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Revolting! Some Early Historic Period Indigenous Revolts in the Americas

Allen Dart, RPA
Old Pueblo Archaeology Editor

This issue of the *Old Pueblo Archaeology* bulletin presents articles about three of the earliest Indigenous revolts against colonial powers in the Americas.

Archaeologist Dr. Deni Seymour’s “A Great Time of Troubles” describes and discusses two Sobaipuri O’odham battles, in what is now southern Arizona, against Spanish explorers and colonizers during the 1539-1542 Coronado expedition. The first, at the Sobaipuri village of Chichilticale, probably early in 1540, was a precursor to the 1541 O’odham Revolt. The latter wiped out San Geronimo III, the first Spanish *villa* (townsite) that had been established at an O’odham village in the Suya Valley. This 1541 incident can now be identified as the first successful Indigenous revolt against colonials in the continental United States.

The 1680 Pueblo Revolt used to be considered the earliest successful Native American revolt against the Spanish. In this issue’s “The Pueblo Rebellion in the Southwest (1680) and the Taki Onqoy Uprising in Peru (1565)” article, historian-anthropologist Dr. Sharonah Fredrick suggests a main reason for the Pueblo Revolt and the Taki Onqoy Uprising was the power of underlying Indigenous belief systems that stimulated political resilience. Interestingly, this does not seem to have been a factor in the O’odham Revolt of 1541.

A Great Time of Troubles: O’odham Opposition to the Coronado Expedition

Deni J. Seymour, PhD
Independent Researcher

The initial encounter that spring day in 1539 appeared, from all accounts, rather benign, even encouraging and jovial. As was typical of later times, the Sobaipuri O’odham along the San Pedro River in southeastern Arizona welcomed the Black Moor, Esteban de Mendoza, who served,

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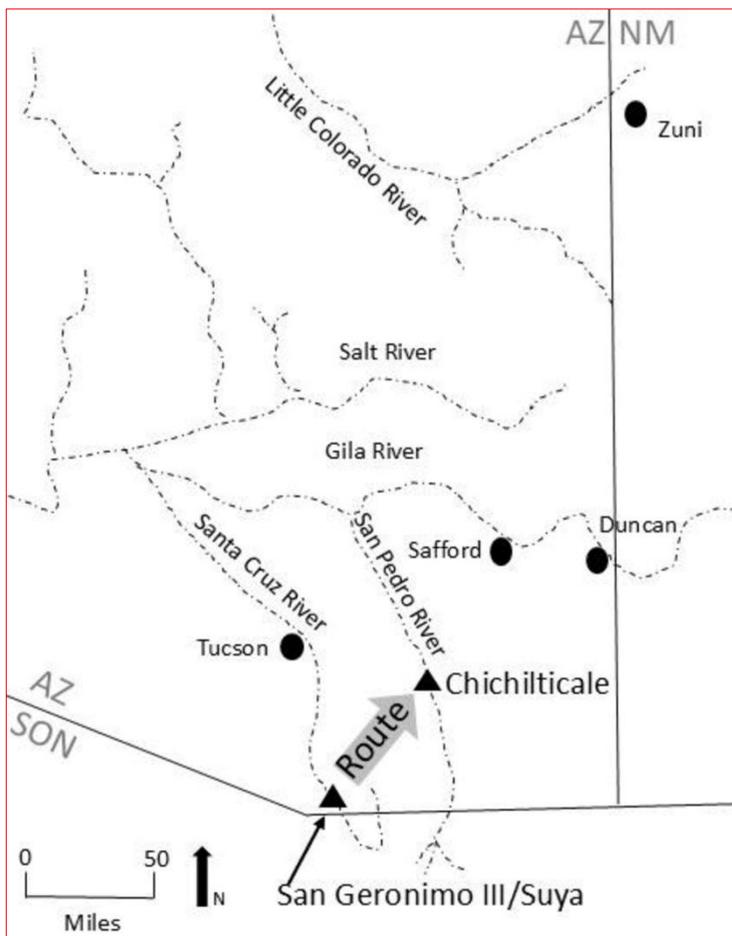


Figure 1. Map of southeastern Arizona showing San Geronimo III (Suya) and Chichilticale (see page 2; image by Deni Seymour)

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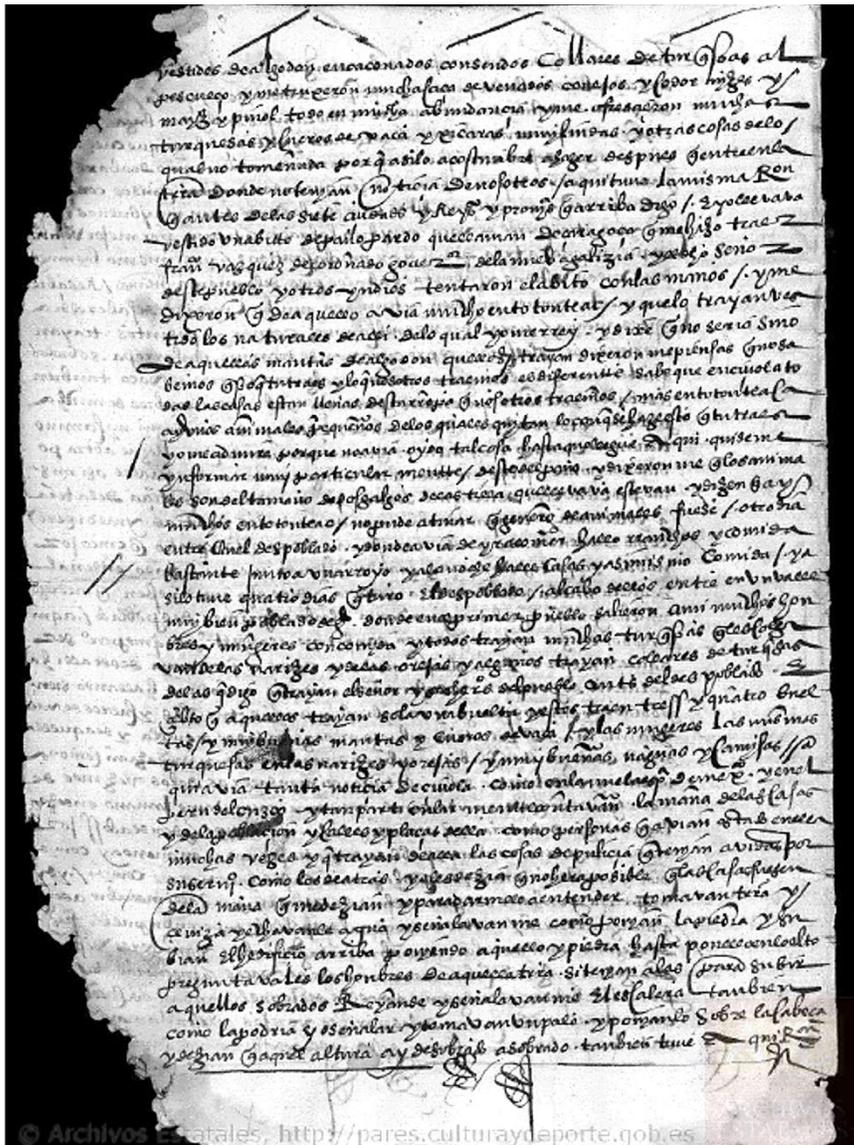
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it seems, as way finder and emissary, announcing the peaceful intent of the initial probe of the Coronado expedition that followed days later.

This was the first European expedition to enter the American Southwest, occurring between 1539 and 1542 (Figure 1). Fray Marcos de Niza was leading the first stage of the expedition, an exploratory reconnaissance north to Cibola or Zuni, the place they thought represented the mythical Seven Cities. This barefoot mendicant followed a few days behind Esteban and was received with joyous celebrations (Niza 1539). As was their custom, O'odham community members probably met him on the trail with trays of food, gourds of water, and gifts, perhaps turquoise and shell chokers, feathers, and finely cured hides.

Fray Marcos probably sat with these “splendid people” in what he described as a “heavily populated land” for hours, eating the traditional foods they offered while sharing sugar cane, dried fruit, and religious medals, showing samples of pearls and precious metals, and telling stories of his holy conception of the world, aided by religious images, prayers, and hymns (Figure 2). This scenario was likely repeated at every major village encountered, with local people gathering together from smaller neighboring communities to visit with the newcomers, hear the news, and gawk at their unusual demeanor. As residents traced maps of the region in the parched earth, Marcos absorbed information about the upcoming trail and the people who lived in the fabled cities to the north. He would convey this information to his sponsor, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. But the information he focused on most attentively was seemingly not geographic.



Historians of this period understand that Fray Niza’s approach to his mission in *Tierra Nueva* reflected Franciscan mysticism, as seen in his emphasis on poverty and anticipation of the Apocalypse (Cervantes 2021; Phelan 1970[1956]; West 1989). His interactions with Indigenous communities and his committed journey toward Cibola were influenced by these priorities. During this period, Observant Franciscans commonly believed that human existence was designed solely for conversion (Phelan 1970[1956]:8), such that a sufficient number of converts from all backgrounds were sought to fill vacancies in paradise. Thus, missionary activities of the time focused on converting non-Christians to their faith by whatever means necessary (West 1989:297).

