WESTERN APACHE HERITAGE

PEOPLE OF THE MOUNTAIN CORRIDOR

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life they had developed over many generations. Glottochronology suggests that as early as A.D. 600 the Apachean dialects probably were distinct from most Northern Athapaskan languages (Hoijer 1956), although ties with some of the Canadian dialects persisted longer. If this estimate is correct or close to it, the split occurred several centuries after the warming trend had begun, during a period of animal and human population adjustments to changing conditions.

Intermittent contacts between some Northern Athapaskans and Apache may have occurred long afterward. As caribou became harder to find in the southern part of their former range and as the northern section of the Alberta-to-Wyoming Athapaskan population extended their food quest farther and farther into the Subarctic, these forays into the north would have increased the likelihood of their encountering other groups exploiting the same resources. Long-separated Athapaskan populations would again come into close contact in the northern regions.

A northward contraction of the population could have been especially pronounced at the end of the chain in Alaska, not only leading to an Athapaskan breakthrough at the coast of Norton Sound and a disruption of communication among the Eskimo population but affecting Athapaskan languages spoken in Alaska. Koyukon, Tanana, Ahtna, and Ingalik territories directly adjoin that of the Tanaina, but the deep linguistic divergences among them would be most likely to have occurred if speakers of these languages had once been more dispersed. A subsequent push northward would result in the juxtaposition of dissimilar languages.

During this period, in the middle of the first millennium A.D., the smaller projectile points usually associated with the bow and arrow begin to appear in the Alberta-to-Wyoming region. This technological innovation was an additional stimulus to population movements, allowing people to exploit certain resources more effectively than they had before.

Apache and Canadian Athapaskans

In the southern section of this Athapaskan-speaking population, the ancestors of the Chipewyan and Carrier were part of a single dialect group. Eventually linguistic differences grew as the Chipewyan expanded east of the mountains. If their movements resulted from population pressures on the local food supply, this pressure could have motivated people to expand and broaden their resource base. The introduction of the improved snowshoe and bow and arrow would have enhanced their possibility of doing so.

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Much of the caribou population of North America consists of a few discrete herds. Their movements affect the movements of the human groups who hunt them, particularly on the barren grounds east of the Cordillera. Herds inhabiting that area spend the winter in the forests south of the tundra, moving north onto the open grounds in the summer when calving takes place (Gordon 1975). According to James Smith (1973:315), Chipewyan caribou hunters in the flat, barren lands east of the Cordillera "have traditionally followed the herds; some have told me that 'in the old days we lived like the caribou.' Others have likened their former existence to the wolves that also followed the herds." Elmer Harp (1978:106) has noted the historic linkage of caribou-hunting groups to the north-south movements of herds, and as he observes, "It is plausible to suggest that the Archaic Indian hunters might have operated to a like economic pattern."

But in some ways the historic strategies of the Chipewyan are a departure from the early Proto-Athapaskan pattern. If Athapaskans initially spread southward along the Cordillera, such groups as the Chipewyan, who occupied the open grounds to the east on the arctic drainage side of the mountains, moved into the barren ground more recently.

Many decades ago, D. S. Davidson (1937) advanced the hypothesis that only after the development of the refined snowshoe was human mobility on the tundra enhanced enough to make the exploitation of the eastern caribou herds feasible. He also suggested that the early introduction of the snowshoe into North America was associated with Athapaskan-speaking peoples. He proposed that, based on the geographic distribution and time sequences of subsequent modifications and refinements, these innovations also were Athapaskan developments that spread to other parts of North America. But for this issue, perhaps the most significant aspect of his classic study is the assertion that the light, efficient snowshoe opened some vast areas of the Northern Hemisphere to regular human habitation for the first time.

Linguistics provides additional support for the conclusion that the Chipewyan spread to the east was recent. The territory of the Chipewyan is easternmost of the historic Northern Athapaskan distribution. Westward toward the Cordillera lie the territories of the Sarsi, Beaver, and Sekani with the Carrier beyond that in the mountains verging toward the Pacific Coast. The degree of similarity between the Chipewyan and Carrier dialects is far greater than that between either of these and Beaver or Sekani, which are spoken in the territories lying between them.

