

The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters

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Introduction

The Comparative Archaeology of Colonial Encounters

Gil J. Stein

For we who were Occidentals now have been made Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank is now a Galilaeen, or an inhabitant of Palestine. One who was a citizen of Rheims or of Chartres now has been made a citizen of Tyre or of Antioch. We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already they have become unknown to many of us, or, at least, are unmentioned.... Some have taken wives not merely of their own people, but Syrians, or Armenians, or even Saracens who have received the grace of baptism.... The one and the other use mutually the speech and the idioms of the different languages. Different languages, now made common, become known to both races, and faith unites those whose forefathers were strangers. As it is written, "The lion and the ox shall eat straw together." Those who were strangers are now natives; and he who was a sojourner now has become a resident.

*Fulcher of Chartres, Medieval Chronicler of the Crusades
A.D. 1127 (Krey 1921:280–81)*

Colonial encounters are a widespread, cross-cultural process having far-reaching effects on the economy and political organization of prehistoric and historically documented societies in both the Old and New Worlds (Algaze 1993a, 1993b; Champion 1989; Dyson, ed. 1985; Lyons and Papadopoulos, eds. 2002; Rowlands, Larsen, and Kristiancen, 1987). As illustrated by the quote above from Fulcher of Chartres, a twelfth-century participant in and chronicler of the Crusades, these

colonial encounters also had profound transformative effects on the cultural identities of all groups involved. Archaeologically documented colonies were established by state societies such as Teotihuacan (Santley, Yarborough, and Hall 1987) and Oaxaca (Rattray 1990b, 1993; Spence 1992); by polities of Andean South America such as Wari (Schreiber 1992), Tiwanaku (Goldstein 1993), and the Inka Empire (D'Altroy 1992; Pease 1982); by Uruk Mesopotamia (Algaze 1993b; Rothman, ed. 2001; Stein 1999b), Egypt (W. Adams 1984; S. T. Smith 1998), Assyria (Larsen 1976), Greece (Boardman 1980; Dietler 1998; Tsatskhladze and De Angelis 1994); Phoenicia, and Carthage (Aubert 1993; van Dommelen 1998); by the empire of Alexander the Great and his Hellenistic successors (Descoedres 1990); and by Rome (Alcock 1989, 1993; Haselgrove 1987; Millett 1990; Wells 1998). However, to date there has been no real effort to synthesize this large body of accumulating evidence into a general theoretical understanding of colonial encounters in cross-cultural perspective. Gosden (2004) proposes a comparatively oriented model for the archaeology of colonialism. Gosden's approach explicitly focuses on the materialization of symbolic power between regions, and not on colonies per se (2004:3). As such, it complements the approach taken in our own volume, which examines the dynamics of symbolic, political, and economic interaction in relation to identity in colonial encounters. This is particularly important because the common model of colonies is grounded in the experience of European colonialism in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries A.D. By focusing on non-Western and precapitalist networks from both the Old and New Worlds, we can broaden our perspective to develop a more realistic, synthetic understanding of colonial encounters.

Despite the intellectual centrality of colonial encounters in the anthropology of complex societies, there is still no consensus among anthropologists about (1) what colonies are, (2) how and why colonies vary one from another, (3) how colonies function as social, economic, and political entities, (4) what colonial relations are like with indigenous host communities, and (5) how ethnic identities are transformed in colonial situations. Most significantly, researchers disagree on the fundamental foci of analysis—are we studying *colonies*, *colonization*, or *colonialism*? Overall, our understanding of these important phenomena suffers because we have no theoretical framework within which to

understand colonial encounters as a cross-cultural phenomenon. I am using the term “colonial encounters” in the title of the book and in the discussion below as a way to avoid the semantic baggage of other constructs, while at the same time emphasizing the dynamic nature of these processes of cultural interaction.

This chapter attempts to identify some of the main research issues involved in developing a comparative archaeology of colonial encounters. My goal is to highlight key debates and emerging themes in the ways we conceptualize this form of interaction. The theoretical framework employed here explicitly recognizes the cultural uniqueness of specific historical conjunctures while at the same time maintaining a comparative perspective aimed at identifying both variation and cross-culturally recurring processes in colonial encounters. This book presents revised versions of papers discussed at a conference on the archaeology of colonization in cross-cultural perspective, held at the School of American Research in Santa Fe (NM), March 19–23, 2000, as part of the SAR advanced seminar program. The contributors to this volume examine prehistoric, precapitalist, and early historic colonies of the Old and New Worlds in an attempt to develop a more synthetic understanding of colonial encounters as a form of interregional interaction characteristic of ancient state societies and/or their constituent social groups.

COMPARATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON COLONIES

Colonies, colonial encounters, and colonialism have emerged as an important focus for converging lines of research by social anthropologists, ethnohistorians, and anthropological archaeologists. This is entirely appropriate, since colonialism has played such a crucial role in shaping the complex societies and enduring structures of political economies in both the ancient and modern worlds. At the same time, as postcolonial theory has emphasized, the practices of colonialism have had a pervasive and transformative impact on the cultures of all groups involved in colonial encounters. Colonialism has furthermore played an important and often implicit structuring role in Western intellectual traditions, not least in anthropology and archaeology.

As Dietler points out (this volume), archaeology can contribute

significantly to our understanding of colonies, colonial encounters, and colonialism for several reasons. First, it generates material data that are fundamentally different from, and independent of, the textual record on which most colonial and postcolonial theory is based. Archaeological data illuminate the unconscious processes and *habitus* of daily life, thereby complementing the ideologically charged information provided by historical sources. Archaeological data also allow us to examine those ancient, non-Western, and precapitalist colonial encounters that fall outside the scope of the written word, whether for geographical, chronological, or contextual reasons. Thus archaeology can provide a wide range of case studies that can contribute to more general theory because they differ markedly from the standard, better-known episodes of colonial expansion by Greece, Rome, and the European states in the Age of Discovery.

