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# THE LOCATION OF CHICHILTICALE

CARROLL L. RILEY

## INTRODUCTION

Chichilticale known variously as an Indian ruin, a mountain range and pass, and a "province" was an important way station during the Coronado expedition of 1539-42. After the mid-1500s the west coast route to Cibola and the Southwest dropped out of use and the location of Chichilticale was eventually lost. In this paper the two most probable locations, one on the lower Salt River, the other on the upper Gila River, are discussed, and evidence for and against each one is given.

The site and area of Chichilticale (variously identified as a mountain range, a pass, an Indian ruin, and a "province") was important to the earliest Spanish southwestern expeditions. It stood at the edge of the last great despoblado separating the populous statelets of Sonora and the agricultural populations of the Gila-Salt Valley from Puebloan Cibola. In spite of this importance, the site was never firmly located, and after the mid-16th century it was lost to view. Spaniards traveling from Sonora to New Mexico in the 18th century made no mention of Chichilticale. Since it was a kind of mid-point in Coronado's journey from Sonora to the upper Southwest, a firm location of Chichilticale is obviously desirable in establishing the route of the Coronado expeditions and the location of a major pre-European trunk road from Mesoamerica to the Southwest.

A number of previous attempts have been made to locate Chichilticale. I shall briefly survey some important ones here, returning to a

discussion of them as needed later in the paper.

Serious modern speculation on Chichilticale began with the wave of historical and anthropological interest in the Southwest that followed on the American occupation of 1846 and the subsequent heavy population movement into New Mexico and Arizona. Although two early American scholars, E. J. Squier in 1848 and H. C. Morgan in 1869, suggested a Chichilticale north of the Gila River (Schroeder 1955: 294), the commonest early identification of Chichilticale was with the spectacular site of Casa Grande near the Gila River. As late as the 1880s this identification seems to have had general acceptance. For example, according to Hubert H. Bancroft (1886: 84):

... Chichilticale the "red house" probably is the structure since known as the Casa Grande on the Gila, then as now a roofless ruin.

Drawing on work done in that same decade, however, Adolph F. Bandelier made it clear that Casa Grande could not be a serious candidate as the site of 16th century Chichilticale. Bandelier (1892: 408-409) pointed out that the reasonably explicit descriptions of the country around the ruin of Chichilticale simply could not be equated with the area of the Gila River near Casa Grande. Bandelier's own location of Chichilticale was in the Fort Grant area west or south of Fort Graham and the Pinaleno Mountains (Bandelier 1892: 409). In May, 1883, Bandelier was told of "large-house ruins near Fort Grant" while visiting at Solomonville (Lange and Riley 1970: 99), and this presumably was the ruin that he had in mind.

in Marcos' footsteps, swung north and east, roughly on the route of modern U.S. Highway 80, between the Chiricahua and the Peloncillos, past present-day Rodeo, New Mexico. The ruin of Chichilticale was one of the sites in the San Bernardino Valley. From Antelope Pass Coronado's army moved northwestward to the Duncan area, recrossing the New Mexico-Arizona line at that point. The party then went down the Gila to about the town of Guthrie and overland approximately to modern Clifton. At that point Coronado moved up the San Francisco and then the Blue River, again recrossing the state line to Luna and Spur Lake. The journey continued northward, entirely on the New Mexico side of the modern state line, crossing Carrizo Wash (Coronado's Bermejo River) and on to the Zuni River below Hawikuh. This route differs considerably from the traditional ones which have had Coronado traveling by Fort Apache and White River (Bolton 1964: 110) or through the Tonto Basin (Schroeder 1956: 32). In both of these proposed routes, Coronado went on over the Mogollon Rim and his Rio Bermejo was the Little Colorado.

I have discussed Chichilticale in a number of papers (Riley 1975, 1980, 1982) but I have always been rather cautious about choosing one route over the others in the face of conflicting and often scanty evidence. I did suggest (Riley 1982: 10, Fig. 4; 11, Fig. 5; 63) two alternate routes for Coronado and two locations for Chichilticale, one essentially that of Schroeder with a Salt River location, and the other a variant on DiPeso with Chichilticale located on the upper Gila River. I also made another stab at linguistic identification of the placename, suggesting that it might be some variation on the Piman word for house, kih or kihki (1982: 67).

