LEADING THE "FATHER" THE PAWNEE HOMELAND, COUREURS DE BOIS, AND THE VILLASUR EXPEDITION OF 1720

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In 1742 two sons of the explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de La Vérendrye met an indigenous nation they called the Gens de l’Arc somewhere along the middle Missouri River near present-day Pierre, South Dakota. Louis-Joseph and François were searching for the mythical Sea of the West, and the former asked the chief of the Gens de l’Arc if he “knew the white people of the seacoast.” When the chief replied that “[t]he French who are on the seacoast are numerous” and have “many chiefs for the soldiers, and also many chiefs for prayer,” Louis-Joseph believed he had at last found evidence of the Mer de l’Ouest and the people living on its shores. But his hopes were quickly dashed when the chief proceeded to speak a few words of the whites’ language. As Louis-Joseph explained to Charles de la Boische Beauharnois, the governor of Canada, “I recognized that he was speaking Spanish, and what confirmed me in my opinion was the account he gave of the massacre of the Spanish who were going in search of the Missouri, a matter I had heard mentioned.” He concluded, “All this considerably lessened my eagerness, concerning a sea already known” by the Spaniards.

The chief was most likely describing an event that had occurred over twenty years earlier: the destruction of the Villasur Expedition on the banks of the Platte and Loup rivers in present-day Nebraska. It was the last expedition of its kind until fears of Zebulon Pike inspired another Spanish march to the northeast. In 1720 Pedro de Villasur led forty-five Spaniards and sixty Pueblo auxiliaries out of Santa Fé to win Indian allies and to gauge the French presence in the Great Plains. Pawnee Indians, perhaps with the help of a few French...
traders, destroyed the expedition near the confluence of the Platte and Loup rivers, leaving only fourteen survivors to report back to Santa Fé (see Fig. 1).

The chief’s memory of the Spanish-Pawnee encounter suggests that it resonated as an important event in the early eighteenth-century history of the central Plains. Yet the repercussions of the expedition remain somewhat unclear. In general, historians have viewed the Villasur Expedition as a brief extension of European imperial rivalry into the continent’s interior and have not fully addressed the indigenous politics surrounding it.³ This article attempts to reposition the Villasur Expedition from the perspective of the Pawnee, who likely would have seen the Spaniards more as Cuartelejo and Paloma Apache allies than French enemies. Drawing on French records and more recent archaeological evidence, it argues that changing economies in the early eighteenth-century central Plains, which experienced a growth in bison hunting and the slave trade, contributed to Pawnee expansion into the lands of northern Apaches in present-day western Kansas and Nebraska. During a pivotal five-year period of European activity in the Plains, from 1719 until 1724, both the Pawnee and their Apache enemies enlisted Europeans in a decidedly indigenous struggle.

When Villasur and his men entered the Platte Valley, they set foot in a region that Pawnees had called home for hundreds of years. Caddoan-speaking ancestors of the Pawnees settled in present-day Nebraska as early as AD 1000. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, new neighbors joined Pawnees in the central Plains. Dakota attacks forced the Omahas, Dhegiha Siouan speakers, to abandon the Big Sioux River and cross to the western bank of the Missouri River, near Pawnee lands. Otoes also fled the Dakotas, eventually establishing villages along the Platte River, east of the Pawnees, by the late seventeenth century.⁴ To the west, Comanches would leave the Rocky Mountains to settle in the western Plains, where they would vie with Pawnees over control of hunting grounds and river valleys.⁵ Finally, groups of Apaches left the Athabascan migration south from Canada.

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and Alaska during the early part of the second millennium to settle on the shortgrass prairies of eastern Colorado and western Kansas and Nebraska, directly west of the Wichitas and Pawnees. Archaeologists have linked them to settlement remains in the so-called Dismal River Aspect. Known to the French as the “Padoucas” in the first half of the eighteenth century, these northern Apaches likely occupied Dismal River sites from around 1675 to the mid-1720s. Perhaps the most important Apache settlement in the central Plains was a place called El Cuartelejo, a large ranchería that was probably located in present-day Scott County, western Kansas. In response to these forced and voluntary migrations to the central Plains, Pawnees collected in larger groups and moved to hilltops along the Loup and Platte rivers for safety. Archaeologists have designated sites from this period of transition, which lasted from about AD 1500 to 1750, the Lower Loup Focus. During the 1600s, pressure from outsiders perhaps caused Pawnees to split from their linguistic relatives, the Arikaras, who settled farther north, along the Big Bend of the Missouri in present-day South Dakota. Before the arrival of epidemics, these Panian groups occupied a large swath of territory stretching from the Loup River to the Cheyenne River.

Officials in New Mexico learned of the sweeping changes taking place well north of their border only in piecemeal rumors and mainly through reports of Apaches. Not only were Comanches raiding farther south with greater abandon, they discovered, but Pawnees seemed to be moving farther west and south of their typical hunting territory, asserting their control over Apache lands with the help of French traders. As early as 1695, Diego de Vargas, the governor of New Mexico, heard a rumor that a “great number of Frenchmen came toward the Buffalo Plains, driving the Apaches to [Picuris Pueblo] because of the many attacks they make against them.” And in 1706 Juan de Ulibarri, a captain in the presidial militia, discovered during a mission to the Cuartelejo Apaches in present-day south-western Kansas that French traders were visiting “Pawnees” (possibly Wichitas) and trading them guns. He had gone north to rescue twenty Pueblo families who were reportedly slaves of the Cuartelejo Apaches, but he also wanted to enlist the Apaches as allies against the French. They asked a favor in return: help them attack “their enemies” the Pawnees, who had recently raided them alongside French traders. They produced guns and iron axes of French manufacture as evidence of Pawnee-French cooperation.

Over the following decade, Comanche raids on New Mexico with their allies, the Utes, grew worse, so much so that the government at Santa Fé convened a war council, which agreed to carry out another expedition to the north. Governor Antonio Valverde y Cosío set out in 1719 to “punish” the “insolence” of the Utes and Comanches and to reaffirm the Apache alliance. This expedition was in many ways a replay of Ulibarri’s: Valverde went north to the Arkansas River, where he met a group of Cuartelejo Apaches who reported Pawnee-French attacks. One of the Paloma Apaches, who dwelled farther north of El Cuartelejo, on the “most remote borderlands of the Apaches,” had been recently wounded by gunfire. The injured man informed Valverde that the Palomas had been attacked by the “French, united with the Pawnees and the Jumans.” The Pawnees, aided by the French, had seized the lands of Paloma Apaches, forcing their retreat.