Considering the distance that separates Carrier from Chipewyan and their apparent lack of any recent influence on one another, the linguistic similarity between these dialects must result from their having been the same not too long ago. With reference to Carrier, Dyen and Aberle (1974:250) conclude that "the deep divisions in the Carrier subdialects suggest long occupancy and a lengthy differentiation in the area. The alternative possibility, that Carrier is simply an amalgam of groups, is unlikely."

Although Carrier probably has long been established and stable in its present area, Chipewyan territory has fluctuated considerably even in historic times. In the early years of the fur trade, the Chipewyan expanded south and east at the expense of Inuit and Cree to control the trade routes from Prince of Wales's Fort on Hudson Bay at the mouth of the Churchill River (Yerbury 1976; Gillespie 1975, 1981; Rogers and Smith 1981).[4] There was considerable "push and shove" with the Cree, especially, with resultant territorial instability, until the horrors of the eighteenth-century epidemics became an even greater factor in the region.

The available evidence leaves little doubt that Chipewyan speakers spread eastward out of the Cordillera into the barren ground, eventually losing contact with their Carrier-speaking relatives in the mountains. Their pattern of open ground caribou hunting with snowshoes led to an even wider pattern of mobility and thinner population dispersion than had characterized their ancestors in the mountains.

The closest relationships of Apachean languages to northern dialects are with Chipewyan and Sarsi, but Chipewyan is far more closely related to Carrier than it is to Apache. Even now their differences do not exceed the level of dialect (Dyen and Aberle 1974:12). The Canadian Athapaskan dialect group, which shares cognates internally at the level of 77 percent or more and is thus considered by Dyen and Aberle (1974:14) to be a single language, certainly was even more uniform in this earlier period, suggesting that Carrier and Chipewyan were still the same when the Proto-Apache population separated from the northern groups.

Some caution is in order, however. It is misleading to visualize relationships among Athapaskan languages in the metaphor of a genetic tree or branching model (Krauss 1973b). Where speakers of a language are spread over a wide area but retain some degree of contact with one another, the regional dialects that form over time are likely to influence one another unevenly and in ways that confound attempts to determine past relationships in a clear-cut way (Krauss 1979:847–848). This can be even more complicated when speakers of these dialects move around a great deal and when people speaking related dialects rejoin after periods of separation. The Athapaskan languages and dialects have been subject to all of these phenomena.

Considering the wide dispersal of Athapaskan populations, it seems likely that there were regional variations in speech even at the time of the Apachean separation. Phonetic differences between eastern and western Apache dialects appear in Chipewyan subdialects as well. Because the Chipweyan eventually spread eastward, the Proto-Chipewyan, even at this earlier period, may have occupied the eastern slopes of the Cordillera that verge onto the flatlands. The eastern side of the Cordillera provides fewer fish but more abundant large game, including caribou (Dyen and Aberle 1974:276). The presence of these animals in large numbers would have been a precondition for some of the northern groups' eventually coming to specialize in hunting caribou on the barren grounds.

Contact between Proto-Apache and related segments of the Canadian Athapaskan population would not have suffered a sudden, distinct break. In both the Subarctic and the Southwest, historic Athapaskan groups were so mobile that treks of hundreds of miles on foot were not unusual (e.g., Hearne 1911; Goodwin 1969:69). With the capacity to range over so great a territory, these people might have encountered one another occasionally over many centuries. There is at least one report that Navajo in the late nineteenth century revisited northern Athapaskans, to whom they referred as other Navajo living far to the north (Morice 1914:155; Ellis 1974:113). Evon Vogt (1961:231) points out that Navajo speakers still can understand some Northern Athapaskan words.