Turning now to the actual evidence for Chichilticale, it might be well to say that, at present, there is

no great help to be gained from archaeology. Eventually, when the region of Chichilticale is identified with reasonable certainty, the archaeological evidence will be useful. The current incomplete description of the ruin (given only by Castañeda) fits so many different areas of the Southwest that it gives very little in the way of leads. Indeed, some authors (Schroeder, for example) have been skeptical of the value of Castañeda's "Red House" comments.

The first Old World individuals to see Chichilticale may have been Esteban and Marcos de Niza in the spring of 1539. These two men led the first of a series of expeditions directed by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, from the Spanish-controlled areas of central and west Mexico to the Greater Southwest. Unfortunately, Esteban was killed at Cibola (Zuni) and so never returned to tell his story. Marcos did not actually mention Chichilticale in his summary accounts to Viceroy Mendoza but, from later comments of Coronado, it is generally assumed that Friar Marcos had indeed seen or heard of the place (Hammond and Rey 1940: 165).

Chichilticale was also visited by a second exploratory expedition sent by Coronado in the winter of 1539-40 and led by Melchior Díaz. The latter man did not actually use the name in extant reports but later testimony by one of his soldiers did mention that Chichilticale was about 60 leagues from Cibola (ICC, Juan de Zaldívar test.). Díaz' own statements indicated that it was a very cold area.

Coronado, leading a vanguard to his expeditionary forces in the spring and early summer of 1540 marched from San Miguel de Culiacán to Cibola. He reached Chichilticale on June 19 after a trip of indeterminate length from the large Indian settlements of Corazones. Coronado found that Chichilticale was 15 days from the sea (Hammond and Rey 1940: 165), and

A Chichilticale somewhere in the vicinity of the Pinaleno Mountains was accepted rather widely. In his landmark publication of accounts of the Coronado journey, George P. Winship (1896: 73) repeated the Bandelier identification with evident approval. In addition, the location in the Handbook of American Indians (Hodge 1907: 259) "on the Gila, E. of the mouth of the San Pedro, S. Ariz., probably not far from Solomonsville" was essentially that of Bandelier.

A detailed study of the Chichilticale question was published in 1908 by Samuel O. L. Potter, an army surgeon who had traveled through southern Arizona in the late 1860s. Potter located Chichilticale opposite the mouth of Pinal Creek on the north side of Salt River north of the present-day town of Globe, some 130 km northwest of the Bandelier location (Potter 1908: 273).

Little additional work was done on Chichilticale until 1932 when Carl O. Sauer published his landmark Road to Cibola which investigated anew the routes of the early explorers to the Southwest. In general, Sauer agreed with Bandelier in the location of Chichilticale. Like Bandelier, Sauer believed that the Coronado party journeyed up the San Pedro River and then up Arivaipa Creek and over Eagle Pass between the Pinaleno and Santa Teresa mountains. Sauer gave two likely locations for Chichilticale. He believed it to be either in the Arivaipa Basin, at the Haby ranch, or on the bluffs of the Gila about a mile north of Geronimo and a bit downriver of Fort Thomas.

A rather different location was given by George J. Undreiner (1947: 460). Undreiner believed that the site was first visited by Fr. Marcos de Niza in 1539 and that it could be identified with the cliff dwellings in present-day Tonto National Monument. Herbert E. Bolton, however, writing in 1949 essentially went back to the Bandelier

and Sauer identifications and placed Chichilticale on the 76 Ranch at the foot of Eagle Pass (Bolton 1964: 106). Bolton also made a stab at identifying the name Chichilticale. He believed that it might be derived from "Chichilte and calli ... two Yaqui words still in use, and they still mean red house." Presumably, Bolton inadvertently substituted the name "Yaqui" for "Nahuatl."

A. L. Schroeder, in 1955, published an analysis of the placement of Chichilticale. Following, to some degree, the work of Potter, Schroeder (1955: 294) suggested that the ruin of Chichilticale is on the Salt River near the mouth of Salome Creek. He also (p. 295) discussed the meaning of the word Chichilticale. Aside from the identification of Chichiltic-calli as "Red House" in Molina's 1550 Aztec-Spanish dictionary, there were other possibilities for the word. Schroeder suggested the Apache Tli-chi-kowa, meaning "Red House," or the Apache Chi-chil-kain which referred to the Oak People Clan. The Yavapai word Chi-chi-itch-kwali with a meaning "Mother Plants" was one that had to be taken seriously in that Schroeder (1956: 33) believed that the Coronado groups first encountered Yavapai Indians in the region of Chichilticale.

