

Pedro Paulo A. Funari

Maria Ximena Senatore *Editors*

Archaeology of Culture Contact and Colonialism in Spanish and Portuguese America

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To the memory of my parents

P.P.A.F.

To my parents

M.X.S.

I Foreword

For a very long time, historical archaeology has been the archaeology of the European expansion in the former British colonies (USA, Caribbean, Canada and Australia) and its consequences: the Atlantic trade, the fur trade, slave plantations, colonial conflicts, creolization, urbanization and industrialization. Iberia has played rather a secondary role in the narratives of historical archaeology, except in those areas of the USA that were once part of the Spanish Empire (such as Florida, California or Texas). During the last couple of decades, however, historical archaeology has grown vigorously in many Latin American countries, most notably Argentina and Brazil, and has expanded to other regions where pre-Columbian archaeology used to ring the tune, as in Ecuador or Colombia. This can be noticed in the growing presence of Latin American contributions to international journals and books.

However, a monographic volume like the present one was much needed. First, it was necessary to display the richness and diversity of the archaeologies of Iberian colonialism. With the inclusion of Scandinavia, Africa and Latin America, historical archaeology is becoming truly global and, therefore, more balanced in geographical and cultural terms. It would be wrong, however, to consider that including Latin America in the wider picture is just an issue of increasing diversity: in fact, the second reason why a volume like this is crucial for the development of historical archaeology is that there can be no archaeological understanding of modernity and capitalism (whatever these concepts mean) without Latin America. As decolonial thinkers, such as Anibal Quijano and Enrique Dussel, have made abundantly clear, the regions conquered by Spain and Portugal are not just another area colonized by Europe; they are the cradle of coloniality. The place where all began: from racism to predatory capitalism and also novel forms of challenging or evading colonial power.

Decolonial thinkers insist—and this is of paramount importance for archaeologists—that the imperial practices developed by Spain and Portugal (genocide, slavery, concubinage, racism or economic depredation) are not independent of the development of modernity, but actually an essential part of the modern episteme itself. While archaeologists may have a hard time identifying the philosophical categories of modernity as such in the archaeological record, they are excellent at locating politico-economic and cultural practices, which are so vital in the decolonial definition of colonial modernity. The coloniality of power is strongly material as the

contributors to this volume eloquently show. It has to do with political economy, including trade, technology, markets, anti-market strategies and tribute, the body, which materializes racial hierarchies and performs gender, ethnic and class differences and controlling the land and the sea through seafaring, ports, forts and outposts. The present volume covers all these issues.

These issues are in turn related to another phenomenon in which archaeology excels: documenting the creation of cultural diversity through *mestizaje*, creolization, transculturation or hybridity—terms that have been all developed outside archaeology but to which archaeology has much to contribute. The case studies presented in this book help disrupt the grand narrative of colonialism, which is another product of the coloniality of power. They do so by scrutinizing the manifold local interactions made possible by the colonial encounter/conflict, from the fisheries of Canada to the Spanish settlements in Patagonia. In these local contexts, myriad histories and a wealth of cultural practices developed which have often passed unnoticed to conventional historiography—more concerned with cities, revolutions, large industrial centres and global missionary projects.

Archaeology thrives in “small things” as James Deetz famously put it: minimal things that have been neglected by history, often because they were ephemeral, like Fort San José in Florida, or because they were a failure, like the sugar and gold industries in Concepción de la Vega, or the settlement of Floridablanca. Of all ephemeral times, perhaps that of the early contact is the most fascinating. Some of the chapters contained in this volume open a window into the short but eventful time of the first encounter, and there is something uncanny, and at the same time, deeply archaeological in it. Perhaps because this ephemeral time is so flimsy and fragile, but had such extremely solid, material consequences. Or perhaps because it is an infinite time of possibility. Failed things are equally irresistible. In small, failed things, we can grasp the nature of history and, perhaps more poignantly, the history of modernity, which tends to portray itself as grand, progressive and successful. In local interactions between the colonizers and the colonized, we see asymmetries and violence, and also the contradictions and weaknesses of imperial power, whose attempts at fully mastering reality were often thwarted, or at least had unforeseen outcomes. Much of the hybridity that we can detect in the archaeological record is witness to this failure of colonial regimentation.

Archaeology is of course not limited to the ephemeral and unsuccessful. It also has an unrivalled ability to document the long term and the remote past. In the case of the colonization of the Americas, this ability is of enormous relevance: many of the historical trajectories and cultural practices that we document during the colonization are impossible to understand without a look at the deep history of the continent. Several of the chapters of this book take a long-term perspective in order to reclaim indigenous agencies and reveal the ways in which colonial power imposed itself in a foreign land, often in a very physical way. If failed outposts speak of the inconsistencies of imperial power, the long-term resilience of indigenous practices, which several of the contributors tackle in their chapters, speaks of success—the secret victory of the subaltern.

