*Journal of Pacific Archaeology* – Vol. 11 · No. 2 · 2020

– ARTICLE –

# The First Missions in Oceania: Excavations at the colonial church and cemetery of San Dionisio at Humåtak (Guam, Mariana Islands)

Sandra Montón-Subías[1,2], Natalia Moragas Segura[3] & James M. Bayman[4]

ABSTRACT

This essay outlines and explores the broader implications of preliminary archaeological excavation at the colonial church and cemetery of San Dionisio (Humåtak, Guam, Mariana Islands). The native Chamorro of the Marianas were the first Pacific Islanders to experience European colonization following the inception of Jesuit missionization in 1668. Although the archipelago was once perceived as a peripheral outpost of Spanish colonialism in the 17th century, recent scholarship reveals that such locales epitomize the underlying logic of the Jesuit mission system. Moreover, it is increasingly clear that in spite of centuries of colonialism, Guam offers a striking example of indigenous resilience and the vitality of archaeological heritage in the maintenance of contemporary cultural identity.

*Keywords*: Early Modern Colonialism, Micronesia, Chamorro, Jesuit Missions, Archaeological Cemeteries

## INTRODUCTION

Early modern missionization is a well-established topic in Pacific archaeology (for an overview, see Flexner 2014; Lydon & Ash 2010). However, archaeological research on modern missions is nascent in Guam and the Mariana Islands, even though Chamorros (*Chamoru*) were the first islanders in Oceania to contact Europeans and experience colonization and missionization. In this essay, we outline and explore the implications of preliminary archaeological excavations at the colonial church and cemetery of San Dionisio (GHPI site 66-02-1024) in Guam, the largest and southernmost island of the Marianas archipelago. Our work echoes aspects of previous scholarship on the topic, including the seminal investigations by Angela Middleton (2007, 2008) in New Zealand.

Guam (*Guahan*) is today a complex social and economic hub in Micronesia, and it is an increasingly significant nexus of global geopolitics. Its current status as an unincorporated territory of the US is a clear reminder that colonialism continues to this day in an allegedly post-colonial world. In fact, during the past five centuries, the island has endured Spanish, American and Japanese colonization, and, as a result, it has one of the longest trajectories of modern colonialism in world history. Guam was formally incorporated by the early modern Spanish empire in 1565, but its permanent colonization began in 1668 at a moment of worldwide expansion of Jesuit missions (Banchoff & Casanova 2016; Clossey 2008; Coello 2016; Molina 2013; Prosperi 1999).

Although the Marianas are sometimes perceived as a peripheral outpost of Spanish colonialism, recent scholarship reveals that such locales epitomize the underlying logic of the mission system, which aimed to 'civilize' natives by changing their long-established quotidian routines (Montón-Subías 2019). Altering ways of being was deemed as vital as the colonization of new land. Laura Souder made it very clear when she wrote that Spanish colonization impacted the Chamorro psyche in profound ways (1992: 233). An archaeology of the Jesuit mission of Guam is important in at least three respects: 1) it offers a material perspective on the complex history of Guam and its Chamorro society, and a better understanding of the local implantation of the mission system in specific places; 2) it provides a broader perspective on mission processes in Oceania, whose archaeology is still biased towards later British and French missionization and colonization (Atienza 2019; Bayman 2017; Cruz Berrocal 2017); and, 3) it enhances understanding of how missionization and globalization were co-constituted during the early modern period. In spite of centuries of colonialism, Guam offers

1 Dept. d'Humanitats, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Ramon Trias-Fargas 25–27, 08005 Barcelona (Spain).
2 ICREA. Passeig de Lluis Companys 23, 08010 Barcelona (Spain).
3 Dept. d'Història i Arqueologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Montalegre 6, 08001 Barcelona (Spain).
4 Department of Anthropology, 346 Saunders Hall, 2424 Maile Way, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822 (USA).
*Corresponding author: Sandra.monton@upf.edu
Submitted 3/4/20, accepted 26/7/20. First online 10/8/20.

a striking example of indigenous resilience and the role of archaeological heritage in the maintenance of contemporary cultural identity. Current attitudes toward Guam's heritage from the colonial era are nonetheless varied and dynamic. At Humåtak, a small village in southern Guam, this heritage serves an important social role, and its residents are deeply involved in supporting and/or participating in efforts to investigate and preserve it. Excavations at San Dionisio commenced in 2017 as part of this effort, and through a collaborative partnership of the Guam Preservation Trust-GPT (*Inangokkon Inadahi Guahan*), *Universitat Pompeu Fabra*-UPF, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa-UH and the Humåtak mayor's office to develop fieldwork within the framework of community archaeology.

## GUAM IN THE WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF JESUIT MISSIONS

On 16 June 1668, Jesuit Diego Luis de Sanvitores arrived in Guam in the company of Jesuits Thomas Cardeñoso, Luis de Medina, Pedro de Casanova, Luis de Morales and the scholastic brother Lorenzo Bustillos (García 1683:189). They established their base at Hagåtña, where they inaugurated the first in a series of Christian missions that ever since would sprinkle Marianas and Oceanic maps. Jesuits remained in Guam until 1769, when, following their expulsion from Spain's overseas territories, they were replaced by Augustinian Recollects.

Before the Jesuits, a series of expeditions and visits in the Marianas produced an important body of knowledge about pre-colonial *Latte* societies that was likely instrumental in establishing the mission (Driver 1988:2–3). When approached critically, these written accounts are still invaluable for understanding Chamorro society before colonization. The Jesuits of Guam were also informed by the order's earlier experience in the Americas and in the Philippines. By the 17th century, the missionization of Guam was no doubt part of the Jesuit's global and universalist effort to mould humankind according to a specific Christian credo, but it was also inspired by a potent and growing desire to enhance the order's religious credibility. Jesuits like Sanvitores wanted to demonstrate to the world their true vocation and there was nothing better than to establish a mission in a remote 'heathen' region where the only riches were the abundance of 'poor souls' (García 1683:143, 170; and see Atienza 2013:16).

While some historians have highlighted the anomalous character of Marianas' colonization as an evangelizing initiative away from economic gain at a time of recession for the Hispanic Monarchy (for an overview, see Coello 2020), other researchers (Montón-Subías 2019) have noted how well it fits into what Latin American decolonial thought has called 'coloniality' (Lander 2000; Lugones 2007; Quijano 2000; Segato 2011). Understood from the outset as a 'civilizing' project, native worldsenses (*sensu* Oyěwùmí 1997:3), ways of being and cultural logics were deemed as vital as – if not more than – the colonization of new land.

Although the Jesuits envisioned the establishment of missions in Marianas as a peaceful evangelizing project, they soon had to petition for military support to compel native communities to comply with the imperatives of a new lifeway they were seeking to impose upon them. Thirty years of conflict followed suit until native Chamorros were forcibly uprooted from their ancestral lands and nucleated in a reduced number of villages or towns during what is known as *La Reducción* (Driver 1988:7; Hezel 2015). Before *La Reducción*, Chamorro society was characterized by orality, social relationality, absence of institutionalized positions of social power, and a division of labor according to gender only (Craib 1986; Cordy 1983; Dixon *et al.* 2006:56; Montón-Subías & Moral de Eusebio, in press [2021]). In such societies, space is usually experienced as a multidimensional reality of human behavior with which strong emotional bonds are established (Bourdieu 1990; Hernando 2002). It is of utmost importance in self-formation, and not just a passive scenario where to act, move, or extract resources.