Archaeologists have studied colonies for more than a century (all Roman archaeology in Britain and early historical archaeology in the United States could be regarded as the archaeology of colonies). However, the explicitly *comparative*, theoretically informed study of historical, ancient, and non-Western colonies and colonial encounters is a relatively recent development (see, for example, Dyson, ed. 1985; Descoedres 1990; D. H. Thomas 1991; Cusick, ed. 1998; Gosden 2004; Lyons and Papadopoulos, eds. 2002). This book complements and builds on the comparative work to date in two significant ways. First, the focus of analysis is shifted here from analyses of colonialism to analyses of colonial encounters as a concept that does not have implications about specific power relations among the interacting groups. Second, the current volume is the first to bring case studies from the prehispanic New World into explicitly comparative analyses of colonial encounters. The latter is particularly important as a corrective for our discipline's tendency to build theoretical models of colonial encounters based on either Greco-Roman or European colonialism.

A related set of theoretical, methodological, and empirical developments suggests that now is an ideal time to attempt a new synthetic appraisal of ancient colonial encounters. At the theoretical level, archaeologists have been able to identify a broadly recurring pattern of colonization as a strategy of expansion in ancient state societies (Algaze 1993a). Sociocultural anthropologists have come to recognize the

importance of indigenous agency in colonial systems—that is, the idea that local groups play a key role in structuring interaction. At the same time, anthropological archaeologists have begun to question the universal applicability of the European-based world-system model to non-Western and precapitalist colonial networks (for example, Dietler 1998; Stein 1998). In other words, the dominant role of the colonizer has been effectively challenged (see, for example, Blaut 1993). Concurrently, anthropologists have developed methodological frameworks to examine the roles of indigenous groups in colonial interaction and the ways their identities are transformed (for example, Deagan 1998; Hannerz 1987; van Dommelen 1997a). Finally, we now have an extremely rich database of high-quality empirical research on both colonies and colonial-local interaction in a variety of Old and New World complex societies.

COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS AND EVOLVING PARADIGMS OF INTERREGIONAL INTERACTION

Colonial encounters form part of the broader phenomenon of culture contact or interregional interaction. A number of related theoretical developments in both historical and prehistoric archaeology have led to an emerging consensus that we can reasonably call a new paradigm for interregional interaction (Stein 2002b). Archaeologists have come to recognize that a focus on agency (for example, Dobres and Robb 2000), practice (for example, Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff 1998), and social identity (for example, van Dommelen 1998; Wells 1998) can greatly clarify our understanding of how complex societies function and evolve. More specifically, researchers have been revising their models to incorporate the idea that the recursive relationship between social structure and the strategic actions of individuals or small groups plays a major role in reproducing and changing the social organization of complex societies.

The second major development leading to a fundamental rethinking of interregional interaction has been the increasing dialogue among prehistoric archaeologists, archaeologists working with textually documented ancient societies such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and historical archaeologists dealing with the European expansion in the Age of Discovery (see, for example, Lightfoot 1995).

Recognizing that the world systems and acculturation models apply to only a small subset of culture contact situations, researchers are now making a conscious effort to define interregional interaction in ways that incorporate a broad range of variation including long-distance trade, colonial situations, and military expansion. By doing this, we can now start to move beyond simple typologies of interaction, and instead we can start to focus on the variables and processes that explain why the organization and effects of culture contact can be expected to vary under different structural conditions and historical contingencies (Schortman and Urban 1998; Stein 1998).

This emerging perspective on interregional interaction consists of seven interrelated elements (Stein 2002b). First and fundamentally, the current research combines processual and post-processual approaches. From post-processual theory, we see a concern with agency, practice, ideology, the active role of material culture in negotiating cultural identity, and the importance of historical contingency. Key processual elements include a recognition of the importance of political economy, a comparative analytical framework, and a concern with explicit, replicable methodologies that use data to evaluate broader theoretical propositions.

Second, the new framework rejects unilinear models such as acculturation and world systems as being limited to only a narrow range of the possible forms of interaction. Third, this framework is, in Kent G. Lightfoot's words, "multiscalar" (Lightfoot 1995; Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff 1998:199). In contrast with the world-systems model's structural overdetermination at the interregional level, current approaches see the organization of culture contact as the composite outcome of processes at both the intra- and inter-polity levels.

The fourth key element of this new paradigm is its explicit recognition of patterned variability in the power relations of the polities linked by an interaction network. Under some conditions, more developed "cores" can control less developed "peripheries" on the lines of world-systems/acculturation models. In many other cases, interaction can take place on a more equal footing. Some of the major factors that can affect the interregional balance of power are (1) distance and transportation economics; (2) technology (especially military and transportation technologies); (3) population size and composition

(especially in the primary zone of culture contact); (4) disease; (5) military organization; and (6) the degree of social complexity in each polity.

The fifth aspect of this framework is the explicit recognition that the interacting complex societies must be seen as heterogeneous entities, composed of different groups whose interests, goals, and social strategies are often in conflict. Group identities are defined by categories such as ethnicity, class, and gender (Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff 1998). These groups overlap, so that membership in each is differentially expressed depending on social context. Interregional interaction also creates entirely new categories of identity through ethnogenesis (Deagan 1998).

The heterogeneity of the interacting polities brings out a sixth main aspect of the new interaction paradigm: the importance of internal dynamics. In other words, the diverse economic, political, social, and ideological processes inside each polity are as important as external processes (such as long-distance trade or colonization) in shaping the overall organization of the network.

Finally, the seventh aspect of this new framework is an idea that permeates the other six. This is the principle that human agency is as important as macroscale political economy in the organization of interregional interaction networks. Agency plays a crucial structuring role in all parts of these systems—not just in the highly developed core areas. This contrasts markedly with the world-systems and acculturation models' treatment of less developed peripheral polities as passive recipients of unidirectional influences from the core.

The combination of theoretical developments and an improved knowledge base of more representative archaeological case studies makes this an ideal opportunity to reexamine colonial encounters within this emerging new perspective on interregional interaction. Our goal in this book is to elucidate recurring mechanisms and processes in colonial encounters, rather than engage in a futile attempt to develop a single global model.

WHAT ARE COLONIES?

Definitions and definitional debates are irritating, pedantic, and unfortunately necessary. As C. Wright Mills noted, "The purpose of definition is to focus argument upon fact, and...the proper result of

good definition is to transform argument over terms into disagreements about fact, and thus open arguments to further inquiry” (Mills 1959:34).

