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Publication Date

2010

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Archaeology of the Colonial Period Gulf of Fonseca, Eastern El Salvador

By

Esteban Montes Gomez

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Rosemary A. Joyce, Chair

Professor Kent G. Lightfoot

Professor William B. Taylor

Fall 2010

Abstract

The Archaeology of Colonial Period Gulf of Fonseca, Eastern El Salvador

by

Esteban Montes Gomez

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Rosemary A. Joyce, Chair

This dissertation is an archaeological and historical study of culture contact and colonialism at Conchagua Vieja, an indigenous village site on the Salvadoran island of Conchagüita, in the Gulf of Fonseca. Based on ethnohistorical research, Conchagua Vieja was inhabited by Lenca-speaking peoples at the time of Spanish contact in 1522. Conchagua Vieja was later abandoned at the turn of the seventeenth century because of pirate incursions into the area. The culture and lifeways of the indigenous peoples that resided on the island of Conchagüita, along with their multi-ethnic neighbors that inhabited the Gulf of Fonseca region, were irrevocably transformed by culture contact and colonization.

The events and processes of colonization and missionization created, and depended upon, complex new forms of interaction between and within groups of Mesoamerican Indians, Africans, Europeans, and mixed-race American-born colonial subjects. The dynamics of this entanglement between peoples of regional, ethnic, racial, and cultural distinctions are significant to any study of Central America. The research presented here investigates the multifaceted nature of cultural entanglements between European and indigenous peoples through archival research, archaeological survey and excavations, and laboratory analyses.

There are two primary objectives to this dissertation. First, shed light on a local experience on an island in the Gulf of Fonseca that addresses larger themes of colonialism and nationalism in El Salvador. In a country with arguably the weakest historiography in Latin America, the need to carry out such an extensive empirical research project could not be greater. Second, develop a nuanced social history of colonialism in El Salvador, one that explores how colonialism was differentially experienced on a variety of scales. Addressing the first goal complements archaeological research in Central America that has not dealt with the Gulf of Fonseca, an area that has received scant archaeological and historical attention. The second goal is important not only as the backdrop for a theoretical and methodological exercise, but also as an exploration of a noteworthy, but often overlooked, colonial venue in El Salvador and Central America. Illuminating the experiences of an indigenous community that did not include resident Spaniards further unveils the diversity of culture contact in Central America, providing new data for comparative work and revealing critical moments in indigenous histories along the Pacific coast of Central America.

The investigation brings together five bodies of data: (1) published and unpublished archival records related to the island of Conchagüita and the Gulf of Fonseca; (2) survey data

that reveals patterns of indigenous landscape practices; (3) archaeological evidence of architectural practices in the Spanish church that was constructed in the middle of Conchagua Vieja at the turn of the seventeenth century; (4) evidence of household practices acquired through excavations of residential contexts; and (5) ceramics, material culture, and dietary remains recovered from midden deposits. These inquiries into the conditions of daily life in the indigenous community provide the empirical foundation for a rich historical reconstruction of cultural practices at Conchagua Vieja.

The convergence of data from topographic mapping, archaeological excavations, and unpublished archival documents from repositories in Guatemala provides a basis for evaluating the changing nature of human occupation in the Gulf region under Spanish colonization. Positioned among historical, environmental and cultural studies and at a powerful confluence of sub-disciplines within anthropology, the historical anthropology of the multi-ethnic Gulf of Fonseca region will stimulate further dialogue and intellectual exchange among anthropologists, historians, and other scholars working in El Salvador and Central America.

Dedicated to the memory of my brother Alex.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have provided their assistance and support to this project. Archaeological research is a group endeavor and the product of long hours of extensive dialogue. I am especially lucky to have had the opportunity to work alongside many gifted and generous scholars.

My first thanks go to the wonderful archaeologists from the Department of Archaeology at the National Institute of Culture and Art (CONCULTURA) in San Salvador, El Salvador. Without their logistical support, this project would not have been possible. I would particularly like to acknowledge the help of Marlon Escamilla, and the students from the *Universidad Tecnológica* of San Salvador: Julio, Eulisses, Liuba, and Hugo. Their enthusiasm for and support for my archaeological project was key to its fruition, and I thank them for their participation. Marlon was especially key in communicating to me the permit process and guiding me through the process of doing archaeological research in a setting that I was not familiar with. At the same time, I would like to extend my gratitude to Fred Lang, who got this project rolling in the first place. Without his support and knowledge, this project would have never gotten off the ground in the first place. Without Fred's involvement I would have never been able to work with the Salvadoran Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in the summer of 2002. It was Fred who drove me around the Salvadoran countryside, introducing me to different staff members from several Salvadoran *Casas de Culturas* in eastern El Salvador. This experience inspired me to do an archaeological research project for the people of eastern El Salvador.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement provided by Pedro Antonio Escalante de Arce, a Salvadoran historian who helped me with the archival documents I encountered at the national archives in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Pedro was the first to push me towards the usage of archival documents and to do more historical research on eastern El Salvador. I also have to thank Rus Sheptak for his continued help with the archival component of this research project. Words cannot describe the amount of help he provided me throughout my time at UC Berkeley. Both were always willing to help and always showed an interest in my research and general interests.

Some of my deepest appreciation goes to those amazing individuals who worked with me in the field and laboratory. Three Berkeley students were especially helpful: Mineko Brand, Charmaine Wong, and Kristyn Hara. I could not have completed this work without their help and it is only appropriate that I recognize them here. As for the small towns in the Gulf of Fonseca, it was simply amazing how many people in these small communities were willing to help me with my research. I also have to thank Don Chungo on the island of Zacatillo. Don Chungo was the first to invite me to the islands in the summer of 2002. I stayed with his family for two months while doing reconnaissance work in the Gulf of Fonseca. I shared many special moments with him and his family. I especially enjoyed our long chats at sunrise. Come to think of it, I shared many special moments with a variety of individuals on the islands. It truly was a transformative experience for me.

Over the course of the project, numerous individuals offered insight and assistance on a variety of fronts. I want to personally thank all of the members of the Dissertation writing group: Andy Roddick, Darren Modzelewski, David Cohen, Kat Howlett Hayes, Lee Panich, Matt Sayre, Sara Gonzalez, and Meg Conkey. Their insight and generosity will always be remembered. For assistance with other issues, I thank Steve Shackley, Laurie Wilkie, Mark

McCoy, Bonnie Clark, Shanti Morell-Hart, Doris Maldonado, and others who have gone through the Department of Anthropology at UC Berkeley. I cannot thank you all enough for all the help and support.

I want to express deepest thanks to my dissertation committee. Over the years, Rosemary Joyce has been a remarkable source of inspiration and support. Rosemary was always there when I needed her most, and there is no question that her work ethic and dedication to helping others has inspired me to do more as a scholar and mentor for undergraduates. For those who know Rosemary personally, you can appreciate her wonderful sense of humor that always made working with her a pleasure. I also want to thank Kent Lightfoot, for being an amazing co-advisor during my graduate career. Kent has been a major influence in my thoughts about archaeology and the teaching of archaeology, and I appreciate all the time and effort he dedicated to me, and his other students over the years. Finally, I thank William Taylor for his insightful reading of my dissertation. He brought a new perspective to this work, one that has done nothing but improve the research and writing of history. I especially appreciated the opportunity to present my research to the Colonial Writing Group at UC Berkeley. I deeply appreciated his patience, and the way he made himself available for me. He also reminded me to thank the Dodgers and Angels for not making the playoffs while finishing up the dissertation.

Many organizations provided financial support towards my graduate school expenses and towards the research reported here. The Cota Robles Fellowship, UC Dissertation Award, and various teaching positions in the Department of Anthropology funded my graduate education. The National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant provided major funding for field and laboratory research. Grants from the Robert H. Lowie and Ronald L. Olson, and the Tinker Grant allowed me to attend conferences and meetings that were critical in developing this research. I also want to thank Ned Garret and other staff members who were always willing to help me, and to answer questions whenever they could.

Finally, I want to thank all the family and friends whose love and support have kept me going. My parents taught me to always work hard, and to never give up on anything. They taught me everything I know about perseverance, and how to find amazing Mexican food. I am grateful for all the financial and emotional support they provided throughout my graduate career. I am grateful to my siblings who encouraged and supported me every step of the way. Along with my family, I want to thank my extended family in El Salvador: the Vaqueranos at *Casa Tazumal*. I always loved staying at their guesthouse, where I was able to meet so many great individuals. I loved how they always treated me and Nicole like family. I also want to thank my aunt Delfina and uncle Jose for their support, and willingness to help me throughout my career.

Last – but certainly not least – this dissertation could not have been completed without the love of my life, Nicole Anthony. It's truly remarkable how much patience, sympathy, and encouragement she exhibited throughout the writing of this dissertation. She willingly tolerated the many disruption in our lives that archaeological research can cause. To be honest, I don't know how she was able to put up with me. I am truly grateful for her support and the many life lessons she was able to provide for me. Nicole is my intellectual and spiritual inspiration, and she is always challenging me to be more rigorous in my research and to be humble. Above all, she believed in me, and believed that this project was not only possible, but also worthwhile. Her support and love and general craziness have meant more than I can say. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

Outside observers find a paradox when trying to follow El Salvador's history. On the one hand, El Salvador appears to be a nation without history, where its people, institutions, and government have a weak and fragmented sense of their own past. At the same time, the common observer might see Salvadorans as overly engaged with their sense of "rootedness" – as people who understand that where the country is now, and where it has been, is firmly rooted in its past. A past in which events are known to have occurred, but remain elusively ambiguous and vague. This dissertation sets out to navigate the terrain established by this paradox, as it explores El Salvador's colonial past to see its connections with its present situation. Historical processes are reconstructed and traces of the past recovered, with the intent to understand the colonial legacies that continue to inform the present. I use the phrase colonial legacies here not as a way to suggest that colonial structures were simply passed on to subsequent societies, like a box that is handed from one person to another, but as a tool for understanding how historical narratives simultaneously produce knowledge and renew claims to truth.

The following chapters explore fundamental issues concerning the relation between the past and present, the construal of time, and the respective roles of history and memory as modes of apprehending the past or of bringing it to bear in the present. Persons and events are not intrinsically of the past. They become so only in relation to the moving prospect of the present. This statement, however, immediately raises a quandary. On the one hand, the past appears cut off from the reality of our contemporary existence. In our own personal lives, we often say that the past resides in the *past*. On the other hand, we are constantly reminded of our early years, and how the events we experienced as children played formative roles in the development of our own capacities. While history might lie behind us, our memories of the past remain very much a part of us: in our thoughts, actions, dispositions, sensibilities, and skills of perception. While the past might seem alien to our present experiences, it also appears to be generative of those experiences.

The position taken in this dissertation is that the past is active in the present and the present influences our vision of the past. Collective memories, or knowledge, of the past are not discrete representations stored in storage cabinets of images and recollections from which individuals and groups of people can pull out whatever they need for current purposes. This is the kind of memory we expect from our hard drives and portable flash drives, where our memory is measured by storage capacity. Fortunately, or regrettably (depending on your outlook on life), people do not work like computers and remembering is not necessarily a process of summoning representations of what happened. The contents of our storage cabinets are neither fixed, nor accessible at will. It is rather impossible to separate memory from the movement of consciousness, the passage of generations, and the flow of real time. It is precisely this weathering of time, where the past, present and future collapse onto a single plane of reality that characterizes contemporary perspectives of how we tend to think about history. Remembering and producing knowledge of the past involves real people in a real world.

There are two primary objectives to this dissertation. First, shed light on a local experience on an island in the Gulf of Fonseca (Figure 1.1) that addresses larger themes of colonialism and nationalism in El Salvador. In a country with arguably the weakest historiography in Latin America, the need to carry out such an extensive empirical research project could not be greater. Second, develop a nuanced social history of colonialism in El Salvador, one that explores how colonialism was differentially experienced on a variety of scales. My exploration of colonial life for the Lenca-speaking inhabitants of Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita, moves away from studies on colonial Central America that simply focus on the early years of conquest and colonialism, and the destructive impact of European incursions into the region. Each objective is requisite for the full consideration of the other. The underlying motivation is to account for the social development of El Salvador, and Central America, in its entirety by paying more attention to a geographic area, historical era, and peoples that have been neglected by the scholarly field.

Illuminating the colonial experience for the Lenca-speaking residents of Conchagua Vieja further unveils the complexity of Spanish colonialism in eastern El Salvador, providing new data for comparative work and revealing critical moments in indigenous histories in Central America. To facilitate future discussion, the remaining sections of this introduction will situate the underlying goals of this investigation in its proper cultural-historical context, the development of Salvadoran anthropology and history, and the use of a colonial landscape approach to better understand the history of the Gulf of Fonseca, and eastern El Salvador.

THE CULTURE HISTORY OF THE GULF OF FONSECA

During the sixteenth century, the Gulf of Fonseca of Pacific Central America was culturally and linguistically diverse, a complex, interrelated socioecological zone composed of islands of communities organized in cross-cutting social networks between peoples that spoke different languages, but occupied contiguous territories (Figure 1.2). The socio-cultural composition of the Gulf of Fonseca shifted after the arrival of the Spanish in 1522, as the islands and communities of the Gulf of Fonseca were taken, traded, and governed by various colonial and then postcolonial states.

While archaeological data is scarce for the Gulf of Fonseca region prior to the arrival of the Spanish, scholars presume that the linguistic and cultural diversity in the gulf was just as complex. Archaeologists have proposed that trading networks along the Pacific coast connected lower Central America with areas to the north and south (Andrews V 1976; Lange and Stone 1984; Lange *et al.* 1992; Sheets 1984). The appearance of lowland Maya artifacts from sites in lower Central America, particularly the Nicoya region in Costa Rica (Stone 1984), strongly suggest trade and exchange networks along the coast as early as the late Classic period, ca. 800 CE (Sharer 1984: 75-76). Archaeological research in the Comayagua Valley of Honduras has long exhibited the highland basin as a major route of cross-cultural communication between middle and lower Central America (Dixon 1989). Survey work in the Comayagua Valley, a basin that links the Pacific and Caribbean drainage systems, redefined the nature of cross-cultural relationships between these two regions by revealing a complex history that spans from the early Formative (ca. 1000 BCE) to the sixteenth century (Dixon 1989).

This multifaceted history of cross-cultural relationships throughout middle and lower Central America is supported by archaeological research that has taken place at Quelepa

(Andrews 1976; Brasswell *et al.* 1994), and has been re-substantiated by recent excavations at Chiquirín (Escamilla and Shibata 2004), and survey work in eastern El Salvador (Amador 2008) and the Gulf of Fonseca (Gómez 2003). The analysis of ceramic remains from the Laguneta, Salto Coyote, and El Cacao archaeological sites suggest a strong connection between eastern El Salvador and northern Honduras as early as the Formative period (Amador 2008). Material remains from Chiquirín and the island of Zacatillo, in the Gulf of Fonseca, strengthened this stance by revealing the existence of ceramic forms and styles from as far south as northwestern Costa Rica.

Networks of exchange and communication between middle and lower Central America may have been facilitated by the several large and small rivers in Honduras' southern Pacific region, such as the Goascarán, Nacaome, Choluteca, and Sampile, all of which empty into the Gulf of Fonseca (Figure 1.1). Coastal zones along the Gulf of Fonseca are mangrove-lined and not particularly fertile; however, Baudez (1976) did encounter a number of small settlements and salt-making locales near the coast in the Honduran Departments of Nacaome and Choluteca. Based on radiocarbon dates and the presence of imported ceramics from the lower Ulúa river valley (northern Honduras) and Usulután (eastern El Salvador), settlement in this area reaches as far back as 300 CE and continued into the fifteenth-century (Baudez 1976: 15-17; Beaudry 1982; Valdivieso 2006). Away from the coast there are valley zones with richer soils and more abundant vegetation (Andrews 1983). In the Gulf of Fonseca, archaeological research at Asanyamba, just north of the Bay of La Unión (Beaudry 1982; Mejia 1981; Valdivieso 2004, 2006), reinforced this position by demonstrating that the most active trade likely occurred between coastal and inland native groups that emphasized different economic activities (Andrews 1983: 107; Beaudry 1982; Boggs 1978; Lange 1971; Mejia 1981; Valdivieso 2004, 2006).

The Lenca of eastern El Salvador

Three different ethnic groups resided in the Gulf of Fonseca: the Lenca, Chorotega, and the Nicarao (Figure 1.2). Based on the earliest accounts of the Gulf of Fonseca ((CDI 6: 7; Ponce1873: 231-36), the islands were inhabited by Lenca-speaking peoples that occupied a part of El Salvador east of the Rio Lempa, and the mountain regions of central and southern Honduras (Figure 1.3). The Lenca were distributed in hereditary chiefdoms that consisted of complex regional polities that included local settlements supported by several subordinate communities (Chapman 1978; Herrera y Tordesillas 1727; Richter 1971; Weeks *et al.* 1987; Weeks and Black 1991). According to Lyle Campbell (1979: 970), the ancient proto-Lencan homeland was in central Honduras, but that sometime during the late Formative period 400 BCE to 200 CE, proto-Lencan diverged into two distinct languages – Honduran and Salvadoran Lenca (Campbell 1976; Campbell *et al.* 1978). Campbell further argued that Salvadoran Lenca speakers were responsible for the development of Quelepa, an important commercial center located near the modern-day city of San Miguel, in eastern El Salvador.

Campbell's reconstruction is consistent with E. Wyllys Andrews' (1976) archaeological research at Quelepa, which suggests that specific items, such as Usulután pottery, may have been manufactured and distributed throughout Honduras and eastern El Salvador by Lenca-speaking peoples in this region. Both reconstructions – archaeological and linguistic – strengthen the position that the historic Lenca are direct descendants of the Formative era populations of eastern El Salvador, and Honduras. Archaeological data in

Chapters 6 and 7 not only reinforces this position, but also demonstrates the strong ties that existed between Lenca-speaking peoples throughout Honduras, and eastern El Salvador.

There are a number of published historical sources that provide noteworthy information for the Lenca of Central America. Primary sources that comment on the early sixteenth century Lenca is limited to a collection of letters written in the 1530s to the Spanish Crown in response to the numerous insurrections that took place throughout Honduras (Alvarado 1864, 1871, 1875; Montejo 1864a-b, 1875a-c; Pedraza 1908, 1916). Direct observation of the Lenca in eastern El Salvador relate mostly to the establishment of San Miguel, and the enslavement of indigenous peoples from this region by governors Pedrarias Davila and Pedro de Alvarado (AGCA A1.24, Leg. 193, Exp. 1; AGCA A1.24 Leg. 121, Exp. 21; AGI Patronato, Legajo 20, Numero 4, Ramo 5; AGI Justicia, Legajo 296; AGI Patronato, Legajo 180, Ramo 62; DHN II: 189-213; DHN V: 363-76). Many of these documents describe military operations related to the subjugation of the Lenca, but provide little cultural information. A full use of primary and secondary documents that describe eastern El Salvador's landscape and peoples is provided in Chapters 3 and 4.

While the majority of documents provide *encomienda* assignments, ecclesiastical histories, and documents that comment on administrative matters, several sources mention specific aspects of indigenous Lenca society (Anguiano 1946; Cadinanos 1893; Contreras Guevara 1946; Funes 1952; Juarres 1936; Vazquez 1944; and Velasco 1971). Lenca features that are most commonly discussed in these documents include aspects of political hierarchy and regional organization, which were used by the Spanish to organize tribute demands and labor (Lara Pinto 1982: 47). Based on historical documents from western Honduras (Herrera y Tordesillas 1726-1730; Montejo 1875c; Pedraza 1916), the Lenca *cacicazgos*, or chiefdoms, were territorially based societies characterized by an internal ranking system established through hereditary power. *Caciques mayores*, and family members, formed the very head of the hierarchy, followed by *caciques principales*, whose authority was limited to outlying districts and communities.

For this investigation, two sixteenth-century sources that have proven to be invaluable are the written accounts of Diego Garcia de Palacios (1881), and the *Relación* produced by both Fray Alonso Ponce and his secretary Antonio de Ciudad Real (1873). Both ethnohistoric accounts provide valuable sources of information on the social and physical landscape of eastern El Salvador in the latter half of the sixteenth-century, as well as ethnological and linguistic information unique to this region (Garcia de Palacios 1881; *Relación* 1873: 329-389). Research at the *Archivo General de Centroamérica* (AGCA) in Guatemala City also revealed relevant social processes, including the practice of slave raiding in eastern El Salvador, the introduction of the *encomienda* labor system, and missionization efforts throughout the region.

To date, the Lenca have received relatively little attention within the larger realm of Mesoamerican and Central American studies. In terms of colonial period research, most works published in the Mesoamerican area have as their object the texts produced about (and sometimes, although less frequently, by) the indigenous cultures often considered the most "developed": the Maya, or the Mexica of central Mexico. As a consequence, the linguistically diverse ethnic groups that resided in the transitional zone between Mesoamerica and Central America (Figure 1.3) have been, more often than not, neglected. This transitional zone stretches from northern Honduras to the Nicoya Peninsula of northwestern Costa Rica. The vast majority of scholars interested in the development of Mesoamerica and Central America

have paid a minimal amount of attention to this zone, despite the amount of linguistic diversity that existed in this region (see Figures 1.2 and 1.4).

To make matters worse, eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca have been left in a historiographical void, seen by Central Salvadorans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans as part of a distant periphery. The historiographical view of eastern El Salvador as neither a significant center in its own right, nor meaningfully attached to its regional neighbors, developed partly as a response to this neglect from scholars interested in this region's Precolumbian and colonial history. In this dissertation, I argue that eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca region, should be studied not despite the marginal status given to this territory but because of it. In this case, the colonial processes that took place in this territory should be compared to other regions of Central America, where different economic and political circumstances determined the processes of social development.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historiography, or the history of history, is of paramount importance for any scholar who wants to capture the complex process of history making. Whether in El Salvador, or North America, there are different degrees of diversity within traditions of historical scholarship, and it is only during specific segments of time and social circumstances that their internal diversity is reduced. Salvadoran history after the arrival of the Spanish is such a segment, one in which historical scholarship concerning the colonial period and the modern republican era were based on the limited attention given to the historical depth and cultural achievements of past indigenous peoples.

Since the early twentieth century, historical studies of El Salvador rarely ventured beyond accounts of military or political narratives. To counter these long-standing historical paradigms, Salvadoran intellectuals in the 1970s attempted to identify some of the country's major social developments. They did so, however, with extremely limited training in historical research, and with little use of primary – especially archival – sources. Three identifiable factors contributed to the dearth of historical studies concerning El Salvador: decades of military dictatorship; limited resources for research; and a socio-political culture that neglected a close analysis of the country's social past. In this dissertation, I provide insights into how each of these factors manipulated the production of El Salvador's social histories, encouraging certain forms of history while discouraging, and sometimes, silencing others. The Salvadoran state exercises a certain amount of influence over the production of the country's local and national histories in a variety of ways: the allocation of resources for research and training that serve to amplify knowledge about specific time periods with which the state has identified; and the sponsorship of archaeological agendas that indirectly cloud understandings of the country's local and multi-ethnic histories.

There are several works that broadly discuss El Salvador's colonial history. The most recognizable of these works include Jorge Lardé y Larín's two seminal works, *El Salvador: Descubrimiento, Conquista y Colonización* and *El Salvador: Historia de sus Pueblos, Villas y Ciudades*, which cover the country's social, political, economic, and cultural history from the original societies of the colonial order to the twentieth centuries. Writing as a journalist, Jorge Lardé y Larín's two books largely consisted of news columns from the Salvadoran newspaper *El Diario de Hoy*. Two other population and demographic studies related to the colonial period include Rodolfo Baron Castro's *La Población de El*

Salvador, and *Reseña histórica de la villa de San Salvador, desde su fundación en 1525 hasta que recibe el título de ciudad en 1546*. With regards to archaeological research, the Izalco region of western El Salvador has drawn considerable attention from William Fowler (1983, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995) and a dissertation from Inez Leontine Verhagen (1997). William Fowler (2002) also investigated Ciudad Vieja, the first Spanish outpost in El Salvador and the proposed foundation for San Salvador. Finally, the most comprehensive study of El Salvador's colonial history and demographic development is David Browning's *El Salvador: Landscape and Society*.

There are two works that specifically cover the broad history of eastern El Salvador: Jorge Lardé y Larín's *Toponimia Autoctona de El Salvador Oriental* and José Antonio Fernández's *Pintando el mundo de azul*. Similar to *El Salvador: Descubrimiento, Conquista y Colonización*, Larín's *Toponimia Autoctona de El Salvador Oriental* documents the major events and peoples associated with eastern El Salvador's colonial history. Fernández's indigo text is an account of El Salvador's participation in the wider indigo economy in the western and central region's of the country, between 1750 and 1810. The text is mostly concerned with the economic and political impacts of indigo, but provides little coverage on the social and environmental impacts of indigo in the region (a more thorough discussion of these impacts is provided in Chapter 5). Other notable works include Robert Chamberlain's brief colonial account of the early history of San Miguel de la Frontera, the eastern-most villa in the province of San Salvador; Pedro Rivas' research on the Gulf of Fonseca, titled *Monografía geográfica e histórica de la isla El Tigre y puerto de Amapala*; and "El Golfo de Fonseca: Una historia trascendente" by Pedro Antonio Escalante Arce, a Salvadoran lawyer who was written extensively of the country's colonial history (Escalante Arce 1992, 2002). Chamberlain's brief historical review of San Miguel is mostly concerned with the pacification of the villa, while Escalante Arce's most recent article concerning the Gulf of Fonseca can best be described as a recap of other works that previously covered the Gulf of Fonseca.

Due to the generalized nature of history and anthropology, earlier studies of El Salvador failed to unravel how large-scale, national-level historical processes developed from local, small-scale interactions and actors. This oversight applies to all aspects of the country's history, including the origins and processes of the civil war in the 1980s; the massacre of indigenous peoples in 1932; the dominance of large landed estates during the colonial period; and many other critical themes. Lost in this development, is insight on local Salvadoran places, institutions, and experiences that might have arisen from a research agenda that can reposition and reframe larger, national perspectives. Thus, an important component of this dissertation is to shed light on the process of historical production. I'm interested in how history works, and how history reveals itself through specific narratives. Of concern here are the processes and conditions of production of such narratives for El Salvador. Echoing the works of Abiola Irele (1991: 58), a Nigerian literary theorist, what is needed in El Salvador are works that take charge of the knowledge that has been produced and continues to be produced on and about El Salvador in an autonomous discourse that contributes to the historical representation of the country, Central America, and the world. This dissertation exemplifies this objective.

LANDSCAPE AND PLACE IN ARCHAEOLOGY

In the past two decades, approaches to landscapes and studies of space and place have been gathering more and more steam within the field of archaeology. As numerous scholars have observed, straightforward approaches to landscape and place do not exist (Fisher and Thurston 1999; Hicks 2001; Stoddart and Zubrow 1999). Instead, approaches to places and landscapes are encompassed in several perspectives, theories, and epistemologies. Much of this diversity stems from the use of words like landscape, which tends to be used as if its meaning were unambiguous (Groth 1993; Jackson 1984; Morphy 1993). In the following chapters, I will demonstrate that the multifarious meaning of the term – a picture representing a view, the art of depicting that view, the (human and natural) landform of a region, a ‘way of seeing’, or the area that can be understood in a single glance – in fact make the idea of a landscape quite important to recognizing the history of a place.

Before I describe my own approach to history, landscape and place, I want to highlight some of the approaches contemporary scholars have used to address this same topic. The first approach is largely quantitative and incorporates traditional settlement pattern studies, land use models, and regional scale approaches with methodological advances in spatial analysis, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and non-site based applications (Rossignol 1992; Wandsnider 1998). Many of these studies prioritize macro-scale models that stress economic, political, and ecological issues (Stoddart and Zubrow 1999). The lineage of this first approach can be traced to Cyril Fox (1932), Gordon Willey’s (1953) work in the Virú Valley of Peru, and later Lewis Binford (1978). This first approach sees the environment and the economy as the prime movers of cultural evolution, and was readily adopted by processual archaeologists for its potential to predict cultural change on a regional level.

In the second approach, landscapes are multi-vocal and often involve the active presence of people who socially and symbolically engage with the environment within which they live. Rather than prioritize macro-models, scholars who advocate this second approach will often emphasize memory and continuity (Bender 1998, 2002; Cobb 2005; Head 2000), ritual and sacred places (Parcero Oubiña *et al.* 1998; Staller 2008; Zvelebil 1997), and links that exist between people, pathways, and places (Abercrombie 1998; Basso 1996; Cooney 1999; Ortiz *et al.* 2008; Silverman 1998). While landscape studies in the first approach have a tendency to concentrate on the human actions done *to* the landscape, the second approach is much more concerned *with* how people interact with the environment. The relationship people have with the land is always active and dynamic (Bender 2002). As the Geographer Edward Relph once suggested, “There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security.” People will often make connections with the land, and in the process of doing so will develop what Keith Basso (1996) refers to as a “sense of place.”

Both approaches to places and landscapes have provided important insight to the shifting relationship that exists between people and their environments. In many ways, places and landscapes are stories that enfold the lives and times of predecessors who, over the years, have moved around them and played their part in their arrangements. To perceive places and landscapes as acts of remembrance, where remembering is not so much a matter of retrieving an internal image stored in the mind, but the act of perceptually engaging with an

environment is a reflection of human agency and action. Both approaches, at their core, see landscapes and places as many documents at once.

Landscape and Place in Mesoamerica

Landscape has long been a central concept in Mesoamerican archaeology. For much of the time it has been an under-theorized concept, but landscape does not need to exist in a theoretical vacuum. Mesoamerican archaeologists will often use the word ‘landscape’ to categorize ecological regions, social networks, and settlement histories (Buikstra *et al.* 2004; McKillop 2002; Powis *et al.* 2008); or as a way to envision how social histories and cosmological meanings are embedded in the physical attributes of a region. In the first set of examples – ecological origins, social networks, or settlement histories – archaeologists will focus on the actions done to the land, and the effects of historically specific social, political, and cultural relationships. In the second set of examples – social histories and cosmological meanings – the landscape becomes a tablet that reflects a particular way of seeing, experiencing, and remembering the land.

Most of the recent published research on ancient landscapes has concentrated on the interrelationships between monuments and monumental architecture through phenomenological constructs, viewing space, and how such spaces are perceived and experienced by the analyst (see Staller 2008).

Archaeologists in Mesoamerica have long been interested in places and landscapes. Yet, these perspectives are most commonly applied at sites with visible architecture and features. I believe approaches to landscape and place need not be limited to monumental sites and features, nor do they need to be concerned with legitimating and homogenizing origin myths. Instead, multi-scalar approaches to landscapes and places can be employed to better understand tensioned and contradictory processes, and to conceptualize our understandings of the past. Examining these processes at work in the past will permit a clearer understanding of the present. Chapters 2 through 4 exemplify this approach.

As I mentioned earlier, many researchers expect an archaeological landscape investigation to include large-scale settlement patterns, GIS, three-dimensional modeling programs, and geophysical survey. I encourage the application of these methods, but in this investigation I am more interested in the relationships forged between land and people. The landscape perspective I find most useful for my research – specifically for eastern El Salvador and the indigenous village of Conchagua Vieja – needs to include a sense of place and life history of a place. For the purposes of this investigation, my interest in place is multi-scalar. Not only am I interested in the knowledge production and historical development of El Salvador’s eastern landscape (Chapters 3 and 4), I am also interested in the social and emotional attachment the Lenca-speaking residents of Conchagua Vieja had to their church, and its placement in the middle of the village at the turn of the seventeenth century (Chapter 7).

In thinking about colonial entanglements, landscape and place are useful terms and necessary concepts for understanding how people experienced and actively participated in different colonial settings. Given the tremendous range of variation in colonial programs, I employed a landscape perspective to understand the processes and mechanisms of colonialism in eastern El Salvador. Landscape perspectives in archaeology often focus on the relationships and intersection between land and people. Although traditionally interested in issues of spatial variation at a broad scale, archaeologists have recently addressed the cultural

construction of the landscape as it shapes and is shaped by people's lives. My research in eastern El Salvador presents a specific case study on this topic. A meeting ground of different geographic regions, the area supported a wide variety of people in the past, making the region at times a crossroads and at others a frontier. Multiple generations traveled across eastern El Salvador, while others settled and made it their home. It is cattle country, indigo country, and a country relatively unknown.

ORGANIZATION

The events and processes of colonization and missionization in Central America created, and depended upon, complex new forms of interaction between and within groups of Mesoamerican Indians, Africans, Europeans, and mixed-race American-born colonial subjects. The dynamics of this entanglement between peoples of regional, ethnic, racial, and cultural distinctions are significant to any study of Central America. The multifaceted nature of cultural entanglements between colonial worlds and indigenous practices is at the heart of this investigation.

The research that forms the basis of this dissertation involves the historical documentation and archaeological excavation of an indigenous village settlement that was occupied before the arrival of the Spanish in 1522, and later abandoned in 1683 because of pirate incursions (Dampier 1927; Gerhard 1960; Incer Barquero 1990; Lardé y Larín 1975, 2000; Lussan 1704). Conchagua Vieja thus provides a chronologically well-defined settlement in which to examine forced migration, loss of population, and changes to the landscape, division of labor, and access to resources in the Gulf of Fonseca. Archaeological research at Conchagua Vieja also provides a context for examining the changing social, economic, and political relations that accompanied the *encomienda* system, slave raiding, and missionization. Thus, on the backdrop provided by this chapter, I have organized the dissertation in the following manner

In Chapter 2, I address the politics and history of *mestizo* nationalism and indigenous identity in El Salvador. The chapter is largely concerned with the ways in which knowledge of El Salvador's past has been produced, and how historical narratives of El Salvador continue to be premised on previous understandings of the country's history, which are themselves premised on European ideals of civility and modernity. The national narrative of indigenous loss after the massacre of 1932 is described in detail in order to better understand how history is produced, and why the Salvadoran past appears the way it does. I begin the chapter with a brief discussion on the stunted development of history and archaeology (as academic disciplines) in El Salvador, followed by the alleged disappearance of indigenous peoples from El Salvador following the *Matanza* of 1932. I conclude the chapter with the complicated circumstances that accompanied the return of the Salvadoran Indian in contemporary political movements, archaeological inquiry, and museum exhibits. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate how Salvadoran archaeology became an offshoot of the *mestizo* nationalism enterprise – a thoroughly cultural, economic and political endeavor that has silenced El Salvador's marginalized histories.

Chapter 3 is pivotal in demonstrating how El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca region in particular, have traditionally been represented through narratives strongly based in Western ideological foundations. The official histories of Central American nation-states continue to be written by members of the hegemonic groups of European and *Criollo* origin, whose

perspective – often universally accepted, even by members of the most marginal groups – offer just one of the many possible versions of the historical events that took place in Central America. While Chapter 2 enables readers to draw connections between the practices of history and archaeology in El Salvador, Chapter 3 is where I begin to create an ideological space for the ways in which archaeology and history can construct a more inclusive, pluralistic representation for the *‘tierras de ningun provecho’*, or lands without benefit.

Chapter 3 is largely concerned with not only the colonial appropriation of the Gulf of Fonseca, but also how that landscape entered the cognitive framework of the European observer. At the moment of “discovery,” the lands surrounding the Gulf of Fonseca became an object of appropriation and knowledge for the European subject. The process through which this territorial appropriation occurred is difficult to follow because the record of the encounter and of the years that followed is so fragmented. For archaeologists interested in reconstructing a balanced multi-cultural situation, the absence of texts by non-European groups presents an additional problem. I limit my discussion to the fragments of text and archival documents to evaluate how the Spanish produced the first representations of the Gulf of Fonseca, and how Spanish practices of territorial appropriation impacted the indigenous residents of Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita. Three Spanish practices I chose to concentrate on were establishment of *villas* in the region, the enslavement of indigenous peoples, and the development of the *encomienda* system.

While the documents and texts used in Chapter 3 provide an early glimpse of how the Spanish engaged and interacted with the natural environment, resources, and peoples provided by the Gulf of Fonseca, Chapter 4 has two goals. First, the chapter confronts the ‘myth of emptiness’, or the notion that eastern El Salvador had always been an empty territory, devoid of the cultural riches left by the Maya and Pipil of western and central El Salvador. Second, Chapter 4 details the acquisition and usurpation of land in eastern El Salvador during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Historical accounts and archival documents are used in this instance to highlight the material transformation of eastern El Salvador by studying the impacts of cattle ranching and indigo production in the region.

With regards to the first goal, the assumption underwriting archaeological and historical investigations in eastern El Salvador was that, with the exception of Quelepa, there was no substantial (‘authentic’) presence of indigenous peoples who might lay claim to their own (distinctive) cultural identity specific to El Salvador. This premise had long been accepted, with the assumption that there was little evidence relating to an indigenous presence in the post-contact/colonial period and that there was no point in undertaking systematic investigations of eastern El Salvador. This position justified successive policies of expropriation and displacement, which ensured that there would be no data from the region that could counter this narrative. The theses of abandonment and assimilation became a self-fulfilling narrative of a singular racial collective in El Salvador. The *mestizo* narrative they serve guarantee their own continual legitimation by quite literally limiting knowledge of the records (written, material, and cultural) of contingency and historical process that could have been used to dispel the ‘myth of emptiness.’

One of the methods I chose to dispel the ‘myth of emptiness’ was the use of legal petitions filed by community members from the village of Conchagua Vieja to explore how indigenous peoples throughout eastern El Salvador strategically made use of European discourses, institutions, and spaces to reproduce and maintain their own meaningful senses of history and identity. Rather than purely emphasize the disastrous impacts of cattle ranching

and indigo production throughout eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, a primary objective behind this chapter was to reveal as much as possible about indigenous experiences in eastern El Salvador during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the exact composition of native populations in eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, is not entirely well-known, the ability to interpret indigenous responses to land-grabbing efforts during this era must be tempered with an understanding of native contexts, contingencies, and histories that intersect the colonial moment. The many lacunae left by the sparse historical record left the door wide open for archaeological research.

The remaining three chapters best represent my attempt to dispel the ‘myth of emptiness’ by restoring some materiality to the Lenca-speaking peoples who inhabited the village of Conchagua Vieja during the colonial period. The empty spaces left by the sparse historical record begin to be filled in Chapter 5, which covers the archaeological research design, methods, and field results. This chapter covers all relevant details on the chosen sampling strategies for survey and excavation. Materials to be included in this chapter includes descriptions of relevant features, artifact patterns, as well as discussions on temporal issues, and the delineation of depositional events for Conchagua Vieja. Fully analyzed data is presented in the following chapter. I should also note that the excavation and laboratory analysis of recovered materials from Conchagua Vieja could not have been completed without the assistance of eight student volunteers from the *Universidad Tecnológica* of San Salvador.

Chapter 6 is an analytical chapter devoted to native life and materiality. Popular archaeological studies of colonial contexts and associated indigenous responses to colonialism often involve the study of mass-produced European artifacts and their use in native practices. Under this model, the recovery of ceramics, glass, and metal artifacts in indigenous communities, especially in Native American living quarters, can provide a distinctive avenue into evaluating the level of colonial penetration into the everyday lives of native peoples, and the degree of appropriation and use of colonial material culture. The approach used in this chapter does not go that route. Rather than track acculturation via ratios of native and non-native material culture, the methodological position taken here will give way to more contextual considerations of colonial material culture in native social relations.

Chapter 6 begins with a consideration of ceramic and lithic artifacts recovered from Conchagua Vieja. The analysis of ceramic artifacts included a visual study of the different paste groups encountered in the collection, and prevalent vessel forms. The chapter continues with a technological, compositional, and spatial analysis of the chipped lithic assemblage. I also include a discussion on the geochemical sourcing (energy-dispersive x-ray fluorescence) done on the obsidian artifacts. The remaining sections of the chapter include analyses of archaeobotanical remains, metal, and the single majolica earthenware recovered through excavation.

In Chapter 7, I fulfill two objectives. First, I focus on the *visita* (or church) of Conchagua Vieja, which was built in the middle of the village at the turn of the seventeenth century. I contextualize Spanish missions and churches in sixteenth and seventeenth century colonial Central America in light of their structure and composition. Second, I use the *visita* of Conchagua Vieja as a way to synthesize the archaeological and documentary data to fully explore the nature of social life in the village during the colonial period. In this chapter I combine data from Chapters 5 and 6 and use it to explicitly address how the residents of Conchagua Vieja were able to maintain their own sense of history and identity during the colonial period. I use the *visita* to explore how specific identities are inextricably linked to

place. The chapter underscores the importance of using multiple lines of evidence for interpreting any past context.

Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation. In the final chapter I provide a nuanced view of the colonial experience in the Gulf of Fonseca in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Working at multiple scales, from the village to the region, I take a critical look at how indigenous peoples maintained their social practices under changing economic, political, religious and social conditions. Archaeological research at small indigenous village sites, like Conchagua Vieja, have broader implications for studies of colonialism and missionization across the Americas, especially in Central America.

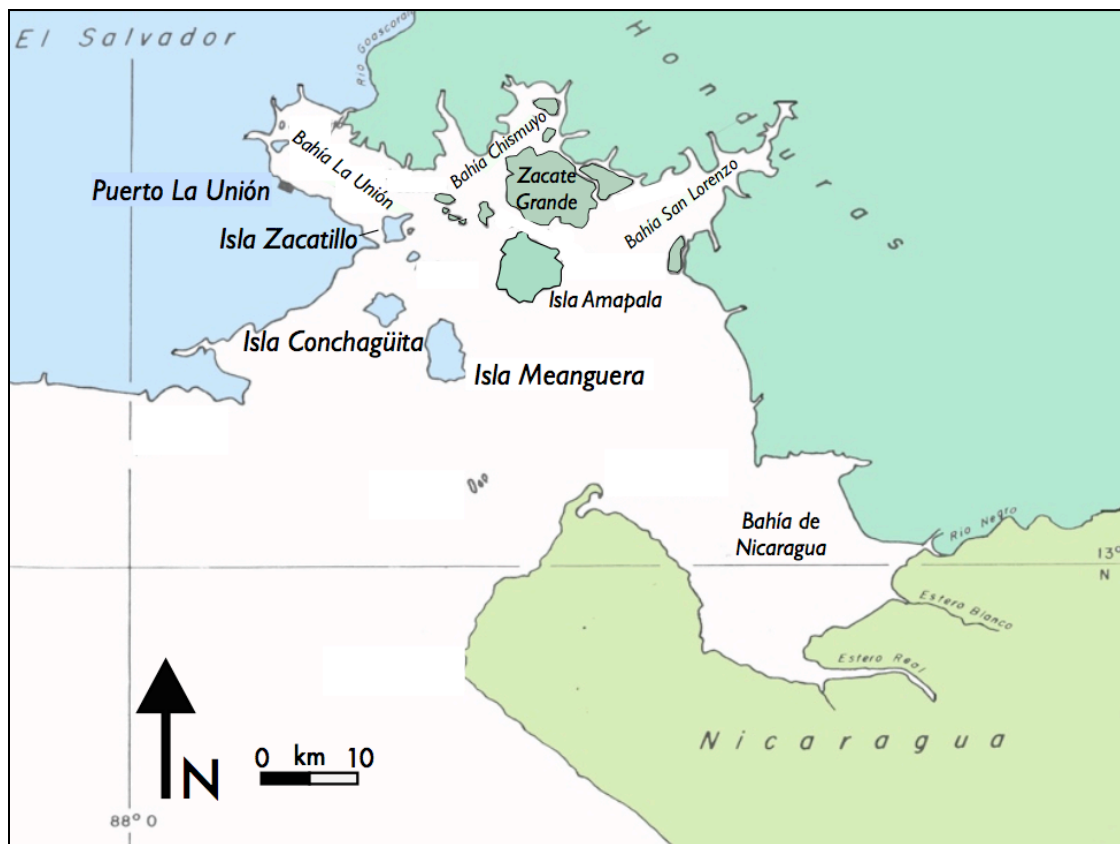


Figure 1.1 – Map of the Gulf of Fonseca.

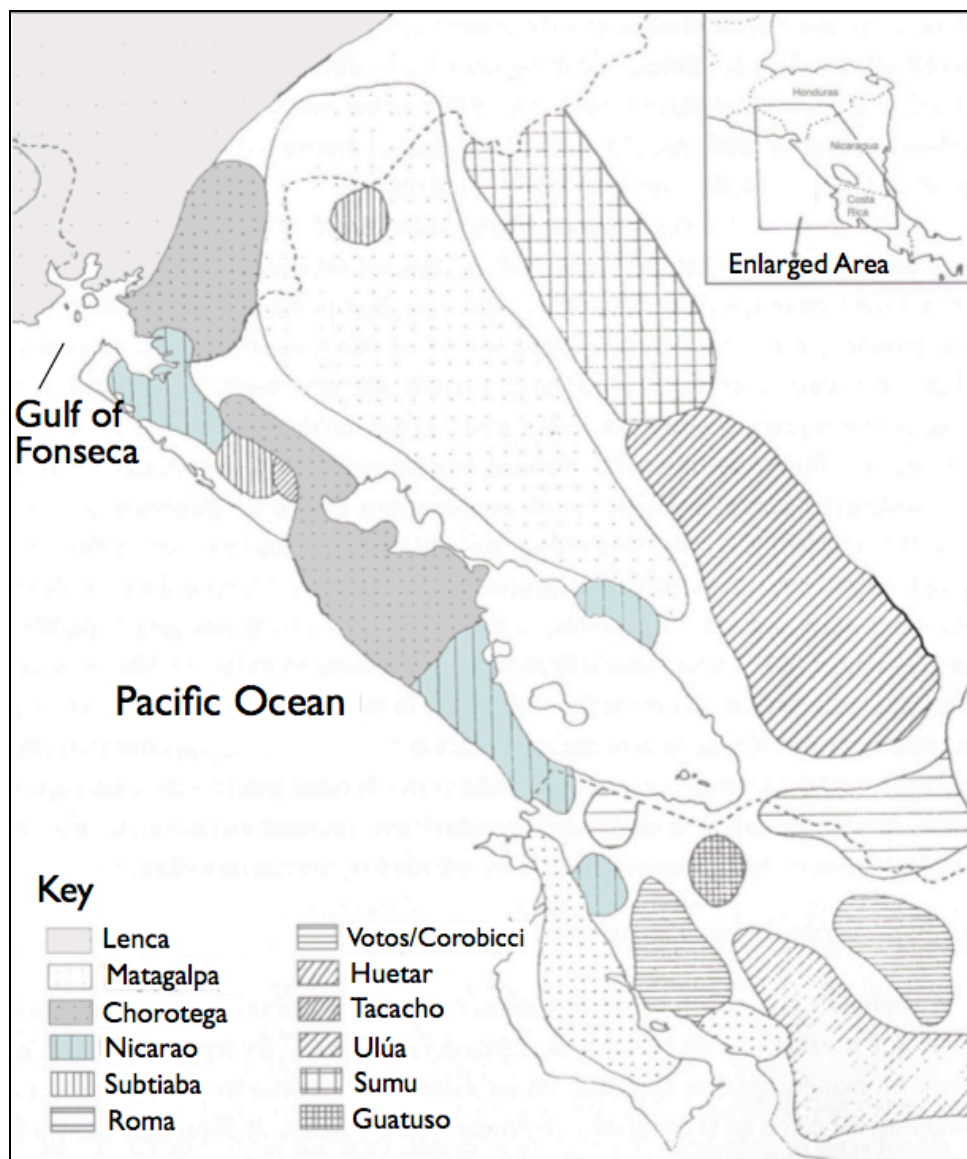


Figure 1.2 – Map representing the linguistic diversity that existed in Central America and the Gulf of Fonseca at the time of contact with the Spanish.



Figure 1.3 – Map of Mesoamerica.

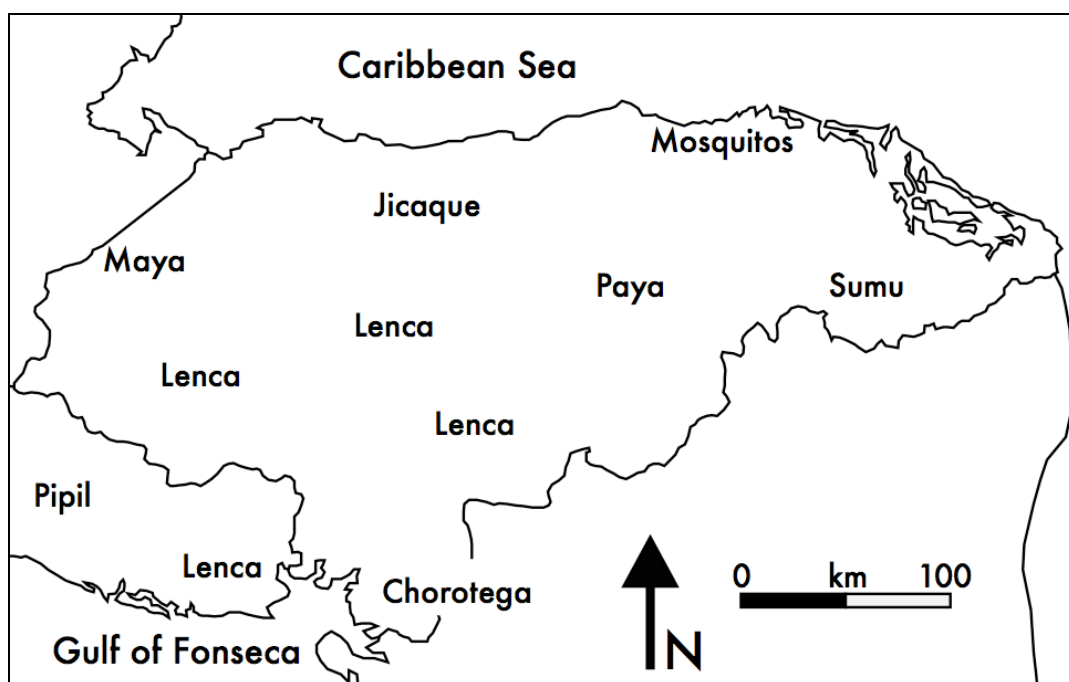


Figure 1.4 – Map demonstrating the linguistic diversity that existed in Honduras and El Salvador during the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER 2

REMEMBERING THE PAST AND THE PRODUCTION OF HISTORY

This chapter addresses the politics and history of *mestizo* nationalism and indigenous identity in El Salvador. The conditions under which the narrative of *mestizo* nationalism has emerged is marked by a sustained absence of the historical consciousness of the heritage and identity of El Salvador's indigenous communities, sometimes including the systematic erasure of their historical presence. The narrative that unfolds here is one of struggle against various forms of dominant history and against the terms of its construction – assumptions about the validity of historical scholarship and authority – which threatens to usurp the development of an alternative narrative that addresses larger themes of colonialism and nationalism in El Salvador.

My analysis of El Salvador's narrative of *mestizo* nationalism is guided by a warning once issued by Michel Foucault: "I don't believe that the question of 'who exercises power?' can be resolved unless that other question '*how does it happen?*' is resolved at the same time" (1988: 103). The history of El Salvador is not the sole priority here; instead, how that history is produced is necessary to evaluate why the past appears the way it does. Guided by Foucault's insistence that tracking power through various 'moments' accentuates the fundamentally processual character of historical production, this chapter analyzes the following: first, the stunted development of history and archaeology in El Salvador, which led to very few questions concerning race and cultural rights in national politics; second, the alleged disappearance of indigenous peoples from El Salvador following the *Matanza* of 1932; and third, the complicated circumstances that accompanied the return of the Salvadoran Indian in contemporary political movements, archeological inquiry, and museum exhibits.

The national narrative of indigenous loss after the massacre of 1932 is described in great detail here because it closely parallels tactics by which the presence of indigenous peoples and the integrity and continuity of their communities were systematically denied by the dominant Spanish colonial history of eastern El Salvador. A historical record was created that reinforced assumptions of absence – of abandonment, extinction and assimilation – which reflect Western notions of what counts as presence, occupation and authenticity. Since the dominant conventions of history making impose exclusive reliance on records created and used by European observers, it is not surprising that generations of historians would fail to recognize the fate of El Salvador's indigenous population after the Spanish conquest and the massacre of 1932.

SALVADORAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

In El Salvador there is a limited amount of training available for those interested in the fields of anthropology and history. That El Salvador did not offer formal training, or a degree-granting program (*licenciatura*) in the field of History until 2002, at the National University of El Salvador, is especially pertinent. In many nation-states, both large and small,

locally trained scholars often invoke powerful narratives of the nation's past through the practice of historiography. The representations of the past produced by these scholars often serve official interests, providing historians an important legitimizing purpose behind their works (Herzfeld 1986 and Trouillot 1995). El Salvador's authoritarian legacy, characterized by military rule from 1932 to 1979, factored into the country's weak historiographical tradition and limited programs in higher education. Before El Salvador's Civil War (1980-1992), the country's elite and military exhibited little interest in providing a suitable academic infrastructure for their citizens, as demonstrated by the large number of Salvadoran elites who acquired academic degrees outside of the country (Rosenberg 1991: 234). Tina Rosenberg went as far as to suggest that "probably nowhere is there a group of foreigners as 'American' as El Salvador's oligarchy" (1991: 238). At first glance, Rosenberg's commentary might appear as an artifact of the Civil War, but the landed oligarchy's preference to educate their children abroad continues and is a long-standing practice.

Anthropological studies in El Salvador did not fare much better than history. Though the country is rich in archaeological resources, the first degree-granting program in anthropology only commenced at the Technological University of San Salvador in the year 2000, followed by a second program at the National University of El Salvador in 2004. Before the initiation of these two programs, studies that were anthropological in appearance lacked sophisticated training, and were highly abstract and theoretical, rarely leading to in-depth fieldwork or research (Ramírez C. and Rodríguez H. 1988). For Salvadorans who wanted training in anthropology, the most readily available options were in Guatemala and Mexico. As a result, much analysis of El Salvador's social, political, and economic history was pitched at a high level of generalization, with little attention given to local and regional differences.

The absence of interest in historiography and anthropology, and the limited promotion of specific representations of the past by the Salvadoran state, for nationalistic purposes, is in contrast to nation building practices of other nation-states. Notable examples include Mexico (Gamio 1960); Greece (Herzfeld 1986); contemporary Taiwan (Corcuff 2002); and other developing countries. For many nations in the developing world, establishing ties to the deepest past possible can often legitimate claims to territory, resources, or potentially primordial cultural regimes. Enrique Florescano (1988: 262) suggested that, unlike their contemporaries in New Granada and Peru, the creoles of Mexico approached the indigenous past to legitimate their claims to political leadership, and to separate the past from the one claimed by the peninsular Spaniards. In Latin America, defining collective symbols of identity and adjusting them to existing political projects have been continuous processes since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Brading 1990; Gamio 1969 [1916]; Mallon 1995; Thurner 1997).

In the Caribbean, for example, the first step in the struggle for independence was to rebaptize the colonies with indigenous names, and to recognize a historical continuity Europeans had only interrupted. This rite of restoration began in 1804 when patriots called the first black republic in the Americas 'Haiti.' By the 1820s, separatists in Cuba called their island the Republic of Cubanacan, and creoles in Puerto Rico and the colony of Santo Domingo on Española (Hispaniola) revived the names Borincanos and Quisqueyanos – local communities whose names had come to identify resistance – to distance themselves from the Spanish (Arrom 1971; Betánces 1975; Sevilla Soler 1986: 161). While the nation-building experiences of these countries and Mexico recaptured the particularities of ethnic diversity in

the Americas – and encouraged political discourse, discussion and historical investigation – something entirely different took place in El Salvador.

In El Salvador, the founding figures of the nineteenth century did not harmonize claims of modernity with meaningful cultural inscriptions, or position themselves as benefactors of an indigenous cultural heritage. Despite a large indigenous presence, local or popular representations were derided in favor of ‘universal’ or ‘Western’ values and symbols that were more consistent with the notion that the national population consisted of ‘*mestizos*’ (mixed Indian and Spanish). In contrast to the nation building strategies employed by Mexico and a few notable Caribbean nations, the approach advocated by the nascent Salvadoran government highlighted the dawn of a modern republic. Little value was placed in a pre-Colombian past. Instead, cultural worth was placed in a modernity that stressed European ideals, and looked down upon an Indian cultural heritage considered inferior by the Salvadoran elite. Notions of what it meant to be Salvadoran were forged from these early nineteenth century ideals. As a consequence, the texture of analysis concerning El Salvador’s history suffered in three crucial areas.

First, official Salvadoran histories of the early to mid twentieth century, communicated negative images specific to certain aspects of the nation’s social origins; such as the inferiority and untrustworthiness of the Indian; and the slave heritage of the culturally inferior peoples of African heritage (Fiehrer 1979; Herrera 1997, 1998, and 2003; Rout 1976; Sweet 1997). Making matters worse, Salvadoran president Maximiliano Hernández Martínez instituted race laws in 1930 that prohibited blacks from entering the country and denied them rights to property. General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez was also president during *La Matanza* of 1932 (discussed below). Throughout El Salvador’s years of military dictatorship (1931 – 1979), negative representations of the country’s indigenous and black populations were largely embedded in the national consciousness through formal and informal educational books that only minimally referenced these peoples positions in the nation’s history. El Salvador’s Indian and black populations were most often referenced in relation to the massacre of 1932 (discussed below) and the race laws of 1930. Before the *V Congreso Centroamericano de Historia* (Fifth Central American History Congress), held for the first time in El Salvador in the year 2000, popular and academic accounts of the nations free and enslaved black communities during the colonial period were difficult to encounter, if not non-existent (Lokken 1999, 2000, 2001, 2004 a and b).

Second, while traditional accounts of El Salvador’s multi-ethnic history – occasionally found in history textbooks used in primary and secondary schools – are slowly fading away, the nation still suffers from educational texts and larger narratives that describe the country’s history through a series of self-contained and self-explained temporal blocks that are not connected to either the past or present. Nowhere is this more evident than the publication of a two-volume, post-war produced textbook titled *Historia de El Salvador* (Government of El Salvador 1994). The textbook, meant for secondary school use, can best be described as a summary treatment of El Salvador’s history from conquest to the 1870s (vol. 1), and from the 1870s to the 1980s (vol. 2). The motivation to limit an understanding of El Salvador’s pre-Colombian past remains faithful to the ways in which indigenous peoples have been written about in El Salvador for more than 150 years.

In these historical descriptions, El Salvador’s social history is represented as a string of more or less disconnected periods, such as the Precolumbian, colonial, republican, 20th century, and post civil war. In such a format, historical variables and social movements that

inspired change and creativity are obscured by blocks of time that are filled by personal trivia, and enduring symbolic events. History is frozen into slices of time, where historical changes in one block of time are only tenuously connected to social experiences that took place in earlier or later periods. Historical descriptions of the colonial period, for instance, provide a superficial discussion of the connections between its events and personages and what took place in Precolumbian times.

The third reason leads me to the next section of this chapter. El Salvador, until recently, suffered from a lack of scholarly works that addressed closely related anthropological topics, such as identity politics, *creolization*, *mestizaje*, and *indigenismo* studies (DeLugan 2004; Peterson 2005, 2006). Recent works by foreign scholars (Acuña 1995; Alvarenga 2005; Ching and Tilley 1998; Gould 2001 and 2004; Gould and Lauria-Santiago 2008; Lauria-Santiago and Binford 2004; Lindo-Fuentes et al. 2007), and more importantly, Salvadoran scholars (Lara Martínez 1993, 1998 and 1999; López Bernal 2007), are slowly attempting to ameliorate this situation, but the lack of attention given to these topics led to very few questions concerning race and the presence of ‘authentic’ Indians in El Salvador. These days, if you ask a Salvadoran, ‘Where are the Indians?’ the Salvadoran will most likely respond by pointing to Guatemala. To be Indian in El Salvador is a foreign concept.

In the next section I will elaborate on how the de-emphasis of race and cultural rights in national politics led to the hegemonic belief that there are virtually no Indians in El Salvador. By the second half of the 20th century, fragments and figments of memory and narrative helped constitute a set of beliefs about how *La Matanza* of 1932 made El Salvador a *mestizo* nation. Not only will I discuss how this national myth came to be, but I will also highlight how historical texts related to the massacre of 1932 (re)produced the common-sense story of ‘What happened to the Indians?’ in El Salvador. The aim is to draw attention to the politics and history of *mestizo* nationalism and indigenous identity in El Salvador, and how narratives of the past are active in the present.

LA MATANZA AS HISTORICAL FACT

In terms of anthropological research, El Salvador has traditionally been one of the least studied nation-states of Central America because of the perceived absence of a large, visible, and ‘exotic’ indigenous population to attract the attention of foreign scholars (Ronsbo 2004). This perception is largely a response to *La Matanza* (The Massacre) of 1932, which claimed the lives of more than 10,000 peasants and other civilians. A substantial number of the victims were Indians who resided in the coffee-growing regions of western El Salvador. Narrators of El Salvador’s history, national and foreign alike, eventually came to recognize the massacre of 1932 as the moment when Salvadoran Indians effectively vanished from the national scene. In the dominant narratives of the massacre, those indigenous people who survived the actual violence were so traumatized they abandoned all outward markers of Indian identity (Lauria-Santiago 2004; Ronsbo 2004). Some people believed that Nahuatl – the Uto-Aztecan language related to Nahuatl and spoken in parts of central and western El Salvador – was prohibited after 1932, and that indigenous clothing was deemed illegal, in a project of ‘compulsory deculturation’, although no documentary evidence for such laws exist. As a consequence, the *Matanza* represents a pivotal moment in the establishment of a *mestizo* nation, and the perceived absence of ethnic difference in El Salvador.

The Birth of Mestizo Nationalism

Salvadoran narrators – left and right, amateur and professional – have taken as historical *fact* the disappearance of Indians, producing a deeply held certainty that, unlike its neighbors, El Salvador has been an entirely *mestizo* nation for most of the 20th century. Decades of state rhetoric have positioned El Salvador as a racially homogeneous nation without any significant ‘Indian problem’, further suggesting that El Salvador *once had* a vigorous history of Indian ethnopolitics in the early decades of the twentieth century (Ching and Tilley 1998: 121). This narrative of loss depended on the notion that real people either ceased to exist or abandoned the kinds of difference (embedded and embodied in markers like dress and language) that distinguished them from an idealized and dominant national subject.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995: 29) noted that the dual establishment of facts and sources when producing a narrative are significant for several reasons. First, facts will always carry importance, no matter how insignificant they are; and second, facts are never made to be equal, and traces of the past will always be created, effectively producing silences in the process. While some facts are simply erased, other facts are firmly established from the beginning, engraved in collective consciousness through the erection of buildings, monuments, political boundaries, and discourse. In El Salvador, the disappearance of Indians and the establishment of an imaginary racial unity were reinforced by the document affirming El Salvador’s support of the International Labor Organization’s Convention 107 on indigenous rights, issued in 1952. The document declared: “in our country indigenous populations do not exist, nor do other Tribal or Semitribal populations that are not integrated into the national collectivity” (Government of El Salvador 1952).

According to Benedict Anderson (1983), the creation and reproduction of national ‘myth-histories’ depend on print capitalism, specifically the production and circulation of print media as commodities. The print media, especially newspapers, contribute to the production of ‘the people’ as a national imaginary by assuming this national collective subject as its audience. Print accounts of *La Matanza* helped produce modern El Salvador by constituting this national audience and by telling a narrative of the elimination of a threat to the body politic, of disruptive, transgressive difference, thereby representing ‘the people’ as a racially singular, *mestizo* collective.

Print accounts concerning the events of 1932 can be classified according to three basic periods of production, which correspond to three distinct historical moments: the aftermath of the massacre; the late 1960s and into the 70s; and the period following the Salvadoran civil war. The rebellion and massacre have been addressed at other times, as in Richard Adams’s 1957 *Cultural Surveys of Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras* and Segundo Montes’s 1988 article “Es El Salvador una nación sin indios?” (Is El Salvador a nation without Indians?), but the most influential accounts were produced in the first two periods. Thomas Anderson’s 1971 book *Matanza: El Salvador’s Communist Revolt of 1932* drew heavily from the first phase of writing on the massacre, particularly Joaquín Méndez’s *Los Sucesos Comunistas en El Salvador* and Jorge Schlesinger’s *Revolución Comunista*. These two works can best be described as anti-communist polemics, Méndez’s in the form a travelogue, and Schlesinger’s a traditional historical narrative.

Historical narratives are often premised on previous understandings of historical *facts*. Nowhere is this more evident than Joaquín Méndez’s preface to his book on the rural uprising in western El Salvador:

The capital was filled with contradictory versions. Some foreign journals were surprised by the inexact reports. And here, just as outside the country, the true magnitude of the devastation wrought by the indigenous masses, excited by the communist agitators, could not be appreciated ... This book is something like a panoramic view of the affected area, or what is the same: a report based on the data collected in the place where the event took place. The reports appear in the order in which they were collected, without commentary. What for ...? It will not attempt to tell a history of causes or determine possible effects. It will offer the lived reality, as the victims describe it. With its traces of blood, of terror and fire. San Salvador, 1932.

Joaquin Méndez's account of the rural uprising in western El Salvador was written immediately in the aftermath of the massacre and was aptly used as a credible source for Anderson's book. Méndez's *Los Sucesos Comunistas en El Salvador* details how several thousand rebels – almost all peasants, and mostly consisting of *indios* – took over a handful of towns in the western and southwestern coffee-growing regions of the country. The Salvadoran communist party and its mutual aid auxiliary, the *Socorro Rojo*, organized the rebels and the rebellion was ignited after months of strikes, demonstrations and political turmoil. As an anti-communist text, the narrative focused specific attention on class conflict and the conditions that sparked the rebellion. Although the rebellion was assembled in historically indigenous areas, this was seen as merely coincidental, and secondary to the conflict itself. Given the circumstances, the account presents the massacre as a rather inevitable outcome of the rebellion.