For some Chamorro, the *reducciones* were likely close to their native villages, but for others, they were probably located several kilometers away (see Bayman *et al.* 2012) or even on a different island, in places they had never before experienced, and far from the land of their venerated ancestors. Thus, while for colonial agents *La Reducción* was mainly a politico-religious enterprise, for the native Chamorros it challenged the very structure of their world and its everyday interactions, practices and experiences (Montón-Subías 2019:414). Fundamental transformations ensued in the islands following *La Reducción* (Bayman & Peterson 2016; Russell 1998:317–322), including the turn to a newly-introduced system of gender inequality and the emergence of a racialized colonial underclass (Montón-Subías in press [2021]). Perhaps the most conspicuous physical correlate of such social upheaval was the plummeting population that endangered the very existence of the colony itself (Hezel 2015:80–81).

Acknowledging the devastating effects associated with colonialism is not incompatible with investigating processes of Chamorro cultural continuity, resistance and resilience (for instance, Bayman *et al.* 2020; Clement 2019; Dixon *et al.* 2020; Lujan Bevaqua 2020; Perez Hattori 2006; Souder 1992). Similar processes of native resistance and resilience in the wake of cataclysmic events that followed contact have been noted in other regions of the Spanish empire where Catholic missions were established (de France *et al.* 2016; Liebman & Preucel 2007; Lightfoot 2015; Panich & Schneider 2015; Scaramelli & Scaramelli 2004; Silliman 2001; Tomka 2020). Also, doing so is not incompatible with investigating the overlapping contradictions and competing interests of the various social actors that were involved in the process in Guam: Catholic missionaries, Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties, civil governors, the militia, colonial settlers of different descent (mainly

from New Spain, the Philippines and Iberia) and native Chamorro.

## HUMÅTAK IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Humåtak was one of several native villages that were selected for the establishment of one of the 17th century *reducciones*. According to Franciscan lay brother Juan Pobre de Zamora (1598–1603: 448), Humåtak was one of Guam's primary villages at the end of the 16th century. By contrast, documents written at the end of the 19th century portray it as a decadent place in comparison with its more splendorous past (Olive y García 1887: 42). Today, Humåtak is a small and economically depressed village in Guam, but also one where oral tradition places Magellan's 1521 landing during the first circumnavigation in world history. Therefore, it is also here where the first encounter between Pacific Islanders and Europeans is positioned. Although some scholars have questioned whether the village was the actual location of Magellan's landfall in Marianas (Rogers & Ballendorf 1989), there is no doubt that some years after 1565, Humåtak served several times as a waystation for the Manila galleon that connected Acapulco and Manila until 1815, when it was terminated. A subsequent period of progressive decline likely accounts for the image that is conveyed in documents from the latter half of the 19th century.

The Manila Galleon route has long been considered the first truly global trade avenue in the history of humankind (Clossey 2006; Giráldez 2015), and it was a primary reason for the Spanish Crown to maintain protracted interest in the island despite its clear lack of economic riches. It is also why a residence for governors (known today as Palasyo) was constructed at Humåtak when *La Reducción* was instigated, and why a series of coastal fortifications were later added (Delgadillo, McGrath & Plaza 1979; Driver & Brunal-Perry 1994). As a result, Humåtak is one of the most significant places in Guam, and indeed in all of Oceania, with relatively well-preserved Spanish-style architectural heritage. During the long period from 1565 to 1668 it must have been also at Humåtak where interactions between Chamorro and travelers of the Manila Galleon were particularly intense. No doubt, its primacy among *Latte* Chamorro villages and its service as a waystation in the transpacific route made it an ideal location to situate a *reducción* village.

There is very little information about the *reducción* process at Humåtak, and, in fact, in the Marianas in general. Spanish sources only mention that the most appropriate places were areas where it was feasible to concentrate Chamorro populations so that they could be managed more easily (García 1683: 584). But *reducciones* were much more than mere administrative centers to control mobility and avoid uprisings; they functioned as true 'civilization' centers to colonize native lifeways and enforce a new mode of being (Montón-Subías 2019: 413). As in other regions of the world, new corporeal disciplines (*sensu* Foucault 1975) related to food, health, care, dress or sexuality, and new labor regimes, kinship systems or, amongst others, land-tenure patterns (Bayman & Peterson 2016; Montón-Subías 2019; Montón-Subías & Moral de Eusebio in press [2021]; Peña 2020) were imposed through the joint effort of Jesuit churches and schools (see Loren 2010 and Voss 2000 for a comparative perspective). Important institutions of Chamorro life were forbidden while new ones were instated. The elimination of the so called *guma'uritaos* or bachelor houses (Moral de Eusebio 2016; Russell 1998: 318) and the promotion of indissoluble monogamous marriages and nuclear families are telling examples of mission power over local lives.

Likewise, the establishment of a new spatial logic and the construction of buildings alien to tradition, such as churches and schools, loomed large in the colonization of indigenous space and minds. Humåtak's church was consecrated to San Dionisio Areopagita. Together with the different forts and batteries, the Governor's residence, and the as-yet unlocated post-1521 latte-period sites and living quarters of the *reducción,* it stands as an archaeological witness of colonial processes that spanned the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The recent excavations at San Dionisio foreshadow a broader effort to investigate different enclaves representative and informative of colonial times.

## SAN DIONISIO IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

By 1670, Jesuits had founded 5 churches in Marianas (Ledesma 1670: 6v), and by 1686 they had established a total of 12, which is the highest number of churches that the archipelago had in Jesuit times (Lévesque 1996: 669). Francisco García mentions that San Dionisio began to be built in 1680, and was dedicated in 1681 (1683: 585). He also indicates that a house for priests was also constructed and that this period coincided with the placement of a *reducción* at Humåtak, which was divided in two different areas separated by 1.2 km because the village was not large enough to house everyone who was relocated (see also Joseph Hernández 1690, in Lévesque [1997: 429]). This early San Dionisio may have been a wood and thatch structure (García 1683: 586), which, like many other buildings in Guam, was destroyed on several occasions by a combination of natural and human-driven events, such as conflict. After a 1684 Chamorro revolt, it was rebuilt in 1689, only to be destroyed again by a severe typhoon in 1693, and rebuilt in 1694 (Haynes & Wuerch 1993: 15).

The actual remains of San Dionisio are coral masonry walls with a mortar facing that is 2–3 cm in thickness (figure 1). The standing walls convey a feeling of massiveness. However, we do not know exactly when it assumed such a configuration. In his 1715 Annual Letter, Jesuit Felipe María Muscati (in Lévesque 1998: 639) wrote that a stonewall church was constructed in 1715 because the previous church was in such a poor condition. Haynes and Wuerch

Figure 1. San Dionisio standing walls with frames for windows and remnants of the covering mortar (photograph by Sandra Montón-Subías).