The basic question “What is a colony?” is surprisingly contentious. In historians’ usage, the traditional view of colonies is almost completely structured by the European experience. In one of the few attempts to develop a typology of colonies, Finley argues that we should continue to follow the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century usage and restrict the term “colony” to only those implanted settlements characterized by (1) large-scale emigration from the homeland, (2) the appropriation of local lands through the subjugation of local peoples, (3) colonial control of the local labor force, and (4) formal political and economic control of the implanted settlement by the homeland or metropolis (Finley 1976:184). Central to Finley’s model is the idea, drawn from European colonialism, that the implanted settlements dominate indigenous peoples, who are seen as “technically backward, small scale in their political organization, incapable of concerted action, as compared with their European conquerors. Above all they were . . . hopelessly outclassed in their ability to apply force” (Finley 1976:184). Inequality and domination are thus inherent in every level of the model, in a chain of domination where homelands control colonies and the latter in turn control the indigenous host communities around them. As a result, Finley’s overrestrictive definition excludes Greek, Phoenician, Hellenistic, Crusader, Venetian, and other important historical and ethnographic cases from his definition of colonies because they do not reflect foreign domination over local communities (Finley 1976:177).

However, any definition that excludes this many archaeological and historical cases impedes rather than helps us in our goal of understanding the comparative dynamics of ancient colonial encounters. We need a more neutral definition of colonies that subsumes, but is not limited to, European colonialism. For purposes of cross-cultural comparison, I suggest that a colony can be provisionally defined as

an implanted settlement established by one society in either uninhabited territory or the territory of another society. The implanted settlement is established for long-term residence by all or part of the homeland or metropole’s population

and is both spatially and socially distinguishable from the communities of the indigenous polity or peoples among whom it is established. The settlement at least starts off with a distinct formal corporate identity as a community with cultural/ritual, economic, military, or political ties to its homeland, but the homeland need not politically dominate the implanted settlement (Stein 2002a:30).

The corporate nature of the foreign community and its formalized ties with its homeland are important elements that provide a significant distinction between colonies and episodes of migration by individuals or families. This definition treats the nature of power relations between the colony and the host community, and between the colony and its homeland, as open issues to be determined empirically, rather than assuming a priori that these are structured along the lines of European colonialism.

This reformulated definition has several advantages. First, it encompasses the sixteenth- to twentieth-century European expansion while also allowing us to compare a wide variety of ancient, non-Western and/or precapitalist networks of colonies within a single general framework. Second, the recognition of variation in power relationships forces us to investigate the dynamics of historically specific interactional situations, while also focusing our attention on investigating the broader-scale structural determinants of these relationships. The definition of colonies proposed here accords substantially with that suggested by Dietler (this volume).

As the case studies in this volume show, colonies can be established for a variety of often-overlapping purposes. Exchange and/or resource extraction, usually in conjunction with other functions, is probably the single most common reason for the establishment of colonies. Other important colonial functions, usually combined with exchange and resource extraction, are (1) colonies as military or administrative outposts connected with direct conquest, such as Roman provincial colonies (Alcock this volume; Schreiber this volume); (2) colonies as refuges, such as the Puritan Massachusetts Bay colony; (3) “settler colonies” as so-called safety valves to resettle excess population in order to defuse social conflict or land shortages in the homeland, such as the Greek colonies or Australia; (4) colonies as outposts for the spread of

a specific ideology, such as the Spanish missions in California (Lightfoot this volume); (5) colonies as capital investments in agriculture, such as the early English colonies in Virginia; and (6) colonies as points of resettlement for the conquered populations of empires, such as the Inka *mitmaquna* settlements (D'Altroy this volume).

The ancient Greeks distinguished between at two different kinds of colonies—*apoikea* (a settlement colony that reproduced the key features of its founding *polis* or city-state) and *emporion* (trading outpost). We have also noted above Finley's (1976) attempt to develop a typology of colonies. Although it is important to recognize that colonies can be founded for different reasons and operate in a variety of contexts, we should be careful not to reify these distinctions. The contributors to this volume were unanimous in arguing that typologies of colonies only obscure the tremendous range of variation in the reasons for the establishment of these settlements, and in the ways that they actually functioned.

The establishment of colonies appears to be a process uniquely characteristic of complex societies—almost exclusively states and empires. We can speculate that some possible reasons for this might include the following:

1. States function at a larger scale and have a higher demand for goods, both commodities and prestige goods. High levels of long-term demand may well be a key factor leading to colonial enterprises as a way to supplement or reorganize exchange in order to obtain these goods.
2. States have the degree of economic specialization and what we might call the “organizational technology” to carry out the large-scale movements of people and materials involved in the process of colonization.
3. Only states would have the large standing armies necessary to establish and maintain long-term garrisons (in those cases where the establishment of colonies has a military component).
4. It is necessary to have the corporate structure of a colony when dealing with host communities that are in themselves complex societies.

In an important 1993 article in *American Anthropologist*, Guillermo

Algaze (1993a) suggested that colonies founded by the earliest pristine states differed markedly from those founded by later secondary states, because the former enjoyed tremendous superiority over their less developed neighbors. By contrast, once secondary states began to establish colonies, the developmental asymmetries between colonies and host polities were much less pronounced, leading to more balanced power relationships between the two. Algaze's model is worth considering in the light of the case studies in this volume, since we are dealing with colonies established by both pristine and secondary states. Related to this is the observation that colonization is often associated with secondary state formation in the host polities, either through local resistance to colonization or through the disruptive effects of external trade in prestige goods or other commodities.

The contributors to this volume were in general agreement that colonies must be considered within their regional and interregional context. Colonial encounters take place in a social space that consists of at least three key focal points: the colonies themselves, their homelands or metropolises, and the indigenous host societies in whose midst the colonies are established. Cooperation and competition among these three very different nodes defines the organization of the interregional interaction network as a whole. As a result, we need to examine each node explicitly to develop a realistic understanding of colonial encounters. For this reason, the contributors to this volume focus not only on the colonies themselves, but also on interaction and the role of indigenous groups as active agents in these networks.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

We can no longer automatically assume that colonies dominate the preexisting indigenous polities or communities among whom they are founded; nor can we assume that colonies directly reflect the interests of their colonial homelands. Given this conceptual shift, what is the range of variation in the power relations linking the colonies, homelands, and host communities that make up a colonial network, and how does it influence the developmental trajectories of colonial encounters?

