

A HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT SOUTHWEST

o n e

Fore! — *Orthodoxies*

Archaeologies: 1500 to 1850

Histories: "Time Immemorial" to 1500 BC



This book is about southwestern archaeology and the ancient Southwest—two very different things. *Archaeology* is how we learn about the distant past. The *ancient Southwest* is what actually happened way back then. Archaeology will never disclose or discover *everything* that happened in the ancient Southwest, but archaeology is our best scholarly way to know *anything* about that distant past.

After a century of southwestern archaeology, we know a lot about what happened in the ancient Southwest. We know so much—we have such a wealth of data and information—that much of what we think we know about the Southwest has been necessarily compressed into conventions, classifications, and orthodoxies. This is particularly true of abstract concepts such as Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon. A wall is a wall, a pot is a pot, but Anasazi is... what exactly?

This book challenges several orthodoxies and reconfigures others in novel ways—“novel,” perhaps, like *Gone with the Wind*. I try to stick to the facts, but some facts won’t stick to me. These are mostly old facts—nut-hard verities of past generations. Orthodoxies, shiny from years of handling, slip through fingers and fall through screens like gizzard stones. We can work without them. We already know a few turkeys were involved in the story.

Each chapter in this book tells two parallel stories: the development, personalities, and institutions of southwestern archaeology (“archaeologies”) and interpretations of what actually happened in the ancient past (“histories”). The century-long development of southwestern archaeology parallels, in odd but interesting ways, what happened in the much longer, three-millennium-long history of the ancient Southwest. Chapters 1 through 7 match sequences of archaeologies and histories, building frameworks and story lines for the last half of the last chapter—the point, the punch line, the nervous scraggly rabbit pulled out of a threadbare hat.

The first seven chapters are, in effect, extended notes for “A History of the Ancient Southwest,” the last half of chapter 8. And each chapter has its own extended apparatus of

notes—notes to notes. Impatient readers may cut to the chase: read the last half of chapter 8 first, and then browse through the earlier chapters. But it's all one big intertwined story. We can't understand the history of the ancient Southwest without also understanding the development of archaeological thinking, because what we know about the past comes through the filters and lenses of archaeology. Archaeology has a history of its own, focusing on different things in different ways at different stages of its development. So it's all history, or histories.

What's so interesting about *history*? Surely, that's what archaeology has been doing all along? Yes and no. The earliest southwestern archaeologists (chapters 1 and 2) considered themselves historians or prehistorians. Their goals—history—were those of European archaeology, a scholarly field that developed from written history and art history. Decades later, in the nineteenth century, American (anthropological) archaeology developed as a natural or social science with the work of Lewis Henry Morgan and Adolph Bandelier (chapter 2). History was not a major focus of anthropological archaeology because anthropologists weren't entirely certain that American Indians *had* history in the European sense. During the first half of the twentieth century, American archaeologists pursued "culture history" (chapters 3 and 4), but culture history was less history than *systematics*: geographically and chronologically structured diagrams of who was where when. No narratives tied together the rows and columns of culture history charts. Tree-ring and carbon 14 dating—and historical verisimilitude—arrived shortly before and after World War II, respectively (chapter 4). Archaeology then had precise dates with which to order events chronologically: what happened when. But before that chronological precision could be woven into a narrative, along came scientific "New Archaeology" (chapter 5). "New" in the 1960s, New Archaeology (in its most enthusiastic forms) eschewed history altogether, aiming instead for scientific laws or processes that transcended time and space (chapters 5 and 6). By the early 1980s, postmodern sensibilities—doubting science—had revived historical interests (chapter 7). Then several federal laws favoring Indians and historic preservation forced history down science's throat (chapters 7 and 8). Today almost all archaeology "does history" of one sort or another. But that's a recent development, only in the past ten years or so. We are still learning how to write history.

When we write southwestern history, what tales do we tell? Surprisingly dull stories, as it turns out. Apparently, nothing much ever happened in the ancient Southwest. Paul Martin and Fred Plog (whom we shall meet again in chapter 5) published a well-regarded textbook in 1973. One chapter lists "the great events" (273) in southwestern prehistory. There were precisely three: agriculture, towns ("an explanation based on technoenvironmental and technoeconomic determinism" [297]), and abandonment. People got corn, formed towns, and then left them for other towns. End of story.

The backstory, or master narrative, beginning with the first great Southwesternist, Adolph Bandelier, and continuing today, has been steady progress from rough rude beginnings to Pueblo life:

The picture which can be dimly traced into this past is a very modest and unpretending one. No great cataclysms of nature, no waves of destruction on a large scale, either natural or human, appear to have interrupted the slow and tedious development of the people before the Spaniards came.¹

We would not put it that way today of course. We know (and of course Martin and Plog knew) there were a few bumps on the road. The Great Drought of 1275 to 1300, for example, qualifies as a cataclysm. But a century after Bandelier and his "slow and tedious develop-

ment,” we still favor versions of the past that turn ancient people into modern Pueblos as quietly and efficiently as possible. Slow and tedious, perhaps, but along a fairly straight line leading to the Pueblos—serene, spiritual, communal, eternal. That’s the version you see in museum exhibits, hear at Mesa Verde campfire talks, read in Santa Fe coffee table books. That’s the orthodoxy.

I don’t think it happened that way. I think the Southwest had rises and falls, kings and commoners, war and peace, triumphs and failures. Real history! Just like everyone else, the wide world over. And I think the story of the ancient Southwest was the story of the *whole* Southwest and beyond. The rise of kings at Chaco Canyon, for example, was a geopolitical reaction to the Colonial Period Hohokam expansion (chapters 4 and 5); the Hohokam Classic Period was the product of refugee Chacoan nobles chased off the Colorado Plateau by angry farmers (chapters 6 and 7); Casas Grandes was a failed attempt to create a Mesoamerican state (chapter 7); and modern Pueblos—so different from Chaco and Casas Grandes—developed not *from* their past but as a *deliberate rejection of* that past (chapter 8). Along the way there were cataclysms and destructions, and societies so big and bright we could rightly call them civilizations. That’s a different history—not the sort of thing you’ll read in coffee table books; it is a kind of history that archaeology has denied the ancient Southwest for reasons, honorable and not so honorable, that occupy many of the pages that follow. This book challenges the conventional view, our orthodoxies of the ancient Southwest.

How to Write a History of the Ancient Southwest

My goal is to write a narrative history of the ancient Southwest, specifically a political history. Why *political*? I will explain below. Why *narrative*? Simon Martin, in a recent essay, “On Pre-Columbian Narrative,” explains:

We cannot comprehend the meaning of time, or history, or personal experience outside the narrative form, making it a universal of mankind throughout the ages.... For all its centrality, and the weight of literature directed at the topic, defining exactly what is meant by “narrative” has seldom proved easy. At its broadest, we might include all discourses on human action, *especially as they concern change to an existing state of affairs*—usually describing both the reasons for that change and its consequences.²

An *eventful* history, a history in which *things happened*. We don’t currently have that kind of history of the ancient Southwest. We have phase sequences, chronologies, and population graphs.³

Don’t get me wrong: it took tons of work by many talented archaeologists to discover, analyze, and assemble those phase sequences, chronologies, and population graphs. Southwestern archaeology accumulated almost terrifying amounts of information and data. Making sense of it all is an enormous task. Fifty years ago, a committee of senior scholars—all wiser than I am—declared, “The time is not yet here when one man, or one committee, can write a new ‘Southwestern Archaeology.’”⁴ The following half century has not made the task any easier. The quantity of raw and processed data, of site reports and syntheses, has increased astronomically. It is inconceivable that a single person (or even a very large committee) could master that vast literature. What do I conclude from this? To write a history of the ancient Southwest, the aspiring author must be (1) completely bonkers or (2) highly selective. Or most likely both.

I leave it to others to judge my qualifications under criterion 1. I can more usefully address criterion 2, selectivity. Simon Martin again: “While we might consider any particular

narrative self-contained, even the ‘thickest’ and most detailed description leaves a universe of crucial information unstated.”⁵ Let us be clear from the onset: I am not writing a comprehensive review of southwestern archaeology, presenting and weighing every model or idea. I pick and choose, and I do not exhaustively consider every alternative explanation. I attempt to reduce ten thousand years of glorious, messy, incompressible human history into a short, reasonably coherent narrative (the last half of chapter 8). Think of southwestern archaeology as a vast Iowa-size field of maize—variegated in corn’s many varieties and colors—and think of the last half of chapter 8 as a shot of bourbon, neat. How do we get from corn to mash to still to barrel to bottle?⁶

Well, that depends. Is archaeology history or is it science? Science requires one set of procedures; history another. That question and its spin-offs occupied American archaeology for most of my career (which began during the distant, heady days of New Archaeology), and it’s still unresolved. My contemporaries and I were trained in the 1970s and 1980s as scientists, and most members of my age group consider themselves scientists. But I’ve chosen to write history. (Sections to follow explore how that’s done.) Since I’ve (temporarily) hung up my lab coat and (briefly) abandoned hypotheses for narrative, a short explanation is in order.

Archaeologists swim in theoretical schools. It’s comforting—socially, intellectually, and professionally—to think, speak, and move together.⁷ But which school? A recent review welcomes to this new millennium “a thousand archaeologies.”⁸ But I see only two: science and humanities. After four decades, C. P. Snow’s “Two Cultures” (1959) have been rejected as a false dichotomy. But I reject those rejections. The differences are profound: sciences simplify understanding, reducing an unruly world to principles and *processes* (thus “processual archaeology,” chapter 6); the humanities and arts multiply understandings, with as many valid insights as there are gifted practitioners—each a unique appreciation of unique events or phenomena. Schools formed along those two lines, following Lewis Binford (science) and Ian Hodder (humanities).⁹

Four decades ago, Binford (who dominated archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s and with whom I studied at the University of New Mexico) told us that we were poor scientists. Two decades later, Hodder (the leading British archaeologist, recently transplanted to Stanford University) told us that we were poor humanists. Both were right. They each found different deficiencies in American archaeology because they each had different ideas about what archaeology should be. Binford rejoiced in reduction and generalization and science; Hodder celebrated complications and particularity and humanistic understandings. Chalk and cheese.

Well known, but curiously underappreciated, is the fact that European and American archaeologies have very different histories and are in many ways different disciplines.¹⁰ European archaeology may consort with anthropology, but it originated in written history and art history. European “prehistory is...a humanity and those who would call it a science are using the word *science* in a very special way.”¹¹ We replied: “American archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing.”¹² Anthropology, once the “science of man,” remains very much at home with the social and natural sciences. “New” or scientific archaeology, at its most extreme, avoided history altogether: it sought laws and rules, not unique stories of particular places (Bruce Trigger rightly noted “the antihistorical bias of New Archaeology”).¹³ Despite recent humanistic turns in anthropology, American archaeology is still funded by the National Science Foundation and is featured regularly in *Science*.¹⁴ British books and conferences address science *and* archaeology, or science *in* archaeology; American archaeology remains convinced that it *is* science.

“This disciplinary difference is far more than mere bureaucratic procedure: it mirrors the development of remarkably different methods and theories in Europe and the US.”¹⁵ Witness the appalled reaction of Europeans to the aggressive scientism of New Archaeology as expressed in *Explanation in Archaeology: An Explicitly Scientific Approach*, by Watson, LeBlanc, and Redman (1971). That book lit fires in Britain that have not yet burned out; our British cousins are still annoyed by scientific hypothetico-deductive Popperian falsification (which is curious because not many American archaeologists actually did archaeology *that way*). Conversely, American archaeologists are confused and bemused by the art school manifestos of avant-garde British archaeology, the introspective archaeology of Barbara Bender,¹⁶ and the theater/archaeology of Michael Shanks.¹⁷ (How many British archaeologists actually do archaeology *that way*?)

