ROUTLEDGE

Manifesting Power

Gender and the interpretation of power in archaeology

edited by TRACY L. SWEELY

Manifesting Power

Manifesting Power confronts the relationship between gender and power within prehistoric and historic societies. It addresses the extent to which our preconceptions of the nature of power, and of relations between the sexes, are rooted in our own experience of Western society, and argues that both conditions and perceptions may have been quite different among peoples of the past.

This collection comprises eleven innovative, diverse chapters which draw on data from a range of periods and areas. By looking at the evidence for gender distinctions both from archaeological sites and from ethnographic observation, the contributors explore what these distinctions can reveal about power relationships more generally. They reveal that the evidence frequently does not point to the existence of hierarchical gender relationships, and explore forms of power which seem to have been exercised by prehistoric women among the Maya and Aztec, and those of the Southeastern United States, Denmark and Alaska.

Manifesting Power will be of great interest to students of archaeology, anthropology, power, and gender studies.

Tracy L.Sweely has conducted research in archaeology and anthropology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She continues to study social phenomena and currently works in cultural resources management.

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To all the powerful women, wholly in the struggle to *be* powerfully, not the least of whom is my mom

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Introduction

Tracy L.Sweely

> The ideological becoming of a human being…is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others.
>
> (Bakhtin 1981:341)

Prior to the 1980s archaeological analyses of power tended to focus on one of two types of relationships: either those between large, clearly defined social groups in a society and the dominant authority structures within which they operated, or those between two or more such authority structures. The apparent archaeological accessibility of the material culture of social institutions, such as large-scale architecture found in societies considered "complex," may explain this focus on domination. But, while this focus on larger systems is instrumental in elucidating power as it is visualized in the social conditions and in the overarching social structures within a given society, the resulting definition of power makes it difficult to view the concept outside of a hierarchical, dominance-oriented framework (Paynter and McGuire 1991). A shift in theoretical orientation regarding the analysis of power has been the result of developments in feminist, post-processual, and critical thinking (Wylie 1992; see Conkey and Spector 1984; Miller and Tilley 1984).

The purpose of this introduction is to encourage in archaeological analyses of power a theoretical shift from a focus on dominating groups to an exploration of the *relations* of power, based on the assumption that all power relations are historically developed, and except in the most extreme cases of domination, are negotiated, and that, at any given time, various individuals as well as different segments within a society are attempting to assert their own interests. Power relations are envisioned here as non-static circumstantial positions along a continuum in which individual actions affect authority structures, and public discourses influence individual opinions and actions to greater or lesser degrees.

A primary issue addressed in this collection is the *"operationalization"* of power on a small scale, and how it must first be analyzed in order to work out a theory of power. The role that social distinctions, in this case gender distinctions, play in a society is used here to explore the ways in which power relations are operationalized and characterized. As Hodder (1997:76) points out, a truly anti-

essentialist view must admit that gender distinction may not always be a useful category. This is acknowledged here, yet where gender distinctions do appear to exist, examination of their significance is a legitimate pursuit for the purpose of discovering possible power relationships that may be more or less, different or similar to those found in our own world. In a heuristic sense, gender distinctions are an isolatable example of the numerous social distinctions that a truly comprehensive study of power requires. This introduction will make explicit some theoretical positions that some of the authors may take issue with but which are neverdieless implied in the following chapters.

Power beyond large-scale structure

One problem with many traditional approaches to the analysis of power (e.g. Marxist, Weberian, Foucauldian) is that their primary focus on institutional forms creates a wide conceptual gap between ideological structures, which, for the purposes of this introduction, include social, political, and economic structures, and the actual individuals who interact within them. Even Foucault, who defines power as ubiquitous in all social relations, focusses on how subjects are produced by cultural institutions, rather than the other way around. There is also an implicit assumption within traditional approaches that an apparently dominating segment of a given society consciously authors the ideological conditions and institutions within which members operate (Strathern 1988; see also Sweely 1998) and, following from this, controls the manner and direction of culture change (Sweely 1994, 1998). In associating a body of cultural traditions with the legitimation of the interests of an apparently dominating segment of a society, we may be attributing "too much power" to one segment of society (see Spencer-Wood, Chapter 9 in this volume).

Making an explicit distinction between "dominant ideologies" and the interests of an apparently dominant segment of a society may be useful here. Dominant ideologies can be seen as the historically formulated set of guidelines for behavior under which *a majority* of individual members of a society operate. Individual members of societies share historically developed beliefs regarding patterns of etiquette, the appropriate age for various life-cycle changes, and the extent of personal and social responsibility, to name a few examples. These ideologies shared by individuals or groups who would claim membership to a given society may perhaps, but not necessarily, be historically bound up with the interests of an apparently dominant group.

An example from the modern world where dominant ideology *is* historically bound up with the interests of the apparently dominant sector, is the ideology that there are insufficient resources and that personal gain must come at a cost to another. This "scarcity" ideology results in individual and collective behaviors at every level of society that maintain and exacerbate chronic and endemic poverty for large segments of the population.

A brief glance around the globe will demonstrate that intense hierarchical social relations can arise in the historical development of ideologies. This results

in the consolidation of greater opportunities for exclusive social groups to exercise power, in which case shared ideological conditions provide more opportunities for some than for others within specific contexts. But this is not, obviously and not surprisingly, indicative of an intrinsic and inevitable linear social evolution for humanity towards the consolidation of power by some. The rise and (often violent) fall of numerous "civilizations," all of which appear to have hierarchically organized social relationships, have been historically documented. Realizing the historical contingency of ideologies helps to expand the definition of power beyond static hierarchy. It provides us with a window of opportunity to envision societies without hierarchical power relations and strengthens the idea that power relations are not static but change over time. In fact, as I have asserted elsewhere (Sweely 1998), it is the interplay between *contesting* interests rather than the directives of an apparently dominating faction within a society, that is the driving force of culture change (see also Bahktin 1981; Strauss and Quinn 1994).

Returning to the disjunction between interpretations of ideological structures and the individuals that operate within them, a focus on large-scale structural relationships to formulate and analyze power is also limited in that such a focus does not attempt to examine power relations among individuals. This lack appears to detract from any kind of thorough understanding about "how power works." For the purposes of this book, power is viewed, not as Marxist oppositional dialectic, or as Foucauldian discourse, but more like what Bakhtin (1981) in his analysis of language terms a *dialogic* interaction.

Bakhtin's view of language is not unlike how Marx, Foucault, and others perceive society; they all share an overarching concern with the way larger social structures and institutions affect individual behavior. Marx, Foucault, Durkheim, Weber, and others, all argue that institutional/political structures shape individuals and keep them in line (internally or externally as Foucault argues). However, according to Bakhtin it is the *centrifugal* forces of variation and improvisation within any specific interaction that are far more powerful and significant than the basic rules that lend them their basic shape.

In his focus on language as a historical process, Bakhtin sees a reversed social order: the centrifugal force of the ever-changing contextual play of language as it is carried out among people at any given time is greater than the *centripetal* authoritative structures that create the illusion of a cohesive and unchanging whole. In other words, overlying social structures are secondary to individuals. Power as a generative source is produced not through audioritative discourse, which, as it has been defined, is unquestionable and therefore static, but in the interactions among individuals in which its meanings and terms are continually created:

> Internally persuasive discourse—as opposed to one that is externally authoritative—is as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with "one's own word." In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and

> independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. *It is not so much interpreted by us as it is farther, that is, freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts.*
>
> (Bakhtin 1981:346; emphasis added)

The centrifugal force results in the intersection, or "coexistence," of ideological contradictions in what Bakhtin terms *heteroglossia:*

> Languages do not *exclude* each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways.
>
> (Bakhtin 1981:291; emphasis in original)

His premise is simply that language and, by extension, culture (or ideological structures and ideological conditions, and a specific set of power relations, for the purposes of this book) are what happen when particular people talk to one another at a particular time and in a particular context. The character of the power relations between these people is entirely dependent upon the particularities of the context, and the extent to which they agree to share a set of ideological conditions. Cohen (1994) similarly demonstrates how ideological structures (centripetal forces) are undermined by individual consciousness (centrifugal forces):

> Religious, nationalist or political doctrine may give people ways in which to think about themselves, forms within which to locate themselves. But there is a vital distinction to be made between these *forms* of thought and expression, and their content…. However compelling its structural and theoretical logic may be, the organization does not produce *me:* it is produced through *me*…. For all its institutional power, its capacity to generate and impose social forms, society is constituted by self consciousness and substantiated by the meanings which conscious selves impute to those received forms.
>
> (Cohen 1994:146; emphases in original)

Cohen continues demonstrating how ideological structures can be simultaneously maintained through disparate individual meanings:

> The mere existence of a plausible structure for the expression of a grievance or for the mobilisation of a mass following might be sufficient to persuade people *with very different kinds of motivation* to gather behind its banner. In other words the explanation of *collective* behaviour is to be sought among its individual participants.
>
> (Cohen 1994:148; emphases in original)

Cohen gives many examples of individuals consciously or inadvertently maintaining social organizations by participating in and using organizations for their own purposes. Spencer-Wood (1994) in her account of nineteenth-century

domestic reform also gives representative examples of working-class and minority individuals using reform organizations to their own ends rather than in complete agreement with reform organizers. Thus in the face of ideological contradiction the tendency to aggregation remains which can be thoroughly examined only through attention to individual intentions (cf. Cohen 1994).

There are some important implications of this reformulation of the relationship between social structures and conditions and the people who create them, maintain them and operate within them. Most obvious from the above discussion is that language, culture, and power relations, ideological structures and conditions exist in concrete practice, through communication, reinterpretation, and action. Perhaps less obvious is that as a result of *heteroglossia,* i.e. the centrifugal forces of the "contextual play", language, culture, power relations, ideological structures and conditions change over time. But a third implication is much less apparent and far more important to the theorization of gender distinctions. This theory demonstrates that analytical distinctions between the processes of socialization traditionally thought to occur exclusively in *public* or in *private* contexts completely lose meaning.

Public and private revisited

Power exists in the concrete practice of individual interaction everywhere and at all times. Therefore, exclusive public and exclusive private contexts, as some researchers have already extensively problematized, are unrealistic categories in the analysis of the "processes" of socialization and in the "processes" of societal development. Many contributions in this volume assert that women held both public and domestic roles. The fundamental assertion that both men and women had both domestic and public roles can be extended by reexamining what is meant by the terms "public sphere" and "private sphere."

The "public sphere" has traditionally been thought of as the location of activities that serve to control or influence people (Nelson 1997:132). I would clarify this traditional definition of the public realm, which has been assumed to be the "realm of men," as the location for the expression of public discourses which are thought to constitute social ideologies. For example, public puberty initiation ceremonies as well as public political displays have been interpreted by researchers as primary contexts for the formation of ideologies. Current theorists interpret these public ceremonies as loci for the *affirmation* of ideological principles, likely by social groups attempting to consolidate power in the face of contestations, rather than the locus for their actual formation. In the model proposed here, the formation of ideologies occurs in historically developing instances of interaction among improvising individuals, in any given setting, everywhere, and at all times.

The "private sphere" has traditionally been thought not only to be the "realm of women" but also to be imposed upon by public discourses, though not to be constitutive of them. For example, the domestic sphere is rarely, if ever, considered in analyses of the important elements that characterize the "social," "economic," or "political" world of a given society. But the domestic sphere is a principal

location for individual interactions in which the transmittal, as well as the transmutation, of ideology occurs.

Processes of socialization thought to occur in "public" and "private" realms are less distinct and exclusive, as well as more interdependent, because of the existence of individual consciousness, which experiences both institutionalized ideologies and personal interpretations of those ideologies in *both* settings (cf. Cohen 1994). The "private" is not "not public": experiences of institutional ideologies happen in private settings too, by both men and women, hence, "the private is political." Conversely, public discourses within public settings are experienced privately by both men and women, when they are interpreted or reinterpreted in light of individual goals. The analysis of the use of space by men and women within household contexts in my contribution in this volume and elsewhere (Sweely 1998), demonstrates, through examination of opportunities for interaction, what kinds of power relations may have been possible within settings traditionally distinguished as private and what possible significance these relations have for power relations in the wider society.

The archaeological visibility of power

> Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems.
>
> (Bakhtin 1981:288)

The purpose of extending Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* to power relations has been to demonstrate how the character of a specific set of power relations is the outcome of the "multitude" of perceived ideological conditions, and contradictions inherent in an interaction. Contradictions are embodied in individual interpretations of ideological conditions and in terms of the tendency to aggregation (cf. Cohen 1994) may reveal themselves in the form of social distinctions. Social distinctions are intimately bound up with power relations (Moore 1994:91; Stolke 1993:28), whether they exist as a result of historical ideological development or arise as a response to existing ideological conditions. The existence of social distinctions is used in this volume as a device for making social behavior and relations visible archaeologically since such distinctions very often have material expressions. Beyond this, social distinctions are used to examine the power relations that they indicate.

Bakhtin's discussion of language demonstrates how communication is operationalized within interactions via language and can be seen as analogous to the relationship between social distinctions and power relations. Language is to communication as social distinction is to power; i.e. language and social distinctions are elements of the operation, and communication and power relations are the operations. Just as the arbitrarily defined gesture or facial expression can facilitate communication, the arbitrarily defined distinctions of age or skin color can facilitate the specific character of power relations.

These social distinctions can be found along the lines of age, gender, kinship, marital status, procreative status, physical attributes, wealth, knowledge and likely along many lines we have not yet fathomed. Social distinctions can and do organize behaviors into differing sets of relationships, that in the face of individual interpretations of ideology provide guidelines regarding under what conditions one is permitted to display assertions of power. Social distinctions, as well as social ideologies, are maintained or changed through the continual negotiation and reinterpretation of the significance of specific "differences" (Moore 1994:83, 104–105). In effect, people differentiate themselves in order to create relationships in which power is differentially manifested (cf. Stolke 1993). The multitude of social distinctions, overlap in the same way as Bakhtin's "languages do not exclude each other" (see quote on p. 4), creating further ideological contradictions.

Social distinction, negotiating meaning and the analysis of archaeological data

> Behaviour, sets of activities conducted in structured space, can be used to "read against the grain" of dominant discourses, to expose the arbitrary nature of their construction. If one cannot resist by placing oneself outside dominant structures and discourses, one can none the less displace oneself within them.
>
> (Moore 1994:82)

This focus on social distinction to analyze power is similar to the traditional focus on social groups within societies, but because of the concept of ideological contradiction the employment of the method is very different. Traditional approaches to power focus on the relationship between two specific, "analytically reduced" or essentialized subgroups, for example, women and men, or between one subgroup and the larger society, for example, between the working class and the state. Because of the ideological contradictions resulting from individual interpretations, social distinction and any associated social grouping are not seen here as conducive to analytical reduction for the purpose of being able to visualize how ideological changes occur.

Here there has been a tendency to emphasize the power of individuals to affect ideological conditions, but this can be seen on a continuum, depending on "how much" power has been historically surrendered by individuals to larger social institutions. In this volume, Kent's and Trocolli's continua (Chapters 2 and 3), Levy's discussion of Wolf's modes of power (Chapter 4), and the theory outlined in this introduction, all demonstrate that an inverse relationship exists between increasing "social stratification," with its commonly accompanying institutionalized forms of delimiting individual behavior, and the power of individuals to direct their own lives. The relationship is not mysterious or difficult to grasp. What is difficult, at least for Westerners, is that "social complexity," i.e. the existence of social differentiation, social groups, social institutions, and ideological structures, need not always indicate stratification, (Levy, Chapter 4);

it need not be seen as requiring the relinquishment of the power of individuals to direct their own lives.

Indeed, Cohen's (1994) primary thesis is that social groupings or organizations, and by extension "societies," are more resilient if members are allowed greater latitude to further their own interests within the group ideology (see also Moore 1994). It is in visualizing the *latitude* with which individuals might negotiate their own interests through a set of ideological conditions that the analytical reduction of social groups can be avoided. For archaeological analysis we must envision this latitude in order to see power relations at work.

Joyce's (1993) comparative and diachronic analysis of the development of gendered human representations involved in productive activities in three pre-Hispanic southern Central American societies provides a good illustration of the archaeological analysis of the relationship between the lattitude for individual behavior, historical development, and social change. She found that, through time and parallel to changing social stratification, gendered human representations changed in different ways among the three societies (ibid.). She concludes that the manufacture of gendered human representations was a symbolic expression of assertions and claims to power by *individual members* of these societies (ibid.) In addition, it appears that the assertions embodied in the multitudes of human representations had an effect on the character of changing social stratification, as those individuals who were attempting to consolidate opportunities for exerting their interests met with "ideological contradictions." In at least one case, Joyce points out that the existence of the gendered human representations in such large quantities belies the idea that the interests of the apparent dominant segments, indicated by centralized political control were paramount (ibid.). This analysis demonstrates that the effectiveness of these strategies likely depended on the degree to which individuals had historically relinquished assertions of power to larger social institutions embodied in the different types of centralized political control among the three groups compared.

Hence, in spite of an apparently overwhelming disjunction, or "ideological contradiction," resulting from individual interpretations of ideology, we can justifiably employ interpretations of ideological social distinctions to examine power at the level of individual interaction. In order to be able to fully and effectively explore "power," the full range of meanings of social distinctions must be addressed, not an easily or quickly achieved, (or, in many cases, even possible) pursuit. But for the immediate purposes of this book it is in visualizing the *latitude* with which individuals might negotiate or operate within heuristically formulated sets of ideological conditions and institutions of social distinction that this analytical dilemma is escaped in many of the chapters.

The chapters

Not all of the chapters in this volume directly confront the task of extrapolating information about power relations from a specific set of material remains. Many of the chapters focus on ethnographic and ethnohistorical data in order either to

explore the operationalization of power theoretically or to illuminate possible ideological power structures within specific societies for the purpose of assessing how power might be negotiated within them. Thus this volume has been subdivided into four parts, with the first three parts clarifying these three approaches to examining power archaeologically. Many of the chapters exemplify more than one of these approaches and could have been placed in each part in any number of ways. The chapters were assigned to a part based on the approach that they best exemplified. The fourth part of the book includes three discussions, by prominent researchers, of the preceding chapters, and provides further diversity of the theorization of the relationship between gender and power and of the archaeological examination of power.

The first part of the book consists of chapters by Kehoe, Kent, Trocolli, and Levy. In their contributions to this volume, they primarily explore the theoretical relationships that are possible between the social distinction of gender and power.

Exemplifying a non-traditional view, while Kehoe does focus on social institutions of power, she does so in a manner that elucidates one of the problems of simply focussing on what archaeological researchers have assumed to be evidence of institutional power, i.e. conspicuous display. In terms of analyzing ideological structures and conditions, she shows that assumptions regarding how power manifests materially in conspicuous ways may not always be appropriate and she demonstrates the implications this has for gender relations. She demonstrates an association of conspicuous display with powerlessness in two different types of situations: conspicuous display resulting from "wanna-be" assertions of power and "ornamental" display not associated with the one on display, but rather reflecting the power of another. Real power, she shows, may be expressed in much more subtle ways. In her analysis, Kehoe maintains a definition of power as dominance, stating that "power is the capacity to impose one's will upon another."

Kent also focusses on a definition of power that is inherently asymmetrical, defining power as domination. She proposes a continuum of the covariation between gender hierarchy and egalitarianism, which shows that she is not exclusively concerned with power structures and institutions of authority. Kent's continuum, like many of the models proposed in this volume, is meant to be used as a heuristic device for exploring how, and ultimately why, gender hierarchy varies cross-culturally. Her continuum shows that although there are exceptions, the least complex and most egalitarian societies are at one end of the spectrum and exhibit the least gender hierarchy, and the most complex and least egalitarian are at the opposite end with the greatest gender hierarchy. The relationship she finds is an interesting one that begs further examination. Kent is most concerned about the necessity of a comparative examination of gender and power relations.

Trocolli also envisions power along a continuum, but in a very different way than Kent. Trocolli's continuum is based on a definition of power that is inherently circumstantial. Power to Trocolli can be both self-determination and the ability to get things done at one end of the continuum, and domination and the ability to control others through sanctioned consent at the other end. Her continuum consists

of relative and circumstantial positions, in which individuals can have power in some areas and none in other areas, depending on circumstances. No one member, or no one segment, of a society inhabits a static position in terms of the amount of power they can exercise. The power they may exercise could be either the self-determining or the dominating type, again depending on circumstances.

In drawing upon Wolf's (1990) modes of power, Levy recognizes that power is multi-scaler, that simultaneous existence of different levels of power can, and should, be distinguished. This coincides, however implicitly, with both Kent's and Trocolli's continua, all of which essentially deal with variability between greater power associated with an individual's self-determination at one end, and greater power associated with overarching structures for limiting individual behavior at the opposite end. Like Trocolli, Levy also supports a definition of power that is circumstantial, which both researchers describe (cf. Crumley 1987) as hierarchical. In addition, Levy demonstrates in the societies she is examining, especially the most temporally remote society illustrated in this volume, Bronze Age Denmark, that the employment of gender distinctions in analysis is not simply an example of a taken-for-granted Western assumption of the existence of such distinctions. As she states, "if we assume that the artists knew what they were doing–and, in fact, we do assume this–then, these differences mean something" (Levy, p. 70 in this volume).

The contributions in the second part of this book are by Tate and McCafferty and McCafferty. These chapters demonstrate the analysis of ethnographic and ethnohistoric data to illuminate ideological structures and conditions. These authors also offer suggestions about how power might have been negotiated by members of the societies they examine within these ideological conditions. Tate and McCafferty and McCafferty illustrate attempts to illuminate possible emic understandings of the overarching social institutions and structures of Maya and Aztec societies, moving beyond the imposition of traditionally androcentric Western meanings.

Through an extensive and thorough analysis of human representations, ethnohistorical and ethnographic data, Tate begins by proposing a reformulation of Maya gender identity. Tate admits that her reformulation is a generalization and hence is "philosophically outmoded in the post-structuralist era." But she is correct in asserting that we must begin to take the enormous body of evidence that illuminates the ideologies of these societies seriously if we are to transcend Western stereotypes of the meaning and valuation of gender distinctions. Within her reconstruction of Maya gender identity, Tate demonstrates possible loci where Maya women in general and specific women, Lady Xoc for example, could achieve status and exercise power. In addition to her reformulation of gender identity being in many ways strikingly different from Western conceptualizations of gender distinction, it is her perspective on the valuation of female productive activities that enables her to transcend Western stereotypes. While Western stereotypes tend to place females on "pedestals," they also routinely devalue female labor and activities, something that may not have occurred in past societies.

McCafferty and McCafferty also reinterpret ideological institutions of gender identity within Aztec society in an attempt to transcend Western androcentrism

and show how social groups, in this case Aztec women, might negotiate power within them. They go a step further though, demonstrating the inconsistency (read "ideological contradiction") with which ideologies may have been used by different social groups (and presumably by different individuals) drawing upon the same ideological elements for different purposes. This inconsistency, the McCaffertys show, can even be seen in the manner in which the colonizing missionaries used the institution of Xochiquetzal, attempting to subvert aspects of the goddess which contradicted Western notions of morality.

Distinguishing gender-associated items or gender in iconographie representations does not simply proclaim the existence of an essentialized social subgroup. The presence of such artifacts also proclaims the existence of individuals who, prior to the effects of site formation processes, may have been consciously or subconsciously providing commentary, in the action of using or discarding an item in a specific location, or drawing a visible representation on a wall or vase. This commentary may be bound up with personal interpretations either supportive of, or in conflict with, the ideological conditions in which the individual lived. Woodhouse-Beyer's and my own contribution in this volume both demonstrate attempts to view archaeological data in terms of their potential for illuminating individual latitude for negotiation within ideological conditions. The chapters in the third part by Woodhouse-Beyer and myself rely more on the use of specific archaeological data sets than any of the previous chapters, in order to visualize the character of some contexts within which power relations may have operated and they also explore how power may have been negotiated.

Setting her exploration against the backdrop and overarching structure asserted under colonization, Woodhouse-Beyer demonstrates the possibility of an interplay between the powers of the "dominant" group of colonizers and that of the native Alutiiq women of the Kodiak Archipelago, who may have found powerful positions in terms of native ideology through intimate association with colonizers. Woodhouse-Beyer maintains that acculturation is not unidirectional and, transcending Western androcentric bias in ethnographic accounts, while maintaining that native women did not have power in all contexts, she discusses the contexts in which native women did have power. For example, native women likely had many opportunities to define space, or to pursue their goals, during the lengthy seasons that men were away hunting, and perhaps also, when they returned. In addition, it sounds as if Alutiiq women may have been able to choose who they would marry, giving them the power to determine a large part of the character of their adult lives. Woodhouse-Beyer uses the conclusions she reaches from the ethnohistoric data to analyze archaeological data from a village active during the contact period.

Finally, in my chapter power is defined as the capacity of individuals to pursue goals. My definition is closely aligned with Levy's, in that I see individual capability as the root of all other modes of power. This chapter emphasizes the spatial analysis of gender-associated artifacts at an exceptionally well-preserved archaeological site, analyzing how the excavated spaces might have been used prehistorically by men and women. This analysis heuristically draws upon a

construction of gender roles based on Classic Period Maya human representations in an attempt to illuminate possible relationships among gendered individuals through the use of space in productive activities (whether they be economic or spiritual), and the resulting opportunities for interaction and the communication of knowledge. The purpose of this exercise has been to envision the resulting possibilities for opportunities to exercise power. An example of an apparently unwealthy shaman residing in one of the structures found at the site also demonstrates the circumstantial nature of power, i.e. how individuals can have power in some areas, in this case spiritual, but not in others, in this case economic. Like Kehoe's conspicuous display, this case warns researchers not to envision the indicators of power as exclusively embodied in such things as material wealth.

While the location of a spindle whorl in a household compound or the existence of a representation of a gendered figure may not tell us everything we want to know about the thoughts that the spinner or sculptor possessed regarding the ideological conditions they found themselves in, these artifacts should not be divested from the *very real* individual people that made or used them, and the ideological conditions they found themselves living in. The questions that this volume asks, in light of the theoretical reorientation provided above, are first, how can material remains be viewed in order to explore the character of the ideological conditions that members of a society operated within? Second, in what ways could members of a society negotiate within these ideological conditions? Ultimately, what questions must be asked of the material data that would elucidate answers to these questions? This volume is an exploration of the different ways that researchers have attempted to answer these question using the social distinction of gender.

Discussions: diversity and the theorization of power

> Post-modernist anthropologists call attention to the constructed nature of cultural accounts, and they seek to develop new forms of writing, such as those predicated on dialogue, intertextuality and heteroglossia to unmask and displace the unitary authority of the anthropologist as author.
>
> (Moore 1994:107)

While the authors do share theoretical perspectives rooted in post-processual, critical and feminist thinking, they were not held accountable to the theory outlined above nor to the specific theoretical orientations of each other. As a result they define power in different ways and demonstrate a wide range of opinions on the specificities of the relationship between power and the social distinction of gender. Hence, the various theoretical positions taken throughout the volume are not shared by all of the contributors and in some cases directly contradict one another. This is viewed here as an asset since the greatest diversity in perspectives on the relationship between gender and power would more thoroughly capture the complexity of the relationship and further its theorization.

This introduction has adopted and developed a specific theoretical direction that is reflected, at times implicitly, in a majority of the following chapters. Such an in-depth analysis of theory in this introductory context of necessity lacks the ability to examine and correlate the implications of the other important perspectives reflected in the following chapters. For this reason discussions by Spencer-Wood, Nelson and Pyburn were included in the final part of the book in order to tease out and draw together the epistemological implications of this collective effort. These commentaries make explicit the diversity of opinion found throughout the chapters and reveal important implications that the various perspectives have. These commentaries not only provide strong concluding remarks but also present important points of departure from the ongoing debates that have already been extended by the chapters in this volume.

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Part I

Exploring power through gender

1 A resort to subtler contrivances

Alice B.Kehoe

Introduction

Power is the capacity to impose one's will upon another. Power is…imposing? We tend to assume that imposing appearance indicates power. Peacocks look imposing (and peahens not). Male birds of paradise display imposing plumes, strut aggressively, and repel invaders of their territories. The highly charged flamboyance of these cocks is not a simple sign of power, for as Darwin proposed, it is the smaller, plain females who have the power to accept or reject the gorgeous suitors. A century after Darwin's startling insistence that conspicuous display may be associated with begging for favor, numerous field studies shifted the focus of selection from the cocks *per se* to the territories they maintained (Mayr 1972:95) and attributed hens' drabness to their need for concealing nests (Selander 1972:205). That being said, it remains, as Darwin noticed, the imposing cocks have less power to effect their will than do the brown hens.

Darwin (1981 [1871]) wanted to draw conclusions that might illuminate "The Descent of Man." His discussion of display dimorphism in birds makes a cautionary tale for archaeologists: conspicuous display associated with one sex does not automatically translate into power enjoyed by that sex. A generation after Darwin, American economist Thorstein Veblen (1931 [1899]) explored the associations between display and power, pointing out "subtler contrivances" through which the truly powerful signal their superiority over the vulgarly ostentatious.

Discerning gender through the archaeological record is challenging. Discerning loci of power is challenging. Discerning the intersections of gender, status, and power through archaeological data demands a sophistication far exceeding the usual practices of identifying ceramic types or even cut marks on bones. "Gender," "status," and "power" are relative rather than physical attributes; they cannot be simply "found" in our data (Cannon 1991:145; Fradenburg 1992). Duality need not reflect male/female distinctions (e.g. Eisner 1991). Gender may not be a decisive criterion in the ascription of rank and power (Nelson 1993; Weiner 1989:60). Common associations of occupation with gender meet too many exceptions readily adduced (Bruhns 1991). Gender is often subsumed under

status and power classes, as Jack Goody (1982:101) noted when he compared Europe and the Mediterranean, where men cooked for the great courts, to Africa where a privilege of royal wives was to cook for kings.

As naturalists worked through their compiled observations, their confounding instances and anomalies, they came to realize that the social field–territories–rather than the individual actors held the elusive ordering principle. Joan Wallach Scott recommends:

> we must critically analyze the categories we most often take for granted: history, women, men, equality, difference…. Rather than assume to know the meaning of these terms, we need instead to examine them as they have been developed and used in specific historical contexts as the products of culture, politics, and time…concepts through which a certain vision of social life is realized.
>
> (Scott 1989:112–113)

Put somewhat differently, social life is a dialectic of being and becoming with signifiers functioning only through their unstated negations, every thesis implicitly its antithesis (Murphy 1971). In this chapter, I will use history, ethnography, and archaeology to illustrate conspicuous display associated with powerlessness, and also the contrary case of plainness signifying transcending power.

"Subtler contrivances" are designedly rarefied. Furthermore, the radical attenuation of cultural phenomena evidenced through archaeological preservation will render "subtler contrivances" particularly elusive. My purpose is not to hand out an algorithm for tapping in attributes, clicking out POWER, but to request thoughtful weighing of alternative explanations, freighted with sobering range of actual situations. Let archaeologists sing with Little Buttercup, "Things are seldom what they seem. Skim milk masquerades as cream.…Jackdaws strut with peacocks' feathers."

Conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption

A century ago, Thorstein Veblen propounded his pioneering, radical analysis of the wealthy, *Theory of the Leisure Class.* He noted that:

> By virtue of its descent from a patriarchal past, our social system makes it the woman's function in an especial degree to put in evidence her household's ability to pay…. The women being not their own masters, obvious expenditure and leisure on their part would redound to the credit of their master.
>
> (Veblen 1931 [1899]:180)

Norbert Elias makes the same point when he emphasizes the servitude demanded of his courtiers by Louis XIV (Elias 1983:197). Extraordinary display may mark an individual, as Veblen says, to be no more than the chief ornament of another, more powerful, person. In the most extreme example, the beautiful and expensively dressed young man enjoying a year of utmost luxury impersonating Tezcatlipoca

in Aztec Tenochtitlán was the most powerless man, doomed to be sacrificed at the end of the year. Ostentatious display and power are not isomorphic, and that possible disjunction constitutes a challenge for archaeological interpretation.

I think we should make a distinction between "theaters of power" and signs of power employed to signify to a discriminating elite.[1] Veblen expounded this distinction:

> Conspicuous waste and conspicuous leisure are reputable because they are evidence of pecuniary strength; pecuniary strength is reputable or honorific because, in the last analysis, it argues success and superior force.
>
> (Veblen 1931 [1899]:181)

An example of Veblen's thesis is provided by Simon Schama: "Baron Haussmann's architectural reordering of the city [Paris] provided exactly the theatres of spectacle–the Opéra, Longchamp, the *grands boulevards*–in which the parade of expensively dressed women could serve as an advertisement of moneyed power" (Schama 1995:103).

Theaters of power must be awesome. They are generally on a superhuman scale, that is, stretching beyond what the human eye easily takes in. The palace and gardens of Versailles, St. Peter's in Rome, the pyramidal mounds and plazas of indigenous American cities, the temple precincts of Egypt, the courts within courts of Beijing's Forbidden City, L'Enfant's plan for Washington, all overwhelm the ordinary person. Lords of these realms are enhanced by retinues, entourages magnifying the presence of the powerful. The lowly are kept back by armed guards; they may prostrate themselves. Grandeur informs even the stupidest onlookers that they have no recourse but obedience.

If social life were no more than command and response, symbols of power might be straightforward. Veblen reminds us that once

> a sufficiently large wealthy class has developed, who have the leisure for acquiring skill in interpreting the subtler signs of expenditure…there arises a tendency to exclude the baser elements of the population…even as spectators whose applause or mortification should be sought. The result of all this is…a resort to subtler contrivances…which require a progressively nicer discrimination in the beholder.
>
> (Veblen 1931 [1899]:187)

In 1616, such discrimination was spelled out:

> [One ought] not account him a gentleman, which is onely descended of noble bloud, in power great, in iewels rich, in furniture fine, in attendants brave: for all these are found in Merchants and Iewes. But to be a perfect Gentleman, is to bee measured in his words, liberall in giuing, sober in diet, honest in liuing, tender in pardoning, and valiant in fighting.
>
> (quoted in Shapin 1994:62)

Such finesse of self-control, supple rather than rigid, continued to define the ideal aristocrat into the nineteenth century (Loeb 1994:160).

Pierre Bourdieu observes,

> Those who are held to be distinguished have the privilege of not worrying about their distinction…. Where the petit bourgeois or nouveau riche "overdoes it", betraying his own insecurity, bourgeois discretion signals its presence by a sort of ostentatious discretion, sobriety and understatement, a refusal of everything which is "showy", "flashy" and pretentious, and which devalues itself by the very intention of distinction.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984:949)

A contrast between ostentatious pecuniary power and real high class was presented by Mike Parker Pearson reporting in 1980 on his examination of funeral monuments in Cambridge (England) City cemetery. Among the most impressive monuments in the City cemetery are those for gypsies and carnival workers. Parker Pearson says:

> Showmen and their families favoured the distinctive and expensive polished red granite monuments standing up to two meters high in cross or block form. The gypsies commemorate their dead with large white marble angels which also stand to two meters or more. These groups hold the most expensive funerals in Cambridge with funeral director's fees and monument costs sometimes amounting to over £3000 [compared to under £500 for other Cambridgensians].
>
> (Parker Pearson 1982:104)

In his original 1980 conference presentation, Parker Pearson had noted, "Upper middle class burials are generally in…local churchyards rather than in the City cemetery" and had more modest markers. In this case, itinerant outcasts asserted their pecuniary power by erecting large showy monuments in the public cemetery, while the truly powerful upper class removed themselves from "the baser elements of the population" to signify to the nicer discrimination of their peers.

Of greater antiquity, a somewhat parallel phenomenon was the contrast between the relatively small, carved olive-wood cult statue of Athena in the north temple on the Athenian Acropolis, and Pheidias' magnificent gold and ivory sculpture of the goddess dominating the Parthenon. The older, rather plain wooden image was dressed in an actual woolen peplos and golden ornaments. She had a shield and an owl, but the viewer particularly noticed the libation bowl in her hand (Herington 1955:23). Pheidias' Athena seems to have been one of at least four such gold and ivory works of art, one of Zeus at Olympia, one of Hera (by Polykleitos) in the Argive, one of Dionysos (by Alkamenes) near the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis, and the Athena. The Hera, like the Athena, was in addition to an older wooden cult statue. Ridgway (1981:10) suggests that the

expensive later fifth-century images by well-known masters were "propagandistic," trumpeting the wealth and glory of their cities through advertising these deities' patronage. The spiritually numinous older wooden figures of the goddesses received the devotions of the privileged cognoscenti, becoming subtle contrivances marking status.

There are two counterintuitive points here. First, Pallas Athena, the armed Virgin Warrior more narrowly emblematic of the Athenian city-state, occupied the showier Parthenon temple while the spiritually potent statue apparently was lodged in a smaller temple. Second, the Athenians symbolized the armed power of their vaunted state–victor in the Persian Wars–by a woman. (The myth of her origin explains that she issued from pure male power, unalloyed by any mother: Onians 1951:1111.) Classical Greek art assigned a perverse meaning to clothing: nakedness signified power (Ridgway 1981:13). Male figures aligned with the custom of soldiers and male athletes competing nude. Women properly should be clothed; women were subordinate to men of their social class. Sculptors were challenged by the contradiction of goddess patronesses of Athenian military power. In the Nike (winged Victory) by Paionios, the female figure wears a belted peplos that is carved clinging so closely that it totally reveals the figure's body, the Greek equation of nudity and heroic power overriding the propriety of clothing females (Ridgway 1981:108–109). On the broader front of international dialectic, contemporary Western Asian societies chose the opposite signification, clothing their heroes and rendering the disgraced enemy naked (Ridgway 1981:91, n. 30).

Ornaments on pedestals

Pallas Athena and the Nike exemplify the practice of putting women on pedestals. Each symbolized power that issued from males, Athena literally from Zeus and Nike the embodiment of male warriors' battlefield victory. Athena was not so much a goddess as a dialectical exercise of maleness affirmed through picturing its contained antithesis, quintessentially male because neither born of woman nor, by remaining Virgin, functioning as a woman. If, as Virgin, Athena may be thought of as woman symbolically castrated, at least she was neither mutilated nor hobbled. Actual women of high social position have often suffered pain through the instruments signifying the conspicuous leisure marking their families' power.

Turning again to Veblen, he refers to the features of elegant women's dress

> making work impossible…this high heel obviously makes any, even the simplest and most necessary manual work extremely difficult…. The skirt …hampers the wearer at every turn and incapacitates her for all useful exertion…. The corset is…substantially a mutilation, undergone for the purpose of lowering the subject's vitality and rendering her permanently and obviously unfit for work.
>
> (Veblen 1931[1899]:171–172)

Chinese foot-binding is parallel to corset tight-lacing. Bound feet would be unmistakable in skeletons; tight-lacing could deform ribs. I am not aware of any archaeological reports of skeletons showing systematic deformation creating incapacity,[2] but it would be interesting to compare indices of health that might indicate the confinement of women in purdah, demanded of upper-class women in Classical Athens as well as in so many other societies.

