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Across a Great Divide: Continuity and Change in Native North American Societies, 1400–1900. Edited by Laura L. Scheiber and Mark D. Mitchell. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010. 352 pages. \$59.95 cloth.

Archaeologists have been complicit in constructing and reproducing the assumption that colonialism resulted in inevitable losses for Native American peoples: from loss of culture through acculturation and assimilation to their disappearance all together as a consequence of disease, conquest, and dislocation. This complicity is due, in part, to a treatment of colonialism as an undifferentiated, wholesale, and unidirectional process that casts Native peoples as passive recipients of change resulting from European and Euro-American actions. Throughout the last two decades, however, scholars have begun to wrestle with the complexities of intercultural colonial relationships. Current scholarship, like Laura L. Scheiber and Mark D. Mitchell's *Across a Great Divide*, compels archaeologists to rethink approaches to the study of Native American lives in the context of European colonialism.

Across a Great Divide responds to a growing demand for new epistemologies and methods to mobilize in the study of colonial contexts, taking seriously what Stephen Silliman refers to as “colonialism as context” rather than as a defining moment (“Culture Contact or Colonialism? Challenges in the Archaeology of Native North America,” *American Antiquity*, 2005, 55–74). It joins a cadre of recent scholarship, including Diana DiPaolo Loren's *In Contact: Bodies and Spaces in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Eastern Woodlands* (2007), Chris Gosden's *Archaeology and Colonialism: Cultural Contact from 5000 BC to the Present* (2004), Claire L. Lyons and John K. Papadopoulos's *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (2002), and Gil J. Stein's *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters: Comparative Perspectives* (2005). *Across a Great Divide* shares with these works the objective of sharpening our focus on social, material, political, and economic interactions in colonial contexts by situating continuities and changes in these domains as part of longer-term histories.

The contributors to this volume first came together for a symposium organized by Scheiber and Mitchell at the 2007 Society for American Archaeology annual meeting. Participants were asked to emphasize the actions, institutions, and agency of indigenous peoples in colonial contexts and to bridge the “great divides” of disciplines (divisions between prehistory and history as fields of

study, as well as prehistoric and historic archaeology) and ways of thinking (conceiving of the European incursion as a fracture point in Native American history, identity, and culture). The symposium was awarded the Amerind Foundation prize, allowing participants to meet for several days in order to exchange ideas. *Across a Great Divide* is the outcome of this extended dialogue.

The volume consists of thirteen chapters, including eleven case studies that reach across the North American continent and five centuries of Native American history. An introductory essay by the editors and a concluding chapter by Silliman frame the case studies. At the outset, Mitchell and Scheiber outline how colonialism gave rise to and shaped the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology; critique conventional narratives of postcontact change and assumptions of inevitability; and sketch out cross-cutting themes that include agency, political economy, and multiscalar analyses. Silliman's concluding chapter is, in part, synthetic, but more so it is a provocative essay that points out limitations and avenues to further the work presented.

The case studies are organized geographically from east to west and describe a diversity of Native American experiences in colonial contexts. The strength of this organizational framework is that themes emerge across temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts, though a thematic organization may have been more effective in anchoring the case studies to the themes of agency, political economy, and materiality. For example, John Scarry's consideration of Apalachee interactions with Europeans in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Florida, Susan C. Vehik and colleagues' analysis of 450 years of Wichita hide production and related technologies on the Plains, and Liam Frink's look at the intersection of religious colonialism, gender, and social power in Yup'ik communities of Alaska during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries form a constellation of case studies centering on agency and social practice. Jeffrey L. Hantman's effort to place the 1607 settlement at Jamestown within a long-term Monacan and Powhatan political history, Cameron B. Wesson's exploration of the dynamics of moral economies and capitalism in order to explain early nineteenth-century Creek factionalism, Kurt Jordan's analysis of the Seneca Iroquois political economy from 1550 to 1779, and Jeremy Kulisheck's consideration of long-term Pueblo mobility and demography gravitate strongly toward political economy and the historicity of forms of sociopolitical organization. Finally, Mark J. Wagner's consideration of the material dimensions of Midwestern Algonquian nativism during the nineteenth century, Scheiber and Judson Byrd Finley's study of cultural landscapes and technological changes of the Mountain Shoshone of the Rocky Mountains and Northwestern Plains, Richard H. Wilshusen's effort to trace Diné (Navajo) identity in the Southwest, and Anthony P. Graesch and colleagues' comparative study of foodways among the Chumash and Stó:lô peoples of the West and Northwest are compelling

cases for the importance of considering materiality and the long-term social biographies of material culture in colonial contexts.

