Material Encounters and Indigenous Transformations in Early Colonial El Salvador

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In this chapter we explore the material encounters and indigenous transformations that took place in two different times and places in the Central American Republic of El Salvador, which in the early colonial period formed part of the *audiencia* of Guatemala. The cases consist of (1) the early Spanish colonial *villa* (town) of San Salvador – now the archaeological site of Ciudad Vieja – during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, and (2) the indigenous Pipil town of Caluco of the Izalcos region in western El Salvador during the second half of the same century. The two cases together cover a time span from about AD 1525 to 1600.

Any archaeological study of sixteenth-century Spanish America should confront the “haunts” of modernity enumerated by Charles Orser (1996, 2004, 2014): colonialism, mercantilism/capitalism, Eurocentrism, and racialization. These are structurally complex, interconnected forces or metaprocesses that operate on a global scale through simultaneous vertical and horizontal networks as a “unified ... system of activity, practice, and procedure” that came into existence after AD 1500 (Orser 2014, 27). While the haunts are massive global forces that change through time, we may address them in specific archaeological cases by contextualizing issues of power (e.g., gender, status, ethnicity, and identity) through material culture studies at the local, regional, and global scale and in varying time spans. The scale at which pattern can be comprehended or meaning attributed is referred to as the “effective scale” (Marquardt 1989, 7; 1992, 107; following Crumley 1979, 166). We view these issues from the perspective of the effective scales (segments of space and time) in multiscale, dialectical analysis of archaeological landscapes and material culture (Marquardt 1989, 1992; Orser 1996, 184–190; 2014, 2–4, 66–69). Considering the nexus of everyday practice as seen through a multiscale, dialectical analysis of the materiality of interaction and change, it becomes possible to plot the courses of relationships and intersections of different groups.

The issues of power came into play at the scales of the community and the household at Ciudad Vieja and Caluco as distinct social groups made efforts to preserve their own practices and traditions as they lived alongside each other

and entered into social relations in new urban or semi-urban communities. We use the term “traditions” here in the sense discussed by Timothy R. Pauketat (2001a, 2001b), not as conservative structures that impede or constrain change, but rather as dynamic media of negotiations that generate cultural change. By this interpretation, tradition-making or cultural construction is embodied or represented through practice in material culture (objects and landscapes). Material culture “as a dimension of practice, is itself causal. Its production – while contingent on histories of actions and representations – is an enactment or an embodiment of people’s dispositions – a social negotiation – that brings about changes in meanings, dispositions, identities, and traditions” (Pauketat 2001b, 88). Tradition in this sense bears a strong similarity to Gramsci’s (1971) cultural hegemony and Bourdieu’s (1977) *doxa*. The specific social groups included Spanish and indigenous *conquistadores* and colonists and their families, local indigenous populations, and (in Caluco) large numbers of mestizos and African slaves. Unequal relations of power among these groups led to the dialectical relationship of domination and resistance, the latter expressed in subtle forms. Attempts to assert, protect, and maintain identities succeeded partially or failed completely, leading to new social forms and classifications derived from a conjunction of sociocultural practices which was, in turn, a product of close proximity and permeable social boundaries between groups.

1 Historical Background

Dispatched from their base of operations in Olinstepeque, Guatemala, under the command of Diego de Alvarado, a small group of Spaniards, accompanied by a much greater number of *conquistadores mejicanos* from Mexico and points south, pitched camp and founded the first *villa* of San Salvador in April 1525, possibly on the same site as the later 1528 settlement (Escalante Arce 2014, 54). If this was the location of the first Spanish colonial town in El Salvador, San Salvador was built in the valley of La Bermuda, a small pocket of land to the north of Cuscatlan Pipil territory which had little or no indigenous settlement at the time of the conquest (Fowler and Earnest 1985). Excavations beneath a sixteenth-century structure, likely a Christian church used by indigenous settlers, as well as isolated artifact finds across the site suggest a modest Terminal Classic/Early Postclassic occupation (ca. AD 800–1000) at this location but a lack of subsequent artifact or architectural evidence suggests it was abandoned until the arrival of the Spaniards. Despite the isolation of La Bermuda, San Salvador was still prone to attack, especially from the west and the south. The Pipils rebelled and drove out the Spaniards and their allies sometime in

