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At the Mouth of the Wolf: The Archaeology of Seventeenth-Century Franciscans in the Jemez Valley of New Mexico

Matthew Liebmann

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On March 19, 1696, Fray Francisco de Jesús María Casañas wrote with a quivering hand to his superior in Santa Fe. Stationed at a remote Pueblo Indian mission village the Spaniards called San Diego del Monte y Nuestra Señora de Remedios, Fray Francisco had heard the rumblings of rebellion. Talk of Native insurgency was burning through the Pueblos of northern New Mexico, and in those early spring days the friar noted that recently “from what the wind brings it appears to be burning even hotter.” He had already appealed for military reinforcements from the governor of New Mexico, Don Diego de Vargas. But Vargas rebuffed Fray Francisco’s request for additional soldiers, claiming that he “did not have enough bread for that big a wedding” (*No tenía tanta pan por tanta boda*). Frustrated but stoic, Fray Francisco accepted his fate. He wrote to his *custodio* that he did not wish to suffer the same demise as the twenty-one Franciscan brethren famously martyred en masse in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. “To place myself at the mouth of the wolf, so that he may swallow me and drink my blood, my mother did not bear me . . . for that purpose. For I did not come to seek death but rather the lives” of Native American converts, wrote Fray Francisco. Yet if his congregants presented him with “the prize” of martyrdom, the friar stood ready to receive their gift. “If they do not revolt today,” he predicted, “they will tomorrow” (Espinosa 1988:200, 229).

Unfortunately for Fray Francisco, tomorrow arrived in the early Monday morning hours of June 4, 1696, when the Jemez residents of San Diego del Monte joined forces with their Tewa, Keres, northern Tiwa, and Tano neighbors in the lesser-known “Second Pueblo Revolt” of 1696. Like they had sixteen years earlier, the Puebloans rose up against the Spaniards in their midst, killing five Franciscan priests and twenty-one colonial settlers throughout New Mexico. At San Diego del Monte the Jemez residents lured Fray Francisco from his mission church under the pretense that a sick woman needed him to hear her confession. Once outside the chapel door, two warriors clubbed the friar to death, leaving his corpse to rot at the foot of a cross Fray Francisco had erected in the cemetery (Espinosa 1988:250; Kessell et al. 1998:750). Following the

disposition of the friar’s body, the people of San Diego del Monte ripped the mission bell from its moorings, smashed statues of the saints, and shattered crosses in harmony with their Pueblo brothers-in-arms at other missions throughout northern New Mexico (Liebmann 2012:216=219).

Just one year earlier Fray Francisco had overseen construction of the mission church at San Diego del Monte. He designed a modest, one-room structure that blended almost seamlessly with the adjacent Pueblo architecture. About the same size as a large Pueblo kiva (the traditional ritual chamber favored by the Jemez and other Puebloans), the humble structure huddled in the corner of the village, wedged between the apartment-style rooms. In this way, the San Diego del Monte mission contrasted starkly with its precursor, San José de los Jemez, a giant fortress of a church that stood thirteen kilometers (eight miles) to the north at the ancestral Jemez village of Giusewa. Built seventy-five years earlier during one of the initial large-scale campaigns to convert the Pueblo peoples to Christianity, San José loomed over the surrounding landscape, a monument to the power and authority of the Spaniards’ god (Farwell 1991; Ivey 1991; Kubler 1940:82=84).

With stone walls tall enough to grasp the sky, San José de los Jemez evoked permanence and stability. Its cavernous nave held hundreds of proselytes in rapt attention, and a fifteen-meter (fifty foot) tall octagonal belfry ensured that its clanging mission bells would be heard far and wide. San José was an architectural marvel, built to awe and inspire. Constructed in 1621 at the behest of an enterprising friar named Fray Gerónimo de Zárate Salmerón, the mission church was praised as “*un templo grandioso*” by the custodial head of the Franciscans in New Mexico (Hodge et al. 1945:69; Scholes 1938:67=68). San José’s architectural grandeur was no accident. Fray Zárate Salmerón had cut his architectural teeth overseeing the construction of causeways in Mexico City, and the engineering skills he learned on the shores of Lake Texcoco served him well when he traveled north to New Mexico (Farwell 1991:26).

Considering the fact that both of these churches were constructed under similar circumstances, among the same ethnic group, separated by less than eight decades and eight miles, it is hard to imagine two seventeenth-century Spanish colonial churches more dissimilar in appearance. The pueblo of the latter housed the children of those who constructed the former. In each case just one solitary Franciscan priest oversaw the design of the building, with construction performed by the native Jemez residents of the two villages. But San José de los Jemez and San Diego del Monte differ radically in terms of scale, plan, architectural elaboration, and placement in the landscape. The seminal event separating the construction of these two churches was the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, when the Native peoples of New Mexico banded together to expel their Spanish colonizers in the most renowned Indigenous uprising in the history of the American Southwest (Liebmann 2012). The Revolt of 1680 forced the Franciscans to radically revise their evangelical policies and strategies among the Pueblos, changes that are reflected in the architectural differences between these two missions. Ultimately, the Franciscan churches of the Jemez Valley exemplify larger patterns of Spanish=Pueblo relations in seventeenth-century New Mexico. They represent not merely a pair of isolated, centuries-old archaeological ruins, but open a window into the tenuous and shifting world of Pueblos and Franciscans at the edge of the Spanish American empire in the 1600s.

Franciscan Missions in the Jemez Valley

For the Spanish colonizers of New Mexico, the Pueblo villages along the northern Rio Grande and its tributaries were a land of margins and peripheries (Lycett 2005). As one disconsolate colonial governor put it, this territory was “at the ends of the earth and remote beyond compare” (Kessell 1989:168). To the Spaniards, the Pueblos of New Mexico were perched on the periphery three times over: in relation to Iberia, the entire colonial project in the Americas was peripheral; as the northernmost outpost of New Spain, La Nueva Mexico was peripheral to its namesake city 1000 miles to the south; and as the villages defining the outer boundaries of this region, the Pueblos were peripheral to the Spanish capital of Santa Fe. Nearly a century ago, historian Herbert Eugene Bolton (1921) labeled this region “the Spanish borderlands” (as an antidote to Frederick Jackson Turner’s American *frontier*). But seventeenth-century New Mexicans did not etch their borders clearly in the sand. Rather, these were largely *borderless* lands, an area characterized by shifting alliances, miscegenation, and contested occupation (Adelman and Aron 1999). In an attempt to impose order upon this

seeming chaos, the Spaniards quickly dubbed the sedentary maize farmers of the northern Rio Grande “Pueblo Indians” (*indios de pueblos*) to distinguish their civilized nature from that of the “savage” *indios bárbaros* who roamed the outskirts of the region, the ancestors of modern-day Diné (Navajo), Apache, and Ute peoples.