(1993:15) note that although in 1769 the church walls were already made of stone, the roof was nevertheless made of palm-thatch. This is how it appears in historical illustrations (figure 2), and 19th century governor's reports that succinctly mention the church (de la Corte y Ruano Calderón 1875:50; Olivé y García 1887:42, 78). However, our excavations recovered a high number of tiles and their presence implies that a tile roof had apparently been added at some point. Antoine-Alfred Marche (1887, in Craig 1982:24) mentions a rebuilding event in 1845 after an earthquake. Brunal-Perry (2019) also describes episodes of earthquake destruction and church reconstruction in 1779, 1849 and 1862. Finally, after the 1902 earthquake, the church was abandoned. Although we identified past reconstruction events on the excavations, confirming a correlation between those episodes and the specific destructions that are documented in written sources is pending. In 1939 a new San Dionisio church was constructed several meters to the north, and directly on top of the remains of the Governor's residence. While this event constrains our ability to conduct archaeological investigations at the Palasyo, it did enhance the preservation of the earlier San Dionisio building. Notwithstanding, San Dionisio has also been affected by more recent events, like the construction of F.Q. Sanchez elementary school in 1953, which severely damaged the remains of its *kombento* (house for priest).

In addition to Spanish primary sources, a series of illustrations made within the framework of 18th and 19th century expeditions have also offered information about the church (figure 2). Importantly, all of this artwork postdates the expulsion of the Jesuits, which means that the

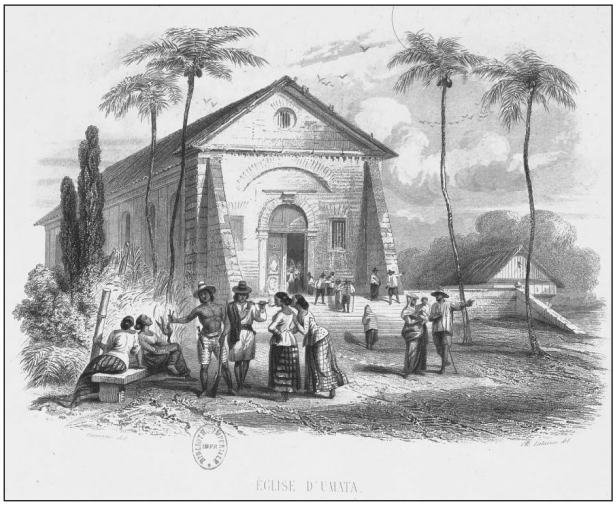


Figure 2. San Dionisio according to J. Dumont d'Urville (1835). *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*. Volume II. Paris: Tenré et Dupuy, p. 482.

building depicted was operating under the Augustinian Recollects', rather than the Jesuits. These illustrations include plan-views of the area, and freehand drawings in different styles. As historical documents, caution is required in their interpretation because they were created to illustrate and convey a certain agenda for a distant audience, or complement a written report made for political and geographical purposes. They were made by (and for) European eyes and so the buildings and places they illustrate were possibly embellished in certain respects. Apart from these concerns, such images provide insights on the appearance of the church exterior and nearby areas, like the *kombento*, that was later largely destroyed.

Twentieth century photographs and island reports supplement the above information, as do *Chamorun Humåtak's* oral memory by including a cemetery in the area that faces the main façade of the church. The appearance of the cemetery is also illuminated by a 20th century photograph of wooden crosses that were possibly marking its graves. During the *Latte* period Chamorros typically buried their dead under, between or in front of *Latte* houses – wood and thatched superstructures supported by stone pillars (Carson 2012; Peterson 2012; Russell 1998; Thompson 1940). Juan Pobre de Zamora (1598–1603: 451–2) provided the most detailed account of such pre-colonial rituals (Montón-Subías & Moral de Eusebio in press [2021]). He described the burial of a *principal* and noticed some differences in comparison with ordinary men (unfortunately, no description of a female funeral is provided). Described as enjoying some social advantages but having very limited power, *principales* (which can translate into English as 'the main ones') have been interpreted as people of high status or socially preeminent community leaders (Driver 1983: 208). While the deceased *principal* was exposed on a framework of scaffolding made of palms and trees for mourning outside their homes, ordinary men were simply shrouded in a newly-made mat. Both were interred in the vicinity of houses, although not their own; and while the principal was buried in front of the house of his fraternal heir, ordinary individuals were buried in front of the most prestigious relative's house. In addition, a platform was constructed and covered with new woven mats on top of the principal's grave, whose body was accompanied by an axe and a knife.

In addition to *Latte* burials, archaeology has documented post-mortem disturbance for bone acquisition and secondary burials – in some cases consisting only of individual skulls (McNeill 2005: 308; Stodder *et al.* 2015: 533, 543). Spanish primary sources also report the use of human-bone for making weapons (García 1683: 200) and the presence of venerated skulls of ancestors inside houses (Pobre de Zamora 1598: 448–449; Aranda 1690: 220), which highlights that the continuity between the physical and the symbolic spaces of life and death was also extended to the uses given to dead bodies (Montón-Subías 2019: 413). These practices were interpreted by Jesuits as pagan beliefs but not as a religion, something that they valued positively because introducing a religion where there was none was deemed to be an easier task than rejecting an existing one (Ledesma 1670: p. 5v).

No doubt, the implantation of the Christian doctrine challenged existing burial customs and their associated beliefs (Dixon, Jalandoni & Craft 2017: 213; Montón-Subías 2019: 415). Over time, spaces inhabited by the living would no longer be appropriate for housing the dead; funerary spaces would become more clearly differentiated and located in close proximity to the church, a novel building that emerged as a new locus of community life and community death. This process, however, was not always smooth. García (1683: 409), for instance, mentions how difficult it was to bury Quipuha – the main *principal* of Hagatña who had assisted the establishment of the mission in 1668 – in the church. He also describes (1683: 408) how Jesuits burnt native idols at Pigpug and obliged its locals to re-bury their ancestor's skulls (maybe *Latte* burials of isolated skulls found at other locales result from events such as this). Much later, in 1744, German Jesuit Bonani still referred to ancestor veneration and the preservation of certain skeletal parts by Chamorro who had not yet been converted (Lévesque 1999: 585). We must, however, qualify the use of this source because it uses similar oratory as 17th century documents, and it may have been a device to contrapose Christian and non-Christian Chamorro beliefs as a means to praise the virtues of the first.

## THE EXCAVATIONS AT SAN DIONISIO: THE CHURCH AND THE CEMETERY

Our excavations at San Dionisio have been the first multi-year program of systemic archaeological excavation in the site. In 1984, however, Mardith Schuetz-Miller undertook an architectonic study that documented San Dionisio's state of preservation. She also suggested that the layout of San Dionisio materialized aspects of sacred geometry and the involvement of 19th century military engineers, who would have introduced the Filipino colonial style of building (Schuetz-Miller 2016: 11–16). Although parts of the walls have progressively collapsed over time, much of the structure still remains *in situ*. To date, we have completed three archaeological field seasons (2017–2019), and we are planning a subsequent session to analyze the excavated and processed materials that are curated at the Humåtak Community Centre.