A concern with the political economy of colonization requires that we examine a series of different relationships among the three

aforementioned “nodes” of the colonial encounter: homelands, colonies, and host polities. When examining the relationship between homelands and colonies, one important question is, “Who controls colonies?” Greek and Old Assyrian colonies seem to have been state sanctioned but privately run; we can reasonably guess that Phoenician colonies were not state controlled. Other colonies were directly organized and controlled by centralized state institutions. How does the degree of state control (or lack of control) affect the organization of colonies and their relations with host communities? As part of this examination, we must recognize that colonies and their homelands often diverge rapidly in their political and economic interests.

A second dyadic power relationship among the three nodes of the colonial encounter concerns interaction between the colony and the host polity. One can suggest that colonists can pursue three main strategies: (1) domination, (2) long-term competition, and (3) alliance (see also Rogers this volume, for a discussion of different strategies of expansionist control over other societies). The implicit “European colonialist” model has led most studies of colonial-local interaction to focus on domination and, to a lesser degree, competition as the main strategies for interaction. We need to investigate the strong possibility that *alliance* strategies may have been extremely important in ancient, non-Western, and precapitalist colonial networks, particularly when colonizing groups were dealing with populous and/or already-complex local polities whom they could not militarily dominate.

Clearly, this revised definition of colonies and the recognition of the complexities involved in colonial encounters require us to rethink as well the way we conceptualize the material signatures of colonies in the archaeological record.

The Recognition of Colonies in the Archaeological Record

The identification of colonies in the archaeological record is surprisingly difficult, not least because it is closely related to the problematic issue of recognizing ethnicity through material culture (see, for example, Emberling 1997; S. Jones 1977). In general, one can identify as colonies those settlements whose architecture, site plan, and material culture assemblage are identical to those of another region but are located as spatially discrete occupations surrounded by settlements of

the local culture. One would expect colonies to be founded as completely new settlements on previously unoccupied land. Alternatively, if founded in a preexisting settlement, a colony should show sharp architectural and artifactual discontinuities with earlier occupations (see Stanish 1989). Artifactual similarities to the homeland should reflect a broad complex of material culture used in a variety of contexts, rather than being limited to a single category such as ceramics.

Santley, Yarborough, and Hall argue that the ethnic identity of the inhabitants in a colonial enclave should be expressed in material culture connected with two different levels of social inclusiveness: the enclave as a whole, and the more restricted domestic level (1987:87). At the enclave-wide level, the identity of the foreigners is expressed and reinforced through public rituals; these are often centered on a ceremonial structure whose architecture generally incorporates the style or symbolic elements of the homeland. Common language, styles of dress, the wearing of particular badges or emblems, and burial customs are also enclave-wide ways to express the foreigners' separate identity.

At the domestic level, the members of an enclave generally live together in a spatially contiguous area, distinct from local and other groups. Food preferences, preparation procedures, and the material culture associated with these practices should both differ from local patterns in the host community while resembling the cultural practices of the homeland. In addition, the foreigners' distinctive ethnic identity will often be reflected by the use of raw materials or styles from the homeland in the ritual paraphernalia used for household rituals (Santley, Yarborough, and Hall 1987:87–88).

It is important to consider alternative interpretations for the presence of foreign styles of material culture in the sites of a different culture, rather than automatically assuming that this material culture reflects the existence of a foreign enclave. The use of multiple criteria combined with contrastive patterning between the foreign and local assemblages is necessary to distinguish the actual presence of foreign settlers from either (1) intercultural trade in the absence of a colony or (2) emulation by groups of local elites who are simply adopting status-related aspects of foreign material culture (through either importation or imitation). Trade, emulation, and the presence of trade colonies should leave different archaeological signatures. If interaction is

limited to trade without the presence of a foreign enclave, then we would expect to see only portable trade items in the local settlement; foreign public and residential architecture would be absent, as would be evidence for foreign food preferences in spatially discrete contexts. If interaction consists of local elite emulation of foreign styles, we would expect to see these imports or imitations limited to high-status households, while lower-status groups retained local customs. In most cases, the elite households would show a distinction between the emulation of foreign styles in public contexts and the retention of local styles in domestic life.

Colonial Encounters and Identity

Many sociocultural anthropologists and archaeologists refer to the “colonial entanglement” as a way to emphasize the complexities and ambiguities of power relationships and identities of colonizers and their host communities in colonial encounters (for example, N. Thomas 1991; Dietler 1998). Work by Lightfoot, Deagan, and others has shown that the interregional interaction networks within which colonies are founded bring multiple groups into contact not just colonizers and host communities. In these encounters, the social identities of colonizers, other foreign communities associated with the colonizers, and host communities can all change.

Much, if not most, attention has focused on identity transformations in the host communities, often implicitly or explicitly relying on the traditional “acculturation” model of culture contact. This model assumes a unidirectionality in which the dominant colonizing “donor” culture transforms the more passive indigenous “recipient” culture of the host community. Similarly, archaeologists have traditionally viewed the social identity of the colonizing group as essentially static, mirroring the culture of the homeland in both ideology and material culture. If items of material culture did not exactly mirror the material culture of the colonial homeland, then they were assumed to reflect a process of local emulation, in which elites (and others) in the host community selectively appropriated high-status symbols and items of colonial material culture.

We now recognize that the political interests, economic goals, and social identities of colonizing groups diverge rapidly from those of

their homelands. Even when the colonizing group dominates its host community politically, militarily, and economically (as in the case of Spanish colonies in the Americas), it is clear from the work of Deagan (1998), Cusick (ed. 1998), and others that rather than speaking of unidirectional processes such as “acculturation” (by the host community), or “assimilation”/“going native” (by the colonizers), what occurs instead is a bidirectional or multidirectional process in which diasporic cultures can form entirely new, composite identities through what has been termed transculturation, ethnogenesis, creolization, or hybridization. We need to understand this transformative process in relation to the political economy of colonization and the dynamics of power relations among colonies, host communities, and colonial homelands.

