷



Map 23: Study of the Sierra del Carmen.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

Below him he saw scores of Mescaleros gathered around their wickiups, harquebuses in their hands. Both Ugalde and the Mescaleros knew that the *ranchería* enjoyed the superior position, and these Apaches celebrated the believed superiority with conspicuous shouting and dancing. The Spanish colonel would not be put off,

¹⁷ Juan de Ugalde, 26 March 1783, Relación de las Campañas del Coronel Juan de Ugalde, Gobernador Militar de la Provincia de Coahuila, contra los Apaches Mescaleros, Legajo 29, Parte 2, Historia, AGN, CSWR.

however, and after leading his men for half an hour down to just within the basin where the Mescalero were situated, he paused before the attack. His whole force assembled before him, Ugalde spurred his horse, raised his harquebus, and shouted “long live the King!” The Spanish troop stormed the *ranchería* but were repulsed twice before they seized it on the third rally. In terms of prisoners and bodies, however, it was less of a victory than Ugalde wanted: nearly all of the Mescaleros had escaped into higher, and more defensible havens in the Sierra del Carmen, and eluded Ugalde’s grasp. He had killed four Mescaleros in the attack, bringing the total number of slain enemies to six. Considering that he had been in the field for just less than six continuous months and had rescued only twelve captives, there were some who doubted his accomplishments. Indeed, it is ironic that the secretary to the colonel decided to include a brief “*nota*” at the end, where we learn that, while Ugalde was reconnoitering the Bolsón de Mapimí, Mescaleros had attacked Nueva Vizcaya ten times, leaving 19 dead, wounding two Spanish captains, taking sixty-seven captives, reclaiming eight of their own number, and seizing 744 head of horses and mules. An impressive haul in comparison.¹⁸

It is a mistake, however, to assume that Ugalde did no real damage. On the contrary, his campaigns were incredibly punishing because they were, basically, Spanish counter-raiding missions. The colonel may have only killed six Mescaleros, but he destroyed 4 *rancherías* and took 154 animals back for the Spanish. The first three *rancherías* were empty, and so he only destroyed the wickiups, but after the last battle he succeeded in sacking 43 full tents. His men took all the material that they could carry and burned the rest. The destruction of wickiups alone would have placed a burden on

¹⁸ *ibid.*

Mescaleros inasmuch as Apaches would have had to spend time resourcing more wood to rebuild, but the loss of an entire community's tools, food, clothing, and shelter represented a catastrophic blow. This six month expedition, moreover, was only Ugalde's fourth campaign. In the previous three forays into the Bolsón de Mapimí, he had raided 120 tents, taking most of the possessions (and burning the rest), seizing countless firearms, scores of prisoners, and over 500 animals. Sustained campaigning like that undertaken by Ugalde was expensive and exhausting, but it produced an entirely new climate in the Bolsón de Mapimí, and soon Mescaleros began to actively sue for peace at presidios, like the one at La Junta, in the hope of escaping this Spaniard who seemed intent on their complete annihilation.¹⁹

More than a generation's time had passed since Comanche pressure from the southern Great Plains had forced Faraones and Lipanes southward, and sliced off large chunks of their Apacherías. The consequent Comanche-enforced injunction from bison-hunting on the Plains prompted Mescaleros to adopt more violent strategies of competition with the Spanish, but the price of that policy revealed itself immediately. Even before Ugalde, Hugo de O'Connor had also taken advantage of the military license afforded by the Bourbon Reforms. In 1776 he launched a series of campaigns that lasted for four years and that targeted Mescalero strongholds along the Pecos River and the Bolsón de Mapimí. He was largely unsuccessful in doing mortal or material damage, but he did manage to force Mescaleros deeper into the Bolsón and back into the Siete Rios region of the Central Closed Basin—where an expanding Comanchería

¹⁹ *ibid.*
Anderson, 131.

waited to pounce on them. Pincered between the Comanches to the north and the Spanish to the south and east, Mescaleros plied the presidios that surrounded the Bolsón de Mapimí with pleas for peace.²⁰