These archaeological investigations have been undertaken to examine a variety of general and specific research questions. We wanted to attain a better understanding of the beginnings of the colonial mission system in Guam, its evolution over time, and the impacts and involvement of the local native population. In addition to exploring the cultural dynamics that prevailed at San Dionisio, we sought to examine questions regarding the technology of buildings and their related activities, especially as it relates

to the construction, reconstruction and periodic maintenance of the church. Such activities, for example, would have entailed the procurement of the various construction materials (e.g., coral headstones, lime, nails, glass or, among others, ceramic construction materials) that we have recovered during the excavations. As suggested by Anne Perez Hattori, we wanted to investigate the ways in which San Dionisio 'touched' Chamorro daily lives (2007:133). Moreover, we were interested in comparing San Dionisio to other colonial-period enclaves in terms of their architecture and material culture. More specific goals were to document and examine the archaeological sequence of the site from its construction to its abandonment; to enable an evaluation of the condition of the footings and foundations for a potential reconstruction in view of the community's interest on the church; and to confirm whether (or not) a cemetery was established in proximity to the church.

To investigate these previous and other research questions we established four areal excavation units and three test pits (figure 3). Unit 1 was located in the area of the main

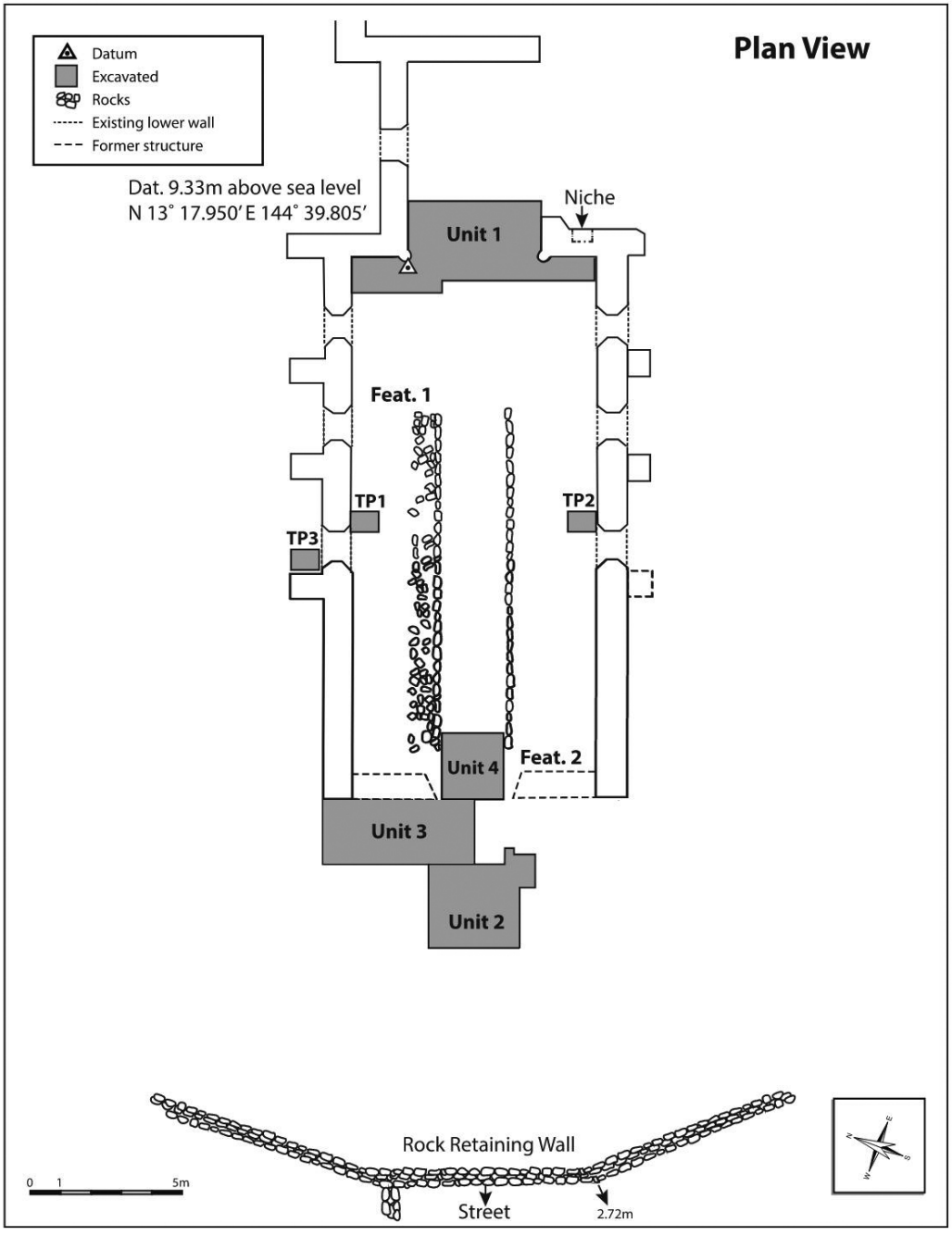


Figure 3. Location of excavation units in San Dionisio. Courtesy of Richard Schaefer and Cardno GS Inc. Unit 1, TP1 and TP2 were excavated in 2017; Unit 2, from 2017 to 2019; Unit 3, from 2018 to 2919; Unit 4, in 2019; and TP3, in 2018.

altar to document its depositional sequence and its spatial relationship to the almost completely destroyed *kombento*. The most visible and impressive feature was part of the arched structure with two carved columns that would have framed the access entry to the presbytery (figure 4). Test pits 1 and 2 were opened to document the stratigraphy of their respective areas, and their pavements were consistent with those identified in Unit 1. Unit 2 was opened to investigate a potential cemetery, which co-occurred with the remains of a pavement of large coral slabs (figure 5). Unit 3 was designed to achieve a better understanding of the church's façade and its connection with the burial area. Here, we were able to identify different construction episodes, including the installation of pavements, a bench structure and a main 3-stepped staircase, and burials that intruded below the patio's pavements (figure 5). Unit 4 was simply an extension of Unit 3 so that we could understand better the primary entrance to the building. Multiple pavements were also detected in that area and they included a well-preserved brick example, together with remains of a possible wooden gate (figure 5). Test Pit 3 was adjacent to the west wall's exterior face with the goal of documenting the foundations of the building, and we found a massive example consistent with the robust character of the building.