No major new speculation on Chichilticale occurred until the publication of C. C. DiPeso's monumental work on Casas Grandes. DiPeso (DiPeso, Rinaldo and Fenner 1974: 98-102) had a variant route for the early Spanish parties. He believed that both Marcos and Coronado traveled first up the Bavispe River and then the Batepito and the San Bernardino, crossing the present international border at a point a few kilometers east of Agua Prieta. His Chichilticale was in the region of the San Bernardino drainage. The Sierra of Chichilticale included the Sierra de San Luis and the Peloncillo Mountains (pp. 98-99). According to DiPeso, Coronado's party, following

spoke to Indians there who had made the trip. He also spoke of the "Port of Chichilticale" though it is not clear just where this "port" was located. It can hardly be at 35°N. latitude (that of Zuni) as Coronado claimed to have heard from Marcos. On leaving Chichilticale after a two-day stay Coronado encountered a 30 league despoblado with mountains and dangerous passes (Hammond and Rey 1940: 166).

One of Coronado's lieutenants, Juan de Jaramillo, also talked of Chichilticale. According to Jaramillo the party traveled down the arroyo "which we understood was called Nexpa" for two days. After an additional two days the party reached "the foot of the cordillera, where we learned that it was called Chichilticale" (Hammond and Rey 1940: 297). From Chichilticale the party went into rugged and high country (p. 298).

Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera who was with the main Coronado army, several weeks behind the vanguard, also saw and described Chichilticale "where the despoblado began" (p. 207). The men were disillusioned to find that "the famous Chichilticale turned out to be a roofless ruined house, although it appeared that formerly, at the time it was inhabited, it must have been a fortress" (p. 207). Fifteen days march from this red mud ruin, the party reached the Rio Bermejo (p. 208).

In another part of his narrative Castañeda (pp. 251-252) gave our most detailed description of Chichilticale:

Chichilticale received its name because the friars found in this region a house formerly inhabited by people who broke away from Cibola. It was built of brown or red earth. The house was large and showed clearly that it used to be a fortress. It must have been despoiled by the natives of the region, the more barbarous people thus far encountered.

They live by hunting, and in rancherías, without permanent settlements. Most of the region is uninhabited. There are large pine forests and pine nuts in abundance. The pines that are found are squatty and have long branches upward of two or three estados in height. There are oak trees bearing sweet acorns, and fanonas which produce a fruit like that from which coriander preserves are made. When dried the fruit is very sweet, like sugar. In some streams watercress was found, and there are also vines, pennyroyal, and wild marjoram. In the rivers of this despoblado there are barbels and picones as in Spain. Gray lions were seen from the beginning of the despoblado. The land rises gradually until one reaches Cibola, which is eighty leagues by the northern route.

From Castañeda's account it would seem that the inhabitants of Chichilticale as of 1540 were not the builders of the Red House at least in Castañeda's mind. They were barbarous rancheria-builders who lived in great part by hunting. The relatively detailed description of the flora and fauna in Castañeda should give us some clues to the location of Chichilticale — unfortunately, it serves about equally well for the high country south of the Mogollon Rim and for the upper Gila drainage. The pines described by Castañeda very likely include Ponderosa (Pinus ponderosa and P. arizonica) and piñon (P. edulis). The oaks mentioned cannot be identified beyond the genus Quercus but a number of oaks are represented in the mountainous areas of southern Arizona and southern New Mexico. The fanona tree with its sweet fruit is more difficult. Strout (1971: 16) identified it as the anona or custard apple (Annona squa-

mosa). This plant, however, has a more tropical distribution, and as near as I can tell, did not appear aboriginally in Arizona. One of the native fruit trees, or even one of the fruit producing cacti may have been meant. The "watercress" mentioned at Chichilticale, Strout (1971: 17) believed was Nasturtium officinale. Castañeda also mentioned "poleo" pennyroyal at Chichiltical as well as oregano. Neither of these plants is native, but Strout (1971: 23) suggested that mock pennyroyal (Hedeoma drummondii) may have been meant for the former. Any one of a number of grasses or riverine weeds might have been called "oregano."

