



Bridging Conceptual Divides Between Colonial and Modern Worlds: Insular Narratives and the Archaeologies of Modern Spanish Colonialism

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Abstract

Narratives embedded in studies of modern Spanish colonialism have conspired against a deep understanding of colonialism as a global and current issue and have influenced or limited the directions for research. By focusing on particular narratives that separate and disconnect the realities of the colonies from those of the Iberian Peninsula, this article discusses the conceptual divide between the study of colonial and early modern realms, and the tenuous connections between the archaeology of Spanish colonialism developed in America and in the Iberian Peninsula. This paper attempts to counter those insular narratives by offering a view on how even remote settlements in Ibero-America show connections that tell stories of sixteenth-century Spain and pose questions that often cannot be answered due to the lack of shared perspectives between the study of modern Spanish colonialism in America and the Iberian Peninsula. To illustrate this view, a case study focused on Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús settled during the failed Spanish plan for the fortification of the Strait of Magellan at the end of the sixteenth century is provided. The interpretation of the results of archaeological and historical lines of research allows the establishment of material connections among individuals, stories and places of the Iberian Peninsula and America. The implication of this case contributes to considering the role that archaeology can play in questioning the enduring effects of modern Spanish colonialism.

Keywords Spanish Colonialism · Strait of Magellan · Narratives · Sixteenth century

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Introduction

Some years ago, during the investigation of the HMS *Swift* shipwreck, which occurred in 1770 off the coast of Patagonia, the skeleton of a British marine was recovered by the Underwater Archaeology Program PROAS-Argentina (Elkin 2008). Once the archaeological studies were completed, his remains were buried in the British cemetery in Buenos Aires through a ceremony organized by the English embassy (Underwood 2007). The funeral paid tribute to the marine who died centuries ago. When such a significant event occurred, I was digging in southern Patagonia at the sixteenth-century Spanish colonial settlement Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús. Five skeletons were recovered during our fieldwork. They were a child, a woman, and three men of the group of 300 Spanish settlers and soldiers left on the coast of the Strait of Magellan in 1584 who died there. No prospect of burial ceremony is expected for the people who died as part of the failed plan of fortification of the Strait of Magellan. The ceremony of the English embassy in the cemetery implicitly showed that the British marine is currently recognized as part of the history of the United Kingdom and considered a subject of modern European history. What history it is assumed the settlers and soldiers of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús belong to, is a question that appears to be more difficult to answer. In this sense, the histories linked to the skeletons recovered in Patagonia—in both British and Spanish colonial historical contexts—trigger some thoughts about the role the grand narratives of modern Spanish colonialism have played in shaping and interpreting particular colonial stories as increasingly distant and remote.

Historical archaeology research plays a crucial role in questioning the narratives that conspire against a deep understanding of colonialism as a global and current issue. Grand narratives are understood as the normalized and standard view of Spanish and Portuguese colonization of the Americas, which work as a framework of knowledge and interpretation (Senatore and Funari 2015). As Barbara Voss (2015a: 354) states, “what these grand narratives share is the way they close down, rather than open up, meaningful directions for research.” Thus, critically thinking about modern Spanish colonialism from an archaeological perspective involves archaeologists acknowledging the role these grand narratives have played in influencing or limiting the directions for research. Moreover, questioning the ways in which the past is presented may contribute to thinking about the influence that these different views of the past may have in the present.

This paper contributes to this critical perspective by discussing some of the narratives that have proven detrimental to archaeologists attempting to understand what modern Spanish colonialism means, especially in the Iberian Peninsula. It particularly focuses on narratives that separate and disconnect the realities of the colonies from those of the contemporaneous Iberian Peninsula and construct the colonial subject as different from the subject of early modern Europe. While colonies in the Americas have been fundamental to modernity and capitalism and are not just the result of these processes (Dussel 1992),

some narratives of modern Spanish colonialism disregard this and assume colonialism as a term associated with the history of those who left Spain or linked to what happened in distant lands and not with what happened in the Iberian Peninsula. This idea, rooted and naturalized in various contexts, has prevailed in historical narratives, historiographical discourses, and certain academic approaches. Likewise, it has influenced what and who has been considered “colonial.”

The divides between modern and colonial realms have been built based on dichotomous approaches in both Europe and America and based on a particular notion of change considering that transformations occur in the American continent. The dichotomous approaches, such as colonizer-colonized and especially “those who left to America—those who stayed in Spain,” separate and simplify the social and cultural complexity inherent to the processes of colonial expansion. The notion of change is assumed to be unidirectional as an inevitable consequence of European arrival. The naturalization of a one-sided notion of change emerges without posing questions about the extent to which changes occurred or not and about their times, dimensions, scales, magnitudes, nuances, and particularities both in Ibero-America and in the Iberian Peninsula. The narratives of the Spanish and Portuguese presence in America also tend to overlook its temporal depth and work against the possibility of understanding the deep changes taking place through centuries in diverse American and European geographic contexts over time. Correspondingly, the changes that occurred within the Iberian Peninsula as a consequence of colonial expansion as well as the enduring legacies of colonialism are currently disregarded.