On the eve of their discovery of Europeans, Pueblo peoples lived in an estimated seventy-five to one hundred different villages located throughout modern-day New Mexico and northeastern Arizona (Schroeder 1979; Pratt and Snow 1988). These settlements generally consisted of multistoried masonry or adobe dwellings bordering on central plazas, varying in size from just a few rooms to numbers in the thousands, with multiple plazas and kivas (Haas and Creamer 1992). The peoples shared broad similarities in material culture, subsistence strategies, religious practices, and political organization, yet the Pueblos differed in significant ways as well. At the time of first contact with Europeans they spoke seven separate, mutually unintelligible languages, each with multiple dialects. As a result, the Pueblos of the northern Rio Grande did not think of themselves as a unitary ethnic group prior to Spanish colonization. Rather, the sedentary villages of sixteenth-century maize farmers were dispersed across the region into a series of scattered settlement clusters, each with broadly defined, separate ethnolinguistic identities (Adams and Duff 2004; Snead et al. 2004:27).

One of those settlement clusters gathered together the Towa-speaking people west of the Rio Grande, an ethnic group that self-identified as *Hemish*, later transliterated as “Jemez” by the Spaniards (see Figure 1). The Jemez people lived in ten (or more) large villages in and around the Jemez Valley, a steep canyon that cuts a swath through the northern New Mexico mountains seventy-five kilometers (about forty-five miles) west of Santa Fe (Kulisheck 2001:83; Liebmann 2006:144). For more than two and a half centuries prior to the Spaniards’ arrival, the Jemez farmed the flat mesa tops and hunted in the shadows of the valley’s deep canyons. Sometime in the late 1400s, a group of Jemez people founded a village in the valley bottom, nestled into a hillside adjacent to a series of hot springs. They called their village Giusewa, meaning “pueblo at the hot place” (Harrington 1916:393).

[INSERT FIG 1 ABOUT HERE]

The Jemez first encountered Europeans in 1541, but witnessed the foreigners only sporadically for the next six decades. Not until 1598 did the Spaniards establish a permanent presence in the region. That year don Juan de Oñate led a colonizing expedition of 570 settlers up the Rio Grande, seeking untold riches (Riley 1999:44). The Crown’s “Royal Orders for New

Discoveries” left no doubt that Oñate’s primary responsibility, if not his principal ambition, was the salvation of Indigenous souls. As such, he brought along eight priests and two lay brothers to minister to his new Native subjects (Simmons 1979:181; Norris 2000:8; Weber 1999:4). Among this number was Fray Alonso de Lugo, a priest assigned to the remote Jemez Province. Fray De Lugo chose Giusewa as the base for his missionary activities, and there he and his *donado* oversaw the construction of a small temporary mission in September of 1598. This first church in the Jemez Province was a decidedly modest structure, reflecting the priorities of the colony at the time. It featured a simple rectangular nave about five meters (sixteen feet) long and four and a half (fourteen feet) meters wide. (Similarly humble mission structures arose at Awatovi, Pecos, and Quarai during the initial phase of Franciscan settlement at those pueblos as well.) Apparently Fray De Lugo’s efforts among the Jemez were less-than-well received, however, and he left New Mexico in 1601 (Scholes 1938:62; Ivey 1991).

By 1605 it became abundantly clear to both the governor and his superiors that the Kingdom of New Mexico did not contain the riches for which Oñate yearned. The viceroy recommended that the Spaniards withdraw from New Mexico completely. Its isolation and distance from Mexico City made the colony too difficult to sustain. The Franciscans protested. What the territory lacked in mineral wealth, they argued, it made up for in souls. How could the Crown turn its back on its newest citizens? The friars claimed to have baptized over seven thousand Indians already, and now the Crown had a moral responsibility to minister to these new converts. They appealed to the King to fund the colony out of the royal coffers. Accordingly, in 1609 King Phillip III transformed New Mexico from a proprietary venture into a royal colony whose primary role both in word and deed was to proselytize to the Native peoples. The missionary effort in New Mexico exploded. Over the next two decades, more than thirty new missions sprouted in Pueblo villages across the colony.

Una Muy Suntuosa y Curiosa Yglesia: San José de los Jemez

The New Mexican churches raised between 1610 and 1640 tended to be far grander affairs than the simple chapels founded under the Oñate regime. Many of them still stand nearly four centuries later at places like Abó, Quarai, and Acoma—a testament not only to the friars’ architectural design skills, but to the thousands of hours of labor invested by Pueblo hands. At Giusewa, Fray Zárate Salmerón re-established the mission, vacant since De Lugo’s departure twenty years prior (Ivey 1991:13=14; Elliott 1991:8). Dubbed San José de los

Jemez, Zárate Salmerón’s church was more grandiose than any other erected in the Jemez Valley, before or since (see Figure 2).

[INSERT FIG 2 ABOUT HERE]

The Mexican-born friar-engineer employed a standard unit of measurement throughout the construction of San José (a *vara* of eighty-four centimeters/thirty-three inches), belying the careful plans he drafted beforehand. Its footprint was huge, enclosing an interior space of 335 square meters. The exterior walls stretched to a height of nearly twelve meters (thirty-nine feet). Without the use of supporting arches, their loftiness required a thickness of two meters (six feet) or more. With its colossal walls and rooftop parapets, San José de los Jemez looked as much like a fortress as it did a church. Pueblo builders quarried the stone from a nearby limestone outcrop, breaking off pieces with stone tools and wedges. This ledge stone technique (Giffords 2007:81) allowed them to use harder limestone masonry rather than the softer volcanic tuff blocks employed by the Jemez to build their homes at Giusewa. From the back of the church the massive, three-story octagonal bell tower stood sentinel over the mission, rising to a height of fifteen meters (fifty feet) above the church floor.

Fray Zárate Salmerón selected the location of his new church carefully. He placed the mission on high ground, looking down into the plazas of the nearby Pueblo village. But because the site did not harbor a flat area large enough to accommodate his planned structure, its Jemez builders were forced to gauge a notch out of the hillside, making room for the head of the church by carving into the bedrock. Like the mission churches built at the pueblos of Pecos, Abó, Quarai, Gran Quivira, Acoma, Hawikuh, and Awatovi during this period, the church at Giusewa was built to astound and to dominate the local landscape (Hodge 1918, 1937; Montgomery et al. 1949; Kubler 1940; Hayes 1974).

