New Mexico and the Pimería Alta
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New Mexico and the Pimería Alta: The Colonial Period in the American Southwest.
PART 1

The New Mexico Colony

Native and Colonist Worlds Colliding
INTRODUCTION

In the sweep of history, instances of first contact between indigenous peoples and explorers from foreign lands form a dramatic and often tumultuous turning point in the lives and cultures of all participants. The “Age of Discovery,” as characterized by European exploration and later by enterprises of colonial expansion, is strewn with many examples of intercultural collisions. Across the globe, from Africa to South Asia and later into Polynesia, native cultures were permanently and usually negatively impacted. Perhaps nowhere was this page of history more dramatically turned than in the events surrounding the exploration of the Fourth Part of the World (Lester 2009), or the “New World,” as it came to be known.

Starting with Cristóbal Colón’s first encounters with native Caribbean peoples, New World explorations based out of Spain and Portugal would unremittingly range across the entire Western Hemisphere for all of the sixteenth century. Historian Richard Flint (2008:206) notes that over 130 Spanish-led expeditions were conducted between 1492 and 1598 in the Americas, a summary that
does not include the Portuguese enterprises. Considering the massive effort and geography involved, native responses to European contact were by no means uniform or passive. Noting that the Taíno peoples had destroyed Colón’s first colony of La Navidad with a total loss of Spanish settlers’ lives, Matthew Liebmann and Melissa Murphy (Liebmann and Murphy 2010:3) state that “this was not an anomalous incident, but merely the first episode in a long pattern of native opposition to Spanish colonialism that spanned more than three centuries and ranged across two continents.”

This chapter explores the texts and contexts of one of the most significant of the sixteenth-century Spanish explorations, the 1540–42 expedition into present-day northern Mexico and the American Southwest led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (see chapters by Thomas E. Sheridan and Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa [9], J. Andrew Darling and B. Sunday Eiselt [7], and Kelly L. Jenks [8], this volume, for discussion of later Spanish colonial texts). Expeditionary documents of the Coronado exploration will be reviewed in detail to discern the range of reactions and responses elicited by native peoples when confronted with first contact by foreigners. As Liebmann and Murphy (2010:4) observe, “Much of what we think we know about native negotiation of Spanish colonialism is founded upon modern readings of historical texts.” They point out that there were filters and motivations of documentary writers that often underrepresented the “multitudes whose identities fell into the ambiguous interstices between Indian and Spaniard” (Liebmann and Murphy 2010:4). This chapter attempts to fill out that void by summarizing a variety of native tactics and strategies inferred from written eyewitness accounts of the Coronado expedition. By so doing, it affirms the conclusions of Liebmann and Murphy (2010:6) that “the colonial landscape was a patchwork of domination, resistance, accommodation, and negotiation as indigenous peoples exerted a variety of strategies” in response to colonizing efforts and that “armed confrontation [was] but one of an array of strategies employed by indigenous peoples in their interactions” with the Spanish (Liebmann and Murphy 2010:4).

This chapter will focus the material consequences of what is described in documents, attempting to more strongly bridge gaps that can exist between history and archaeology. As Liebmann and Murphy (2010:5) also note, “Archaeology complements historical studies of post-1492 life in the Americas . . . in many ways [more] . . . than that afforded by documents alone.” They go on to observe that “many everyday acts of resistance leave no material signature” and that “those that do leave material traces are often equivocal at best” (Liebmann and Murphy 2010:6). Recognizing that documents do not account for much of what is contained in the archaeological record, this chapter draws a more direct connecting line between the inferential nature of native actions in contact situations and the specific material consequences of those actions. This will be done by
examining the material record of one significant locality where first contact and ensuing conflict occurred in the American Southwest.

THE VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO EXPEDITION

On February 22, 1540, one of the largest land-based explorations ever organized in the New World by the Spanish Crown (Schmader 2011:314–15; 2014:116) departed Compostela, then the provincial capital of Nueva Galicia, and began its fateful journey northward.1 Competitive rights to conduct the expedition were granted to the viceroy of Nueva España, Antonio de Mendoza, and interest in the outcome was greatly anticipated (Hammond and Rey 1940:87). It had been just twenty years since Hernán Cortés vanquished the Aztec empire and fewer than ten years following the conquest of Peru by the Pizarro brothers in the early 1530s. The short span from 1519 to 1539 witnessed breathtaking results in Spanish imperial expansion, both in terms of huge land claims and physical wealth of gold, silver, and jewels to fill royal coffers. Expectation of finding another great civilization to the north of Nueva España, and a final route to the orient (Flint 2008:17–19), were piqued by reports of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, whose odyssey of survival in the mid-1530s along the United States–Mexico border encountered evidence of settled lands (Goodwin 2008). In 1539, Viceroy Mendoza sent a small party under Fray Marcos de Niza north as far as Cíbola (now Zuni pueblo in New Mexico), and the outcome seemed encouraging that another great civilization lay ahead (see John G. Douglass and Graves, chapter 1 in this volume).

To lead the larger exploration, Mendoza chose his twenty-nine-year-old governor of the province of Nueva Galicia, Captain General Francisco Vázquez de Coronado y Luján (Hammond and Rey 1940:83–85). The expedition was not funded by the Spanish Crown but rather was a private enterprise that cost its investors nearly $20 million in present-day value of silver (Schmader 2011).2 Three primary investors staked over $2 million each: Viceroy Mendoza, Vázquez de Coronado (mostly from his wife Beatriz Estrada’s estate), and Aztec conquistador Pedro de Alvarado shortly before his death in 1541. The average cost in cash and goods for a captain was about $175,000 and the cost of an average foot soldier was $30,000 (S. Flint 2003:44–48). The assembled force grew in numbers as it proceeded northward from Compostela to Culiacán (Figure 2.1), eventually totaling 375 European men-at-arms. Several women vital to the expedition are named in the documents, and others, unnamed, surely went. Slaves and porters were important to the contingent, and many were attached to households (Flint 2008). Over 1,100 horses and several thousand head of livestock supported the expedition.