While this Pawnee-French alliance was not necessarily news in Santa Fé, the report of French settlements in the Plains was. The Apaches told Valverde that the French had established “two large pueblos, each of which is as large as that of Taos” among the Pawnees. In a letter to Baltasar Zúñiga Guzmán, the Marqués de Valero, in Mexico City, Valverde stated that these two French settlements were located on a “very large river which here is known as the Jesús María,” according to the Pueblo scout José Naranjo. Apache women who had escaped slavery among the French also reported that the whites had “three other settlements on the other side of the large river, and that from these they bring arms.”

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These settlements were most likely Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Fort de Chartres, which were all established on the eastern side of the Mississippi by October 1719, when Valverde met the Cuartelejo and Paloma Apaches.

Armed with French weapons, Pawnees could have very well attacked the Paloma Apaches and pushed them out of their lands, which might have extended as far north as the South Platte River. Living farther north of the Cuartelejos, on the “most remote borderlands of the Apaches,” Palomas would have lived approximately west of the large Pawnee settlements on the Platte and Loup rivers. But Valverde himself seemed unsure about who actually attacked the Palomas. In his letter to Valero, he stated that the gunshot wound came in fact from a Kansa Indian, though he also described a French alliance with the Pawnees and Jumanos. By 1719 Apaches were also suffering raids by Wichitas, distant relatives of the Pawnees. The commandant at Fort de Chartres in the Illinois Country, Pierre Dugué de Boisbriant, reported in October 1720 that the Wichitas had recently raided the “Padoucas” and captured one hundred slaves. The Spanish might have mistaken the Wichitas for Pawnees.

PAWNEE LIFeways ON THE CENTRAL PLAINS

The secondhand reports by Apaches provided the Spanish officials with only faint clues about the Pawnees. Where exactly they resided in the Plains—let alone how they traded or what crops they raised—remained a mystery. The Skiri Pawnees, whom the French called the Panimahas, were the largest band and lived on the Loup River. The smaller South Bands—the Chawis (Grands), Kitkahahkis (Republiques), and Pitahawiratas (Tappages)—lived on the south bank of the Platte River. The Skiris and South Bands spoke a different dialect of Pawnee and did not always cooperate. Even in the late eighteenth century, the Spanish and French considered them to be distinct “nations” that occasionally pursued different economic and political agendas.

It is difficult to estimate the Pawnee population in this period. Based on the number of villages they occupied, the number was close to ten thousand, and it was probably much higher before the arrival of epidemics. Each village held 300 to 500 people, and the Pawnees occupied over fifteen villages in the early 1700s. The French explorer Etienne Vériard, sieur de Bourmont, who reached the mouth of the Platte in 1714, stated that the Skiri Pawnees alone occupied eight villages. A 1722 copy of Guillaume Delisle’s Carte de La Louisiane shows twelve “Panis” (South Band) villages along the “Riv. des Panis” and twelve “Panimaha” (Skiri) villages along a tributary to this river, presumably the Loup. Delisle’s numbers match Pawnee traditions. During the spring equinox, Skiri Pawnees recited their creation story twelve times to honor the establishment of twelve original settlements; they also held twelve sacred bundles, one for each village. The South Bands also occupied multiple villages: in the late 1800s the Chawis held three sacred bundles for villages that had since disappeared, while Pitahawiratas had two bundles.

These villages were part of a sacred landscape. Pawnees designed and arranged villages to show their reverence for celestial bodies, which guided their religious cosmology. They situated earth lodges within villages to mirror constellations, and the earth lodge itself functioned as a “microcosm of the universe”: the vaulted ceiling was the “dome of the universe,” and the circular wall represented the horizon. Priests looked through the smoke holes in earth lodges to locate stars at certain points in the sky. The star deities granted chiefs the authority to make the sacred bundle for a village, and each village became associated with the star that brought it into being. Individuals also followed the guidance of specific stars. Through the star gods, the Pawnees came to know the power of the creator of the universe, Tirawahut, the “supreme god and First Cause of All.” Pawnee ceremonies honored Tirawahut’s most important creations: Morning Star, the god of light, fire, and war; and Evening Star, the goddess of fertility.
Pawnees appealed to the celestial beings throughout the year, which began anew in March with the spring equinox. Having returned from their winter encampments, Pawnees marked the arrival of spring by recreating the birth of the universe. In May they performed the “groundbreaking ceremony” for corn, one of the few ceremonies that involved women. They tended the fields until mid-June, when they left for the summer hunt. This hunt brought them west to the High Plains bison ranges, where they obtained most of their meat and the hides that they used to make tipi covers and moccasins. They returned to harvest the corn in early September, when the South Star, Canopus, appeared. Corn was a sacred object for Pawnees, and they celebrated three different ceremonies during the harvest. Finally, in late October, after gathering the corn, they set out for another hunting season that lasted until early spring. The heavier robes acquired during winters served as clothing, and the winter camps delivered timber and foraging opportunities for their expanding horse herds. During this winter season, Skiri Pawnees moved toward the forks of the Platte River, while the Kitkahahkis, Chawis, and Pitahawiratas moved south into present-day Kansas. These South Bands traveled along a heavy north–south trail that brought them past two sacred animal lodges: Pa:huru’, a hill on the Republican River that whites later called Guide Rock, and Kicawi:caku, or “Spring Mound,” the location of a natural artesian spring where they made offerings to Tirawahut.27

Pawnees were self-sufficient, though they did participate in an expansive indigenous trading system in the Plains that predated the eighteenth-century Missouri River trade. Traditionally, groups that emphasized hunting traded meat and hides for the agricultural products of farming societies. Pawnees had both hunting and farming products at their disposal, but they carried on “redundancy” trading with their Arikara and Wichita relatives. By the early 1700s, however, Pawnees were trading for entirely new products: horses and guns. Pawnees adopted horses relatively quickly: the animals were likely “integrated into Pawnee lifeways” by the end of the seventeenth century, and horses probably led to an expansion of bison hunting.28 While the horse trade was an “elaboration” of older exchange patterns, it did increase the volume of trade in the Plains and helped produce new indigenous trade centers: those of the Mandan-Hidatsas and Arikaras on the upper Missouri, the Shoshone Rendezvous in southwestern Wyoming, and the Comanche center at Big Timbers on the Arkansas. Pawnees traveled to the Shoshone Rendezvous to buy horses from Utes; they also journeyed south along the north–south trail from the Republican River to the Great Bend of the Arkansas to trade for horses from Comanches.29