This paper attempts to counter those insular narratives by offering a view on how even remote settlements in Ibero-America show connections that tell stories of sixteenth-century Spain and pose questions that often cannot be answered due to the lack of shared perspectives between the study of modern Spanish colonialism in America and the Iberian Peninsula. The following sections introduce the conceptual divide between colonial and early modern realms, and the tenuous connections between the archaeology of Spanish colonialism developed in America and in the Iberian Peninsula. The section *Telling Disconnected Stories* discusses how particular narratives separate and disconnect the realities of the colonies from those of the Iberian Peninsula. This is illustrated by a case study focused on Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús settled in 1584 during the failed Spanish plan for the fortification of the Strait of Magellan at the end of the sixteenth century. In the *Archaeology* section, the interpretation of the results of archaeological and historical lines of research is presented to establish material continuities among individuals, stories and places of the Iberian Peninsula and America. In the *Discussion* section, the results contribute to pondering whether the bodies, social bonds, and decision-making of the settlers of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús tell stories about colonial Ibero-America, sixteenth-century Spain, or both. At the end of the work, reflections are presented on the role that archaeology can play in questioning the enduring effects of modern Spanish colonialism.

Conceptual Divides Between Colonial History and Modern History

The concepts of modernity/coloniality have laid the foundations for thinking critically about colonialism (Dussel 2000; Quijano 2000). Walter Mignolo (2007: 477) pointed out that the simultaneous foundation of imperial Spain and the colonization of the Americas changed the course of European history itself. In this context, he postulated that the capitalist economy, as we know it today, could not have existed without the massive appropriation of land, the massive exploitation of labor, and the production of goods in a new way. The scale of the global market was possible thanks to the emergence of the Americas on the European horizon. Therefore, the modern history of the Iberian Peninsula cannot be understood without considering Latin America, nor can American colonial history be comprehended without understanding post-fifteenth-century Europe. In the words of Dussel (2000: 473), modernity is not an exclusively European phenomenon; it is inextricably linked to the colonies.

For the archaeology of modern Spanish colonialism, the colonialism-capitalism-modernity connections still remain to be explored in depth. Hence it is still relevant to revise the extent to which archaeological approaches to modern societies in Spain and to colonial Iberoamerican contexts have accepted that both the constitution of modernity in Europe and America and the expansion and consolidation of capitalism-colonialism are part of the same process. There is a tenuous connection established between the historical archaeology focused on colonial Iberoamerican contexts and the one on the Iberian Peninsula. In contrast, there are clear examples of research projects of historical archaeology focused on colonial North America that have shown an integrated vision of the social, cultural, and material connections of the United Kingdom and its colonies (see, for example, studies about the Georgian worldview by Deetz 1977; and later about the Georgian Order, by Johnson 1999; Leone 1988, among others). They have demonstrated that capitalism and colonialism have gone hand in hand to consolidate modern society (Orser 1996). However, theoretical approaches underlying European Historical Archaeology have tended “to militate against explicit considerations of things colonial” (Johnson 2006: 316).

A deep understanding of what colonialism means should include studies of material and social changes taking place through centuries in diverse analytical scales and regions not only in Ibero-America but also in the Iberian Peninsula. Studies focused on Iberoamerican colonial contexts have contributed to the understanding of the complexity and enduring effects of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. In the field of historical archaeology, critical perspectives on colonialism have expanded by the influence of postcolonial perspectives and insights (Lydon and Rizvi 2016). Coming from disciplines such as history, anthropology, and cultural studies, which have exposed the links between past colonialism and the present realities, Indigenous and Afro-descendant authors critically reflecting on colonialism and coloniality, have also added new perspectives looking to expose colonialism legacies, and contributing to turning critical thinking towards decolonizing practices in archaeology (see discussion in Atalay 2006; Gnecco 2015; Haber 2012; Hamilakis 2018; Hartemann 2022).

In recent decades, historical archaeology research has begun questioning great narratives that had been embedded in many archaeological studies of modern colonialism in Ibero-America. Examples of these narratives are the deeply embedded notions of acculturation (see critics in Lightfoot 1995; Silliman 2005, 2009), the narratives of technological replacement (King and Konwest 2019; Rodríguez Alegría 2008), the narratives of inevitability (Cornell 2015, for North America see Mrozowski et al. 2015, Silliman 2009), “terminal narratives” (Panich 2013: 110; Wilcox 2009: 11), many different representations of flat and fixed views of temporality and assumptions about fixed or objective boundaries, borders, belonging and exclusion, and centers with margins (Hayes and Cipolla 2015: 4), among others. New perspectives focused on the study of persistence (Hofman et al. 2020; Panich 2013; Sallum and Noelli 2020), change (Rodríguez Alegría 2008; Scaramelli and Scaramelli 2015; Silliman et al. 2012), and “changing continuities” (Silliman 2009) have traced the unfolding consequences of colonialism (Ferris 2009) as a counter to the expressions of the naturalized belief in the inevitability of changes in colonial America. Based on case studies in Ibero-America, academic production has also critically reviewed notions of the colonizer-colonized dichotomous approach as a structural factor of colonial discourse (see, for example, Funari 1998; King 2020; Muniz and Gomes 2017; Noelli and Sallum 2020; Orser and Funari 2001; Rodríguez-Alegría et al. 2015; Senatore 2015; Symanski and Gomes 2015; Van Buren 2021; Voss 2015b; among many others). Even when the spatial and temporal scales of comparative studies have been expanded for decades (Beaule and Douglass 2020; Deagan 2003; Funari and Senatore 2015; Thomas 1991; among many others), these have been mostly limited to cases within the American continent or other colonial territories, leaving the Iberian Peninsula on the sidelines.

In Spain, historical archaeology has recently developed in academia (see discussion on terminology and trajectories in Gutiérrez Lloret 1997; Montón Subías and Abejez 2015). In the last decade, it has served as a space for reflection and critical positioning on modernity (González Ruibal 2016), globalization (Escribano Ruiz 2019a), colonialism (for example, Azkárate and Escribano Ruiz 2014; Marín Aguilera 2018; Montón Subías et al. 2016), and ethnocentrism (Montón Subías and Herando 2018) and it has presented critical analyses and approaches to the recent past (for example, Alonso González and González Álvarez 2016; Ayán Vila and García Rodríguez 2016; Ferrándiz 2019; Gutiérrez Lloret 2016; González Ruibal 2005, 2020; Marín Suárez et al. 2012; Roldan Bergaraxea et al. 2019; among others).