During the last decades, archaeologists have been more and more concerned with recent times and with the effects of the past in the present—not the least through the concept of cultural heritage. The effects of the colonial past in contemporary societies are perhaps nowhere clearer than in Latin America. In Cuba and Brazil, slavery left a vibrant cultural heritage and a bitter legacy of social asymmetry. From the deep past to the very present, this book shows the strengths and potentialities of archaeology to unravel the colonial experience of the Americas under Iberian rule.

For a long time, theoretically guided research has been regarded as the preserve of Anglo-Saxon academia. This overlooks the fact that Latin American archaeologists have consistently developed theoretical approaches to their rich material, both prehistoric and historical. The present volume, by bringing together scholars from Latin America, Iberia and the USA, goes a long way in redressing another epistemic imbalance of coloniality—in this case, regarding the geography of knowledge production on coloniality itself. The volume offers a unique opportunity to have a glimpse of the varied and sophisticated interpretations of Iberian colonialism that have been put forward in recent years in the North as well as in the South. Hopefully, colleagues from other countries and intellectual traditions will pay heed and engage with the many dialogues that this book now opens.

Institute of Heritage Sciences Spanish
National Research Council (Incipit-CSIC)

Alfredo González-Ruibal

II Foreword

At a time when grand narratives of all kinds are being discarded, this volume, archaeology of culture contact and colonialism in Spanish and Portuguese America, both skillfully deconstructs the triumphalist myth of European colonization in the western hemisphere and builds a firm, empirical foundation for an emerging twenty-first century alternative. Readers of this volume will see precisely how the tide is turning: from binary cultural oppositions to cultural interactions. In the physical and psychic violence of the European arrival and colonization of the Americas, all participants were profoundly changed. Beyond the overt acts of domination and resistance, more subtle changes took place in the everyday life and working landscapes of all peoples involved. And as the material culture and archival materials show, those changes—so incremental that they were almost invisible to the participants—were far more influential than theological and territorial claims in determining the historical evolution of the Americas.

Indeed one of the great values of this volume lies in its sheer geographical scope. In framing the great transformation through the lenses of archaeology, material culture studies, anthropology and political economy, the contributors to this volume have together presented the commonalities as well as the regional specificities of Euro-American culture contact in an area stretching all the way from the Basque fishing stations of Eastern Canada to the Spanish Enlightenment-inspired utopian colony of Floridablanca in Patagonia. In place of the timeworn binary oppositions of Europeans and native peoples, the essays in this volume show how profound were the local, improvised and creative responses to alien understandings of gender, faith, race, and social hierarchy. Moreover, the authors' empirical evidence from the contact period clearly contradicts the belief that history proceeded in only one direction with the Europeans' arrival. In the colonial encounter, all peoples were shaped by, and participated in the profound reshaping of landscapes and social environments.

In contrast to the traditional historiography of Spanish and Portuguese colonization, whose interpretive goal was the othering of the native peoples, and the more recent narratives of victimhood and resistance of the native peoples to European colonization, this volume presents the more complex process of *Mestizaje* in both a genealogical and cultural sense. Though the violence, enslavement, and genocide

performed on native peoples by the European colonizers have been extensively discussed, the unconscious assumption of the essential separateness between the colonizers and the colonized has only recently been challenged effectively. This volume certainly makes an important contribution to that discussion, in moving beyond essentialist distinctions of “us” vs. “them”—even in an ideologically projected Saidian “orientalist” sense. Cultural purity and segregation have always been ideological objectives attempted but never fully realized, in the period of euro-American cultural contact and colonization no less than in the current era of neoliberal globalization.

Indeed, because of this contemporary relevance, this volume should be of great interest to heritage professionals as well as archaeologists and social historians, for it provides the outlines of a new framework for public heritage interpretation in which actions and behaviours sometimes (often) differ sharply from what is being said. Ethnic essentialism has been and continues to be an ideology that promotes inequality and justifies structural violence. Yet this essentialism is a chimera as the empirical evidence presented here clearly shows. Though it still serves as a basis for the selective preservation of certain historical and archaeological sites by national governments and UNESCO World Heritage list nominations, the new perspectives presented here have the potential of more deeply engaging the culturally diverse public and raising the significance of cultural diversity in the public’s historical consciousness.

The construction of an inclusive public discourse about the past—in the Americas, as elsewhere—is arguably of equal importance to the academic interests in collecting data to fill gaps in specialist knowledge and the refinement or discarding of theoretical paradigms. This volume represents a generational turn in the understanding of contact period archaeology in the Americas. More than that, it is deeply relevant to the wider field of contemporary public heritage and identity making in the western hemisphere.