Castañeda's "barbels" and "picones" were identified by F. W. Hodge as catfish and Gila trout (Hammond and Rey 1940: 252). Whatever their specific identification, they are not very diagnostic as the alternative locations for Chichilticale discussed below are on the same river system. Castañeda's "gray lions" are most probably mountain lions, but these are too widespread to be of any use in establishing the area of Chichilticale.

None of the other extant Coronado documents mentioned Chichilticale. The papers of Pedro de Tovar, now lost, were available in the 17th and 18th centuries and the lawyer-historian Matias de la Mota Padilla, who wrote about two centuries after Coronado, seems to have made some use of them. According to Mota Padilla the Coronado party

went through a little pass, which they named Chichilticali (that is to say, 'red house,' after one that was in it plastered with red earth called ochre); here they found pine trees with large cones of very good pine-nuts. Further on, at the top of some rocks, they found sheep skulls with large horns, and some said they had

seen three or four of these sheep, and that they were very fleet (Day 1940: 93).

Surveying the various attempts to route Marcos and Coronado and the scattering of locations for Chichilticale, it seems clear that no single routing and location fits all the evidence at hand. Like all students of this matter, I have made my own choices in interpreting the data, and these choices must determine my own "judgment call" as to where Chichilticale should be located. First, I agree with Undreiner and Schroeder as to the basically western path of Marcos de Niza. Like Undreiner, I locate Marcos' town of Vacapa somewhere in teh Altar-Magdalena Valley (Riley 1971: 290, 311; 1976: 15; 1980: 44; 1982: 9, 10, fig. 4). I am, however, uncertain as to whether Marcos actually made the final leg of the journey to Cibola. If he, in fact, turned back, was it before or after he arrived at Chichilticale?

There is one point on which I am at odds with most people who have studied the Coronado documents. That is, I do not believe that Marcos and Coronado took the same route, at least for the Mexican portions of their trips. The main reason that people accept a single route for the two men is that Marcos in 1540 was supposed to have "guided" Coronado to Cibola. A careful reading of the relevant documents, however, really does not support this presumption and common-sense consideration makes it most unlikely. If Undreiner, Schroeder, and I are correct, Marcos stayed near the Gulf of California until he reached northwestern Sonora. This would have been a most impractical route for Coronado with numbers of horses (and, with the main Coronado army, stock animals and carts). Water and grass for such a large number of animals cannot be found near the coast at least from northern Sinaloa northward. Of course

on the last leg of the journey, Marcos and Coronado could have followed the same route, though even here Coronado would surely have preferred the Sonoran guides that we know were with the party.

At the present state of knowledge there really seems no way to establish a premiere single location for Corazones. Depending on a given routing of various Coronado parties it does seem to me that there are two most reasonable possibilities. I shall call them Chichilticale west and Chichilticale east (see Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

Chichilticale west. If one traces the Marcos and Coronado expeditions northward from the San Pedro/Gila junction, they likely entered the Salt River Valley along or near a route suggested by Potter and Schroeder. To give Schroeder's (1955: 285) excellent summation of the situation:

The most simple route from Globe to the Salt River would have been to go down Pinal Creek to Wheatfields, which is located just above the point where the canyon boxes up. From here a traveler only would have to go over a low pass to the east and then follow a northeastern flowing arroyo to the Salt River, opposite the mouth of Cherry Creek. At this point, except when the river is high during the spring thaws, one can easily ford the Salt River.

Given this route, it would seem that the ruin of Chichilticale would be one or the other large mounds on the north side of the Salt, now covered by Roosevelt Dam (Schroeder 1955: 285) or perhaps specifically a ruin a small distance downriver and across the Salt from the mouth of Pinal Creek (Potter 1908: 273). In such a case, also, the "Sierra of Chichilticale" would be the Sierra Ancha and the "Pass of Chichilticale" in the same

range. Continuing on north, the Coronado party might have gone "up Salome Creek and over the north end of the Sierra Anchas and then generally northeast over the Mogollon Rim across to Zuni" (Schroeder 1956: 32). At any rate this seems to fit the chronicle evidence better than the alternative route proposed by Bolton (1964: 109-10) which had the group crossing the Salt River at about the mouth of Bonita Creek and continuing northward into the Fort Apache and White River areas to the Mogollon Rim, in part following the route of the modern Arizona State Highway 73.