The separation probably involved a gradual growing apart, as regional subsistence enterprises ultimately led to local populations pursuing different activities in areas more and more distant from one another. Proto-Apache remained in the Great Divide region of Wyoming for many generations, and the last tenuous contacts with their northern relatives took place only a few hundred years ago.

The Athapaskans who occupied the Wyoming area for centuries, the Shoshoneans who came after them, and the Siouans and Algonkians who followed were only the last of a long sequence of peoples entering the broken country of that region. The myriad reasons for these comings and goings probably will always remain beyond our comprehension, and the movements of Apachean peoples alone are far from clear.

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On the Fringes of the Southwest

When the southward drift of the Proto-Apache led them to the threshold of the Southwest, they may never before have encountered sedentary village farming peoples. It is possible that some of the Proto-Apache had ventured far enough east over the Plains in the course of their food quest to encounter river valley agriculturalists before A.D. 1500. In earlier times, too, before the dry years of the thirteenth century, Southwestern farming peoples of the Anasazi tradition had spread north into Colorado, and it is conceivable that they might have had some encounters with Athapaskans in those northern areas as early as A.D. 1000. But if so, the interaction in the Southwest became more prolonged and intense.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the Apache population was scattered thinly from the Colorado Plateau eastward through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, which verge onto the southern Plains. Communication between the extreme ends of this population tapered off, but this was merely a continuation of a long-standing phenomenon, as the t-k shift between the eastern and western sectors suggests. At the same time, the mobility of small groups within this population tended to allow a chain of continuous contact across the geographic spectrum, maintaining a general but gradually decreasing cultural homogeneity.

The game in this region overlapped what had been available farther north, but there were major shifts in proportion and some new sources of food. Elk abound on the Colorado Plateau, but for most of these peoples, deer replaced the moose and caribou of the northern Rockies and the Subarctic.

Deer and elk do not lend themselves as well as caribou and bison to the game drive techniques of the North. Among the Apache groups in mountainous regions where deer was a major food source, no evidence of the use of the drive technique survived. But farther to

the east where the mountains give way to the Plains and herds of buffalo grazed over the flatlands, people continued to use drives until early historic times. Not long after that, horses revolutionized buffalo hunting.

Although the Southwest supported a greater quantity and variety of game than the Subarctic could provide, one of the most significant changes was in the relative availability of plant foods. Wild plants came to play a major role in the Apache food supply, and this emphasis coincided with a shift in the economic importance of women's contributions to subsistence. The traditional sexual division of labor meant that hunting was strongly associated with men. This continued to be the case in the Southwest, and while the acquisition of game remained important, the proportion of wild plant foods in the diet—generally gathered by women—grew to rival those derived from animals.

Another source of plant food in the Southwest had a great impact on Apache patterns in a different sense. The stable, sedentary farming villages of native peoples throughout much of the region often had stores of food, and through trading and raids, the Apache sought to include this in their subsistence quest. Their open receptivity to varied subsistence opportunities, which had enhanced their ability to survive in other situations in the past, now easily accommodated "enemy food," as the Navajo referred to corn, and other products of village farming.

In some cases they acquired this food through the exchange of products of the hunt for those of agriculture. In the late 1500s, the Spanish explorer Antonio de Espejo refers to people who might have been Apache, mentioning a "mountain people" near Acoma Pueblo who "came to the aid of the settlements and traded salt and game, particularly deer or rabbit and tanned hides for cotton *mantas*." (Schroeder 1974, I, 188).[1] During the Pueblo Rebellion of the 1680s, some Pueblo refugees found shelter with Apache groups. Relations between Apache and Pueblo seem to have been somewhat unstable, though. By the late seventeenth century, the Apache acquired a great deal of their agricultural supplies through subsistence raiding.

The easy mobility and fluid nature of Apachean social organization amounted to a precondition that lent itself well to raiding. It facilitated the elements of surprise, rapid escape, and a general elusiveness that provided great advantages over the predictable, settled village life of intensively agricultural peoples. The orderly ritual calendar of Pueblo ceremonies attuned to the stately repetition of seasons is a striking contrast to Athapaskan concepts of a living uni-

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verse peopled by capricious, unpredictable powers. To some extent these different views of the world reflect differences in the realities of these peoples.