Archaeological research focused on modern colonialism has been developed almost exclusively outside the Iberian Peninsula (for example, Cruz Berrocal and Sand 2020; Cruz Berrocal et al. 2020; Escribano Ruiz and Azkárate 2018; González Ruibal et al. 2016; Montón Subías et al. 2016; among others). It is said that colonial archaeology is paradoxically disconnected from archaeology in Spain (Escribano Ruiz 2017). Consequently, prospects of conceptual connections among the archaeological contexts located chronologically in the modern age in the Iberian Peninsula, the Americas, and other territories of the colonial world are still limited. Additionally, in terms of the study of Spanish colonialism inside the Iberian Peninsula, there is great potential that has not yet been exhaustively explored.

The studies of the archaeological contexts of modern times in Spain have become insular and disconnected from the study of broader processes. They have tended to emphasize local identities and traditions at the expense of wider questions. Generally, these studies have remained mainly within the scope of cultural resource management archaeology (see Gutiérrez Lloret 2011) which is often connected to local political interests (Díaz Andreu 2002). Nevertheless, there have been systematic approaches to specific local and regional contexts, such as investigations of ceramic production (see Busto Zapico 2015; Fernández de Marcos García et al. 2017; Lopez Rosendo and Ruiz Gil 2012; Moratinos García and Villanueva Zubizarreta 2013; Pleguezuelo et al. 1997; among others) and the analysis of a great variety of urban contexts (for example, Conesa and Fernández i Espinosa 2014; García and Domínguez-Solera 2018; among others). Some projects have attempted to connect the material worlds of the colonies and the metropolis based on ceramics and specific colonial products (for example, Buxeda i Garrigós et al. 2015). In recent years, an increase in the development of research projects within the Iberian Peninsula has been acknowledged (Casimiro 2019; Escribano Ruiz 2017; Gámez Mendoza et al. 2016; Gomes and Casimiro 2013; Quirós Castillo and Grau Sologestob 2020; Solé and Jané 2014; among others). However, the generation of knowledge and the problematization of modern times in the Iberian Peninsula from an archaeological point of view have not been specifically oriented to defining common grounds from which to study modern colonialism (with exceptions such as Casimiro et al. 2019, 2020; Teixeira et al. 2015; Teixeira and Bettencourt 2012; Neves et al. 2015).

There is still a clear need for dialogs that could contribute to understanding discontinuous and diverse colonial realities which have been part of common processes (see, for example, Bento Torres et al. 2015; Escribano Ruiz 2019b). This lack of systematic dialog has proven detrimental to archaeologists' attempts to see the big picture of colonialism. An interesting case that shows the limitations of trying to extend comparative perspectives, including colonial Ibero-America and Spain, was focused on cemeteries by Frey Sánchez (2013: 171). "The archaeological study of collective burials in Spain has not aroused much interest given its limited significance and its limited historiographic results." A clear contrast between Spain and Ibero-America was highlighted. "The same has not happened in Iberoamerican countries, where archaeology has paid special attention to colonial vestiges, including the types of burials, under the idea that any glimpse of the colonial past is part of the roots of *their* history" (Frey Sánchez 2013: 171, my italics). These observations allow for interpretations about who is considered to be part of, or represented by, colonial history.

Some narratives of Spanish colonialism have separated colonial subjects as conceptually different from the subjects of early modern Europe, and academia has contributed not only to building bridges that are still insufficient but also to strengthening oppositions and establishing distances. Beyond archaeology, it is not clear in some historical approaches whether the conceptual divides are due to limitations of the evidence or of the research questions. An example of this is the historical study of migration from the Iberian Peninsula to America in colonial times. This field has offered interesting contributions in terms of quantitative and qualitative analyses on the movement of people from the Iberian Peninsula to the American continent, but it

has also noted—in general terms—the inherent difficulties regarding the conformation and/or conservation of the documentary corpus as one of the greatest impediments to the generalization of studies that integrate or complement the stories on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean (see a complete state of the art in García Hidalgo 2019). However, interesting studies have begun to propose research questions that contribute to understanding links that overcome source limitations (see, for example, Rey Castelao 2021; Sánchez Rubio 1999; among others). Here, the field of historical archaeology research is proposed as a possible way to materially connect the trajectories of people, objects, and ideas in various places within the immense global colonial geography.

Telling Disconnected Stories: Victims at the “Confines” in the Sixteenth Century

This work is part of a line of research in historical archaeology that investigates modern Spanish colonialism in the Atlantic Coast of Patagonia in South America focused on case studies (Senatore 2007). One of them is Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús, settled in 1584 as part of the failed Spanish plan for the fortification of the Strait of Magellan at the end of the sixteenth century. Although it had an ephemeral existence, its story has not been forgotten. Television series and literary and graphic works of regional and local scopes have told the tragic story of the settlers and soldiers of the Strait of Magellan. The locations of the settlements founded by Sarmiento de Gamboa have been identified by the placement of commemorative monoliths by the governments of Argentina and Chile (Martinic 1983; Ortiz Troncoso 1970; Urbina et al. 2020). Over time, there has been a naturalization and uncritical acceptance of the generally known history of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús. Analyzing and understanding the implications of this account, its forms and content, and the processes that have participated in its reproduction over time have been an important part of our research (De Nigris et al. 2010; Senatore 2008; Senatore et al. 2016).