I’ve found myself swimming with one school and then the other, depending on where they were headed. Right now, I’m interested in history, for reasons that may or may not become clear in books yet to be written. But I’m not jumping in the deep end with the Brits. We differ on scale, and scale is important. Humanistic history loves small scales, even micro scales; it has been said that all history is essentially biography. The ancient Southwest must have had heroes and villains, elites and commoners, men and women of engaging interest. There would be plenty of biography if we could only know those long-gone characters and individuals. We can’t—not without a time machine. So I’ll essay history on a larger, geographic scale—which we *do* know, thanks to the hard work of pioneer, culture history, and New Archaeologists and their postmodern progeny. For more than a century, archaeologists have tramped back and forth across our quarter of the continent, finding sites and making notes. We know the geography of the ancient Southwest.¹⁸

Histories, Scales, and Connections

Modern history, however, favors smaller scales—a postmodern trend. Conventional biography (of course!) but also the micro scales of a medieval village in France, a woman’s life on the American frontier—scholarly narratives constructed on the smallest possible scales dominate the literature. But there is also a countercurrent in contemporary history toward larger, even global scales. In the face of postmodern downsizing, globalization justifies Big History, which reemerged in recent years as “world history.” Jerry Bentley, in a survey of “The New World History,” defines the genre:

The term world *history*...does not imply that historians must deal with the entire history of all the world’s peoples, and certainly not all at the same time. It refers instead to historical scholarship that explicitly compares experiences across the boundaries of societies, or that examines interactions between peoples of different societies, or that analyzes large-scale historical patterns and processes that transcend individual societies.¹⁹

A flurry of recent studies focuses on the interconnectedness of the world’s regions and continents: McNeill and McNeill’s *The Human Web* (2003), David Christian’s *Maps of Time* (“An Introduction to Big History,” 2004), and Felipe Fernández-Armesto’s *Pathfinders* (2006)—or, more to the point, his hemispheric *The Americas* (2003).²⁰

Surely, *global* goals are unsuited for the Southwest—a small and insignificant bit of the great large world? Most readers, whether archaeologists or innocent civilians, probably share a view of the Southwest as neither mover nor shaker in world events. Rather, they see an

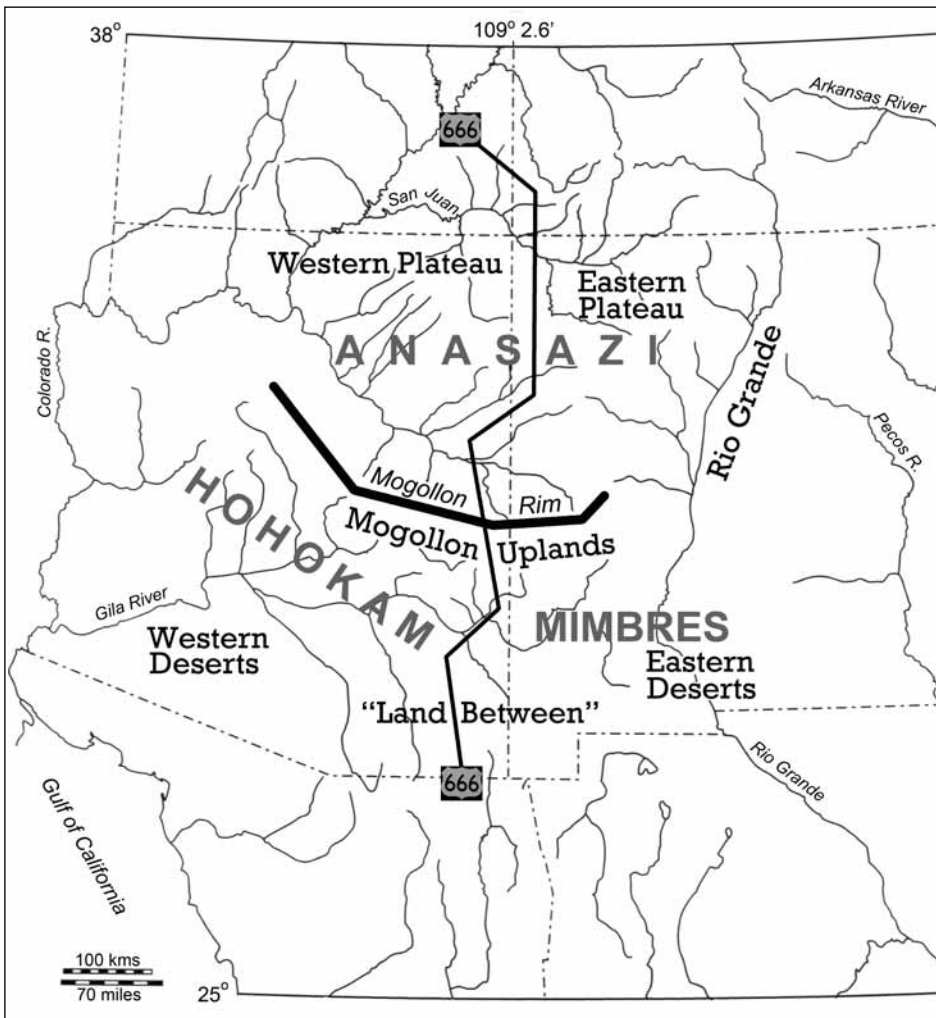


Figure 1.2. The Southwest. Courtesy of the author.

isolate, a backwater, an island of serenity amid the tumult and clatter of captains and kings. That idyllic detachment is one of the Southwest's particular (contemporary) charms. That's wrong. The ancient Southwest was not a prime mover in global events, but neither was it an island, entire unto itself (as we shall see in the chapters that follow). Do not fear: I am not trying to inflate the Southwest into a major player in world history.

I am inspired instead by the *scales* of world history, and particularly by the presupposition that *things were more likely than not interconnected*. If, as Big History tells us, the world and its continents were interconnected in historically important ways, it seems likely that smaller regions were too, in ways less dramatic but still consequential—within the Southwest, for example, across regions such as Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon (figs. 1.2, 1.3), which we will explore in chapter 3. Southwestern archaeology views those three cultural regions as separate domains, separate professional specialties.²¹ An Anasazi archaeologist is not required to know much about Hohokam, and vice versa. I'm troubled by that separation and specialization. It seems likely to me that the various regions of the Southwest were densely

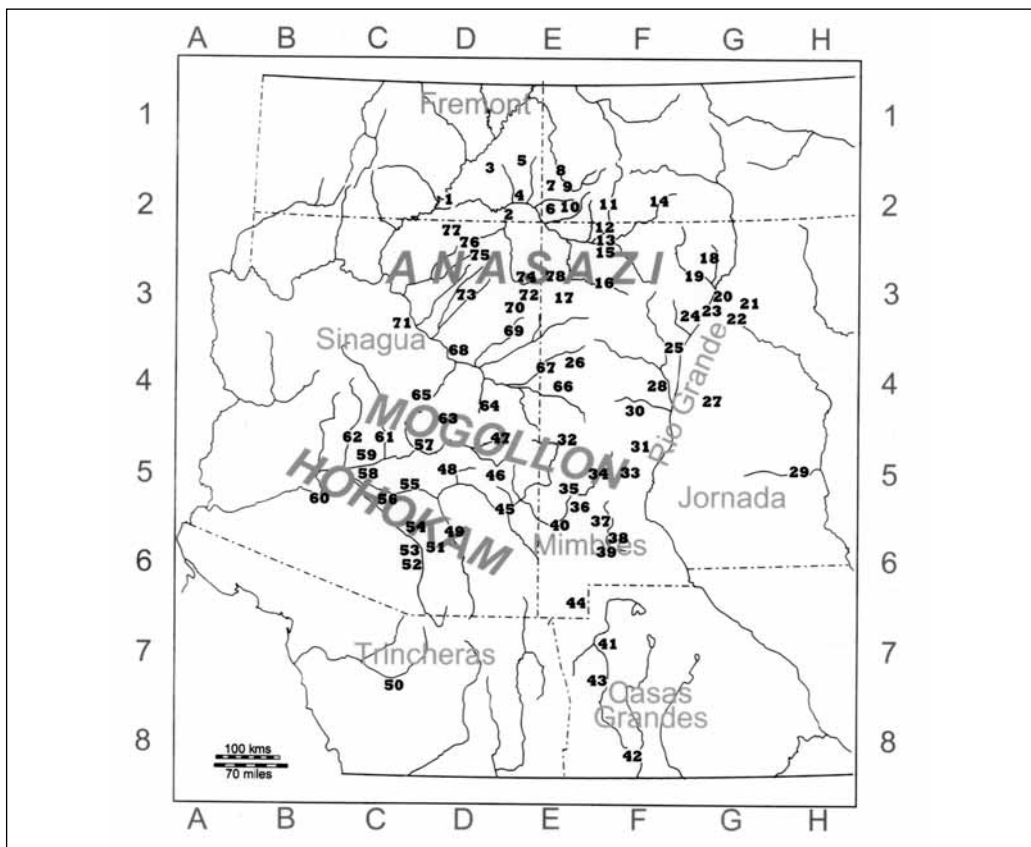


Figure 1.3. Sites and archaeological regions. Courtesy of the author.

29 SJ 423, 16 (F3)	Chimney Rock, 14 (F2)	Kinishba, 47 (D5)	Pueblo Viejo, 45 (D5)
Adamsville, 56 (C5)	Cliff Palace, 10 (E2)	Kuapa, 24 (G3)	Redrock, 40 (E6)
Agua Fria, 62 (C5)	Dolores, 8 (E2)	Kuaua, 25 (F4)	Reeve, 49 (D6)
Alkali Ridge, 5 (E1)	Escalante AZ, 55 (C5)	Kwilleylekia, 35 (E5)	Ridges Basin, 11 (F2)
Aragon, 32 (E5)	Escalante CO, 9 (E2)	La Ciudad, 59 (C5)	Roosevelt 9:6, 57 (D5)
Archeotekopa, 26 (E4)	Farview, 10 (E2)	Las Capas, 53 (C6)	Sacred Ridge, 11 (F2)
Awatovi, 73 (D3)	Fort West-Lee Village, 36 (E5)	Las Colinas, 59 (C5)	Safford, 45 (E5)
Azatlan, 61 (C5)	Galaz, 37 (F6)	Long House Valley, 76 (D2)	Salinas, 27 (G4)
Aztec Ruins, 12 (F2)	Galisteo, 22 (G3)	Los Muertos, 58 (C5)	Salmon, 13 (F2)
Bad Dog Ridge, 70 (E3)	Gallinas Spring, 30 (F4)	Los Pozos, 53 (C6)	Sand Canyon, 7 (E2)
Bass, 7 (E2)	Gallin, 60 (B5)	Lowry, 7 (E2)	Shabikeschee, 16 (F3)
Betatakin, 77 (D2)	Gila Bend, 60 (B5)	Marana, 54 (C6)	Silver Creek, 64 (D4)
Black Mesa, 75 (D3)	Gila Pueblo, 48 (D5)	McPhee, 8 (E2)	Snaketown, 58 (C5)
Black Mountain, 39 (F6)	Glen Canyon, 1 (D2)	Mesa Grande, 58 (C5)	Stove Canyon, 46 (D5)
Bloom Mound, 29 (H5)	Goat Hill, 45 (D5)	Mesa Verde, 10 (E2)	SU, 32 (E5)
Blue Mesa, 11 (F2)	Grand Canal, 59 (C5)	NAN, 38 (F6)	TJ, 34 (F5)
Bluff, 4 (E2)	Grass Mesa, 8 (E2)	Owen's, 3 (D2)	Tonto Basin, 57 (D5)
Broken K Pueblo, 64 (D4)	Grasshopper, 63 (D4)	Palo Verde, 62 (C5)	Tonto Cliff Dwellings, 57 (D5)
Bronze Trail Group, 23 (G3)	Great Sage Plain, 7 (E2)	Paquimé, 43 (E7)	Twin Angels, 15 (F3)
Canyon de Chelly, 74 (E3)	Grewe, 56 (C5)	Pecos, 21 (G3)	Una Vida, 16 (F3)
Carter Ranch, 64 (D4)	Gurley, 64 (D4)	Peñasco Blanco, 16 (F3)	University Indian Ruin, 51 (D6)
Casa Grande, 56 (C5)	Hawiku, 67 (E4)	Phoenix, 58 & 59 (C5)	Valencia Vieja, 52 (C6)
Cerrillos, 23 (G3)	Hay Hollow Valley, 64 (D4)	Pine Lawn Valley, 32 (E5)	Victorio, 31 (F5)
Cerro Colorado, 66 (E4)	Homolovi, 68 (D4)	Point of Pines, 46 (D5)	White House, 74 (E3)
Cerro de Trincheras, 50 (C7)	Hungo Pavi, 16 (F3)	Poncho House, 2 (E2)	Winston, 33 (F5)
Cerro Juanqueñlet me tell you.a, 41 (F7)	Joyce Well, 44 (E6)	Poshu'ouinge, 19 (G3)	Woodrow, 35 (E5)
CH 151, 42 (F8)	Keet Seel, 77 (D2)	Poston Butte, 55 (C5)	Wupatki, 71 (C3)
Chaco Canyon, 16 (F3)	Kin Cheops, 66 (E4)	Pottery Mound, 28 (F4)	Yellow Jacket, 7 (E2)
Chavez Pass, 65 (D4)	Kin Li Chee, 72 (E3)	Pueblo Alto, 16 (F3)	Yucca House, 6 (E2)
Chetro Kell, 16 (F3)	Kin Tiel, 69 (E3)	Pueblo Bonito, 16 (F3)	Zuni, 67 (E4)
		Pueblo Grande, 59 (C5)	