Although there were times when a perceived common interest led to a fleeting coalescence of Apache local groups, this occurred only rarely even in later times. Considering the vital importance of free-ranging autonomy throughout the Athapaskan past, it would be surprising if it had. The actions of one aggregate of Apache did not necessarily have anything to do with those of any others.

The fundamental freedom of individual and small-group behavior that pervaded Apache social organization allowed them to pursue other options of interaction with farming peoples as well. Although one Apache group might raid a particular farming village, other Apache might maintain peaceful visiting relationships with the same community. There seems to have been some ambivalence on the part of the villagers in many cases, though. Pueblo peoples who welcomed friendly daytime visits by the Apache often were uneasy, nonetheless, about letting them spend the night within their walls and so required them to camp outside the village.

For the first few generations after they had arrived in the Southwest, though, there is not much evidence that the Apache raided sedentary peoples, and there is little indication of any general, coordinated overall raiding effort during the early period. Only after repeated Spanish attacks on Apache groups for slaves did raiding become an established pattern, often on Pueblo villages under Spanish control. Moreover, there are numerous instances of Apache groups forming alliances with certain Pueblo communities against the Spanish. Apache raids on pueblos are reported early in the 1600s, and by the latter part of that century, Spanish records indicate that because of these raids, a number of pueblos had been abandoned (Schroeder 1974, I, 268–269).

Eventually the Apache found themselves in chronic conflict with the Spanish. In the late 1500s, the Spanish were new to the area themselves and were advancing toward the north from relatively secure bases in Mexico. Renaissance Europeans in the process of expanding their empire, the Spanish represented a complex, hierarchical social order and an array of interest groups. The Apache who confronted them were mountain-dwelling hunters whose concepts of territory, political affiliation, and social relationships were vastly more egalitarian and individualistic. For the next several centuries, these mountain people not only would succeed in holding their own resource base but would contest the territory held by Europeans.

Eventually this struggle would end, but for the next several centuries, the process was to have profound effects on both peoples.

The raiding pattern also led groups of Apache into contact with peoples farther to the south. In a sense this was a manifestation of the general southward gravitation of the Apache that carried them down the mountain corridor in the first place. But the establishment of Spanish towns in Mexico provided a more specific attraction. The Apache's mobility allowed them to carry out raids on villages hundreds of miles away, retreating to their mountain base camps in regions that remained unknown to the Spanish. Their presence was felt far to the south of the territories that they actually inhabited.

The process of cultural differentiation among the Apache continued during their early years in the Southwest. As mobile as they were, local aggregates tended to operate more intensively in certain regions than in others, developing familiarity with local food sources and a degree of commitment to them. In doing so, they tended to become increasingly distinct from one another in dialect and to undergo cultural changes as a result of their historical experiences.

The Eastern Section

In some ways this diversification amounted to a continuation of more long-standing processes. In refining their ability to hunt buffalo successfully on the Plains, Apache groups in the eastern sector, these vaqueros, as the Spanish called them, shifted away from what earlier had been a basic, direct subsistence activity to hunting for trade, which gave them access to the agricultural products of the eastern Pueblo groups.

According to the early Spanish records, the buffalo-hunting Apache of the east used vast numbers of pack dogs to transport their products, not only to meet Pueblo demands but to take advantage of their growing Spanish clientele as well. Dolores Gunnerson (1974: 141) characterizes the enterprise as "commercial hunting." Our fragmentary glimpses of these people do not suggest a group that hunted only for their own food, and Spanish descriptions from the period probably depict a people who already had modified their ancient strategies in adapting to a new set of circumstances. No doubt these people had hunted buffalo and other large game for centuries, using drive techniques with origins in the north. They may have used dogs on a small scale long before their departure from their northern relatives. Gunnerson points out that the buffalo-hunting Apaches' use of dogs as pack animals rather than for pulling sleds or

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nition of female puberty in the Southwest came to involve public ceremonies among all of the Apache groups, and among the Jicarilla it included a ceremonial relay race and an episode during which the young woman ritually ground corn on a metate (Opler 1944:75). Like the other Apache peoples of the Southwest, in contrast with the Kiowa Apache who remained on the Plains, the influence of Pueblo cultures also led the Jicarilla to the ceremonial use of masked dancers who represented benevolent deities.