O'Connor's aggression aside, the Spanish were legally inclined to hear overtures of peace. After the Marques de Rubí's *visita* had finished in 1768, his and Lafora's findings led to the production of a fresh *Reglamento*, in 1772, meant to reorganize the northern frontier. It was the first major policy shift since Rivera's *visita* had produced its own *Reglamento*, in 1729. The tenth chapter is devoted to the subject of Apaches and how best to temper their assaults and incorporate them—or “reduce” them—into the imperial structure. Presidio captains were encouraged to establish truces with Apache groups, pending the approval of only the inspector-commandant who oversaw the province militarily. (The *Reglamento* abolished the requirement that provincial authorities wait for permission to come from the viceroy in Mexico City since that process took far too long and often hampered peace talks.) Prisoners and petitioners were to be treated with respect, and rules were set in place to regulate the taking of spoils from *rancherías*. But chapter ten also impugned Mescalero integrity by prefacing its recommendations with the observation that these Apaches “demonstrate the desire for peace, or reduction when their numbers are inferior or are set back by our successes, but who abuse us immediately after, at the first chance, [they] who interpret as a weakness our clemency.” Apache groups who flouted peace agreements were

²⁰ Schroeder, 530.

Opler (1983), 420.

Anderson, 101.

cf. Britten, 135-137 & Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *The Mescalero Apache, 1653-1874* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1959): 8-15 for the brutal effect that his campaigns had on Lipanes and their southward migration.

barred from them, and were to be exterminated with prejudice. The *Reglamento* was thus an ambiguous document that tried to acknowledge historical realities while advocating for political-cultural desires. It was open to competing interpretations that made negotiations unpredictable, and strategies unstable.²¹

Indeed, Ugalde often ran afoul of his colleagues on these missions. Presidio captains who constructed the 1772 *Reglamento* more favorably for Mescaleros often had their feet trampled by Ugalde when they tried to extend peace to their former foes. Ugalde commandeered presidials and supplies and hoarded both in the field for months at a time, returning them to their garrisons only after they were exhausted from the hunt for Mescaleros. These captains could have reasonably feared that Ugalde's campaigns would irritate Mescaleros to the point that they would choose to attack Spanish places in retaliation, the very event that captains had tried to avoid, or that their garrisons would simply be left too defenseless. Sometimes the confusion over policies of war and peace led to embarrassing contradictions. Once, Ugalde tracked a group of Mescaleros north out of the Bolsón de Mapimí, across the Rio Grande, and towards the Chisos Mountains of the southern Trans-Pecos. It was the tail end of March when he finally caught up to the *ranchería* situated at the opening to an arroyo. At dawn Ugalde gave the signal and stormed the *ranchería*, this time killing 4 and taking 12 prisoners; the rest fled into the Chisos to safety. Once again, he sacked the *ranchería* and took or burned all the possessions.²²

²¹ *Reglamento e Instruccion para los Presidios que se han de Formar en la Linea de la Nueva Espana Resuelto por El Rey en Cedula de 10 de Setiembre de 1772*, Box 1, Folder 1, Ted Otero Collection of Historical Documents, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico: 19-23.

²² Alfred B. Nelson, "Campaigning in the Big Bend of the Rio Grande in 1787," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 39:3 (1936): 208-210.



Map 24: The Big Bend Region and the Chisos Mountains.

Edited Excerpt from A.K. Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of North America*.

But Ugalde was in for a surprise this time. The leader of the *ranchería*, a man named Quijiesya, approached the Spanish once the smoke had cleared, and asked to be reunited with his family. Moreover, he was confused (and probably annoyed) that his people had been attacked so soon after they had completed a peace treaty with the captain of the Presidio del Norte, the garrison at La Junta de los Ríos that had only been rededicated fourteen years prior, in 1773. Ugalde marched towards La Junta, his blood already up, when he came upon a newly abandoned *ranchería*, its material wealth still sitting in the wickiups. As his men once again seized everything in sight, his anger must have climaxed when he found a document of safe conduct that had been issued at del Norte. Believing that a gross error in judgement had been made, Ugalde rushed towards del Norte to try to rectify the situation. He came upon more abandoned

rancherías along the way, and it became increasingly clear that they were all making for the presidio in a bid to gain protection from a Spaniard, namely him! One *ranchería*, a few leagues east of La Junta, was not as fortunate as the others and Ugalde, despite being aware of peace treaties, attacked it in a surprise pincer maneuver. Yet again, most of the Mescaleros handily escaped with their lives, but the tools and clothing from 23 tents were taken or destroyed, along with 83 horses and mules.²³