Only when visitors entered the front doors would San José reveal its most magnificent and ingenious qualities, however. Inside, the nave stretched forty *varas* (33.5 meters/110 feet) into the distance. Light poured into the sanctuary through six massive, gypsum-glazed windows lining the sanctuary. (We know the materials used in their construction because archaeologists uncovered large quantities of gypsum beneath these windowsills in 1922 [Bloom 1923].) Massive trees, fourteen meters (forty-six feet) long, served as vigas, bearing the roof on their backs. Murals draped the walls in red and yellow ochre, blue and green malachite, and white gypsum. Checkerboard and fleur-de-lis motifs dazzled the eyes, bordered by intertwined vines and leaves. In other parts of the church traditional Puebloan icons of clouds, maize plants, flowers, and wild

game embellished the walls (Lambert 1979:185=192). San José probably even sported a raised wooden floor—a rare luxury in seventeenth-century New Mexico. Archaeologists uncovered a series of joist support stones and plinths running down the central and outer aisles of the nave, suggestive of a timber floor that once lay on top (Ivey 1991:3, 7).

Regardless of how brilliant the murals or how resplendent the light spilling in through the windows, though, visitors' eyes inevitably fixated on the altar above all else. Fray Zárate Salmerón employed several cunning architectural techniques to focus the congregation's attention (Kubler 1940:68; Farwell 1991:107; Ivey 1991). The walls of the nave converge slightly as they approach the sanctuary, bowing inward toward the altar. The wooden floor sloped gradually upward from the back of the nave to the front. The sanctuary sat elevated above a series of eight steps hewn out of bedrock, with the altar sitting on a *banco* three steps higher. And the three windows on each side of the church decreased in length as they approached the sanctuary (originally measuring six, five, and four varas, respectively, Ivey 1991:11; see Figure 3). This regular diminishing created an optical illusion that appeared to lengthen the nave, stretching the lanky torso of the church to a vanishing point at the altar. Zárate Salmerón's clever tricks prompted the head of the Franciscan order in New Mexico to describe San José in its heyday as *una muy suntuosa y curiosa yglesia* ("a breathtaking, sumptuous and distinguished church" [Morrow 1996:29]).

[INSERT FIG 3 ABOUT HERE]

Archaeologists have conducted extensive excavations at Giusewa over the past century, including nine field seasons between 1910 and 1978 (Elliott 1991). Curiously, despite recovering more than 100,000 potsherds and countless lithic and bone artifacts, archaeology has revealed almost no artifacts that can be traced directly to Fray Zárate Salmerón or his Franciscan successors. Marjorie Lambert surveyed a sample of the ceramics excavated from Giusewa, but found "an almost total lack of European artifacts and/or pottery" (1981:215). Just one sherd of San Luis Blue-on-cream majolica and two sherds of plain white tin-glazed sherds appear in the Giusewa collections, the only artifacts with a confirmed Iberian biography yet found at San José de los Jemez (Elliott 1991:66). Even so, the friars did leave their mark on the production of local Jemez pottery. Among the remains of tens of thousands of traditional Puebloan vessels unearthed at Giusewa excavators have found numerous items exhibiting Spanish forms and influences manufactured in the style of the local ware, Jemez Black-on-white pottery. The shattered remains of multiple Jemez Black-on-white "soup plates" (small,

shallow bowls with flaring, everted rims), Spanish-style cups, a scone, a candelabra, a cross, and a chalice all came to light in excavations in the 1920s and 1930s (Bloom 1923:20; Lambert 1981:224=228). The fact that the women of Giusewa manufactured these "Spanish" artifacts in the local style is not entirely surprising, as Jemez Black-on-white pottery dominates the ceramic assemblage of the Jemez region. In fact, Jemez Black-on-white comprises 94 percent of the decorated pottery at Giusewa, spanning both the pre-Hispanic and mission periods (Elliott 1991:80).

The proportions of these hybrid Jemez-Spanish ecclesiastical artifacts correspond remarkably with the standard size and shape of typical Christian accoutrement of the period, suggesting that either their creators were personally familiar with these types of vessels, or—more likely—that someone intimately acquainted with chalices and sconces oversaw the manufacturing process. Possibly the potters copied the forms of other chalices and sconces that the priest brought with him to Giusewa. The mixing of the two traditions is further evident in the decoration of the chalice, which combines the Jemez convention of concentric lines encircling the upper register of the inside of the bowl with the Christian crosses that adorn the bottom of the bowl interior and the underside of the base.

The Passion of San José: Death and Resurrection in the Jemez Valley

San José's bells and whistles may well have proven effective in aiding conversions during these early days of Franciscan activity among the Jemez. Fray Zárate Salmerón bragged of baptizing 6,566 souls during his time there. Certainly his successes were aided by the fact that he spoke the Jemez language, Towa. Franciscan missionaries rarely bothered to learn Native tongues in seventeenth-century New Mexico. Yet in his 1627 *Relaciones*, Zárate Salmerón wrote that he not only spoke the Jemez language but had penned a Christian *doctrina* in Towa (Milich 1966:26).

Even with this linguistic dexterity, Zárate Salmerón found the craggy landscape of the Jemez Province—what another Franciscan called "terribly rugged and inhospitable" (*asperessimas y inhabitables*)—an impediment to his evangelical progress. As a remedy to this challenging terrain Zárate Salmerón instituted a policy of *congregación* in the province, attempting to collect the Jemez people scattered throughout the mesa top villages into a central place to facilitate proselytization. As the *custos* put it: "recognizing the impossibility of administering well those Indian mountaineers," the friar "induced them to live in a pueblo, which with their help he founded in a very suitable place" (Hodge et al. 1945:69). Thus it came

to pass that only a year after establishing San José, Fray Zárate Salmerón oversaw the construction of a new mission among the Jemez, probably located twenty-one kilometers (thirteen miles) to the south. There, in a wide, flat floodplain at the southern end of the Jemez Valley, the friar founded a second church.¹

Whatever gains Fray Zárate Salmerón thought he made in the initial years of his ministry among the Pueblos were repudiated in 1623, when the Jemez people revolted for the first time. The parishioners of the two missions rose up, destroying their villages before fleeing them entirely. While traces of the destruction of the southern village have yet to be discovered—excepting historical references that it was “burned down” and “totally abandoned” (Hodge et al. 1945:70)—the archaeology of Giusewa provides some useful clues regarding what happened in the 1623 uprising. Excavators discovered a telltale layer of charred wood and ash when they removed the fill from San José’s nave, testifying to the destruction of the church (Bloom 1923:17). Apparently the Jemez residents of Giusewa set fire to Zárate Salmerón’s celebrated temple in an apparent protest against the Franciscan’s presence. Flames spilled across the ceiling toward the entrance of the church, engulfing the giant wooden doorway. When the lintel beam burned through and finally gave way, the balcony above it crashed to the ground. The choir loft crumpled too, further fueling the immolation. The windowsills turned to ash, collapsing the giant lateral clerestory windows in on themselves. Finally, the fire gnawed its way through the tree-trunk vigas one by one. The roof caved, bringing down the parapets with it. With its scalp smoldering on the floor, blue sky poured into the church to illuminate the charred murals. A uniform dusty black replaced their formerly dazzling colors. Architectural historian Jake Ivey notes that when the flames finally died out, the building probably looked very much like it did in the early twentieth century (see Fig. 2) (Ivey 1991:9).