While Méndez's *Los Sucesos Comunistas en El Salvador* paid little attention to race, the account played a significant role in construing popular conceptions of race. First, in the epigraph used above, Méndez clearly suggests the extent to which communist and Indian occupied a shared conceptual space for elites: savage, backwards, an invader or disease threatening the national body (Candelario 2003). Second, Méndez represents 1932 as a temporal pivot marking a before and after, a moment to which is attached a sense of loss as well as of beginnings. Beginnings, in the sense that the book was published during the genesis of El Salvador's repressive, anti-communist state, and the same era that witnessed the origin of a national myth that asserted El Salvador as a racially unmarked collective subject. Lost was an indigenous El Salvador that was placed outside of the national here and now. The birth of the *mestizo* nation leads me to a second outcome that came from Méndez's account of *La Matanza*: the transformation of the *Indio Salvadoreño* through the power of representation.

An example of this can be clearly seen when Thomas Anderson echoes Méndez's claim that the massacre was an inevitable outcome of the rebellion when he writes "the 1932 revolt, of course, caused strong measures to be taken against Indian culture" (Anderson 1992: 33). The confidence that comes with the phrase "of course" captures not only the brutality of the massacre, but also the ensuing disappearance of an indigenous culture that existed with great certainty before 1932. In the dominant *Matanza* narrative, this moment marks the Indian's last moment, the episode that finally shoved Indians out of existence. At the same

time, Anderson portrays Indianness in El Salvador with some uncertainty throughout the text, almost as a fluid category that went through considerable changes before 1932:

There was a noticeable drop in the number of person adhering to Indian dress, customs, or language after 1932. This was due in large measure to the great massacre, but as time went on the chief impetus to change appears to have been the desire to slough off the characteristics of a despised group. A Salvadoran Indian could cease to be one by moving 'a few kilometers', as one of them put it, adapting 'western' dress for his wife, and taking care to speak reasonably good Spanish (Anderson 1992: 33)

Race is treated rather ambivalently throughout Anderson's book. Echoing Méndez's *Los Sucesos Comunistas en El Salvador*, Anderson maintains that race was relatively unimportant in mobilizing the rebellion. Anderson argues that by 1932 the Salvadoran Indians were '*ladinoized*' to such an extent that little coherent sense of shared identity transcended the community level. On the other hand, Anderson emphasizes at key moments that Indians' resentment of their exploitation by *ladinos* was a deep-rooted factor that led to the uprising. Throughout the text there is an inability to settle on any perspective that might suggest what it meant to be an Indian in El Salvador before and after 1932.

Anderson indirectly alludes to a naturalistic realm of a racial division in El Salvador even as *ladinoization* blurred the edges between *mestizos* and *indios*. It might be more apt to suggest that what existed in El Salvador in 1932 was an unconscious understanding of racial difference, fueled by a constructed knowledge of an unambiguously Indian subject that clearly deserved, for obvious reasons, the state's brutal response to the rebellion. This was the position that was unmistakably made by General José Tomás Calderón in a report written weeks before the rebellion:

In Sonsonate and Izalco ... there is much restlessness because of the fear of the communist reaction. They fear pillage and murder, but this is not universal because some of the leading citizens of the said cities say that, as punishment has been severe, there may not be a revolt, but they allow that the Indians are very tenacious in their ideas (Anderson 1992: 104)

The use of the word 'Indians' is notable since General Calderón was in charge of the military response to the rebellion. This same sentiment was reinforced in an interview, taken by Méndez, of a woman in a Sonsonate market who was terrified of the rebellious Indians:

when we heard the first shots we thought the hour had come. The coming of the communist assault had been announced for several days, and we thought that when it happened no one over seven years of age would be left alive ... They would kill us and burn our houses (Méndez 1932: 11-12).

The passages above represent the Indian as a repository of ideas, images, and ideologies. These accounts resemble the fears experienced during two other well-documented indigenous rebellions in Salvadoran history. The most recent event was the Insurrection of the Nonualcos, which took place a hundred years earlier in the Department of San Vicente

(Figure 2.1). The rebellion was led by indigenous leader Anastasio Mártir Aquino, and involved the sacking of several towns, including San Vicente. Once the rebellion was suppressed, Aquino was captured and executed by a firing squad. Another event that evoked similar fears involved the settlement of San Miguel de la Frontera, in eastern El Salvador during the sixteenth century. The documentary history behind the settlement of San Miguel will be discussed more thoroughly in the following two chapters, but it should be noted that the history of San Miguel's settlement and its ferocity was well documented in a number of articles written by Lardé y Larín, and published in the *Diario de Hoy*.

When reality does not coincide with deeply held beliefs, people will often produce interpretations that force reality within the scope of these beliefs. Writing of the brutality with which colonial rubber planters and their agents treated the indigenous people of the Putumayo region of Colombia, Michael Taussig shows that "the terror and tortures they devised mirrored the horror of the savagery they both feared and fictionalized" (Taussig 1986: 133). The fears expressed by the urban bourgeoisie weeks before the rebellion were the same fears that excited the colonists of San Miguel centuries before, and the residents of San Vicente during the insurrection led by Aquino.

The year 1932 is inextricably linked to the transformation of the Indian through discourse and representation. In the moment of the massacre the image of the Indian is split into two. The first Indian is the vanishing ancestor of El Salvador represented in the figure of Atlacatl, the mythical Indian who shot Pedro de Alvarado and whose name would be taken by a military battalion responsible for some of the most horrific atrocities of El Salvador's civil war (Binford 1996). This first Indian was displaced to another era, removed from the national imagination, now a figure of melancholy, a mere remnant of a time that cannot be now (Fabian 1983). The second Indian is the *indio comunista*. As Alejandro Marroquín (1975) noted, after 1932 Indian and communist came to represent a single entity in the imagination of El Salvador's elite. The genesis of this common-sense narrative initiated with Méndez's account of 1932 and later reproduced in Anderson's *Matanza: El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932*.

La Matanza is remembered today in El Salvador as a historical fact, a gruesome event that had its concrete effects. Not only did it lead to the perceived absence of Indians from the national imagination, the massacre (re)awakened collective representations of Indians and Indianness. The response allowed the Salvadoran state to re-cast the savage Indian from earlier times as a threat to the national body, made visible in the gaze of the soldiers, and materialized in the bodies they slaughtered. As consequence, the word *Indio* today interpolates a subject marked by a history of unimaginable violence, and is energized by a double dynamic of loss and discovery. After ostensibly disappearing in the wake of the 1932 massacre, however, the Indian returned to post-civil war El Salvador.

THE INDIAN AND POST-CIVIL WAR EL SALVADOR

Salvadoran narrators both conservative and liberal remember the disappearance of Indians as a historical fact, producing a deeply held belief that, unlike its Central American neighbors, El Salvador had been an entirely *mestizo* nation for most of the 20th century. In the dominant narratives of the massacre, those indigenous peoples who survived the violence were so traumatized they abandoned all outward markers of indigenous identity. In this context, the sudden emergence of a fairly large indigenous movement in the wake of the civil

war of the 1980s was perplexing for many Salvadorans. The Peace Accords of 1992 unveiled a new phase in virtually every aspect of Salvadoran society. The accords commanded sweeping changes in the structure of the military and the police. The revolutionary FMLN (Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation) was recognized as a legitimate political party. Neoliberal economic policies championed free markets, leading to the demise of the strictly controlled agriculture economy – which represented a long tradition of class conflict. UNESCO's Culture of Peace Program worked with local leaders to develop cultural and educational projects for creating a more stable and peaceful society. It was in this new El Salvador – millennial, cultural, neoliberal, and postwar – that the Indian returned.

The Rise of Indigenous Activism

After several decades of mobilizing in Brazil, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, and other countries, Latin American indigenous groups gained international attention in the 1990s. International organizations including the World Bank and UN suddenly became invested in the conditions of indigenous peoples. The UN went as far as to declare the 1990s the 'Decade of the Indigenous Peoples.' After the Peace Accords of 1992 the number of indigenous political organizations in El Salvador went from one to as many as 16 in a matter of years (Tilley 2002). The UNESCO Culture of Peace Program for El Salvador not only listed indigenous peoples as one of four priority areas for postwar development, but also provided political space for El Salvador's long silenced Indians. In 1995, the Salvadoran state created a department of indigenous affairs, and has persisted, in one form or another, for more than a decade. Each of these developments facilitated a climate that was highly favorable to foreign scholars, opening up a sense of discovery and revelation that returned the Indian to Salvadoran society. Most notable was a monograph, written in Spanish by US anthropologist Mac Chapin, titled, "The Indigenous Population of El Salvador" (Chapin 1990). In the monograph, published by the Salvadoran Ministry of Education, Chapin claimed the presence of more than 500,000 "invisible" Indians in El Salvador. Not surprisingly, this same number has persisted for two decades, and is continuously revealed whenever you ask a Salvadoran 'How many Indians are there in El Salvador?'

The traditional narrative of the Salvadoran Indian was reinforced when Chapin asserted the presence of more than 500,000 '*invisible*' Indians. The word 'invisible' is key in this context, since Chapin reasserts the position that Salvadoran Indians abandoned their identities, embodied in markers of difference, such as the 'traditional dress', out of fear of persecution after the massacre. While Chapin reinscribed the myth of disappearance, the monograph was influential in suggesting that Indians remained Indians in important ways despite the absence of fetish objects of popular indigenism, specifically the *refajo* (the wrap-around skirt worn by women, and rarely seen today) and Pipil. More importantly, Chapin's essay and support of activist organizations and conferences, provided a springboard for activists, non-governmental organizations, and scholars to get involved with the state in order to ask more revealing questions about El Salvador's indigenous population, which at the time represented 10 percent of the national population.

The affirmation from an academic expert encouraged many leaders among the new indigenous movement to speak of a 'clandestine culture', emphasizing the traditional narrative of persecution after the massacre. Some activists extended this stance further by declaring an unchanging core essence of indigeness, a difference substantiated in reports of customs and practices maintained in hidden, private spaces away from the gaze of the

mestizo national subject (as well as scholars, national and foreign). This view was highlighted in a document written by the Salvadoran National Indigenous Coordinating Council (CCNIS, an umbrella group of indigenous organizations), which stated:

[We] have found ourselves needing to preserve our culture within our own communities and to hide many elements of the indigenous peoples.... In the decades following [the 1932 *matanza*] we indigenous peoples in El Salvador hid ourselves, hiding our existence and our culture [and] identity (CCNIS 1999: 11)

There are several communities that have maintained cultural practices treated conventionally as indigenous in western El Salvador (see Figure 2.1). The only remaining traditionally indigenous community in eastern El Salvador is the town of Cacaopera, in the department of Morazán (the reasons for this development will be discussed in chapter 4). Some of the traits that continue to identify the communities and its members as indigenous include public ceremonies, as in the active *cofradías* or religious fraternities of the towns of Panchimalco, Izalco and Nahuizalco, and to a lesser degree language. While Cacaopera is no longer spoken in the town of Cacaopera (Campbell 1975), Nahuat has continued to be spoken in parts of Nahuizalco and Santo Domingo de Guzmán. In these same communities, Leda Peretti recently discovered that after the massacre people frequently dropped their Nahuat surnames and adopted Spanish replacements whenever it was feasible to do so. For example, in the town of Izalco, people were allowed to change their surnames at little or no cost, while the residents of Nahuizalco were charged a significant amount to change names on legal documents. Today there are many more Nahuat surnames in Nahuizalco than Izalco.

The belief in a ‘clandestine culture’ and the practices that mark these communities as indigenous is important to activists because these communities still represent a small percentage of El Salvador’s population. In order to claim that indigenous Salvadorans make up an important population – more than the 500,000 declared by Chapin – communities need to assert the presence of many more indigenous residents. Many activists claim that residents will often deny their identity to outsiders, and that their denial is a matter of false consciousness, a failure to recognize their true identities as a consequence of the active discrimination that continues to take place in El Salvador. In light of this, an important question to consider is what characteristics have traditionally defined the ‘true identity’ of the Salvadoran Indian? More importantly, how has Indianness been constructed in contemporary El Salvador?

Any attempt to address these two questions must acknowledge the characteristics described above. At the same time, it should be noted that postwar El Salvador witnessed a surge of research that questioned the myth of disappearance in more detail than Chapin, giving special attention to issues of race, identity, the 1932 massacre, and the demise of Indianness. Erik Ching and Virginia Tilley (1998) argue that indigenous communities never disappeared, and that they did not abandon all markers of Indian identity in the wake of the massacre. They went as far as to claim that the military and General Martínez did not make a concerted effort to eradicate all traces of Indians and indigenous culture. In fact, they highlighted specific moments where the military defended indigenous communities against abuses suffered by ladino politicians and landowners, and noted cases where the government supported legal and land claims made by Indians (Ching and Tilley 1998). Once the black

box of historical narrative was exposed, more and more scholars discovered that indigenous practices that allegedly disappeared precipitously in the years following the massacre, such as the *refajo*, continued in some communities, while in other communities those same markers were already fading before the massacre. A clear example would be the visibility and use of the *refajo* – the strongest marker of Indianness – after the massacre, which diminished partly due to reasons of cost and the ability to acquire the skirt. The same argument was made for Pipil, which was already on the decline before 1932. Both of these markers call into question the centrality of the massacre as a significant factor in the decline of visibly distinct cultural practices considered rightfully Indian (Peretti 2002).

Trouillot suggested “the reasons why a specific narrative matters to a specific population are themselves historical” (Trouillot 1995: 13). If Salvadoran Indians neither disappeared nor suddenly abandoned their ‘indigenous’ cultural practices, they were indeed removed from the official narrative of the nation. By 1940, the category ‘indigenous’ had been removed from the official census, and by 1952 the International Labor Organization confirmed the disappearance of radical difference when a document from Convention 107 declared the absence of an indigenous population in the modern republic of El Salvador (Government of El Salvador 1952). This maneuver of the state produced concrete effects. The certainty with which people came to believe the official fiction is linked to assimilation narratives typical of *mestizaje* and as a practical tactic to explain the massacre of 1932.

In contemporary western El Salvador, few communities regarded indigenous recognized themselves in official representations of Indianness. There are communities that do fit a conventional model of indigenous identity, where members explicitly consider themselves indigenous, and are seen as such by their non-indigenous neighbors, but they are rare and hardly stand out. At the same time, there are other communities, families and individuals who might well assert indigenous identity, but renounce indigenousness despite the efforts of activists and the relatively favorable climate of multiculturalism in neoliberal El Salvador. Many of these efforts by activists took place in the 1980s, when the political meaning of indigenous identity became institutionalized in the practices and discourses of transnational indigenous activist groups, NGOs and quasi-governmental agencies, like the UN, that provided indigenous groups with funding and juridical claims to legitimacy (DeLugan 2005, 2008; Tilley 1997, 2002).

According to Virginia Tilley (2002), indigenous communities that wished to be included in the network found incentives to ‘be Indian.’ Many of these communities received access to funding and other resources, but only if they were able to meet the narrow and dominant models of indigeness. This ‘new hegemony’ of indigeness was not only imposed from outside the context of what it meant to be an Indian in El Salvador, but also regulated by non-indigenous international and transnational agencies (Tilley 2002). For Tilley, the poor relationship between the particularities of the Salvadoran racial experience and universal models of authentic Indians placed Salvadoran activists in a double bind. Activists were encouraged to conform to international standards in order claim Indianness, but in the process of doing so they simultaneously set aside their own realities of Salvadoran history and their own experiences, unintentionally interfering with their own path to legitimacy. In step with Charles R. Hale’s research on the relationship between neoliberalism and the rise of indigenous rights activism in the 1990s, Tilley’s analysis demonstrates the ways that neoliberal multiculturalism has the potential to ‘menace’ those subjects it purports to represent and protect (Hale 2002).

Since the rise of indigenous activism in the 1980s, the category of Indianness has been open to empirical challenges over who is or is not ‘really’ indigenous, drawing activists to concentrate on closed categories of identity formation. The production of these closed categories was partly a response to the subject-forming effects of the discourse and practices introduced by transnational institutions. Lost in all of this were the revolutionary hopes of the civil war that energized the indigenous movement in postwar El Salvador. Rather than have 1932 be central to the history of the Indian, indigenous activists turned to the optimism of the revolution as an opportunity to create a forward-looking narrative for the Salvadoran Indian. Postwar El Salvador animated the desires of the indigenous movement to supplant the traditional ‘*indio*’ marked by a history of violence, a violence that was produced and organized within a form of knowledge. This form of knowledge, the recognition of the abject Indian from the colonial period and 1932, is deeply tied to the overwhelming certainty that the other Indian, the utopian half of Trouillot’s (1991) double-sided ‘savage-slot’, is absent. When the Indian is visible, representation is often controlled by the state.

When El Salvador’s National Salvadoran Institute of Culture and Art (CONCULTURA) and other state agencies promote vibrant indigenous ceremonies in Izalco or Panchimalco or mount an exhibit on contemporary Indians in the National Museum of Anthropology that mourns the slaughter of Indians in 1932, part of the understood message is that these are symbols that index the past from which the nation arose. As more and more Salvadorans view their country from afar, and Salvadoran-born residents of the USA or Canada are the majority of tourists visiting El Salvador, the state’s recognition of this kind of Indianness is wedded to its support for increased archaeological work at the handful of Precolumbian sites in western El Salvador, or its efforts to promote El Salvador in the Mundo Maya tourism campaign. Thus, the Indian returned to El Salvador most prominently in the world of NGO’s, indigenous rights groups, urban intellectuals, and museum displays.

MESTIZO NATIONALISM, ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUMS

The discursive context within which the fictional reality of *mestizo* nationalism and indigenous loss was discussed after 1932 has important consequences for representing El Salvador’s colonial and Precolumbian past. Questions concerning the mythical disappearance of indigenous Salvadorans were evident in the 1990s when revelatory declarations not only declared the presence of Indians, but also demanded the state and the nation to recognize them. However, if knowing what it meant to be a Salvadoran Indian before and after 1932 was not fully understood as it occurred, then how could the indigenous practices of the *antiguos* (ancient ones) be properly assessed in the present?

Just as history is not a simple account of past events, archaeology is not simply a straightforward record of discoveries. The aim here is to demonstrate how Salvadoran archaeology and museums are offshoots of the *mestizo* nationalism enterprise. Both fields have been shaped by their role in supporting the *mestizo* narrative by playing the part of the silent spectator.

The Silent Spectators

There are a number of key issues at work here. The first is ideological, and concerns the myth of *mestizo* nationalism and absence. The mythical disappearance of the Indian was based not so much on empirical evidence as on an ontology, an implicit organization of the

world and its inhabitants. Twentieth century works, including the long lists of newspaper articles and academic publications discussed earlier, reveal the incapacity of most contemporaries to understand the fate of the Salvadoran Indian before and after the massacre of 1932. When given the task to represent the past, Salvadoran archaeologists readily did so with their ready-made categories. The second issue, and most important, is epistemological and, by inference, methodological in the broadest sense. A critical issue in Salvadoran archaeology is the preoccupation with an ancient past, a static past that is disconnected from the present. Taken together, to what extent has modern Salvadoran archaeology broken the iron bonds of the philosophical milieu in which it was born?

The majority of the earliest archaeological reports from El Salvador were concerned with ceramics, often collected at random, and monumental architecture (Cobos 1994). Almost all of these ceramics were recovered from major Maya sites located in western El Salvador. Data from these artifacts were used to construct typological charts similar to those from other parts of the Maya world, which extended from Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula to western El Salvador (Figure 1.3). The data collected on the structures were used to locate ancient political centers of the Classic Period, traditionally thought of as the years between 300 AD and 900 AD. A number of archaeological sites were surveyed in eastern El Salvador, but only Quelepa (Andrews 1976) was excavated. The minimal attention that Quelepa received was partly due its Classic period occupation, which would have placed the site as a chronological contemporary of the Maya sites in western El Salvador.

The most significant player in Salvadoran archaeology before the 1970s was Stanley H. Boggs, an American archaeologist often considered the *Padre de Arqueología Salvadoreña* (Father of Salvadoran Archaeology). Boggs arrived in El Salvador in 1939, after doing a significant amount of research in Haiti, the Yucatán, and Copán, Honduras. Though Boggs never completed his PhD at Harvard, he is best known for his archaeological research at Tazumal, in the archaeological zone of Chalchuapa, in the department of Santa Ana (Figure 2.1). Most of his publications – written in Spanish and English – consisted of short notes and reports from excavations and ceramic analyses. Having already done research in other areas of Mesoamerica, the explanatory framework adopted by Boggs to explain the development of El Salvador's rich past was simple and straightforward: diffusionism. For Boggs, diffusionism was the only manner to explain the similarity of form between objects found throughout the Mesoamerican world, and it was only reasonable to assume that the Maya and Pipil of western El Salvador were culturally similar to their distant relatives.

Stanley Boggs arrived in El Salvador seven years after the massacre of 1932, at a time when the narrative of indigenous disappearance was just beginning. When he arrived, there were no longer any indigenous peoples of Maya descent in western El Salvador, only Nahuatl speaking Indians. Rather than place attention on archaeological sites associated with the Pipil, the indigenous peoples who inhabited western El Salvador at the time of contact, Boggs focused his efforts on the Maya. His interests did not lie in the war-like, Nahuatl speaking Pipil; instead, Boggs and fellow archaeologists were more concerned with the artistic and peaceful Maya of the Classic period. In this context, the *indios comunistas* of 1932 were simply maintaining their war-like tendencies of the past. The decision to ignore the dynamic historical development of the Pipil had profound impacts on Salvadoran archaeology. First, it was assumed that the Nahuatl speaking people of western El Salvador had simply left the country after the massacre of 1932, or had successfully adopted western

practices. Second, if there was nothing to be learned but what is evident in the present, why undertake investigation of local history and the recent past at all?

Contemporary Salvadoran archaeologists see Boggs' arrival as the introduction of a rigorous 'scientific' program. The major research approach that has continued to confine Salvadoran archaeology into the twenty-first century is the artifact classification framework. Change in material culture and cultural practices were manifested mainly in greater emphasis on archaeological artifacts, on the description of sites and finds, and on typology, with only very brief discussions of origins and attempts at a contextual interpretation of the archaeological record. The construction of chronological charts has continued to be the aim of professional archaeologists in El Salvador. As a consequence, the prominence of ceramic types and chronological charts effectively disengages the study of the past from any investigation of the Pipil, and their descendants. Despite the enduring importance of the landscape to the Pipil, regional archaeologists often obscure their cultural meaning and historical presence. When Salvadoran archaeologists, foreign and local, study El Salvador's Precolumbian and historic periods, they rarely write about ancestral homelands. Instead, one reads archaeological reports about decreased mobility, changes in the utilization of habitats, or the intensification of trade networks. Indigenous peoples are rarely mentioned in these narratives of the past.

Archaeologists continue to enforce an emphasis with the culturally rich past of the Maya, but this is an ancient past, a static vision of the past, that is disconnected from the present. This disconnection takes two forms. The first involves the denial of the political dynamics and class struggles by which the oppressive conditions of the contemporary Salvadoran Indians came to being, thereby characterizing the conflict and massacre of 1932 as an inevitable outcome of essential ethnic difference. The second is engaged with the construction of a dehumanized history focused solely on questions that bear no relevance to contemporary Salvadoran Indians or their struggles – a history which is cast as an idiom that is alienating and inaccessible to those whose history has no connection. In the making of Salvadoran history, the oppressive myth of mestizo nationalism is reproduced and internalized by a conceptual framework that perpetuates the narrative of erasure, strategic ignorance, and repressive essentialism. Such histories offer no insight on how to manage the long established problems of ethnic conflict and oppression in El Salvador. This sense of disconnection in contemporary Salvadoran archaeology has continued to foster and institutionalize conflict along racial and ethnic lines, and has the potential to threaten the gains made by indigenous communities and activists that were meant to be empowered with 'dissolution' after the civil war.

A second development that emerged with the 'scientific' approach advocated by Boggs was the reluctance to incorporate the oral histories and traditions of local indigenous groups. On the surface, the reluctance to do so served a pragmatic purpose: Salvadoran archaeologists, foreign and national, were not interested in the histories of the descendant populations that still resided in El Salvador. They were only interested in the ancient past of the Maya. On the other hand, the reluctance to incorporate oral traditions sent two clear messages: first, the oral accounts of the Pipil did not form an important body of data for Salvadoran archaeologists, which led to an absence of archaeological fieldwork related to the Pipil; and second, the use of oral accounts did not fall under the domain of archaeology. While the practice of ethnographic analogy had been an established practice in American archaeology for more than a quarter century, a rather non-existent relationship between

ethnological and archaeological fieldwork existed in El Salvador. While Boggs and his colleagues were busily recording artifacts from Maya sites like Tazumal, anthropologists at the University of California, Berkeley, were pioneering the direct-historical approach to trace the culture history of contemporary indigenous communities back through recent history and into deeper history using a combination of ethnographic research, indigenous oral traditions, and archaeological methods.

To date, few archaeological projects have focused on the Pipil of western El Salvador (Cobos 1994 and 1999; Fowler 1983; Velásquez y Hermes 1996 and 1997). The most significant Pipil site investigated archaeologically was the site of *Antiguo Cuscatlán*, which was discovered during the construction of the US Embassy in the early 1990s. A salvage project was initiated to mitigate the impacts of development of the US Embassy and the surrounding communities. The paucity of archaeological research on Pipil sites has had an everlasting influence on the field of archaeology in El Salvador. The debate over the use of ethnographic information to interpret direct materials found in the archaeological record, particularly for Pipil sites, never existed. Native elders were never seen as useful sources of information by archaeologists because Indians either no longer existed in El Salvador, or because they were thought to have endured an extensive amount of culture change since the European exploration and colonization of El Salvador, and especially after the *Matanza* of 1932. To this day, ethnographic analogy is of little use to Salvadoran archaeologists, which has led to minimal collaboration with indigenous communities over questions concerning the archaeological record, and how to properly represent the past.

The question of who owns, controls, and speaks for the past is a crucial one for El Salvador. In El Salvador, the Department of Archaeology, CONCULTURA, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Salvadoran Foundation for Archaeology (FUNDAR) have established themselves as the proper authorities that decide how to protect and preserve archaeological sites within the national territory. Ultimately, these institutes have the final say on which sites to investigate and how to properly represent the past. Sites that have received the most attention are those located near major tourist destinations. Three sites that have attracted the most tourists are San Andrés, Chalchuapa, and Joya de Cerén. Each archaeological site has its own museum, with artifacts that were found locally.

Salvadoran museums have the difficult task in not only displaying El Salvador's rich cultural history, but also creating an environment that promotes Salvadoran nationalism. In postwar El Salvador, Museums and *Casas de Culturas* have come forward as relatively new settings for casting official ideas about national culture, history and mestizo nationalism. The country's two largest museums include: the government operated *Museo Nacional de Antropología* (MUNA), and the privately owned *Museo de Arte* (MARTE). Both museums opened after the civil war, MUNA in 2000 and MARTE in 2004. Museums have long served as official sites for shaping knowledge and collective understandings about the nation. Until recently, this was not the case for El Salvador.

Since the 1970s El Salvador has relied on the *Casas de Cultura* (Culture Houses) to promote and disseminate ideas about Salvadoran culture and history. The network of museum-like houses originally received funding and technical support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), but is now managed by CONCULTURA. While each *Casa de Cultura* varies widely in scale and exhibition content, minimally all of the houses have the national flag, and the two-volume, post-war produced *Historia de El Salvador*. Depending on the location, the *Casas de Cultura* in western El

Salvador will display crafts, musical instruments, archaeological artifacts, folkloric material culture, or celebrate prominent individuals from national history.

By Salvadoran standards, MUNA is a monumental architectural structure with a terracotta exterior with sky blue accents. The colors for the museum were specifically chosen to communicate El Salvador's indigenous heritage, terracotta representing the red land used to produce the emblematic ceramics of the region and the sky blue a reference to remind us of our Creator. Most museum workers will tell you the significance of the colors with great pride, and if given the opportunity, will inform visitors that the near life-size statue at the entrance to the museum is Xipe Totec – the Nahuatl god of spring, rain and fertility. From there, the casual visitor will enter five exhibits, starting with an exhibit that documents El Salvador's Precolumbian indigenous roots. The flow of the museum then continues through time to see the conditions that shaped El Salvador's modern society. This is accomplished by representing the nation's history through a progression of exhibition rooms that chronologically capture El Salvador's most distinguished elements: human settlements; agricultural traditions; and religious practices. The three practices are covered in chronological order in each of these exhibition rooms, showcasing how each of these activities changed over time and into the twentieth century. The final exhibition room contains artifacts from some of the most significant Precolumbian cultures throughout the Americas.

Where the historical achievements of El Salvador's indigenous peoples were once denied, MUNA valorizes a glorious indigenous past through the lens of mestizo nationalism. While the historical achievements of these groups were once attributed to the intercession of external players, the indigenous peoples contained in the domains of MUNA are now constituted as a unitary people in the first exhibit room that presents El Salvador's Precolumbian roots. These are the 'true' Indians of El Salvador, the figures of a romanticized and 'homogenized' Salvadoran culture. The following three exhibition rooms then cast the Salvadoran Indian as the historical agent that is intent on completing the project of modernism in and through the emerging nation-state. As a result, MUNA's organizational scheme strengthens the theoretical and methodological foundations of *mestizo* nationalism by denying the historical nature of the nation's indigenous groups. In this case, a romanticized notion of ethnic, racial, and cultural unity represented in the first and last exhibition room's obscure significant diversity within the Americas and El Salvador, legitimating processes of assimilation and integration. If internal difference or historical change is recognized in MUNA, it is circumscribed through the representation of sequences of disconnected periods and phases.

DISCUSSION

In principle, history is often considered an account of past events. This minimal definition raises difficult problems in establishing the margins between past, present and future. If the present is regarded as the intersection between the past and future, it does not itself consist of any temporal depth. It is individuals and, more generally, social groups who produce narratives that widen or narrow the temporal scope of the present according to popular beliefs. History is a contextual product, where the past itself is not yet history, but a practical history that emerges as explicit history through the efforts of people – academic and

non-academic – who select, transform, and transmit what is considered important for the present:

For me, history does not correspond to any kind of pre-established truth, everlasting, ‘pre-written,’ which has to be discovered by the historian after an ineffable treasure hunt; it is constantly reworked and rewritten according to the specific time, habits, and societies of reference. As Marc Bloch said a long time ago in *Apologie pour le métier d'historien*, each period reconstructs the past according to its own preoccupations. Being a historian thus means, beyond the techniques and methods, being able to evaluate as honestly as possible the conditions determining the requirements and prohibitions that, within the historian’s own society, constrain the making of history (Devisse 1988: 325).

Regardless of the training and the degree to which they may be homogenized as a single group, Salvadoran narrators continue to explain the past in terms of the present. Present-day aims and deeds are imputed to people of earlier times. Heritage jettisons the past’s cultural distance. Historic sites, museums, and costume romance cleave to the hoary dictum that human nature is constant, that people are essentially unchanged from age to age. In the words of David Lowenthal, “the past is seen as another present” (1989: 1263-80). Though our knowledge of the past is based on evidence acquired in the present, an essential question is how the past has come to seem that way?

By the second half of the 20th century, fragments and figments of memory and narrative helped constitute a set of beliefs about how *La Matanza* of 1932 made El Salvador a *mestizo* nation. The founding figures of the nineteenth century El Salvador did not harmonize claims of modernity with meaningful cultural inscriptions, or position themselves as benefactors of an Indian cultural heritage. Despite a large indigenous presence local or popular representations were derided in favor of *mestizo* nationalism. In contrast to the nation building strategies employed by México and a few notable Caribbean nations, the approach advocated by the nascent Salvadoran government highlighted Western values and the dawn of a modern republic. Little value was placed in a pre-Colombian past. Instead, cultural worth was placed in a modernity that stressed European ideals, and looked down upon an indigenous cultural heritage considered inferior by the Salvadoran elite. Notions of what it meant to be Salvadoran were forged from these early nineteenth century ideals. As a consequence, the texture of analysis concerning El Salvador’s history suffered greatly.

Historical narratives of El Salvador continue to be premised on previous understandings of the country’s history, which are themselves premised on nineteenth century ideals of modernity. In the case of Salvadoran historiography, as in other Latin American countries, these previous understandings have been profoundly shaped by Western conventions and procedures. For example, the assumption underwriting the myth of *mestizo* nationalism in El Salvador is the belief that there are no substantial (‘authentic’) indigenous peoples who might lay claim to land, resources, or their own distinctive cultural identity and thus contest the legitimacy of essentially colonial and neocolonial rights of access and authority. This premise had long been accepted, with the assumption that there was little evidence relating to an indigenous presence in the post-contact/colonial period and that there was no point in undertaking systematic investigations of an indigenous history in El Salvador,

especially in the east. This position justified successive policies of expropriation and displacement, which ensured that there would be no data from those contexts that could counter this narrative. The theses of abandonment and assimilation became a self-fulfilling narrative of a singular racial collective in El Salvador. The *mestizo* narrative they serve guarantee their own continual legitimation by quite literally limiting knowledge of the records (written, material, and cultural) of contingency and historical process that could have been used to support the claims of contemporary indigenous communities to counter the encompassing methodology of the inevitable absence of ethnic and racial difference throughout El Salvador.

Once the complex of assumptions was established, they were perpetuated by historical practices that systematically ignored sources, archaeological and historical, which might have provided an alternative understanding of Salvadoran history. These same issues plague the investigation of El Salvador's colonial history, where secondary sources are rarely critically scrutinized and primary sources are often left unexamined. As chapter 4 will clearly lay out, when such sources are considered, the focus is safely on individual personalities and isolated events, rarely on the colonial policies that shaped the social development of El Salvador's colonial landscapes, and certainly not on the emerging histories of surviving indigenous populations. The void, the sense of loss created by the myth of *mestizo* nationalism after 1932 mirrors colonial eastern El Salvador, and is marked by the evocation of a mythical past and the recreation of what is indigenous.

Finally, the *Matanza* of 1932 had an important cultural-historical dimension: who were these armed, angry, and potentially dangerous people? What was their place in the nation? What role will they play in the future? This was not the first time the indigenous people of El Salvador had been closely inspected. The examination process had been set in motion by the Spanish incursions of the sixteenth century, but the contours of the problem changed through time. The conditions of historical production that relate to 1932 run parallel to the Spanish exploration and colonization of eastern El Salvador. The suppression of historical knowledge have entrenched a conception of eastern El Salvador as depopulated, impoverished, or as '*tierras de ningun provecho*' (unprofitable lands) almost from the time of conquest, reinforcing widespread unawareness of how colonial exploitation of the region was founded and first justified. The conception of eastern El Salvador's history turns on a thesis of automatic depopulation or elimination (because of disease) and (voluntary?) abandonment. This narrative serves not only to undermine any sense of history to the region, but also to absolve the Spanish colonial administration responsibility for the alleged disintegration of indigenous society in the region, justifying their subjugation and dispossession of indigenous peoples.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I argue that the recuperation of historical memory is a crucial project that is needed to overcome official policies of historical disinformation that have extended over many generations. At a purely descriptive level, the patterns of change evident when describing the past, archaeologically and historically, are much more complicated than models of orderly succession would suggest. The historiographies provided in this dissertation show that when history is written, generational consensus in El Salvador was and continues to be achieved through extraordinary purpose, by means of deliberate canalization, selective

memory, direct or indirect silencing, or as a function of an artificially and contingently unified reaction against a common threat, such as the *indios Comunistas* of western El Salvador or the *indios guerreros* of eastern El Salvador.

An underlying premise in this chapter is that producing a historical narrative is always, in different ways and to varying degrees, a political undertaking. Whatever commitment practitioners may make to a stance of detached neutrality, their situated interests play a powerful role in shaping the practice of history making. This is especially evident in the following chapter. A parallel case was also made for the practice of archaeology in El Salvador. Like history, archaeology is a thoroughly cultural, political and economic enterprise. At the very least, Salvadoran archaeologists have worked hard to catalog the number, distribution, and nature of archaeological sites within national boundaries. However, most archaeological attention has been placed in the western and central regions of the country. Eastern El Salvador's '*tierras de ningun provecho*' have received little attention.

What follows is an initial effort to write a more inclusive, broader history of Spanish colonialism in the Gulf of Fonseca, eastern El Salvador. The goal is to illuminate the lives and experiences of native peoples in eastern El Salvador through documentary and archaeological sources, while challenging how those same lives and experiences are so often still misrepresented. The underlying premise here is that the writing of history and the doing of archaeology continue to shape the lives and futures of native peoples and thus affect everyone committed to building more open, culturally democratic communities in Central America.

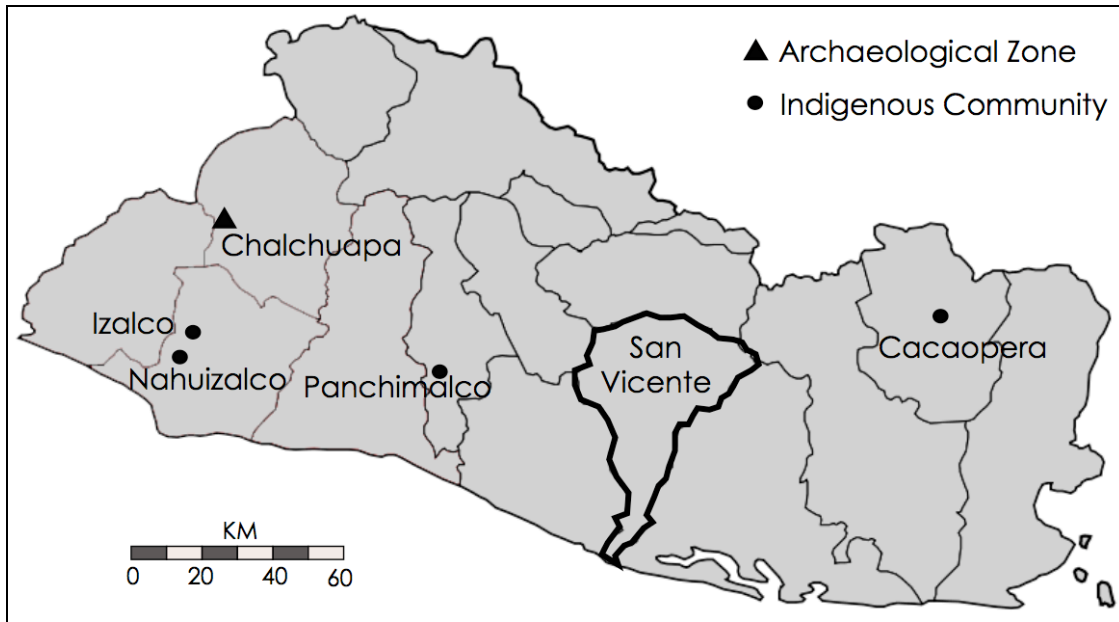


Figure 2.1 - Map of El Salvador with specific indigenous communities in El Salvador, and the archaeological zone of Chalchuapa in western El Salvador. The Department of San Vicente is also highlighted.

CHAPTER 3

‘TIERRAS DE NINGUN PROVECHO’: COLONIAL APPROPRIATION OF THE GULF OF FONSECA

In 1522, the Gulf of Fonseca entered the Western imagination with the arrival of both Andres de Niño and Gil Gonzalez Dávila. At that moment, the Gulf crossed the horizon of historical time (or discursive time), and entered the cognitive framework of the European observer. From an Occidental perspective, this moment represents the ‘birth’ of the region, and the shaping of the ‘Gulf of Fonseca,’ which continues today. With Niño’s expedition, and the texts that narrate its fate, the islands, and peoples of the region entered historical, verbal, and European time. In a land that from a Western perspective was a blank page, these texts found the space and time in which new historical developments would take place.

The colonial entanglements that took place in the Gulf of Fonseca are characterized by the fragmentary nature of the historical documents that account for them. The expeditions and accounts of the region from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries left meager documentary evidence. After 1522, the only first-hand accounts of the region were by *Licenciado* Diego Garcia de Palacios; the *encomendero* Melchor Hernandez; the Franciscan fathers Alonso Ponce and Antonio de Ciudad Real; the cartographer Francisco de Valverde; the English buccaneer William Dampier; the *Juez de Milpas* (or judge that monitored land rights and use) Miguel Garcés y Reinosa; and the Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz. Second-hand accounts of the region, its resources, and peoples, are provided in letters written to the Crown by Spanish colonial administrators, specifically Francisco de Castañeda, Captain Martin Estete, and Pedrarias Dávila. Alonso López Cerrato’s *tasaciones* (or tribute) list for the *audiencia* of Guatemala, taken between 1548 and 1551, has also proven to be a valuable source of information. All of these sources briefly comment on the nature of the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca, its resources, and its peoples. From a European perspective, the intellectual operations offered in each of these documents granted ‘being’ to the unknown.

TACTICS OF TERRITORIAL APPROPRIATION

I am interested in the slow discursive development of that landscape. Following the works of Walter Mignolo (1989 a and b, 1993, 1994), Gustavo Verdesio (2002), Louis de Vorsey (1992), and Margarita Zamora (1993), it can be said that sixteenth-century colonial texts performed an initial mapping of the territory – verbal maps that named the unknown, demarcating the lands as a sign of its possession. This chapter is a study on geographical discourses, territorial representation, and knowledge production for the Gulf of Fonseca and eastern El Salvador in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When eastern El Salvador was first explored and settled in the sixteenth century, the region was commonly referred to as “*tierras de ningun provecho*” (unprofitable lands, or lands without benefit). In chapter 4, I will follow up this discussion with a few words on Spanish colonial practices that contributed

to the struggle over access to lands, and the eventual displacement of indigenous peoples from eastern El Salvador. Chapter 4 will also place a special emphasis on the archival documents I independently retrieved from the AGCA (*Archivo General de Centro America*) to see how the residents of *Conxagua* (or Conchagua Vieja), on the island of Conchagüita, reacted to the Europeans' colonizing endeavor.

In this chapter, I limit my discussion to the fragments of text and archival documents that refer to the Gulf of Fonseca and eastern El Salvador. In the first section of the chapter, I use these texts to see how the Spanish produced the first versions of that referent, and to better understand how Spanish practices of territorial appropriation affected an indigenous village located on a lump of land in the middle of the Gulf of Fonseca. In the following section, I pay attention to the documents and texts that relate to the following processes: the establishment of Spanish *villas* in the region; the *encomienda* system of labor; and slave raiding. Between 1522 and 1543, all three practices had profound impacts on the island villages of the Gulf of Fonseca. I chose to focus on the years between 1522 and 1543 in the second half of this chapter for one reason. The documents and texts from these two decades provide an early glimpse of how the Spanish interacted and engaged with the natural environment and the indigenous peoples who resided in the region. During these first two decades, the Spanish were more interested in discovering precious metals, and the acquisition of wealth (via labor), rather than recognizing and taking advantage of fertile lands. At the time, land was a surplus, almost useless, commodity. It was not until after jurisdictional control was firmly established over the territory when we begin to see increased attention given to the acquisition and usurpation of land. This process is described in chapter 4. Missing from these two chapters is a discussion of the missionization process that took place in the Gulf of Fonseca. This will be described in chapter 8, when I do a full discussion on the church of Conchagua Vieja; an edifice that was placed in the middle of the village, and most likely constructed near the end of the sixteenth century.

When woven together, the colonial processes described in chapters 3 and 4, provide a clear illustration of how each practice had concrete effects over the social and physical environment of the Gulf of Fonseca. The Spanish did not merely limit themselves to rethinking the landscape, but they also set out to modify, through specific actions, the place they encountered.

Claiming by Naming

At the time of Spanish contact in 1522, both Andres de Niño and Gil Gonzalez Dávila hardly noted, if at all, the linguistic and cultural diversity in the Gulf of Fonseca and its surrounding areas (Andagoya 1945: 399-406; Manuel 1883: 27-31; Meléndez 1976: 51). While both Spanish explorers chanced upon the '*bahia de Fonseca*,' by taking different paths that followed pre-existing trade routes, each encountered a complex, interrelated socio-ecological zone inhabited by multiple ethnic groups organized in crosscutting social networks between peoples that spoke different languages, but occupied contiguous territories (Davila 1883: 128-33; Larde y Larín 1975: 145). When reading of this encounter, one is struck by how both explorers interpreted the islands of the Gulf for his Spanish sovereign in ways they would find meaningful. While stressing the lack of an inter-oceanic route between the Pacific and the Caribbean, they described the islands in terms that made them familiar to their far-off patrons, giving them Spanish names so they might be more readily understood, while at the same time making them more securely Spanish.

At the moment of ‘discovery,’ the Gulf of Fonseca went by several names: *islas de la Teca*, and *golfete de chorotega* (Escalante Arce 2002; Larde y Larín 1975; Oviedo 1959 [1535-47]; Rivas 1933). In many sixteenth and seventeenth-century documents the island of Conchagüita is often referred to as *isla de la Teca*, with *indios potones* as the inhabitants (CDI 6: 7; Ponce 1873: 231-36). *Potón* is in reference to the specific Lenca dialect the inhabitants spoke on the island, and *Chorotega* refers to the nahautl-speaking peoples who inhabited the Nicaraguan shores of the Gulf of Fonseca. Coming from El Salvador, or southern Honduras, the gulf was referred to as *islas de la Teca*; likewise, if you came in from Nicaragua, the gulf was referred to as the *golfete de Chorotega*. Much of this is related to the socio-cultural diversity that existed in the Gulf of Fonseca, as well as the possible importance of place and meaning to the peoples that lived there. By not relating the indigenous names for the islands, the claim by Niño to have a God-given and royally sanctioned right to assert Spanish ownership of them was strengthened. Andres de Niño had no compunction in dubbing the Gulf of Fonseca “in honor of the Bishop and President of the Council of the Indies, Juan Rodrigo de Fonseca,” and the name of the first island he encountered *Petronila* (modern day Meanguera), for his niece (Larde y Larín 1975, 2000; Oviedo 1959 [1535-47]).

During the seventeenth century, the Gulf of Fonseca was momentarily recognized as ‘*bahía de Amapala*’ because of the importance of the port of Amapala, located in the modern day Bay of La Unión (see Figure 1.1). The port of Amapala provided a good harbor for careening ships and for shelter from bad weather in the Pacific, and accentuated the Pacific orientation of Central American demographic, social, economic life during the seventeenth century (Borah 1954: 5; Fuentes y Gúzman 1932-33: 293-98; MacLeod 1973: 81). The appearance of these names on Spanish maps drawn up in the wake of the expedition (Figure 3.1), and replicated on maps prepared in other countries (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3), would help to establish the Spanish right to possession of the Gulf of Fonseca and its islands. Stephen Greenblatt argued that this territorial christening was the “founding action of Christian imperialism” during which the “taking of possession [and] the conferral identity are fused in a moment of pure linguistic formalism” (1991: 52). There was nothing particularly novel about Niño’s actions. Andres de Niño and the Spanish were doing what a countless procession of supplanting societies, whether Christian or otherwise, had done before them (Greenblatt 1991). They were supporting their claim to a new territory by the simple conferring of a name that tied it symbolically to its putative owners, much as an individual might fashion a distinctive car name when taking possession of a new automobile.

The importance of place and meaning to the people that lived in the Gulf of Fonseca was not fully captured by the Spanish explorers. In fact, the diversity of ethnic groups and languages in the Gulf was not fully recognized until 1586, when Antonio de Ciudad Real reinforced earlier observations of the region made by *Licenciado* Diego García de Palacio (CDI 6: 7). As *oidor* (auditor) of the *audiencia* of Guatemala, between 1572 and 1579, Palacio was the first colonial administrator to make acute observations regarding the indigenous peoples and archaeological remains of present-day El Salvador (Warren 1973: 103). Palacio’s short, but informative letter to the Crown, was later copied by Antonio de Herrera for his canonical work *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano* (dec. iv, bk, vii, chaps. 8-10). This report also proved to be an invaluable source of information for Fray Alonso de Ponce, and his two secretaries Alonso de San Román and Antonio de Ciudad Real. As the Commissary General for the Franciscan Order of New Spain, Fray Alonso Ponce traveled from Mexico to Nicaragua, visiting

Franciscan monasteries and correcting abuses. The account of their tour is entitled *Relación breve y verdadera de algunas cosas de las muchas que sucedieron al Padre Fray Alonso Ponce en las Provincias de la Nueva España siendo Comisario General de aquellas partes*, and was largely written Ciudad Real (Roys 1932: 119). As one of the most accomplished Maya linguists of his time, it is not surprising that Ciudad Real inquired of the languages spoken in each of the villages they visited. The *Relación* also included a linguistic map of the region (Figure 3.4). The sixteenth-century texts provided by both Palacio and Ciudad Real are considered canonical documents amongst scholars who work in Central America, and situation in both Precolumbian and Latin American colonial studies.

The interpreters that accompanied Fray Alonso Ponce and Fray Antonio de Ciudad Real in 1586 spoke to the indigenous peoples of the Gulf in the *lingua franca* of the region: *nahuatl*. For this reason, many of the islands and points of reference in the Gulf region are named by words of *nahuatl* origin, with the exception of the island of Conchagüita, which is often referred to as either *Teca*, *Conchagua*, *Conxagua*, or *Comixao*. A clear example of this can be found in Ponce's (1873: 117) first encounter with the Gulf, where he was to meet with the *Padre Comisario* of Nacaome, southern Honduras:

Sin las islas sobredichas hay allí cerca otras algunas, todas despobladas, una de ellas se llama *Matzateptl*, en que dicen hay gran suma de venados; solia haber en ella un pueblo pequeño de indios potones, y pasáronse con los de *Quetzalteptl*; otra hay llamada de *Tecuantepitl*, que quiere decir Isla de Leones, porque dicen que está *Tzinacateptl*, donde hay infinidad de murciélagos; sin estas hay otras sin nombre. A aquella isla de la Teca ó Conchagua, vino por mandian de Nacaome ... (italics used for emphasis)

Without the aforesaid islands, there are others closeby, all of them uninhabited, one of them is called *Matzateptl*, in which they say there is a great sum of deer; there was only one small town of *indios potones* and they passed with those of *Quetzalteptl*; there is another called *Tecuantepitl*, which means Island of Lions, because that is where *Tzinacateptl* is, where there is an infinity of bats; without these there are others without name. To that Island of Teca ó Conchagua, he came by way of Nacaome ... (italics used for emphasis)

In 1590 the Spanish engineer Francisco de Valverde surveyed the Gulf of Fonseca region for a possible inter-oceanic trading route between the Gulf and *Puerto Caballos* in northern Honduras. In his report to the Crown, Valverde provided the *nahuatl* names of the islands, with the exception of *isla de la Teca* (Rivas 1933: 86-87). This is interesting, considering that if the island of Conchagüita formed the leading part of an independent, localized socio-political group at the time of the first Spanish incursions in the region (as the name of the bay might suggest), then it would be natural to assume that the other islands would have kept their Lenca names. Instead, the Lenca names for the islands are only revealed in legal petitions and census reports (see Chapter 4).

In Ponce's passage about the encounter between him and the *indios potones* of *isla de la Teca*, their sermons and dialogue are presented as non-conflicting, and without issue. There are no comments suggesting communication problems; nor does one have the impression that they were in need of a translator. The sermons given to the communities in

the Gulf of Fonseca are represented as natural, as if the parties involved did not speak different languages. While Ciudad Real was recognized as an accomplished linguist (Roys 1932), recent archaeological research on colonial Soconusco calls into question the linguistic observations made by Ciudad Real (Gasco 2008). The Europeans that traveled through Central America showed a complete ignorance of the ethnic and linguistic diversity among the local communities. As a consequence, these texts exclude, or hide, the cultural heterogeneity found in the Gulf of Fonseca.

Texts of Latin America's colonial period abound with examples of 'noise' in the communication channel, the most dramatic of which is the famous encounter in Cajamarca, Peru, in which Atahualpa threw away the Bible because it did not speak to his ear. Another classic example would be Gil Gonzalez Dávila's encounter with the *cacique* Nicaragua in 1522. Before accepting baptism Nicaragua posed a number of questions for Gil Gonzalez, such as whether or not the sky will fall, and how he came directly down from heaven, "like the flight of an arrow, or riding a cloud" (Dávila 1883). For Gil Gonzalez it was surprising that Nicaragua was not able to properly understand his responses, but the difficulty in communication did not lie in translation. Instead, problems in communication rested in Nicaragua not being Christian.

While Nicaragua was not entirely satisfied with Gil Gonzalez's responses, he did allow the Spanish to replace the temple idols with Christian crosses (Manuel 1883: 27-31; Meléndez 1976: 51). The placement of Christian crosses across the landscape being an essential element needed to bring about both a religious and a civic conversion of the indigenous communities. The matching of religion with civilization has a long history that intensified in the twelfth century, when the revival of classic traditions associated Christian beliefs with human reason, and human reason with civilization. Under these circumstances, subjection to Christian Law and practices became a test for membership in the human community and Christianity and European civility were presented as a necessary step in the evolution of man from barbarian to civilized citizen.

Theories related to Christian dogma and the Law of Christian communities facilitated the identification of Spanishness with civilization, and *Indianness* with barbarism (Gerbi 1992). In such a framework, the move from one group to the other was not a move between different ethnic or racial groups, but as a transition between different stages of civilization. The native peoples of the Americas were understood to be prisoners of a fragmented, confused and disorderly world (Gerbi 1993: 10-11). The positioning of crosses across the landscape were small acts that would eventually allow the *indios* to come into reason, meaning, and to become civil, as well as believe in a single god. The placement of a church in the middle of Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita, was supposed to serve the same purpose.

The brevity with which events are recounted in the colonial testimonies about the Gulf of Fonseca, and surrounding areas, does not contribute in the least to a better understanding of the cultural exchanges of the colonial encounter. How these texts refer to facts is important in itself, because it tells us something about the attitude and manner in which the Spanish communicated with Native American groups. The matter of factness with which they narrate such contacts reveals the value those contacts had in the framework of the dominant axiology in Renaissance Europe: indigenous communities were not as important (or as interesting) as the precious metals hidden in the lands to be possessed and conquered. The Gulf of Fonseca was initially valued as a possible port that would form the beginning point of an inter-oceanic

route that would connect the Pacific with the Caribbean. When this plan was abandoned, the Spanish settlers of the region relied on the forceful extraction of slaves, labor, and provisions from the region to support mining ventures in other areas of Honduras and South America.

By giving the Gulf of Fonseca a Spanish name, Andres de Niño made them Spanish, at least in his own mind and in the minds of his compatriots. Not that others were prepared to recognize either the names or the territorial claims that the names were meant to justify. Although early English explorers in the Americas attentively named places they ‘discovered,’ the English government was reluctant to acknowledge that the simple act of naming could constitute by itself a legal claim to a territory. This was partly due to the English being late starters in the chase for colonies, but doubtless due to the fact that they would be debarring themselves from much of the world if they were to recognize the mere act of naming as giving rise to an enduring legal claim. When the Spanish ambassador had tried to make this argument to England’s Queen Elizabeth in 1580, she retorted, “giving Names ... does not entitle [the Spanish] to ownership” (Seed 1995: 162-63). The mere act of naming, she said, was insignificant and did not entitle them to ownership other “than in the parts where they actually settled, and continued to inhabit” (Debenham 1960: 89).

In the maps produced by the English Buccaneers Basil Ringrose and William Hack, during the 1680s (Figures 3.2 and 3.3), both noted the names of the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca; presence of towns, churches, ranches, and roads; and the general geography of the region. While the process of territorial control is the basis for the remainder of this chapter, naming a place and its features was one of the first acts the Spanish did when taking possession of an ‘empty’ land, or what they perceived to be a blank page. As noted earlier, the Spanish were only doing what countless other societies had done before them.

The act of naming is crucial for colonial discourse in general, especially in sixteenth and seventeenth century texts. The naming of unknown lands functioned as a demarcation of territory, as a sign of its possession. Through the process of writing and the impression of names onto the landscape, “the land that was nobody’s possession becomes somebody’s” (Jitrik 1983: 98). By using the language, conceptual repertoire, and discursive strategies available in their culture and episteme, the Spanish appropriated and conceptually modified a geographic and human reality they had not previously known. At the same time, these subjects produced an image of the Other, they created a space for their own enunciation, a space from which to emit their discourse (“Montaigne’s ‘Of Cannibals,’” in de Certeau 1989 [1986]: 67, 73). In the following section, I use select reports from the 1520s and 30s to highlight the discourse used to describe the Gulf of Fonseca’s inhabitants and physical landscape.

Villas, Slavery and the Encomienda System

As I have stated, one of the goals of this chapter is to study the process of formation of the Gulf of Fonseca and its peoples through the use of archival documents and reports from the 1520s and 30s. The purpose is to see the different forms given to the territory and its peoples by the Spanish observers. The colonization of eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, did not take place overnight. According to initial reports, the territory lacked any signs of precious metals. While the territory exhibited certain resources useful for the booming shipping industry (Radell 1971), the land was considered ‘unprofitable’ and did not immediately arouse much interest. The region’s high population density, on the other hand, made the exploitation of the region worthwhile; as the *encomienda*, and other forms of forced

or free labor, served as the foundation of the colonial economy in Central America. An *encomienda* (from *encomendar*, to entrust) was an arrangement designed by the Crown to grant a Spaniard (or *encomendero*), usually for life, a specified amount of labor and tribute from a given indigenous village. The *encomienda* was a landless institution not based on the legal ownership of land tracts. In areas close to major Spanish towns (such as León), where there was a fair market for European agricultural produce, or in regions where the native populations had quickly disappeared (such as San Miguel), was there an interest in taking possession of land. Before I continue my discussion, I want to briefly provide a few words on the structure behind the initial exploration of Central America, as it gives some context to the reports and documents used below.

To ensure the collection of royal taxes and methodologically garnering information on the surrounding regions, Spanish officials established a centrally controlled structure of exploration in Central America (Ramos Pérez 1981). While private investors had to put up the capital for explorations, they were not free to set off in any direction they wished. Before setting forth, the organizer of an expedition had to obtain official permission – usually from the local governor or, for larger, more ambitious expeditions, from a more distant royal authority in Spain. While no physical force prevented an individual from setting out on his own, a subtly more effective pressure kept individuals from doing so. Without official permission, government officials could seize any and all wealth obtained during, or after, the voyage. Any hope an individual had of establishing independent political authority in any area similarly vanished. While individuals who encountered wealth in uncharted areas tried to keep knowledge of the full amount of their acquisitions from colonial officials, paying a 20 percent tax on some of it was preferable to losing all of it.

The early reports for the Gulf of Fonseca, provided below, highlight the process described above. While the 1522 expeditions of both Andres de Niño and Gil Gonzalez Dávila were specifically undertaken to discover an inter-oceanic route between the Pacific and Caribbean, later expeditions into the Gulf of Fonseca were carried out for the explicit purpose of locating and exploiting valuable resources. Each of the reports used in this investigation not only provide a record of the rationale for settling *villas* near and around the Gulf of Fonseca, but also provide a register of the Spanish discourses used to describe the territory and its peoples.

Establishing administrative control

Before administrative control was formally established in the Gulf of Fonseca, Governors Pedrarias Dávila (or Don Pedro Arias de Avila) of Nicaragua, and Pedro de Alvarado of Guatemala, jockeyed for control in the area, and enslaved many indigenous peoples living on the Gulf islands, or in surrounding areas (Barquero 1990: 35; Castro 1978; Larde y Larín 2000: 372; Radell 1976; Sherman 1979: 54-55; Stanislawski 1983: 17-19). In light of these circumstances, three *villas* were established in the surrounding areas of the Gulf of Fonseca: San Miguel de la Frontera; Choluteca (or Xerez de la Frontera); and León (see Figure 3.2, 3.3, and 3.5). In the 1520s, all three of these *villas* were ‘frontier’ settlements – hence the *de la frontera* designations – founded primarily to thwart claims over the region by advancing Spanish settlers from Guatemala, Honduras and Panama.

By 1530, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Chiapas (Mexico), and Panama all functioned under separate royal orders, but the death of Pedrarias in 1531 and the prestige of Alvarado contributed to the unification of the isthmus thereafter (see Table 3.1). The

establishment of the Viceroyalty of New Spain in Mexico City in 1535 included the northern portion of Central America, but the establishment of an *audiencia* in Panama in the same year continued the confusion over jurisdiction in northern Nicaragua, especially over the Gulf of Fonseca and the islands therein. Panama's importance as a slave-trading center, and link between Europe and the mines of Peru, justified the development of its own *audiencia*. Only after the establishment of the *audiencia of Guatemala* (or *de Los Confines*) in 1543 (see Figure 3.6), did the islands officially fall under the jurisdiction of Guatemala, and awarded as *encomienda* to Melchor Hernandez, one of the first Spaniards to settle in San Miguel de la Frontera.

My goal in this section is not to describe the administrative history of the Gulf of Fonseca and Central America. Instead, I want to center my attention on how the Gulf of Fonseca and its native peoples were first described in those initial reports, and how those texts represented and gave meaning to the land and its peoples. In this section I chose to focus on two letters written by Pedrarias Dávila, and later sent to the Crown; several archival documents that related to the initial settlement of San Miguel de la Frontera; and several testimonials that highlight the injustices enacted upon the indigenous peoples of eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca. Each of the texts and archival documents selected for this section come from a variety perspectives that emphasize the differential interests from both Nicaraguan and Guatemalan administrators, explorers, and settlers.

I chose not to include the initial texts provided by both Andres de Niño and Gil Gonzalez Dávila because their descriptions of the Gulf of Fonseca were brief, and not entirely concerned with the land and its peoples. Their chief interest was the discovery of an inter-oceanic route between the Pacific and Caribbean, and the texts reflect that ambition. The reports provided here, on the other hand, represent the first revealing descriptions of the territory and peoples of the Gulf of Fonseca. My fundamental purpose behind this section is to provide an analysis of the forms in which these initial reports represented the Gulf of Fonseca, as well as capture how the peoples of this land were first illustrated through the traces left in the texts. Thus, while it was important to keep in mind what was being said of the land and peoples in the texts, it was just as significant to place my attention on what was *not being said*. Following the works of Terry Eagleton (1976: 34-35) and Pierre Macherey (1978: 81-91), I was just as intrigued with the *silences* that inform the texts.

The villa of León and the influence of Pedrarias

After 1522 there are few available documents that comment on the Gulf of Fonseca. The following reports by Pedrarias Dávila were sent to the Crown in 1529. At the time, Pedrarias was the acting governor and captain general of Nicaragua, a position he had held since 1527. The reports are based off accounts produced by several expeditions sent to the Gulf of Fonseca to explore the territory and natural resources of that region. These reports represent the earliest descriptions of the Gulf of Fonseca, as well as reveal Pedrarias' initial intentions for the region. While the descriptions are short, Pedrarias' letters to the Crown offer cogent explanations as to why the territories of eastern El Salvador, southern Honduras, and Nicaragua should be placed under his jurisdiction.

In the first report of January 15, 1529, the Gulf of Fonseca was described as:

... muchas é grandes lagunas que en esta tierra hay, é inhabitable, no hay tanta tierra para poblar, por que lo mejor de la tierra que es el medio della es Lagunas (DHN I: 447).

... many and large *lagoons* that are in this land, and *inhabitable*, there is not much land to settle, because the best lands are in the middle of the lagoons (italics used for emphasis).

While this is only a small caption of the report, there are a few details from the entire report worth noting. The first thing we notice in this report is a lack of interest in the native peoples who resided in the Gulf of Fonseca. The lack of information reveals two issues addressed earlier in the chapter: (1) how little Pedrarias, and other Spaniards who explored the region, knew (or wished to know) about the peoples who lived in these ‘uninhabitable’ lands; and (2) the attitude of those who did not think it worthwhile to comment, or acquire, knowledge about peoples understood to be inferior. Pedrarias’ references to ‘lagoons’ and ‘uninhabitable’ are two signposts that defined the region until the 1580s, marking a dramatic first conception of the referent Gulf of Fonseca.

Pedrarias’ initial description of the Gulf of Fonseca as swampy, and not suitable for settlement, does not seem to readily justify his desire to claim the region. The narrative is brief, and provides no explicit reason as to why the territory should be placed under his jurisdiction. Pedrarias’ reasons for claiming the region are described in a second letter sent to the Crown, and dated to September 2, 1529. In the second report, both Governor Pedrarias Dávila and Diego Alvarez Osorio (*protector de los yndios*, or protector of the Indians) described Dávila’s justification for an *entrada* (entry) into the Gulf region, led by Captain Martín Estete (DHN II: 96-99). Governor Pedrarias Dávila rationalized the *entrada*, by commenting on the mistreatment and enslavement of *indios* in the region by Pedro de Alvarado, López de Salcedo, and their men (DHN II: 97). In addition to the usual pieties about bringing additional lands under the control of the Crown so that the Spaniards in Nicaragua could have a clear purpose in the region, it was stated that the *indios* could be brought to Christianity, and that, “the conversion to the Catholic faith of the many Natives who live in this land would be a great service to God, our lord” (DHN II: 99).

The sequence of Pedrarias’ argument for claiming the Gulf of Fonseca in the two reports described above is interesting in itself. While Pedrarias does not outline any economic advantages of populating the land, he does comment on the potential moral and religious conversion of the Gulf’s inhabitants. In the discourse provided, the main goal is the development of a religious mission, and possibly an economic enterprise. In practice, however, the economic side of the colonial enterprise is given priority over the evangelical mission. While the Gulf of Fonseca may have not exhibited the most attractive characteristics for Spanish settlement, this did not stop Pedrarias from allotting tributaries on the islands of the Gulf to Hernan Nieto, Alonso de Segovia, and Gonzalo de los Rios (DHN V: 363-64), *encomenderos* from the villa of León. More importantly, the conditions did not prevent Pedrarias from extending his lucrative slaving practices into the Gulf region.