At the same time, we should explicitly recognize that continuities in social identity by either colonizing or host groups are phenomena worthy of study, since they may have played important roles in either domination by one group or resistance by another. Rogers’s (1990) pathbreaking study of Arikara selective appropriation of Euro-American material culture provides an important example of the ways that artifactual evidence can serve to illuminate the development of new identities in colonial encounters. By studying transformations or aggressive nontransformations of identity, we can understand how colonial-local interaction actually worked, while monitoring change in the developmental trajectories of colonies as social entities. Finally, to study identity and its transformations more accurately, we need to develop finer-grained, contextually sensitive perspectives on colonies and indigenous groups. These analyses need to focus carefully on chronological variation and change, as well as on variation in behavior and symbolic activity in public versus domestic social contexts (see, for example, Deagan 1983, 1993; Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff 1998).

COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

The contributors to this volume examine colonial encounters from two complementary perspectives: (1) a “top-down” approach that focuses on local, regional, or interregional political economy, and (2) a “bottom-up” approach that emphasizes individual or small group agency as it relates to identity and its transformations. Clearly, these

analytical foci are always intertwined at a fundamental level; both are necessary in order to develop a nuanced, holistic understanding of the complexities of colonial encounters. In fact, one might argue that the very disjunctures and ambiguities that so characterize colonial encounters provide an ideal context for understanding the intersection of political economy and identity. The chapters in this book reflect these complementary approaches.

The contents and format of this volume reflect three broad areas of discussion. The first section presents a series of theoretical frameworks and issues that structure modern analyses of ancient colonial encounters. Michael Dietler discusses the ways in which the development of European understandings of the Greco-Roman world have exercised a pervasive influence on European intellectual traditions, thereby structuring Western conceptions of colonies and colonialism in both the modern and the ancient worlds. Using as a case study the interaction between the Greek colony of Massalia (modern Marseille) and the local groups of the lower Rhône Valley in southern France, Dietler critiques the commonly used Hellenization perspective and world-systems model for their structural overdetermination, their unidirectional view of power relations, and their inability to account for local agency in the natives' selective appropriation of Greek material culture.

Janine Gasco presents an overview of the Spanish conquest and colonization of the Americas—perhaps the crucial historical case that implicitly frames our understanding of all other historically and archaeologically documented colonial encounters. Gasco shows that one cannot understand Spanish colonial agendas and practices in the New World without situating them within the historic context of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Spanish history. Specifically, the centrality of religious ideology and the administrative structures imposed on native populations in the Americas can be directly traced to the militaristic Christian ideology and political strategies used by Aragon and Castile in the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslim Moors. Through an analysis of the cacao economy in the Soconusco region in Mexico, Gasco also makes the important point that Spanish colonial rule and its impact on local populations differed significantly from region to region as a negotiated outcome of conflict and accom-

modation with native American groups. Thus, contrary to the general perception of Spanish dominance, local groups in Soconusco showed a high degree of agency and autonomy by retaining control over the production of cacao, arguably one of the most important commodities in the colonial economy.

Peter van Dommelen argues for the utility of postcolonial theory, notably the concepts of “hybridity” and “hybridization,” for our understanding of ancient interaction and the development of new, colonial identities. Through a comparative analysis of the first millennium B.C. Phoenician and Punic colonization of Sardinia, Andalusia in southern Spain, and Ibiza, van Dommelen shows that it is misleading to talk about colonial enterprise as a unitary phenomenon. Instead, the goals, nature, and outcome of these colonial encounters varied markedly, depending on the specific regional context and the nature of the indigenous societies in whose midst they settled. He also shows that colonial agendas and the intensity of colonial-local interaction changed significantly over the course of three centuries. Perhaps most significantly, van Dommelen suggests that new colonial identities developed on Sardinia through a hybridization process (Bhabha 1992) in which the indigenous groups showed great selectivity in their appropriation and transformation of Punic material culture.

The second section of this volume presents a series of archaeological case studies from the Old and New Worlds to emphasize variation and contingency in the colonial encounters, as well as the need to situate these processes of interaction within their historical and regional contexts. Gil J. Stein’s chapter analyzes the roles of smaller-scale social groups in the sociopolitical organization of both the colonial homeland and the indigenous societies as factors structuring the political economy of colonial encounters. This analysis compares two episodes of Mesopotamian colonial encounters in Anatolia (modern Turkey): the Old Assyrian trading colonies of the eighteenth century B.C. and the colonial network of the Uruk expansion in the fourth millennium B.C. In both cases, the fragmented, factionalized political landscape of the metropole, combined with surprisingly high levels of indigenous social complexity in Anatolia, led to an essential symmetry in power relations between the Mesopotamian colonies and their Anatolian host communities.

Kent G. Lightfoot contrasts two more or less contemporaneous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European colonial encounters with similar native Californian hunter-gatherer groups: the Russian colony at Fort Ross in the north and the Spanish mission system along the southern coast. Lightfoot demonstrates that the differing colonial agendas of the two competing European powers, combined with a significant difference in the duration of the colonial encounters, led to markedly different outcomes for native Californian demography, identity, and cultural cohesion. The Spanish mission system in southern California lasted for more than a century and was directly focused on the relocation, control, and religious conversion of indigenous groups, with correspondingly drastic effects on the demography and cultural identity of the native southern Californians. By contrast, the short duration and secular, commercial focus of the Russian trading outpost at Fort Ross had considerably less impact on the composition and cohesion of local Pomo groups in northern California.