Following the destruction of San José and her sister church to the south, the missions’ neophytes scattered to the winds, returning to the ancestral villages that dotted the mesas and canyons surrounding Giusewa. Try as they might to put their colonizers at their backs, however, the wraiths of mission life stalked them with no mercy. Two waves of epidemic diseases ravaged the Jemez between 1623 and 1626, no doubt sicknesses from the Old World introduced by the Spaniards. When the spirits known as *Kliwah* (“refuse winds”) finally left their villages, only half the Jemez people remained breathing (Parsons 1939, 2:938; Morrow 1996:29; Liebmann et al. 2016). With the survivors in an unending state of mourning and the Jemez world collapsing around them, opportunity once again rapped on the doors of the Franciscans. Into the plague-ridden vacuum swept the

friars, rebuilding the missions at Giusewa and Walatowa in 1626.

San José reclaimed most of its former glory, but the remnants of the fire necessitated a few architectural modifications. Workers enlarged the windows, enclosed a doorway, and built a new choir loft, though they couldn’t salvage the balcony. Gone too was the luxurious wooden floor, replaced by one of puddled adobe. Artists reanimated the walls with bright frescoes, covering the soot with leaflets and fleur-de-lis of blue, green, yellow, and white (Ivey 1991:11=12). At San José’s sister village in the southern end of the valley the Franciscans apparently decided to wipe the slate clean, starting anew. They christened this new village San Diego de la Congregación. According to the *custodio* this congregación village rivaled the planned communities of today, containing a church, friary, “houses already built” for Jemez neophytes, and schools to teach them trades (Morrow 1996:29). Scholars debate the location of San Diego de la Congregación (Scholes 1938; Bloom and Mitchell 1938; Farwell 1991; Ivey 1991), but Mike Elliott’s (2002) calculations using Geographic Information Systems software convincingly situate the 1626 mission in the area of the modern village of Walatowa (also known today as Jemez Pueblo). While the plan and exact location of the church remain unknown—it may be buried under the present pueblo—San Diego de la Congregación reportedly boasted “a high tower,” suggesting that it bore more than a passing similarity to San José (Kessell et al 1995:203).

The Gathering Storm: 1630=1680 in New Mexico

For the next five decades the Franciscan fathers and their Pueblo parishioners danced a delicate minuet. The priests labored to boost their numbers of converts while simultaneously attempting to eradicate traditional Pueblo religion. Complicating this relationship even further was the colonial government in Santa Fe. Although the missions and the secular colonial administration existed in a symbiotic relationship, friction and mistrust characterized the church=state relationship in New Mexico for much of the seventeenth century (Scholes 1942:55=57). Franciscans, colonial officials, and *encomenderos* battled repeatedly during this period, with the Pueblos often caught in the middle. The friars and governors frequently fought over control of the Native labor pool, leaving the Pueblo people in a precarious position—forced to choose between being good Christians in the service of God or loyal vassals in service of the Crown. Pleasing the governor might earn the friars’ reprobation. At other times, secular officials punished the Pueblos for serving the Franciscans. In seventeenth-century New Mexico, there was often no

way to be a “good Indian.” Obeying one branch of the colonial system frequently meant defying the other.

Tensions simmered as the friars grew increasingly intolerant of the masked kachinas dancing in the plazas and the smoky late-night gatherings in the wombs of the kivas. Throughout the custody of New Mexico, Franciscans attempted to drive the devil from the pueblos through the destruction of kivas; confiscation of kachina masks and ritual paraphernalia; prohibition of ritual dances; and periodic arrests, whippings, and executions of Pueblo religious leaders (who they referred to as *hechiceros*, or “sorcerers”). In the 1630s, for example, the *custos* boasted that he had burned “more than a thousand idols of wood” in a single blaze while their shocked Pueblo wardens looked on in dismay. In 1660, the Franciscan leadership decreed an unconditional prohibition of kachina dances, and missionaries were instructed to collect and destroy all materials of “idolatry.” Shortly thereafter, priests reportedly incinerated sixteen hundred kachina masks (Scholes 1942:59; Hodge et al. 1945:43; Spicer 1962:160–161).

What happened at Giusewa during the fifty years following 1630 is shrouded by the mists of time. Church records for this period were destroyed, and the few documentary sources that survive make no mention of missionary activities at San José during this interval. By 1628 the Franciscans considered San Diego de la Congregación the primary center of missionary activity among the Jemez, leading France Scholes, the dean of New Mexican colonial history, to conclude that the friars abandoned San José sometime during the 1630s (Scholes 1938:93=94). Yet the archaeology of Giusewa hints that Jemez people continued living at the site even after the priests were long gone. The presence of Kotyiti Glaze polychrome pottery (i.e., “Glaze F,” produced between 1625 and 1700) in greater quantities than other Rio Grande glazewares may be an artifact of continued occupation of the site following the Spaniards’ departure (Elliott 1991:80). More convincing is the fact that Jemez people converted one of the rooms of the *convento* into a kiva, an act that almost surely occurred without a friar in residence (Ivey, personal communication, 2014). With the priests gone, the Jemez installed a ventilator shaft, a hearth-and-deflector, and a sipapu in the floor. Nonetheless, this post-Franciscan occupation at Giusewa was probably brief, lasting no more than a decade or two at most. By the late 1650s, the Jemez no longer lived at Giusewa. When the Governor of New Mexico visited “the baths of San José de los Jemez” in 1658, he reported the area to be *despoblado* (uninhabited) (Scholes 1938:93=94, 96).