Although areas near the Gulf of Fonseca would eventually produce silver, and some gold, the only profitable enterprise in the 1520s and 30s was through an *encomienda*, or the trading of enslaved native peoples. The ambiguity of laws pertaining to slavery and the conditions of slaves was reflected in the bewildering variety of circumstances in which

enslaved native peoples found themselves. Slavery in the Americas was never a static condition, making the practice in the Americas difficult to generalize. Spanish slave laws were largely guided by the thirteenth century *Siete Partidas* of Alonso X “*el Sabio*” (1221-84). Originally called the *Libro de Leyes* (Book of Laws), the *Siete Partidas* was a compilation of texts intended to establish a uniform body of normative rules for the kingdom of Castile during the thirteenth century. The *Siete Partidas* addressed philosophical, moral, and theological topics and played a significant role in the legislation of the Spanish colonies. Colonial American conditions, however, were quite unlike the Kingdom of Castile in the thirteenth century, and so slavery underwent many transformations in the Americas.

While slaving in the Caribbean began in 1499, the almost industrially paced demands for indigenous labor to sustain the new colonies led Queen Isabella to approve the enslavement of only ‘hostile’ *indios* in 1503 (Sauer 1966: 112). The label of ‘hostile’ remained open to broad interpretation, allowing Spaniards, in effect, to enslave native peoples from many different regions (Sherman 1979: 29-30). Though the practice was banned temporarily in the Americas, a royal *cédula* of 1534 once again allowed for the enslavement of ‘hostile’ native peoples, though the issue was not proclaimed in Central America until 1535 (AGI Justicia, Legajo 296). The practice of enslaving indigenous peoples in the Central American provinces were repeated from Chiapas, Mexico, to Costa Rica, with only slight variations.

The slave industry in the Gulf of Fonseca was largely facilitated by the *encomienda* system. The process of arranging an *encomienda* was often overseen by a *corregidor* or *alcade mayor* (local Spanish officials in charge of a given jurisdiction). An *encomienda* was often given to an important Spaniard (most were *conquistadores*) who resided in Spanish cities, or villas, and was often based on an existing native sociopolitical unit, which kept its own authorities and its people kept their own land, but through the *cacique* (native leader) they performed labor for and/or paid tribute to the *encomendero*. The *encomendero* informed the *cacique* of his demands, and the *cacique* depended on the already existing labor and tribute mechanisms to produce it. Spanish authorities bullied or replaced resistant *caciques* if necessary. The functioning of the *encomienda* depended on the indigenous community’s maintenance of its internal government, land resources, and tax paying mechanisms. If the resources were lost, through depopulation, or reorganization, then the *encomienda* did not function as well.

In the Gulf of Fonseca, slaves were either acquired through *encomienda*, or the islands were explicitly raided for slaves. Despite royal bans to protect the indigenous villages in the region, both Pedrarias and Pedro de Alvarado not only tolerated the enslavement of indigenous peoples, but also actively participated in the illicit activity. Before the approval of the royal *cédula* of 1534 – which permitted the enslavement of ‘hostile’ native peoples – both governors were directly involved in the traffic of enslaved native peoples between the Gulf of Fonseca and Panama. An excellent example of this can be found in Pedrarias’ second letter to the Crown in 1529, when Captain Martín Estete was sent to eastern El Salvador to regulate the injustices exercised by Alvarado and his men in eastern El Salvador (DHN II: 96-99). What is not revealed, until much later, is that Estete was given a branding iron by Pedrarias, which was only to be used for criminals and rebels (DHN II: 189-92). In a testimony provided by Francisco de Castañeda, who assumed control of Nicaragua upon the death of Pedrarias in 1531, he was not only familiar with Estete’s gratuitous cruelty towards the native peoples of the region, but he also identified the illegal practices carried out by Diego Alvarez

Osorio, the “protector of the Indians” (DHN II: 97, 99). In a statement supported by Hernando de Soto, the *regidor* (or alderman) of León in 1530, Castañeda testified that both Osorio and Estete seized Indians regardless of their status, and branded them all (DHN II: 211-13).

The men of Estete’s expedition sought any profit possible, and in the mid sixteenth century entrepreneurial ambitions made control of labor more important than control or ownership of land. The men who participated in the expedition to the Gulf of Fonseca expected to enslave as many native peoples as possible. What they did not expect was to stumble upon Alvarado’s forces, which were determined to keep eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca. Estete was eventually driven out of the territory, but during his withdrawal from the region he and his men enslaved many of the native peoples they encountered, and set fire to their villages (DHN II: 211-13; Larde y Larín 2000: 373). Once Estete returned to Nicaragua, he went directly to either León or Granada, which had become one of the primary centers of the slave trade in Central America. Many of the enslaved native peoples were then sent to Panama, where they were auctioned off at a slave market, or sent to Peru as labor (Sherman 1979: 54).

The villa of San Miguel and the ‘lands without benefit’

In a separate case, we notice that Pedro de Alvarado – the governor and captain general of Guatemala – and his men were also busily branding and enslaving indigenous peoples from eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca. This is not surprising, considering they were willing to confront Estete for territorial rights over the region. While there are few details that are different from the Estete case, the reports described below provide justifications for enslaving the native peoples in the region. Based on the discourse provided in the statements below, their rationalization for enslaving the native peoples rested on the conviction that they were taking precautionary measures to pacify eastern El Salvador, specifically the lands surrounding San Miguel de la Frontera.

The *villa* of San Miguel de la Frontera was first settled in 1530 by Captain Luis de Moscoso, who, ventured past the Lempa River to take control of the territory toward the Gulf of Fonseca. Little is known of what happened to this settlement, as it was soon abandoned. Based on the scant documentary record available for this region and time period (Chamberlain 1947: 624), the settlement was abandoned because the territory was regarded as “*tierras de ningun provecho*”. Nevertheless, while the general region was deemed unprofitable, Alvarado did take advantage of the villages within the region. In a testimony provided by a ship captain, it was reported that Alvarado and his men had used the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca as a repository from which they could draw from whenever necessary (DHN V: 363-76). The island of *comixao* (or Conchagüita) had been explicitly raided for slaves before Spanish administrators had any substantial knowledge of the region.

This practice continued for several years. However, once Alvarado recognized Pedrarias’ intentions to claim the territory he sent don Cristóbal de la Cueva to re-settle the *villa* of San Miguel de la Frontera in 1535. During this campaign, Cristóbal de la Cueva was charged with violating royal provisions, particularly his cruel treatment and enslavement of the native peoples in the region (Larde y Larín 2000: 372; Sherman 1979: 30; Stanislawski 1983: 20). In a testimony provided by a lieutenant, it was reported that during the re-settlement of San Miguel, Cueva sent one of his lieutenants to make war on the natives who went to him in peace. In the process of declaring war with the native groups, more than two

hundred native peoples were killed, while the rest were taken as slaves, including four and five year olds. Several witnesses verified this testimony, stating that all the captives were branded (AGI Justicia, Legajo 296; AGI Patronato, Legajo 180, Ramo 62). Other witnesses justified Cueva's actions by commenting that there was *word* the natives were conspiring to revolt, even though they *appeared* peaceful. To punish the *conspiring* rebels, Cueva fought them and enslaved those who lived. For many Spaniards, this was the custom in war, and according to Pedro de Alvarado, this policy had the effect of pacifying the land (AGI Patronato, Legajo 20, Numero 4, Ramo 5).

Although the kind of *word* the Spanish received concerning the indigenous insurgency is never revealed in the texts, it is clear that Cueva and his companions justified their actions through a rhetorical arrangement, or hegemonic discourse, that represented them as the victims of the region's sly, treacherous inhabitants. In several sixteenth century documents related to the establishment of *San Miguel de la Frontera*, the Spanish settlers were quick to mention the 'deceitful' nature of the native peoples they encountered in the region (Chamberlain 1947). Despite the minor variations, the commentaries and testimonials show a structure that is repeated, which give the reader (or expected audience) a reinforced narrative that might as well be considered 'official': Cueva and his companions (regardless of their number) were received with deceit by the native peoples who resided in the region.

The language described here is similar to the discourse that was later adopted by General José Tomás Calderón, who was in charge of suppressing the 1932 rebellion in Sonsonate (from Chapter 2). The orders used by General Calderón and don Cueva approximate the savagery of the soldiers and vigilantes who killed thousands much more than the *expected* actions of the *indios* who might have only harmed dozens. The fears expressed in this example and those to follow read more convincingly as a script not for the *indios*, but for the mimetic appropriation by the Spanish and the state of powers they attributed to the *indios crueles*. That power is turned on the *indios* themselves.

This descriptive feature was not unique to the 'discovery' and conquest of El Salvador and Central America. Phrases, such as "we encountered some *Indios*" or "the *Indios* rebelled" flooded many sixteenth-century accounts when describing the first European encounters with indigenous peoples across the Americas. Examples of this can be found in the documentary history of the revolts that overwhelmed the Spanish settlers in San Miguel, from 1537 to 1539. Several of the documents refer to the '*cruel guerra*' (or cruel warfare) of the warlike *indios* who resided in the region (AGCA A1.24, Leg. 193, Exp. 1; AGCA A1.24 Leg. 121, Exp. 21; Chamberlain 1947: 629). From the earliest documents that describe eastern El Salvador, the narrative constructed by the testimonials never comment on the ethnicity of the indigenous groups that may have attacked the Spanish settlers, or why they attacked. Instead, the Lenca, referred to as *indios*, are described as brave and savage warriors who attacked and killed the '*españoles cristianos*' (Christian Spaniards), on a Sunday morning, no less; a characterization reproduced ad nauseam by many of Spanish explorers and settlers.

According to the documentary history, several raids victimized the *villa* of San Miguel between 1537 and 1539. A number of military officers stationed at the garrison were killed, along with several *encomenderos*, and some cattle. Lost in these encounters is that many of the confrontations experienced by the Spanish took place during their attempts to pass through, or encroach upon (via cattle grazing), the territory of the Lenca-speaking peoples. A similar set of hostilities were experienced by the Spanish in the northern Ulua river valley, northern Honduras (Sheptak 2006 and 2007). The acts of resistance that took place in

northern Honduras are described in a series of letters written from the perspective of the Spanish governors who were engaged in a decade-long struggle with the indigenous peoples of the region. Under the guidance of Çicumba, the indigenous villages of the northern Ulua river valley fought to keep the Spanish from encroaching on a defined area within the river valley (Sheptak 2006: 2). Rarely did Çicumba, or his allies, move against the Spanish outside of that defined area.

Throughout the 1530s, several acts of resistance were enacted by Lenca-speaking groups, from eastern El Salvador to the northern Ulua river valley, northern Honduras. While several scholars have been quick to cite Çicumba as the catalyst for this pervasive movement (Chamberlain 1947; Lardé y Larín 1975, 2000), it is more likely that these communities were acting on their own accord, and rightfully defending their own territories. This is not to say the Lenca-speaking villages were not in communication with each other. Based on archaeological and documentary evidence from the Ulua river valley, the village of Ticamaya exhibited long-distance connections that spread to southern Guatemala, and as far as the Yucatan peninsula, Mexico (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006; Sheptak 2006). The same long-distance exchange networks can be argued for Conchagua Vieja. Virtually all of the obsidian found at Conchagua Vieja comes from Guinope, a source located on the Honduras side of the Honduras-Nicaragua border (see chapter 7).

The data for long-distance exchange networks draw attention to the scope of alliances and relationships shared by villages across Central America's social landscape. While it would be easy to reduce the indigenous campaigns against the Spanish to a movement spearheaded by Çicumba, the documentary and archaeological data suggest a set of social practices and tactics that are much more complex (Sheptak 2006: 2). Independent from the texts' truth-value, what the chroniclers and Spanish settlers do not seem to perceive is that the Lenca-speaking peoples of Honduras and eastern El Salvador – connected through long-standing social networks – were acting in defense of their own respective territories. This small fact is conspicuously hidden in the corpus of works and documents related to this region. The documents describe in great detail the nature of the attacks, but lost in all of the details are the injustices inflicted upon the native peoples of the region, and their potential reasons for attacking. As we have seen, Cristóbal de la Cueva and his men had clear intentions during their exploration of eastern El Salvador. In a separate testimony, not provided earlier in this section, it was revealed that Cueva wanted to purchase goods brought in from Panama, but did not have any gold to pay for them (DHN V: 365-66). He overcame the predicament by sending a raiding party to the island of *comixao* (Conchagüita) in the Gulf of Fonseca, which seized eighteen natives and brought them back to be exchanged for imported foods, olive oil, and wine (DHN V: 366, 375-76).

DISCUSSION

It is interesting to examine the problems posed by the Spanish explorers and other colonial documents that represent the earliest encounters in eastern El Salvador. The extant colonial-period texts allude in an incomplete way to the Gulf of Fonseca and peoples of the region. One might expect a plurality of perspectives, given the variety of documentary sources available, yet the opposite is true. For the first several decades the most prevalent version of this encounter in eastern El Salvador, narrate the hostile activities of the natives and present the Spanish as victims of their treachery. That is, of course, when the indigenous peoples of this territory are ever mentioned in the documentary record. In many of the

documents, the indigenous peoples only partly interest the Spanish. The Spanish are only interested in appropriating the land's wealth, via the acquisition of precious resources or labor.

To appropriate the lands, we observed Gil Gonzalez planting crosses at every ceremonial site he encountered. This Christian sign was accompanied by another act of possession: claiming by naming. The act of naming the body of water encountered by Niño, Bahía de Fonseca, instead of *islas de la Teca* or *golfe de Chorotega*, during the sixteenth century, marked the beginning of a process in which the unknown landscape took shape as a referent in colonial discourse. The American territory was an imagined blank page, waiting for European cartographers and explorers to place inscriptions onto the landscape (Certeau 1988: xxv). European cartography from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is early testimony to that formation when it represents the Gulf of Fonseca as an inhabited Spanish landscape devoid of indigenous peoples.

At the same time, the Spanish version of the sixteenth-century colonial encounter in the Gulf of Fonseca is the only perspective we have access to. This monolithic situation notwithstanding, it is possible to discern the presence of the indigenous peoples in the texts used for this investigation. The texts show the indigenous peoples fighting against the Spanish, escaping from them, and sometimes even receiving them with the best intentions. Despite their minimal representation, the native peoples of the Gulf of Fonseca, and eastern El Salvador, appear in the documents in traces that remind us that the Spanish conquest of the territory was not an easy task. More importantly, the conquest of the territory was not achieved without acts of resistance displayed by the Lenca-speaking peoples who inhabited eastern El Salvador, and parts of the Gulf of Fonseca. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate how a Lenca-speaking community on the island of Conchagüita creatively adapted to the challenges of the new colonial administration.

SUMMARY

Between 1522 and 1543, armed conflicts and diplomatic struggles between the governorships of Nicaragua and Guatemala dominated the history of the region. Initially, Spanish administrators from both territories lobbied for an inter-oceanic route between *Puerto Caballos*, northern Honduras and the Gulf of Fonseca. Plans for an inter-oceanic route between the Caribbean and Pacific never diminished; as evidenced by the 1590 survey of the Gulf by Valverde, and the contemporary development of a port in the Gulf of Fonseca to suit this long-awaited request. Aside from the inter-oceanic route, the Gulf region exhibited a relatively high concentration of indigenous peoples. As we have already seen, land tenure in the region was much less important than the extraction of labor, via *encomienda*, or slavery. The enslavement of native peoples in the Gulf of Fonseca was considered a '*produit moteur*' or successful key to wealth in the region (MacLeod 1973: 48). Enslaved Native American peoples, mining, and *encomienda*, were far more important features of the years before 1580 than the acquisition of land or title to land.

While slaving in the Caribbean began in 1499, the almost industrially paced demands for native labor to sustain the new colonies led Queen Isabella to approve the enslavement of only 'hostile' *indios* in 1503 (Sauer 1966: 112). The label of 'hostile' remained open to broad interpretation, allowing Spaniards, in effect, to enslave native peoples from many different regions (Sherman 1979: 29-30). Though the practice was banned temporarily in the

Americas, a royal *cédula* of 1534 once again allowed for the enslavement of ‘hostile’ native peoples, though the issue was not proclaimed in Central America until 1535 (AGI Justicia, Legajo 296). The practice of enslaving native peoples in the Central American provinces were repeated from Chiapas, Mexico, to Costa Rica, with only slight variations.

The Spanish did not go to Central America alone. They took with them their conceptual repertoire, discourse, technology, ideas of civility, and their social practices. Each of the reports used in this chapter not only provide a record of the rationale for settling *villas* near and around the Gulf of Fonseca, but also a register of the Spanish discourses used to describe the territory and its native peoples. Based on the available documents related to the territory, the eastern Salvadoran landscape was an obstacle for Spanish expansion into the territory, but unfavorable conditions notwithstanding, the *villa* of San Miguel started to grow in the second half of the sixteenth century. The next chapter describes how cattle ranching and indigo processing allowed the *villa* of San Miguel to slowly, but relentlessly, change the social and physical composition of the landscape.

Table 3.1 – *Audiencias* of mainland Spanish America

Kingdom	Audiencias	Date of Creation
New Spain (Mexico)	Santo Domingo	1526
	Mexico	1527
	Los Confines (Guatemala)	1543
	New Galicia (Guadalajara)	1548
New Castile (Peru)	Panama	1535
	Peru (Lima)	1542
	Santa Fé de Bogotá	1549
	Charcas (Upper Peru)	1559
	Quito	1563
	Chile	1609
	Buenos Aires*	1661

* Later suppressed



Figure 3.1 – Map of Central America in 1544 (taken from Rojas 2001: 62).

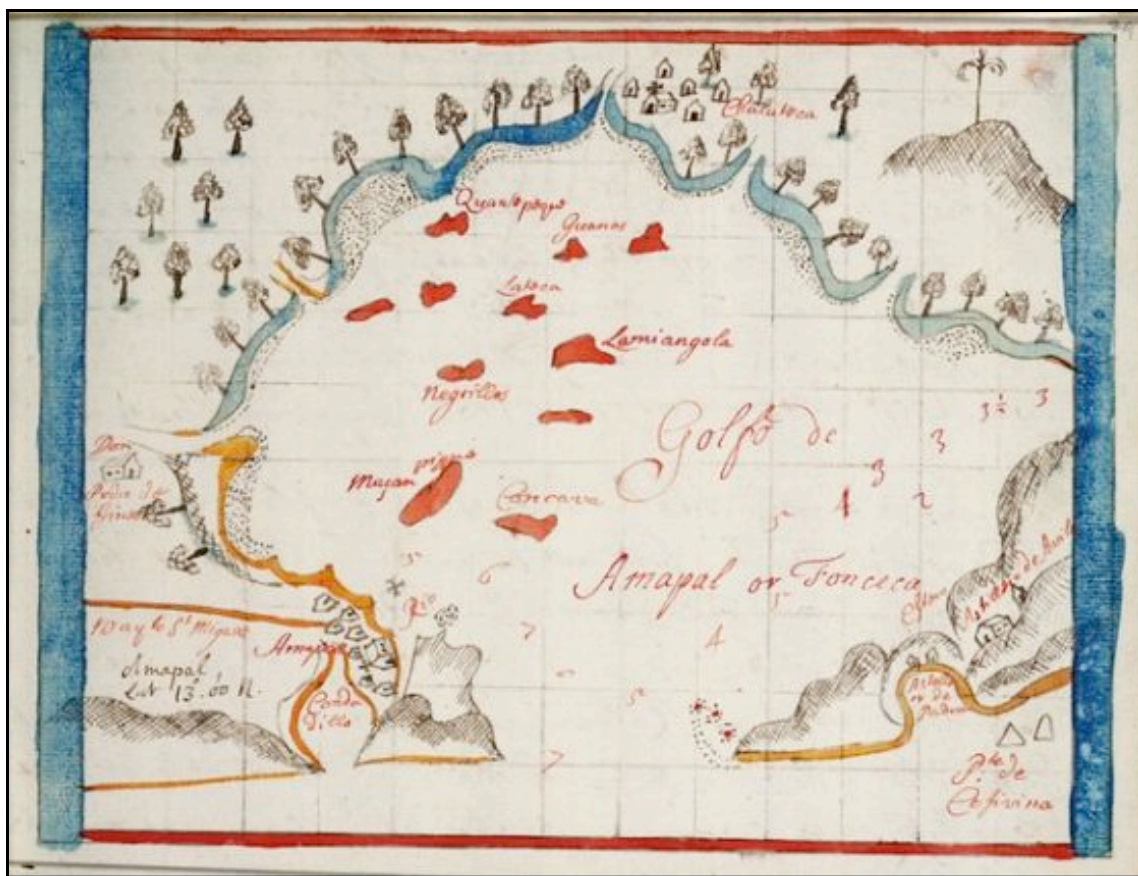


Figure 3.2 – Map of the “Golfo de Amapal or Fonseca” by Basil Ringrose. Published in 1682 (image taken from the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich, London, UK).

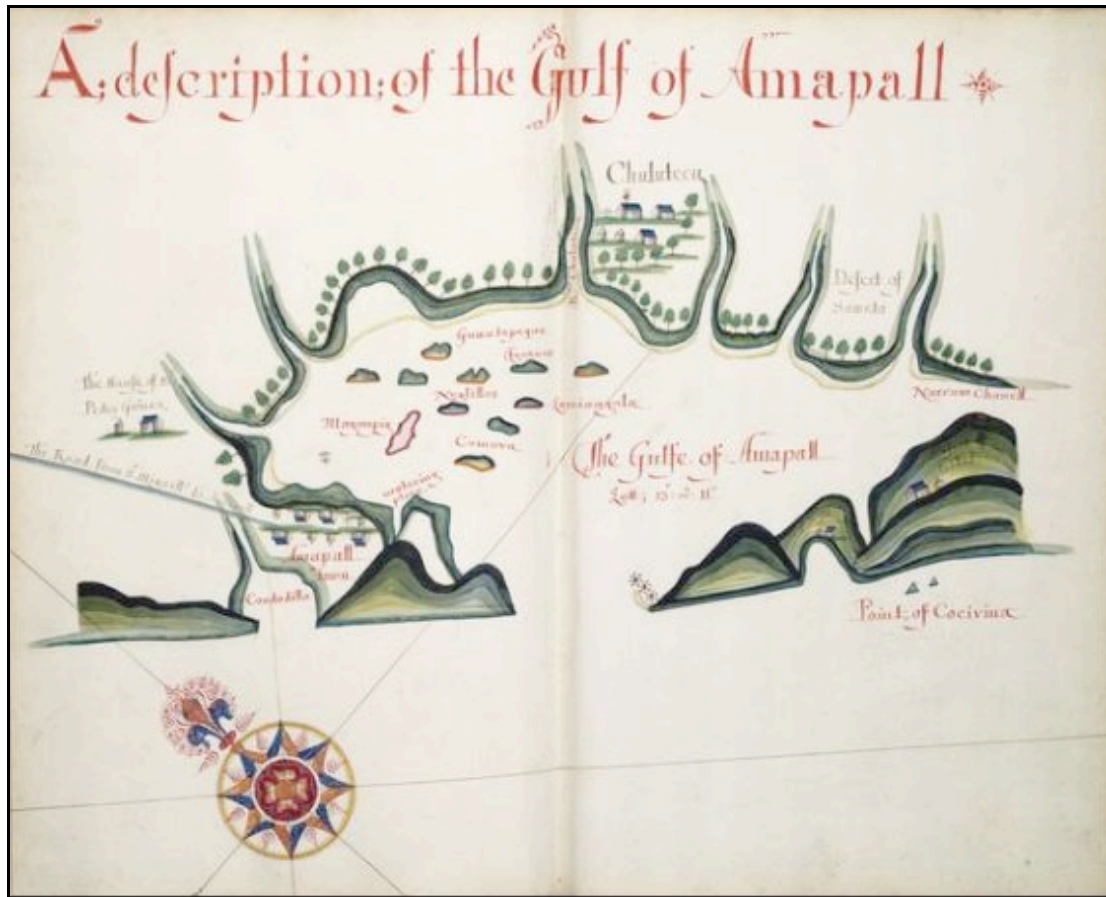
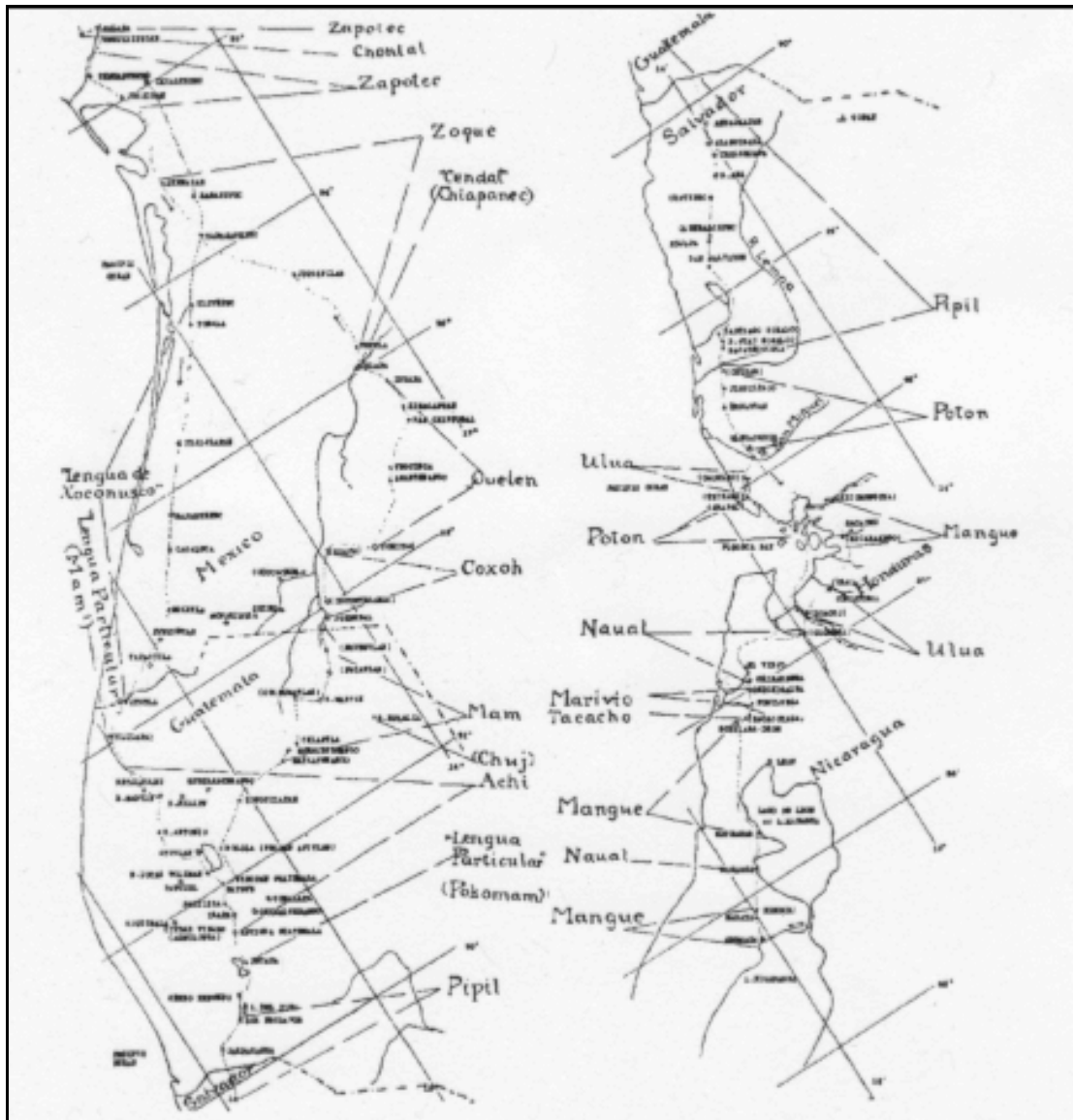


Figure 3.3 – Map of the “Gulf of Amapall” by William Hack. Published in 1685 (image taken from the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich, London, UK).



Map 3.4 – Antonio de Ciudad Real’s linguistic map of Central America (taken from Roys 1932: 120).

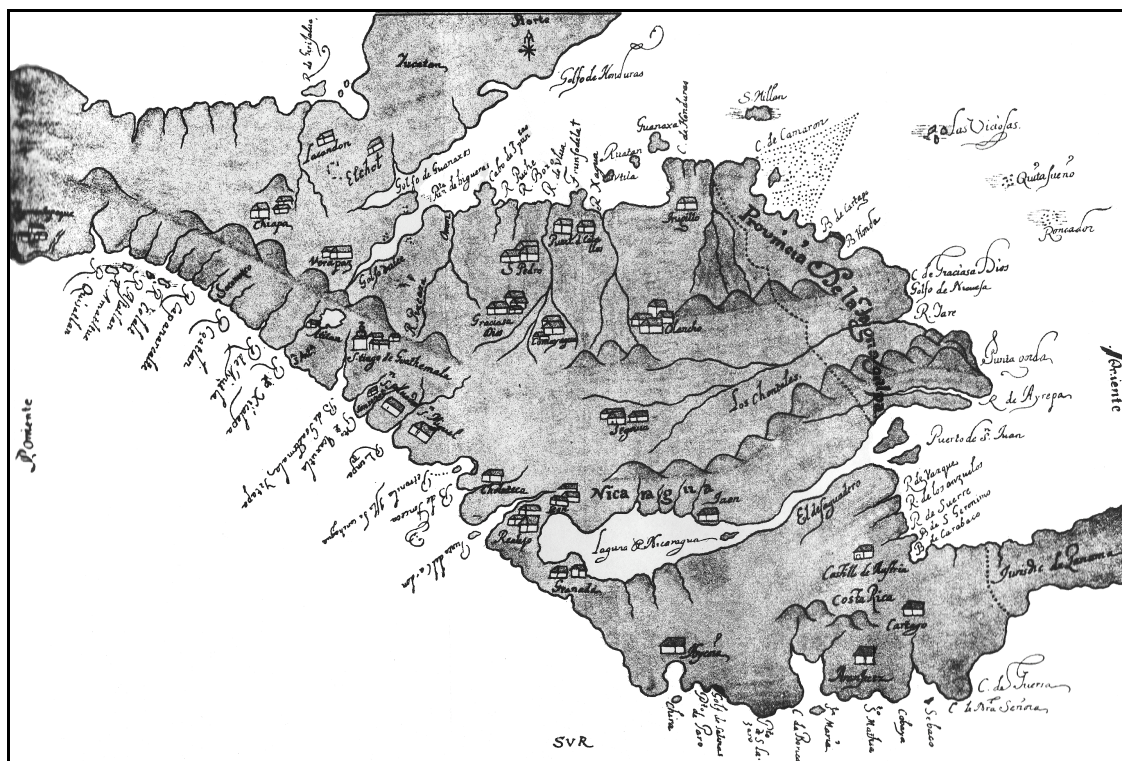


Figure 3.5 – Map of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala in the sixteenth century (taken from Chapman 1960).

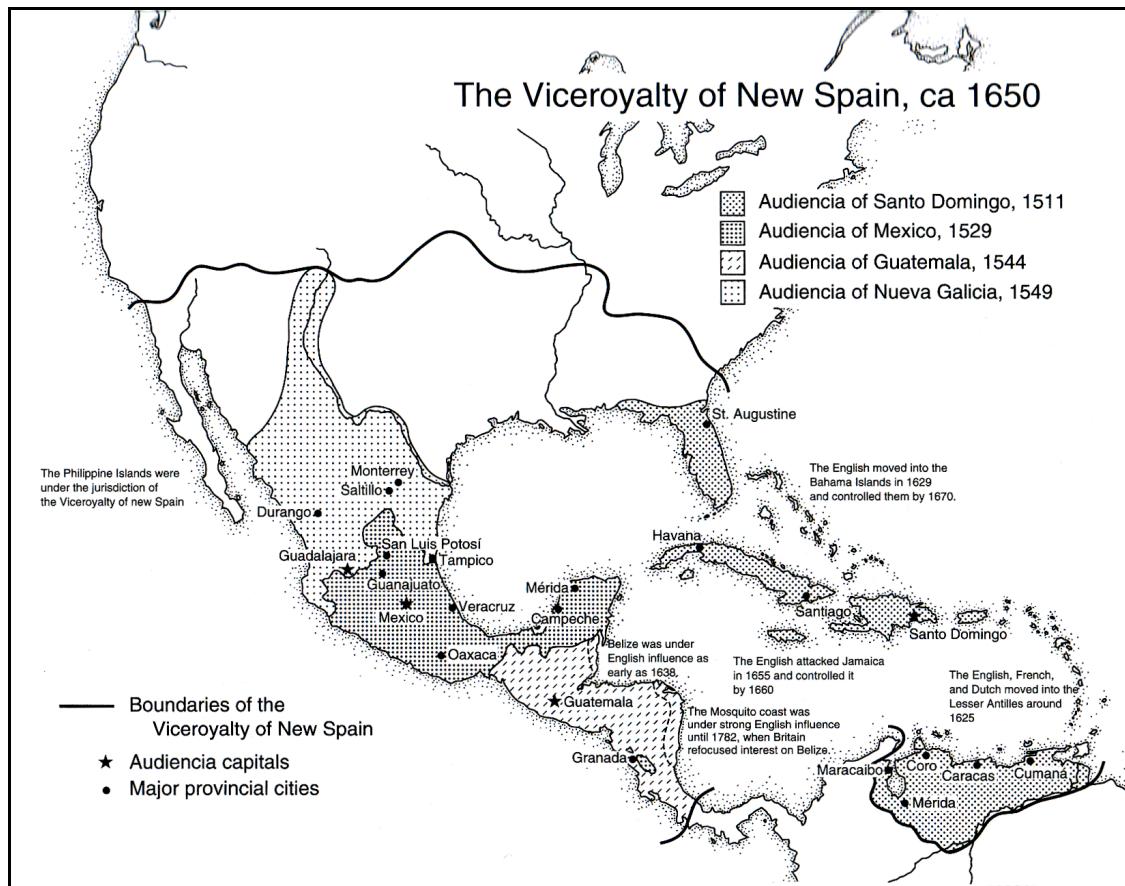


Figure 3.6 – Map of the Viceroyalty of Spain, ca. 1650 (taken from Ramírez 2008: 109).

CHAPTER 4

COLONIALISM, HISTORY AND THE MYTH OF EMPTINESS

In 1576, a visitor to the Pacific coast region of eastern El Salvador wrote a dispatch that described the lowland environs as having a tremendous amount of "...grazing land that is called *zabanás*, that are large and give good pasturage, in some of which are cattle ranches." With a possessive eye, that same visitor judged the region south of Zacatecoluca (near Río Lempa) as a fine area for "...broad *campos* for cattle...some *estancias* but very few and much more could be had here" (taken from Browning 1971: 46). Within half a century of establishing the *villa* of San Miguel de la Frontera, the Spanish settlers had transformed the landscape to match the prospectus for colonization, so much so that by 1586 Fray Alonso de Ponce could report the region inland from the Gulf of Fonseca as coated with extensive '*sitios de estancias*', for cattle ranching and indigo production (1873: 235-46). In 1770, Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz (1958 [1770]) produced a report that documented the number, size, and location of villages throughout El Salvador. In that document, he reported that many of the indigenous communities throughout eastern El Salvador had disappeared completely. By the mid-nineteenth century, in one of the first comprehensive surveys of Central America, the American archaeologist E.G. Squier (1878: 319) noted that in eastern El Salvador "the native languages has fallen into disuse."

Those four firsthand accounts signpost a dramatic material and cultural transformation of El Salvador's eastern landscape. Its consequences have persisted even with the waning of the Spanish empire, as the legacies of colonial land-use practices, such as vegetation change, have not only defined the material parameters for post-colonial land-use options, but also reconstituted the long-term historical composition of the social and cultural landscape. In this context, the four accounts parallel a conceptual transformation, a landscape outlook that emerged over the colonial period, and recently phrased as 'the myth of emptiness' (Blaut 1993: 15). Under this model, Precolumbian landscapes lacked dense populations and productive land uses, which logically meant that the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas lacked the rationality to use the lands effectively. The consequences of the myth have persisted to define the conceptual parameters for understanding eastern El Salvador's cultural and material history since the Precolumbian era.

Falsifying the myth of emptiness requires not only a demonstration of its emergence as a myth during the colonial period, but also its persistence after Spanish colonialism. Prior studies of the emergence of the myth of emptiness, or the 'pristine myth' generally, have traditionally addressed the material (Denevan 1992) or the cultural (Bowden 1992) transformation of the landscape. Rather than focus on the material transformations of eastern El Salvador, this chapter will build on chapter 3 and concentrate on the conceptual transformation of the *tierras de ningún provecho*.

The chapter will begin with the complementary insights that can be gained from both approaches. I will then describe, on a regional level, the effects of Spanish colonial processes

in eastern El Salvador, and then follow with a complementary perspective that evaluates how individuals, through their own practices, were able to empower their own community on a lump of land just off the coast of eastern El Salvador.

The events of Spanish expansion in eastern El Salvador left a detailed database of land-grant documents that enabled me to reconstruct interactions between the Spanish and Lenca-speaking peoples on the island of Conchagüita, in the Gulf of Fonseca, and to evaluate categories of land use, cover, and tenure in the region. The goal of this chapter is to provide a multi-scaled perspective of the colonial encounter in eastern El Salvador, and to tentatively provide a basis for a more general falsification of the colonial myth of emptiness that has continued to persist in modern day El Salvador.

RECONFIGURING THE NEW WORLD

A pervasive theme in chapters 3 and 4 is the position that landscapes are shaped as much by the politico-economic ideologies and religious philosophies of the peoples who create them as by the practical work that brings them into physical existence. In the previous chapter I described in detail the thoughts, ideas, and imperatives that drove those who occupied or exploited the landscape. Central America's lands and bodies of water were recorded, briefly registered and mapped, bought and sold, assessed and taxed. In the clearing of forests, the draining of marshlands, the plowing and cultivating of the terrain, the exploitation of minerals, and the establishment of settlements and industry, Spanish colonists not only radically changed El Salvador's eastern landscape, but also transferred over European notions of property, resource ownership and social organization. All of these developments led to the creation of an entirely new administrative landscape.

A full understanding of the process of landscape formation requires an appreciation of the conscious and unconscious tendency to transplant Spanish ideas and ideals. As settlers moved into and occupied eastern El Salvador, their presence irrevocably altered the physical, cultural and social composition of the landscape. This chapter will illustrate how indigenous populations and cultures in eastern El Salvador were displaced, socially and politically diminished, or simply eradicated. The way of life for the Lenca-speaking peoples that occupied eastern El Salvador fundamentally changed. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to reinforce the notion that landscape research is about much more than the physical attributes of a particular tract of territory. In this context, I will briefly describe how scholars in the past have addressed what was *done* to the land. More central to this discussion, however, is the notion that landscape studies involve the cultural, political and economic forces that exerted an influence on how lands were to be settled, claimed, exploited, adapted, and ultimately contested.

The Material and Conceptual Transformation of Eastern El Salvador

Vast tracts of the world's landscapes were dramatically altered by the implementation of imperial governance by a range of colonial powers. The imperial expansions of the English, Dutch, British and French from the sixteenth century onwards defined, demarcated, and shaped new landscapes in diverse environments throughout the Americas. In the decades following the War of Granada of 1492, the Iberian kingdoms that would later form modern Spain oversaw its territorial and demographic growth with military conquest, colonial administration, and colonial capitalism imposed on a multitude of overseas territories. In

Central America, areas were opened up for agriculture, mining and manufacturing, for the building of towns, and for the installation of routes that would connect the Pacific with the Caribbean. Landscapes were thus molded and fashioned to serve new purposes and to afford a livelihood for the settlers who emigrated under the protection of the Crown or who demanded, by virtue of their capital and sacrifices, increased investment returns. Although landscapes are not immutable and will always be subject to change and adaptation, the deeply incised marks of Spanish colonialism still remain clear across modern day El Salvador.

Efforts to understand the material transformation of the Precolumbian and colonial landscapes in the Americas derive from Carl O. Sauer, a self-proclaimed ‘anthropo-geographer’ (Denevan 1996; Parson 1996). In the 1930s, Sauer initiated a research tradition that placed the Precolumbian population of the Americas at more than fifty million, which was then subsequently reduced to approximately five million by 1650 (Sauer 1935; Denevan 1992). Relict agricultural fields and cultural vegetation over broad regions of Mexico and Central America confirmed that Precolumbian landscapes were densely inhabited and much modified. In El Salvador, ancient agricultural fields are often associated with Classic period Maya sites located in the western district of the country, though agricultural fields were surely associated with major archaeological sites located in the east, such as Asanyamba (Valdivieso 2006), Los Llanitos (Longyear 1942) and Quelepa (Andrews 1976). Continuing controversy among scholars regarding many aspects of the Precolumbian and colonial Americas – from native populations and their declines, to the extent of intensive agricultural systems – confirm the need for more research on these topics, especially in eastern El Salvador, a landscape often considered to have been devoid of a large indigenous presence.

Sauer was also concerned with the conceptual transformation of the landscape. In his groundbreaking essay of 1925, ‘The Morphology of Landscape,’ Sauer set forth his initial understanding of how landscapes are formed, “The cultural landscape is fashioned from the natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result.” In this context, the landscape is articulated as a particular region shaped by a cultural group and strongly influenced by the limits of soil, climate, and plant life. At the same time, the definition equates landscape to coherent and stable cultures, and gives no credence to historical process. While this paper has been cited repeatedly, a more mature version of Sauer’s views appeared in his 1956 honorary presidential address to the Association of American Geographers, “The Education of a Geographer.” In that essay Sauer notes that “geography is a science of observation... The geographic bent [for students] rests on seeing and thinking about what is in the landscape.... In some manner, the field of geography is always a reading of the face of the earth.”

Sauer’s address to the Association of American Geographers comes close to ten years after J. K. Wright’s (1947) proposal that what geographers should be doing is ‘historical geosophy,’ or the study of changes in knowledge about places. According to Wright, historical geosophy, as a methodological approach, “can show us where the ways we observe and think fit into a larger scheme. By helping us better to understand the relations of scientific geography to the historical and cultural conditions of which it is a product, it can enable us to become better-rounded scientific geographers” (Wright 1947: 12). A prevailing theme in the works of both Sauer and Wright was the perception that the landscape is a historic document that tells a story – actually, multiple stories – about the people who created the landscape and the cultural context in which the landscape was embedded. If we think of

the common landscape as a document, then it is a document that is written by many different authors.

The firsthand accounts provided earlier sketch out the material and cultural transformation of eastern El Salvador's landscape from the colonial period into the mid-nineteenth century. The inertia of those colonial transformations persisted well into the nineteenth century, and continues to characterize the material parameters for postcolonial land-use options and the cultural history of the landscape. In some cases, colonial degradation of particular resources – soil erosion due to overgrazing, for example – rather than a “naturally impoverished resource base” has played a role in postcolonial economic marginalization (Browning 1971). In other cases, colonization enhanced particular resources, as in the case of expansion into abandoned clearings for salt production and trade along the Gulf of Fonseca coastline (Andrews 1983). For eastern El Salvador, the four accounts above outline the conceptual transformation of the landscape, and a play-by-play of how the introduction of livestock strongly influenced the forms social life would take on those lands.

Confronted with an unknown nature, Spanish settlers chose to modify the eastern landscape. According to Antonello Gerbi (1992: 337), European subjects chose to adjust the landscape because the Indians they encountered in the New World had not achieved, from a European perspective, a total control of nature. From the Western standpoint, the Indians were at the mercy of nature. Instead of doing what ‘civilized man’ does – dominate nature – the indigenous peoples of the Americas were viewed as dominated by the natural elements. From a Western perspective, this was a serious flaw that did not follow the tendency of European subjects to view nature as a commodity, as something that should be exploited by human beings (Turner 1994: xxv). The colonial reconfiguration of the global redistribution of resources, labor, and capital thus became naturalized and justified through a parallel redistribution of oppositional categories: cultivated versus wilderness, civilized versus savage, enlightened versus despotic, social versus natural, developed versus developing, core versus periphery, innovative versus imitative, and other synonyms for, essentially, advanced versus slowed by tradition (Wolf 1982).

For Europeans, the ‘New World’ came to mean a region both newly brought within the Western purview as well as a newer version of Europe, one with undeveloped cultures and resources that, through improvement, eventually would become like Europe. Colonization would be the process through which the savagery of the New World would catch up to the civility of the Old, though which the irrational, natural and static would develop into the rational, social and dynamic (Hulme 1992; O’Gorman 1958; Todorov 1984). Such colonial categorizations were integral to the process of escalating material redistributions rather than derivative ideological props; they infused and became axiomatic to every expression of the Western worldview, from science to literature (Latour 1993; Lowe 1991; Said 1979). Thus, the ‘myth of emptiness’ came to characterize Precolumbian and early colonial landscapes as sparsely populated and extensively underutilized.

One key element for the expansion of European civilization was the introduction of livestock. Bovine and equine livestock were introduced to eastern El Salvador shortly after the establishment of San Miguel de la Frontera. Both San Miguel and the Gulf of Fonseca were ideally located in Central America, and able to take advantage of the livestock industry in the mid-sixteenth century. The nearby Gulf of Fonseca, with all of its various inlets, provided an excellent harbor from which to distribute much needed supplies, such as candles, cattle, hides, and other items for the nearby mining towns in Honduras and the shipping

industry in Nicaragua (MacLeod 1973). For two centuries, travelers noted the abundance of livestock in the region, and above all, the social changes that took place with the simultaneous development of cattle ranching and indigo processing.

Today, eastern El Salvador is seen as cattle country, and as a landscape dominated by landed estates established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This way of representing the territory, although based on verifiable elements, fails (or forgets) to account for the historical moment that altered the social lives for the indigenous peoples who had initially occupied the region, and the ecological changes that inflicted the terrain. The establishment of extensive *haciendas* for ranching and indigo processing in the sixteenth century not only paved the way for ecological changes in the region, but also reconstituted the social and cultural composition of the landscape. Although the ecological disturbance introduced by cattle ranching and the cultivation and processing of indigo were dramatic and some of its effects definitive, those two processes alone do not explain the radical modification of El Salvador's eastern landscape.

The modification of the environment that started in the sixteenth century is largely ignored by contemporary Salvadorans, and by scholars who have produced knowledge of the nation's history. The following looks at the current situation of El Salvador against the background of the actions that transformed the eastern landscape into what it is today. I pay specific attention to the establishment of *estancias* and *haciendas* for cattle ranching and the cultivation and processing of indigo in eastern El Salvador. In the remainder of the document I will use *estancia* to denote ranch, as that was the most consistently used term in the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Again, rather than concentrate the material transformation of the landscape, the following will outline how these two processes contributed to the struggles over access to lands, and the eventual displacement of the Lenca-speaking peoples that inhabited eastern El Salvador. Sixteenth and seventeenth-century land grant records and petitions proved to be crucial sources of information for delineating the earliest spatial interaction among the Spanish and indigenous peoples of the region.

HISTORICAL REALITIES

In 1770, Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz (1958 [1770]) was commissioned by the *Audiencia* of Guatemala to document the number, size, and location of villages throughout El Salvador, specifically in the east, where many indigenous settlements had completely disappeared. In the survey, Cortés noted that the majority of pueblos were nothing more than scattered collections of huts:

En realidad no puede llamárseles pueblos considerando sus escasos pobladores ... Son extremadamente miseros y viven en sitios montañosos de rocas que nada producen ... Supongo que los naturales saldrán a sembrar maíz en alguna parte; pero las cercanías de estos términos, sólo presentatan rocas, ceros y precipios que no parecen cultivables ... (Cortés 1958: 79)

... They cannot really be termed pueblos because of their small number of inhabitants ... they are extremely miserable and situated in rocky mountainous areas that produce nothing ... I suppose that they grow maize somewhere, but

the lands around all these places consist of rocks, hills and precipices and do not appear cultivable ... (Cortés 1958: 79)

The 1770 survey was instrumental in exhibiting the growth of private estates and haciendas throughout El Salvador. Cortés' survey does not include dispersed population – whether in the form of scattered individual small landholders or laborers resident on the haciendas – but that does not negate his observation that Spanish colonial practices had a broad impact on the distribution of villages within the colony. Many of the Indian communities across the northern highlands in the district east of the Río Lempa and along the coastal plains disappeared completely. Another telling detail in Cortes' survey was the language spoken in these communities. In stark contrast to cacao producing regions in central and western El Salvador, where native practices and languages still remained, the only spoken language encountered in these communities was '*castellano*.'

Two significant outcomes were firmly planted after the 1770 survey. First, it was clear that the early Spanish organization and protection of native cacao production in the western departments of El Salvador, later replaced by coffee production, partly explain the continued concentration of native communities in that region. Proximity to San Salvador and the greater ease with which colonial officials could impose legislation designed to protect indigenous communities was a factor that facilitated the partial preservation of these communities. East of the Lempa River larger haciendas for indigo production and cattle ranching were established, and the demands for indigenous land and labor was greater. A report made by Antonio Gutierrez y Ulloa in 1807 (1962 [1807]) noted that the size of individual haciendas near San Salvador ranged from 3,500 to 14, 500 acres; while in indigo areas around Santa Ana, San Vicente, and San Miguel, haciendas were described as 'larger' and 'more extensive' (Browning 1971: 84).

Second, the 1770 survey re-confirmed the suggestion that eastern El Salvador had always been a territory sparsely populated by indigenous settlements. Since the eighteenth century, western El Salvador has long been considered the lone indigenous zone for El Salvador; partly an outcome of successive waves of immigration into a region characterized by village settlements and commercial agriculture. Today, the municipality of Izalco (see Figure 2.1) has the largest indigenous population in El Salvador. By the mid-nineteenth century it contained the largest native Indian settlement in the region, and was surpassed in population only by the municipalities of Ahuachapán and Santa Ana (Figure 4.1). Understanding the processes responsible for this development have not yet been fully explored, but should stem back to the differential practice and enforcement of Spanish colonial policies in eastern El Salvador. Doing so will prove to delegitimize the assumption that eastern El Salvador had always been an empty territory and devoid of the cultural riches evident in the west.

The tale of Two Surveys

In the previous chapter I noted how slave raiding and the *encomienda* system profoundly impacted the native population of eastern El Salvador. A clear view of this impact is best captured in a survey completed two hundred years before Pedro Cortés y Larraz's survey of 1770. Once eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca were allotted to the *Audiencia* of Guatemala in the 1530s, a list of indigenous villages was compiled for the purpose of regulating the system of *encomiendas* in 1551, and to establish the amount of

tribute from each of the indigenous communities. The result of the survey was a report, *Tasaciones de los naturales de las provincias de Guathemala*, A.G.I. *Audiencia de Guatemala*, Leg. 128. Two details stand out from the 1551 survey. First, when you compare the 1551 survey of *tasaciones* and compare it to Larraz's survey of 1770, you will note a higher density of indigenous communities along the coastal lowlands east of the Rio Lempa. Second, the *tasaciones* list was compiled ten to twenty years after eastern El Salvador had been raided for slaves under the orders of both Alvarado and Pedrarias.

One of the indigenous villages included in the 1551 survey, and not 1770, was the pueblo of *Conxagua* (or Conchagua Vieja) on the island of *Teca* (or Conchagüita). Although the island was continuously raided for slaves, there were still approximately 100 tributaries, or families, on the island on Conchagüita in 1551, which included the communities of *Conxagua* and *Santa Ana de la Teca* (a second community located on the northern end of the island). Based on the 1551 survey, the residents of Conchagua Vieja were required to provide maize, beans, cotton, cloth, fish, salt, chickens (*gallinas de Castilla*), and wax in tribute, and labor for the *encomendero* Melchor Hernández, one of the original colonizers of San Miguel de la Frontera - the southernmost city in the *Audiencia* de Guatemala, and the closest to the Gulf of Fonseca (Chamberlain 1947: 643; Hall and Brignoli 2003: 118). Residents on the island of Conchagüita specialized in the provision of fish, salt, and 'vino de la tierra', and were involved in the cultivation of cotton and the weaving of cloth (Chamberlain 1947: 641). Villages and towns also provided two to six native peoples to clear and cultivate cacao groves, to tend the livestock placed in *estancias* (ranches), or to work in the indigo processing plants near San Miguel (Chamberlain 1947: 640). Salt was often used for cattle licks, preserving meat and fish, tanning, and processing silver. In the Gulf of Fonseca, salt was essential for all of these tasks.

After the 1551 survey, many of the communities in eastern El Salvador disappeared completely, and the relocation of settlements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to a demographic catastrophe throughout El Salvador (Browning 1971; Fowler 1987, 1993; Hall and Brignoli 2003; Lardé y Larín 1975; 2000). The Gulf of Fonseca was not immune to these developments. In 1590, Francisco de Valverde surveyed the region in order to evaluate the costs involved in developing an inter-oceanic route between the Gulf of Fonseca and Puerto Caballos, in northern Honduras (MacLeod 1973: 162). Though he was optimistic of the project, he noted two concerns. First, the costs involved in such a project would be tremendously high. Second, he feared that there would not be enough local labor to complete such a project. For example, during his survey he noted that only 40 *indios* resided at Conchagua Vieja (referred to as 'Comixagua'; Rivas 1933: 86-87), while another 70 *indios* still resided at Santa Ana de la Teca (referred to as 'Teca'). In less than four decades since the 1551 survey, the population on the island dropped from 100 families to just over 100 inhabitants. These numbers suggest a loss of more than three quarters of the population. Even a modest estimate would imply a decline in population of at least 50%, a decline that may have paralleled other communities outside of San Miguel.

Indigo Processing and Cattle Ranching

For much of the sixteenth century, cacao beans from the Izalco region of western El Salvador provided a currency as well as a means of balancing interregional payments for the *Audiencia* of Guatemala. To maximize the profits of the cacao industry, the captaincy-general encouraged the cultivation of the land by the indigenous peoples who not only resided in the

region, but also knowledgeable in the maintenance of the cacao industry. William Fowler (1987, 1991, 1993 and 1995) maintains that the continuity of the traditional cacao industry in the Izalco region facilitated the continued concentration of native communities in this region, and enabled those same communities to retain some of their traditional practices and regional political economy. Outside of the cacao producing areas, Spaniards raised cash crops and cattle on their own estates, and exhibited much less concern for the interests of the native populations.

The priority given to cacao in the sixteenth century, is best represented by the prohibition of cattle in the Izalco area before the establishment of the New Laws, which restricted *encomenderos* to graze livestock on the lands of the native populations. While cacao production facilitated the continued concentration of native communities in the west, in eastern El Salvador indigo cultivation and cattle ranching dominated a good portion of the landscape. The sixteenth-century environmental impacts of cattle ranching in El Salvador remain far from clear, though the practice did require a great deal of land. The combination of these two practices contributed to territorial competition over lands, the wholesale movement of native peoples, and the transformation of the region's pattern of settlement.

Indigo Production

While traveling through eastern El Salvador in 1586, Antonio de Ciudad Real (1873: 235-246), noted the presence of extensive '*sitios de estancias*' for cattle ranching and indigo that ranged from the Gulf of Fonseca to the villa of San Miguel. Other early land grants east of the Lempa River were given 'for indigo' or for the 'cultivation of indigo.' A land grant of 1589 was described as "*un sitio para obraje de tinta*" (Browning 1971: 70).

By the first decade of the seventeenth century, indigo had replaced cacao as the primary product that financed the bulk of Guatemala's import trade (Fernández 2003; MacLeod 1973; Smith 1959). The principal indigo farms were located in the Pacific coastal plains that stretched from the northwestern corner of Guatemala to the shores of Lake Nicaragua. More than ten *haciendas de tinta* (or *haciendas de añil*) were located in eastern El Salvador alone (see Figure 4.2). Based on the report produced by José Mariano Moziño (1976 [1826]), a prominent scientist of the Royal Botanical Expedition to New Spain, *xiquilite* (or *indigofera tinctoria*) grew best in the hot lowlands, on sandy not too wet soil. Most often, the indigo plants grew in rows so that the livestock grazing between the rows would not eat the indigo plants. This was not an uncommon practice, since most planters wanted to take advantage of the extensive terrain needed for indigo planting and processing. Though *xiquilite* was grown perennially, the maximum amount of dye extracted from the leaves were in the second and third year's growth, after which the land was generally cleared and reseeded. Most *haciendas de añil* were large enough to accommodate various forms of land use in order to allow a reserve of unused land, just in case disease or insect pest destroyed one of the crops. This characteristic 'shifting' cultivation continued throughout the four centuries of indigo farming in El Salvador.

Harvesting the indigo required that the plant be cut a few inches from the ground. Once harvested, the leaves of the plant were separated through drying and threshing, then taken from the field to be dumped in the dye extraction vats (or *obrajes de añil*), which were filled with enough water to completely immerse the leaves and stalks. The water was needed to stimulate fermentation, which released the dye from the leaves. After six to twenty hours of soaking the leaves and stalks in water, the water containing the indigo in solution was

drained into a second vat, where coagulation of the particles of dye was induced by rapid beating, either manually or by a horse-driven wheel. As soon as the beating ended, the water was drained off and the mud-like mass of indigo was scooped up in boxes and placed in the open air to dry. Once dried, a process that often took as long as forty days in the humidity, the large blocks of dye were cut into smaller pieces and wrapped in cloth for storage or shipment.

The processing of *xiquilite* left in the steeping vat a putrid mass of stalks and leaves that proved to be harmful to the health of men and animals associated with the dye extracting process. The warm and wet residue that remained in the steeping vats attracted flies that continuously bit the workers and work animals found near the processing areas. The flies were notorious for transmitting infectious diseases that often proved to be fatal. One grower in Nicaragua reported the loss of 33 mules from fly bites in a single season, and reported the death of a worker after drinking chocolate contaminated by flies (Moziño 1976 [1826]: 67-70). To reduce the fly problem, the safest measure was to immediately burn the residue as soon as possible. Since the construction of pits and ovens for such burning was an additional cost for growers, it was not until 1799 that the president of *Audiencia* ordered all growers to burn the residue (Smith 1959: 186).

Acquiring land for indigo production in eastern El Salvador was not a problem for many growers. A major problem that hindered indigo production was the lack of labor necessary to run the farms. For example, two hundred pounds of stalks and leaves were needed to produce 8-12 ounces of dye. In order to generate enough profits, an indigo planter needed permanent residents on the property for the year-round cultivation of the plant. Extra hands were needed for harvesting and processing between the months of September and November. For indigo planters, the reliance on local indigenous communities was just as important as the suitability of the land when determining the location of the indigo estates. The restricted supply of enslaved Africans prevented indigo planters in eastern El Salvador from using only slave labor. Small growers often used family labor or cooperated with their neighbors in growing *xiquilite* and operating indigo vats. Larger producers depended on the limited number of slaves available, wage labor, tenants, or sharecroppers. As early as 1546, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala prohibited the employment of indigenous peoples in indigo production on the basis that the work was harmful to the health of workers (Fernández 2003). The ruling was upheld in the Royal Cédulas of 1581 and 1601, which noted indigo processing as 'detrimental to their health' (*Recopilación de Leyes de Reynos de las Indias*, lib. vi, tit. 14, ley 3). To make up for the labor shortage, indigo growers relied on fraud and force to get the Indians to work their lands.

Rather than hire local Indians for wages, indigo growers were notorious for contracting with Indians to cut and haul indigo per load, paying them in clothing worth only a small fraction of what they should have received in money wages. Growers guilty of this practice were threatened with the loss of their Indians, if they were *encomenderos*, or with the confiscation of half their property. By 1636, the *Audiencia* condemned those who violated the law by seizing their lands, assuming exclusive jurisdiction of cases involving employment of Indians in indigo production (AGCA, leg. 607, exp. 5493, fols. 3-11). In many cases, indigo was produced on lands belonging to indigenous communities (AGCA, leg. 607, exp. 5490; AGCA, leg. 608, exp. 5520). By that time, the situation was dire in eastern El Salvador, as evidenced by the following notes a priest provided while on a visit to an indigo mill located near San Miguel in 1636:

He visto grandes poblaciones indígenas ... casi destruidas después de que se instalaron cerca de ellas molinas de añil, porque la mayoría de los indios que entran a trabajar en los molinos enferman pronto, como resultado de los trabajos forzados y del efecto de las pilas de añil en descomposición que ellos amontonan. Hablo por experiencia pues varias veces he convesado a gran número de indios con fiebre y he estado allí cuando se los llevaban de los molinos para enterrarlos ... como la mayoría de estos infelices han sido forzados a dejar sus hogares y milpas, muchas de sus mujeres e hijos mueren también. Esto es particularmente cierto en esta provincia de San Salvador donde hay tantos molinos de añil y todos ellos construidos junto a los pueblos indios ... (taken from Browning 1971: 73).

I have seen large Indian villages ... practically destroyed after indigo mills have been erected near to them. For most Indians that enter the mills will soon sicken as a result of the forced work and the effect of the piles of rotting indigo they make. I speak from experience as at various times I have confessed great numbers of fever-stricken Indians and have been there when they carry them from the mills for burial ... as most of these wretches have been forced to abandon their homes and plots of maize, many of their wives and children die also. In particular this is true of this province of San Salvador where there are so many indigo mills, and all of these built close to Indian villages... (taken from Browning 1971: 73).

There were many cases where local Indians asserted that they had been forced into employment to pay off debts, or where they actively challenged the seizure of their lands for the growing of *xiquilite* (AGCA, leg. 621, exp. 5759; AGCA, leg. 622, exp. 5768; AGCA, leg. 623, exp. 5772). By the mid-eighteenth century it is hard to say how many existing indigenous communities remained in eastern El Salvador. The data provided by Valverde's survey in 1590 suggests that there had already been a massive demographic change in the Gulf of Fonseca by the end of the sixteenth century. In 1570 the *Audiencia* of Guatemala asked for licenses to import 1,000 slaves, and in 1587 sought permission to purchase 500 enslaved Africans to distribute to indigo planters (Barbarena 1980: 307-308). As labor declined throughout eastern El Salvador, requests to either import enslaved Africans or repeal the prohibition against Indian employment continued into the mid-eighteenth century (Fernández 2003).

While local official reports provoked legislation prohibiting the forceful employment of Indians on indigo estates as early as 1546, it is hard to say how this legislation was enforced in rural areas, such as eastern El Salvador. Despite the royal prohibition to employ Indians for the harvesting and processing of indigo, they had been employed in the production of dyes for more than two centuries. Many chose to work in the *obrajes de añil* to earn enough money to pay their tribute (AGCA, leg. 621, exp. 5752). By the middle of the eighteenth century, the labor supply was so low that in 1784 Governor Estachería commissioned a judge to evaluate the labor conditions in the indigo-growing regions. The new ordinance, drafted by judge José Ortiz de la Peña, sought to end the 'scandalous idleness' of the Indians by requiring Growers' Society of Indigo to produce an annual roster of *indios de trabajo* (Indian

laborers), and to assign laborers in accordance to needs of the planter's and the available labor. The labor register could not compromise more than one-fourth of the able-bodied Indians in each village. Mission friars could not secure exemptions for inscribed workers on the pretext that they had *milpas* (fields) to tend; but friars were entitled to assigned laborers for indigo production. Conscription into the indigo industry was applied to *ladinos*, *mulattos*, *mestizos*, *zambos*, and *negros*; with the exception of those who owned or leased land growing indigo, tobacco, rice, beans, or corn (Smith 1959: 192).

Unlike a plantation, the typical indigo farms were not exclusively devoted to the cultivation of indigo. While indigo may have formed most of the property, the remaining terrain consisted of forest, unfenced grazing land, or *milpa* plots worked by sharecroppers, *colonos*, or tenant farmers. The ability to combine free-grazing cattle and indigo cultivation in unfenced fields on the same estate encouraged planters to acquire an adequate amount of land for grazing and securing reserve areas for future indigo planting. Consequently, indigo production in eastern El Salvador often introduced a number of individually owned estates that gradually increased over time, at the expense of the lands that had already been cultivated by indigenous communities. Since indigenous village communities had already settled most of the areas suitable for indigo, it was rather inevitable that territorial competition between the private estate and the village was a consistent struggle throughout eastern El Salvador. In many cases, cattle ranching played a vital role in the social and physical development of the region.

Cattle Ranching

While there is a relative paucity of research on the nature of cattle ranching in colonial Latin America, recent research by geographer Andrew Sluyter (1994, 1996, 1999, and 2002) on the tropical lowlands of Veracruz, Mexico, suggests that there is much to gain from evaluating the long-term changes in agricultural and pastoral landscapes. Though scholars have long emphasized Spain's semi-arid plateau – or the Estremadura region – as the origin of New Spain's ranching ecology (Bishko 1952; Brand 1961), Sluyter argues that the lowlands of Veracruz were an environmental homologue to coastal Andalusia (Sluyter 1996: 162). The Andalusian-derived herding ecology involved the seasonal movement of cattle between wetlands and hill lands. Using land grant documents, Sluyter was able to partially reconstruct interactions between the Spanish and native populations, vegetation, livestock, and categories of land use, cover, and tenure. The questions and methods used by Sluyter were central to delineating the earliest spatial interactions between the Spanish and indigenous communities of eastern El Salvador.

Cattle were introduced into eastern El Salvador as early as the 1630s, and reached high numbers thereafter. Their rapid increase is best captured by the fall in the price of meat in Guatemala: in 1576 the price of 28 pounds of meat was one *real*; by 1605 one *real* bought 40 pounds; and in 1609, it was reported that 300 cow hides sold for 5 *reales* (Remesal 1966: 40). Merchants often purchased large numbers of cattle as meat and stock, or for export to the rest of Central America as hides. While the sixteenth-century environmental impacts of cattle ranching in El Salvador remain far from clear, the practice did require a great deal of land, and was often involved in the forceful movement of native peoples.