At a later historic period, when the Jicarilla had given up sedentary farming and had turned their subsistence focus to hunting buffalo on horseback, they saw themselves as a society consisting of two groups: the Ollero and Llanero, or Sand People and Plains People. Some researchers have suggested that this dual division reflects a reunion of some of the earlier Plains Apache population with the group that had briefly turned to farming, although this also has been debated (Opler 1936b).[7]

The eastern Apache retained a pattern of matrilocal residence that required a married couple to live with the wife's family, but by the nineteenth century they had developed bilateral social organization, which gave equal recognition to relatives on both the father's and mother's side rather than emphasizing descent through women. They also had a general prohibition on the marriage of cousins (Dyen and Aberle 1974:234). This idea had the effect of maximizing the scope of marriage ties, extending them beyond the range of known relatives among a population that exploited vast regions of the Plains.

The Lipan Apache seem to have been in close association with the Jicarilla, and both may represent the coalescence of some of the earlier Plains and transitional zone Apache who were noted by chroniclers in the region of northeastern New Mexico, the Texas-Oklahoma Panhandle, and the southwestern Nebraska regions. By the 1700s the Comanche advancing from the north pushed them into west Texas, where again they established themselves in the vicinity of mountainous terrain. We can see reflections of their mobility in scattered references to the confrontations they had with the French and their Pawnee allies in eastern Texas, and there is some evidence that they had further sporadic contact with the Kiowa Apache to the north (Dyen and Aberle 1974:15).

Other groups alluded to in Spanish records farther south in Mexico may also have been Apache. Segments of the general Apachean population could have found their way that far south, but we know very little of these groups, and the weight of evidence does not support their identification as Apache (Forbes 1959).[8] On the other hand, many Apache groups based in New Mexico did spend a large portion of the year far south of the Chihuahua border.

The Western Section

As these complex interactions were occurring in the eastern zone of Apache territory, the western section of the population was relatively unaffected by early Spanish contact. There are very few descriptive accounts of these people until much later. Even in this earliest phase of their Southwest occupation, though, we can see some Apache diversification and a range of historical encounters with other groups. In the broken country far to the west of the Plains, some of these people eventually came to be known as the Coyotero, Arivaipa, Pinal, Sierra Blanca, or collectively, the Western Apache.

In the early 1600s, the extensive region occupied by the Apache, ranging from the southern Plains westward into the complex mountain system verging toward the Basin, was relatively unknown to the Spanish chroniclers, and because of Apachean occupation, they had little access to it. There is no doubt that after the Apache's first century in the Southwest core region, the process of differentiation among local groups was well under way. Regional populations already had begun to precipitate into various niches. But continued interaction among them made the process far more complex than a simple branching off.

In 1630 Father Alonzo de Benavides (1965:39–57, quoted in Dyen and Aberle 1974:213) referred to Apaches de Xila, Apaches de Navajo, Apaches del Perillo, and Vaqueros and noted that these people spoke a single language with some variation in dialect. In subsequent accounts the Apache's geographic distribution gradually increased, with the notable exception of the eastern groups' retraction and loss of territory in the face of Comanche pressure (Secoy 1957). The overall trend in Apachean movements was to the south. Benavides' account provides an early glimpse of a continuous process. Differentiation continued, and Apache territory increased until the late nineteenth century. No doubt the population grew as well, although to some extent this may have involved a rebounding from earlier losses that resulted from their initial exposure to European diseases.

