
Symposium: Archaeology of Colonialism

The generosity of the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities made this symposium possible

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This symposium will explore the archaeological evidence of colonialism through case studies of material culture and excavated sites. The case studies range from ancient Mesopotamia and the classical Mediterranean to historical contexts in Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. Cross-cultural and diachronic studies can offer valuable ways of integrating--or problematising the relationship between--artifactual remains and historic documentation. Each paper adopts a comparative approach and considers issues of identity, cultural reciprocity, and indigenous responses to the colonial experience within an explicit theoretical framework.

The full-day symposium will be organised into morning and afternoon sections, each with a respondent and discussion period. The first session focuses on interpretations of material culture evidence in order to explore the role of economic and cultural exchange in defining aspects of colonisation. Taking the evidence of recent excavations, the four papers present different paradigms of colonial trade and how exchanges between colonisers and colonised are organised. The role of myth, religion, and ritual in the symbolic expression of colonial identities is examined in the afternoon session. These papers consider shifting identities in response to colonial contact and their reflection in the patterning of the material world

Forms of Andean colonial towns, free will and marriage

Tom Cummins

This paper will compare forms of European spatial and social organisation within the colonisation of Peru in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. My intent is to suggest how one can productively study the relation between the planning and building of new towns for the native population and the re-organisation of Andean rules of consanguinity and marriage. Focussing on concrete examples, I examine these forms and their ideological importance in the creation of the colonial native subject.

I will first give a descriptive analysis of sixteenth century idealised town plans and a small number of actual Andean colonial towns. The analysis centres on the creation of a colonial sense of order, both architectural and social. I will then focus on two doctrinal documents from the Andes through which I examine the relationship between town planning, architecture and Catholic ritual. The first document, a Catechism for natives, was written in Bogotá in 1576 by the second bishop of Nueva Granada. The other document the *Ritual Forumlario e instruccion de curas* was written around 1620 by a priest in Cuzco. I will analyse the sections on the marriage and consanguinity in both texts and how they directly relate to the grid plan and architecture of Indian towns as re-enforcing ideological structures of colonial order.

Greeks in Iberia: Colonialism without colonisation

Adolfo Dominguez

I intend to explore the cultural action of Greeks on natives of south- eastern Iberian Peninsula, using Iberian sculptures showing Greek models and a class of writing called Graeco-Iberian as points of departure. Both of elements show the depth of the Greek action; sculpture is a new phenomenon to the Iberians, who previously did not know and use it. Graeco-Iberian script, although not the only script used by Iberians, as an adaptation of the Greek alphabet, clearly shows Greek influence. This strong cultural influence is compared to the slight evidence for Greek settlements in south- eastern Iberia, and suggests Greek trading centres in Iberian.

Thus, a particular relationship between Greeks and Iberians can be delineated, displaying some features of colonial processes but without true Greek colonies in the region. However, the strong Greek cultural influencesuggests the existence of an intense dialogue between Greeks and natives in which each partner put forward their claims and obtained from the other the fulfilment of their needs. If this hypothesis is true, this case-study would allow the proposal of the existence of colonialism without true colonies and advance knowledge of the Phocaeen-Emporitan model of colonisation and interaction.

Indigenous responses to colonial encounters on the West African Coast: Hueda and Dahomey from the 17th through 19th centuries

Kenneth Kelly

This paper discusses historical archaeological research undertaken at the site of Savi, capital of the *Hueda* kingdom (ca. AD 1660-1727) on the West African coast of the Bight of Benin. Savi achieved its notoriety as a primary destination for European slavers seeking to acquire captive Africans for New World plantations. Archaeological evidence demonstrates how the Hueda employed a unique strategy to control and manipulate European traders, actively encouraging the presence of multiple trading nations in order to ensure Hueda autonomy, and shows how the Hueda negotiated complex meanings associated with the European presence.

Following the defeat of Hueda and destruction of Savi, by Dahomey (ca. AD 1650-1894), located to the north, European traders moved closer to the coast, where the town of Ouidah (founded ca. 1727) grew to prominence in the Atlantic trade. Archaeological research at Ouidah demonstrates cultural transformation occurring here due to the increasingly strong European presence. Ouidah also became an increasingly multi-ethnic town, with apparent affiliations to specific European nations, as well as the presence of an Afro-Brazilian segment of society who were central to the economic life of 19th century Ouidah. Two centuries of contact with colonial powers culminated in the French defeat of Dahomey in 1894, and the imposition of French colonial governance.