While Giusewa was in decline, its sister site of Walatowa rose phoenix-like from its ashes. The mission of San Diego de la Congregación flourished during the

1630=1680 period. In 1642 the *custos* reported that “the pueblo of Jemez has a splendid church, a good convent, a choir and organ, and 1800 souls under its administration.” By 1661 friars were raving about the mission, calling it “*la mayor administración*” in New Mexico. If there were any doubts regarding San Diego de la Congregación’s earlier status, by this time it indubitably served as the principal mission among the Jemez. Six years later the provincial of the Franciscan Order in Mexico City noted that the two priests who served the Jemez at San Diego de la Congregación were not enough, decreeing that a third would be added. And in August 1672 the chapter meetings of the Holy Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul and the provinces of New Mexico took place in the convent of “San Diego de los Jemez,” indicating the status that this church and pueblo had attained as a center of missionary activity in New Mexico (Scholes 1938:95=97; Bloom and Mitchell 1938).

While Franciscan records depict the Jemez Valley as a lively center of Christian conversion and worship prior to 1680, it is difficult to reconcile this rosy assessment with documents produced by the colonial government during this period. Between 1644 and 1647, the Jemez allied with neighboring “Apaches” (probably ancestral Navajos) in an attempt to overthrow the Spaniards, killing one colonist. For this plot the Jemez were punished “with just severity” when the governor of New Mexico hanged twenty-nine of their leaders, whipping others and sending some into forced servitude. A few years later the Jemez were again implicated in planning a rebellion in league with their Keres, southern Tiwa, and Apache neighbors, for which nine of the conspirators were hanged (Scholes 1938:63, 68=69, 95=96; Hackett and Shelby 1942, 2:299; Sando 1982:118; Ivey 1991:10; Kessell and Hendricks 1992:42, n9; Riley 1999:21). Then in 1675, forty-seven religious leaders from Pueblos throughout the province were arrested, publicly whipped, and imprisoned. One of these *hechiceros* was hanged in the plaza at San Diego de la Congregación as an example to those Jemez persons who harbored any lingering sympathies for their traditional religion (Hackett and Shelby 1942, 2:289=290, 300=301).

With the hindsight typically borne of traumatic episodes, Franciscans later recalled the ominous forebodings that surfaced among the Pueblos during the 1670s. In 1675, an apparition of the Virgin reportedly visited a New Mexican girl, ordering her to “arise and announce to this custody that it will soon be destroyed for the lack of reverence it shows its priests.” This miraculous revelation prompted Fray Juan de Jesús, a priest stationed at San Diego de los Congregación, to urge his Franciscan brother to cease construction on the collaterals being added to the church’s nave at that time.

Renowned for his gift of prophecy, Fray Juan purportedly felt that their efforts were better spent “uniting ourselves with God and preparing to die for our Holy Faith.” He allegedly went on to predict “the collaterals will soon end in ashes and many of us in death” (Gutiérrez 1991:131; Kessell et al. 1998:371).

Fray Juan de Jesús’s prophecy was realized on August 10, 1680, when he was martyred along with twenty of his Brothers of St. Francis during the opening days of the infamous Pueblo Revolt of 1680. After eight decades of missionary activity and Spanish rule, the enraged Pueblos threw off the yokes of their colonial masters. Together with their Navajo and Apache allies, the Pueblos banded together in a coordinated attack that succeeded in driving the Spaniards from their lands. In the process, they killed 380 colonial settlers and two-thirds of the Franciscans stationed among them. With the priests gone, the Pueblos turned their fury on the mission churches, ripping their doors from the hinges, smashing the mission bells, desecrating the altars, and burning Catholic icons and statuary. For the next twelve years independence was returned to the Pueblo world, and the Spaniards remained in exile south of the Rio Grande (Liebmann 2012).

The Short Saga of San Diego del Monte and San Felipe-on-the-Mesa

With the Spaniards gone, the Jemez burned San Diego de la Congregación to the ground and migrated seven kilometers (4.4 miles) up the valley, following the winding course of the Jemez River to the north. There they settled on a mesa above the confluence of two streams, where they built a new village. Contemporary Jemez oral traditions, Spanish historical documents, and the archaeological record all confirm that this new village is the one known as Patokwa (“pueblo of the turquoise moiety,” Liebmann 2012:85). It was here that a large group of Jemez people were living when the exiled Spaniards made their first foray back to the Jemez Valley under the command of Don Diego de Vargas in 1692 (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:520=523).

The seventeenth-century component of Patokwa sported two large rectangular plazas that mirrored one another, each with a kiva sunk into their southern half. Blocks of two- and three-story, apartment-style pueblo rooms surrounded the plazas in the four cardinal directions, with a fifth room block bisecting the two open areas. The four corners of the pueblo remained open, providing gateway entrances to the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest. It was in the southeast corner gateway that General Vargas ominously appeared in late October 1692, a harbinger of the bad times to come. Over the next two years the Jemez people fought a series

of bloody battles with the Spanish colonizers and their allies.

When the dust finally settled in 1694, Vargas installed a new missionary at Patokwa, a friar named Francisco de Jesús María Casañas. Fray Francisco de Jesús established a new church, christened San Diego del Monte y Nuestra Señora de Remedios (Kessell et al. 1998:405=406). But this new structure was a far cry from the grandiosity of its predecessors. San Diego del Monte was significantly smaller—just a third of size of San José, with a nave thirteen meters long (forty-two feet) (Liebmann 2012:215). Unlike the looming fortress constructed at Giusewa three-quarters of a century earlier, San Diego del Monte blended almost seamlessly with the pueblo architecture surrounding it. Tucked into the northwest corner of Patokwa, the church was nestled between two adjacent pueblo room blocks (Figure 4). Its flat roof peered just over the tops of the three-story pueblo rooms surrounding it. Rather than using fortress-like walls two meters thick, San Diego del Monte was clad in masonry of identical size and material as the nearby pueblo architecture. The floor area was far smaller as well (just under 140 m²), akin to that of a large kiva.

[INSERT FIG 4 ABOUT HERE]

San Diego del Monte is not the only church built during the Spanish *reconquista* of New Mexico to exhibit these characteristics. The post-Revolt pueblo of Old San Felipe contains a similarly modest church (Kubler 1940:106). The Spaniards neglected to record its name for posterity, but it too was located at a mesa-top pueblo founded in the tumultuous years following the Pueblo Revolt, probably in late 1693 or 1694. Like San Diego del Monte, the church at Old San Felipe was wedged into the corner of a rectangular pueblo, bordering on the plaza. It abutted the surrounding village architecture, with one side clinging to the edge of a precipice. And with a petite footprint of just 100 m², it was even smaller than San Diego del Monte (Treib 1993:232).