Importantly, the force included at least 1,300 native Mexican indigenous soldiers (indios amigos or aliados) of mixed Tarascan, Tenochca, Tlatelolca, and Mexica descent. It is possible that number could have been 2,000 or more (Flint
See chapter by Douglass and Graves, chapter 1 in this volume, on overall make-up of troops heading both north and south during this period from central Mexico). The salient fact is that three-fourths of the expedition were native to central and western Mexico, and were not Europeans. Much of the exploration’s provisioning did not include modern weaponry: it was outfitted with just 21 crossbows, 25 arquebuses (primitive muskets), 60 swords, and 50 coats of chainmail (Aiton 1939). The majority of soldiers used native weapons and
armor called armas de tierra, which “included cotton tunics, round shields, traditional feathered headgear, banners and other insignias; macanas (obsidian-edged swords) clubs, lances, slings, and bows and arrows” (Flint and Flint 2005:138; also see Flint 1997).

Numerous cultural groups were encountered as the expedition made its way along the western coast of Mexico and then on a path mostly due north following the route taken earlier by de Niza (see Figure 2.1). By the time Vázquez de Coronado reached Cíbola and the vicinity of Zuni, the pueblo people were prepared but could not be certain if Coronado and his forces were coming to avenge the killing of Estevan, de Niza’s charismatic Moorish guide (Goodwin 2008). Coronado was intent on reaching his perceived goal of a promising civilization with exploitable resources; further, his forces were strained, tired, and hungry. Neither side accurately assessed the other and in the process of deteriorating communications, fighting broke out. This established a repeated pattern of interaction between the expedition and the peoples they were to encounter, as distrust would escalate into outright bloodshed numerous times in the ensuing two years.

The battle at the major Zuni pueblo of Hawikku was hard fought but brief. New European technologies, tactics, horses, and likely the indios amigos themselves, overcame the Zuni defenders. Coronado was badly wounded early in the conflict and had to be rescued by his captains, Hernando de Alvarado and Diego López de Cárdenas (Hammond and Rey 1940:169, 181). The first meeting between natives and nonnatives, on July 7, 1540, did not set a precedent for communication and diplomacy but instead had erupted into fighting and casualties.

The expedition rested and reprovisioned during the summer months of 1540 while an advance scouting party under Alvarado pushed east past Acoma Pueblo. By September 1540, Alvarado had led the first group of nonnatives to see the present-day Rio Grande: “The Nuestra Señora river flows through a broad valley planted with fields of maize. There are some cottonwood groves. There are twelve pueblos. The houses are made of mud, two stories high. The people seem good, more given to farming than to war” (Hammond and Rey 1940:183). This area was thereafter called the “Provincia de Tiguex” by Vázquez de Coronado (Figure 2.2). It is situated north of and includes part of the present-day city of Albuquerque, New Mexico.³

Alvarado continued eastward through the Galisteo Basin of New Mexico and to the pueblo of Cicuye (Pecos) before arriving at the edge of the Great Plains. There, he heard of possible riches even further east toward a land called Quivira but by then Alvarado had to rejoin López de Cárdenas, who had begun to set up winter quarters outside a major Tiguex village called Alcanfor (Hammond and Rey 1940:218–20). Coronado arrived in the Rio Grande Valley later by way of a
more southerly route (Sánchez 1988). By the time the entire force had reassembled, the especially harsh winter of 1540 had set in and the group was woefully unprepared. Cold and hunger forced them to take over Alcanfor (Hammond and Rey 1940:219).

Demands for food and clothing, imprisonment of native guides, and assaults on pueblo women worsened relations. In retaliation, the pueblos stole horses and killed several native Mexican guards. Tensions erupted into a battle at the Tiguex pueblo of Arenal, after which more than 100 pueblo men were burned at the stake. Any remaining Puebloan resistance consolidated at “the strongest” pueblo, called Moho, three to four leagues (13 to 16 kilometers, or 8 to 10 miles) away from Alcanfor. Vázquez de Coronado personally led the initial assault on Moho, but it took a siege of fifty to eighty days to finally overcome the village (Hammond and Rey 1940:360). Dozens more native people died in that prolonged series of skirmishes. Coronado was never able to control worsening

**FIGURE 2.2.** Map of Vázquez de Coronado’s “Tiguex Province” (middle Rio Grande valley) showing locations of known occupied pueblo villages at the time of contact in 1540. Illustrative map by author showing settlements fifteen miles upriver of Albuquerque. © 2016 Society for American Archaeology. Reprinted by permission from Advances in Archaeological Practice, volume 4, number 1.
tensions during the winter of 1540–41, and permanent damage to Spanish-Native relations had been done.

By the spring of 1541 Coronado hurriedly left the Tiguex Province for Pecos Pueblo. Spurred ever eastward by stories, trickery, and hopes of fortune, the expedition soon found itself on the edge of the Great Plains (Sánchez 1997:236). There they noted its vastness, many tribes, and massive herds of buffalo. Continuing on through the Texas panhandle, Coronado decided to send nearly all of the expedition back to Tiguex while he and thirty-five others rode on, possibly into Kansas before realizing they would never find Quivira (Sánchez 1997:244–48). Vázquez de Coronado was compelled to return for a second winter in the Tiguex Province in 1541–42 before retracing his steps back to Mexico (Hammond and Rey 1940:28). Coronado’s return to Culiacán was not marked by triumph. He did deliver his force with few casualties, though he never fully recovered from a fall off his horse and died at the age of forty-four some dozen years later (Bolton 1949:405).