Finally, Michael W. Spence applies Abner Cohen's (1969, 1971) ethnographically based "trade diaspora" model of interregional interaction to Classic-period Mesoamerica, through an analysis of the Zapotec ethnic enclave of Tlailotlacan in the urban center of Teotihuacan, circa A.D. 200–650. Although clearly Oaxacan in character, this enclave does not appear to have been sponsored by the Monte Albán state. Spence argues for a more generalized version of the diaspora model in order to deemphasize the role of trade per se, while paying closer attention to the ways in which this small diasporic community of an estimated 800 merchants and their families maintained and reproduced its distinctive cultural identity within an enormous cosmopolitan urban center of up to 150,000 inhabitants. Spence also constructs important bridging arguments to specify criteria for the archaeological identification of an ethnic enclave. Taking a practice theory approach (analogous to that used by Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff in their analysis of a multi-ethnic community at Fort Ross), Spence focuses on *habitus* in the productive technology, style, and use of material culture as a key element in forging a Zapotec diasporic identity. Spence also shows the utility of an archaeological focus on two important (but often overlooked) processes through which a community of foreigners reproduces itself physically and culturally: marriage and the socialization of children. By

combining artifactual and bioarchaeological lines of evidence, Spence shows that the small reproductive population of Tlailotlacan maintained its identity by exchanging marriage partners with other Zapotec diasporic communities. In parallel, stable isotope evidence from human bone and teeth shows that both male and female members of the Tlailotlacan enclave traveled widely outside of the city of Teotihuacan, probably residing for significant periods in other diaspora enclaves. This analysis emphasizes the need to consider colonial encounters within a broad regional context, a view shared by virtually all the contributors to this volume.

The third section of this volume presents Old and New World case studies of imperial colonial strategies, which seem, on the face of it, to have differed significantly from the colonial encounters of smaller-scale, less centralized polities. Katharina Schreiber contrasts the colonial strategies of the Wari Empire of the later first millennium A.D. Middle Horizon. By examining the three nodes of the colonial encounter—metropole, colony, and local population—Schreiber shows that imperial agendas and expressions of local agency both changed markedly over time. Equally important, Schreiber's comparative regional analysis demonstrates that the form, function, purpose, and constituent population of Wari colonies varied significantly between the Nasca region on the Peruvian south coast with the Sondondo Valley of the central highlands. Wari colonies were founded for administrative purposes, for military control over the local population, for specialized resource procurement (coca production), and even as a way to transform the indigenous ritual landscape into one centered on Wari religious ideologies. This variation in imperial colonial strategies was greatly affected by the nature of the local groups in the conquered areas, notably their degree of sociocultural complexity and capacity for resistance.

Terence N. D'Altroy presents a detailed analysis of the Inka *mitmaqkuna* system of forced resettlement and colonization. Like the historically known Neo-Assyrian Empire of the first millennium B.C. in the Near East, the Inka Empire used mass deportations and resettlement of conquered peoples as a fundamental tool of statecraft, economic organization, and imperial control. The scale of this process was staggering, even by modern standards; the Inka Empire resettled an estimated

three to five million people out of a total population of ten to twelve million. Entire provinces or towns of colonists called *mitmaqkuna* were relocated to new areas, sometimes as far as 2,000 kilometers away from their original homelands. The Inka organized these mass resettlements for two reasons: to disperse groups who posed a threat of rebellion, and to create settlements of economic specialists whose productive output was controlled by the state. By isolating these groups within larger local populations, the Inka insured their loyalty to the state and minimized potential resistance. One of D'Altroy's most significant observations is that Inka administrators were well aware of identity politics and its material correlates; to insure the social isolation and dependence of the colonists, the Inka required *mitmaqkuna* colonists to retain their traditional, ethnically distinct styles of clothing, and they required them to retain their "official" residential affiliation with their homeland, regardless of their actual place of (forced) residence. D'Altroy's chapter also provides us with a sobering reminder of the limitations of archaeological data in that, despite its astounding scale, the *mitmaqkuna* system is known only from historical documents. Communities of this sort can only be recognized by the presence of Inka material culture, and not by any artifactual indicator of the ethnicity of the deported groups.

Susan E. Alcock examines the divergent developmental histories of two Roman imperial colonies in Greece (Corinth and Patras) and two in southwest Anatolia (Pisidian Antioch and Cremna). Her analysis reinforces the point that Roman colonial strategies and goals differed markedly by region and were in every case structured as much by local factors as by deliberate imperial strategies of political, economic, and military control. As in other case studies presented in this volume, the Roman colonies were multiethnic in character and highly stratified socially, with the result that they can in no way be treated as homogeneous communities. Alcock demonstrates that the organization and cultural identity of the inhabitants of these Roman colonies changed over time in regionally distinctive ways. In the case of Corinth and Patras, one can document the gradual reassertion of a Greek identity, while Pisidian Antioch and Cremna developed a more complex creolized identity in which a Roman colonial identity remained important, along with indigenous Anatolian and Hellenized aspects. Alcock emphasizes the contextually dependent nature of these new colonial

identities, and the fact that their constituent elements were not mutually exclusive:

Polyphonic identities, with different contexts determining choices made in self-presentation and cultural allegiance, would seem to have become the elite norm at this time, rather than any strict exclusivity between Greek and Roman positions.... These communities could see themselves, and sell themselves, as both Roman *coloniae* and Greek *poleis*, as context and need dictated (Alcock this volume).

The final chapter in this volume is J. Daniel Rogers's synthetic overview of some of the key theoretical issues in examining the archaeology of colonial encounters. Rogers emphasizes the importance of local agency, indigenous systems of meaning, and historical context for the understanding of these processes. Rogers argues for the utility of an essentially semiotic approach to material culture as a way to monitor those transformations of identity that play such a key role in colonial encounters. Rogers proposes that archaeologists can study the linkages between cultural memory, identity, and material culture by examining three kinds of sign structure: indexes, symbols, and signs. Each type of sign has a different temporal valence and set of linkages between object and identity. Thus, for example, icons refer to past time, while symbols are more forward looking due to their polysemic character. By deconstructing the symbolic aspects of material culture in this way, it becomes possible for archaeologists to monitor changes in the cultural coherence of a group, and in the processes through which new creolized/hybridized identities emerge over the course of a colonial encounter.

EMERGING THEMES IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

The chapters in this volume present different case studies from at least ten different colonial encounters in the Old and New Worlds. They include not only "canonical" cases of colonization by Greece, Rome, and Europe, but also non-Western, precapitalist, and even prehistoric colonial episodes. The authors are unanimous in emphasizing the astonishing degree of variability in colonial organization, and consequently all reject the utility of colonial typologies as tools for research.

Instead, all emphasize the importance of following historically situated analyses of the key *processes* involved in colonial encounters. Though rejecting globalizing frameworks such as world-systems theory, the contributors to this volume all see great value in comparative analyses that still recognize the unique character of specific culture histories. The case studies and theoretical overviews presented here emphasize a number of shared perspectives. I outline below some of the themes that I believe to be the most significant for current and future research on the comparative archaeology of colonial encounters.