Apparently the central and western segments of the Apache population gave rise to the historic Navajo, Western Apache, Chiricahua, and Mescalero, but the process by which this occurred is not alto-

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gether clear. The Chiricahua and Mescalero dialects are very similar, partly a result of the reservation period, when in 1913, a group of 187 Chiricahua were granted permission to move from Oklahoma to the Mescalero reservation (Schroeder 1974, I, 536).

In the earlier period, the Mescalero, referred to as Faraones, conducted their raiding activities to the south, north, and east from a region on the east side of the Rio Grande. At one point they refused to live on the west of the Rio Grande with an Apache group known as Mimbres, who were part of a more general regional Apache population that the Spanish referred to collectively in many earlier documents as Gila Apache. The Faraones did not consider themselves closely related to these people, nor were they very well disposed toward them (Schroeder 1974, I, 166).

It was in the Gila population, including the Mimbres, that the Chiricahua apparently originated. One observer in the mid-1800s stated that the Gila Apache, different from the Mescalero, were among themselves "identically the same people in language and habits, they range over the same country, are intermarried" (Michael Steck, quoted in Schroeder 1974, I, 172).

Despite their linguistic similarities to Navajo and Western Apache (Dyen and Aberle 1974:216–217), the Chiricahua and Mescalero dialects share significant resemblances with Jicarilla and Lipan as well. The Mescalero spent some time on the southern Plains and may even have been the first native American group to acquire horses. Eventually they withdrew farther into the mountains of New Mexico because of Comanche pressure, but for a time they experienced close and intensive contact with the Jicarilla.

From this perspective the issue of whether or not the sections of the Apache population ancestral to the Chiricahua and Mescalero might have been more closely affiliated with the eastern or western groups may not be particularly meaningful. They had a variety of associations and interactions with each end of the population spectrum.

During the 1600s, from the time of their first appearance in the historic records, the Chiricahua Apache were established in the southeastern Arizona region. Apparently they were named after the mountain range that was thought to be their base of operations, as was the case with many of the other Apache divisions. They raided assiduously and relentlessly to the south into Mexico. Their closest interactions were with groups on the west side of the Rio Grande in central New Mexico, who were known collectively as the Apache of the Gila drainage, including the regional populations called Mimbrès, Coppermine, and Mogollon.

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The Mescalero remained to the east of the Rio Grande, raiding south into Chihuahua. Antonio Cordero (quoted in Schroeder 1974, I, 536) writes of the Mescalero in 1776, "This group dwells, generally speaking, in the mountain ranges near the Pecos River, extending northwards on both banks as far as Comancheria. It uses this locality particularly in the proper seasons for the buffalo hunt, on which occasions it joins with the plains group which is its neighbor." The neighboring Plains group probably were Lipan Apache.

Although all of these groups were extremely mobile, apparently most, if not all, planted small plots of corn here and there within their territories. For the most part, they operated out of the mountain ranges scattered throughout New Mexico and Arizona. In 1777 Teodoro de Croix (quoted in Schroeder 1974, IV, 73) described the area between El Paso and Sante Fe as largely uninhabited, being "surrounded on all sides by hills on which the Apaches live and from which they come down to commit hostilities without risk of suffering retaliation."

The earliest reports of Apache late in the sixteenth century focus on the northeastern corner of New Mexico. But the locales of reported Apache in Spanish documents might primarily reflect the places where the Spanish happened to be, rather than the range of the Apache. Aside from a reference to possible Apache near Acoma Pueblo in the 1580s, the earlier accounts generally refer to the regions east of the Rio Grande and indicate a general southward movement of Apache activities over a number of decades.

Although the areas west of the Rio Grande were much less known to the Spanish, by the 1600s the records contain references to Gila Apache and later, more specific references to Mimbres, Coppermine, and Mogollon Apache. Gila Apache territory on the west side of the Rio Grande near the Arizona border ranged from just south of Zuni almost to Mexico.