Native Responses Derived from Expeditionary Documents

Surviving documents of the Coronado expedition contain abundant contemporaneous material to inform about many events that took place (see chapter by Sheridan and Koyiyumptewa, chapter 9 in this volume, for discussion of later Spanish texts describing events at Hopi Mesa). These documents have been transcribed in and translated into several forms and versions (e.g., Flint and Flint 2005; Hammond and Rey 1940; Winship 1896). Perhaps the most complete eyewitness account was provided by a literate member of the expedition, Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera, who wrote his recollections while in Spain twenty years later, during the 1560s. A careful reading of Castañeda’s version of events reveals a wealth of information about interactions between the expeditionary forces and native peoples, and particularly about native responses to those fast-moving circumstances. His account will be used as a primary source to analyze several types of native responses to these rapidly changing situations. Other sources used will include Vázquez de Coronado himself, as well as captain Hernando de Alvarado and other anonymous texts from the time.

Long-Distance Information Exchange

At the time of European contact, native networks of information exchange appear to have been broad geographically, and knowledge of the expedition’s movements was shared far ahead of its physical arrival. As Michael Wilcox (2009:103) points out, the “Pueblos . . . had individual historical experiences, protocols for communication, and trade relations with other ethnic groups in the surrounding areas.” For example, Castañeda describes a delegation that
came to Zuni from Pecos Pueblo, a distance of 190 miles away: “There came to Cíbola some Indians from a pueblo of the province called Cicuye [Pecos], distant seventy leagues to the east” (Hammond and Rey 1940:217). Information of Coronado’s advance would have reached Pecos at least a week ahead to allow for the travel time from Pecos to Zuni. The delegation intended to stave off the eastward progress of the expedition, or at least befriend it ahead of time.

The residents of Cíbola made reference to “a settled area” thirty-five leagues (ninety miles) to the west, which was the Hopi pueblos (Flint and Flint 2005:498). Coronado describes a communication network made up of smoke signals to warn of his advance and arrival: “From time to time the Indians sent up their smoke clouds, which were answered from a distance with as much coordination as we would have known to do ourselves. Thus, they were notified that we were traveling and where we had reached” (Flint and Flint 2005: 257; Hammond and Rey 1940:167).

Another example of information networks is provided by Castañeda. When hostilities broke out later in the Rio Grande province of Tiguex, knowledge of it was widely shared: “These [men] spread the news throughout the land, telling how the peace that was granted them had not been kept. This resulted in great harm later” (Flint and Flint 2005; Hammond and Rey 1940).

**Symbolic or Ritualized Behavior**

Native reaction to foreigner interlopers sometimes translated into symbolic and ritualized behavior. Castañeda describes how “their most reliable peace pact consists in crossing their hands, and this peace they keep inviolable” and that “they answered their signs for peace by similar ones, which consisted of making a cross” (Hammond and Rey 1940:218; see also Flint and Flint 2005:399). When situations with the Coronado expedition became tense, the pueblo people pressed their point through symbolic acts. At Hopi, leaders took corn meal and “they drew lines and tried to prevent our men from crossing them” (Flint and Flint 2005:396; see also Hammond and Rey 1940:214).

Measurement and accounting of safe distances, in addition to lines not to be crossed, were also kept. Castañeda says that a pueblo man “shot an arrow, which landed at the foot of Don Lope’s horse. Putting another arrow in his bow, he told him to leave or he would shoot to kill” and “when they saw that [Don Lope] was in a safe place, they began to shout and howl and to send a shower of arrows” (Hammond and Rey 1940:229–30; see also Flint and Flint 2005:405). The symbolic effect of shouting and physical posturing was used as tensions built in Tiguex: “Certain warriors . . . used to come out every morning to make a display to frighten our army in some way” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:230; see also Flint and Flint 2005:405).
The pueblo people also seem to have held that new and mysterious animal, the horse, with a sense of special power. At Zuni, Castañeda noted that “they made their peace ceremonies by approaching the horses, taking their sweat, and anointing themselves” (Hammond and Rey 1940:218; see also Flint and Flint 2005:399). Later, in the Tiguex Province, Puebloans targeted horses by stealing a number of them. When Captain Diego López de Cárdenas went to investigate at a nearby village, he “heard a great shouting inside, with horses running around as in a bull ring and the Indians shooting arrows at them” (Hammond and Rey 1940:225; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403).

Spanish officials used their own ritual symbolism when they announced their intentions to make the pueblo people vassals of the king of Spain. They read the requerimiento, a proclamation recounting the history of the world, Spain’s rights to lands in the New World, an ultimatum to submit to the king, and a directive to learn the ways of Catholicism (Flint 2008:109; Liebmann and Murphy 2010). The requerimiento was delivered to the pueblo people in highly formalized Spanish with no basic interpretation. The ritual symbolism of reading the requerimiento prior to initiating any action must have seemed an odd device to the pueblo people in terms of the theatrics involved. They, in turn, responded with symbolism of their own: the Zunis “drew lines in front of [the friar], indicating that the army should not cross them [and] threw dirt in the air . . . They were never willing to come in peace . . . nor did they stop shooting arrows” (Castañeda, in Flint 2008:108–9).

Trust and Respect Systems
Systems of trust and mutual respect seem to have been important for communication across Puebloan linguistic boundaries and as a means of diplomacy (see Wilcox 2009:103–5). It is perhaps in this realm more than any other that Vázquez de Coronado failed to realize the importance of compromise and restraint: had he understood the significance of native respect systems, he might have avoided many of the problems he ultimately faced. This is evident during the expedition’s initial stay during the winter of 1540–41 in the Tiguex Province of the Rio Grande Valley. The expedition was poorly prepared for the high desert cold, and was suffering from lack of food as well. Coronado was compelled to set up his main encampment at the village of Alcanfor, in the northern part of the Tiguex Province. It did not help that the pueblo’s “ill feeling was aggravated by the general’s desire to gather some clothing and distribute it among the soldiers” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:224; see also Flint and Flint 2005:402).