By merging nationalism with evangelism, religious leaders believed Spain was divinely chosen to complete the final conversion before the end of the world (Phelan 1970[1956]:11). This belief justified the use of force and even anticipated violence, as those like Fray Marcos prioritized the missionary enterprise above all else, making it the key standard for decision making in the New World. Fray Marcos understood that it would be necessary to convert Natives to the Faith through coercion. As he anticipated significant changes ahead, he likely felt compelled to

Figure 2. Page out of one version of Fray Marcos de Niza’s account that describes Native encounters in southeastern Arizona



Figure 3. The “splendid people” described by Fray Marcos were the Sobaípuri O’odham of the San Pedro River valley. They were irrigation farmers, as he described. (Image by Bill Singleton)

convert this region of humanity at what he saw as a pivotal moment before the Last Judgement (West 1989:294, 295, 310). He understood that “before the appearance of the Messiah the earth would be torn asunder in a great time of troubles” (Phelan 1970[1956]:13). Fray Marcos was likely assessing the malleability of these “splendid people” and whether *Tierra Nueva* was sufficiently populated to warrant expedited ecclesiastical attention that would initiate the onset of the Millennium.

Fray Marcos continued north past the San Pedro River, which was at the margin of the Sobaípuri O’odham homeland, moving through the final unsettled region, accompanied by 30 principals from among these “splendid people” (Figure 3). Yet, just days before reaching Zuni, he met exhausted and sweat-covered retreating Natives who had been with Esteban, including some of the 300 Sobaípuri O’odham who had escorted him north. The Moor had been killed. The leader had rejected the gourd sent ahead as an announcement of their arrival because he recognized the bells adorning it as representing the enemy. Nonetheless, Marcos pushed north, but only after placating his fellow travelers by dispersing the trunks of clothing and trade items he carried with him (Niza 1539). He traveled only far enough to view Hawikku (at Zuni, Cíbola) from a distance before turning and fleeing south (Figure 4). When he reached Chichilticale again he was not received as well as he had been at first (Niza 1539), demonstrating that a new reality had set in. But at least he had prepared the way. His only goal, he related, was to provide information about the “grandness of the land where God, Our Lord, could be served so much, his Holy Faith glorified, and His Majesty’s royal patrimony increased” (Flint and Flint 2005:74).

A year later, as one of five friars, Fray Marcos accompanied Francisco Vázquez de Coronado on another (third) leg of the expedition, which was now the main thrust north. But soon, great disappointment and rage were focused on Fray Marcos from lay expedition members because they thought he misrepresented what was encountered along the route (Flint and Flint 2005:255, 321). Soon after the expedition reached and attacked Cíbola/Zuni (in modern New Mexico), he was sent south, back to Mexico City, under protective escort. But Fray Marcos knew that his work on this expedition was sufficient, if not complete. The Indigenous world was being torn asunder and his expectation for bloodshed and violence was visibly underway at Zuni.



Figure 4. Photograph of Hawikku (at Zuni, Cibola; public domain photo)

Just a few months before Captain General Coronado arrived, however, a less understood episode of the expedition had unfolded within what would become southern Arizona. The Sobaípurí O'odham world had stood strong against a second reconnaissance, in a chapter of the Coronado expedition that is often overlooked but that can now be seen as a crucial element of these first early months of encounter.



(See page 11)

A Follow-up Reconnaissance and the Battle at Chichilticale

When the cold of winter in 1539 had silenced the land, the “splendid people” of the San Pedro River heard rumor of another company of foreigners moving rapidly north through O'odham territory. As the first horsemen arrived, they were likely met on the trail by a reinforced line of stern-faced Sobaípurí O'odham warriors. After gathering information and probing the route north, the deep snows and excessively cold temperatures forced Melchior Díaz's reconnaissance to remain along the San Pedro River, rather than continuing north to assess Fray Marcos' report of Cibola. They stayed there, at a place later referenced in narrative accounts as Chichilticale, in the heart of the Sobaípurí O'odham homeland. Melchior Díaz, 17 horsemen, and support personnel had arrived in 1539 in time to spend the first European Christmas in what would become southern Arizona and the American Southwest. Chichilticale was soon to become the site of the first significant battle of the Coronado expedition, the earliest battle between Europeans and Indigenous people in the American Southwest.

Díaz's company was shown an entirely different welcome than Fray Marcos had initially experienced. We can see this in the spacing of archaeological sites, the artifacts present on sites, and in the narratives contained in documentary accounts (Seymour 2025a). Taken together, these sources present a strong case that, in the six or seven months between the spring of 1539 and the winter of the same year, relations had already soured between the Sobaípurí O'odham residents and these Europeans. This is nowhere clearer than when Díaz noted:

those from Cibola [Zuni] told those of this [Sobaípurí] pueblo and its vicinity that if some Christians came, that they did not have to hold them in any regard and that they should kill them, because they were mortal, and that they knew it because they had the bones of the one who had gone there [Esteban], and that if they [Sobaípurí] did not dare, to send them a message, because they would come to do it right. I believe that this has happened like this, and that these [conversations] have been discussed with them [Sobaípurí] based on the lukewarmness with which they received us and the mean face that they [Sobaípurí] have shown us [my translation; originally Díaz to Viceroy but quoted in Viceroy to the King, April 17, 1540 (Mendoza 1540)].

Attributes of the archaeological loci at the place called Chichilticale are consistent with the reported two-month-long occupation. There are numerous small middens, rock spoil piles, and fire pits, some of which contain metal artifacts and have produced chronometric dates that fall within the Coronado era

(Seymour 2025a). Numerous tent clearings are positioned across the surfaces, resulting from the large group of probably 100 to 150 people, consisting of Díaz, other Europeans and all their support people (Figure 5).

Over 400 expedition-related metal artifacts have been recovered, representing a diversity of activities typical of the range of everyday activities expected for an expedition. Among these are metal artifacts that are highly diagnostic of the

Coronado expedition, including formal ferrous crossbow bolt heads and other iron projectile points described as *armas de la tierra* (Figure 6; Seymour 2025b). These are points used by the rank-and-file Europeans on the expedition, as well as the allied central Mexican Natives. There were also fragments of copper bells, caret- or gable-headed nails, and ferrous and copper lace aglets – all have long been considered clearly indicative of the Coronado expedition. They are unlike the metal artifacts found in archaeological contexts when the next Spaniards entered the area in the 1690s, when Father Eusebio Francisco Kino and Captain Juan Mateo Manje and others began infiltrating the area.

Chichilticale also had a “ruined roofless house,” as described by Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera (Seymour 2025a) who wrote about the expedition two decades later. His account clearly referred to this as a house (*casa*), not a village (*pueblo*). Nor was this a “bright red house,” as has been thought. Rather, the documents refer to it as russet-colored or ginger, which is one interpretation of the word *bermejo* (Diccionario de la Lengua Española 2014), which is the color of adobe, which



Figure 5. Tent clearings are a defining attribute on these Coronado expedition encampments, including Chichilticale (Photo by Deni Seymour)



Figure 6. Formal ferrous crossbow bolt heads and other iron projectile points described as “*armas de la tierra*” were found on each of the loci at Chichilticale, evidence of an undocumented battle, likely in late January or early February of 1540 (Photo by Deni Seymour)



Figure 7. Drone shot of the ruined roofless house at Chichilticale, described by Castañeda of the Coronado expedition (Photo by Deni Seymour)

is what has been found in the field (Figure 7). The chronometric sample on charcoal flecks from within the structure produced a radiocarbon date consistent with the Coronado expedition (Seymour 2025a). A fragmentary curb-style bridle bit was present within the fill of the structure.

The archaeological record conveys that the reconnaissance occupied a defensive series of landforms. This and its thick stone-and-adobe walls reflect the description of Chichilticale as a *casa fuerte* (strong house or defensible). But also, the height of these landforms would protect them from a surprise attack...or so they thought. The archaeological record conveys that the company was likely attacked. The number of iron projectile points, their condition, and their placement across the landforms provide evidence of conflict.

The archaeological evidence of an attack on the Spaniards at Chichilticale seems supported by a passage in a documentary account – a June 1540 letter from Hernando Cortés to King Carlos V – that previously was thought to represent no more than historical derision. Cortés was known to be quick to betray, deceive, and lie (Restall 2018:178). This battle may have resulted in the death of 12 horsemen who had gone with Díaz (Cortés 1540). This passage seems to report on a detail of history hidden from view until potentially made clear through archaeological evidence.

This abruption sent the survivors, including Díaz and Zaldívar, south as late as February 1540 with devastating news and an unfulfilled mission. Yet, Coronado and his entourage had already started north, and so, undaunted, hundreds of expedition members continued their trek from Chiametla. They had already left San Miguel de Culiacán before receiving word from the Viceroy to delay their advance following this news from the Díaz reconnaissance (Castañeda in Flint and Flint 2005:234). The captain general would soon experience the aftereffects of this encounter during this poorly understood phase of the expedition. This revelation about the battle at Chichilticale means that this is the earliest known battle between Europeans and Native Americans in the American Southwest. While recognizing that Esteban was killed six months earlier at or on the way to Zuni, that killing was not a battle in this sense, but rather, according to Fray Marcos, he was captured and then killed.

Who were the attackers whose ire was activated by this follow-up reconnaissance? Coronado expedition sites, including the four loci of Chichilticale, are situated within the Sobaípurí O'odham heartland. Yet other groups, such as the Jcome and ancestral Chiricahua Apache, could have been responsible since this was also their territory. Fortunately, many aspects of the archaeological record provide clarity on this issue, including the presence of numerous distinctive Sobaípurí O'odham stone projectile points on the battlefield.