1526 (Barón Castro 1996, 39–44), forcing them back to their base in Guatemala. A subsequent Spanish military push, aided by much larger numbers of *conquistadores mejicanos*, overcame Pipil resistance in early 1528, allowing the Spaniards to return and found a permanent settlement (Matthew 2012, 85–92). This was the second founding of the *villa* of San Salvador on 1 April 1528 by 73 Spanish *conquistadores* and their Mexican allies under the command of Diego de Alvarado. All of the Spaniards declared themselves residents of the town; many of the Mexican allies remained to settle there as well (Barón Castro 1996, 87–91, 197–202; Fowler 2011e, 28–29). Some 17 years later, in 1545, residents began to relocate to the modern location of San Salvador, on the left bank of the Acelhuate river, although our analysis suggests that occupation persisted at La Bermuda until about 1560.

Two major indigenous Nahuatl-speaking Pipil polities dominated the territory of modern El Salvador at the time of the conquest and the founding of San Salvador: the relatively small Izalcos kingdom in the west and the larger Cuscatlan kingdom in the central region (Fowler 1989, 60–64). The Cuscatlan polity was centered on the *altepetl* (“mountain/water place,” ethnic state) of Cuscatlan (modern Antiguo Cuscatlan), located just west of modern San Salvador. Cuscatlan had probably conquered a number of smaller Pipil polities such as Nonoalcos and Cojutepeque during the late pre-conquest period (Fowler 1989, 191, 208). The Spaniards effectively dominated the Pipils by the time of the second founding of San Salvador in 1528, although some armed resistance still occurred in the region until the end of the 1540s. The eastern portion of the country, between the Lempa River and the Gulf of Fonseca, was held primarily by the Lencas whose distribution extended from eastern El Salvador north into central and western Honduras (Fowler 1989, 64–65). The Lencas were still engaged in active resistance against colonization at the time of the second founding of San Salvador (Escalante Arce 2014, 77–84; Lardé y Larín 2000, 143–147).

The Izalcos polity of the Nahuatl-speaking Pipils, whose heartland lay in the Río Ceniza valley of western El Salvador, was a thriving economic and political power at the time of the first Spanish *entrada* in 1524 (Fowler 1987, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2006, 2009; MacLeod 1973, 80–95). The prodigious cacao production of the Izalcos region, recognized long ago by Millon (1955) and Bergmann (1969), provided the basis of this power, both before and after the conquest. Soon after the conquest, Spanish entrepreneurs, *vecinos* of Santiago de Guatemala (not San Salvador), recognized the potential value of cacao as a cash crop, and by 1535 they began to export small amounts of cacao from Izalcos to Mexico (Fowler 1987, 145; MacLeod 1973, 80). By the 1540s the Izalcos cacao plantations had expanded to such an extent that the region was hailed as a veritable jewel in the Spanish Crown. The 1548–1551 *Tasaciones de tributos*

(tribute assessments) conducted by Alonso López de Cerrato and his associate justices of the audiencia of Guatemala (Fowler 1989, 26–27) indicate that Izalco, Caluco, Nahulingo, and Tacuscalco were the major cacao-producing towns of the region in the mid-sixteenth century, and they were among the principal cacao producers of Mesoamerica (Bergmann 1969, 92–93; Fowler 1989, 164; 1991, 1993). The audiencia established a Spanish town in the region, La Trinidad de Sonsonate, founded in 1553, ostensibly to control the activities of Spanish and *mestizo* merchants (Escalante Arce 1992, 1, 28, 34, 55–60, 109; Fowler 1995, 52–53; 2006; MacLeod 1973, 82).

Cacao production, which remained largely in indigenous hands while the Spaniards controlled trade, intensified in the region from the mid- to the late sixteenth century despite a serious decline in native population (Fowler 1995, 1997, 2006). By the end of the sixteenth century, the Izalcos towns had only a fraction of the indigenous populations that were recorded at mid-century by Cerrato, and this demographic collapse, combined with plant disease, soil exhaustion, and outside competition combined to destroy the once-lucrative cacao production and trade (Fowler 1987, 147; MacLeod 1973, 116–117).