Trade with distant allies like the Comanches, enemies like the Sioux, and even members of other Pawnee bands took the form of a gift exchange within the calumet ceremony. Other tribes have testified that this ceremony, which spread throughout the midcontinent, originated among the Pawnees.30 For Pawnees, smoking the calumet pipe played the crucial role of establishing kinship relations between trading parties. Pawnees approached interpersonal relations in terms of kin designations, and those who fell outside kin structures were often enemies or slaves. In the ceremony, the visiting party “represented Fathers, while the ones they visited were designated their Children.”31 Only the wealthiest members of Pawnee villages, typically chiefs, participated in the ceremony.32 On the fourth day of the ritual performance, the “fathers” unpacked gifts to the “children” that usually consisted of robes and embroidered clothing. That night, the “children” would reciprocate by delivering horses to the visitors.33 By performing the role of “children” in this ceremony, Pawnees became middlemen in the horse trade, distributing the animals to neighbors to the east, including Omahas, Otoes, and Poncas.34 The ceremony was less an alliance building mechanism, as the French would come to see it, and more a “sign of peaceful intention and thus a safe-conduct through enemy territory.”35 Through the calumet ceremony, Pawnees could trade temporarily with

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those who would remain enemies. Once the ceremony was over and the visitors had traveled a safe distance from the Pawnee village, hostilities could resume.  

When unlicensed French traders, or coureurs de bois, began reaching their villages, Pawnees simply treated these strangers as new “fathers.” They incorporated them into their kinship structures and conducted gift exchanges. Yet the French would attempt to assign new political meanings to the calumet ceremony. In October 1750 the eldest of three brothers who led the Skiri band visited Monsieur de St. Clin, the commandant at Fort de Chartres in the Illinois Country. According to the governor of New France, Pierre Jacques de Taffanel La Jonquière, this Pawnee leader, Stabaco, proclaimed his loyalty to the French: “My father, if thou hast any rebellious Children who lose their wits, let me know. Thou canst rely on me and on my nation.” La Jonquière concluded that this “alliance is a very advantageous one, and, by maintaining that nation in our interest, we shall be masters of the front and back of the Missoury country.” But he was too optimistic. By calling St. Clin “father,” Stabaco made the kin designation of the calumet ceremony, which did not necessarily guarantee political cooperation.

COUREURS DE BOIS AND THE SLAVE TRADE ON THE GRASSLANDS

After hearing the reports by the Palomas and Cuartelejos in 1719, Governor Valverde was reluctant to admit any Pawnee initiative in the attacks on the Apaches. Instead, he blamed enterprising French traders, who seemingly could convince the Pawnees to invade New Mexico. Valverde had other reasons to fear a French invasion. France had seized Pensacola and claimed part of Texas following the outbreak of the War of the Quadruple Alliance, which started in 1718. In the same year, the ambitious Compagnies des Indes gained control of French Louisiana. Although the company directors were much more interested in trade with New Mexico than war, they sought to open a trade route to New Mexico by lining it with French allies, including the Apaches.

Yet Indian nations in the eastern Plains did not cooperate with this French scheme. The Osages, Pawnees, and Wichitas tried to monopolize the French trade and prevent traders from visiting the Apaches. In July or August 1719, around the time that Valverde visited the Cuartelejos, a French officer named Claude-Charles Dutisné left Kaskaskia heading west on an overland trade and diplomatic mission to the Osages, Wichitas, and Apaches. The Osages, once they discovered he was traveling toward the “Panis” [Wichitas], insisted he trade them all but three of his guns, while the Wichitas were “very strongly opposed” to his plan of meeting the Apaches. In a report to the governor of Louisiana, Dutisné concluded that French traders could reach New Mexico only if Wichitas and Osages—who were in a confederation—formed a “union” with their Apache enemies, which would require the exchange of slaves and gifts.

French officials shared Valverde’s belief that coureurs de bois were really the ones behind the Pawnee, Osage, and Wichita attacks on the Apaches. According to their theory, these unregulated traders provoked endless wars in the Plains by encouraging Pawnees to raid Apaches for slaves. The slave trade, more than anything else, sabotaged the larger commercial ambitions of the Compagnie des Indes by earning the French the continued enmity of the Apaches.

The company’s preoccupation with the slave trade raises questions about its size and relative importance in the eighteenth-century Great Plains. Markets in Louisiana and New Mexico created a demand for slaves that Plains Indians were attempting to satisfy as early as 1706, when Ulibarri noted that Apaches and “Pawnees” were raiding each other to sell captives to the Spaniards and French, respectively. This trade continued in 1719, when Valverde met the three Apache women who had escaped slavery near the Mississippi, and it may have escalated in the 1720s, when the number of recorded baptisms of Pawnees in
New Mexico missions peaked. Nine Pawnees were baptized at the Taos, San Juan, Nambe, Pecos, and Zia pueblos—certainly not a large number, but Spanish missions recorded the baptisms of only two Pawnees total in the 1730s and 1740s.44 This modest increase, which may reflect larger numbers of undocumented Pawnee captives, raises the possibility that the Villasur Expedition occurred at a time when Pawnees were suffering a new level of raiding by Apaches.

Among Indian nations in the eastern Plains, only the powerful Osages seemed immune from the retaliatory cycles of slave raiding; practically no Osage captives appeared in French settlements in the Illinois Country. Pawnees were less fortunate. Osages seized so many Pawnee and Wichita captives that they may have adopted a matrilocal household organization from their Caddoan enemies.45 And traders delivered enough Pawnee slaves to French markets in the Illinois Country, the pays d’en haut, and Canada that “Panis” became the French term for any Indian slave originating from west of the Mississippi. Although many of these slaves were not in fact Pawnees but Indians from neighboring tribes, about 68 percent of Indian slaves in French Canada who received Indian names in the documentation—over two thousand—appear as “Panis.”46

Only six years after the Villasur Expedition, in September 1726, a French trader provided an unusually detailed portrait of the eastern Plains slave trade. Concerned that traders were fomenting dangerous Indian wars for their own profit in the slave trade, officials at Fort de Chartres solicited a deposition from Jean-Jacques Desmanets regarding a trip he had made to the eastern Plains earlier that summer with Jean-Baptiste Poudret, a trader in the Missouri Country.47 According to Desmanets, the first Indians they encountered were Little Osages, who were returning from “an attack on the Pawnees and had with them a young Pawnee slave.” Poudret was evidently on his way to the Pawnees to trade for “horses and peltries,” not slaves, but he decided to purchase the captive so he could return it to the Pawnees as a gesture of good will. They continued another forty leagues until they reached the “grand village of the Osages,” where they redeemed another captive.48 Poudret then set out by himself to find the Pawnees, who were away on their annual summer hunt. Returning after three weeks, the Pawnees were “contemptuous” of the remaining trade goods and Poudret’s pleas for them to end their attacks on Osages, boasting that they had “eaten Osages and would continue to eat them.” They had returned from the western Plains with a five-year-old Padouca, or Apache, slave, for whom Poudret “paid dearly.”49 After foiling a plan by a few Pawnees to steal their horses, Poudret and Desmanets finally made it to Fort d’Orléans, a post on the Missouri River that the explorer and diplomat Etienne Véniard, sieur de Bourgmont, had established in 1724.50