Some of the unique characteristics of the church at Old San Felipe can be ascribed to its unique biography. In fact, this church began its unusual life as a kiva. When Vargas visited the mesa-top pueblo on September 26, 1694, he installed “the reverend missionary father and apostolic preacher, Fray Antonio Carbonel” as the minister there. Vargas recorded that the residents of San Felipe:

showed me a tall, spacious kiva they were currently using as a chapel. I allowed this, telling them it would serve for now since this location was to the father’s liking. I, the governor and

captain general, told him I would order what was appropriate in the coming year. (Kessell et al. 1998:400)

Apparently Fray Carbonel or his successor followed through with Vargas's plan, and "what was appropriate" included the replacement of the stone-walled kiva with an adobe-walled church (Kubler 1940:106=107, pl. 56). (In 1706 the resident friar and his flock left the site, moving down from the mesa top to a settlement on the banks of the Rio Grande below.)

The churches of San Diego del Monte and San Felipe on the Mesa stand out as unique among the religious architecture of New Mexico. As the only mission churches constructed at post-Revolt refugee pueblos (Liebmann et al. 2005), these structures allow a glimpse into Franciscan-Pueblo relations in the brief, two-year period between the *reconquista* of New Mexico (1692=1694) and the Second Pueblo Revolt (1696). As Kubler notes, these churches were contemporaries, and "represent a significant phase of post-Rebellion construction, characterized by small buildings, erected of adobe or stone, located among the pueblo buildings, constituting an integral part of the settlement" (1940:107). Less ambitious in design and execution (Farwell 1991:116; Kessell 1980:11=12; Kubler 1939), these churches suggest that Franciscan power in New Mexico waned during this period, and hints at the new evangelical policies implemented by the friars after the Pueblo Revolt (Liebmann and Preucel 2007:208–209). No longer did they attempt to dominate the Pueblos by ruthlessly suppressing traditional Native religious practices. After 1692, the Franciscans adopted what might accurately be described as a kinder, gentler missionary strategy in New Mexico (Norris 2000). While they did not approve of the Pueblos' paganism, after 1692 the friars did tolerate its existence. Following the Pueblo Revolt, the Brothers of St. Francis were forced to adopt strategies of accommodation rather than domination in their interactions with Pueblo communities.

Interpretations

Comparing the seventeenth-century mission churches of the Jemez Valley to one another, some clear patterns emerge (Figure 5). At the most basic level, we can read this architecture as a simple reflection of Franciscan power. The early seventeenth-century mission architecture of New Mexico, exemplified by the San José de los Jemez church at Giusewa, reflects the ideology of the Franciscans during the pre-Revolt era. They saw themselves as superior to and distinct from the Puebloans, in a relationship analogous to that of stern fathers to their children. These churches and their

associated mission complexes were built to distinguish themselves as separate from the existing Pueblo architecture. At Giusewa, Zárate Salmerón took considerable pains to construct San José on the highest point in the area, overlooking the pueblo room blocks. Moreover, the sheer size of these early churches relayed a message of dominion over the landscape. Their hulking forms loomed over the existing pueblo architecture. The walls of San José were six to seven times wider than those of the pueblo architecture at Giusewa. Even the materials from which they were constructed were different—at Giusewa, the pueblo rooms were constructed of volcanic tuff masonry, while the walls of San José were made of limestone. (Both materials were acquired locally.) The friars used this architecture not only to express, but to naturalize Franciscan distinction, superiority, and dominion over the Pueblos.

[INSERT FIG 5 ABOUT HERE]

After the Pueblo Revolt, however, these patterns changed dramatically. When the friars returned to New Mexico with the 1680 martyrdom of their brothers fresh in their minds, they no longer attempted to emphasize their difference and dominion through architecture. The new churches they constructed were no longer designed to dominate the pueblo architecture. Now the Franciscans built their houses of worship among the existing pueblo architecture, and at a much more modest scale. Rather than using fortress-like walls two meters thick, these new churches used masonry of identical size and material as the nearby pueblo architecture. The floor area was far smaller as well, akin to that of a large kiva (quite literally at San Felipe on the Mesa). In this architecture, we can see the changes to Franciscan missionary policy that occurred in the 1690s (Norris 2000). No longer did the priests separate themselves. After 1694 the friars attempted to ingratiate themselves, moving their churches directly adjacent to the pueblo plazas and living cheek-to-cheek with their congregants.

It would be a mistake, however, to end our interpretation there. To merely see these churches as a straightforward reflection of Franciscan domination and its decline is to overlook the subtleties of power that contributed to their construction, maintenance, and destruction. After all, the Franciscans did not build these churches alone. They were primarily put up by Pueblo hands. And there is good reason to believe that the Pueblos' participation in this process was not entirely coerced. While violence and intimidation were common tools of the Spanish colonial effort, there is no clear evidence to suggest that the Franciscans employed any military support in their construction efforts. Thus the size and complexity that characterized the churches built between 1610 and 1640 attests to the early successes that the friars enjoyed in their evangelical efforts among the

Pueblos. Judging from the massive church structures that appeared on the New Mexico landscape in the early to mid-seventeenth century, of which San José at Giusewa is an exemplar, there had to be a significant amount of Native “buy-in” in order to raise the walls (Brooks 2013:761=763). In examining the architecture of San José and its sister churches, we can see that Franciscan brothers often succeeded in their early efforts to establish themselves in local Pueblo communities. These early successes contrast markedly with the churches built between 1694 and 1696, which show far less overall effort in their construction, but also far less differentiation from the Pueblo architecture.

James Brooks (2013) notes that the successes of the Franciscans among the seventeenth-century Pueblos broke along gendered lines. Franciscans targeted women (and sometimes younger men) precisely because they tended to be marginalized in Pueblo society and excluded from traditional chambers of power. As a result, conversions likely soared among the women of villages like Giusewa in the early 1600s. It comes as no surprise, then, to see Franciscan influences disproportionately reflected in classes of material culture traditionally associated with Pueblo women: architecture and pottery. Women traditionally laid up the walls among the Pueblos, and it was probably the women who primarily stacked the masonry of San José de los Jemez. As the Franciscan *custos* noted in 1630, churches among the Pueblos were “built by the women and by boys and girls taking Christian doctrine, although this may seem an exaggeration since these structures are sumptuous and ornate. It is the custom among these nations for the women to build the houses,” he continued, noting that “if we compel any man to work on building a house, he runs away and the women laugh at him. In this way, there have been erected more than fifty churches, whose ceilings are attractively carved with interlaced flowers, and whose walls are very well painted” (Ayer 1916:36).