Once a semblance of Spanish control was established in the province during the 1530s, some of the earliest land grants were titles for stock ranching, which rarely mentioned the size of the grant, with boundaries described in extremely vague terms. Cattle in eastern El

Salvador were allowed to graze freely across the land, and rounded up at intervals to be slaughtered locally or taken to markets in San Miguel, San Salvador, or southern Honduras. In the late 1530s, indigenous communities reacted not just against Spanish settlers, but also against the newly introduced animals. As noted in the previous chapter, there were multiple indigenous uprisings in San Miguel between 1537 and 1539. In those uprisings, both the Spanish *encomenderos* and livestock were killed (Chamberlain 1947: 630), mainly because livestock were used as an instrument to claim open lands that belonged to indigenous communities.

Viceregal legislation endeavored to protect native culture and ecology from the implanted and expanding pastroecosystem. An ordinance of 1567 proclaimed that native settlements were to encompass a minimum area of one square league. Subsequent legislation confirmed that no cattle *estancia* was to locate within one and a half leagues of any native settlement. In an attempt to ensure compliance, the *merced* was merely the final document in a legal process that first required inspection by a Crown officer. An *alcade*, or sometimes an *oïdor*, was to ensure that the grant under consideration would not prejudice the interests of the Crown, the native communities, or the existing grantees by inspecting the actual location of the requested *estancia* and interviewing local natives. The ensuing reports – in effect, recommendations to the viceroy for or against the grant, sometimes accompanied by maps – at first glance, confirm the successful implementation of the protective legislation, but in actuality they were not very successful.

Once introduced to eastern El Salvador, the freely wandering cattle ensured that forests, once cleared, were not allowed to re-establish themselves; they were a regular hazard to owners with cultivated lands; and they blurred land-use rights to unfenced properties. The unchecked herds of roaming cattle were effectively used to invade the cultivated plots used by indigenous villages. A report from 1555 revealed that ‘... because the cattle are so numerous and wander about without herdsmen, the Indian cannot stop their foraging, although large numbers of the Indians take turns in watching their fields’ (Zorita 1963: 268). As a result, many plots of maize and orchards were extensively damaged. A description of cattle ranching, written by Thomas Gage in 1637, emphasizes the lack of control over cattle grazing throughout El Salvador:

Above all are the great *estancias* in the South Sea coast or marsh, where in my time there was a grazier that reckoned up that there were in his own *estancia* and ground, forty thousand head of beasts, small and great, besides many which are called there *cimarrones*, or wild cattle, which were strayed among the woods and mountains, and could not be gathered in with the rest, but were hunted by the blackamoors like wild boars, and daily shot to death lest they should too much increase and do hurt.... (Thompson 1958: 184)

Consolidation of land was assisted by the introduction of cattle, allowing landowners not only a claim over an indefinite area, but a consistent challenge to the property rights of neighboring villages. This was especially true for eastern El Salvador, where claim to ownership through possession was the primary vehicle for transforming untitled occupants into titled landowners. During the *reconquista* of Spain, this policy was referred to as *presura*, which involved the confirmation of land ownership subsequent to its settlement. In the Americas, occupation was recognized as an acceptable proof of legal ownership. This

practice eventually led to *prescripción*, or the means by which property rights over land were acquired through uninterrupted possession over a period of time, of which claims to land titles were based. The long process of establishment and clarification of property titles throughout the Spanish Americas were grounded on the principle that if an individual could prove the occupation and use of a particular piece of land over a period of time, then a legal claim to a land title could be made.

Conditions in Spanish America during the sixteenth century were similar to those experienced in Spain during the *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish administrators involved with the distribution of land had to contend with an assortment of issues, such as: the confusing circumstances that followed the conquest; the existence of abandoned villages and unappropriated lands (often occupied by settlers without permission); and the complete lack of definitive boundary marks. In many ways, the methods used to regularize land settlement and ownership in the Americas was based on those used in Spain. Following the first decades of settlement of El Salvador in the 1530s, the first instrument for legalizing possession of land, referred to as the *confirmación de tierras*, appeared between 1589 and 1591. There were three goals behind the legislation: first, to confirm existing land titles acquired by Indians and Spaniards; second, create new titles to lands that had been occupied and improved for a period of forty years; and third, recovery territory taken from Crown land to which there was no title and for which no claim could be made on the basis of possession.

The application of the *confirmación de tierras* did not become effective until nearly a century later. Until the early eighteenth century, the twin institutions of *encomienda* and loosely-defined land grants for indigo production or cattle ranching were the basis of Spanish land colonization in eastern El Salvador. In the 1700s, the importance of the *encomienda* gave way to the growing haciendas, worked by resident or hired labor. This era also witnessed more attention given to the acquisition of land titles that specified and confirmed the extent and boundaries of the private estate. Before the 1700s, the steady expansion of Spanish and *ladino* (or *mestizo*) properties, whether by abuse of the *encomienda* or by illegal seizure of land, was often done informally, arbitrarily, and without documentation.

At the same time, indigenous communities were becoming more cognizant of Spanish policies concerning land use, possession, and even more cautious of European schemes to appropriate indigenous lands. A closer look at land grants and legal petitions from the seventeenth-century reveals the struggles over access and rights to land between Spanish officials and indigenous communities. The legal system introduced by the Spanish administration became an important theatre for representing the strategic use of a European institution by indigenous actors. Many *peticiones* (petitions), often written for indigenous community leaders, were successfully pursued by *pueblos de indios* throughout the *Audiencia* of Guatemala.

Based on seventeenth-century *peticiones* (petitions) by residents in *pueblos de indios* throughout eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca, *estancias* for cattle and indigo production were quickly dominating the landscape. Four *peticiones*, written between 1658 and 1672, by community leaders on the island of Conchagüita, highlight the struggles for access to the land, and its provisions, between Spanish officials and native communities in this region (AGCA A1 L1563 E10207). According to the petitions, community leaders from both *Teca* and Conchagua Vieja (referred to as *Conxagua* in the document) appealed to four separate mandates that would have made them pay dues in *milpas* to the villas of San Miguel de la Frontera and Choluteca. The *Jueces de Milpas*, a governmental institution established in

1539 to reinforce the provisioning of the *villas* throughout the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, attempted to enforce each of these mandates to support the villas of San Miguel and Choluteca. Failure to pay dues in *milpas* would have resulted in the seizure of their lands.

In each case, the *indios principales* (or community leaders) from both Teca and Conchagua Vieja appealed to *Real Audiencia* of Guatemala, recalling the previous decisions denying their jurisdiction over the villages. In the last episode, the fourth appointed *Juez de Milpas*, Miguel Garcés y Reinosa, sent a notification to the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, asking for clarification of the *milpas* under his jurisdiction. While visiting the island of Conchagüita, the *Juez de Milpas* was requested by the *indios principales* (principal Indians) of both Teca and Conchagua Vieja to stop his survey for the following reasons:

Para suyo remedio nos pidieron y suplicaron que puesto del despacho de dichos tributos compara por testimonio que presentaron en el juramento necesario mandase a despachar recaudo necesario para que el dicho don Miguel Garcés y Reinosa no usare de dicho titulo que se despacho (AGCA A1 L1563 E10207).

For his remedy, they asked and entreated us that the place of the office of said tributes compares to the testimony they presented in the necessary oath they sent to attend to the necessary collection that said don Miguel Garcés y Reinosa I did not use of said title of that office (AGCA A1 L1563 E10207).

The four legal petitions from 1658 to 1672 highlight how an indigenous community was able to retain their lands, and denounce Judge Reynosa in his attempt to circumvent Viceregal efforts to protect the surviving culture and ecology of indigenous peoples. The *indios principales*, in this case, were don Diego Felipe de Guzmán and Andrés Benítez from Teca; and Gaspar Paul Pérez and Juan Gabriel from Conchagua Vieja. Once on the island of Conchagüita, the *indios principales* showed the *Juez* the *Real Provisión* of 1662, which relieved them of tribute. In his notification to the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, don Miguel Garcés y Reinosa suggested the island villages contained in the letters of appointment of other *Jueces de Milpas* did not concern him because they were only “islands that lied within the sea” (AGCA A1 L1563 E10207).

The Legal Petitions of 1658 to 1672, along with the other archival documents related to the Gulf of Fonseca, highlight the regional and global processes in which the small indigenous community of Conchagua Vieja was embedded. Unfortunately, while all three of the island communities on both Conchagüita and Meanguera appear to have been successful, a closer look reveals otherwise. When Pedro Cortés y Larraz (1958: 161-65) visited the Gulf in 1770, he recorded a large *estancia* situated on the island of Meanguera, in the Gulf of Fonseca. The grant for this *estancia* was most likely established after 1683, when Guatemalan officials ordered the abandonment of the island communities on both Meanguera and Conchagüita because of increased pirate raids in the region.

According to Cortes’ survey, the eastern Salvadoran landscape was dominated by ranging haciendas for indigo production and *estancias* for cattle ranching. Most noteworthy were the number of families and persons that were associated with the private estates. While 199 families (1,210 persons) lived in the local communities near and around the Gulf of Fonseca, more than 221 families (2,079 persons) were living in both haciendas and *estancias*

(or *pajuides*, as they were referred to in the document). Cortes (1958 [1770]: 163) also described these communities as small and in poor shape. The data seems to suggest that most native communities that lived near and around the Gulf of Fonseca did not withstand the demographic catastrophe of the sixteenth century, and were most likely weakened by the depredations of the cattle herders and indigo producers. For example, although in 1717 the *alcade* of San Salvador refused to allow a rancher of San Miguel to use or buy common land belonging to the village of Monleo, by 1770 the name of this village appears as Hacienda de Monleo (AGCA, A1.24, exp. 10226, leg. 1582, fol. 223; Cortés 1958: 68). Similar protection was given to the community of Intipuca, but the village met the same and was absorbed into a hacienda associated with the modern day town of Pueblo Viejo (AGCA A1.2, exp. 10226, leg. 1582, fol. 223).

Despite legislation, the native settlements that remained after the demographic catastrophe of the sixteenth century came into conflict with the expanding *estancia* frontier. After the abandonment of the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca in 1683, communities were forced to contend with cattle and sheepherders for land near the Gulf of Fonseca. This was not an easy task. While the native communities of Conchagüita were able to establish a town on the mainland, present-day Conchagua, the community from the island of Meanguera first re-located to Nacaome, in southern Honduras. After several petitions to relocate, they were finally given a small piece of terrain near present-day La Unión.

DISCUSSION

Arguably one of the most significant advances brought about by colonialism was the accurate surveying and mapping of landscapes (Kain and Baigent 1992). Charting the landscape was, of course, fundamentally important to the control, defense and ultimately management of the Spanish colonies in the Americas. It was also an essential tool in facilitating the allocation, sale and occupation of property and in planning the appropriation and exploitation of resources. At the same time, colonization almost invariably introduced a contest over the possession of landscapes and their attendant resources. In chapter 3, both Pedro de Alvarado and Pedrarias Dávila sought to impose their authority over the Gulf of Fonseca and eastern El Salvador. After the establishment of San Miguel de la Frontera, and into the late seventeenth century, there was a consistent conflict between the land-use imperatives of the Spanish settlers and those of Lenca-speaking peoples that initially inhabited the region. The changing landscapes created as a result of such contests bare physical witness to the gradual victory of Western interests over those of indigenous economies.

The themes presented in this chapter are central to better understanding the nature of colonial settlement and landscape development in the Spanish Americas. Two themes in particular can be highlighted. First, colonial settlement of the Americas was inherently a practical process that required a range of technical and administrative innovations. The development of cadastral mapping, property and resource legislation, the creation of a legislative framework to protect the interests of the settlers and indigenous peoples, the expansion of mines and the establishment of export-crop farms and plantations were all central to the realities of colonial expansion and settlement. Second, the interaction between colonial exploitation and indigenous cultures and economies was a recurring theme throughout the Americas. The extension of colonial control often entailed the dispossession

of indigenous lands and resources, which stimulated an important discourse between the interests of colonial administrators, European settlers, and indigenous communities. The exploration of that discourse, and its manifestation in the landscape itself is an important and perhaps under-researched area of the historical geography of Central America.

Land-holding indigenous village communities survived in many areas of western El Salvador. They were able to do so partly because of the Spanish desire to maintain certain villages intact as sources of agricultural produce or labor. The processes of conflict that produced eastern El Salvador's landscape were subtle and complex. The aim of this chapter was to examine the conflict between Spanish settlers in eastern El Salvador looking to expand on their lands and the indigenous communities of eastern El Salvador. In some cases, indigenous communities were able to contest the reduction of their lands, such as the legal petitions filed by the communities of Conchagüita, between 1658 and 1672. In the absence of maps penned by the Lenca-speaking peoples from the Gulf of Fonseca, the four legal petitions were used here to explore how the descendant peoples of this village strategically made use of European discourses, institutions, and spaces to reproduce and maintain their own meaningful senses of history and identity. The image of Central America we get from studying European appropriations of those lands is rather incomplete if the objective pursued is the study of a colonial situation in which territorial representations and practices were not exclusively European.

SUMMARY

Despite much empirical evidence that contradicts 'the myth of emptiness,' it retains its pernicious grip on the popular imagination in Western, and Westernized, culture. For this reason, a regional study of eastern El Salvador was undertaken to explore regional and local responses to Spanish colonial practices. Historians and anthropologists working in El Salvador have increasingly recognized the ways in which large, long-term explanations are built from small, local experiences, including those of seemingly marginal peoples. Thus, one of the primary objectives behind this dissertation is to move away from studies of colonial Central America that simply concentrate on the early years of conquest and colonization and the destructive impact of European incursions into the region. Many indigenous communities throughout Central America persisted and creatively adapted to the challenges of the new colonial administration introduced by the Spanish. Land petitions and other archival documents are providing glimpses for recognizing how a small indigenous village on a lump of land in the Gulf of Fonseca made use of Spanish practices and laws to maintain their own community during the colonial period.

The goal of the following chapters will be to restore some materiality to the Lenca-speaking peoples who inhabited the village community of Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita, in the Gulf of Fonseca. The study of the material aspects of indigenous communities in eastern El Salvador could very well be the appropriate tool for dispelling the 'myth of emptiness' and recovering indigenous historical agency.

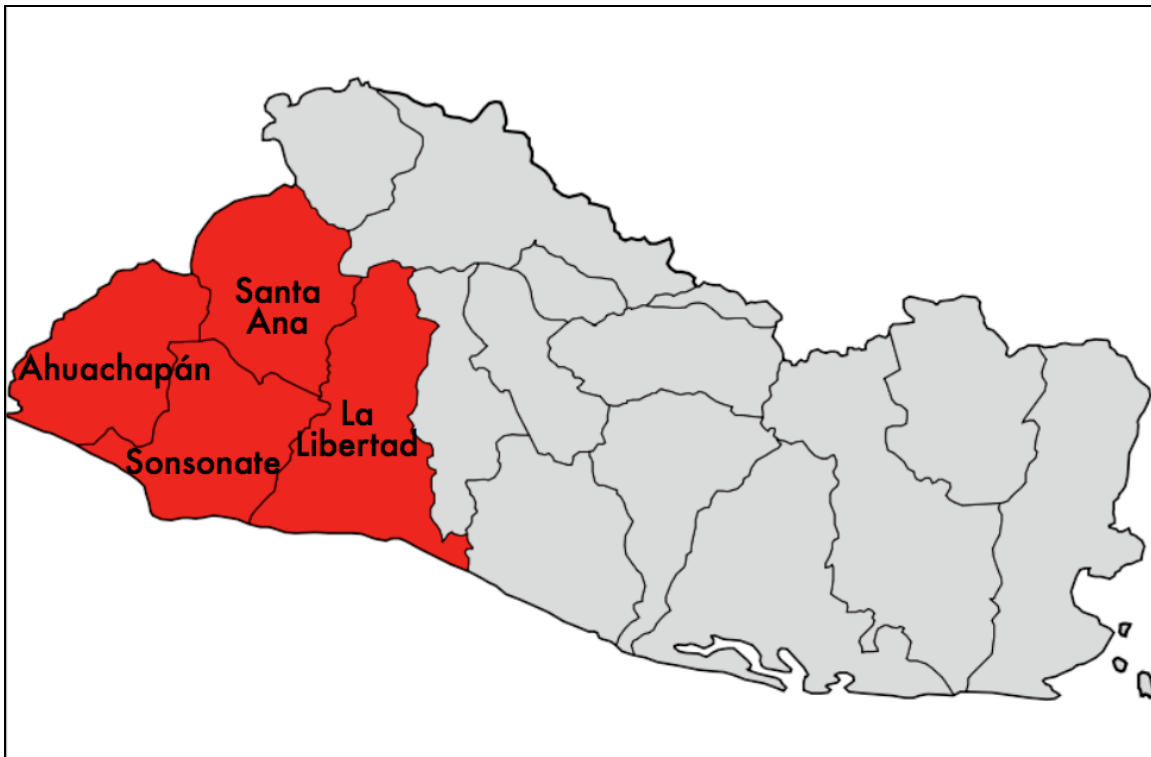


Figure 4.1 – The modern departments of Ahuachapán, La Libertad, Santa Ana, and Sonsonate (highlighted in red) now contain the highest concentration of indigenous communities in El Salvador.



Figure 4.2 – Map representing the distribution of major *haciendas de tinta* in eastern El Salvador.

CHAPTER 5

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD RESEARCH AT CONCHAGUA VIEJA

The assumption underwriting archaeological investigations in eastern El Salvador was that, with the exception of Quelepa (Andrew 1976), there was no substantial (“authentic”) presence of indigenous peoples who might lay claim to their own (distinctive) cultural identity. This premise had long been accepted, with the assumption that there was little evidence relating to an indigenous presence in the post-contact/colonial period and that there was no point in undertaking systematic investigations of eastern El Salvador. This position justified successive policies of expropriation and displacement, which ensured that there would be no data from the region that could counter this narrative. The theses of abandonment and assimilation became a self-fulfilling narrative of a singular racial collective in El Salvador. The *mestizo* narrative they serve guarantee their own continual legitimacy by quite literally limiting knowledge of the records (written, material, and cultural) of contingency and historical process that could have been used to support the claims of contemporary indigenous communities to counter the encompassing methodology of the inevitable absence of ethnic and racial difference throughout El Salvador.

The importance of developing a more informed historical narrative of the colonial period in El Salvador is unmistakable in this context. Thus, in the two previous chapters my analysis centered on how Spanish chroniclers and administrators, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, overlooked the centrality of the Gulf of Fonseca to the peoples who lived there. This neglect grew more profound and eventually led to the conception that the eastern El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca were essentially ‘empty’ of cultural groups and a history of any importance. In the next two chapters I will document the archaeological research on the site and material assemblage of Conchagua Vieja. Archaeological excavations and laboratory analyses of material remains from Conchagua Vieja were designed to evaluate on a material level how colonial processes were integrated in the organization of social life through such shared community activities as trade, and resource exploitation. Based on the archaeological data I will demonstrate that the residents of Conchagua Vieja did not readily abandon their cultural practices once the Spanish arrived. Despite the circumstances, the residents of Conchagua Vieja not only contested Spanish expansion through legal petitions, but also maintained their cultural practices through material culture and the spatial organization of their community.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE GULF OF FONSECA

To properly evaluate the colonial situation in the Gulf of Fonseca, archaeological data was combined with colonial texts and archival documents to further understand the colonial experience on the island of Conchagüita. An underlying objective behind archaeological research at Conchagua Vieja was to move away from archaeological studies that simply tracked the acculturation of indigenous cultures via ratios of native and non-native material

culture (Deetz 1963). Instead, an important goal was to develop a nuanced social history of colonialism in Central America; a historical narrative that highlights the persistence of indigenous cultural practices at Conchagua Vieja. Support for archaeological research came from the National Sciences Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant #0606656.

The Conchagua Vieja Archaeology Project on the island of Conchagüita (PACVIC) was designed to evaluate social interaction at various scales, including: household features; use of space within a community setting; and social networks within the Gulf of Fonseca, and surrounding areas. Key to this perspective was the attention given to the diversity of connections and interactions that specific communities have on the local, regional, and inter-regional scales. My knowledge of these regional connections come from documentary sources that described the movement of island communities in 1683, when they were forced to abandon their villages because of pirate incursions into the region. While the residents of Teca and Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita, were able to move to the present-day town of Conchagua, the islands inhabitants of Meanguera first moved to Nacaome, southern Honduras, then to a small area near present-day La Unión.

The lack of but a few archaeological works on the colonial period in Central America, and the complete absence of research on native life in the Gulf of Fonseca foregrounds archaeology as the primary source for understanding the indigenous experience on the island of Conchagüita before its abandonment in 1683. This chapter elaborates on the field methodology and general results of archaeological research from 2005 to 2006. The recovery of material culture from Conchagua Vieja required a hierarchical and integrative research design. The methodological hierarchy included: mapping, pedestrian survey, and sub-surface excavations. Each method rested upon the results of the preceding method, and the research design was organized to fulfill two goals: to restrict the area under investigation, and to provide a unique set of data for addressing multiple aspects of the indigenous village community.

In this chapter I lay out the rationale and scope of archaeological research that took place at Conchagua Vieja. I begin with a brief description of the methodological framework used for this investigation and then continue with a short review of previous archaeological research on the island of Conchagüita. I will then carry forward with sections that correspond to the research design I developed for Conchagua Vieja: mapping, pedestrian survey, and sub-surface excavations. The field methods were crucial for providing the bulk of the material analyzed. The succeeding chapters focus exclusively on data recovered through the research strategies adopted for this project.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Two methodological approaches were used to properly evaluate the affects of Spanish colonialism on the community of Conchagua Vieja. First, data gathered from this project was compared to data collected from sites related to the residents of Conchagua Vieja spatially, temporally, and culturally. Comparable sites identified in colonial documents and investigated archaeologically include: Caluco (Fowler 1995; Verhagen 1997), Ciudad Vieja (Fowler and Gallardo 2002), León Viejo (Blaisdell-Sloan 1997; Navarro 1985; Tünnermann 1997), and sites in the Department of Santa Barbara, Honduras (Weeks *et al.* 1987; Weeks and Black 1993).

Before the arrival of the Spanish, the protohistoric Lenca were distributed in hereditary chiefdoms throughout central and western Honduras and east of the Lempa River in El Salvador (Figure 1.4). These chiefdoms consisted of complex regional polities that included focal settlements supported by several subordinate communities (Chapman 1978; Newson 1985; Weeks *et al.* 1987)

Excavations at the Spanish colonial town of León Viejo, in northwestern Nicaragua, produced a low percentage of European material culture (Navarro 1985; Tünnermann 1997), and an especially low percentage of European ceramics (Blaisdell-Sloan 1997: 75). This low percentage may be due to León Viejo's Pacific location, or because of their economic inability to acquire goods from home. This is unlike other contemporary towns in Central America and Mexico, such as the colonial Maya town of Ocelocalco, located in the Soconusco region of Chiapas, southern Mexico, which exhibited a high percentage of European ceramics (Gasco 1992: 70). This may be related to cacao production in the Soconusco region; however, this does not explain why the indigenous inhabitants of Caluco, western El Salvador – another cacao producing region – consumed relatively few items of Spanish manufacture (Verhagen 1997: 495). While merchants sold metal tools in the Sonsonate region, western El Salvador, as early as the sixteenth century, Caluco's indigenous inhabitants continued to use obsidian blades and did not readily adopt metal tools (Verhagen 1997: 367). Data produced from each of these investigations have highlighted the multi-faceted nature of Spanish colonialism in Central America.

Second, an agent-centered analytical approach was applied at the household scale to form the basis for a multi-scalar evaluation of social interaction including integration of households at the community level, and economic linkages with communities in other regions. A framework for evaluating the effects of agency in communities undergoing 'structural transformation' must include the idea that the cultural traditions of these historical communities and the practices held within them are always in the process of becoming, and always open to potentially unpredictable consequences (Giddens 1984; Sahlins 1985). My archaeological fieldwork at Conchagua Vieja specifically targeted two midden deposits and a residential building in order to evaluate the ways in which social structures at Conchagua Vieja - themselves historically structured - were sustained, disrupted, or both, by various kinds of practices.

The focus on daily practices is well suited to archaeology (Gillespie 2001; Hendon 2004; Kirch 1996; Moreland 1992; Yaeger 2000), and is especially appropriate for examining the reproduction and transformation of traditional practices during moments of culture contact and colonialism (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998; Loren 2001; Silliman 2001 a, b; Voss 2003). As presented by Pierre Bourdieu (1977), practice theory incorporates a fundamental insistence that everyday tasks (practices) always include elements and expressions of group tradition, beliefs, and identities, which are incorporated by the individual actor as a set of enduring dispositions to act. This approach has proven to be productive and successful in revealing specific details of community-level cultural adaptation because households and communities offer a context in which archaeology has been able to consider the complex interplay of ethnicity, gender and economy in shaping and mitigating colonial adjustments (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998; Silliman 2001 a,b).

Archaeologists investigating culture change and colonialism have shown that both methodological approaches – broadly comparative and agency-based – are ideal at the household scale because it is at this level that individuals of different subject positions can

make political statements regarding their identities, and enact practices that are hidden from view (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998; Silliman 2001a; Voss 2003). In other studies, both change and continuity in cultural practices have been examined through the detailed analysis of architectural features (Andrews 1991; Hanson 1995), extramural space (Miller and Farris 1979), midden deposits (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998), artifacts (Graham 1991; Pendergast 1991), osteological remains (Reitz 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993), and plant remains (Reitz and Scarry 1985, 1990; Scarry 1993). Changes in architectural patterns can provide evidence of the incorporation of European features by some members of the community (Miller and Farris 1979; Pendergast 1991). Local pottery making techniques may incorporate European technological practices or may conserve indigenous practices (Deagan 1986, 1990, 1995; Graham 1991; Verhagen 1997). Foodways, evidenced through botanical and faunal remains recovered, can establish cultural identities, social differences, and nutritional stresses within communities (de France 2003; Reitz and Scarry 1985, 1990; Larsen 1993).

In multi-component sites, assemblages from different periods can be compared within and between households to determine the degrees of culture change and persistence (Verhagen 1997). Other researchers have argued that new practices, especially those publicly visible – like architecture or dress – may be closely linked to an individual's desire to broadcast politically charged affiliations associated with either tradition or emerging orthodoxies (Lightfoot and Martinez 1998; Loren 2001). This project will build on previous practice-based archaeological approaches to colonial contact by evaluating the changes and continuity of cultural practices at Conchagua Vieja.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Conchagua Vieja was initially explored and identified in 1942, when John M. Longyear (1944) carried out an investigation of archaeological sites located in the republic of El Salvador. His survey was done under the auspices of the Institute of Andean Research, with funds supplied by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American affairs. While Longyear did not visit any other islands in the Gulf of Fonseca, he did provide a brief description of Conchagua Vieja. Longyear did not visit Santa Ana de la Teca, the other known contact site on the island of Conchagüita. A description of Santa Ana de la Teca is provided in the following section.

Based on a pedestrian survey of Conchagua Vieja, Longyear suggested that the village was approximately 10 hectares in area. Longyear also noted the presence of several low terraces, numerous stone house mounds, and the standing walls of a Spanish colonial church (1944: 11). The colonial church, located on a small plaza in the middle of the village community, faces northwest towards a cross stand at the far end of the plaza (Figure 5.11). Both the church and the cross-stand were made of crude brick, and covered with mortar. The arrangement of the stone house mounds, in relation to the plaza, was not mentioned in Longyear's survey. In my 2002 survey I recognized the placement of the plaza in the middle of the community, on the flattest area of the site (Gómez 2003). Longyear noted that (1944: 12) scattered across the surface of the village community were several *metates*, obsidian blades, and pottery sherds – notably, coarse plain brown ware. At the time of his survey, Longyear noted that Conchagua Vieja was covered by maize, impacting visibility across the site.

2002 Archaeological Survey of the Gulf of Fonseca

Since Longyear's reconnaissance work in the 1940s, archaeological sites in the Gulf of Fonseca have received limited attention (Beaudry 1982; Cobos 1994; Erquicia 2006; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Gómez 2003, 2006 a and b, 2008; Valdivieso 2006). To ameliorate this situation, I designed and carried out an archaeological survey of sites in the Gulf region (2003). The 2002 survey formed a part of the *Proyecto Conservación de los Ecosistemas Costeros en el Golfo de Fonseca* (The Gulf of Fonseca Coastal Ecosystem Conservation Project). With institutional support from both the Salvadoran Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) and the National Institute of Culture and Art (CONCULTURA), the survey was designed to evaluate the nature and state of archaeological sites on the Salvadoran islands of Conchagüita, Meanguera, and Zacatillo (Figure 1.1). The preliminary survey of the island of Conchagüita produced the exact geo-positioning and data on the present conditions of Conchagua Vieja (site No. 54-A2) and Santa Ana de la Teca (site No. 54-4).

Both Santa Ana de la Teca and Conchagua Vieja are located on ridges, on opposite ends of the island, and have strategic vistas of the entire Gulf of Fonseca. Conchagua Vieja – located on the eastern side of the island – has a clear view to Nicaragua, the island of Meanguera, and the entrance to the Gulf of Fonseca. Santa Ana de la Teca – located on the northwestern side – has a clear view of the northern and western Gulf coast. Both sites can be approached through paths that begin at the most accessible beaches on the island. Conchagua Vieja, for example, is less than 500 meters away from *Playa Brava*, located just south of the site. Santa Ana de la Teca is approximately 1 kilometer away from *Playa El Idalo*, and can be accessed by going through a ravine, the *Quebrada El Peladero*. Finally, both sites have paths that lead to the modern community of Conchagüita, which has the largest beach on the island. It should also be noted that all four paths run through very steep ravines.

In 2002, the archaeological site of Santa Ana de la Teca was covered by high grass, limiting visibility across the entire site. In areas that were not covered by high grass I recorded two low terraces, three stone house mounds, and surface artifacts distributed across the site. The distribution of non-European tradition ceramic sherds, obsidian fragments, and shellfish were noted but not collected. Santa Ana de la Teca has an approximate area of 12 hectares.

At the time of the 2002 survey, Conchagua Vieja was recognized as a protected archaeological zone under the Salvadoran registry of archaeological sites. Though protected, the area was used as both a cattle pasture and as a *milpa* for maize. The two *milpas* located on the site were owned and maintained by two landowners from the nearby community of Conchagüita, also located on the island. Despite active development on the island of Conchagüita, and around the site of Conchagua Vieja, the 2002 survey confirmed the earlier observations made by Longyear in 1942. The site still exhibited well-preserved architectural remains of a Spanish colonial period church, with accompanying cross stand (see Figure 5.11), and a distribution of surface artifacts – specifically of non-European tradition ceramic sherds and obsidian fragments – throughout the village. Surface distributions of ceramics, bone, shellfish, and lithics were noted but not collected.

Conchagua Vieja has an approximate area of 10 hectares. Most notable is the presence of a seventeenth century Spanish colonial period church, with an outdoor cross stand, centrally located in an area of the site that would have been visible by the whole village. The outdoor cross stand is an unusual characteristic, and is not a feature exhibited by

other churches in the area. In addition to the church, at least four low terraces were located just north and south of the church, and nine stone house mounds were located on small terraces that surrounded the plaza (see Figure 5.1). Because the survey was carried out in the summer, high grass that surrounded the church and cross stand limited visibility across the site. Keeping this in mind, I narrowed the archaeological focus to specific areas of the site that appeared promising for exploration. Once the survey was completed, a final report of my findings from 2002 was produced for both CONCULTURA and MARN. With permission from CONCULTURA and the landowners who managed the area associated with the archaeological site, I was allowed to continue my fieldwork in August of 2005.

MAPPING AND SURFACE SURVEY

PACVIC began in the summer of 2005. The first field season had two primary objectives: produce two maps that detailed the topography and spatial layout of Conchagua Vieja (see Figure 5.2), and to carry out a pedestrian survey over a portion of the site (see Figure 5.4). Both objectives were undertaken to evaluate the nature of the archaeological deposits at Conchagua Vieja; to seek out previously unrecorded deposits; and to inform later stages of archaeological research.

Respecting the wishes of the landowners, the area of investigation was limited to those areas whose productive use would not be impacted by mapping activities and the pedestrian survey. A priority was placed on maintaining the integrity of the cattle pasture and the *milpas*. The maps thus represent 4 hectares (40%) of the site area, the part of the site where further research was permitted.

Mapping and Exploration

The production of two maps detailing the contours and visible archaeological deposits of Conchagua Vieja was the first step in exploring the site more thoroughly (Figures 5.3 and 5.5). A permanent datum point was placed in the southwestern region of the archaeological site for all future mapping and transit work. The datum was given the arbitrary coordinates of E100, N100, and Z100, and geo-referenced using a Garmin GPSMAP 76S. The grid for Conchagua Vieja is on a true north bearing with coordinates labeled as meters north-south and meters east-west from the site datum.

A topographic map for Conchagua Vieja was produced using a Sokkia transit, four 100-meter tapes, pin flags, and a Brunton Com-Pocket Transit. Once the datum for Conchagua Vieja was established a grid was created using pin flags that were placed every 5 meters along an east-west axis. At each pin flag north-south lines were created using pin flags placed at intervals of 5 meters. Pin flags were also placed at points where there were extreme changes in elevation. A total of 580 points were taken. These points were then used to create two different topographic maps that best represent the changes in elevation that characterize Conchagua Vieja (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Northing and Easting are provided along the axes.

The plan map for Conchagua Vieja was produced using a plane table made available by the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology, and a Brunton Com-Pocket Transit. The primary objective behind this second map was to capture the most significant features specific to the spatial layout of Conchagua Vieja. Two aspects of the plan map proved to be informative.

First, the church, and cross stand, of Conchagua Vieja are centrally situated in the middle of the community, in a northwest orientation. These two features formed a small plaza in a depression located in between higher grounds to the east and west. Four low terraces, at a lower level, can be found to the north and south of the church. Because of this spatial layout, the church and cross-stand would have been visible to all those who resided in the community. All the recorded stone house mounds and domestic features are located in areas that surrounded the church, either on higher ground or along the terraces associated with the site.

Second, five midden deposits were encountered south of the church at Conchagua Vieja. No midden deposits were seen north of the church. Of the five midden deposits encountered while doing the plan map for the site, three proved to be larger than 25 square meters in area. All three of these larger midden deposits were located away from domestic structures, and on slight erosional slopes. Based on the variability of material remains observed, the deposits might relate to a variety of dumping episodes from different activities associated with the village.

The other two midden deposits were much smaller, and directly associated with two domestic structures encountered during the pedestrian survey. Again, the diversity of material remains observed during the survey suggests even these smaller middens came from many different activities.

Based on the variety of materials associated with the midden deposits, as well as the location and sizes of the deposits, I undertook a more thorough pedestrian survey in the area south of the church (Figure 5.4). Also, because the midden deposits were encountered along erosional slopes south of the church I directed a pedestrian survey in this area to evaluate the nature of deposition.

Pedestrian Survey

The primary objectives behind the pedestrian survey were to evaluate the spatial organization of the area surrounding the church, specifically the open field south of the church, and to facilitate future subsurface exploration. Using 5 x 5 meter survey units, the area was investigated by a crew of five members in less than one week. In total, we covered an area approximately 3225 square meters, or an estimated 5% of the total area of Conchagua Vieja. In each survey unit crewmembers noted the variety and abundance of surface artifacts, paying particular attention to the occurrence of obsidian. With permission from CONCULTURA, worked obsidian remains were collected and taken to the University of California, Berkeley, for EDXRF analysis. This analysis was intended to understand the chemical characterization of the obsidian, and to compare the results of this study with known source data for Central America. A more detailed discussion of this analysis is described in chapter 6.

Of the 25 obsidian samples recovered during the survey, only one small projectile point was collected. The other 24 samples of obsidian were blades and flakes. Chert debitage was registered more frequently, and tended to cluster along the northwestern edge of the survey area, approximately 30 meters southwest of the church. This area, in general, revealed a dense concentration of material remains, specifically shell, lithics, and ceramics. Though the area was not initially recognized as a midden deposit, because of the high grass that limited our visibility, the high concentration of materials called for further subsurface exploration.

Results from the 2005 Field Season

The mapping and pedestrian survey were both designed to guide my understanding of the distribution of deposits across the village of Conchagua Vieja, and to guide future subsurface excavations. The production of two maps detailing the contours and visible archaeological deposits were helpful in assessing the spatial organization of activities and architectural features at Conchagua Vieja. Surface data compiled from the pedestrian survey was used to evaluate the site's internal structure and nature of deposition.

The pedestrian survey concluded the 2005 field season. The survey of the area south of the church proved to be informative, specifically the variety and abundance of materials encountered along the northwestern edge of the pedestrian survey area. In 2006 an auguring technique was used to explore this area further, and to understand the spatial and artifactual nature of the remains encountered. Other areas targeted for subsurface exploration in 2006 included the remains of a domestic compound, and the small midden encountered during the pedestrian survey. The latter two deposits allow for the exploration of household features and domestic social relations.

SUBSURFACE EXPLORATION IN 2006

Data from the 2005 field season was used to define meaningful spatial patterns at Conchagua Vieja, and inform the subsequent stage of research undertaken in 2006. The subsurface exploration program in the 2006 field season was designed to meet four specific objectives: (1) further investigate the high concentration and variety of materials found along the northwestern edge of the pedestrian survey area through an auguring program; (2) explore two middens in search of features and artifact patterns; (3) evaluate household features and the use of space within a domestic setting; and (4) examine the extent of Spanish administrative support through a controlled excavation inside the church. The first three objectives were intended to assess the organization of daily practices at Conchagua Vieja, in terms of architecture, artifacts, food, and use of space. All four objectives were chosen to evaluate the effects of Spanish colonialism on the community of Conchagua Vieja, and to highlight the multi-faceted nature of Spanish colonialism in Central America.

In the following sections I provide brief descriptions on the methodological techniques adopted for this investigation, as well as the results from the 2006 field season. I begin with a discussion of the auguring program, and then continue with a review of the methodological techniques and results from each of the four areas that were excavated.

Augur Survey

An auguring technique was used at Conchagua Vieja to fulfill two goals. First, I wanted to explore the site's vertical and horizontal extent, and evaluate the relation of cultural and non-cultural deposits with limited site destruction in a moderate amount of time with a moderate amount of effort. Given the conditions of the site, auguring was chosen over other subsurface exploration techniques because of its expediency in extremely hard and compact soils. Excavated augur data also allow for the solid identification of stratigraphic levels and sequences in dense deposits (Hoffman 1993; Howell 1993; Kintigh 1988; Stein 1986). Second, an auguring technique gave me the opportunity to further explore the archaeological deposit encountered during the pedestrian survey. The relative expediency in auguring

greatly aided the subsurface exploration component of PACVIC, which sought to reliably and efficiently assess subsurface deposits.

A 4 in. diameter carbon steel bucket augur, with 5 ft. extension, was chosen to excavate 28 augur holes in a cross pattern across the site (Figure 5.6). Of the 28 augur holes, 17 were placed every 5 meters along the North-South axis, while the 11 holes along the East-West axis were placed every 10 meters. All of the augur test pits were excavated in 20 centimeter levels and all materials were screened by level using a quarter inch mesh. Standardized forms were used to record the color and texture of the excavated matrices, and all of the artifacts were noted and collected. All of the recovered materials were collected by level and augur hole. To facilitate the organization of field records, the recovered materials were placed in bags labeled A (for augur), followed by: hole number, level, date, and excavator.

Only five days were taken doing augur work at Conchagua Vieja, proving that the subsurface survey method was both efficient and productive. The survey occupied five people, with two working the augur, two screening the materials, and another recording the findings and observations. This method was most effective in revealing areas dense with materials, and other areas that were not as rich. While materials were found across the entire survey area, the area that proved to be the densest was the northwestern edge of the pedestrian survey area. Augur holes 2, 3 and 4 (Figure 5.6) proved to be the most informative, as all three revealed dense concentrations of both ceramics and shell as deep as 80 centimeters from the ground surface. The three augur holes could not go deeper because of the thick concentration of either rocks or boulders. In fact, almost all of the augur holes did not go deeper than 90 centimeters because of the same condition. Only augur holes 23 thru 26 went deeper than 90 centimeters, and then only to 1.2 meters. These four deep augur test pits actually provided the least amount of materials.

No recognizable diagnostic materials related to the chronology of Conchagua Vieja were recovered from any of the augur holes. Most of the ceramics recovered were plain brown ware, and all of the lithic debitage recovered was chert. Lithic debitage was only recovered from augur test pits 2, 3, 4, and 21. The high occurrence of lithics, shell, and ceramics from test pits 2, 3, and 4 provided little doubt that we had augured through a fairly large, intact midden deposit. An excavation unit was placed next to augur test pit 2 to evaluate the midden more thoroughly. Test pit 21 also revealed a high degree of lithics, shell, and ceramic material indicative of a midden, but the midden was encountered 67 centimeters below the surface, and ended at a depth of 82 centimeters. Based on the augur data, this appeared to be a relatively shallow midden that was located adjacent to the southern corner of the church (Figure 5.6), but before the construction of the church.

Excavation Methodology

The auguring program, combined with the pedestrian survey of 2005, confirmed the presence of well-preserved architectural remains from domestic structures, and outlined the distribution of midden deposits across Conchagua Vieja. Excavation units were placed in four areas to explore an architectural structure, the church, communal spaces, and two different midden deposits. All four excavation areas were designated “Operations” (Figure 5.5). Operations 1 and 3 concentrated on two of the midden deposits discovered at the site. Because they are different in size, and located in different areas of the community, both middens were excavated to explore any potentially different artifact patterns or features.

Operation 2 was designed to explore the domestic structure, while Operation 4 was placed inside of the church. Each excavation unit in Operations 1 thru 4 was designated a *Sub-Operation*, and given a letter for identification and recording purposes.

Excavations at Conchagua Vieja employed a modified Harris matrix excavation and recording system. The primary motive in the application of the Harris matrix at Conchagua Vieja was to capture depositional events that relate to natural and human activities. The system facilitates the recording of very small stratigraphic units representing small-scale depositional events. It is not unusual that identifiably different depositional events can be 2 to 3 centimeters thick. The ability to analyze excavated remains from such a fine context was ideal for the identification of changes in the patterning of material culture within such a short time frame. This excavation and recording methodology was specifically chosen to evaluate the changing situation of the community as it moved from local to colonial rule, and the ways in which the residents of the community responded to the stresses of social, political, and economic reorganization.

The excavation strategy for PACVIC minimized impacts to the archaeological site while maximizing the data return. The field methodology was designed to anticipate and accommodate specific discoveries, such as: (1) culturally-stratified deposits, (2) shallow historical deposits, (3) mixed deposits, and (4) lack of discernible Precolumbian deposits. Each *Sub-Operation*, or excavation unit, was excavated manually, using trowels and hand picks, but no shovels. Standardized forms were used to record each depositional context encountered, and each excavated depositional context was labeled a *Locus*, with an accompanying number for recording purposes. The sediments that surrounded the artifacts, ecofacts, and features within each depositional context were defined as the *matrix*, and the surface of each matrix was defined as the *interface*. Different locus numbers were assigned to each matrix and interface encountered through excavation. Thus, locus numbers correspond to separate depositional events, and not to stratigraphic layers.

Excavators were instructed to identify changes in the matrices being excavated – such as changes in color, texture, or content – and to label *loci* (matrices and interfaces) accordingly. Matrices were subdivided every 10 centimeters if no changes in the sediments had been identified. A Munsell soil color chart was used to assess soil color for all deposits. Drawings and photographs were taken of each excavated locus.

During the excavations, archaeological materials and samples were systematically collected for analysis. All sediments were screened through 1/4-inch mesh screens, and labeled accordingly. Ten-liter archaeobotanical flotation samples were taken from each depositional context to determine whether historic macrobotanical remains were preserved in the deposit. Flotation samples were processed using a standard barrel-type flotation machine with a 1/32-inch heavy fraction mesh and a 1/64-inch light fraction mesh. After flotation samples were taken, all remaining excavated soils were collected and wet screened through 1/8-inch mesh. The residue remaining in the screen was dried, bagged, inventoried, and boxed for transport. Sediment samples for soil chemistry were taken from the *Sub-Ops* in Operation 2, the domestic residence, and Operation 4, inside of the church. All materials and samples were taken to facilities available at the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology in San Salvador for processing, inventory, and analysis.

EXCAVATION RESULTS

In the remainder of this chapter, I describe the depositional events encountered through excavation, and summarize the artifacts and features recovered therein. These materials and activities provide the background for the analytical chapters to follow, and for the final discussion on indigenous practices at Conchagua Vieja. The Operations can be seen in relation to topographic contours and archaeological features in Figure 5.5. All *Sub-Ops* were linked to the site datum via transit and stadia rod, and labeled by the coordinate of the southwest corner. Absolute depths were recorded in each *Sub-Op* with the aid of specific sub-datums placed near each Operation. In each of the operations the goal was to excavate all of the *Sub-Ops* until sterile subsoil was reached. This was only achieved in *Sub-Op* 3A of Operation 3.

I will begin my Operation subsections with Operations 1 and 3, which represent two different middens found through surface and subsurface survey. Both of these middens will be compared to evaluate any potentially different artifact patterns or features. Tables of weights and counts from each depositional context in each *Sub-Op* are provided for comparative purposes. I will then continue with a discussion of Operation 2, the domestic structure, and finish with a review of Operation 4, the excavation unit placed inside the church. Within each Operation subsection, I describe the *Sub-Ops* involved, initial measurements, ending measurements, artifact finds, and features. While absolute depths were recorded in each *Sub-Op*, I will refer to depths below the surface hereafter for interpretation. Plan maps and stratigraphic profiles are provided for significant portions of each *Sub-Op*.

Operation 1

Only one 2 x 1 meter *Sub-Op* was placed in Operation 1. The *Sub-Op* was designated 1A, with the number denoting the Operation, and the letter representing the *Sub-Op*. From here onwards, the lone 2 x 1 meter excavation unit in Operation 1 will be referred to as *Sub-Op* 1A. The coordinates of the southwestern corner of *Sub-Op* 1A are 137N – 180E. *Sub-Op* 1A was placed in the midden deposit first encountered in the 2005 pedestrian survey, and confirmed through auger testing. Auger test pit 2, with the coordinates of 140N – 180E, revealed a dense shell layer, mixed with cultural materials, at a depth of approximately 35 centimeters. Additional auger holes were placed two meters apart to sample the extent of the midden, which came out to an estimated 109 square meters in area. Once the estimated size was established, *Sub-Op* 1A was designed to sample the richness and spatial aspects of the midden deposit. This midden is located approximately 30 meters southwest of the church, near the center of the community.

Artifacts and organic remains were numerous and diverse in *Sub-Op* 1A, exhibiting great promise for addressing issues of early colonial life on the island of Conchagüita. Large quantities of all artifact types were encountered: obsidian blades, flakes, cores, and debitage; groundstones; thermally-affected rock; marine and terrestrial faunal debris; shellfish fragments; charred floral remains; ceramics, including one piece of majolica; and metal artifacts, such as nails, hooks, and a small knife. The high fragmentation of artifacts and disarticulated faunal elements suggest the midden may have received materials from activities at nearby locations rather than from specific activities in the immediate area. The characteristics possibly distinguish the midden as a secondary, or tertiary, deposit.

No formal hearths were identified, but the midden deposit did contain several thin ash and charcoal lenses. Using a judgmental sampling strategy, I collected 3 samples of different

ash and charcoal lenses for flotation analysis. The size of the sample varied according to the size of the particular lens. In all, I collected one 3-liter sample, and two 2-liter samples from different ash and charcoal lenses in *Sub-Op* 1A. Flotation samples were taken systematically from each locus after a depth of 25 centimeters. The size of these samples remained consistent. In total, I collected eleven 8-liter samples from each locus. Profiles were also drawn for the southern and western walls of *Sub-Op* 1A.

The first 18 centimeters of *Sub-Op* 1A were mixed, as little to no stratigraphic layering could be recognized in the first two loci, leading me to initially excavate the *Sub-Op* in 10-centimeter arbitrary levels (Figure 5.7). These upper sediments were most likely disturbed through plowing, rodent burrowing, and others forms of bioturbation. The top 18 centimeters of sediments may also represent sediments washed downhill from other portions of the site. All of the samples recovered from Loci 1 and 2 were combined during analysis.

Clear depositional layers were identified after a depth of approximately 18 centimeters. The matrix changed, becoming more compact, darker, and more rich with coastal bivalve mollusks (clams, oysters, cockles and scallops) and artifacts. While the first 15 centimeters included some 88 kilograms of shell debris and a variety of artifacts, the first identifiable depositional layer, below the initial 15 centimeters of sediment, revealed one metal nail, a single piece of majolica, and a dense concentration of shell, ceramics, chert debitage, and disarticulated faunal fragments (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2 for counts and weights). All of this material was recovered in Locus 3, which ended at a depth of approximately 26 centimeters below the surface. The following depositional event, Locus 4, revealed a higher density of shell and lithic material, in both weight and frequency, but a considerably lower concentration of both ceramic and fauna remains. The majority of lithic debitage and faunal fragments were recovered through flotation at the Department of Archaeology in San Salvador.

Due to the frequency and variety of shell species, one 10-liter sample of shell debris was sampled from each locus and taken to San Salvador for future analysis. A full analysis of shell debris was logistically impossible due to the need to transport these materials down a ravine, and then from the island to the mainland. Few discernible patterns of variation were observed in the shell debris. Non-fragmented cockle-shells made up the majority of the bivalve mollusks recovered from Loci 3, 4, and 6. I recorded a noticeable drop in cockle-shells in contexts deposited before Locus 6.

Loci 6 and 8 represent two depositional layers that contained a high degree of shell debris, ceramics, faunal fragments, and lithic debitage. The two notable differences between Loci 6 and 8 were found in the matrix and density of materials. While the matrix of Locus 6 was a dark grayish brown silty loam, the matrix of Locus 8 was lighter in color and more of a silty clay loam. The density of shell and lithic debitage was revealing: Locus 6 produced 108 kilograms of shell debris and 55 lithic debitage fragments, compared to 66 kilograms of shell and 4 debitage samples in Locus 8. Below Locus 8, there is a considerable drop off in shell debris and weight in earlier deposits throughout the *Sub-Op*. Overall, the relative diversity in shell species was the same, but the recovered shell debris in Locus 8 was not as dense, and more fragmented. Unfortunately, the ceramics from Locus 6 could not be compared to other Loci because these ceramic remains were misplaced during the move from the *Casa Presidencial* (Presidential House), the former location of the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology, to *Casa Dueñas*, the current location in downtown San Salvador. I was not present, nor was I notified, when the transportation of the materials took place. However,

based on the excavation form for Locus 6, the same amount of ceramics was recovered from Locus 6 as Locus 8. It is possible that Locus 6 might have similar numbers (in terms of weight and count) as Locus 8.

The increase in shell debris over time in this area was related to the remains of a terrace wall I encountered at a depth of approximately 60 to 70 centimeters below the surface. The boulders that formed the terrace wall were first encountered in Locus 10, a depositional context that preceded Locus 8. Once I recognized the boulders formed a terrace wall I promptly labeled the terrace wall Locus 14, and separated the sediments from inside and outside of the wall, which were clearly distinguishable. The fill used to form the terrace wall was labeled Locus 15, but was not excavated (Figure 5.7). The Locus 10 matrix was a very dark grayish brown clay loam that was very compact compared to the previous loci. The entire depositional layer sloped downwards towards the southern end of the *Sub-Op*, resulting in the ending depths for the southern corners to be close to 10 centimeters lower than the northern corners. Since the shell midden was located on a slope, it was only natural the sediments would slope downwards, as evidenced by the profile for the western wall (Figure 5.7). This compact dark grayish brown clay loam deposit was approximately 18 centimeters thick, and because of this the deposit was separated into two loci (Loci 10 and 12).

Locus 12 was a continuation of Locus 10 that was only encountered on top of the terrace wall. Because of this, the contents inside, or on top of the terrace wall, were separated from those outside of the terrace wall. The shell density seemed consistent since 35 kilograms of shell was recovered from Locus 10, and only 15 kilograms of shell debris was removed from the underlying deposit, Locus 12. This was not surprising, since Locus 12 only represented half of the *Sub-Op*. Overall, the decreasing shell density continued up to Locus 20, the final locus excavated in *Sub-Op* 1A. While much of this can be attributed to only excavating one half of the *Sub-Op*, I should note that the shell recovered from Loci 16, 17, 19, and 20 (the Loci outside of the terrace wall) were more fragmented and not as densely concentrated as in previous Loci. One ring-like metal hook was recovered from Locus 17. High amounts of faunal fragments and lithic debitage continued to be revealed, but the majority of these remains were recovered through flotation. The excavation of *Sub-Op* 1A ended at an approximate depth of 1.3 meters. Just below Locus 20, the last excavated depositional event, were the remains of the terrace wall, or Locus 14 (Figure 5.7).

All of the Loci can be grouped into certain contexts. Loci 1-3 revealed a high density of ceramics, shell, lithics and fauna. The following depositional event, Locus 4, revealed a matrix that was darker in color and not as compact as the previous Loci. Locus 4 also revealed a higher density of shell and lithic material, in both weight and frequency, and a lower concentration of both ceramic and fauna remains. Loci 6 and 8 represent two separate depositional events that exhibited a high degree of material remains. Locus 10 was the depositional context just above the terrace wall, while Locus 12 was the fill for the terrace wall. Locus 12 also happened to be the only context from the fill of the terrace wall. Loci 16 though 20 were all contexts from outside of the terrace wall. Locus 17 is a continuation of Locus 16 and Locus 20 is a continuation of Locus 19.

Operation 3

Only one 1 x 1 meter *Sub-Op* was placed in Operation 3. From here onwards, the lone 1 x 1 meter excavation unit in Operation 3 will be referred to as *Sub-Op* 3A. Due to the high

quantity of boulders found in the area, *Sub-Op 3A* was placed in the area with the least amount of obstruction. The coordinates of the southwestern corner of *Sub-Op 3A* are 118N – 133E. *Sub-Op 3A* was placed in a midden deposit located next to a residential household encountered in the 2005 pedestrian survey. Additional auger holes were placed one meter apart to sample the extent of the midden, which came out to an estimated 12 square meters in area. Unlike the midden deposit encountered in Operation 1, this midden was smaller, and not removed from the residential area. Thus, due to the location and size of the midden, *Sub-Op 3A* was specifically excavated to evaluate the potentially different artifact patterns, and community activities, related to both midden deposits.

The same methods for excavating *Sub-Op 1A* were used for *Sub-Op 3A*. The excavation of *Sub-Op 3A* ended at a depth of 111 centimeters, and was the only excavated *Sub-Op* to reach sterile subsoil. I excavated 15 centimeters into the sterile subsoil to make sure no additional material remains could be recovered from the *Sub-Op*. I should also note that all of the material remains recovered from Locus 6, the earliest depositional context found in *Sub-Op 3A*, were found at the very beginning of the layer. With the exception of the sterile subsoil, *Sub-Op 3A* revealed 3 distinct depositional layers, including the humus layer (Figure 5.8). The humus layer was excavated in 10-centimeter arbitrary levels, and reached a depth of approximately 20 centimeters. Like *Sub-Op 1A*, the first 15 to 20 centimeters of *Sub-Op 3A* represent sediments washed downhill from higher grounds. Profiles were drawn for the northern and eastern walls of *Sub-Op 3A*.

The artifacts from *Sub-Op 3A* include a variety of artifacts, including Native American produced ceramics, lithic debitage, faunal remains (both terrestrial and marine), and two metal pieces. Though *Sub-Op 3A* was a 1 x 1 meter excavation unit, the amount of shell encountered was still high, when compared to *Sub-Op 1A*. The only notable difference was that the variety in shell species observed and recovered from *Sub-Op 3A* was not as high as *Sub-Op 1A*. Like *Sub-Op 1A*, 10-liter samples of shell debris were recovered from Loci 1, 2, 3, and 4. Flotation samples were systematically taken from each locus after a depth of 20 centimeters. The size of the samples remained consistent. In all, I collected five 8-liter samples from each locus. Almost all of the faunal and lithic remains were recovered through flotation. Most noteworthy, was the lack of lithic debitage in *Sub-Op 3A* (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4 for counts and weights). While *Sub-Op 1A* revealed an intense amount of lithic materials (chert and obsidian), *Sub-Op 3A* revealed only 15 samples of lithic debitage, which were all found through flotation. Loci 2 and 3 revealed no lithic remains. Accordingly, faunal remains in Loci 1, 2 and 6 were all very low compared to other Loci 3 and 4. A metal knife tip and small metal knife were recovered in Loci 2 and 4, respectively.

As for the ceramics recovered from *Sub-Op 3A*, the count and weights of ceramics from each depositional context do not reveal any significant pattern. A more thorough discussion on the ceramics and lithics from Operations 1 and 3 can be found in Chapter 6. Overall, the majority of the material remains from Operation 3 were not as disarticulated, and not as diverse as Operation 1, suggesting the midden may have only received materials from the adjacent residential household.

Operation 2

Operation 2 was the excavation of a residential building located on the western border of the survey area (see Figures 5.5 and 5.9). The residential building was one of a number of

house clusters identified along the western border. All of the residential structures found in this zone had a clear view of the church, and were generally at a higher elevation than the church. Three 2 x 1 meter *Sub-Ops* made up Operation 2. The coordinates of the southwestern corner were: 98N – 95E for 2A; 96N – 94E for 2B; and 94N – 94E for 2C. These three excavation units were staggered across the inside and outside of a domestic building that was encountered during the 2005 survey season. Unit 2A was placed in the patio area outside of the domestic structure, while Units 2B and 2C were placed inside of the domestic structure.

The same methods for excavating Operations 1 and 4 were used for Operation 2. The excavations for Sub-Ops 2A, 2B and 2C did not go deeper than 45 centimeters. Very few artifact types were encountered while excavating *Sub-Ops* 2A, 2B and 2C: ceramics, lithics, and *bahareque* (or wattle daub). The presence of *bahareque* and the limited amount of artifacts was not surprising, considering this was a residential household. Most items were encountered in *Sub-Op* 2C, the innermost unit in the building (see Table 5.5).

Most items were recovered from compacted floor surfaces, inside and outside of the structure, or associated with the hearth in *Sub-Op* 2B. The ground level hearth outlined in stone left no doubt that was indeed a residential structure. The stone hearth appeared to be slightly raised. Several charcoal and ash layers were recovered from both Units 2B and 2A. The size of the sample varied according to the size of the particular lens. In *Sub-Op* 2A we collected one 2-liter sample, and one 1-liter sample, and in *Sub-Op* 2B we recovered one 3-liter sample from inside of the hearth. The exact provenience of each sample was recorded. Soil samples were also taken from each locus. Soil samples were taken systematically from contemporaneous living surfaces in each excavation area, after a depth of 5 centimeters. This topsoil layer was highly disturbed from plowing and other forms of bioturbation. The size of the samples remained consistent. In all, we collected twenty-four 5-gram samples from each locus. The exact provenience of each sample was recorded.

Operation 4

An excavation unit was placed inside of the seventeenth century church, located in the middle of the village. One of the most intriguing aspects of the church is the placement of the cross stand outside of the building (Figure 5.11). This is an unusual characteristic, considering no other churches in the general region exhibit such a distinct characteristic. The church was also constructed with *teja*, or clay roof tiles; another rare feature unique to the area. The majority of churches in the region, with the exception of those located in nearby Spanish *villas*, were covered by thatch. A more thorough discussion of the church and its significance for the village of Conchagua Vieja is provided in Chapter 7. In this section, I will discuss some of the findings from *Sub-Op* 4A, and other features related to the church.

Sub-Op 4A was placed in an area that showed the least amount of visible disturbance on the surface (Figure 5.11). The coordinates of the southwestern corner of *Sub-Op* 4A are 153N – 206E. Four distinct depositional layers were encountered through excavation: a humus layer; a depositional layer composed of wall and roof rubble; the fill just below the church floor; and a depositional layer filled with *bajareque* (see Figure 5.10). Very few artifact types were encountered while excavating *Sub-Op* 4A: ceramics, lithics, and *teja*. Approximately 45 kilograms of *teja* was recovered from *Sub-Op* 4A (see Table 5.6). Not surprisingly, all of the *teja* was found in Loci 1 through 3, just above the church floor, which was encountered at a depth of approximately 35 centimeters below the modern surface. A

soil sample for chemical analysis was taken from Locus 5, the floor of the church. The size of the sample remained consistent with the size of samples taken from the living surfaces found in Operation 2.

The church floor was composed of a compact surface distinguishable from the matrices above and below. Above the church floor, I encountered very few artifacts, and spent much of the time excavating through wall and roof rubble. I should note, however, that the recovered ceramics above the church floor were more complete, and not as fragmented as the ceramics below the church floor. This is best demonstrated in Table 5.6, which documents the weights and counts of materials recovered from *Sub-Op* 4A. Underneath the floor surface, I encountered some fragmented artifacts, and randomly placed stones. Though not noted in Table 5.6, bajareque fragments were recovered from Loci 7 and 8 (approximately 113 grams). Underneath Loci 7 and 8, at a depth of approximately 75 centimeters, I encountered very fragile human skeletal remains in the northern half of *Sub-Op* 4A. The skeletal remains were found at the bottom of Locus 9, where there was a dense concentration of carbon remains, approximately 40 centimeters below the church surface. Based off my observations in the field, the skeletal remains appeared to have been two femurs, oriented in an east-west fashion. Once this discovery was made, excavations ended, at an approximated depth of 90 centimeters below the modern surface.

No mortuary items were found, and the majority of artifacts recovered from Locus 9 were encountered while initially excavating the locus. Very few remains were found at the bottom depths of Locus 9. It is important to note here that I do not believe that the interment is associated with the church, since the interment does not appear to be stratigraphically intrusive. Instead, the presence of bajareque in Loci 7 and 8, combined with the midden deposit found in augur test pit 21 (at relatively the same depth), seem to suggest that the interment was associated with a residential building that was placed there before the construction of the church.

Results from the 2006 Field Season

The 2006 field season was designed to identify areas of Conchagua Vieja that contained intact deposits related to indigenous habitation or use, and to collect data from these areas. To do so, I used the information gathered from my 2005 assessment of Conchagua Vieja to identify areas of the site that could potentially hold such deposits. Next, I did an augur survey in two areas I identified as indigenous midden deposits from the colonial period. The two midden deposits were identified as colonial, based on the presence of non-indigenous metal at the lowest depths of excavation. In addition to the two midden deposits, I also excavated a residential structure, and inside of the seventeenth century church. Overall, the excavations in the two midden areas, residential structure, and church, provided a large and diverse artifact assemblage that will be used to address the research goals posed by this investigation.

DISCUSSION

To complement the methodology and general findings, I will end this chapter by considering the relevance of these findings for the analysis and interpretation of material remains. The implications include: first, the colonial use of the two excavated middens; and

second, the relatively synchronic nature of excavated deposits. The relationship between these two positions forms the basis of my interpretations.

Operations 1 and 3 were both colonial period midden deposits encountered through surface reconnaissance, and subsequent subsurface survey techniques. I am certain these two middens are colonial era since metal was recovered close to the lowest depths excavated: Locus 17 for Operation 1 and Locus 4 for Operation 3. Both deposits appeared intact and undisturbed. If we assume that Conchagua Vieja was abandoned in 1683, then it is likely that most of the remains are colonial era. Operation 1 was located approximately 30 meters southwest of the church of Conchagua Vieja, and covered an estimated area of 100 meters square. The midden was situated on top of a Precolumbian terrace, which might suggest a change in the use of space within the community during the colonial period. Operation 3 was much smaller, and located next to a residential household unit. Overall, Operation 1 had a much larger quantity of artifact types than Operation 3. However, the high fragmentation of artifacts and disarticulated faunal elements suggest Operation 1 may have received materials from around the whole community, rather than just discard from specific activities performed near the residential units; distinguishing Operation 1 as either a secondary, or possibly, a tertiary deposit. The high density of lithic debitage recovered from Operation 1, and the relative lack of lithic debitage from Operations 2, 3, and 4 supports this position (see Tables 5.2 and 5.4). This will be further discussed in the following chapter when I cover the analysis of lithic materials from Conchagua Vieja. Finally, the remains from Operation 3 were not as disarticulated and not as diverse, suggesting the midden only received materials from that particular household.

Trash disposal at Conchagua Vieja should be assessed as a socially distinctive set of practices. While aspects of trash disposal are pragmatic and probably universal for sedentary people, others may be based on particular social meanings. Many Precolumbian sites have reported patterns of small-scale discard ("middens") behind and close to individual buildings and building clusters (Arnold 1990; Hayden 1983; Santley and Kneebone 1993). The map of Conchagua Vieja demonstrate that there are areas with dense concentrations of discard that are not associated with individual houses or clusters, as well as small discard areas near individual residential units. It is possible that the residents of Conchagua Vieja disposed of midden close to houses, and that this form of discard was indeed an indigenous practice. The larger concentrations of discard may reflect a new pattern of community activity introduced with colonization. During the colonial period, the residents of Conchagua Vieja may have simply performed both discard practices within the community.