The reasons the Sobaípurí O'odham attackers chose these responses are not directly documented, but one can infer and envision some of the causes based on more broadly recognized human behavior and also expeditionary conduct documented along other portions of the route and in other Indigenous communities. Too numerous and common to require specific citation, the violation of Native women expectedly initiated a violent Native response through time and in many areas – the 1823 transgression of men from William H. Ashley's Rocky Mountain Fur Company on the Missouri River comes to mind (Clyman and Camp 1925:112). Among Europeans on the Coronado expedition were many very young men, with almost half 25 years of age or younger (Flint and Flint 2019:106) who perhaps felt no motivation to curtail their youthful urges. For that matter, nor did the older men restrict their actions, as historical events expose (e.g., Cortés was 35 when subduing central Mexico and taking women and girls as sex slaves, concubines, and wives). Coronado's expeditionaries, like those of the earlier two decades, were there to conquer and to take for themselves the riches of the land. The people themselves, their bodies, labor, and



souls, not to mention their land and resources, were viewed as part of the bounty. As Hoig (2013:21) related, “There is ample evidence that sex was a driving force in the exploration of the Americas.” Drawing broadly from the historical record, Restall (2018:305-311) reiterates this notion in detail. The considerable quantity or *pile of Indias*, women and girls (referred to as *pieces* and *catches*), were among the valued plunder. This carnal motivation is reflected in the first history of this region prepared after the Coronado expedition, wherein the only topics Francisco López de Gómara wrote about this area in his short summary were its frigid temperatures, food shortages, and its women worthy of passion:

From there [Culhuacan; i.e., Culiacan] to Síbola, which is three hundred leagues away, they suffered hardship. And many Indians died of hunger along the way, along with some horses. They encountered beautiful women, and naked, even though there is flax there. They suffered great cold. It snows a lot in those mountains [my translation, López de Gómara 1552].

Accordingly, if sex was a driving force for exploration, then it certainly was a catalyst for resistance.

Another contributing factor probably arose because the reconnaissance had not anticipated remaining in place, and so the Europeans were likely low on food, as were their horses. They were accustomed to feeding their mounts corn, in addition to the grass available at waterholes. What must have been Díaz’s persistent demand for corn and other stored food in substantial quantities would have put the Sobaípurí O’odham at risk, depleting their stores against dry-season shortages or famine in times of unpredictable meager harvests, not to mention depleting their currency of trade. When visitors wear out their welcome emotions become raw, and offense is easily taken. At some point the residents would have refused requests for more.

The strong appeal sent south from Zuni quoted above was likely another motivating factor that braced their resistant position. Stories of the visitors’ barbarity, perhaps sent north through messengers from central Mexico, would have reinforced the request. The martial prowess of the Sobaípurí O’odham would have been clear, and, when coupled with a chilly demeanor, would have put the Europeans on edge. The foreseeable unpredictability of hot-headed explorers in challenging circumstances can quickly turn fear into violence. Even as late as January of 1778, at “the very opening moments of first contact” in Kauai, Cook’s final voyage was marked by impulsive violence (Sides 2024:207-208). After killing an over-zealous Native assisting him to shore, Lt. John Williamson misinterpreted the excitement as an attack and panicked. He would attempt to justify his hasty actions, saying:

indigenous people often had to be put in their place, swiftly and decisively, in order to check their “insolence.” He believed in what he called “the good effects of at once showing our superiority” – principally through firearms. The best way to handle these types of messy situations was to “do execution,” as he called it. An early discharging of a weapon to injure or kill an occasional Native, he said, was a merciful action that saved lives in the end. “These barbarians must be quelled by force,” he wrote, “as they afterwards readily believe that whatever kindness is then shown them proceeds from love, whereas otherwise they attribute it to weakness, or cowardice [Sides 2024:208].

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This response is similar to ones in 1513 when a Spaniard went berserk and triggered others to slaughter curious Taínos as Pánfilo de Narváez watched (Cervantes 2021:94), in 1694 when Solís slaughtered unarmed O'odham leaders and warriors seeking peace (Karns 1954:62-63), and in 1520 when Pedro de Alvarado, fearing being subjects of ritual execution, “waded through unarmed [Toxcatl] festival celebrants, slaughtering and dismembering” them (Restall 2018:223). These examples are reminiscent of so many other misunderstandings, sudden nervous skirmishes, premature acts, and the taking of umbrage that led to indiscriminate killings throughout the New World. As Las Casas stated, it was “all so cruelly done, and also so easily dismissed and forgotten” (Cervantes 2021:94, 318).

Obviously, there were many possible motivations for the Sobaípurí O'odham attack, and any one of them would have been sufficient. But a rarely cited comment by Coronado is likely among the main impetuses for the hostilities. He conveyed that Esteban had killed women, likely Sobaípurí O'odham women, and he had “touched” their women (Coronado in Flint and Flint 2005:262; see Seymour 2024a).¹ If this were not reason enough, then, according to Fray Marcos, some of those who had escaped when Esteban was killed said that some of the Sobaípurí villagers had also been killed in the melee at Zuni.²

Regardless of which combination of factors provided the final spark that ignited their response, the Sobaípurí O'odham along the middle San Pedro responded differently to Díaz than they had initially to Fray Marcos. They successfully rose to meet this late 1539 threat. The Sobaípurí O'odham response was not just a humiliating defeat for the Spaniards, but it was a grave betrayal and illegal act of rebellion given that Fray Marcos had taken official possession of the land (Niza 1539), making these people enemies of the state rather than mere defenders of their homeland. Had expedition leadership taken the cue at this early stage of the venture, the great time of troubles throughout the *Tierra Nueva* might have been avoided. The expedition that was ultimately viewed as a failure may well have been terminated. But the multitude moved forward with a sense of destiny, anticipation, greed, and lust.

From Great Abundance to a Gift of Little Value

By the time Coronado came through the area in late June 1540 relations between the Sobaípurí O'odham and the expedition had already deteriorated and had the potential to derail the realization of their goals. This is apparent in Jaramillo's (1560) comment about the Nexpa: “Some Indians came out to see the general with a gift of little value, some roasted maguey [agave, mescal] stalks and pitahayas [saguaro cactus fruit]” (Figures 8 and 9). The reference to “a gift of little value” is a clear indication that Jaramillo, and likely Coronado, devalued these gifts and that only a limited gift was provided. Coronado could not get much-needed food, and the gifts provided were meager, surely indicative of a lukewarm reception by the mean-faced Sobaípurí and their recent battle with Díaz.

This malicious compliance to the expedition's needs would have been especially apparent in contrast to the better gifts provided to Fray Marcos: “They brought me much game deer, rabbits, and quail and corn and pinole, all in great abundance. They offered me many turquoises, hides, very lovely gourd bowls, and other things” (Fray Marcos in Flint and Flint 2005:71). This would have been obvious as well in the contrast between the wild plant foods provided and the verdant agricultural fields bordered by extensive canals, as described by Fray Marcos and visible to Coronado, and likely the numerous granaries that topped houses and bordered plazas. The gifts provided were more characteristic of the mobile hunter-



Figure 8 (left). Mescal stalks are described as one of the gifts given to the Coronado expedition. He was referencing cooked agave hearts.

Figure 9 (right). The pitahaya fruit mentioned by Jaramillo as part of the gift given to the expedition are likely saguaro fruit, as they are described as coming from a large cactus and they would have been ripe in June when the Spaniards passed through the area.



(Photos by Deni Seymour)



gatherers than the settled agriculturalists, which is why scholars including myself have assumed that the people Coronado met were Jocomo or Apache (Seymour 2009, 2016). At a minimum Coronado and Jaramillo had expected corn, which they required for their own consumption, but also, with its high energy content corn was needed for their ailing horses in their final push toward Cíbola. Instead, they were given food that had little worth to them because cacti did not measure up to their expectations. The Sobaípurí were minimally complying, but with restraint that masked a substantial underlying hostility (see Seymour 2025c). The warriors were undoubtedly prepared for any contingency, likely expecting revenge for the battle with Díaz, and so Coronado acted with appropriate discretion by moving on.

This lack of cooperation and unwillingness to share any more of their women, time, and resources is why Coronado stated that they could only rest for two days before proceeding into the wilderness. As Coronado (Flint and Flint 2005:256) stated, they needed to rest the horses longer, but they were low on food and so needed to move forward. The food he needed and had planned on was not being supplied by the local residents. Coronado had to move on quickly, with insufficient rest and food, and this had dire consequences for the party as they passed through the final wilderness. Several Indian allies died, and a Spaniard and two Moors died from eating poisonous plants. Many horses died as well (Flint and Flint 2005:256).

As a result, they were all the more desperate when they arrived at Zuni/Cíbola, which precipitated a battle within the opening hours of their arrival (see Flint and Flint 2005:257). But while Coronado was planning his rush toward Cíbola, he was likely also considering the larger implications of this refusal to comply. It was a direct affront to Spanish authority. As Restall (2018:190) has noted, one of the primary motivations of exploration in this period was to convert them and harvest their labor, that is “to produce food and tribute goods.” Not only had Díaz and Coronado experienced an entirely different welcome than had Fray Marcos, but the reception given was dire for the survival of the expedition. Conditions in what would become Arizona would only worsen for these expeditionaries as a European settlement was established in a neighboring valley among their Sobaípurí cousins.