interconnected in ways we can see—and can't see. Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon were not atomistic isolates, separate until proven otherwise. World history—Big History—offers a different perspective: human societies (even on Easter Island) existed only in the context of other societies. Local histories were always embedded in much larger narratives. This should be true of the Southwest too. We should *expect* interconnections between and among our carefully constructed culture areas.²²

And I am pretty sure that the Southwest will never be understood except as a part of much larger North America. The Southwest was part of that larger world, not so much shaken as stirred by events beyond its borders. By the time the Southwest really got going—say, around AD 500—states and civilizations had been roaring along for two millennia in other parts of North America. Southwestern civilizations were late bloomers on a continent marked by active and intense large-scale, long-distance interaction. What picture would emerge if we began our thinking about the Southwest with the premise that it and its subregions were *more likely interconnected than otherwise?*²³

Connecting the Dots

I write history by *connecting the dots*. The British call this method interpretive archaeology. “Filling in the gaps in the past...rendering it comprehensible,” as one of the leading British archaeologists, Julian Thomas, says (nodding to Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley) in his introduction to *Interpretive Archaeology*.²⁴ But here's the rub: what renders the past comprehensible *to me* may not work *for you*. Tilley tells us that “the ‘truth’ of an interpretation in archaeology, in effect, boils down to its acceptability to others”; “consequently, there is always resistance to novel interpretations.”²⁵ Not only do I connect the dots differently, I see different dots! Different key sites, turning points, events. That's one reason we have seven chapters of windup—setting up the dots—before the pitch in chapter 8. To connect those dots, I follow three principles: (1) Everyone knew everything! (2) No coincidences! and (3) Distances can be dealt with. I err in many ways, I'm sure, but I err consistently in those three directions.

Everyone Knew Everything!

Of course, I do not mean that everyone in ancient North America had perfect social and environmental knowledge on a continental scale. Rather, I want to shift the burden of proof from the current default that ancient Indians (until proven otherwise with lead-pipe certainty) were ignorant hicks who knew little or nothing beyond their front yards or at best their valleys. We labor mightily—spending lavishly for laboratory tests of who made what where—to demonstrate that Indians on one side of the river knew about Indians on the other side of the river. Why start with such an unrealistic, even demeaning assumption? Why not instead assume that people were aware of what was going on over the hill and over the horizon? Assume interconnections!

I think, for example, that we can safely assume most Anasazi were well aware of Hohokam. People on the Dolores River during the ninth century knew that big things were happening on the Gila River, and more than a few had firsthand knowledge of those events. (As far as I know, no Hohokam sherds have ever been found on the Dolores River. So what?) Likewise Mexico: assume that southwestern peoples were aware of civilizations to the south and that the southwestern world was conditioned by that knowledge.

No Coincidences!

As scientific archaeologists, we were trained to assume that concurrent or sequential changes in different regions—for example, that in the tenth and eleventh centuries Hohokam fell while Chaco rose (chapter 5)—were causally unrelated unless proven otherwise. We do accept coincidence in regional and transregional *environmental* dynamics—El Niños, droughts, shifting westerlies correspond to cultural changes—but we eschew large-scale *historical* coincidences. If something goes up in one region and down in another, that’s merely coincidence—in the sense of unrelated, random events. I think that’s wrong, or at least wrongheaded. What happens if we take the opposite tack? ²⁶

Most coincidences (probably) were not coincidental. If something goes up or gets bigger in one area and goes down or gets smaller in another, or if similar things happen across several areas at the same time, or if series of events happen in parallel sequences, then I will assume that those things and events, more likely than not, were historically interconnected. Unless proven otherwise.

Distances Can Be Dealt With

Alice Kehoe inscribed the phrase “Distances can be dealt with” in a book she autographed. Long distances, as Kehoe rightly notes, did not intimidate Native North Americans. Why should distances intimidate *us*? Global or world histories of other continents show that human societies were almost never isolates. Polynesian societies offer us the incredible fact of their very existence: Polynesians *got there*, over vast and truly daunting distances. Distances *were* dealt with, in Polynesia and in North America, as we shall see in following chapters. Eric Wolf exhorted us in his classic *Europe and the People Without History*, “What difference it would make to our understanding if we looked at the world as a whole, a totality, a system, instead of as a sum of self-contained societies and cultures.... As we unraveled the chains of causes and effects at work in the lives of particular populations, we saw them extend beyond any one population to embrace the trajectories of others—all others.”²⁷

After some necessary stage setting in chapter 2, I’m fairly explicit about these three principles in chapter 3, so you can see how they work. Thereafter, they fade into the background—but they were posted over my desk throughout the writing of this book.

My Predilections

The rules and principles we just reviewed might be called methods or (in academes) methodology. Just as important are my innate prejudices: (1) I have outdated notions of politics, and (2) I’m down on parsimony. These are arcane archaeological concerns. Readers who are not interested in academic debates might do well to skip to page 14; we’ve had enough scholarly angst for one chapter already!

Playing Politics

I have unsubtle, undernuanced notions of “politics”: I’m interested in hierarchies—a few people telling a lot of people what to do and enjoying it. The few enjoyed it, that is. But perhaps not forever. It’s good to be king, until an angry mob rolls up a tumbrel. When small groups began making decisions for large groups and those decisions stuck, an interesting tipping point in human history and social evolution had been reached. Things happened that

might not otherwise have happened, for good or ill (what *was* the lead lemming thinking?). Glorious Caesar or backroom cabal, somebody called the shots. (Of course, people don't always do what they are told; ask Louis XVI, Nicholas II, or any modern pope.) Most humans live with that kind of governance today, and it would be interesting to watch how it developed and operated in the past. Centralized, hierarchical governance is my narrow definition of "politics" in "political history."

In fairness to myself, my ideas of politics are not so much undertheorized as tightly focused (tunnel-visioned?). I'm sure there were plenty of communal nongovernments in the old Southwest, but they are relevant to my interests only in retrospect, as things that developed after the Southwest rid itself of conventional hierarchies and elites (chapter 7). I will suggest kinds of political hierarchy that may seem outré in the ancient Southwest—*kings*, for example.²⁸ In the 1980s, arguments about hierarchy and political complexity dominated southwestern archaeology (chapters 6 and 7). Today those topics are outdated, unfashionable. At the risk of being a bit retro, I think the potential insights of ancient southwestern political history are too important to dismiss like an old toy tossed aside by a kid with too many new toys. It seems sometimes that archaeology does not solve old problems; we simply tire of them or wear them out. Yesterday it was adaptation and complexity; today it is agency and ritual; tomorrow it will be something else.²⁹ It's too soon to abandon hierarchies; they have great interest for evolutionary sciences,³⁰ for political science,³¹ and I think for the history of the ancient Southwest.

And it's a question of fairness, of equal coverage. Southwestern archaeology has long favored commoners over leaders. We've studied commoners for more than a century. Indeed, for the longest time we didn't even know there *were* leaders. Time for the leaders to take a bow.³²

Hierarchy in the Southwest actually matters. For example, in the breach, the idealized perception (mistaken, I think) of communal, nonhierarchical societies in the ancient Southwest—through the work of Lewis Henry Morgan (chapters 2 and 8)—influenced Karl Marx and his followers. The cold war is over, so that interest is merely historical. But hierarchies in the ancient Southwest also offer insights into perennial, seemingly unanswerable questions: What's up with governments? Where do governments come from? I will suggest, in chapter 8, that southwestern hierarchies might even tell us something about states—secondary states. (For southwestern archaeologists, *states* are even worse than *kings*.) We can understand southwestern history only if we remember what was happening on the larger North American continent: two millennia of kings and empires to the south; great cities with kinglike "chiefs" to the east, in the Mississippi Valley. Even the California Coast, to the west, became politically "complex" during the era of Chaco and Hohokam. The Southwest was all but surrounded by "chiefs," kings, states, and "complexity." Politics in the Southwest had precedents, and if the Southwest had states, they weren't original. No southwestern king *manqué* had to *invent* kingship.

One of the more interesting aspects of political hierarchy is how some societies reject it, avoid it. Pierre Clastres called this situation "societies against the state."³³ Archaeological interpretations of southwestern societies were and are often cast that way: ancient North American societies were *not* states; they avoided the trap of government. And the ancient Southwest does provide, as we shall see, two remarkable instances of the rejection of state-level politics, "the defeat of hierarchy" as Barbara Mills termed it³⁴—first, Hohokam, which should have been a state but wasn't (chapters 4 and 5), and second, Pueblo peoples, turning away from the hierarchical, statelike political arrangements of Chaco (chapters 7 and 8).

Hohokam is a puzzler (and one of the great pleasures of writing this book. I am mystified by Hohokam—and that’s a good thing). Pueblo prehistory, in contrast, was not stateless or state free; early governments at Chaco Canyon and later centers set the historical circumstances for a Pueblo revolt, turning away from kings and toward the communal (chapters 7 and 8).

Hierarchy is a good theme for Big History because the forms and trappings of hierarchy move over distance—not just as empires or colonies but as ideas and practices.³⁵ Hierarchical governance is by definition an elite endeavor, and elites communicate on levels and over distances not often reached by commoners.³⁶ The Southwest developed kingdomlike polities at a time when Mesoamerica was rife with states and empires. The rise (and fall) of hierarchies in the Southwest was historically affected by or connected to that larger world. Fledgling governments often replicate or mimic older, bigger, better-known states (the sincerest form of flattery). As we shall see, southwestern leaders looked to the south, to Mesoamerica, to support their hierarchies, as did Pueblo and Hohokam looking for alternatives to kingship.

Once hierarchy starts, it spreads like rust or crabgrass or cancer. This is important, because hierarchies in the Southwest (if any) were neither original nor parthenogenetic. Kings ruled in ancient Mexico for millennia before Chaco and Cahokia, and they begot other kings by inspiration and insemination; they begot other kings, and so forth. These things were known in the Southwest and the Mississippi Valley.

