

Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States  
on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533 - 1960  
Chapter 5 - Upper Pimas  
Edward H. Spicer  
Kino's Decisive Years 1695 -1697

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They welcomed the Kino party in the now standard manner, with crosses and arches, and some asked for baptism. Kino preached at length. A year later he was able, at last, to provide a missionary for Caborca - Father Saeta.

Two other missionaries had already been placed in 1693 - Agustín Campos at San Ignacio in the Magdalena Valley west of Dolores and Daniel Januske at Tubutama west of San Ignacio. Now with Saeta at Caborca there were four missionaries in the field. Most of what is modern Sonora had been brought under the mission system. Cattle herds and fields and orchards were flourishing at Dolores, Cocóspera, San Ignacio, and Tubutama.

Two hundred Pima soldiers had joined with Opatas in the defense of Cuchuta a few miles south of the presidio of Fronteras. Here in 1694 a force of Jocomes-Apaches had attacked this Opatá mission pueblo, but the combined Pima-Opatá force had beaten them and driven them off. It appeared that the new work among the Pimas had justified Kino's hopes. They were steadily accepting the missions, converts were being made by the hundreds, if not the thousands, and they were allying themselves with the Spaniards against the increasing threat of raids from the northeast.

In 1695, however, the complex forces which Spanish conquest had released on the northern frontier were swirling to a focus. Fifteen years before in New Mexico the Pueblo Rebellion had swept the Spaniards southward to El Paso. The pressure of conquest from the south had upset the balance of Indian relations in New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Arizona. Northeastern Sonora was increasingly beginning to feel the consequences of these reactions to conquest. The effects of the dislocations in 1695 reached as far west as Caborca, almost on the Gulf Coast, and set up a reaction which for a time changed the peaceful course of events in Pimería Alta.

The ranches which had been set up by Spanish settlers in northern Sonora were suffering from raids by Indians in which they lost many horses and cattle; occasionally there were killings. At this time the Spaniards did not know enough about the tribes of the area to be sure who was responsible. Pimas had been implicated, as we have seen, earlier, and the idea persisted in Bacanuche and San Juan and the other Spanish border towns that the Pimas were as dangerous as the Jocomes, Janos, and Apaches of the east. In 1694 a lieutenant of the Fronteras force had unjustly and summarily killed three Sobaipuri men accused of horse stealing on the San Pedro River. The same lieutenant in that same year had forcibly quieted some Pima leaders at Tubutama who were said to be haranguing others against the Spaniards. Also at Tubutama, following usual custom, the Jesuit missionary Januske had employed already-Christianized Indians to oversee the operations of the mission herds and lands. In this case the overseer and his assistants were Opatas, who had long been accustomed to look down on Pimas as inferior savages. In 1695 feelings against Opatas came to a head; suddenly the peaceful Pimas of Tubutama killed the Opatá overseer and two assistants.

This action released hostile feelings, of which the missionaries were apparently quite unaware. Undoubtedly the plan included the killing of Father Januske, [125] but he escaped along with Father Campos from San Ignacio. The Tubutama Pimas who killed the Oyata overseer seem to have been a faction, rather than a representative group of the mission pueblo. They made their way southwestward, enlisting confederates from other rancherías, including Oquitoa north of Caborca. They destroyed Altar and, entering Caborca, murdered Saeta, the young missionary who had barely been installed in his new post. They were not aided by the Pimas of Caborca, who, however, fled from the mission fearing reprisals by the Spaniards.

Spanish reprisal was prompt. General Jironza with Spanish soldiers and a few Seris marched immediately into the Pima country, but he and his lieutenants found few Pimas against whom to take action. They killed a few women and boys here and there, but there was no Pima force to meet them. They destroyed fields at Caborca, as a lesson to the Indians, and then decided that since there was no general uprising to combat by arms it would be best to work out a peaceful settlement.