2 Landscapes of Transformation

Discussion of landscapes of transformation requires first a brief consideration of early Spanish colonial urbanism. The relevant studies rely heavily on the trope of the Spanish colonial grid-plan city: A systematic implantation of Eurocentric spatial concepts and values ordained and structured as a strategic element in conquest and colonization throughout Spanish America, explicitly intended by the Crown, conquerors, and colonists as a vehicle for the spread of commercial capitalism (Kinsbruner 2005, 64–65). Indeed, Christopher N. Matthews (2010, 91) regards the American urban grid as “one of the largest materializations of the capitalist ideology ever constructed.” Problematization of the Spanish colonial grid plan reveals the dialectic between the haunts of modernity and the processes of identity, gender, and hybridity, expressed through relations of interaction such as domination and resistance, accommodation, and appropriation. An effective way to decenter the grid plan with respect to these issues is through landscape analysis of the urban environment of conquest and a perspective from practice theory (Bourdieu 1977) which views the cultural production of the grid plan as the material and spatial embodiment of relationships and networks of power (Fowler and Zavaleta Lemus 2016; cf. Pauketat 2009, 245).

As J.H. Elliott (1963, 55) noted, the word *conquista* implied to the sixteenth-century Castilian the establishment of Spanish “presence.” And presence was

established through the formal founding and building of towns (Brewer Carías 2008, 15; Domínguez Compañy 1981, 39–43). Urban historian Richard L. Kagan (2000, 26–28) emphasizes that the grid-plan town represented an ideological statement by *conquistadores* acting on behalf of the Crown to impose moral, legal, and religious order, or *policía* on indigenous populations. Such ideological statements played a crucial role in the formation of community and the definition of structures of power. As the material and spatial embodiment of *policía*, the grid-plan city symbolized Hispanic civilization itself and evoked a propagandistic statement concerning the power of the empire that translated into very specific notions of spatial patterning derived from the social structure of the conquest. The symbolism of the siting of the government buildings and church on the central *plaza* underscored the power of the sword and the cross in imposing Castilian imperial will locally. Thus, in a very real spatial sense, the conquest emanated outward from the plaza and the grid to the surrounding countryside (Elliott 1963, 68). As Richard Morse (1962, 473), quoting Erwin Walter Palm (1951, 258), put it, the “geometric lines of force radiated out to the vast and often loosely settled surrounding space.”

Conquistadors endeavored to found cities in the New World almost immediately after entering a region – in some cases even before violently subduing local indigenous societies or while they were still at war with rival Spanish factions. These cities, with rare exceptions, were built on a grid plan for reasons of both practicality and cultural tradition. Cultural tradition refers to the “genealogy of practices” (Pauketat 2001b, 80) that resulted in the grid-plan layout forming the arena for urban interaction throughout colonial Spanish America. The main thrust of the argument that we develop here is that Spanish urban traditions and institutions with very deep historical roots provided the long-term structural framework for conquest, colonialism, and colonial hegemony, yet Spanish and indigenous social actors dwelling in and near early Spanish colonial cities interacted within this spatial context from the perspective of their own traditions. Through the exercise of local agency, both Spaniards and Indians negotiated, made, and constantly remade the cultural traditions that would be passed down to future generations.

3 Ciudad Vieja

The best preserved example of a conquest-period, grid-plan town in Central America may be found at Ciudad Vieja. The rigid and orthogonal plan of San Salvador is a paragon of the Spanish American grid-plan, although potentially echoing highland Mesoamerican grid-plan cities including the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, especially with regard to the expansive use of space in these new

colonial centers (Fowler 2008, 2009, 434–438; 2011e, 29–33; 2014a; Hardoy 1978, 228–229; Low 1995; McAndrew 1965, 110; Wagner et al. 2013, 41–45).

Located in a rural area 10 km south of the modern town of Suchitoto, the site is readily accessible and easily observed from the surface. Archaeological research at Ciudad Vieja conducted from 1996 to 2005 (Fowler 2008, 2009, 2011e, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Fowler and Zavaleta Lemus 2016) and 2013–15 (Fowler and López Rodríguez 2016) has established that the urban core of the grid-plan town covered a core area of 45 ha (about 111 acres) (Figure 9.1), virtually all of which was artificially leveled and filled with various types of constructions. Visitors to the city, Spanish and indigenous alike, in its prime of occupation and expansion, surely would have been impressed with the strict, orderly layout of the townscape. They would have admired the spacious *plaza* at the center of the town, the church to the east of the *plaza*, the *casa de cabildo* (town hall) and other municipal buildings on the north, stores and shops on the west, and a tavern and blacksmith's shop on the south (Card 2007, 482–499; Card and Fowler 2012). Among the 20 structures and activity areas so far excavated, we have identified Spanish and indigenous residences (Gallardo Mejía 2004, 2011; Hamilton 2009, 2011b), ritual spaces (Fowler and López Rodríguez 2016), civic/administrative buildings (Fowler 2011c), food preparation areas (Card 2007, 2011), commercial and industrial buildings (Fowler 2011a, 2011b, 2011d), warehouses and storage areas, terraces, streets, ramps, and defensive features. The latter consist of guard houses, sentry stations, and a steep defensible cliff sloping away from the south and east sides of the site (Hamilton 2009, 247, 2011a).