David Anderson mapped the spread of chiefdomlike governance pulsing out from the middle Mississippi across the southeastern United States (fig. 1.4; see chapter 5).³⁷ Starting with a “big bang” at Cahokia—the great Native city on the Mississippi and Chaco’s exact contemporary—secondary and tertiary chiefdoms rippled outward, appearing first near Cahokia and then farther and farther away, much like the appearance of secondary and tertiary states on the margins of major civilizations. Anderson writes:

Given the scarcity of evidence for chiefdom organizational spread through migration (something now suggested in only a few cases such as at Macon Plateau in central Georgia or the Zebree site in northeast Arkansas)...the spread of chiefly organization was more likely something of a reactive process. Following arguments of Carniero, if the first chiefdoms were predatory, chiefdoms may have emerged across the region as defensive reaction. Alternately or additionally, they developed to allow privileged lineages to participate more effectively in expanding trade and status-based, power-enhancing games through a process of competitive emulation.³⁸

Ben Nelson proposed a similar “propagation” model for the spread of Mesoamerican traditions outward to the Southwest:

Mesoamerican styles and practices spread northward along a time series of newly aggregated social groups whose formation demanded the introduction of symbols and practices associated with hegemonic order.... Small groups either assimilated to a growing politically coherent local center or moved away, eventually to face the same pressures again. Individuals joining local centers would naturally become subordinates, but they might establish their legitimacy by demonstrating special knowledge. Competence in Mesoamerican ritual and warring practices may have given some immigrants bases of power.... Neither the Hohokam nor any southwestern polity appears to have been Mesoamerican dominated, and yet Mesoamerican elements—including genes and languages—did appear there. Indeed, it may be the resistance to domination, both internal

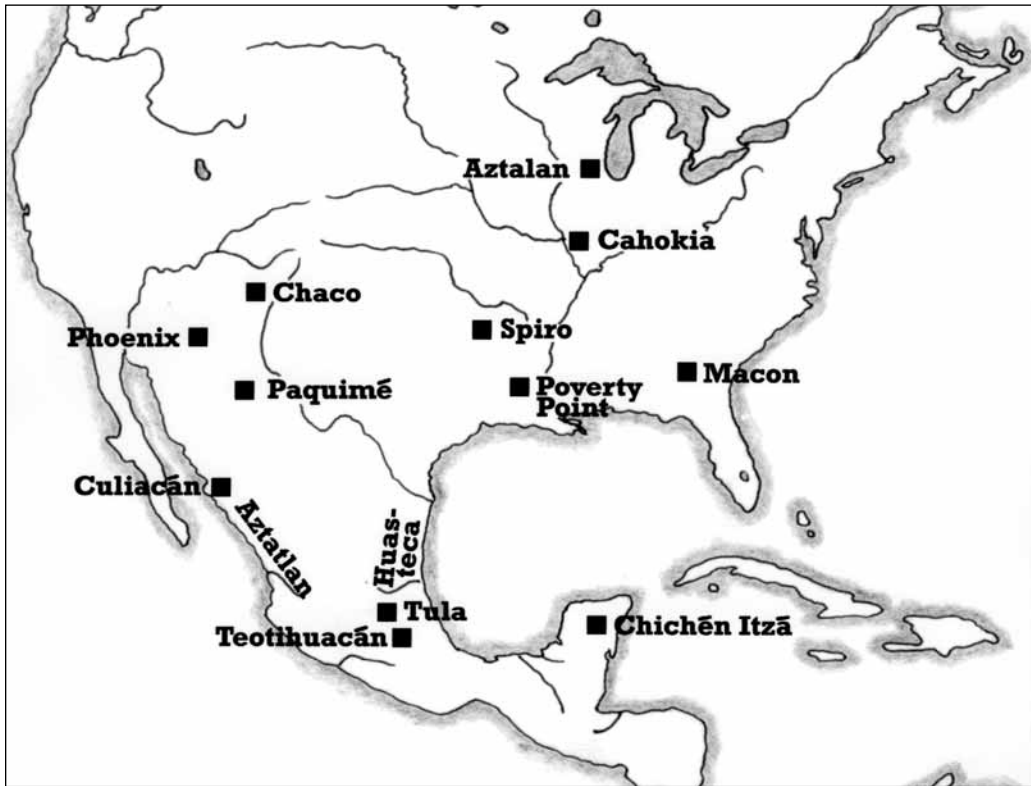


Figure 1.4. North America. On this small-scale map, *Alla Vista* and *La Quemada* are near the “z” in *Aztatlán*; and *Teuchitlan* is near the “n” in *Aztatlán*. Courtesy of the author.

and external, that fundamentally sets the Southwest apart from Mesoamerica, but that is another issue.³⁹

Indeed, an issue central to this book, especially chapters 7 and 8. Throughout the following chapters, I try to frame southwestern events in the political context of Mesoamerica and the Mississippi Valley. Gordon Brotherston, who has looked more broadly at these matters than most archaeologists, laments the historical ignorance of a continental “native coherence ceaselessly splintered by Western politics and philosophy.”⁴⁰ The Southwest mirrored larger Mesoamerican and Mississippian histories on smaller, local scales. Governance—its forms and protocols and sometimes perhaps its protagonists—moved across space, on both continental and regional scales. Some portion of southwestern political history might have been actual movement by displaced elites or would-be elites. And some portion might have been the adoption or emulation by local wannabes of ways of governance seen at other southwestern or Mesoamerican centers. Large-scale processes can indeed explain small-scale processes and at least make those small-scale processes something more than local history.⁴¹

Against Parsimony

My second peccadillo is a tendency to think that, all things being equal, the past was generally more interesting than not. This idea runs against a somewhat peculiar notion of “parsimony,” a staple of American archaeology. Parsimony is a principle of simplicity, drawn like a

gun to shoot down anything bigger than our customary breadbox, to mix metaphors. American archaeologists are encouraged to favor the simple over the complicated, the conservative over the daring. This approach (we think) makes us good scientists because we “stay close to the data.” But consider: “the data” represent a small sample of a site that represents a small sample of a society’s material remains that represent a tiny and indirect sample of its range of people, actions, and events—what actually happened in the ancient Southwest. No matter how much we dig, we work with impossibly small, unrepresentative samples of data. Any statement that stays “close to the data” almost certainly misrepresents the past.

I critiqued “parsimony” elsewhere as the sin of Occam: misapplication of the razor to the question of interest rather than to the logic of its answer.⁴² Columnist Marilyn Vos Savant (once touted as “the highest IQ”) writes a brain piece for the Sunday papers. She discounts parsimony thus:

Many of us have heard that the simplest solution to a problem is the best one. This is a commonsense warning against unnecessarily complicated solutions, especially to practical problems. But some people think the statement also means: “The simplest answer to a question is the best one.” This is just plain wrong. That’s because problems and questions are different. Problems describe situations that need to be resolved.... By contrast, questions are requests for information, so the context of the question must be considered.... The best answer to a question will seldom be the simplest.⁴³

I could not have said it better myself, because I am not as smart as Vos Savant. Marilyn and I don’t like parsimony, but perhaps for different reasons. I think parsimony, as applied archaeologically, too often has the unintended consequence of underestimating Native accomplishments and—far more ominously—*keeping the Natives down*. Parsimony’s real problems are not simply misapplied logic; the real problems are rather more sinister (chapter 8). We have been trained to think that Native societies north of Mexico *could not* have been large, complicated, or hierarchical, because our intellectual forefathers believed those societies to be simple and—here we go!—“savage” (chapter 8). Those were the assumptions of the forefathers of our field, who trained our teachers’ teachers’ teachers. But the societies of the ancient Southwest (and North America) were neither simple nor savage.

I anticipate objections to my interpretations in this book: too big, too complicated, too unparsimonious. Loud objections, strident objections—I’ve heard them already at conferences, in seminars, and over drinks. The things I suggest for the ancient Southwest seem unseemly for the kinds of societies we know—or think we know—north of the Rio Grande. “They couldn’t have done that!” “That’s beyond their capabilities!” “Remember the scales of these societies!” (These are real quotes.) To that I say bosh! Who are we to say what they could or couldn’t do? Within very broad limits of environment and even more elastic limits of technology, anything was possible.

We should not limit Native history a priori. We should not say, “They couldn’t have done that.” Those limits, in both historical and archaeological thinking about Native Americans north of the Rio Grande, have unpleasant pedigrees—far more serious than mistaken theory. It was in our interests (I use the plural pronoun here to mean the United States of past times) to have simple, savage Natives—because essentially we wanted them gone. Our policies were less to assimilate than to eliminate, either by removal or destruction. (Efforts to remove or at least significantly diminish the Pueblos continued through the 1940s.) And it was morally easier to exterminate savages than it was to topple civilizations. So: No civilizations north of

Mexico. Mound builders were not Native; Aztec ruins were, well, Aztec (chapter 8). It was convenient, morally, to portray the history of Native peoples north of the Rio Grande as simple and savage.⁴⁴

Originally, unquestionably, these ideas were racist. Parsimony, used today as a scientific principle, runs the risk of perpetuating antique, racist notions about Native America. No archaeologist known to me is the least bit racist, but we are heirs to unwholesome traditions. Kings are demoted to chiefs, cities are leveled to chiefly centers, acts of will and courage are explained as adaptations to changing environments. We have edited their past to fit our present for almost five centuries.

The present isn't what it used to be. It's time to give ancient Native America back its complicated and impressive past, its *history*—insofar as that's ours to give. Too big? Too complex? I think not. My pumped-up versions of the ancient Southwest are still far shy of the mark, still too simple. The Southwest was a lively, dynamic, eventful place—a region with a history as rich and varied (and uneven) as any other in the New World. Parsimony, improperly applied, denies the political history that drove the ancient Southwest.⁴⁵

Settings

The continents we call the Americas were transformed by European conquest: both calendars and place-names changed. After several failed experiments with decolonized terms and time systems (see chapter 8, note 50), I capitulate. I use Old World calendars and Old World geographic terms for Native times and spaces. Archaeology has so far been a Euro-American pursuit, and this book is written in a Euro-American language for an English-speaking readership. In this book we are looking at the “Southwest” from 1500 BC to AD 1500.

Defining the Southwest is actually a little tricky because the history of its Native peoples transcends modern political boundaries.⁴⁶ The history directly involves the northwesternmost parts of modern Mexico, the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Indeed, the term *Southwest* is something of a misnomer. What we call the Southwest of the United States was in fact the northwestern frontier of ancient Mesoamerica and for quite a while the northern third of modern Mexico. One recent, popular correction is *noroeste/sudoeste*—Spanish, of course, so just as colonial as English terms. A precolonial term that has seen some use, *Chichimeca*—the Nahuatl name for the howling wastelands north of Mesoamerica—is a complex term too. It refers to a region, a people, or peoples and ultimately tells us as much about archaeologists' notions as about ancient geographies.⁴⁷ I'll stick with *Southwest*.

