

Book Review

Native and Spanish New Worlds: Sixteenth-century entradas in the American Southwest and Southeast. Edited by Clay Mathers, Jeffrey M. Mitchem, and Charles M. Haeker. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013, 382 pp.

*Reviewed by Nicole Mathwich
School of Anthropology, University of Arizona*

The collection *Native and Spanish New Worlds* (2013) explores a unique and problematic kind of indigenous-Spanish interaction in North America: the entrada. The entrada expeditions were groups generally organized by Spanish officers and were composed of officers, soldiers, priests, native allies and laborers. Entradas initiated the first direct contact between Native American groups and Europeans in the Southwest and Southeast of North America. Due to the ephemeral nature of these meetings, there is often little material evidence of these events. As a result, historians and archaeologists rely heavily on Spanish accounts of events, but have to contend with inherent problems of perspective and reliability associated with those sources.

The authors in *Native and Spanish New Worlds* are predominately archaeologists from academic and cultural resource management backgrounds, and attempt to broaden the historical record of entradas through the inclusion of political and settlement information, demographic estimates, tree-ring data, historiography, and oral histories. These additional lines of evidence come from years of archaeological and historical research, and the collection helps re-contextualize the native political and environmental settings in which the Spanish entrada events took place. One result of this widened scope, however, is that many of the volume's chapters have little to do with entradas directly. Still, any reader interested in the 16th

century in North America will find new lines of evidence and perspectives to consider.

Published in 2013, the collection emerged from Society for History Archaeology and Society for American Archaeology conference sessions in 2008 and 2009, and represents a distillation of the thoughts and work presented at these meetings. The editors optimistically organized the volume into seven sections exploring native perspectives, historiography, climactic influences and impact, disease, political organization, conflict, and discussion. One of the strongest elements of this volume is its comparison and review of two distinct regions. Each section generally presents one Southwestern and Southeastern case, maintaining a focus on the Southwest on the Puebloan-Spanish interactions, and in the Southeast, on La Florida. While it is an archaeological collection, most of the chapters rely on historical documentary research, with the exception of the climatic influences section, which employs tree ring data from the Southwest and Southeast.

Section I on Native Perspectives contains a single chapter—Chapter 2, “Crossing the Corn Line: Steps toward an understanding of Zuni communities and entradas in the sixteenth-century Southwest”—about Zuni reactions to the Spanish entrada. Kurt E. Dongoske and Cindy K. Dongoske attempt to insert active Zuni voices into historical accounts of Spanish entradas. The Zuni were visited by every major expedition into the area and later the long-term Spanish occupation. Dongoske and Dongoske present both the documentary evidence and the disinterest the Zuni Cultural Resource Advisory Team expressed when asked about the subject. The authors plan to pursue the subject further, with more specific questions. Unlike the rest of the volume, Chapter 2 was not followed by a paired perspective from Southeastern entrada history, and oral histories and collaboration with descendants did not figure prominently in other analyses.

In Section II, historiographies of entradas question

dominant narratives of early contact, which frequently celebrate or vilify “great men” like Coronado and de Soto. Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint problematize assumptions of the military nature of entradas in Chapter 3, “Catch as catch can: The evolving history of the Contact Period Southwest, 1838–present.” The relative inexperience of entrada soldiers and their failure to adhere to contemporary standards of military practice and theory contributed to the escalation of conflict in some encounters. Unlike previous historical views on the subject, which portray Coronado’s expedition as a small Spanish army, Flint and Flint present evidence that the entrada was quasi-military at best, composed of a few Europeans and a diverse collection of native warriors and laborers. For comparison, Robbie Etheridge presents a Southeastern historiography of the 16th and 17th centuries in Chapter 4, “Contact era studies and the Southeastern Indians.” Etheridge highlights the difficulties historians face when attempting to study this sparsely-documented period. Using Annales School paradigms which focus on long-term social histories, Etheridge examines studies where post-contact native peoples reformulated alliances along pre-contact, Mississippian political organizations. Etheridge calls on researchers to look at both prehistoric and historical dynamics rather than assume complete ruptures with prehistoric indigenous traditions.

The authors in Section III seek to contextualize entrada consequences using climatic information. In Chapter 5, “The Role of Climate in Early Spanish-Native American Interactions in the U.S. Southwest,” Carla R. Van West and her co-authors use tree-ring data to compare climactic information to historical events. For example, the open display of traditional ceremonies, acts which led to the hanging of several Pueblo religious leaders also coincided with a cold-drought period from 1664–1678. Similarly, Dennis B. Blanton’s summary in Chapter 6, “The factors of climate and weather in sixteenth-century La Florida,” uses tree-ring data from the 16th and 17th centuries, and overlays

these data with historical events. While the approach is not particularly useful for de Soto's short entrada, Blanton's investigation advances understandings of the duration of dry conditions at failed early settlements in La Florida. Blanton and Van West et al. suggest climate information, while not determinate of outcomes, ought to be added to the understanding of events explained by predominately cultural reasons.