The principles underlying the dominant narrative about Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús contribute to presenting the colonial subject as dissimilar from the subject of early modern Europe. This separation is achieved first, by placing the settlers in a distant location, totally alien from the daily European space, and second, by erasing their previous stories and giving them an identity as victims of their fatal fate. The Strait of Magellan fortification project at the end of the sixteenth century has been presented as the story of an ambitious plan, poorly executed or as a large-scale plan with a tragic end, namely the death of all the settlers (for example, Fernández 1990; Martinic 1983; Rosenblat 1950). Additionally, a story that includes victims tends toward simplification and totalization (Giglioli 2017: 103).

The fortification plan for the Strait of Magellan was one of the largest undertakings of the reign of King Philip II. The founding expedition left Spain in December 1581 and included 3000 men, women, and children distributed in 23 ships. After two years of travel, shipwrecks, desertions, and conflicts reduced the number of settlers, ships, and supplies. Finally, approximately 300 people landed on the Atlantic

shore of the Strait of Magellan. The original plan, which included the settlement of two fortifications on each side of the Strait (Fig. 1), was replaced by the settlement of two villages. The first one, Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús, was established near the landing site, and the second one, Ciudad del Rey Don Felipe, was erected after a journey on foot of more than 200 km made by approximately 100 men under the command of Governor Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa (Fig. 2).

Forced isolation, shelter and supply shortages, hostile natives, an unfavorable climate, riots, and discouragement of the settlers and soldiers during the first months of both settlements were described by Sarmiento de Gamboa accounts and reports. This critical situation forced his departure seeking relief, using the only boat available. Never was he able to return due to various unfortunate reasons. Only three years after the founding of the cities, in January 1587, a British ship under the command of Sir Thomas Cavendish found Ciudad del Rey Don Felipe and renamed it Puerto Hambre (Port Famine) upon the strong impression that settlers and soldiers had starved to death. He reported fewer than 20 survivors, but only one soldier named Tomé Hernández was taken on the ship. This Spanish soldier escaped when reaching the first Spanish port on the Pacific and made his first official statement about what happened in the Strait to the Spanish authorities, which was repeated in 1620 for the Viceroy of Peru. The stories told by Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa and Tomé Hernández, as well as the narratives of travelers who later visited Puerto Hambre, have created representations of the reality of the Strait of Magellan that have lasted from the sixteenth century to the present day. Not that there is any mention of the settlers' place of origin, language, tradition, family ties, or age in their accounts. Nor are their names included. Indeed, the lack of such references contributes to the impression of social or cultural homogeneity, and to their detachment from their previous stories and bonds to their lives in the Iberian Peninsula.

This standardized repeated story placed the settlers in a remote location, totally alien from the daily European social environment, and erased their previous stories identifying them as victims of their tragic end. The significance of the Strait of Magellan, as well as of the colonizing and defensive enterprise entrusted to Sarmiento de Gamboa, cannot be understood but from a global perspective within the framework of early modern Europe. However, the Spanish fortification project and the stories of the settlers are located geographically and conceptually in the “confines” of the empire. From the field of literary criticism, María Jesús Benites (2013: 76) understands the term “confines” “as the “limit of any territory, an imaginary line that separates, divides and distinguishes it from the rest,” and the lack of definition of geographical space motivates the emergence of wonderful and enchanted elements. In fact, in the accounts of travelers and cartographies from the sixteenth century, the representations of Patagonia and the Strait of Magellan combine reality with the imagined (i.e., the monstrous, exotic and marvelous; Castro Hernández 2012). In such a context, the settlers were presented as victims of what others had done and had decided. The consequences were suffering, starvation, and death. That is, both history and historical subjects become visible from the moment of their victimization. By erasing their previous stories, their identities have been built upon their death in the strait. I argue that in the narrative of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús, the settlers have been given the identity of victims, understood as those portrayed by



Fig. 1 Historical document showing one of the fortifications planned as part of the Spanish project for the Strait of Magellan “Instrucción para la fábrica de los fuertes que se habían de construir en el Estrecho de Magallanes, Tiburcio Spanoqui”(AMN0021.MS0029-015 AMN 0021, Archivo del Museo Naval, Madrid, Spain)

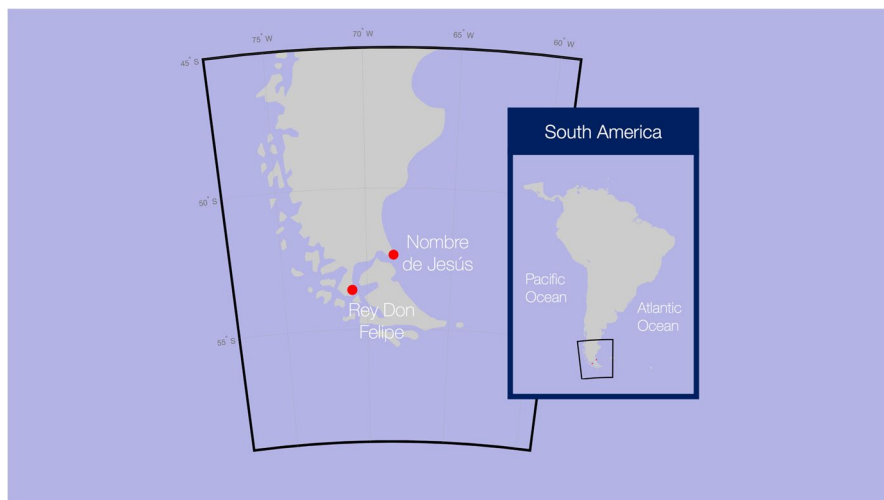


Fig. 2 Map of location of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús and Ciudad Rey Don Felipe, the two settlements established in 1584 as part of the fortification of the Strait of Magellan

philosopher Daniele Giglioli (2017: 97) in his essay “Critique of the Victim.” For him, victims have not done, but something has been done to them, and they do not act, but they suffer. In this way, victims are considered passive subjects, infantilized or represented in their social inaction.