For the purposes of this book, the Southwest is framed by mountains and rivers: on the north and south by the Rockies and Sierra Madre, on the east by the Pecos River, and on the west by the Colorado River (see fig. 1.2). The northern Southwest is the southern half of the Colorado Plateau (hereafter the Plateau), a vast upland sitting about 1,500 m above sea level. Slicing right down its middle, cutting the Plateau into east and west halves, are the Chuska Mountains, which reach elevations of 2,500 m or more. The southern edge of the Plateau is the Mogollon Rim (hereafter the Rim), a long mountainous escarpment that runs right across Arizona and New Mexico, separating the Plateau to the north from the low deserts in New Mexico and Chihuahua and in Arizona and Sonora, to the south. Those deserts range from 600 to 1,200 m in elevation—much lower, hotter, and drier than the Colorado Plateau. A (low) upland, now in southeastern Arizona, separates the Chihuahuan Desert on the east from the Sonoran Desert on the west. The “Land Between,” as Henry Wallace calls it, was an area of

signal importance. The ancient social Southwest expanded far beyond the limits just sketched, but the land they enclose is the heart of its civilizations.⁴⁸

The Mogollon Rim divides the region into northern and southern halves, and a modern feature, old Highway 666 from Douglas, Arizona, to Blanding, Utah, works as an axis dividing east and west.⁴⁹ The Rim, of course, is a natural feature, while Highway 666 is a modern road, conveniently routed for my purposes. The intersection of the Rim and 666 divides the Southwest into four quarters: the western Plateau, the eastern Plateau, the western (Sonoran) deserts and the eastern (Chihuahuan) deserts, representing—approximately, anachronistically, but usefully—natural, cultural, and historical regions. Highway 666, in the south, separates the Sonoran (western) Desert and the Chihuahuan (eastern) Desert very approximately. But to the north, the natural environments of the eastern and western Plateau are not notably different. The distinctions are historical: on the west side of 666 were Hohokam and Hopi—Uto-Aztec speakers and societies that tended toward political equality and avoided hierarchy. On the east side of 666 were Paquimé, Mimbres, Chaco, Aztec, and the Rio Grande—speakers of the Pueblo “isolate” languages (Zuni, Keres, Kiowa-Tanoan) and societies that were, on balance, more hierarchically structured and authoritarian. From time to time, these easy generalizations spilled across, east to west and back again. But the north-south line along old 666—broad and zonal—marks a divide that meant something historically.

The Colorado Plateau’s rolling plains—crossed by the north-south Chuska mountain chain, along the foot of which ran 666—were cut by erosion into deep canyons and tall mesas. Black volcanic plugs and peaks rim the Plateau (the Flagstaff volcano fields, the Mogollon Rim, and Mount Taylor; more on these below). The terrain of the southern deserts is “basin and range”—parallel, thin, jagged mountain ranges separated by enormously broad, flat, deep, sand-filled valleys, many of them indeed basins with no outlet for the rare rainfall. Huge playas (shallow salt lakes) fill each basin’s center after exceptional storms and then evaporate with astonishing rapidity.

Separating the Plateau from the low deserts, the Mogollon Rim is mainly basalt and ash flow rocks—created by volcanic forces but not true volcanoes. At the Rim’s west end, around Flagstaff, there are true volcanoes, at least one of which played a dramatic role in the history of the ancient Southwest. At the Rim’s east end, in New Mexico, a series of huge, overlapped calderas—like gargantuan Olympic rings—formed from gigantic bubbles on the earth’s crust. As these bubbles rose and then collapsed, forming calderas, their interlocking circles formed labyrinthine canyons. The Rim’s higher elevation catches rainfall and snowfall—the headwaters of the Salt and Gila rivers, which flow west to the Colorado River. The Mogollon Rim and its uplands were a major east-west axis structuring the environment and history of the ancient Southwest—the only ecotone that really mattered.

Ten thousand years ago, the region was colder and wetter, with less desert and more grassland. Then the globe wobbled a bit, the glaciers melted, and the Southwest dried out. By two thousand years ago, it had reached its present condition, more or less. Through most of the story told here, the environment remained largely constant. There were minor oscillations of sun, rain, and water (and the living things that depended on them)—too small to affect the larger regional ecology but perilous for the very specialized economies of human societies. El Niños and El Niñas shaped the bigger picture. Local droughts shaped history.

The life the land supports is remarkably varied. The highest mountains are capped with arctic tundra; below that are broad bands of pine forest. Lower still, the vegetation varies with latitude. To the north, below the pine forest, are the piñon-juniper woodlands (P-J); scattered

clumps of short piñon pines and junipers define the landscape of Santa Fe and Sedona and form a leitmotif of the Plateau and Anasazi. To the south, in place of piñon and juniper on the mountain slopes are thickets of scrub oaks and agaves (“century plants”) that make up the encinal. Note those associations: P-J in Plateau highlands and encinal on the edges of the low deserts. Below encinal and P-J forests, both on the Plateau and in the deserts, are dry and drier grasslands (respectively). At least they once were grasslands; after decades of cattle and sheep ranching, little is left of the original grasses, which in good wet years grew thick and tall. Each of these biotic zones has its own wildlife and ecologies.⁵⁰ The Southwest is a desert—but a very complicated desert, with more fine-grained interweaving of environments than any comparable area north of Mexico.⁵¹

How did people live on this land before it had been colonized, reclaimed, irrigated, grazed, urbanized, industrialized? Some lived well on foods hunted and gathered from the wild; others farmed; most did both. Maize farming was the basis of southwestern civilizations. Even today, with the world’s foods at every supermarket, Pueblo people maintain that “corn is life.” Yet maize was profoundly out of place in the arid Southwest. It was originally a tropical plant, happiest in heat and heavy rainfall. Most of the Southwest gets less than 30 cm of yearly precipitation—summer rain plus winter snow. That’s on the Plateau; the deserts get much less. (St. Louis gets 105 cm a year; Mexico City 75 cm; and Guatemala City 120 cm.)

Farming in the Southwest followed three general patterns: first, planting in naturally wet areas (even the desert has swamps); second, relying on rainfall (“dry farming”); and third, diverting waters from running streams to irrigate desert fields. All three can and did succeed—after centuries of experimental hybridization.

Natural wet spots included rare areas around seeps or springs, but more importantly the moist floodplains of streams and *ciénegas*—swampy patches along streams where natural constrictions backed up water and saturated the soil. Ciénegas were probably the first places where maize was grown, planted around the margins of the wettest soils. Dry farming was a much more problematic business. For most maize, 25 cm of precipitation a year is the rock-bottom, bare minimum. So on the Colorado Plateau, it was (just barely) possible to dry-farm (relying on rainfall)—most of the time. Chaco Canyon, perhaps the single most important ancient city on the Plateau, today gets only 22 cm of precipitation a year. The low deserts were bone dry: Phoenix, in the western (Sonoran) desert, today gets less than 20 cm of rain a year; El Paso, in the eastern (Chihuahuan) desert, gets only 22 cm. In Chaco, dry farming was merely precarious. In the low deserts, dry farming was simply impossible.

One solution was to take water from creeks and rivers and divert it to farm fields. Channeling water through ditches and canals requires a fair amount of labor, above and beyond the work of planting fields. If fields are directly alongside a stream, not much more than some sort of dam or intake is needed. But if fields are more distant, then canals must be dug—and carefully. They must be big enough to carry all the water needed to irrigate the fields they service, and they must slope enough (but not too much) to reach the farthest field. Intake dams and canals must be maintained, and rebuilt entirely if the river cuts deeper into its bed or if a flood destroys the system. The labor, planning, control, and maintenance of canals varied widely, but clearly canals required more effort and social coordination than dry farming. We tend to assume, understandably, that people first dry-farmed and later dug canals only when growing population or environmental circumstance made it absolutely necessary. But this might not be the case; the first great civilizations of the Southwest relied on canal irrigation (more on this below).

For nutrition, maize was not enough. Other crops were important, and some were critical. Beans and squash offered most of the missing nutrients, and that trio of crops—corn, beans, and squash—was planted and harvested all across the Southwest by 500, supplemented by other crops and many wild or partly domesticated plants.

Farming was seasonal, but hunting was constant. Meat was processed in many ways for storage, but it could never last as long as dried vegetables (corn stores for years). A major difference between the Old World and the New World was animals; the Old World had more species to tame and more time to tame them. Dogs and turkeys were the only domesticated animals in the Southwest. Turkeys were kept for feathers (not just fluff but down woven into winter cloaks); they became increasingly important for protein after 1150. Most meat came from game: deer, elk, pronghorn, mountain sheep, and (on the eastern edge of the Southwest) bison. More commonly, smaller animals such as rabbits, which lived in and around farm fields, found their way into the stew pot. Fish were sometimes eaten but most times not, and although the Southwest is today and probably was in ancient times on major migratory bird flyways, there is little evidence for harvesting wildfowl. Certainly by 1300, when game animals had been hunted out in the Four Corners, turkeys were being raised for food, a practice that moved to the Rio Grande and elsewhere in the fifteenth century.⁵²

There were at least fifty different tribal groups—as Old World eyes saw them—in the Southwest when the Spanish arrived (fig. 1.5). We may question whether today’s “tribes”—often the result of complicated colonial histories—were those of the ancient past. Colonial groupings often were administrative conveniences, foreign to Native ways. We speak today of “Pueblo Indians” as if they were a cohesive, self-identified group, but that’s a five-century fiction. For the Spanish, *pueblo* simply meant permanent farming villages; there were many such pueblos throughout the empire. Today’s Pueblo Indians speak dialects of four distinct languages. One (Kiowa-Tanoan) is related to a language spoken on the Plains; another (Hopi) is related to the language of the Aztecs; still others (Keres, Zuni) are isolates, unique on the continent and apparently representing local peoples who were displaced by Uto-Aztecan migrations (chapter 2).⁵³ There are today twenty-four federally recognized Pueblo groups, but many include a number of different, distinct villages. “Hopi,” for example, encompasses twenty villages, administratively grouped for our government’s convenience. While there is clearly a sense of “Hopi-ness,” even near-neighbor villages can differ in many important ways (not the least in policies). Most other Pueblo groups have or had more than one village. And within each village there may be a dozen or more clans, each of which has its own history and traditions. The term *pueblo* means something but not something tribal.

The people we call Navajo and Apache both speak dialects of the same Athabaskan language (shared with other groups in Canada and Alaska). Science and history say that they came late into the Southwest, near the end of the story presented here. Navajos and Apaches tell different histories, which owe nothing to the Bering Strait and migrations from the north. Those who went to the Colorado Plateau became the people we call Navajo; those who went to the Mogollon Rim and the southern deserts became the people we call Apache. Those are our names; the people call themselves just that: people (*dine*). Neither the Navajo nor the Apache were coherent “tribes” historically. Each, in fact, consisted of scores of small local groups, fluid in membership and recognizing no higher affiliation. Sometimes groups cooperated, sometimes they fought. To us they were all Apaches or Navajos, and we forced them together in concentration camps and reservations, with sometimes disastrous results.