Long, straight streets run from (or into) the four corners of the *plaza* in the cardinal directions. The one exception to the straightness of the streets is the street running south from the platform on the southeast corner of the *plaza mayor* which curves around a valuable natural spring. Other streets run parallel and perpendicular to the *plaza*, bisecting each other to form large blocks. The *plaza*, including surrounding streets on the four edges of the *plaza*, measures approximately 100 m on a side. The square city blocks measure approximately 80 m (roughly 100 Spanish *varas*, 1 vara = 83.5 cm) on a side, bounded by streets about 8 m (10 *varas*) in width. Most of the city blocks were probably subdivided into four *solares* (see Bayle 1952, 80–82) or house lots of approximately 40 x 40 m (50 x 50 *varas*).

The overall town plan shows strong adherence to the grid-plan layout, but our excavations and geophysical remote sensing data show that no prevailing norm governed the locations of structures within house lots, the orientation of architecture, or the size, shape, and internal arrangement of rooms within structures (Fowler et al. 2007). Spanish-style buildings are distinguished by

FIGURE 9.1 Plan of Ciudad Vieja showing natural topography, the reconstructed sixteenth-century urban grid plan, and the archaeological site grid
PLAN BY CONARD C. HAMILTON, 1998–99

multiroom floor plans, substantial stone foundations measuring 83–84 cm (1 vara) or greater in width, brick tile floors, ceramic roof tiles, and the use of iron nails and other hardware to secure structural elements. But variation occurs in Spanish-style architecture with wall foundations ranging above and

below the standard *vara*. The structures are generally oriented to the overall site alignment of 12°, but exceptions do occur.

A good case for an indigenous-led household can be found in Structure 2F1, located on the southeastern edge of the site. This structure consisted of one room outlined by narrow foundations. It did not employ roof or floor tile, indicating packed earth floors and thatch roofing (Hamilton 2009, 258, 2011b). It appears to have had wattle-and-daub walls, with only a handful of Spanish-technology metal tacks involved in its construction (Hamilton 2009, 363). Trash middens associated with Structure 2F1 show similarities to those found in other households at the site in regards to ceramics as well as the use of obsidian blades (Card 2007, 476–479). Several spindle whorls suggest indigenous textile production, and the artifact assemblage as a whole indicates a household rather than a non-residential out-structure. The orientation of such buildings does not follow the overall site grid. Thus, while the overall urban layout appears quite rigid at first glance, a considerable amount of flexibility and variability in internal distribution and use of space characterizes the town.

4 Caluco

In contrast to the Spanish-directed founding of the *villa* of San Salvador which included many indigenous residents, the sixteenth-century town of Caluco was a reorganized, resettled indigenous community with few if any Spanish residents. The pre-Columbian Izalcos Pipil polity consisted of four principal towns: Izalco, Caluco, Tacuscalco, and Nahulingo, referred to collectively during the early colonial period as “los Izalcos.” In terms of native politics, these four towns formed a quadripartite altepetl (Lockhart 1992, 19) divided into the paired towns of Izalco/Caluco and Nahulingo/Tacuscalco, with the native lord of Tecpan Izalco controlling cacao production and exercising political domain at the time of the conquest (Fowler 1989, 195; 1991, 189). Lockhart (1992, 436–438) emphasized the cellular-modular nature of the altepetl and its tendency to create larger units by the aggregation of parts that remain relatively separate and independent. Archaeologically, this principle was manifest by a tendency toward dispersed settlement with strong nucleation or centralization occurring only in complex urban landscapes (Lockhart 1992, 19; cf. Smith 2008, 73).