Archaeology: Establishing Material Links

In the framework of the broader research project, systematic excavations confirmed the location of the material remains of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús (Senatore et al. 2007). The results on different lines of archaeological and documentary research that have already been published are revisited under the light of the perspective of this work. This includes data from archaeological research conducted on the Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús site, as well as on an analysis of documents from the Archivo General de Indias. The results of bioarchaeological studies (Senatore et al. 2007; Suby 2007; Suby et al. 2009), zooarchaeological analyses (De Nigris et al. 2010; De Nigris and Senatore 2008, 2011) and documentary analyses (Rigone 2014, 2017; Senatore 2008; Senatore et al. 2016) were used to address questions about the life trajectories of settlers and soldiers, their decision-making in the Strait of Magellan, and their stories prior to the trip.

The location where the founding event of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús was held was identified, coinciding with the area where Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa had located the main altar of the town’s church (Senatore 2008). Five skeletons were found; the orientation of the remains and the position (i.e., arms crossed on the chest) indicated a Christian burial, respecting a single alignment and depth, which indicates a regular and controlled organization of the cemetery, which at

that time also corresponded to the sphere of the church (Fig. 3). The analyses of the skeletal remains determined that a child and four adults were buried at Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús. The adults were three men and one woman, with an age at death ranging from 18 to 26 years; for the child, the age at death ranged from 10 to 12 years. The skeletons were found to be complete in all cases, with a good state of preservation. The stratigraphic position of the skeletons below the set of objects buried during the founding ritual of the city that included a silver coin of eight Reales reveals that these individuals died soon after the settlement of the

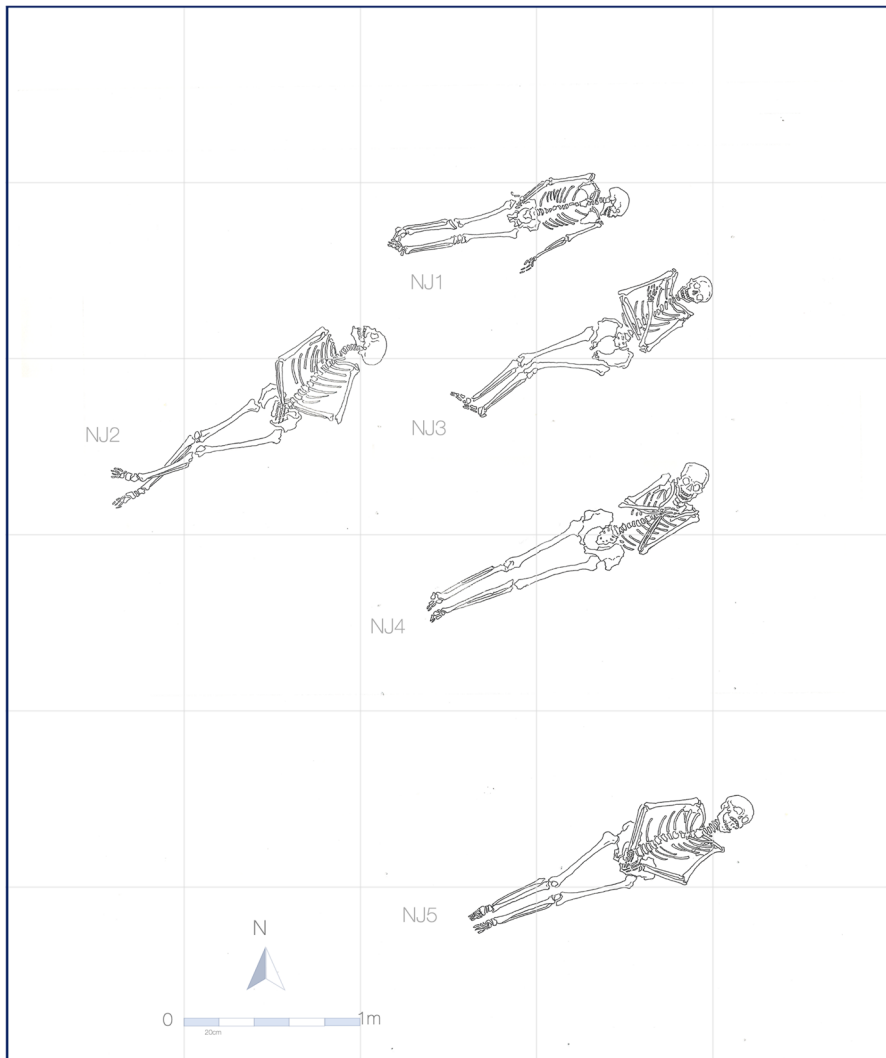


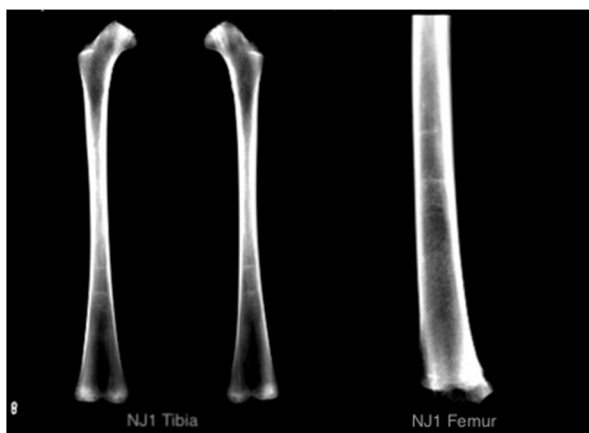
Fig. 3 Disposition of burials excavated at Ciudad de Nombre de Jesús site (Cabo Vírgenes, Santa Cruz province, Argentina)

town (Senatore et al. 2007). In this way, their state of health indicates, to a greater extent, their state when arriving at the Strait than their time spent at Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús.