Like the Apache and Navajo, the Pima-speaking peoples of the Sonoran Desert were

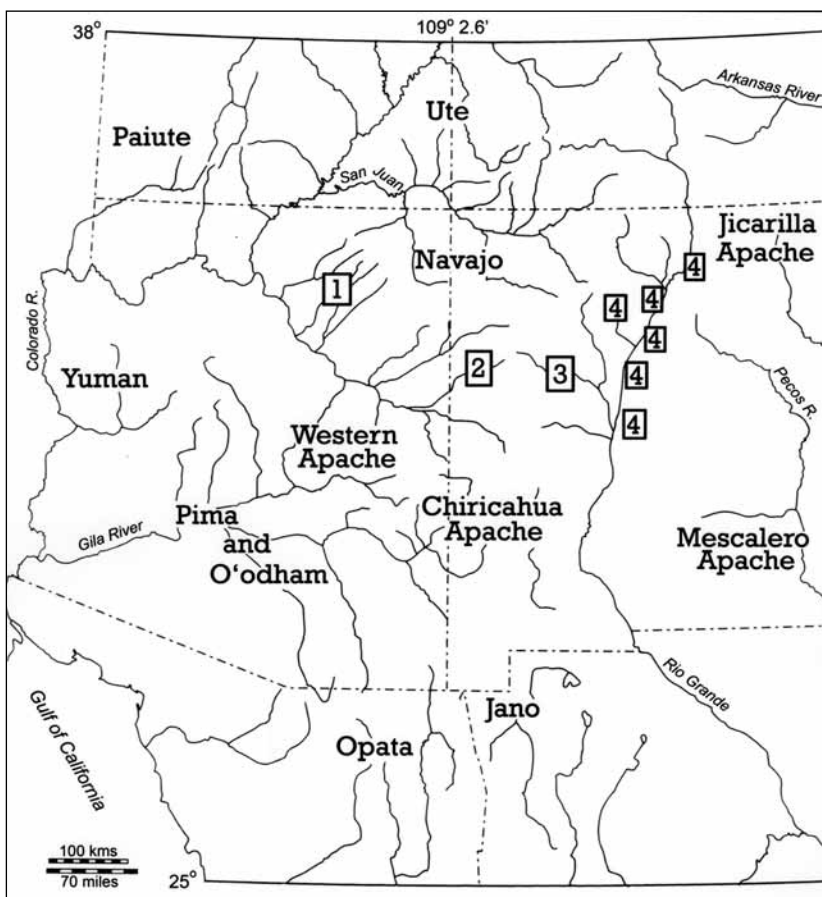


Figure 1.5. Modern tribes, pueblos, and nations. 1, Hopi; 2, Zuni; 3, Acoma and Laguna; 4, Rio Grande Pueblos. Courtesy of the author.

originally a score or more of separate local groups, with no overarching political leaders or governmental structures. Piman is part of the larger Uto-Aztec language family that includes Nahuatl, the Aztec language. In the Southwest, Uto-Aztec dominates west of 666, with Ute and Hopi branches to the north and Piman to the south. This is a fact of fundamental importance to the history of the ancient Southwest. Mark it well.⁵⁴

From these many tribes, clans, and local groups, I have selected four southwestern peoples—the Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, and Pima—to illustrate the range of ways in which ancient southwestern people lived on the land. My presentations are idealized—almost caricatures of lifeways in the 1800s, after two or three centuries of Old World colonization, because nineteenth-century descriptions offer the best information we have on how Native peoples actually lived on this land.

The Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, and Pima all hunted game, gathered plants, and farmed, but the mix of strategies varied markedly from group to group. Some were mostly hunter-gatherers; others were farmers who hunted. Those differences were in part historical, the result of choices and decisions. But to a very great extent, those differences reflected differing local environments. Apaches represent successful hunter-gatherers of the Rim; Navajos, pastoralists of the Plateau; Pueblos, Plateau farmers; and Pimans, desert farmers.

The most successful hunter-gatherers were the Apache.⁵⁵ Apaches were mountain people who lived in the Mogollon uplands and on and below the Rim. That rugged area is high for maize—the growing season is short—but it was probably the very best environment in the Southwest for hunter-gatherers. The Mogollon uplands are wet, with the most rainfall in the entire region. Consequently, the variety of wild plants and the numbers of animals were remarkable. The encinal, along the Rim’s flank, was a key zone for acorns (oak) and agave, the Apache staple. The Salt, Gila, and Mimbres rivers flowed out of Rim country and the mountains, and where they reached the desert, they created oases with permanent water and long growing seasons—great for farming. And the Apaches did indeed grow patches of maize in their mountain valleys. Not a lot, but maize was a useful backup to traditional wild foods in bad years—if the acorn harvest was small or if a new army fort impeded access to a favorite agave field. (In good years, maize might be brewed into *tiswin* beer.) Agave hearts and acorns from the encinal were the base of the Apache economy—they could be stored for winter and early spring, when other wild foods were scarce. So the Apache had a seasonal round in the mountains during the summer and fall and in the encinal in the winter and spring.

Pima speakers had a range of economies. One branch was the hunter-gatherers in the lower Sonoran Desert of southwestern Arizona, an impossible place for maize and indeed a rather difficult place for hunting and gathering. Piman hunter-gatherers were never very numerous—perhaps a few hundred at most—and they disappeared from the area almost immediately after the Spanish entered the territory (although they live on among modern farming Pimans). Historically, Pimans farmed desert wet spots or cienegas,⁵⁶ most successfully along rivers such as the Santa Cruz, Salt, and Gila, and they also farmed in isolated micro-environments deep in the desert itself. Cienegas were enhanced by minimal but effective modifications. For example, along the rivers, Piman farmers diverted flow into fields along the banks with small “scratch” ditches or by simply laying a log from the bank into the flow. The Salt and Gila river valleys contain broad floodplains and terraces of potentially excellent farmland; after the Spanish arrived, Pima people built large canal systems with substantial intake dams and became famous desert farmers, moving water well away from the rivers and cienegas out onto the broad desert terraces. Pima irrigation expanded historically: colonists (especially frontier garrisons) created a demand for more food than existing “low-tech” irrigation could grow, so Pimas revived Hohokam-scale canal irrigation to supply that increased demand. As we shall see, the Salt, Gila, and Santa Cruz rivers had long Native histories of canal irrigation, and we can assume that those histories were known to the Pima. However, even the largest post-contact Pima irrigation systems pale in comparison with the canals in place a millennium before the Spanish and Anglo-Americans arrived.

Over much of the Colorado Plateau, it was possible to dry-farm maize using rainfall alone—and that was a very good thing because the Colorado Plateau was an almost impossible place for hunter-gatherer economies. There were no large stands of dependable plants like the Apache’s agave and oak encinals. The Plateau’s most famous food plant was piñon nuts, but piñon pine stands produce large harvests only at long and largely unpredictable intervals. Nut crops vary from place to place; a great year for piñon in Santa Fe might be a lost year at Sedona. By spreading very few people very widely over the Colorado Plateau, a group might be sure of finding piñon somewhere every year. Still, piñon nuts could not provide even seasonal subsistence for large groups. To survive on the Plateau, people needed maize.

The Navajo, who (according to us) occupied the Plateau long after the ancient Pueblo people left, were excellent farmers. Navajos mixed low-tech irrigation and wet-spot cienega

fields, along with a bag of other less important agricultural tricks. Because resources were thin and dispersed, Navajos lived in widely separated communities, with houses scattered up and down canyons, over ridges and hills. Each clan had its own historical ties to particular territories, but within those areas, Navajo life was mobile. Farming communities might last only a generation or so. Navajo homes were (and still are) abandoned after the death of a resident—a good way to keep people moving every ten or twenty years. Sheep, adopted early from the Spanish, also required movement to and from pastures and from parched grasslands to greener ones over the next hill.

With maize and sheep, the Navajo became long-term, migratory, pastoral farmers. Kit Carson knew this in 1863 when he led a small army deep into the Chuska Mountains—the heart of Navajo territory—burning cornfields and destroying stored food. Without those stored crops, there was no future. Hundreds of Navajos surrendered and were taken to a concentration camp on the Pecos River, at the eastern edge of the Southwest (a journey remembered today as the Long Walk). Many small, local Navajo groups were jammed together with groups from other tribes. The independent Navajo groups had to cooperate to survive, and a new tribal identity emerged from that terrible experience. When they were returned their old homelands in 1868, the Navajo became a nation. Their reservation and population has grown steadily ever since. Today the Navajo Nation is the largest Indian group in the United States.

Pueblos are the archetypical desert farmers, although most now farm in irrigated fields along rivers. Twenty federally recognized pueblos form a crescent along the southern margin of the Plateau, from Hopi on the far west, through Zuni and Acoma, and up the Rio Grande to the Keres and Tewa towns of northern New Mexico. Taos, the northernmost pueblo, marks the opposite end of the arc that starts at Hopi. Hopi country is arid and difficult; farmers use every trick in the book of desert agriculture (indeed, Hopis wrote that book)—*except* major canal irrigation, because Hopi lands today do not include major streams or rivers. All the other pueblos are located on creeks and rivers, and all irrigate with diversion dams and canal systems.

The Pueblos today are famously fixed in place. Pueblo towns like Oraibi and Acoma (which began around 1100 or even earlier) vie for the Chamber of Commerce honor of oldest town in North America. But in ancient times the Pueblos, too, were mobile. Whole villages moved, often great distances at remarkably short intervals. (The pace, place, and purpose of those movements are themes throughout this book.) When a village did stay in one place, Pueblo people traveled great distances, through expeditions and trade, to obtain the things they needed. Unless caught on the fly, however, Pueblos were indeed *pueblos*—the colonial category for settled Indians. Spain put an end to any movement (more or less). The king of Spain granted Pueblos deeds to their lands—4 leagues square, or about 100 square miles—within which they were expected to stay, live, pay taxes, and become Catholic. It was impossible: pueblos located on rivers could irrigate more acres, but other natural resources essential for body and spirit were beyond the king's grant.

When the United States acquired the Southwest, it promised to honor the royal grants. And it did, in the breach: Native titles meant that lawyers and speculators could legally buy Pueblo lands. By the late nineteenth century, the Pueblos owned only their towns and their immediate fields—and many fields were in legal doubt. The Pueblos lost much of the little granted to them by the king. Decades later, some attempt was made at compensation. Pueblos were asked, Where were your lands originally? The example of Zuni, one of the largest pueblos, is astonishing. Beyond their royal grants, the Zuni proved in a court of law that the lands

upon which they had relied (the “area of Zuni sovereignty”) extended from the Rio Grande on the east to the San Francisco Peaks (Flagstaff) on the west and from the Chuska Mountains on the north to the Mogollon Rim on the south—about 22,000 square miles.⁵⁷ (Today the Zuni Reservation totals 725 square miles—and it’s one of the larger pueblos.) Remember that there are a score of pueblos today—two score if we count the various villages within each pueblo separately. When the Spanish arrived, there were even more. If each had a territory comparable to the Zuni’s, there must have been considerable overlap in resource areas; good hunting, places where important plants grew, and other necessary resources must have been shared to some extent. Ancient Pueblos resolved overlapping territories through negotiation, but (as we shall see) they also settled disputes in more direct ways.

Many other people lived in the Southwest when the Old World arrived. The Apache, Navajo, Pima, and Pueblo fairly represent, I think, the range of economies that underwrote the southwestern civilizations, and they occupied the lands in which those civilizations rose, fell, and rose again.

Prehistories

This section presents a very brief introduction to southwestern archaeology. There are two reasons for this summary. First, for readers (bless you!) who are not deeply immersed in southwestern archaeology, to set the stage. Second, for readers (bless you too!) who are well up on southwestern archaeology, to present what I think *we* think—that is, my idea of the archaeological consensus. That’s probably important for all readers to know, because I work both with and against this consensus (as I perceive it) in the chapters that follow.

All the Southwest was divided into three parts: Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon. Other, less well-defined subregions sat out on the edges: Fremont, Patayan, and Jornada (figs. 1.3, 1.6).

A note on terminology: I use *Anasazi* as archaeological jargon, which it is—taken by archaeologists from a Navajo word but no longer Navajo.⁵⁸ There are Navajo and Pueblo terms for the people who built Chaco and Mesa Verde, but I do not use them—this book is based on archaeology, not on Navajo or Pueblo histories (those come into play, viewed through archaeological filters, as in chapters 7 and 8).

Roughly speaking, Anasazi equals the ancestral Pueblo peoples of the southern Colorado Plateau; Hohokam represents the several peoples of the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona who were (at least in part) ancestral to the Piman peoples who live there today; and Mogollon names the people of the rugged uplands that separate Anasazi and Hohokam.

Mogollon is a bit of a catch-all, open-ended to the east and south. I have no definite ideas about what modern groups descended from the ruins of the Mogollon area (although others do).⁵⁹ Probably more than one modern Native community has Mogollon roots, while other Mogollon communities are probably not represented at all in modern, federally recognized tribes. They went south, into Mexico. I often substitute *Mimbres* for *Mogollon*. Mimbres was the precocious Mogollon subregion of southwestern New Mexico and the historical focus of the region.