Sumptuary rules associating food and gender systematically caused women to be at high risk of malnutrition in a number of societies, especially in Asia and Africa (Kehoe and Giletti 1981:553), and ought to be recognizable in the skeleton (as should anorexia). American Indian populations were much less likely to institutionalize gender-differentiated sumptuary rules inflicting malnutrition, but interesting sex-correlated differences do appear in isotope studies (Bumsted *et al.* 1990). Malnutrition and its correlate, dissociative trance or spirit possession, have been more frequent in the lower classes, but strong sumptuary rules or, as in the contemporary United States, unrealistic idealized feminine proportions, have allowed it to appear in women of well-to-do families, too. Severely hampering women's movements, whether through mutilation, clothing, malnutrition, or the institution of purdah (Small 1991), amounts to "conspicuous waste" of women's capacities and thus must be read as a sign of power exercised *over* the women, however rich their raiment.

Women on a pedestal, the pedestal of purdah or the pedestal of high heels, can be considered a resort to subtler contrivances, in that it takes a nicer discrimination to understand that to be treasured is to be transformed from an active agent to an object signifying another's power, as the conspicuously leisured and wasted Tezcadipoca impersonator vividly illustrates. The nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution created a gender distinction in clothing that set the ostentatiously frilled and corseted lady against the soberly suited man who exercised social power. Captains of industry, professional men, bankers, politicians all dressed in what an 1853 periodical called "the plain dark democracy of broadcloth" trousers and jacket. One social historian, perhaps with Veblen in mind, comments,

> It is probable…that most contemporaries perceived differences where we can see only similarities. Inexpensive clothes, clothes purchased in second-hand shops, and clothes worn for too long a time created visible differences within the broadcloth democracy.
>
> (Blumin 1989:143)

This suggestion is developed by Hollander (1994:98), arguing that when every one of a class wears the same muted covering, individual distinctions are readily noticed, whereas flamboyant variety fixes attention on the costume and makes the wearer a mannequin. The uniformity of bourgeois men's suits thus was a resort to subtler contrivances appropriate to the securely uppermost class. Hollander (1994:99) provocatively connects the cut of men's suits with the Greek heroes' nudity, insisting that the manner in which tailored men's suits follow body contours conveys physical power and masculine sexuality. Nineteenth-

century workmen's loose clothes bespoke only rough muscular strength, and women's dresses hid half their bodies, tantalizing onlookers by revealing bosoms and sweeping the real object of desire under cones of voluminous fabric.

Overall, the stark contrast lies in the subtlety of distinctions within the class of men in broadcloth, all of whom were legally empowered as adults, most of whom could vote and hold office, as opposed to the ostentatious dress distinctions within the class of women, nearly all of whom were legally minors and none of whom were able to vote or hold office. It is telling that as reform bills progressively enfranchised more and more men over the course of the nineteenth century, the previous strong distinction between gentlemen's and workingmen's costumes largely disappeared in the "broadcloth democracy." Along the same line, working-class women's clothing remained different from men's and readily distinguished from ladies' dress until the twentieth-century extension of the suffrage to women as an undifferentiated class. That milestone in the distribution of power immediately was marked by the abandonment of full-length skirts and the provision, for the first time in Western history, of clothing for women tailored like men's to reveal the movements of the entire body (Hollander 1994:134).

Very little of the overwhelming nineteenth-century distinction between the genders in dress and power is visible archaeologically, for clothing is unlikely to be preserved in graves and it is household rank, rather than individual political-economic power or lack of it, that is evidenced in houses, furnishings, and food debris. Donna Seifert's (1991) titillating investigation of a Washington brothel explicates a niche that yields an archaeological assemblage of expensive-cut meat bones, a large number of men's pipes, jewelry and fancy buttons, and lighting-fixture glass. Here was a house situated in a working-class district, using artifacts produced for the commoner market but with a higher number and percentage of ornaments and leisure-time activity items than found in other working-class house excavations. If one did not know the house was documented to have been a brothel, the paucity of tools, abundance of ornaments and clothing buttons, and preponderance of luxury cuts of meat would seem to indicate a wealthier household than its neighbors. Seifert, alert to subtler contrivances of distinction, realizes that the quality of ornaments and buttons betrayed young working-class women "putting on style" rather than well-to-do women (Seifert 1991:103). Particularly given its context of working-class houses, the assemblage could be interpreted as a brothel even without documentation.

Northwestern Plains, for comparison

Is it an attribute of Western tradition, or of state-type societies, for those of high position to employ the subtle contrivance of signifying elite status dialectically by antithesis to vulgar ostentation? Let us look at a nation usually categorized as hunter-gatherers, albeit better understood as specialized producers in the Northern Plains economic system (Kehoe 1993:93–98). Historic records indicate a degree of conspicuous leisure for families wealthy in horses: one Blackfoot woman recalled that she accompanied cousins to the hunt because "Father would never get [a]

chance to go because he had two fast buffalo horses and someone would ask to borrow them and they would bring him meat" (Kehoe 1996:399). Personal autonomy is highly valued and practiced among Blackfoot, correlated with a belief that real power is spiritually enhanced power, hence intangible. Here we can clearly view the subtle contrivance of signifying intangible power through conspicuous modesty, dialectically played against the flamboyance of those insecure in social position.

The Northwestern Plains archaeological record has precious little of either gender or power preserved (Duke 1991:154–159). Sizes of tipi rings have turned out to be surprisingly constant over time (Wilson 1983:134), and diameter is factored by the length of lodge poles, not by wealth. Tipi furnishings were limited, portable, and perishable. Ethnographies describe the placement of deceased male leaders in tipis with their best clothing, weapons, horse, and possibly personal medicine bundle, but the tipi was above ground, the contents were largely perishable, and the bones would likely have scattered once the lodge disintegrated; very few archaeologically excavated burials fit the description of a leader's burial tipi. I am not aware of either ethnographic or archaeological descriptions of similar treatment for deceased women (Mirau 1995:196). Burials of persons with relatively numerous or expensive ornaments could indicate a favorite child—*miníí'pokaa,* in Blackfoot—or a concubine, conspicuously leisured and wastefully ornamented as a sign of the power not of the favorite but of their parent or master.

Ethnographically, powwows graphically exhibit the inverse correlation between power and display. The most flamboyant dancers are the raw young men vying to be noticed, their gorgeous costumes likely to be the joint endeavor of their family for whom the youth symbolizes their pride and hope. The most modest costumes, and most restrained steps, are those of the matrons. Blackfoot believe that women are gifted by the Almighty with innate power to reproduce both people and material culture. A woman who successfully raised a family in proper comfort obviously enjoys spiritual power. Wissler (1971 [1938]:280) described a Blackfoot matron who was "held…in veneration…by her neighbors…many winters had she seen, many honors had she received." He recorded (1971 [1938]:240; Kehoe 1976) the respect that a band accorded its Old Ladies, formally greeting them with acknowledgement of their demonstrated skills. Ritually, the power of women among the Blackfoot is expressed in the very plain elkskin dress of the Holy Woman who is high priestess of the Okan (Sun Dance). The dress she wears is said to have been that of the legendary Elk Woman. Neither the female elk nor her human embodiment need any ornament beyond their aura of impregnable virtue. The Okan Holy Woman carries on her back a wooden digging stick, representing the digging stick of Woman Who Married Morning Star. She wears a headdress composed of a hide band in the shape of a lizard, to which are fastened plumes resembling the leaves of the prairie turnip dug by the Morning Star's wife, feathers representing the elk's horns, and raven tailfeathers, which with moose hooves hung on the digging stick were given by the two powerful animal comrades of the Elk. Tobacco seeds in a pouch, a flint arrow head, human scalplocks, a wildcat's tail, and

ermine skins complete the array of power symbols on the headdress (Wissler 1912:209–220). (It is a comment on the sexist assumptions of early-twentieth-century scientific illustrators and editors that a full-page drawing of a Holy Woman's headdress in the American Museum collections is depicted on a young *male* head: Wissler 1912:213!)

Like the Mahatma Gandhi wearing only his dhoti, in the Blackfoot Sun Dance this plainest little old person in the elkskin dress transcends mortal power. Their flagrant *lack* of ostentation is a resort to subtlest contrivances to communicate a state surpassing mundane behests. Neither Gandhian living nor the Blackfoot Okan, a few days' tent encampment, leave much residue of archaeological features. The Holy Woman's paraphernalia is transferred to the next woman willing to assume the burden of the role and would not be buried with any of the women; in any case, only the heirloom arrowhead is imperishable. What archaeologist would infer that the arrowhead was hung from a woman's headdress? What archaeologist could read from this one arrowhead the complex costume with its elaborate concatenation of legendary foundations and significations?

Conclusion

Seeking to construct pictures of the past, archaeologists must struggle with the enticement to "paint-by-number," coloring in familiar categories of role and status. In the world created by the Judaeo-Christian God, there are three levels—upper, middle, and lower—and two sexes. Conflict is endemic (Kehoe 1992). Archaeologists socialized in this Western cultural tradition expect to ferret out clues to distinguishing men and women, rich and powerful upper-class persons, neat and clean middling-class persons, and ragged, dirty low-class persons. Occupations should also be evidenced: priests and chiefs, merchants, and farmers (or hunters) and craftsworkers—the Dumézilian triad (Dumézil 1958; see also Lyle 1990:1–25). Archaeologists' pictures of the past tend to be cast as a generalized Western past, still in the mold of the eighteenth-century conjectural histories of mankind (Collingwood 1939:107–108; Meek 1976).

To shove ourselves out from this mire of familiarity, we need to build an everbroadening platform of ethnographic knowledge, close and extended acquaintance with communities throughout the world and history. This platform must include deep analysis of Western societies as well as of those with other cultural traditions, and it must be constantly scrutinized as new data and new approaches are proffered: standard ethnographies from undergraduate reading lists are simply inadequate. Instructors' insecurity in areas outside their own primary competencies tend to perpetuate canonized, ideologically conforming texts in place of thoroughly researched ethnohistories, e.g. Hoebel on the Cheyenne (Hoebel 1978[1960]) rather than Moore (1987). This understandable, if unfortunate, tendency to let inertia carry stereotypes along the academic mainstream is worsened by a few flashy self-nominated theoreticians who cannot be bothered either with searching out current primary researchers or evaluating the standard sources against recognized wellsprings of bias (Kehoe 1993:100).

We should explicate each *chain of signification* whereby an archaeologist identifies a datum, labels it, contextualizes it within a syntagm (the actual in-the-ground assemblage of data), and links the *syntagm* to a *paradigm* (conceptual model). These may seem big words, jargon, because archaeologists do not generally study semiotics.[3] An example of a chain of signification in archaeology is the label "projectile point," routinely given to bifacially chipped stone blades. Inspection of collections of "projectile points" frequently reveals an asymmetry of the distal portion of the blade, such that, on the distal third, one edge is straight and sharp and the opposite slightly convex and less sharp, even lightly ground. Furthermore, the artifact as a whole is not balanced along its long axis, so that if it were attached to a shaft and discharged, the weapon would not fly straight. Functional analysis suggests the great majority of "projectile points" were primarily knife blades, an identification supported by discoveries of so many of them near hearths and with food debris. The tradition of *labeling* plain bifaces "projectile points" leads in a *chain of signification* from the *syntagm* of these blades lying in a context of food processing, not to the logical identification of knife, but instead, from "projectile point" to men's hunting weapons and a *paradigm* of hunting as subsistence (Kehoe 1990:23–26). The convention reflects eighteenth-century European colonialist bias asserting conquered non-Western nations to be savages with no title to their lands. This standard picture led archaeologists to focus on hunting and "foraging," neglecting until recently to seek means of recovering plant evidence. The semiotic of signification is the crux of archaeological interpretation, and ought to be routinely expounded rather than hidden behind description and statistics.

If questions of "gender" and "power" engage us, we are obliged to entertain simultaneous working hypotheses. Did the community uphold the distinction between men and women in all phases of life? Only for those of reproductive age? Only for leisured classes? Only for the middling ranks? Did the community ascribe power to office? To rank? Negate it by demanding respect for personal autonomy (Gardner 1991; Kehoe 1995)? What dialectical relationships might have affected presentations? Ethnographies, including analyses of our own society, can suggest hypotheses; the archaeologist tests recognized data (explicated through a *chain of signification*) against a set of alternative hypotheses. The examples I have discussed in this chapter illustrate the daunting variety of significance observed in ethnographic instances, the danger of simply equating elaborate ornamentation with power, or modest demeanor with inconsequence. Archaeologists, like Veblen's *crème de la crème,* may consider resorting to subtler contrivances to create an inference to the best explanation (Kelley and Hanen 1988:276).

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Notes

1 I take the term "theaters of power" from Amos Rapoport (1993).
2 Hollander (1994:141) mentions that "evidence for dislodged bones and organs was found in work-house corpses," dismissing the idea that upper-class ladies might be deformed by corsets, but she gives no reference.
3 A basic text that uses an anthropological slant, discussing culture, is Eco's *Theory of Semiotics* (1976); see especially pp. 58–59, 66–68, 76–81, and Table 17, p. 105. George Lakoff (1987, esp. pp. 418–461) develops a complementary perspective of chaining using terms of image schemata.

Jean-Claude Gardin and colleagues associated with the French CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique/National Center for Scientific Research) have been using semiotics methodology in archaeological interpretation for several decades. An accessible summary is in *Representations in Archaeology,* edited by Gardin and Peebles (1992), the papers by Gardin, Gallay, and somewhat differing, by Perlés (on *châines opératoires,* a term introduced by André Leroi-Gourhan).

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2 Egalitarianism, equality, and equitable power

Susan Kent

> In every known society, the male's need for achievement can be recognized. Men may cook, or weave, or dress dolls or hunt hummingbirds, but if such activities are appropriate for occupations of men, then the whole society, men and women alike, votes them as important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important.
>
> (Mead 1949:125)

Introduction

Margaret Mead's words, written fifty years ago, are an accurate description of many Western anthropologists' views of male and female activities. However, not all non-Western societies define power or importance in this way because not all cultures arrange activities or the division of labor hierarchically. As a consequence, it is necessary to understand the nature of gender, egalitarianism, and power cross-culturally and why it differs among dissimilar groups. This necessity is imperative in order to safeguard against attributing Western concepts to non-Western, now extinct societies.

The challenge is to understand how gender is organized in different societies in order to draw appropriate inferences about prehistoric groups who can no longer be observed directly. The difficulty for archaeologists (and other anthropologists) results from the tendency to see the prehistoric world through Western filters, while needing to recognize non-Western patterns of culture, behavior, and material culture. Even some gender-aware anthropologists have unintentionally based their understanding of the world on a Western male perspective (Reiter 1975:14). Anthropologists pride themselves on being able to acknowledge very different kinship, linguistic, religious, economic, and other systems. However, when it gets down to talking about the fundamentals of how a culture is structured (as in gender relations), there is a tendency to adopt "common sense" views, which are usually "common sense" because they fit Western cultural patterns.

I attempt to tackle here some of the problems in explaining prehistoric gender relations without projecting Western views of gender onto non-Western cultures, past or present. Societies that are most difficult for Westerners to understand are

those most different from them. Therefore I spend much of the chapter detailing gender in highly egalitarian societies that stand in sharp contrast to highly *non*-egalitarian societies. Although anthropologists tend to view gender and power as interwoven concepts because they are in Western society, they tend *not* to be interwoven in all non-Western societies. Such a bias is particularly troublesome for archaeologists for whom relationships of gender, equality, and power are thought to be embedded in material objects, spatial patterning, and architecture.

In order to study gender inequality and the concept of power, which I suggest are, by definition, asymmetrical, in prehistoric or modern cultures, it is necessary to first understand gender equality and social symmetry. Many concepts of gender and power used in archaeology result from our own Western gender classification and history. Lamphere (1993:71) notes that they are ultimately grounded in a Victorian heritage that promotes highly stratified dominance hierarchies. Rapp (1979:511) acknowledges the difficulty that anthropologists experience in viewing the world without their filters of Western society. Some archaeologists operate under an implicit assumption that all societies have similar gender relations in which one sex is ideologically and/or behaviorally superior to the other, as occurs in Western culture. This is incorrect.

Early models of gender interaction tended to be descriptive, simplistic, and Western-centric (e.g. Hayden 1992). Such models are difficult to reconcile with the diversity of gender relations known from the twentieth century. While the ethnographic record does not contain all possible types of gender relations that probably occurred in the past, I argue that current perspectives and models of gender are often Western-biased. They tend to be uninformed of the variability of gender and what causes that variability. Archaeologists need to understand the nature of different cultural constructions of gender and then apply that understanding to model building. Models can then be tested with cross-cultural data before being applied to the archaeological record (note that I am specifically *not* advocating ethnographic analogy; see Kent 1998a, 1998b; S.M.Nelson 1998). To avoid portraying past gender relations from a Western bias, or, perhaps worse, from an archaeologist's conjecture of what non-Western gender is, which could result in a caricature of cultural reality, it is important to understand gender relations through ethnoarchaeological investigations. Once accomplished, archaeologists can use their understanding of modern societies as a base from which to test their archaeological models, perhaps discovering gender organizations that have not been observed ethnographically.

A classification of gender relationships based on degree of egalitarianism cross-culturally can provide context in the form of a continuum upon which to view gender in past societies. In this way archaeologists can determine if prehistoric groups were more, less, or similarly egalitarian in their gender relations compared to others across space or through time. Without this context it is difficult to know if a prehistoric hunting and gathering society, for one example, was highly egalitarian like modern Basarwa (Bushmen) or slightly egalitarian like modern Australian Aborigines and Eskimos (Inuits). Then, most importantly, what does egalitarianism mean in terms of interpreting the material culture and spatial patterning of a group and its change through time?

Power and egalitarianism

> [W]e have accepted almost without question the nineteenth-century Western legacy that had effectively segregated women from positions of power…. [H]ave we considered the effects of their [early missionaries and travelers] bias towards women? …We unquestioningly accept male statements about women as factual evidence for the way a society is structured. We argue the problem of emic and etic, but not with reference to women's perception of their roles.
>
> (Weiner 1976:228)

There are many facets of power (e.g. social power, political power, economic power, religious power). Power is imbued with the notion of strength and importance. In some cases, scholars use the word to imply the threat of or actual use of force and domination. Endicott (1981) defines dominance as "control over others' labour, decision-making, social contacts, access to food and resources and sexuality." Power, according to Herdt (1993), is the "access to and control over people and resources." Sanday defines power as "the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favourable decisions which are not of right allocated to the individuals or their roles" (Sanday 1981:114). In this chapter I refer to power as influence, control, domination, coercion, and perceived superiority on the part of those who have power (see Nelson, Chapter 10 in this volume for a detailed discussion of power). My view is consistent with Miller and Tilley's (1984) description of *power over* that

> always involves a dialectical relationship between the power "holder" and those upon whom power is exercised, as agents always have some resources, mental or material, to resist the exercise of power. Power relationships thus exhibit a dialectical asymmetry and will always be contingent.
>
> (Miller and Tilley 1984:7)

It is important to recognize a common fallacy wherein an *absence of power* is interpreted as inequality. This results from a failure of many ethnoarchaeologists to obtain the view of their informants. Anthropologists often transform informants' neutral statements of differences between male and female activities into hierarchical gender categories. Informants may acknowledge the categories as separate but not ranked. Westerners usually assign activities associated with men as having the highest prestige, most importance, and/or dominance. In Western society, men are perceived and treated as more powerful than women intellectually, emotionally, economically, publicly, and in other realms of culture. The same perception of men is not valid even for some of the most patriarchal societies we know of, such as East African pastoralists (Gifford-Gonzalez 1998). Within the Western concept of culture there is a presupposition of power as ubiquitous. Therefore, Western anthropologists sometimes "observe" power, with its inherent hierarchies and stratifications, when, in reality, there is none. The *absence of power* is overlooked because it is not conceived as possible, since it lies outside the realm of Western culture. This leads to the common assumption that male-associated

hunting among foragers is more important and has more status than female collecting or that Paleolithic cave painting was religiously important and therefore women were excluded in all aspects–from being the artists to being the spectators (Russell 1991). The theoretical examination of gender and power is therefore imperative before archaeologists can attempt to make meaningful interpretations about gender relations of the past.

Because power and egalitarianism are inversely related, it is difficult to understand one without understanding the other. Egalitarianism as used here is the absence of stratification, hierarchies, domination, power, coercion, force, and privilege. It is a continuum in which the amount, type, and importance of differentiation, stratification, and hierarchy differ cross-culturally (see also Begler 1978). Equality and inequality are terms usually considered to be synonymous with egalitarianism and non-egalitarianism. According to Endicott (1981:1), they can be used interchangeably. They both refer to a situation in which no one has control or power over another individual's "labour, decision-making, course of action, social contacts and sexuality." In very highly egalitarian societies there is little or no differentiation in the behavior or status of people by gender. Females and males may perform separate tasks, but the tasks are seen as complementary and not hierarchical. In highly egalitarian societies, I suggest there is an underlying emphasis on social definitions of people, rather than hierarchical categories.

Power in highly egalitarian societies is a meaningless concept because no one has more than anyone else. It is meaningless because power exists in the negative–there is no power present. Individuals may be situationally influential based on a particular personal trait in highly egalitarian societies, but still have no more influence than anyone else in other situations, as occurs among G/wi and G//ana Basarwa, i.e. Bushman, San (Kent n.d.). A person might be looked to for guidance in other highly egalitarian societies but have no power to command or compel, e.g. Ju/'hoansi, formerly called !Kung (Lee 1979, 1993) and Pygmies (Hewlett 1996). In still less egalitarian, more differentiated, but not stratified or hierarchical societies, males and females basically have the same degree of power, but in different realms (Weiner 1992). Lepowsky (1993) notes that among the Vanatinai of New Guinea, women can be dominant in some activities and not in others that are of equal consequence and value to the society in general. Males and females in these societies are assigned to a category without judgment. The same is valid for other similarly structured societies, such as the Navajo (Kent 1984). There actually are societies where separate but equal exists.

Power is asymmetrical, and therefore does not exist, in my opinion, until a society institutionalizes inequality. In those societies where power influences interactions and relationships, unequal access to power often results in continuing negotiations. In *non*-egalitarian societies for example, power is aggregated in such a way as to permit access to power for some individuals while denying it to others. This is particularly visible along gender lines in complex societies. Institutionalized positions of authority are absent in highly egalitarian societies.

The invisibility of highly egalitarian gender relations

> [A] great deal of recent social science theory emphasizes "the centrality of domination" and the analysis of "asymmetrical social relations," in which one group has more power than the other, as a key to understanding a social system. A focus upon asymmetry and domination also tends to presuppose its universality as a totalizing system of belief and practice and thus to distort analyses of gender roles and ideologies in places with egalitarian relations.
>
> (Lepowsky 1993:283–284)

Why is hunting consistently considered by anthropologists to be more prestigious and important than collecting? That is, why do Westerners tend to assign higher status, more importance, and increased value to hunting and consider collecting a lesser task? Evolutionary biologists, sociobiologists, and evolutionary ecologists claim that hunting is tied to male hunters' reproductive fitness (e.g. Blurton Jones *et al.* 1996; Hawkes 1991; Tooby and Cosmides 1992). Others portray hunting as more dangerous and therefore more valuable than collecting (e.g. Howell 1979). However, at least in the Kalahari, the risk of encountering poisonous scorpions or snakes while digging for plants, or cutting oneself while chopping firewood, makes wild-plant gathering at least as dangerous as hunting. Even Howell (1979) acknowledges that more mishaps occur while performing activities other than hunting. The danger hypothesis is conceived by Westerners and shows their regard for male versus female associated activities. The evolutionary and sociobiologists also cannot separate their Western biases from their observations and conclusions, focusing primarily on male reproductive fitness while basically ignoring the role of women and their fitness in evolution.

I offer a more cultural-social explanation for the value assigned to hunting by anthropologists. In anthropology and related disciplines, hunting is perceived as "naturally" masculine for reasons that are often either ecological or biological, despite ethnographies that suggest otherwise (e.g. Estioko-Griffin and Griffin 1981). Hunting, and not gathering, is accorded status by equating it with manliness and masculinity. To many anthropologists, hunting is equated with prestige, dominance, and differential access to power accorded to males. The importance, value, and status attributed to hunting (and other men's activities) *are not necessarily* the result of how a particular foraging culture views hunting, but are a projection of Western culture.

Around the world hunting is accorded prestige because everywhere anthropologists (male or female) go, they apply the Western view that hunting is "manly" and therefore more important than "womanly" gathering. Sometimes their assumptions are contrary to the observable data. For example, many Western anthropologists consider plant gathering to be a female task, even though in most highly egalitarian societies men routinely collect a relatively large proportion of wild plants, including firewood (e.g. Endicott 1981; Kent 1996b; Lee 1979; Silberbauer 1981; and others). Furthermore, collecting wild plants requires skill and knowledge. Gathering among Kalahari foragers was described by Draper

(1975) as quite different from the monotonous portrayals described by many anthropologists.

> Descriptions of the work of gathering leave the reader with the impression that the job is uninteresting and unchallenging–that anyone who can walk and bend over can collect wild bush food. This stereotype is distinctly inappropriate to !Kung [Ju/'hoansi] female work, and it promotes a condescending attitude toward what women's work is all about.
>
> (Draper 1975:82)

According to Moore the reason why anthropologists generalize their Western views of gender to non-Western societies is that:

> the way gender ideologies work [is] to appear natural, pre-given and eternal [and that] it is in the natural order of things that men head households; that women are responsible for child care…. We find these naturalizations of gender relations made explicit in the material world. The apparently evidential nature of the sexual division of labour is almost everywhere *concretized through material objects.*
>
> (Moore 1994:72; emphasis added)

It is because gender is concretized through material objects that archaeologists can study gender relations in various prehistoric societies.

Anthropologists sometimes fail to recognize equality of power among the sexes when it is present in highly egalitarian societies because Westerners tend to rank differences as better or worse. Richard Lee noted that among the Ju/'hoansi, although men hunt and women gather wild plants, there is no conception or behavior exhibited through either words or deeds that they consider hunting superior to collecting. In fact, Lee (1979) wrote that

> I did not get the feeling that women's nonparticipation in hunting was a sore issue between the sexes (i.e. that the women wanted to hunt but the men would not let them, or that the men wanted women to share in the work of hunting but the latter did not want to). It was not an area of conflict.
>
> (Lee 1979:235)

Readers selectively make use of Lee's research for their models, theories, or interpretations and, just as selectively, ignore this very important observation. Using data from the highly egalitarian Batek, Endicott (1981) nicely sums up the inappropriate virility Westerners have attached to hunting:

> The dominant role of men in producing meat does not of itself place men in a dominant position in general…. It takes more than a few pounds, or a few hundred pounds, of meat to accomplish such a cultural task. The fact that men and women…may perform different foraging activities in no way leads

> to an unequal structuring of male-female relationships or differential evaluations of the activities of each sex. Asymmetrical structuring of society depends upon the legitimization of authority structures in that society…. [In highly egalitarian societies] there is a conspicuous absence of authority positions. Thus we find that men and women are not differentially valued.
>
> (Endicott 1981:8)

The misconceptions of a universal preference for hunting over gathering perpetuated by some anthropologists can be illustrated in highly egalitarian foraging populations. For example, while men's hunting is expressly defined as hunting by many anthropologists, women's hunting is defined as gathering, based only on the anthropologists' cultural ideas of a gender division of labor. The result is that women never hunt by definition of the anthropologist! Women's hunting is often overlooked by researchers either because they do not see it while emphasizing men's activities to the exclusion of women's or because they deem it unimportant or irrelevant to studies of subsistence (also see Estioko-Griffin and Griffin 1981:140–142). When authors do mention women's hunting, it is usually only in passing and easy to miss when reading an ethnography. In contrast, they describe men's hunting in great detail (see Estioko-Griffin and Griffin 1981:140). Agta women hunting the same animals as men using the same implements is considered an anomaly that is not generalizable to other groups, past or present (ibid.).

It is no coincidence that while mentioning that both male and female desert Australian Aborigines consistently acquire small game, Gould (1980) specifies that only men kill large game, and he subsequently refers to all hunters as males. Hunting of small game is considered "gathering" for little apparent reason beyond that it is done by females. Concurrently, slightly larger animals killed by Aboriginal men are referred to as prey, and their efforts called hunting by the same anthropologists who indicate that men's contribution is somehow more important and valuable. Such a distinction between large and small animal hunting is meaningless; at what point does an animal become large enough to be considered hunted rather than gathered, particularly when the kill is done by the same weapons? In the case of the Central Kalahari Basarwa or Bushmen, women use small traps to acquire birds and they hit small animals, such as mongoose, on the head with a digging stick; men use larger traps to acquire antelopes and also hit hares and jackals on the head with a digging stick. Yet after noting that women hunt small animals, Silberbauer (1981) and Tanaka (1980) speak of hunters only as males and ignore female hunting.

Cross-cultural classification of gender relations

> Gender roles and gender identities are constructed by both men and women in any society.
>
> (Brettell and Sargent 1993:110)

Based on my work among both egalitarian and non-egalitarian societies, I have devised a classification of gender relations that allows us to better visualize the diversity of gender relations present cross-culturally. This visualization provides an understanding of gender relations that would not otherwise be available. The classification is not sharply defined because cultures do not usually differ as sharply as many anthropologists would like. Instead the classification is perceived as a continuum in which gender and power relations can be understood as reflecting greater or lesser degrees of inequality. The usefulness of a classification of gender relations based on egalitarianism and the presence/use of power as a heuristic device emanates from both our Western culture's use of classification schemes as tools for understanding phenomena (e.g. in disciplines like biology) and, more importantly, from the structure of modern humans' brains. At least since the dawn of anatomically modern humans, the brain has sought to understand the world around it through classification. Because all modern humans share a common "architecture of the brain," we consciously and unconsciously classify everything around us, as is exemplified by language, the ultimate in classification systems. This tendency to categorize, to compartmentalize the phenomena around us, is particularly encouraged in Western society because of the way in which the culture is organized (Kent 1990, 1991). As a result, classifying types of gender relations that are cross-culturally valid (and therefore presumably cross-temporally valid) is a helpful endeavor to assist archaeologists in comprehending the diversity of gender interaction in very different societies, permitting interpretations of some of its causes.

Despite the benefits of developing cross-cultural classifications of gender relations, many schemes are too simplistic and Western-biased to be useful. Their simplicity has been noted by a number of scholars, particularly in reference to the perceived public/private-domestic (i.e. male/female) dichotomy or belief in universal two-tiered male dominance and female subordinate categories (e.g. see Lamphere 1993; Wylie 1992). Although the following classification is offered as a partial solution for archaeologists studying gender in prehistory, caveats do exist because classification systems are always artificial constructs, and therefore category boundaries are permeable. Even the terms "men" and "women" do not capture all the variability that exists in gender relations since there are homosexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, hermaphrodites, and other ambiguous categories of gender.

It is essential to bear in mind that egalitarianism and power are continua, not absolutes. There is no society that is absolutely egalitarian; rather, there are only societies which are more, less, or equally egalitarian as others. Note that while category boundaries of the following may be indistinct or fuzzy for some groups, the point of this discussion is *not* the classification scheme itself, but the study of gender equality and power cross-culturally and in the past. These concepts are best understood when at some point in the analysis, power and equality are compared to other groups. It is only in this way that the terms "egalitarian" and "power" have context and meaning. It is not possible to assign every society known to a category in a short chapter. The descriptions discussed below are

meant to illustrate the types of societies that would fall into any one category. The following categories are a heuristic device to demonstrate the diversity of gender relations that fall outside the Western pattern so that we, as archaeologists, do not perpetuate the myth of a universality of Western culture and project gender roles back into prehistory.

Highly egalitarian

Although a number of subdivisions are possible within any classification, for the sake of simplicity, I define six major categories in which gender relations can be organized. First, at one extreme of the continuum are those societies in which gender is organized cooperatively. The division of labor is extremely flexible and little emphasis is placed on the differences between males and females. Group decisions are based on a consensus of opinion among both women and men, and individual decisions are relatively autonomous.

Highly egalitarian Basarwa (i.e. Bushmen or San) are one example of this category. Central Kalahari G/wi and G//ana, for instance, do not segregate space or material culture by sex, nor do they emphasize differences between the sexes as much as less egalitarian societies do. Additionally, they do not denote activities as masculine or feminine. While hunting is referred to as "men's work" and gathering as "women's work," each sex routinely and without stigma performs both. Men regularly collect wild plants and women use bird traps and kill small animals (Kent 1996b). Both sexes fetch water, chop and carry firewood, cook, smoke, drink beer (when available), decide when and where to move camp or go visiting, and tend to small livestock (when present). The highly egalitarian ethos of this culture is perpetuated by, among other things, the extremely flexible division of labor, required sharing of all objects, and the absence of judgments or evaluations of individuals (Kent 1993). Because differences in the degree of equality varies among the various Basarwa groups, women generally have as much autonomy, status, and equality as men, their political opinions are as important as those of men, and there is little or no spatial segregation or gender-specific material culture (Kent n.d.). Other highly egalitarian societies include the various Pygmies and Batek groups.

Strongly egalitarian

Societies in which gender is organized complementarily comprise the second category. Anthropologists seem to have difficulty with this type of society, since Westerners tend to hierarchically arrange all differentiation–gender, social, political, and economic. In strongly egalitarian societies, differentiation exists but without hierarchy in any sense or form. Navajo Indians are a good illustration of this category (Kent 1983, 1984). Women and men often have separate, frequently non-overlapping jobs, but neither the jobs nor the sexes are ranked. For example, Lamphere (1977:70) states that the "complementarity between motherhood and fatherhood is explicit in Navajo concepts of birth and clanship." While political

power in the position of an informal chief with achieved status is held by males, it is not considered better or superior to the power and control the matrilineal Navajo women have over land, residence patterns, and descent. The political position of Navajo men was often mistaken by Westerners to be a source of men's presumed higher status. Instead, each sex among the Navajo has access to different types of non-hierarchically ranked power. Navajos and other cultures that belong to this category tend to be differentiated but not stratified; gender relations and division of labor are complementary in that differentiation exists in the absence of stratification, ranking, or hierarchies.

Moderately egalitarian

The New Guinea Vanatinai (Lepowsky 1993) are an example of a society having complementary gender relations like the Navajos, but, unlike the Navajos, gender relations are internally ranked. Hierarchy is a part of gender relations for the Vanatinai, while it is not part of Navajo culture. Among the Vanatinai, both "big" men and "big" women can rise through effort and personal achievement. Both are treated with equal respect and status and command equal power. The Vanatinai use their achieved power to gain social, political, and economic status, as opposed to gaining control and domination–the typical goal of power acquisition in less egalitarian societies. This category is composed of societies in which there is sociopolitical stratification or ranking *within* each sex-specific hierarchy but not *between* the hierarchies. In other words, men and women are not necessarily perceived as better or worse, superior or inferior. Instead, there is a hierarchy for each gender within which there is stratification. In these societies, men and women may be roughly equivalent in social status, but each gender is interiorly stratified.

These types of societies are not commonly known during the twentieth century because male ethnographers may not have recognized them or because they were vulnerable to the enormous upheavals caused by colonialization and Westernization. Archaeologically, some of these societies are beginning to be identified in Asia. For example, in Japan during the late Yayoi to early Kofan periods (*c.* AD 100–700), women and men were co-rulers (Sarah Nelson, personal communication 1997). As with the Vanatinai, apparently queens and kings had complementary status and the main hierarchy existed within genders and not between. During the Old Silla Kingdom in Korea (57 BC–AD 668) women also ruled as queens in conjunction with kings or by themselves (Nelson 1993:299, 300–312).

Moderately non-egalitarian

The next category contains societies characterized by asymmetric gender relations where males or females have unequal power. Conceptually there is a major dichotomy between the sexes. Men are often considered superior, while women are considered inferior by the indigenous males (we do not have many ethnographies discussing how women perceive themselves and males in these types of societies, but see Gifford-Gonzalez 1998). Cross-cultural examples include

many patrilineal societies where gender is an important means of stratification, but highly developed and differentiated sociopolitical hierarchy is lacking. Various kinds of power–ritual, political, etc.–is used by both sexes to sway and negotiate attitudes, activities, and beliefs in these societies. The patrilineal, patrivirilocal Sambia horticulturists of Papua New Guinea illustrate this category of gender relations. They have a rigid division of labor by sex, a men's house where women are forbidden, a men's secret society that excludes women, male elders, male war leaders, and male shamans (Herdt 1993:196). Gender interaction is described as "sexual antagonism" that stratifies and regulates relationships between males and females (Herdt 1993:195). Since there is nothing intrinsic to males that makes them superior, the Sambia have developed an ethos that stereotypes "men as higher and women as lower, [which is] communicated in temporal, spatial, and spiritual representations regarding the place of man and woman in the world" (Herdt 1993:197). The gender hierarchy mirrors the social and political hierarchy. Women have negative power through fear–the power of menstruation and contamination as one example (Herdt 1993).

Strongly non-egalitarian

Gender relations are sometimes opposed and even confrontational in more differentiated and hierarchical societies than the above. The Batswana, traditionally a complex Bantu-speaking chiefdom in southern Africa, exemplify this category of gender relations. In the past, gender relations constituted "by our standards a very rigid, vertical, caste-like cleavage affecting every aspect of human relations" (Alverson 1978:12). According to Schapera (1953:37), men and women traditionally sat apart at feasts and other social gatherings, with certain spots in the village such as the *kgotla* (council-place) reserved specifically for men. Women were legally under the authority of males their entire life and were excluded from most politics. Also characteristic of societies in this category, Batswana men traditionally had "enormous power over the disposition of a wife's labor. Generally men dominate women psychologically. Women were in past times, with few exceptions, legal minors dependent on some man or men" (Alverson 1978:12). Unequal access to power because of male domination and inequitable stratified hierarchies structured most spheres of Batswana culture in the past. As a result, inequality not only underlay the sociopolitical system among the Batswana, but also structured gender relations, as commonly occurs in these societies. Gender discrimination was visible in Batswana behavior through the use of gender-restricted space. For example, the corral and public court area were considered to be the two most important parts of a camp or village, and they were associated with males (Schapera 1953).