Section IV explores the controversial topic of disease and the shifts in population demographics in the two regions. Ann F. Ramenofsky and Jeremy Kulisheck complicate narratives of demographic collapse in North America in Chapter 7, "Regarding sixteenth-century native population change in the northern Southwest." The authors observe that the epidemics, like small-pox, which destabilized and depopulated much of the Southeast, did not occur with the same potency in the Southwest. Ramenofsky and Kulisheck infer that disease was not a major factor in New Mexico from historical accounts, population counts, settlement patterns, and the relative persistence of all these communities. While emphasizing the continuity and stability of Pueblo groups, this argument has the effect, however, of suggesting groups in the Southeast were less persistent and less stable than those in the Southwest. These kinds of arguments have modern political implications for descendants of Southeastern groups, and there does not seem to be any consideration of this issue. As part of the Southeastern evaluation of demographics, Dale L. Hutchinson's Chapter 8, "Entradas and epidemics in the sixteenth-century Southeast," presents indirect evidence of epidemics, like mass burials, but explains the limitations and difficulties associated with both direct and indirect evidence. Hutchinson tempers the explanation that the Southeastern depopulation was due solely to epidemics with Eurasian examples like the bubonic plague. In those cases, high mortality occurred, but never resulted in complete obliteration of those regions' populations. Social and environmental factors like labor demands and climate may have made Southeastern

populations more susceptible to disease. In the end, Section IV navigates the notoriously problematic subject of disease and indigenous-European interactions with mixed success.

Section V presents the likely political organization of native peoples at time of contact. Richard C. Chapman surveys subsistence and settlement patterns in the Rio Grande Valley in the 16th century, underlining the significance of seasonal and inter-village movements in Chapter 9, "Sixteenth-century indigenous settlement dynamics in the upper middle Rio Grande Valley." Spanish *entrada* accounts described Puebloan settlements as hierarchical and sedentary, and Spanish authorities based their imposition of the *encomienda* system on these assumptions. Chapman examines the ethnographic accounts and settlement information from archaeological sources and suggests the Spanish fundamentally misinterpreted Pueblo political life. The failure to understand the politically egalitarian structure and mobility may have contributed to the *encomienda's* failure in the 17th century.

In the Southeast, Robbie Ethridge and Jeffrey M. Mitchem follow Hernando de Soto's *entrada* through the region from 1539–1543 and use historical and archaeological evidence to describe the Mississippian chiefdoms he encountered along the way in Chapter 10, "The interior South at the time of Spanish exploration." No other Europeans entered the region for another 130 years, and when they did, the chiefdoms de Soto had observed were gone. Ethridge and Mitchem do not attribute the collapse entirely to disease, but frame it within regional Mississippian politics destabilized by disease, warfare, and slave raiding. In contrast, Chapter 11, "Inventing Florida: Constructing a colonial society in an indigenous landscape," John E. Worth explores very different themes in his analysis of the many failed attempts to gain a Spanish foothold in La Florida in the 16th century. While acknowledging involuntary constraints influenced indigenous decisions to participate, Worth argues in Chapter 11 that what ultimately emerged was a system

of relative accommodation, which produced an emergent Spanish-Indian society at the end of the 16th century.

The chapters of Section VI survey the topic of conflict in the Southwest and Southeast. Clay Mathers puts the conflict in the Southwest and Mexico into context through the lens of many different martial traditions from the Iberian Peninsula, Mexico, and the Southwest in Chapter 12, "Contest and violence on the northern borderlands frontier: Patterns of Native-European conflict in the sixteenth-century Southwest." He underscores the importance of native alliances and antagonism with the Spanish in conflicts. Mathers compares strategic use of party composition and violence in the Coronado entrada and subsequent expeditions and finds a greater wariness in Pueblo groups' reactions to Europeans after Coronado. Using surface survey, limited metal detecting, and geophysical methods, Mathers reviews the archaeological evidence of these conflicts and the strategies they may reflect. In Chapter 13, "Conflict and violence in La Florida," Christopher B. Rodning, Robin A. Beck, Jr., and David G. Moore continue the examination of violence that accompanied Spanish entradas and evaluate the types and sources of the conflicts: food, bad gift giving, hostage taking, labor demands, and sexual transgressions. Rodning and his co-authors view the arrival of the Spanish into the Southeastern region as the precursor to a shift in status relations between native communities; the political and economic situation altered considerably. Southeastern chiefdoms continued but did not endure in their traditional forms.

David Hurst Thomas and Charles R. Ewan conclude the collection with a summary of the significance of each contributor's work to the overall trajectories of research and the importance of regional differences between La Florida, the Puebloan groups, and the Mississippian world. *Native and Spanish New Worlds* offers useful reviews of entradas and their consequences. In chapter 14, "Honor and hierarchies: Long-term trajectories in the Pueblo and Mississippian worlds, Hurst summarizes

the ideas and paradigm shifts explored by the authors, many of whom have worked in these regions of the U.S. for decades. In Chapter 15, "History, prehistory, and the contact experience," Ewan goes further by comparing and contrasting the views of the contributors, and how regional methods and perspectives have shaped the debates on each topic.

For archaeologists and historians new to the histories of the Southwest and Southeast, the volume offers a good orientation to the numerous physical, literary, and theoretical challenges of studying the 16th and 17th centuries in each region, but readers will have to go to other sources for the original studies reporting the archaeological data. For the researchers who have made their careers in either the Southwest or Southeast, the volume may not offer new information about their area of expertise, but it does provide a valuable archaeological comparison of key themes from two North American regions influenced by early Spanish colonialism.