Through the nineteenth century, the Chiricahua acted as hosts to Apache raiders from other divisions among the Gila groups, occupying a strategic mountain pass that was used regularly as a gateway south into Sonora (Schroeder 1974, IV, 183). No doubt their relationship with other Apache groups helped to maintain, and perhaps even to establish, cultural similarities among them. The Chiricahua may have gravitated into their southerly location to gain an advantageous position for raids into Mexico. Whatever the case, though, their geographic base eventually gave them an identity apart from the other Apache of New Mexico and Arizona. Yet despite this separate identity, in 1859 government agent Michael Steck (quoted in Schroeder 1974, IV, 184) wrote that although the Chiricahua were a distinct

group, they were "intimately connected with those of the Mogollon Mountains by intermarriage and habits and if a reservation should be established they should at once be compelled to locate with them on the Gila." In the succeeding reservation period, they were indeed grouped with the Gila divisions, and as a result, the diversity that had begun to develop among these regional populations tended to blur (cf. Schroeder 1974, IV, 138).

Once again in this period in the Southwest, the merging and rejoining of local Apachean populations continued much as it had in the past, albeit for different reasons. Circumstances led to the rejoining of groups whose diverse activities had led them to grow apart, and other ethnic divisions that had not existed before began to develop.

By the mid-1600s, other groups west of the Gila Apache of New Mexico, in what is now east-central Arizona, became more prominent in the literature. They were referred to as Pinal, Arivaipa, and Coyotero, and later came to be known collectively as the Western Apache. Their earlier relationships with the other Apache groups is not clear, but throughout the literature there is evidence of significant differences between these people and the Gila Apache. A strip of uninhabited territory separated them from the Mogollon section of the Gila Apache to the east (Schroeder 1974, IV, 138). Occasionally they joined efforts with the Gila population for enterprises that they conceived to be in their common interest, but in a government report of 1858, a brother of the prominent Gila Apache leader Mangas Coloradas was quoted as saying that his people "had no connection with the Coyoteros."[9]

Apparently the Western Apache had a common origin with the Navajo in the westernmost section of the Proto-Apache population. On the basis of shared linguistic innovations, the Navajo and Western Apache dialects form a distinct unit apart from the other five dialects of Apache. Nonetheless, the depth of the division between Navajo and Western Apache is much greater than those among the other five. The Western Apache (San Carlos) dialect shares cognate words at the level of 94 percent with Navajo, 95 percent with Chiricahua, and 94 percent with Mescalero. Among themselves, Chiricahua, Mescalero, Jicarilla, and Lipan share cognates at the average of 95 percent (Dyen and Aberle 1974:13). With regard to shared innovations in kinship terms, "early inter-influence was probably followed by a fair degree of isolation, to judge by the number of unshared innovations in San Carlos." (Dyen and Aberle 1974:225). Although Navajo and Western Apache seem to share a common base

within the Apache population, that base is fairly old compared to past relationships among the other groups. In some ways the Navajo and Western Apache are more different from one another than the Chiricahua, Mescalero, Jicarilla, or Lipan are among themselves.

Western Apache traditions indicate that they once lived in northern Arizona near the Navajo and Hopi, but that encounter probably would have been too recent and brief to account for the linguistic evidence. Apparently the Navajo entered northern Arizona for the first time from the east in the 1860s as a result of military pressure (cf. Schroeder 1974, I, 478–482; Kelley 1980). They were unfamiliar with the region at that time, and in the course of their migration into the area they had a series of hostile confrontations with Western Apache who were already there. There is no suggestion in the records that the Navajo had any previous, remembered acquaintance with these people.

Much of what we know about the Navajo, in fact, indicates that they might have been among the last of the Apachean groups to enter the Southwest and that they arrived substantially later than the others. Quite the opposite view is held by a number of researchers (Brugge 1981; Schaafsma 1981), but the geographic position of the Navajo as northernmost of the Apache, with the exception of the Kiowa Apache, is consistent with this. At times other Apache groups on the Plains side of the Rockies may have occupied regions to the north of them, but these seem to have been later incursions onto the Plains from a base in the Southwest. The Spanish in the 1600s perceived the Navajo as a group distinct from other Apache (Schroeder 1974, IV, 190, 194). They also seem to be the only Apache who maintained a belief that other people like them lived far to the north (Ellis 1974:47–52).