Suya in 1541: The First Successful Indigenous Revolt in the Continental U.S.

The Spanish townsite of Suya (or San Geronimo III) was unexpectedly identified in the Santa Cruz River valley of southern Arizona in July 2020, miles north and west of where scholars had predicted it might be. In the summer of 1541 Pedro de Tobar of the Coronado expedition had repositioned an enclave of expedition members just north of what is now the international line, moving them away from hostile Indigenous populations surrounding its previous location, and placing the settlement closer to Cíbola. It was to become the first European settlement established in the American Southwest, exhibiting stone-and-adobe-walled structures and a diversity of household- and battle-related artifacts spread across at least a kilometer (Figure 10). It is the site of the first decisive uprising of Natives in the continental United States (Seymour 2025d). It has also produced two bronze cannons, which represent the earliest known firearms on the continental landmass (Figure 11; Seymour and Mapoles 2025) and the first known firearms of the Coronado expedition.

The events that transpired at the incipient Spanish colony of Suya in 1541 had been set in motion during the preceding 25 months of initial interaction between the Sobaípurí O'odham and Spaniards. In fact,

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Figure 10. Plan drawing of one of the stone-and-adobe-walled structures built for the Europeans at Suya, the first European townsite in the American Southwest. The durability of this structure and the investment in its construction are part of the argument for the intended permanence of the settlement, as are the density, diversity, and character of artifacts (Drawing by Deni Seymour)

the attack at Suya cannot be understood without the short but impactful history of interaction that preceded it, as just relayed. Villages throughout the Sobaípurí O'odham homeland were no longer open to visitation and they were unlikely to have willingly provided food and supplies to the travelers, nor ceded land. Nonetheless, their fertile fields, abundant stored supplies, and expansive irrigation fields made their land in what is now the Santa Cruz River valley attractive for Spanish settlement. These advantages were coupled with the reality that this was one of the few options available for placement of the townsite since the O'odham in this valley had not yet risen in resistance.

In May of 1541 Tobar went south to address unrest within the expedition townsite of Señora (San Gerónimo II, situated in what is now Sonora, Mexico). Discovering that the local Indigenous residents had been disrespectful, and even killed a man, the Europeans attempted to capture the Native leaders and ignited a battle (Flint and Flint 2005:406). Assessing the situation, Tobar moved the incipient Spanish colony north to the Suya Valley, 120 miles closer to Cíbola. Tobar then left half the residents at the new (Arizona) townsite (Suya, San Gerónimo III) – which would be the Southwest's earliest European settlement—while he led the others north to the Tiguex Province (Albuquerque, Bernalillo). Yet, it was not long before half the European population of Suya mutinied with their followers and fled to the south, leaving a dangerously small population at this struggling townsite. The resident Sobaípurí-O'odham seized their opportunity.

One night the residents saw fires in the surrounding mountains and so the guard was doubled, probably within the settlement and at the six lookout stations on the surrounding high points. But, as later accounts convey, the captain was inattentive, and the guard became careless near dawn. This was the opportunity the Sobaípurí O'odham were seeking, and so warriors from all over the land descended on this enclave (e.g., Tello 1891:438). The townspeople were soon decimated, the buildings burned, and stores of food and equipment gathered up. Early in the conflict, the two captive Sobaípurí O'odham women lodging with Captain Diego de Alcaraz killed him with poisoned arrow points as they helped him put on his cotton armor. By the time the smoke had faded, the townsite was destroyed and most of its 100 or so residents



Figure 11. Two bronze cannons have been encountered in the Suya site excavations. This is the image of the first one recovered. They were referred to as “versillos” in the documents and are small hook guns, typical of the time and earlier. It seems the site had its own set of artillery since a third, similar bronze cannon was recovered from an off-site location. (Photo by Deni Seymour)

killed (including slaves, domestic servants, and Indian allies). Some of the children were taken, later to be adopted elsewhere in the region (Obregon 1988 [1584]; compare to Hammond and Rey 1928).

No doubt, as the few expedition survivors fled south to tell of this calamity, the Sobaípurí O'odham who had experienced no fatalities, celebrated their victory. They were finally free of these offenders who had raped their wives and daughters, taken two-thirds of their resources, demanded too much labor, and cut off their noses, hands, and tongues for offenses unduly conceived by the cruel Captain Alcaraz.

We can look to historical instances within Christian Europe to provide some insight into why these specific mutilations might have been implemented but we should take care not to “enlist random examples from remote times with insufficient care and nuanced interpretation of the evidence” (Effros 2014: 77). Perhaps a reasonable assumption is that such mutilations are related to various biblical passages that advocate that when your “hand causes you to sin, cut it off” (e.g., Matthew 5:30 and Matthew 18:8). Consequently, we might assume that instead of cruel whim, Alcaraz perceived that some kind of transgression had occurred and these punishments were judicial in nature. For example, Arawak in Haiti who did not provide sufficient quantities of gold tribute had their hands or noses cut off (visible in an image by Theodore de Bry 1598; Zinn 1997:11). This punishment is consistent with the notion that in fourteenth and fifteenth century Europe a thief’s hand might be cut off (Fernandes et al. 2017:66-67; Kirkup 2007). Thus, those at Suya providing inadequate tribute or someone who had pilfered a metal nail might have been subjected to this punishment.

Similarly, amputation of the nose was often aligned with patriarchal values of authority and honor (Skinner 2014), including rebellion against authority, adultery, and the spreading of libel about political opponents (Sperati 2009). This response might have been elicited when village leaders complained of the rape of their women and girls or pointing out that too much food was demanded. Individuals accused of heresy and blasphemy during the Medieval era, and in particular, during the Inquisition, might have their tongues cut out. This was intended to silence those who challenged religious or political authority (Haught 2023). This might characterize those who spoke out against Alcaraz’s authority with the captain inflicting this punishment on religious leaders, medicine people, as well as irate fathers. Like in central Mexico, this type of excessive cruelty was sustained by moral justifications and legal loopholes that tended to encourage the perpetuation of these practices rather than curtail them (e.g., Restall 2018:300).

Archaeological evidence of this battle at Suya is widespread throughout the expansive archaeological site. The metal projectile points including crossbow bolt heads and *armas de la tierra* (Figure 6), two bronze cannons (Figure 11), sword and lance pieces (Figure 12), knives (Figure 13), lead shot (Figure 14), matchlock and wheellock gun parts (Figure 15), and chain mail and other armor pieces (Figure 16) provide clear evidence of the battle. Moreover, from the distribution of weapons’ pieces and ammunition the progression of this battle can be traced and areas of intensive conflict identified.



Figure 12. Sword and lance parts recovered from Suyá: Above, sword tip and quillons (hilt crosspieces to protect users' hands); below, lance tip, an example of the "armas de la tierra" used by rank-and-file expedition members (Photos by Deni Seymour)

To prohibit premature warning, the attack was likely initiated at first light at three of the lookout stations where a rich array of expedition-related evidence has been found, including a sword fragment, lead shot, metal points, and other characteristic items found that were indicative of very close combat. Then with a larger force the town's bound-

aries were breached, Sobaípuri O'odham streaming up from the lowlands and emerging from a thick mesquite and cottonwood bosque that bordered the river. The attack centered on the arroyo that cut through the heart of the most densely populated part of the townsite. First it seems a large stone-and-adobe structure was overrun, before the occupants could prepare their firearms for use. Their firearms would have had to be loaded, and coals or an open flame were needed to light the match cord and ignite the powder. This structure was likely breached before this sequence of tasks could be completed, as is suggested by the bronze cannon, which lay unfired within the structure. Crossbow bolt heads cluster just outside in the direction of the river, providing an indication that a few were fired from within before the structure was overrun.

Then the focus of the attack seemingly shifted to the residences on the opposite side of the arroyo as the assailants moved further into the town. From the arroyo bottom a dense array of arrows were shot at the defenders on the terrace tops, who responded with an equally intense shower of arrows, crossbow bolts, and arquebus balls. Another bronze cannon was brought forward to the frontline of action, but it exploded as the enemy was advancing, rendering it useless. This likely resulted in the death of the artillery men, given the size of the force overtaking them and the number of townspeople later reported dead. The distribution of the cannon kit along the slope suggests that perhaps the artillerymen retreated upslope before meeting their end. At the close of the battle, 100 men were killed, women and children taken captive, with only a handful escaping to safety (Obregon; see Hammond and Rey 1928). Among the few that escaped was a Franciscan friar, likely given mercy by the Natives who could have easily killed him and his five companions (Seymour 2024b, 2024c).

Suyá was at the north end of what had already erupted as a war zone. Villages along 600 miles of the frontier north of Culiacán ignited against the expedition's intrusion, adding to the unrest in Jalisco, Zacatecas, and elsewhere caused by the Mixtón War (1540–1542). Suyá was the latest attack and most consequential Spanish loss in *Tierra Nueva*, providing another impetus for Coronado to soon call an end to the expedition. This battle at Suyá represents the first successful Native American uprising in the continental U.S. What this means is that Europeans did not return to the area in any numbers for 150 years.³

This is quite an accomplishment for the O'odham, a group that has been viewed in modern and historic times as docile and peaceful, a reputation clearly in service to the colonial message. Yet the Sobaípuri O'odham in their time were fierce warriors known for their aptitude in battle. I've discussed this before with respect to a 1698 battle at a Sobaípuri site on the San Pedro where the survivors of a 500-strong Apache and allied force that had attacked an 80-person Sobaípuri village sued for peace under the condition that the Spanish would protect them from the "mean" Sobaípuri (Seymour 2014, 2015). In fact, this is the basis for the Sobaípuri name, which in the O'odham language was a reference to their fierceness (Seymour 2018; 2014:47, 234).