Because he was under investigation for involvement in the Indian slave trade, Desmanets might have changed the story to make it seem as though the Indians, not the French, were the real slave traders. It is likely that Poudret, who would remain active in the Missouri River trade into the 1730s, was not such a reluctant trade partner. Nevertheless, this testimony provides an important glimpse of Osage-Pawnee relations in the 1720s as well as the Plains slave trade. It suggests that Pawnees had their own source for captives: the Padoucas, or Apaches, living in present-day western Kansas and southwestern Nebraska. They were not the only ones acquiring Padouca captives in this period. Wichitas, Kansas, and Comanches also seized Apache captives, sometimes in large numbers.51

Pawnees might have taken Apache captives for a number of reasons. Most basically, Apaches fell outside Pawnee kinship relations. Skiri Pawnees called Plains Apaches katahkaa’, which derives from katahkaa, “to be inside out,” a derivation that perhaps reflects their view of Apaches as a strange and foreign people who were potential captives.52 Some captives held religious significance. Occasionally in the fall season, a Skiri warrior impersonated Morning Star, the god of light, fire, and war, on a journey to retrieve the god’s daughter. He led a party of experienced warriors to an
enemy village, where they seized a thirteen-year-old girl, who was later sacrificed in the spring during the five-day-long Morning Star ceremony. Pawnee men raided for captives that would "enhance family honor and solidify ... economic status" by increasing the wealth of their families and villages. Captive women might have also helped replace those lost to disease and supplied the labor attached to an emerging equestrian economy.54

By selling women and children to traders like Poudret, Pawnees could acquire weapons and other items that they could trade to the Comanches farther west for horses. Trading slaves may have also had a political function. As Brett Rushforth has noted, Indian peoples in the pays d’en haut effectively limited the scope of the French alliance system by involving traders in a slave economy that depended on hostilities with their enemies. Rushforth asserts that the Padouca slave trade may have been one reason why the French never formed an effective alliance with the Apaches.55

The slave trade had evidently become enough of a problem in the Plains by the late 1710s that French officials identified it as their primary obstacle to commercial and political expansion. In 1717 François le Maire, a priest who had served for nearly a decade in the settlement of Mobile, composed a mémoire on Louisiana in which he recommended that the French crown outlaw the Indian slave trade in the Great Plains. He specifically condemned those coureurs de bois, like Poudret, who bought and sold slaves of “Padoucas and other peoples of the Missouri.” A ban on the slave trade would, he concluded, “cut at the root the wars that the Indians only continue between themselves because of the advantageous sale that they make of their captives to the traders, who then resell them in this colony to the Spanish and to the vessels that come to our port, for selling them a third time to the islands.”56

The directors of the Compagnie des Indes, monitoring their unprofitable colony from Paris and hoping to open the New Mexico trade through the Padoucas, eventually heeded le Maire’s call for a ban on the slave trade. In late October 1720, they ordered Governor Bienville to end the Indian slave trade along the Missouri and Arkansas rivers because the raiding for captives inhibited trade across the Plains. They complained that voyageurs were fomenting war between Indian nations in order to “procure slaves.” This was “not only contrary to the orders of the King” but “very harmful to the well-being of the company’s commerce,” the directors concluded. But officials in Louisiana largely opposed this plan. In the Illinois Country, Boisbriant worried that a ban on the Apache slave trade would alienate Pawnees, Wichitas, and Osages, and that the Pawnees would continue raiding and simply sell their captives to Fox peoples, who could destroy the Illinois Country. He concluded that the French were stuck between two options: a dangerous Pawnee-Fox alliance, or an alliance with Pawnees against the Apaches, who would then block trade with New Mexico.59

While the directors of the Compagnie des Indes believed that an end to the slave trade would secure peace in the Plains, they overestimated the influence of slave-trading coureurs de bois on Pawnee chiefs. Pawnees were not raiding Cuartelejo and Paloma Apaches simply to meet a demand for slaves. Instead, these Apaches occupied lands that Pawnees wanted to use for themselves: bison ranges and river valleys in the western Plains.

The growth of a bison-hunting economy and the introduction of horses, more than the slave trade, intensified the conflict between Apaches and Pawnees. Archaeological evidence suggests that Pawnees began hunting bison in much larger numbers beginning in the seventeenth century. For the first time, they established specialized hunting camps to the west and north of their villages: along the western Platte basin, in the Nebraska panhandle, near the Sandhills, and on the central Niobrara River. By the mid-eighteenth century, Pawnees were importing lithic materials in much larger amounts to produce end scrapers, which they used to work bison hides. The reasons for this shift toward bison are not entirely clear. It is possible that bison populations rebounded after an extended
period of drought, which may have encouraged Pawnees to expand their hunting operations. The emergence of the French robe trade could have also played a role. By the mid-1700s Pawnees were acquiring French guns, iron axes, brass bracelets, and glass beads, which together could indicate a “thriving trade on a very large scale.”

The only problem with this hunting expansion was that Apaches, pressured on the west by the Comanches, claimed the same hunting ranges. The direct testimonies of those involved suggest that hunting ranges were the principal battlegrounds between Apaches and Pawnees. The Cuartelejos informed Ulibarri that the French had previously “come united with the Pawnees to attack them at the time when they were going out to hunt buffalo meat.” Almost twenty years later, in 1724, a Skiri Pawnee leader cited the freedom to hunt as a reason why he welcomed peace with the Apaches: it was “good that we make peace with the Padoucas for plenty of reasons: the first, for our tranquility; the second, to carry out hunts in peace; and third, to have horses.”