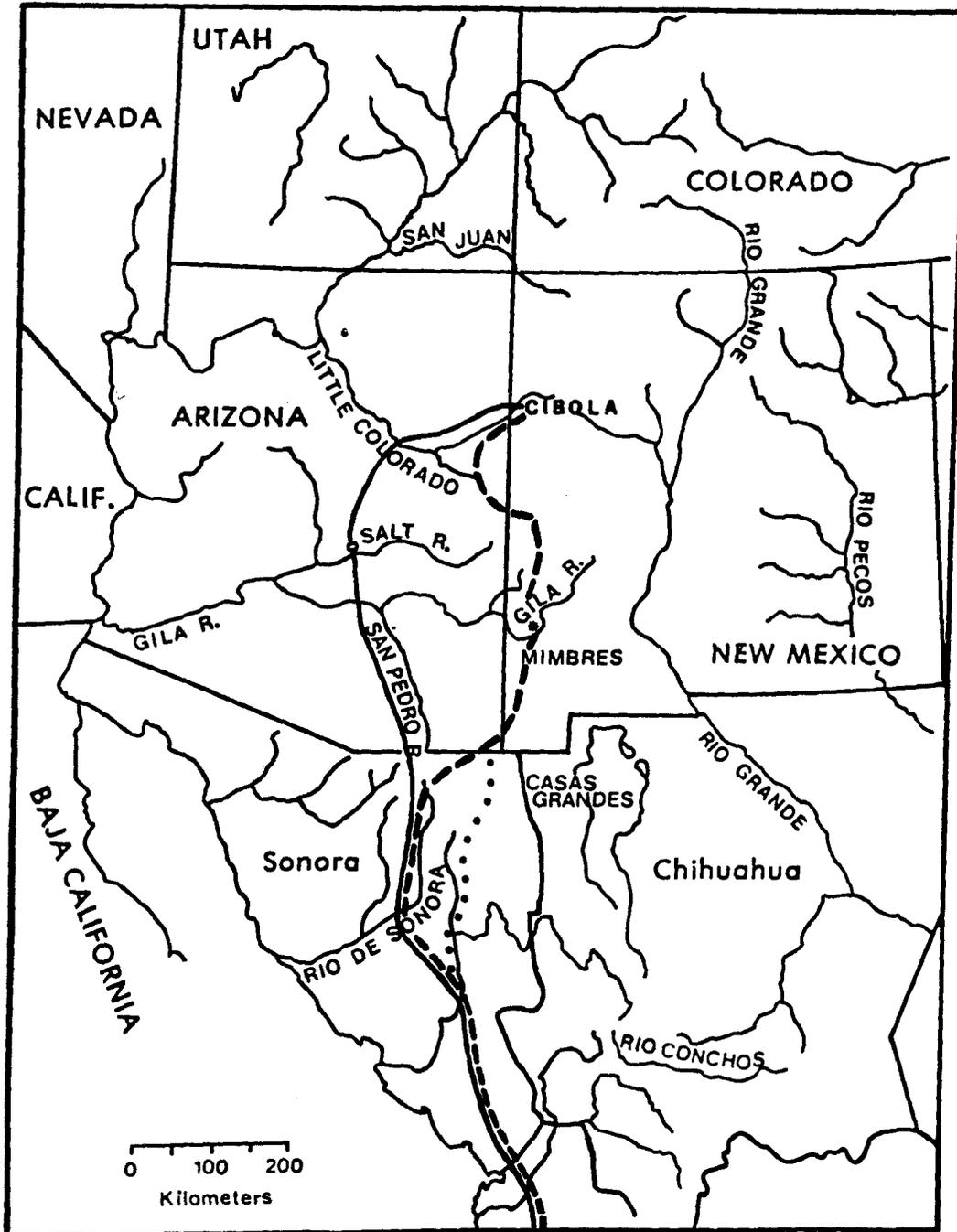
If the Pinal-Salt-Salome route is correct, the Indians encountered in the Chichilticale area were probably Yavapai as Schroeder (1956: 33) has suggested.

Chichilticale east. In a recent publication (Riley 1982: 10, fig. 4, 11, fig. 5) I accepted Schroeder's placement of Chichilticale and routing of Coronado as one alternative, but mapped a second routing with Chichilticale located some 240 km to the east.