1. *The problematic nature of the term “colonialism” and its intellectual baggage.* Most of the contributors to this volume agree on the need to disentangle the concept of colonies from that of colonialism. Dietler (this volume) defines colonialism as “the projects and practices of control marshaled in interactions between societies linked in asymmetrical relations of power, and the processes of social and cultural transformation resulting from those practices.” It is thus a form of unequal social relations between polities and entails the idea of political, military, and/or economic dominance by intrusive foreign groups over local populations (Osterhammel 1997:4). However, colonialism is not just an abstract concept; it is embedded in a culturally specific historical experience. In Western thought, the central defining case of colonialism is the expansion of early capitalist Europe to extend its control over the Americas, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia from the sixteenth through the mid-twentieth century. The connection between colonialism and the last four centuries of Western history is so deeply rooted that a number of scholars in different disciplines have argued that the European colonial encounter continues to structure not only Western intellectual conceptions of other cultures (including the discipline of anthropology and the culture concept; Dirks 1992:3), but even the West’s very definition of itself as a distinct entity (Said 1978). Colonialism is inextricably bound up with notions drawn from the European experience, such as “domination of an alien minority, asserting racial and cultural superiority, over a materially inferior native majority; contact between

a machine oriented civilization with Christian origins, a powerful economy, and a rapid rhythm of life and a non-Christian civilization that lacks machines and is marked by a backward economy and a slow rhythm of life; and the imposition of the first civilization upon the second” (Emerson and Fieldhouse 1968:1; see also Balandier 1951:75).

We can only start to develop a more synthetic archaeology of colonial encounters by bringing non-Western and precapitalist colonial networks into our comparative analyses in a way that does not assume a priori colonial dominance of the recent European kind. At the same time, we must examine the colonies themselves, their homelands, and the indigenous host communities as the three main institutional actors whose interaction defines a colonial network.

2. *The myth of the colonizer-colonized dichotomy.* The chapters by Lightfoot, Schreiber, van Dommelen, and Alcock show clearly that traditional analyses have vastly oversimplified a complex reality by treating colonial encounters as a simple dichotomy between “the colonizers” and “the colonized” (see also Stoler 1989). At a minimum, the colonial encounter should be treated as having three nodes: (1) the colonial homeland or metropole, (2) the colonies themselves, and (3) the indigenous societies in whose midst the colonies are established. One recurring pattern is that of a rapid divergence between the interests and agendas of the metropole and its colonies. It is important to emphasize that while the political and economic interests of colonies may rapidly split off from those of the metropole, at the same time colonists often emphasize (sometimes hypertrophically) their cultural ties to the homeland in order to assert a distinct, superior identity in their interactions with indigenous groups. Each of the three nodes in the colonial encounter is best understood as having a heterogeneous composition. As van Dommelen (this volume) notes, “By ignoring the much more nuanced and complicated social and economic divisions at the grassroots level, in which criteria such as gender, age, and class intersect with the colonial-indigenous distinction,

dualist representations not only assert the dominant position of the colonizers, but they also overlook much of the social dynamics of a colonial situation.”

Many, if not most, colonial encounters have been multiethnic entanglements in which “the colonizers” consisted of several distinct cultures, with differing identities, power structures, value systems, and agendas. At the same time, the local “colonized” node emerges as a multifaceted congeries of distinct, often conflicting ethnicities.

3. *Problematic comparisons with the Classical world and the European expansion.* Michael Dietler’s chapter in this volume forcefully reminds us of the degree to which the pervasive influence of Rome and Greece on Western thought leads many archaeologists to develop anachronistic interpretations of ancient colonial encounters. Similarly, D’Altroy (this volume) notes, “A more subtle bias also pervades the study of ancient colonies—namely, the deference paid to intellectual traditions whose motivations and practices are expressed through documents.... [W]e need to be wary of systematically interpreting past colonization through Rome-colored glasses.”

It is particularly important to proceed with caution when considering precapitalist and/or non-Western colonial encounters in the light of the European expansion in the “Age of Discovery.” As Lightfoot (this volume) points out, a consideration of European colonial practices can be useful for understanding similarities and differences in colonial ideologies, dominance structures, political strategies, interethnic relationships, and local (“native”) agency.

However, at the same time, we must recall that the European expansion into the Americas certainly differed from other colonial encounters due to historically unique factors such as (1) the tremendous technological differences between the Europeans and indigenous peoples, (2) the biological vulnerability of the indigenous peoples of the Americas to Old World pathogens, and (3) the vast difference in cultural traditions and religious ideologies between the Europeans and their native

American counterparts. If precapitalist situations are so different that we cannot uncritically apply concepts drawn from the European expansion, then is it still possible to undertake a comparative study of ancient/historic colonial encounters?

The risks of comparison are compounded by the fact that much of the existing literature on the archaeology of colonialism tends to oversimplify European colonialism into a single homogeneous model. As the papers by Lightfoot, Gasco, and Rogers all demonstrate, there existed tremendous variation in European colonial practices, power relations, and modes of interaction with native peoples. These contrasts existed not only between the colonial enterprises of different colonizing polities such as Spain, Portugal, England, France, Russia, and the Netherlands, but also *within* the colonial policies of these states, depending on the areas they colonized and the specific cultures with whom they interacted. To paraphrase the aphorism of American political life, all colonization is local.

Thus one cannot uncritically apply a single unitary model of European colonialism to the archaeological record. Conversely, we should not automatically assume that comparisons with European colonialism(s) have nothing to tell us about precapitalist and/or non-Western colonial encounters. As Gasco observes (this volume), “The comparative study of colonies, colonization, and colonialism should be designed precisely to sidestep these assumptions and explore in a systematic way how and why ancient and more recent colonial situations are similar and different.”

4. *Colonial encounters engender the development of new forms of cultural identity.* Closely related to the need to reject the dualistic oversimplification of the “colonizer-colonized” dichotomy are two key processes that must be taken into account in the analysis of colonial encounters: the mutability of identity, and the common, if not universal, process of *new* identity formation in the course of long-term colonial interaction. Anthropologists and archaeologists have long recognized the importance of these processes but have always analyzed them through the use of

unidirectional, core-dominant models such as acculturation theory (for a history and critique of the acculturation concept, see Cusick 1989b; for Classical archaeologists' models of "Hellenization" and "Romanization," see critiques by Dietler and Alcock, both this volume).