Bioarchaeological Analysis

The bioarchaeological studies conducted thus far have focused on the diseases suffered during the life of settlers and the possible causes of death (Senatore et al. 2007; Suby 2007; Suby et al. 2009). These investigations determined that the individuals buried in the cemetery had a very deteriorated and compromised state of health, with nutritional deficiencies close to the time of death (Suby et al. 2009). Some structural characteristics of bones were evaluated (bone mineral density and cortical area index) as good indicators of nutritional stress. Data obtained using bone photon densitometry showed compatible values with osteopenia in all skeletons. Some cortical alterations were observed in long bones through tomographical slices and digital X-ray. This last technique revealed that individuals have significant metabolic-nutritional disorders at different times of their lives based on the occurrence of Harris lines and long-bone thickness of cortical bone and dental enamel hypoplasia (Fig. 4). On the one hand, the evidence suggests that malnutrition processes affected them both during the developmental stage, as evidenced by Harris lines and dental enamel hypoplasia, and during the adult stage, as demineralization and alteration of cortical and spongy tissue (Suby et al. 2009). For further future studies, combining Harris line studies with other aspects of bone growth may enable us to more closely define the nature of the stress episodes giving rise to the lines. Taking into account the age at death of the buried child, between 10 and 12, and adults, between 18 and 26 years, the traces observed in the bones inform about periods of malnutrition during their growth stage (Suby et al. 2009). On the other hand, the evidence shows starvation close to death. Peripheral quantitative computed tomography (pQCT) contributed to the evaluation of the cross-sectional structure of long bones through the cortical area and second moments of inertia, showing that

Fig. 4 Harris lines in the tibiae and femur of the skeleton of a child (NJ-1) observed through tomographic slices and digital X-ray (after Suby et al. 2009)



all skeletons have endocortical alterations, with a significant reduction in the cortical area in the tibia and radius (Suby et al. 2009) (Fig. 5). It is possible that these endocortical alterations as well as osteopenia occurred before the arrival to the Strait of Magellan. However, their active state at death might indicate their increase during the ephemeral time of the settlers at Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús.

Archaeofaunal Analysis

The study of the archaeofauna remains recovered in the archaeological excavations at Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús indicated the consumption of a diversity of species, with a clear predominance of animals available locally in the extreme south of the American continent (De Nigris et al. 2010). These findings showed a departure from the diet planned by the crown, organized in the form of individual rations, which mainly included cake or flour, wine, salted meat, bacon, tuna, oil, vinegar, beans and chickpeas, white rice, rice for sowing, salt, corn, and cheese (De Nigris and Senatore 2008). Based on zooarchaeological analysis, the consumption of foods of animal origin was different from the species mentioned in the rations or in the food lists supplied by the crown. Domestic species of European origin, such as pigs (*Sus scrofa*), were poorly represented in the findings (De Nigris and Senatore, 2011). In contrast, the remains of seabirds prevailed, mainly cormorants (*Phalacrocorax* sp.), followed by guanacos (*Lama*