Documentary data indicate that the rectilinear pattern of the modern Izalcos towns is a Spanish imposition. A visitor to the Izalcos region at the time of the conquest would have observed a rural landscape dotted by dispersed settlements with households dispersed evenly across the landscape and surrounded

by *milpas* and cacao orchards crisscrossed by irrigation canals (Sampeck 2007). Beginning in 1529, a stream of royal decrees mandated that indigenous settlements be “reduced” and brought into Spanish-style nucleated towns or villages with streets running east-west and north-south departing from a central *plaza* in which was located the church and the *cabildo* (town hall) with a jail. House lots were parceled out to indigenous families by priests and *caciques* (indigenous political leaders), and common lands were assigned for cultivation. The new formalized settlements were probably in place by about 1553 in Izalco, Caluco, Nahulingo, and Tacuscalco, since by this time the towns had their own priests and Spanish-style indigenous governments (Escalante Arce 1992:1, 26). In addition, before enforced nucleation occurred, Izalco and Caluco formed a single dispersed, rural settlement that was broken up in 1532 to assign *encomiendas* to two Spaniards. At that time, Tecpan Izalco (the northern sector) became known simply as Izalco, and Caluco Izalco (the southern sector) became Caluco (Escalante Arce 1992:1, 218). Contemporary observers often referred to the four Izalcos settlements as “*dos pueblos hechos quatro*” (two towns made into four), a clear reference to *reducción*. Verhagen (1997, 235–238) found, however, that the earliest archaeological materials in Caluco date to the 1580s. Therefore, full, practical implementation of forced nucleation of the Izalcos Pipil towns appears not to have occurred until this decade.

Sampeck (2007, 2010) has presented the results of an intensive regional survey in the Río Ceniza valley, as well as excavations, lithic analysis, and ceramic analysis in order to assess key elements of the Izalcos political economy before and after the conquest. Her data show that the Pipils were central actors in Late Postclassic regional integration, which positioned the Izalcos region within the world genesis of capitalism and structured Spanish colonialism locally in the sixteenth century. Sampeck (2007, 232–257, 2010) found in her Izalcos regional settlement survey slight nucleation balanced by dispersion in late pre-conquest times, following the principles of Nahua cellular-modular organization, contrasted with a tendency toward stronger nucleation in post-conquest times, associated with Spanish concepts of urbanization and the legal requirements of *reducción* (Escalante Arce 1992:1, 22–23; Fowler 1995, 40; MacLeod 1973, 122). In addition to the role of Nahua cognitive principles in determining patterns of settlement before the conquest, Sampeck (2007, 232–233) also attributes a significant role in pre-conquest settlement dispersion to the requirements of tending cacao orchards at the household level of production (see Fowler 2006, 2009, 431–432).

Fowler (1995) and Verhagen (1997) describe Caluco in the late sixteenth century as a dense, nucleated settlement consisting of a series of artificial terraces,

FIGURE 9.2 Map of modern town of Caluco showing distribution of sixteenth-century materials

FOWLER 1995, FIGURE 4

large platforms, a stone-paved street, house foundations, and check dams on gently undulating terrain covering an area of approximately 80 ha. (Figure 9.2). Also during this time, the once-sumptuous church of San Pablo y San Pedro, an exquisite example of Spanish American *mudejar* architecture, was built in Caluco, probably beginning around 1567–68 with construction completed in the early seventeenth century (Fowler 1995; Verhagen 1997, 147–175).

5 Local Production and Indigenous Material Transformation

5.1 *Indigenous Production*

While Spanish presence at Ciudad Vieja is clearly indicated by the townscape, the architecture, and certain industries and classes of material culture such as iron, brick, and glass, we see a strong indigenous presence at San Salvador also

reflected in the material culture of Ciudad Vieja. Indigenous residents of the town would have included indigenous Pipils as well as Mexican (Nahua and Mixtec) and Kaqchikel groups allied with the Spaniards during the conquest.

Of the more than 44,000 potsherds from excavation and surface collection, the handful of majolica and a few hundred fragments of *botija* transport jars gives Ciudad Vieja one of the lowest proportions of Spanish ceramics found at any Spanish colonial site in the Americas and is more comparable with rural indigenous villages of the colonial period than with a Spanish capital (Card 2007, 514–519). The architecture and iron working of Ciudad Vieja are that of a Spanish town but the pottery is that of an indigenous one.