Highly non-egalitarian

The final category on the continuum of egalitarianism consists of societies in which gender relations are competitive and antagonistic. Highly complex societies

use stratification and hierarchies to organize many domains of their culture, from politics to economics and religion, and from architecture and the use of space to material culture and status. Men and women are perceived to be fundamentally different–from the physiology of their brain, to their intellectual abilities and their emotional constitution. Men in highly non-egalitarian societies feel legitimized in treating women very differently than they would treat fellow males. This differential treatment impacts jobs, education, crime, wages, expectations, opportunities, daily activities of various types, and on. Women either tend to be so oppressed and without power in important parts of their lives that they do not routinely contest their position or are belligerent about their inferior status and lack of power. For example, some frustrated female Westerners use jokes as a means of reducing tension between the sexes, others behave "masculinely," some harbor anger against men, and still others do not question their subordinate position. Islamic women tend to be outwardly passive and acquiesce to men but act quite differently when no men are present or when dealing with their own realms of power, like the religious or supernatural (C.Nelson 1974). Within their walls of seclusion, Islamic women interact independently and use young boys to run messages between compounds and to perform errands for them. Other methods of resistance to domination by males take different forms according to the society.

Gender inequality is an attribute of highly complex societies in the past and the present. Such societies organize people stratigraphically by gender, age, ethnicity, class, economics, occupation, appearance, etc. These strata are arranged into opposing categories as superior versus inferior. The above discussion shows that diversity in gender relations and in power exist today, and existed in the past. This diversity must be taken into account when interpreting the archaeological record and understanding prehistory.

Cross-cultural diversity in gender relations

> The obvious fact of biological differences between women and men tells us nothing about the general social significance of those differences; and although human societies all over the world recognize biological differences between women and men, what they make of those differences is extraordinarily variable.
>
> (Moore 1994:70)

Although the above classification scheme is far from perfect, comprehensive, or without indistinct boundaries, if we can temporarily agree on it, we can see that power also varies greatly. The distribution of power among individuals and groups within a society differs by a culture's degree of egalitarianism. Power has very different consequences in various societies. Differences occur because equality of the sexes co-varies with egalitarianism along a cross-cultural continuum. The more egalitarian a society, the more equity there is in political, social, economic, and gender realms; the less egalitarian, the less equity between or among individuals. In the most highly egalitarian societies, power is not a useful concept

because everyone has the same amount of power or no one has power—either way power is absent, in that it cannot be used by anyone for anything. It is the presence of stratification and hierarchies that makes power a relevant factor, because it is in their presence that power becomes an unequal commodity with unequal access and unequal consequences. When studying non-egalitarian societies cross-culturally, it is important to understand how power is used to enforce and perpetuate stratification, hierarchy, and beliefs of inequality and subordination, particularly along lines of gender.

In the past some scholars have asserted that there are no highly egalitarian societies in which males and females are unranked in any way and the division of labor is truly cooperative (e.g. Moore 1988; Reiter 1975). Recent studies have discredited this claim (Kent n.d.). Because egalitarianism is not an absolute; not all hunter-gatherers are as egalitarian as others. Some, such as the Eskimo (Inuits) and Australian Aborigines, are sometimes considered to be as highly egalitarian as are the Basarwa, despite the fact that they have lineage heads/leaders or hunt leaders, gender inequality of different degrees and types, and asymmetric power relations among and between individuals. Such hunter-gatherers may be egalitarian when compared to Westerners (and Northwest Coast complex hunter-gatherers) but not when compared to the Basarwa. Cross-cultural comparison of various hunting-gathering groups shows that gender constructs are not based on economics, such as hunting-gathering or farming, as much as they are based on other, more social facets of culture (Kent 1996a). Cross-cultural studies force anthropologists to reconsider the validity and utility of using modes of subsistence rather than sociopolitical stratification or egalitarianism to classify societies.

There actually is much more cross-cultural diversity than even described in the above categories (i.e. each category could have subdivisions). Western anthropologists have either failed to recognize or have chosen to ignore this diversity because of their own cultural biases. For example, female rulers who were present pre-historically and historically in geographical regions ranging from Asia to North America are treated by many archaeologists as anomalies, if indeed they are acknowledged at all (S.M.Nelson 1993; Chapter 10 in this volume; Patterson 1993; Trocolli 1992). In some of these societies, males and females may have separate hierarchies and ranking, while in others they are part of the same hierarchies. Political power or status in these societies may be determined more by class than by gender (Nelson, Chapter 10 in this volume). In Japan, from the Yayoi to Kofun periods, some women were recorded as rulers in their own right, but it has been argued that co-rulerships of women and men might underlie most of the Japanese king lists (Piggott 1999).

Diversity exists even within those groups usually considered highly egalitarian, such as the Basarwa. For example, of the different highly egalitarian Basarwa groups, Ju/'hoansi have less gender equality than do the Nharo Basarwa, who have less than the G/wi and G//ana. The G/wi and G//ana women at Kutse hunt small animals, have no special sitting or activity areas, are permitted to handle hunting gear when not menstruating, check traps when their husbands cannot, butcher animals of springbok size and smaller if men are not available, routinely

butcher animals smaller than a hare, cook meat as well as wild plants (as do their spouses), and participate in the distribution of both wild plants and meat (Kent 1997). This contrasts with Ju/'hoansi (!Kung) women, who do not hunt, are forbidden to touch men's hunting equipment even when not menstruating, sometimes have an informal leader, and have separate sitting areas in front of their huts. The latter is actually followed mostly during formal occasions, such as a ritual, etc. (e.g. Lee 1979; Marshall 1976). Thus, diversity in the amount of gender egalitarianism is found within the larger category of highly egalitarian societies. Diversity among the highly egalitarian groups extends to other highly egalitarian groups, such as the Aka Pygmies (Hewlett 1991; McCreedy 1994). Aka Pygmies have minimal stratification wherein an individual can command more respect from the others either through skill in hunting or age, sex, knowledge, and respect (Hewlett 1991). In contrast, most Central Kalahari Basarwa groups do not have such a leadership position available (Kent 1996a; Silberbauer 1981). This does not mean that the Aka or other Pygmy groups cannot be considered to be highly egalitarian, because, compared to most cultures in the ethnographic record, they are. It does mean that they are not as comparatively highly egalitarian as the G/wi and G//ana, even though they are more so compared to many groups. We can see here how meaningless the terms egalitarian or power are without a comparative context. These terms are best viewed comparatively along a cross-cultural continuum.

What I hope is clear to the reader is that even within groups considered to be highly egalitarian, or towards the extreme of egalitarianism compared to most societies, there is notable variability. It is more than misleading to uncritically lump societies together, ignoring variation; it is erroneous and will impede our understanding of the past. By recognizing the diversity in egalitarianism cross-culturally, it is possible to begin to understand factors important in affecting egalitarianism, equality, and equity in power between males and females, as well as other cultural categories.

Egalitarianism in thought versus deed

> [I]t begins to seem as if what we understand of gender and power is entirely a matter of our own culturally or individually idiosyncratic perspective; women may seem powerful, or not, and gender relevant to the understanding of power relations, or not, depending on the categories of analysis you adopt which, in turn, depend on your interests and standpoint, as defined by the power structures and relationships in which you are enmeshed.
>
> (Wylie 1992:60)

Several cultural anthropologists who read either a rough draft (Tim Ingold, personal communication 1996) or comment that I wrote (Boehm 1993) have had an interesting objection to my conceptualization of equality and egalitarianism. They state that there are many dimensions in society, which I agree with, and that a society might be egalitarian along one dimension but not another, which I do not agree with. The so-called egalitarianism expressed in

democracy à la Western thought is comparable to the egalitarianism found among some hunter-gatherer societies (Boehm 1993). Finally, egalitarianism is not a concept recognized by most indigenous peoples, so is it a valid concept for these societies (Tim Ingold, personal communication 1996)? Each point needs to be addressed. From my perspective, all dimensions in a culture are intricately intertwined. What may superficially appear to be distinct dimensions are, in reality, interconnected. Apparent discontinuities and contradictions among the dimensions are only such until the deeper interconnections (or "structures") are exposed. It is for this reason that I examine gender relations in male-female interaction through social relations, politics, economics, use of space, architecture, and material culture. I believe that consistencies exist among the different realms of culture, often tied to general structuring principles of society, such as egalitarianism.

Some anthropologists do not distinguish egalitarian thought in inegalitarian societies from egalitarian behavior in egalitarian societies. It is inappropriate to consider societies as the highly non-egalitarian United States as egalitarian in ideology simply because someone long ago wrote that "all *men* were created equal." I suggest that this motto did not pertain to the neutral term "men" as including all humans; if they were, women would have had the privilege of voting and other rights at that time. In other words, I suspect that the same men who believed that all "men" are created equal never considered women to be the equal of men. Furthermore, the male writers probably meant only those men of European descent, not black male slaves or male Native Americans. There are many societies that profess equality in facets of their idealology (e.g. all "men" are created equal) but not in behavior.

Egalitarianism is not discussed in highly egalitarian societies because inequality is not a part of their culture. The only societies, I suggest, that are fixated on egalitarianism in their conversations and writing are those that know that both kinds of societies exist. Does the fact that Kutse residents do not discuss equality mean that equality does not exist in their society, even if their attitudes, ideology, and behavior all emphasize equality in ways that highly non-egalitarian societies do not? Of course not; at least no more than any other anthropological concept. Basarwa do not recognize the concept of germs and illness, but that does not mean germs and illness do not exist. One has to be aware of the presence of germs before one can discuss their absence; similarly one must be aware of inequality before one discusses equality.

I hope that it is now evident that truly highly egalitarian societies do exist and did exist in the past as well. There are no genetic, environmental, or biological determinants that mandate that women must be subservient or men dominant, and there are societies where neither sex thinks hierarchically of the other. The structure or organization of culture in specific societies mandates power and gender relations by encouraging certain behaviors. The reason diversity in gender relations was not acknowledged for so long is because people's view of gender feels so "natural;" all aspects of culture combine to reinforce culturally appropriate gender relations. This can be seen in a group's myths, ethos, understanding of themselves

and others, and even in their use of space, architecture, and material culture. It is the latter three domains that allow archaeologists to uncover past societies' gender relations and possible changes through time as expressed in the archaeological record.

Summary and conclusions

Westerners have a very difficult time conceiving of unranked, equal categories, such as hunting and gathering. That is, Westerners apply their hierarchies to societies in which hierarchies do not exist. I suggest that those scholars who claim that gender egalitarianism does not exist in any society do so because they are unwilling or unable to see highly egalitarian societies outside their own hierarchical cultural filters. They wear blinders, regardless of their sex, missing the fascinating diversity in gender relations and power that characterizes the broad range of cultures present today and surely also in the past. By denying variation, we deny ourselves the opportunity to study and understand diversity between different kinds of societies—one of the basic goals of anthropology in my opinion. What does it mean to say that Pygmy groups are egalitarian? They are egalitarian compared to whom—not to the G/wi and G//ana. To discuss egalitarianism or power in isolation and without cross-cultural comparisons is to render the terms meaningless at best. Behavioral and material cultural differences are sometimes interpreted by anthropologists as stratified and hierarchical based on their own Western perceptions of gender, when, in fact, no hierarchical differentiation exists. Egalitarianism and power are concepts that require a cross-cultural context. To refer to egalitarianism or power as if they occur in a cultural void, without reference to other facets of culture, is to distort the interpretations or conclusions based upon them.

Anthropologists who view power as present in all modern societies usually see it as hierarchical in reference to gender. However, most highly egalitarian societies (i.e. band-level foragers) do not differentiate or stratify individuals. Therefore, the concept of power, be it political, social, or gender, is not present or appropriate for such societies. Other slightly less egalitarian tribal societies (such as the Vanatinai Melanesians and Navajos) have a concept of power that is, at least in theory, equally available to males and females who have the desire and ability to achieve it. In these societies, power is used to gain social and political status more than to control and dominate. Gender relations are complementary and gender differentiation exists in the absence of hierarchies. In contrast, power in many non-egalitarian societies is hierarchical, usually with men having more power than women. In these cases, power is often used to subjugate, intimidate, dominate, and exploit.

Once we recognize variability, we can then try to model and predict why cross-cultural differences in egalitarianism, access to power, and gender equality exist. Why should scholars focus so intensively on hunting over gathering when studying hunting-gathering societies, particularly since most acknowledge that wild plants constitute a larger portion of me diet than does wild meat? I suggest

the reason is that in Western society hunting is linked to males which is then imbued with importance and prestige. It is essential *not* to project Western culture onto the non-Western cultures of the past. The most productive way to avoid this is to include relevant ethnoarchaeological data when model-building, testing hypotheses or propositions with the archaeological record, and formulating interpretations and conclusions. Only through such endeavors can we begin to truly understand the nature of power and gender. This understanding is directly relevant to our studies of gender in the past as well as to gender relations in the present and future.

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3 Women leaders in native North American societies

Invisible women of power

Ruth Trocolli

Introduction

This chapter focusses on sociopolitical power in native North American societies.[1] The extent of this power is not the same as that in Western societies where leadership is often impersonal and politics can be far removed from everyday life. Chiefs and tribal leaders in native societies fulfill different cultural roles than leaders in non-native societies; moral obligations and direct ties to a shared past closely bind native leaders and their constituents. The societies included in this chapter are native North American cultures that are predominantly "tribal" in their political organization. Historical accounts usually refer to all native leaders as "chief," whereas anthropologists employ that term specifically for leaders of relatively complex, stratified societies. Examples of women leaders are drawn from a wide range of North American cultures, including the anthropological categories of "band," "tribe," and "chiefdom," to demonstrate both the wide geographic distribution of this institution and also the time depth involved.

Research on the early years of European contact in North America has revealed more than sixty instances of women leaders among native North American and Caribbean peoples between 1493 and the present.[2] Included are the coastal Algonkians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Grumet 1980); the Chesapeake Tidewater groups in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Bataille 1993; Grumet 1980); Timucuans and Timucuan speakers on the Florida and Georgia Atlantic coasts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Deagan 1978; Hann 1996; Lorant 1946; Milanich 1995; Milanich and Hudson 1993; Trocolli 1992); the sixteenth-century Mississippian-style paramount chiefdom of Cofitachequi, encountered by De Soto (Anderson 1994; DePratter 1983); the Cherokee prior to Bartram's visits in the eighteenth century (Waselkov and Braund 1995:153); the Guatari of central North Carolina, as reported by Pardo (Anderson 1994; DePratter 1983); the Caddoquis in the eighteenth century (Swanton 1928); island Hispaniola in the late fifteenth century, visited by Columbus (Wilson 1990); and Puerto Rico, which had thirty-seven women leaders on one-fifth of the island in 1514, ranging in status from lowly hamlet "headmen" *(sic)* to a paramount chief (Sued Badillo 1985).

Presently, there are modern tribal groups that have elected women chiefs or

women members in their tribal councils: the Tlingit and Coastal Salish (Klein 1995; Miller 1994a, 1994b); the Cherokee; Oglala Sioux (Powers 1986); and others, including the Colville, Yuvapai, Seminole, Puyallup, and Menominee (Allen 1992:31; Bataille 1993; Fiske 1995; Green 1980:265; Kidwell 1979, 1992; LaFromboise *et al.* 1990; Miller 1994b). There are undoubtedly additional groups with women leaders that are not listed here. Certainly, not all of the historical examples of women chiefs were recorded or even encountered by Europeans.

The archaeological literature does not incorporate women into models of political organization or succession, assuming that only men were political actors despite the ethnohistoric examples listed above. The lack of explicit research on how women access roles of sociopolitical power and authority is an example of "gender blindness" (McCafferty and McCafferty 1994) and has hindered archaeologists from envisioning women in the past fulfilling different types of roles than women generally do in the present. Burials of chiefly individuals are identified as "male," although the biological sex based on the skeleton may indicate otherwise (see Arnold 1991; McCafferty and McCafferty 1994 for specific examples of this trend). Ian Hodder (1991) recognized that he was guilty of gender blindness when he realized that he applied a double standard for judging female and male representations of power. He was able to "accept real male power but found ways of rejecting real female power" (Hodder 1991:13). This type of cultural bias causes the viewer to interpret women in positions of political power as anomalous and marginal and is arguably behind the paucity of research on women leaders.

In contrast to Anglo-American societies that have cultural biasses against women accessing power, several researchers have noted that women in many American Indian societies have relatively few problems accessing elected political office in their own cultures (e.g. Fiske 1995; Kidwell 1979, 1992; Knack 1989; LaFromboise *et al.* 1990; Miller 1994b; Niethammer 1977). The ethnohistoric documents are replete with accounts of women having political power and decision-making authority, leading war parties, acting as emissaries or ambassadors, and signing treaties (Allen 1992; Bataille 1993; DePratter 1983; Grumet 1980; Sued Badillo 1985; Swanton 1928; Waselkov and Braund 1995; Wilson 1990). This phenomenon is not limited to native North American peoples, but has also been observed among traditional societies in Africa and on the Pacific Rim (Barnes 1990; Kopytoff 1990; Miller 1994b). Ironically, in comparison, "in the United States, with its longstanding egalitarian ideology and progressivist tradition, the election of a woman president remains elusive and the reality of women cabinet members rare" (Kopytoff 1990:77). The mental template for Western leaders is that of "man" or "men," and deviations from this norm in non-Western societies are often not recorded or acknowledged, thus obscuring individual cases of women leaders.

The ethnohistoric documents usually identify only one leader or chief for each group encountered; Europeans did not seem to understand the purpose of multiple chiefly leaders and the polythetic nature of power inherent in such systems. Therefore, there were probably more women leaders present, but the Europeans

did not know or comprehend their existence. Europeans also tended to stick to male informants whenever possible and to deal with men, because in their own world, men were the leaders.

Notions of power

In order to understand how women have accessed power, we must understand what is meant by the term. "Power" is not easy to define. Its usage is inconsistent and imprecise in English, conflating many different notions in a single word. Most power terms are active, implying the ability to *do* something: to have self-determination, control a situation, or get things done. Such usage presumes the existence of individuals lacking these abilities, such as those without money, legal status, the weak, or infirm. "Power" in its Western usage implies a relationship of presence and absence, and of hierarchical social relationships.

Power in Western society "is commonly equated with domination and control over people or things" (hooks 1984:83). Part of this notion of power incorporates sociopolitical power and the related concepts of legitimation, authority, and status. Individuals with political power have the ability to achieve desired goals with or without the consent of others (Marquardt 1992:106). This is power "over" others and implies force or coercive ability to accomplish desired tasks. Coercion is ineffective unless the power behind it is sanctioned by custom, consensus, or law. It is this *legitimation* that makes power a social force. Unger and Crawford (1992:157) define this as "social power" and note that "some form of coercive control" is implied. Authority is the "capacity of individuals to influence events as a result of widely recognized knowledge, prestige or legitimate position" (Marquardt 1992:106). Power without authority and legitimation is brute force. It is, however, possible to have authority without apparent power, political or otherwise. The usage of these terms as defined above provides the framework to look at power and access to power not as a single entity but as a continuum. This multiscaler or hetrarchical (Crumley 1987) notion of power admits that individuals may have little power in some realms or social contexts and more power or authority in other realms. Because power, authority, and status combine in any number of ways, power relationships are circumstantial and relative. One person's ability to dominate another may be temporary, fleeting, or event-related, as is often the case in politics.

Western notions of power are very different from many native North American conceptions of power, which usually extend far beyond the realm of politics and economics.[3] The Cherokee believe that "power is primordial, an attribute of their existence as a people granted to them at the time of creation" (Wahrhaftig and Lukens-Wahrhaftig 1977:225). This is a common theme among virtually all American Indian groups, popularized by the roughly synonymous Iroquois term *orenda,* and the Plains Siouan *wakan* (DeMallie and Lavenda 1977; Isaacs 1977). This type of power is the mystic potency that all beings and some things possess to some degree; it is more a supernatural essence and process (Klein and Ackerman 1995:12). This power is localized, limited, impersonal, and transferable (Isaacs

1977:168, n. 3). People acquire this power throughout their lifetime by various means, for example, by learning a ritual, having mystical experiences or visions, or being rewarded with it by the spirit world. The longevity of elders is seen as evidence of their power and wisdom, and they are consequently well respected. This is power in the sense of Wolf's (1990:586) first definition of power: a potency or capability of the individual.

Inanimate objects, places, and animals also possess power of varying potency. A person can incorporate the essential power from these sources into their personal power makeup. There is a hierarchy of power sources and usually a clearly defined protocol or behavior for displaying or using power. Power in any form can be used for good or ill. Individuals generally do not advertise or otherwise call attention to their own personal power since that might cause it to dissipate (DeMallie and Lavenda 1977; Isaacs 1977).

The so-called menstrual separation or isolation of menstruating women can be viewed as a power issue, because blood is considered extremely powerful (Fogelson 1990). Women bleed and do not die–a process heavily imbued with metaphors of power (Fogelson 1990; Galloway 1991). Among the Cherokee, separation may serve to protect others from the "potent force possessing rare destructive capacity" (Fogelson 1990:173) of menstruating women and not, as is widely thought, because the women are unclean or polluted.

Sociopolitical power among the coastal Algonkians was not possible without legitimation by spiritual sanctions (Grumet 1980:54), and all leaders, at every level within these societies, were served by councils comprised of a number of individuals. After comparing the political processes of eastern North American societies, Leacock concluded that "leadership was based on personal influence and ability, not formal office…decisions were not binding on those who would not agree [and] autonomy was unquestioned both for individuals and groups" (Leacock 1983:26). Leadership among the more egalitarian native North American societies is the ability or power to persuade people, not the "persuasion of power" (Grumet 1980:48). Leaders' actions are limited to the realm they are chosen for, such as external chief or military leader (Plog and Upham 1983).

I have defined six spheres of power-laden activities derived from descriptions of American Indian societies (Trocolli 1993); this list is not necessarily exhaustive. These spheres are sources of *achieved* power and prestige and include economic and productive activities (farming, gardening, gathering, hunting, crafts, arts), religion, politics, reproduction, healing, and warfare. These are sources of "achieved" power because they are categories in which an individual learns or acquires the skills, abilities, or knowledge necessary to wield that power; the more skillful they are, the greater their status. "Ascribed" power is that with which an individual is endowed because of nature, or a close relationship to powerful entities. For example, a woman in a specific clan may have higher status than a woman of equal achieved skill from a different clan, because her lineage group may be more highly ranked and more closely linked to powerful ancestors. Ascription also limits who can access a particular realm, such as politics, since certain leadership roles may be limited to members of one lineage. Together,

these statuses contribute to a person's overall position in a ranked society. If women participated in, and could access, status in these realms, then we should ask, "Why could they not also vie for chiefly office?"

Is political power a gendered category?

Shoemaker observed that American Indian

> men often had more visible public roles, but that does not mean they were necessarily more powerful. Much of the recent literature on Indian women views gender as a fundamental, yet nonhierarchical social category. Women and men have complementary roles of equal importance, power and prestige. (Shoemaker 1995:5)

Shoemaker is not alone in this opinion; many of the scholars studying American Indian women are themselves American Indians (i.e. Allen; Green; Kidwell; LaFromboise; Medicine; Midnight Sun). Their views and insider's knowledge must be considered by "outsider" anthropologists trying to understand the cultural traditions of native peoples. Unfortunately, anthropologists observing egalitarian relations between women and men often have been "unable to understand this potential equality because they insist on interpreting difference and asymmetry as inequality and hierarchy" (Moore 1988:2). Because many American Indian women themselves recognize the power of women in their societies, it becomes clear that outdated views on women's roles and lack of power must be re-evaluated. Anthropological views on power and the archaeological and ethnohistoric interpretations must begin to reflect the reality of women's power. Specifically, perspectives on power need to grapple with the idea that chiefly power may not be a gendered category in the Western sense but a series of offices to which both women and men had access.

The study of women's power requires a mental shift away from male as "normal" and as "subject," as is assumed in most anthropological, archaeological, and ethnohistoric texts. This Western tradition, at least as old as ancient Greek civilization, assumes that males occupy the public sphere, including politics and public life, and women are limited to the domestic or private arena (Saxonhouse 1992). There is seemingly no overlap in these spheres. The public/private split is well established in Western society even today. However, in many societies, especially non-Western ones, the domestic realm is not equivalent to "private," and there is considerable overlap between the public and private fields. In addition, the exclusion of women from political or public activities is not a universal cultural trait.

Rigid labor dichotomization into the public/private pattern is problematic for many native North American groups. The concept of "private" is inappropriate, because most groups have strong corporate underpinnings, and individuals do not take precedence over communal affairs. Lineages are both public and private, family and community. The nuclear family is not the foundation of society, and

production and consumption are communally oriented. Domestic affairs are important to group interests and are therefore mingled with "public." No clear differentiation between "public" and "private" in a Western sense is thus possible for many domestic activities.

"Woman" in Western culture is a construct based on biological priority and role expectations, where "women" should be passive, nurturing, domestic, affective, and so on. Until relatively recently, these "feminine" properties were considered immanent, non-negotiable, permanent, essential, global, and regarded as natural. In many non-Western cultures, "woman" and "femininity" imply a much more restricted definition that does not extend to a rigid division of labor along the lines of sex (Kopytoff 1990). The self-acknowledged ultimate expression of femininity in many American Indian cultures is to be a mother (Allen 1992; Kidwell 1979; LaFromboise *et al.* 1990; Niethammer 1977), while other rigid role-based expressions of femininity are lacking. "Manliness" in these societies is a behavioral category, a way of acting or behaving that signifies strength of character, persistence, courage, and bravery. Qualities associated with leadership are not necessarily those associated with manliness. For example, women are often associated with the ability to mediate, and forthrightness, qualities useful in the roles of speaker and ambassador (Kidwell 1992).

Generalizing from her own observations among the Tlingit, Moss commented that for American Indian groups "division of labor was not as rigidly dichotomous as some 19th- and 20th- century ethnographers imply" (Moss 1993:632). In the Southeastern United States, the veracity of the sources for examining women in roles of power during the contact period is questionable because of lack of specific data and obvious observer biasses. Division of labor seems to be clearly established along the lines of sex and/or gender during the contact period, and apparently, it was also flexible. In the Southeastern United States and beyond, women accessed such roles as warrior (Medicine 1983; Swanton 1928; Waselkov and Braund 1995), healer, and shaman (Allen 1992; Bataille 1993; Niethammer 1977). Even today, native North American women continue to be recognized for their economic production and are considered the perpetuators of cultural traditions (Allen 1992; Green 1980; Kidwell 1995; Knack 1989; LaFromboise *et al.* 1990; Medicine 1993; Niethammer 1977).

The concept of "role flexibility" has been misused to explain how women access roles "normally" occupied by men—roles in the "public" realm. The deeply rooted conventional wisdom of Southeastern archaeology, for example, considers the presence of women leaders a last-ditch response by ruling lineages to ensure survival of the chiefly line and/or cultural continuity in the face of external pressures (Anderson 1994; DePratter 1983; Hudson 1976, 1990; Wilson 1990; see also Trocolli 1995 for a more detailed discussion of this research tradition). Role flexibility assumes dire need in the ruling lineage, without demonstrating the need—do we know these women leaders had no living male relatives?—and ignores the cultural traditions where a "chief" may not be a gendered category. Therefore, gender role flexibility is not a useful concept for understanding why and how women become chiefs.

Roles or tasks that in the West would be considered gendered are circumstantial and negotiable among many native North American groups (Kopytoff 1990; Miller 1994a). It is this feature that best explains women accessing the roles of leader, chief, war leader, warrior, shaman, and healer. These roles are offices that are best occupied by *individuals* possessing both the necessary talents to fulfill the role and the social status providing them access to the role. Tasks that seem to be strongly gendered and are reported that way in the ethnographic literature may not be gendered from emic, or insider, perspectives.

For example, prior to Moss's (1993) study, shellfishing among the Tlingit had been recorded as infrequent and a task solely performed by women, children, and the aged or poor. Closer examination of the practice of shellfishing revealed that it is *not* a gendered emic category (Moss 1993). Moss found that all Tlingit individuals claim to have shellfishing knowledge, rights, and skills, regardless of sex, and when prodded all informants admitted harvesting and eating shellfish. They acknowledged that shellfishing is not a high-status task, although it may contribute significantly to the diet at certain times of the year (Moss 1993). Was this task gendered by the original ethnographers because, by definition, women's tasks are low status in Western culture? If this observation holds true for tasks other than shellfishing, then it is imperative to critically evaluate the standard litany of sexual division of labor since low-status tasks may be preferentially identified as "women's work," although both women and men may participate equally in the task.

Recasting the analysis away from gender may be necessary. Other social variables may be more powerful for analyzing women's access to political leadership, especially categories emicly identified as critical variables.

> Perhaps the most visible emerging position in clarifying the connections between gender and political and economic life is to argue that gender is not necessarily useful as a category of analysis, because gender is constructed fundamentally differently in Native communities than in non-Native communities; because gender is not a superordinate status in Native communities; because Native communities frequently are egalitarian and structured around kin and not gender relations; and because *changes in political life and in the allocation of work are not regarded as gendered issues by Natives themselves.*
>
> (Miller 1994a:58, emphasis added)

If the allocation of work and political life are not gendered categories, which Miller believes is true for the Coastal Salish, then it is useless to define a sexual division of labor for these tasks where none exists. It would further our understanding of such societies to define the emic distinctions used in allocating various tasks.

Disposal of role flexibility in favor of existential identities seems to remove some of the biasses inherent in Western interpretations of less complex lifeways. Some division of labor by sex, however, is present throughout North America, and many researchers have noted the complementarity or interdependence of

gender roles (Maltz and Archambault 1995; Trocolli 1992). Together, women and men form productive units that provide food, shelter, and clothing.

Discussion

Among many native North American peoples, especially those that reckon descent matrilineally, women did and do access roles of sociopolitical power. There are examples of women leaders from the highest levels to individual village leaders, dating from Columbus's second voyage to the present. Women were also at times warriors, healers, and shamans, and hunted, farmed, and produced a wide variety of goods and crafts. These women's existential identities are not tied to notions of passivity, lack of personal power, dependence, and childlikeness—qualities associated with women in Western culture (Kopytoff 1990). These women accessed many roles that in Western society are limited to, or reserved for, men. Such roles are not defined by gender in their own societies; instead, they are circumstantial (Kopytoff 1990; Miller 1994a). Acquired and achieved power and status of birth and ability combine to provide women access to leadership roles.

Arguably, the manner in which leadership power is parceled out to individuals does not preclude women from accessing it. We know that women did occupy all of the leadership roles at some time; therefore, there does not seem to be a gendered restriction for these roles. Clan membership and closeness to the prominent matriarchs are probably the critical variables. Using Kopytoff's notion of existential roles and identities, the above evidence indicates that political power was not a gendered category, *per se;* it was not part of the definition of what it was to be "masculine," or limited to males. Current ethnography indicates that, not surprisingly, Western gender roles and identities are not appropriate categories for understanding native power relationships.

Kopytoff (1990) was looking for an explanation as to why women in emerging nations have a much easier time of accessing high levels of sociopolitical power. Using African cases, he realized that what has been called "role flexibility" to explain women who gain great power or political prominence is, in reality, often a structurally different way of defining the roles of male and female. These roles are not gendered as are their Western counterparts. Miller, an ethnohistorian working for the Coastal Salish, was able to explain the patterns of female tribal leadership he observed in the Pacific Northwest (1994a), using Kopytoff's model. He pointed out that one of the underlying assumptions of using "role flexibility" to explain women wielding sociopolitical power is that the presence of such women is inconsistent with native gender roles and not normal or regular practice (Miller 1994a). As Moss (1993) discovered, the gendered division of labor may not be as sharply defined as earlier sources imply.

In many non-Western societies, the terms "woman" and "femininity" imply more restricted definitions that do not extend to a rigid division of labor by sex. Roles that in the West would be considered gendered are circumstantial and negotiable in many other societies. Gender is constructed fundamentally differently in native North American societies, which are frequently structured around kin

and not gender relations. Miller's (1994a) insight that political life and the allocation of work are not gendered categories is based on diachronic study and incorporates indigenous or emic categories of the people for whom he works. Therefore, he provides a powerful argument for looking at leadership roles and access to power in new ways.

The power known and experienced by native North American women is present in every facet of their lives. It includes, but is not limited to, sociopolitical power. Women's power is evident in creation myths, menstrual separation, female gods, and female-identified spirits that imbue these cultures. Women in many native North American societies know power intimately because life is overflowing with power. It is evoked in song and celebrated in folklore. Women's identities are consonant with power, just as men's are. Women have power, and that is how they know it. There is no clear line between having and knowing, because power is an explicit cultural concept that structures the relationship between people, the earth, and other living things (Duran and Duran 1995). From this perspective, to know is to be; and to be is to have. The way power is viewed and parceled out to individuals, specifically in matrilineal societies, makes it entirely possible for women to access that power.

Many native North American languages are characterized by a lack of marking for gender. The categories of animate/inanimate, or growing/nongrowing, are two examples of noun marking among these languages. The terms for political or chiefly offices among the Timucua of Florida, for example, were not marked by sex and/or gender (Trocolli 1993). In the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean, the Taino word *cacique* or *cacicazgo* was introduced by the Spaniards as the universal term for chief. *Cacica* was used to refer to all female leaders and is likely a feminization of *cacique*. The original Taino word was not marked for gender, yet the Spaniards added gender-marking when they adopted the term. The Spaniards applied *cacica* and *cacique* to all types of chiefly leaders, contributing to the difficulty of defining the political systems of contact-era peoples. The same terms were applied to all types of societies, regardless of the political complexity. Linguistic evidence, therefore, supports the argument that leadership roles were not gendered among some cultures. It is not surprising that women in these cultures have occupied leadership roles and chieftaincies, but were not "noticed."

Conclusions

The separation of the so-called domestic sphere from the public sphere is an analytical model that is not applicable to all societies. In many native North American societies, public decisions affect "domestic" events, and domestic affairs are necessary prerequisites for public affairs. Because both women and men are viewed as complementary beings, different, but equally necessary, both women and men are considered fit to wield political power. It is important to remember that women are *not* biologically constrained from participating in power relations, whether public, medical, or religious. There are clear indications that women at the time of European contact were political beings with substantial input in public

activities. Positions of leadership in some societies may be offices that are filled by individuals that possess the requisite skills, abilities, and status. Such offices are existential, and, if women could occupy them, the offices would not be gendered. Allowing that chiefs and leaders may be existential identities permits us to break away from analytical models that force rigid gender roles that are not emicly valid. Future analyses based on the existential model should provide data useful for expanding our ideas about pre-contact social formations, so they are more consistent with historical fact. The goal of such studies would be to provide gendered interpretations where men are not assumed to be the only public entities who wield political power.

Archaeologists employ analogies and the direct-historical approach for filling in details of social life not otherwise available from the archaeological record. Women accessing power need to be incorporated into such interpretations by employing appropriate and factually grounded analogues, instead of the incomplete and gender-biassed models and assumptions currently popular. When the reconstructions of pre-Columbian social formations resemble the gender patterns of Western societies, alarm bells should sound, and we should ask "Where are the women leaders?"

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Notes

1 The term "native North American societies" is used in this chapter to reflect the cross-cultural nature of this research.
2 Many of these individuals were found in the secondary literature and those references are included here. Research addressing the primary sources is ongoing.
3 An exception to the traditional or conservative Western notion of power is the so-called "New Age" or counterculture term "vibes," referring to personal energy or aura. This term is rooted in non-Western spiritual traditions.

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4 Gender, power, and heterarchy in middle-level societies

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Introduction

This chapter grows out of several stages in my own intellectual development in archaeology. I began as a European prehistorian with major interests in Bronze Age chiefdoms in Denmark and Western Europe generally (e.g. Levy 1982). However, after moving to North Carolina, I developed research interests in the later prehistory of the Southeastern United States. This cross-cultural perspective is helpful in illuminating both commonalities and differences in prehistoric human societies, including those called chiefdom, ranked, or middle-level societies. The literature on archaeologically known chiefdoms is vast; Earle (1987) provides a summary. Over time I began to find that the evolutionary perspective of much of this literature–that is, examining chiefdoms as part of a trajectory leading toward state development–tends to overemphasize the importance and, perhaps, rigidity of ranking in these societies. Both the Western European and Southeastern United States cases provide examples of chiefdoms which did not develop into primary states, so they offer an opportunity to look at the social dynamics of middle-level societies without focussing on what these societies might change into.

These queries about the nature of prehistoric chiefdoms were expanded and illuminated by two theoretical developments, of rather different scale. First is the concept of *heterarchy,* introduced by Crumley (1979) to add complexity to our understanding of status differentiation in human societies. Second is the growing discussion of gender in prehistoric societies (e.g. Claassen and Joyce 1997; Conkey and Spector 1984; Gero and Conkey 1991; Wright 1996; among others) and the interpretative complexities that a consideration of gender adds to our analysis of prehistory.

In this chapter, I examine variability in status and power in middle-level societies in two regions, Denmark in the Bronze Age and the Southeastern United States in the Mississippian period, incorporating a preliminary analysis of gender roles and statuses. The analysis of gender roles and statuses contributes to our understanding of prehistoric power structures by bringing attention to the fluctuations, contests, and complexities within these structures. I suggest that at least in these cases, the sociopolitical structure is better described by the term

"heterarchical" than by the term hierarchical; heterarchy emphasizes multidimensional and continually shifting standards of rank. This perspective encourages us to consider social complexity as something more than simply the degree of ranking. This discussion of power relations within middle-level prehistoric societies is placed in the larger context of Wolf's (1990) discussion of the workings of power generally. Here I understand power as the ability of one individual to impose on another in social action (Wolf 1990:586). Action *per se* is difficult to perceive in the archaeological record. Thus, the surrogate for direct observation of power is observation of individual access to resources of labor, knowledge, and material as shown in variability in the archaeological record.

Culture-historical setting

Stratified, non-state societies, which I will call "chiefdoms" for convenience, are salient features of the culture-historical trajectories of both Western Europe and the Southeastern United States. Here I choose illustrations from the Bronze Age of Denmark and adjacent parts of south Scandinavia (*c.* 1600–500 BC, Montelius II–VI; see Kristiansen 1991), and from the Mississippian period of the Southeastern and south central United States, approximately eastern Oklahoma to northern Florida (*c.* AD 1000–1500; see Steponaitis 1991). Despite significant differences in detail (and quite different geographic scales), these two culture-historical phenomena share a number of characteristics. In both locales, we find prehistoric societies practicing agriculture in temperate, wooded environments; building earthen mounds for burials containing varying amounts of wealth items; participating in long-distance exchange for exotic materials, including metal, stone, and shell; and creating elaborate pictorial artifacts that appear to express important iconographic and symbolic motifs. Summaries of the culture history of Bronze Age Denmark can be found in Coles and Harding (1979:277–334, 491–532) and Jensen (1982:129–196); and a review of Mississippian archaeology can be found in Pagan (1995:427–452) and Galloway (1989). It is widely suggested for both areas that ritual knowledge and ceremonial power contributed to and were intimately connected with political power (Knight 1986; Kristiansen 1984).