When Coronado instructed his men to go throughout the Tiguex Province rather than to put too great a burden on one village, it worsened the situation. “If they saw an Indian with a better [cloak] they exchanged it with him without
any consideration or respect” and as Castañeda noted, “the Indians resented this very much.” Another aggravating factor was the devastating effect that horses and livestock had on the pueblos’ agricultural fields, which still had useful stubble (a winter fuel source) and possibly food at the end of the harvest season (Flint 2008; Wilcox 2009).

A crucial moment came when a pueblo man brought forth charges of an attempted rape on his wife at the Tiguex village of Arenal. When this appeal for justice went unheeded, “in the end he went away without getting any redress for what he had demanded” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:225; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403). In retaliation, the pueblo people then stole horses, an act of defiance that demanded Coronado’s swift action. He called a council of his leaders, decided on a course of action, and read the requerimiento to the village chiefs. When this attempt to achieve submission failed, Arenal was attacked.

After a short fight, the pueblo men surrendered by making the sign of the cross. But the captives, believing they had surrendered in peace, were instead rounded up to be burned at the stake and further serious bloodshed ensued when they fought to save their lives. This series of horrendous events marked a permanent turning point in relations, for as Castañeda stated, “this was the beginning of the distrust the Indians had from then on for the word of peace.” He goes on to state that “the Indians replied that they would not trust those who did not know how to keep the word they had pledged . . . and that they had not kept the peace” (Hammond and Rey 1940:227; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403). Several months later, at the final standoff and siege of Moho Pueblo, all attempts to ask for reconciliation went unheeded: “They paid no attention to the requisitions for peace made upon them, nor would they grant it” and “we were unable to induce them to make peace” With a sense of finality, Castañeda notes that “they did not want to trust people who did not keep their friendship or word they gave” (Hammond and Rey 1940:228; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403–4).

**Defensive Tactics**

Information about Puebloan defensive and offensive tactical organization is readily apparent in Castañeda’s narrative. He describes a defensive tactic at Zuni, in which “these people waited in the open within sight of the pueblo, drawn up in squadrons.” At Tiguex, the people had already begun to fortify their villages, as captain López de Cárdenas “found the pueblos enclosed by a palisade.” Further, “Cárdenas could do nothing because they refused to come out into the field, and as the pueblos are strong, they could not be harmed” (Castañeda in Hammond and Rey 1940:225–26; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403). When the men who had surrendered at Arenal realized they were not prisoners but were in fact destined to be burned alive, “about one hundred who were in the tent began to offer
resistance and defend themselves with stakes which they rushed out to seize.” Following the battle at Arenal, the remaining populace in the Tiguex Province consolidated themselves at two villages in self-defense: “Most of the people of these pueblos had taken refuge in these two places,” that is, the villages called Moho Pueblo and Pueblo de la Cruz by the Spanish (Flint and Flint 2005:404; see also Hammond and Rey 1940:228).

The critical confrontation occurred at the pueblo of Moho, where Coronado himself led the first assault on the village. But as Castañeda describes, the assault was repulsed, as “the enemy had been getting ready for many days and had so many stones to hurl upon our men” (Hammond and Rey 1940:228; see also Flint and Flint 2005:404). Coronado then elected to surround the pueblo and lay siege to it, which lasted a period of fifty to eighty days. During the standoff there were several skirmishes, but the provisioned village of Moho was caught short of a most precious resource: “What troubled the Indians most was their lack of water. Within the pueblo they dug a very deep well, but they were unable to obtain water” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:229; see also Flint and Flint 2005:404). Even the act of digging a well in the midst of a siege could be regarded as an act of self-defense.

The last acts of self-preservation occurred when “the Indians decided to abandon the pueblo during the night, and they did so. Placing their women in the middle, they set out.” But the escapees were discovered, and after a fight “they fell back to the river, which was high and cold . . . few of the enemy escaped death or injury” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:230; see also Flint and Flint 2005:405). The siege had ended, yet “there were a few who remained in the pueblo, and who resisted in one of the sections, but they were overcome in a few days.”

Offensive Tactics

The pueblo people acted not only in self-defense to situations imposed on them by the expedition, but they actively engaged in offensive tactics and strategies as well. Vázquez de Coronado describes the first fighting at Hawikku: “The people who were on the roof defending themselves had no difficulty at all inflicting the injury on us that they had power [to do]. With an infinity of large stones they hurled from the roof, they knocked me to the ground twice. If it had not been for the excellent helmet I wore, I think the result would have been grim for me” (Coronado, in Flint and Flint 2005:257).

Early in the expedition’s stay at Tiguex, “the men in the pueblo came out to fight, shooting arrows and berating Alvarado, saying that he had broken his word and friendship.” When the people of Arenal retaliated for the lack of justice sought in the attempted rape of a woman, a soldier “who was guarding
the horses came bleeding and wounded, saying that the Indians of the land had killed one companion and were driving the horses before them to their pueblos” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:225; see also Flint and Flint 2005:403). When Coronado then attacked Arenal, Castañeda recounts that “the defenders wounded many of our men with arrows which they shot from the inside of their houses” (Flint and Flint 2005:403; Hammond and Rey 1940:226).

