Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico (review)

Jean A. Stuntz

The Americas, Volume 66, Number 1, July 2009, pp. 122-123 (Review)

Published by Cambridge University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/tam.0.0136*

Lienzo de Tlaxcala. The work finishes with a brief recapitulation and her conclusions. The book also includes a separate full color reproduction of the lienzo itself.

This is a complex and fascinating work based on a complex and fascinating document. The lienzo itself is on cloth, one of the largest such paintings in existence from the colonial period. Asselbergs does a careful analysis of nearly all aspects of the piece, looking loosely at the pictographs, the inscriptions, the colors, and juxtaposition of figures. She also does an exceedingly good job of comparing the piece to other similar works, in particular the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2*. Other than the specific narrative outlined in each, the only major difference is that one was produced on paper (the *Mapa*) while the other was on cloth (the *Lienzo*). Her work is also firmly rooted in the historical context of the time; that the natives of Quauhquechollan aided the Spaniards in their conquest of Guatemala, and the function of the work in helping to both create corporate identity and to serve as a reminder to colonial authorities of the important role of their native allies. Lastly, Asselbergs rightly points out that this work is the earliest map of Guatemala, and thus is an important historical document for that area as well.

This study fits in well with work by Carrasco and Sessions on the *Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2* and Diel on the *Tira de Tepechpan*, among other works, and is part of a general reassessment of colonial documents from native authorship, such as Stephanie Wood's work on *techialoyan* manuscripts. It is an important contribution, well researched, well written, and thoughtful.

SUNY, Potsdam JOHN F. SCHWALLER
Potsdam, New York

Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico. By John L. Kessell. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. Pp. xii, 225. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $24.95 cloth.

John Kessell uses a biographical/social history approach to answer the significant questions of why the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 occurred and why the Spanish were able to re-conquer the land ten years later. Kessell looks at personal interactions, between Spanish and Indian, between Spanish factions, and between Indian factions. It was these interactions, based on personalities and personal ambitions, which brought on the larger movements.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the Pueblo world and emphasizes the variety of people and ways of life it entailed. People who lived in the Southwest had many different communities with different languages and different values. Warfare, while not continuous, was common. Kessell stresses that the kachina religion and religious calendar bound the scattered communities together.

When the Spaniards began colonizing, it was the kachina religion and religious calendar that they attacked most. Kessell examines the leading Spaniards like Cap-

tain Pérez de Villagrá and Juan de Oñate to show how their personal motivations (glory and greed) led to the fighting at Acoma and the brutal repercussions. Once the Franciscans arrived in the 1610s, some Pueblos used them for their own purposes just as some Franciscans sought their personal ends of salvation and control. Again Kessell looks at the individuals involved and shows how they came to the decisions that had such long-lasting effects. Most Pueblos continued their own ways of life even after nominally converting, which caused outbreaks of violence.

As the colony grew, the Spaniards factionalized because of family quarrels and ambitious plots. This caused more instability than it might have otherwise because the individual Indians further divided the Spanish to achieve their own ambitions. Pueblo culture remained vibrant even though it was hidden from the Spanish. Things just got worse in the 1660s and 1670s, with drought causing Apache raids and further deterioration of stability in both the Spanish and Indian groups. Then Don Esteban Clemente, a Pueblo who grew up in the Spanish mission, denounced the kachinas to gain personal power with the Spanish. As the drought worsened, the Pueblos believed it was the kachinas punishing them for abandoning their religion. Don Clemente switched sides in 1670 to lead almost all of the Pueblos against the Spanish in the hope that the kachinas would end the drought. He did not succeed.

Kessell skillfully interweaves individual storylines to tell of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the resettlement of 1690. From the Pueblo point of view, the Revolt of 1680 was a holy war intended to get rid of the Spanish whose religion caused the drought and resulting hard times. They succeeded at first, but ancient divisions between the various Pueblos caused friction and eventually the Spanish came back to stay only a decade later. Kessell ends with brief descriptions of the New Mexico colony after the two sides learned to live together with amicable cultural interaction.

Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico assumes that the reader knows at least the general outline of the Spanish settlement, revolt, and reconquest of New Mexico. Its strength lies in the story-telling approach which will interest both the general reader and scholars. Kessell brings all the people to life, complete with foibles, strengths, ambitions, sacrifices, and rationalizations. The weakness is in the citations, which rely heavily on his own previously published works instead of directing the reader to the primary sources. The bibliography included mostly older material with the addition of a few recent articles. This would be a good book for undergraduates, with its underlying theme of individual people making a difference. It is easy to read, entertaining, and full of fascinating anecdotes about the people who created the Kingdom of New Mexico.

West Texas A&M University JEAN A. STUNTZ
Canyon, Texas