In neither locale do we see the development of "primary" state societies. I would argue that certain regional manifestations of Mississippian culture, for example the Cahokia polity of *c.* AD 1000–1250 in the central Mississippi River valley, were periodically more stratified than any Danish Bronze Age region. However, it is clear that in both areas, political organization experienced significant cycling, the rise and fall of centers, and fluctuation in the degree of political centralization. While considerable effort has gone into identifying chiefly sites and burials, this emphasis on hierarchy may be overstated and may mask both these fluctuations and other kinds of social complexity.

Of necessity, this chapter paints with a broad brush. Regional and chronological variations within the two regions are neglected or downplayed here in the interest of discerning some general patterns. The data to be discussed include burial associations; skeletal evidence; patterning of other ritual finds including hoards

or caches; and iconographic representations on portable artifacts (intra-site spatial distributions and other evidence for division of labor are not discussed here). Although all these categories of data are available for both cases, the data sets are not identical. For example, there has been much more osteological analysis of skeletal remains from Mississippian sites (e.g. Powell 1991) than from Danish Bronze Age sites (e.g. Bennike 1985), partly because of differing research traditions and partly because a large proportion of Bronze Age burials are cremations, while almost all Mississippian burials are inhumations.

A final introductory point has to do with the complexities of distinguishing *sex* and *gender*. There has been extensive discussion within anthropology and elsewhere about the distinctions between sex and gender (Conkey and Gero 1991:8–14; Joyce and Claassen 1997:2–5; Moore 1994:10f). The consensus emphasizes that these concepts are not isomorphic and, further, links the concept of sex with biological variables and gender with sociocultural ones; however, this perspective has itself been recently critiqued within the gender scholarship community (Moore 1994:19f; see also Claassen 1992:1–4). Within this discussion, the relevance of skeletal remains to analyses of gender in prehistoric societies has sometimes been problematized (Bacus *et al.* 1993:2; Claassen 1992). Nevertheless, I am completely unwilling to do without the rich body of prehistoric skeletal data. Thus, in this chapter, I concern myself with *women* and *men* as they can be determined from skeletal markers and visible attributes of statuary and other representations (keeping in mind that some skeletons and some human representations cannot be so distinguished) and the evidence of status for these two categories. This may understate the gender complexity but still reveals interesting social dynamics. I am interested in actual females and males rather than in the concept or category of gender in general. In the following, I first discuss the archaeological evidence for roles, statuses, and activities of women and men in the two societies, followed by a discussion of social structure and power. I conclude by re-evaluating ideas about hierarchy and power in middle-level societies within a perspective of heterarchy.

Gender

Denmark

Danish Bronze Age gender roles and statuses have been discussed by Gibb (1987), Sørensen (1987, 1991), Randsborg (1984), and myself (Levy 1995). Although there probably was some gender-based division of labor in the daily activities of cultivation, stock rearing, weaving, woodworking, and other craft activities, we have little direct evidence for what that division of labor might be. For the earlier Bronze Age (*c.* 1800–1100 BC), direct evidence of gender statuses comes from the inhumation burials and associated artifacts in rounded earthen mounds and, by extension, from non-mortuary hoards of similar artifacts. For the later Bronze Age (*c.* 1100–500 BC), there is less evidence from burials, which are now cremations accompanied by relatively few grave goods, and more from these

hoards, which are interpreted as ritual offerings. (While there seems to be some possibility of establishing sex for cremated remains (e.g. Gejvall 1961), little analysis has been done.)

The best recorded evidence comes from bronze and gold objects found in these mortuary and non-mortuary ritual contexts; evidence is derived both from artifact associations and from engraved representational and abstracted motifs on the metal objects. About a half-dozen small bronze figurines are also known from the period; five of them are females dressed in ways that are congruent with female burials. I take these to be representations of humans (albeit, perhaps humans in special ritual roles) rather than of supernatural (illustrated in Glob 1970:155–166, who calls them "gods"). A final potential source of gender information are the rock carvings, mostly from Norway and Sweden from culturally affiliated contexts. Representations of artifacts in rock carvings demonstrate that many of them certainly date to the Late Bronze Age; some portion, however, date to the Early Bronze Age. Some of the rock carvings represent groups of stylized human figures, sometimes in boats, in what appear to be processions or other communal activities.

As noted above, the baseline for these analyses are the burial associations from Early Bronze Age inhumation burials and the half-dozen or so small bronze figurines of humans. The skeletal data are quite skimpy because skeletal remains are not preserved in many inhumations and only a small sample have been analyzed. So, there is no systematic information about nutritional status, pathologies, age at death, etc. It is striking that Bennike's (1985:50) chart of male and female height through history in Denmark shows that females were taller in the Bronze Age than at any other period until the twentieth century and that sexual dimorphism in height was less in the Bronze Age than at any other period (except the Mesolithic when everyone was much shorter), suggesting more equal childhood diets and health conditions in this period than in others. However, it is true that the Bronze Age sample is small and, therefore, may be skewed by a few atypical individuals.

The distribution of metal grave goods suggests a non-egalitarian society (Randsborg 1974). Both females and males were accompanied by metal grave goods. Taking the evidence from inhumation burials and from figurines at face value, there are several artifact types, found both in burials and in hoards, that seem to have clear gender associations. Swords, spears, helmets, and elaborately decorated axes are associated with males; elaborate belt ornaments, earrings, and hollow bronze tubes that dangled from string skirts are associated with females. Patterns of artifact association suggest that neckrings are predominately female, but no absolute gender affiliation can be assigned to a large range of artifacts including armrings, brooches, pins, ordinary axes, and daggers.

These metal objects were manufactured by local craft specialists, more likely part-time specialists than full-time, from imported raw materials (Levy 1991). Some of the finished objects were also imported, mostly from central Europe. Both Sørensen (1987, 1991) and Randsborg (1984), in rather different ways, suggest that the dominance of male items among the imported bronze objects

reflects male control of long-distance exchange, but this is not as straightforward as they imply. It is, indeed, the case that imported axes and swords are relatively common, and a small number of spectacular, imported shields and helmets are also male-associated items. Nevertheless, cups, buckets, and other feasting equipment are also numerically common imports. I would argue these are either non-gendered or, if we accept a conventional association between women and food, they are then female associated; in fact, they are found in ritual hoards associated with female jewelry.

The ornaments and weapons appear in ranked sets that suggest their identity as sumptuary goods, marking differences in rank (Levy 1979). Many of the objects are engraved with representational and abstracted motifs that seem to have iconographic significance. Motifs include boats, birds, snakes, suns, horned animals, and horses, as well as more abstracted spiral and wave forms (Figure 4.1). For reviews of the arguments establishing the ritual nature of the hoards and the engraved motifs, see Levy (1982) and Kristiansen (1982, 1984).

Overall, the burial and hoard associations suggest that both women and men wore, displayed, and manipulated valuable ritual objects made of exotic raw materials; thus, both men and women had access to important ritual objects and, thus, probably to important ritual power. It appears that metal wealth, both locally produced and imported, was controlled by both males and females, as was ritual activity in some sense.

If we turn to the rock carvings, we find that human figures are relatively common and very stylized in these carvings. There are two distinctive kinds of humans represented: phallic figures and others. Some of the others have long hair; some do not. Some of the others have an indented dot ("cupmark") between their legs; some do not. Many of the phallic figures brandish weapons (illustrated in Coles and Harding 1979: Plate 24a); a smaller number of the non-phallic figures also hold weapons (illustrated in Coles 1990:24, 81). My qualitative evaluation is that phallic figures outnumber non-phallic ones by about three to one.

Except for the obviously phallic figurines, the traditional gender identifications of these images are problematic. For example, Coles (1990:24–25) suggests that most of the figures are probably males and the rest unidentifiable: "As we have said, many of the humans are sexless, and only a few are thought to be definitely female." That is, in Coles's view, non-phallic figures cannot be female unless marked by some other identifier, such as a cupmark beneath their legs; these markers are rare. In contrast, I suggest that most of the non-phallic figures *are* females.

Given our assumption that whoever carved these images produced their designs consciously and in a planned fashion (an assumption, however implicit, that we do make when we analyze the carvings as patterned cultural evidence), I suggest they are meant to represent at least two kinds of people. Given the prominence of phalluses on some figures, gender was at least one of the things differentiating these two kinds of people. In this light, the rock carvings seem to represent processions and ceremonies in which males, often armed, played a frequent part, but that some women periodically also participated in. Males outnumber females,

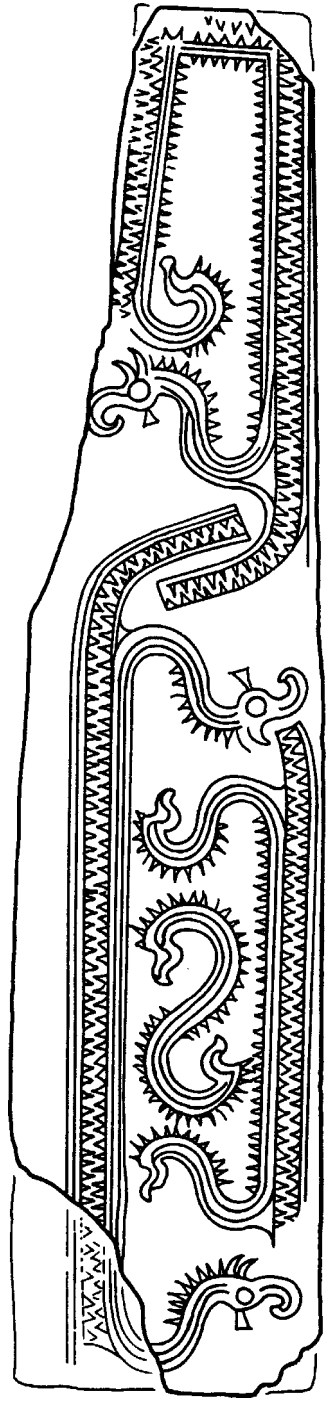

Figure 4.1 Bronze razor from Denmark, approximately 10 cm. long. Drawing by Jennifer Hook, MASCA, University of Pennsylvania Museum, from Broholm (1953: Figure 156)

but both are represented. By extension, then, both men and women participated in or were symbolically associated with the rituals that the rock carvings are thought to represent.

Overall, both men and women were seen to wear and to control objects embodying ritual power in Bronze Age southern Scandinavia. The arenas of ritual activity seem to have differed in degree, with women more involved in rituals that deposited artifacts in watery places (possibly, related to fertility) and men more involved in the kind of processions and combats pictured in rock carvings. Female-associated artifacts are dominant in the ritual hoards, especially in the Late Bronze Age, while phallic figures are more frequent than non-phallic ones in the rock carving processions. Thus, gender might be a significant determinant of where human individuals may seek ritual knowledge and power. In contrast, the iconographic evidence does not suggest a cosmology of gendered supernatural beings. Most of the engraved motifs are of animals lacking any gender identification we can recognize today. I have argued elsewhere (Levy 1995) that these may represent different realms of the universe: e.g. upper world and lower world. As noted above, despite Glob's (1970) traditional identification of the bronze figurines as "gods," I think they are humans. The higher proportion of female figurines supports the importance of their role in ritual, but says little, to my mind, about the possible gender of supernatural beings.

Mississippian

Mississippian gender roles and engendered iconography have been discussed by C.Brown (1982), Drooker (1994), Trocolli (1993; Chapter 3 in this volume), Thomas (1995, 1996), Koehler (1997), and Claassen (1997), among others. Again, there probably was a gender-based division of labor in many daily-life activities in the Southeastern United States during the Mississippian period. However, the data considered here about gender roles and statuses come from burial associations, skeletal analyses, and artistic representations, especially those conventionally considered part of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC: Galloway 1989). The SECC material is mostly dated post-AD 1200 and includes items of sheet copper, marine shell, pottery, and stone found both in burials and in non-mortuary ritual contexts. The burials are all inhumations or skeletal material disarticulated during burial processing (e.g. at the Craig Mound at Spiro, OK: J.A.Brown 1971). Burials may come from rounded earthen mounds, flat-topped mounds, or non-mound, village contexts. Objects from non-mortuary contexts are often found in caches incorporated into flat-topped mounds or the structures that once stood on top of these mounds. More data are available from the larger, fortified, multimound centers than from smaller villages or hamlets.

There is a great deal more skeletal information from the southeast than from Bronze Age Denmark. Even though we do not have skeletal analyses from some of the most important Mississippian mound burial contexts (e.g. from the major mounds at Moundville, AL, where grave goods but not skeletal remains have survived to meet modern analysis: Powell 1991), there is enough evidence to

demonstrate that both males and females are found in high-ranking mound contexts. Identifiable males are more frequent than identifiable females and a proportion of adult skeletal remains cannot be identified as to sex. For example, in Mound 3 at Lake Jackson Mounds in northern Florida, of eighteen adult burials, nine are identified as male, four are female, and five are unidentifiable as to sex (Scarry 1992:175). Elaborate artifacts with implications of high status and of ritual power are found with both males and females, although there is evidence that the richest burials are those of males. Certain very elaborate artifacts, including the embossed copper "eagle dancer" or "hawk man" plates are found preferentially, but not exclusively, with males. For example, at Mound 3 at Lake Jackson, of the four well-preserved embossed copper plates found, three were found with two different identifiable males and one with a female Jones 1982; Scarry 1992:175). There is at least one case of a similar embossed plate associated with a child's burial, at Etowah, GA (Larson 1971:67).

Overall, the burial evidence suggests greater male access to items of wealth and ideological significance, with some female access to these items. Blakely (1977:58) proposes that the females in Mound C at Etowah are wives of high-ranking males sacrificed at the husband's death who may have gained their status through marriage. I suggest that this greatly oversimplifies the possible determinants of status for females, particularly in light of ethnohistoric evidence of widespread matrilineal kinship systems in the region and the presence of some female chiefs at the time of first contact with Europeans (*c.* AD 1540). In contrast, J.A.Brown (1971:101) proposes that the diverse burial treatments found among high-ranking burials at Spiro, OK, demonstrate a diversity of social routes to mound burial, including kinship status and achieved power; according to Brown, only males have access to the single highest status, but a variety of adults, male and female, have access to other high-ranking positions. This more nuanced interpretation is more convincing and, in fact, is congruent with Blakely's (1977:48) own argument that there were several routes to mound burial for the males found at Etowah; one needs only to expand this explicitly to all adults.

If we turn to the representational iconography found on items of copper, shell, pottery, and stone, we find that human and human-like gendered beings are common. One relevant category consists of ceramic effigy vessels of both males and, more commonly, females (Drooker 1994). Two other categories consist of relatively flat, engraved or embossed, copper and shell objects; and of three-dimensional carved stone objects, including pipes and statuary. Knight (1986) distinguishes these into two independent categories of "iconic families." Among the copper and shell materials that Knight calls the "warfare/cosmogeny complex," figures of males are apparently much more common than females, while among the second category, which Knight calls "temple statuary," males and females are represented about evenly. Knight's third iconic family is based on the imagery of the flat-topped temple mound, which he associates with mythological themes of earth/agriculture/fertility.

However, it is worth looking again at the warfare/cosmogeny complex. Phillips and Brown (1978) say about southeastern art generally:

> Recognizable sexual characteristics are nonexistent in the figural art of Spiro, as in the Southeast generally. The present writers incline to the opinion that this means that identification as to sex was not considered necessary because it was taken for granted that none was female.
>
> (Phillips and Brown 1978:95)

This statement has the advantage of being explicit about what is evidence and what is assumption, although it does ignore the three-dimensional figures which are widely known to include females. More problematic is Emerson's (1989:61–62) statement about figures in the Spiro shell corpus: "where women (and sexual identification in general) are rarely portrayed." Like Coles's analysis of the Bronze Age rock carvings, it seems that when explicit sexual identification is lacking, we can still see men, but not women. The key here, as in Denmark, seems to be weapons: weapons mean warriors mean men. It is not necessary to deny the general cross-cultural association of males with weapons to suggest that females are being dismissed from this iconography for inadequate reasons.

In fact, several of the best known, putatively male figures may well include some females. C.Brown (1982), Drooker (1994), and Koehler (1997) point out that some of the classic "hawk man" or "eagle dancer" figures are shown with breasts and some are not. The breasts are small and stylized, but they are certainly there. While Jones (1982:16) refers to a "nipple" on one of figures from the Lake Jackson copper plates, identifying it as a male hawk dancer, he does not mention that the figure on another copper plate lacks a nipple. Even more striking is the well-known shell gorget from the Hixon site in Tennessee, showing two identically costumed figures facing each other in profile, one with a breast and one without (Figure 4.2). Again, if we assume that the artists knew what they were doing–and, in fact, we do assume this–then, these differences mean something.

Because of the sexual and gender connotations of breasts, that something is likely gender differentiation. Thus, just as women were occasionally buried with copper or shell representations of the eagle dancer, females apparently participated at times in the ceremonies shown in these material representations.

To summarize, within the ranked societies of the later Mississippian, men held many positions of status and power. The archaeological evidence suggests that both warfare and ritual influence contributed to the power of chiefs. In addition, some women filled positions of high status and power. Control of agriculture and agricultural ritual, such as is implied in several female figurines, such as the Birger figurine who is hoeing the ground and entwined with a gourd vine (Emerson 1989), probably contributed to female status, while prowess in warfare or ritual influence over warfare may have contributed also in some cases. The iconographic materials do not explicitly tell us anything about control of craft specialization or distribution of foodstuffs, but there is nothing in the techniques of craft work (e.g. embossing copper plates, engraving shell cups, pottery making, etc.) that limits the activities to males or females. Ethnohistoric evidence confirms that at the time of early contact, most recognized chiefs were males although some female chiefs are also known. The widespread presence of matrilineal kinship systems in

Figure 4.2 Shell gorget from the Hixon site, Tennessee, approximately 12 cm. in diameter. Courtesy of the Frank H.McClung Museum, University of Tennessee at Knoxville

the southeast suggests the likelihood of relatively high status of women, as is known ethnographically in matrilineal societies. As in Bronze Age Denmark, there seem to be multiple sources of influence and power in these societies.

Power and heterarchy

Sørensen (1987:100) suggests that it seems as if men and women in Bronze Age Denmark were parts of two separate social hierarchies. An alternative way of expressing this is to suggest the existence of multiple sources of power and status in the society, including control of agricultural production, craft production, trade, combat, and ritual power. Sometimes, these reinforced each other and created temporarily powerful chiefs; at other times, influence and authority were dispersed

to a number of parties, male and female, exploiting diverse means of control and legitimation. I suggest that a similar conceptualization of status and power as being many-stranded will illuminate the ranking system of Mississippian societies. When ranking is seen as multiplex, we must grapple with extra complexities but are probably closer to reality for these middle-range societies. This approach to power can be put in a larger context by considering Wolf's (1990) conceptualization of power in human societies.

Wolf (1990:587) identifies four levels or modes of power:

1 power as an attribute of the person, emphasizing potency or capability
2 power as the ability of one to impose on another in social action and interpersonal relations
3 power that controls the settings in which interactions may take place, which Wolf calls tactical or organizational power
4 power that structures the overarching political economy, which "shapes the social field of action so as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible or impossible."

Wolf focusses on the interaction of modes three and four because they illuminate the modern world. In contrast, I will focus on mode one because I find it illuminates the chiefdom case. Individual potency or capability (type 1) has implications for Wolf's other three modes because it is always individuals who impose on other persons (type 2), control the settings of social interaction (type 3), and structure the very possibilities of social interaction (type 4). In state societies, the strength of overarching structures may severely limit the action of individuals, but in middlelevel or chiefdom societies, the power of the individual is significant. This power is created out of personal qualities and enhanced through public appearance and ritual performance. In this context, gender is one personal quality that will often be salient in defining power and will, thus, often be expressed, emphasized, and manipulated in ritual settings.

In addition, Wolf encourages us to examine the *process* of power as well as conflicts and contradictions within the expression of power. Wolf (1990:593) points out that cultural structures or "versions of significance," including those that establish some individuals as more powerful than others, must be repeatedly negotiated and maintained, established and re-established: "The cultural assertion that the world is shaped in this way and not in some other has to be repeated and enacted, lest it be questioned and denied." The maintenance of power thus requires work and action. This is congruent with the emphasis on sumptuary goods, costume, and ritual performance by elites within chiefdoms. In the two regions under discussion, these emphases are demonstrated archaeologically in mortuary remains, hoards, and in artistic representations of active human and superhuman figures in rock art, copper plates and bronze objects, shell gorgets, and elsewhere.

Such an emphasis on process is also congruent with the pattern of cycling of power and influence found in these middle-level societies (Earle 1991). For example, Anderson (1994) documents the rise and fall of several chiefly centers

during the Mississippian period in the Savannah River valley of Georgia and South Carolina. Around AD 1000, there were two mound centers near the mouth of the river and two near its headwaters. Around AD 1200, the centers at the headwaters were abandoned, but several single mound centers were established along the middle reaches of the river. Around AD 1350, most of these mound centers were abandoned and two multimound centers dominated the central valley, while one of the headwater sites was reoccupied. By AD 1450, the entire valley and all the mound centers were apparently abandoned except for three mound sites at the headwaters, including one that had not been occupied for several hundred years (Anderson 1994:234–244). Patterns of settlement occupation and abandonment in several Mississippian regions probably followed similar trajectories. Similarly, even within the much smaller geographic scale of Bronze Age Denmark, there is evidence of subregions rising and falling in importance over the period (Levy 1982:86–91).

Finally, examination of the cultural and ritual "work" of maintaining power, of the rise and fall or cycling of chiefly power, and of the role of ritual and gender all are congruent with the concept of "heterarchy." Crumley (1979) borrowed the term heterarchy from computer science and defines it as a system of relations:

> in which each element possesses the potential of being unranked (relative to other elements) or ranked in a number of different ways, depending on systemic requirements…elements in a hierarchical structure are most frequently perceived as being vertical…, whereas heterarchical structure is most easily envisioned as lateral, emphasizing the number and variety of connections among elements and the varying circumstantial importance of any single element.
>
> (Crumley 1979:144)

She also notes (1979:145) that hierarchical systems are a subset of heterarchical ones. The concept of heterarchy encourages an understanding of social systems that does not privilege hierarchy as the only mode of complexity (Crumley 1987; Ehrenreich *et al.* 1995) and emphasizes the possibility of multiple bases of influence and power within a society.

Wolf's first mode of power—power as an attribute of a person, potency, or capability—refers especially to the role of culturally valued individual characteristics in creating a powerful person. Such characteristics may include physical qualities such as height, intellectual qualities such as special knowledge, and/or ascribed statuses such as kinship position. And, of course, gender is one of the most obvious personal or individual characteristics, which may then be culturally associated with physical, intellectual, and other qualities. Within any society, I suggest that several cross-cutting personal criteria will contribute to status, influence, and power. In very centralized and hierarchical societies, rather rigid controls will be placed on the number and flexibility of criteria of power; these are the constraints of Wolf's tactical and structural modes of power. However, in middle-level societies, such as Bronze Age Denmark and Mississippian North America, there will be

numerous personal qualities, both achieved and ascribed, that may contribute to status and power.

Each of these personal qualities can be emphasized and/or manipulated through control of material items, particularly items of dress and costume, and through ritual performance. The symbolic representations on these objects, as well as their raw materials, contribute to their value in creating status and power. Helms (1988) points out that the control of exotic raw materials (i.e. from geographically distant places) in dress, costume, and ritual objects reinforces the appearance of controlling special knowledge (i.e. from spiritually distant places). Such use of exotic materials occurred in both the cases discussed here. The copper and shell in North America and the bronze in Denmark were all exotic materials to be acquired from distant locales.

The iconography of special humans and supernatural beings of both human and animal form found on shell, copper, and bronze linked the individuals who wore and manipulated the objects to the power of the supernatural world. Like the natural world, I suggest that there was diversity in the sources of power to be found in the supernatural world. Knight's (1986) concept of "iconic families," sets of motifs and structures associated with different cult institutions, suggests the complexity and multiplicity of these ritual sources of power for Mississippian societies; the same is likely true for the Bronze Age. In both cases, there are hints in the iconography and in the contexts of ritual remains that differing rituals focussed on reproduction and fertility, on warfare and physical prowess, and on cosmological understandings of the structure of the world (e.g. Levy 1995). There are hints that fertility rituals were more commonly the arena of female activity and warfare rituals were more commonly associated with males, but I doubt that this was a clear dichotomy.

At times, one person may concentrate a large number of personal qualities of potency and capability such as gender, physical strength, reproductive capability, kinship status, and/or esoteric knowledge, becoming a temporarily powerful central chief. At other times, influence and authority were dispersed to a number of parties, female and male, exploiting diverse means of legitimation and control. It is not that there are no chiefs or no hierarchy in these prehistoric cases, nor does the evidence suggest that women wielded as much public political power as men. But "hierarchy" and "chiefdom" alone do not express the complexity of everyday power relationships; lateral and parallel relationships were as important as vertical relationships.

Conclusion

I have argued that both Mississippian and Bronze Age societies were heterarchical organizations, combining vertical relationships of dominance and subordination with frequent and complex lateral and parallel social relationships. Both females and males held high-ranking social positions; both participated in rituals that contributed to social status (and both participated in the economy of their societies, although this topic is not discussed here). Gender, kinship status,

ritual knowledge, and economic clout all contributed to an individual's status and power, which probably varied through the life course. On a larger scale and over time, communities and regions experienced fluctuations in the location of central places, in the degree of ranking within societies, in the kinds of power accorded to individuals, and, probably, in attitudes toward gender. Incorporation of gender into analyses of power encourages this emphasis on variability and fluctuation.

It is worth examining very briefly the differences rather than the similarities in these social organizations. The data suggest that some regional manifestations of Mississippian society were more stratified than Bronze Age Denmark. This is revealed in the more obvious site hierarchies and the presence of impressive fortifications in Mississippian archaeology, both of which are lacking in the Danish Bronze Age archaeological record. In addition, there is occasional evidence of Mississippian human sacrifice, also not present in Denmark. These material signs may suggest that Mississippian elites controlled more tactical and structural power (Wolf's types 3 and 4) than did Danish Bronze Age elites. For example, the presence of fortifications suggests a greater degree of control of the landscape and, thus, the settings of social interaction (Wolf's type 3) than exists in societies with no fortifications. Nevertheless, the continual fluctuation of elite power and the shifting of centers from place to place over time suggest, in both cases, that political systems were relatively open and flexible. Tactical and structural power were relatively undeveloped, as is shown by the inability of any single site to concentrate resources for very long.

In both Danish Bronze Age society and Mississippian society, men and women held elite positions. While there is evidence that males held more elite positions and frequently held higher elite positions, to focus only on individual high chiefs is to miss an important point: in these societies, there were multiple sources of influence and power, sometimes reinforcing each other, sometimes intercutting each other. Power had to be literally performed in public manipulations of striking material costumes, objects, and settings. The complexity of the social system is not fully served by the description "hierarchical." A concern with the role of gender in influence and power reminds us of the diversity and flexibility of sources of power, the heterarchy of middle-level societies.

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Part II

Ideology and the negotiation of power

5 Writing on the face of the moon

Women's products, archetypes, and power in ancient Maya civilization

Carolyn E. Tate

Introduction

> The moon, our grandmother, *Iyom pak'lom,* is the great power in Atitlan. She brought everything from her belly. She gets big and swells and gives birth to the months. She is like some bitch-dog who gives birth to puppies all the time. She gives birth to the sun also and she creates *il* and *mac* (our pleasure-pain sin). She is into *il-mac* herself so she comes and goes. The first child of the Padre Eterno…, and our grandmother was not made from a sexual union, because really, there were not two people…. The moon lives on top of the 12 steps…of which she is the *ahaw* [lord]. On these steps, she greets the sun when he comes in from work and from here she sends him off again.
>
> (From an oration by Cristóbal Y, a Tzutujil Maya man, in Tarn and Prechtel (1986:174–175): see Figure 5.1)

Since the 1970s, scholars attempting to reconstruct classic period (AD 250–950) Maya women's roles as shown in art have recognized that the figural scenes on monumental sculpture and ceramic vessels portray primarily men and their deeds and that women were portrayed by men from a male viewpoint (Clarkson 1978; Joyce 1992; Stone 1988, 1990). However, they have not explored the realm of women's art production except for spinning and weaving. Nor have those working with hieroglyphic decipherment asked what culturally constructed archetype privileged men to control imagery and writing in Maya civilization. Women's spiritual roles and their contribution to men's political efficacy have been equally little studied. This chapter addresses these related issues through an exploration of the Maya gendered world, in which both men and women relate to distinct aspects of nature, but the ideal nature of anything is androgynous.

In order to create a Maya frame of reference in which to consider the roles and products of women, the chapter reviews recent ethnological work on gender archetypes, which parallel the behavior of the sun and moon. It then proposes two hypotheses about women among the ancient Maya. The first is that women made the ceramic vessels that men decorated and also the paper that men inscribed. Furthermore, while this division of labor between the manufacture of material

Figure 5.1 A Maya couple honor the moon over Lake Atitlán with offerings. Note anthropomorphic world. Adelina Nicho Cumez (1992) *El Llanto de los Volcánes* Collection C.Tate. Author photo

products and the oral arts was based on an engendered and ensouled cosmology and provided women with a sense of secure identity, it also allowed a politicization of inequality by replicating a primordial (and ongoing) dialectic in which men attempt to seize and politicize the primary status and generative power of women. The second hypothesis is that balancing their unequal access to public office, women's spiritual practices formed an essential link between the political endeavors of men and their ancestral deities. These hypotheses are explored through examination of art showing the roles and associations of the "Moon Goddess," the gendered divisions of labor that intersect with this archetype, and woman's spiritual practices, including prayer, blood offerings, and impersonating the dual-gendered, primordial Maize "Deity."

The Maya gendered world

Classic Maya world view was (and is today) fundamentally magic-cosmic. This phrase has been employed in a provocative book by Alan Roland (1988) aimed at creating psychiatric and anthropological bases for a theory of cross-cultural psychology. He contrasts a magic-cosmic world view with a Western rationalist-scientific one, defining the former as

> a nonrational, noncausal monistic relationship between planetary and other celestial bodies with past lives on one hand, and with everyday relationships and events on the other, through correspondences, identities, and emanations

> that are metonymically understood. Philosophically, this is based on the idea that human beings constitute a microcosm with a number of inner correspondences and identities with the forces of the macrocosm or cosmos.
> (Roland 1988:299 n. 14)

That the Maya definition of self consists of such correspondences has been shown indirectly by a number of anthropologists, perhaps best by Duncan Earle (1986). His participation in the life of a Quiché family provides a paradigm for how the activities of women and men at different ages resonate with the cycles of the sun and moon on their daily and yearly courses. The following paragraphs draw from his work in Chinique, Guatemala, and that of several other anthropologists to create a greatly condensed view of how a Maya individual sees correspondences among the personal soul, the body, the home, community, animate landscape, and moving celestial bodies, all of which possess inner spiritual entities or souls.

The individual's world is centered on the home, which is the "action domain" of the woman, who is called *rahaw ha,* "owner of the house," although she does not normally own it in terms of legal property (Earle 1986:157). Each part of the house possesses gender-specific, anthropomorphic qualities. The roof is made of wood, the stem or male part of trees, and associated with the male sky. Here men store seed maize and the ancient Hero Twins, whose story is told in the *Popol Vuh,* stored ballgame equipment. The walls and floor of the house are made of mud and associated with the cold female earth (Earle 1986:166). In the home, each day, the woman rises with the Morning Star in the chill predawn to bring the fire back to life in the hearth. She works continuously and steadily all day, close to the earth: cooking over the three-stone hearth on the ground, weaving while sitting on the ground, washing clothes in the low-lying river or lake, and tending children. Ideally, women leave the house only to perform activities firmly rooted in the household, even if economically productive (Earle 1986:158 ff.), such as pottery making.

Men rise with the sun, warm themselves by the fire, then set out for their own or others' agricultural fields, or engage in wage labor. Their work involves verbal negotiation skills. As the sun sets or the rains begin, they return home tired (ibid.).

Like the moon, which is constantly present in both the day and the night, women's activities are fairly constant throughout the day and the year. In contrast, men's activities vary seasonally: just before the rainy season begins and during the early months of the rainy season, they work intensely in their maize fields. During the dry season, they may even leave their community to work on the coast (ibid.: 159).

Instead of seeing an opposition between nature and culture as a basis for gender-specific work roles, the Maya see the genders as operating on different temporal cycles.

Female-associated time runs in a 260-day cycle in which each possesses a unique identity of number and name. Its length approximates nine lunations and the human gestation period. This cycle dominates ritual life, which consists of repetitive devotional and divinatory acts. The male cycle of 365 days approximates

the solar year (ibid.: 160). Furthermore, masculine activities such as war were sometimes synchronized with planetary movements (Lounsbury 1982). These cycles conjoin to define each day, which thus has male and female components. As Earle states:

> Things that are unchanging [repetitive women's activities] are juxtaposed to those things that change, things that grow and die [men's activities]. The process of separation, complementary opposition, and reintegration of these two concepts characterizes the Quiché view of daily life and their beliefs about the nature of the temporal and spatial world.
>
> (Earle 1986:158)

Thus, while materials, such as wood and tools, and activities, such as eating and building, and body parts such as the clitoris are considered male, and cotton and its manipulated forms, fruit and flowers, the earth and its bodies of water, weaving, and the penis are considered female, the Maya believe that everything that fulfills its function unites male and female aspects. As Cristóbal Y said (in the epigraph), "The first child…was not made from a sexual union, because really, there were not two people."

The Tzutujil Maya of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, share the cognitive pattern that Earle described among the Quiché:

> one unit of function can bear, within itself, male and female aspects on the model of the human couple as the primary unit…. Thus a man's body is his wife, everything concerned with the mind and wisdom being male, while everything concerned with the body and beauty being female.
>
> (Tarn and Prechtel 1986:173)

Understanding that cognition involved a complex system of taxonomy of things respective of gender and seniority will help iconographers unravel the symbolic webs of Maya imagery. After examining the principal female archetype, in which the dimensions of female behavioral norms and duties are developed, this chapter will reconsider several important images of women.

The Moon Goddess

The principal female "deity," whom scholars call the Moon Goddess (or Goddess I), and whom Maya people call "Our Grandmother" or "Our Mother," symbolizes the continuum of phenomena related to growth of vegetal and human life: the earth, its plants, and especially maize. She is represented (in the 260-day calendar) by the day Caban, which signifies the earth, and includes the Moon Goddess's curly forelock (Thompson 1971:86). Some Maya call both the Moon Goddess and maize by the appellative "Our Mother," while some refer to maize as masculine. The Moon Goddess is often connected with bodies of water: in Panajachel the Caqchiquel say that she owns Lake Atitlán (illustrated in Figure 5.1). In Tenejapa,

among other places, young women offer their finest weavings to the Moon Goddess, patroness of weaving, by throwing them into the depths of the lake (Branstetter 1974).

Representations of the Moon Goddess show her at different ages and as both helpful and wanton. While the Moon Goddess aided civilization by controlling the essential activities of procreation, sex, midwifery, medicine, and weaving, she could also provide a negative example, wantonly disappearing from view or consorting with planets in the night sky. In Maya thought, complementing the feminine power of generation is a fearsome aggressive voraciousness, best known through the widespread myths of the *Xtabay,* a female demon who steals men's souls. The reader may recall the words of Cristóbal Y in the epigraph, which explicitly address the contradictory roles of powerful source of life versus unchaste woman.

The activities and powers associated with the Moon Goddess spin a continuum of correspondences in the Maya gendered cosmos. Cotton, medicinal herbs, and maize are fruit of the feminine earth. Therefore spinning, weaving, healing, midwifery, preparing maize dough and drink are properly the activities of women. As we shall soon see, paper (the inner bark of amate trees) and clay are worked directly on the earth with water drawn from the earth and also are the domain of women.

Women's products

Writing around 1566, Diego de Landa, the second Bishop of Yucatan, observed that:

> [Women] were very devout and pious, and also practiced many acts of devotion before their idols, burning incense before them and offering them presents of cotton stuffs, of food and drink and it was their duty to make the offerings of food and drink.
>
> (Tozzer 1941:128)

The "idols" mentioned were certainly images of the ancestors (McAnany 1995:35), who were a source of spiritual guidance. The products that Bishop Landa listed–cloth, food, and drink–appear on classic period imagery along with other products, specifically paper and ceramic vessels, whose manufacture is not so well documented. This section addresses the issue of who made the ceramics and paper books that Maya artists decorated so profusely.

Painted on the Princeton Vase (Figure 5.2) are five women within a palace assisting a Lord of the Underworld. In the scene are several objects always assumed to have been manufactured by women: the cloth curtains, their own tiedyed robes, and the woven cape of the lord. Who made the cylinder vases handled by the women and the codex on which the rabbit writes? Ethnographic analogy made in light of the gendered cosmos provides the basis for the hypothesis that making paper and pottery was women's work while writing and painting was men's.

Figure 5.2 Vase in Codex style: palace scene with beheading. The Art Museum, Princeton University, NJ, gift of the Hans and Dorothy Widermann Foundation (75–17). Photo ©Justin Kerr

Throughout ancient Mesoamerica, spinning and weaving were metonyms for pregnancy, parturition, and female generative power (Bricker 1973:19; Sullivan 1982). However, there is no direct evidence about who manufactured ancient pottery vessels. In his study of traditional pottery making in contemporary Guatemala, Ruben Reina stated that where pottery is still made the traditional way, its manufacture is in the hands of women. Only when the Spanish-introduced wheel is employed are men exclusively the potters (Reina and Hill 1978:21). Gathering clay and water and shaping pottery all involve interaction with the earth and ground waters and logically fit into the women's domain. The activities of hand building pottery emulate grinding corn, forming corn dough, and cooking it, as the mythical First Mother of the *Popol Vuh,* formed the human race of corn dough. Also, the title for women in Classic Period hieroglyphics is an inverted ceramic water jar infixed with a sun sign. This seems to refer to the woman as a maker of pottery, a bearer of water, and a womb in which the male element has been introduced.

Similarly, little direct evidence about pre-Columbian papermaking practices survives. In a book on Maya painting, papermaking is included in a list of elite men's artistic skills: Dorie Reents-Budet says that men "probably also had knowledge of making the paper or preparing the deer skins that were the base material for the manuscripts" (Reents-Budet 1994:65). However, several eyewitness descriptions of the papermaking process exist, from 1571, 1900, and 1961. The second account, by Frederick Starr among the Otomí, specifies that "The work is done by women and usually in the houses with a certain degree of secrecy" (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986:28–29, citing Hernández 1959 [1571–6?] and Starr 1901). In the 1960s, Hans Lenz traveled to numerous villages around Puebla where Otomí papermaking survived. He found that although sometimes men helped to procure the raw material for paper, "the actual manufacture is done only by women" (Lenz 1961:83). Creating paper

entails collecting the bark when the moon is new, soaking it like laundry in the running water of a stream so the abundant latex can be scraped off, boiling it in the lime water in which corn has been soaked, and beating the fibers with special stones on a board into thin sheets. These kinds of activities relate closely to cooking, laundry, and making tortillas and (as Starr observed) were probably done by women inside the home.