The later siege and battles at Moho began, as noted above, with an assault led by Coronado himself. But the initial attack did not go well for the expeditionary forces, because the pueblo people “had so many stones to hurl upon our men that they stretched many on the ground. They wounded close to one hundred men with arrows” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940; see also Flint and Flint 2005). Other attempts were repulsed when Coronado’s soldiers “could not harm the enemy . . . because of heavy showers of arrows that soon fell upon them” and because “they shot arrows from terraces with much shouting.” The pueblos inflicted significant casualties on the expedition, as “many of our men came out badly wounded.” During one skirmish, “the enemy fell upon them, killing a Spaniard and a horse and wounding others” (Hammond and Rey 1940:228–29; see also Flint and Flint 2005:404).

**Capitulatory Behavior**

A diplomatic tactic tried by several pueblos was to meet the strange newcomers with acts of capitulation. At Zuni, Castañeda notes that “the Indians gave them some presents of dressed skins, shields, and head pieces” and that “they presented a large number of turkey cocks, much bread, dressed deer skins, pinyon nuts, flour, and maize” (Hammond and Rey 1940:217; see also Flint and Flint 2005:398). When Alvarado reached Acuco (Acoma) on his way to explore the Rio Grande Valley, the residents, he noted, “came to us in peace, although they could have refused to do it . . . They gave us cotton mantas, [bison] and deer hides, turquoises, [turkeys], and the rest of the food[s] they have” (Relación del Suceso [anonymous text], in Flint and Flint 2005:499). When Alvarado reached Tiguex, he describes how “the principales and people came from twelve pueblos. [They came] in order, those from one [pueblo] behind the other. They walked around our tent playing a flute, and an old man [was] speaking. In this [same] way they came into the tent and presented me with food, mantas, and hides they were carrying” (Alvarado in Flint and Flint 2005:305).

Upon their arrival in the Tiguex Province, “the Indians all came out peacefully, seeing that men who were feared in all those provinces were coming with Bigotes,” a chief of Pecos captured as an expeditionary guide. When Hernando de Alvarado’s advance scouting party arrived at Pecos, “the people came out to meet him and their captain (Bigotes) with demonstrations of joy and took him
into the pueblo with drums and fifes.” When it became clear that the entire expeditionary force intended to overwinter in Tiguex, Castañeda states that “as the natives had to provide quarters for the Spaniards, they found themselves compelled to abandon a pueblo.” Consequently, “they did not take along any belongings but their persons and clothing” (Hammond and Rey 1940:224; see also Flint and Flint 2005:402). Following the brief fight at Arenal, the pueblo warriors understood that they were better off surrendering than having the whole pueblo destroyed: “The natives soon laid down their arms and surrendered at their mercy.” During the prolonged siege of Moho, “one day, before the pueblo was taken, they asked for a conference.” Castañeda continues, “As they had learned we did not harm women and children, they wanted to give us theirs” (Hammond and Rey 1940:224; see also Flint and Flint 2005:402).

**Deceptive Tactics**

Native use of deception was another apparently widespread stratagem. At Moho, Castañeda describes how pueblo leaders “told [Cárdenas] that if he wanted to talk with them, he should dismount and they would approach him on foot to discuss peace.” Then, “when [Cárdenas] was close to them, they said that they bore no weapons and that he should remove his” but as the pueblo chief Xauian “embraced [Cárdenas] while two other Indians who had accompanied him drew two maces, which they had concealed behind their backs. They struck [Cárdenas] two blows over the helmet so that they nearly stunned him” (Hammond and Rey 1940:227–28; see also Flint and Flint 2005:404).

More covert forms of deception were practiced in an attempt to lead the force away from the pueblo homeland. Vázquez de Coronado, in a letter to the king, stated that “while I was overseeing the subjugation and pacification of the natives of this provincial [of Tiguex], some native Indians from other provincias beyond these gave me a report that in their land were much grander towns and buildings . . . that there were lords who ruled them, that they ate out of golden dishes” (Coronado, in Flint and Flint 2005:319). Coronado had taken several captives who were forced to become guides. One of the captives, El Turco, often talked about gold and riches to be found further to the east in his native land called Quivira. El Turco “claimed that in his land there was a river . . . two leagues wide, with fish as large as horses and a great number of very large canoes with sails” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:236; see also Flint and Flint 2005:408). El Turco made numerous references to precious metals including golden jingle bells and table service of silver and gold plates in lands to the east. Ultimately, the Spaniards’ impatience for that form of deception, which fruitlessly led them far onto the Great Plains, resulted in their killing El Turco out of spite.
Organizational Strategies

Native populations employed a broader strategy of organizational tactics in response to contact. The disruption of intervillage relations within the Tiguex Province forced groups to relocate: “They found themselves having to abandon a pueblo and seek lodging for themselves in the other pueblos of their friends” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:224; see also Flint and Flint 2005:402). After the battle at Arenal had been fought and the numerous casualties inflicted on that village, “most of the people of these pueblos had taken refuge in these two places,” that is, the last remaining Tiguex villages called Moho and Pueblo de la Cruz.

During the occupation of the Tiguex Province, Coronado sought allies outside the area: “The general sent a captain to Zia, which had sent messages offering submissions” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:233; see also Flint and Flint 2005:407). That strategy on the part of Coronado may have helped obtain badly needed food, clothing, and supplies. But more important, it likely gained him geopolitical intelligence and added relief by not creating an adversary of every pueblo in the region. This informal allegiance with Zia may have also opened access to sources of obsidian in the Jemez Mountains, which would have been vital for provisioning native weaponry carried by the indios amigos. The Zias, in turn, may have gained assurance that conflicts occurring in Tiguex would not be repeated against them. In fact, the whole of the “Quirix Province” to the north, as Coronado called them (i.e., the Keres-speaking pueblos of Santa Ana, Zia, San Felipe, Santo Domingo, and Cochiti), seems to have been politically united to appease, rather than oppose, the expedition.