His testimony reveals additional reasons for raids against Apaches. The Apaches portrayed themselves as the victims of Pawnee raids to Ulibarri and Valverde, but they evidently disturbed the “tranquility” of Skiri Pawnees. Pawnee raids against Apaches might have been defensive or retaliatory. The Skiri leader also cited a shortage of horses, which Apaches could obtain more easily from the Southwest. In order to feed these horses in the winter, however, Pawnees needed the wooded river valleys that Apaches used. A member of the Ulibarri Expedition recalled that as soon as the Apaches at El Cuartelejo had harvested their crops, “they retire to other parts where they can resist the rigor of the winter, because there is a scarcity of wood in that spot.” Instead of following coureurs de bois on slave raids, Pawnees were more likely leading traders in a campaign to remove Palomas (like the wounded man in 1719) from bison-hunting grounds and river valleys in present-day western Kansas and southwestern Nebraska. By raiding Apaches, Pawnees could steal horses and take control of natural resources essential to their survival in a sometimes harsh Plains environment.

By the late 1710s and early 1720s, the Republican River valley had emerged as a particular focus of conflict between Apaches and their Pawnee and Comanche enemies, all of whom were eager to control the river valley for its water, timber supply, and shelter during harsh winters. The valley was a probable site of Apache displacement about the time of the Villasur Expedition. Excavations at the White Cat Village site, a former Apache settlement on the Republican around seventy-five miles southwest of the Pawnee villages on the Platte, revealed at least six Athabascan residential structures in a desirable area that would have provided water, timber, and level ground suitable for limited agriculture. One of the homes at this settlement was burned to the ground around 1723. Archaeologist Waldo Wedel proposes that the reported attack on the Palomas might have occurred near this Apache settlement.

Pawnee raids constituted only one of the challenges facing the Apaches in the early eighteenth century. Comanches were taking advantage of their mobility on horseback to strike against the farming villages of semisedentary Apaches. The powerful Osages controlled the major arteries of trade in the midcontinent, and their trade embargoes with the Wichitas isolated Apaches from traders, who already had difficulty reaching Apaches because of the shallowness of rivers on the western Plains. By controlling most of the French trade and then delivering surplus goods to Comanches for horses, Wichitas, Pawnees, and Osages could advance their own military capabilities in the newly equestrian Plains at the expense of the Apaches. Cuartelejo and Paloma Apaches sought Spanish aid in 1706 and once again in 1719 because they were in an increasingly desperate position in the central Plains. They used one thing they did have—Spanish fears of the French—to try to gain a European ally against their Pawnee, Wichita, and Comanche enemies.
Spanish officials in New Mexico were accustomed to approaching the Apaches as enemies, not potential allies. Raiding by Apaches and military campaigns by the Spaniards punctuated their relationship throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the basis of Apache reports to Ulibarri and Valverde, however, these officials briefly came to view the Apaches as a crucial ally against the French and the Pawnees, and they sought to bolster their northern defenses in Apache lands. In early 1720 the Marqués de Valero in Mexico City commanded Valverde to establish a presidio at El Cuartelejo; to convert the Apaches and make them farmers, so they could block French expansion; and to send a reconnaissance mission to the north to investigate French activities in the central Plains. Valverde convened a war council, which concluded that the El Cuartelejo presidio was too risky, and that La Jicarilla—a village of Jicarilla Apaches about one hundred miles northeast of Santa Fé—would be a more suitable location. It also began planning for Valero’s reconnaissance mission.

When Pedro de Villasur, Valverde’s lieutenant, led the requested expedition out of Santa Fé in mid-June 1720, he knew little about the Great Plains and would have to rely heavily on Native guides. One of them was José Naranjo, the “captain” of Villasur’s sixty Pueblo auxiliaries and a veteran of the Ulibarri and Valverde Expeditions. Apache allies also guided the expedition. Leaving the Taos pueblo, Villasur entered the lands of the Carlana Apaches, whom he gave some maize, tobacco, and a few knives in return for their service as guides into Pawnee lands. The expedition party then probably followed a trail that ran from the Great Bend of the Arkansas River to Grand Island in the Platte River. It reached the Platte by Tuesday, August 6. On the Platte, Villasur would depend on the services of a Pawnee slave named François Sistaca, who was the property of Captain Cristóbal de la Serna, an expedition member. Apaches might have originally captured and sold Sistaca into New Mexico. His last name clearly derives from their term for the river of the Pawnees—the “Sitacah” —and he might have come from one of the Chawi settlements on the Platte River.

After Naranjo and Sistaca spent a few days scouting the Platte Valley, Villasur met about twenty-five members of the Pawnee encampment. The Pawnees said that “they wanted peace” but could “not confer that day,” pointing to the sun—perhaps an indication that it was too late in the day to initiate the calumet ceremony. Carrying some tobacco for use in the ceremony, Sistaca went over to the Pawnees. He would never return to his life in slavery. The Pawnees sent back someone else, who brought a white flag and spoke in a language that the Spaniards could not understand. Juan L’Archevêque, a Frenchman and Spanish loyalist accompanying the expedition, took the flag from the Indian and gave him a letter written in French, which most coureurs de bois would not have been able to read even if they were present in the Pawnee village.

After additional communication attempts failed and the Pawnees captured a Pueblo or Apache ally who had been bathing in a stream, Villasur retreated back to the Platte-Loup confluence, likely camping just southwest of present-day Columbus, Nebraska. The clear signs of Spanish-Apache cooperation, let alone the violation of Pawnee sovereignty, probably sealed Villasur’s fate. The Pawnees must have known that his party traveled safely from New Mexico through the neighboring lands of the Apaches with the help of the Carlana guides, and Sistaca may have told them about meetings with the Cuartelejos and his slavery in the Spanish colony. The Pawnees likely viewed Villasur and the other Spaniards as the allies of their Apache enemies.

The attack came suddenly on the morning of August 13. According to Valverde, the Pawnees followed Sistaca’s advice by remaining in “hiding until after the sun had come up, giving time to our people to lessen their precaution, some being engaged in catching horses, others gathering the utensils, and all
A surviving member of the horse guard testified that the Pawnees’ initial gun volley sent the Spanish horse herd “into a stampede.” He and a few others broke through to the rest of the Spaniards, rescuing seven of them, overtook the horse herd, and repulsed three different attacks by a “great number of enemies.” After rescuing three more Spaniards, the group of survivors retreated, accompanied by the Pueblos. Among the dead were Villasur, L’Archevêque, Naranjo, and eleven of the sixty Pueblo auxiliaries. The fourteen Spanish survivors turned southwest and eventually reached the Cuartelejo Apaches, who treated them with “much kindness for two days” and insisted on a reprisal. They arrived back at Santa Fé on September 6, 1720.