Both middens exhibited some similarities. Tables 5.1 through 5.4 demonstrate that the majority of recovered ceramics came from the shallowest deposits. Interestingly, Locus 6 of *Sub-Op* 1A revealed a spike in shell debris, ceramics, faunal fragments, and lithic debitage. A similar spike is evident in Locus 2 of *Sub-Op* 3A. A closer look revealed that both Locus 6 of *Sub-Op* 1A and Locus 2 of *Sub-Op* 3A had similar matrices: a dark grayish brown silty loam. In addition, matrices that were lighter in color, and of silty clay loam textures also followed both Locus 6 of *Sub-Op* 1A and Locus 2 of *Sub-Op* 3A. Locus 3 of *Sub-Op* 3A also exhibited similar characteristics to Locus 8 of *Sub-Op* 1A – decrease in shell density and relative consistency in faunal remains – with the exception that no lithic debris was recovered from this context. The similarities continued with Locus 10 of *Sub-Op* 1A and Locus 4 of *Sub-Op* 3A: both matrices were very compact, dark grayish brown clay loams. I should also note that Locus 12 of *Sub-Op* 1A was a continuation of Locus 10. All of these lines of evidence –

matrix composition and density of material remains – strongly suggest that Loci 6 through 12 of *Sub-Op* 1A are linked chronologically to Loci 2 through 4 of *Sub-Op* 3A.

In addition to midden areas – which may be associated with neighborhoods in the site and indirectly with individual houses or house clusters – the identification of hearths, such as the one found in *Sub-Op* 2B, are significant architectural elements needed to evaluate changes or persistence in food preparation activities. In Precolumbian Central America, there is evidence for ground-level hearths outlined in stone inside and outside of architectural structures; fired clay hearths built on raised platforms inside of domestic structures, and ovens dug into the earth outside of domestic structures (King 2008). Based on ethnographic research done in Honduras and El Salvador (Rivas 1993), it is likely that ground level and raised hearths inside domestic structures provide indirect exposure to fire vessels containing soups and stews, and more direct exposure for griddles used for tortillas. External earth ovens, if used for food preparation and not other local industries, would have been limited to producing steamed breads (tamales) or roasts. Roasts, however, are not frequently noted as a component of indigenous foodways in the region (Fowler 1989).

For analytic purposes, I am treating these deposits as roughly equivalent. During the analysis of the material assemblage, I considered feature contents separately per locus for Operations 2, 3 and 4, since these entities are relatively bounded. For Operation 1, I chose to combine specific Loci according to depositional events. I also respect the superposition that existed between items and loci with depositional integrity. In the following chapter I will pay most attention to the continuity of specific material practices in the colonial period deposits that I chose to excavate.

Finally, I do not believe the interment in Locus 9 of *Sub-Op* 4A is associated with the church, and that it is most likely associated with a residential building that preceded the construction of the church. This is an important distinction to make for two reasons. First, by not associating the human burial with the church I am eliminating a set of practices attached to the interment of specific individuals inside of churches. Second, implying that the church was constructed over an area that had previously been inhabited introduces questions related to the use of that space just before the construction of the church. Were residents forced to remove themselves from this area in order to construct the fort? Or was the area already left open because the residents of Conchagua Vieja were simply continuing a set of practices that intentionally left spaces in the community that were once occupied open and intact, thereby cultivating a persistent connection between the earliest and latest residents at the site? Both of these questions will be addressed in chapter 7.

SUMMARY

Using a multi-stage research designed that utilized low-impact field methods, I targeted specific areas of Conchagua Vieja that provided important information with which to address the continuity of indigenous practices at Conchagua Vieja. The following chapter will focus on the artifacts recovered during excavations. While it is certain that indigenous people lived in the village of Conchagua Vieja before the arrival of the Spanish, my archaeological research of the site did not encounter any deposits that I could safely say were from the post-classic, or proto-historic period. I also did not encounter any evidence that would indicate a post-abandonment occupation of the site, after 1683. In sum, the

investigations of Conchagua Vieja suggest that the deposits associated with the village are from the colonial period.

Primarily native people who resided at Conchagua Vieja deposited all of the deposits and artifacts encountered through excavation. The material residue of residential life at Conchagua Vieja will be key to developing a picture of how native practices and materials intertwined with novel European-manufactured goods under the mantle of colonialism.

Table 5.1 – Density of materials recovered from each depositional event recorded in *Sub-Op 1A*.

	Ceramics (g.)	Shell (kg.)	Lithics (g.)	Fauna (g.)
Loci 1 & 2	14373.5	88	73.9	227.4
Locus 3	8088	54	20.8	154.2
Locus 4	2514.8	85	27.6	37.2
Locus 6	NA **	108	97.36	32.2
Locus 8	3988.6	66	9.3	46.88
Locus 10	905.5	35	91.81	26.4
Locus 12	1457.8	18	106.14	50.1
Locus 16	1113.5	8	1.3	7.8
Locus 17	646.8	8	14.08	3.9
Locus 19	1920.3	10	1.8	21.4
Locus 20	943.4	5	2.3	9.4
TOTALS	35952.2	485	446.39	616.88

* Loci 1 and 2 were combined because they represent one mixed deposit.

** The ceramics were misplaced during the movement of materials from the *Casa Presidencial* to the Department of Archaeology in San Salvador.

Table 5.2 – Raw count of materials recovered from *Sub-Op 1A*.

	Ceramics	Lithics	Fauna
Loci 1 & 2	689	36	57
Locus 3	355	27	118
Locus 4	79	43	164
Locus 6	NA	56	131
Locus 8	210	4	133
Locus 10	92	110	157
Locus 12	62	153	275
Locus 16	87	10	76
Locus 17	44	8	2
Locus 19	92	24	128
Locus 20	56	29	159
TOTALS	1766	494	1400

Table 5.3 – Density of materials recovered from each depositional event recorded in *Sub-Op 3A*.

	Ceramics (g.)	Shell (kg.)	Lithics (g.)	Fauna (g.)
Locus 1	6182.1	26	4.93	15.9
Locus 2	2263.5	32	0	7.7
Locus 3	456.8	29	0	10.3
Locus 4	1238.2	10	.84	73.9
Locus 6	545	0	.56	1.5
TOTALS	10685.6	97	6.33	109.3

Table 5.4 – Raw count of materials recovered from *Sub-Op 3A*.

	Ceramics	Lithics	Fauna
Locus 1	168	13	4
Locus 2	133	0	53
Locus 3	58	0	158
Locus 4	96	1	206
Locus 6	27	1	40
TOTALS	482	15	461

Table 5.5 – Raw count of materials recovered from Operation 2.

	Ceramics	Lithics
Sub-Op 2A	30	5
Sub-Op 2B	33	6
Sub-Op 2C	90	24
TOTALS	482	15

Table 5.6 – Raw count and weights of ceramic, lithics, and *teja* recovered from *Sub-Op* 4A.

	Ceramics	Ceramics (g.)	Lithics	Lithics (g.)	Teja (kg.)
Locus 1	1	11.4	0	0	6
Locus 2	9	339.9	0	0	31
Locus 3	14	568.9	1	1.59	8
Locus 4	11	78.2	1	2.1	0
Locus 6	29	283.3	1	1.24	0
Locus 7	29	21.9	0	0	0
Locus 8	21	123.7	1	.47	0
Locus 9	20	184.3	3	2.12	0
TOTALS	134	1808.7	7	7.52	45

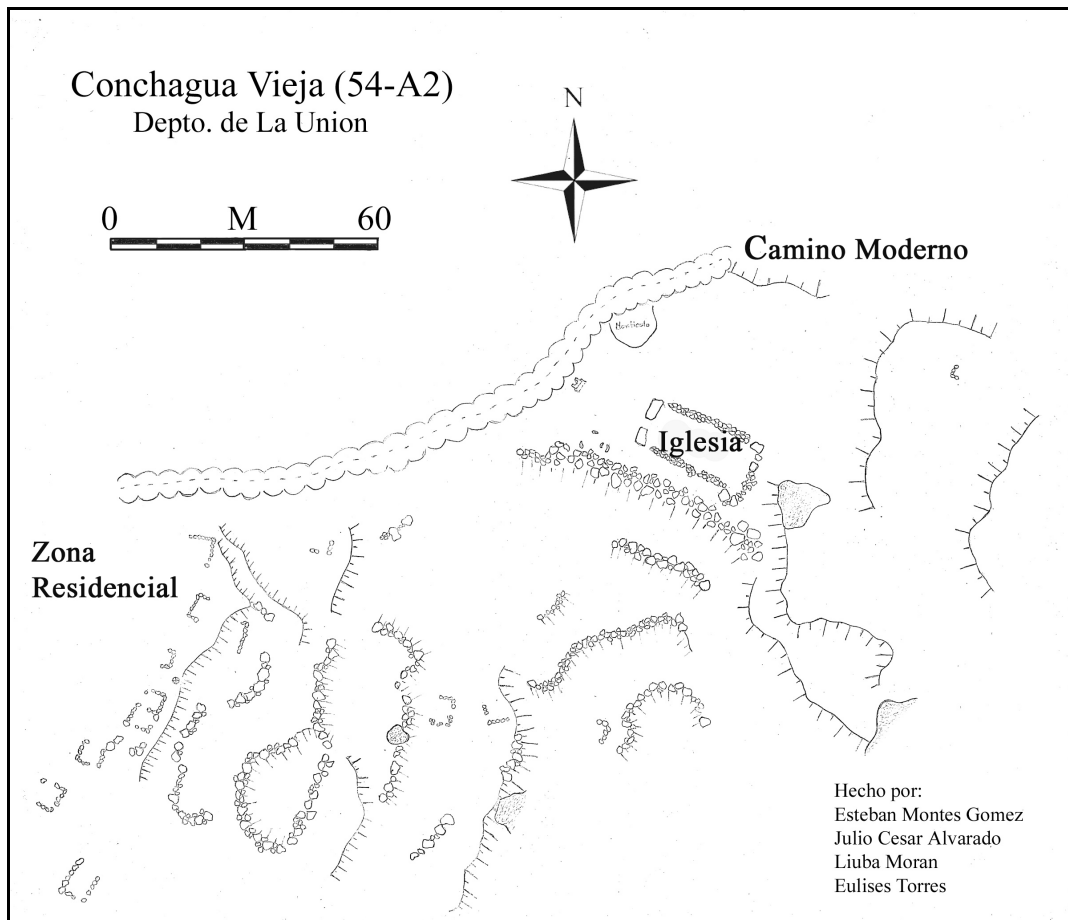


Figure 5.1 – Plan map of Conchagua Vieja on the island of Conchagüita.

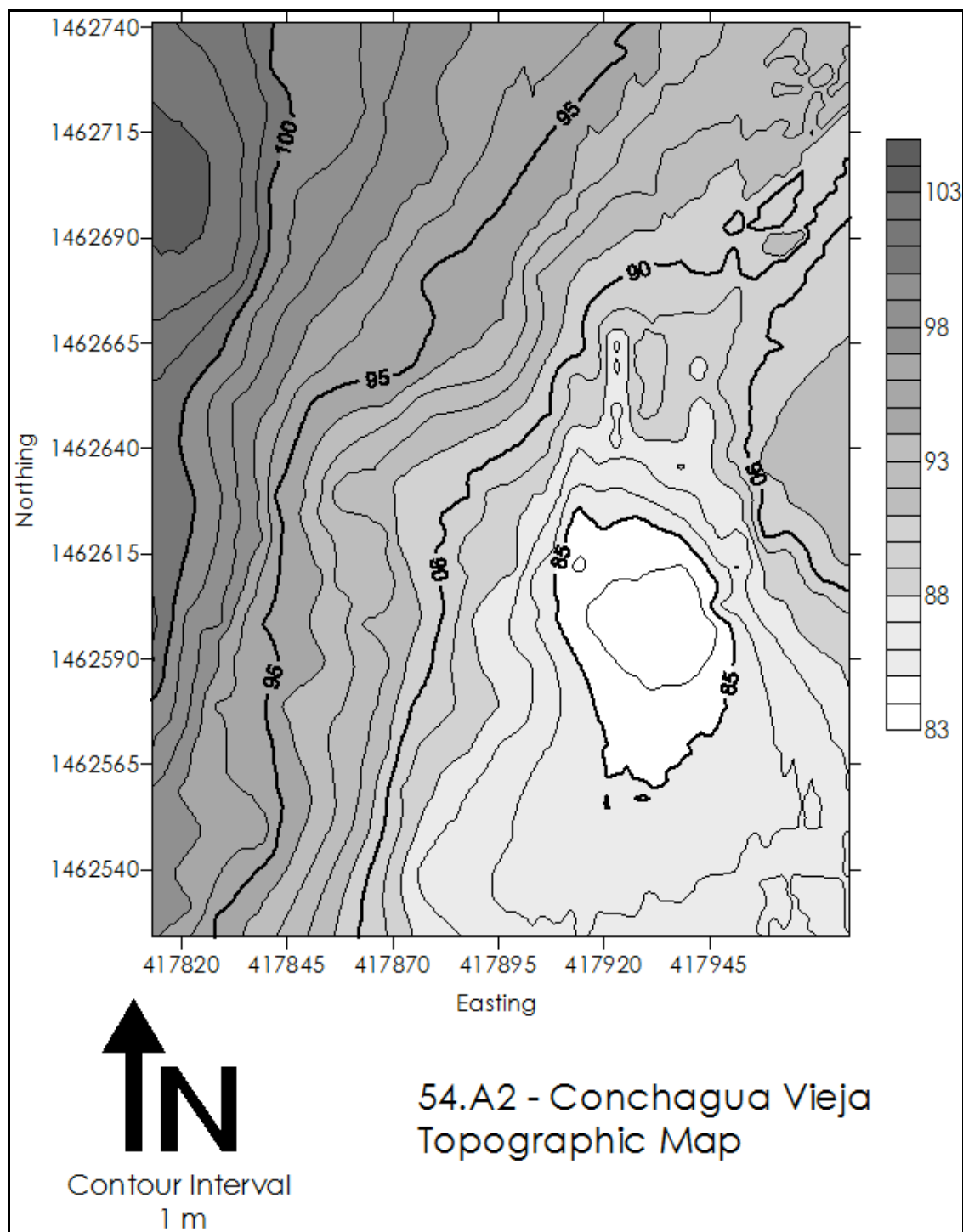


Figure 5.2 – Topographic map of Conchagua Vieja.

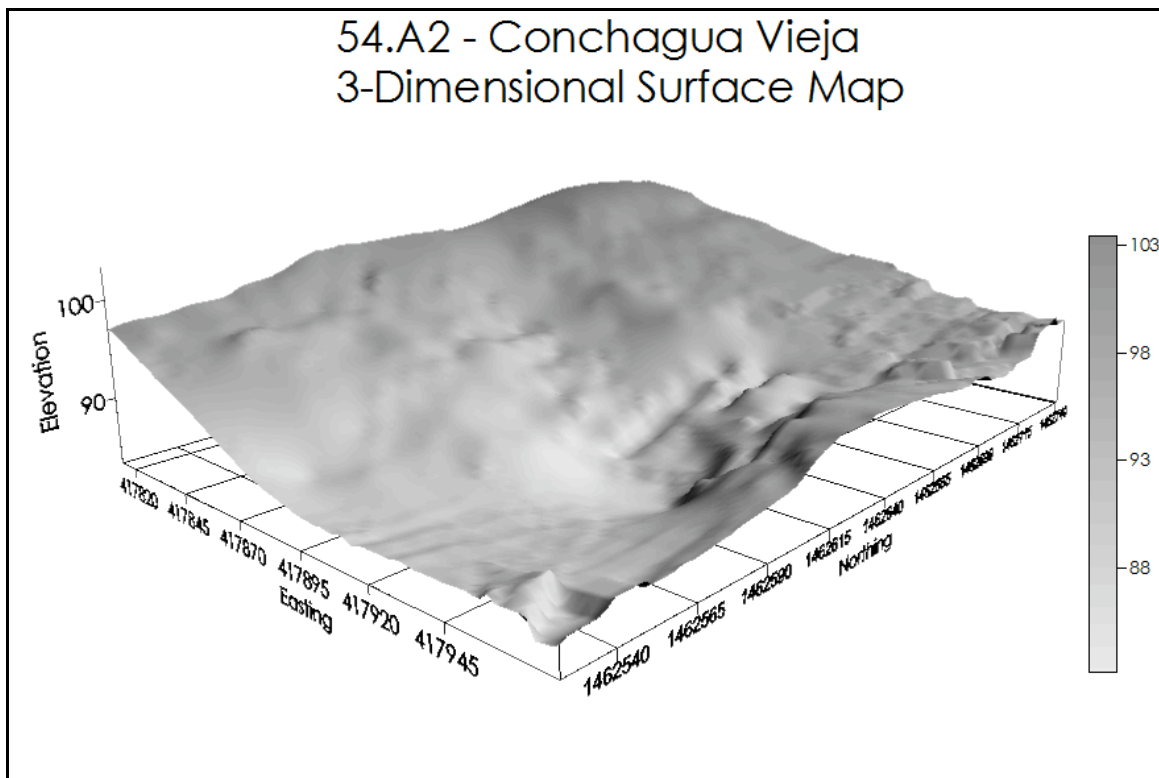


Figure 5.3 – 3-dimensional surface map of Conchagua Vieja.

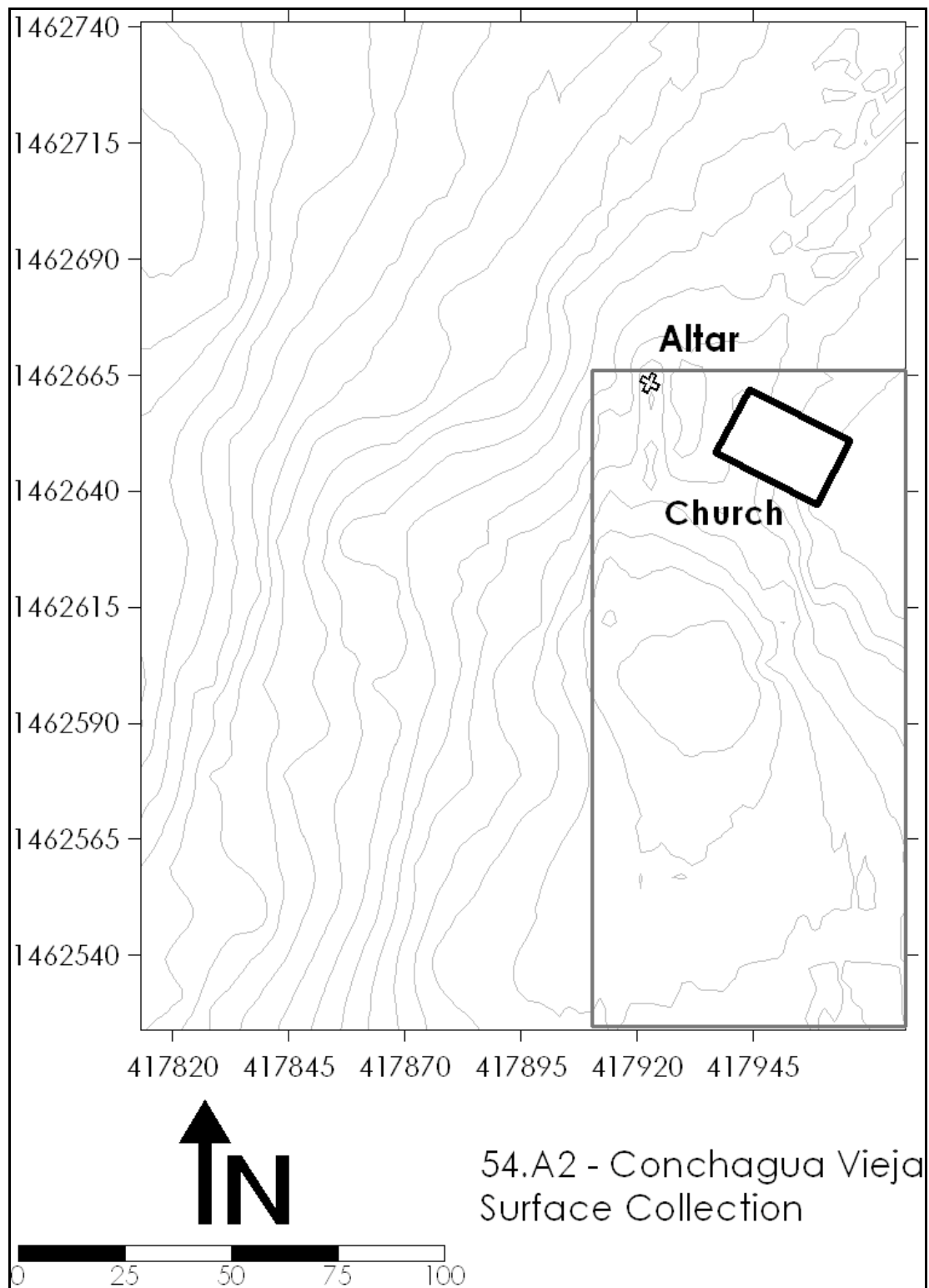


Figure 5.4 – Boxed area represents the extent of surface collection.

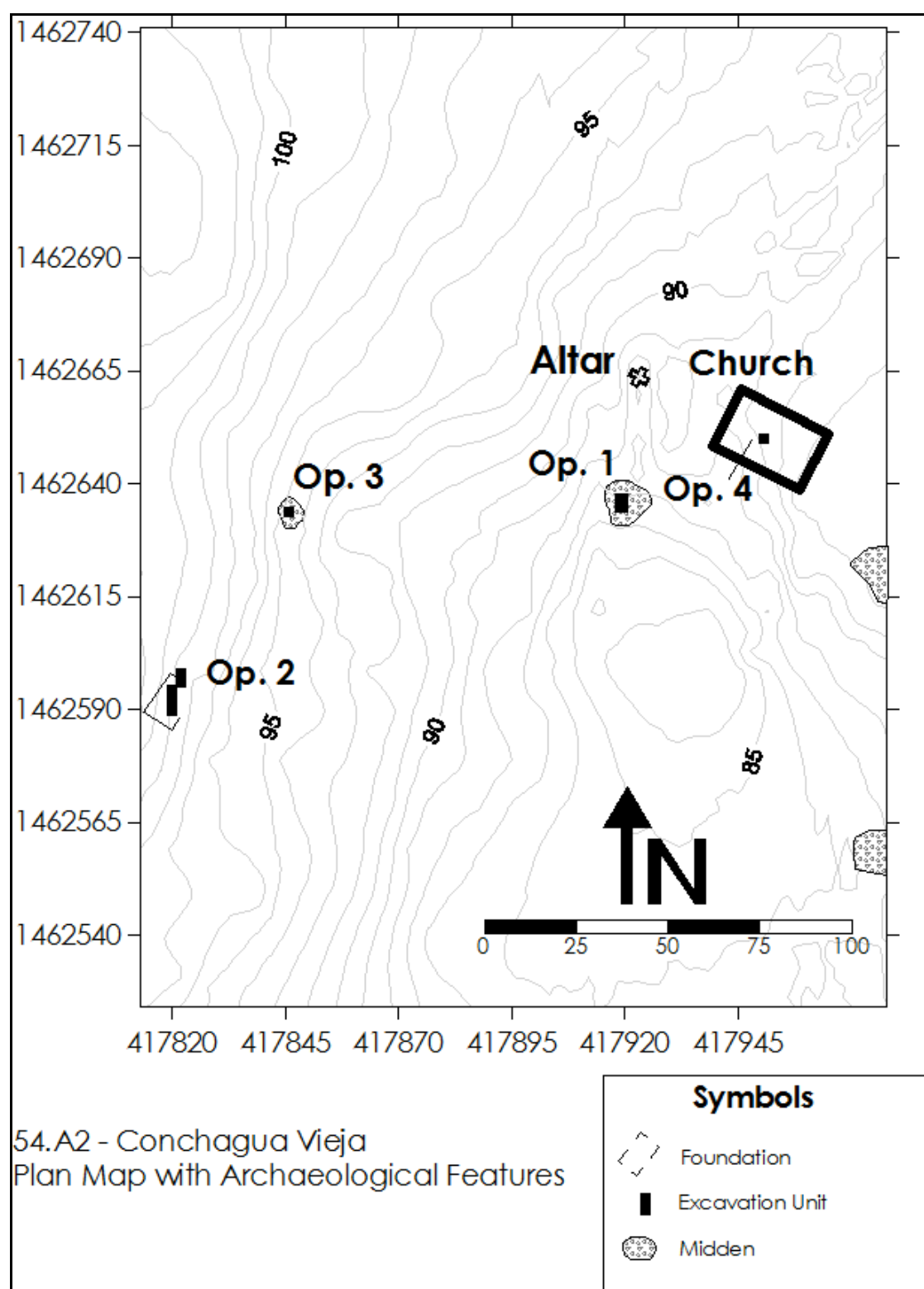


Figure 5.5 – Plan map of Conchagua Vieja with archaeological features.

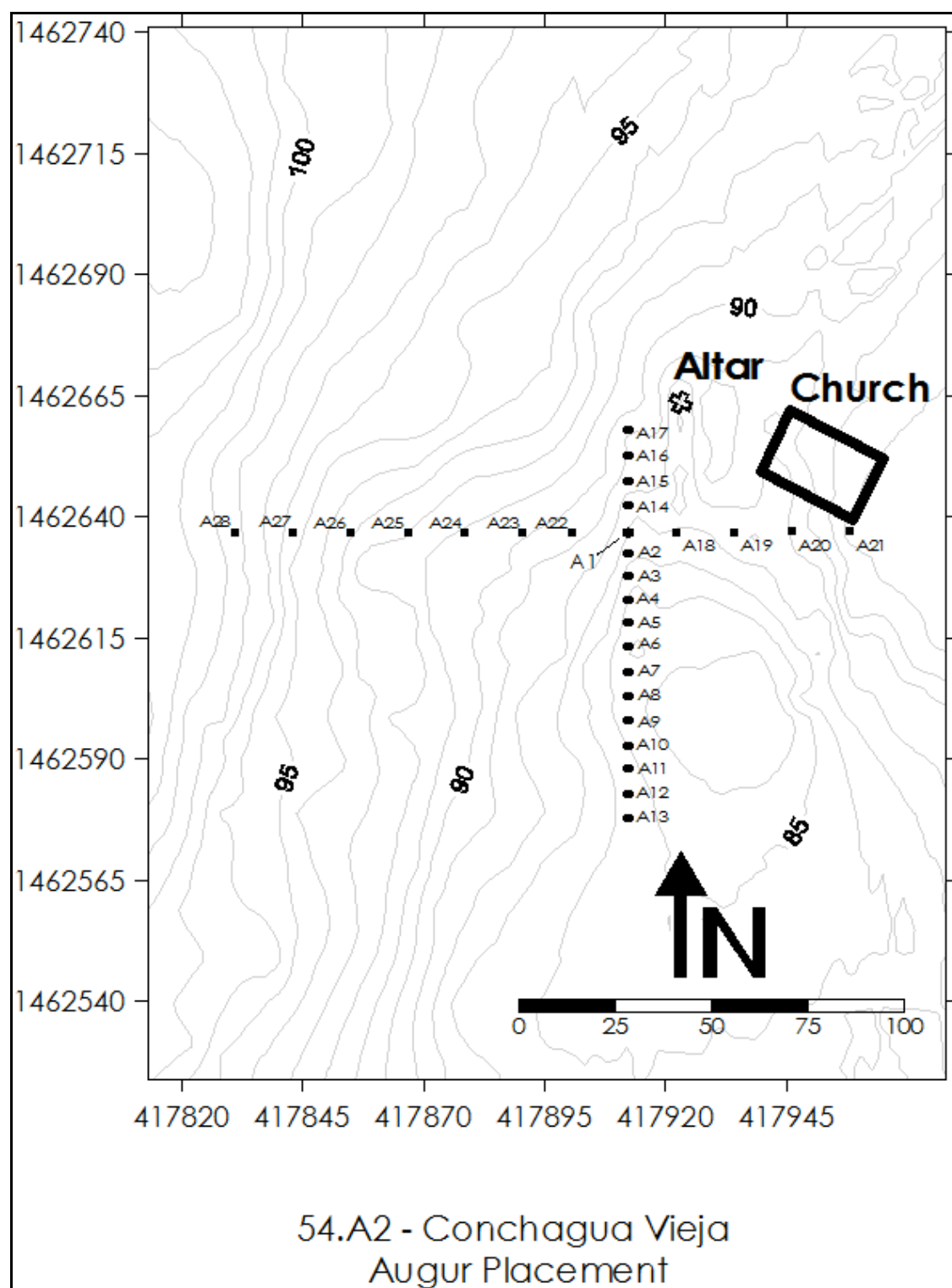


Figure 5.6 – Augur survey at Conchagua Vieja.

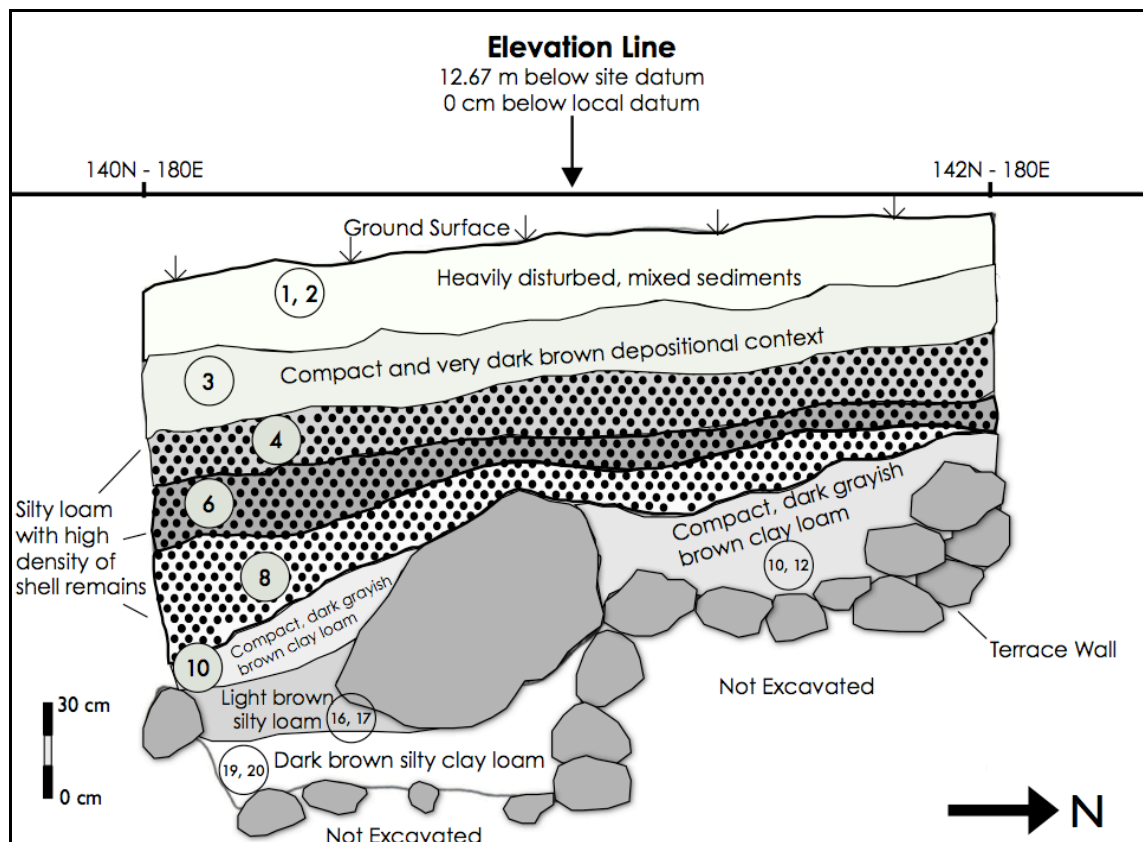


Figure 5.7 – Stratigraphic profile of *Sub-Op* 1A, west wall. Loci numbers provided for each depositional context.

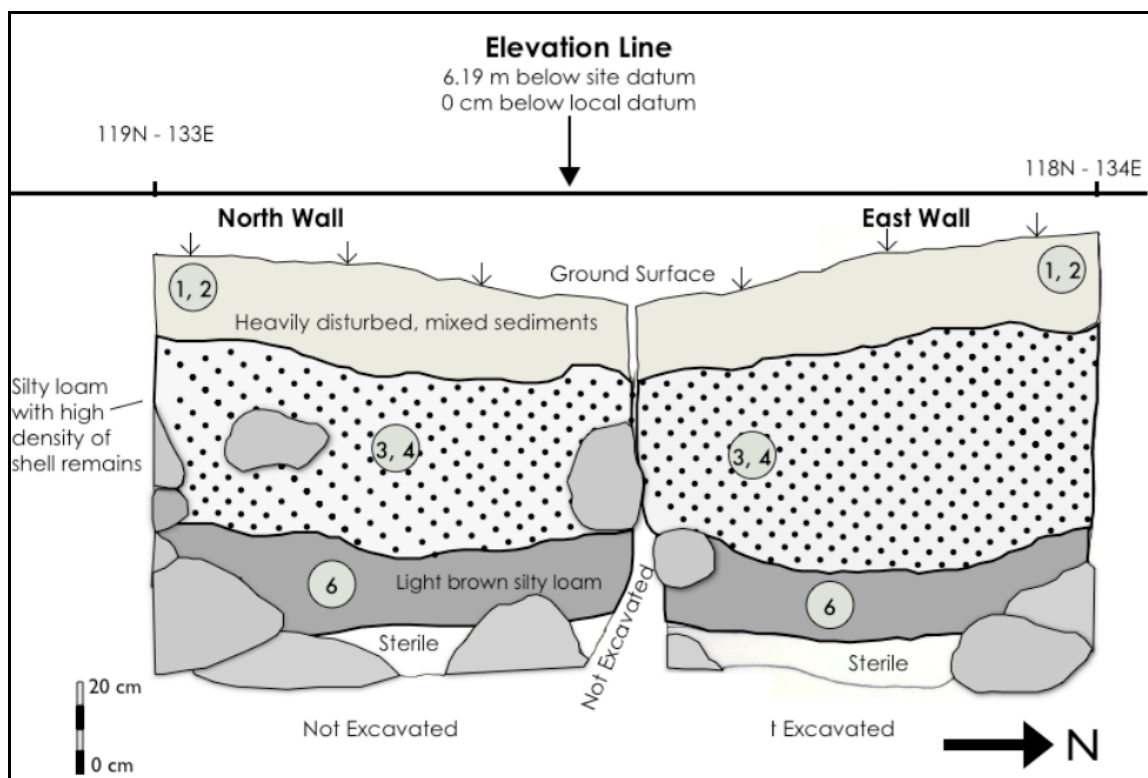


Figure 5.8 – Stratigraphic profile of *Sub-Op 3A*, north and east walls. Loci numbers provided for each depositional context.

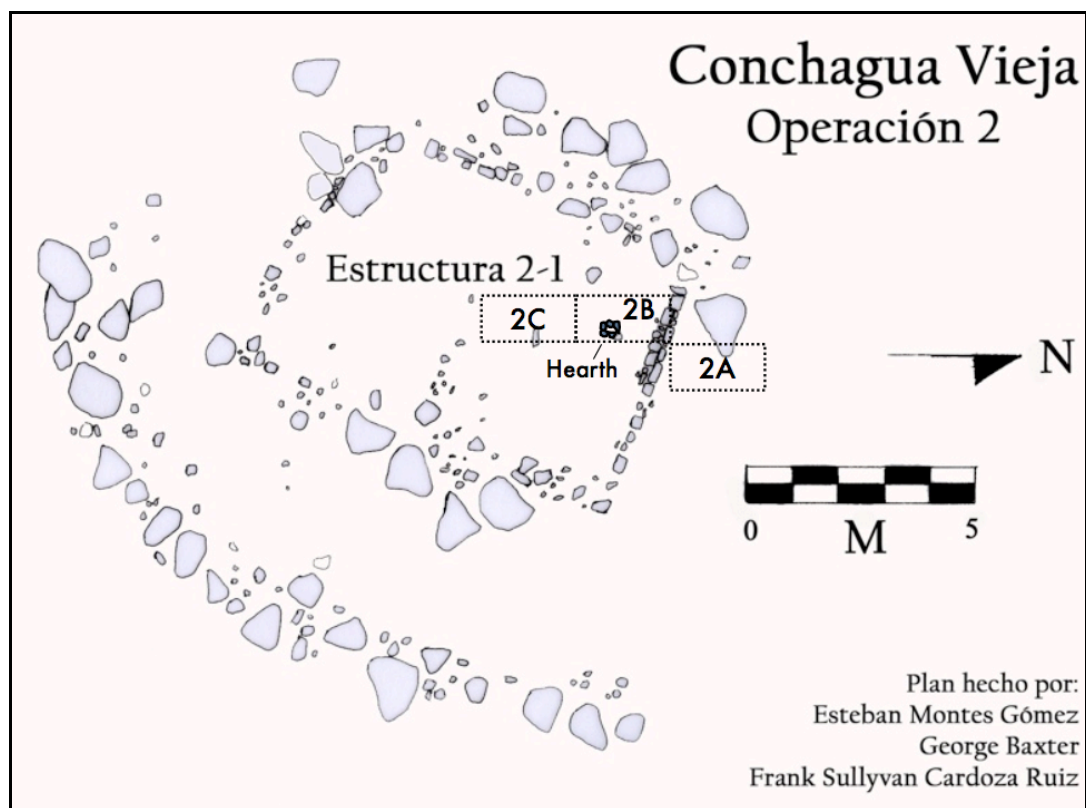


Figure 5.9 – Plan map of residential structure excavated at Conchagua Vieja.

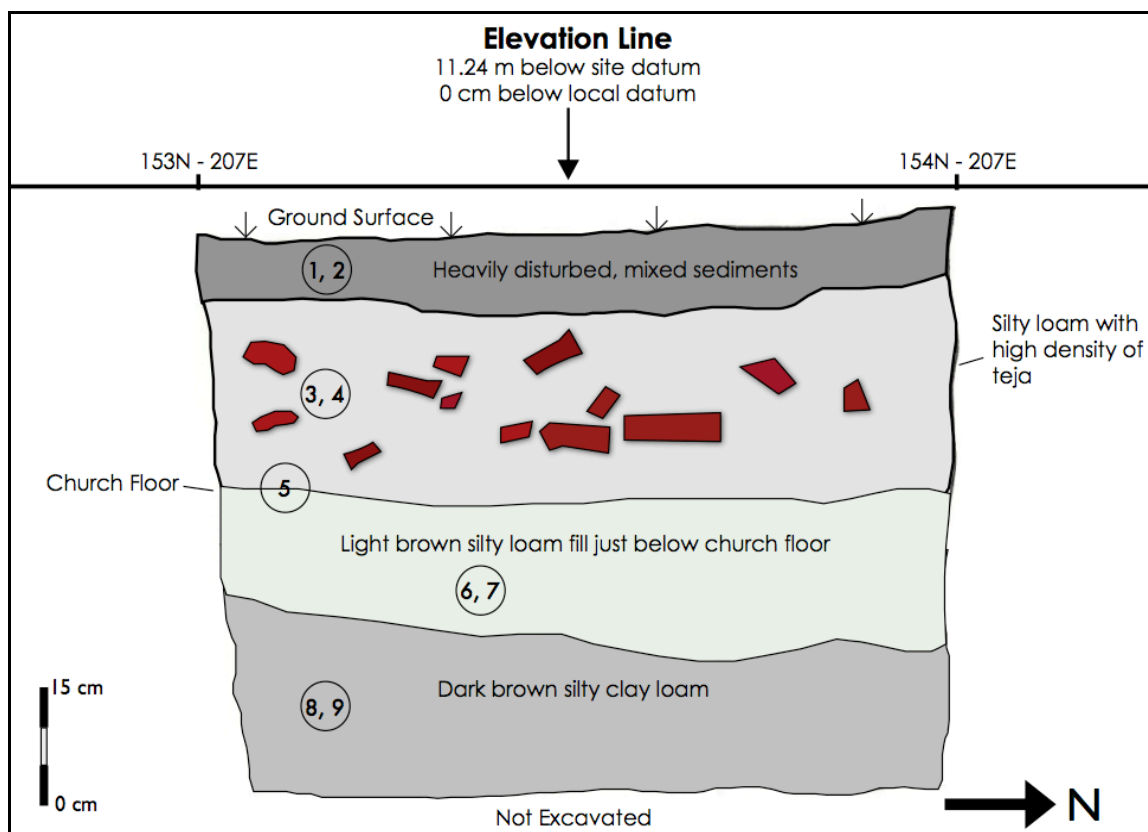


Figure 5.10 – Stratigraphic profile of *Sub-Op* 4A, east wall. Loci numbers provided for each depositional context.

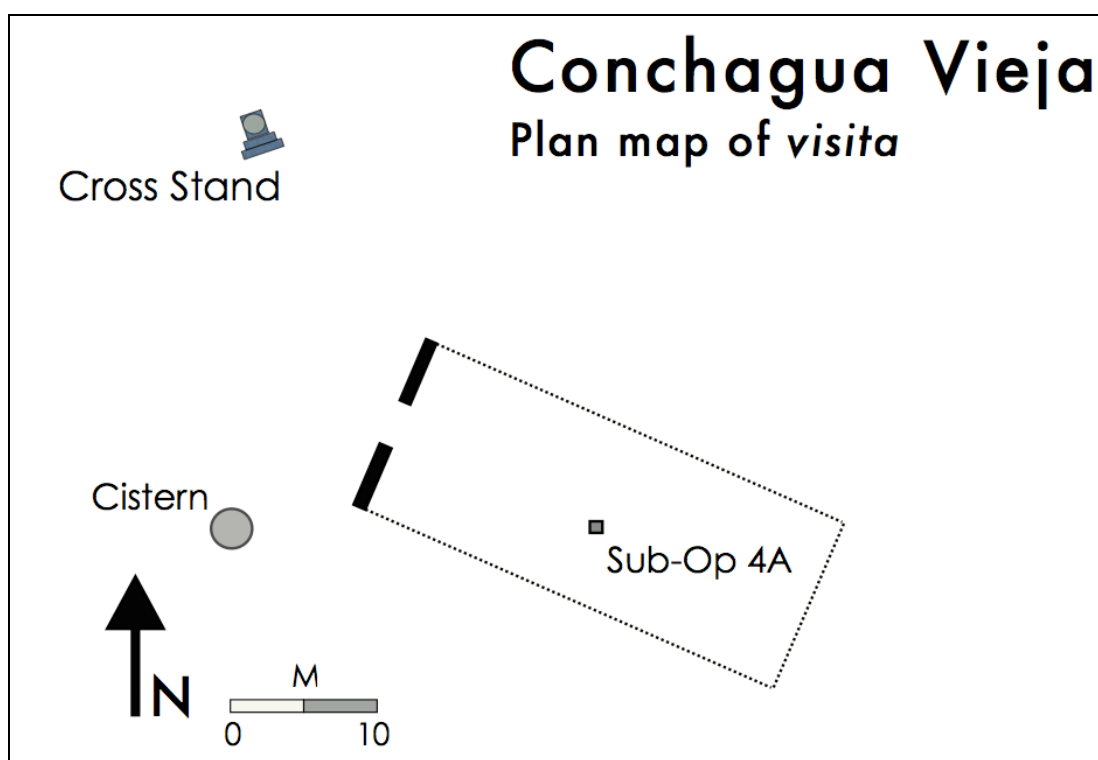


Figure 5.11 – Plan map of the *visita* at Conchagua Vieja.

CHAPTER 6

MATERIAL LIFE AT CONCHAGUA VIEJA

Spanish and Native American sites produce quite different artifact patterns, but Native American sites also produce a variety of archaeological assemblages. Conchagua Vieja was an indigenous village that did not include resident Spaniards. Examining the material remains from Conchagua Vieja is of critical importance because of the very limited amount of European materials found at the site, and the dominance of indigenous artifacts. The small amount of European materials at Conchagua Vieja is noteworthy since there were reports of illicit trading taking place in the region (MacLeod 1973: 167-169). In one case, a Manila galleon by the name of Nuestra Señora de la Victoria anchored in the Gulf of Fonseca after being lost at sea for eight months. Most of the survivors were sick, and more than one hundred and fifty sailors died during the voyage. Almost all of the survivors were unable to continue. According to the documentary record, trading and unloading of materials began almost at once. The events in the Gulf of Fonseca naturally drew the curious, and soon enough while the crew was ashore, the local inhabitants were on board of the ship unloading the cargo. By the time the Oidor Juan Francisco Esquivel had arrived to inspect the scene, it was already too late to prevent much of the trading. He noticed immediately, “more care was needed because of the many canoes which I saw from my lodgings, going and coming from the ship” (MacLeod 1973: 168).

Popular archaeological studies of colonial contexts and associated indigenous responses to colonialism often involve the study of mass-produced European artifacts and their use in native practices. Under this model, the recovery of ceramics, glass, and metal artifacts in indigenous communities, especially in Native American living quarters, can provide a distinctive avenue into evaluating the level of colonial penetration into the everyday lives of native peoples, and the degree of appropriation and use of colonial material culture. The approach used in this chapter will not go that route. The event described above simply illustrates a demand for European and Asian goods. Rather than track acculturation via ratios of native and non-native material culture (Deetz 1963; Farnsworth 1989; South 1977), the methodological position taken here will give way to more contextual considerations of colonial material culture in native social relations (Allen 1998; Cusick 1995; Lightfoot 1997; Lightfoot *et al.* 1998; Loren 2001; Silliman 2001 a and b).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter, I present the material data for the following items recovered during excavations at Conchagua Vieja: ceramics, lithics, archaeobotanical remains, metal, and majolica earthenware. There were two main categories of expectations based on previous work and the methodological frameworks adopted for this investigation: changes in the kinds of practices evident; and changes in the way the same practices are carried out, including the

incorporation of new goods as a result of economic changes and especially, the introduction of European materials. For example, changes in the kinds of practices evident before and after colonization were classically expected as evidence of the imposition of new regimes of labor and religion. One would expect that artifacts used in indigenous rituals would disappear and/or be replaced by Catholic ritual artifacts. Other expectations include: introduced tools replacing local industries, such as metal tools in place of chipped stone; products of wheel-made, glazed, kiln fired ceramic industries and metal-working industries in place of indigenous pottery and lithics. Both of these developments were often expected as signatures of successful colonization, and their absence was presumed to be a sign of incomplete colonization or acculturation.

The analysis provided here suggests that reality is much more complex. Since societies do not simply replace another, new ways of doing things, including new materials made available, and new 'orthodoxies' about how to do things, are seen as resources that colonized people draw on in potentially varied ways. One of the ways some indigenous communities react to the new colonial situation is to incorporate new orthodoxies, and with them, new goods and new ways of using them. The expectations for this situation – which can be evident at a fine scale of individual or household-level behavior, or at a larger scale of an entire village – would be that early colonial households would use European-style goods in ways that these would have been used by Spanish colonists.

A second way that indigenous communities, households, and/or individuals could respond to the new colonial situation would be to incorporate new practices and goods, but use them in ways that were consistent with traditional practices. This would be a form of heterodoxy, in which the practices of everyday life were not those of the orthodox Spanish way of doing things, but also not the same as the pre-existing indigenous way of doing things: the resulting cultural experience would best be described as hybrid. Many of the actual Spanish colonial situations investigated have been argued to represent this kind of response. The selection of bowl forms, and even specific bowl rim forms, in Spanish wares that mimic in size and shape the indigenous bowl forms used for food serving before the conquest at Ciudad Vieja in western El Salvador is an example (Card 2007).

A third set of responses would potentially use new goods, but might simultaneously persist in the use of indigenous goods. This is the kind of complex situation described at Rancho Petaluma in California, where indigenous people who had access to metal knives used obsidian preferentially in their own living sites (Silliman 2001a). These situations can be seen as a second form of orthodoxy, one in which the indigenous actors are consciously persisting in practices that may have significant implications as "traditional".

These three general scenarios formed the range of expectations anticipated for Conchagua Vieja. Recognizing that these patterns all might be present to some degree, and especially that individual households might follow different pathways, any sort of patterns would be significant because of the expectations embedded in the literature for communities with small '*visita*' churches (Andrews 1991; Card 2007; Fowler 1995; Fowler and Gallardo 2002; Gasco 1992, 2008; Graham 1991; Pendergast *et al.* 1991; Sheptak 2007; Weeks and Black 1991; Weeks *et al.* 1987). In certain cases, communities would have been under a higher degree of surveillance than indigenous towns whose labor was allocated to Spanish colonists, but which did not have an imposed religious institution, such as Ticamaya, Honduras (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006; Sheptak 2007), where local and non-local materials seem to have been incorporated in indigenous orthodoxies. At the same time, *visita* churches were not

continuously occupied by Spanish religious authorities, but only at intervals, as the name suggests.

Conchagua Vieja is an ideal venue for such an investigation because of the relatively short time span of the colonial occupation, the good preservation, the specific set of Spanish colonial institutions present, and the body of data collected from excavations. Based on the artifacts recovered from Conchagua Vieja, there were no major shifts in practices during the colonial period. People continued doing what they had always done. European materials were introduced, and available through illicit trade, but they made up a small percentage of the entire archaeological assemblage from Conchagua Vieja.

For clarity, I will provide the methods and results for each artifact class, and provide some general interpretations in the discussion sections for the ceramic and lithic materials because of their complexity. These general interpretations will be linked to the overall interpretations provided in the next chapter.

CERAMICS

The ceramic assemblage from Conchagua Vieja includes 2,991 indigenous objects collected as part of surface collection and excavation conducted as part of this project. A little less than half of the recovered ceramic sherds were large enough for analysis ($n=1485$), and more than 80 percent of these samples ($n=1072$) are undiagnostic body sherds. The bulk of the analysis is therefore limited to a discussion of diagnostic rim sherds ($n=519$). Drawing on methodologies suggested by Clive Orton and colleagues (Orton *et al.* 1993), descriptive information regarding paste, form, rim diameter, rim angle, rim shape, thickness, exterior and interior finish, and exterior and interior color were recorded for each diagnostic ceramic artifact. All sherds were analyzed in San Salvador, at *Casa Dueñas*, the current location of the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology.

Methodology

The majority of the assemblage consisted of ‘plainwares’ that exhibited varying degrees of slips on the interior and exterior surfaces of the vessel. In light of this, priority was placed on the analysis of different pastes encountered in the collection. The paste analysis was done visually using a 10x to 40x microscope. Inclusion size, shape, and density were recorded using three different scales: a percentage inclusion estimation chart; Power’s scale of roundness; and an inclusion-sorting chart (Mathew *et al.* 1991; Orton *et al.* 1993: 238-241). These scales allowed me to initially identify the different pastes with a microscope. Visual identification was then undertaken once I became more familiar with the different paste types at Conchagua Vieja.

Based on preliminary observations, I recorded 6 distinct paste groups. Due to similarities in inclusion types, the paste groups are best understood in relation to one another. Pastes 1, 2 and 3 have the same general type of inclusions; black, red, white, and clear. The main distinguishable characteristics between these three paste groups pertain to the density and shape of visible inclusions. Paste 3, while not a fine paste, is finer than Pastes 2 and 1, and Paste 2 is finer than paste 1. Paste 4 also shares the same sort of inclusion mix as pastes 1, 2 and 3, but feels lighter and has a distinct high-pitched sound when struck. Paste 5 has a similar inclusion form and density to that of Pastes 2 and 3, but has a noticeable greater abundance of white inclusions. The sixth paste was the only identifiable paste at Conchagua

Vieja. Based on the abundance of reflective inclusions, the sixth paste was identified as a Santa Bárbara ware from the Naco Group of the Nolasco Ceramic Subcomplex (Urban 1993: 56-59). The Naco Valley is located in northwestern Honduras, along the Chamelecón drainage (see Figure 6.30). The two types that most resemble Paste 6 are Algo Red and Tal Burnished. The identifying attributes for both Algo Red and Tal Burnished include well-smoothed and burnished surfaces; slip colors; paste; and decoration.

The raw counts of each paste for each excavated context from Operations 1 through 4 are in the appendix. Paste types by locus for each Operation, and the overall percentage of each paste type in each Operation are also available in the appendix. When possible, I tried to relate the ceramics recovered from Conchagua Vieja with those from previously investigated sites in Honduras (Baudez 1976; Beaudry-Corbett and Henderson 1993), eastern El Salvador (Andrews 1976; Beaudry 1982; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Longyear 1944; Valdivieso 2006), and Pacific Nicaragua (Lange et al. 1992; Salgado González 1996), which also includes the Greater Nicoya region of Nicaragua and Costa Rica (Bishop *et al.* 1988; Coe 1962; McCafferty and Steinbrenner 2005). The ceramics from Conchagua Vieja were markedly distinct from these areas, making cross-comparative analysis difficult. The identification of the sixth paste as a Santa Barbara ware is based on comparison with the work of Patricia Urban and Anthony Wonderley in the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras (Urban 1993; Wonderley 1981). Before I continue with the details of each paste type encountered at Conchagua Vieja, I will provide a few details on the ceramic vessel forms evident in the assemblage. I will end this sub-section with some general patterns in the different paste types and vessel forms, and their spatial distributions across the site.

Ceramic Vessel Forms

Bowls and ollas comprise the main categories of vessel forms found at Conchagua Vieja (see Figure 6.1). Vessels can be further grouped according to size: large, medium, and small. The rim sherds collected from Conchagua Vieja are highly fragmented and vessel size is difficult to infer. Orifice diameter was recorded when possible, but the relationship between vessel size and orifice diameter is not always standard: small cooking ollas may have large orifices, or large cantaros might have very small openings.

In El Salvador, cantaros and ollas are both considered jars, and have the same vessel form, with the exception that cantaros are often much larger than ollas. Ollas and cantaros were distinguished from one another based on a combination of surface treatment, wall thickness, paste type, and rim diameter. Throughout Central America, cantaros were used for the storage of dry foodstuffs as well as other perishable items. Cantaros were often used as granaries and were often cached near the household. At Conchagua Vieja, larger cantaros were also likely used for water storage, since water availability was limited to the naturally occurring springs located near the village. Medium ollas were likely used for storage within the household, or cooking area, or for cooking (Salgado González 1996: 176). All of the cantaros and ollas have recurved rims and a globular body with a rounded base (see Figure 6.2). Many of the ollas and cantaros also exhibited oval handles attached to the rim, like example c from Figure 6.2. The ollas and cantaros made up close to 35 percent of the analyzed samples (see Figure 6.1). No analyzed samples of cantaros were taken from Operation 2, and more analyzed cantaros were taken from Operation 3 than Operation 1 (see Appendix A). Ollas dominated the analyzed ceramic vessels from Operation 2 (see Appendix A). Almost all of these samples came from *Sub-Op* 2C.

Bowls served a number of purposes, with large deep vessels used for cooking and shallower ones for serving. Four main bowl forms exist: tecomate bowls (Figure 6.3); deep bowls that were either open or with slightly flared rims (Figure 6.4); flared lip bowls (Figure 6.5); open bowls with tripodal feet (Figure 6.6); and medium-sized shallow bowls (see Figures 6.7 and 6.8). For analysis, the four main bowls were categorized as either deep bowls, medium-sized shallow bowls, bowls with tripodal feet, or bowl with rounded feet. Orifice diameters for the deep bowls varied between 34 and 47 cm, with the majority of samples falling in the 37-42 cm range. Orifice diameters for the medium-sized shallow bowls varied between 12 and 22 cm, with the majority of samples falling in the 17-20 cm range. Bowls with rounded feet (n=8) were also encountered in each of the Operations. Half of the samples came from Operation 1 (see Figure 6.10 and 6.19).

A lower number of ollas (n=7) than bowls (n=10) showed evidence of exterior fire blackening. Of the 10 ollas that showed evidence of exterior fire blackening, 6 of them were from *Sub-Op* 2C. Overall, bowls made up more than 50 percent of the analyzed samples (Figure 6.1). Medium-sized bowls dominated the analyzed assemblages from Operations 1, 3 and 2 (see Appendix A). No deep bowls were taken from Operation 4. Plates made up 11 percent (n=43) of the analyzed ceramics. The plates were broken down into small and large plates (Figure 6.9). The diameters of the plates range from 8 to 34 cm. When comparing Operations 1 and 3, there were proportionately more plate forms recovered from Operation 3 (18%) than Operation 1 (8%). Only 2 identifiable plates were recovered from Operation 2 and 3 Plate rims from Operation 4.

The remaining ceramic artifacts from Conchagua Vieja fall into the following categories: one cylindrical vase; one figurine; one figured piece; and two miscellaneous ceramic objects. Only 1 identifiable cylindrical vase was recovered at Conchagua Vieja. The lone cylindrical vase was recovered from Locus 7 of Operation 4, below the surface of the church. The interior and exterior of the cylindrical vase was highly eroded. One figurine fragment was recovered from Locus 2 of Operation 3 (Figure 6.11), and one figured piece was recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1 (Figure 6.12). The figured piece might have been attached to the rim of a ceramic vessel.

Two other miscellaneous objects came from Locus 1 of Operation 1. Object A of Figure 6.13 was the only ceramic sample that had red paint on a white slip and Object B only had red paint. Object A is distinct in that it has a fine paste that is different from the six defined pastes encountered at Conchagua Vieja. The fine paste, and red paint on a white slip, leads me to believe that this might be a Delirio Red-on-White ceramic object. Delirio Red-on-White is most commonly associated with the Lepa phase (A.D. 625-1000) of Quelepa (Andrews 1976: 114-116). The presence of Delirio Red-on-White on the islands is not surprising, since Delirio Red-on-White was recovered from the site of Playona, on the island of Zacatillo (Gómez 2002). Delirio Red-on-White has been recovered from Copan, Honduras, and sites in the Ulua Valley (Joyce 1986: 319-21). According to Silvia Salgado González (1996: 237), Delirio Red-on-White has gone as far south as the Vidor site, the only Costa Rican site where this type has been reported,

The ceramic forms present in the assemblage from Conchagua Vieja are quite typical of other ceramic objects noted in Precolumbian assemblages for the region (Andrews 1976; Baudez 1976; Beaudry 1982; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Longyear 1944; McCafferty and Steinbrenner 2005; Salgado González 1996; Valdivieso 2006). With the exception of the lone majolica piece recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1, the entire ceramic assemblage

consisted of indigenous made vessels. The continuity of indigenous ceramic use is suggested by the maintenance of a broad range of forms like those used in pre-colonial sites.

Paste 1

Paste 1 is the second most common paste type at Conchagua Vieja (n=383), but not by much (see Figure 6.14). This paste is very coarse and consists primarily of black, grey, red, and white inclusions. Inclusions are poorly sorted and make up a little more than thirty percent of the paste volume. Inclusions range in size from .5 mm to greater than 1 cm, and are predominantly very angular with few sub-rounded variations. Inclusions that range from 1 mm to 2.5 mm dominate the inclusion volume. Although sparse, still visible are smaller, clear and reflective inclusions that can range from very angular to very small flecks. This paste encompasses the most variability of inclusion shape and density of all of the paste groups. Within this paste category, there is some variation pertaining to the dominance of black, white, or red inclusions in the paste matrix. Predominance of any specific inclusion color was noted during analysis. The exterior and interior surfaces often showed heavy wiping, and were sometimes smoothed. All Paste 1 samples showed no evidence of paint or slip (Figure 6.15). If a slip or paint were used for this paste, it did not preserve very well, limiting the amount of information that can be said about the exterior and interior surface colors for this paste.

Paste 1 vessels were consistently thick, even, and well shaped bodies. Wall thickness ranged from 8 mm to 1.6 cm, but most vessels fell within a range of 1.10 cm and 1.35 cm. Identifiable vessel forms include deep bowls (n=14), ollas (n=4), and cantaros (n=19). All of the bowls, ollas and cantaros were quite large. Of all the paste types, Paste 1 appears to have the least amount of vessel form diversity, is well represented in each Operation, and appears in virtually every context where ceramics were present (see Appendix A). No traces of Paste 1 were recovered above the original floor surface of the church, but did occur frequently in Locus 8, below the surface of the church floor.

Paste 2

This is the most common paste type at Conchagua Vieja (n=392). Paste 2 is less coarse than Paste 1, but contains the same types of inclusions; black, grey, red, and white (Figure 6.16). The inclusions of Paste 2 are fairly sorted, and are more rounded and medium to small in size, with fewer large and angular inclusions than paste 1. While Paste 2 tends to be of a medium to low density, there are some instances of a high density of very well rounded inclusions. Inclusions range in size from .4 mm to 3 mm. Paste 2 tends to have a greater density of larger inclusions than Paste 3, while Paste 3 has a greater density of small/fine inclusions. Within this paste category, there is some variation pertaining to the dominance of black, white, or red inclusions in the paste matrix. Predominance of any specific inclusion was recorded. The exterior and interior surfaces were heavily wiped, smoothed and burnished. Overall, the texture for Paste 2 was not as rough as Paste 1. Unlike Paste 1, this paste was more likely to have a red (n=34) or black (n=11) slip.

Paste 2 vessels were very well made, but not as thick as Paste 1 vessels. Wall thickness ranged from 80 mm to 1.45 cm, but most vessels fell within a range of 99 mm and 1.15 cm. Identifiable vessel forms include deep bowls (n=17), medium-sized bowls (n=7), tecomate bowls (n=13), ollas (n=26), cantaros (n=28), plates (n=22) and 1 vessel with rounded feet at the base. Of all the paste types, Paste 2 showed the most vessel form

diversity. Paste 2 was found in each Operation, and appears in every context where ceramics were present (see Appendix A). Paste 2 was consistently used over time for the manufacture of deep bowl vessels, ollas and cantaros. Most noteworthy was the increased usage of Paste 2 for tecomate bowls (n=10) in Loci 1 and 2 of Operation 1. A similar spike is evident in the usage of Paste 2 for plates in Loci 1-4 of Operation 1 (n=12) and Loci 1 and 2 of Operation 3 (n=7). The other 3 plates were recovered from Locus 4 of Operation 3. The vessel with the rounded feet at the base was recovered from Locus 2 of Operation 1.

Paste 3

This is the third most common paste type at Conchagua Vieja (n=310). Paste 3 is similar to both pastes 1 and 2, in that the inclusions tend to be black with some gray, white and red inclusions. In terms of sorting, Paste 3 was given a 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being best sorted. The inclusions make up twenty to thirty percent of the paste volume. The inclusions are small to very fine – smaller than Paste 2 and almost fragment like – and have a low density of small to medium sized inclusions, but a high density of fine/small inclusions. Paste 3 has a high density of small, fine inclusions, but the low density of larger sized inclusions is a characteristic that differentiates paste 3 from paste 2. Paste 3 is finer than paste 2.

Of the Paste 3 samples that were analyzed, the exterior and interior surfaces of the vessels had red, brown, or black slips (see Figure 6.17). The red slip varied from 2.5YR 5/6 to 10R 5/6. The brown slip varied from 5YR 7/2 to 5YR 4/6. Of the samples that were not eroded, the vast majority of Paste 3 vessels were burnished (n=208). Paste 3 vessels are not as thick, or as roughly textured, as vessels made from Pastes 1 and 2. Wall thickness ranged from 53 mm to 1.6 cm, but most vessels within a range of 63 mm to 92 mm. Identifiable vessel forms include medium-sized bowls (n=22), tecomate bowls (n=9); flared lip bowls (n=10); bowls with rounded feet (n=3), bowls with triangular feet (n=1), ollas (n=17), large plates (n=6), small plates (n=3), one figurine, and one cylindrical vase. Based on the samples analyzed, Paste 3 was not used to make deep bowls or cantaros. More than two-thirds of the Paste 3 vessels analyzed consisted of some type of medium-sized bowl (n=45). Many of these bowls, excluding the tecomate bowls, had orifices that ranged from 14 to 20 cm. Eight of the flared lip bowls came from Loci 1 and 2 of Operation 1, and two came from Locus 1 of Operation 3. The absence of flared lip bowls before these two contexts suggests that this vessel form might have been introduced later in the occupation history of Conchagua Vieja. Interestingly, medium-sized bowl and plates were the only Paste 3 vessel forms recovered from Operation 2.

Paste 4

Paste 4 has a similar inclusion make-up as both Pastes 2 and 3: blacks with whites but fewer reds, with inclusion size and shapes that vary from small and rounded to medium and angular. The overall inclusion density is medium and highly variable. The most distinguishing characteristics of Paste 4 are that it has a fine texture, is lightweight, and has a high proportion of voids (small holes in the paste). The combination of lightweight and presence of voids give Paste 4 a high pitched, clink-like sound when struck. Of the seventy-two Paste 4 samples that were analyzed, the majority of the exterior and interior surfaces showed red slips. Like Paste 3 vessels, the red slip varied from 2.5YR 5/6 to 10R 5/6. One of the flared rim bowls in this group had a red slip on the exterior and pale yellowish brown slip

(10YR 6/2) in the interior. Only two of the bowls had pale brown slips on the interior and exterior. The brown slips varied between 5YR 5/5 to 5YR 5/6 (see Figure 6.18). All of the samples analyzed showed burnished surfaces (n=72).

Paste 4 vessels are thinner than Paste 3 vessels. Wall thickness ranged from 40 to 83 mm, with most vessels falling between 52 to 77 mm. Identifiable vessel forms include medium-sized bowls (n=11), tecomate bowls (n=14), flared lip bowls (n=11), ollas (n=16), small plates (n=6), vessels with rounded feet (n=1), and bowls with triangular feet (n=3). Like Paste 3 vessels, Paste 4 was not used to produce deep bowls and cantaros. Paste 4 was found in virtually every context. Interestingly, Paste 4 made up close to one-fourth of the ceramics recovered from Operation 3, and only twelve percent of the ceramics recovered from Operation 1 (see Appendix A for details).

Paste 5

Paste 5 has a medium to high density of gray, black and white inclusions that vary from sub-angular to round. The inclusions make up twenty to thirty percent of the paste volume. The abundance of white inclusions gives Paste 5 a speckled look, and also serves to distinguish it from the other pastes. In terms of sorting, Paste 5 was given a 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. Only seventeen Paste 5 samples were analyzed. This was not surprising since it made up only eight percent of the entire ceramic assemblage (see Figure 6.14). At the same time, Paste 5 was present in most contexts, with the exception of *Sub-Op* 2A (outside of the residential structure), and above the surface of the original church floor (see Appendix A for details).