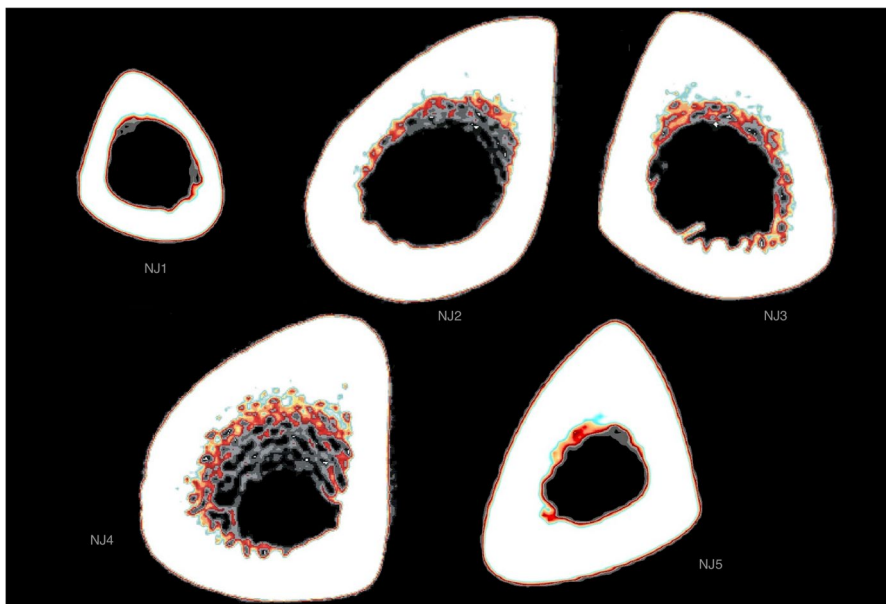


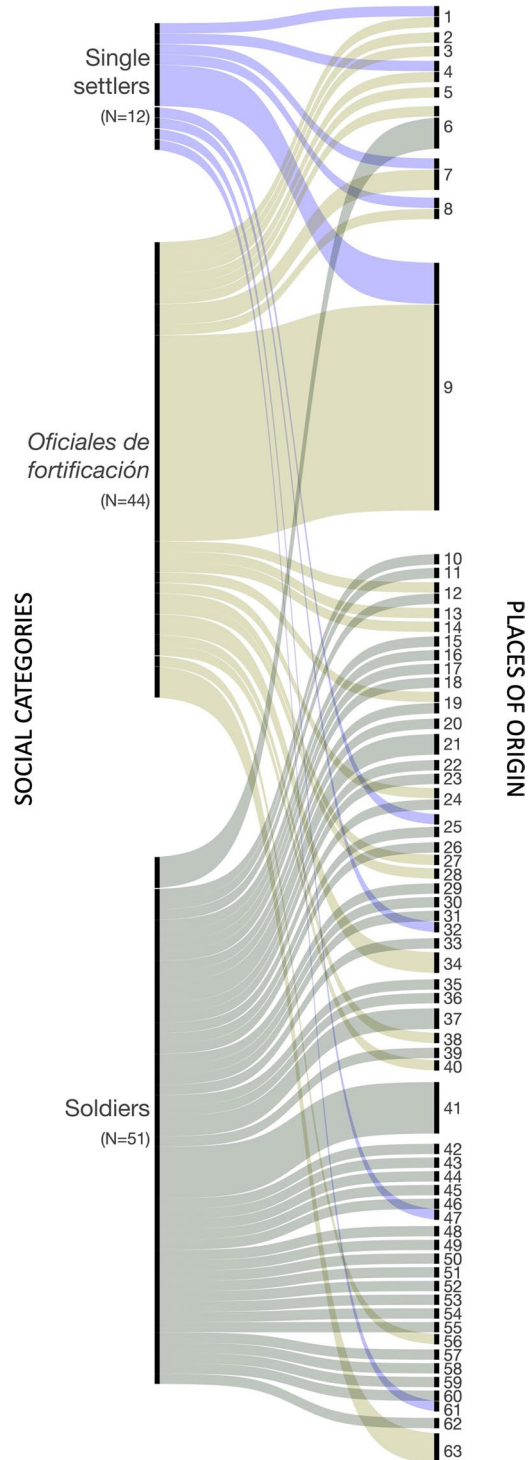
Fig. 5 Endocortical alterations, with a significant reduction in the cortical area in the tibia and radius observed through the cross-sectional structure of long bones through the cortical area and second moments of inertia NJ1 child, NJ3 adult woman, NJ2, NJ4, NJ5 adult males (after Suby et al. 2009)

guanicoe), sea mammals and shellfish. It is possible that animals such as sea mammals or guanacos would not have been part of their usual diet prior to the trip and would also be unknown to the settlers (De Nigris and Senatore 2011). Regarding nutrition requirements to survive in harsh environments in which higher caloric intake is necessary to survive, some specific observations were of interest. A generalized practice among hunter gatherers living in the region at the time was the consumption of the marrow of long bones of guanaco as a source of fat (De Nigris et al. 2010). In Nombre de Jesús, even though guanaco was consumed, the marrow of the bones remained unused. This could indicate the unawareness and limited experience with the local resources of the newcomers, as well as the lack of exchange of information and knowledge with the local Native groups living in the region.

Documentary Studies

Information about the people who were part of the plan was recorded on administrative documents dated at different times of the plan for the fortification of the Strait of Magellan. The study of historical documents offered information of great relevance for the analysis of the life trajectories of individuals who were part of the Strait of Magellan fortification project. The characteristics of the population group in terms of gender, ethnicity, marital status, age, origin, trades, salaries, kinship relationships, and size and composition of the family groups were based on a series of lists identified among the administrative documents (Rigone 2014). Information about the places of origin of the settlers and soldiers is scarce in the available administrative documents. Therefore, data obtained from lists of people possibly underrepresent the real number of places of origin. However, 106 individuals listed under the categories of soldiers, single settlers, and *oficiales de fortificación* (e.g., carpenters, builders, blacksmiths) were recorded to come from more than 62 towns, according to the territorial division of the Spanish Empire at the end of the sixteenth century (Fig. 6). For example, the 43 *oficiales de fortificación* listed in the same document came from more than 20 districts of the Corona de Castilla and the Kingdom of Portugal, 13 single inhabitants came from at least 10 towns of the Corona de Castilla, Corona de Aragon and Kingdom of France, and 50 soldiers came from at least 42 towns (Rigone 2017). The districts of origin identified thus far included a considerable number of different regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Other information of interest was the conformation of families that were defined by kinship, political, and religious ties. They were mostly formed by a couple with one child; however, they could include up to four children. In one particular case, a family included more than 20 members of three generations, linked not only by blood ties (i.e., son, daughter, brother, sister, grandson, niece, nephew) but also political (i.e., spouse, mother-in-law, sister-in-law) and religious (i.e., goddaughter) (Rigone 2017). The results as a whole contributed to understanding the heterogeneity of

Fig. 6 Diagram showing the diversity of towns within the Iberian Peninsula for three different social categories. References of the places of origin: 1 Gran Canaria, 2 Málaga, 3 Almonaster la Real, 4 Antequera, 5 Aracena, 6 Écija, 7 Jerez de la Frontera, 8 Sanlúcar de Barrameda, 9 Sevilla, 10 Estepa, 11 Gibraleón, 12 Frenegal de la Sierra, 13 Utrera, 14 La Rambla, 15 Baena, 16 Córdoba, 17 Tinajas, 18 Lucerna, 19 Andújar, 20 Alcalá la Real, 21 Arjona, 22 Baeza, 23 Úbeda, 24 Madrid, 25 Badajoz, 26 Cáceres, 27 Ciudad Real, 28 Toledo, 29 Almodóvar del Campo, 30 Hontanarejo, 31 Puertollano, 32 Alcocer, 33 Arenas, 34 Valladolid, 35 Bayona, 36 Medina del Campo, 37 Medina del Rioseco, 38 Espinosa de los Montes, 39 Villalpando, 40 Jerez de los Caballeros, 41 León, 42 Valencia de Don Juan, 43 Bizaler, 44 Tamara, 45 Herrada, 46 San Clemente, 47 Arna, 48 Salamanca, 49 Salvatierra, 50 Linares, 51 Navalagamella, 52 Dom García, 53 Zamora, Tui, 54 Avilés, 55 Cangas de Tineo, 56 Carmona, 57 Ibio, 58 Valle de Toranzos, 59 Navarra, 60 Motrico, 61 Valencia, 62 Mogadouro, 63 Reino de Portugal



the group as well as connecting the settlers with their stories, places, and life experiences prior to leaving for the Strait of Magellan.