Obsidian artifacts also occur in great numbers on the surface and have been recovered from all excavated loci at Ciudad Vieja. *Manos* and *metates* for maize processing occur in domestic contexts and on the surface. Ceramic spindle whorls for spinning thread speak to gendered production practices. Polished ceramic ear flares and jade objects (elite bodily adornment) are significant in the inventory of indigenous-associated items and maintenance of indigenous identity. In sum, the archaeological evidence indicates that this Spanish American town had a indigenous Mesoamerican population of significant proportion and that at least some members of this population were engaged in maintenance or construction of indigenous identity. At the same time some men and women entered into relationships and engaged in productive activities as part of the new order.

The complex interplay of Spaniards, *conquistadores mejicanos*, and Pipils is particularly visible in the hybrid brimmed plates that make up the primary serving vessel at Ciudad Vieja (Figure 9.3). The form of these vessels closely mirrors variations in Spanish *morisco* and Italianate majolica, but the surface designs and potting technology are clearly part of the Late Postclassic Pipil ceramic tradition (Card 2007, 2013). Unlike the situation at most other Spanish colonial settlements, this new class of vessel is more associated with indigenous use than with Spanish use, and they are especially rare in the wealthiest Spanish households. This pattern of use is found in other examples of forced indigenous displacement in early colonial Spanish America (Card 2007, 276–299, 2013, 120). While San Salvador is within Pipil country, as there was no immediate precontact settlement on the site, all inhabitants would have been newcomers to the site by choice or by force.

Placing Ciudad Vieja locally produced earthenware brimmed plate forms within a seriation of European majolica finds that most of the plates agree with the historically documented occupation span of the site (1525/28–1545), but some of the forms post-date 1545, suggesting a protracted abandonment

FIGURE 9.3 Hybrid brimmed plate, a very popular ceramic form at Ciudad Vieja. Provenience: Structure 4C1, unit 2002-3.7, level 3

PHOTO BY JEB J. CARD

lasting until possibly 1560. From an archaeological perspective, we can no longer privilege the record of the written text; we must revise the chronology of the abandonment of the town.

Analysis of vessel form and function from eight excavated contexts of Ciudad Vieja shows similar activities in Spanish and indigenous households, as well as the identification of a tavern or other commercial food and beverage vendor in the center of town. Three microstyles – possibly individual potters’ “hands” – crosscut other classificatory categories suggesting localized or household production and distribution of ceramics.

These microstyles become less common during the later years of the occupation, suggesting the emergence of new community networks and production practices that tended to swamp the initial localized variability. The potters were likely Pipil women from different communities who initially brought minor differences on a regional style with them as well as adopting new pottery forms and styles. The interaction of their children as members of

the new community left its mark in the more homogenous ceramics they produced. This transformation suggests that a model of creolization and ethno-genesis would be useful for understanding other interactions in early colonial Mesoamerica.

In contrast with the new concentration of power and economy around San Salvador, an essential element for understanding Izalcos Pipil settlement structure involves their engagement in the expansive trade network that reached into central Mexico in both pre- and post-conquest times. Even though the evidence from Caluco is decades after that of Ciudad Vieja, the importance of the Izalcos region in long-distance trade was undiminished after the Spanish conquest. Pipil concepts, institutions, and boundaries structured Spanish political and economic activities, while the Spanish rationalized the landscape as wage labor emerged in the late sixteenth century. This new local market of production, consumption, and speculation, however, did not respond entirely to the demands or mandates of colonial power or even the world-system. Characteristic ceramic markers of the late sixteenth-century town at Caluco consist of Ming porcelain and imported majolicas of Guatemalan, Mexican, and Panamanian origin (see Lister and Lister 1987; Sampeck 2015). Obsidian, groundstone objects, glass, and metal artifacts are also abundant in the Caluco collections. The Manila galleon trade was a prime catalyst for Mexico to consolidate power by moving the route of New World trade across the isthmus, but the dispersal of porcelain and majolica in the Izalcos region suggests that contraband trade thwarted the Crown's efforts. In each phase, according to Sampeck (2007), Izalco-centered interests exerted a gravity the world-system could not alter.

5.2 *Spanish Industries*

Early Spanish colonial cities were important political and administrative centers, but it was in matters of the economy that they exerted the strongest local force. Dedicated to the exploitation of local land and labor, Spanish conquest towns served the predatory economic interests of both the Crown and the individual colonists. Issues of power, ethnicity, gender, and identity were integrated into all aspects of the economy of San Salvador.