A total of fifteen burials corresponding to primary deposits with articulated skeletons were documented in Units 2 and 3. We also identified 15 'bone sets' that we believe exemplify other kinds of burials. In most cases, they are secondary depositions whose nature we are still investigating. Sometimes, these sets of bones are directly above one or more primary burials or in close proximity, but in other cases they are found in isolation. Interestingly, the area which is closer to the main façade seems to be reserved for newborns, infants and toddlers (figure 5). Two radiocarbon dates have confirmed the colonial chronology of the bones analysed (table 1). However, the flat calibration curve for the period under investigation precludes a more precise radiocarbon age-determination. More accurate information is offered by an inscription of bronze tacks made in a wooden coffin with what seems to indicate 1833 but could also be a 1933, which suggests that at least one of the burials belongs to the early 19th or 20th century. In either case, an in-depth osteoarchaeological study of these remains will be conducted during the 2020 season of the project.

Together with human osteoarchaeological remains we have uncovered an assemblage of materials whose study will be fundamental to evaluating our research questions. Colonial-style artefacts (e.g., ceramic building material, 'Spanish' nails, galleon's amphorae, bone buttons) as well as

Figure 4. Unit 1, with the two carved columns that would have framed the access entry to the presbytery (photograph by Enrique Moral).

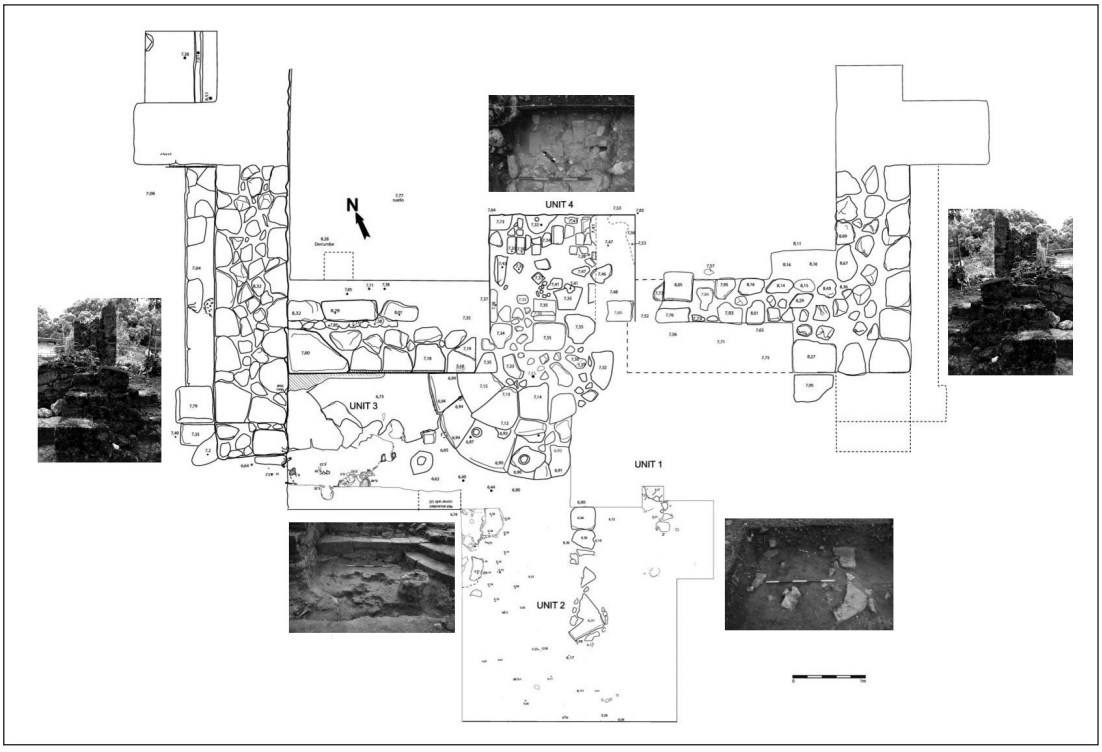


Figure 5. Units 2, 3 & 4 (Plan view made by Natalia Moragas).

Table 1. *Radiocarbon dates for San Dionisio's cemetery, U2.*

| Lab code | Provenance | Material | Radiocarbon age (BP) | $\delta^{13}C$ IRMS (‰) | $\delta^{15}N$ (‰) | C:N | %C | %N | Calibrated date (68.2%) cal AD | Calibrated date (95,4%) cal AD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beta-4999136 | SD2018, U2, B5 | Human Fibula | 140 ± 30 | –17.2 | +8.7 | 3.3 | 39.83 | 14.21 | 1679–1939 | 1669–1944 |
| Beta-512057 | SD2018, U2, CH4 | Human Femur | 170 ± 30 | –16.5 | +10.3 | 3.4 | 40.35 | 13.99 | 1668–1950 | 1659–1950 |

*Latte*-style artefacts (e.g., sling stones, shell beads, pottery) have been recovered (figure 6). Additionally, we also recovered an assemblage of recent materials in the surface layers. Of special significance are post WWII marbles – given to children by the Red Cross – and a Japanese canteen. These materials illuminate more recent activities in the vicinity of the building following its abandonment during the post-Spanish period.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Centuries of Spanish colonialism in the Marianas have resulted in both tangible and intangible legacies (see Bayman *et al.* 2020). San Dionisio is a clear example of the first, as Roman Catholicism – the predominant religion in the island – is of the second. Chamorro attitudes towards their 'Spanish' cultural heritage are ambivalent and in no way unitary even if certain dimensions of it are fundamental to their daily lives. This is the case of Roman Catholicism (Atienza & Coello 2012; and see Lane 2020 for a comparative perspective). Chamorros are well aware that they share aspects of this heritage with many other peoples around the globe, but they also contend that, on their island, it is situated in a uniquely Chamorro way (Montón in press [2021]).

In this article, we have focused on the church and cemetery of San Dionisio, and presented the preliminary results of the excavations conducted until now. These excavations are part of the research project ABERIGUA which aims to excavate at different enclaves of the colonial period to better understand the case-specific details of colonial strategies implemented during the colonization of Guam and the Marianas, and the subsequent native Chamorro responses – including processes of cultural identity, change and continuity (Montón Subías, Bayman & Moragas 2018; Montón-Subías in press [2021]). On March 6, 1521, Chamorros encountered Europeans for the first time when they visited the Magellan expedition that had anchored in their