The contributors and editors of this volume are to be congratulated for their collection, compilation and analysis of a vast body of data from the contact and initial colonization eras that offers new insights into the entangled relations of globalization, nationalism, scholarship, gender, race, and, ultimately, contemporary cultural heritage policies in the Americas. The link between past and present in former Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the “New World” remains unbroken. Yet this volume powerfully rearticulates that trans-historical connection by challenging traditional narratives of binary opposition and replacing them with a more sophisticated understanding of how complex processes of cultural interaction and hybridization are still deeply felt in the evolving culture and consciousness of the region in the twenty-first century.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Disrupting the Grand Narrative of Spanish and Portuguese Colonialism

Maria Ximena Senatore and Pedro Paulo A. Funari

1.1 Introduction

The edited volume aims at exploring contact archaeology in the modern era. Archaeology has been exploring the interaction of peoples and cultures from early times, but only in the last few decades have cultural contact and the material world been recognized as crucial elements to understanding colonialism and the emergence of modernity (Gosden 2004).

Impressive literature on colonialism has been produced on a worldwide scale which shows that shared attributes in colonial situations around the world and throughout time have been identified (Fitzhugh 1985; Given 2004; Gosden 2004; Liebmann and Murphy 2011; Stein 2005, inter alios). In this sense, the Gosden's typology of colonialism as a "grand scheme" approach intended to apply to colonialism at all times and places, based on general and wide categories, and has been proved significant. Nevertheless, the question of the need to develop more granular approaches to studying colonialism and colonial projects in either a regional or more limited time scale has been posed.

Latin America would thus be an interesting contribution to the study of colonialism and cultural contact in this respect and for a good reason: Its diversity is particularly daunting for social theorists and archaeologists. The fact that hybridism, transculturation, and *métissage* have been developed as interpretative tools to understand cultural mixture in Latin America is no coincidence: Cultural contact in

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Spanish and Portuguese America has meant that the lives of European, native and African peoples and cultures became intertwined and therefore shaped new social and material realities. It is noteworthy that other specialized fields, such as classical archaeology, have been using Latin American mixtures as a way of interpreting ancient material culture processes in the Ancient Mediterranean.

This volume has been designed comprehensively including authors from different intellectual traditions from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Latin American countries, which resulted in a highly diverse “native perspective,” added to the contributions of authors from Spain, Portugal, and English-speaking countries.

1.2 Main Ideas

The contents and the organizational scheme of the volume reflect three broad areas of discussion: Sect. I—posing questions in cultural contact and colonialism, Sect. II—local histories: diversity, creativity, and novelty, and Sect. III—new realities and material worlds. As a result, this book offers a view that encompasses histories that question the idea of homogeneity in Latin America, as it appears in the master narrative of the Iberian colonization.

Modern colonialism studies pose questions in need of broader answers. This volume explores these answers in Spanish and Portuguese America, comprising mainly present-day Latin America and former Spanish territories now part of the USA. This initial map has widened to include spaces on the Atlantic coast of current Canada and of Portugal beyond the ocean. Contributions span different geographies, landscapes, and material contexts, within a temporal range extending from the past to contemporary times.

Colonialism had enough unity to be understood within a single comparative framework, but it also had deep variations in different times and places: It had its own local histories (Gosden 2004, p. 24). The volume stresses the importance of local context (Funari et al. 1999). The contributors address studies of the particular features of Spanish-Portuguese colonialism, as well as the specificities of Iberian colonization, including hybridism, religious novelties, medieval and modern social features, all mixed in a variety of ways unique and so different from other areas, particularly the Anglo-Saxon colonial thrust. Cultural contact studies offer particularly an in-depth picture of the uniqueness of Latin America in terms of its cultural mixture.

Colonialism created new worlds through the meeting, clash, and sometimes merge of varying values. We need to explore the variety of these worlds and the processes, whereby the contacts between social logics put existing values at risk, including some of those we mostly take for granted (Gosden 2004, p. 23). The edited volume creates a dual view conjugating particularities and generalities, as well as expressing the unity and diversity of Latin America. This volume particularly highlights local histories, revealing novelty, diversity, and creativity in the conformation of the new colonial realities, as well as presenting Latin America as a multicultural arena, with astonishing heterogeneity in thoughts, experiences, practices, and material worlds.