On the basis of the frequencies of twenty-four blood group genes, Emoke Szathmary (1977:117) concludes that although there is little difference among Apache in general, the Navajo are more similar to Northern Athapaskan populations than are the other Apache. Moreover, with regard to the Northern Athapaskan population, they also score closer to the Slave, Sarsi, and Chilcotin at the southern range of the distribution than to the Kutchin or Tutchone farther to the north.

This suggests something about Apachean migration patterns into the Southwest. Although some of these population movements probably took place along the eastern slopes of the Rockies, there is no reason to see the migration as having been limited to that side of the mountains, since this historic Apachean population was spread

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widely from east to west. The western region around the Colorado Plateau was largely unknown to Europeans well into the eighteenth century. The western groups of Apache not only share a number of distinctive linguistic and cultural features among themselves but also patterns suggesting some contact with Uto-Aztecan groups who inhabit the western side of the Rockies verging toward the Great Basin.

Some of these features could be the result of later influences, but others, such as the dome-shaped willow-covered house form, appear in very early accounts. Some researchers argue that early Navajo pottery resembles a type found in certain Plains sites dated in the 1600s, but it also is typical of a type of utility ware made throughout a broad range from the Plains westward through the Great Basin. The Navajo pattern, in fact, is almost indistinguishable from Paiute ware (Ellis 1974:47–52).

Considering the linguistic, historical, and ethnographic evidence, it seems most plausible that the Navajo and Western Apache shared a common past in the region north of their present territory and that the Western Apache preceded the Navajo into the Southwest. By the time they encountered each other again in northern Arizona, they had become strangers. They could still communicate through dialects of the same language, but their interactions were tentative and often volatile.

Western Apache legend attributes their departure from the Navajo in northern Arizona to the activities of a quarrelsome woman, whose banishment along with her relatives gave rise to the Navajo (Goodwin 1969:71–72). No doubt there is another side to this story. But in any case, after a series of Navajo incursions into Western Apache territory south of the Mogollon Rim in the 1860s, both populations apparently withdrew to leave a buffer zone between them that each tended to avoid for fear of encountering the other.

Whatever the exact reason for their departure, in a wider context it represents another manifestation of the diversity among segments of the Apachean population. Whether metaphorical or not, the tale of the quarrelsome woman expresses the tone of the relationship between these groups, which seems always to have been uneasy and often hostile, in the absence of formal social structures capable of mediating disputes between such autonomous, free-ranging aggregates. Despite their recognition of shared cultural features, a certain amount of distrust and a fair degree of active conflict characterized interactions between the Western Apache and the Navajo throughout the historic period.

An old-style dwelling, San Carlos

Much evidence indicates that the Apache entry into their present territories progressed southward through New Mexico along the east side of the Rio Grande, with some of the population, drawn by the establishment of new Spanish settlements in Mexico, later crossing to the west side in southern New Mexico to become known as the Gila Apache (Schroeder 1974, IV, 512). This model seems plausible as far as it applies to the groups of New Mexico, but it appears more likely that the Western Apache entered their region from the northeast, from the direction of the Hopi. The early sites in the La Plata River Valley and the San Juan drainage of New Mexico tend to support this idea. The territory between Pueblo communities and Spanish settlements was largely devoid of population, and small groups of Apache would have found it easy to pass through these almost empty lands whose inhabitants were clustered in small, scattered agricultural communities.

It would be difficult to account for the Western Apache's differences from Gila groups if they had been a recent offshoot of the Gila segment of the population. On the other hand, if the Western Apache had diverged from the rest of the Apache population farther north and finally had ended up adjacent to their former kin by way of a

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