The secretive aspect of papermaking may relate to the sacred function of the material. In their study of paper, Sandstrom and Sandstrom characterize it as "a kind of messenger or go-between, providing a medium of communication between the human and spirit worlds" (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986:12). In the Maya area, we know that paper served as a surface for the recording of ritual and astronomical information by male scribes and that strips were bloodied and burned in offerings. If service and sacrifice to the deities place one in a feminine relationship to them, then paper itself as a medium of offering is feminine and logically would be produced by women.

The distribution of barkbeaters at sites hints that papermaking was a gender-specific activity. These stone implements are rarely found in elite male burials or in caches but do occur in habitational zones. In the excavations of a residential area at Copan, 509 metates and 468 manos were found, compared to 10 barkbeaters, suggesting that papermaking was done only by a few persons or households at any given time (Willey *et al.* 1994:241).

Another line of evidence, Classic Period Maya art, offers few positive clues to the manufacture of pottery and paper. As Andrea Stone (1988) observed, the majority of Maya art concerns the male sphere of action: public displays of political status, warfare, and encounters with the supernatural, so there are few images of women in their own private domains. The absence of images of the production of pottery or paper supports my proposal that these were women's work, done around the home.

The unusual vase in Figure 5.3 is one of the most explicit representations of the gender-specific distinction between writing and producing the surfaces for writing. Here several young women and the Moon Goddess in her aged guise as Healer assist a deer-eared man in vomiting for ritual purification. There in the women's domain are their products—a bowl with rolls of paper and other pottery vessels. The hieroglyphic text identifies the deer-eared man as the scribe who painted the vessel. He portrays himself kneeling as a paper tree in the primary scene and again seated at the end of the inscription, where he signs his name.[1]

The decipherment of a hieroglyphic "signature phrase" (Stuart 1987:7) has led to the conclusion that the profession of artist/scribe was dominated by men and that among men, it was limited to those of elite status (Reents-Budet 1994:56–57). When someone is shown writing or painting in Maya art, it is a man, a male supernatural, or a rabbit (as on Figure 5.2).

Contemporary stories from Chamula, a Maya Tzotzil community in Chiapas, link men's markmaking with cosmic archetypes and reveal that cunning is one of the qualities that makes men seem superior. A story in which the Moon's son blinds her by scalding (and scarring) her face appears in a number of contemporary

Figure 5.3 An old woman and her assistants conduct a ritual for a deer-eared man, witnessed by a scribe. Maya Cylinder Vase. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 24/4313. Drawing by Persis Clarkson

men's narratives, although not in women's. Brenda Rosenbaum summarizes it (using a story from Gossen 1974:37):

> The Moon/Virgin, Our Mother, exists first. To protect her son from the demons, she employs a typical strategy of Chamula women: she flees so as not to confront her persecutors directly and thereby saves her child. The stories collected by Gossen from male informants explain how the mother's superior power, based on her generational priority, is taken over by the Sun/ Christ when he is a child. He tricks his mother and throws boiling water at her face. The water scalds her eyes and makes her less luminous and less powerful. Thus the Sun/Christ overcomes his mother and gains supremacy, …an event which epitomizes the triumph of the gender principle over the seniority principle. (Rosenbaum 1993:68)

In analyzing this story, we find that the Moon/Woman appears as an unstained white disk: a blank surface like handmade paper or an undecorated vessel. Her son, the Sun, seizes power by marking her white face, suggesting that the Maya conceived of writing as an act that aggressively claims political and social superiority.

Reviewing the inventory of objects on the Princeton Vase in terms of gender divisions of manufacture, the scene includes a codex of female-made paper covered with the skin of a male-hunted jaguar. The symbolism of the rabbit as a scribe may relate to the fact that the marks or darker patterns on the face of the moon are said to resemble a profile rabbit similar to the one shown in Figure 5.2. It could be that this writing rabbit represents men's superior cunning and the masculine seizure of the priority of Moon/Woman.

Although Maya culture constructs painting and writing as masculinely mental activities, it also recognizes that they are ephemeral, like the wars and political deeds of men they describe. When traces of codices exist in tombs, such as a tomb under the hieroglyphic stairway at Copan, it is only the paper that survives, decomposed but recognizable, not the writing (Agurcia Fasquelle and Fash 1989). If my hypothesis that women made pots and paper is correct, then their products are the raw material, the relatively permanent female surfaces upon which men recorded their temporal accomplishments and rituals.

Unlike the secrecy or lack of recognition accorded women as potters and papermakers, women are explicitly associated with and respected for weaving in Maya society. The text of the *Popol Vuh* begins "Here we shall design, we shall brocade the ancient Word," indicating that the process of staking and laying out the four sides of the textile on a backstrap loom is analogous to the process by which the sky-earth was created (Tedlock 1985:72). In weaving the clothes and cloths that men require for ritual, classic Maya women created abstract designs that established the visual order of people in the universe and of ritual objects in space (Morris 1984), although they were not narrative. As Janet Berlo (1991) and Mary Helms (1981) suggest, such fabrics served as silent female prayers and presence in the ritual arena. Thus weaving and writing both convey information, status, and detail the social order.

Women's spiritual and political powers

Women's products were necessary in ritual as sacred offerings and as the physical supports for male political rhetoric. This complementarity exists today in the essential structure of political office, for which a husband and wife together must undertake the financial and psychic burden of community service (Guitéras-Holmes 1961:71; Rosenbaum 1993; Tarn and Prechtel 1986).

In contemporary Maya societies, males assume roles of public leadership while wives function as their assistants. However, men also serve in the capacity of assistant, and when they do, are considered female relative to their superior (Tarn and Prechtel 1986:173). Service to the community is the primary virtue in Maya society, and is not an activity of low status.

Brenda Rosenbaum reports that in Chamula, upon entry into office, the husband appears with his wife and receives a baton, an emblem of the deity and instrument of power. For one to three years, during the time the couple holds that office, the woman prays and burns incense three times a day to the baton in her own home, bringing the presence of the deity into her own domain. Her prayer procures the blessings of the deities, thereby counteracting potential conflicts that her husband might encounter in the external world. During and after her service, she is addressed by a respectful title (Rosenbaum 1993:159). In an accession to office 1,200 years earlier, we find striking parallels as shown on two classic period images that are commonly interpreted as showing a woman subservient to a male.

Figures 5.4 and 5.5 are two lintels from a set of four that highlight Lady K'abal Xoc, (pronounced "shoke") a relative of King Shield Jaguar of Yaxchilan,

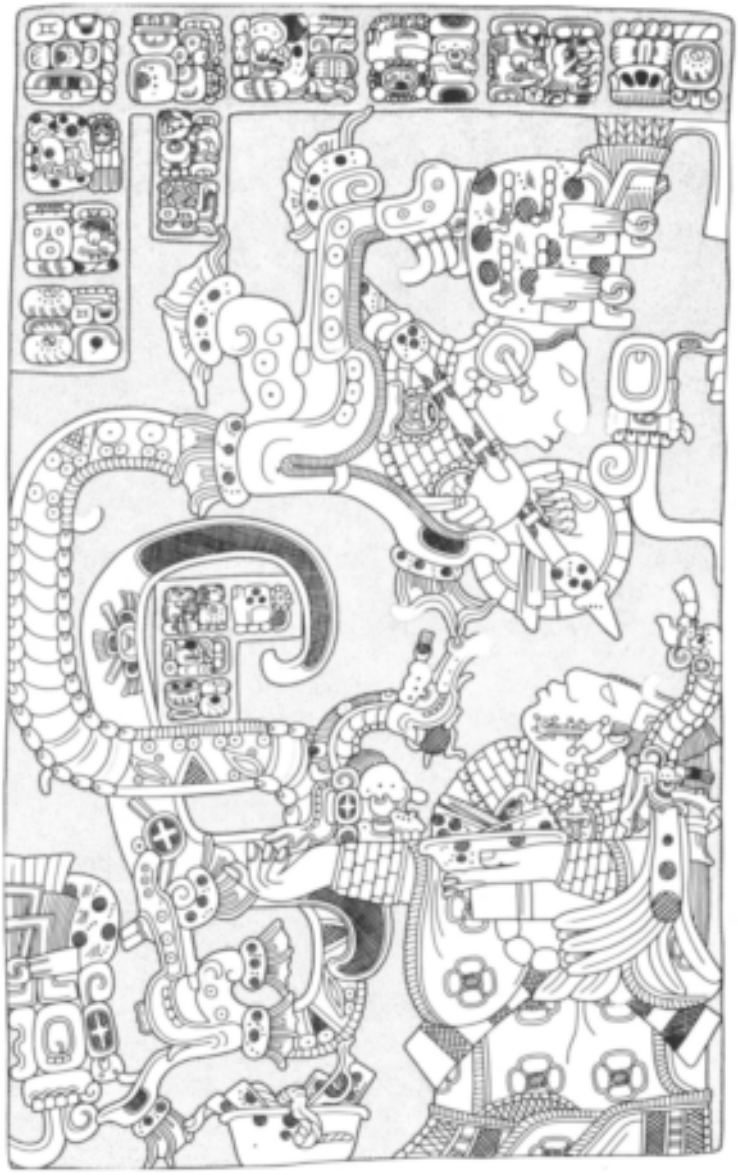

Figure 5.4 Yaxchilan, Lintel 25. Original in British Museum. Drawing by Ian Graham and Eric von Euw, © President and Fellows of Harvard University, used by permission, Harvard University Press

Figure 5.5 Yaxchilan, Lintel 24. Original in British Museum. Drawing by Ian Graham and Eric von Euw, © President and Fellows of Harvard University, used by permission, Harvard University Press

which between AD 400 and 800 was an important city situated on the banks of the major river of the Maya realm. One of the best documented of classic Maya women, she was his ritual assistant, and perhaps involved in astronomical affairs (Tate 1987). The bas-relief on Lintel 25 depicts an aspect of the accession of Shield Jaguar to the throne in AD 681. Shield Jaguar holds royal weapons and has received a sacred bundle. Lady Xoc kneels, perhaps in prayer, and holds the unwrapped bundle. The hieroglyphic text refers to her by the title *chahom,* scat-

terer of incense, and states that her activity occurred in the dancing place in the center of the great plaza at Yaxchilan, referred to as a waterlily place, meaning a lake: *chahom/Na K'abal Xoc/u yokel te'/tan naab.* The text also includes an invocation of the founder of Shield Jaguar's royal lineage, probably referring to Yat Balam, who is named as the founder in another inscription (Freidel *et al.* 1993:208).

Considering the imagery in light of the gendered world outlined above provides further insights. Here Lady Xoc wears a female, civilized, brocaded garment while King Shield Jaguar's headdress is covered with male, wild, jaguar skin (Joyce 1992; Taylor 1992).[2] In Maya art, each position in the picture plane relates to the cosmic realm (sky, earth, underworld) and provides a syntactic context for the function of symbols (Tate 1992:101–110). On this lintel, the male does not touch the ground; his higher position relates to the male sky. His weapons, which emulate those from Teotihuacan, a distant foreign culture, become metonyms for lightning. A double-headed serpent with a female title, *Na-Chan,* acts as a conduit between the male and the female, who is on the earth. Lady Xoc holds a ceramic bowl filled with strips of female paper, a fiber rope, and two male items, a stingray spine and an obsidian lancet. Another bowl with similar implements rests on the earth.

One feminist art historical interpretation of this scene compares Lady Xoc's upward gaze to that of a captive and suggests that the relative positions of the figures signals submission (Stone 1988). I think that when read in the context of the gendered cosmos, the meaning of this scene is richer. While females metonymically relate to qualities that are physically lower, colder, wetter, and more constant than those of males, and while they are perceived as assistants to the males, female spiritual practices, including offerings of prayer and incense to the staffs of office and the ancestors, were fundamental to the spiritual and hence political success of the male office holder.

Another lintel at Yaxchilan that shows Lady Xoc and Shield Jaguar in tandem is Lintel 24, on which she is portrayed pulling a cord through her tongue (Figure 5.5). John Watanabe's research among the contemporary Mam-speaking Maya of Chimaltenango provides insight to the spiritual significance of autosacrificial bloodletting among the ancient Maya. Chimaltecos, along with other Maya people, consider themselves to possess multiple souls, including a community-directed soul called *t naab'l,* which resides in the blood, and which forms the repository for local tradition and moral conventions. The *t naab'l* enables one to "be humanly sensible to oneself and others–including those to whom one prays" (Watanabe 1992:83). One is born with *t naab'l* but must vigilantly act in accordance with the conventions it embodies in order to maintain and strengthen it. A "complete" *t naab'l* sharpens human perceptions, making one "resourceful, intelligent, purposive, and self-controlled" (ibid.: 83–84). Possession of ample *t naab'l* relates to the degree of "heat" in the blood, which can be increased through means such as experiencing pain or strong emotions or through physical exertion (ibid.). Autosacrificial tongue bloodletting such as Lady Xoc performed requires the self-control of one who has a strong *t naab'l.* Her extreme physical exertion would further strengthen her link with the community's moral soul.

Based upon the parallelism between women's roles among the contemporary

and classic period Maya, I propose that Lady Xoc's spiritual practices, specifically, scattering incense in the dancing place and bloodletting, were necessary to the successful reign of Shield Jaguar and furthermore, enabled her to establish a close relationship to the deity, in this case the ancestor Yat Balam. That relationship probably became a source of spiritual satisfaction to Lady Xoc. Her upward gaze on this lintel is unique among the women portrayed at Yaxchilan and may relate to her communication with the spiritual forces as convincingly as it marks her as submissive in the Western sense of the value of a strongly individuated ego. In the words of Maruch, a contemporary Chamula woman, "When we finished our cargo, when we unloaded Our Father, we remained empty…. Oh God, it already hurt not to be able to talk with Our Father" (Rosenbaum 1993:185). In this statement, Maruch contrasts her feelings of emptiness with the full heart she must have experienced while performing the sacrifices of her cargo duties.

Apparently, Maya men believed that by emulating women they could contact their ancestors more readily. As Stone (1988) has pointed out, when a male sheds blood from a slit in the penis, the act parallels blood that issues from female genitals. Penis perforation "transformed the male genitalia into a doubly potent agent of fertility, capable of shedding two life-giving fluids: semen and blood" (ibid.). Furthermore, she contends that this appropriation of apparent fertility by men serves to support the male claim to power, specifically political power. I agree with her observation that the Maya kings' periodic public bloodletting (which, I point out, is timed to interval endings in the male 365-day cycle) is a deliberate reference to menstruation and female generative power. However, I suggest that since hieroglyphic texts explicitly state that the bloodletting act contacted or manifested spiritual beings, especially the patron of royal ancestral lineage, and since penis perforation emulated menstruation, it follows that menstruation was seen as contacting or serving spiritual powers. A bloodletting man demonstrated that he was powerfully androgynous, being female (assistant) relative to the ancestral and cosmological deities.

The offering of blood succors the ancestors as a woman suckles her children. A passage of hieroglyphs on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross at Palenque refers to the king, upon bloodletting, as wetnurse to the gods (Schele 1984:93). That king, Chan Bahlum, stands on the First True Mountain, which guarded the maize seed before creation. He impersonates the Maize "Deity," whom we know contains both masculine and feminine elements in perfect complementarity. While the men usurped the creative role of the Maize "Deity" in most public art, in times of crisis, women have stepped into that regenerative role in both the classic and modern eras.

The androgynous Maize Deity; mystical generative power

A major subject of Maya art and ritual, the Maize "God" was assumed to be male, despite the observation that "he" is not specifically masculine, but is "handsome…with even a touch of effeminacy" (Thompson 1970:286) and "at

times has a decidedly feminine caste, which parallels the female, life-giving qualities of maize" (Taube 1985:178). Furthermore, scholars have also noted that the Maize "God" wears an outfit occasionally worn by women, consisting of a netted jade skirt and cape, and a belt with a spondylus shell and shark's head.[3] It has been suggested that this outfit is the dancing costume of the progenitor gods' First Father (the resurrected Maize "God" who is also the Milky Way) and his wife, the Moon Goddess (Freidel *et al.* 1993:286). This observation points to the possibility that the First Father and Our Mother may be aspects of the androgynous Maize Deity.

Among contemporary Maya people, the maize plant, the central symbolic element of the physical world, has a male stem and female flowers (Tedlock 1993:179). The psychic unity between the human being and maize, which has many cultural manifestations, cannot be overstated. Maize as a food and its planting as a way of life are so important to the traditional Maya sense of self that the *Popol Vuh* relates that the Quiché people consider themselves to be formed of maize dough. I suggest that the Maize "Deity" possesses the feminine qualities of beauty and youthfulness specifically because, as the spirit of sustenance, it is both female and male. Whoever impersonates the Maize Deity takes on a multiple-gender role, becoming the primeval Mother/Father, the progenitor deity referred to by Cristóbal Y when he said "really there were not two people" (see the epigraph, p. 81).

I further suggest that when women were represented in this costume, it signals a desperate measure to revitalize their communities in times when the male dynasty was threatened. Several examples of this response to crisis exist in Classic Period art (see Table 5.1 for most published examples of women wearing Maize Deity costume). On the Oval Palace Tablet of Palenque (Figure 5.6), which depicts young Pacal's accession to the throne, his mother, Lady Zak Kuk, who represents the last ruler of her patrilineage, wears the Maize Deity costume as she empowers a new dynasty by bestowing the Maize Deity regalia (Freidel *et al.* 1993). Another example is Site Q Altar 1, on which a then-living woman is portrayed in this costume while she performed a Period Ending bloodletting, normally the prerogative of kings, because all the males had been killed in war (Figure 5.7).[4] The glyphs indicate that her act summoned from the ancestral realm another woman who had lived 400 years earlier, and the text mentions three more women in the intervening years. Finally, another of the relatively rare instances in which a woman impersonated the Maize Deity is the case of Lady Six Sky, who presided over an era of changing fortune at Naranjo (Figure 5.8). Epigrapher Stephen Houston says, "Lady Six Sky is important because she contributed to the revitalization of the Naranjo dynasty, which had been seriously affected by war with Caracol" (Houston 1993:108). In these cases a historical woman impersonating the Maize Deity destroyed the old pattern and initiated a new one.

On ceramics, the Maize Deity outfit is not worn by historical women, but by the various manifestations of the Moon Goddess, including Blood Woman, mother of the Hero Twins whose birth established the present creation of human beings, by the Hero Twins themselves, and by the essential spirit of maize, the Maize

Table 5.1 Monuments showing a woman wearing the Maize Deity costume (in chronological order)

Monument	*Date*	*Context*
El Zapote Stela 5	9.0.0.0.0.	On opposite side is a male ruler
Palenque Oval Palace Tablet	9.9.2.4.8	Lady Zak Kuk crowns Pacal, founding a new dynasty
Naranjo Stela 3	9.12.10.5.12	Lady 6 Sky arrives from Dos Pilas to found new Naranjo dynasty
Palenque Palace East Piers	9.12.19.14.12?	Probably Chan Bahlum shown with deceased parents
El Peru/Calakmul Stela 1	9.13.0.0.0	Paired with image of male ruler; she performs Period Ending; time of war and intrigue
Naranjo Stela 24	9.13.7.3.8	Lady 6 Sky subdues man of Ucanal
Palenque Palace Tablet	9.13.10.6.8	His deceased parents make offerings at Kan Xul's accession
Palenque Temple 14 Tablet	9.13.13.15.0	His flower-crowned dead mother makes offerings to deceased Chan Bahlum as he dances as a creator god 3(365)+260 days after his death
Palenque Palace West Piers	~9.13.15.0.0.	Cosmic ritual scenes by male and females
Site Q/Calakmul Altar 1	9.14.9.9.14	Woman does a nawah (sacrificial) event after kings of site are killed in war
Site Q/Calakmul Altar 1	9.15.0.0.0	Same woman performs Period Ending; Calakmul thrives
Cancuen Stela	9.18.0.0.0	Woman seated on throne (only lower third survives)
Dallas Mus. Wall Panel	date missing	Woman holds royal scepter
Calakmul area stela	date missing	Woman holds bone staff; Vision Serpent behind her
Calakmul area lintel	date unknown	Shows man and woman gesturing

Deity (Taylor 1992:521). These mythic characters all represent the archetypes and progenitors of human civilization.

It seems that a historical woman's inherent generative powers were augmented by her constant connection with the three hearth stones of every home, whose celestial analog, the Three Stones of Creation, is part of the European constellation of Orion. From this triangular-shaped celestial hearth or womb, the Milky Way sometimes stretches in a south to north position across the sky, a configuration which is seen by the Maya creation story as the Maize Deity emerging from a cracked turtle shell above the Three Stones of Creation (Freidel *et al.* 1993:85).

Relationships between the celestial Three Stones of Creation, a goddess, and maize persisted in religious post-conquest religious belief in Chiapas. In 1711, 1712, and in 1867, Maya women instigated religious insurgencies centered around apparitions of a goddess that they hoped would return some sense of spiritual autonomy to their harshly exploited communities (Rosenbaum 1993:22–27).[5] In 1711, a Chamula woman, Dominica López, saw the Virgin appear in a cornfield

Figure 5.6 The Oval Palace Tablet, Palenque. Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson, courtesy Princeton University Press

and became the transmitter of the Virgin's messages. The woman and her husband were brought to trial by Christian authorities. Shortly thereafter, the Virgin appeared to another young woman in Cancuc, María de la Candelaria. For a while, Maya priests operated around her as the chief steward and oracle of the Virgin, who had ordered that the Catholic priesthood be replaced by the native traditions. To validate her oracular revelation to Ladino authorities, a Maya man claimed to have personally verified her words with the Virgin. The cult developed into "soldiers of the Virgin," who initiated a campaign to oust the Spanish population of several towns. When the Ladino military threatened the Maya with severe reprisal, the insurgents rallied, sending four women to contact the supernatural spiritual forces. The women were covered completely with mats to

Figure 5.7 A queen impersonates the Maize Deity as she conducts a sacrificial ritual for her city, whose kings have all been killed. Site Q Altar 1. Dallas Museum of Art. Author drawing

shield them from the [male] sun, and carried in chairs to the [female] river to petition natural forces for magical weapons (Bricker 1981:64).

In 1867, a revitalization movement arose to protest the appropriation of peasant lands after Mexico's independence from Spain. It began when a young girl, Augustina Gómez Checheb, was herding her sheep when she saw three stones fall from the sky. As happened in the earlier cases, a man took charge of the cult. This time it was the *fiscal* of Chamula, Pedro Diaz Cuscat. He referred to her as the "mother of god" who had given birth to the three stones, a metaphor similar to the Milky Way/Maize Deity rising above the triangle of stars in Orion. The cult that grew up around Augustina Gómez was eventually incorporated into the festival cycle of Chamula, where it grew in popularity until it so threatened Ladino control that they banned it. This ban caused a three-year Maya rebellion against

Figure 5.8 Naranjo Stela 24. Drawing by Ian Graham, © President and Fellows of Harvard University, used by permission, Harvard University Press.

Ladino authorities in San Cristóbal. Mainstream Mexican history named the rebellion after the man, Cuscat. In Chamula today, it is referred to as the war of Santa Rosa, patroness of weaving, who, of course, is a modern version of Our Grandmother, the moon (Rosenbaum 1993:25).

Writing on the face of the moon: conclusions

This discussion of ancient Maya women and the culturally constructed archetypes within which they negotiated their daily lives, activities of production, spiritual satisfaction, and their influence within the community, is intended to provide a generalized vision of the engendered and ensouled world view in which Maya monumental art was created. Although proposing such a cultural generalization is philosophically outmoded in the post-structuralist era, neither is it appropriate that iconographers and epigraphers continue to ignore the kinds of paradigms in which the Maya likely operated. This chapter also provides food for thought to the ongoing debates (for example, Ortner 1996) about how completely males actually dominate even when they clearly hold political power, and about the universality of women's identification with nature and its processes and opposition to men and culture.

The politics of representation among the ancient Maya cast women as acting out the archetypes of Our Grandmother the moon, who influenced the earth, its waters, plants and their products, especially cotton, maize, and medicinal herbs. As a secondary source of illumination, the moon assisted the sun and similarly, assistantship was seen as a female activity in cultural life. Despite their obvious political and social control, however, men may have secretly acknowledged women as a primary source of spiritual and generative power. By the Late Classic, women were certainly represented in art as important to political and ritual life. As seems usual in most societies, some women achieved high status in the play for prestige and power.

While women's manufacture of ceramic vessels likely served the needs of elite male patrons and scribes, it may have been valued as a significant economic contribution to the exchange of social currency–those items used in elite ritual. Woman-made paper seems to have been a more sacred material, based on its function. All four surviving Maya codices record esoteric astronomical and ritual information, and bloodied paper was burned to nourish the ancestors and ask for their communication.

Women were probably conceived as having a heightened connection to the spiritual realm of ancestors and the forces of cosmic order and disorder. In ancient Mesoamerica, both male and female children were apparently exhorted from birth onward to fulfill archetypal roles, but a woman's universe was circumscribed to her home, her waterhole, her family responsibilities. Perhaps this inward focus, on darkness, on depths of water, on creative generation and flowering, on mythic, lunar time, allowed the more intimate spiritual connection.

It seems that the cyclicality of menstruation (in a healthy woman) and the fact that some suffering accompanied it were factors that elevated it to a spiritual

practice emulated by men. Through penis perforation a man demonstrated that he was, like a woman, secondary in status, but only to the ancestral creator deities. Self-abasement, suffering, and offering genital blood were powerful practices that blurred gender oppositions and allowed a person to approach realization of the androgynous ideal, the Maize Deity.[6] Public displays of penis perforation appeared on monuments at many sites, reiterating that, ideally, gender should not be a matter of opposition but an integration of various roles and tendencies.

Contemporary educated Maya women observe that "while ladino women all too often are treated as substanceless ornaments and passive sex objects in roles subservient to males…, indigenous women are men's equals, with complementary but active and important roles in life" (Hendrickson 1995:115). In relating males to sky and the solar calendar and women to earth and the 260-day cycle of human gestation, the order-infatuated Maya conceived of both genders as being influenced by the cycles inherent in nature. This identification with natural phenomena permeated all aspects of culture, which endured in monumental form for a thousand years and persists in the hearts of 12 million Maya speakers today.

Notes

1 The signature phrase was first identified by David Stuart (1987:7). Michael Gloss (1992) argues that the scribe who painted this vase is female. His evidence is that the scribe wears a dress. However, the figure does not wear a woven cloth female garment but sprouts a tree (the stem of a tree is male; Reents-Budet (1994:41) calls this a "print-out icon") as mentioned. Gloss does correctly decipher an inscription on another vessel in which a scribe gives his parentage statement naming both mother and father as scribes. To my knowledge, the vessel he discusses is the only reference to a female scribe, and it is not in a signature statement but a parentage statement.

2 In separate articles, Joyce (1992) and Taylor (1992) observed that only Maya men wore skins while women wore woven garments.

3 Taube (1985) noted that Maize "God" and women wear the same costume, first identified as female costume by Proskouriakoff (1961).

4 As Peter Mathews, Stephen Houston, and others have demonstrated in unpublished research.

5 Victoria Bricker (1981) first brought to scholarly attention the Virgin Cults of Santa Marta and Cancuc.

6 Bolin (1996) proposed a five-form model of gender variance of which the Maya dual- or multiple-gendered Maize Deity seems to relate best to her "Two-Spirit Tradition," in which the blurred gender status is culturally recognized and the person integrates behavioral codes from both genders.

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6 The metamorphosis of Xochiquetzal

A window on womanhood in pre- and post-conquest Mexico

Geoffrey G.McCafferty and Sharisse D.McCafferty

Introduction

Early Spanish chroniclers attempting to describe Mexican cosmology were confronted by a bewildering array of supernatural entities. Relying on their medieval, male mindsets, sixteenth-century Catholic priests integrated pre-Columbian religious beliefs into categories that they did understand and thus constructed a Classical pantheon of gods and goddesses who controlled different elements of the natural world. While this undoubtedly captured some sense of pre-Columbian religious ideology, it also tended to rigidify what in fact was a very fluid system with deities sharing attributes and assuming other roles depending on ritual context.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in relation to the female deities. Catholic priests were ill prepared to deal with females as active and powerful participants in religion (Brown 1983). Particularly confusing was the cult of the earth/fertility goddesses (Sullivan 1982), also known as the Teteo-Innan complex (Nicholson 1971), which combined numerous personae in different phases of the female life cycle: young and sensual, mature and nurturing, old and wise. These deities were very important in Aztec culture because of their control over domestic production and sexual reproduction, and because of the specialized groups that held the goddesses in esteem: midwives, healers, harlots, and artisans.

Within this group of female deities was one of particular importance to the arts (Figure 6.1). Xochiquetzal, or "Precious Flower," was the goddess who introduced the artistic skills of spinning, weaving, featherworking, painting, sculpting, and metalworking (Durán 1971:239). But Xochiquetzal was also a patroness of the sexual arts, revered by harlots and lovers alike. As a lunar deity (Milbrath 1995), her relationship to productivity extended into the domain of fertility, not only for women who made offerings to her for help during childbirth, but for all generative life forces. Xochiquetzal was the essential creative force, and those who participated in creative acts–transforming nature into art–paid homage to her.

In this chapter we discuss some of the characteristics of Xochiquetzal and her avatars. Specific themes addressed are her role in craft production and the embodiment of female ideals of sexuality and fertility. Additionally, we explore

Figure 6.1 Xochiquetzal with quetzal headdress and twin feathered plumes, jeweled face ornamentation, and *quechquemitl*. After Codex Borbonicus (1974: Plate 19)

the importance of Xochiquetzal and her followers in sorcery and ritual prostitution. A fundamental theme is to distinguish between the goddess cult as perceived by Spanish chroniclers in contrast to pre-Columbian representations in order to chart the metamorphosis of the goddess and, through her, female identity during the process of conquest and conversion (Quiñones Keber 1988). Finally, we discuss the possibility that the goddess served as a symbol of female power to be emulated by women, in contrast to the more widely recognized male ideology of the Aztec state (Nash 1978; Rodríguez 1988; but see Brumfiel 1991; McCafferty and McCafferty 1988).

A frustration in attempts to reconstruct the role of women in the pre-Columbian past is their relative invisibility in the ethnohistoric record. Chroniclers, exclusively

male, paid little attention to the activities of women, and even less to their religious practices. As Sahagún admonished his indigenous subjects in the *Florentine Codex* (1950–82, Book 1:72): "This which your forefathers proceeded to do in worshipping many women, was indeed a confusion and laughable." Textual evidence that *is* available is suspect because of a pervasive androcentrism in the primary documents that tends to present a stereotype of a feminine ideal (from the male perspective) rather than the reality of practice. What we attempt to do, then, is balance that stereotype against a variety of tantalizing shreds of evidence to identify a series of alternative practices associated with the Xochiquetzal cult. While admittedly speculative, the contrasts provided suggest important distinctions between the representation and practice of gender relations in Aztec Mexico. By contrasting pre-Columbian images of Xochiquetzal with the Colonial accounts of the goddess and her attendants, it is possible to document the transformation of the cult as it was "reinvented" by the Catholic Church (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The divine Ms. X

Aztec religion is best known for the intensity of its cult of human sacrifice, and the continual opposition of birth and death imagery pervades Aztec ideology (Klein 1975). The sun could be regenerated only by consuming human hearts, thus death had to precede life. The goddess Xochiquetzal epitomized the transformation of life from death in the symbolic use of butterfly motifs, worn as face paint (by avatar Chiconauhui Izquintli, "Nine Dog"), a golden nose ornament, feather banner, or in her headdress (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 9:79–80; Book 8:34; see also Berlo 1983). The transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly is a natural example of the principle of metamorphosis. Butterflies and birds were believed to carry the souls of dead warriors to their own special paradise (J.L.M.Furst 1995:27–28), as seen in the representation of butterfly breast plates on warriors, for example the Atlantean warriors from Tula. Another avatar of Xochiquetzal, Itzpapalotl ("Obsidian Butterfly"), was the primordial warrior and first to die in battle (Berlo 1983; Nicholson 1971). The dualism of Xochiquetzal as creative force and warrior continues the theme of structural opposition that is common to the earth/fertility goddess complex (Sullivan 1982).

The opposition of life and death is further demonstrated in the twenty-day festival of Pachtontli, dedicated specifically to Xochiquetzal (Durán 1971:244). Celebrated in October, this was known as the "Death of the Flowers," and was associated with rituals of renewal. In the principal sacrifices of the festival, two virgins of noble lineage were sacrificed, and a goddess impersonator in the full costume of Xochiquetzal was first sacrificed and then flayed. A male priest put on the skin of the victim and the costume of the goddess, and was made to imitate the female task of weaving. At the same time, artisans adorned in animal costumes danced while displaying the tools of their particular craft specializations.

Xochiquetzal was originally a Tlahuica deity who was adopted into the

Aztec pantheon when the cotton-producing area of southern Morelos was incorporated into the Aztec empire (Sullivan 1982:17). The conceptual character of an earth/ fertility goddess, however, possibly dates to as early as the Olmec Period, *c.* 1000 BCE (P.Furst 1981), and it has been suggested that the Great Goddess was the predominant religious force in Teotihuacan during the Classic Period (Berlo 1992). An elaborate ceremonial precinct featuring female imagery has been discovered at Xochitecatl in the Puebla/Tlaxcala valley, where hundreds of terracotta figurines depict women with elaborate floral headdresses similar to those later identified with the Postclassic Xochiquetzal (Serra Puche 1996; Spranz 1982).

As part of the Teteo-Innan complex (Nicholson 1971; Sullivan 1982), Xochiquetzal shares attributes with Tlazolteotl, Toci, Itzpapalotl, Chalchiutlicue, and Cihuacoatl, among others. This group of female deities combined elements of the archetypal goddess complex, especially in their control over fertility, childbirth, and domestic production. By dividing the "Mother Goddess" role among multiple deities, Nahua religion recognized distinctions inherent in the female life cycle, with separate avatars for different phases, and with specific characteristics for each.

In Aztec mythology Xochiquetzal was associated with the primordial woman Tonacacihuatl (Nicholson 1971; Sullivan *et al.* 1997:140–141, n. 16) and was perceived by the Spanish as a parallel to the Christian Eve (Brundage 1982). Xochiquetzal lived in Tamoanchan, a mythical garden paradise. In the *Histoyre du Mechique,* Xochiquetzal and her solar-god husband Piltzintecuhtli produced a son, Centeotl, while dwelling in the underworld (*Histoyre du Mechique* 1973:109; Sahagún 1997:140–141). From the body of the young Centeotl grew plants upon which Mesoamerican civilization was based, including corn and cotton. For this reason Xochiquetzal was closely associated with fertility and sustenance.

In the *Anales of Cuauhtitlan,* Xochiquetzal (as Quetzalpetlatl, "Feather Mat") and her brother Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl became drunk on pulque (fermented juice of the agave plant) and abandoned their sacred vows, including perhaps vows of chastity (Codice Chimalpopoca 1992:10; Brundage 1982:258). According to the historical mythology of the Aztecs, this scandalous behavior forced Quetzalcoatl to flee the Eden-like Tollan and led to the downfall of the Toltec empire.

Xochiquetzal was personified as young and attractive, the essence of sensual femininity (Figure 6.2). She had long black hair with bangs (cut straight across the forehead), worn in a style associated with young women. Xochiquetzal wore a twisted headband with floral decoration and a distinctive pair of green feather plumes (Durán 1971:244). In other depictions the twin plumes were stylized as two upright locks of hair. The hairstyle of double locks appears throughout the *Florentine Codex* as a characteristic of mature women (Figure 6.3), possibly even as an indication of motherhood (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10:178) or, more generally, sexual activity.

Her face is shown with face paint, or possibly tattooing (Figure 6.4). This can take the form of a band of circular "jewels" across the cheek to the nose, or it can appear as intricate geometric patterns. In other cases, however, Xochiquetzal is

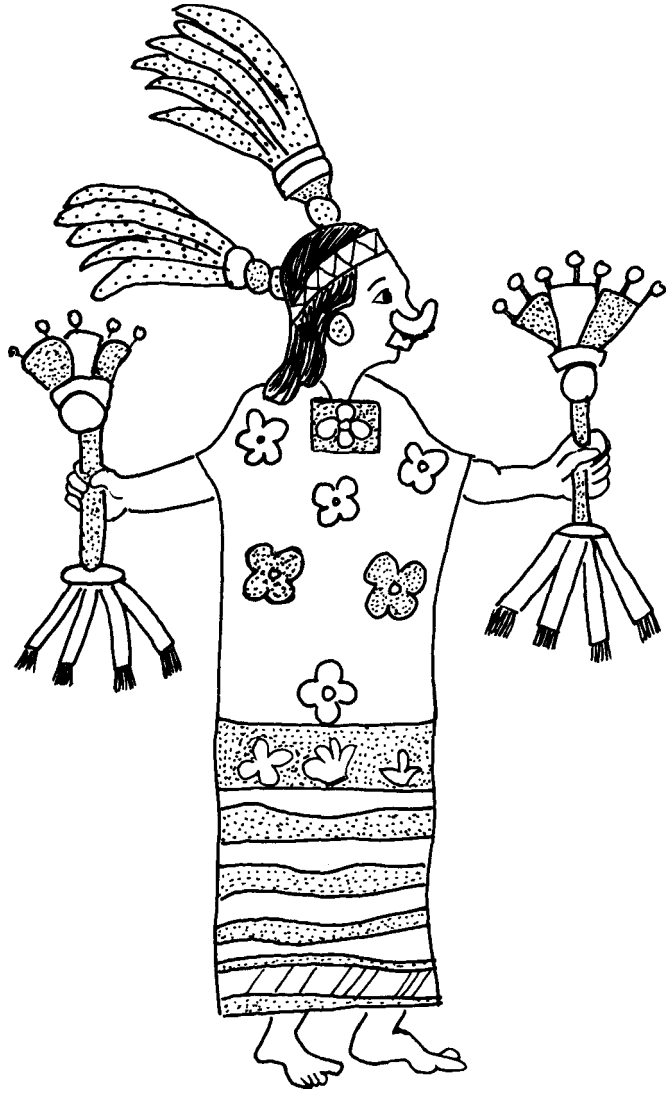

Figure 6.2 Xochiquetzal with twin feathered plumes and elaborately embroidered *huipil.* After Durán (1971: Plate 25)

depicted with black bitumen face paint around her mouth, a characteristic also found among the "cloistered maidens" dedicated to Tezcatlipoca (Durán 1971:105). Bitumen, mixed with *axin* (made from insect eggs), was known as *chicle.* It was chewed almost exclusively by women, for enjoyment and for the sweet smell it gave the breath (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10:89–90; McCafferty and McCafferty 1991). Chewing bitumen in public was common among unmarried women, while married women chewed only in private. Men also chewed *chicle,* but never in

Figure 6.3 Aztec noblewomen conversing. Note double locks. After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10: Figure 83)

Figure 6.4 Xochiquetzal with twin plumes, elaborate facial decoration, butterfly nose ornament, and intricately woven *quechquemitl*. After Codex Borgia (1963: Plate 62)

Figure 6.5 Dual aspects of Xochiquetzal, as goddess of love (left) and as patroness of harlots (right). After Codex Borgia (1963: Plate 59)

public unless they were homosexuals. Harlots often chewed publicly, with the gum-like substance "clacking like castanets" (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10:89).