It is useful, initially, to stereotype the three regions at about 600 to 1100. Anasazi was typified by stone masonry pueblos, pit houses, and kivas (see figs. 3.7, 4.12, 5.8); black-on-white decorated pottery and “corrugated” utility pottery (grayware) made by coiling; and rain-fall dry farming. Hohokam, in contrast, was characterized by earth-and-timber, single-room

	Mesoamerica	Hohokam	Anasazi / Pueblo	
1500		<i>Mimbres</i>		1500
	Late Post-Classic			
1400		Salado	Pueblo IV Paquime	1400
1300				1300
	Middle Post-Classic	Classic	Pueblo III Aztec	
1200				1200
1100				1100
	Early Post-Classic	Sedentary	Pueblo II Chaco Regional System	
1000			<i>Mimbres</i>	1000
		Late Pithouse		
900		Hohokam Regional System		900
	Epi-Classic	Colonial	Pueblo I	
800				800
700		Pioneer	Basketmaker III	700

Figure 1.6. Chronologies. Courtesy of the author.

thatched houses (see fig. 4.6); ball courts (see fig. 4.7); red-on-buff decorated pottery made by paddle and anvil techniques (buffware); elaborate shell and carved/ground stone industries (see fig. 4.10); and farming with canal irrigation (see fig. 4.4). Mogollon, characterized by brownware pottery made by coiling, had both pit houses (before 1000; see fig. 3.1) and pueblos of stone or adobe (after 1000; see fig. 5.13) and farmed with rainfall (in the uplands) and canal irrigation in the Chihuahuan Desert.

Ritual and ceremony differed, particularly between Anasazi and Hohokam. Early Hohokam ritual focused (at least in part) on ceramic figurines and later on the ball game, played in modestly monumental ball courts. Hohokam cremated their dead in an elaborate burial ritual involving schist pallets (see fig. 4.8) and censers and buried the ashes in pits or jars in well-defined cemeteries. Anasazi ritual was expressed most clearly in kivas (see fig.

5.9). Anasazi dead were buried as inhumations in middens associated with each household. Mogollon dead were generally buried beneath floors of rooms, which were then refloored and replastered.

Hohokam villages between about 700 and 1000 consisted of a central plaza surrounded by single-room houses clustered, in threes or fours, into courtyard groups (see fig. 4.6). It is possible that the “houses” of a courtyard group were functionally differentiated: one structure might have been a house, another a storeroom, and so forth. Multiple courtyard groups formed a second-order grouping, or village segment, often associated with trash mounds and a cemetery for cremation burials. Larger villages often had one ball court (or sometimes two): oval surfaces defined by earthen embankments, presumably for a local version of a ball game pervasive across much of Mexico.

Anasazi villages were loose aggregates of independent households, or “unit pueblos.” A unit pueblo consisted of a small masonry pueblo of five or six small rooms facing an informal plaza or work area; a subterranean pit structure, with its floor excavated deep below the plaza level and roofed with earth over a wooden framework; and, beyond the pit structure, a well-defined midden area for trash and burials (see figs. 5.8, 5.9). Much of the masonry pueblo was probably storage space; living took place under ramadas in the plaza, with sleeping and winter living in the pit structure. The pit structure was also a locus of ritual, and many archaeologists consider pit structures to have been kivas. Half a dozen to several score unit pueblos would have been loosely aggregated—the space between them ranging from nearly nothing to hundreds of meters—with a very large communal pit structure (Great Kiva) near the center of the community. Occasionally, a large clear area near the center of the village appears to have served as a community plaza.

Mogollon pit house villages generally lacked the courtyard groups of Hohokam villages or the formal storage facilities of Anasazi masonry pueblos but were often clustered into two larger aggregates, north and south of a clear plaza area. Frequently, to one side of the plaza, there was a large rectangular pit structure with a ramp entrance, probably a communal structure analogous to the Anasazi Great Kiva (see fig. 4.11).

Again, these descriptions are stereotypes—caricatures, really, of each region at about 600 to 1100. The history of agricultural villages in the Southwest starts about 1500 BC, so each area had two millennia of history before this archetypical span. And after 1100, the pace of change in each area accelerated dramatically. Hohokam ball courts fell out of use, replaced by rectangular platform mounds (see fig. 6.1). Anasazi unit pueblos aggregated into dense, apartment-style buildings, much like today’s pueblos (see figs. 6.8, 6.9). Mogollon pit houses were replaced by masonry pueblos much like those of the Anasazi (see fig. 7.1). And those major shifts in material culture and architecture were just the beginning of five centuries of rapid change, from 1100 to 1600.

With the very notable exception of the Hohokam, tied to their canal irrigation systems, southwestern people moved in seasonal and multigenerational rounds and in large-group, long-distance migrations. Anasazi sites were usually single component (a single, short occupation) or, if multicomponent, discontinuous in occupation (for example, occupation at 600 to 700, a gap, and reoccupation at 1000 to 1150). Hohokam sites had deeper roots and were often continuously occupied for many centuries. But notably, many Hohokam sites were abandoned and relocated about 1150, about the time platform mounds replaced ball courts.

By 1300 the Anasazi heartland (around the modern Four Corners) was empty, “abandoned” in archaeological terms. Tens of thousands of people had migrated west, south, and

east to where modern pueblos stand today. Many Mogollon districts had been abandoned a century earlier (by 1150), and the Mogollon uplands as a whole were largely depopulated by 1400. Hohokam towns beneath today's Phoenix ended around 1450, if not before. When the densely populated districts of 1150 to 1300 emptied, new population centers rose on the Rio Grande, at Acoma, Zuni, and Hopi, and in northern Chihuahua, in the Casas Grandes region (see fig. 1.3).

The history of penultimate "prehistory," from 1400 to Spanish colonization, about 1600, is surprisingly difficult to understand archaeologically. Pueblos reached immense sizes; some had several thousand rooms. The total regional population, however, declined sharply between 1400 and the arrival of the Spanish. Thereafter, European diseases and colonial policies decimated the remaining southwestern peoples. Some languages and "ethnic groups" effectively went extinct. From that nadir, southwestern peoples have recovered demographically, at least partially, and many modern Indian tribes and nations in the Southwest remain on the lands they occupied at European contact, maintaining enclaves of traditional cultures within the United States.

Archaeologies: 1500 to 1850 (Discovery and Exploration)

The discovery of Native Americans posed serious philosophical problems in Europe.⁶⁰ These were resolved in part by the *Sublimis Deus* of 1537, which declared that Native Americans did in fact have souls. But the size of the New World did not faze Old World explorers. Pre-Columbian Europe was well aware that the world was large and alarmingly diverse. Long-distance, nearly global interactions had a deep antiquity in the Old World.⁶¹ The prehistoric Silk Road and many other long-beaten paths linked Europe, Asia, and Africa. Pre-Columbian Europeans were accustomed to distance. But they did not know what to do with Indians on that distant continent, a New World. Who were they? What were they? Where did they come from? What was their history?

In *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts 1492–1729* (1967), Lee Eldridge Huddleston identified two European intellectual traditions in thinking about Indians and their history. The first, associated with Gregorio Garcia, was "characterized by a strong adherence to ethnological comparison [between Old and New Worlds], a tendency to accept trans-Atlantic migrations, and an acceptance of *possible* origins as *probable* origins." Garcians were not at all afraid of distance. The second tradition, associated with José de Acosta, was "marked by skepticism with regard to cultural comparisons, considerable restraint in constructing theories, and a great reliance on geographical and faunal considerations." Contemporary American archaeology follows the Acostans: local trumps global.⁶²

Early explorers were no more daunted by distance than were Garcian intellectuals. Conquistadors marched large, expensive armies thousands of miles. Distance was something they did. Cortés burned his boats. Only his caballeros (and higher-ranking prelates) rode; the rest of his ruffians walked. That was true for all colonial armies. Yet Spanish forces ranged from Cuzco to Pecos in just a few decades. A few short centuries after Columbus, the new continents were crawling with Spanish, English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese intruders. These explorers *almost always had Native guides*. Native people had already been there and done that; distance was something *they* did too.⁶³

Several armies sought Cibola, the fabled seven cities of gold; they looked to the north,

toward the present-day Southwest. Histories of the Southwest typically begin with Cabeza de Vaca, the shipwrecked Spaniard whose epic wanderings took him through a corner of New Mexico or well south of New Mexico (depending on whom you believe) in 1536. De Vaca never saw the pueblos, but he heard rumors of great cities. Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, inspired by de Vaca's stories, mounted an expedition into the Southwest in 1540–1541.⁶⁴ Hoping to find the seven cities, an Old World myth transported to the New World, the expedition formed near Mexico City and marched to old Culiacán on the Sinaloa coast, the final outpost of Mesoamerican civilization (see fig. 1.4). From Culiacán, the soldiers marched north to Zuni. Zuni was a bust—all battles and troubles, no gold. Vasquez de Coronado and his men moved then from one pueblo to another, increasingly disappointed with the small farming towns empty of treasure. Each pueblo tolerated the Spaniards as long as it could and then directed the army to the next town; perhaps they would find what they sought up the river, over the mountains, across the plains?

At Pecos, the easternmost port of trade between Pueblos and the Plains (and all points east), the people furnished Coronado with a guide, whom the Spanish nicknamed the Turk. He was an Indian, but not a Pueblo Indian, who knew of the great city of Quivira far to the east.⁶⁵ The Turk led Vasquez de Coronado and a large contingent of his army across the southern Plains. The conventional interpretation is that the Turk deliberately led the Spanish on a wild goose chase, away from the Pueblos. Vasquez de Coronado lost patience with the Turk somewhere in Kansas and had him killed. The survivors of the expedition returned to Mexico, their exploration a failure. Almost sixty years would pass before a second official expedition, led by Don Juan de Oñate, colonized New Mexico.

For Europeans, the Southwest was a distant inland “island,” needing discovery. Cabeza de Vaca found it by accident, and then only in passing. Vasquez de Coronado, inspired by de Vaca's traveler's tales (and other garbled reports), received official sponsorship and considerable financial support to chase a rumor. He found the Pueblos and was not satisfied, but New Mexico had finally been discovered. The clock of history could start.

That's the textbook story, written from the north. A seldom mentioned precursor gives us a slightly different view. In 1530—only a decade after Cortés took Tenochtitlán—Nuño de Guzmán, one of Cortés's more difficult lieutenants, assembled a large army at Culiacán to search for the seven cities. After looting Native coastal towns, Guzmán marched north following Native guides, including one whose “father traded into the back country, exchanging fine feathers for ornaments, by a forty days journey north, and one which involved passage of a wilderness.”⁶⁶ This guide, Tejo, may have been from the Huastec area, but he reported his information to Spaniards in Mexico City and knew the western approaches over which his father traded. Tejo and other guides led Guzmán's army north out of Culiacán and into the Sierra Madres, where Native paths proved impassable for Spanish horses and wagons. After several failed attempts, political turmoil in Mexico City pulled Guzmán away from the expedition, and the first major attempt to find Cibola was abandoned.

We might draw two lessons from this historical footnote. First, Mesoamerican traders were familiar with the Southwest in 1530—sufficiently familiar to convince conquistadors to move armies. Second, history reads rather differently when we admit Native knowledge. Tejo knew what he was talking about and was not misleading Guzmán. His route north out of Culiacán would have led Guzmán to great cities; Paquimé, Chaco, and Aztec lie north of Culiacán. By the mid-sixteenth century, Chaco and Aztec were long gone (chapters 5 and 6),

but Paquimé had closed its doors only eighty years before Tejo showed Guzmán the road to Cibola. If we are wrong in dating Paquimé's fall (our current guesses are about 1450, but 1500 is possible), it is possible that Tejo's father or his father's father actually visited the Southwest's greatest city (chapter 7) at its height, when it was a place of wealth, riches, and metals—copper, not gold.