A colonial middle ground: Greek, Etruscan, and local elites in the Bay of Naples

Irad Malkin

This paper proposes a new perspective for evaluating the colonial presence around the Bay of Naples, the earliest area of Greek colonisation. It reviews the evidence for 8th- and 7th-century contacts among Greeks, Etruscans, Latins, and local elites. Here contact and social reciprocity were prominent, as indicated by the dissemination of the Euboean alphabet, paraphernalia relating to the symposium, and artistic motifs. The use of Greek myth as an articulation of ethnicity and collective identity, and the willingness of non-Greek cultures to accept Greek constructs about themselves, is emphasised.

The process of trans-culturation in frontier areas created what may be appropriately termed a "Middle Ground". The Middle Ground is not just the physical frontier region but also a mental creation, where one side plays according to the parameters it imagines the other side perceives of itself. Narrative frameworks articulating collective identities seem to have been operating either to emphasise a common ground among various colonial and native populations, or to trace a hostile dichotomy. This perspective of a Middle Ground comprised of reflecting images and mythic articulations of collective identities argues for the emergence of a mediating culture, an approach that is preferable to the bi-polar, "Self-Other" dichotomy.

"Strong is the bond of kinship": West African-style ancestor shrines and subfloor pits on African-American quarter

Patricia Samford

Torn from their families and communities, transported across an ocean, and thrust unwillingly into a system of forced labour, peoples of African descent in the colonial American South responded to enslavement in myriad ways. Regardless of the specific details, every individual met life's challenges from perspectives influenced, albeit to varying degrees, by their African heritages. Using an interpretative approach that views the meanings of material culture within historical contexts, this paper shows how the enslaved used personal identities as a tool or strategy for negotiating circumstances within the context of Virginia plantation slavery. It examines how ancestor veneration, one aspect of many West African traditional religions, may have been maintained and transformed in Virginia. Using a combination of ethnohistoric, archaeological, documentary, and ethnographic evidence from both Virginia and the West African societies whose descendants figured prominently in the Virginia slave population, these sources suggest that ancestor veneration continued to play a critical role in the lives of enslaved Virginians. Moreover, it is proposed that subfloor pits, a type of archaeological feature common on eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Virginia slave sites functioned in some instances as ancestor shrines with antecedents in West Africa. Subfloor pits believed to have served as shrines on five eighteenth-century sites are described.

Colonies without colonialism: Models of Mesopotamian-Anatolian interaction at Hacinebi, Turkey in the 4th millennium, BC

Gil J. Stein

In the fourth Millennium BC, the newly emergent state societies of Mesopotamia established a network of settlements along the trade routes to Syria, Anatolia, and Iran, forming the world's first colonial system. Most analyses of this network rely on an implicit model of European colonialism, which sees these enclaves as parts of a chain of domination where homelands control colonies, while colonies control indigenous host communities. I argue here that this model is overly restrictive, and ignores variation in power relations between a) homelands and colonies, and b) colonies and indigenous polities. I propose an alternative "trade diaspora" model as a more realistic framework for the analysis of culture contact and exchange.

The colonialist domination and trade diaspora models are tested at Hacinebi, on the Euphrates River in southeast Turkey. In 3700 BC, a Mesopotamian trading enclave was established in one corner of this Anatolian site. However, there is no evidence that the Mesopotamians dominated their host community. Instead, comparisons of the Mesopotamian and local parts of Hacinebi suggest that the enclave was a socially and economically autonomous diaspora. The Hacinebi data indicate that considerable variation exists in power relations and colonial-local interaction in ancient, non-western colonial networks.

Ambiguous matters: Colonialism and local identities in Punic Sardinia

Peter van Dommelen

Because of the numerous and evident instances of colonial settlement in the ancient Mediterranean, such as the Greek colonisation of South Italy, colonialism is generally regarded to provide a coherent and transparent framework for archaeological and historical research in Mediterranean archaeology. Considering contemporary attitudes towards colonialism, however, the allegedly unproblematic nature of ancient colonialism has recently been criticised from a postcolonial perspective. Likewise, the opposition between colonisers and colonised has been problematised, using in particular Homi Bhabha's notion of ambivalence for probing the more murky dimensions of colonialism. Starting from the assumption that material culture plays a basic role in the construction of identities, I suggest that an archaeological study of colonial situations is one way forward for examining how people perceived a given colonial situation and reacted to it. By examining the interrelations of the colonial situations on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia in the late Punic and early Roman period (roughly 4th-1st centuries BC), I intend to rethink the use of conventional colonial terminology in Mediterranean archaeology and to reconsider the ambiguous dimensions of (ancient) colonialism.