Once the Tiguex stronghold of Moho fell, and the resistance was broken, the pueblo people had one last organizational choice to make: “The twelve pueblos of Tiguex were never resettled as long as the army remained in that region, no matter what assurances were given them” (Castañeda, in Hammond and Rey 1940:233–34; see also Flint and Flint 2005:407). The consequences of this decision were powerful and long lasting. Several hundred Pueblo people were casualties of direct hostilities in the Tiguex Province alone (Flint 2008). Each of the Tiguex towns reported by Alvarado and other chroniclers was burned and left in ruin. Moreover, the wrath unleashed upon the pueblo people by Coronado’s soldiers left a deep scar of distrust and outright fear of the foreign invaders. In particular, the clash in belief systems between native and Christian religions and exposure to new European thoughts would resonate into the next several centuries (Preucel 2002; Wilcox 2009). Contributing factors such as disease and changes in subsistence brought about by exposure to Old World plants and animals would have a substantial and lasting effect.
Today, the Tiguex Province, as named by Vázquez de Coronado’s expedition, occupies a stretch of about twenty miles along the Rio Grande floodplain northward from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The “twelve villages” of Tiguex were evenly distributed on either side of the river (Figure 2.2), and when Coronado decided to spend the winter of 1540, he likely arrived at the north end of the province near Santiago Pueblo (opposite the present-day town of Bernalillo). The twelve contact-period villages have almost all been identified on the basis of ceramic evidence, but place-names from the Spanish expeditionary documents—Alcanfor, Alameda, Arenal, Pueblo de la Cruz, and Moho—have yet to be tied to specific sites with absolute certainty. For recent discussions of this topic, see Matthew Schmader (2011), Flint (2011), and William Mathers (2011).

Investigations have been conducted at the largest of the Tiwa village sites, called Piedras Marcadas Pueblo (“village of the marked rocks”) since 2007 (Schmader 2011, 2014, 2016a). Surface ceramics indicate an occupation from AD 1300 until the early 1600s (Marshall 1987; Schmader 2011:347). Based on remote-sensing studies, Piedras Marcadas is estimated to contain at least 1,000 ground-floor adobe rooms and several hundred more second- and third-story rooms arranged in three apartment-like complexes or roomblocks (Schmader 2011, 2016a).

Electrical resistivity (ER) is the principal remote-sensing technique used at the site. Surveys using ER of one hectare (2.5 acres) in the central portion of the site reveal several hundred ground-floor rooms arranged in a rectangular layout, surrounding an open interior plaza (Schmader 2014). Possible passageways are found at the northwest and southeast corners of the plaza, along with a large above-ground kiva built into the northern section of the roomblock, and an underground kiva in the west-central part of the plaza.

Following ER studies, intensive metal detection conducted over a half-hectare area (1.25 acres) has identified more than 1,000 sixteenth-century metal artifacts, which are mapped in relation to subsurface adobe architecture. Metal artifacts include many iron and wire fragments, unshaped lead blobs, and pieces of copper alloy sheet. Hardware includes wrought iron nails (Figure 2.3a), horse shoe fragments, and pieces of chain. Personal items include clothing lace tags (aglets), clothing fasteners, buckles, belt loops, and decorative medallions (Figure 2.3b, 2.3c, 2.3d, 2.3e, and 2.3f respectively). Military-related objects include chainmail, lead musket balls, body armor, scabbard tip, copper crossbow arrow points called “boltheads,” and the snapped end of a dagger (Figure 2.4a through 2.4h respectively). Characteristic facet-headed wrought iron nails, aglets, and the copper crossbow boltheads are precise diagnostics of the Coronado expedition (Flint 1992; Schmader 2011:316–18).
FIGURE 2.3. Sample of sixteenth-century metal artifacts recovered from Piedras Marcadas pueblo: (a) wrought iron facet-headed nail, (b) copper alloy clothing lace tags ("aglets"), (c) copper alloy clothing fastener, (d) copper alloy belt buckle, (e) ornate copper alloy belt loop, (f) copper alloy medallion. Photograph by author.
Figure 2.4. Military-related metal sixteenth-century metal artifacts recovered from Piedras Marcadas Pueblo: (a) iron chainmail link, (b) lead ball, for use in a musket, or arquebus, (approximately .50 caliber), (c) lead musket ball, flattened from impact, (d) copper sheet, probably used as body armor from interior of vest (note preserved straw impressions), (e) copper alloy scabbard tip, (f, g) pure copper crossbow bolt-heads, (h) broken iron (or steel) dagger tip. Photograph by author.
Metal fragmentation, heavy loss and breakage of personal gear, and abundance of armaments and munitions indicate that Piedras Marcadas was the scene of at least one or more intense fights between the pueblo’s inhabitants and Coronado’s forces (Schmader 2016a, 2016b). The majority of sixteenth-century artifacts are found three centimeters to eight centimeters below present-day ground surface; this shallow artifact depth indicates a relatively stable ground surface. The relationship between metal artifact distributions and adobe walls suggests several areas where fighting probably occurred (Schmader 2016a). For example, some locations adjacent to walls contain numerous broken horseshoe nails and lost personal items.

In turn, these site characteristics relate to descriptions found in the expeditionary documents. The documents describe how Coronado’s initial attack used ladders to scale the walls, but that attempt was thrown back. Other areas fit the description of the pueblos as having been “palisaded,” since normally open passages were likely blocked off where the expeditionary forces may have tried to gain access to the plaza. Exterior walls and passageways at Piedras Marcadas contain high concentrations of broken material. Areas within the plaza contained a higher number of items such as lead musket balls, crossbow boltheads, pieces of body armor and chainmail, and the broken dagger tip, which also indicates combat activity (Schmader 2011, 2016b).