What emerges in this new work on the Coronado expedition in southeastern Arizona is evidence of a progression of increasing intolerance by the Sobaípurí O'odham toward these earliest Europeans, and the escalation of their response. The unwavering arrogance and single-mindedness of the Europeans blinded them, making them careless in their cruelty and indifference. Just like elsewhere within the Spanish empire, these atrocities were normalized by historians, in a cloak of glory and adventure, shrouded by a preferencing of the excitement of discovery. All of these acts were implemented by men (under the leadership of Columbus, Guzman, Cortés, Marcos de Niza, Coronado) who viewed themselves as instruments chosen by God whose mission was to set in motion events that would lead to the end times (e.g., Cervantes 2021:47).



Figure 13. Knife blade recovered from Suya
(Photo by Deni Seymour)

Conclusions

Arizona was by no means a backwater of resistance against the initial stages of European expansionism, as is generally understood. New studies reveal that some of the earliest opposition, as well as the most successful early regional rebellion in 1541, occurred in what is now southeastern Arizona. In the first 13 months beginning in 1539, the documentary and archaeological records convey a rapidly changing series of reactions to encounter as local residents actively rose in opposition. Sobaípurí O'odham resistance to these newcomers is visible in many forms in the earliest period of interaction.

The contrast between the initial positive reception given to Fray Marcos as compared to the subsequent stages of the expedition is illuminating. The friar's escape from the region after the Zuni debacle in May of 1539 should have clarified the terms of engagement, but he was likely blinded by his messianic veil, although he did note how his reception at Chichilticale differed as he escaped down trail through Sobaípurí territory. Within just seven months of the initial encounter the message from the Sobaípurí O'odham was even clearer to Díaz, and to the Viceroy. The Sobaípurí effectuated the first battle between Europeans and Native Americans in the American Southwest, potentially killing 12 horsemen, but certainly sending Díaz south with bad news.

Then by June of 1540, Jaramillo's incredulity is perceptible in his statement about the poor-quality gifts they received. Coronado's discouragement is palpable in his realization that there was insufficient food available among the local population to sustain his party, or at least the locals would not comply with his requests. Coronado's astronomical measurements differed significantly from those provided by the friar, potentially placing them when at Chichilticale geographically much farther from Cíbola, at 32 degrees north latitude rather than at the 35 degrees recorded by the friar (according to Coronado; see Flint and Flint 2005:256), a difference of 200 miles, assuming, as he would have had to, with no other information to evaluate. This would have been viewed as theoretically widening the *despoblado*, all while they were within hostile territory. Their diminishing food supplies and the exhausted, thinning horses and pack animals put them in considerable peril.

Clearly, the unfriendly reception from the last settled villagers before the *despoblado* only worsened their prospects. This culminated in an unanticipated but foreseeable response a year later when the expedition sited their fragile townsite among another Sobaípurí O'odham community who lived in the next major valley to the west of the San Pedro. Some of the same behavior that ignited their ire on Díaz's 1539 intrusion on the San Pedro sparked a well-planned attack that for 150 years extinguished the raging wildfire at their borders and suppressed the intrusive contagion that was spreading throughout the surrounding lands.



Figure 14. Lead shot artifacts of varied sizes recovered from Suya (Photo by Deni Seymour)

Endnotes

- ¹ Esteban was not allowed to enter Zuni so he could not have had access to A:shiwi women. The most recent women he had contact with otherwise were Sobaípurí O'odham.
- ² I think this was a ruse to cover for the execution of Esteban by the Sobaípurí for killing their women because Coronado stated that no others were killed.
- ³ Battles that occurred elsewhere, in the southwestern and southeastern US, between Europeans and Natives did not stop the flow of Europeans. This battle did and so seemed to balance the scales against intrusion into this area again until the memory faded. Minor incursions by miners, traders, or hunters cannot be evaluated as no evidence has been found to assess them so reference here is to sanctioned expeditions.

About the Author

Deni J. Seymour, PhD has documented more Coronado expedition sites in Arizona and Texas than all other known Coronado sites combined, a success attributable in part to 45 years of working in this area, focusing on mobile groups and mobility and on how to recognize light traces, ephemeral uses, and transient occupations. Coronado is a manifestation of these practices and of her research focuses of identifying a specific component out of multiple ones and of defining groups by identifying and isolating cultural diagnostics.

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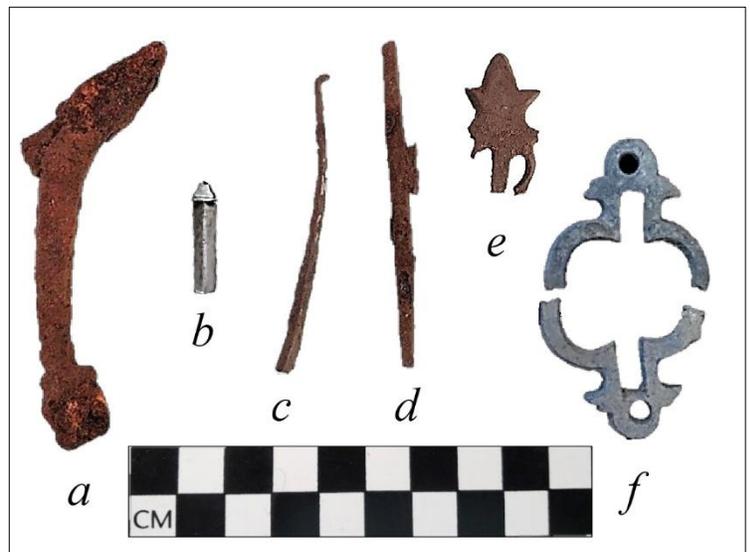


Figure 15. Gun parts recovered from Suya: a, matchlock hammer; b, wheellock axle; c, d, springs from two different kinds of guns; e, matchlock or wheellock trigger guard; f, gun or crossbow stock decoration (Photos by Deni Seymour)



Figure 16. Chain mail, jack plate armor, and armor rosette recovered from Suyá (Photo by Deni Seymour)

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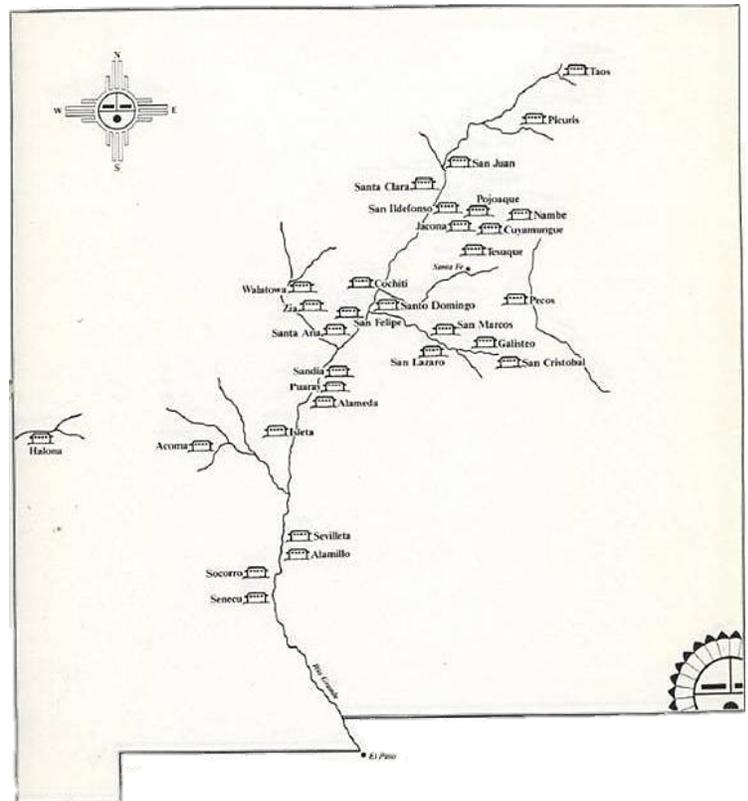
The Pueblo Rebellion in the Southwest (1680) and the Taki Onqoy Uprising in Peru (1565): Ancestral Religion as a Political Force Against Empire

Sharonah Esther Fredrick, PhD

Author of *An Unholy Rebellion, Killing the Gods: Political Ideology and Insurrection in the Mayan Popul Vuh and the Andean Huarochiri Manuscript* (2024, University of Nebraska Press)

On the face of it, these two major Indigenous rebellions against Spanish colonial rule – the Pueblo Rebellion in the U.S. Southwest and the Taki Onqoy Uprising in Peru – could not be more different. The Great Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the succeeding 12 years that followed it were the result of unprecedented unions among nations – North and South Tewa, Hopi, Zuni, and some Diné – that had strongly decentralized, autonomous societies. Prior to Spanish incursions in the American Southwest, beginning with Francisco Coronado in 1540 and continuing, infamously and even more violently, with Juan de Oñate in the late 1590s, these nations had never been subjugated to a central power. The Revolt occurred more than a century after the nations of the Pueblo peoples had been thrust into violent contact with Europeans.