Kurt Jordan's study of a Seneca Iroquois community and its political economy stands out as the strongest example of a comprehensive engagement with the volume's themes. Jordan combines a sharp critique of colonial studies scholarship with a convincing argument for multiscalar analyses attentive to shifting power relations. He illustrates the effectiveness of such an approach by focusing on connections of alliance, trade, mobility, and conflict among Seneca communities, demonstrating that processes like mourning wars, captive adoption, and village consolidation originated prior to 1550 and were not the outcome of domination by Europeans.

As a whole, *Across a Great Divide* makes a significant contribution to the study of cultural change in colonial contexts in North America. The greatest strength of this collection of essays is its distinctively long-term, multiscalar approach paired with its attention to local processes and patterns of change. Following Mitchell and Scheiber's argument that deconstructing colonialist narratives is not enough—that "they must be replaced with grounded, contextual explanations that do justice to the richness of the cases from which they emerge" (12)—the contributors use empirical evidence to construct nuanced explanations of continuities and transformations. A notable example is Kulisheck's innovative approach, which takes materially observable aspects of Pueblo life—specifically, mobility and demography—as starting points to refute dominant narratives attributing Pueblo population decline to European diseases.

Several authors make contributions that mobilize and articulate theoretical concepts in ways that enhance the reader's analytic potential. Scarry's concept of "categorical" individuals, Vehik and colleagues' "collectivities of interests," and Frink's "identity collectives" link agency and practice with material traces by drawing attention to social groups with varying interests, opportunities, and limitations within communities. Jordan complicates the concept of colonialism by distinguishing between what he terms "cultural entanglements" and colonizer-initiated changes of colonialism, proposing that the term *cultural entanglements* be used to "describe settings of relative intercultural parity" (81). This distinction draws attention to the nature of power relations and distinguishes entanglements from the massive power inequalities of European domination.

Another strength of *Across a Great Divide* is that several authors connect their cases to present-day politics, positioning their work as relevant to studying the past and for contemporary Indian communities. Hantman's engagement with the politics of commemoration at Jamestown is an important example, but several contributors make the point that the political dimensions

of archaeologies of colonialism extend beyond the interests of the generalized public. For example, Wesson sees the present-day divisions among Creek bands as stemming from the conflicting values of capitalism and Creek moral economies, thus paralleling nineteenth-century factionalism. Wilshusen combines archaeological, documentary, oral historical, and linguistic evidence in order to grapple with questions of Diné and Apache group identity throughout 250 years—questions that have significant implications for these groups in the contemporary sociopolitical milieu. Graesch and colleagues bring their cross-cultural study of foodways to the present, noting that food (for example, salmon) remains at the center of ongoing political negotiations and conflict among First Nations and provincial governments in the Pacific Northwest. Jordan reflects that an understanding of intercultural entanglement “may prove to be of greater relevance to present-day indigenous peoples, who can look to the history of their ancestors for examples of successful resistance to colonialism, recovery from political-economic downturns, and innovations in intercommunity connection as they negotiate the complex realities of indigenous life in the present” (106).

As noted, this volume makes crucial strides in decolonizing archaeological practice and interpretation in several ways, but the use of broad, sweeping culture histories in several case studies—either as a “backdrop” to the particular historical contexts under consideration or to establish a “long-term” view—is at odds with the overarching efforts to engage multiscalar practice and agency-oriented research in local contexts. These generalized culture histories collapse variation and render human agency and local practice invisible. They are precisely the legacies of a discipline steeped in colonialism that *Across a Great Divide* and similar scholarship draw our attention to and force us to abandon if decolonization is our goal. Mitchell and Scheiber note that “the work of decolonization requires careful documentation of local processes and local patterns of change. It demands empirical evaluation of multiple explanations for these patterns” (12). The generalized culture histories offered as background and context deserve similar treatment.

Across a Great Divide makes a valuable and timely contribution to the study of colonial contexts in North America and the varied experiences of Native peoples. It provides the student and practitioner of North American archaeology, Native American history, and intercultural colonial studies with conceptual tools and empirical studies that serve as models for scholarship that further dissolves boundaries that divide disciplines and ways of thinking.

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