Eventually an officer of Presidio del Norte, Juan Bautista Elguézabal, tracked down Ugalde, along with 42 of his men, and a terrific row ensued. Elguézabal had orders from his captain, Domingo Díaz, that demanded Ugalde hand over all prisoners and seized goods. The colonel refused and tried to convince Elguézabal to abrogate the peace agreements on the grounds that Mescaleros were untrustworthy and because they continued to raid from the Bolsón de Mapimí. Eventually the presidial captain left empty-handed while Ugalde departed for the Guadalupe Mountains, to the north. The rest of his campaign, however, came to naught, and he soon returned to his base at Santa Rosa. We should not put too much weight on the inefficiency of the Spanish peace process to explain the denouement of Apachería. In reality, by the time Mescaleros began asking for peace, the long and inexorable processes of ecological degeneration were already well under way. The damage had been done, and after more than 13 years of counter-raiding by him and O'Connor, the edges of Apachería began to crumble.²⁴

²³ *ibid*, 211-213, 217-219.

²⁴ *ibid*, 223-225.

Still, the prolonged and guerrilla-like campaigns of Spanish commanders like O'Connor and Ugalde were not such an incredible innovation of military strategy that they alone can explain why Mescaleros suddenly doubled back on a trajectory of competition then 200 years old. Other factors came into play that help explain why Apachería in the Bolsón de Mapimí and the southern Trans-Pecos became unstable, and unsustainable. The answer, ironically, is an inversion of the arguments laid out in chapter one. In the seventeenth century, the Spanish newcomers to the Middle Rio Grande Valley depended on the Rio Grande for their *acequias* and potable water, but the aridities of the landscapes between the Chihuahuan Desert and the steppes of the Rocky Mountains produced shortfalls that crippled the Spanish's ability to maintain themselves and to thrive. At the same time, Faraones utilized a much broader range of geography, including southern portions of the Rio Grande around the Jornada del Muerto and the Pecos watershed, just to the east; they fared much better through periods of drought because they had recourse to more spaces where water could be found.

By 1786, however, Mescaleros found themselves hemmed into the southern Trans-Pecos and the Bolsón de Mapimí; into a set of ecologies that were, relatively, more marginal than those that they had enjoyed before 1748 and Comanche ascendancy. *Playas* and the oases they produced were plentiful, but only if it rained. The Rio Conchos was a breadbasket, but only so long as the Spanish could still produce and so long as there was rain enough for maize fields and for pastures for horses and cattle. Perhaps if typical precipitation levels had persisted through the eighteenth century then the arc of Mescalero history would have stayed its course, and Apachería might have consolidated its grip over the Chihuahuan Desert, or even found

the means to make a resurgence back into the northern Trans-Pecos and the southern Great Plains. But none of that happened because of drought. When Mescaleros first coursed down the Rio Conchos from La Junta de los Ríos during the 1680s the fluctuations in rainfall from year to year were typical: a dry year, a wet year, two dry, one wet, but never a prolonged drought that seriously compromised ecological regeneration. That all changed in 1784. That year an acute multi-year drought began that crippled water supplies across Chihuahua and Coahuila, and certainly the Bolsón de Mapimí. Maize crops failed and famine soon picked at every *villa* and *ranchería* of the Chihuahuan Desert. The next year, 1785, became infamous as “El Año del Hambre”—the year of hunger. When rains finally returned in the monsoons of 1786, it was too much: seeds in the soil that were not washed away in flash flooding were ruined. Ugalde—just then preparing for his fifth campaign—could not have picked a better time to harass the Bolsón de Mapimí and the southern Trans-Pecos; Mescaleros were most likely famished and parched owing to the poverty of their own *rancherías* and the offerings of Spanish places. The combined pressures of relentless Spanish counter-raiding and climatic disaster overwhelmed Apachería, and made Spanish reservations seem attractive by comparison.²⁵

It is likely that Ugalde and O’Conor also contributed to the decimation of favorite Mescalero habitation sites. Fires set to destroy material goods and wickiups could have

²⁵ Georgina H. Endfield & Isabel Fernández Tejedo, “Decades of Drought, Years of Hunger: Archival Investigations of Multiple Year Droughts in Late Colonial Chihuahua,” *Climatic Change* 75 (2006): 402-403.