The Taki Onqoy movement, whose name in Quechua may be loosely translated as singing and dancing “disease” according to Peruvian anthropologist Luis Millones, also arose among very different Andean cultures, but cultures that had been subjugated for at least a century to one of the strongest



“New Mexico Pueblos – 1680” map #2 in “Creating a Movement Through Resilience” unit of the [high school lesson plan](#) from the Indigenous Wisdom curriculum (Used with permission of Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque)

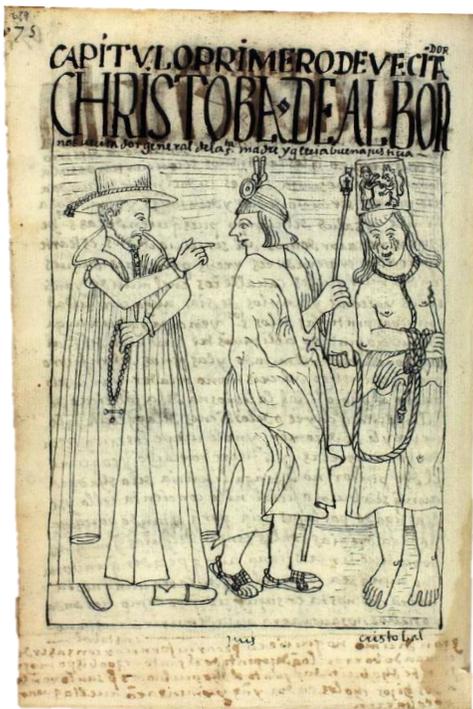


Map of Peru by French cartographer D'Abbeville sometime in seventeenth century: post-Taki Onqoy but mid-Idolatriy extirpation trials in Peru's Huarochiri region (Public domain)

of all centralized empires: the Incas. From their base in Cusco (and far from their origin near Lake Titicaca), the Incas had, by the early fifteenth century, subjected more than a hundred different ethnicities and cultures to their rule. “Benevolent” characterizations apart (such as those of chronicler Garcilaso el Inca), these ethnicities had rebelled more than once against Inca rule, and the conquistadors would exploit those divisions, particularly in the case of Chanca and Tallan Indians, both of whom chafed under Inca rule. By 1534 the Inca empire was crumbling, and while the center of Vilcabamba served as an Inca “capital in exile” until the 1570s, their rule was no more. But when the Taki Onqoy

revolt broke out, or better said, when it was “uncovered” by missionaries such as Cristóbal de Albornoz in 1565, its protagonists were not dethroned “Incas.” They were, in terms of social organization, more similar to the autonomous Pueblo peoples, and the religious ideology of Taki Onqoy reflected that.

The Pueblo areas were, from the point of view of Spanish colonialism, very sparsely populated, particularly when compared with the relatively dense (more than Europe at the time) urban centers of Mesoamerica; or the huge fortress complexes, such as the Incas’ Sacsahuaman, in South America. But the Pueblo areas were key to Spanish control of North America, and so the forced Christianization of its population was considered as much of a necessity as were the obligatory conversions of the larger Indigenous nations. It is worth pointing out that this forced conversion, initiated by conquistadors and followed up by priests in the service of the Spanish Empire in both the Southwest and the Andes, was a major component in detonating both rebellions. The leaders of both the Pueblo Revolt and the Taki Onqoy movement were prominent spiritual leaders, each in their own right: Popé among the Tewa Indians, and Juan Chocne among the peoples of the Andes.



Left: This drawing from the Indigenous author Guaman Poma's 1615 “New Chronicle and Good Governance,” written in Peru and representing the capture and punishment of an Andean Native American connected to the messianic Taki Onqoy movement, is widely believed to represent Juan Chocne or someone very close to him as well as an ambivalent political attitude. Guaman Poma denounced Spanish colonial abuses but believed all Indigenous people, including his own from the area of Huanuco in Peru should indeed be converted to Christianity. In the same chronicle he condemned Spanish colonial excesses yet characterized Native Andean religion as “idolatry” and “things of the devil,” so how the person is portrayed here is open to interpretation. (Wikipedia Commons)

Right: Statue representing Popé in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center (Architect of the Capitol photo, cropped)



But it was not only spiritual. Juan Chocne and Popé carried messages that struck at the very base of Spanish colonial power: as they saw it, the autochthonous deities were to be re-established over the imposed cult of Christianity. And once they were re-established, their peoples could no longer be considered, legally, “vassals of Spain,” in other words, they were no longer Catholic subjects of His Majesty in the Iberian Peninsula. And thus, the Indigenous peoples were freed of the onerous charges of forced labor, and slavery in everything but name, imposed on them by Spain.

These are seminal aspects of the Taki Onqoy and Pueblo revolts, and should not be omitted or downplayed. In the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, there was a stark connection between political servitude to Europe and the submission to its Christian missionary efforts, and the Native peoples perceived and understood that. It is not for nothing that one of Juan Chocne’s primary demands in the *Taki Onqoy* movement was to abolish the enforced servitude of Native peoples in the terrible silver mines of Potosí. Their souls, according to sixteenth-century missionaries, were saved . . . but their bodies and families were dying.

Similarly, one of the triggers of the Pueblo revolt was the constant kidnapping and disappearance of Tewa peoples by Spanish slave traders. It is true that Spain “officially” prohibited the slavery of Native peoples. But as Mexican historian Edmundo O’Goorman remarked, Spanish colonial needs gave rise to the saying, “La ley se acata pero no se cumple” (literally, the law is superficially obeyed but not actually



fulfilled). That cynicism pervaded the Spanish Empire in the Southwest and would pervade Anglo and French empires after it. Coronado, in the 1540s, often enslaved Zuni women in villages where he had already killed most of the men . . . thinking that no one was going to hold him accountable when he returned to Mexico. Interestingly enough, Coronado would later be denounced and tried in court by members of his own expedition; but sadly, the fate of the captive people that he had sold into slavery, was already sealed.

The Pueblo peoples, who had watched and suffered the gradual encroachment on their lands by these European conquerors, and who by 1680 had seen the ephemeral nature of the Coronado expedition and the sudden shock of Onate's tortures and mutilations of 1598, had been replaced by more entrenched power: that represented by the founding of Santa Fe, with its prominence on the northern route of the *Camino Real* (the King's Road) which began in Tenochtitlán, by then transformed into Mexico City. Meanwhile, the peoples of the Andes had seen how quickly the "dual monarchy" or "diarchy" represented by two sovereigns, Atahualpa in Quito (in present day Ecuador) and Huascar in Cuzco (in south-central Peru) could not resist the conquistadors' sudden eruption in 1532.

Or was it so sudden? After all, Pizarro had been reconnoitering the sea route between Panama and the Inca empire, called Tahuantinsuyo, since 1526. And many enemies of the Incas, such as the Tallanes and the Chachapoyas, had word, and in some cases had already met, these bearded soldiers from abroad. The name "Tahuantinsuyo" means literally "Land of the Four Quarters" and ran from the south of modern-day Colombia to the middle of Chile (to the Maule River) including large swaths of Bolivia and northwestern Argentina.

And the "Land of the Four Quarters," in the thought and philosophy of the Pueblo peoples, was and is the term by which they refer to their ancestral lands in the Southwest. This is more than an interesting coincidence: it reveals how traumatic the Spanish conquest was for America's Indigenous nations. Four was and is the totality of cardinal directions, a whole, literally, a world. It was worlds that were destroyed in the Conquest. Conversely, it would be leaders such as Juan Chocne and Popé who would attempt to revive those worlds, and supposedly cleanse them of European interference. And while neither rebellion accomplished its aims in the macro, the tremendous spiritual upheaval that they initiated had a great deal to do with guaranteeing the resilience of these belief systems, belief systems which Spain deemed, very wrongly, "idolatrous."

The Pueblo Rebellion

Let us begin with Popé and the cosmology and beliefs of the Tewa peoples, which, like the Andean religions of South America, are shared by neighboring peoples, though not identical. Popé, a well-known



"Pueblo Revolt 1680" mural created by Loren Mozley above the first-floor elevator in the U.S. Courthouse, Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1936 during the Great Depression's Treasury Relief Art Project sponsored by the U.S. Works Progress Administration (Public domain, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo_Revolt#/media/File:Loren_Mozley_Pueblo_Revolt_1680_installed_1936_ABO_NM.jpg)



Ancestral Pueblo storage jar: One of the reasons that the Great Pueblo Uprising was surprisingly successful, given Spanish military dominance, was the deep-rooted historical connection Pueblo peoples have always maintained to their ancestors and their ancestral territory. This old Pueblo ceramic is from Arizona and shows patterns seen on ancient petroglyphs throughout the Southwest. (Public domain)

spiritual leader and shaman, was one of many Pueblo religious leaders imprisoned by the Spanish governor in Santa Fe in 1675, five years before the rebellion began, a rebellion that he was instrumental in organizing. Popé is to this day a highly controversial figure, and we cannot say that all Pueblo cultures united under his aegis; they were not. But we can say that he exerted a powerful, and galvanizing force, among the majority . . . at least for a while, and for long enough to foment an insurrection.

