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## Review of Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico 1540-1840

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*Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico 1540-1840.* By John L. Kessell. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. Preface to second edition, preface, epilogue, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. xiii + 587 pp. \$17.95.

Poised at the gateway to the Great Plains, Pecos Pueblo—the people and the place—figured prominently throughout much of New Mexico's early history. It was once the mightiest of the eastern Pueblo city-states, but permanent Spanish settlement of New Mexico in 1598 signalled a protracted and unmistakable decline in fortunes that ultimately resulted in abandonment of Pecos by 1840. The story of conflict and cooperation between Pecos and its neighbors is fascinating, and John L. Kessell, a master of the narrative, weaves it skillfully into the rich warp of colonial New Mexico history.

Relying mainly on Spanish colonial documentation, Kessell traces the history of Pecos Pueblo in chronological fashion. The author recounts the initial Spanish invasion of the Pecos world, the severe social and cultural

disruptions caused by missionization in the seventeenth century, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, and, as the colonial period closed, the pathetic struggle for survival in the face of Hispanic encroachment and Comanche and Apache raids. To the extent the documents allow, Kessell focuses on the individuals who played prime roles in Pecos history. The reader meets village notables such as Cacique and Bigotes, whose plot to lead Coronado to his death on the Great Plains nearly succeeded; Juan de Yé, the loyal vassal of the crown who all but ensured Diego de Vargas's successful reconquest of the province in the 1690s; and the indomitable Agustín Guichí, who mocked the Bishop of Durango by "baptizing" his fellow villagers, complete with a hearty slap in the face. (Guichí later paid for this sacrilege by being mauled by a bear: God's retribution, or so the bishop believed.) John Kessell emphasizes the human dimension that many historians miss. While the author favors a good story over theoretical and conceptual models, he does develop the theme of intravillage factionalism. In Kessell's estimation, factionalism at Pecos cost dearly and, in the end, contributed perhaps as much to its decline and eventual demise as European disease and cultural subordination.

*Kiva, Cross, and Crown*, which first appeared in 1979, is easily available once again, now published by the University of New Mexico Press. One might lament the elimination of several color plates that accompanied the original edition, but the reduced cost should make the new edition suitable for classroom use. Carefully researched, written with zest, and abundantly illustrated, this book is at once accessible to the general reader and satisfying for the specialist. Fourteen years after its first appearance, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown* remains secure among the classics of colonial New Mexico history.

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