When news of the expedition’s defeat reached Santa Fé, Valverde, sensing his own career on the line, was eager to blame the French for the catastrophe. In a letter to the Marqués de Valero in Mexico City, he claimed that the attacking force consisted of “more than two hundred” French soldiers using arquebuses, with an endless number of Pawnee Indians as their allies. He was “persuaded,” moreover, that the attackers included “some . . . heretical Huguenots whose insolent audacity did not even spare the innocence of the priest who went as chaplain.” The stakes were high for Valverde and New Mexico. The destruction of the Villasur Expedition was a sizable blow to the poorly equipped frontier province. Thirty-one of the original forty-five Spaniards on the expedition had perished, and Valverde informed the Marqués de Valero in Mexico City that he required men to fill the vacancy” at the Santa Fé garrison. French participation in the attack would have also constituted a violation of the Treaty of The Hague, which had ended the War of the Quadruple Alliance in February 1720.

It is possible that a few French traders—certainly not the 200 soldiers that Valverde claimed—were among the Pawnees when Villasur arrived, but the Spanish eyewitnesses and survivors did not really identify any. One of them testified ambiguously in 1724 that he “does not know whether they [the attackers] were French or some other nation.” Moreover, French officials were in fact surprised by the expedition and had to piece together what had happened. The news traveled from Indians or coureurs de bois in the Missouri Country to Boisbriant at Fort de Chartres, down the Mississippi to Governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyen de Bienville in New Orleans, and across the Atlantic to the directors of the Compagnie des Indes in Paris. In the weeks following the skirmish, vague reports about the expedition reached Boisbriant. On October 5, 1720, he informed Governor Bienville that the Otoes and Kansas had recently raided the “Padokas” for 250 slaves and also killed twenty Spaniards. Later, on November 22, 1720, he reported that 250 Spaniards, “accompanied by the Padoka [Apache] nation,” crossed the Plains to “make an establishment on the Missouri” and confront the Otoes, who had recently raided the Apaches. After defeating five nations and sending captives back to New Mexico, a smaller party of sixty Spaniards and 150 Apaches met the Otoes, who earned their trust before quickly killing everyone except for two men and a chaplain, whom they held prisoner.

Based on Boisbriant’s imaginative reports, Bienville informed the directors of the Compagnie des Indes the following summer that 200 Spaniards and a large number of Apaches had come from New Mexico to attack the French in the Illinois Country. Like Boisbriant, he never once claimed that any Frenchmen were directly involved. Instead, he credited Otoes and Pawnees, “our allies,” for destroying the Spanish plot. Bienville interpreted the attack on Villasur as a demonstration of loyalty by Pawnees and Otoes, not as a preemptive strike against an Apache ally. Father Charlevoix, a Jesuit who traveled through the Illinois Country within a year of the Villasur Expedition, was more skeptical of the intentions of the Indians who reported the Spanish defeat.

Pawnees and their neighbors in the central Plains would continue to disrupt and manipulate the military and political goals of Europeans following the expedition by stoking
fears of Spanish settlement. A few months after the attack, Boisbriant heard that the Spaniards reportedly brought along a large number of cattle and sheep for an establishment on the Missouri. Less than two years later, in April 1722, Bienville informed the French Crown that according to “Indians of the Missouri,” the Spaniards had plans of returning to punish their enemies and establishing a post on the Kansas River. He ordered Boisbriant to send twenty soldiers to build a fort and establish a garrison on the same river. Yet the Pawnees had proven to Spanish officials that they did not have the resources to patrol the central Plains. When Spain formed a new alliance with France in 1721, regaining Pensacola and territory in Texas, officials in Mexico City withdrew support for the planned presidio among the Jicarilla Apaches. Following the Villasur Expedition, they yielded the Plains to the Pawnees and the Comanches, whose raids would punish New Mexico in the ensuing decades.

Now fearing a Spanish invasion, the French Crown commanded Bourgmont, the experienced explorer and husband of a Missouria woman, to establish a post in the Missouri Country to guard against Spanish advances. At the same time, it still wanted him to effect an alliance with the Apaches to open up the New Mexico trade. In January 1722 the directors of the Compagnies des Indes asked him to establish “peace with the Padoucas and the other savage nations that make war with those allies of the French.”

Before Bourgmont even reached the Missouri Country, however, the directors would change their minds about the Apaches. In a few years’ time the price of Indian slaves in New Orleans had increased from 40 to more than 300 livres, and the Apache slave trade ban stood in the way of substantial profits for a struggling colony. In 1723 Governor Bienville wrote to Boisbriant, “The commissioners remark to you in their last letter that however easy M. de Bourgmont may believe it is to make peace with the Padoucas, we should drop the idea and push our tribes toward war with them and trade in slaves for the account of the Company.”

Bienville himself believed that Bourgmont should really be going to the Missouri Country to “push all the Missouri tribes against the Fox, to destroy that nation.”

Even some of Bourgmont’s men opposed a French alliance with the Apaches. While constructing Fort d’Orléans, the new post on the Missouri, he had to quell an insurrection led by two officers who disapproved of his “despotic authority” and wanted to trade for Apache slaves despite the Crown’s prohibition. His Apache peace proposal probably threatened the commercial gain of still other expedition members. One of the early casualties of the expedition was a Canadian named Jean Rivet, who died on September 1, 1724, in the Missouri Country. An inventory of Rivet’s papers compiled at Fort d’Orléans on December 14, 1724, includes a bill of exchange for a “Padoca slave” aged “six to seven years.” Another French casualty in the Missouri Country—Claude Gouin, a native of Angers, France, and keeper of the storehouse at Fort d’Orléans—awarded some flour as well as “a small Padoca slave of eight to nine years” to a man named Girard in his will dated September 2, 1724. Bourgmont would set out from the Missouri River to reach the Apaches only a week later. This trade in Apache slaves helped compromise the French commitment to an Apache alliance, likely to the benefit of the Pawnees.

Bourgmont finally discovered the company’s reversal on the Apaches in February 1724, when he was hundreds of miles up the Missouri River. Fearing a possible alliance between the Apaches and the Fox, who had recently made overtures to the Otoes and Iowas, he refused to abandon the expedition. Apache slaves would play a crucial role in his diplomacy. The two Apache women he had brought along both died of disease—likely cholera—within weeks of their arrival at a Kansa village. Bourgmont purchased two additional Apache slaves from the Kansa and sent them ahead with a Frenchman named François Gaillard to look for their Apache village. A few months later, he met 200 Apache leaders and warriors, whom he asked to accept peace with the French allies.
in attendance: the Kansas, Osages, Otoes, Iowas, and Skiri Pawnees. The leader of the Apaches replied that he would guarantee the safe passage of French traders to the Spanish, and that he was indebted to the French for bringing much better trade goods—including “fusils, gunpowder and balls”—than the Spanish did. According to the Apache chief’s enemy, the Skiri Pawnee leader, peace would bring “tranquility,” horses, and safer hunting.