During the revolt and its aftermath, in which the vast majority, though not all, of the Hispanic population was expelled from Pueblo territory, Popé managed to retain enough followers to be re-elected as leader by the Council of the Pueblos in 1688. But he died soon after, and his popularity could not extend to the families that had already intermarried with Spanish colonists and were now firmly “mestizo”: families of mixed ethnicities and mixed cultures. Would a Spaniard be welcome in liberated Pueblo territory if he/she would accept Tewa beliefs? This was a question that would be echoed in similar fashion in the Andean Taki Onqoy rebellion, and the demands of its leader, Juan Chocne, may be seen as a precursor to Popé’s demands. There was, of course, no contact during the Colonial period between Puebloan and Andean people. But similar circumstances often produce similar behavioral attitudes, and Chocne and Popé are evidence of this.

The Taki Onqoy Uprising

Juan Chocne was of somewhat uncertain origin, and scholars of Andean culture still debate whether Chocne was of Inca or Chanka origin. This is far from an abstruse issue in Peru, where it is part of the



Peru’s Ausangate Mountain, one of the most imposing peaks in the Andes, was and is revered as a powerful “apu” ancestral spirit who animates nature with the divine force called “camaq” in Quechua; Pueblo Indian designs seen as abstract to the Western eye are based on coherent and consistent symbols utilized by Pueblo peoples for many centuries to communicate information about the natural world, as well as spiritual beliefs (Public domain images)



popular consciousness. It should be noted that in the highly popular, fictional dramatic series “Eva de Eden” (2004) on Peruvian television, Juan Chocne is a prominent character, and he is unequivocally described as Chanca. This would insinuate that the Incas were incapable of leading a successful rebellion against the Spaniards once their emperors had been defeated, and so it fell to the people they had subjugated, such as the Chancas, to lead the revolt. Chocne was followed by two female followers who were, provocatively, known as “Mary Magdalene” and “Virgin Mary.”

Was this an attempt to attract support among the *mestizo* (mixed) peoples of the conquered empire? It was barely a generation since Pizarro’s conquest, and yet mixed families were becoming more and more common. But Chocne’s behavior does not seem to indicate a predilection for Christianity. Like Popé would do a century later, Chocne called on his followers to divorce their Christian spouses and cleanse their families of the rituals that had been imposed upon them violently by the conquistadors. And as with Popé, what would happen if the families would accept Andean belief systems – would people of Spanish origin not be expelled if they embraced Andean religions? – remains an open issue.

Comparisons

It is on this point-of cosmology, of belief, and of the spiritual end goals that these two rebellions seem most to converge. When Popé was arrested five years before the 1680 rebellion, and when Juan Chocne was ostensibly “discovered” by the idolatry extirpators (such as Cristobal de Albornoz) in 1565, the religious beliefs that they preached would have struck their respective antagonists as notably similar, and not only in terms of expelling the Spanish presence from their ancestral territory.

Both the Tewa, and the peoples of the Andes long before Inca dominion, believed in the sacredness of the natural landscape and its bonds with ancestral spirits, with Creation, and with Life itself. For the Tewa, the Corn Mothers helped human beings to emerge from within the Earth itself, and with their ceremonies, their dance and song and poetry, they literally “danced the world into existence.” For the non-Incan peoples of the Andes (the Sora, the Chanca, the Yauyos, and countless other cultures), dance and song were and are also sacred, profoundly so. And it was the dance, the “taki,” the word that refers to the union of song and dance, that exalted Chocne’s followers: this “disease” of dancing was an expression of the anger of the forsaken gods, the “wak’as,” incarnated in the mountains and geographies of the Andes. Chocne reminded his followers that the wak’as were angry, profoundly so, because their peoples had forsaken them in the name of subjugation to the Spaniard’s Christianity. So the gods entered the bodies of their followers, singing and dancing and returning their people to their origins of Tahuantinsuyo, before they were enslaved to Imperial Spain.

Popé, in the more northern “Land of the Four Corners,” wanted his people to return to the harmony of those four cardinal directions, each with its own color and climate. There the ancestors of Humanity – who according to Tewa tradition had not been enthusiastic about arising from the inner world to the outer one, the one we inhabit – could again establish the balance that had been lost when Spain invaded. Dance was intrinsic to this rebellion too; it was one of the most visible assertions of the original cultures. Dance was the connection to existence and life that



The Peruvian traditional dances of today are hotly debated regarding their origins. Some anthropologists feel there are echoes of the Taki Onqoy practices; others see the dances as more reflective of Hispanic culture. (Public domain)

animated the clay that later became humanity. And politically, it was an act of overt defiance.

Juan Chocne preached the union of two actually antithetical deities: Pachacamac, the Earth Mover and Shaker, of Peru's coastal cultures, whose strength is felt in that region's earthquakes; and Inti, the Inca version of the older Andean "Antu," God of the Sun and Protector of Fire. He carried what the Spaniards described as a "basket" that contained an image of the Deity who spoke to him, and gave him his orders, both politically and spiritually. Many Peruvian scholars theorize that this basket may actually have contained the mummified remains of an ancestor; mummification was one of the key characteristics practiced in the Andes to honor progenitors and kings. It would have made sense then, that the twin voices of the gods Pachacamac and Inti would speak to Chocne and his followers through a tangible material custom that honored the pre-Christian past.

The horrible effects of drought and crop failure had provided an impulse for the Pueblo Rebellion, as it seemed that, there as in the Andes, the spirits of the Universe were angry at having been forsaken by Indigenous peoples who had accepted the Spanish yoke and become Christians. Popé emphasized this a great deal in the beginning, and so his discourse, in the early stages, would have been quite similar to Chocne's preachings. But this, in fact, undid Popé's political futures, as his followers became increasingly upset with his inability to bring the rains that the parched Southwest so desperately needed. Just as in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Native American theology viewed Nature as a manifestation of often inscrutable Divine plans.

Outcomes

The outcome of both Taki Onqoy in the Andes, and the Pueblo Revolt in the Southwest, are perhaps better known by the general public than the rebellions themselves. Francisco Toledo became vice-regent of Peru at the end of 1569, and his iron fist put an end (at least temporarily) to the Taki Onqoy rebellions, and their defiant singing and dancing. He is revered by pro-Hispanist historians as someone who "stabilized" Peru. But the stability was only skin-deep: during the seventeenth century, ancestral belief exploded again in the Huarochiri region of the lower Andes, and by the end of the eighteenth century, Native and even Mestizo uprisings were widespread throughout the Andes.

Diego de Vargas and his overly glorified figure as "pacifier" of the Pueblo Indian Revolt, with its supposed definitive end in 1692, also may not have been as successful as he, and Imperial Spain, would have liked. While the Northern Tewa peoples did agree to Vargas' terms for political reincorporation into the Spanish empire, it was obvious that something deeper had changed. The armed action that the Pueblo Indians had taken against Spanish priests and missionaries produced a certain "de-escalation" of anti-Indigenous religious persecution by the Spanish authorities; and for the next hundred years into the end of the eighteenth century, there was a certain amount of tolerance shown to Indigenous practices. All this providing, of course, that Indigenous peoples did not openly defy Christian custom.

And so, while from a military standpoint one might say that in the short run both rebellions failed, a historian would see that, in the long-run, their outcomes were felt in a more lasting manner. Both revolts pointed to the power of underlying belief systems as one of the pillars of political resilience, a fact not lost on Native educators today, throughout North and South America.



The "dreamcatcher" is an instantly recognizable symbol of Native American culture in the Southwest and beyond. But many Native American educators, such as Frank Menusan, reject the idea that it "catches dreams" and see it as a representation of the complex web of life itself. (Public domain)



Suggested Reading

Hackett, Charles Wilson (editor)

1942 *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*. 2 vols. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

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1995 *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

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About the Author

Sharonah Esther Fredrick, PhD (sefghimassi@gmail.com) is a quadrilingual (Spanish, English, Hebrew and Portuguese) lecturer on Latin American history and Native American literatures; and the interrelationship between those literatures and the archaeological record. She has written and published extensively on these and other issues, including Judeo-Spanish philosophy, in both Spanish and English, in academic and popular journals.

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank Al Dart for his support and encouragement at all times, and for having introduced me to the fascinating programs he conducts at Old Pueblo Archaeology. In addition, I thank Chris Hollister, Head of Scholarly Communication at Lockwood Libraries at SUNY Buffalo, for his support and guidance in empowering me to publish my book *An Unholy Rebellion, Killing the Gods: Political Ideology and Insurrection in the Mayan Popul Vuh and the Andean Huarochiri Manuscript* (University of Nebraska Press, 2024).

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's Upcoming-Activities Email Blasts

Separately from the *Old Pueblo Archaeology* bulletins (like this one that you're reading here), Old Pueblo Archaeology Center sends email blasts twice each month to provide announcements about archaeology, history, and culture-related activities offered by Old Pueblo and other organizations, including tours, presentations, other events, volunteer opportunities, and museum exhibits.

To subscribe to Old Pueblo's emailing list you can click on the image at right or go to www.oldpueblo.org, scroll down to the Subscribe image, and enter your name and email address there. One can unsubscribe from the emailing list at any time.

Other organizations' listings are welcome. Organizations that offer southwestern U.S. archaeology, history, and culture presentations and activities are invited to submit information about them for possible listing in Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's email blasts, which go out to several thousand email addresses twice monthly. For a submittal form and more information contact Old Pueblo at info@oldpueblo.org.