Most of the Paste 5 samples had a red slip that ranged from 2.5YR 5/8 to 10R 5/6. A small number of bowls (n=3) had a light brown slip (10YR 6/2). All surfaces, interior and exterior, were burnished. Wall thickness ranged from 40 mm to 1.5 cm, but most sherds ranged from 47 to 63 mm. Identifiable vessel forms include medium-sized bowls (n=3), tecomate bowls (n=3), flared lip rim bowl (n=1), ollas (n=7), plates (n=2), and one vessel with a rounded foot at the base (see Figure 6.19). Interestingly, the orifice diameters for the seven ollas were remarkably consistent at 16 to 18 cm. The thickness for each of these samples ranged from 47 to 49 mm. All of the ollas were recovered from Loci 1, 3, 4, and 8 of Operation 1.

Santa Bárbara Ware

The sixth paste is a Santa Bárbara ware that has a micaceous paste that is of medium density, meaning the inclusions make up approximately 40 to 50% of the paste volume. The Santa Bárbara ware has black and gray inclusions, with fewer reds and whites than Pastes 1, 2, and 3. Inclusions are small to medium, ranging in size from .1 to .3 mm. The most distinctive characteristic is the paste, which has clear and reflective inclusions. Based on my paste analysis, reflective inclusions made up less than a fifth of the inclusions. According to Urban (1993: 56), mica makes up approximately 13% of the inclusions for the Santa Barbara ware. While there is some variation in inclusion shape and density, the abundance of reflective inclusions makes the Santa Barbara ware relatively easy to identify (see Figure 6.20).

The Santa Bárbara ware was the least represented paste type at Conchagua Vieja (see Figure 6.14), but I was able to analyze twenty-seven Santa Bárbara rim sherds. A high percentage of the Santa Bárbara sherds were recovered from Operation 2; inside and outside

of the residential structure (see Appendix for details). The ware was recovered from most contexts, with the exception of Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1. This further enhances my argument in the previous chapter that Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1 are linked chronologically. Interestingly, the majority of Santa Bárbara ware vessels were recovered from Loci 1 and 2 of Operation 1 (n=17) and Locus 1 of Operation 3 (n=8), or 33% of the entire paste type at Conchagua Vieja (see Appendix A).

Based on the slip colors, this paste most resembled two specific types: Algo Red and Tal Burnished. Again, a red slip (7.5YR 7/4 and 2.5YR 5/6) was evident on the majority of sherds analyzed (n=18). Six of the sherds analyzed showed a light brown slip (2.5YR 3/4 to 4/4) on the interior and exterior surfaces. Many of the body sherds showed considerable erosion, but of the sherds analyzed, most showed burnished (n=15) or smoothed surfaces (n=2). Wall thickness ranged from 58 mm to 1.4 cm, with most sherds falling between 95 mm to 1.2 cm. Identifiable vessel forms include medium size bowls (n=7), tecomate bowls (n=1), flared lip bowls (n=2), ollas (n=14), plates (n=2), and one ceramic vessel with triangular feet. Figure 6.20 is an example of reed stamping, a common decorative feature of Tal Burnished. Generally, Algo Red often shows a red slip, while Tal Burnished shows is often slipped in a medium brown. Figure 6.20 is hemispherical bowl with a red slip, and a beveled rim shape

Discussion

The ceramic forms present in the assemblage from Conchagua Vieja include most of the vessel forms noted in Precolumbian assemblages for the region (Andrews 1976; Baudez 1976; Beaudry 1982; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Longyear 1944; McCafferty and Steinbrenner 2005; Valdivieso 2006). The application of a red slip on the majority of the assemblage is quite consistent with assemblages collected from other sites in the region (Andrews 1976; Baudez 1976; Beaudry 1982; Beaudry-Corbett and Henderson 1993; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Longyear 1944; Valdivieso 2006). The ceramics from Conchagua Vieja were markedly distinct in that only one decorative motif or design could be made out from the assemblage, making cross-comparative analysis between regions difficult. In light of this, emphasis was placed on paste type, vessel form, and spatial distribution (see Figures 6.21 and 6.22).

Pastes 1 and 2 were the most common paste types recorded at Conchagua Vieja. Paste 1 was most commonly associated with larger storage vessels (like cantaros and ollas), while Paste 2 was used to manufacture a wide variety of vessel forms, specifically vessels that might have been used for storage. The high amount of storage vessels at Conchagua Vieja is not surprising, since the village is located on an island, thereby increasing the importance of caching specific items. None of the other pastes were associated with storage vessels like deep bowls. An interesting side note to Paste 2 was the increased usage of this paste for tecomate bowls and plates later in the site's occupational history. This change in practice is best seen in Operation 1 (see Figure 6.22). The preferred use of Paste 2 for tecomate bowls, in particular, may represent a shift in ceramic practices, since tecomate bowls did not form a large part of the assemblage until later in the site's history.

Pastes 3, 4 and 5 were the finest pastes recorded at Conchagua Vieja, with Paste 5 being the paste type with the thinnest walls. Paste 3 was used to manufacture a wide variety of vessel forms, including the only figurine and cylindrical vase found at the site. The interior surfaces of these three paste types were burnished and slipped in either red, or brown. Paste 5

ollas also showed a high degree of uniformity in orifice diameter (16-18 cm) and wall thickness (47-49 mm). This level of uniformity was not evident with any other paste types. Pastes 3, 4 and 5 are commonly associated with medium-sized bowls, including flared lip bowls, tecomate bowls and bowls with triangular feet. Interestingly, the Santa Bárbara ware vessels were recovered from most contexts, except Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1. Building off the argument posed in the previous chapter, this line of evidence strongly suggests that Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1 are linked chronologically.

In terms of spatial variation across the site, Operation 3 revealed a higher percentage of cantaros than Operation 1, while Operation 1 revealed a higher percentage of deep bowls than Operation 3 (see Figure 6.22). Both Operations 1 and 3 revealed a similar percentage of medium-sized bowls. As for plates, Operation 3 revealed a higher percentage of plates than Operation 1. Based on the diameter range (8-22 cm), many of the plates recovered from Operation 3 were smaller (n=11). The high percentage of shallow medium sized bowls and plates in Operations 1, 2, and 3 is not surprising since indigenous peoples across Central America prepared foods as soups or stews. Often, these soups and stews were served in shallow bowls or plates, and prepared in deeper, round bottom pots that were exposed indirectly from fires in hearths. Traditionally, smaller animals and cuts are generally associated with indigenous practices of food preparation and consumption, whereas larger animals and cuts are associated with European practices of food preparation and consumption (Reitz 1992, 1993; Reitz and Scarry 1985, 1990; Larsen 1993).

This topic will be explored later in the chapter, but based on vessel morphology, the continued use of shallow medium-sized bowls strongly suggests the maintenance of indigenous food preparation and consumption practices throughout the site's colonial period history. This persistence is further reinforced in a passage taken from Alonso Ponce's visit to the island in 1583:

Los indios de aquella isla es gente muy devota de nuestros frailes, hiciéronles mucha caridad y regalo, trajéronle para aquel día y para el lunes siguiente, que fué vigilia, mucho pescado fresco, ostionos, y otros pescados, y para el domingo gallinas de la tierra, las que fueron menester (Ponce 1873: 115).

The Indians of that island are very devout people to our friars, they gave them a lot of charity and gift and gave them for that day, and for the following Monday, a day of wake, a lot of fresh fish, oysters, and other fish, and for Sunday the necessary chickens of the land (Ponce 1873: 115).

The presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels in virtually every context excavated at Conchagua Vieja suggests a continuous long-distance exchange network that was shared with the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras throughout the colonial period. Many of these vessels were recovered from Operation 2, but do not show up in Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1. This further enhances the position stated in the previous chapter that these two deposits are linked chronologically, and suggests that specific social networks might have temporarily shifted at this time during the colonial period. This shift was also evident in the analysis of lithics from Conchagua Vieja, discussed next.

With the exception of the lone majolica piece recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1, the entire ceramic assemblage consisted of indigenous made vessels. Thus, the data for ceramic vessels forms and paste types at Conchagua Vieja suggests that the Lenca-speaking residents maintained a wide array of practices associated with ceramic consumption over the course of the site's occupation in the colonial period. The use of the vessel forms and paste types described above were relatively constant throughout the colonial period. Only Pastes 1 and 2 seemed to have spiked during the later stages of the site's history. This may represent a shift in practices and the preference for Paste 2 over time to manufacture other vessel forms. Also, there was no way to determine if any ceramics were being produced locally. In 2005 I was able to locate a clay source just north of the village. Samples were taken from this clay source and are currently in storage at the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology in Casa Dueñas, San Salvador. In the future, these clay samples can be analyzed and compared to the different paste types by using a portable energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence (EDXRF) spectrometer. Generally, ceramic artifacts are not allowed to leave the country.

LITHICS

The lithic assemblage from Conchagua Vieja includes 538 stone artifacts. Chipped stone artifacts make up the bulk of lithic objects in the Conchagua Vieja assemblage (n=524), followed by groundstone (n=14). The bulk of this section will focus on the analysis of chipped stone artifacts. First, I will define the classification method used for the analysis of chipped stone artifacts. Results of the lithic analysis will include the morphology and spatial distribution of each raw material (cryptocrystalline silicates and obsidian). I will then follow this discussion with the analytical technique I employed in sourcing the obsidian artifacts recovered from the surface and excavation of Conchagua Vieja. The data for groundstone will be provided first, since the analysis involved a different classification scheme. I will provide general interpretations of the data in the discussion segment of this artifact class. Finally, the forms of chipped stone at Conchagua Vieja were informed by the criteria and terminology established by Sheets (1975, 1977, 1983), Clark (Clark and Lee 1979), Fowler (1984, 1987), and Andrefsky (1988).

Methodology

The cryptocrystalline silicates and obsidian were morphologically analyzed to better understand lithic practices at Conchagua Vieja. Cryptocrystalline silicates – specifically, chert and chalcedony – dominated the chipped stone artifact assemblage at 469 specimens. The majority of the cryptocrystalline silicates (CCS) specimens recovered from Conchagua Vieja were classified asdebitage (n=465), and only four of the specimens were classified as either blade fragments (n=3) or as cores (n=1). The two blade fragments do not show the dorsal patterning typical of prismatic blade manufacture, but were defined as blades based on their parallel margins, which are generally twice as long as they were wide. None of thedebitage showed any edge modification that could be considered unimarginal, bimarginal, or a combination of both. Debitage is defined here as any piece that is detached from an objective piece, such as a core or tool-in-preparation. Flakedebitage is defined as any debris that includes one recognizable ventral surface (Sullivan and Rozen 1985: 785), and non-flakedebitage is defined as debris that is non-oriented, or lacking recognizable ventral and dorsal surfaces, such as angular shatter. A flake is defined as complete if it possesses a striking

platform and a recognizable termination, so that the entire detached piece can be seen from its point of applied force to the exit of that force. Only eight such specimens were recovered from Conchagua Vieja. Incomplete flakes include those specimens that exhibited the following characteristics: a striking platform; a step-terminated end (proximal flake); a feather, plunging or hinge termination (distal flake); or those specimens that did not demonstrate intact distal or proximal ends (flake shatter). In terms of the lithic debitage analysis below, I chose to focus on the following attributes: the size of the debitage and the amount of dorsal cortex. Other attributes, such as flake termination, platform type, and dorsal flake scars were examined, but the sample size for each of these attributes was low.

The obsidian specimens from Conchagua Vieja were recovered through surface survey (n=30) and excavation (n=25). Basic forms include blades (n=24), flake tools (n=18), projectile points (n=2), and debitage (n=11). Flake shatter, from debitage, was distinguished from flake tools by the presence of modification subsequent to its removal from a core. Modification was defined by the following: size of the flake; angle of the margins, which is roughly related to expected uses of scraping or cutting; the presence of margin retouching in order to sharpen, or change the edge angle; and use-wear resulting from the use of the flake for either cutting or chopping. Obsidian debitage, like CCS, occupies the broad categories of angular shatter, complete flake, proximal flake, and flake shatter. All of the blades at Conchagua Vieja show the dorsal and ventral patterning typical of prismatic blade manufacture: flake scars on the dorsal surface and triangular in cross section.

Groundstone

Artifacts in this section can be classified broadly as manos, metates, and unidentifiable groundstone. Mano fragments dominate the collection at 6 specimens. These range from 7 to 13 cm in length and from 5 to 8 cm in width/diameter. Only Operations 1 and 3 produced the mano fragments. The manos from Operation 1 were heavily battered on one end. Only 3 metate fragments were recovered from Operations 1 and 3. The basin depths ranged from 4.8 to 11.5 cm, and the heights ranged from 9 to 18.2 cm. Based on the morphological dimensions, three types of metates were identified: slab metate, shallow basin metate, and a trough metate. Five other unknown items were originally classified as groundstone, but they are not described or accounted for here because of the ambiguity and the low probability of being cultural.

Cryptocrystalline Silicates

Chert and chalcedony artifacts number 469 across Operations 1, 2, and 3 (Figure 6.24). Operation 1 revealed the highest concentration of chert and chalcedony artifacts at 412 specimens. No chert and chalcedony artifacts were recovered from Operation 4. The assemblage differs notably from obsidian in its lack of formal tools, consisting mainly of angular shatter and flake shatter. Only four lithic artifacts are anything other than debitage: 1 core fragment, and 3 prismatic blade fragments. The 1 core fragment was recovered from Locus 10 of Operation 1, which happened to reveal the second densest concentration of CCS fragments throughout the entire site (see Figure 6.24). The core appeared to be exhausted, since it was less than 30 mm in maximum dimension. The reduction trajectories are exclusively multidirectional. The 3 blades showed edge modification on both the ventral and dorsal surfaces, and measured less than 30 mm in length. The high concentration of debitage led me to look at the size of the debitage and the amount of dorsal cortex.

Since stone tool technology is a reductive process, the size of detached pieces become increasingly smaller in length, width, and thickness as more reduction takes place. It should be noted that while this is a general trend, it is quite likely that small flakes can be removed at any stage of stone tool production (Mauldin and Amick 1989: 78). The main point to note is that the maximum size of the largest flakes will decrease with each successive stage of lithic reduction. I chose debitage size as an attribute to focus on in order to discriminate bifacial reduction from other lithic techniques and help identify technologically mixed assemblages (Patterson 1990: 551). Size was measured by using categories of <5 mm, 5≤10 mm, 10≤15 mm, 15≤20 mm, 20≤30 mm, and >30 mm. Lithic size was determined by placing each artifact in circles with the requisite diameters at the artifact's maximum coverage.

Dorsal cortex can also serve as a potential index for determining the stage of lithic reduction, but should be used carefully. Some artifacts, like obsidian, might have initiated as cortex-free, or the amount of cortex on flakes in any given assemblage may be more a function of nodule size than reduction technology (Bradbury and Carr 1995: 106). At the same time, archaeologists have noted that the amount of dorsal cortex can be useful in identifying the earliest stages of lithic reduction, and is best used in relation to debitage size (Ahler 1989: 90; Mauldin and Amick 1989: 70). Dorsal cortex was organized according to the following categories: none, <50%, >50%, and 100%.

Summary percentages for Operations 1, 2, and 3 reveal the chert and chalcedony artifacts to be 59.1% flake shatter, 36.4% angular shatter, 2% proximal flakes, and 2% complete flakes. Debitage density in Operation 1 was higher than Operations 2 and 3. All of the complete flakes were recovered from Loci 3 and 6 from *Sub-Op 2B*, and the proximal flakes were recovered from Locus 1 of Operation 3. The most revealing bit of information comes from the size of the chert and chalcedony debitage in Operations 1, 2, and 3 (see Figures 6.25 and 6.26). Operation 1 predominantly consists of debitage that are of the smallest size classes (<5 and 5≤10 mm), while Locus 1 of Operation 3 is relatively balanced with the smallest three size classes (<5 to 10≤15 mm). Interestingly, *Sub-Op 2C* consists primarily of three of the largest size classes (10≤15 to 20≤30 mm). In terms of cortex cover, only seventeen chert and chalcedony artifacts revealed <50% (n=9) or >50% (n=8) coverage. Chert and chalcedony artifacts with cortex were only recovered from Loci 3, 4 and 12 of Operation 1. The distribution of CCS artifacts with dorsal cortex was ambiguous when compared to debitage size.

Obsidian

Obsidian artifacts number 55 across the entire site, and only 25 of those artifacts were recovered through excavation (see Figure 6.28). The 30 obsidian artifacts recovered through surface survey were recovered in 2005 (see Figure 5.4). Obsidian EDXRF sourcing results are presented later in the chapter. Quantitatively, prismatic blade fragments are the most common obsidian artifact category at Conchagua Vieja (n=24), with flake tools (i.e., debitage with retouch or use-wear) as the second most common artifact category (n=18). Of the prismatic blade fragments, 9 had intact striking platforms, while only 2 of the flake tools and 1 one of the projectile points showed striking platforms. All prismatic blade fragments, flake tools, and projectile points showed retouch and use-wear. Finally, not all of the flake tools and debitage recovered from Conchagua Vieja need be products or by-products of a prismatic blade industry. The flake tools and debitage could also be produced by casual bifacial, or bipolar industries.

As part of the core reduction process, the striking platform from which blades would be removed during prismatic blade manufacture were almost roughened for better accuracy. Of the 12 obsidian artifacts that showed intact striking platforms, 8 platforms were striated and only 4 platforms were flat. Following Andrefsky (1998: 93-95), a flat platform is defined as a smooth surface lacking any facets, and a striated (or abraded) platform is intentionally smoothed through grinding. No spatial or stratigraphic patterns could be made from the 12 obsidian artifacts with platforms. It is safe to say that two principal platform preparation techniques were practiced at Conchagua Vieja.

Only two projectile points were recovered from Conchagua Vieja. Both are small dart points characteristic of the Postclassic, side notched with a concave base. Both obsidian dart points were worked from prismatic blades, a typical Postclassic form. One of the dart points was retouched on both surfaces. One of the dart points was recovered in Locus 1 of Operation 3, and the other projectile point was recovered through surface survey, but in the vicinity of Operation 1. Both points are associated with the two midden deposits. Overall, both the blades and projectile points show consistent uniformity in platform preparation and morphology.

Obsidian debitage occupies the broad categories of angular shatter (n=3) and flake shatter (n=6). All of the obsidian debitage was recovered from Operation 2, specifically *Sub-Op* 2A and *Sub-Op* 2B. Interestingly, while Loci 3 and 6 of *Sub-Op* 2C revealed a high density of chert and chalcedony debitage, Loci 10 and 13 of *Sub-Op* 2B revealed only obsidian debitage. All of the Loci are stratigraphically related. The obsidian debitage in Operation 2 falls into two size categories: <5 mm (n=3) and 5≤10 mm (n=5). The chert and chalcedony debitage, on the other hand, is more mixed, but generally falls into the larger size categories (see Figure 6.26). No dorsal cortex was evident on the obsidian debitage.

While Operation 2 consisted almost entirely of angular shatter and flake shatter, Operation 1 consisted primarily of blade fragments, with the exception of 2 flake tools. Operation 3 was rather mixed, representing each stage of lithic production, and Operation 4 consisted mostly of blades, with the exception of the 2 flake tools in Locus 9. No core fragments were recovered, which might suggest obsidian was imported in nodule form and worked into blades and projectile points locally. The blade widths and presence of debitage seem to support this position. Blades widths ranged from .7 to 1.6 mm, representing every stage of lithic production, and the debitage in Operation 2 is consistent with the local production of flake tools, blades and projectile points.

Sourcing

To complement the study of lithic technology at Conchagua Vieja, I subjected all obsidian artifacts to energy-dispersive x-ray fluorescence (EDXRF) characterization. EDXRF analysis is a geochemical method for determining obsidian composition and subsequent geological source. Though macroscopic examination, or ‘visual sourcing,’ has long been the method of choice in El Salvador and throughout much of Central America (Aoyama 1994; Braswell 1994; Braswell *et al.* 2000; Clark and Lee 1984), EDXRF was chosen for two reasons. First, visual sourcing has not proven to be a reliable method for many archaeologists familiar with Mexican and Central American obsidian sources (Jackson and Love 1991; Moholy-Nagy and Nelson 1990). Second, I wanted this analysis to complement other analyses done on obsidian from Quelepa, eastern El Salvador (Braswell *et al.* 1994), and to evaluate the range of social networks the residents of Conchagua Vieja had with other

communities outside the Gulf of Fonseca (Figure 6.30). I performed all EDXRF analyses at the University of California, Berkeley. See Appendix B for details on technique and full data presentation.

The failure of visual sourcing in the past has been caused by several factors. First, scholars working in Mexico and Central America were quite familiar with known sources found in their collections, but were unable to recognize lesser-known sources. Jackson and Love (1991: 51), for instance, initially found difficulties distinguishing San Martín Jilotepeque source obsidian from either El Chayal or Ixtepeque. Familiarity with those three sources eventually allowed them to differentiate San Martín Jilotepeque from both El Chayal and Ixtepeque. Second, few scholars were familiar with the full range of visual criteria that characterizes a particular source. Initially, Moholy-Nagy and Nelson (1990: 171) often confused El Chayal with both San Martín Jilotepeque with Ixtepeque, and other Mexican sources. Finally, scholars were only familiar with worked obsidian, but paid little attention to natural obsidian, complicating visual identification of source obsidian.

Recognizing the complication with visual sourcing, data for the samples were compared to data from the obsidian artifacts of Quelepa, and known Mesoamerican obsidian sources (Glascok 1993, 2008; Braswell *et al.* 1994). The obsidian from Quelepa was analyzed using similar compositional methods. The site of Quelepa is located 8 km northwest of San Miguel (Figure 6.30). It is the largest archaeological site in eastern El Salvador, consisting of some forty structures spread over approximately one square kilometer along the north bank of the Río San Esteban (Andrews 1976). Archaeological research at Quelepa established a sequence for eastern El Salvador that stretched from the late formative to the terminal classic periods. There are three significant phases for Quelepa: the Uapala Phase (200 B.C. – A.D. 200); the Shila Phase (A.D. 200 – 750); and the Lepa Phase (A.D. 750 – 950). According to Andrews (1976: 137), there are virtually no Postclassic markers for Quelepa, and he argues that the site was abandoned near the end of the Lepa Phase.

Known Mesoamerican obsidian source data came from two sources. First, the University of California, Berkeley Geochemistry lab, provided data for samples from El Chayal, Ixtepeque, La Esperanza, El Venado, and San Luis (La Unión) sources in Honduras. Second, Michael D. Glascok provided Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) data for El Chayal, Ixtepeque, Güinope, San Martín Jilotepeque, San Bartolome Milpas Altas, and La Esperanza. The obsidian samples from Conchagua Vieja were then manually assigned to sources based on concentrations of manganese (Mn), rubidium (Rb), strontium (Sr), and zirconium (Zr).

Artifacts were assigned to sources by comparing concentrations of mid-Z incompatibles, which are ‘most useful in the discrimination of archaeological sources of obsidian’ (Shackley 1995). Bivariate scatter plots were utilized to verify relationships of archaeological samples with known sources. Scatter plots of data for mid-Z incompatibles (Sr/Zr, Rb/Sr, Rb/Mn) were used to establish groups of genetically related archaeological samples. Figure 6.29 is an example of a scatter plot for raw Sr and Zr values. While obsidian sources can only be assigned on a probabilistic basis, a majority of the samples from Conchagua Vieja showed chemical characterizations distinctive of known sources.

Plots for Rb/Mn and Rb/Sr were found to be extremely discriminative between data for the Ixtepeque and La Esperanza sources. The El Venado source (see Figure 6.30), demonstrated extreme variability of Mn, Sr, and Zr concentrations, creating broad ranges for these individual elements. All but two of the archaeological samples from Conchagua Vieja

show chemical characterizations distinctive of known sources. Concentrations of mid-Z incompatibles for these last two samples are close to the ranges of data for both San Bartolome Milpas Altas and Güinope, but will be considered unknown origin until further source material analyses from San Bartolome Milpas Altas, Güinope and potential new sources are encountered in Honduras and Guatemala.

The full elemental results of the sourcing are reported in Appendix B. Based on the results, the following obsidian sources were used at Conchagua Vieja: La Esperanza (n=33), Ixtepeque (n=6), Jilotepeque (n=5), San Bartolome Milpas Altas (n=3), Güinope (n=3), El Venado (n=2), El Chayal (n=1), and possibly two other unknown sources. The variety of source obsidian encountered at Conchagua Vieja closely resembles the variety of source obsidian recovered from excavated and surface contexts dating from the late formative Uapala Phase to the terminal classic Lepa phase of Quelepa (Braswell *et al.* 1994: 177). According to Braswell and his colleagues (Braswell *et al.* 1994: 196), the ancient residents of Quelepa participated in a Mesoamerican, rather than Central American, obsidian transference network, as evidenced by the source obsidian recovered from Quelepa: Ixtepeque, El Chayal, Jilotepeque, La Esperanza, and Güinope. Of the nearly 600 obsidian artifacts recovered from Quelepa, more than 95% came from Ixtepeque. At Conchagua Vieja, more than 60% of the obsidian came from La Esperanza. Surprisingly, La Esperanza and Güinope source obsidian were not recovered from Quelepa. This could have been a result of long-established networks with Guatemalan obsidian sources, or an issue of sampling, since most of the excavations and surface survey were concentrated in Quelepa's ceremonial center. Excavated contexts include dry-fill platforms from the Uapala Phase; platforms and terraces from the Shila Phase; and fifteen masonry structures and platforms from the Lepa Phase.

Given the number of La Esperanza materials, it is not surprising that La Esperanza was recovered from every Operation at Conchagua Vieja, and showed the most variability. Interestingly, Operation 2 consisted entirely of La Esperanza obsidian (n=10), all of which were debitage. La Esperanza obsidian was also recovered from both middens and in Operation 4. In Operation 3, La Esperanza was recovered from Loci 1 and 6; and Loci 3, 6, and 8 of Operation 4. The contexts alone suggest that La Esperanza obsidian was being used throughout most of the colonial period, which is especially evident in Operation 4, since La Esperanza was recovered above and below the church floor. Though Güinope was the closest obsidian source for the residents of Conchagua Vieja, the vast majority of source obsidian came from La Esperanza. This is largely due to Güinope material not being well suited for the prismatic blade industry, which La Esperanza material is, suggesting that utility and ease of access explains the high quantity of La Esperanza material at Conchagua Vieja. All three of the Güinope obsidian artifacts recovered from Conchagua Vieja are flake tools with platforms and edge modification. One of the Güinope flakes was recovered from Locus 9 of *Sub-Op* 4A, and from the surface near the southeastern corner of the church.

Because of the low number of samples from other obsidian sources at Conchagua Vieja, no other recognizable patterns emerged. Most notable, were the projectile points, which were made from La Esperanza and Jilotepeque source obsidian. Even more surprising was the presence of so many different obsidian sources at Conchagua Vieja (Figure 6.30). More than a quarter of the obsidian sample came from Guatemalan sources: Ixtepeque, Jilotepeque, El Chayal and San Bartolome Milpas Altas. Of the Guatemalan sources, Ixtepeque and Jilotepeque were the most common.

Discussion

Individuals at Conchagua Vieja put different raw materials to similar uses. These patterns are visible in both tool and debitage characteristics. Lithic reduction and use for the obsidian and CCS raw materials are similar in that stages of lithic reduction are present for both raw materials; with the exception that there is evidence that individuals chose to focus on specific materials for specific purposes. The lack of flake tools from chert and chalcedony, but six flake tools from obsidian is an example of this. Initial stages of reduction are present with chert and chalcedony with one core, and debitage with dorsal cortex. None of the obsidian debitage demonstrated dorsal cortex, and no obsidian cores were recovered. Prismatic blades were produced from both CCS and obsidian raw materials, but based on the samples from Conchagua Vieja obsidian was the only raw material used for projectile points.

It is important to keep in mind that obsidian only made up 11% of chipped stone artifacts at Conchagua Vieja. The absence of obsidian cores and debitage without dorsal cortex might suggest that obsidian prismatic blades were manufactured elsewhere, but the size and platform preparation suggests that, obsidian reduction was devoted in large part to later stages of reduction. Obsidian debitage is consistently smaller than CCS debitage in all areas of the site, especially in Operation 2, where obsidian debitage occurred most frequently. The presence of debitage inside of the residential structure suggests that lithic reduction of raw materials took place in the same location, though all of the obsidian debitage was concentrated in *Sub-Op* 2B and all of the CCS debitage was recovered from *Sub-Op* 2C. The amount of angular shatter in *Sub-Op* 2C strongly supports the position that CCS core reduction took place there (see Figures 6.24 and 6.28).

The amount of angular shatter in *Sub-Op* 2C is telling. Earlier I mentioned that only 3 complete CCS flakes were recovered from Conchagua Vieja, which happened to be in *Sub-Op* 2B of Operation 2. Although more complete flakes could indicate core reduction, it is likely that they represent later stages of lithic reduction. The combined concentration of obsidian debitage and complete flakes in *Sub-Op* 2B suggests that different stages of lithic reduction might have taken place in separate areas of the residential structure. Debitage size of chert and chalcedony objects was also greater in *Sub-Op* 2C of Operation 2, which is interesting considering that debitage size was generally smaller in Operations 1 and 3 (Figure 6.26).

More than half of the obsidian recovered from Conchagua Vieja was La Esperanza material. No prismatic blades from Güinope materials were recovered, but flake tools from either bifacial reduction or bipolar reduction were encountered. All of the other source materials produced both prismatic blades and flake tools from either bifacial reduction or bipolar reduction. No general patterns could be discerned, but the only debitage recovered from the site was from La Esperanza material.

PLANT RESOURCES

Archaeological materials and samples were systematically collected for analysis at Conchagua Vieja. Ten-liter archaeobotanical flotation samples were taken from each depositional event to determine whether historic macrobotanical remains were preserved in the deposit. Flotation samples were processed using a standard barrel-type flotation machine with a 1/32-inch heavy fraction mesh and a 1/64-inch light fraction mesh. After flotation samples were taken, all remaining excavated soils were collected and wet screened through 1/8-inch mesh. The residue remaining in the screen was dried, bagged, inventoried, and

boxed for transport. The bags were labeled with the appropriate provenance information and contents, and entered into a flotation log. All materials and samples were taken to facilities available at the Salvadoran Department of Archaeology in San Salvador for processing, inventory, and analysis. The light and heavy fractions were eventually removed and analyzed by Shanti Morell-Hart, a graduate student from the University of California at Berkeley Paleoethnobotany Lab. The following discussion builds on her report for this analysis (Morell-Hart 2009).

Table 6.1 summarizes Morell-Hart's paleoethnobotanical analysis of remains from Conchagua Vieja. Based on the report, only a few botanical taxa were recovered from the light and heavy fractions, and many of these could not be identified due to the generally poor state of preservation. All sorted materials were classified into general categories of Wood, Lumps (mostly parenchymous tissue), Seeds, Other, Other Charred, Mineral, Modern Botanical, Shell, Snail, and Unidentifiable. Botanical taxa in the *Arecaceae*, *Poaceae*, *Cactaceae*, and *Fabaceae* families were tentatively identified at the family, genus, or species level. All of the surviving botanicals appear to have been charred at medium-high temperatures in dry contexts, as they are fairly uniformly carbonized and have fairly clear morphology where the surfaces have not been distorted or eroded. Many of the samples recovered from Operation 1 were highly fragmented, although some samples contained larger fragments of wood, likely indicating less bioturbation and transformation after deposited. The high fragmentation further suggests that Operation 1 is either a secondary, or possibly, a tertiary deposit.

The exact use of the botanical remains recovered from Conchagua Vieja is difficult to ascertain. The recovered archaeobotanical materials indicate the use of several typical species, as well as several other species that may have been weeds, or used for various purposes. Although there are some 'unknown' species present in the assemblage, it is likely that they simply served as tinder or fuel, based on their context (see Table 6.1). The absence of other known economic species is due almost entirely to sampling and preservation, but may also indicate different processing or cooking areas, different cooking methods, or different areas sampled. For example, only three Sub-Ops were placed in Operation 2 (see Figure 5.9).

Various palm (*Arecaceae*) species are recorded as being used for food, medicine, construction, roofing, beverage, and utensils (King 2003, 2008; Piperno 1993, 1998; Piperno and Pearsall 1998). As *Arecaceae* species have been recovered from many other archaeological sites, have a multitude of recorded uses, and present an extremely durable endocarp, it is no surprise that fragments were recovered from the samples. Some species have an edible endosperm similar to coconut, leaves often used for thatching, and/or sap used in making beverages. It is also not surprising that potential *Zea mays* material appeared in the archaeobotanical assemblage, as this is considered the staple crop of much of the Americas.

The potential cactus (*Cactaceae* sp.) wood is an interesting element of the assemblage. It is possible that the fruits of this cactus were consumed, and the desiccated stems burned. Or it may be possible that the wood itself was targeted, and collected from old cactus "skeletons" to be used as fuel. The potential guanacaste (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*) testa (seed coat) fragment is another interesting element. The uses of the tree are various, including shade, food, and fuel. But as the testa alone was positively identified, it is likely that this portion, at least, was specifically utilized. As the testa is extremely durable (like nutshell), this taxon is more likely to be preserved than many other species.

In terms of context, all four of the positively-identified taxa may have come from a house garden, milpa, or fallow milpa—the cactus (*Cactaceae*) wood fragments, the possible guanacaste seeds (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*), the possible maize kernel tissue (*Zea mays*), and the palm (*Arecaceae*) fruit endocarp fragments. The presence of all these species suggests a concordance with ethnographically (Rivas 1993), and ethnohistorically (Abel-Vidor 1981; Fowler 1985; Ponce 1873), recorded common species.

METAL

Only five metal artifacts were recovered from the site. All five of the metal artifacts were found in the two midden deposits (see Figure 6.31). The metal artifacts are divided into the following categories: nails (n=2); unidentified hook (n=1); a knife tip (n=1); and a small knife with handle (n=1). All five of the metal items were made of iron. The two nails were recovered from Operation 1, in Loci 3 (Figure 6.31c) and 10 (Figure 6.31d). Both nails are medium sized, approximately 8 cm in length, and most likely served multiple purposes. The nail recovered from Locus 2 of Operation 1 was bent into the shape of a hook, leaving the impression that it may have been conscripted for ‘non-traditional’ use as a hook.

The ring-like hook (Figure 6.31e) was excavated from Locus 17 of Operation 1. The metal artifact was classified as a hook based on general morphology rather than a definite function. The knife tip (Figure 6.31a) was excavated from Locus 2 of Operation 3, and the small knife (Figure 6.31b) was recovered from Locus 4 of Operation 3. It is not entirely surprising that the knife tip and small knife were recovered from the small residential midden. The same can also be said of the two nails, which were found in the larger midden.

MAJOLICA EARTHENWARE

The lone majolica fragment was recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1 (see Figure 6.32). John Goggins' *Spanish Majolica in the New World: Types of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (1968), and Kathleen Deagan's *Artifacts of the Spanish Colonies of Florida and the Caribbean, 1500-1800* (1986) were used in the attempt to identify this artifact. While a definite match could not be made, it is safe to say that the ceramic artifact is not Ming Porcelain, because of the paste, and is most likely a piece of majolica, making it a tin-glazed earthenware that is commonly decorated in bright colors on a white background. Many scenes on majolica earthenware vessels often represent specific historical actors and legendary tales. The colors are applied as metallic oxides or as fritted underglazes to the unfired glaze, which absorbs pigments like fresco. Sometimes the surface is covered with a second glaze that lends greater shine to the wares. The ceramic fragment recovered from Conchagua Vieja has a buff, or creamy, paste color and has a milky-white background color. Blue is applied in what appears to be either a circular or floral design.

The placement of the majolica fragment in Locus 3 of Operation 1 leads me to believe that it was discarded late in the village's history, before the abandonment of the village in 1683. While it is easy to assume that this is a European produced item, the placement of the majolica fragment in Locus 3 does not eliminate the possibility that this is a fragment of Mexican majolica known as *Talavera Poblana* pottery. Talavera Poblana pottery comes from the city of Puebla, Mexico, and the nearby communities of Atlixco, Cholula, and Tecali. Talavera Poblana pottery is a type of majolica earthenware that is distinguished by a milky-

white glaze, and was often decorated in blue, or other colors such as yellow, black, green, orange, and mauve. All pieces are hand-thrown, and the glazes contain tin and lead. The painted designs have a blurred appearance as they fuse slightly into the glaze. In the first decades of production, only a cobalt blue was used, as this was the most expensive pigment, making it highly sought after not only for the prestige, but also because it ensured the quality of the entire piece. Production of this ceramic became highly developed in Puebla, and had grown sufficiently enough by the mid-seventeenth century that standards and guilds were established, improving the quality of the ceramic. The 'golden age' of Talavera Poblana pottery ranged from the mid-seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.

Again, this was the only ceramic of its kind found at Conchagua Vieja, making it a very rare find. In terms of context, Locus 3 was one of the first intact depositional events encountered in Operation 1. Loci 1 and 2 were mixed deposits.

DISCUSSION

Archaeological attention at historical sites across Central America draws attention to the variability in colonial period archaeological assemblages. Spanish and Native American sites produce quite different artifact patterns, but Native American sites also produce a variety of archaeological assemblages. Conchagua Vieja is different from these sites in that it was an indigenous village that did not include resident Spaniards. While the archaeological data recovered from Conchagua Vieja indicates the village was well connected with other areas, the bulk of the data suggests that the residents were rather conservative in their cultural practices. Even after decades of colonial interaction, material life at Conchagua Vieja did not show tremendous shifts in material practices.

Building off the methodological framework described in the previous chapter, the household level formed the basis of this investigation in order to develop a multi-scalar approach that evaluated social interaction at various scales, including: integration of households at the village level; economic networks within the Gulf of Fonseca; and economic linkages with communities in other regions. Key to this perspective is attention to the diversity of connections and interactions that specific communities have on the local, regional, and inter-regional scales to better understand the potential shifts that colonial movements set in motion.

In terms of ceramics recovered from Conchagua Vieja, the assemblage includes vessel forms noted in Precolumbian assemblages for the region (Andrews 1976; Baudez 1976; Beaudry 1982; Escamilla and Shibata 2006; Longyear 1944; McCafferty and Steinbrenner 2005; Valdivieso 2006). As for spatial variation across the site, Operation 3 revealed a higher percentage of cantaros and plates than Operation 1 (Figure 6.22). Based on the diameter range (8-22 cm), many of the plates recovered from Operation 3 were generally smaller (n=11). Operation 1, on the other hand, revealed a higher percentage of deep bowls (Figure 6.22). The high percentage of shallow medium sized bowls and plates in Operations 1, 2, and 3 is not surprising since indigenous peoples across Central America prepared foods as soups or stews. Rather than indulge in preparation of meals centered on cuts of meat accompanied by baked bread, as colonial documents show was the Spanish orthodoxy, smaller animals, and smaller cuts, were often served in shallow bowls or plates in indigenous societies, and prepared in round-bottomed pots exposed indirectly to heat from fires in clay hearths. Though detailed analysis was not performed on the faunal materials recovered from

Conchagua Vieja, a preliminary view of the remains suggest a diet that was dominated by marine resources, and other small animals, such as rodents and birds. Domesticates do not appear to have made up a significant portion of the diet.

With the exception of the lone majolica piece recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1, the entire ceramic assemblage consisted of indigenous made vessels. Thus, the data for ceramic vessels forms and paste types at Conchagua Vieja suggests that the Lenca-speaking residents maintained a wide array of practices associated with ceramic consumption over the course of the site's occupation in the colonial period. The use of the vessel forms and paste types described above were relatively constant throughout the colonial period. The presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels in virtually every context excavated at Conchagua Vieja suggests a continuous long-distance exchange network that was shared with the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras throughout the colonial period. Santa Barbara ware vessels did not show up in Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1, reinforcing the position that the two deposits are linked chronologically. This shift was also evident during the analysis of lithics from Conchagua Vieja.

The sourcing of obsidian artifacts contributed greatly to this investigation. Obsidian sourcing studies are well suited to tracing patterns of lithic procurement, trade, and mobility. Tracing obsidian procurement revealed the exchange relationships that were available for the residents of Conchagua Vieja during the colonial period. Of the 55 obsidian samples recovered from Conchagua Vieja, 53 were geochemically characterized to known obsidian sources in Guatemala (El Chayal, Ixtepeque, Jilotepeque, San Bartolome Milpas Altas), northern Honduras (El Venado), central Honduras (La Esperanza), and southern Honduras (Güinope). All source assignments were made with a combined use of raw part-per-million (ppm) and bivariate element plots. While more obsidian source characterization and identification research is needed for Mesoamerica, the EDXRF data was demonstrated that the residents of Conchagua Vieja had access to a wide range of obsidian sources at a time when social networks were greatly altered during the colonial period. The most abundant obsidian source encountered at Conchagua Vieja was La Esperanza, located in southwest Honduras.

La Esperanza obsidian is high quality material that was used for a variety of purposes at Conchagua Vieja. Based on excavation data, La Esperanza obsidian was the only obsidian material worked inside of the residential structure (Operation 2). Though Güinope is the closest obsidian source to the Gulf of Fonseca, only three flake tools were encountered. According to Braswell and others (1994: 196), Güinope material is not ideal for the prismatic blade industry. All of the other source materials produced both prismatic blades and flake tools from either bifacial reduction or bipolar reduction. Though not evaluated here, in the future it will be important to investigate the relationship with communities in the Naco Valley and their use of obsidian.

A variety of activities are recorded in the metal artifacts: specifically construction (nails), and potentially cooking and eating (blade tip and small knife). These presumed activities are based on typical uses of these artifacts, and there is no current evidence to suggest their use otherwise. One of the nails may have been used for 'non-traditional' purposes, such as a hook. It is curious that one of the nails (Figure 6.31d) was recovered from Locus 10 of Operation 1. Locus 10 also demonstrated one of the highest densities of lithic debitage at Conchagua Vieja. In terms of shell density, the amount of shell debris in Locus 10 nearly doubled, going from 18 kilograms in the previous depositional event to 35 kilograms (see Table 5.1). All three of these lines of evidence suggest that major construction activities

were taking place in the village. My preliminary interpretation is that Loci 10 and 12 might represent the first stages in church construction at Conchagua Vieja.

The analysis provided here suggests that indigenous actors did not change their practices dramatically during the colonial period. Future research on pre-Colombian life in the Gulf of Fonseca will be needed to substantiate this claim, but based on the available archaeological data, the residents of Conchagua Vieja did not readily abandon the practices and materials they were familiar with for European practices and materials. This claim will be further substantiated in the following chapter, but based on the material record discussed in this chapter, European objects made up less than 1% of the entire archaeological assemblage for Conchagua Vieja. In the future it will also be key to investigate the faunal remains from Conchagua Vieja, but based on preliminary observations and Ponce's 1583 account, the residents of the island village maintained a diet based on marine resources, with very few, if any, domesticates other than *gallinas de la tierra* (chickens of the land). It would be interesting to evaluate any dramatic changes in diet between Ponce's 1583 account and the abandonment of the island village in 1672.

SUMMARY

Moments of colonialism and missionization often disrupt access to resources, affect the nature and organization of households, and alter the social practices that maintain intra-community social cohesion. To examine these social practices archaeologically, a detailed study of activity areas was undertaken to reveal subsistence practices, production and processing, exchange, and links to wider regional and interregional spheres. The goal was to observe the basic organizational principles of people in action. The archaeological data from Conchagua Vieja suggests that individuals maintained many of their social practices during the colonial period. Though faunal analyses need to be done in the future, the ceramic data suggest no major changes in diet, and no adoption of European ceramic vessels or vessel forms. The lithic data suggests that no major changes in lithic reduction technologies, and that the residents of Conchagua Vieja were able to acquire a wide variety of obsidian from Guatemala and Honduras.

With the understanding that societies do not simply replace one another, indigenous people may have adopted European ceramic, metal, or glass objects into their everyday lives, but it cannot be assumed that individuals always used them in the same ways the manufacturers intended. Individuals see the introduction of "new" material culture against a backdrop of expectations, local history, and within a field of accepted practices and strategic use. How they make use of these items is an empirical question. Like the organization of discard and communal space, these materials may channel particular activities and play critical roles in solidifying or undoing social relations, but they do not determine social relations.

Table 6.1 – Paleoethnobotany at Conchagua Vieja

Archaeobotanical Taxa:	Recorded Uses:	Contexts Recovered From:
<i>Arecaceae</i> endocarp fragments. Palm family.	Recorded uses for various species within <i>Arecaceae</i> include food (edible endosperm and oil extraction), construction (leaves used in thatching), medicine, and beverage.	Operation 1 Locus 3 Operation 2 Sub-Op 2B, Locus 10
<i>Cactaceae</i> wood charcoal fragments. Cactus family.	Recorded uses for various species within <i>Cactaceae</i> include food (edible fresh and dried fruits) and medicine.	Operation 1 Locus 20
<i>Enterolobium cyclocarpum</i> (guanacaste) testa fragments. <i>Fabaceae</i> (bean) family.	Recorded uses for <i>Enterolobium</i> include wood (canoes and paneling); dried fruit (ground to produce soap); medicine; fodder; fuel; apiculture; toys; tools for the home; and food (seeds toasted and ground, similarly to squash seeds).	Operation 2 Sub-Op 2A, Locus 9
<i>Zea mays</i> (maize) kernel fragment. <i>Poaceae</i> (grass) family.	Recorded uses for <i>Zea</i> include edible kernel (for tortilla, tamal, atole, horneado (pib'il)); feed for pigs, dogs, and chickens; and cooking wrapper.	Operation 2 Sub-Op 2A, Locus 3
Unknown pericarp fragments	They may have been used in everything from medicine to animal fodder to fuel, but do not match any seeds currently contained in the UCB reference collection.	Operation 1 Locus 20
Unknown nutshell fragments	They may have been used in everything from medicine to animal fodder to fuel, but do not match any seeds currently contained in the UCB reference collection.	Operation 2 Sub-Op 2A, Locus 9
Lumps: various unknown species	These are large lumps of parenchymous root or tuber tissue, or stem storage tissue. They may be from <i>Manioc esculenta</i> (manioc), <i>Ipomoea batatas</i> (sweet potato),	Operation 1 Loci 3, 4, 6, 11, and 19 Operation 2 Sub-Op 2A, Locus 3

	seeds, or other starchy storage tissue, but remain unidentified at this time.	<i>Sub-Op 2C</i> , Locus 6 Operation 3 Locus 4
Wood: various unknown species	They may be from a large variety of wood species, or a narrow range of species, but remain unidentified at this time, aside from the tentative <i>Cactaceae</i> wood identification	Operation 1 Loci 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 19, and 20 Operation 2 <i>Sub-Op 2A</i> , Loci 3 and 13 <i>Sub-Op 2B</i> , Loci 10 and 13 <i>Sub-Op 2C</i> , Loci 3 and 6 Operation 3 Loci 2, 3, 4, and 6

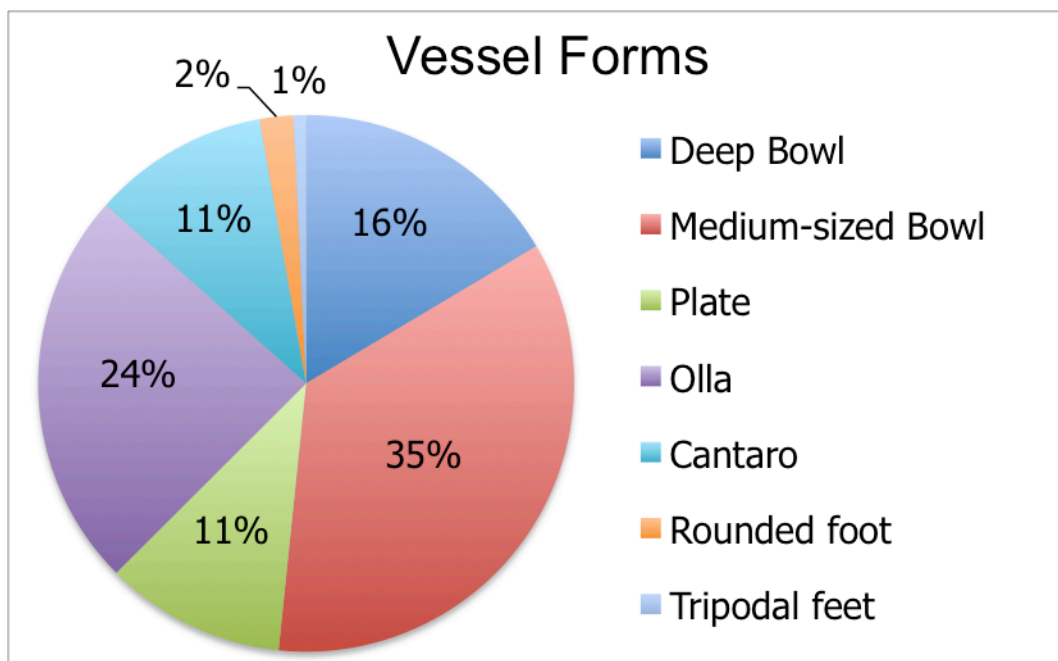


Figure 6.1 – Pie chart representing the percentage of vessel forms encountered during ceramic analysis.

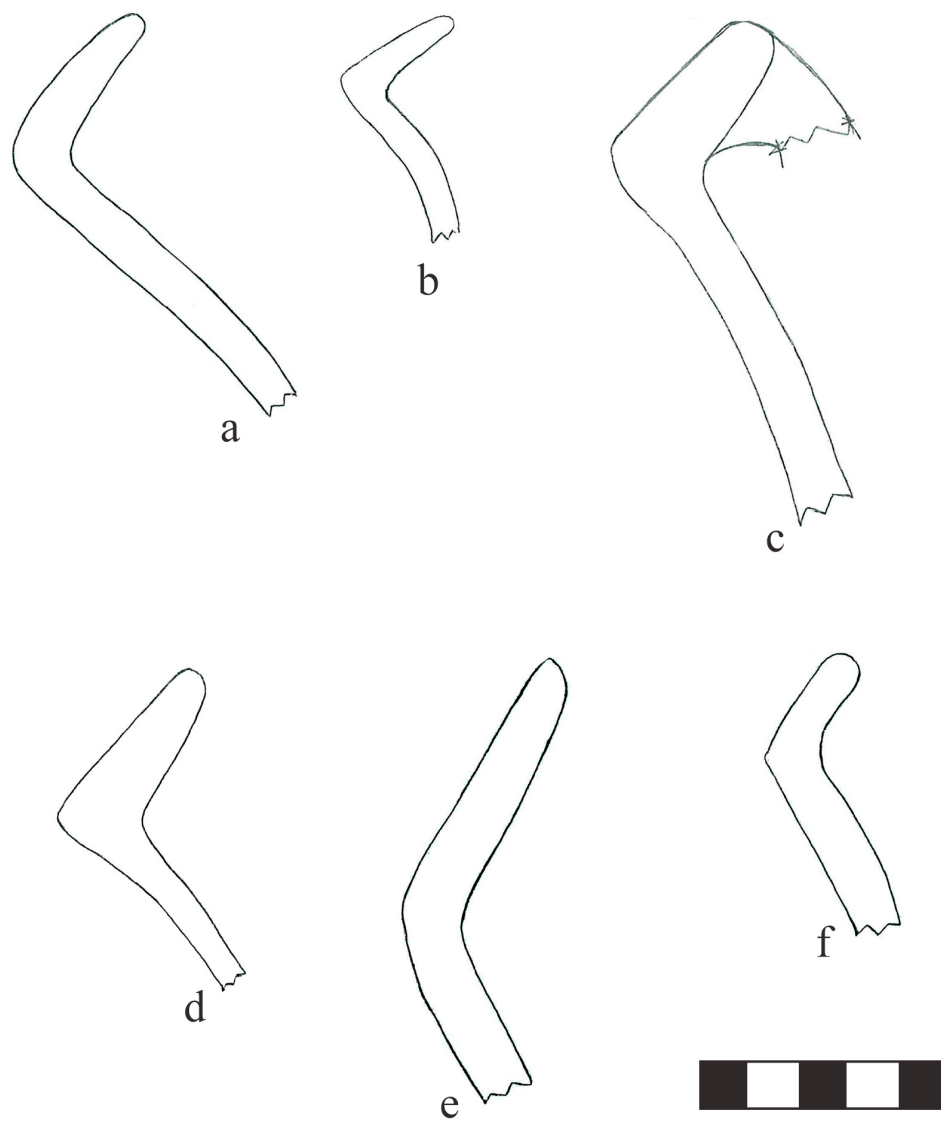


Figure 6.2 – These rim shapes represent the range of variability evident in the recurved rims on the ollas and cantaros from Conchagua Vieja. Unique ID numbers for: a) 3A.6.1; b) 1A.2.67; c) 1A.2.2; d) 1A.3.38; e) 1A.3.42; f) 1A.19.10

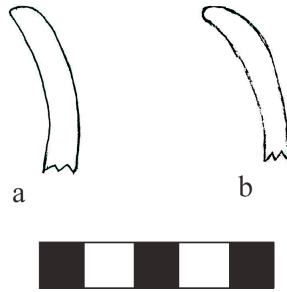


Figure 6.3 – Rim profiles for tecomate bowls. Unique ID numbers: a) 1A.1.15; b) 1A.8.29



Figure 6.4 – Rim profiles for deep bowls. Unique ID numbers: a) 3A.1.1; b) 1A.1.25

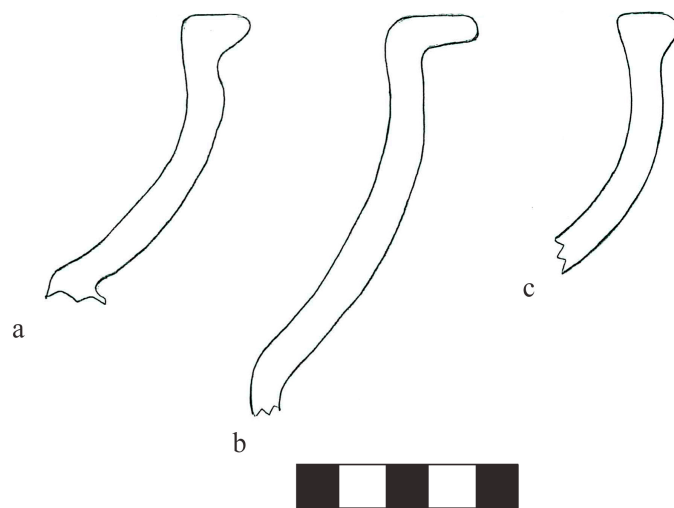


Figure 6.5 – Profiles for flared lip bowls. Unique ID numbers: a) 3A.1.28; b) 1A.19.19; c) 1A.12.10

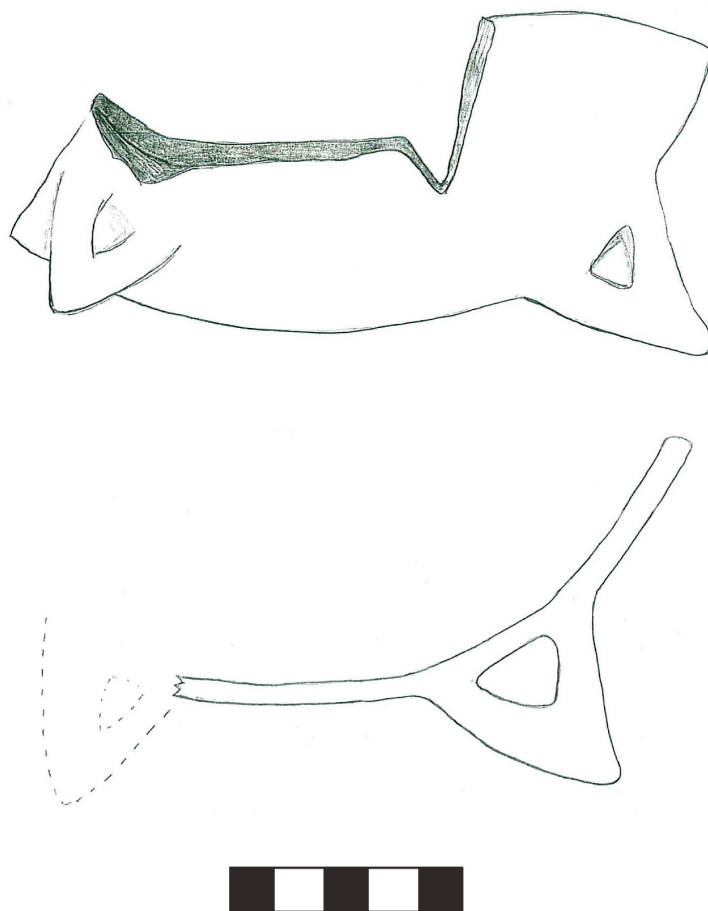


Figure 6.6 – Open bowl with triangular feet. Unique ID number: 1A.4.21

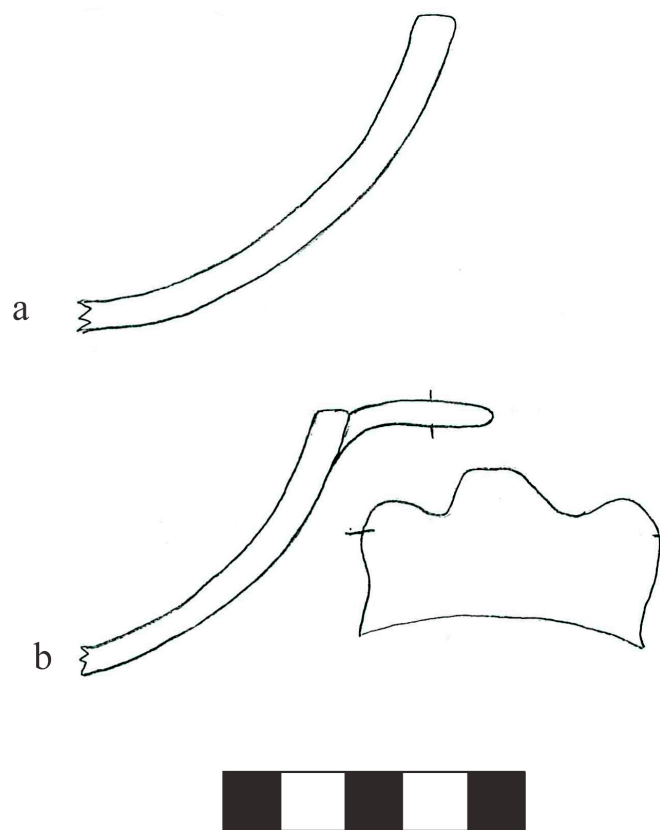


Figure 6.7 – Medium-sized open bowls. Example b was the only such bowl found at Conchagua Vieja. Unique ID numbers: a) 1A.4.11; b) 1A.4.13

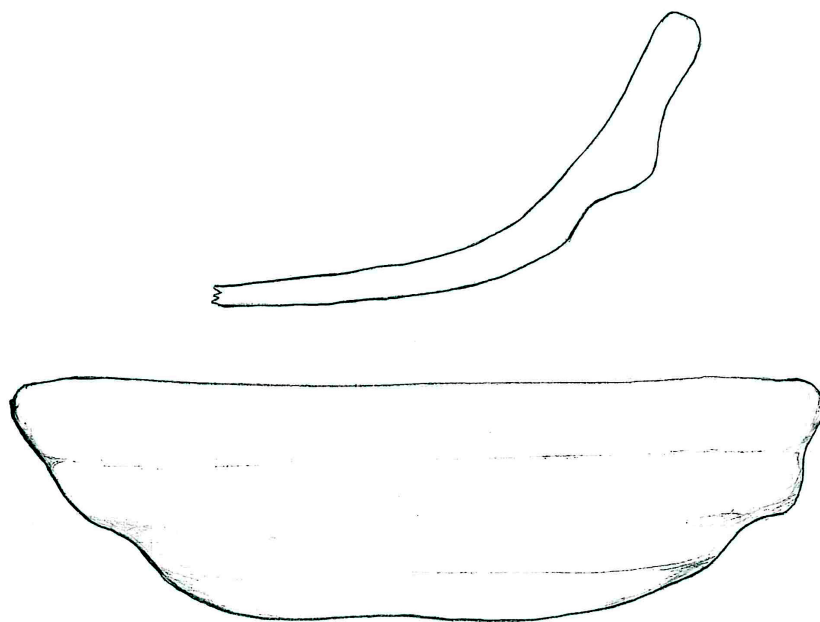


Figure 6.8 – An entire half of a medium-sized open bowl. Example b was the only such bowl found at Conchagua Vieja. Unique ID numbers: 1A.3.23

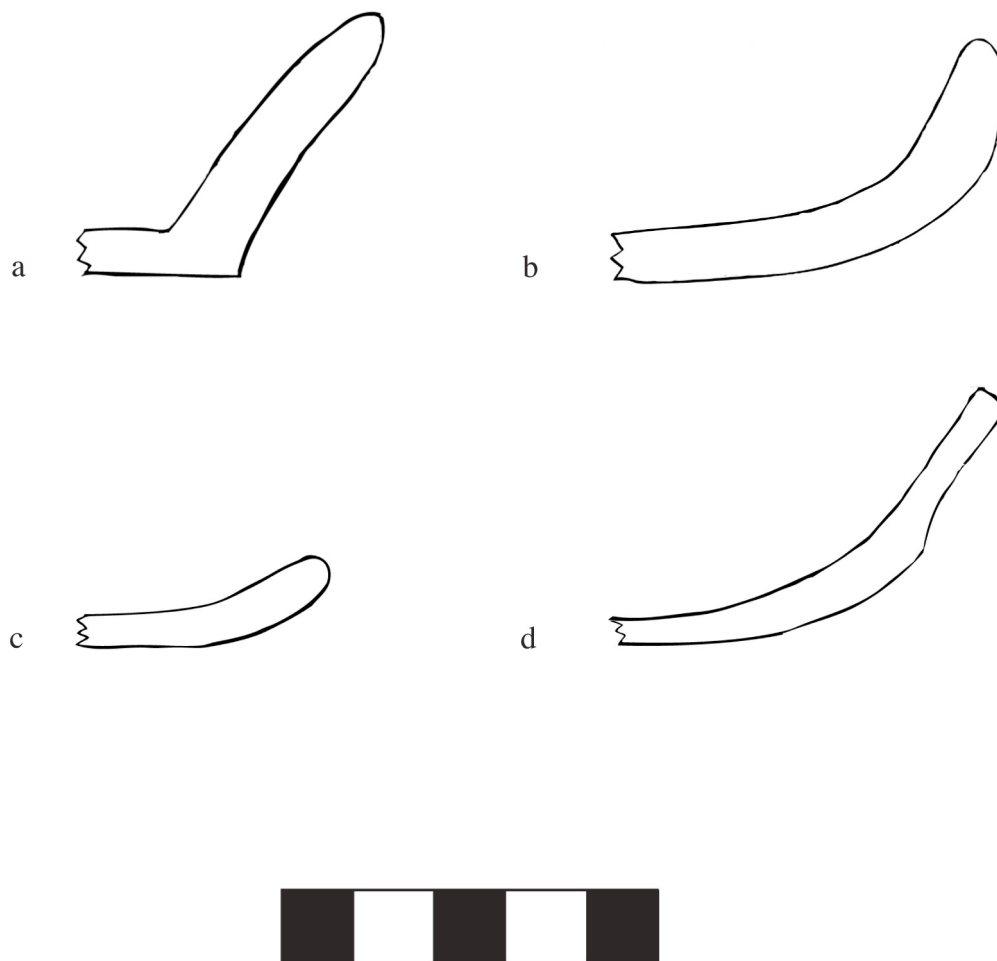


Figure 6.9 – Rim profiles for plates. Unique ID numbers: a) 2C.6.2; b) 1A.8.2; c) 2C.3.1; d) 1A.2.28.

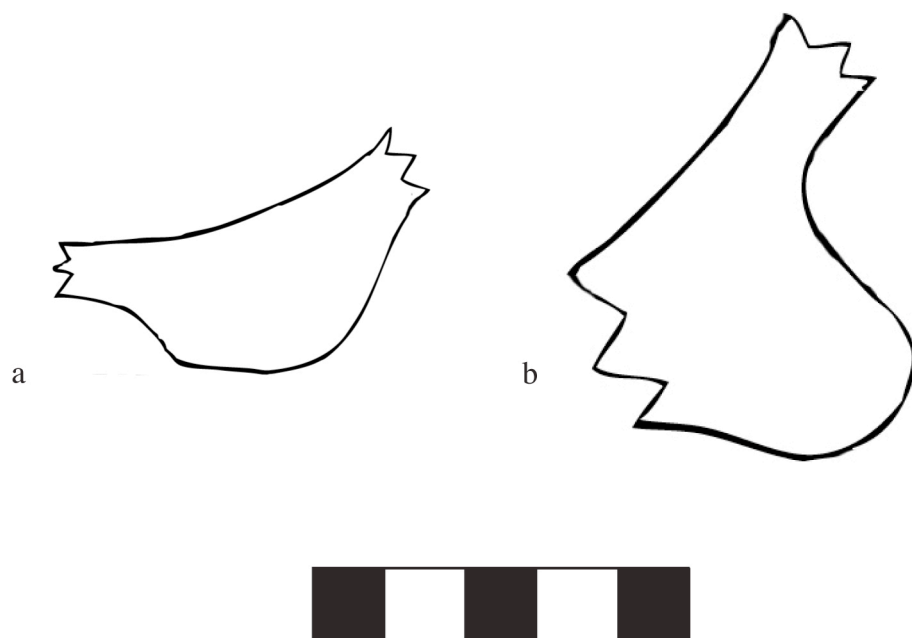


Figure 6.10 – Examples of rounded feet at base of ceramic vessels. Unique ID Numbers numbers: a) 1A.2.6.b) 4A.9.1



Figure 6.11 – Fragment of a ceramic figurine recovered from Locus 2 of Operation 3.