Xochiquetzal is usually depicted wearing a triangular cape, or *quechquemitl* (Figure 6.5; Anawalt 1982). She is frequently shown partially nude, with her breasts bare beneath the *quechquemitl,* possibly as an emphasis of her role as voluptuous goddess of sexuality and reproduction. Her skirt is elaborately decorated with embroidered and woven designs, probably in reference to her role as patroness of the textile arts (Figure 6.6).

Flowers were an important element in the identity of Xochiquetzal (Durán 1971:435) and were prominent metaphors in Mexican mythology (Heyden 1983). In another parallel to the Christian Eve, Xochiquetzal was the beautiful virgin goddess who dwelled in the paradise of Tamoanchan but was cast out and banished to the earth for plucking a flower from the Tree of Life (Brundage 1982:39–42). The *Codex Magliabechiano* (Boone 1983:206) records the myth that from the semen of Quetzalcoatl a bat was born, which bit Xochiquetzal on her sex organ and thereby caused flowers to first appear (Heyden 1983:105). Flowers, then, became a symbol of all sensual delights, including love, art, music, and the life force.[1]

Medicinal properties of flowers and plants were learned by followers of the female deities, including healers, midwives, and sorceresses (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:17, 107; Book 5:183; Heyden 1983). Book 11 of the *Florentine Codex* features a variety of medicinal flowers with their use in childbirth, treatment of sexual ailments, and in sweatbath purification rites. For example, the white amaryllis

Figure 6.6 Xochiquetzal seated in front of flowering Tree of Life in Tamoanchan. Note elaborate *quechquemitl,* quetzal headdress with butterflies, and butterfly nose ornament. After Codex Borgia (1963: Plate 9)

and the poinsettia were both used for the treatment of genital diseases (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:19; Book 5:183).

Animals associated with Xochiquetzal included the quetzal bird, snakes, scorpions, butterflies, dogs, hummingbirds, centipedes, and ocelots (Quiñones Keber 1995:187–188). The quetzal, a tropical macaw with long green tail feathers, was part of her name glyph as well as a synonym for "precious." Other associations were based on concepts of sexual promiscuity, renewal, and rebirth (Sullivan 1982). Hummingbirds were often used as magical talismans for bringing on fertility. Animals like the ocelot, coral snake, and scorpion, however, were a reminder of the malevolent side of Xochiquetzal's personality. The goddess is linked with scorpions in native folklore, where the lord Yappan was transformed into a scorpion after being seduced by Xochiquetzal (Ruíz de Alarcón 1982:293–299). In seventeenth-century Morelos, healers called upon the goddess to help counteract the venom of a scorpion's sting while referring to the legend of Yappan.

Descriptions of Xochiquetzal come from Colonial Period accounts recorded by Catholic priests. The emphasis is on Xochiquetzal as a goddess of flowers, sexuality and childbirth, and artistic creation. Comparisons can be made to Venus/Aphrodite and Eve, and there is a sense of the Spanish elevating Xochiquetzal onto a pedestal to accentuate her benevolent qualities, while at the same time warning against the destructive aspects of uncontrolled female sexuality.

Xochiquetzal incarnate

An alternative perspective on Xochiquetzal is provided by consideration of the groups affiliated with the goddess, including artisans, healers, midwives, and harlots. Ethnohistorical evidence for these groups is embedded in many of the same sources that describe Xochiquetzal, but the tone of the narrative is less dogmatic and relevant information can therefore be ferreted out. Additional information is also supplied by illustrations from both pre- and post-Conquest pictorial manuscripts. As has been suggested in art historical analyses of Contact Period illustrations (e.g. Brown 1983; Quiñones Keber 1988), artists' representations often reflect a more "indigenous" perspective than the corresponding texts. Combining these two sources is thus a means of reconstructing the social organization of groups for whom Xochiquetzal was patroness, and thereby inferring the pre-Hispanic roles played by the goddess in religious ideology and in the negotiation of female gender identity.

Professional artisans enjoyed a relatively elevated status in Aztec society. Ethnohistorical documents recorded the advice of the Aztec ruler Mocteuczoma II, who told his children not directly in line for political succession that they should "learn well" the skills of artisans (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 8:45). It can therefore be inferred that the artisan classes were closely related to the noble lineages, with many of the followers of Xochiquetzal familiar with the standards of elite society.

The crafts of spinning and weaving were closely associated with female identity, with women expected to be competent weavers (Figure 6.7; Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10:96). Noble women were expected to exemplify this stereotype, and young women were admonished to emulate their behavior:

Figure 6.7 Mature woman weaving on backstrap loom. After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10: Figure 21)

> Pay heed to, apply yourself to, the work of women, to the spindle, the batten. Watch carefully how your noblewomen, your ladies, our ladies, the noblewomen, who are artisans, who are craftswomen, dye [the thread], how they apply the dyes [to the thread], how the heddles are set, how the heddle leashes are fixed…. It is not your destiny, it is not your fate, to offer [for sale] in people's doorways, greens, firewood, strings of chiles, slabs of rock salt, for you are a noblewoman. [Thus], see to the spindle, the batten.
>
> (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:96; in Sullivan 1982:13–14)

At the birth of a girl child, the midwife immediately began the baby's indoctrination into a female identity by burying the umbilical cord beside the hearth (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 4:3–4), as a symbol that the place of a woman was at the center of the household, and her tasks were "to prepare drink, to prepare food, to grind [maize flour], to spin, to weave" (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:173). It should be noted that within Aztec society the hearth (*xictli,* literally "navel") was the symbolic center of the household, the *axis mundi* of the Aztec domestic landscape. At the bathing ceremony following the birth, newborn babies were presented with gifts in accordance with their social rank and gender identities (Figure 6.8). Girls received a spindle whorl, weaving batten, basket, spinning bowl, skeins of thread, and shuttle, with the skirt and tunic of female dress. Girls began to learn to spin by the age of 4, and by 12 they began to weave (Figure 6.9; Codex Mendoza 1992, vol. 3: folio 58r–60r; Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:201).

Expertise at spinning and weaving were highly regarded skills, to the extent that female slaves awaiting sacrifice would be given a spindle and fiber to spin, and if the woman showed exceptional ability at the domestic arts she could be spared from sacrifice to enter the royal household (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 9:46). On the other hand, it was also believed that embroiderers who failed to observe religious rituals "lived in great vice and became terrible whores"

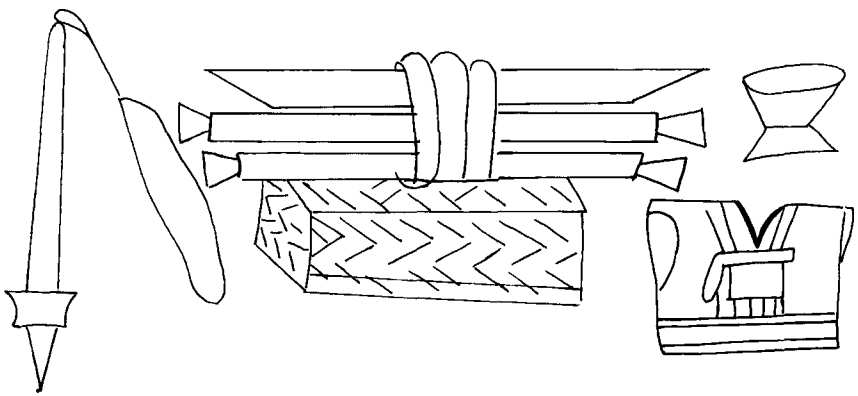

Figure 6.8 Gifts presented at bathing ceremony as symbols of female identity. After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 6: Figure 30)

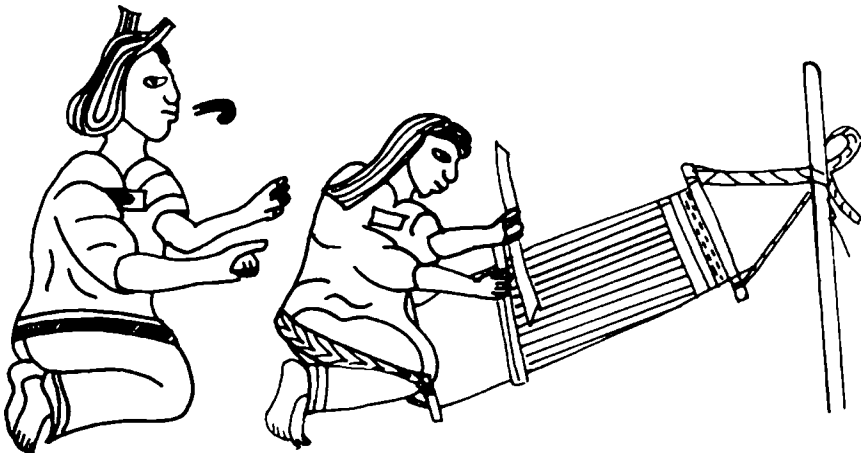

Figure 6.9 Woman teaching daughter to weave. After Codex Mendoza (1992, vol. 3, folio 60r)

(Sahagún 1950– 82, Book 4:7). Xochiquetzal, as patroness of embroiderers, punished the non-penitent with "piles and infections."

Weaving was one of the most important avenues by which a woman could participate in the market economy (Brumfiel 1991; Hellbom 1967; McCafferty and McCafferty 1991) and women are repeatedly depicted selling their wares in the marketplace (Figure 6.10). Besides economic gain, good weavers gained prestige for their households through ritual gift giving of finely woven cloth. Gifts of textiles of different sizes and qualities often accompanied ceremonial participation, such as betrothals, births, funerals, or religious holidays (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:129, 196; see also Motolinía 1951:132). Intensive production of woven goods was therefore essential to the acquisition and maintenance of social status. This would have been an important impetus for the practice of polygyny by the Aztec elite, who depended on multiple wives and their maid-servants to produce textiles in quantity (Motolinía 1951:202; see also Durán 1971:435).

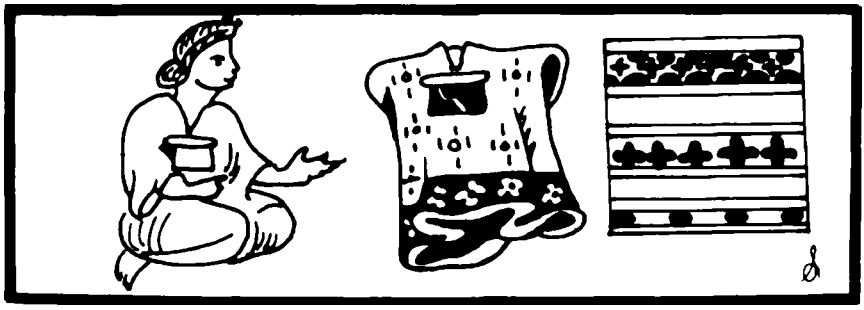

Figure 6.10 Woman selling capes in the marketplace. After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10: Figure 120)

Temple compounds were established where women could perfect the skills of spinning and weaving, along with giving service to the gods (Clavijero 1976:168; Motolinía 1951:127–128). The Xochiquetzal temple was located within the Huitzilopochtli compound at the Aztec capital (Durán 1971:240), and "Maidens of Penitence" lived as cloistered virgins where they performed ritual and domestic service (Figure 6.11; Durán 1971:83–88). Life in the temple was carefully guarded, with priestesses to remain chaste and virtuous (but see p. 115). Time was spent learning the proper ways to worship the deities, with apprentices trained in songs, dances, and ceremonial rites. Temple priestesses also learned more arcane secrets, including practices used for healing, midwifery, divination, and sorcery.

In contrast, Xochiquetzal was also the patroness of harlots. During festivals in her honor in Tlaxcala, brightly dressed prostitutes and hermaphrodites paraded through the streets (Thompson 1933:145–146). Women of "ill-repute" made a profound impression on the Spanish chroniclers (Arvey 1988). Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10:55) described the harlot *(ahuiani):*

> She makes herself beautiful; she arrays herself; she is haughty. She appears like a flower *[mosuchiquetza],* looks gaudy, arrays herself gaudily; she views herself in a mirror–carries a mirror in her hand. She bathes; she takes a sweat bath; she washes herself; she anoints herself with *axin* [a yellowish unguent]–constantly anoints herself with *axin.* She lives like a bathed slave, acts like a sacrificial victim; she goes about with her head high–rude, drunk, shameless–eating mushrooms. She paints her face, variously paints her face; her face is covered with rouge, her cheeks are colored, her teeth are darkened –rubbed

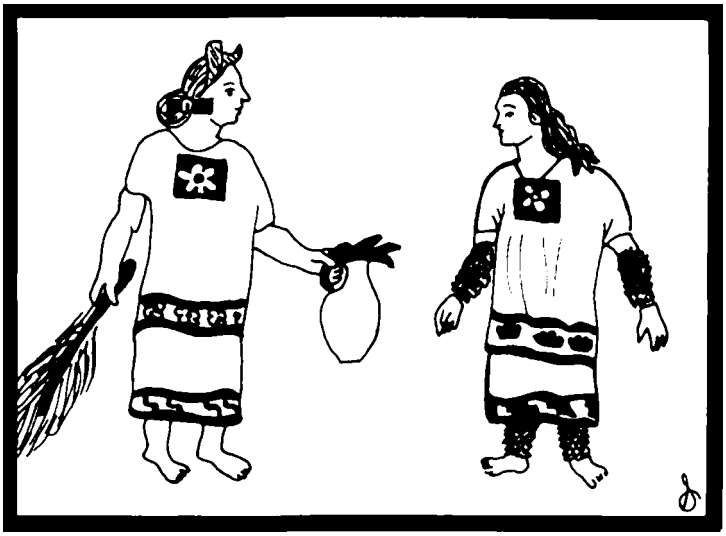

Figure 6.11 Aztec maidens from the temple school. After Durán (1971: Plate 6)

> with cochineal. [Half] of her hair falls loose, half is wound around her head. She arranges her hair like horns.

It is notable that the harlot is explicitly described as being *mosuchiquetza,* "like Xochiquetzal." This description of the harlot also parallels in many respects Sahagún's descriptions of the "bad" noblewomen (1950–82, Book 10:45–50). Whereas "good" noblewomen were characterized through a wide variety of exemplary qualities, their wicked counterparts were "perverted," "gaudy," and "given to carnal pleasure." This distinction is further blurred through the contrasting descriptions of women's appearance in Sahagún's texts dealing with moral rhetoric (Book 6:101) as opposed to noble practice (1950–82, Book 8:47–48). The moral rhetoric instructs girls not to dress like *ahuianime,* yet elsewhere "esteemed" noble women were described with precisely those attributes.

Illustrations of harlots (Figure 6.12) continue this parallel; note also similarities to the "Maidens of Penitence" from the Xochiquetzal temple. A composite glyph of a foot over a three-petal flower is used to identify both the "good noblewoman" (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10: Figure 98) and the "harlot" (ibid.: Figure 109). Harlots are also depicted with a spindle and female head as naming elements, perhaps in reference to symbols of female identity (Arvey 1988:187); the head features the twin "horns" of hair characteristic of Xochiquetzal and, more generally, mature women. The figures hold flowers in their hands in reference to their use of flowers and herbs such as the *poyomatli* (also *poyomaxochitl, cacauaxochitl*) herb used as an aromatic narcotic (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 10:56; Book 11:202, 212). In all three illustrations the harlots are shown with water motifs, including shells, beneath their feet and in their hand. This may be in reference to the description that harlots "lived on the water" (ibid.: 56, 94); Durán (1971:350, Plate 28) illustrates Chalchiucueye, goddess of the waters, kneeling on similar water symbols.[2]

While documentary sources regularly condemned harlots, little attention was devoted to the organization of the group. Noble girls could go to study in the temple schools *(calmecac)* but were warned not to enter the "place of courtesans,

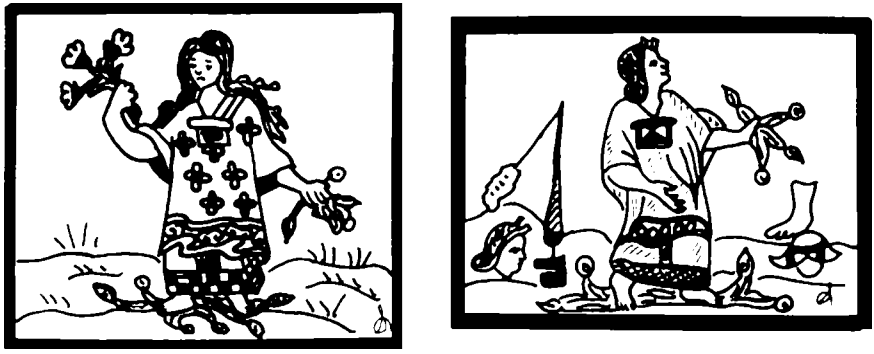

Figure 6.12 Aztec *ahuianime.* After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10: Figures 107 and 109)

place of diversions" (*auilpan, camanalpan;* Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:216–217). There is some evidence that harlots *(ahuianime)* were affiliated with the female priesthood, since they participated in ceremonial rites of the goddess Toci alongside the healers and midwives (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:118). *Ahuianime* were the attendants of deity impersonators destined for sacrifice and were rewarded by receiving all the precious belongings of the impersonator after his death (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:169). During the feast of Toxcatl, an impersonator of Tezcatlipoca had "carnal relations" with a group of four women specially trained to represent members of the earth/fertility goddess complex–the leader of this group was identified as Xochiquetzal (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:9, 69–70).

On the feast day of the lords, in the month of Uey tecuilhuitl, *ahuianime* ("pleasure girls") and *maauiltia* ("courtesans") emerged from the House of Song *(cuicacalli)* to dance with successful warriors and noblemen.[3] After the ceremony, matrons *(tlauhtiloya)* gathered up the women at which time the noblemen and teachers offered gifts in order to take the dancers home for the night (Figure 6.13; Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:96–103). In a separate ceremony known as the Etzalqualiztli, "pleasure girls" and warriors danced from door to door asking for offerings of *etzalli* (a mixture of corn and beans) (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:84).

Ahuianime who travelled with the armies, maintaining the camps, cooking, and presumably performing other "services" (Salas 1990:9–10), may have also been associated with Xochiquetzal. There is some evidence that women also served as warriors among the Aztecs and other Mesoamerican groups (McCafferty and McCafferty 1994a). It was recorded that Tlatelolcan women defended their city against the Aztec army (Durán 1994:260; also Klein 1994), and Tepanec warriors

Figure 6.13 Temple matron arranging match between man and *ahuianime*. After Sahagún (1950–82, Book 10: Figure 146)

in female costume are shown in battle (Durán 1994: Plate 11). The Codex Mendoza illustrates tribute of military costumes from the Huaxteca with distinctively female elements, including spindles in the headdress and crescent-shaped nose ornaments; note also that these are the only costumes that lack loincloths (Codex Mendoza 1992, vol. 3:45, folio 19r).

Another role of the *ahuiani* was to incite the young warriors to go into battle, by taunting the more reticent (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:81). Valiant women may have even had a non-combatant role on the battlefield, where they "coached and cheered on their warrior mates" (Salas 1990:7, citing Torquemada 1723, vol. 2:299). In this role *ahuianime* paralleled Xochiquetzal, urging soldiers into battle while at the same time protecting and caring for them.

Xochiquetzal/Itzpapalotl in her role as primordial warrior provided a bridge into the predominantly male realm of war. Success in battle was one of the primary means available to men for gaining status in Aztec society. Metaphorically, blood gushing from a wound was equated with a flower blooming, and the glyphic elements for "flower" and "heart" are sometimes identical (Berlo 1983). Xochiquetzal as goddess of flowers, then, was also a goddess of war, urging soldiers into battle while at the same time protecting Aztec warriors. The "Flowery Wars" of the Aztec Triple Alliance were designed specifically to capture victims for sacrifice, to offer up the flowers/hearts to the sun.

When women gave birth, the midwife would let out a shout, to be heard by all in the community, that the woman had been like a brave warrior and taken a prisoner, a baby. Women that died in childbirth (*mocihuaquetzque,* literally "quetzal women") were given a place of honor in Aztec society (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:37–38), structurally equivalent to warriors who died in battle (Kellogg 1988). It was believed that these corpses had magical powers, and warriors tried to cut locks of hair and the middle finger from the deceased to carry into battle for luck (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:161–163). Thieves believed that the forearm could be used to paralyze victims during robberies. To prevent the dismemberment of female heroines, it is little wonder that the midwives/priestesses banded together to protect the corpses, taking up their "little shields" *(tehuehuele)* and weaving swords for defense.

Priestesses affiliated with the earth/fertility complex were powerful in their knowledge and control over fertility and childbirth. Herbal medicine, magical charms, and prayers could be used to either bring on or prevent pregnancy (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 1:4–5). Other methods were known to cause or prevent miscarriage, to ensure easy childbirth, and to facilitate lactation (ibid., Book 6:159). Since bearing children was an important way for women to gain prestige within pre-Columbian society, control over reproduction was an arena for the negotiation of power in gender relations.[4]

This can be further seen through metaphors for sexual reproduction relating to spinning and weaving. As Thelma Sullivan (1982) described it:

> Spinning goes through stages of growth and decline, waxing and waning, similar to those of a child-bearing woman. The spindle set in the spindle

> whorl is symbolic of coitus, and thread, as it winds around the spindle, symbolizes the growing fetus…. Weaving, too, the intertwining of threads, is symbolic of coitus, and thus spinning and weaving represent life, death, and rebirth in a continuing cycle that characterizes the essential nature of the Mother Goddess.
>
> (Sullivan 1982:14)

The Spanish chronicler Bernardino de Sahagún recorded the Aztec riddle: "What is it that they make pregnant, that they make big with child in the dancing place?" The answer, spindles, again refers to the ball of thread winding around the spindle shaft, while the "dancing place" refers to the little bowl where me end of the spindle shaft rests during supported spinning (Book 6:239–40; in Sullivan 1982).

Sexual reproduction and domestic production were the two principal avenues available for pre-Columbian women to acquire status within Aztec society. The metaphorical blending of sexual symbolism with spinning and weaving suggests that control over these resources was consciously manipulated by women to maximize social power. Analyses of material culture from archaeological contexts, such as spindle whorls and weaving battens, indicate that stylistic representations on these implements emphasized associations with female supernaturals and related resources of female power (McCafferty and McCafferty 1991, 1994b). The material culture of spinning and weaving played an active symbolic role in reifying female identity and asserting claims to power and prestige.

Parallel structures equated the male and female activities of battle and reproduction. Spinning and weaving implements were used symbolically to continue this metaphor (McCafferty and McCafferty 1991). The weaving batten, a long flat piece of wood used as part of the back-strap loom, was commonly referred to as a weaving sword (Berdan 1988). The goddess Xochiquetzal was depicted with a batten as a symbol of her authority in the *Codex Télleriano Remensis* (Quiñones Keber 1995:187–188), as was Cihuacoatl in the *Florentine Codex* and *Primeros Memoriales* (Figure 6.14; Sahagún 1950–82, Book 1:3; 1993: folio 264r). Battens were also used in ritual contexts to "sacrifice" dough idols made of amaranth seeds (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 2:29). Ethnographically, we have witnessed weavers using their wooden battens like a *machete* to crack open coconuts!

Clay spindle whorls were often decorated with mold-made impressions closely resembling the patterns of battle shields, including shields carried by female deities of the earth/fertility complex. Many other whorls include floral motifs, possibly evoking Xochiquetzal either in her role as patroness of weavers or as primordial warrior. Spindle whorls may be what the chroniclers referred to as "small shields" *(tehuehuele)* that women would use in battle and in childbirth (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:154). *Téueuellis* were described as small enough that "all the little shields [could] rest in thy hand" (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:97). The idea of a small clay whorl does not take on ominous proportions until one considers the sharply

Figure 6.14 Goddess Cihuacoatl holding weaving batten. After Codex Magliabechiano (1983: Plate 45)

pointed wooden spindle that passes through the hole, effectively becoming an eighteen-inch hat pin.

A final group that was affiliated with Xochiquetzal and her priestesses were dwarfs *(tzapatl),* hunchbacks *(tepotzli),* and others with deformities. It was believed that through these intermediaries supernatural power was channeled. Birth defects were interpreted as a sign from the goddess, and dwarfs and hunchbacks were often retained as servants for the nobility (Durán 1971:122, 271–272; Sahagún 1950–82, Book 8:30). These may have been equated with the *xolotls,* mythical creatures affiliated with Xochiquetzal. Literally, *"xolotl"* means "servant" and "page," and therefore is a suitable description for the role of dwarves and

hunchbacks in the service of the nobility. The god Xolotl was the deformed twin of Quetzalcoatl (Brundage 1982), and a further implication of *xolotl* therefore relates to individuals suffering from syphilitic deformities, relating to the syphilitic god Nanahuatzin, an avatar of Xolotl.

Syphilis may have been a relatively common disease in pre-Columbian Mexico that spread to Europe shortly after the Conquest. In addition to causing open sores, untreated syphilis can cause crippling bone disease ("charcot joint"), birth defects, blindness, and high prenatal and maternal mortality (CIBA 1971). Charcot joint is the result of the deterioration of load-bearing long bones, and can cause the distal end of the tibia to disarticulate from the foot. As noted above, birth abnormalities were interpreted as being caused by the goddess, but they could also be the result of the *cihuateteo,* deified women affiliated with Xochiquetzal who died in childbirth and returned to earth to cause mischief (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 1:19; Sullivan 1982:18–19). Interestingly, *cihuateteo/ ahuiateteo* are depicted in the Codex Borgia with oddly deformed ankles, possibly

Figure 6.15 Cihuateteo (deified woman). Note deformed eyes and ankles. After Codex Borgia (1963: Plate 47)

an indication of the syphilitic bone disease (Figure 6.15), and with eye deformities similar to that shown on Nanahuatzin (Codex Borgia, 1963: Plate 10). The complementary name for these supernatural, *ahuiateteo,* suggests a close relationship with the "pleasure girls" affiliated with the priestesses of Xochiquetzal.

Conclusion

The portrayal of Xochiquetzal as patroness of harlots, gaudily dressed, clacking her bitumen gum loudly, full of vice and crippled with syphilis, is a far cry from the original description of a young woman, the essence of sensual femininity. How should we rectify this discrepancy? Should we accept the prejudiced interpretations of the medieval Spanish priests, relying as they did on the opinions of Aztec elite males. We think not! The overwhelming male bias of the ethnohistoric record does more to *prescribe* proper behavior than to *describe* alternative female roles.

Instead, we see Xochiquetzal as an ideological figurehead for women's roles in contrast to male activities and thus a focus for the negotiation of female power. Women that affiliated themselves with the goddess participated in an alternative discourse that was not congruent with the dominant culture of the Aztecs. These women–healers, midwives, weavers, and harlots–accentuated the traditional resources of female power, sexual reproduction and domestic production, to augment their own social status. Through the concepts of religious duality and parallelism, a potential existed for structural equality, and through such means as the symbolic use of weaving "weapons" this identity was projected.

Xochiquetzal was presented as an ideal for Aztec womanhood. Yet the problem arises: whose ideal? In the "official" histories collected by the Spanish chroniclers, the goddess fulfills the needs of a dominant male ideology as subservient, domestic, and willing. Intertwined throughout the chronicles, however, are hints, based largely on the women's groups that were associated with the goddess, that a different ideal may have existed, with a distinctly female agenda. Xochiquetzal may have been on a pedestal for the male elite, but she was a focal point for Aztec women seeking to negotiate their own place in society.

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Notes

1 The "adultery flower" *(teccizuacalxochitl, tetlaxincaxochitl)* raised by Aztec palace women even had a functional use relating to its phallic form, and Mocteuczoma's concubines caught using the flower "in place of a virile [male] member" were stoned (Durán 1994:52 n. 3, from Hernández 1959–60:II:390; also Sahagún 1950–82, Book 11:209).

2 Sahagún describes water merchants who also "lived on the water" and sacrificed a female slave to the goddess of the waters (1950–82, Book 1:22).

3 Seler (1963:23) notes that the *ahuianime* lived in the *cuicacalli* and were the "companions" of single warriors living in the *telpochcalli,* the house of youths. Sahagún added (1950–82, Book 3:59):

> And these youths [in the *telpochcalli*] had their paramours *(ynmecaoan)* by twos, by threes. Perchance one was in her own house, perchance several lay scattered. And when, they said, youth was laid down, he paid his debt. In order to leave, the youth left large cotton capes, perhaps ten, perhaps twenty if he was rich.

4 Youths were warned by their fathers to avoid eating things given by "whores and harlots" *(cioatlaueliloque in auianime),* since they could include potions such as *mac¸acoatl* (made from a particular species of snake: Sahagún 1950–82, Book 11:80), that caused heightened sex drive to the point that they would become dehydrated from continuous ejaculation and "die of lasciviousness" (Sahagún 1950–82, Book 6:125–126).

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Part III

Manifesting power through material culture

7 *Artels* and identities

Gender, power, and Russian America

Katharine Woodhouse-Beyer

> Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with meaning and power and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-changing social geography of power and signification.
>
> (Massey 1994)

Introduction

From the genesis of historical archaeology in 1967 as a professional academic discipline, scholars have uniformly argued that the intrusion of Europeans upon Native American lands and cultures effected rapid and significant social change for all. Pioneering anthropological studies typically invoked debates, now old, by juxtaposing archaeology against history and Indians against Europeans; however, it soon became clear that these interpretative boundaries were more fluid than actual (Fitzhugh 1985; Rubertone 1989, 1996).

Moving beyond the early considerations of the processes and material culture of native "acculturation," historians and archaeologists in more recent decades have increasingly applied symbolic, critical, and feminist approaches as heuristic tools in understanding the complex intertwining of race, class, and gender variables during the North American contact period. Many of these approaches demonstrate that the processes of contact and cultural change, in a variety of geographic and social settings from the eleventh to the nineteenth century AD, were neither one-sided, nor homogenous (Fitzhugh 1985; Rubertone 1989, 1996; Trigger 1991; Wolf 1982). Historical archaeologists now consider a "laundry-list" of research variables when discussing the methods and mechanics of "contact" by taking account of differences in timing, intent, sociopolitical organization, and population density of both native and European groups. More importantly, there is now an increasing focus on recovering the archaeology of the dispossessed and muted "Other," defined culturally and historically on one or more axes of race, class, and gender.

Early attempts to more critically consider the methods and mechanics involved in the North American fur trade commonly invoked the works of Marx, Durkheim, and Foucault to enable discussions of economic, social, and sexual inequalities. While seductive and often aesthetic, such studies have been

condemned as both androcentric, and ethnocentric, in viewing native peoples (if they view them at all) as passive victims to a dominant group and ideology. Women's domestic roles are commonly relegated to a lower status *vis-à-vis* men's centrally important public, and productive, status (Claassen 1992; Claassen and Joyce 1997; cf. Spencer-Wood 1989, 1991, 1992). A growing body of feminist archaeological research, specifically focussing on gender relations and placing women at the center of analysis, now challenges the simplistic stereotypes of relations between native women and European colonizers. A critical reassessment of both history and archaeology promotes that women were indeed visible, viable, and powerful social agents in a variety of cultural and historical situations (Claassen 1992; Claassen and Joyce 1997; Conkey and Spector 1984; Gero and Conkey 1991; Scott 1991a, 1991b, 1994; Spencer-Wood 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994; Walde and Willows 1991).

Following the tradition of "engendering archaeology," this chapter seeks to examine the way in which an analysis of gender relations provides alternative perspectives on socioeconomic inequalities and power relationships existing between the nineteenth-century Alutiiq of the Kodiak Archipelago, southwestern Alaska, and the colonizing Russian American Company. Using preliminary archaeological data recovered from the early-nineteenth-century Afognak *artel,* a provisioning post managed by the Russian American Company on Afognak Island, as well as through a critical reassessment of the relevant nineteenth-century ethnohistorical accounts concerning the Alutiiq, I shall examine the potential of artifactual patterning and site spatial arrangements to reveal the material and architectural effects of changing gender relations in Russian America. Specifically, I shall explore the interaction of gender and power in Russian America through an overall discussion of *created space* and *created identity*.

Definitions of power

Power relations are not only ubiquitous in human life but also an intrinsic part of social relationships. However, like other complex social phenomena, the definition and analysis of "power" vary widely among social scientists; theoretical and empirical research concerning power relations are subsequently beset with difficulties in methodology and operationalization. The explicit considerations of power relations in archaeological contexts are few and are largely limited to discussions of elites and their apparent ability to control trade and/or direct the construction of large civic works, such as monumental architecture or irrigation. Commonly, archaeological research has focussed on the ancient cultures of Mexico, Peru, or the ancient Near East to the near exclusion of North America.

The academic struggle to define "power" can be traced back in the literature to the 1950s. Robert Bierstadt (1950) measured the effects of power through a consideration of the instrument "force"; Talcott Parsons (1960) defined power as "the capacity to get things done" (Bierstadt 1950:733 and Parsons 1960, cited in Hindess 1996). Robert Dahl later promoted the analysis of power based on "quantifiable" variables such as magnitude, distribution, scope, domain, and

motivation (Dahl 1968). Unfortunately, direct measurement of the archaeological manifestations of power is difficult; in addition, without historical data, the means and processes by which people acquired social positions and/or status are virtually invisible.

Clearly, not all definitions of power can be subsumed under overarching theory. Any construction of power must be both culturally and historically conscious. The definition of power used in this chapter on nineteenth-century Kodiak is most closely aligned with the definition provided by Max Weber:

> "Power" is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests.
>
> (Weber 1957 [1922]:152, cited in Dahl 1968)

Seen in this way, power is an "ability" exerted in social situations by individuals or groups to effect change and pursue goals *even within* a hegemonic relationship. I argue that even while the traditional Alutiiq division of labor was changed by the Russian American Company, Alutiiq women, by intensifying their productive skills, "womaning" the *artel*s, and, some, intermarrying with Russian officers, were powerful social actors within the colonial arena. Alutiiq women's power was not overt, but *covert,* while they followed Russian dictates by intensifying their traditional tasks of sewing and gathering, Alutiiq women were essential both to the Russian American economy *and* to Alutiiq society. Alutiiq women were able to:

1 have some measure of control over their own households, labor tasks, and utilization of space within the *artel* community
2 acquire luxury goods, and thus social prestige, for themselves, their families and their children
3 promote the survival of their own culture through intermarriage and the creation of the Creole class.

Russian America: history and research

The history and archaeology of the Russian American Company has received scant attention by historical archaeologists as compared to studies of other colonial mercantile ventures, such as those of the English, Dutch, and French (Dilliplane 1991; Woodhouse-Beyer 1994, 1995a). Russian *promyshlenniki* were among the later arrivals in the rapacious European quest for North American land, labor, and resources. Beginning with the voyage of Bering and Chirikov in the mid-eighteenth century, this eclectic group of merchants and fur hunters ranged widely across the north Pacific after fur-bearing mammals, particularly the sea otter, which would sell at high profit to the capricious Chinese merchants at Kiakhta and Canton. When Gregorii Shelikov finally secured tsarist sponsorship for the consolidated and monopolistic Russian American Company in 1799, the

subsequent extent and intensity with which the Russians carried out a complex system of wage labor, resource procurement, commodities exchange, and territorial expansion was to forever change the geographic and human landscape of the north Pacific. By 1867, when the Company sold its holdings to the Americans, the Russians and their conscripted native labor had constructed a chain of over sixty forts, settlements, and work stations extending from the Aleutians to the Kodiak Archipelago, Alaska mainland, northern California, and briefly, Hawaii (Fedorova 1971; Okun 1951; Tikhmenev 1979).

While many historical and economic histories have attempted to produce comprehensive accounts of the Russian American Company, it has only been since the 1960s that historical archaeologists have more seriously investigated the Russian presence in North America. Early archaeological research in the Russian American sphere largely falls into three categories (Dilliplane 1991): site survey and testing, detailed descriptions of artifact types and settlement layout of mainly "Russian" sites, and preliminary attempts to archaeologically distinguish "Russian period" from later "American period" assemblages (VanStone 1968, 1970, 1972; VanStone and Townsend 1970; see also Oswalt 1980). The former, largely ethnoarchaeological, studies commonly sprinkled ethnohistorical excerpts among detailed archaeological findings. While information on artifact types and distributions is voluminous and descriptive, the results of the earliest archaeological and ethnohistorical research often implied that acculturation was unidirectional, with native peoples abandoning their spiritual beliefs, clamoring for such Russian trade items as tobacco, tea, and items of personal adornment, and passively accepting their new roles as drudges for the Russian economy (Marakova 1975; Okun 1951).

In recent years, archaeological research designs have undertaken a wider view of Russian America. In particular, researchers have focussed upon settlements known to have been inhabited by both Russian and native peoples in order to more clearly understand the complexities of native-Russian interaction (Crowell 1994; Knecht 1985; Knecht and Jordan 1985; Lightfoot *et al.* 1994). Although these studies often operate within the "world systems" paradigm, they have enabled the formulation of other inquiries perhaps not anticipated by earlier scholars. Alaskan historical archaeology could benefit by testing an "expanding" archaeological record against new research questions posed by "critical" scholarship, which, despite a "top down" stance, highlights the complex relationship among power, culture, and symbolic action; the addition of insights provided by engendered research may extricate not only the daily life on the Russian American frontier but, more importantly, the people (Claassen 1992).

Russians on the Kodiak Archipelago

Early-nineteenth-century ethnohistorical data, based in part on earlier information gathered by the *promyshlenniki* and combined with material from the logs and diaries of Company officers Davydov (Pierce 1976) and Lisianski (1968), and church official Heiromonk Gideon (Black 1977), comment exhaustively on several features of Alutiiq lifeways at contact–particularly on the topic of the division of

labor and spatial arrangements. Although historical sources are often biassed, and, at best, fragmentary (Leone 1988), we can use the data to construct a framework for hypothesis forming against which future archaeological data can be tested.