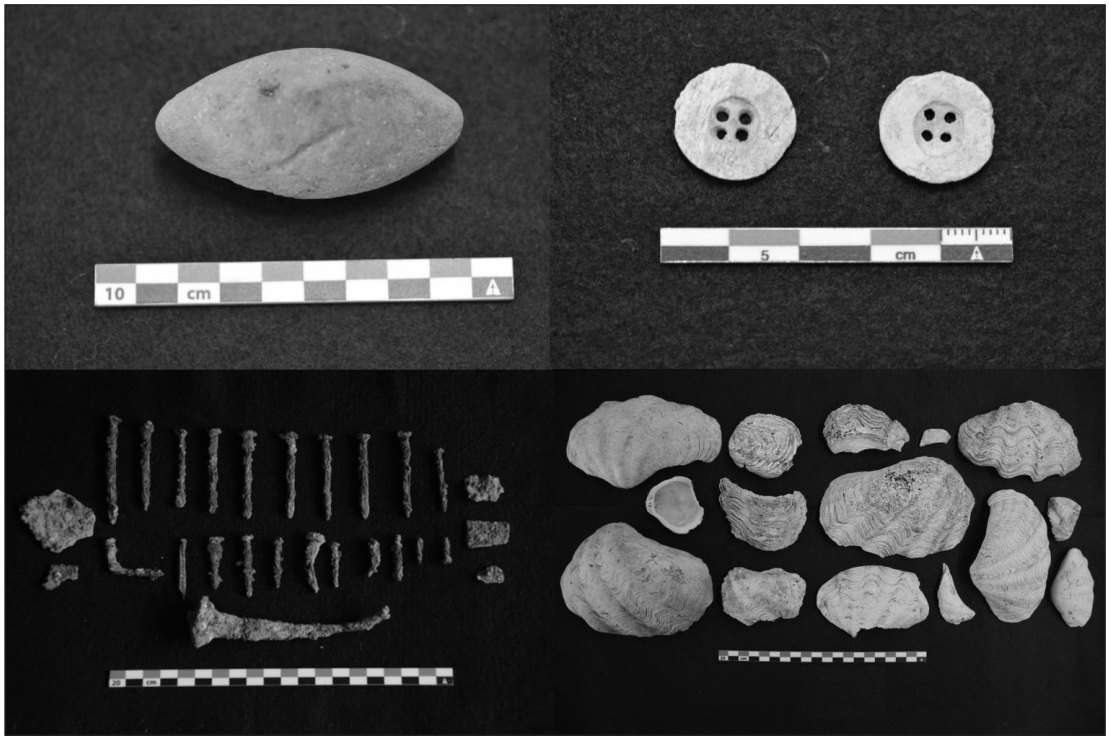


Figure 6. Archaeological materials form San Dionisio. Top left: sling-stone; top right: colonial bone buttons; bottom left: colonial iron nails; bottom right: tridacna and shell used as construction material (photographs by Enrique Moral).

waters while circumnavigating the world. However, the permanent colonization of the Marianas begun much later, in 1668, after Sanvitores was granted a Royal Cedula to establish the first missions. Since then, dramatic changes were to take place, especially after *La Reducción* was implemented. Humåtak, one of the most significant villages during pre-colonial *Latte* times, became one of the main *reducciones* in Guam. San Dionisio was its parish church and cemetery.

The history of San Dionisio enhances understanding of how missions functioned in specific locales, and it provides a comparative perspective on processes of modern missionization worldwide. San Dionisio was established within the 17th century global expansion of Jesuits missions and it witnessed their progress in the island, their expulsion and replacement by the Augustinian Recollects in 1769, and the substitution of Spain by the US as a new imperial power in Guam, which roughly coincided with its abandonment in 1902. During its protracted period of use, San Dionisio experienced flashes of native resistance – in 1684, for instance, it was destroyed by a Chamorro revolt – and it underwent a series of destructions-reconstructions and a progressive process of empowerment before the community. This sequence of empowerment is materialized in the architectonic changes that are evident in the building. While it was most likely constructed following the *Latte* tradition – Spanish documents testify the use of wood as a construction material in the first 1680 building – stone was already used in 1715 and, most possibly, it acquired increasing monumentality during its subsequent reconstructions. It may have thus become gradually differentiated from the ordinary housing of local tradition. Although we have not yet detected evidence of the early wooden church, we have documented multiple episodes of reconstruction/maintenance and pavements that predate the impressive two column structure that frames the Main Altar (figure 4).

Within the ABERIGUA project, we have initiated various lines of research to investigate how the Jesuit missions impacted the routines of Chamorro everyday life. We realize that ongoing study of the material culture that we recovered will permit us to develop a deeper understanding of the alteration of earlier cultural routines that were interrupted by the mission. While this research may confirm that many earlier traditions were altered in profound ways, we anticipate that many later practices were still rooted in local traditions, as they are to this day. For example, because we know that the Jesuits accommodated certain Chamorro customs and traditions, such as native music (Irving 2019), the same could have happened with certain aspects of local architecture. Native knowledge of coral reefs, for example, was likely instrumental in the construction of the church with coral blocks in the early 18th century. Notably, we have documented coral blocks in the church walls that could have been recycled from surrounding *Latte* buildings, as they were in other colonial buildings (Montón-Subías & Bayman 2019).

Accordingly, we seek to document the enduring persistence of particular customs in the wake of the profound changes instigated by colonialism. There is little doubt that the establishment of the cemetery must have been one of those changes. The advent of the mission and the introduction of Christianity precluded the traditional use of native dwellings (i.e., *Latte*) for housing deceased ancestors. Instead, the burial of native Chamorro together and within a demarcated space that was attached to (or in close proximity to) only the House of God was required. An additional avenue of archaeological research in Guam aims to investigate archaeological sites that remained beyond immediate colonial surveillance (Bayman *et al.* 2020; Dixon *et al.* 2020). Documenting whether or not traditional funerary rites were practiced at such locales is a priority of such research. In either case, it is apparent that some continuities in native mortuary traditions persisted also at Christian cemeteries in Chamorro villages, such as the internment of deceased individuals in extended positions on their back or on their side. In this sense, it would be interesting to document whether or not other pre-colonial practices, such as those described by Bonani, persisted through colonial times, but such studies will need to await future excavations to be conducted.

## Acknowledgements

First of all, we need to thank all the people who have been participating and collaborating in the San Dionisio excavations since 2017, including Humåtak residents and students from Guam, Hawai'i and Spain. Local archaeologists like Boyd Dixon, Darlene Moore, Judy Amesbury, Jollie Liston, Caecilia Craft, Sandy Yee, Rick Schaeffer, Justin Maxwell, or, among others, Rich Olmo have also assisted and supported us in different moments of fieldwork. Hiro Kurashina and Mike Carson generously shared their supplies and space in the Archaeology Laboratory at the Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) at the University of Guam. Omaira Brunal-Perry has always help us with her deep knowledge of the colonial history of Guam, and our sincerest thanks go also to her. Joe Quinata has been a key person in the implementation of the excavations, and has answered all questions we posed to him while writing this article. We must also thank Laura Trellisó, Verónica Peña and Gonzalo Aranda for their comments and help. Finally, our most heartfelt thanks go to the Humåtak community. They have always received us with open arms, invited to their festivals, shared with us important Chamorro traditions, and served us Chamorro delicacies while we excavated in their village. Our stay in their island village has been an unforgettable experience.

This work has been partly supported by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness under Grant HAR2016-77564-C2-1-P, and by the ABERIGUA grant (sponsored by the Palarq Foundation and the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports).

## References

Atienza, D. 2013. A Mariana Islands History Story: The Influence of the Spanish Black Legend in Mariana Islands Historiography, *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, 4 (1): 13–29.

Atienza, D. 2019. Chamoru 'Adaptive Resistance' During the Spanish Conquest and Colonization of the Marianas Islands. In: *4th Marianas History Conference*. Manguilao: Guampedia, pp. 1–15.