One well-documented activity of the Spanish and indigenous men of San Salvador was warfare. From the founding of the first San Salvador in 1525 until the defeat of Lempira's uprising in 1539 – the historical record documents several raids and battles between San Salvador and indigenous resistance forces (Barón Castro 1996, 103–104; Lardé y Larín 2000, 111). It was through war materiel, specifically made of iron, that warfare intersected with the San Salvador economy. During the Lempira revolt of 1537–1539, Governor Francisco de Montejó

of Honduras appealed to the *vecinos* of San Salvador, apparently more secure against rebellion, for support and war materiel. They responded by sending a Spanish captain with 100 native auxiliaries and 1000 indigenous (probably Pipil) porters carrying gunpowder,arquebuses and balls, crossbows and bolts, swords, lances, shields, armor, and iron bars from which to manufacture points for crossbow bolts.

Blacksmithing has been identified in Structures 6F2 (Fowler 2011c) and 3D2 (Fowler 2011d). The northern smithy, at Structure 6F2, eventually closed his shop during the occupation of the town, and the structure came to be used as a trash dump. It was located near the largest residence identified at the site, Structure 6F1. A higher proportion of exotic indigenous ceramics, possibly from elsewhere in the region, and transport jars support the interpretation of this structure as the home of an *encomendero* receiving tribute from indigenous communities (Card 2007, 500, 526, 555; Gallardo Mejía 2004). The smith's shop on the main *plaza* in Structure 3D2 included charcoal manufacturing and was part of a compound also including a tavern (Card 2007, 482–499; Card and Fowler 2012; Fowler 2011d). In both cases it is notable that these “dirty” industries were located close to zones of Spanish wealth and cultural display. The blacksmith's shop and the tavern in Structure 3D2 were located across the *plaza* from the *cabildo* and likely near the public marketplace. Thus, it was located squarely in the economic, political, and social heart of San Salvador. European imported objects are rare at Ciudad Vieja, but excavations of the tavern in Structure 3D2 yielded a fragment of a Venetian crystal goblet with *vetro a fili* decoration, dating to the second quarter of the sixteenth century (Figure 9.4).

Local Spanish industries attested archaeologically, such as brick making, roof and floor tile manufacturing, blacksmithing, and charcoal making would have also depended on male indigenous and *mestizo* labor. The Dominican chronicler Antonio de Remesal (1964–66:vol. 2, bk. 9, Ch. 3, p. 202), a secondary source of the early seventeenth century who had access to the *cabildo* books, mentioned the following trades in the town: shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, tanners, and blacksmiths (see also Lardé y Larín 2000, 150–152). These all constitute activities that likely involved Spanish overseers and indigenous, *mestizo*, and perhaps African laborers. Bricks and tile are found across the site, though their exact production source has not been identified. A small minority of brick and tile may have been imported. Discolorations of one floor space in Structure 3D1 suggest a bichrome tile design that might have used imported tile (Fowler 2011b). One glazed *teja* roof tile and a handful of green tin-glazed *baldosa* floor tile also suggest some tile was imported. But the majority would have been locally produced.

FIGURE 9.4 Fragment of Venetian crystal goblet with *vetro a fili* decoration. Structure 3D2, Room 5, Op. 03–1.127, Level 1
PHOTO BY JEB J. CARD

5.3 *Labor and Tribute*

Subsistence production in or near San Salvador probably would have included local cultivation of garden crops, tending of fruit trees, hunting, and fishing – activities of both men and women – but the majority of food consumed in the town probably was obtained from tribute rendered by conquered Pipil and Lenca towns in the surrounding region and the hinterlands. Tribute payments to the 56 Spanish encomenderos of San Salvador are enumerated in the 1532 *Relación Marroquín* (Fowler 1989, 25–26, 155–186). This extraordinary document from the Archivo General de Indias in Seville (Audiencia de Guatemala, legajo 52), published in paleographic transcription by Francis Gall in 1968, contains rich economic and demographic data on approximately ninety indigenous settlements that had been assigned in *encomienda* (a formal grant of labor and commodity tribute) to the Spanish *vecinos* of San Salvador. The document shows that maize, beans, chili peppers, turkeys, venison, salt, dried fish, honey, beeswax, firewood, and a variety of woven cotton cloth and clothing were paid in tribute by Pipil and Lenca conquered communities. Tribute was delivered to San Salvador by male porters from these communities. Failure to pay tribute was met by threat or application of violent force.