While there was no regional unity on the Kodiak Archipelago, each Alutiiq village had its own *toion,* or native leader, in addition to an informal network honoring family heads and skilled elders. Displaying a gender complementarity which andiropologists have found characteristic of traditional Alaskan Inupik and Yupik peoples of later historic periods, the precontact Alutiiq presumably separated their tasks, toolkits, and living arrangements according to gender (Fienup-Riordan 1983; Graburn and Strong 1973; Ray 1981).

Alutiiq men were renowned as skillful hunters of sea mammals from their sleek *baidarki,* or *kayak*s, as well as being expert woodworkers and craftsmen. While they shared meals and social activities with the women, male Alutiiq resided in the *kazhim,* or men's house; ethnohistoric sources emphasize that men kept their tasks and tools largely separate from females (Davydov in Pierce 1976; Gideon in Black 1977; Holmberg 1985; Lisianski 1968). Alutiiq women procured edible plants and shellfish, gathered grass matting and roots for twined basketry, and, most importantly, processed skins and gut to make distinctive Alutiiq *kamleika*s, or waterproof *parka*s, for their families. Lisianski notes that women trained their daughters

> from their infancy in needle-works, in making nets, lines, and other things adapted to their sex.
>
> (Lisianski 1968:202)

Female Alutiiq, among whom I include the special position of the *schoopan,* an Alutiiq male raised to take on the tasks, attitude, and attire of the female gender (Lisianski 1968:199), resided in extended family groups within the smaller *barabara*s and were required to keep their tools separate from those of the men because of their potential polluting power (Davydov in Pierce 1976; Gideon in Black 1977; Holmberg 1985; Lisianski 1968).

Concerning overt mentions of female Alutiiq "power," the ethnohistories are relatively silent. Davydov comments:

> Among all savage peoples the women are more slaves than companions of the men; here, in contrast, they wield a lot of power and the girls are not chosen by the men but they choose their husbands.
>
> (Davydov in Pierce 1976:11)

While women were undoubtedly valued members of the Alutiiq community for their food, clothing, and reproductive services, the Russians noted that females also had a "pollutant power." During their menstrual cycles, women were expected to move to separate, and smaller, menstrual huts. Furthermore, women were barred from attending men's ceremonies in the *kazhim* unless invited to do so:

> even given this apparent ascendancy of the women, however, they are not allowed to attend the councils when matters of public interests are being discussed, and they do not even sit down to eat with the men.
>
> (Davydov in Pierce 1976:11)

The discovery of the Kodiak Archipelago by Stephan Glotov in 1762 set the stage for drastic changes in Alutiiq lifestyles over the next forty years. After a hiatus since Glotov's initial discovery, Gregorii Shelikov ventured to make Kodiak the headquarters for his proposed "Russian American Company" in the early 1780s (Shelikov 1981). Small skirmishes between the Shelikov-Golikov Company and groups of Alutiiq led quickly to the massacre of over 500 Alutiiq at Refuge Rock in 1784, the turning point from which the Russians subsequently asserted their dominion over the archipelago (Black 1990). Company headquarters were established at Three Saints Bay; the capital was later moved by Baranov, the first Company manager, to St. Paul Harbor in 1792. From here, even after another relocation of the headquarters to Sitka in 1799, the Company monitored and supplied smaller Company settlements and provisioning points, known as *odinochka*s and *artel*s.

Like the English East India Company, the Russian American Company was similarly a thinly masked imperial enterprise in the idiom of a trading company (Okun 1951). As a political community, the Company functioned under an explicit ideology not only to subordinate native populations in its path, but also to deter other competing mercantile companies from doing the same (Anderson 1992; Wortman 1995). Armed with a toolkit of Russian material culture and Shelikov's architectural plans of site and settlement (Gibson 1978; Lidfors and Peterson 1990; Senkevitch 1987), the Company imposed a new geography on the Kodiak Archipelago, and, with it, restructured the traditional Alutiiq division of labor.

Kodiak prehistoric archaeology

In order to measure changes in the social, economic, and material conditions of the historical period, historical archaeologists often lay out an archaeological baseline set in the late prehistoric period. Moving specifically to the Kodiak Archipelago, archaeological research since the 1930s has traced Alutiiq occupation of the islands extending nearly 7,000 years into the past (Clark 1984). Research on the three distinguishable periods of Kodiak prehistory–"Ocean Bay," "Kachemak," and "Koniag"–has documented not only the Alutiiq sea mammal hunting and fishing adaptation from their earliest days on the archipelago nearly 7,000 years ago, but also an increasing trend towards ranked social complexity (Crowell 1988; Graburn and Strong 1973; Jordan and Knecht 1988). From the Koniag type site of "Karluk" (AD 1100–1780s), archaeological data strongly suggest that before the Russians visited the north Pacific, the Alutiiq feasted, traded, and raided with other north Pacific groups and lived in large, year-round coastal villages of 200 people or more. Ethnohistorical and archaeological sources

concur that the Kodiak Archipelago was one of the most densely populated areas of native North America.

At the time of contact, the historic Alutiiq lived in *barabara*s, semi-subterranean sod houses reinforced with whalebone and driftwood (Davydov in Pierce 1976; Lisianski 1968; Holmberg 1985; Sarychev 1969). These structures were small, oval, and single-roomed during Ocean Bay times (7000–3500 BP) but became larger and multi-roomed through the later Kachemak (3500 BC–1000 BP) and Koniag periods (1000 BP–AD 1784) (Knecht 1985). *Barabara*s, with entrances on their roofs, were closely spaced along Kodiak's coasts and major salmon rivers. Spatial and material evidence from the few excavated Koniag house sites on the archipelago reveal large semi-subterranean structures with attached siderooms. The central room, roughly square in shape, served as the main gathering area and featured the hearth; adjoining siderooms functioned either as storerooms, sweat-baths, or sleeping *(zupan)* compartments. Most archaeologists on Kodiak have focussed on the documentation of house construction and activity areas for the purposes of chronology (Clark 1984; Crowell 1988; Dumond 1994; Jordan and Knecht 1988), although excavations in other areas of Alaska demonstrate the potential of artifactual task patterning, and possibly, future "engendered" research (Aigner 1978; Grozier 1989; Dumond 1994).

Historical archaeology on Kodiak

Historical archaeological studies on the Kodiak Archipelago are few enough that limited comparison has been made either between them or with prehistoric sites; "gendered" analyses are virtually nonexistent, with the notable exception of an ethnohistorical discussion of cloth, clothing, and Russian America (Jackson 1994). Until the 1980s, the existing historical archaeology of the archipelago comprised the testing, excavation, and description of the more monumental and/or notorious sites: Three Saints Bay (Clark 1985; Crowell 1994); and the Erskine, or Baranov House (Shinkwin and Andrews 1979). More recent excavations have contributed information on a post-contact Alutiiq village at Nunakakhnak (Jordan and Knecht 1988; Knecht 1985), a Russian brick kiln site at Middle Bay (Dilliplane 1991) and, in 1993, limited excavations at the early contact Alutiiq refuge island, Awa'uq, the site of the last major battle between the Russians and the Alutiiq.

Much of the spatial analysis on Russian American sites, particularly the Kodiak Archipelago, has concentrated on Russian culture. Scholars, using existing architectural data from surviving Russian structures, historical sketches, and excavations, have documented that Russian American architecture went through several identifiable stages after the initial Russian arrival (Senkevitch 1987). While earlier Russian houses in the Aleutians tended to mimic Alutiiq *barabara* types, being of small size, round shape, and with windows of talc or gut (Berkh 1974; Lidfors and Peterson 1990), later settlements on the Kodiak Archipelago and northern California were planned landscapes with houses subscribing to western notions of rectilinearity and orientation (Clark 1979, 1985; Crowell 1994; Knecht 1985).

Typically, Russian settlements were strategically located on coastlines in order

to take advantage of natural harbors and the plentiful aquatic and terrestrial resources of the north Pacific. Many of these early settlements sprawled along hillsides and cliffs, such as the Company outposts at Kodiak and Sitka. The largest Russian houses belonged to supervising Company officials and were generally constructed of a combination of sod and hewn spruce logs insulated with moss chinking (Lidfors and Peterson 1990; Senkevitch 1987). Russian residences and storehouses were commonly rectangular, with some structures exhibiting European architectural flourishes such as hipped roofs and front porches. The houses of the Company managers and supervisors were outfitted with a number of imported glass-paned windows. On Kodiak, Russian settlements were largely oriented east-west (Knecht 1985; Knecht and Jordan 1985; Senkevitch 1987; Woodhouse-Beyer 1994, 1995b). Ethnohistorical sources suggest that quarters for the Alutiiq and other native workers were positioned apart from the Russian settlement (Dymytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1976). While researchers have located native living areas on Russian American Company sites at such places as the Kuriles (Schubin 1990) and California (Lightfoot *et al.* 1994), until recently, evidence for distinct Alutiiq living areas on Russian American Company *artel*s on Kodiak have been either ambiguous or absent (Crowell 1994; Knecht 1985; Woodhouse-Beyer 1995a, 1995b).

The Afognak *artel*

In a listing of Russian American Company settlements on the archipelago, Davydov reports:

> On Afognak there are two *artel*s: the Igvat or Afognak, and the Malinovskii
> (Davydov in Pierce 1976:24)

In 1992 and 1993, area researchers conducted limited survey and excavation of the Malinovskii *artel,* also known as the Malina Creek, or Nuniliak (AFG-005). Nuniliak consists of a multicomponent settlement with occupation from Ocean Bay times through the historic period (Woodhouse-Beyer 1994, 1995a). Research on Afognak Island, under the auspices of the Afognak Native Corporation "Dig Afognak," has also recovered the remains of the Afognak *artel* settlement commissioned by Shelikov in the mid-1780s (Black 1990; Davydov in Pierce 1976:24; Gideon in Black 1977:90; Lisianski 1968; Tikhmenev 1979). The Afognak *artel* is most likely a multicomponent site crossing both sides of the Afognak River (Figure 7.1): Aleut Village and Afognak Village are located on the western side of the river, and on the eastern side is "Katanai" or "Igvak," both referring to a later-nineteenth-century American settlement in the same area (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996; Workman and Clark 1979). Preliminary survey and excavation at Katenai, which we now identify as the Afognak *artel,* reveal what may be the earliest component of the *artel* settlement before the Russian consolidation of the site after 1836 at the later Afognak Village (Tikhmenev 1979).

Survey at the Afognak *artel* has located the "typical" Russian period linear

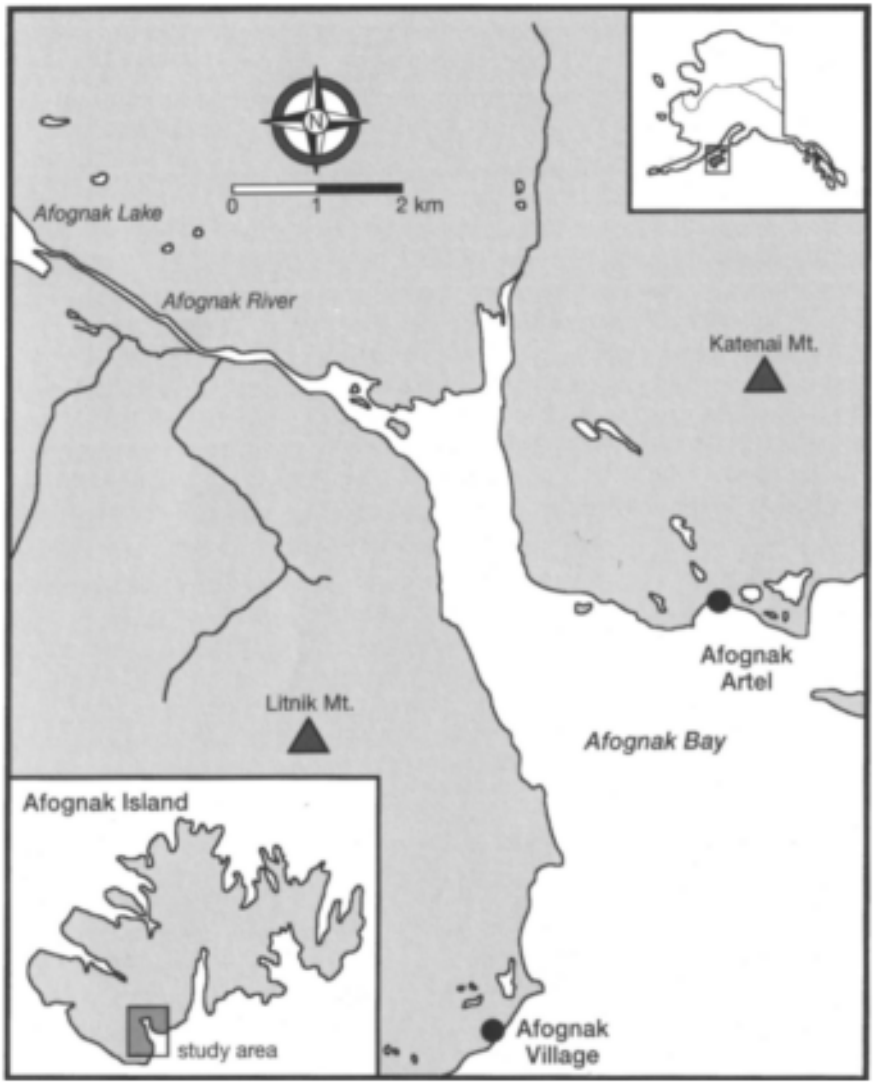

Figure 7.1 Afognak River and site location. Adapted from Clark (1979:47) by Amy Steffian

settlement layout of at least eight associated structures positioned along a forested beach ridge (Figure 7.2). The largest structure (Structure 2), over 15 by 9 meters in dimension, may represent the house of the resident Company supervisor (Figure 7.3). The house is rectilinear, of sod and wood plank construction, and located at the highest point of the ridge with its longer side oriented east-west (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b). Smaller structures, positioned at the base of the ridge, have been identified as living quarters for the Alutiiq workforce (Woodhouse-Beyer 1996). The Alutiiq structures are ovate semi-subterranean sod and driftwood houses

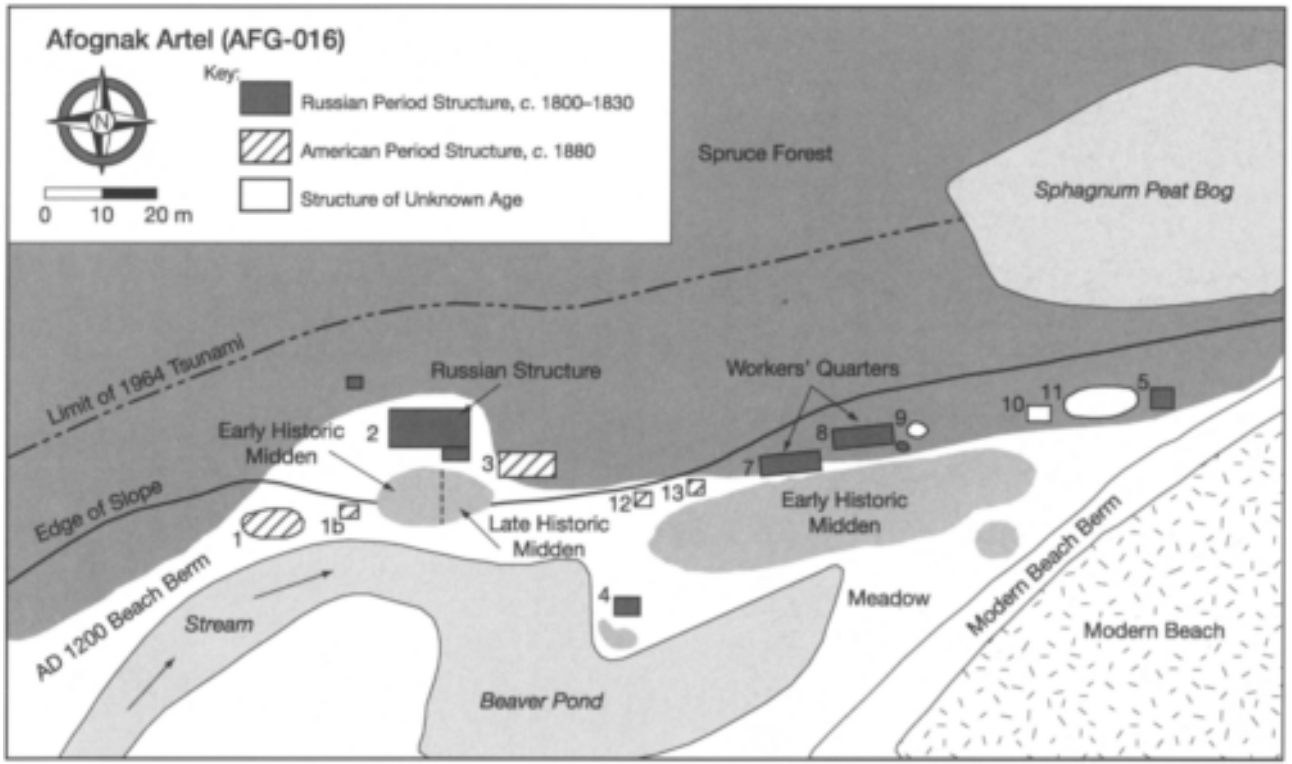

Figure 7.2 Afognak *artel* (1996). Graphics by Amy Steffian, Alutiiq Museum

Figure 7.3 Afognak *artel,* Structure 2, "Supervisor's House"

(Structures 5 and 7) (Figure 7.2). Fortunately, neither the Novaerupta volcanic eruption of 1912 nor the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964 significantly affected the settlement (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996).

The Afognak *artel* is archaeologically valuable for its preservation of early Russian era architectural detail of timber, sod, and brick construction as well as for its large and varied artifact assemblage of both Alutiiq and Euro-Russian manufacture. Of all the historical period sites tested on the archipelago, the Afognak *artel* site is not only the most productive (over 15,000 artifacts, including over 4,000 glass beads), but represents the best preserved view of an early-nineteenth-century Russian American Company settlement. Preliminary analyses of archaeological data collected over three field-seasons (1994–6) suggest not only that the site may be able to answer existing questions concerning daily life, supply, and maintenance on the Russian American frontier, but also that the *artel* is amenable to constructing a new set of interpretative questions to extricate information on ethnic, class, and gender relations.

"All that belongs to the handiwork of their sex" (Davydov in Pierce 1976:10): Alutiiq women and *artels*

A critical reading of the Russian ethnohistorical sources suggest not only that *artel*s were the mainstays of the Russian American economy, but also that *artel*s have the potential to explore the material and architectural effects of changing gender relations. Gavrill Davydov, writing in 1806, tells us:

> At certain places along the coast of the island there are small posts in which groups of hunters live—this is called an *artel,* and is supervised by a *baidarschik.*
> (Pierce 1976:24)

Commonly, scholars of the Russian American period have implied that *artel*s were occupied by male workcrews, organized for Company labor in a strategic hunting and/or military territory (Black 1977; Dmytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1976; Lisianski 1968). Heiromonk Gideon recorded his impressions of *artel* settlements, which were fairly similar in composition and layout throughout Russian America:

> There is a house for the *baidarschik* and the Russian hunters, storage *barabara*s for the foodstuffs, the whale oil rendering station, the kitchen, the sweatbath, a barn, the new cattle byre, the Aleut *kazhim,* a storage barn and two *labaz,* that is posts with a platform on top used for the purpose of hanging fish to dry.
> (Gideon in Black 1977:89)

Davydov and Lisianski both reported that while all able-bodied Alutiiq men between the ages of 18 and 50 were conscripted to hunt for the Company from February through October, women, left with male elders and children, continued their regular tasks of sewing mats and baskets, gathering berries and roots, processing skins into *parka*s and *baidarki,* and procuring and preparing smoked and dried salmon to provision both the Company hunting parties and the *artel* community (Gideon in Black 1977; Lisianski 1968).

In view of the above, a closer reading of the ethnohistories and census data suggests that *artel*s may therefore have been almost completely "manned" by *women,* left behind in the camps. Women played a crucial role in supplying the Russian American Company with sewing and provisioning services, thereby maintaining the male hunting domain; technically, we can say that it was the Alutiiq women who actually "fed" the Russian fur trade by contributing significantly to local, regional, and global economies (cf. Gibson 1976, 1978).

Few archaeological studies of fur trading communities have explicitly considered the material and architectural visibility of gender relations (cf. Jackson 1994; Scott 1991a). Commonly, studies of the fur trade have concentrated on men at forts, not the existence of women and children. Yet while Khlebnikov recorded that the Company suggested that Alutiiq men should be taken "whenever possible…from a family with more than one male member, so that a wife and children will not be left without a provider" (Dmytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1976), it is clear that the Company did not follow its own directives. During his voyage in the years 1802–6, Lisianski reported:

> we landed at a settlement, in which we found only women and children, the men belonging to it having been absent with Mr. Baranoff since the preceding spring.
> (Lisianski 1968:177)

Many of the early-nineteenth-century references to *artel*s mention their association with women and children; of these references, most note that the women and children left in the *artel*s were starving from the lack of provisions during the harsh winters (Lisianski 1968). Physical anthropological studies of the incidence of Harris lines, enamel hypoplasias, and other diet-related information may be useful in determining if there were gendered differences in diet during the Russian American period. Unfortunately, owing to the notoriety of Ales Hrdlicka's insensitive physical anthropological research on Kodiak in the 1930s, the likelihood of recovering such information is slim (Bray and Killion 1994).

Following the above argument, as the Russians demanded that the female Alutiiq intensify their productive tasks, such as repairing clothes and catching stores of salmon crucial to supplying the hunting parties, I consider it likely that women not only were present on *artel*s, but also were present year-round, and in number. Accounts of starvation do not suggest that Alutiiq women were wholly unable to provision themselves, but rather, that the Russian American Company distributed products of *artel* labor throughout the archipelago (Gideon in Black 1977). Women's intensified tasks took time away from storing their own winter supplies in quantity (Davydov in Pierce 1976:26; Gideon in Black 1977:102; Lisianski 1968:177).

The critical analysis of the Russian ethnohistorical texts serve to suggest associations between particular activities, tools, and the genders; these findings can be used to formulate new research questions against which the archaeological data can be assessed. Task-differentiation (Spector 1983) and the careful mapping of gender-related material and extra-structural features may enable us to assess the degree to which traditional Alutiiq space conceptions and use changed during the contact period. Excavations at the Afognak *artel* have been able to determine skinprocessing and food preparation areas as well as clay-lined storage features. Faulkner's research at Damariscove Island suggests that fish processing would be evidenced by diagnostic post mold patterns for drying *(labaz)* and storage structures *(balagans)* (Faulkner 1985). In addition to excavating *artel* structures, future researchers of such settlements should aim for more intensive surveys in order to determine the extent and variety of site activities.

Russian ethnohistories of the North Pacific area offer few, but suggestive, associations between the genders and their toolkits. In the 1760s, Levashov sketched Aleutian men and women with their respective possessions, which broadly suggests that other Kodiak artifacts such as flensing knives, workboards, and bowls and baskets may spatially correlate with other "gender female" items (Dymtryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1979; Woodhouse-Beyer 1994). Ethnohistorical accounts referring to the Kodiak Archipelago are suggestive concerning the possibility of interpreting some artifacts as "gendered." Heiromonk Gideon noted that the Company, almost wholly dependent upon the skills and products of the Alutiiq, began paying the women with needles, cloth, and beads, popular trade items throughout the Russian period (Gideon in Black 1977:101). The Afognak *artel* assemblage, while providing evidence of only one thimble and no needles,[1] does, however, consist of a variety of buttons, worked leather scraps,

thread, hammerstones and *ulu*s (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996). A preliminary analysis of the Afognak *artel* assemblage with both Spector's (1983) task differentiation model and Jackson (1994) and Scott's (1991a) statements concerning the gender-associated archaeological visibility of the cloth, clothing, and tea complexes is suggestive. Most indigenous artifacts within the Supervisor's House (Structure 2) are associated with the ethnohistorically known female tasks of sewing–sinew thread, sewn birchbark, leather scraps, *ulu*s, and beads. With the exception of the beads, which are liberally distributed throughout the settlement, both in the houses and the midden, all of these artifacts are almost exclusively located in the northeast corner of Structure 2. Oral historical data gathered from the descendants of the Afognak *artel* and later American period Katenai settlement, as well as ethnohistorical data gleaned from census and Russian Orthodox Church Records, suggests that the *artel* supervisor was married to a native woman (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996, 1997).

Women's space and the *artel*

The absence of men in the *artel*s likely created new opportunities for women in the arrangements and use of space. While researchers must be careful not to stretch analogies beyond the place and time of the current study, the number of studies examining similar circumstances is suggestive of larger processes concerning effects of changes in the division of labor. In eighteenth-century Britain and France, unmarried women commonly had to live and work together to be economically viable as a family unit. Acceptable jobs were found within domestic labor, textile, or service industries (Hufton 1984). Widows and spinsters, pushed into new circumstances, yet still within women's traditional labor sphere, not only survived, but also were in the forefront for future material and architectural changes within the spheres of education, welfare, and domestic service. In the case of late-nineteenth-century Boston, the domestic reform movement resulted in an extension of women's "domestic space" beyond the household (Spencer-Wood 1989, 1991, 1994). While domestic reformers upheld the traditional Victorian ideals of women's domestic sphere and still controlled kitchen and parlor areas, they also made significant material and architectural improvements within these spaces. Economic interdependence and cooperation between households allowed reformers to promote the survival of their children as well as to improve the conditions and status of women. Archaeologically, domestic reformers' power to control their environment translated to overlapping spatial boundaries with those of the male public economic and spatial sphere.

A more modern example of absentee men and its effects on women is that of twentieth-century fishermen in the north Atlantic and Baltic (Thompson 1985). Absent men not only give women more responsibility, but also give women the possibility of more power both at home and in the community. In times of male absence or emergency, women perform traditionally male tasks, such as mending nets, processing fish, and selling surplus; wives of fishermen take over the responsibilites of the men in providing for their own household subsistence as

well as ensuring the survival of the next generation of fishers, their children (Thompson 1985).

Shifting back to the Kodiak Archipelago in the early nineteenth century, it is likely that, in the absence of their husbands, the *artel*s, at least for a large portion of the year, became Alutiiq women's space. It is more than likely that during the hunting months, women and children took over some of the traditional tasks of the men, such as fishing and subsistence hunting; following this, not only is the *bidarka* a polyvocal artifact when we realize that the skins to cover them were processed by women (Davydov in Pierce 1976:29), but other artifacts, such as knives, "utilized flakes" (Gero and Conkey 1991), and projectile points may not be exclusively male task oriented. A number of archaeological studies in other areas of the world indicate that, in fact, women's tasks and activities are more likely to be archaeologically visible at base camps (Brumbach and Jarvenpa 1997; Lowell 1989; Lyons 1989).

Acquisitive tastes: Alutiiq women and the translation of status

Russian colonization of the Kodiak Archipelago offered Alutiiq women new opportunities to enhance their status through material acquisition. Because women were left in *artel* settlements year-round, they had more opportunity to trade and interact with the Russians, who were dependent upon their skills and products (Black 1977; Gibson 1976; Jackson 1994).

The Alutiiq desire to acquire luxury goods was not a phenomenon restricted to the contact period; it was a characteristic trait of late prehistoric Alutiiq society. As other archaeologists have suggested for a culturally related area, the Northwest Coast (Arnold 1993; Grumet 1975; Hayden *et al.* 1985; Maschner 1991; Yesner 1980), new social and environmental conditions such as the growth in population and the global cooling period known as the Little Ice Age resulted in changes in houseforms, task organization, and resource exploitation (Knecht 1985). As surpluses increased, so did social opportunities. The Alutiiq at contact were a complex, stratified society with classes of elites, commoners, and slaves who competed for prestige and status through material good acquisition (Davydov in Pierce 1976; Gideon in Black 1977). At the time of the Russian arrival, the Alutiiq had differential access to luxury goods, such as beads of amber and jet and labrets made of exotic materials, such as jet, greenstone, and limestone. Traditional status competitions among individuals continued into the historic period, now additionally supplemented with European goods and materials.

Not only did the Alutiiq women control the "domestic sphere" of hearth and *barabara,* an extended domain during the absence of the men, but the goods they received from the Russians in trade, as gifts, or as payment for services rendered were important within the traditional Alutiiq context of public display of status. The Afognak *artel* excavations have recovered a large collection of luxury artifacts–ceramics, metals and glass–considered of high socioeconomic value within both Alutiiq and Russian American ideologies; all of the settlement structures, both

Russian and Alutiiq, show differential patterns of household consumption and status display (Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996, 1997). Preliminary artifactual analysis based on "gendered" tasks–the archaeological correlates of which are determined by readings of the relevant ethnohistories–reveal that male task-associated Alutiiq items, such as sea otter darts and other hunting tools, remain traditional in design, material, and manufacture. By contrast, many items associated with Alutiiq women's adornment and tasks, particularly sewing and fishing items, are either replaced completely by Russian tools and technologies or remain traditional in form but are made of Russian "luxury" materials, particularly, glass, copper alloy, iron, and ceramics. Examples include over four thousand glass trading beads, a large number of copper alloy rings, and two copper alloy thimbles. Three artifacts, an iron *ulu* with a wooden handle and spruce root lashing, a slate *ulu* with a woman's name written in Cyrillic, and a ceramic green shell-edged rim sherd with Alutiiq-style repair holes, all illustrate the combination of Alutiiq female and Russian design components.

There are, however, inherent difficulties in discussions of luxury goods and the acquisition of status relative to ethnicity and/or gender. At Michilimackinac, Scott (1991b) notes that, while women can be associated with food preparation containers and ceramics, serving ware–including both glass and ceramics–is not exclusively the domain of women. However, native women did control the domestic sphere and were keen on acquiring goods such as beads and ceramics to display through clothing at the dinners and teas to which the Hudson Bay Company officers or site visitors would be invited. Another ethnohistorical example is that of early-nineteenth-century ceramic use among *hivernant* Metis women. Status acquisition and visitor etiquette were a dominant feature of Red River fur trade society (Burley 1989). For Abner Cohen in the struggle for power and privilege, interest groups (read: Alutiiq women) develop their own ideology to "organize, enhance and legitimate" their existence (Cohen 1981); Cohen adds that

> this is not just an ideological formula, but a way of life, mainfesting itself in patterns of symbolic behavior that can be observed and verified…manners, etiquette, styles of dress, accent, patterns of recreational activites, marriage rules and a host of other traits that make up the group.
>
> (Cohen 1981:1–2)

Russian men, dependent on the Alutiiq for the products of labor and wives, evidently placed a high value on women. It is likely that some Russians bought women dress cloth, ornaments, and ceramic dishes not only in order to repay women with goods that would help them acquire prestige among the traditional community, but also so that the Russians would acquire prestige themselves when site visitors viewed their consorts with objects also valuable within the Russian context.

Like the Metis of Red River, the Alutiiq were a people undergoing ethnic and social change during the contact period. As did the Metis sites, the Afognak *artel*

has provided examples of over 1,500 ceramic sherds, the majority of which are creamwares, pearlwares, and Chinese hand-painted porcelains; it is notable that in the Afognak area and the northern part of Kodiak Island there are no examples of prehistoric native ceramics, which were confined in use to southwestern Kodiak groups (Clark 1984; Knecht 1985). While others have noted the association of women with ceramics for other areas, the issue is more complex when viewed against Kodiak frontier society, which was traditionally supplied with older patterns of ceramic serving wares due to the difficulties of transportation and strict budgets for the Russian American colonies. Because of the scarcity of luxuries in Russian America, ceramics were no doubt highly curated by both Alutiiq men and women and Russians alike:

> But after he had drank his tea, he concealed the cup under his clothes, and wanted to take his leave. I demanded it back, with the assurance, that I could not possibly spare it; upon which he returned it, declaring that he thought it had been given him as a present with the tea.
>
> (Sarychev 1807:22, cited in Hrdlicka 1944)

"Mistress of the Russian economy"
(Sauer 1802:173 in Hrdlicka 1944)

A number of scholars have highlighted not only women's roles in maintaining ethnic identity but also the household as an important locus of interaction. Many of the historical period studies have also emphasized the relationship between cultural proscriptions and gender relations (Stoler 1989). In the case of both the colonial society of the Netherland Indies and French Indochina, both European and native women functioned simultaneously as subordinates and active agents of imperial culture (Stoler 1989:634). Stoler's approach can be readily applied to the Kodiak Archipelago, in that the entwined symbols of economic production and sexual reproduction are central to a discussion of power and gender during the Russian period. Russian community planning, particularly that of *artel*s, had great implications for social relations and settings for interaction–specifically, gendered interaction.

Some social anthropologists have promoted not only that architectural space reflects the ideals of society, but also that its organization is both "product and reproducer" of daily behavior and existing social, economic, and gender relations (Ardener 1981; Ilcan 1996). Historical archaeologists have concurred that households, as well as the larger landscape within which they lie, are not only economic units, but also foci for power relations (Leone 1988; Rubertone 1986, 1991). That women had separate space in the Russian *artel,* even if only in some "elite" houses, shows evidence that some Alutiiq women had a modicum of control over their lives.

Russian colonization offered some Alutiiq women the opportunity to enhance their status not only through work and trade, but also through intermarriage. All over the Arctic and Subarctic from the seventeenth century onwards, liaisons

between native American women and fur traders had been common (Burley 1989). Throughout its existence, the Russian American Company was not only undersupplied, but also underpopulated. As a stratagem to maintain and extend its territorial domain, Company charters explicitly encouraged Russian officers to marry Alutiiq and other indigenous women of North America; there were few Russian females in the colonies (Dymytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1979; Okun 1951). Intermarriages not only occurred, but also were common (Dmytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1979; Gibson 1978; Shelikov 1981).

As a working hypothesis based on an understanding of traditional Alutiiq lifeways, intermarriage may be conceived of as a survival tactic that women could use to substantially improve not only their material conditions for survival, but also their power, in that they could access items valued and esteemed by traditional Alutiiq society. The probability that Alutiiq families would encourage women to intermarry to increase their prestige and wealth is probable in consideration of the status acquisition focus of traditional Alutiiq culture; unfortunately, historical sources are silent over whether this was the free choice of the women themselves. Within the traditional Alutiiq context, it is likely that the families encouraged their daughters to marry not only for trading benefits, but also for the alliances they would bring.

The ethnohistorical sources relate that Alutiiq families at contact encouraged their daughters to marry into elite families; this tradition continued as the men the Alutiiq women married were often higher class officers of the Russian American Company. Alutiiq women were thus incorporated into the higher echelons of fur trade society–and they also felt compelled to "look" the part. Davydov notes that "When native girls marry Russians they sometimes wear jackets and skirts, and even long dresses" (Davydov in Pierce 1976:5) and continues that the wives of the leaders "buy red velvet or red cotton for their parkas" (Davydov in Pierce 1976:7). This desire to "look the part" also involved the use of the formal tea service, which reinforced social status (Burley 1989). Therefore, rather than starving in some communities, the women who intermarried could ensure the survival of both themselves and their children. During his voyage of 1802–6, Davydov also noted that wives of the Russians or *toion*s, high-ranking Alutiiq supervisors within the Company, often bought higher quality goods; at the Afognak *artel,* the presence of large quantities of bricks and glass, both in high demand throughout the Russian colonies (Tikhmenev 1979), and our findings of export porcelain and other luxury items such as glass and metals suggest that the Supervisor's House (Structure 2) occupants were of higher status than other settlement households within the site (Miller 1980; Woodhouse-Beyer 1995b, 1996, 1997).

Survival and tradition: Alutiiq women and the Creoles

The unions, whether between married Russians and native wives, or trysts, resulted in the birth of a special class of Russian citizens, the Creoles. More rarely, Creoles were born of Russian women and native men. In *Imagined*

Communities, Benedict Anderson argued that the formation of Creole populations not only served to exploit economic subjects, but also was essential to the maintenance and stability of empire (1992:58). Creoles played a major historical role as they forged not only a new mixed identity, but also new conceptions of ethnicity, class, and gender. This intermixture did not necessitate bloodshed or force but was accomplished by means of intimate connections within the colonial social hierarchy through sexual liasons and intermarriage with the "Other." Faced with questions of ethnic identification and the maintenance of traditional culture despite the Russian presence and ideology, the Alutiiq had three choices: to impose their own rule, to remodel old forms and practices, or to completely lose their identity (Kubik 1994). I submit that this should not be seen as an all-or-nothing situation, but that native peoples actively and selectively maintained and created symbolic forms to create a syncretic identity and solidarity.

As the wives and mistresses of the Russians, women were therefore actively formers, agents, maintainers and mediators of power relations between natives, Creoles, and Russians. For some women, the sphere of action was the household of intermarriage. Several scholars have studied this topic including Abner Cohen (1981) on the Freetown Creole, Burley (1989) in his discussion of the *hivernant* Metis, and Kathleen Deagan (1983) on Creole households in Spanish St. Augustine. These studies concur that the Creole home, while not functioning easily within Western nature-culture and domestic-public dichotomies, can instead be better formulated as an open system and a place of interaction.

Early Russian American Company directives required that it keep a strict accounting of its population, differentiating between Russian, Creole and native. The fast growth of the Creole population is documented by Golovnin who recorded that, in 1862, 1/3 of the Aleut population was Creole (Dymytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1979). The inevitable formation of the Creoles created a unique situation, namely, increasing problems concerning citizenship, ethnicity, and dissension. Creoles were treated as full Russian citizens by the Russian American Company; they were educated and housed at Company expense and were supplied with *baidarkas,* supplies, and gardening plots. Their position also distinguished them as powerful negotiators of ethnic identity in relation to the Russians and other native groups; as creators of this intermediate social group, Alutiiq women were powerful agents of cultural survival. Alutiiq women shaped the attitude, the social roles, the mediation of social change through their children.

Ethnohistorical sources confirm that Afognak Village, a site across the river from the Afognak *artel,* was one of the first created Creole settlements after the Company reforms of 1835 and the smallpox epidemic of 1836 (Dmytryshyn and Crownhart-Vaughan 1979). The Supervisor's House (Structure 2) may represent the first Kodiak Archipelago archaeological example of an intermarriage between a Russian officer and an Alutiiq female (see p. 138).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the methods and findings of historical archaeology are useful in recovering indigenous peoples, gender relations, and power relationships within the context of culture change and the contact period. By examining the archaeological possibilities afforded by a study of created space, created identities, and the *artel,* I have tried to expand our considerations and definitions of power, which have often focussed exclusively on the control over resources and decision-making. Alutiiq women had economic power (albeit indirect) in their control of the production and processing of subsistence resources; the more important issue is that if women indeed had separate space within the *artel* communities, then *they had the power to be given separate space* by the Russian American Company. This study also emphasizes that Alutiiq women are not part of a monolithic or homogenous category, but were individuals with a variety of social choices, traditional values, and economic motivations (Klein and Ackerman 1995; Young 1994).