Take a line from Tejo to the Turk. Let's assume that, like Tejo, the Turk was a knowledgeable and conscientious guide, just doing his job. Alice Kehoe, who thinks the Turk was Wichita, notes that he described in considerable detail "a Mississippian kingdom in the American South, on a wide river upon which the lord of the realm rode in a flotilla of canoes"⁶⁷—the fading glories of Mississippian temple-towns. Stories of Cahokia, the greatest city in America north of Mexico (chapter 5), *must* have reached the Southwest. By 1540 Cahokia was gone, but smaller towns continued its traditions, including Spiro, Pecos's counterpart trading center in eastern Oklahoma. In April 1541—weeks out from Pecos—Coronado's soldiers camped in the Texas Panhandle, halfway to Spiro.⁶⁸ From there, the expedition went awry. History sees the Turk as a perfidious trickster or at best a martyr. Maybe he was simply doing his job: taking the Spanish to cities he had heard of—heard of as history, not as distant rumor.

Shortly after the Spanish toppled the Aztecs, archaeology (or something like archaeology) enters the picture. Archaeology's roots go deep into Classical and even pre-Classical antiquity. But the field as we know it was a child of the Enlightenment and the Age of Exploration. Archaeology was a colonial enterprise (a fact we consider in chapter 8), an Old World hobby transported to the New. It took odd turns in North America and particularly in the United States. William Adams named "Indianology" as the peculiarly North American form of Bruce Trigger's "imperial synthesis"—the historical, philosophical, and theological accommodation by Europe of a whole New World. How European and later American science and history viewed Indians—North American Natives—is a question and theme running throughout this book.

We have several good histories of southwestern archaeology—after the region was conquered by the United States. We have yet to see a useful account of Spanish and Mexican encounters with the Southwest's ruins. What did colonists think? What did the savants of Santa Fe, of Chihuahua, of Mexico City make of military reports of empty cities at Chaco, cliff dwellings in the canyon country? We have bits and pieces—mentions in travelers' journals, places on colonial maps, brief descriptions in official reports. But how did those fit into Spanish and Mexican historical visions of the region?

Some colonial savants saw the Southwest as Aztlan, ancient home of the Aztecs, who claimed their origin far to the north. Perhaps the ruins of Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon (chapter 8)? Following Alexander von Humboldt, who codified local legends (in 1822 and 1829, based on explorations beginning about 1800), late Mexican and early American maps show specific "homes of the Aztec" at various places in the Southwest (first in the Four Corners, second at Casa Grande, and third and finally, the point of departure, at Paquimé). And both Pueblo and non-Pueblo groups spoke of Moctezuma as a native son.⁶⁹ Identification of the Southwest with Aztlan was strongly encouraged by Mexican authorities during the run-up to the Mexican War.⁷⁰ After that war disconnected Nuevo Mexico from its motherland, the story of Aztlan structured the earliest southwestern archaeology (chapter 2). It resonates today in modern intellectual and political life: Aztlan is a central theme of Chicano civil rights (chapter 8). And that matters.

Histories: “Time Immemorial” to 1500 BC

(Paleo-Indian and Archaic)

This section, the first of the “histories” found in each chapter, covers the longest span—ten thousand years plus—but it is the shortest in length. My “History of the Ancient Southwest” really starts with agricultural villages, about 1500 BC (the Late Archaic). So this section is only prologue—Paleo-Indian (10,000 to 8500 BC), Early Archaic (8500 to 5500 BC), and Middle Archaic (5500 to 1500 BC)—and less a summary than a sermon on archaeological orthodoxies. Orthodoxies are not inherently or even mostly evil, but they provide an inexhaustible way to learn: they can always be challenged. It’s almost always useful to question received wisdom. Sometimes challenges move us forward; more often orthodoxies prevail. (In the words of the poet: No need to be complaining / my objection’s overruled.) I report a few queries about the epochs leading to 1500 BC that seem to be heading in useful directions. I do not report orthodoxies sustained; you can read about those in textbooks.

The first Native Americans (in the orthodox view) were Paleo-Indians. Paleo-Indian studies themselves are a study in orthodoxies,⁷¹ four in number: (1) no Paleolithic in the New World; (2) no migration earlier than 10,000 BC; (3) no migrations save by a land bridge over the Bering Strait; and (4) no migrations other than a major first migration, followed much later by two more recent (Athabaskan and Inuit) migrations, all out of Asia. In the southwestern Archaic, a single orthodoxy is probably more important to this book than the four Paleo-Indian dicta: a seamless transition from Middle Archaic to Late Archaic to agriculture in the Southwest.

No Paleolithic in the New World

After late Renaissance and Enlightenment arguments about the people and peopling of the Americas were resolved, the actual antiquity of Native Americans was a matter of only mild interest. Prehistory was only a preamble to Aztecs and Incas. Real controversy erupted, however, after the discovery of Pleistocene humans in Europe—that is, after about 1860. Artifacts apparently comparable to those of Paleolithic Europe were found in North America, but the authorities denied them. Well into the early twentieth century, new discoveries were subject to the withering scrutiny of William Henry Holmes and Aleš Hrdlička at the Smithsonian Institution and consistently discounted. Claims for antiquity greater than about four thousand years ago were uniformly rejected—an orthodoxy!—until cowboy George McJunkin saw bison bones and fluted points eroding out of an arroyo bank near Folsom, New Mexico. The site, excavated in the late 1920s, had stone tools in clear association with Pleistocene fauna. Alfred Vincent Kidder (the most influential of southwestern archaeology’s founding fathers) visited Folsom and gave his blessings, noted nationally. Orthodoxy fell, and the controversy was settled. Subsequent discoveries at Clovis, New Mexico, gave a name and a time for the first Americans; Clovis dated at about 11,500 years ago (9500 BC). There was a Paleolithic in the New World.

None Earlier Than 10,000 BC

The Clovis finds replaced the Holmes–Hrdlička doctrine with a new orthodoxy: the first settlement of the New World happened about 10,000 or 9500 BC, followed by two much later surges of people into the New World. Recently, Scotty MacNeish and colleagues have argued

that a site in New Mexico, Pendejo Cave, evidences much greater antiquity for humans in the New World⁷²—certainly pre-Clovis, with the West Mesa Phase deposits dated from just over 30,000 to 12,000 BP.⁷³ They claimed even older evidence for human occupation at Pendejo Cave, as early as 55,000 BP. Not everyone welcomed Pendejo Cave, and it remains controversial.

Perhaps southwestern archaeologists were wary, having been through a pre-Clovis false alarm a half century earlier at Sandia Cave.⁷⁴ But recent discoveries at other sites, such as Monte Verde in Chile,⁷⁵ Meadowcroft Shelter in Pennsylvania,⁷⁶ and Cactus Hill in Virginia,⁷⁷ demonstrate that people roamed North America long before Clovis. The “Clovis first” orthodoxy will go the same way as “no Paleolithic” doctrine.

Across the Bering Strait

The received view (of which many Indians are not fond)⁷⁸ demands migration across the Bering Strait land bridge, a “narrows” of immense width and length that linked Asia and America whenever sea levels sank—when water froze into glaciers. That happened several times in the past, during various ice ages, and humans and animals took advantage of the land bridge to move both ways, east and west. A land bridge makes sense, for terrestrial herd animals.

But the odd thing about people (and many animals) is that they solve problems multiple ways. It seems increasingly likely that if one came by land, two came by sea—certainly around the northern Pacific,⁷⁹ less certainly around the northern Atlantic.⁸⁰ Boats! They came in boats! The Bering land bridge orthodoxy joins *Titanic* as a legendary sea wreck. This is not to say that none came by land; of course they did. But others came by sea, faster and farther.

Men out of Asia

The accepted history calls for a single major migration in the distant past (Amerinds), followed by much more recent crossings via the land bridge by peoples who would become Apache and Navajo (Na-dene) and later still by Arctic peoples (Eskimo-Aleuts)—all out of Asia. There are, of course, other theories, mostly wacky: African Olmecs, the Chinese Formative, Polynesian Incas (or Inca Polynesians). But consider that many now think the New World was initially populated, at least in part, by boat people. If Paleo-Indians rowed over once, why not thereafter? It happened: Vikings colonized the New World around AD 1000,⁸¹ and it looks increasingly likely that Polynesians landed, possibly in southern California and more certainly in South America, about the same time.⁸² So we have bookends: Paleo-Indians around the North Pacific (and maybe North Atlantic?) sometime before 10,000 BC and Vikings and Polynesians around AD 1000. That’s an eleven-millennium spread. Was there *nothing* in between? And nothing after, between Leif Eriksson and Columbus?⁸³

It beggars belief that no one crossed the oceans between Paleo-Indians and Eriksson and between Eriksson and Columbus. I’ll leave earlier Archaic seafaring to others. I’m more interested in the later end of that long, long span. From the thirteenth century on, both Europe and Asia were increasingly deep-ocean maritime powers—not just the court-sponsored explorers but also the irrepressible seagoing underclass: fishermen, traders, pirates. If a Chinese junk or a Genoa cog drifted onto American shores in the thirteenth century, that was not “peopling the Americas.” The Americas were already fully and happily peopled. But if a tattered rem-

nant of the Bristol fishing fleet (working the Grand Banks long before Columbus) washed ashore on Late Mississippian North America and a dozen bedraggled fishermen staggered ashore and coughed on two or three Natives, that may explain the Mississippi Valley's "Vacant Quarter." Transoceanic contacts may not have contributed greatly to the New World gene pool, but transoceanic disease vectors could have had a devastating effect on New World demography.

Why fill a page with near-fringe oceanic issues?⁸⁴ In part because the epidemiological possibilities are intriguing. But more to put southwestern squabbles into perspective: in light of Paleo-Indian oceanic and continental distances—the enormous distances covered in peopling the New World—why quibble over a few hundred miles between Chaco and Pueblo Grande or between Paquimé and Culiacán? Those small distances should not truncate our visions of the past. And finally to show that orthodoxies are just that: conventionally accepted beliefs. This book is, in large part, a critique of orthodoxies. Orthodoxies are comfortable, but they are not necessarily correct.

Middle and Late Archaic

The Early Archaic (8500 to 5500 BC) and Middle Archaic (5500 to 1500 BC) together cover more than seven millennia. There is much new, excellent research, and there are many new ideas.⁸⁵

The orthodoxy for the southwestern Archaic is in situ evolution from rude hunter-gatherers to the earliest agricultural stages of Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon. Even though maize itself came from Mexico, early maize seems sufficiently primitive that "domestication" in the Southwest would have more or less mirrored events in areas where crops were first invented and tamed. Various bits of the Southwest were somehow seen as so many separate Tehuacan Valleys, reinventing agriculture in sequences based on those of Mesopotamia or Mexico. This orthodoxy, promulgated by Emil Haury (1962) among many others (for example, Irwin-Williams 1973), is premised on the idea that early, primitive maize made little or no difference to Middle Archaic hunter-gatherers. Slowly and surely—but mostly slowly—maize adapted and hybridized to southwestern conditions, and from an Archaic continuum emerged the classic southwestern societies.⁸⁶

Remarkable discoveries of the past ten years challenge the orthodoxy of slow, seamless transition from Middle Archaic to Late Archaic to agriculture. I review those data in some detail in chapter 2. But to conclude this discussion of past beliefs and present truths, I offer this observation: In a recent regional survey of *The Late Archaic across the Borderlands*,⁸⁷ few of the authors refer to the Middle or Early Archaic; the break between periods *was that marked*. As Bruce Huckell, reviewing the new discoveries, carefully notes, "Such sites suggested that the basic tenets of the Haury model"—the old orthodoxy—"were in need of revision."⁸⁸