Encomienda labor was virtual slavery (Jones 1994, 99; Sherman 1979, 85–92), and labor tribute was rendered by almost all Pipil communities, taking the form of male agricultural service, construction, mining, or trade labor (in addition to burden bearing) and female domestic service such as food preparation, cleaning, and child-rearing. Many if not most Spanish households would have had numerous servants from *encomienda* communities as well as indigenous slaves obtained as war captives or through barter.

A significant but poorly known aspect of the economy of San Salvador, and early colonial Central American cities in general, consisted of slaving and slave trafficking. Slaving operations began in Guatemala and Cuscatlan during the first Spanish invasion led by Pedro de Alvarado in 1524 (Sherman 1979, 27). Alvarado himself is credited with being the largest slaver in Guatemala and one of the largest slaveholders in Central America in the early post-conquest years.

The construction and maintenance of San Salvador would not have been feasible without a large slave labor force. Wealthy *vecinos* of Santiago and San Salvador also had trained gangs of indigenous slaves working in gold and silver extraction operations in Honduras. During Alvarado's time in Honduras-Higueras there were 20 or more of these gangs each with 15–25 slaves on average (Chamberlain 1953, 112). Slaving was the most important economic activity in Nicaragua in the 1530s; slaves taken in Nicaragua were shipped to Panama and Peru (MacLeod 1973, 51–52). Spanish encomenderos of San Salvador participated in the same activity, although on a relatively smaller scale, taking slaves in the eastern Lenca territory of Chaparrastique or Popocatepet, until slaving was curtailed by indigenous population collapse in the 1540s and the implementation of the New Laws in 1548 (Barón Castro 1996, 136, 166–167; Kramer 1994, 186–190). Cerrato liberated 500 Indian slaves from about 40 *vecinos* of San Salvador in 1548 (Sherman 1979, 148). Diego de Holguín, the first *alcalde* of San Salvador in 1525, claimed that 50 slaves had been taken away from him when Alonso López de Cerrato arrived as president of the audiencia of Guatemala in 1548 to enforce the New Laws, thus liberating indigenous slaves (Sherman 1979, 71). It was probably no coincidence that just three years earlier the city began the move from its original location at La Bermuda to the more economically and demographically prosperous location in the Acelhuate valley that it occupies today.

6 Conclusions

Conquest-era San Salvador both supports and defies expectations of early Spanish colonialism. Culture shock and change appear in the creation of a brand-new Spanish town not in accordance with the existing sociopolitical

order. Tremendous labor was expended to create Spanish-style architecture and the townscape, and Spanish technologies and industries are found in some of the most prominent places in San Salvador. Yet the majority of the population was indigenous, as is the bulk of the material culture assemblage, and the site may have been chosen due to deeper memory as a sacred spot. Potters brought from elsewhere experimented within the Pipil regional ceramic style, incorporating and modifying elements of European form. With time, the children of these potters created a more homogenous ceramic product, but one still Pipil in overall style, suggesting creolization rather than *mestizaje* as the conquest shifted into the early colonial period.

Traditional historiography on the cacao boom in the Izalcos region during the early colonial period tends to present a rather static picture of the dominant Spanish *encomenderos* and merchants exploiting defenseless indigenous peoples who had no choice but to submit to the new colonial world order. The archaeological data present a more subtle, more complicated tableau. We see indigenous populations not simply suffering under colonial domination, but actively constructing and structuring their own conditions of reality as they resisted exploitation and adjusted to new social, economic, and political relations. The materiality of these transformations, with its rich and varied artifact inventory and diverse architectural remains, indicates that the inhabitants of Caluco and other Pipil communities in the Izalcos region participated actively in the local and global political economy, and that they developed both passive and active strategies to resist colonial domination.

The sudden impact of San Salvador's conquest-period political economy, dominated by the indigenous *conquistadores mejicanos* and a small number of Spaniards who sought wealth rather than stability, gave way in the late sixteenth century to the likewise indigenous early colonial cacao boom in the west. The resulting global connections and evidence of consumption found in the Izalcos region demonstrates the importance of not only temporal but also social context. Overarching narratives of change and stabilization may make some broad sense at higher levels of abstraction, but the archaeological data challenge larger narratives with smaller effective scales of community, transformation, and adaptation.

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