1.2.1 Contribution of This Volume

The case studies presented in this volume examine the Spanish and Portuguese colonial projects in a wide variety of contexts. The chapters included in Sect. I show different approaches to posing questions about colonialism. In Chap. 2, Teixeira et al. investigate the Atlantic expansion and the Portuguese material culture in the early modern age (Portugal). Azkarate and Escribano-Ruiz, in Chap. 3, question the historiographical representation of the early colonization of the Rio de la Plata Basin (Argentina). Rodríguez-Alegría et al., in Chap. 4, examine technological transformations comparing two different colonial settings (Mexico and Venezuela). In Chap. 5, Pezzarossi analyzes market engagement in Colonial Guatemala. In Chap. 6, Kepecs considers the complex relationships between indigenous ideology and the economy of the northern lowlands Maya of Yucatan (Mexico). In Chap. 7, Dominguez and Funari present a reassessment of archaeology of cultural contact in Cuba.

Local histories in specific social contexts are examined in the contributions in Sect. II. In Chap. 8, Loren aims at obtaining a fuller understanding of the complete colonial body in eighteenth century Spanish Texas. Scaramelli and Scaramelli, in Chap. 9, investigate the commercialization of wild resources articulating the global and local perspectives in the Orinoco frontier (Venezuela). Rosthchild, in Chap. 10, investigates in different social contexts the women's role in the Spanish colonial world. Symansky and Gomes, in Chap. 11, study social segmentation and mestizaje between Portuguese and indigenous people in northern Brazil. Senatore, in Chap. 12, presents novelty as part of social interaction in eighteenth-century Patagonic Atlantic Coast Spanish colony (Argentina).

New realities and material worlds are primary themes addressed in Sect. III. In Chap. 13, Escribano-Ruiz and Azkarate investigate Basque fisheries in eastern Canada. In Chap. 14, Chiavazza presents the sixteenth-century Spanish occupation of the lowlands of Central South America (Bolivia). In Chap. 15, Camargo studies maritime landscapes in sixteenth-century Brazil. Saccente and White, in Chap. 16, present an archaeological view of a remote Spanish outpost in eighteenth-century Northwest Florida. In Chap. 17, Kulstad-González examines the economic activity at Concepción de la Vega settlement. In the final chapter, Poloni discusses the role of archaeology in the emergence of the concept of heritage and national culture in modern Brazil.

1.3 Disrupting the Master Narrative of Iberian Colonialism

The volume—as a whole—contributes to disrupt the grand old narrative of cultural contact and colonialism in Spanish and Portuguese America in a wide and complete sense. We understand master narrative as a concept rooted in Lyotardian

thoughts (Lyotard 1984) introduced in the field of historical archaeology by Johnson (1999). In this case, we refer to the normalized and the standard view of Spanish and Portuguese colonization, which works as a cultural message as well as a framework of knowledge and interpretation.

The different chapters question master narrative in their multiple dimensions: the theoretical dimension, the methodological one, and a further dimension related to the sources of information used. They also question the spatial and temporal scales applied to the study of colonial experiences. This questioning may be either explicit or not, but it becomes evident in the proposal of alternatives, and it is shaped in the widening and diversification of the ways of looking at, analyzing and thinking over the cases presented in this book. Moreover, there is a questioning of the colonial discourse, which has been naturalized in the shape of individual stories, explanations of cultural change, historiographical discourse, or legacies of colonialism in the present time.

1.3.1 Ideas and Theoretical Concepts

Theoretical concepts are reviewed with different degrees of depth. Some of them are more or less widened or else new, different or alternative concepts are presented to contrast them. Thus, categories which have been naturalized both in colonial discourse and by scholars working on cultural contact are questioned.

Along this line *mestizaje* and cultural change become relevant as key concepts. *Mestizaje* is used both in multiple theoretical-methodological-analytical dimensions and from experience. Rothschild questions “*mestizaje* today is valued but naturalized, and masks a great deal of variation, some of which is strongly linked to class differences and would have been present in the past.” Symanski problematizes it following Gruzinski’s when he refers to *mestizaje* as “the mixtures between human beings, imaginaries, and lifeways,” and states it as a process which “is as much objective, being observed in several kinds of sources, as subjective, implying the consciousness that these past actors had about what was going on.” Poloni uses the concepts “*mestiçagem* or *miscegenation*” in a central and structuring way in her analysis of colonialism legacy. Dominguez and Funari interpret it as experience. These multiple approaches contribute to the theoretical debate of the scope and the analytical limitations of the concept of *mestizaje* as well as to the understanding of its multiple interpretative dimensions.

Another immensely rich concept is that of cultural change that appears in this book as linked to the use of different analytical scales. Hence, cultural change is studied in different and complementary spatial scales, for instance, regional scales in Rodriguez et al., Scaramelli and Scaramelli, and Kepecs’s chapters. Teixeira et al.’s contribution offers some clues for the global understanding of the impact of the relations developed with people bordering the opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean (Brazil and Portugal).