Figure 6.12 – Front and back images of figural piece from Locus 3 of Operation 1.

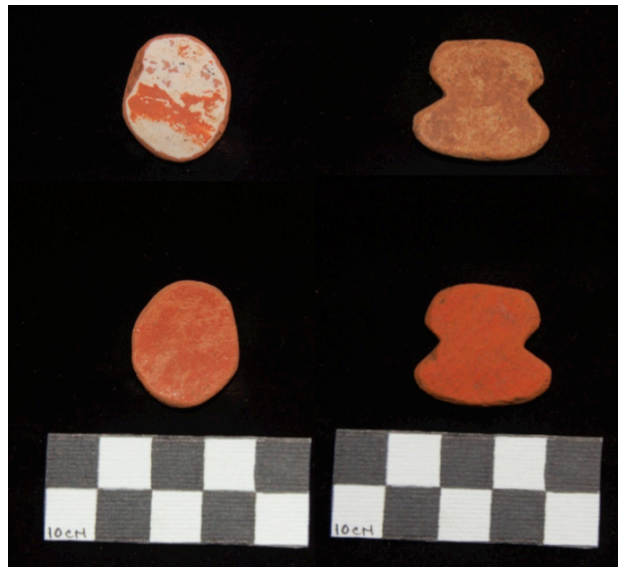


Figure 6.13 – Unidentified ceramic pieces from Locus 4 of Operation 1. Object A is on the left, and Object B is on the right. The ceramic piece on the left side is the only ceramic object in the entire assemblage with red on white paint.

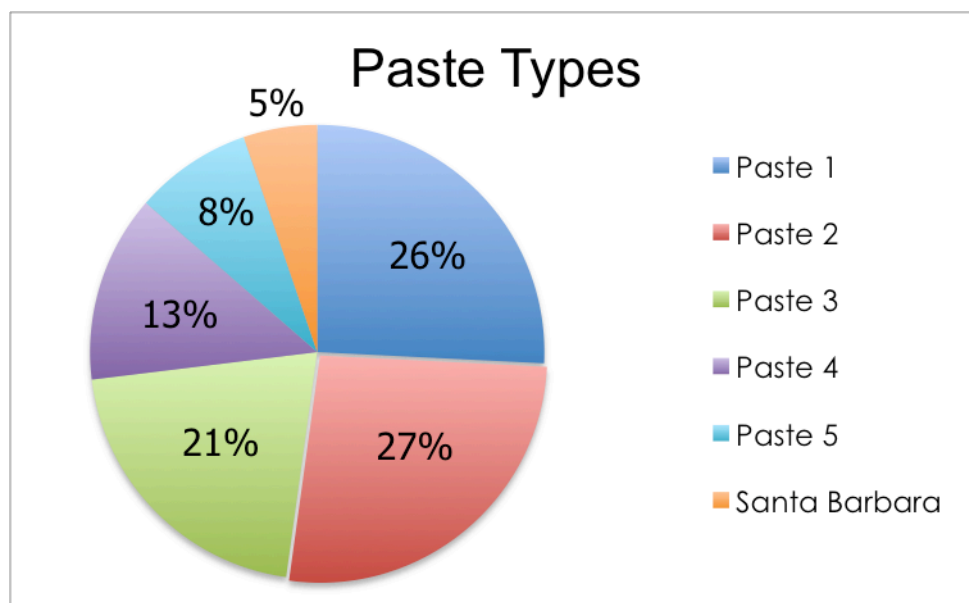


Figure 6.14 – Pie chart representing the percentage of each paste type recovered from Conchagua Vieja.



Figure 6.15 – Example of a Paste 1 cantaro rim that is fire blackened. The profile for this rim is example c of Figure 6.2. Unique ID: 1A.3.42



Figure 6.16 – Example of a Paste 2 cantaro rim with handle that is fire blackened. Unique ID: 1A.1.22

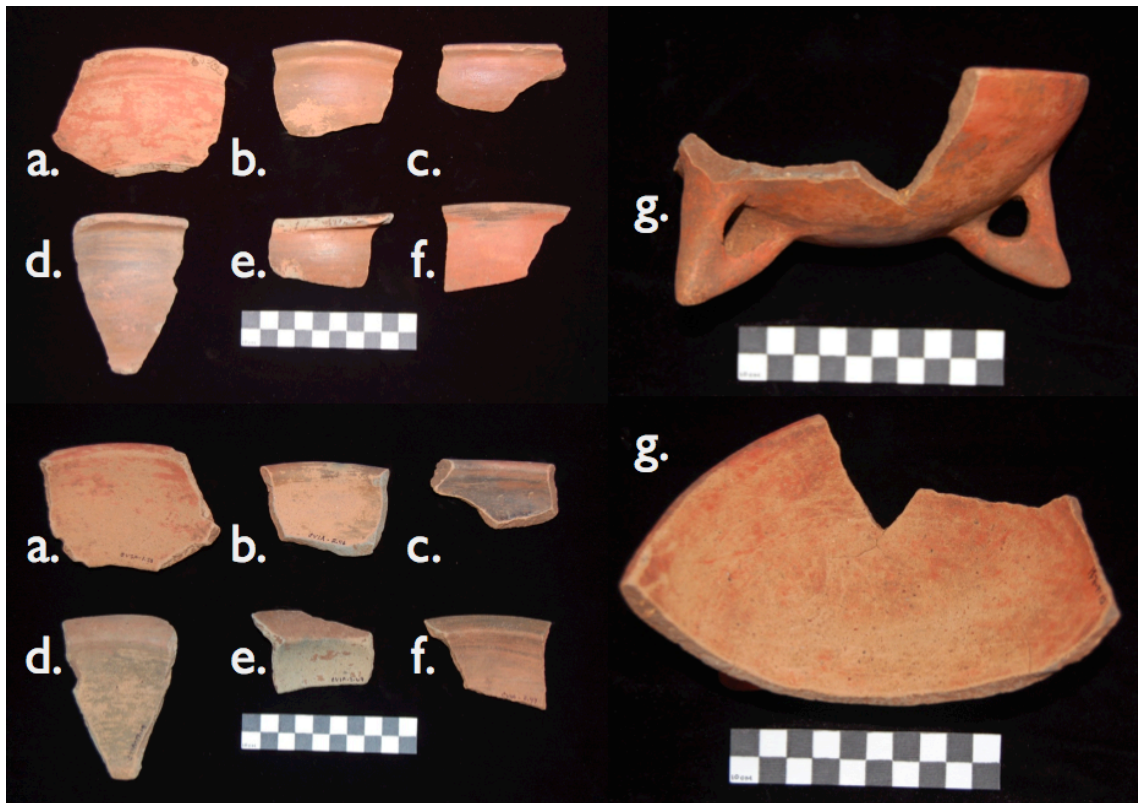


Figure 6.17 – Examples of Paste 3 bowl. Examples a though f are flared lip bowls. All of the vessels, with the exception of examples d and e, have red slips. Examples d and e have brown slips. Unique ID numbers: a) 3A.1.28; b) 1A.2.46; c) 1A.4.15; d) 1A.19.19; e) 1A.2.67; f) 1A.2.47; g) 1A.4.21



Figure 6.18 – Example of a Paste 4 flared lip bowl, with a pale brown slip, and a fire blackened interior surface. Unique ID: 1A.12.10



Figure 6.19 – Example of a Paste 5 shard that appears to be a rounded foot that formed the base of a ceramic vessel. Unique ID: 4A.9.1

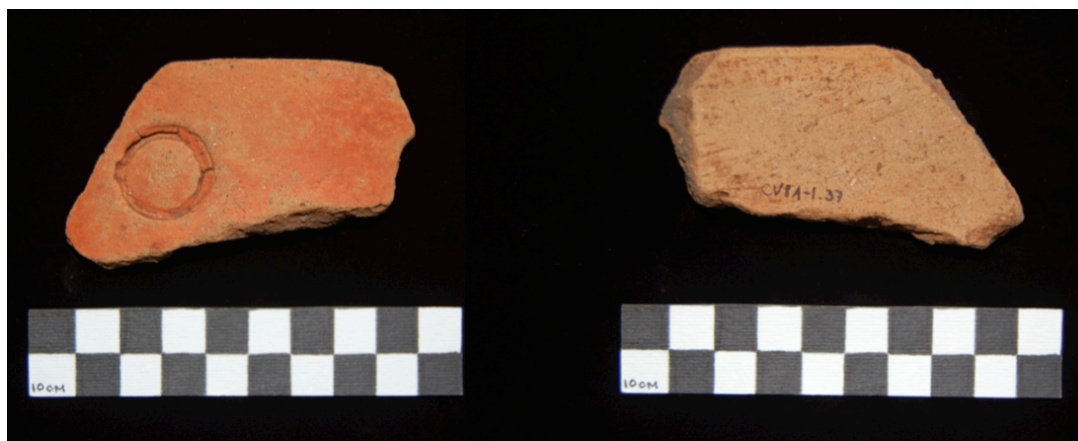


Figure 6.20 – Example of a Santa Barbara ware with reed stamping. Note the reflective inclusions and the reed stamping on the exterior surface. This was the only shard analyzed that demonstrated reed stamping. Unique ID number: 1A.1.37

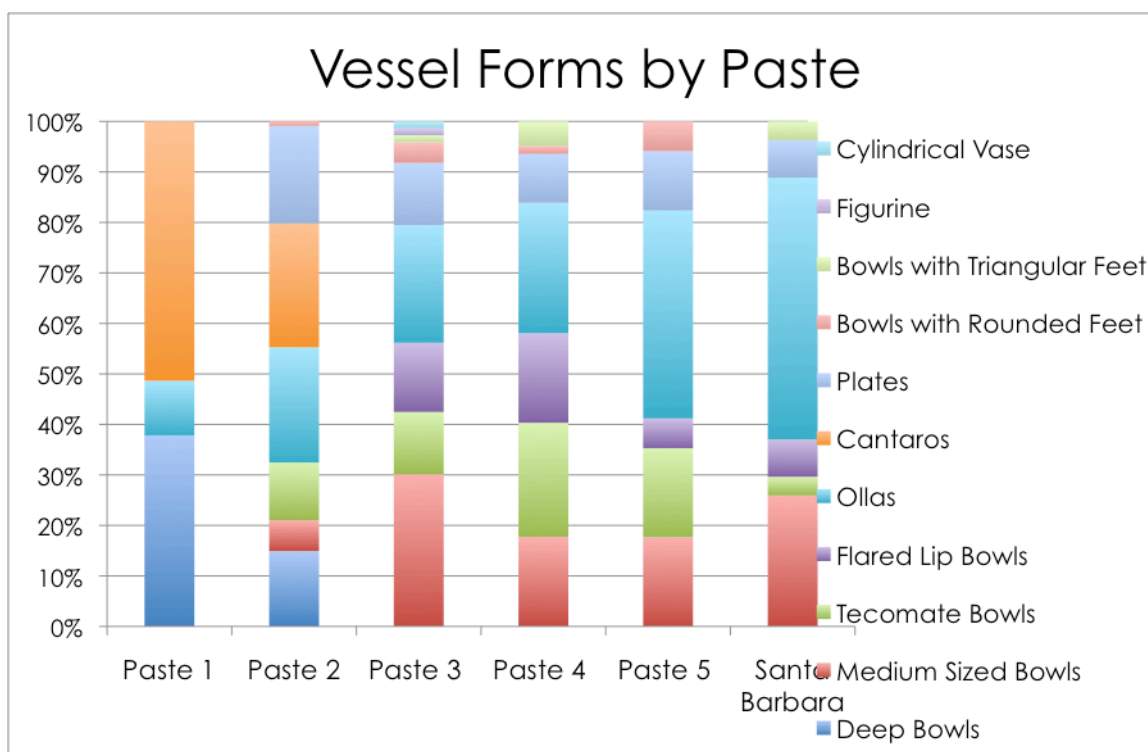


Figure 6.21 – Graph showing ceramic vessel forms by paste at Conchagua Vieja.

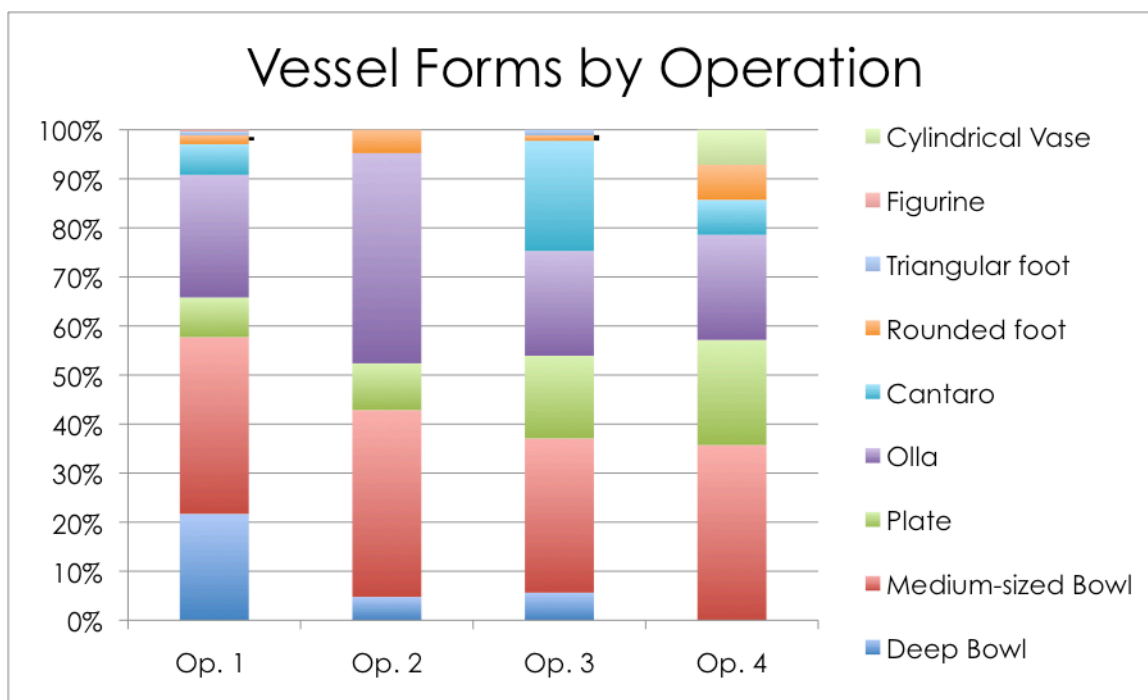


Figure 6.22 – Graph showing ceramic vessel forms by Operation at Conchagua Vieja.

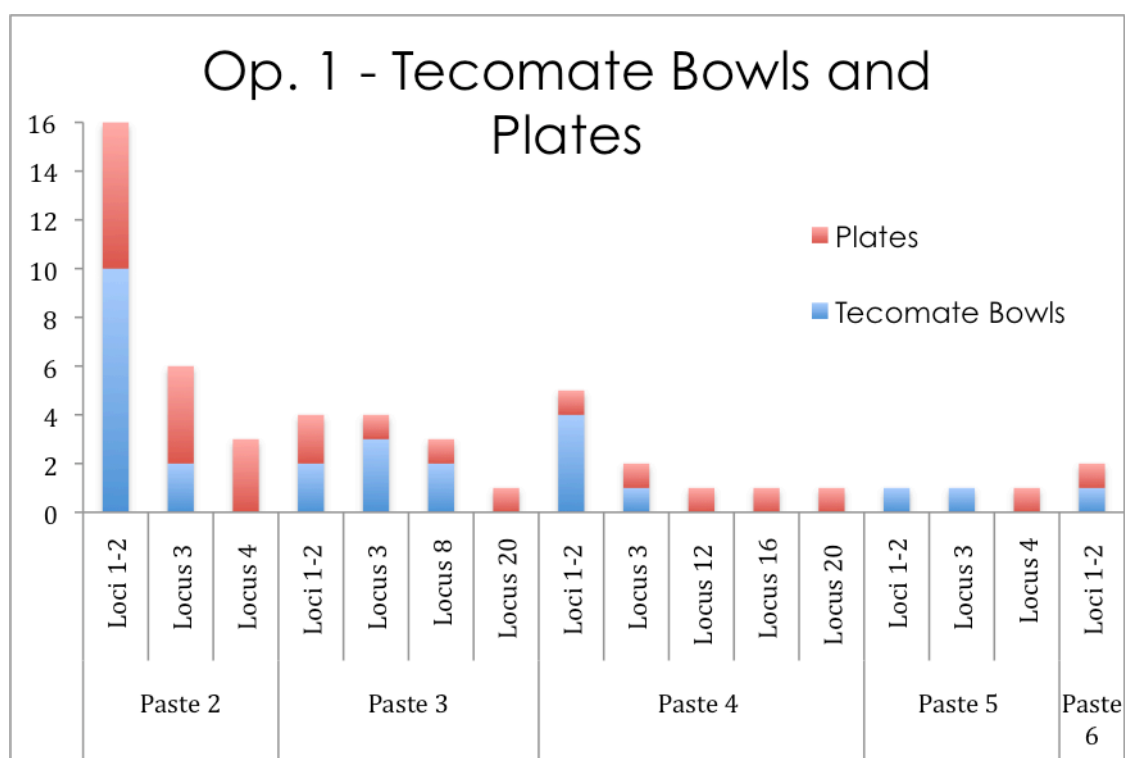


Figure 6.23 – Frequency of tecomate bowls and plates per paste, except Paste 1, in Operation 1.

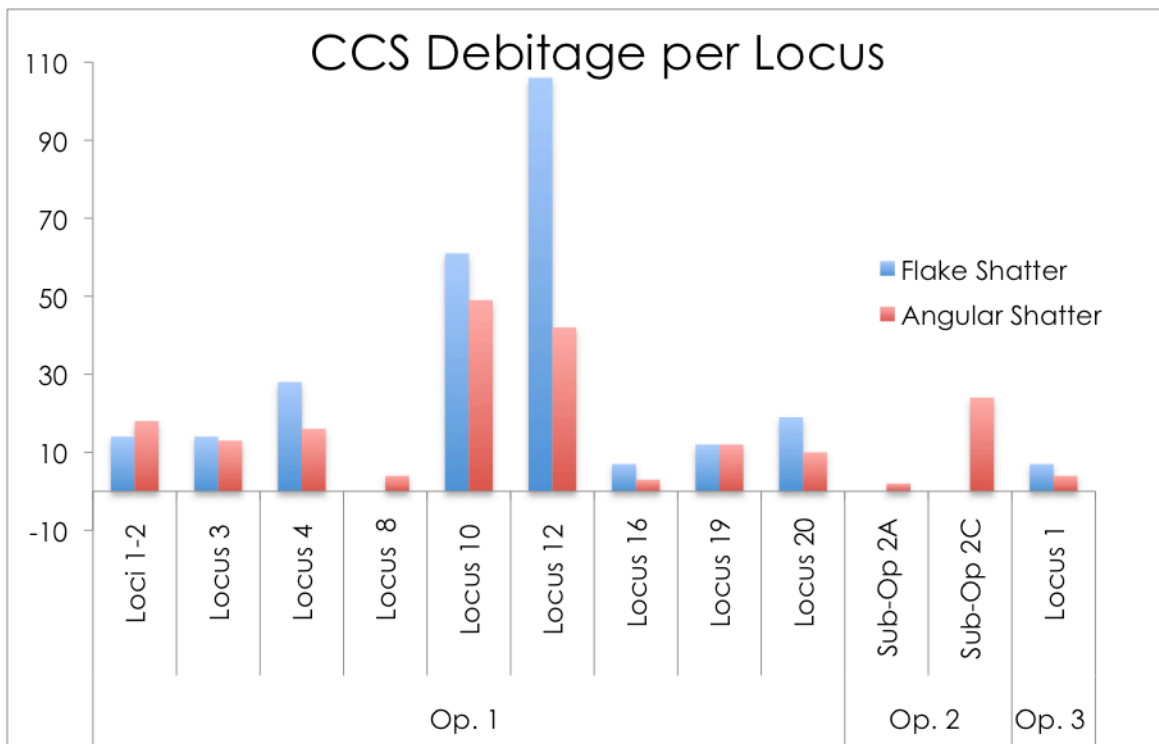


Figure 6.24 – Chert and chalcedonydebitage per locus in Operations 1, 2, and 3. Nodebitage was recovered from Operation 4.

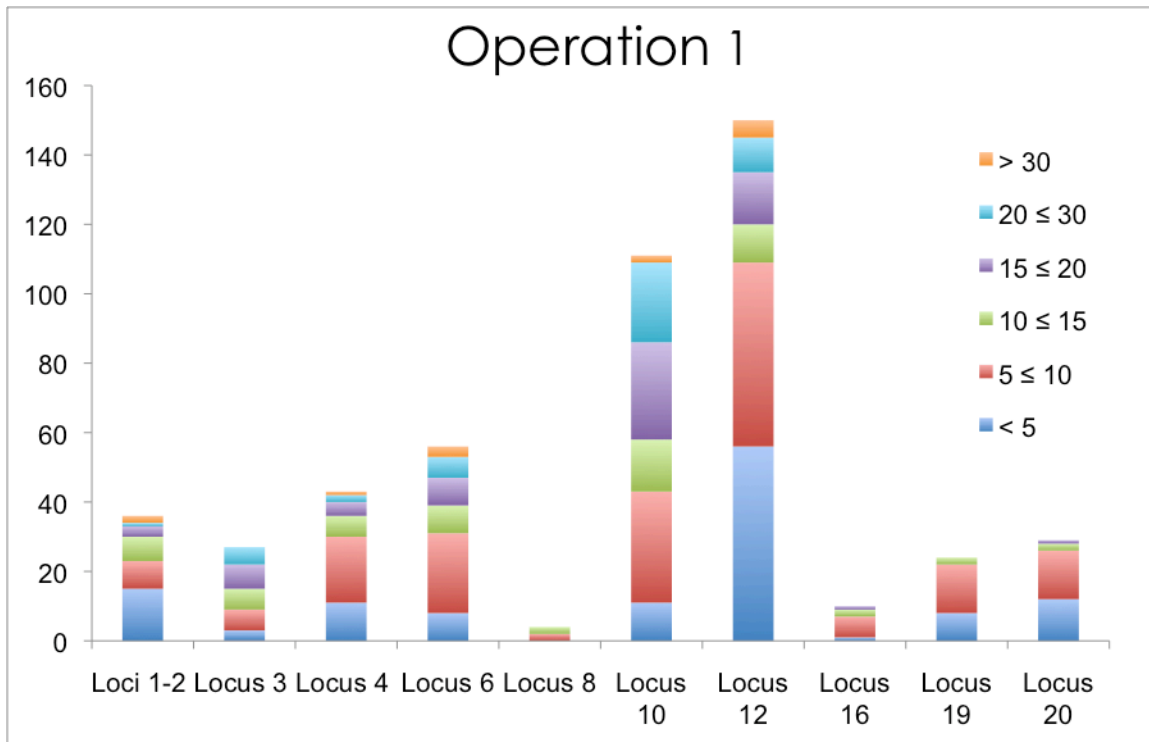


Figure 6.25 – Debitage size in Operation 1.

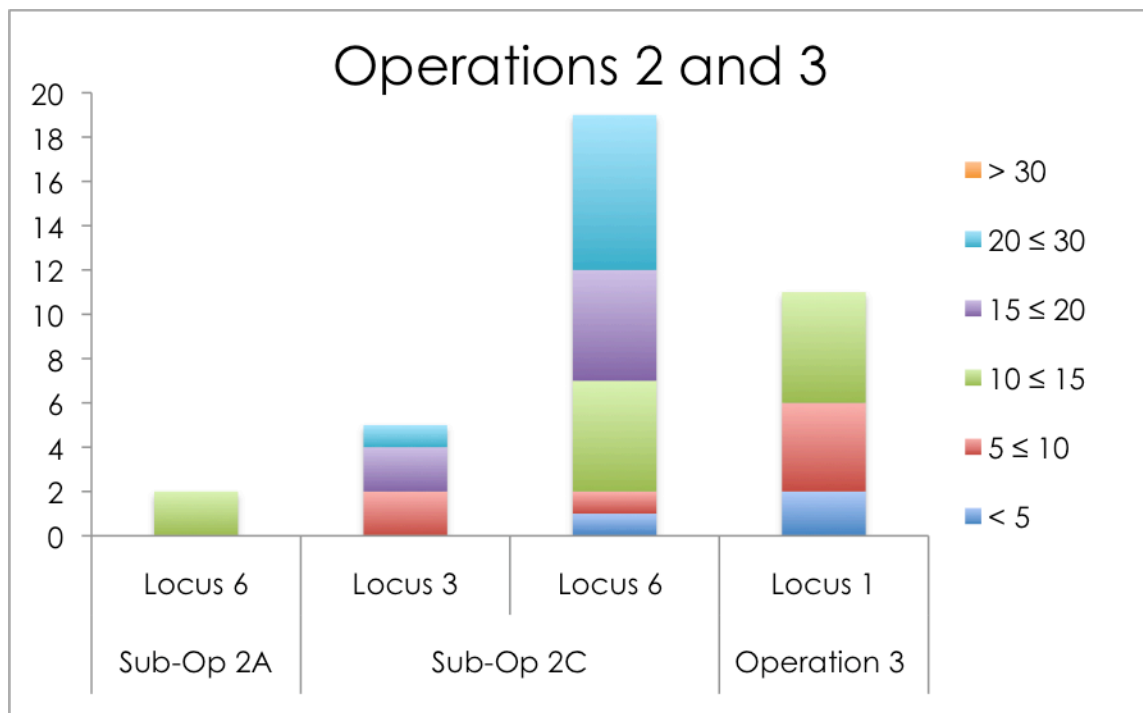


Figure 6.26 – Debitage size in Operations 2 and 3.

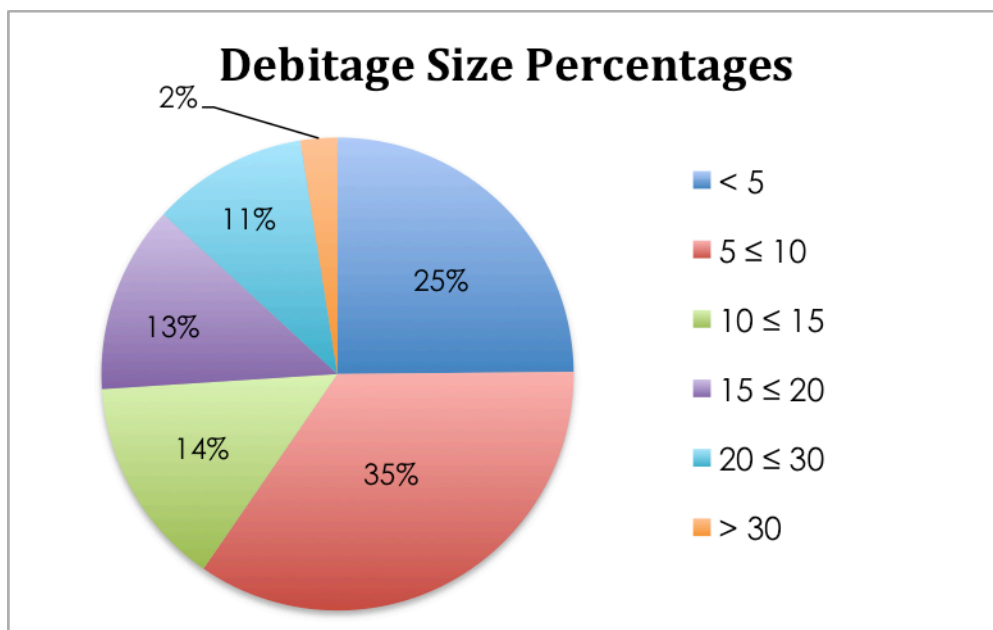


Figure 6.27 – Debitage size percentages for all the chert and chalcedony artifacts.

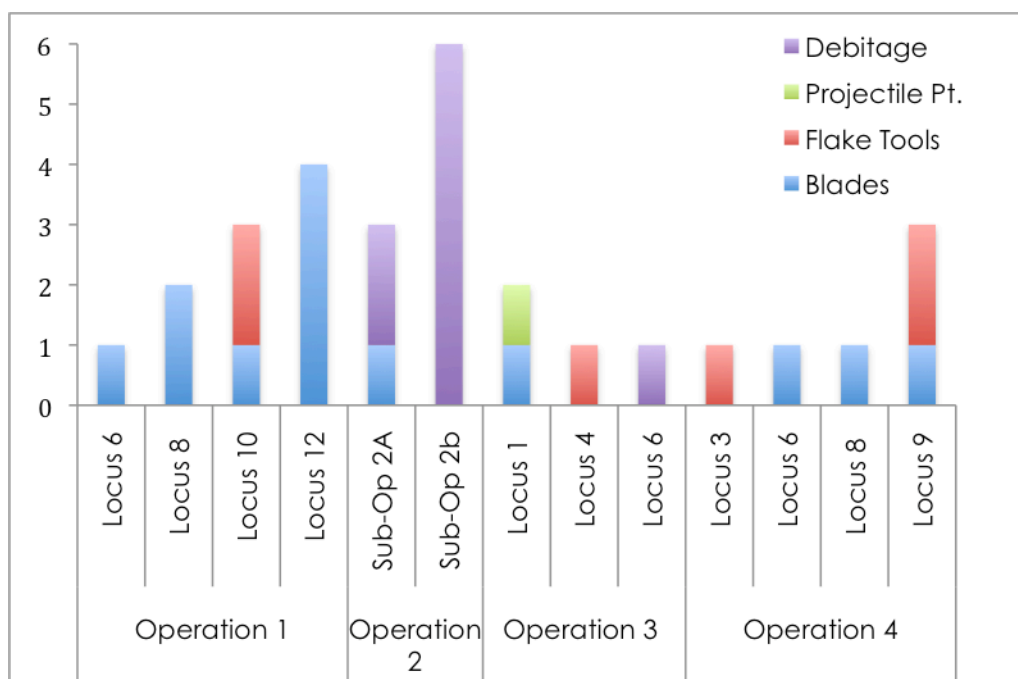


Figure 6.28 – Distribution of excavated obsidian samples at Conchagua Vieja. Note thedebitage concentration in Operation 2.

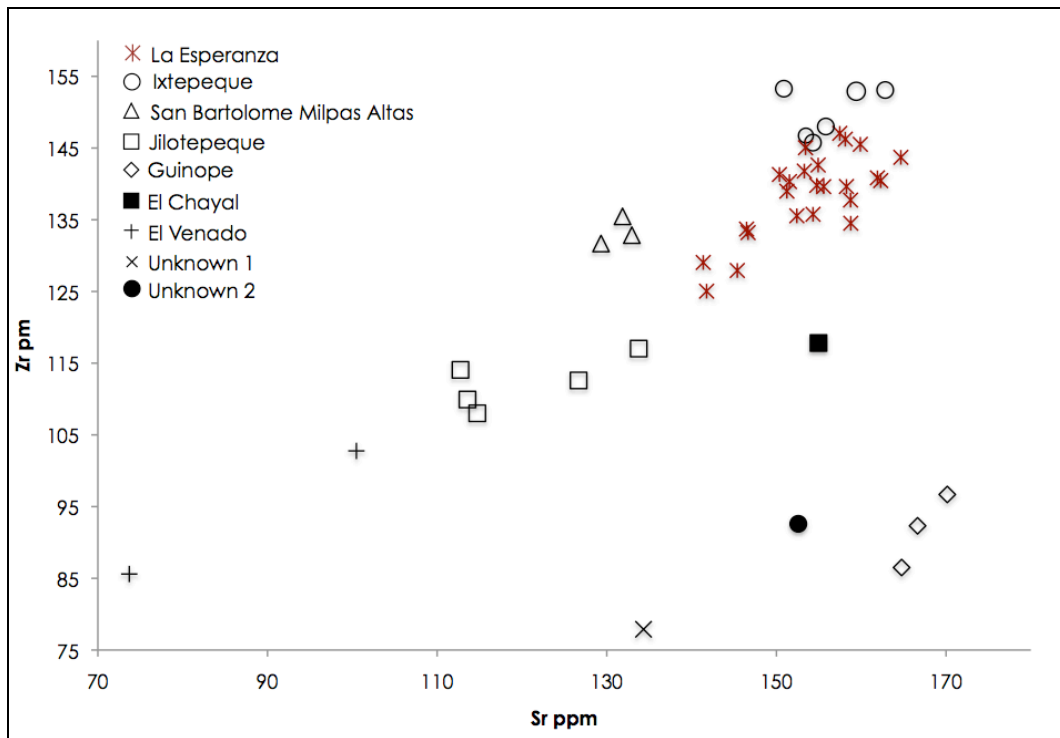


Figure 6.29 – Bivariate scatter plot of raw Sr and Zr values.

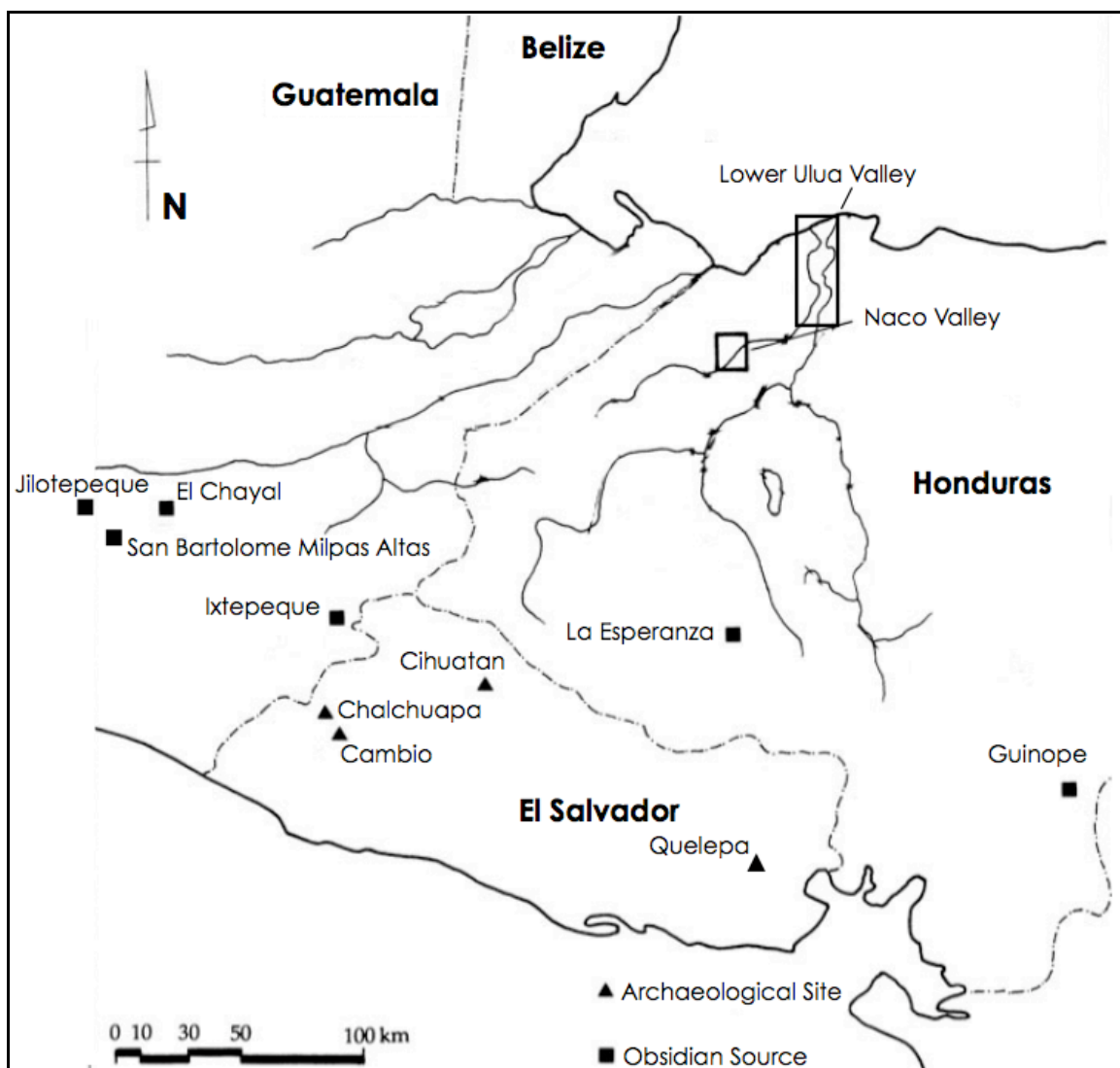


Figure 6.30 – Map of obsidian source locations, valleys, and archaeological sites.

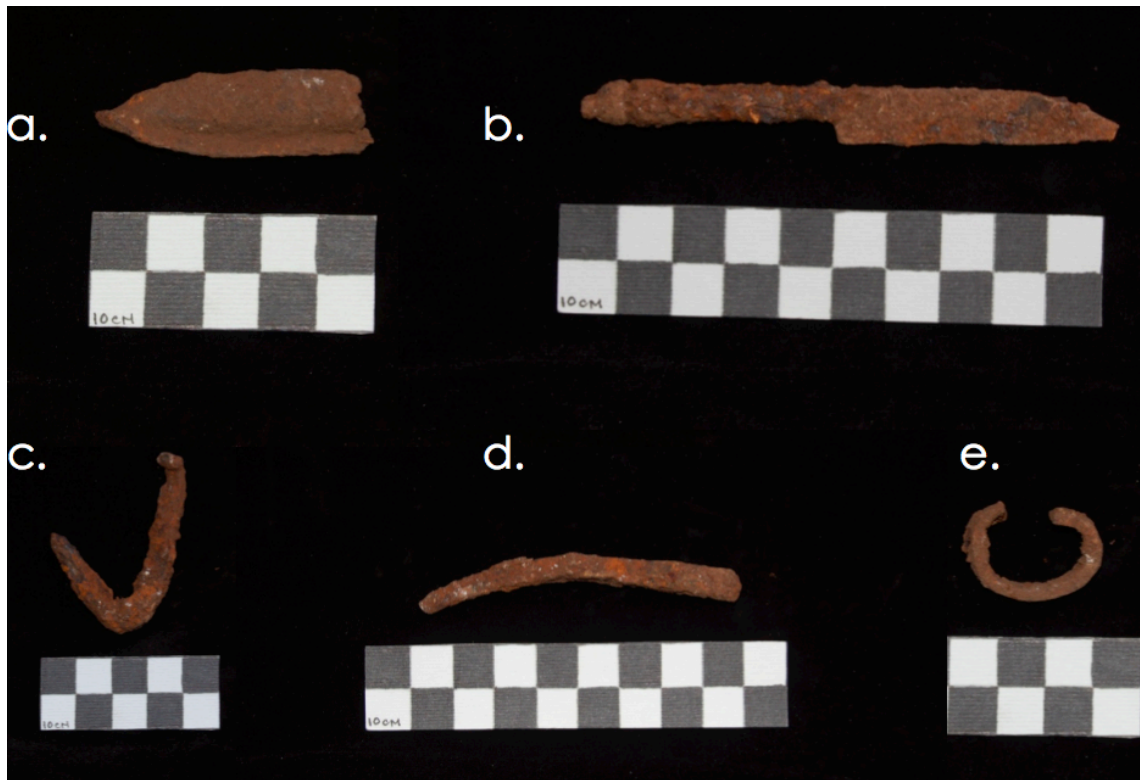


Figure 6.31 – Metal tools of various uses. a) knife tip; b) small knife; c) nail bent into the shape of a hook; d) bent nail; e) unknown hook or similar object.

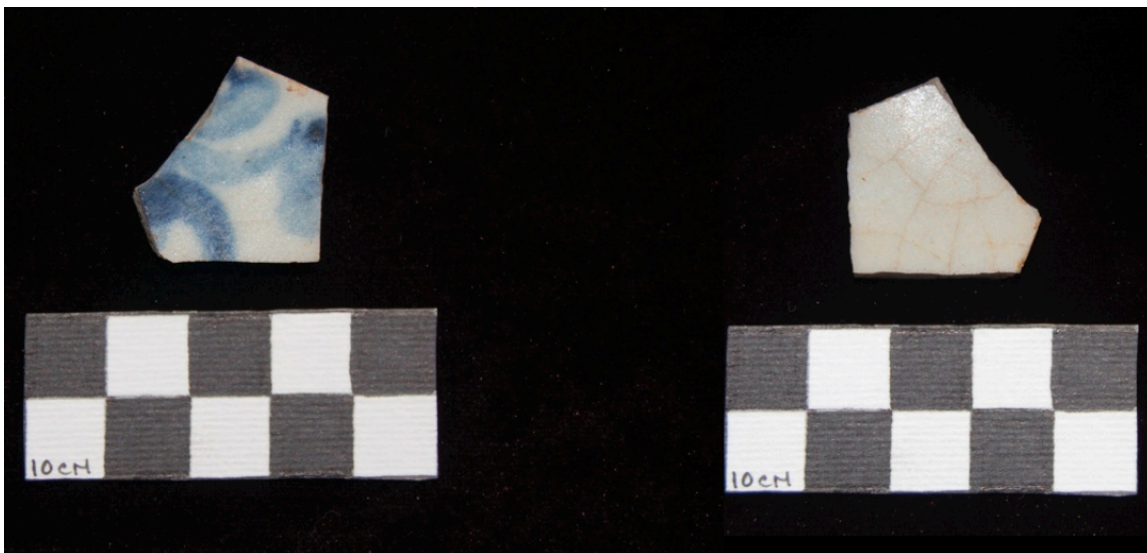


Figure 6.32 – Unidentified Majolica earthenware recovered from Locus 3 of Operation 1.

CHAPTER 7

THE VISITA OF CONCHAGUA VIEJA

It would have been easy to consider Conchagua Vieja as just another indigenous village whose residents were enslaved during the first decades of colonialism; then required to provide labor and goods through *encomienda*; and later forced to abandon their village because of pirate incursions. While this is not the same narrative for every indigenous community in the Gulf of Fonseca and eastern El Salvador, it does not stray too far from what twentieth century scholars have chosen to write about when thinking about the fate of these communities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The importance of developing a more informed historical narrative of the colonial period in eastern El Salvador is unmistakable in this context.

In chapters three and four I described in detail territorial representations of eastern El Salvador through maps and written correspondences, and of the exploitation of the territory's resources and peoples. While the impacts of Spanish colonialism were felt throughout eastern El Salvador, a number of indigenous communities contested the reduction of their lands through legal petitions. One such example was Conchagua Vieja, which strategically made use of Spanish administrative practices to keep their lands against the expansion of cattle ranching and indigo processing by Spanish colonists. I then described the material culture and community organization of Conchagua Vieja in chapters five and six. Based on archaeological data, the residents of Conchagua Vieja were rather conservative in their cultural practices, choosing to use non-European items in their day-to-day practices. Very few European items were in the archaeological assemblage, even though illicit trading had been noted for the Gulf of Fonseca. At the same time, the Lenca-speaking residents of Conchagua were able to maintain their social networks with other Lenca-speaking communities in northwestern Honduras, and able to acquire obsidian from sources located in Guatemala, and throughout Honduras.

The focus of this chapter will be the *visita* church of Conchagua Vieja. The chapter will first begin with a brief description of early mission activity in the Gulf of Fonseca, and then briefly compare Conchagua Vieja to other indigenous sites with chapels and churches. I will then continue with the Conchagua Vieja case study. The aim here will be to demonstrate how the residents of Conchagua Vieja made use of the space in which the church is situated to reproduce and maintain their own meaningful senses of history and identity. Drawing on archaeological and ethnohistorical data, it will be argued that the church was constructed over a previously occupied but historically significant area of the village. The position taken here is that once the space was reconstituted with the development of the church, the space in which it was constructed still maintained some aspects of its original significance and integrity, conserving some of the original cultural meanings of the space. In this context, the church and its specific placement in the village are treated as a representation that simply merges the forms and cultural meanings of two traditions.

EARLY MISSION ACTIVITY IN THE GULF OF FONSECA

The colonial era in Central America was largely dominated by Spanish efforts to impose upon the region's indigenous inhabitants a particular way of being and seeing. Whether it was in the name of a "benign," civilizing imperialism or in the pursuit of their labor power and land, a major objective of generations of Spanish colonists throughout the Americas was the colonization of their consciousness. In chapters three and four, I demonstrated how Spanish practices of territorial appropriation and labor acquisition had enormous historical force throughout the colonial period – a force that was ideological and economic, semantic and social. In the face of it, a number of indigenous communities distributed across Central America succumbed to the encroachment of European ideals, some resisted, while others intentionally (or unintentionally) recast intrusive European forms in their own image. Many indigenous communities experienced all of these transformational processes in an effort to formulate an awareness of their changing world.

In my attempt to better understand how the Lenca-speaking peoples of the Gulf of Fonseca maintained their own sense of history and identity in the face of colonialism I turned to the *visita* of Conchagua Vieja. Archaeologists (Andrews 1991; Black 1995; Graham 1998; Hanson 1995; Pendergast 1991; Weeks and Black 1991) have traditionally seen rural chapels and churches as important settings for the study of early colonial life, but more importantly as sites that witnessed first-hand the process of acculturation in Latin America. Rural chapels and churches were dotted across the Spanish frontier, making them ideal venues for archaeologists to explore the tenuous nature of European dominance over the local indigenous populations (Andrews 1991: 356). While acculturation studies have long dominated the field, my investigation is more concerned with how the residents of Conchagua Vieja transformed the colonial situation into a context for enabling their own histories and communities through countless activities. Drawing on archaeological data from Operation 4 (from Chapter 5) ethnohistoric accounts, and previous archaeological research in northwestern Honduras, this chapter will illustrate how the space in which the *visita* is situated evolved in its own historical moment and within a context of structural transformation.

The visita of Conchagua Vieja

The process of conversion often went hand in hand with the settlement programs of congregation and reduction. In the former, member of indigenous villages were relocated in new towns laid out in a grid fashion, around a main square and with a church and civic buildings. Regional examples of this congregation method are Caluco (Fowler 1995; Verhagen 1997) and Ciudad Vieja (Fowler and Gallardo 2002), in western El Salvador, and León Viejo in northwestern Nicaragua (Blaisdel-Sloan 1999). The reduction program often forced refugees and native peoples from remote rural villages to re-settle in new towns or missions under Spanish control. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Mercedarian mission program of western Honduras would be a regional example of the reduction program, resulting in widespread social, economic, political, and ecological disruption (Weeks and Black 1991; Weeks *et al.* 1987).

The Gulf of Fonseca was difficult to secure from the beginning. Even though missions had been established in western Honduras, they lacked a strong administrative presence to keep the Gulf region stable. The documentary evidence suggests that friars either

placed chapel complexes among existing indigenous settlements, moved settlements to the location of the chapel complex, or both. When the Franciscan Friars established the churches of La Trinidad of Sonsonate, San Salvador, San Miguel and San Andrés Nacaome, southern Honduras, the rural villages of the Gulf of Fonseca originally fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Nacaome. In 1593, the convent of Santa María de las Nieves was constructed in Amapala, a small village situated along the coast, and ideally located near a natural port in the Gulf of Fonseca. Both Fray Alonso Ponce and Antonio de Ciudad Real visited Amapala and made use of the port while traveling through Central America seven years prior to the construction of the convent. Amapala was considered a logical choice not only because of the port, but also the ease with which friars could visit the nearby mainland towns of Limpia Concepción de Intipucá, Santa María Magdalena de Monleo, and San Juan Yyantique, and the island villages of Santa María Magdalena de Meanguera, Santa Ana de la Teca, and Conchagua Vieja.

At the time of its construction, the convent of Santa María de las Nieves was the most imposing and impressive structure in the Gulf of Fonseca. The convent included a private chapel (for the friars), a large rectangular church with clay roof tiles for religious rites and instruction of the doctrine, and an infirmary. Based on the *Relación* provided by Alonso Ponce and Ciudad Real (1873), the private chapel appears to have been the same shelter they stayed in during their initial visit to Amapala. From the convent of Santa María de las Nieves, friars carried their religious activities to Lenca-speaking communities throughout the region, where they built dozens of chapels and churches, or *visitas*. By the beginning of the seventeenth-century, two *visitas* were constructed in the island villages of Santa María Magdalena de Meanguera and Conchagua Vieja (Figure 5.11). The *visitas* were designed and administered by Spanish friars, and built and used by the Lenca-speaking peoples that resided on the islands. Services were held in villages throughout the Gulf of Fonseca from an early date, and sometimes in buildings visited at intervals by a diocesan or missionary priest.

Chapels and churches were placed either to the east of, or in the monumental center of, pre-existing indigenous villages. The *visita* church of Conchagua Vieja is situated in an open and flat area of the village. It is the flattest area of the entire village, and can be seen from throughout the village. There are three terrace walls south of the structure and two terrace walls north of the structure (see Figures 5.1 and 5.5). There appears to have been no masonry wall to enclose the area around the church, an otherwise common feature of chapels throughout the Americas in the sixteenth century (Hanson 1995). Outside the *visita* are the remains of a small cistern and a cross stand. It is likely that the cross stand was used during Alonso Ponce's visit in 1586. The nave was approximately 20 meters long, and was constructed with stone walls and clay roof tiles, a rare feature for the region.

Most noteworthy were the human remains encountered through excavation in *Sub-Op* 4A, approximately 40 centimeters below the surface of the church floor (compacted soil), and approximately 75 centimeters below the modern surface. While scholars have suggested that burials underneath nave floors are normally associated with the church and Christianity (Andrews 1991; Graham 1998; Hanson 1995; Pendergast 1991), I do not believe this burial is associated with the church because the interment is not stratigraphically intrusive. Instead, the presence of *bajareque* (wattle and daub) in a stratigraphic level directly above the interment, and a nearby midden deposit – encountered through an auger test pit, at relatively the same depth – suggest the interment was associated with a residential structure that preceded the construction of the church.

As I mentioned in Chapter 5, by not correlating the burial with the *visita* church I am eliminating a set of practices attached to the interment of indigenous peoples beneath the nave floors of churches. Also, inferring the church was constructed over an area previously inhabited introduces questions related to the use of that space just before the construction of the church. Were residents forced to remove themselves from this area in order to construct the church? Or was the area already left open because the residents of Conchagua Vieja were continuing a set of practices that intentionally left previously occupied spaces in the village open and intact, cultivating a persistent connection between the earliest and latest residents at the site? More importantly, were the uses of the church markedly different from how the residents of Conchagua Vieja used the space before?

To answer these questions it is important to recognize the available data, and to compare Conchagua Vieja to other Postclassic and Colonial contexts elsewhere in Central America. Ethnohistorical and archaeological research has reinforced the perspective that the origins of any cultural artifact are based on a complex set of influences. Issues such as the changes these churches and chapels introduced to the built environment and cultural meanings of space in rural villages have not been adequately researched, but they must be in order to illuminate how the residents of Conchagua Vieja lived their lives in ways that made sense to them. By examining the village in its entirety, the interplay of forces become clearer, and questions can be addressed based on the history of a particular space within a village.

SITES OF CONTACT AND CHANGE

The regimentation, surveillance, and imposition of new worldviews and institutional forms – such as the *encomienda* and the introduction of the *visita* to Conchagua Vieja – characterized the colonial project in the Gulf of Fonseca. As a number of archaeological and historical studies have shown, the church was not an autonomous institution that, when introduced and imposed on a community, was simply taken up as is. The archaeological assemblage from Conchagua Vieja suggests that material practices were not tightly regulated in rural indigenous villages. In other words, when there are discrepant intentions between the introducers and recipients of a specific institution, such as the church and all of its accompanying practices and traditions, its control is open to negotiation, subversion, and reworking. Like other new forms of knowledge, local people took up Christianity, at least partially, according to their own ideologically and culturally informed purposes. These in turn shape local processes of indigenizing this institution, which is crucial to its integration in the community's local practices. Churches and chapels are both sites and signs of local agency and meaning-making, the consequences of which may or may not endure. Understanding them as contexts of dynamism offers insights into the cultural processes involved.

Even when agents of colonization and missionization hold a shared interest in changing local communities or appropriating indigenous souls and lands, encounters themselves were highly variable in terms of duration, intention, and scale. It was in such encounters, ranging in scope from a single instance to sustained contact, that different modes of communication, appearance, and assumptions about the world produced not only the possibilities for transformation and innovation, but new communicate and organizational practices and ideologies as well. Two short examples of similar types of encounters and the short- and long-term consequences for particular *visita* contexts illustrate just a few of the

possible scenarios that have been documented. Each example exhibits different temporal organization regarding points or phases of contact, as well as manner, duration, and intensity. They illustrate ways in which the incorporation of new practices expand local repertoires and give rise to new genres and registers along with new ways of being. These examples also highlight the different types of evidence – archaeological, ethnohistoric, and historic – that are resources for understanding the nature of contact and issues of agency and interpretation.

The Archaeological Sites of Tipu and Lamanai

The archaeological sites of Tipu and Lamanai, in Belize, are examples of Maya sites that demonstrate continuous occupation from the Late Classic (circa 800 CE) into the colonial period (Graham *et al.* 1985; Graham *et al.* 1989; Pendergast 1986; Pendergast and Graham 1993). The historic period structures at these two sites are arranged around a plaza bordered at one end by the church. The combined ethnohistorical and archaeological study of these two sites demonstrate that the local Maya maintained their Precolumbian practices and beliefs in a variety of ways, providing interesting insights into Maya and European interactions in this region. However, a primary focus on these two sites has been on the acts of resistance that characterized the encounter between these two groups.

Based on the documentary and architectural history of Tipu, the first attempt to restructure the native conceptual universe through Christian principles took place in 1544, when the Spanish modified existing structures for their use (Graham *et al.* 1989; Jones 1989). The first step involved the construction of a *visita* church over the corner of a Precolumbian building. After the rebellions of 1567-1568, a European-style plaza with colonial buildings was established around the church, signifying a second stage meant to impose a new mode of perception and practice for the Maya. This restructuring indeed helped to underpin a new order, but also exposed its challenges. In Mesoamerica, and throughout the New World, such challenges made protest not only possible, but effective.

By the 1630s Tipu had taken part in a widespread rebellion that expelled the Spaniards from most of Belize until 1695 (Jones 1989). In response to the European-imposed plaza and church, the Maya of Tipu constructed a Precolumbian style platform in the nave of the church during this insurgece. According to Elizabeth Graham, David Pendergast, and Grant Jones (1989: 1257), the platform was built for the purpose of carrying out rituals not allowed by the Spanish. After the conquest of the Maya at Dzuluinicob, Spanish interest in Tipu faded so that by 1707 Tipu was no longer an occupied town. According to Graham, Pendergast, and Jones (1989: 1257), the presence of Precolumbian style vessel fragments recovered from the collapsed debris of the abandoned buildings at Tipu suggests that Precolumbian habits persisted well into the colonial period. This observation was reinforced by the minimal presence of European material culture at the site, and the overwhelming preference for indigenous materials and styles (Graham *et al.* 1989: 1258).

At Lamanai, the first church was superposed on a Maya ceremonial platform, after the destruction of the original temple (Pendergast and Graham 1993). Pendergast (1991: 343) suggests that superposition had the practical aim of perpetuating Precolumbian patterns during the process of supplanting one form of religious practice with another. An example of this would be an animal effigy (bat or jaguar) placed into the pre-existing platform when it was recognized as a Christian church. A similar find was encountered at Tipu, where a Late Postclassic style effigy pendant and marine pendant were placed together as a cache in the foundation of a building constructed during the historic period (Graham *et al.* 1989: 1259).

During the colonial period, one of the temples at Tipu appears to have been a site of non-Christian ritual activities, because Spanish olive-jar sherds were found in platform debris along with Late Postclassic style censer fragments (Jones *et al.* 1986: 47). Graham (1991) argues that these two cases represent, from an architectural and spatial perspective, an amalgam of Maya and Spanish traditions rather than any dominance of one tradition over another. This would not be surprising, since the European inspired buildings found at Tipu and Lamanai were built by Maya masons with little guidance or oversight by infrequently visiting priests (Pendergast 1993: 122-23).

The examples above suggest that the Spanish utilized Maya buildings, spaces, and organizational patterns until they could develop their own, and that when some architectural or spatial changes took place, Maya laborers incorporated these buildings and organizational structures into their own religion. This process is often framed in the context of resistance, and highlighted by the bloody rebellions that took place at these sites and throughout the region. Resistance and protest often take place alongside the active reexamination of former values and beliefs, together with the development of new concepts of the world introduced by the Spanish, but in the end we need to envision these transformational processes that occurred in indigenous villages throughout the Americas as products of indigenous peoples actively engaging with a changing social world. Of the many aspects of the material record that might reflect the indigenous adoption of Christian values and beliefs, the most revealing is the documentation of the Christianization process. Scholars dedicated to this era, especially archaeologists, need to be wary of the simplistic approaches of colonial missionaries and go beyond the interpretation of material culture from missions and churches as simple manifestations as either the acceptance or rejection of Christianity.

THE *VISITA* AS A SITE OF COLLECTED MEMORY

A bias in archaeology has been to emphasize the political role of Christianity as a religion of the state, and to interpret Precolumbian elements in religious material culture as resistance phenomena. A problem with this reading is that it shows how easy it is to predict the inevitable transformation of small-scale societies into lesser likenesses and parts of societies at the vanguard of colonization and missionization. Marshall Sahlins rejects a weightier, theoretical version of this scenario to rebut the notion that, “colonized and ‘peripheral’ peoples [are] the passive objects of their own history and not its authors.” Rather than treat these peoples as “adulterated goods” they should be seen as active agents deeply engaged in situations of change (Sahlins 1994: 412).

Earlier I described the architectural characteristics and spatial organization of the *visita* church at Conchagua Vieja. Most noteworthy was the human burial encountered approximately 40 centimeters below the surface of the church floor, and the *bajareque* just above the human burial (see Figure 5.10). Two factors led me to believe that the inhumation was not associated with the church, but related to a residential structure that preceded the construction of the church. First, the burial was not stratigraphically intrusive, meaning there is no reason to believe that a burial was placed underneath the nave floor of the church. Second, the *bajareque* found in Loci 8 and 9, just above the burial, and the nearby midden deposit encountered through augur prospection suggests the burial was associated with a residential structure. The presence of a residential structure, or a group of residential structures, in the area in which the church was constructed immediately raises a question.

Was the church built in an area that was left vacant, or were the residential structures removed in order to build the church?

For two reasons, I believe the area was not in use just before the construction of the church, but that it was a historically significant place in the village. First, when Fray Alonso Ponce and Antonio de Ciudad Real visited the village in 1586, they made a point to provide sermons to the villages of *Teca* and *Conxagua* in their “espacios abiertos,” or open spaces. Providing a sermon and building a church in a significant space would be keeping in line with the Spanish practice of utilizing and taking advantage of already existing indigenous buildings, spaces, and organizational patterns. My second reason stems from the connection between the Gulf of Fonseca and the Naco region of northwestern Honduras that was established with the presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels recovered from Conchagua Vieja. Based on excavations directed by Theodore Neff, Patricia Urban and Edward Schortman (1990), the archaeological site of Viejo Brisas del Valle, in the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras, is a settlement that was occupied from the Late Classic into the early Post-Classic. Based on their findings, the site was abandoned at or just before the initial exploration of the region. Viejo Brisas del Valle has four distinct Areas, occupied at different times during the site’s history (Figure 7.1). Of interest here are Areas II and III, which were occupied at two different times, and adjacent to one another. Based on the excavation of twelve different structures from these two Areas, the investigators (Neff *et al.* 1990: 19) were able to determine that the Area II plaza was occupied during the late Post-Classic, while the Area III plaza was occupied during the late Classic and early Post-Classic. Eight inhumations were encountered during the excavation of five different structures in Area III. All of the inhumations were stratigraphically intrusive to the early Postclassic contexts, suggesting the inhabitants of late Postclassic Viejo Brisas del Valle buried some of their dead in or around earlier constructions in the village. According to the investigators (Neff *et al.* 1990: 19), the individuals interred in these structures appear to have been of high status, based on artificial cranial deformation and incised teeth.

Two aspects of this practice at Vieja Brisas del Valle are noteworthy. First, the practice of burying the dead in earlier constructions suggests that the earlier occupation of Area III continued to be significant to later inhabitants. Second, the early Postclassic structures of Area III were not buried by later buildings, but left intact throughout the late Postclassic occupation of the site. Both features of this practice suggest Area III of Viejo Brisas del Valle represented a persistent connection between early and late Postclassic populations (Neff *et al.* 1990). It is conceivable that the space in which the *visita* of Conchagua Vieja was constructed might have carried a similar importance to the residents of the village. However, it is not entirely clear if residential or administrative structures needed to be removed to make space for the church, but based on the archaeological and documentary record two things stand out. First, it is clear the place in which the church was built was previously occupied, and that individuals were buried beneath the residential structures. Second, the construction of the church in a historically significant space in the village allowed that space to maintain its meaningfulness, and allowed the residents of Conchagua Vieja to reproduce and maintain their own senses of history and identity in the same locale. Of significance are the social actions that produce and constitute the importance of place.

Sense of Place: Space and Time

The continued reuse of a particular place on the landscape, or in a settlement, during one's life may be a means of reckoning time, age, and social memory as a symbolic and material marker of the physical social life (Bender 2002; Gilchrist 2000). For Fred Myers (1986: 25), the continued use of the same place by the same group of people is "a critical element in their encounter with time," which produces and in turn reproduces identity. At Conchagua Vieja, placing a Catholic church in an already historically significant place inscribed that place with new memories and a changing sense of identity. As individuals engage with that same place over time, they created their own unique relationship with the church and its place in the community. Passed on through years and generations, this multilayered connection with the church became part of the social memory of individuals and the group as a whole. In this case, multilayered places like the church of Conchagua Vieja can best be imagined as a series of stories about past occupants.

While the *visita* church of Conchagua Vieja was dedicated to Catholic religious observances, it was clearly controlled, managed, and maintained by the indigenous peoples of the village. While the island of Conchagüita fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Nacaome, in southern Honduras, which formed a part of the Bishopric of Comayagua, it was seldom visited, even after the establishment of the convent of Santa María de las Nieves in nearby Amapala. During the majority of the year, when no priests were present, the churches and chapels in the *pueblos de indios* of Central America were under the control and at the service of the community. When traveling along the Pacific coast with a crew of buccaneers in 1684, William Dampier had the opportunity to explore a church on one of the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca (referred to as *Bay of Amapalla* in the document):

One thing I have observed in all the *Indian* Towns under the Spanish Government, as well in these parts in the Bay of *Campeachy*, and elsewhere, that the Images of the Virgin *Mary* and other Saints, (with which all their Churches were filled) are still painted in an *Indian* complexion, and partly in that Dress; but in those Towns which are inhabited chiefly by *Spaniards*, the Saints also conform themselves to the *Spanish* Garb and Complexion (Dampier 1927: 91).

Early on in the sixteenth century, Spanish priests claimed that indigenous people were entering and continuing "their ancient idolatry" inside of churches, and therefore viewed the independent practice of Catholic devotions by lay practitioners with some concern (Sheptak 2006). Like other new forms of knowledge, the inhabitants of Conchagua Vieja took up the church, at least partially, according to their own ideologically and culturally informed purposes. The representation of the Virgin Mary and other Saints in indigenous complexion and garb formed local processes of indigenizing the church, which was crucial to its integration in the community's own sets of practices and traditions.

After encountering the local community of Conchagua Vieja on the island of Conchagüita, Dampier had this to say about the community church:

The *Casica* and Secretary embraced Capt. Davis, and the other *Indians* received his Men with like Ceremony. These Salutations being ended, they all marched towards the Church, for that is the place of all publick meetings, and

all Plays and Pastimes are acted there also; therefore in the Churches belonging to the *Indian* Towns they have all sorts of Vizards, and strange antick Dresses both for Men and Women, and abundance of Musical Hautboys and Strumstrums (Dampier 1927: 93).

From as early as the late sixteenth-century, indigenous craftworkers were responsible for not only the construction of the churches, but also some of the items found within them. Statues or paintings of saints were frequently carried out from central churches and taken in procession to nearby, or partnering, towns. In Honduras, this practice is referred to as *guancasco* in the Lenca language (Rivas 1993; Sheptak 2006). In the Gulf of Fonseca, smaller statues of the saints circulated within certain communities through social ceremonies that were funded by village festivals. The significance of such images and statues to the village of Conchagua Vieja is made clear in petitions made by the residents to rebuild their parish church on the mainland after pirates destroyed their church in 1684. The residents specifically made note of the forceful removal of their images and statues as significant losses (AGCA, A 1.10.3 25545-2857).

The church that now stands in the modern town of Conchagua (Figure 7.2) was constructed in 1693, nine years after the residents of Conchagua Vieja and Teca abandoned their settlements on the island of Conchagüita and were forced to resettle in the town of Conchagua. The archival documentation for the building of the church at Conchagua is minimal, but it is safe to suggest that Spanish priests periodically visited all of the *pueblos de indios* in this area, and that the new church was the focus of religious practices maintained and controlled by indigenous peoples. While the continuation of Precolumbian practices inside of the *visita* at Conchagua Vieja might suggest a form of resistance to Roman Catholicism, the construction of a new parish church within ten years of relocation suggests otherwise. At the same time, the construction of a new church does not simply represent the successful imposition of Spanish customs on unwilling indigenous peoples. I argue that the church itself was the product of efforts and petitions by the residents of Conchagua to maintain the practices that were so closely attached to the previous church and its multilayered connection to the space in which it was built.