A number of convergent, alternative understandings have allowed researchers to develop a more nuanced, realistic understanding of the transformations of identity in colonial encounters. Instead of acculturation, anthropologists have begun to examine the idea of transculturation or ethnogenesis (Deagan 1998), the linguistically derived concept of creolization (Hannerz 1987), and the concept of hybridity, drawn from post-colonial theory (Bhabha 1992). All three related concepts focus on the idea of new, composite identities that emerge as negotiated outcomes in which local agency and colonial structures play important creative roles. Van Dommelen (this volume) argues for shifting the analytical emphasis from hybridity (as an outcome) to *hybridization* as a dynamic process through which new identities are negotiated: "Studying hybridization suggests a different perspective on the colonizers, emphasizing, on the one hand, the local roots and local interests of at least part of the colonial community while, on the other hand, also acknowledging their extraregional involvement in a colonial network." The key shared element in all three alternative concepts is the emphasis on local agency, rather than seeing indigenous peoples as passive recipients of these changes. These concepts have direct archaeological implications in allowing us to better understand the cultural meanings associated with the selective appropriation and fusion of different material culture styles in colonial encounters.

5. *Variation in the "colonial programs" of colonizing polities.* The case studies presented by Schreiber, D'Altroy, Lightfoot, Gasco, and Alcock all agree in showing that colonizing polities—especially empires—showed great variability in their colonial programs, depending on the specific local contexts in which a given colony was established. This variation reflects not only the importance of homeland ideologies in structuring what

Schreiber calls “imperial agendas,” but also represents a composite, negotiated outcome of interaction, accommodation, and resistance by the local groups in any given colonial encounter. It is noteworthy that this variation was not just characteristic of the various European colonizing powers of the Age of Discovery, but also applied to precapitalist or non-Western empires such as Rome, Wari, or the Inka.

6. *The need to focus on variation in modes of interaction, rather than on colonial “types.”* Lightfoot (this volume) represents the unanimous view of the contributors to this volume when he states that “given the tremendous range of variation in colonial programs...we do great injustice to the study of cross-cultural variation by attempting to pigeonhole our case studies into a few discrete colonial types.” Instead, we should focus on understanding the contextually dependent variation in the modes of interaction (at the macro scale) and in the processes of identity transformation (at the micro scale) over the course of a colonial encounter.
7. *The non-universality of world-systems theory.* For the last twenty-five years, world-systems theory (Wallerstein 1974; Hall and Chase-Dunn 1993; Kardulias 1999) has played a dominant role in anthropological/archaeological theories of interregional interaction systems, including colonial encounters. The attraction of this construct derives from its claims to cross-cultural applicability as an explanatory model. However, as Dietler (this volume) notes, “World-systems models exhibit a tendency toward mechanistically reductionist, structurally overdetermined, functionalist explanations and an emphasis on core determination of process in the periphery. They are unable to accommodate culture or local agency and, in their uniformity, they deny the fundamental historicity of colonialism.” This theoretical problem is further compounded by evidentiary biases. An overreliance on textual data tends to privilege core agency, since the core, not the periphery, writes the histories. Even though recent research has argued that world-systems theory is not universally applicable (see, for example, Dietler 1998; Gasco this volume; Stein 1998, 1999b), we should not reject the idea of cross-cultural

comparison altogether. Other comparative models have explanatory utility, such as Abner Cohen's trade diaspora model (see, for example, Spence this volume) or Homi Bhabha's hybridity concept (see van Dommelen this volume). As Gasco notes, the key element that needs to be included in comparisons of this sort is the recognition of the importance of local agency and local systems of meaning as crucial factors structuring interaction and trajectories of change. The papers in this volume show that one can still see recurring commonalities in colonial practices, modes of interaction, and the dynamics of changing identity, without recourse to either the classic or more recent reformulations of the world-systems model.

8. *Colonial interactions change over time.* Colonial encounters and their organization are not static. As the chapters by Schreiber, Alcock, and van Dommelen demonstrate, colonial encounters show marked diachronic change in colonial agendas, political economy, cultural identities, and above all, in power relations. It is a mistake to regard inherently unstable, changeable modes of interaction as if they were temporally invariant. Quite often, our perceptions of a given colonial case are skewed by our tendency to project our understanding of the later stages of the sequence onto the earlier phases of the encounter. As a result, researchers often impute major power asymmetries onto the initial structure of interaction, which might have been far more evenly balanced (Dietler 1998:298). Conversely, as Alcock shows in her comparative analysis of four Roman imperial colonies, strong imperial control over colonies was often subverted over time by the local realities of geopolitics and indigenous cultural identity.
9. *The importance of local agency.* In rejecting the determinative role of colonizers and colonialism, we necessarily must recognize the importance of the other social actors in this arena of interaction. The case studies in this volume are unanimous in stressing the importance of local agency in structuring the dynamics and historical trajectories of colonial encounters. As Rogers (this volume) points out, "Native cultural logics and percep-

tions of events play an essential role in how interactions have been structured.” The case studies presented here provide numerous examples of the ways in which local decision making, local power structures, and local cultural schemes repeatedly modified and even subverted colonial agendas, so that the outcome was in almost every case composite, heterogeneous, and negotiated rather than predetermined. The correlates of this interaction can be seen in the emergence of new, creolized or hybridized identities, artifactual styles, and forms of social organization—all phenomena that can be studied in the archaeological record.

Taken together, the data, theoretical perspectives, and areas of debate and consensus that emerge from the chapters in this volume present a cross-sectional view of promising current approaches to the study of ancient colonial encounters. The sheer complexity, contextual contingency, and degree of diachronic variation in the organization of colonies and their interacting groups make any effort at comparative analysis daunting indeed. However, the analyses presented here are surprisingly consistent and complementary in the approaches they suggest as the most useful ways to investigate the problem. More than anything else, these comparative studies show the significance of this topic for anthropological research, and the nuanced complexity of this ancient and recurring process of cultural interaction and transformation.

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Edited by Gil J. Stein

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