The peace was likely fleeting. For Pawnees, hunting bison and occupying their lands, which the celestial gods had made for their use, were religious prerogatives. The “differences among [Pawnees and Apaches] could not be reconciled with temporal material objects or haranguing speeches by white foreigners,” as James Riding In has concluded. The Apaches would remain on the defensive. In 1726, two years after the Plains peace conference, the governor of Louisiana reported that Wichitas were raiding the Padoucas, or Apaches, their “irreconcilable enemy,” and “from whom they [Wichitas] capture many slaves and take a large number of horses.” In the same year, the officials at Fort de Chartres questioned Desmanets about his role in the trade of Apache and Pawnee slaves.

As much as French and Spanish officials believed that coureurs de bois were to blame for hostilities on the central Plains, the declaration of the Skiri Pawnee leader illustrates that Europeans gave themselves too much credit for these conflicts. Pawnees and Wichitas may have raided Apaches to obtain captives for trade with men like Desmanets and Poudret, but they had more important reasons for conducting these raids: obtaining horses, securing land for hunting, and gaining access to limited sources of water and timber in the western Plains. In a decade of conflict and transition in the central Plains, Europeans effectively became conscripts in indigenous campaigns to control natural resources. Apaches capitalized on Spanish fears of a French invasion to encourage Valverde to send an expedition...
into Pawnee lands. And Pawnees took advantage of the emerging Missouri River trade to enlist French traders in attacks on Apaches. Eventually, the combined pressure of Pawnees, Wichitas, and Comanches forced the Apaches to abandon their northern settlements on the Republican and Smoky Hill rivers. By 1750 Kitkahahki Pawnees lived in villages on the Republican River, once the home of the Apaches; the Pitahawiratas lived on the Smoky
Hill and Blue rivers, with the former also at one point a Padouca, or Apache, territory; and the Chawis occupied villages near Shell Creek and on the south bank of the Platte River. The Skiri Pawnees continued to live in the old villages on the Loup River. The hunting territory of the South Bands expanded along with this settlement into former Apache lands; these bands now ranged as far south as the Arkansas River on their hunting expeditions.

Valverde did not see the Pawnee attack on the Villasur Expedition as a strategic move to eliminate an Apache ally or assert control over lands. Instead, he continued to insist that the French were behind it. A few years after the expedition, someone in New Mexico memorialized Villasur’s final moments in an enormously large and detailed hide painting called Segesser II (Figs. 2 and 3), named after a Jesuit missionary to Sonora who shipped the painting back to his family in Switzerland, where it remained until 1986. If the artist was himself not an expedition survivor, he must have based the painting on eyewitness accounts. He depicted the forks of the two rivers; the Pueblo Indians who were guarding the Spanish horse herd; the painted bodies, headbands, and traditional weapons of the Pawnee attackers; and individual members of the expedition, including a mortally wounded Villasur. But the artist also included nineteen Frenchmen among the Indians attacking the Spaniards. Awarding the French this much attention may not have been just chance; Valverde himself possibly commissioned this work as a visual corroboration of his claims about French involvement. If this was the case, then the hide painting illustrates a story that some Spaniards told themselves about why Villasur never made it back.

NOTES


23. Guillaume Delisle, Carte du Mexique et de la Floride: des terres angloises et des Isles Antilles, du cours et des environs de la riviere de Mississippi (Amsterdam: Chez Jean Covens & Corneille Mortier, 1722), Edward Ayer Map Collection, Newberry Library.


25. Weltfish, Lost Universe, 63.

26. Weltfish, Lost Universe, 19, 64, 79; Murie, Ceremonies of the Pawnee, 13, 38; Douglas R. Parks and Waldo R. Wedel, “Pawnee Geography: Historical and Sacred,” Great Plains Quarterly 5, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 152; White, Roots of


On the sacred sites themselves, see Parks and Wedel, “Pawnee Geography,” 144, 152, 155, 160.


30. For the origins of the calumet ceremony, see Weltfish, Lost Universe, 175.


32. For the role of Pawnee chiefs in trade, see Weltfish, Lost Universe, 7, 19; and White, Roots of Dependency, 191.


34. On the Pawnee horse trade, see Wishart, Unspeakable Sadness, 31.

35. Weltfish, Lost Universe, 175.


37. On the license system, see Carolyn Podruchny, Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 22. For evidence of early French-Pawnee trade, see Weltfish, Lost Universe, 368.


39. For an interpretation of this meeting, see Echo-Hawk, “Skidi Pawnee History on the Loup River,” 27.


43. Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:314. On the Osage and Wichita trade blockades, see Hamiläinen, Comanche Empire, 32.


46. Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 10–11, 13.

47. For the original deposition of Desmanets, see Kaskaskia Manuscripts 26:9:2:1 (September 2, 1726), microfilm, originals at Randolph County Courthouse, Chester, Illinois. For a full English translation of the deposition, see Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 21–22.

48. Qtd. in Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 19.

49. Qtd. in Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 20.

50. Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 21.

51. Bourgmont purchased Padoucas from the Kansas during his expedition to the Plains in 1724. See “Relation du voyage de Mr. de Bourgmont chevalier de l’ordre militaire de St. Louis, Commandant de la Riviere du Missoury et sur lechant de celle du
Arkansas. Du Missoury au Padoucas,” Bourgmont file, Chicago History Museum Archives. This version, previously unnoted by historians including Bourgmont’s biographer, is one of four extant originals; the other three are located in French archives. For translation, see Norall, Bourgmont, 140. Boisbriant reported in 1720 that the Wichitas had taken one hundred Padouca captives. See Villiers, “Le Massacre de l’expédition Espagnole du Missouri,” 250. On the Comanche trade in Apache captives, see Hämäläinen, Comanche Empire, 38–39. 
54. For the role of captives in family wealth and reputation in Pawnee villages, see Brooks, Captives and Cousins, 16; for a comparable role of women captives as laborers in Comanche communities, see Hämäläinen, Comanche Empire, 252.
58. Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:316.
61. “Diary of Juan de Ulibarri,” AC, 70.
63. See the testimony of Miguel Tenorio, a veteran of the Ulibarri Expedition, in AC, 157.
64. See Hämäläinen, Comanche Empire, 31.
65. Waldo R. Wedel, Central Plains Prehistory: Holocene Environments and Culture Change in the Republican River Basin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 139. On the dating (through dendrochronology) and identification of the village site, see Gunnerson, “Introduction to Plains Archaeology,” 146.
70. For the enlistment of the Carlana Apaches as guides, see “Declaration of Tamariz, Santa Fé, April 21, 1724,” AC, 251; and “Declaration of Alva, Santa Fé, April 23, 1724,” AC, 255. See also Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings, 185.
71. For a day-to-day account of the Villasur Expedition, see Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings. For the route of the expedition, see Blakeslee, Blasing, and Garcia, Along the Pawnee Trail, 106, 109, 153; M. A. Shine, “The Platte-Loup Site,” in Nebraska History and Record of Pioneer Days 7, no. 3 (1924): 85; Sheldon, “Nebraska Historical Expedition,” 91; and Villiers, “Le Massacre de l’expédition Espagnole du Missouri,” 246. For an opposing interpretation of
the expedition route, see Alfred Barnaby Thomas, “Massacre of the Villasur Expedition,” Nebraska History and Record of Pioneer Days, no. 3 (1924): 75–76; AC, 270n79. Thomas, however, did not take into account magnetic declination, as Blakeslee notes. See Blakeslee, Blasing, and Garcia, Among the Pawnee Trail, 106.