Time and space create the context for social life and social institutions (Giddens 1984: 132) in all societies. Conceptions of time and the social organization of space are culturally and historically contingent phenomena, and each society has different ways of reckoning time and distinct ways of creating settings to organize activities (Ashmore 2002; Hall 2003). This is certainly true of the multilayered *visita* church and its significance to the residents of Conchagua Vieja. The *visita* was a locale that concentrated interaction and festivities in the village. The *visita*, and the space in which it existed, was a setting that concentrated resources as well as action, and demonstrates how people give meaning to the places they occupy. The process whereby the church accumulated meaning was inherently historical and temporal. The indigenous residents of Conchagua Vieja socially produced the meaningfulness of the *visita*, but—once produced—this setting structured and transformed the character of the social actions that occurred there.

The *visita* should best be thought of as a site of collected memory. Drawing from Maurice Halbwachs (1980), memory derives from the social arena, which people always inhabit when they remember. Recognizing how strongly social processes influence people's personal memories of their own lifetimes, Halbwachs stressed the concept of 'collective

memory' to talk about a community's shared memories of the past (Kohli-Kunz 1973: 39–42; see also Shils 1981: 50f). Such collective memories are crucial for the identity of groups such as families, religious followers, or social classes (Halbwachs 1982). James Young reminded us, however, that societies cannot remember in any other way than through their constituents' memories. He suggested therefore that we speak of 'collected memory' rather than 'collective memory' (Young 1993: XI).

Monuments like the *visita* are places where people who grew up in a town remember their childhood. But these memories were not passively stored in those people's minds until they came back into the open by association. Monuments, like other artifacts, lead people to create a past through active remembrances within the social context in which they live. Such memories can be important in defining both personal and collective identities. Identity is always multifaceted: no one individual or group has just one identity. Identities are relational and constructed in particular social contexts, and in relation to others. More importantly, identities are never fixed but, instead, they are continually negotiated. The objects, monuments, and space people use and the ways they use them define who they are and their place in the world. The multilayered *visita* on the island of Conchagüita, and its successor on the mainland, was integral to the Lenca-speaking residents of Conchagua Vieja and the creation of social relationships, and was strategically employed to define the essence of that community and its history. It is a site of collected memories and narratives.

DISCUSSION

Though shaped by asymmetrical power relations, colonial encounters are dynamic and complex. There is rarely a "horizon point" separating the times before and after contact. The *visita*, and the space in which it was situated, shaped the subjective and intersubjective social lives of the people who lived there. At the same time, the place itself was shaped by the cultural practices related to the memory of that place, and by conceptions about persons, worlds, and knowledge. Ways of feeling, thinking, speaking and remembering the past, a property of human consciousness, are never neutral or ahistorical, but are closely tied to specific sociocultural and epistemological frameworks and processes. A primary focus of this chapter was to explore the nature and mechanisms of such cultural processes that not only transformed a significant place within the village of Conchagua Vieja, but also the evolving relationship and social realities attached to a multilayered locale, such as the *visita*.

Numerous questions about the significance of the spaces built upon by colonizers cannot be completely answered. Does architecture frequently obscure as well as highlight what happened in the past, such as in Tipu and Conchagua Vieja, where the architecture changed but indigenous beliefs and practices remained just as before? What relationship did the *visita* and the space it inhabited on the island have to the rebuilt church on the mainland? The ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence suggests that the church, and the idea of the church, evolved from both indigenous and European influences. More importantly, the multiple lines of evidence used for this investigation demonstrate that places like the *visita* of Conchagua Vieja are not static settings. Places such as these have multiple meanings and are socially constructed. Drawing from Margaret Rodman (1992: 642), these settings are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions. The physical, emotional, and experiential realities places hold for their inhabitants at particular

times need to be understood apart from the uncritical application of syncretism and resistance models.

Studies of indigenous resistance and syncretism are important to any future studies of mission and colonial encounters. Resistance, as well as its myriad refinements and mutations (such as ‘subversion,’ ‘transgression,’ and so forth), became a central theme in the study of social life during the colonial period. The problem with resistance frameworks is that they often place an overemphasis on domination and conflict, overwhelming other faces of social life, such as cooperation, reciprocity, and negotiation (Ortner 1984: 157). The inherent explanatory limitations of the resistance concept become clear in the context of the *visita*, and the space in which it was built. At the same time, studies of syncretism have also been applied uncritically, and interpret the retention of traditional imagery and practices as a conservative and not a transformative process for both the *indios* and the Spanish. Treatments of nativism and syncretism also assess indigenous behavior against an ideal of true or real conversion that goes unquestioned.

It is difficult to reconstruct the cultural practices of the Lenca-speaking peoples of the Gulf of Fonseca as both agents and recipients of change because written accounts of these encounters were relatively rare, and those that survived were biased in one direction. More archaeological and historical research is needed to trace the cultural practices that created new vernacular forms and meanings during the colonial period. An underlying goal behind this chapter, and dissertation, was to refute the long-standing assumption that the indigenous peoples of Central America were passive recipients of European practices and material culture. To enhance our knowledge of the fate of El Salvador’s indigenous population after the Spanish conquest, scholars need to search for the cultural traces of these people’s actions in the past. As this chapter has demonstrated, we have the documentation of what European and other missionaries thought they were doing, as well as reminders of what they were “planting” with their material culture and religious ideologies. Though cultural changes over time can go unnoticed and undocumented, one consequence of the introduction of European chronicles and practices in the Americas is the creation of chronicles and material artifacts – texts that provided clues to the colonial experience.

SUMMARY

Contact and colonialism are contexts that often disrupt and potentially transform one’s habitual practices, or at least makes one aware that what was taken for granted is now subject to scrutiny. Voicing new forms, based either on mimesis or as a novel form to avoid such association, allows one to engage with the other, the previously unknown, and provides the potential for transforming one’s self, identity, and practices. In chapters three and four, I demonstrated how Spanish practices of territorial appropriation and labor acquisition had enormous historical force throughout the colonial period – a force that was ideological and economic, semantic and social. In chapters five and six, I revealed how the residents of Conchagua Vieja did not change their material practices drastically during the colonial period. To some extent, the residents of Conchagua Vieja maintained their long distance exchange networks, as demonstrated by the presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels from northern Honduras, and the diversity of obsidian sources available to a small village on a lump of land in the middle of the Gulf of Fonseca. In this chapter I demonstrated how the residents of Conchagua Vieja made use of the space in which the *visita* was situated to reproduce and

maintain their own meaningful senses of history and identity. Memory and identity are naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported. The *visita* and the rebuilt parish church of Conchagua were places wherein the collected memories of the past could revive and survive.

CONCLUSION

Colonizers everywhere try to gain control over the practices through which would-be subjects produce and reproduce the bases of their existence. No habit is too humble, no sign too insignificant to be implicated. And colonization always provoke struggles – albeit often tragically uneven ones – over power and meaning on the frontiers of empires. It is a process of “challenge and riposte” (Harlow 1986: xi; after Bourdieu 1977: 12) often much too complex to be captured in simple equations of domination and resistance; or, for that matter, by grand models of the politics of imperialism or the economics of the modern world system.

For the Lenca-speaking peoples in the Gulf of Fonseca, this process began with the slave raiding practices of the 1520s and 30s, and was later reinforced with the introduction of chapels and churches onto the historical landscape. Priests and *encomenderos* were the vanguard of the Spanish presence in the Gulf of Fonseca; both were the most active cultural agents of the empire. While the priests were being driven by the explicit aim of reconstructing the ‘native’ world in the name of God and European civilization, the settlers and *encomenderos* wanted land and labor. Patently, the chronicles provided by Spanish friars, administrators, engineers, and surveyors did not tell us the whole story of the Lenca past in eastern El Salvador. Nothing does, in and of itself. Nor does it yield generalizations about how the native peoples of El Salvador were able to maintain their practices and persist in the context of colonialism.

It was important to be clear about what I *did not* set out to accomplish with this investigation. The dissertation was intended neither as a general anthropology of colonialism among the Lenca-speaking peoples of eastern El Salvador, nor as an exhaustive social history of Christianity, of indigenous resistance, or of religious change in this part of the world. These topics have already been covered, in varying degrees, in the works of others more competent than myself. My horizons were modest, and yet, hopelessly ambitious.

Narrowly conceived, this study was a historical anthropology of how Spanish colonialism impacted the Lenca-speaking peoples of eastern El Salvador. But as stated in the introduction, the investigation set its sights more broadly. Essentially, there were two primary objectives. First, I wanted to shed light on a local experience on a lump of land in the Gulf of Fonseca that addressed larger themes of colonialism and nationalism in El Salvador. My second goal was to provide a nuanced social history of colonialism in El Salvador for the Lenca-speaking inhabitants of Conchagua Vieja, one that explored how colonialism was experienced on a variety of scales. The idea was to move away from studies on colonial Central America that simply focus on the early years of conquest and colonialism, and the destructive impact of European expansion into the region. Each objective was requisite for the full consideration of the other. The underlying motivation was to account for the social development of El Salvador, and Central America, in its entirety by paying more attention to a geographic area, historical era, and peoples that have been neglected by the scholarly field.

In this final chapter, I summarize the historical context and major findings of archaeological and archival research presented throughout the dissertation.

SUMMARY

I began this dissertation with the paradox one encounters when trying to follow El Salvador's history. On one end of the spectrum, a common observer might recognize Salvadorans as overly engaged with their sense of 'rootedness' – as people who are very familiar with their past and their identity. On the other hand, El Salvador is often understood as a nation without history, where its people, institutions and government have a weak and fragmented sense of their own past. My project set out to navigate this terrain established by this paradox, as it explored El Salvador's colonial past to see its connections with its present situation. I began by first describing the context of my investigation: Conchagua Vieja. This small village on the island of Conchagüita, in the Gulf of Fonseca was the springboard that allowed me illuminate the colonial experience of the Lenca-speaking peoples who resided on the island and eastern El Salvador at the time of contact in the 1520s. The village of Conchagua Vieja also allowed me to tackle another major issue attached to El Salvador's past: historiography.

Historiography is of paramount importance for any scholar who wants to capture the complex process of history making. I was mainly concerned with how history works, and how it reveals itself through specific narratives. In this case, I was particularly interested in the historiographical view of eastern El Salvador as neither a significant region in its own right, nor meaningfully attached to its regional neighbors. A consequence of this was the lack scholarly research on the Lenca-speaking peoples of eastern El Salvador, and the region itself. On account of the generalized nature of history and anthropology in El Salvador, earlier studies of the country's history failed to unravel how large-scale, national-level historical processes developed from local, small-scale interactions and actors. To address this issue, I thought it pertinent to merge two different approaches. First, I wanted to address how the politics of *mestizo* nationalism have shaped historical narratives of El Salvador's past; and second, I wanted to apply a landscape approach to better understand how eastern El Salvador was left in a historiographical void. Both approaches allowed me to forge a more informed understanding of eastern El Salvador's history, and to dispel the myth that the region had been an empty territory.

In Chapter 2 I made an explicit point to look at the emergence of *mestizo* nationalism in El Salvador, and how that narrative coincided with the systematic erasure of the country's indigenous history. I chose to begin this investigation with a discussion of *mestizo* nationalism as a way to address the failure to recognize the fate of El Salvador's indigenous population after the Spanish conquest and the *Matanza* of 1932. This failure was largely achieved at the social, governmental, and scholarly levels. Guided by Michel Foucault's insistence that tracking power through various 'moments' accentuates the fundamentally processual character of a historical production, Chapter 2 looked at the following issues: first, the stunted development of history and archaeology in El Salvador, which led to very few questions concerning race and cultural rights in national politics; second, the alleged disappearance of indigenous peoples from El Salvador following the *Matanza* of 1932; and third, the complicated circumstances that accompanied the return of the Salvadoran Indian in contemporary political movements, archeological inquiry, and museum exhibits.

La Matanza of 1932 was an essential element to my discussion in Chapter 3. In contemporary El Salvador, *La Matanza* is remembered as a historical fact, a gruesome event that had its concrete effects. Not only did it lead to the perceived absence of Indians from the national imagination, the massacre (re)awakened collective representations of Indians and Indianness. The response allowed the Salvadoran state to re-cast the savage Indian from

earlier times as a threat to the national body, made visible in the gaze of the soldiers, and materialized in the bodies they slaughtered. As consequence, the word *Indio* today interpolates a subject marked by a history of unimaginable violence, and is energized by a double dynamic of loss and discovery.

After disappearing in the wake of the 1932 massacre, the Indian returned to post-civil war El Salvador.

The Peace Accords of 1992 opened the door for indigenous activism in El Salvador. The UNESCO Culture of Peace Program for El Salvador not only listed indigenous peoples as one of four priority areas for postwar development, but also provided political space for El Salvador's long silenced Indians. In 1995, the Salvadoran state created a department of indigenous affairs, and has persisted, in one form or another, for more than a decade. Each of these developments facilitated a climate that was highly favorable to foreign scholars, opening up a sense of discovery and revelation that returned the Indian to Salvadoran society. Postwar El Salvador witnessed a surge of research that questioned the myth of disappearance in El Salvador, giving special attention to issues of race, identity, the 1932 massacre, and the demise of Indianness. Indians were always there, they were only removed from the official narrative of the nation. By 1940, the category 'indigenous' had been removed from the official census, and by 1952 the International Labor Organization confirmed the disappearance of radical difference when a document from Convention 107 declared the absence of an indigenous population in the modern republic of El Salvador (Government of El Salvador 1952). This maneuver of the state produced concrete effects. The certainty with which people came to believe the official fiction is linked to assimilation narratives typical of *mestizaje* and as a practical tactic to explain the massacre of 1932.

The surge in indigenous activism, however, led to the institutionalization of Indian identity in El Salvador. Since the 1980s, the category of Indianness has been open to empirical challenges over who is or is not 'really' indigenous, drawing activists to concentrate on closed categories of identity formation. The production of these closed categories was partly a response to the subject-forming effects of the discourse and practices introduced by transnational institutions. As a consequence, when the Indian is now visible in El Salvador, representation is often controlled by the state. As more and more Salvadorans view their country from afar, and Salvadoran-born residents of the USA or Canada are the majority of tourists visiting El Salvador, the state's recognition of 'authentic' Indianness is wedded to its support for increased archaeological work at the handful of pre-Columbian sites in western El Salvador, or its efforts to promote El Salvador in the Mundo Maya tourism campaign. Thus, the Indian returned to El Salvador most prominently in the world of NGO's, indigenous rights groups, urban intellectuals, and museum displays.

The assumption underwriting the myth of *mestizo* nationalism in El Salvador is the belief that there are no substantial ('authentic') indigenous peoples who might lay claim to land, resources, or their own distinctive cultural identity and thus contest the legitimacy of essentially colonial and neocolonial rights of access and authority. This premise had long been accepted, with the assumption that there was little evidence relating to an indigenous presence in the post-contact/colonial period and that there was no point in undertaking systematic investigations of an indigenous history in El Salvador, especially in the east. This position justified successive policies of expropriation and displacement, which ensured that there would be no data from those contexts that could counter this narrative. The theses of abandonment and assimilation became a self-fulfilling narrative of a singular racial collective

in El Salvador. The following chapters not only set out to disprove this narrative, but to demonstrate how the Lenca-speaking peoples of Conchagua Vieja maintained their sense of history and cultural practices in the face of colonialism. An underlying premise to my investigation was that the writing of history and the doing of archaeology continue to shape the lives and futures of native peoples and thus affect everyone committed to building more open, culturally democratic communities in Central America.

Chapters 3 and 4 explicitly focused on the early discourse and colonial practices that impacted the '*tierras de ningun provecho*,' or lands without benefit. Both chapters were concerned with the geographical discourses, territorial representation, and knowledge production of the Gulf of Fonseca and eastern El Salvador in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Landscape became an essential concept for thinking about how people experienced and actively participated in different colonial settings. Given the tremendous range of variation in colonial programs, I employed a landscape perspective to understand the processes and mechanisms of colonialism in eastern El Salvador, and how the village of Conchagua Vieja was immersed in global processes. The landscape approach became a crucial element to my discussion of territorial appropriation in Chapter 3 and my overview on the impacts of cattle ranching and indigo production in Chapter 4. While landscape approaches in Mesoamerica have often concentrated on monumental sites and features, I instead chose to apply a multi-scalar approach to landscape to better understand the relationships forged between the land and people.

Chapter 3 provided a full exploration of first-hand accounts available for the Gulf of Fonseca. Since I was particularly interested in the slow discursive development of that landscape, and the initial mapping of that territory, each of the first-hand accounts and descriptions of the territory used in this investigation provided commentary on the nature of the islands in the Gulf of Fonseca, their resources and peoples. Two major developments were specifically addressed in this chapter: first, the practice of claiming by naming; and second, the establishment of administrative control of the region.

When reading of the first encounter between the Spanish and the Gulf of Fonseca, one is struck by how the first explorers interpreted the islands in ways they found meaningful. While stressing the lack of an inter-oceanic route between the Pacific and the Caribbean, they described the islands in terms that made them familiar to their far-off patrons, giving them Spanish names so they might be more readily understood, while at the same time making them more securely Spanish. Though the islands of the Gulf of Fonseca went by several names – such as, *islas de la Teca*, or *golfete de Chorotega* – the Spanish paid little attention to these references. Moreover, Andres de Niño had no compunction in dubbing the Gulf of Fonseca in honor of Juan Rodrigo de Fonseca, the Bishop and President of the Council of Indies, in large part because he was simply strengthening their God-given and royally sanctioned right to assert Spanish ownership over the region. The importance of place and meaning to the people that lived in the Gulf of Fonseca was not fully captured by the Spanish explorers. In fact, the diversity of ethnic groups and languages in the Gulf region was not fully recognized until 1586, when Antonio de Ciudad Real reinforced earlier observations of the region made by *Licenciado* Diego García de Palacio, the *oidor* of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala.

The Europeans that traveled through Central America showed a complete ignorance of the ethnic and linguistic diversity among the local communities. As a consequence, these texts exclude, or hide, the cultural heterogeneity found in the Gulf of Fonseca. The brevity

with which events are recounted in the colonial testimonies about the Gulf of Fonseca, and surrounding areas, does not contribute in the least to a better understanding of the cultural exchanges of the colonial encounter. How these texts refer to facts is important in itself because they tell us something about the attitude and manner in which the Spanish communicated with Native American groups. The lack of description of these indigenous groups and their practices reveals how much less important they were when compared to the precious metals hidden in the lands that were waiting to be possessed and conquered. By giving the Gulf of Fonseca a Spanish name, Andres de Niño made them Spanish, at least in his own mind and in the minds of his compatriots.

The second major development I discussed in this chapter was the establishment of administrative control in this region. The colonization of eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, did not take place overnight. According to initial reports, the territory lacked any signs of precious metals. While the territory exhibited certain resources useful for the booming shipping industry, the land was considered ‘unprofitable’ and did not immediately arouse much interest. Unfortunately, this did not stop Pedrarias Davila and Pedro de Alvarado, governors of Panama and Guatemala, from forcibly extracting labor from the islands by way of slavery and the *encomienda*. The region’s high population density made the exploitation of the region worthwhile; as the *encomienda*, and other forms of forced or free labor, served as the foundation of the colonial economy in Central America. For most of the 1520s and 30s, both governors struggled over the control of the Gulf of Fonseca. It was not until 1543 that the islands finally fell under the jurisdiction of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala.

Of particular interest in this section were the initial reports of the region sent to the Crown, justifying Pedrarias’ reasons for administering the region. Pedrarias initially described the Gulf of Fonseca as swampy, and not suitable for settlement. While the conditions did not justify his desire to claim the region, the sequence of his argument for claiming the Gulf of Fonseca is interesting in itself. First, Pedrarias does not outline any economic advantages of populating the land, but he does comment on the potential moral and religious conversion of the Gulf’s inhabitants. In the discourse provided, the main goal was the development of a religious mission, and possibly an economic enterprise. In practice, however, the economic side of the colonial enterprise is given priority over the evangelical mission. While the Gulf of Fonseca may have not exhibited the most attractive characteristics for Spanish settlement, this did not stop Pedrarias from allotting tributaries on the islands of the Gulf to Hernan Nieto, Alonso de Segovia, and Gonzalo de los Rios, *encomenderos* from the villa of León. More importantly, the conditions did not prevent Pedrarias from extending his lucrative slaving practices into the Gulf region.

The Spanish did not go to Central America alone. The documentary record illustrates how they took with them their conceptual repertoire, discourse, technology, ideas of civility, and their social practices. Each of the reports used in Chapter 3 not only provide a record of the rationale for settling *villas* near and around the Gulf of Fonseca, but also a register of the Spanish discourses used to describe the territory and its native peoples. Based on the available documents related to the territory, the eastern Salvadoran landscape was an obstacle for Spanish expansion into the territory, but unfavorable conditions notwithstanding, the *villa* of San Miguel started to grow in the second half of the sixteenth century. Chapter 4 described how cattle ranching and indigo processing allowed the *villa* of San Miguel to slowly, but relentlessly, change the social and physical composition of the landscape.

Chapter 3 provided a small glimpse into how the Spanish engaged and interacted with the natural environment, resources, and peoples of the Gulf of Fonseca. Chapter 4 follows this discussion with an overview of how the Spanish were not only able to expand into eastern El Salvador during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but how they were also able to successfully disenfranchise the Lenca-speaking peoples of the region. A consequence of this was the ‘myth of emptiness’, or the notion that eastern El Salvador had always been an empty territory, devoid of the cultural riches left by the Maya and Pipil of western and central El Salvador. In order to contest this assumption, I first described on a regional level, the effects of Spanish colonial processes in eastern El Salvador. I then followed this discussion with a complementary perspective that evaluated how the residents of Conchagua Vieja, through their own practices, were able to empower their own community in a time when Spanish settlers were forcibly seizing lands from indigenous villages throughout eastern El Salvador.

Today, eastern El Salvador is seen as cattle country, and as a landscape dominated by landed estates established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This way of representing the territory, although based on verifiable elements, fails (or forgets) to account for the historical moment that altered the social lives for the indigenous peoples who had initially occupied the region, and the ecological changes that inflicted the terrain. The brunt of Chapter 4 concentrated on the establishment of extensive *haciendas* for ranching and indigo processing in the sixteenth century. Following the work of David Browning, I argued that indigo processing and cattle ranching paved the way for not only ecological changes in the region, but also reconstituted the social and cultural composition of the landscape. Although the ecological disturbance introduced by cattle ranching and the cultivation and processing of indigo were dramatic and some of its effects definitive, those two processes alone do not explain the full story of eastern El Salvador’s social history.

One of the methods I chose to dispel the ‘myth of emptiness’ was the use of legal petitions filed by community members from the village of Conchagua Vieja to explore how indigenous peoples throughout eastern El Salvador strategically made use of European discourses, institutions, and spaces to reproduce and maintain their own meaningful senses of history and identity. Rather than purely emphasize the disastrous impacts of cattle ranching and indigo production throughout eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, a primary objective was to reveal as much as possible about indigenous experiences in eastern El Salvador during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the exact composition of native populations in eastern El Salvador, and the Gulf of Fonseca, is not entirely well-known, the ability to interpret indigenous responses to land-grabbing efforts during this era must be tempered with an understanding of native contexts, contingencies, and histories that intersect the colonial moment. The many lacunae left by the sparse historical record left the door wide open for archaeological research.

The remainder of the dissertation addressed the archaeological investigation of Conchagua Vieja. The three chapters form my best attempt to dispel the ‘myth of emptiness’ by restoring some materiality to the Lenca-speaking peoples who inhabited the village of Conchagua Vieja during the colonial period. Since, Spanish and Native American sites produce quite different artifact patterns, it was crucial that I recognize Conchagua Vieja as an indigenous village that did not include resident Spaniards. Archaeological excavations and laboratory analyses of material remains from Conchagua Vieja were designed to evaluate on a material level how colonial processes were integrated in the organization of social life through such shared community activities as trade, and resource exploitation. Despite the

circumstances, the documentary record and archaeological data demonstrate how the residents of Conchagua Vieja maintained their lands, spatial organization and cultural practices after the arrival of the Spanish.

Chapter 5 covered the archaeological research design, methods and results from archaeological fieldwork at Conchagua Vieja. The Conchagua Vieja Archaeology Project on the island of Conchagüita (PACVIC) was designed to evaluate social interaction at various scales, including: household features; use of space within a community setting; and social networks within the Gulf of Fonseca, and surrounding areas. Key to this perspective was the attention given to the diversity of connections and interactions that specific communities have on the local, regional, and inter-regional scales. My knowledge of these regional connections come from documentary sources that described the movement of island communities in 1683, when they were forced to abandon their villages because of pirate incursions into the region. While the residents of Teca and Conchagua Vieja, on the island of Conchagüita, were able to move to the present-day town of Conchagua, the islands inhabitants of Meanguera first moved to Nacaome, southern Honduras, then to a small area near present-day La Unión.

PACVIC spanned two seasons of archaeological fieldwork starting in 2005. The primary goal of the first season was to produce a series of maps that documented the topographic and spatial layout of Conchagua Vieja. Once the maps were produced I then proceeded with a pedestrian survey over the site, looking for clusters of artifacts, and to determine the location of subsurface excavations. Working off the data in 2005, the following season continued with subsurface exploration that included augur prospection and excavations in four designated areas. Augur prospection was used to determine the horizontal and vertical extent of the village. Excavations targeted four different contexts: two midden deposits (Operations 1 and 3), a residential structure (Operation 2), and the *visita* (Operation 4). The two midden deposits were both colonial period midden deposits encountered through pedestrian survey and augur prospection. Operation 1 was located approximately 30 meters southwest of the church of Conchagua Vieja, and covered an estimated area of 100 meters squared. The midden was situated on top of a pre-Columbian terrace, which might suggest a change in the use of space within the community during the colonial period. Operation 3 was much smaller, and located next to a residential household unit. Overall, Operation 1 had a much larger quantity of artifact types than Operation 3. The high fragmentation of artifacts and disarticulated faunal elements suggest Operation 1 received materials from around the whole community, rather than just discard from specific activities performed near the residential units.

Trash disposal at Conchagua Vieja was assessed as a socially distinctive set of practices. While aspects of trash disposal are pragmatic and probably universal for sedentary people, others may be based on particular social meanings. Many pre-Columbian sites have reported patterns of small-scale discard ("middens") behind and close to individual buildings and building clusters (Arnold 1990; Hayden 1983; Santley and Kneebone 1993). The map of Conchagua Vieja demonstrate that there are areas with dense concentrations of discard that are not associated with individual houses or clusters, as well as small discard areas near individual residential units. It is possible that the residents of Conchagua Vieja disposed of midden close to houses, and that this form of discard was indeed an indigenous practice. The larger concentrations of discard may reflect a new pattern of community activity introduced with colonization. During the colonial period, the residents of Conchagua Vieja may have simply performed both discard practices within the community.

The identification of a hearth in *Sub-Op* 2B of Operation 2 was another significant architectural element used to evaluate changes or persistence in food preparation activities at Conchagua Vieja. The details of the artifacts found in these different contexts were provided in Chapter 6. The final component of Chapter was my discussion of Operation 4, and the human interment encountered during the last week of excavations. In this chapter I argued that the burial was not associated with the church, but that it is most likely associated with a residential structure that preceded the construction of the church. This is an important distinction to make for two reasons. First, by not associating the human burial with the church I eliminated a set of practices attached to the interment of specific individuals inside of churches. Second, by implying that the church was constructed over an area that had previously been inhabited introduces questions related to the use of that space before and after the construction of the church. All of these questions were addressed in chapter 7.

Two methodological approaches were used to properly evaluate the affects of Spanish colonialism on the community of Conchagua Vieja. First, data gathered from this project was compared to data collected from sites related to the residents of Conchagua Vieja spatially, temporally, and culturally. Comparable sites identified in colonial documents and investigated archaeologically includes: Caluco and Ciudad Vieja of western El Salvador; León Viejo, Nicaragua; and sites in the Department of Santa Barbara, Honduras. Second, an agent-centered analytical approach was applied at the household scale to form the basis for a multi-scalar evaluation of social interaction including integration of households at the community level, and economic linkages with communities in other regions. The agent-centered approach was well suited to this investigation, and was especially appropriate for examining the reproduction and transformation of pre-Columbian practices at Conchagua Vieja. This especially became relevant during the analysis of archaeological materials.

In Chapter 6 I presented the material data for the following items: ceramics, lithics, archaeobotanical remains, metal, and majolica earthenware. There were two main categories of expectations I anticipated from previous investigations of similar contexts and the methodological framework adopted for this investigation: changes in the kinds of practices evident; and changes in the way the same practices are carried out, including the incorporation of new goods as a result of economic changes and especially, the introduction of European materials. The analysis provided in Chapter 6 suggested that reality is much more complex. Since societies do not simply replace another, new ways of doing things, including new materials made available, and new ‘orthodoxies’ about how to do things, are seen as resources that colonized people draw on in potentially varied ways. Three general scenarios formed the range of expectations anticipated for Conchagua Vieja.

The first scenario envisioned early colonial household using European-style goods in ways that would have been used by Spanish colonists. A second framework would have expected the local residents of Conchagua Vieja to incorporate new practices and goods, but to use them in ways that were consistent with traditional practices. This is a form of heterodoxy, in which the practices of everyday life were not those of the orthodox Spanish way of doing things, but also not the same as the pre-existing indigenous way of doing things: the resulting cultural experience would best be described as hybrid. Many of the actual Spanish colonial situations investigated have been argued to represent this kind of response. A third set of responses would potentially use new goods, but might simultaneously persist in the use of indigenous goods. These situations can be seen as a second form of orthodoxy, one

in which the indigenous actors are consciously persisting in practices that may have significant implications as "traditional".

Based on the archaeological data presented in Chapters 6 and 7, I suggest that a bit of orthodox and heterodox practices were taking place at Conchagua Vieja. While the artifacts recovered from Conchagua Vieja imply there were no major shifts in practices during the colonial period, the *visita* suggests the residents of that village took up the church, at least partially, according to their own ideologically and culturally informed purposes. In other words, the Lenca-speaking peoples of Conchagua Vieja continued doing what they had always done, except differently. European materials were introduced, and available through illicit trade, but they made up a small percentage of the entire archaeological assemblage from Conchagua Vieja. There is no clear way to see how metal and majolica were used at the site. The *visita*, on the other hand, formed a significant part of the community, and continued to carry significant weight even after the abandonment of the village in 1683, as evidenced by the construction of a new church in the modern day town of Conchagua within a decade. To explain, three bits of data were quite revealing.

First, the residents of Conchagua Vieja continued to use lithic technology throughout the colonial period. Metal was introduced to the community, but the amount of metal available could not be determined. All stages of the lithic reduction process were evident for chert and chalcedony, but not for obsidian, which suggests obsidian pre-forms continued to be brought in during the colonial period. Of the obsidian data of the 55 obsidian samples recovered from Conchagua Vieja, 53 were geochemically characterized to known obsidian sources in Guatemala (El Chayal, Ixtepeque, Jilotepeque, San Bartolome Milpas Altas), northern Honduras (El Venado), central Honduras (La Esperanza), and southern Honduras (Güinope). The most abundant obsidian source encountered at Conchagua Vieja was La Esperanza, located in central Honduras.

In terms of long-standing practices for the region, the variety of source obsidian encountered at Conchagua Vieja closely resembles the variety of source obsidian recovered from excavated and surface contexts dating from the late formative Uapala Phase to the terminal classic Lepa phase of Quelepa. According to Braswell and his colleagues (Braswell et al. 1994: 196), the ancient residents of Quelepa participated in a Mesoamerican, rather than Central American, obsidian transference network, as evidenced by the source obsidian recovered from Quelepa: Ixtepeque, El Chayal, Jilotepeque, La Esperanza, and Güinope. It seems as though the residents of Conchagua Vieja, descendants of the ancient Lenca who first settled Quelepa, participated in a similar Central American social network. This is evidenced by the obsidian data and ceramic data.

One of the most interesting features taken from the analysis of ceramics recovered from Conchagua Vieja was the evidence for Santa Bárbara ware vessels. The obsidian data clearly implies that the residents of Conchagua Vieja were involved in social networks with different groups throughout Honduras, and southern Guatemala. The presence of Santa Bárbara ware in virtually every context excavated at Conchagua Vieja suggests a continuous long-distance exchange network that was shared with the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras throughout the colonial period. Many of these vessels were recovered from Operation 2, but do not show up in Locus 3 of Operation 3 and Locus 8 of Operation 1. In Chapters 5 and 6 I argued that both of those Loci were stratigraphically linked, and that the two deposits were linked chronologically. This relationship strongly suggested that their long-distance exchange network with northern Honduras might have

temporarily shifted at this time during the colonial period. This shift was also evident during the analysis of lithics from Conchagua Vieja.

The relationship with the Santa Bárbara region of Honduras was especially intriguing, and leads me to a third line of data that proved to be especially revealing for this investigation. Earlier I described the architectural characteristics and spatial organization of the *visita* church at Conchagua Vieja. Most noteworthy was the human burial encountered approximately 40 centimeters below the surface of the church floor, and the *bajareque* just above the human burial. In Chapter 7 I argued that the inhumation was associated with a residential structure that preceded the construction of the church. Based on ethnohistoric accounts and archaeological data, I argued that the space in which the church was built was not in use before the construction of the church, but that it was a historically significant place in the village.

When Alonso Ponce and Antonio de Ciudad Real visited Conchagua Vieja in 1586 they made a point to provide sermons to the villages of *Teca* and *Conxagua* in their “espacios abiertos,” or open spaces. This not only implied an open space in the village to construct a church, but the practice of building a church in a significant space would have kept in line with the Spanish practice of utilizing and taking advantage of already existing indigenous buildings, spaces, and organizational patterns. My second reason stems from the connection between the Gulf of Fonseca and the Naco region of northwestern Honduras that was established with the presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels recovered from Conchagua Vieja. Based on excavations directed by Theodore Neff, Patricia Urban and Edward Schortman (1990), the archaeological site of Viejo Brisas del Valle, in the Naco Valley of northwestern Honduras, is a settlement that was occupied from the Late Classic into the early Post-Classic. An interesting detail that came from the excavations of Viejo Brisas del Valle was the presence of burials in an area that had previously been occupied.

Two aspects of burying the dead in an area that was previously occupied at Vieja Brisas del Valle are noteworthy. First, the practice of burying the dead in earlier constructions suggests that the earlier occupation of Area III continued to be significant to later inhabitants. Second, the early Post-Classic structures of Area III were not buried by later buildings, but left intact throughout the late Post-Classic occupation of the site. Both features of this practice suggest Area III of Viejo Brisas del Valle represented a persistent connection between early and late Post-Classic populations. Based on the exchange network these two sites shared (demonstrated by the presence of Santa Bárbara ware vessels), and the knowledge of an open space at Conchagua Vieja during Alonso Ponce’s visit, I argued that it was conceivable that the space in which the *visita* of Conchagua Vieja was constructed might have carried a similar importance to the residents of the village. First, it was clear the space in which the church was built was previously occupied, and that individuals were buried beneath the residential structures. Second, the construction of the church in a historically significant space in the village allowed that space to maintain its meaningfulness, and allowed the residents of Conchagua Vieja to reproduce and maintain their own senses of history and identity in the same locale.

All three lines of evidence (obsidian, ceramic and the *visita*) suggested to me that the Lenca-speaking peoples of Conchagua Vieja were active agents deeply engaged in authoring and maintaining their social identities and history. While studies of indigenous resistance and syncretism are important to any future studies of mission and colonial encounters, the primary objective behind this investigation was to apply an agent-centered approach to see how the

residents of Conchagua Vieja maintained their long distance exchange networks and cultural practices in the context of colonialism. At the same time I wanted to contest the 'myth of emptiness' and provide a more inclusive history of El Salvador that is more cognizant of its regional histories and diversity of ethnic groups.

THE HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF EASTERN EL SALVADOR

Throughout the dissertation I sought to promote a perspective that highlights the importance of recognizing how indigenous peoples actively maintained their cultural and material practices in a situation not of their own choosing. In discussing colonialism and its short- and long-term consequences in El Salvador, I underscored the complexity of colonial histories in the region, the colonial legacies that followed, and the myths of indigeneity in El Salvador. Exploring the complexities of entanglements that took place between the Lenca-speaking peoples of Conchagua Vieja and Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries required an integrated set of theoretical and methodological approaches. Theoretical frameworks of landscape, place, agency, and discourse provided unique entry points for pulling together the various social and historical strands Conchagua Vieja was wrapped into. As the investigation demonstrated, some strands tightly reined in the residents of Conchagua Vieja into colonialism through slave raiding and *encomienda*. Other strands were not as tight, allowing these same peoples to control various aspects of their social lives and relationships. In this context, the Lenca-speaking peoples of Conchagua Vieja forged their own ways to maintain their own sense of history and identity. This illumination was made possible through the interplay of multiple lines of evidence.

The application of archaeological and historical methods is one of the significant strengths of historical anthropology. By bringing together 'multiple lines of evidence' (as defined by Wylie 1985, 1992) I was able to piece together a more informed understanding of eastern El Salvador's colonial past and the sociopolitical consequences of that encounter for modern Indians. The diversity of information from archaeological data, the documentary record and ethnographic research provided me the opportunity to explore the nuances, intricacies, and plurality of experiences at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. To study El Salvador's colonial past and its legacies without considering the material record of the colonial encounter, the available archival record, and the vigorous history of ethnohistory in the context of *mestizo* nationalism, might have led me to conclude that the indigenous societies of El Salvador perished under the blow of the conquest.

To the degree that those social formations were disarticulated and ceased to function in traditional ways is partly true. A large percentage of eastern El Salvador's indigenous population perished in the first century of Spanish colonialism. While this long-standing historical narrative for El Salvador is well understood, that same historiography must also recognize how small groups and numerous individuals survived and persisted in a variety of contexts. Our understanding of their historical development is clouded. What is needed are works that integrate El Salvador's regional history with municipal-level studies to provide important building blocks for larger reconstructions of national history. Such contributions would be especially valuable given the recent trend in historical literature on nineteenth-century Latin American studies that integrate social history with politics and state formation by starting with the most local levels of all: one pueblo or one hacienda. Such studies place

local persons in the larger context of national histories and rewrite “national history” in terms that are more consistent with the divergent and contradictory experiences of different peoples.

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APPENDIX A CERAMIC ANALYSIS DATA*

Table 6.1 – Raw count of paste types in each Locus for Operation 1.

	Paste 1	Paste 2	Paste 3	Paste 4	Paste 5	Santa Barbara
Loci 1 & 2	72	68	48	23	14	17
Locus 3	51	32	26	8	5	0
Locus 4	32	13	4	2	6	1
Locus 8	31	51	56	30	13	0
Locus 10	36	20	16	9	3	1
Locus 12	7	20	11	12	3	0
Locus 16	20	15	24	10	5	1
Locus 17	3	16	12	2	1	2
Locus 19	18	18	13	16	2	1
Locus 20	7	7	18	2	6	0
TOTALS	277	260	228	114	58	22

Table 6.2 – Raw count of paste types in each Locus for Operation 3.

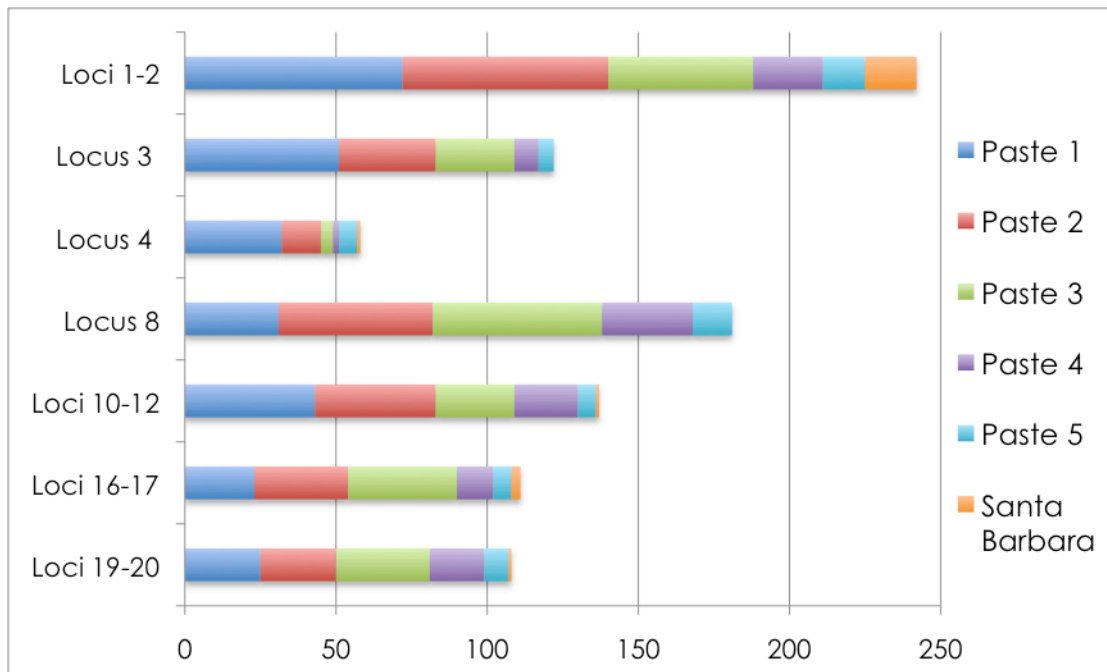
	Paste 1	Paste 2	Paste 3	Paste 4	Paste 5	Santa Barbara
Locus 1	33	33	12	15	5	8
Locus 2	7	16	16	20	5	2
Locus 3	4	5	11	13	6	0
Locus 4	10	13	10	19	4	2
Locus 6	11	3	1	1	1	1
TOTALS	65	70	50	68	21	13

Table 6.3 – Raw count of paste types in each Locus for Operation 4.

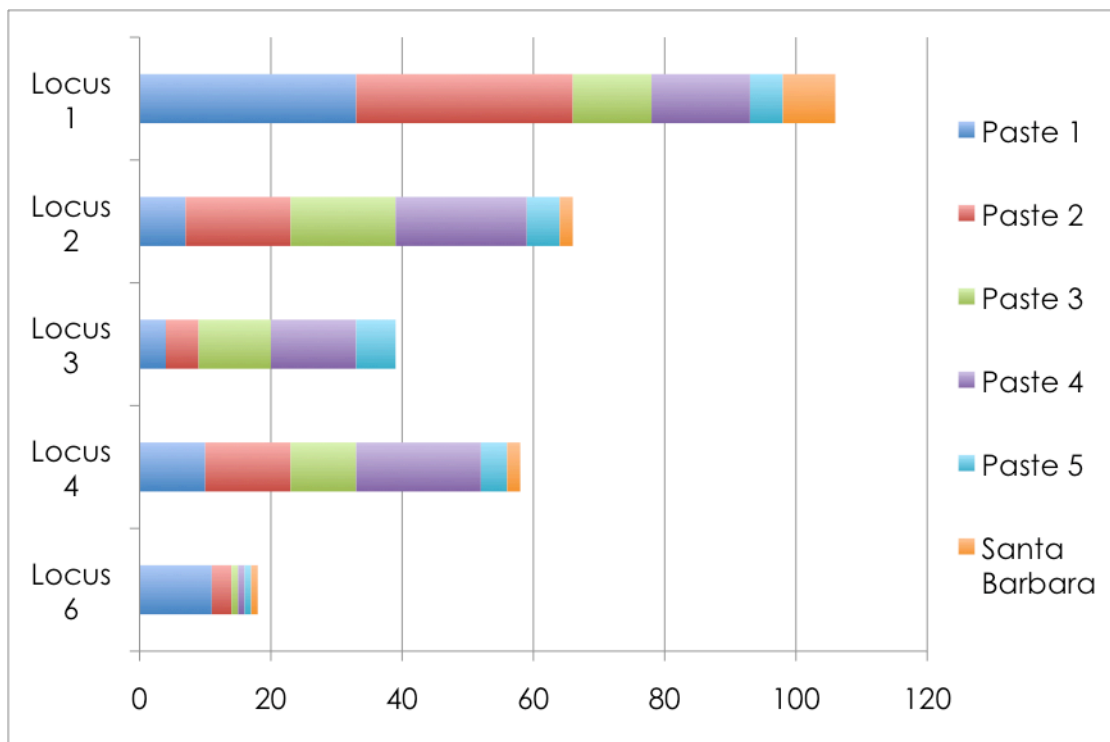
	Paste 1	Paste 2	Paste 3	Paste 4	Paste 5	Santa Barbara
Locus 3	0	7	3	0	0	0
Locus 4	0	3	1	2	0	3
Locus 6	1	7	1	3	1	2
Locus 7	0	7	2	0	6	1
Locus 8	11	3	1	1	1	1
Locus 9	0	3	3	4	4	0
TOTALS	12	30	11	10	12	7

Table 6.4 – Raw count of paste types in each Locus for Operation 2.

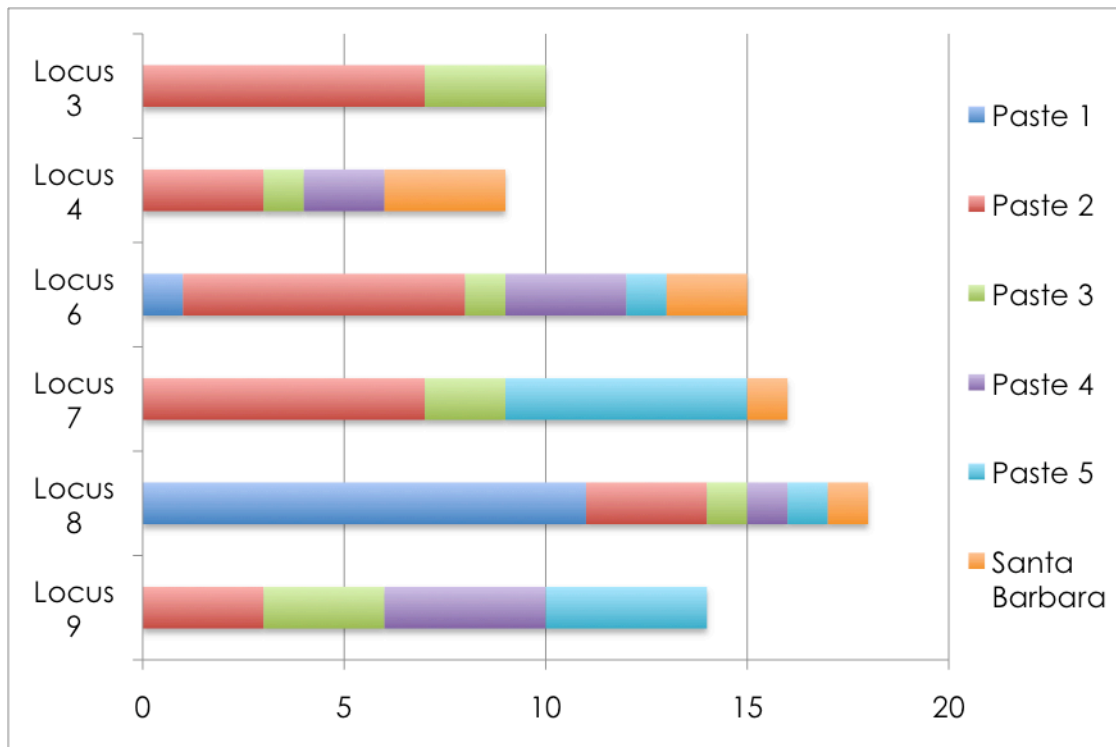
	Paste 1	Paste 2	Paste 3	Paste 4	Paste 5	Santa Barbara
Sub-Op A						
Locus 3	0	0	0	0	0	7
Locus 11	12	11	0	0	0	0
Sub-Op B						
Locus 1	0	5	1	0	0	11
Locus 4	5	5	3	0	6	1
Sub-Op C						
Locus 1	5	0	0	0	0	10
Locus 2	0	0	3	0	0	1
Locus 3	4	6	3	4	16	3
Locus 6	3	4	9	1	11	2
Locus 8	0	1	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	29	32	22	6	33	35



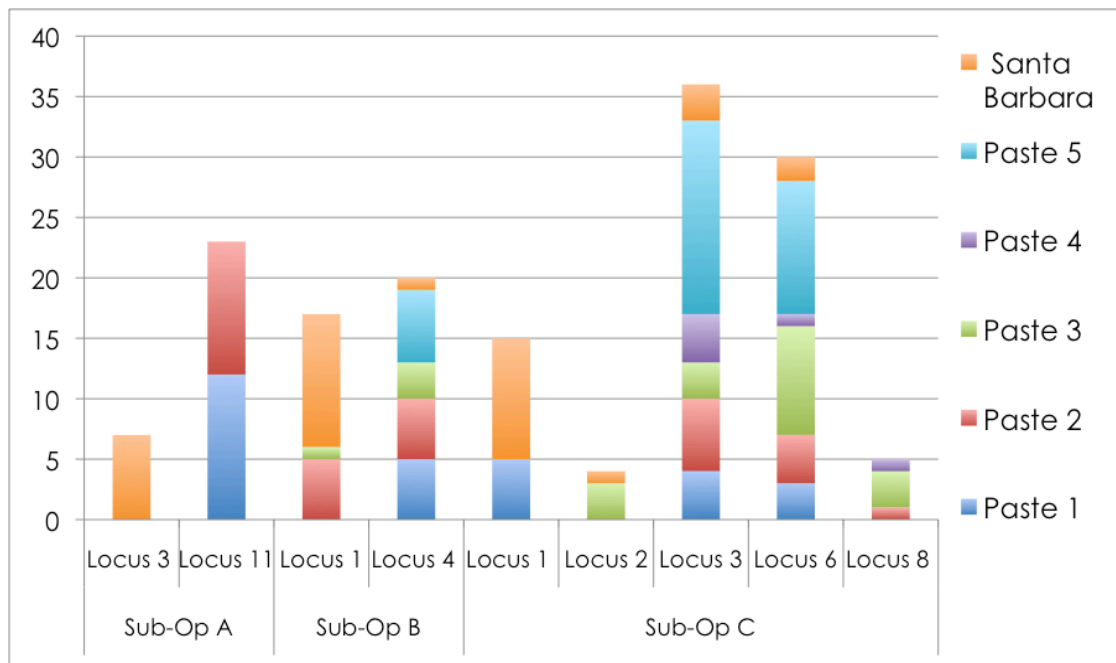
Paste types by Locus for Operation 1.



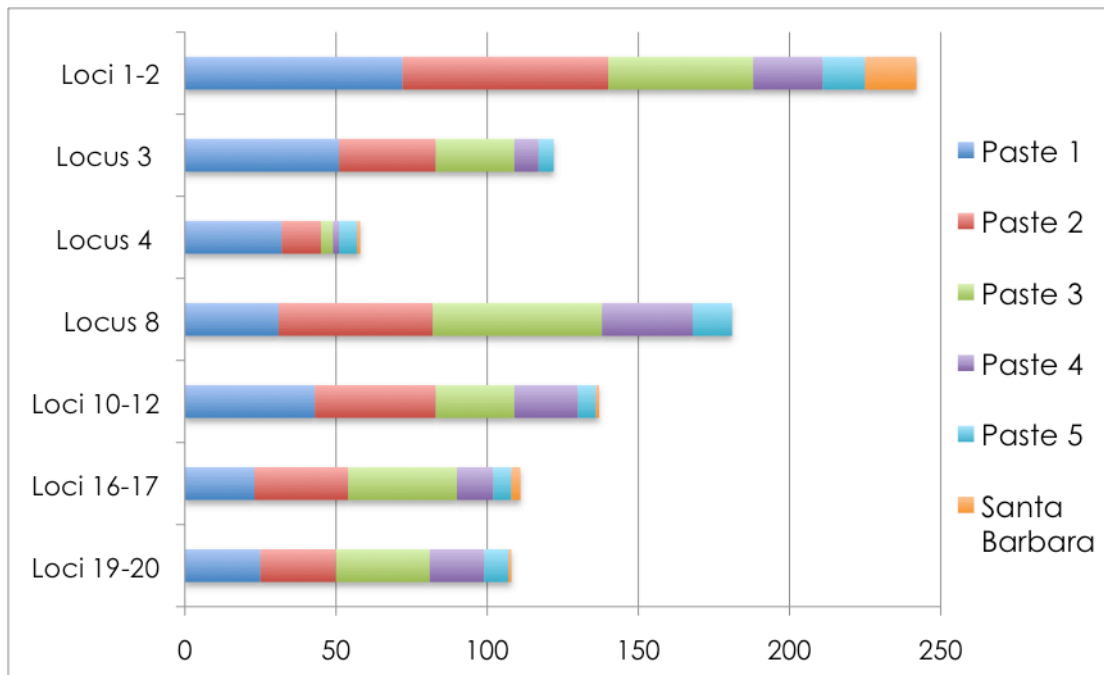
Paste types by Locus for Operation 3.



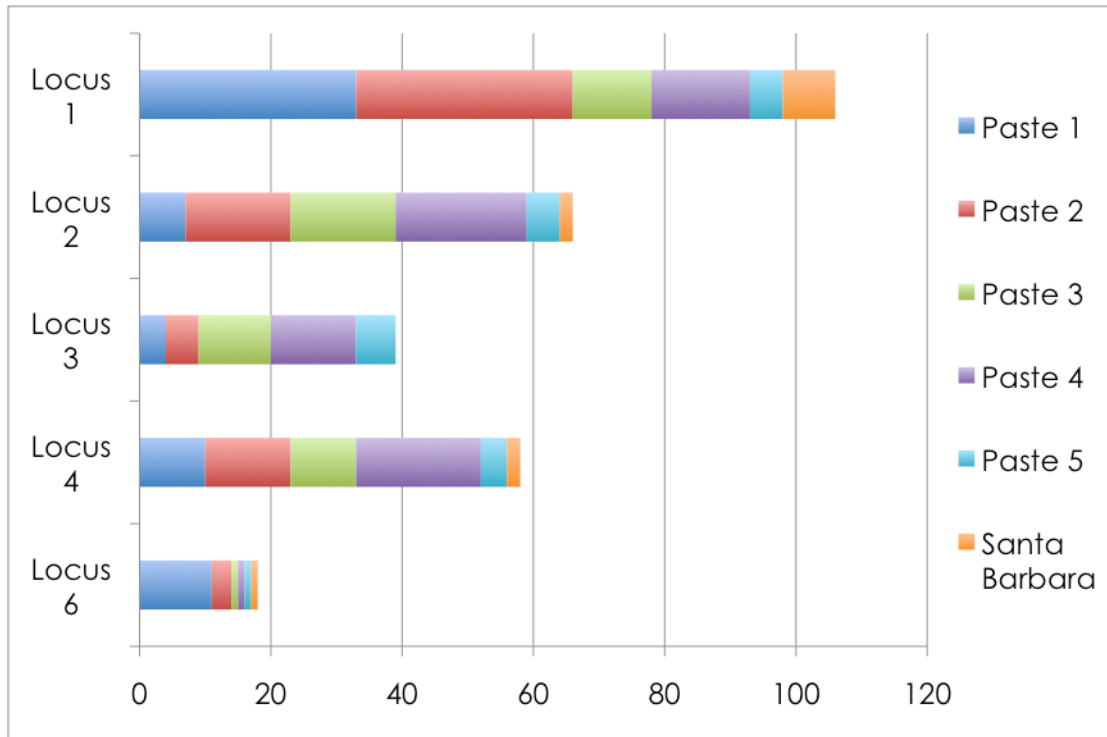
Paste types by Locus for Operation 4.



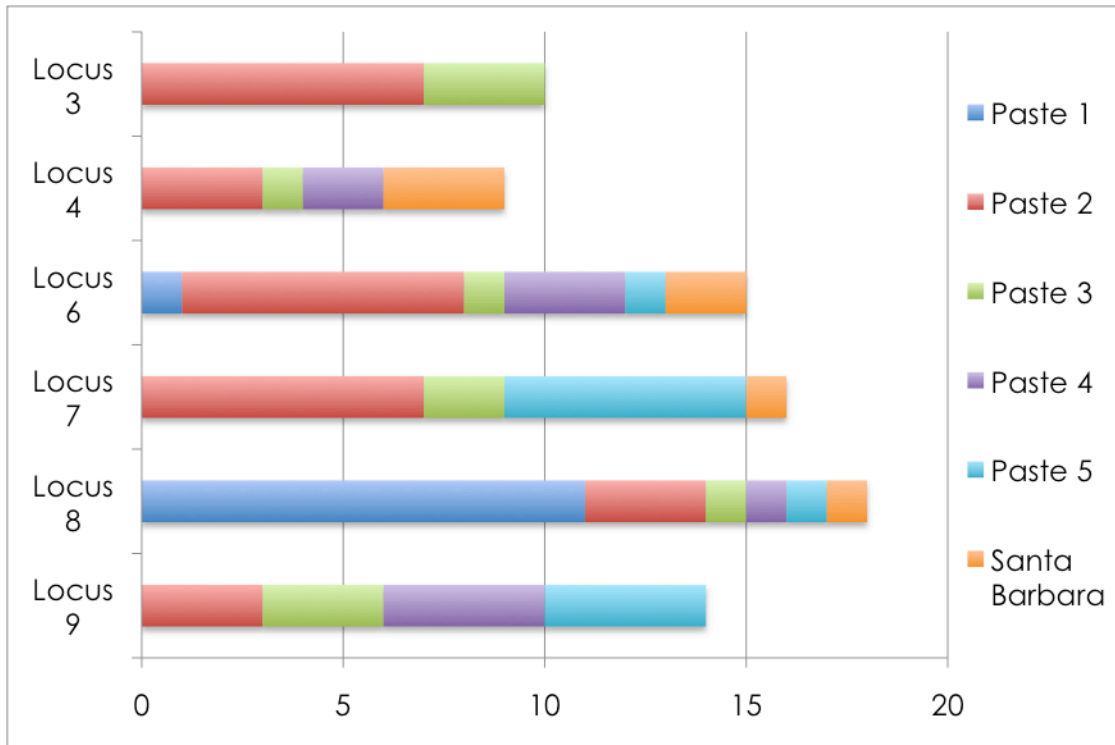
Paste types by Locus for Operation 2.



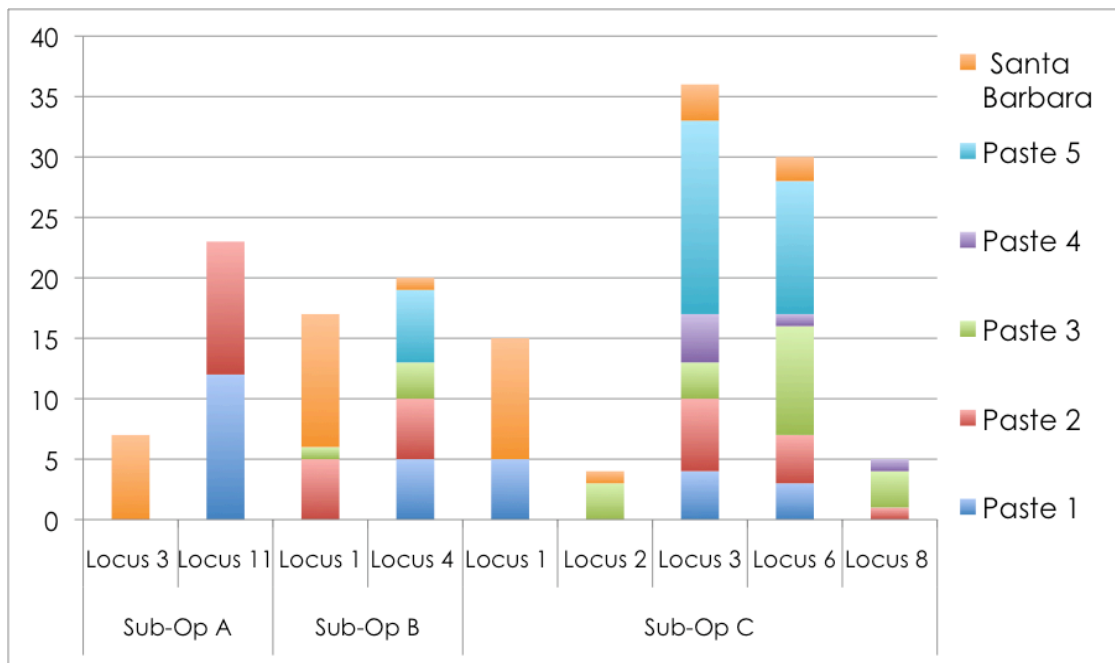
Paste types by Locus for Operation 1.



Paste types by Locus for Operation 3.



Paste types by Locus for Operation 4.



Paste types by Locus for Operation 2.

APPENDIX B

ENERGY DISPERSIVE X-RAY FLUORESCENCE DATA*

Context	Mn	Fe	Rb	Sr	Zr	Source
CV1A-12	535.461	9882.58	142.166	162.296	140.455	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-8B	470.254	10438.5	150.804	158.119	146.24	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-11D	413.712	9593.42	140.244	152.41	135.55	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-11C	460.785	9742.43	149.266	151.536	140.325	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-11B	448.186	10494.9	147.723	161.911	140.845	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-11A	411.771	9402.88	130.994	141.769	125.039	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-10B	537.242	10311	147.562	162.827	153.089	IXTEPEQUE
CV1A-10C	497.782	10065.6	98.543	154.301	145.754	IXTEPEQUE
CV1A-10A	473.305	9838.05	145.745	153.472	146.74	IXTEPEQUE
CV1A-8A	515.612	10501.7	153.528	159.893	145.521	LA ESPERANZA
CV1A-6	500.698	10127.4	148.319	154.921	142.63	LA ESPERANZA
CV2A-3	514.27	10397.4	148.373	158.743	137.745	LA ESPERANZA
CV3A-4	450.256	9842.78	92.783	150.878	153.276	IXTEPEQUE
CV3A-6	404.177	8609.96	116.623	129.322	131.686	SAN BARTOLOME
CV3A-1C	451.875	9730.78	144.891	151.235	138.984	LA ESPERANZA
CV3A-1A	379.417	8070.87	127.508	133.768	117.038	JILOTEPEQUE
CV4A-9C	510.818	10363	97.373	159.412	152.916	IXTEPEQUE
CV4A-9A	533.535	9538.09	156.015	166.642	92.32	GUINOPE
CV4A-8	462.16	9893.2	151.788	153.432	145.048	LA ESPERANZA
CV4A-3	476.122	10304.9	140.527	155.572	139.618	LA ESPERANZA
CV4A-6	517.748	9984.26	147.427	158.259	139.637	LA ESPERANZA
CV4A-9B	507.16	10744.7	138.148	154.766	139.797	LA ESPERANZA
N5-E145-1	460.83	10194.8	147.846	158.769	134.513	LA ESPERANZA
N10E125-1	501.192	9619.9	145.405	146.661	133.206	LA ESPERANZA
N10E145-1	591.823	22813.4	126.707	131.857	135.472	SAN BARTOLOME
110E25N-1	344.436	6778.11	80.355	73.706	85.603	EL VENADO
N20E85-5	566.339	10582.7	158.536	170.144	96.693	GUINOPE
N30E135-1	469.228	10409.1	135.627	141.373	129.044	LA ESPERANZA
N20E85-3	408.984	9345.49	125.665	134.333	77.892	UNKNOWN
N20E85-2	600.043	11333.6	135.294	152.581	92.603	UNKNOWN
N15E135-1	454.416	10996.8	148.537	157.47	147.05	LA ESPERANZA
N30E135-2	388.407	7723.15	97.376	100.482	102.769	EL VENADO
N30E135-3	474.917	10345.7	143.531	146.48	133.703	LA ESPERANZA
N30E140-1	438.431	10905.2	143.654	150.357	141.314	LA ESPERANZA
N30E150-1	441.425	9497.4	135.958	132.956	132.853	SAN BARTOLOME
N30E150-2	450.925	10148.9	144.235	153.288	141.793	LA ESPERANZA
N35E80-1	462.107	9869.14	146.721	154.316	135.763	LA ESPERANZA
UNKNOWN	359.015	8494.11	121.136	126.678	112.593	JILOTEPEQUE
N35E80-2	490.843	9118.5	133.647	164.762	86.506	GUINOPE
N35E90-2	580.038	14732.7	96.537	155.824	148.005	IXTEPEQUE
N35E5-1	509.54	10385.3	157.903	164.673	143.705	LA ESPERANZA

N35E135-1	545.726	10038.3	145.139	154.964	117.815	EL CHAYAL
N35E145-1	441.159	9442.91	134.144	145.388	127.928	LA ESPERANZA
N35E145-2	422.929	10869	117.343	112.746	114.07	JILOTEPEQUE
N35E145-3	345.289	8315.33	105.136	114.733	108.014	JILOTEPEQUE
N40E140-1	326.902	8883.33	120.675	113.576	109.938	JILOTEPEQUE

* All geochemical data reported in parts per million (ppm). The EDXRF trace element analysis was conducted on a Spectrace™ 440 (United Scientific Corporation) energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometer, equipped with a rhodium (Rh) X-ray tube, a 50 kV X-ray generator, and a Tracor X-ray (Spectrace™) TX 6100 X-ray analyzer. Software ran on a PC based microprocessor with Tracor reduction software capable of ratioing the K α intensity values against the Compton Scatter Peak to remove overlapping K β values. The X-ray tube was operated at 30 kV, .20 mA, using a .127 Rh primary beam filter in an air path at 250 sec livetime to derive X-ray intensity values for titanium (Ti), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), rubidium (Rb), strontium (Sr), yttrium (Y), zirconium, (Zr), and Niobium (Nb). Trace element intensities were transformed to concentration values by employing a least-squares calibration line provided for each element by the U.S. Bureau of Standards, and the U.S. Geological Survey. To evaluate instrument accuracy, the international standard for rhyolite, RGM-1, was included to insure proper machine calibration against the standard concentration values. All runs demonstrated statistically identical values to the standard.