Conclusion

In thinking about the Franciscan churches of seventeenth-century New Mexico, the patterns that emerge out of the Jemez Valley appear at first glance relatively straightforward and matter of fact. The physical structures seem to mirror the rise and decline of Franciscan power and influence. Early on the explicit policy of the Order of Friars Minor was one of domination and control, and this is reflected in the architectural elements that mark these churches as different, ascendant, and authoritative. Following their widespread martyrdom and expulsion in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 the Franciscans changed their policies to become more tolerant, assimilative, and less obtrusive. These changes are reflected in architecture that is more

similar to the surrounding pueblo buildings than it is different.

Yet viewed from another perspective, the patterns exhibited by these churches seem counterintuitive as well. At the times when Franciscan power, influence, and authority was at its greatest, their architecture was highly militaristic and defensive. The churches of the early period, when the priests were experiencing their greatest successes, were built like medieval castles, with thick walls and soaring towers. Later, when tensions between the priests and their Pueblo congregants were at their highest, their structures become less defensive and more integrated into the surrounding community. In the absence of the historical texts, it would be easy to mistake this pattern for one of early hostility towards the priests followed by increasing acceptance by the Pueblos—the opposite of what seems to have been the case.

In their construction of militaristic churches in the early seventeenth century, the Franciscans protested too much. And by attempting to dominate the Pueblos the priests created the conditions that ultimately brought about their downfall. These churches shaped the events of the latter seventeenth century as much as they were shaped by the Pueblo people who built them.

Endnotes

¹ Although many scholars have assumed that the name of the new village founded in 1622 was San Diego de la Congregación (Elliott 2002; Liebmann 2006; Kubler 1940; Bloom and Mitchell 1938; Scholes 1938), a careful examination of the relevant historical documents—most notably Benavides’s *Memorials* of 1630 and 1634—reveals them to be mute on the name of this second village prior to 1626. In that year Benavides himself dedicated a mission as “San Diego de la Congregación,” where Fray Martín de Arvide was stationed. This seems to refer to a new mission structure being built on the site of the 1622 mission. While the 1622 mission *may* have been called San Diego, the relevant documents do not record its original name.

Ivey (1991) and Farwell (1991) argue that San Diego and San Jose were actually the same church, as both are located at Giusewa—that San Jose was simply renamed San Diego in 1626. I am convinced by Elliott’s (2002) counterarguments, placing San Diego at Walatowa, based on the distances and descriptions contained in the Vargas documents (Kessell and Hendricks 1992, 1995; Kessell et al. 1998) as well as Benavides’s 1630 statement that the Jemez were gathered “into two pueblos” (Morrow 1996:29).

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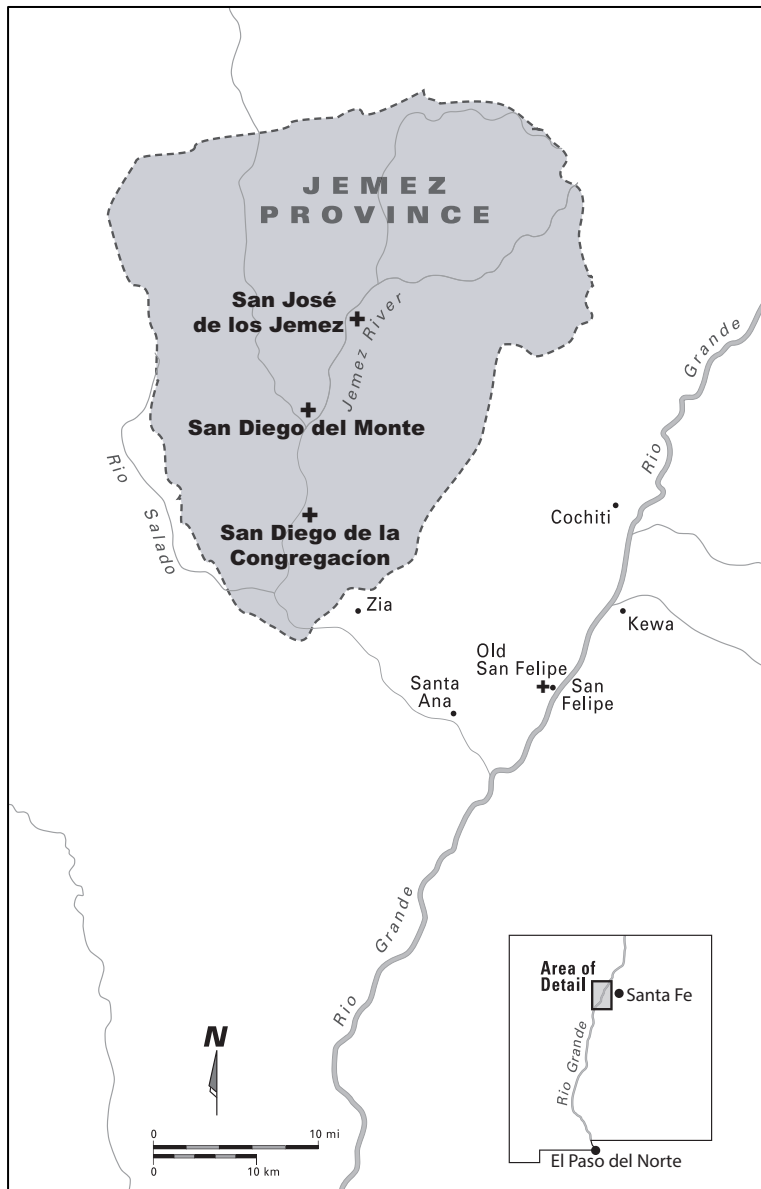


Figure 1. Seventeenth-century Franciscan missions of ancestral Jemez Province, New Mexico.



Figure 2. Early twentieth-century photo of San José de los Jemez at Giusewa.



Figure 3. Nave of San José de los Jemez.