Matthew D. Therrell, et al., “Tree-Ring Reconstructed Maize Yield in Central Mexico: 1474-2001,” *Climatic Change* 74 (2006): 500.

Daved W. Stahle, et al., “Tree-Ring Reconstructed Megadroughts over North America since A.D. 1300,” *Climatic Change* 83 (2007): 377.

Babcock, 378.

easily spread to populations of grass in the baked *playas* or desiccated mountainous basins. Whereas desert grass species like Tobosa (*Hilaria mutica*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), and Buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) actually thrive after a burn during years of average rainfall—sometimes increasing their production by up to 400%—these same species would have withered if burned repeatedly, especially during a drought, taking anywhere from three to ten years to rebound to pre-fire levels. If Apaches attempted to revisit the site or when the Spanish came through again on patrol, the reduced grass populations would have been exposed to overgrazing that would have reduced production and abundance even further. If the fire spread out of control, nearby stands of *Agave lechuguilla* would also be affected; these succulents typically die in fires and do not regenerate unless the damage is minimal. It is likely that entire stands would have perished for years. At favored *ranchería* sites all over the Bolsón de Mapimí and the Trans-Pecos Mescaleros would have looked on in anguish at the stands of agave that once carried plentiful water, fiber, and carbohydrates, but that now hung limp on the landscape, blackened and shriveled. Either unintentionally or through biologically-minded malice, O’Conor and Ugalde stripped these areas of pasturage and forage through the use of fire and their regular presence. Perhaps they decided that if the Chihuahuan Desert was not fit for Spanish habitation and domination, then it should be fit for no one. The Bolsón de Mapimí may have been an Eden of lesser sorts when Mescaleros found it in 1748, but the convergence of a profound drought with punishing Spanish counter-raiding had made it into a *despoblado* by the 1770s and 1780s. As *playas* turned to dust and maize crops failed, and as desert pastures withdrew into the sandy soil, Mescaleros realized that—for the first time in 200 hundred

years—the Chihuahuan Desert had come up short, that great mobility was no longer an option, and that a radical transformation was needed to survive.²⁶

That radical transformation, however, did not signal the end of Mescaleros, nor of their intimate relationships with the many ecologies of the Chihuahuan Desert. Rather, the arrival of Mescaleros at Presidio del Norte at La Junta and their request for settlement on an *establecimiento de paz* reflected the ebb of one age and the dawn of another; it was the transition from the age of encounter, discovery, and experimentation, to an age of resistance, survival, and nation-empires. During the first age that lasted from the 1581 until 1787 Apaches—themselves relative newcomers to the southern Great Plains and the northern Chihuahuan Desert—quickly seized the tools and implements of European empire, and turned them to their own advantage. First as Faraones, then as Natagés and Mescaleros, these Athapaskan-speaking peoples reimagined their concepts of space and mobility through the lens of horse-travel, and transformed the northern Chihuahuan Desert into a mesopotamia of alkaline waterways, agave plants, *playas*, and Puebloan and Spanish granaries. The Spanish remained stubbornly moored to a handful of riparian sites, and set themselves at the mercy of a fickle and often harsh ecosystem, and at the mercy of the indigenous peoples who

²⁶ Carlton M. Britton & Allen A. Steuter, “Production and Nutritional Attributes of Tobosagrass Following Burning,” *The Southwestern Naturalist* 28:3 (1983): 349.

Robert R. Parmenter, “Long-Term Effects of a Summer Fire on Desert Grassland Plant Demographics in New Mexico,” *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 16:2 (2008): 159.

Henry A. Wright, “Effect of Fire on Southern Mixed Prairie Grasses,” *Journal of Range Management* 27:6 (1974): 417.

Steven H. Sharrow & Henry A. Wright, “Proper Burning Intervals for Tobosagrass in West Texas Based on Nitrogen Dynamics,” *Journal of Range Management* 30:5 (1977): 345.