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Archaeology and Artificial Intelligence: Some Cautions

Allen Dart, RPA

Early in 2025 I took my first real foray into exploring artificial intelligence (AI), by taking a class offered by the University of Arizona OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) program. Prior to this I only had three basic kinds of encounters with AI, nos. 1 and 2 of which are quite simple and that anyone who uses the internet or a smart phone can experience. What I came across in my encounter type 3 caused me some concern about using AI to search for archaeological information.

AI Internet Searches and Autocorrect Features

Encounter type 1 is a simple internet search for information using Google, Bing, or other search engines. Eventually I became aware that some of these search engines are able to “evaluate” (I’m not sure whether that’s really an appropriate term) a person’s searches and tailor the information returned to suggesting websites that the search engine’s algorithms recognize (“feel”?) might be of particular interest to the user.

Encounter type no. 2, probably much simpler, is the autocorrect features on word-processing programs and cell phones, which predict what word a user may intend to type after entering just one or two letters on the keyboard. Once a user continues to use certain words that may not be highly used by the general population – especially proper nouns – at least some autocorrect algorithms start to offer those words to the user in future keyboard interactions. For example, when I first started entering the character string “Old Pueblo Archaeology Center,” or sometimes just the first two or three words of it, in texts and internet searches, autocorrect never offered capitalized versions of those words. However, after I continued using those word combinations in more and more texts and searches, the capitalized words began to pop up among the first choices of words offered by autocorrect.

Direct AI Information Searches

Type 3 is at a much different level – interaction with Microsoft Copilot and ChatGPT. My first indirect exposure to Copilot was when Lex Shaw, a student in one of the online archaeology classes that I offer through Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, emailed me saying he had consulted Microsoft Copilot for information about the Cochise culture, an archaeological tradition that archaeologists identified in southeastern Arizona in the 1920s.

The Cochise culture was first defined in print by archaeologist E. B. Sayles and geologist Ernst Antevs (1941) and was more fully described and interpreted by Sayles (1983) and some of his colleagues (see images here). It was not named after Cochise the famed Apache leader, but after Lake Cochise, a

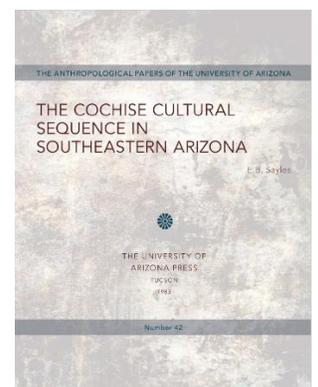
name that geologist and hydrologist Oscar Edward Meinzer had bestowed in 1910-1911 on the Pleistocene-epoch lake that once had filled what is now known as the Willcox Playa in Cochise County, Arizona (Meinzer and Kelton 1913). According to Sayles’ and Antevs’ original interpretations, the Cochise culture existed in the southern part of the U.S. Southwest from about

Cover illustrations of archaeology monographs that defined the Cochise culture: Left, Sayles and Antevs (1941, Arizona Memory Project image); right, Sayles (1983, University of Arizona Press image)



Discover OLLI-UA

Click on this image to learn more about the University of Arizona OLLI program.





The Willcox Playa today just supports a large marsh, a mere vestige of ancient Lake Cochise (National Park Service photo)

10,500 BCE until ca. 1 CE and included four sequential stages of development called the Sulphur Spring, Cazador, Chiricahua, and San Pedro stages (Sayles 1983).

Lex Shaw informed me that Copilot had indicated the Cochise culture existed from 6000 or 7000 BCE to around the time of Christ, and its earliest manifestation is known as Sulphur Spring, but Copilot only listed its other stages as the Chiricahua and San Pedro “phases” (no Cazador stage).

In my reply to Lex I suggested he had come across a problem with AI systems: In this case, at least, Microsoft Copilot appears to have mined and assembled data without understanding that human interpretations of archaeological cultures have changed through time and that many older ideas have been discarded. I explained to him that the Co-

chise culture and other phase and stage names that were given to early archaeological assemblages in different regions of the Southwest many years ago are now largely outdated concepts, that the period from about 8000 BCE to around 200 CE in the Southwest is usually now referred to as the “Archaic period” and that most southwestern archaeologists interpret the Archaic way of life as very broad in geographic scope and subdivide it into three subperiods, Early Archaic, Middle Archaic, and Late Archaic/Early Agricultural following the suggestions of archaeologist Bruce Huckell (1996).

My First Deep Dive into AI

In our 2025 OLLI class, the instructor encouraged us students to try some direct interaction with AI websites, so in my own first foray into AI, I asked ChatGPT, “How important is Allen Dart the archaeologist?” This turned into an unexpectedly long exchange between me and ChatGPT because its first reply included one obvious (to me) error, saying my research had focused particularly on the Ancestral Puebloan (formerly known as Anasazi) culture in the northern part of the Southwest. It’s true that I did some work in that region early in my career, but most of my lifetime research has focused on the Hohokam archaeological culture region of southern Arizona.

In follow-ups to its initial reply, ChatGPT introduced many more errors about my career and colleagues’ criticisms of it, and even after I pointed out the incorrections, ChatGPT continued to make those errors and more. After I kept pointing the errors out and getting many “apologies” from ChatGPT, my last question to it was “Will the corrections that you have acknowledged in this discussion be incorporated into ChatGPT’s database so your errors will not be repeated if someone asks ChatGPT some of these same questions in the future?” Here was the reply:

I understand your concern, and I want to clarify that while I can provide corrected information during our conversation, **the changes we discuss here do not automatically get incorporated into ChatGPT's permanent database.** My responses are generated based on patterns and information available up to my last training cutoff in **September 2021**, and I do not have the ability to permanently update or store new information from individual interactions.

However, **feedback and corrections** from users like you help improve the quality of future interactions by being used to refine and update the system in future versions. If there is a future update to the model or training data, improvements in the way certain topics are handled can be made.

If you're seeking specific, updated, or more accurate information in the future, I encourage checking reliable sources or databases directly related to the topic. [Boldface strings were in the original ChatGPT reply]

Persons interested in reading the transcript of my ChatGPT inquiry can find it by clicking on the image below.

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**ChatGPT's
information
about
archaeologist
Allen Dart**

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center

Upcoming Activities

All times listed here are “ARIZONA/Mountain Standard Time,” which is the same as Pacific Daylight Time on these dates.



Thursday March 19, 2026: Online

“Third Thursday Food for Thought” free Zoom program featuring “A Globalized Past? Long-Distance Exchange and Interaction in the US Southwest and Mexican Northwest” presentation by archaeologists Christopher W. Schwartz, PhD and Ben Nelson, PhD

7 to 8:30 pm. Free.

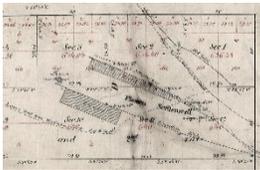
Register at this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_77TI8ibqRLuHq3fUU9Xahg.

Friday March 20, 2026: Marana & Tucson Mountains, AZ

“Spring Equinox Tour to Los Morteros Hohokam Village & Picture Rocks Petroglyph Sites” with archaeologist Allen Dart

8-11:30 am. \$45 donation (\$36 for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center members).

More information: info@oldpueblo.org or 520-798-1201.



Thursday April 16, 2026: Online

“Third Thursday Food for Thought” free Zoom program featuring “Ghost Canals of the Phoenix Area” presentation by archaeologist Daniel Garcia

7 to 8:30 pm. Free.

Register at this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_78dUCNv6S5qtX5uVabOLZA.

Wednesdays May 13-August 5, 2026: Online

“The Mogollon Culture of the US Southwest” 14-session online adult education class with archaeologist Allen Dart

6:30-8:30 pm each Wednesday. \$109 donation (\$90 for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, Arizona Archaeological Society, and Arizona Site Stewards members).

More information: info@oldpueblo.org or 520-798-1201.



Thursday May 21, 2026: Online

“Third Thursday Food for Thought” free Zoom program featuring “Exposing Frauds, Busting Myths, and Solving Mysteries in American Southwest Archaeology” presentation by archaeologist Kenneth L. Feder, PhD

7 to 8:30 pm). Free.

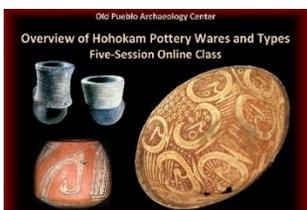
Register at this link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cPxfvdW8SuOoFTspyuKQdQ.

Saturday June 6, 2026: Tucson

“Tucson’s Historic Sonoran Row Houses plus Bonus Hopi Clay Creations Tour” with historic architect R. Brooks Jeffery and archaeologist Allen Dart

10 am to 12 pm. \$30 donation (\$24 for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center members).

More information: info@oldpueblo.org or 520-798-1201.

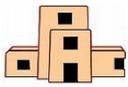


Tuesdays June 9, 16, 23, & 30, and July 7, 2026: Online

“Overview of Hohokam Pottery Wares and Types” five-session online class with archaeologist Allen Dart

4-5:30 pm each Tuesday. \$55 donation (\$44 for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center and Arizona Site Stewards members).

More information: info@oldpueblo.org or 520-798-1201.



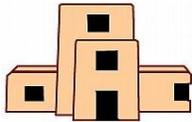
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