In this Kino took the lead. It was arranged, largely through his efforts, that the Pima leaders who had not taken part in the killings would bring together their people, including the leaders of the rebellious group" with the Spaniards at El Tupo. There they would point out the rebel leaders, and the Spaniards could take them and do as they pleased with them. The meeting was arranged and the headman of El Tupo who had been prominent in the negotiations along with other peaceful headmen proceeded to point out the men responsible for the killing of the Oyata overseer, the other Christian Indians, and Father Saeta. As soon as the first guilty man was pointed out, one of the Spanish officers in the midst of the assembly beheaded him with his sword. This produced consternation among the Pimas and many began to run away. The Spanish and Seri soldiers went wild and killed nearly fifty Pimas in a matter of minutes, including the peaceful headman of El Tupo and at least four or five others associated with him in the arrangements for the assembly. Most of those killed, Jironza and Kino both agreed, were innocent persons anxious to work out a settlement, and who had been promised immunity by Kino.

The result was the outbreak of real war. After the breakup of the peace assembly, the small force of Spaniards and Tepoca Seris went back southeast on other matters. No sooner were they out of the way than the Pima forces organized and destroyed Tubutama and Caborca and headed east. They moved on Imuris and San Ignacio and destroyed the churches there. By the time Jironza, who was at Dolores, heard of the outbreak, it was reported that the Pimas were threatening Cocospera, Remedios, and Dolores. Attacks on these places, however, never materialized.

The Spanish forces, augmented by troops from Fronteras, were mobilized to the number of some three hundred, which included many Pimas. They moved through the Pima country killing men and women here and there and destroying crops. But they did not find any force of Pimas ready to give battle. It was the same story as before. Once the attacks-of revenge on San Ignacio and Imuris were accomplished the Pimas dispersed and the Spanish soldiers found no one to fight. Again the situation called for negotiations rather than settlement [126] through battle. Again Kino took the lead in finding peaceful headmen - at Caborca, at Tucubavia, at El Tupo - who would negotiate.

There was no lack of headmen so inclined. Already some had made overtures to the Spanish

military leaders. Now with Kino again promising immunity for those who had no part in the first uprising at Tubutama, a meeting of headmen was arranged again at El Tupu (which had come to be called The Slaughter). The Pimas had become convinced, if they were not before, that they could not successfully oppose Spanish military power. They agreed to turn over the Tubutamans who had engineered the killing of the Opatas, and the Spanish soldiers returned to their campaign against the Apaches.

The newly won territory was nearly devastated, only Dolores, Remedios, and Cocóspera having remained untouched, either at the hands of the Pimas or the Spanish soldiers. Spanish military might had been thoroughly demonstrated. Piman leaders had divided themselves into pro - and anti-Spanish. The Spaniards had demonstrated their inability to work together - soldier and missionary - and keep promises made. Force and distrust had been introduced into the situation and the Pimas, like the Tarahumaras before them, were divided among themselves. Yet, somehow the reputation of Father Kino as an honest man with great power for good survived among the Pimas. Jironza also was convinced that Kino, and Kino alone, was the best insurance against more Indian uprisings. He refused to allow Kino to leave on an expedition to Lower California.

While the mission program in the devastated area was being redeveloped Kino undertook, at the urging of his superiors, to carry his work to the northeast among the Sobaipuris. He had already made the acquaintance of Coro, a headman of the Sobaipuris of the upper San Pedro River rancherías, and had visited Quiburi, Coro's headquarters, on the San Pedro and Bac on the Santa Cruz where there was one of the densest settlements of Indians in the Pieria, numbering in the neighborhood of one thousand.

Now in 1696, Kino set out to bring these groups into the mission system. His methods may be noted. He drove cattle up to Bac and distributed them among the Indians of the Santa Cruz settlements, these cattle to be nuclei for mission herds which would furnish food to mission residents and also provide for Kino on his expeditions of exploration. Thus the mission cattle ranches, under Kino's management, preceded the missions themselves. Secondly Kino stopped briefly, set up altars in the open or under shades built by the Indians, said Mass, and then preached at great length on many aspects of Christian living both theoretical and practical. He thus brought spiritual as well as material gifts. Thirdly, and this was most characteristic of Kino, he organized a big delegation of Sobaipuri headmen and headmen from the upper Santa Cruz Valley to go to the Jesuit rector of the district at Bacerac and ask for missionaries. He made arrangements with the headmen on his visit to Bac in 1696. Then in 1697 they all assembled at Kino's mission of Dolores, feasted and talked, and then marched in a colorful pilgrimage through the northern Opatá country from Dolores to Bacerac, a matter of one hundred miles. Impressed by the delegation, the father rector received them very favorably and promised to do what he could in response to their urgent demands |127| for missionaries in their rancherías.

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