Gary M. Ahlstrand, “Response of Chihuahuan Desert Mountain Shrub Vegetation to Burning,” *Journal of Range Management* 35:1 (1982): 62.

managed it so much more efficiently. The ability to encounter, discover, and create depended on the ability to learn, and to adapt. Time and time again this group of Apaches demonstrated their elasticity and efficiency by plying the tools of empire to the landscapes that lay before them, and not to the fantasized landscapes of empire as the Spanish did.²⁷

Faraones had begun as inhabitants of the edge landscapes just east of Pecos pueblo, but within a century had surged south, past the Middle Rio Grande Valley and deep into the Trans-Pecos, past El Paso del Norte, and to La Junta de los Ríos. On the eve of O'Connor's series of assault in 1776, Faraones-turned-Mescaleros had long roamed the Bolsón de Mapimí and had just finished raiding down to the provinces that were a breath away from Mexico City. Whereas the Spanish had attained their northern extreme of Taos in 1610, Mescaleros had worked tirelessly and had inverted the typical directionality that we attribute to the age of empire; they spearheaded a southward-bound Apachería that showed little signs of slowing or stopping. But processes of counter-invasion and counter-empire ran into a geopolitical, ecological, and practical wall by the 1780s. Just as Apaches had used the apparatus of empire to mount their southward thrust in the 1600s, Comanches had done the same, and by the 1750s the vanguard of southern Apachería saw its northern rearguard squeezed and amputated by the now-archetypal horsemen of the colonial Plains. Mescaleros were an example among many examples of surprising and indigenous counter-empires. The arc of Apachería had preceded that of Comanchería, which itself preceded the arcs of Mexican, Texan, and American empires.

²⁷ Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nation: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 26-27.

The eight leaders of Mescalero who arrived to see Captain Díaz on that cool day in March were not surrendering, and they were certainly not divorcing themselves from the many advantages that the Chihuahuan Desert had historically provided. No one knew at the time that this was the start to the long denouement. Hugo de O'Connor's vitriolic *Informe*, written fifteen months later in September of 1788, seems to confirm that even as Mescaleros were toying with the notion of how best to incorporate *establecimientos* into an Athapaskan geopolitical landscape, small bands of fighters were still raiding the Rio Conchos and using the Bolsón de Mapimí as a platform for mounting an aggressive counter-empire. At the same time, Bishop Esteban Lorenzo went so far as to advise the viceroy that Mescaleros were not reducible and that the only way to incorporate them into the empire was as so many corpses; this religious man advocated total annihilation. Elastic as they had ever been, the Mescaleros at La Junta were negotiating, bargaining, and adapting to weather what they felt was a fleeting storm. That storm, it turned out, was much larger and enduring than anyone, the Spanish included, could have guessed. Within years, Comanches would begin piercing southward into Apachería in search of fresh resources; in decades New Spain would convulse and experience wars of revolution and independence; and in just over half a century, Texans and Americans would invade with an entirely new calculus of ecology

and competition while, at the same time, the Little Ice Age ended and temperatures rose while moisture levels fell.²⁸

In 1787, however, none of these impending events were apparent. It is only with historical hindsight that we begin to understand that the system had climaxed. Apaches had experimented in how much power and abundance they could accrue through creative usage of the Chihuahuan Desert, but those possibilities began to wane with the arrival of Comanche raiding parties within Apachería and years of near-continuous Spanish counter-raiding. As hawkish strategies of competition intensified, so did the price, in the form of individual lives lost and material wealth perished. Sustained drought and sustained conflict at the granaries of Apachería reduced the production of maize and livestock to levels that could scarcely sustain the needs of either community. Perhaps more than any other group who traveled the ranges and basins, Apaches dared to imagine what kinds of worlds the xeric landscapes of the Trans-Pecos and the Bolsón de Mapimí could produce. And for two hundred years Mescaleros had achieved unexpected, and often incredible, results, but 1788 represents the moment when the Chihuahuan borderlands became, for the first time, desert.

²⁸ O'Connor, 6 September 1788, Civil, AGN, CSWR.
Lorenzo, 9 September 1788, Civil, AGN, CSWR.
Hämäläinen (2010), 193-196.
Babcock, 364.
Schelling, 4-5.

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