Atienza, D. & Coello, A. 2012 Death Rituals and Identity in Contemporary Guam (Mariana Islands). *The Journal of Pacific History*, 47 (4): 459–473.

Banchoff, T. & Casanova, J. 2016. The Jesuits and Globalization. In: T. Banchoff & J. Casanova (eds.) *The Jesuits and Globalization. Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, pp. 1–24.

Bayman, J. 2017. 'Great Powers' in the Pacific Islands: A Calibrated Comparison of Spanish and Anglo-American Colonialism, In M. Cruz Berrocal & C. Tsang (eds.) *Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Colonialism in Asia-Pacific: The Southwest Pacific and Oceanian Regions*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp. 123–45.

Bayman, J., Kurashina, H., Carson, M., Peterson, J., Doig, D., & Drengson, J. 2012. Household Economy and Gendered Labor in the 17th Century A.D. on Guam. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 37 (4): 259–69.

Bayman, J., Dixon, B., Montón-Subías, S. & Moragas, N. 2020. Colonial Surveillance, Låncho, and the Perpetuation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guam, Mariana Islands. In: C. Beaule & J. Douglass (eds.) *The Global Spanish Empire: Five Hundred Years of Place Making and Pluralism*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, pp. 222–41.

Bayman, J. & Peterson, J. 2016. Spanish Colonial History and Archaeology in the Mariana Islands: Echoes from the Western Pacific. In: S. Montón-Subías, M. Cruz Berrocal & A. Ruiz (eds.) *Archaeologies of Early Modern Spanish Colonialism*. Cham: Springer, pp. 229–52.

Bourdieu, P. 1990. Time Perspectives of the Kabyle, in J. Hassard (ed.) *The Sociology of Time*. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 219–37.

Brunal-Perry, O. 2019. San Dionisio Catholic Chruch, Umatac. https://www.guampedia.com/san-dionisio-catholic-church-umatac/ [accessed 28 February 2020].

Carson, M.T. 2012. An Overview of Latte Period Archaeology. *Micronesica*, 42 (1): 1–79.

Clement, M. 2019. Garrison Folks and Reducciones. Bifurcating the Hagåtña Narrative in 18th Century Marianas History. In: *4th Marianas History Conference 2019*. Manguilao: Guampedia, pp. 27–58.

Clossey, L. 2006. Merchants, Migrants, Missionaries, and Globalization in the Early-Modern Pacific. *Journal of Global History*, 1: 41–58.

Clossey, L. 2008. *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Mission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coello, A. 2016. *Jesuits at the Margins: Missions and Missionaries in the Mariana Islands (1668–1769)*. New York, London: Routledge.

Coello, A. 2020. La presencia de los jesuitas en las islas Marianas: un balance historiográfico (1668–1769). *e-Spania,* 35. https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/34035 [accessed 1 February 2020].

Cordy, R. 1983. Social Stratification in the Mariana Islands. *Oceania*, 53 (3): 272–76.

Craib, J.L. 1986. *Casa de los Antiguos: Social Differentiation in Protohistoric Chamorro Society*. PhD Thesis, Anthropology, University of Sidney.

Craig, R. (ed.). 1982. *The Mariana Islands. A Report by Antoine-Alfred Marché 1887*. Manguilao: Micronesian Area Research Center.

Cruz Berrocal, M. 2017. Historiographical Absences and Archaeological Consequences. The Early Modern European Journeys in the Pacific. In: M. Cruz Berrocal & C. Tsang (eds.) *Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Colonialism in Asia-Pacific. The Southwest Pacific and Oceanian Regions*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp.10–32.

de Aranda, G. 1690. *Vida y gloriosa muerte del venerable Padre Sebastián de Monroy*. Sevilla: Thomas Lopez de Haro.

de France, S., Wernke, S. & Sharpe, A. 2016. Conversion and Persistence: Analysis of Faunal Remains from an Early Spanish Colonial Doctrinal Settlement in Highland Peru. *Latin American Antiquity*, 27 (3): 300–17.

Delgadillo, Y., McGrath, T. & Plaza, F. 1979. *Spanish Forts of Guam*. Agaña: Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam.

Dixon, B., Mangieri, T., McDowell, E., Paraso, K. & Rieth, T. 2006. Prehistoric Chamorro Household Activities and Refuse Disposal Patterns on the Micronesian Island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. *Micronesica*, 39 (1): 55–71.

Dixon, B., Jalandoni, A. & Craft, C. 2017. The Archaeological Remains of Early Modern Spanish Colonialism on Guam and their Implications. In: M. Cruz Berrocal & C. Tsang (eds.) *Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Colonialism in Asia-Pacific: The Asia-Pacific Region*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp.195–218.

Dixon, B., Welch, D. & Bulgrin, L. 2020. Archaeological Roots of Traditional Land Use and Resistance to Spanish Colonial Engagement on Guam. *Asian Perspectives* 59 (1): 61–99.

Driver, M. 1983. Fray Juan Pobre de Zamora and his account of the Mariana Islands. *Journal of Pacific History*, 13 (3): 198–216.

Driver, M.G. 1988. Cross, Sword, and Silver: The Nascent Spanish Colony in the Mariana Islands. *Pacific Studies*, 11 (3): 21–51.

Driver, M.G. & Brunal-Perry, O. 1994. *Architectural Sketches of the Spanish Era Forts of Guam*. Mangilao: Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam.

Foucault, M. 1975. *Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard.

García, F. 1683. *Vida y Martirio de el Venerable Padre Diego Luis de Sanvitores*. Madrid: Imprenta de Juan García Infanzón.

Giráldez, A. 2015. *The Age of Trade: Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Haynes, D. & Wuerch, W. 1993. *Historical Survey of the Spanish Mission Sites on Guam 1669–1800*. Mangilao: Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam.

Hernando, A. 2002. *Arqueología de la identidad*. Madrid: Akal.

Hezel, F.X. 2015. *When cultures clash: revisiting the 'Spanish-Chamorro Wars'*. Saipan: The Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

De la Corte y Ruano Calderón, F.M. 1875. *Memoria descriptiva é historica de las islas Marianas*. Madrid: Imprenta nacional.

Lane, K. 2020. When the Saints Go Marching In. In: Beaule, C. & Douglass, J. (eds.) *The Global Spanish Emprire. Five Hundred Years of Place Making and Pluralism*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, pp.150–75.

Lander, E. 2000. Ciencias sociales: saberes coloniales y eurocéntricos, In E. Lander (ed.) *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, pp.9–38.

Ledesma, X. 1670. *Noticias de los Progresos de Nuestra Santa Fe en las Islas Marianas*. Biblioteca del Hospital Real de Granada/ Caja IMP-2-070 (31) Col. Montenegro.

Lévesque, R. 1996. *History of Micronesia. A Collection of Source Documents*. Vol 8. Quebec: Lévesque Publications.

Lévesque, R. 1997. *History of Micronesia. A Collection of Source Documents*. Vol 9. Quebec: Lévesque Publications.