72. The Cuartelejo Apaches told Ulibarri that the Indian tribes to the northeast lived on five rivers, including the “Sitsacaha, and on this live the Pawnees in two large rancheras.” This river was possibly the Republican or the Platte. See “The Diary of Juan de Ulibarri to El Cuartelejo,” AC, 176.

73. Gottfried Hotz suggests that Sistaca’s name perhaps was derived from the Pawnee words Chais, meaning “man,” and taka, or “white,” implying that he himself was captured from Chawi Pawnees, who painted their bodies white. Roger Echo-Hawk also proposes that he may have been a Chawi Pawnee. See Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings, 199n43; and Echo-Hawk, “Skidi Pawnee History on the Loup River,” 26.

74. “Testimony of Aguilar, Santa Fé, July 1, 1726,” AC, 227; “Martinez to Valero, Mexico 1720,” AC, 184. On the illiteracy of most coureurs de bois and the difficulty of finding written sources about them, see Podruchny, Making the Voyageur World, 4–10.

75. Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings, 199. For Spanish reports on contact with the Pawnees and the ensuing retreat, see “Valverde to Valero, Santa Fé, October 8, 1720,” AC, 163–64; “Martinez to Valero, Mexico 1720,” AC, 184; “Testimony of Aguilar, Santa Fé, July 1, 1726,” AC, 227; and the “Testimony of Tamariz, Santa Fé, July 2, 1726,” AC, 229.


78. “Valverde to Valero, Santa Fé, October 8, 1720,” AC, 165. Physical remains of the Spanish-Pawnee skirmish have proved difficult to find. Excavations at the Eagle Ridge site in eastern Nebraska revealed Spanish olive jar fragments that may have come from the expedition. Students at the Genoa Indian school reportedly found Spanish artifacts near the Loup River, as did white farmers. See Gayle F. Carlson and John R. Bozell, ed., “The Eagle Ridge Site and Early Eighteenth Century Indian-European Relations in Eastern Nebraska,” Central Plains Archaeology, no. 1 (2010): 134, 188; and Sheldon, “Nebraska Historical Expedition,” 96.

79. Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings, 204.

80. “Valverde to Valero, Santa Fé, October 8, 1720,” AC, 165. By emphasizing French involvement, Valverde refused to acknowledge the growing military superiority of indigenous peoples in the eighteenth century. For a broader discussion of the military realities confronting Spain on its North and South American frontiers by midcentury, see Weber, Barbaros, 68–82.

81. The priest accompanying Villasur was named Father Juan Mínguez. Father Charlevoix would later report erroneously that Mínguez had escaped the massacre but was captured by Indians; the Spanish, however, knew he had died. See Dumont de Montigny, Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane, vol. 2 (Paris: n.p., 1753), 287; AC, 39n105; “Valverde to Valero, Santa Fé, October 8, 1720,” AC, 164; Ralph Emerson Twitchell, ed., The Spanish Archives of New Mexico, vol. 2 (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914), 171.

82. “Valverde to Valero, Santa Fé, October 8, 1720,” AC, 167; John, Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds, 250.


87. For Boisbriant, see Villiers, “Le Massacre de l’expédition Espagnole du Missouri,” 251, 252; for Bienville, see Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:387.

88. Weber, Spanish Frontier in North America, 171; John, Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds, 250. On the consequences of abandoning the presidio at La Jicarilla, see Hämäläinen, Comanche Empire, 36–37.

89. For Bourmont’s instructions, see “Mémoire pour le sieur de Bourmont approuvé par S.A. Royale,” in Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:389; and “Instruction pour le dit Bourmont,” January 17, 1722 (one of at least two extant originals), Bourmont file, Chicago History Museum Archives. See also Waldo R. Wedel, An Introduction to Kansas Archeology, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 174 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1959), 28; and Norall, Bourmont, 20, 24.


91. Qtd. in Norall, Bourmont, 45; see also Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:391–92.

92. Qtd. in Norall, Bourmont, 48.

93. Norall, Bourmont, 42, 43 (quote).

96. Margry, Découvertes et établissements, 6:397, trans. in Norall, Bourgmont, 49.
97. “Relation du voyage de Mr. de Bourgmont,” Chicago History Museum Archives. For translation, see Norall, Bourgmont, 140.
98. The Padoucas lived in large houses (“cabanes”) and were semisedentary, spending part of the year raising crops, suggesting they were Apaches, not Comanches. See George Grinnell, “Who Were the Padoucas?” 253; Wedel, Introduction to Kansas Archeology, 73; Hyde, Indians of the High Plains, 84.
100. See Riding In, “Keepers of Tirawahut’s Covenant,” 49 (quote), 83.
101. “Memoir on Louisiana, the Indians and the Commerce that Can Be Carried on with Them,” (1726) in Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, eds., Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Dominion, vol. 3 (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927), 532; Ekberg, Stealing Indian Women, 21–22.
103. Wedel, Central Plains Prehistory, 139; Wedel, Introduction to Pawnee Archeology, 4; White, Roots of Dependency, 152; Wishart, Unspeakable Sadness, 4; George A. Dorsey, The Pawnee Mythology (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 8.
106. For the distinct portrayal of the Pawnees and Valverde’s possible role, see Hotz, Indian Skin Paintings, 81–150, 204, 228.