Distributions of sixteenth-century metal artifacts may reflect Spanish military tactics of the period and of the expedition. Potential multiple lines of attack are consistent with some documentary descriptions, such as at Moho, where several skirmishes are described. The presence of broken horseshoe nails is consistent with the use of horses in many aspects of fighting. The abundance of broken items reflects the amount of high-energy activity, particularly fighting, that occurred at close quarters (Schmader 2016b).

The documentary record is scanty, however, when it comes to the intriguing topic of interactions or conflict between Mexican native indios amigos soldiers and indigenous pueblo groups (Flint 1997, 2008:58). The unique circumstances of the expedition represents one of the first significant contacts between so many different native people from such a broad geographic area. In events leading up to the battle of Arenal, the pueblo people killed fifty or sixty horse and pack animals, and they “clubbed and killed four or five Nahua Indians” who had been standing guard over the animals (Flint 2008:147). Castañeda notes that during the battle at Arenal, the “mounted men, along with many Indian allies from New Spain, built some heavy smudge fires in the basements [kivas] into which they had broken holes, so that the Indians were forced to sue for peace” (Hammond and Rey 1940:226; see also Flint and Flint 2005:402).

The site of Piedras Marcadas is significant because it contains material evidence of fighting between native Mexican soldiers and pueblo people. Small
Puebloan “bird points” are found on the surface in proximity to sixteenth-century metal fragments. Numerous surface obsidian flakes, particularly within the plaza, may be breakage debris from central Mexican macanas or macahuítls (flake-edged wooden clubs; Schmader 2011, 2014). Other projectile points found on the surface do not appear to have been made locally and could have been imports brought by indios amigos (see Medrano Enríquez 2012).

Slingstones (Figure 2.5) are found outside the north and south walls of the central roomblock and within the central plaza area. These stones range in diameter from forty millimeters to 80 millimeters and often exhibit grinding along their midlines, a characteristic that helps to distinguish them from ordinary river cobbles (Robert York, personal communication, 2012; see also York and York 2011). Some stones may have been thrown by Puebloan defenders, as described by “the many stones they had to hurl upon us,” but other stones may have been thrown by indios amigos using more formal slings. It is unknown if pueblos used formal slings at the time of contact (Robert York, personal communication, 2012).

Coronado expeditionary sites are quite rare. Only a handful have been found in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Extant assemblages large enough to be interpreted as battle sites include the Zuni pueblo of Hawikku (Damp 2005), and Piedras Marcadas (Schmader 2016a, 2016b). The Piedras Marcadas assemblage is the largest and most concentrated of the Coronado sites (Schmader 2011:322). Evidence found at the site suggests that it is a “ground zero” location of the first contact between native Puebloan peoples of the Southwest and a force of foreign explorers.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Events surrounding first cultural contacts and ensuing negotiations, accommodation, or conflict are complex and multifaceted. Present-day perceptions of contact may suggest simple, finite, and short-lived events. But as these complicated historical episodes are examined more closely, it becomes clear that all cultural contacts have causes, effects, consequences, and collateral impacts that can involve many thousands of people over several centuries. The story of first European and native Mexican contact with the peoples of the American Southwest is a profound case in point.

The Vázquez de Coronado expedition’s political and economic failures were so deep that it would take the Spanish Crown a full forty years before considering renewed attempts at exploring Nuevo México. By then, the focus would shift from exploration to setting the foundation for eventual colonization (Hammond and Rey 1966). It was not until 1580 that the next expedition, a small group led by Francisco Chamuscado and Fray Augustín Rodríguez, would venture into the northlands. A follow-up expedition, a larger effort led by Antonio de Espejo
in late 1582, was intended to ensure the safety of two priests left behind at the Tiguex pueblo of Puaray by Chamuscado and Rodríguez. Upon reaching Puaray Pueblo, however, it was learned that the priests had been killed (Hammond and Rey 1966:221).

The largest expedition after Coronado’s was organized by Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, who, in defiance of the orders of the new viceroy, Luis Velasco, assembled
some 200 men and women in an attempt to establish Nuevo México’s first colony in 1590 (Hammond and Rey 1966:245–95). These unsuccessful attempts cleared the way for sanctioning Juan de Oñate to establish the first real colony in Nuevo México. Oñate entered Nuevo México in 1598 with 130 families and 400 soldiers, the largest group to come north since Vázquez de Coronado nearly sixty years earlier. The new colony was established at Ohkay Owingeh (Yunque-Yunque, or San Juan Pueblo) and experienced so many difficulties that Oñate resigned his post by 1607. Despite its rocky early beginnings, colonization was by then set in place and events of the mid-seventeenth century would create strife and animosity culminating in the Pueblo Revolts of 1680–96 (see Liebmann and colleagues, chapter 5 in this volume).

The dramatic effects of exploration, colonization, and missionization on the native populations can be seen dramatically in the central Rio Grande Valley. Beginning in 1540, Vázquez de Coronado’s Tiguex Province is described as having twelve towns. The estimated population at first contact may have been as high as 10,000 (Barrett 2002:12). In the Tiguex Province, the “twelve towns” appear to have persisted until 1602, and the period of most rapid decline began in the mid-1620s. By then, several of the larger Tiwa pueblos on the west side of the Rio Grande, including Piedras Marcadas, already appear to have been permanently unoccupied. Certainly by 1640, there appears to have been broad-scale reorganization and abandonment of even more villages. Population estimates of about 7,000 for sixteen to eighteen villages in the greater middle Rio Grande Basin plummeted by 86 percent to 990 people at just five villages by 1641 (Barrett 2002:64).

Significantly, no major southern Tiwa settlements seem to have persisted on the west side of the river—a pattern that would continue until the Pueblo Revolt—and just three centers of occupation were on the east side of the Rio Grande: Sandia, Puaray, and Alameda. These three pueblos are mentioned consistently as the last, postcontact/prerevolt (AD 1598–80) villages disappeared in the former Tiguex Province. The population level may have dwindled to several hundred at the most. The final distribution of people took place as a diaspora from the central Rio Grande area to the western pueblos of Zuni and Hopi at the end of the seventeenth century.