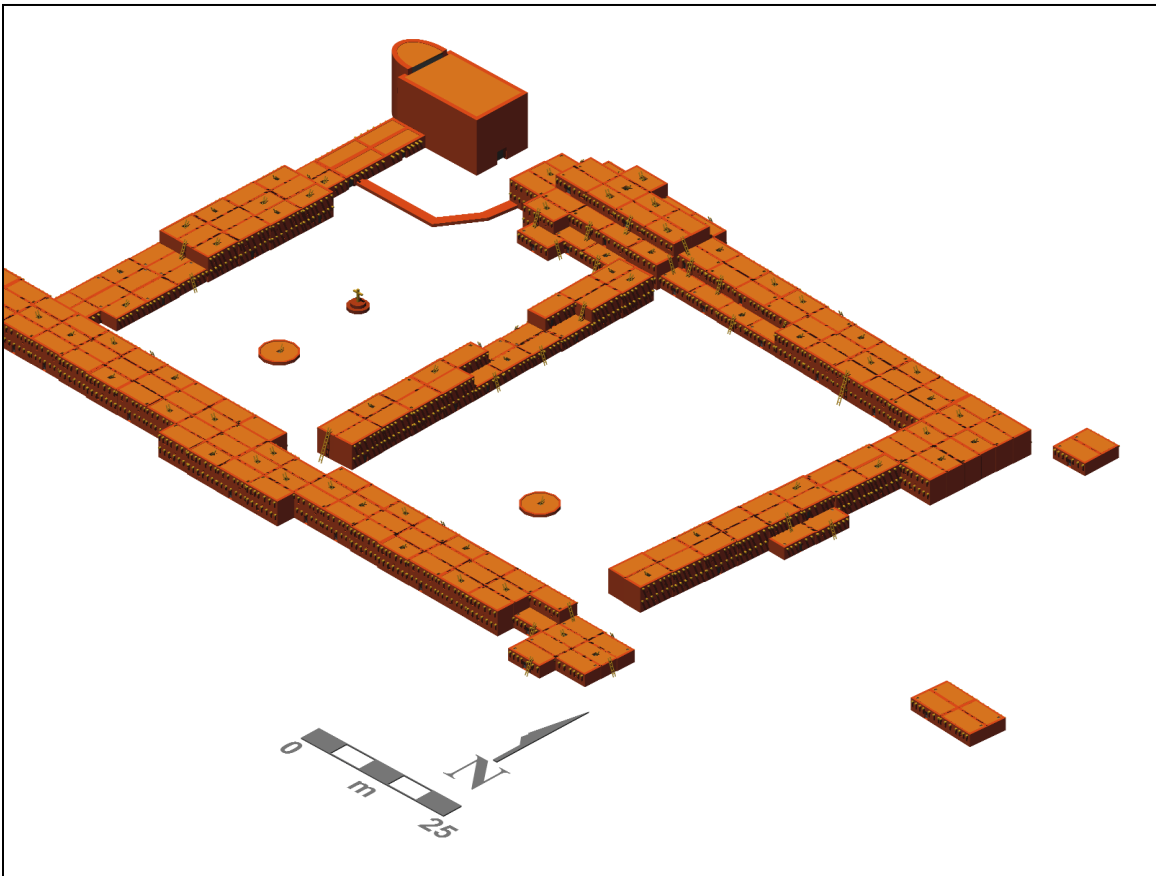


Figure 4. San Diego del Monte mission complex at Patokwa, circa 1695.

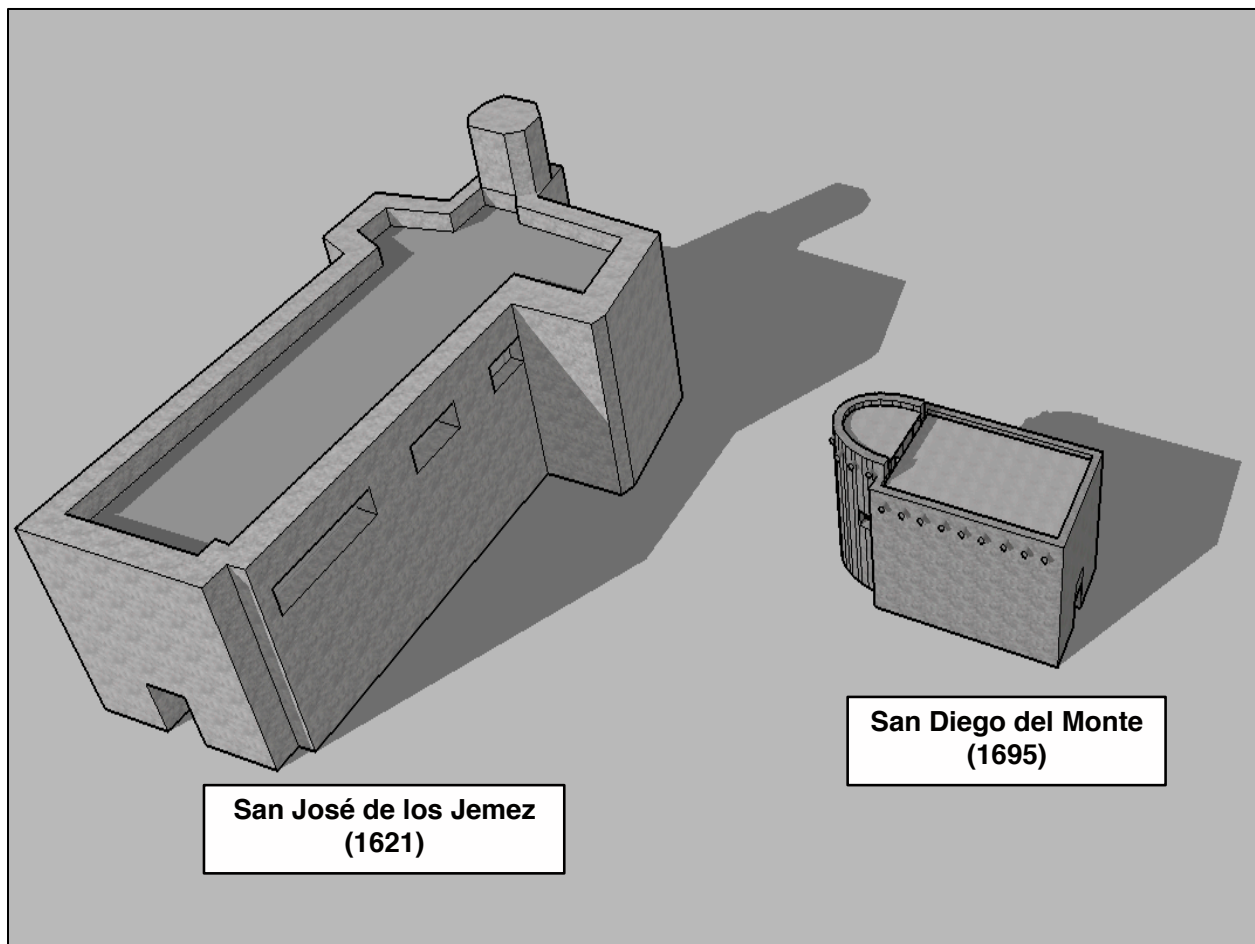


Figure 5. Churches of San José de los Jemez and San Diego del Monte.