If I were to postulate an eastern route, I would have the Coronado party swing through the edge of Mimbres country—eventually crossing the Gila somewhere around Cliff and roughly following the route of modern U.S. Highway 180 to the region of Luna—then either northward to Zuni or more likely northwestward into the Little Colorado drainage ... (Riley 1982: 63).

This route or some variation on it has a number of things in its favor. For the most part it is an easier route, taking advantage of wide areas of relatively flat land, but with mountains near enough for fodder and water. An eastern location of Chichilticale and an eastern route for Coronado would explain the curious lack of information that Coronado had concerning native

FIGURE 1 -  
ALTERNATE LOCATIONS OF CHICHILTICALE



- CORONADO ROUTE VIA CHICHILTICALE WEST
- - - - - CORONADO ROUTE VIA CHICHILTICALE EAST
- ..... ALTERNATE ROUTE UP YACQUI VALLEY
- CHICHILTICALE WEST      • CHICHILTICALE EAST

populations in the Gila-Salt area, compared to Marcos whose information is relatively detailed. This would, of course, indicate that Coronado and Marcos followed different trails not only in the Mexican portion of their trips but in the American portions as well. In such a case, Marcos presumably never saw Chichilticale in 1539, visiting it for the first time as part of the Coronado party in 1540. This does make Coronado's statement in his letter to the viceroy dated August 3, 1540 (Hammond and Rey 1940: 165), difficult to explain for Coronado stated that Marcos had given him specific information on Chichilticale that proved to be false. The information (that the sea was only five leagues distant at Chichilticale and that there was a "Port" of Chichilticale) did not appear, of course, in the Marcos report, and Undreiner (1947: 459) doubted that Marcos ever gave such information to Coronado. This may well have been the case especially since the Coronado letter to Mendoza that gave these data is known only from an Italian text of Ramusio (1556) and may well be corrupt. Still and all, reading such evidence as we do have, it is hard to believe that Marcos had not at least heard of Chichilticale in 1539. "Heard," in fact, may be the operative word. If one assumes that Marcos did not get all the way to Cibola and actually described it from hearsay, the same may be true of Chichilticale. Such a situation does suggest that Chichilticale was an important native landmark on the road to Cibola.

If the Chichilticale east location is correct, the area would have actually been first seen by the Díaz party in the winter of 1539. Both the latter explorer and the two main Coronado parties likely came up the Sonora Valley, and then northeastward to the Agua Prieta area. A route (first sug-

gested by DiPeso) up the San Bernardino then following the line of modern route 80 into the Animas Valley seems most logical. However, rather than swinging westward into the tangled mountains of the San Francisco and Blue rivers, I think Coronado may have followed the relatively easy terrain now used by Route 180, perhaps reaching the Gila somewhere in the Cliff area. Chichilticale may have been one of the Salado or Cliff Phase ruins in that region. As he went north, Coronado would have been in or near stands of ponderosa and piñon as described by Castañeda. The Sierra of Chichilticale might then be the Mogollon Mountains. DiPeso had the party continuing up the New Mexico side of the present state boundary, but it is hard to believe that Carrizo Wash could have been the Bermejo River of the Spaniards. I would rather think that Coronado, following a well-marked native trail with native guides, recrossed the border and came out in the upland valleys in the area around present-day Alpine. From there the route ran northward up the headwaters of the Little Colorado and on to the Zuni. The trail across the San Francisco Mountains would admittedly be rough but there is no way in which Coronado can be routed that does not offer serious terrain difficulties at one point or another.

If Chichilticale was in the upper Gila drainage, the barbarous Indians were not likely to have been Yavapai. In such a case, I suggest that early groups of Apache may have been involved. I realize some scholars hesitate to believe that the Apache were as far south and west as the Arizona-New Mexico border area in 1540 but based on documentation from the slightly later Espejo expedition, I have suggested that Apache and perhaps even Navajo were in western New Mexico and eastern Arizona by Coronado's

time (Riley 1982: 96).

Clearly the search for Chichilticale is not yet over. I have given what I think to be the two most promising candidates for this enigmatic ruin-mountain pass-range. On the basis of present-day evidence, the case for Chichilticale made by Potter and Schroeder would seem to be stronger, but the last word is by no means in.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Figure 1 is adapted and modified from Riley 1982: 10, fig. 4. The base map was drawn by Karen A. Schmidt and the Coronado routes and Chichilticale locations were prepared by Joni L. Manson specifically for this paper.

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