There are numerous hypothesized factors for rapid population decline, including disease, famine, drought, raids, tribute labor, forced relocation, and disruption of trade and land relations. All likely contributed in some way to the dramatic declines seen in the earlier part of the 1600s. Note that Wilcox (2009) emphasizes site abandonment as a crucial social mechanism for self-preservation and cultural survival. The long-term success of that strategy is evident in the persistence and cultural resilience of the Pueblo peoples throughout the southwest.
Analysis of expeditionary period documents in this chapter suggests that precontact Puebloan peoples internally moderated and resolved conflicts through the same mechanisms of symbolic behavior or mutual respect systems that they tried on foreigners they encountered for the first time. They likely believed these time-tested strategies would work, but when they did not, Pueblo peoples could only resort to more intensified responses of defensive and offensive tactics, deception, and ultimately to broader-scale reorganization. European expeditionary tactics of pitting indigenous groups against each other were similarly unsuccessful when tried in the Puebloan world.

There is no general agreement among scholars as to the nature of interpueblo relations just prior to the first expeditions into the American Southwest. The emergence of warrior societies in the central Rio Grande Valley (Schaafsma 2002) suggests the institutionalized depth of social divisions among some Pueblo groups. However, there is little physical evidence of actual hostility among the pueblos during the time just before European contact. Architectural details show that while plazas were enclosed, they were not completely barricaded. Defensive locations were not constructed among the Rio Grande pueblos until the revolt period (Wilcox 2009).

It was into this context of negotiated tolerance and potential friction in the Pueblo world that the first expeditions arrived. The presence of a new “common enemy” may have served to overcome inter-Puebloan differences and provide a source of needed unity. The limits of that unity were tested to the greatest extent when hard choices arose: whether to come to the aid of other pueblos in need or under attack, or whether to acquiesce to the demands of foreigners rather than face the ultimate wrath of resistance.

In the middle Rio Grande Valley, few pueblos offered help to the besieged Tiguex settlements. This followed preexisting social (and ethnolinguistic) boundaries, particularly with Keres settlements to the north. Zia Pueblo elected to protect itself from Coronado’s forces by offering aid and likely had little choice in the face of events occurring just miles away. Even within the Tiguex Province, villages seem to have been autonomous, resulting in nonprovision of aid to other nearby pueblos in times of conflict. The exception to this seems to have been when the remaining populace decided to assemble at the Tiguex village of Moho for a final last stand against Coronado in early 1541.

Likely, there were complex pueblo-specific and interpueblo dynamics to which each group had to respond individually or situationally. As suggested elsewhere in this chapter, it appears that mechanisms to moderate the severity of conflicts were socially and ritually institutionalized prior to the time of first contact with outsiders. The fact that these mechanisms were used by pueblo peoples against foreigners in the face of contact-related hostilities or conflict-laden circumstances is of great interest.
The seeds of the Pueblo Revolt were planted deeply and irreversibly by the actions and events of the first contact between natives and nonnatives in the American Southwest 140 years earlier. The initial breakdown in mutual respect, followed by the resentful treatment of the Pueblo people, the destruction of their villages, and the casualties suffered left scars that carried well past 1540. Those deep scars were reopened by explorations in the latter part of the 1500s and were certainly not healed by the many difficulties that came to pass throughout the seventeenth century. When the Pueblo Revolt did occur in 1680, it was in many senses the inevitable outcome of forces set in motion during the first contact with nonnative peoples on the Vázquez de Coronado expedition.

NOTES

1. The definitiveness of this statement should be clarified in several ways. The only other land-based expedition of comparable size from the time period was led by Gonzalo Pizarro, who was sent by his half-brother Francisco Pizarro from Ecuador into the Amazon Basin to find the “land of cinnamon.” Gonzalo Pizarro left Ecuador in 1541 with 220 Spaniards and about 4,000 Indian allies but within months, two-thirds or more of the expeditionary forces had died. Rather than continue on, he left completion of the exploration to Francisco de Orellana, who then got credit as the “discoverer” of the Amazon River.

Other large expeditions that took place north of South America were all launched by sea or were smaller. Thus, Coronado’s remains the largest land-based expedition with the exception of the Pizarro-Orellana exploration, which was also not organized by the Spanish Crown but rather by Francisco Pizarro himself (for a discussion of the 136 New World expeditions that occurred in the sixteenth century, see R. Flint 2008:205–18).

2. Estimating current monetary values from the variety of medieval currencies is notoriously difficult. Some estimates are based on the values of commodities, such as the cost of a horse, while others are tied to salaries for certain jobs. The cost estimate for the Coronado expedition is based on information compiled by Shirley Flint (2003), who estimated a value of 574,000 sixteenth-century silver pesos. Each silver peso weighed an ounce, and so the base market value in precious metal is 574,000 times the spot price per ounce of silver (which ranges from thirty dollars in early 2013 to twenty dollars in early 2016).

This would generate a precious-metal cost value of the expedition at nearly $20 million, not adjusted for inflation. Inflationary costs over several centuries may drive the actual value of the goods and services assembled and paid for on the expedition into the hundreds of millions of dollars in today’s currency. As S. Flint (2003:52) points out, the sum of 574,000 silver pesos was enormous: at nearly nineteen tons, it was almost three times the amount taken by Cortés from his conquest of Tenochtitlan, and more than Francisco Pizarro’s share of the legendary treasure ransom paid by the Inca emperor Atahualpa.
3. The twelfth pueblo is likely Isleta, located twenty-three miles south of Piedras Marcadas.

REFERENCES CITED