Discussion: Stories in between Modern Spain and Colonial Ibero-America

In summary, archaeological studies have allowed exploring the individual trajectories from their places of origin to their subsequent landing at the Strait of Magellan. The individuals analyzed died soon after the establishment of the settlement, so bioarcheological studies informed, to a greater extent, the health state when arriving at the strait than their time spent at Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús. Pathologies were identified that are compatible with situations of chronic food deficit; that is, during different moments of their lives, these individuals suffered long periods of food shortages. Their bodies show evidence of starvation close to death, but they also exhibit previous nutritional deficiencies at other times and in other geographies of the Iberian Peninsula. The general interpretation of these results would consider the duality of the skeleton as both a biological and cultural entity, emphasizing approaches to life course as a result of interrelated and cumulative events over the timeframe of individuals but also at a community level (Agarwal 2016). However, the reduced information coming from the comparative archaeological context in Spain limits further interpretations. Could these nutritional deficiencies and stories of hunger be interpreted as the regular situation in the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the sixteenth century? To what extent does the deteriorated and compromised state of health of the settlers of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús represent an exception? Even though it is frequently assumed that necessity and hunger were causes for migration, these still need to be proven. Archaeological research could contribute to the study and the revision of these assumptions.

Based on the results of zooarchaeological studies, there was a replacement of the ordinary rations by a rapid incorporation of local resources. The system of distribution of standardized rations of food was a centralized organization. The incorporation of local resources could imply innovation in the modes of acquisition, preparation, distribution and consumption, different from those planned, and the activation of alternative forms of organization within the group of settlers (De Nigris and Senatore 2011). The interpretation of this information could lead to posing questions about decision-making in the face of the unknown. Likewise, it could also lead to considering settlers as active individuals facing new circumstances, perhaps questioning their characterization as passive subjects. Information about modes of acquisition, preparation, distribution, and consumption of food in different contexts of the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth century could contribute to understanding whether the experiences in the Strait of Magellan linked to the incorporation of unknown local resources into the diet were exceptional or not. Moreover, some questions could be asked about how distant these practices were from the everyday lives of the sixteenth-century Iberian Peninsula. Archaeological information about daily lives in

the Iberian Peninsula in modern times has much to offer to understand the significance of findings and interpretations concerning Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús.

The analysis of documentation related to the group of settlers contributes to exploring their stories prior to traveling to the Strait of Magellan. Data showed a great variety of places of origin of the soldiers and settlers. Considering regional cultural richness and diversity in the Iberian Peninsula, a variety of languages, traditions, and life experiences within the group of settlers could be inferred. Likewise, indirectly, these data invite us to reflect on the realities of the places they left and on the imaginary that their absences possibly built in their communities in the Iberian Peninsula. Additionally, the identification of their family ties informs us about close relationships and indicates common experiences shared before and during the colonization project. Perhaps these relationships within the group had some influence on the way they faced unknown places and critical situations.

Conclusion

Critically thinking about Spanish modern colonialism from an archaeological perspective should involve posing questions not only about the colonies but also about the changes and continuities that have occurred within the Peninsula Iberica since the fifteenth century in connection to myriad colonial contexts around the world. This necessarily requires examining assumptions embedded in master narratives that have influenced or limited the directions for research. The historical narrative about Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús presents the colonial subject as dissimilar from the subject of early modern Europe. This separation is achieved through a process of victimization that presents passive individuals at the mercy of the decisions of the crown, erases their previous stories and gives them an identity based on their fatal and utterly remote destiny. The story of the settlers seems to have a beginning and end in their tragic fate in distant spaces, alien to the daily life of early modern Europe. The historical and archaeological studies of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús presented here are only an introduction to various lines of analysis that contribute to connecting the settlers with their past and own stories. For example, the bodies of the individuals expose links between previous life stories and those shared during the crossing and arrival at the strait. The findings indicate suffering close to death but also reveal stories of hunger that occurred throughout their lives, in some cases referring to their childhood in their places of origin in the Iberian Peninsula. Including other scales of interpretation of the results of historical and archaeological research of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús leads to new questions. It also opens interpretative possibilities to visualize material trajectories that connect the realities of the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas at the end of the sixteenth century.

Putting Iberomeric colonial history and early modern Europe into conversation with each other is not merely an academic exercise. Perhaps a necessary step to thinking critically about Spanish colonialism is to question the role played by the narratives that construct the colonial subject as conceptually different from that of early modern Europe. This question may come from the hand of certain reflections on the global dimension and the recurrence and diversity of the stories

of emigration and immigration, hunger and death. From this perspective, it could be proposed that the strength of the identity of the settlers of Ciudad del Nombre de Jesús, as well as that of immigrant-emigrants in general, might lie not in their role as victims but rather in their actions, their search, and their audacity. Questioning the ways in which the past is presented may contribute to thinking about the role that these different views of the past may play in the present. In short, rethinking the enduring effects of colonialism is about recognizing it as current, close, and part of our own story.

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