Lévesque, R. 1998. *History of Micronesia. A Collection of Source Documents*. Vol 11. Quebec: Lévesque Publications.

Lévesque, R. 1999. *History of Micronesia. A Collection of Source Documents*. Vol 13. Quebec: Lévesque Publications.

Liebmann, M.J. & Preucel, R.W. 2007. The archaeology of the Pueblo Revolt and the formation of the modern Pueblo world. *Kiva*, 73 (2): 195–217.

Lugones, M. 2007. Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System. *Hypatia*, 22 (1): 186–209.

Loren, D. 2010. *The archaeology of clothing and bodily adornment in colonial America*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Lujan Bevaqua, M. 2020. The tramsnision of Christianity into Chamorro culture. https://www.guampedia.com/transmission-of-christianity-into-chamorro-culture/ [accessed 15 January 2020].

Lydon, J. & Ash, J. 2010. The archaeology of missions in Australasia: Introduction. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14: 1–14.

McNeill, J.R. 2005. Putting the Dead to Work. An Examination of the Use of Human Bone in Prehistoric Guam. In: G.F.M. Rakita, J. Buikstra & L.A. Beck (eds.) *Interacting with the dead: Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millenium*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp.305–15.

Middleton, A. 2008. *Te Puna – A New Zealand Mission Station*. Contributions to a Global Historical Archaeology Series. New York: Springer.

Middleton, A. 2007. Silent Voices, Hidden Lives: Archaeology, class and gender in the CMS missions, Bay of Islands, 1814–1845. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 11 (1): 1–31.

Middleton, A. 2010. Missionization in New Zealand and Australia: A Comparison. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14 (1): 170–87.

Molina, M. 2013. *To Overcome Oneself. The Jesuit Ethic and Spirit of Global Expansion, 1520–1767*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Montón-Subías, S. 2019. Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 23 (2): 404–29.

Montón-Subías, S. in press [2021]. In Small Islands Forgotten. Lessons from Chamorro Lands. In: L.M. Panich & S.L. Gonzalez (eds.) *Handbook of the Archaeology of Indigenous-Colonial Interaction in the Americas*. Routledge.

Montón-Subías, S. & Bayman, J. 2019. Arqueología del contacto cultural y colonialismo ibérico en Guam. Excavaciones en Casa Real (Refugio de la Vida Salvaje, Ritidian). *Informes y Trabajos*, 17: 243–52.

Montón-Subías, S. & Moral de Eusebio, E. in press [2021]. A Body is Worth a Thousand Words: Early Colonial Dresscapes in Guam. *Historical Archaeology*, 55 (2).

Montón-Subías, S., Bayman, J.M., & Moragas, N. 2018. Arqueología del colonialismo español en la Micronesia: Guam y las poblaciones Chamorras. In: B. Marín (ed) Repensar el colonialismo: Iberia, de colonia a potencia colonial, Madrid: *JAS Arqueología*, pp. 305–35.

Moral de Eusebio, E. 2016. Heterotopías en conflicto. Sexualidad, colonialismo y cultura material en las Islas Marianas durante el siglo XVII interdisciplinaridade. In: I. Pinto Coelho, J. Bento Torres, L. Serrão Gil & T. Ramos (eds.) *Entre ciência e cultura: Da interdisciplinaridade à transversalidade da arqueología (Actas das VIII Jornadas de Jovens em Investigação Arqueológica).* Lisboa: CHAM, IEM, pp. 229–32.

Olivé y García, F. 1887. *Islas Marianas. Ligeros apuntes acerca de las mismas*. Manila: Imprenta y Litografía de M. Pérez (hijo).

Panich, L. & Schneider, T. 2015. Expanding mission archaeology: A landscape approach to indigenous autonomy in colonial California. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 40: 48–58.

Peña, V. 2020. *Alimentación y colonialismo en las islas Marianas (Pacífico occidental). Introducciones, adaptaciones y transformaciones alimentarias durante la misión jesuita (1668–1769)*. PhD thesis, History, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Perez Hattori, A. 2006. The Politics of Preservation: Historical Memory and the Division of the Mariana Islands. *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 5 (1/2): 1–4.

Perez Hattori, A. 2007. Preservation for Our Souls: Lessons from University of Guam Students at Historic Inalahan. In: *Stonework Heritage in Micronesia*. Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation Conference, pp. 131–43.

Peterson, J.A. 2012. Latte Villages in Guam and the Marianas: Monumentality or monumenterity? *Micronesica*, 42 (1): 183–208.

Pobre de Zamora, J. 1598–1603. *Historia de la pérdida y descubrimiento del galeón 'San Felipe'*. J. Martínez Pérez edition. Ávila: Institución 'Gran Duque de Alba' de la Diputación Provincial de Ávila.

Prosperi, A. 1999. L'Europa cristiana e il mondo: alle origine dell'idea di missione. *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2: 189–220.

Quijano, A. 2000. Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1 (3): 533–80.

Rogers, R.F. & Ballendorf, D.A. 1989. Magellan's landfall in the Mariana Islands. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 24 (2): 193–208.

Russell, S. 1998. *Tiempon I Manmofo'na: Ancient Chamorro Culture and History of the Northern Mariana Islands*. Saipan: División of Historic Preservation.

Scaramelli, K. & Scaramelli, F. 2004. A brief but critical presence: The archaeology of a Jesuit mission in the Middle Orinoco (1730–1747). *Missionalia*, 32 (3): 419–44.

Schuetz-Miller, M.K. 2016. *Spanish Civil and Military Construction in Guam and the Role of Military Engineers*. Mangilao: University of Guam Press.

Segato, R.L. 2011. Género y colonialidad: en busca de claves de lectura y de un vocabulario estratégico descolonial. In: K. Bidaseca & V. Vázquez Laba (eds.) *Feminismos y poscolonialidad. Descolonizando el feminismo desde y en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Godot, pp. 17–48.

Silliman, S. 2001. Theoretical Perspectives on Labor and Colonialism: Reconsidering the California Missions. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 20: 379–407.

Souder, L. 1992. *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro women organizers of Guam*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America.

Stodder, A., Ryan, E., Hunter-Anderson, R., Douglas, M. & Ikehara-Quebral, R. 2015. Under the Latte: Osteobiography and Social Context of a Burial Assemblage at Tumon Bay, Guam. In: M. Oxenham & H. Buckley (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Bioarchaeology in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands*. New York: Routledge, pp. 527–68.

Thompson, L. 1940. The Function of Latte in the Marianas. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 49 (195): 449–65.

Tomka, S.A. 2020. Contested geographies. Place-making Strategies among the Indigenous groups of South texas and Northeastern mexico. In: Beaule, C. & Douglass, J. (eds.) *The Global Spanish Emprire. Five Hundred Years of Place Making and Pluralism*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, pp. 242–66.

Voss, B.L. 2000. Colonial Sex: Archaeology, Structured Space, and Sexuality in Alta California's Spanish-Colonial Missions. In: Schmidt, R.A. & Voss, B.L. (eds) *Archaeologies of Sexuality*. London: Routledge, pp. 35–61.