This volume is not a review of colonialism across the entire American Southwest; instead, it offers nuanced approaches to studying variation in colonial processes in two particular areas, the New Mexico colony and the Pimería Alta in southern Arizona. The authors stress the importance of understanding regional historical trajectories and how indigenous peoples actively responded to Spanish colonization and settlement in varied ways. Native groups living in both areas experienced intensive Spanish settler colonization. The volume is divided into three parts: chapters on the New Mexico colony, discussion of the Pimería Alta, and two concluding discussion chapters.

The opening chapter (Douglass and Graves) provides historical background on Spanish colonial expeditions in New Mexico, highlighting the multiethnic nature of both New Mexico and Pimería Alta and stressing the links between social connections in the region and resistance to Spanish intrusion. Schmader considers the Coronado expedition in Chapter 2 and discusses the fluctuating relationships between Pueblo communities before Coronado’s invasion. This expedition inadvertently created stronger relationships among Puebloan communities in the Tiguex Province as pueblos united against Coronado, sowing the seeds for future resistance and revolts. Chapters 3 and 4 (by Leckman and Webster, respectively) consider the persistence of indigenous conceptions of ritual space (adapting to incorporate Spanish churches and squares) and the continuation of traditional textile production. Chapter 5 (Liebmann et al.) considers changing Pueblo social relationships and the emergence of new forms of leadership before and after the Pueblo Revolt in the late seventeenth century. Chapter 9, by Sheridan and Koyiyumptewa, poignantly considers the history of trauma associated with the Franciscan missions. This chapter is one of the strongest in the volume, as it demonstrates how the consequences of Spanish colonial activities continue to impact communities in the present, given that historic traumas are embedded in social memory in contemporary pueblos. Many communities still struggle with the aftereffects of violence, triggering conversations about whether those collective memories should be retained or forgotten.

The other chapters in this section cover a broader range of groups who also navigated the complexities of colonialism. Fowles and colleagues (Chapter 6) argue that we should move past discussions of whether the Comanche were an “empire” to focus on their social reorganization and adaptation, territorial expansion, and social relations with other indigenous groups of the Southwest and Southern Plains. Chapter 7 (Darling and Eiselt) and Chapter 8 (Jenks) both discuss the Vecino community of New Mexico, those who accepted and adopted Spanish rule and corresponding civic identities. These chapters consider groups who are seldom studied by archaeologists, exploring another layer of identity within the social fabric of the New Mexico colony.

The second section covers the Pimería Alta, or O’odham territory. Chapter 10 (Jelinek and Brenneman) discusses the social alliances that connected these seemingly “separate” groups in an ethnically diverse cultural landscape. The next chapters cover a range of issues including mission ranches and the significance of domestic livestock to changing social relations (Pavao-Zuckerman), the importance of maintaining relationships with O’odham and Apache groups for the survival of people living at the Tucson Presidio (Thiel), and the continuation of O’odham economic independence well into the late nineteenth century (Strawhacker). These chapters provide interesting counterpoints to colonial activities in New Mexico, highlighting the variability found in Spanish colonial practices and the significant degrees of independence and autonomy that many indigenous groups maintained along colonial frontiers.
The final two chapters compare Spanish colonialism and indigenous experiences within and responses to Spanish colonialism in the American Southwest with California (Lightfoot) and the American South (Thomas), emphasizing the point that discussions of power, resistance, and processes of colonialism are not straightforward. While the Spanish colonized all these regions of Native North America, the nature of colonial enterprise in these areas was different from other cases, and the entangled social, political, economic, and demographic elements must be teased apart for archaeologists to make sense of the documentary and material record.

As a whole, the book spans almost 300 years of interactions between indigenous peoples and Spanish conquistadores and colonists, and it consistently stresses the longer-term changes and consequences that persisted for many generations—and even into the present day. The chapters are engaging, they illustrate a range of methodological and theoretical approaches to the archaeology of colonialism, and they consider case studies often overlooked in discussions of Spanish colonization and colonialism. This volume is part of a larger effort to shift archaeological studies of colonialism toward interests in historical processes and entanglements, rather than conceptualizing colonization as a series of punctuated events. The book will be of great interest to archaeologists interested in colonial encounters and entanglements in the Southwest and elsewhere.