Placing the study of gender and ethnicity relations within a discussion of the material and spatial correlates of the division of labor may be a key to a clearer understanding of the Russian American Company (Mullings 1994). More detailed research on Russian American Company *artel*s as loci of gendered and ethnic information may elucidate a fuller understanding of the means and methods by which the Russian American Company and native peoples interacted. Future investigations at the Afognak *artel* work with the above hypotheses to gain an engendered understanding of the Russsian American Company through spatial patterning and architectural layout. Archaeological insights are illuminated by a consideration of the relevant ethnohistorical texts and oral histories offered by surviving descendants of the Russian American communities, the elders of Afognak Village.

While the Russian American Company designed its messages of material culture and landscape to affect the perceptions of native peoples and other nationalistic trading companies, as archaeologists we ought to question the extent to which the message was received and how it might play out archaeologically. I hesitate on commenting whether Alutiiq women gave *artel* spatial arrangements and material items their own meanings or continued to use the site in a traditional Alutiiq way; I consider this form of knowledge as highly inferential and archaeologically untestable, even with the contextualization of data by means of historical documents. Nevertheless, while it is recognized that specific artifacts may not necessarily directly correlate with either gender, an engendered approach, incorporating the critical analysis of historical texts and attention to the components and distribution of task activity areas (with particular focus on areas of overlap) within excavations enables scholars to better understand power relations and the social and economic processes at work during the Russian American contact period in southwestern Alaska.

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Note

1 Jackson (1994:45) cites Zagoskin (1967:199) to bolster that needles in Russian America would be highly curated items and therefore not commonly archaeologically visible.

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8 Gender, space, people and power at Cerén, E1 Salvador

Tracy L.Sweely

Introduction

My interest in examining power relations via gender in archaeology began with a critique of traditional anthropological assumptions that all "power" was domination (Paynter and McGuire 1991). As was explained in the Introduction to this volume, traditional approaches tend to focus on formal institutions of power and authority as defining where power is located in any given society. This formulation of power confines the definition to domination and seriously circumscribes the possibilities for "who" can exercise it. These possibilities do not include anyone not directly associated with institutions of authority such as heads of state, governing bodies, or household rulers. Very often this perspective excludes women and other classes of people, such as the apparently poor and dispossessed, who have been historically subjugated within Western society (see Woodhouse-Beyer, Chapter 7 in this volume). As many have already pointed out, this is no coincidence (e.g. Engelstad 1991; Wylie 1992:56–57, 61) but demonstrates the attention needed in disentangling Western social constructions of power relations from interpretations of the social constructions of power relations in prehistoric societies that may not have been the same (see Kent, Chapter 2 in this volume).

This Western perspective limits how power relations can be visualized and thus limits the "discovery" of other possible ways, beyond domination, in which power relations operate. For example, the perspective is limited in that it does not account for how cooperation happens in the absence of force or manipulation. Nor does the perspective account for various manifestations of resistance, or of the interplay between contesting interests (Miller and Tilley 1984; Paynter and McGuire 1991).

Asking questions regarding the existence of cooperation, resistance, and contesting interests provides more refined and realistic understandings of the possibilities of "how power works" at a variety of levels, such as that between states, between villages, or between lineage groups. But examination at the level of interpersonal interactions, among individuals seeking to further their own interests, can refine interpretations of the possible ways that power operates even

further (see Cohen 1994; Sweely 1998) since it is individuals interacting with one another that "operationalize" constructions of power (see Introduction to this volume). Since they are embedded in larger social institutions and ideologies, interpersonal relations in the traditional view of power have been seen only as affected by larger social forces and not as having any effect on them. The assumption that interpersonal interactions have no bearing on social conditions and the direction of social change is beginning to be challenged (Sweely 1998; in anthropology, Cohen 1994). Joyce (1996) submits that there are more opportunities for social regulations to be contested in progressively more private social spaces among closely related individuals than in highly visible social venues. This point encourages research for the purpose of assessing the possibility of individual adherence to or contestation of ideological institutions (in anthropology, see Cohen 1994; see also Strauss and Quinn 1994) and provides interesting insight into the lifestyles of "common" people.

For archaeological analysis, research on interpersonal relations requires study at the level of the household, and requires analysis of how societies draw distinctions among members and what attributes and social values mark and define those distinctions (Introduction to this volume; Bourdieu 1977; Moore 1986). Gender distinctions, when they are known to have existed as social distinctions, can be used in assessing power relations among the sexes of prehistoric societies. If two gender categories, or more (cf. Claassen 1992; Joyce and Claassen 1997; Moore 1994; see also Kent and Woodhouse-Beyer, Chapters 2 and 7 in this volume, respectively), are known or assumed to have existed, associations between the material expression of these categories can be heuristically employed in archaeological contexts to examine possible manifestations of cooperation, resistance, and contesting interests.

The primary objective of this chapter is to explore the implications that a set of gender categories, formulated from Maya iconography, has for the construction of power relations among men and women at the interpersonal level in the prehistoric community of Cerén, El Salvador.[1] This chapter begins with an introduction to the site of Cerén, El Salvador, and a description of the spatial and artifactual data used in this analysis. I then describe how the set of gender categories used to analyze the data was arrived at and used in the analysis of gender and power at the site. Next, I present the results of the analysis of gender-associated artifacts across the site and within specific spaces. Finally, I examine some implications of these results for power relations within the prehistoric community.

Cerén

The following discussion of the data from Cerén is based on the preliminary reports of the Cerén Research Project (Sheets and Brown 1996; Sheets and Kievit 1992; Sheets and McKee 1989, 1990; Sheets and Simmons 1993), unless otherwise specified. Cerén is located in the Zapotitán Valley of western El Salvador (Figure 8.1, inset). It was abandoned suddenly due to the eruption of Loma Caldera volcano, about AD 595, and now lies buried under 5 meters of volcanic ash. The

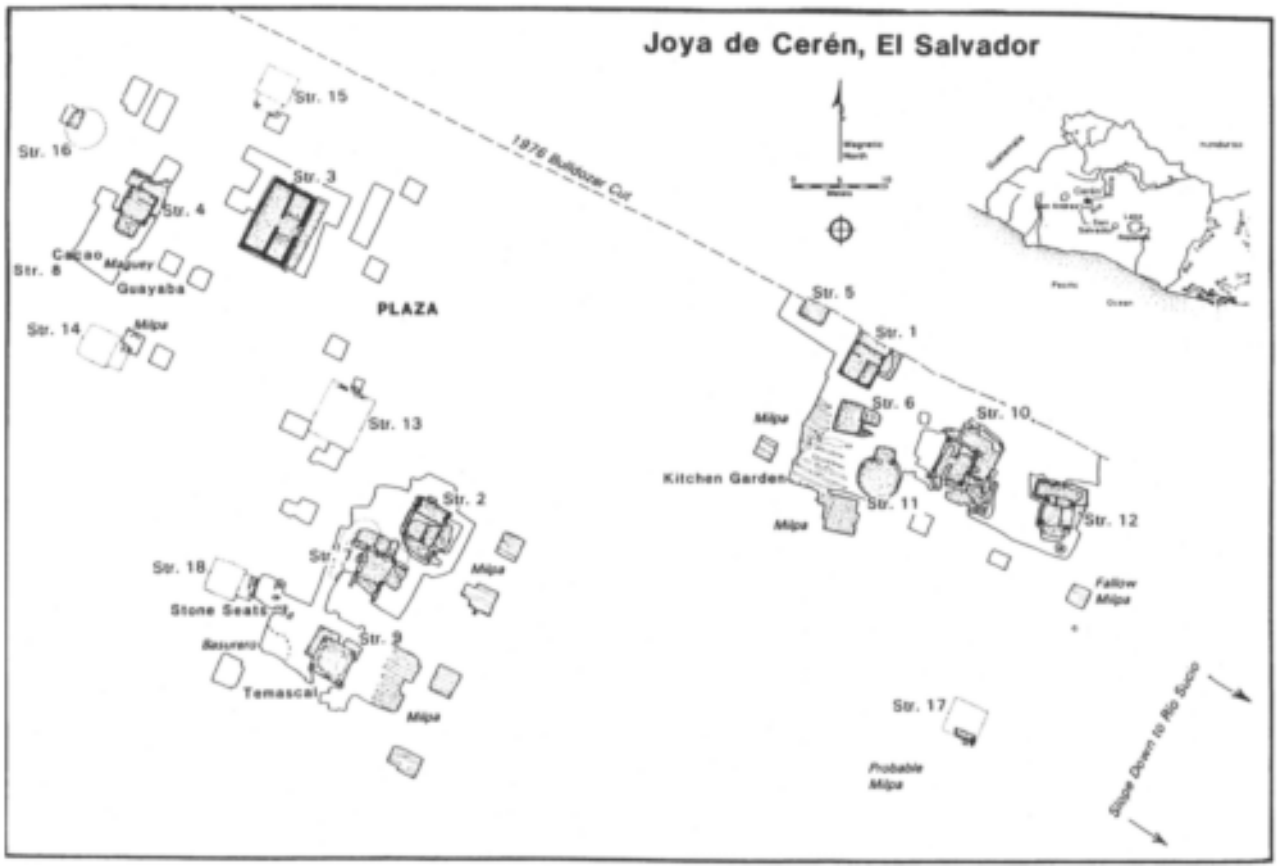

Figure 8.1 Excavated portions of Cerén, El Salvador, as of 1996 field-season

inhabitants seem to have barely escaped, leaving their possessions where they were stored or last used.

Cerén was a prehistoric village located on the Maya periphery. It appears to have been primarily a farming village, but there is evidence of some specialization within households, for either exchange within the village or for exchange at a regional market, probably located at the site of San Andres. It is believed that Cerén was part of a regional political hierarchy (Sheets 1992). In this hierarchy elites from the regional center of San Andres controlled trade and redistribution of important resources, as well as important religious and judicial enterprises (ibid.). It is not yet clear exactly what position the village held within this hierarchy.

Figure 8.1 shows the excavated portions of the site. Geophysical testing has produced evidence of an additional seventeen structures that await excavation (Conyers 1996). Given that three site boundaries have been established, the combined excavation area and geophysically discovered features probably represent one-half of the site (P.D.Sheets, personal communication).

The data I use consist of two categories, spaces and the objects within them. There are four architectural categories defined by function used in this analysis. One is the residential/living structure, indicated in Figure 8.1 by Structures 1 and 2. Another category is the storeroom. These are called bodegas, and are indicated in the figure by Structures 4, 6, and 7. Another category is that of the kitchen, indicated in the figure by Structures 11 and 16. These three categories of buildings, the residential/living structure, the storeroom, or bodega, and the kitchen are the defining features of the dwelling unit or house, within which the household existed. Structures 1, 6, and 11 comprise a single dwelling unit, referred to here as Dwelling 1, and they are detailed in Figure 8.2, along with Structure 5 (at right of figure) discussed below. Structure 2 and 7, a residential/living structure and a bodega, respectively, comprise what is referred to here as Dwelling 2, and for which a kitchen has yet to be excavated. The final dwelling compound, referred to here as Dwelling 3, is solely represented by Structure 4, a bodega.

Structures 3, 5, 9, 10, and 12 in Figure 8.1 are special buildings, the fourth

Figure 8.2 Artist's rendition of the types of structures that comprise the Dwelling 1 compound: Structure 1 is the residential/living structure, Structure 6 is the bodega, and Structure 11 is the kitchen. Structure 5, which is a stoneworking outbuilding, is included. By D.Tucker

architectural category. Structure 5 has no artifacts within it but is associated with a sparse scatter of lithic debris. It has been interpreted as a stoneworking outbuilding of Dwelling 1. Structure 3 has been interpreted as a communal building. It has very few artifacts, but large benches may have served the purpose of seating many people, and a large jar may have been used for dispensing a beverage to members of the group. Structure 9, a sweatbath, also lacks artifacts.

Structure 10, detailed in Figure 8.3, is what has been interpreted as the large-scale food serving structure for a religious association such as a *chinimit* or *cofradia.* In this structure, there were large quantities of stored foodstuffs, food preparation implements, large cooking vessels, and a hearth; 67 per cent of the vessels found here appear to have been used for food serving (Gerstle 1992). There was also a deer antler headdress that likely had a ritual function.

Structure 12, a plan view of which is shown in Figure 8.4, presents a bit of a problem. The structure has a highly unusual inventory of artifacts. Though the artifacts do not indicate a wealthy inhabitant, the building possesses complex architectural features, including a lattice window, the only window found at the site to date, and painted decoration on walls and columns. The most plausible function that it could have served is as a shaman's or diviner's establishment (Simmons 1994; S.E.Simmons, personal communication).

Structures 5, 10, and 12, along with the structures comprising the dwelling units, are the features I will use in my discussion of the gendered use of space and

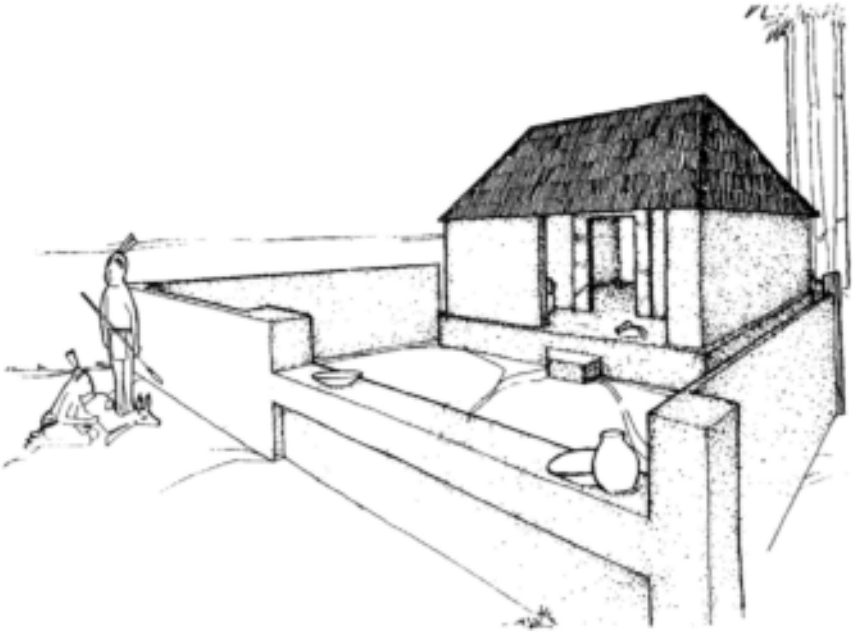

Figure 8.3 Artist's rendition of Structure 10, the food-serving religious association. By K.Kievet

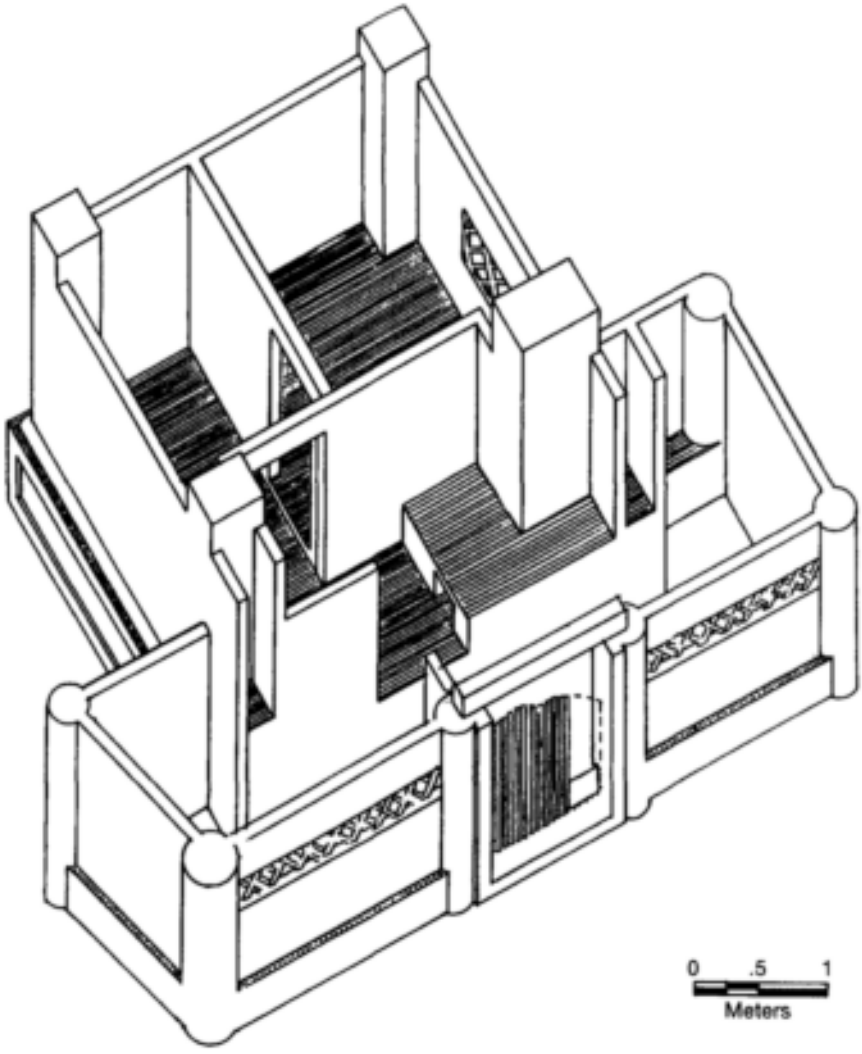

Figure 8.4 Plan view of Structure 12, "the shaman's house." By K.Kievet

its relationship to power. The other special structures, Structure 3 and 9, are excluded from this study because of their relative lack of artifacts. Other structures located on the site map have yet to be fully excavated.

Gender-associated artifacts

Although the ethnicity of the ancient villagers of Cerén is uncertain, the site is located within the southern boundary of the Maya region. For this analysis I draw upon a known gender division of labor from the Maya Classic Period to

trace gender across the excavated areas of the site. A number of gender-associated artifacts were determined using images of the sexual division of labor represented in both elite- and non-elite-associated Classic Maya images of humans involved in productive activities. There are many examples of figurines and painted images which consistently show Maya men and women involved in exclusively different tasks. Maya women are shown involved in weaving, food preparation and presentation, and carrying children or dogs (Joyce 1992, 1993). Maya men are consistently shown participating in ritual, hunting, and warfare (ibid.). It is interesting to note that Classic Period Maya men are not depicted either farming or flint knapping, two productive activities thought to be male associated based on ethonographic and ethnohistoric evidence, and which I assume for this study.

From these images and assumptions I derived a list of artifacts that could indicate the presence of women or men in the location in which the artifacts were found. Artifacts associated with Maya women would include cooking implements, such as mano and metate sets, ceramic pots used in food preparation, and implements used in textile production, such as weaving tools, spinning tools, and sewing tools. Artifacts associated with Maya men include hunting implements, such as projectile points, stone working tools and debris, and implements used for farming such as axes or celts, and digging sticks.

In drawing upon these gender-associated artifact categories, it is my intention to use them in a heuristic manner. Although the sexual division of labor represented in Classic Period imagery does appear to be virtually exclusive (ibid., for exceptions), in practice gender roles may not have been so rigidly defined. Using these gender associations as a lens to view the Cerén data may cause important variability to be obscured. The method can be used, though, to provide an entry point into examining possible power relations at the site and in the development of future lines of inquiry.

Once the list of gender-associated artifacts was compiled, artifacts found at the site were examined for gender association and then tallied by structure and across the excavated portions of the site as a whole. Male-associated artifacts found included celts, hammerstones, and lithic debris. Female-associated items found at Cerén included mano and metate sets, spindle whorls, needles and awls.

There were three artifact categories found at the site that proved to be problematic and that are utilized in this analysis differently than the other artifact categories. Lithic debris counts, though low in concentration, were high enough to obscure comparison to other artifact counts, so these were not included in the analysis of gender-associated artifact distributions. The presence and absence of this category of artifact by structure will be accounted for in the interpretation.

Ceramic pots, like lithic debris, were also not considered in the distribution, due to the large number, which would obscure comparison to the other artifact counts. Unlike lithic debris, the presence and absence of pots by structure will not be included in this interpretation, since pots were found virtually everywhere, and it is likely that they are not a gender-exclusive artifact category.

Similarly, digging stick weights, in the form of perforated stones, were problematic. As farming implements they could possibly be male associated. But

since, ethnohistorically, Maya women were specifically reported to have worked in gardens (Joyce 1992), these items may not be gender-specific. Because of this, perforated stones were not included in the distributions, but these items will be discussed, albeit briefly.

Results

Figure 8.5 shows the distribution of raw counts of gender-associated artifacts by pooled, functionally equivalent structures.[2] Artifact counts from three bodegas, two residences, and one kitchen are represented here. Figure 8.5 also shows the distribution in Structures 10 and 12 and across the site as a whole. Unshaded bars represent female-associated artifacts, and shaded bars represent male-associated artifacts. As can be seen, there are generally more female-associated artifacts than male in all architectural classes and across the site. All of the gender-associated artifacts in Structure 12 are female associated. Structure 5, though not shown in Figure 8.5, would be considered an exclusively male-associated structure because of the lithic debris associated with stone tool manufacture.

Figure 8.6 shows the distribution of percentages of gender-associated artifacts. The structure type that shows the least amount of difference in gender-associated artifacts is the bodega, or storehouse. The most amount of difference, aside from Structure 12, and Structure 5 (not shown), is the kitchen.

The distribution of gender-associated artifacts at the site is interesting in terms of a notable absence of certain artifact types. Of particular interest is that no

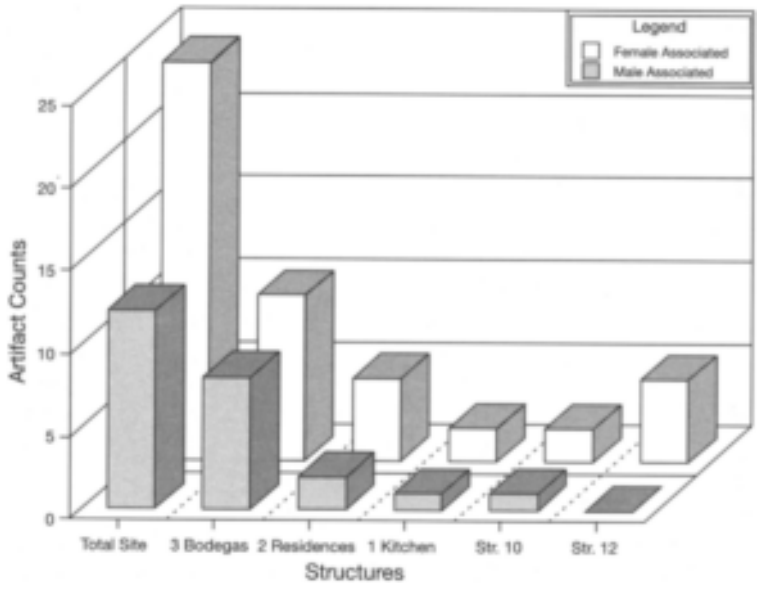

Figure 8.5 Distribution of raw counts of gender-associated artifacts by pooled, functionally equivalent structures

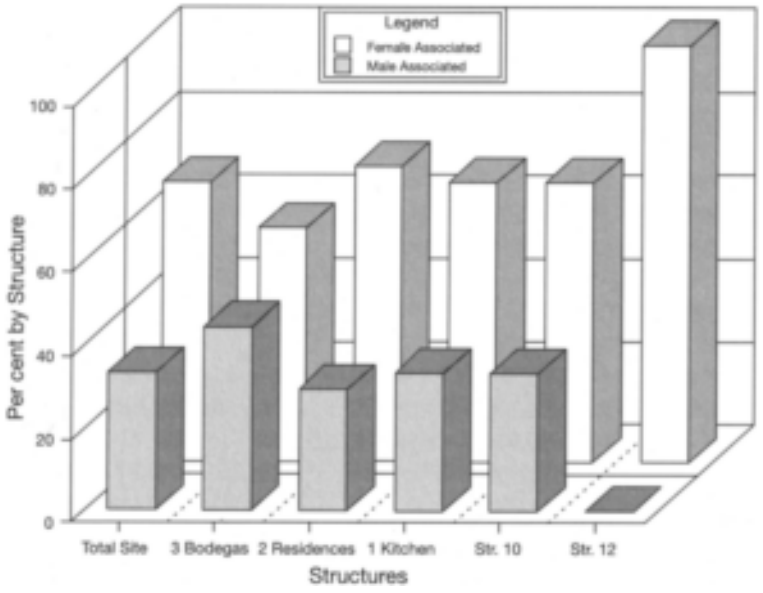

Figure 8.6 Distribution of percentages of gender-associated artifacts by pooled, functionally equivalent structures

projectile points, whole or fragmented, were found anywhere in these excavated areas. Projectile points may have been so valuable that they were taken at the time the inhabitants made their escape. But, since no fragments were found, these items may not have been produced, stored, or discarded in any of the areas excavated thus far. As for the female-associated artifact categories, although spinning tools were discovered, there were no weaving tools found.

Interpretation

The striking differences in raw counts are not statistically significant. That is, no statistically significant differences were found in the use of space by men and women either across the site, using a chi-square, or in pooled functionally equivalent areas, using a small sample binomial. The statistical tests used are weak due to generally low artifact counts. The chi-square test is also weak, because the expected values may not reflect "real" shared spaces. Equally shared productive space may not display equal numbers of gender-associated artifacts, since numbers of artifacts per productive activity would primarily be activity dependent rather than gender dependent.

If we accept the results, the statistical tests combined with examination of raw counts indicate that, although gender segregation appears to parallel functional segregation, there may also have been a low level of gender integration. That is, except for Structures 5 and 12, the differentiated productive spaces do not appear to be gender exclusive.

Greater clarification of this is possible when referring back to the artifacts. A majority of the male-associated artifacts are in the form of hammerstones, probably used for ground stone tool manufacture (P.D.Sheets, personal communication). Most of these are found in the bodega of Dwelling 1. Two other hammerstones were located in Structure 2, the residential/living quarters of Dwelling 2. However, no evidence for their use has been found in the area, so these may have been in storage as well.

The only other male-associated artifact category represented, celts, may also have been in storage. Of the three celts found, two were in food preparation contexts, one in a kitchen and the other in Structure 10, the food-serving structure. Males may have been using them in these spaces, but there is no evidence of wood-cutting activities. The firewood associated with these structures indicates breakage as the method of preparation for use (P.D.Sheets, personal communication). The last celt was found in a bodega, another storage context. These celts may have been used by males and been stored by them in these contexts, or they may have been used by females and been stored by them. Either way, the fact that they were found in these structures, with female-associated artifacts, may indicate that gender roles and, specifically, the gender division of labor may not have been as rigidly defined as the categories used in this analysis. These object locations seem to indicate a pattern in which gender integration of productive activities is in the form of shared storage space. I would consider this quite a low level of integration for productive activities.

Kent (1994; see also Kent, this volume) has pointed out, through intensive cross-cultural comparison in terms of segregation of space, that, while general functional segregation tends to increase with sociopolitical complexity, i.e. increasing segmentation and hierarchy, gender segregation does not. Rather, gender segregation exists in all but the least complex societies. She concludes that gender-specific areas are influenced by variables other than that of sociopolitical complexity.

Varying characters of gender distinctions produce particular social conditions that affect interpersonal power relations in different ways. One variable of gender distinction is the differential attribution of symbolic value to each gender role, the productive activities associated with that role, and, hence, the spaces associated with those activities. Differentially valued activities and roles might affect the abilities of a gendered individual to control their activities, areas, and resources. This would result in different abilities of each gender to exercise power in economic as well as other areas of social life (Moore 1988; Strathern 1988). Economic power can be explored at Cerén generally. The household in Dwelling 3 appears to have been producing a surplus of maguey fiber and cacao (P.D. Sheets, personal communication). These surpluses could have been used either in exchanges among local households or in exchanges at the regional market. There are non-local objects found at the site that may have been obtained at a regional market like San Andres (Sheets 1995). While these products do not have explicit gender associations, other items do, and these give insight into gender-associated productive activities and the power that may have come with it.

In many structures at Cerén, there are small spindle whorls, which were probably used to spin fine cotton thread, a commodity for local and possibly nonlocal exchange. Thus far in the excavations, there have been eight whole spindle whorls discovered. However, no weaving implements were found. This is surprising, given the excellent preservation at Cerén. Ethnographically, battens, part of the backstrap loom, are made out of hard woods; if this was the case at ancient Cerén, they would not have been completely incinerated by fire at the time of the eruption (P.D.Sheets, personal communication). Weaving may have been taking place somewhere else in the village, or thread may have been exported to be woven elsewhere, or the lack of battans may indicate that these items may have been so valuable that they were taken when the inhabitants made their escape.

These options have important implications for the power of the women of Cerén. Ethnohistorically, weaving has been considered a very valuable skill. Women who learned to weave likely enjoyed the ability to exercise power resulting from their abilities and the economic value of the items they produced. There is not yet enough information to know if these women had direct control over the thread they produced or the textiles they may have produced, or if these were part of a household or lineage economy directed by a household or lineage head. If these products were exported, it would allow them a different position in the economy of textile production than if they were used internally. It would also matter significantly to their position in the economy if thread, as opposed to finished textiles, was being exported.

If weaving was being done within the village, but not within the houses, this could imply that women were gathering in work groups to weave. There is ethnohistoric evidence that Maya women did, in fact, gather together to weave (Joyce 1992:67). If this were the case, it could have effects on information flow and access to knowledge, another primary variable in the ability to exercise power (Spain 1992). Spain (1992) and Strathern (1988) argue that possessing secret knowledge contributes to an individual's ability to exercise power. An individual choosing to guard or share knowledge can be associated with the assertion of individual will or the manipulation of situations in order to achieve goals. In other cases, disclosure of secret information could also reveal that power is not naturally innate in, or limited to, those holding secret information (Spain 1992; cf. Tefft 1980). Though access to knowledge can be difficult to address in most archaeological contexts, it can be addressed at Cerén.

There are two areas at the site that provide information about access to knowledge. First, within Dwelling 1 there were five complete, functioning metates. This household may have been supplying ground corn to Structure 10 (Sheets 1995; see Sweely 1998), which is located about 10 meters away. This is the building used for ritual food serving. Structure 10 contained only one metate, which probably would not have supplied sufficient ground corn for the volume of food this building appears to have been serving (P.D.Sheets, personal communication).

It is generally assumed that for each adult woman in a household, there is one set of grinding tools. It is unlikely that there were five adult women living in this house. If Structure 10 functioned as a *chinimit-* or *cofradia*-type structure, it is

reasonable that these women may have been either natal or affinal members of the extended family responsible for the food-serving association. They might have lived in the village or nearby but may have gathered here to grind corn for ritual occasions.

This house may have been a locus where women discussed or controlled knowledge about the community and its members, and it may have provided a context for particular individuals to assert their own wills or support the wills of others. Elsewhere (Sweely 1998) I examine the placement and orientations of the metates in and around these two structures. While they are separated but visible to one another in some cases, the metates are not all in one location and so are not all visible to one another. In fact, there is only one metate position from which all the others are visible. The placement of the metates indicates that interaction may have been dependent on either individual preferences for interpersonal interactions with specific individuals or on the dictates of one authority figure (ibid.). Communication of knowledge may have been shared among certain individuals, but it could also have been controlled by one metate user, in a position to oversee the others (ibid.).

There is not yet much evidence that indicates that the men of Cerén gathered in productive activities or what kind of power relations they may have had within the context of these activities. They may have exchanged information while working in the cornfields, or they may have gathered in Structure 3, the communal building. A perforated stone was located on the porch of this building, and, since there were no female-associated artifacts beyond a pot that may have been used to dispense a beverage, this may have been a male-associated space, but the types and numbers of artifacts present do not indicate gender exclusion. This structure may have had a civic function, since it was large enough for many people, and productive activities do not appear to predominate. There simply is not yet enough information to present more certain possibilities for access to community knowledge that the men of Cerén had.

The second example of access to knowledge is Structure 12, which may have provided access to supernatural knowledge for one or a very limited number of individuals. Of the gender-associated artifacts, this structure has only female-associated artifacts in it. There are two spindle whorls along with a worn blade that were left above the entrance. There is also a stored, but moderately used, metate. Since the spindle whorls are female-associated, it follows that activities associated with the supernatural may have been performed by, or at least in the presence of, a gender-female individual.

The repeated use of the lattice design may also link Structure 12 to concepts of the feminine gender and supernatural activities. Simmons (1994) has interpreted the lattice design as the "mat" symbol, thought to represent the authority of a community council house, known as a popol na. Based on ethnographic information, he also raised the possibility that the design is associated with divinatory and shamanic activities (ibid.).

Another important association that may pertain to this design is that of the lattice motifs found in Classic Period sculptures of elite individuals, which is

distinctly different from the mat symbol. Joyce (1992) argues that latticework costumes in Maya art indicate female gender. In her analysis of the complementarity of elite male and female costumes, Joyce also suggests that the latticework of the elite women's costume "represents the horizontal plane of the spatial world, the green sprouting surface of the earth encircled by the ocean, *considered part of the supernatural world* by Maya" (1992:64, emphasis added; see also Joyce 1996). This information could link Structure 12 to both female gender and to supernatural activities.

Whatever the case with the structure's design, the artifacts indicate that a gender-female individual was associated with Structure 12 and may have had access to supernatural knowledge. This structure had highly restricted access, based on wear patterns to the entrance but not beyond it, and based on its unusual architecture (Sheets and Simmons 1993; Simmons 1994). Therefore, it is likely that not everyone had access to this space and knowledge of the supernatural that it may have been associated with.

There are three points to be made from this interpretation of Structure 12. First, women in the Classic Period could have had access to the power of secret and supernatural knowledge. Ethnographically, at Zinacantan, women can be curers and shamans (Vogt 1990). Of course, it should be noted that the person using the artifacts I have deemed "female-associated" could have been a biological male. There is a possibility that a berdache- or Two-Spirit-type of gender category could have been an option to the villagers at prehistoric Cerén.

Second, if Structure 10 is a *chinimit*- or *cofradia*-type organization, it may represent another element of the control of the supernatural. One function of these lineage-owned organizations at the time of contact was to perform important religious ceremonies to perpetuate life (Carlson n.d.). Structure 12 and Structure 10 share a patio, may be associated (Gerstle 1992) and also may share lineage affiliation.

Finally, these data suggest that access to the supernatural was not limited to elite individuals occupying regional centers. The traditional research concentrating on elite rulers and priests might suggest that these elite individuals were invested with foremost control over and responsibility for the forces of the supernatural. Structures 10 and 12, which may represent supernatural-related activities in a village setting, indicate that there was a demand beyond what the regional center of San Andres may have provided.

Conclusion

This analysis has been an attempt to illuminate some possible power relations, operating among the prehistoric villagers of Cerén, by using a specific set of gender categories arrived at through Classic Period Maya iconographic representations of humans involved in productive activities. The method here has been to impose a hypothetical set of social distinctions, derived from temporally, and somewhat geographically associated representations onto a set of material arrangements. The purpose of this has been to begin to examine what possible power relationships could exist, given this particular combination of social

distinctions and material remains. It is not intended to be the "final word" on power relations at Cerén, rather it is intended to be a contribution to the "simultaneous working hypotheses" championed by Kehoe (Chapter 1 in this volume).

An additional purpose has been to expand upon traditional theoretical conceptions of power, by emphasizing power relations that occur on a small scale, i.e. among individuals. Since power relations are seen here to be operationalized by individuals, it is appropriate to examine them from the small scale, rather than from large-scale ideological structures and institutions. Though it has not been achieved here, the ultimate goal is to demonstrate the effects that individuals have on large-scale ideological structures and institutions rather than solely what effects structures and institutions have upon individuals. Although gender relations among the Maya have been interpreted as hierarchical, these interpretations have been rooted in traditional assumptions that have been extensively criticized as androcentric and ethnocentric. As I have stated elsewhere (Sweely, 1998), it is not my intention to begin an analysis by assuming hierarchical relations since doing so not only reinforces traditional androcentric and ethnocentric assumptions, but also obscures the process of ideological development as outlined in the introduction to this volume.

The ability to explore more thoroughly power relations at Cerén will entail obtaining more data, and critically reviewing existing data, regarding this population's place in the wider social, economic, and political network. It will also entail the critical examination of data obtained from future excavation at the site. Re-examination of existing data will also be necessary. For example, I initially expected to discuss both women and men in my analysis of power in response to a recent trend in the literature to privilege women in an attempt to correct a traditional androcentric bias. Where it seemed appropriate I speculated about male roles. However, the nature of the available data may be reflecting spaces used predominantly by the women of Cerén more than those of both genders. Although, this may be a function of the categories used, it may also be a function of the fact that non-productive activities are not accounted for, since they leave little, if any, material remains.

The productive activities reflected in the material remains at the site, viewed through the gender distinctions used here reveal some basic yet interesting possibilities. First, there is a low level of gender integration since gender segregation parallels functional segregation but storage spaces are shared. If men and women were segregated in their daily activities, they may have had access to different kinds of knowledge and different opportunities for interaction. To understand the implications of this arrangement for power relations it would be necessary to explore what kinds of knowledge were valued and for what purposes this knowledge was used.

Second, women may have formed somewhat dispersed work groups for grinding corn, and perhaps weaving, in which they may have shared or controlled practical and community knowledge in order to assert their own wills. Lack of evidence for work groups would suggest an entirely different set of power relations

(see Sweely, 1998). Again, it is necessary to know what kinds of knowledge were valued in order to understand how the sharing of knowledge affects power relations.

Third, Structure 12 appears to have been used by a gender-female individual. This seems to indicate that the women of this village could have had access to secret and supernatural knowledge, i.e. they may not have been excluded from this type of power. If Structure 12 is associated with Structure 10, access to supernatural knowledge indicated by Structure 12 may have been bound up with lineage systems. This knowledge, then, may have been highly valued by members of the community.

Fourth, thread was being produced either as an exportable resource to be used elsewhere or it was made into textiles in a village location other than the houses that have been excavated. Power for women weavers was dependent on where the cotton resources were processed and on how they were used as well as how valued this labor was by members of the community. Future excavation should provide insight into this, since weaving implements such as battans may yet be discovered.

The method employed here has extended traditional archaeological interpretations of the power relations of inhabitants of this area in a number of ways. Aside from visualizing prehistoric women as possibly having opportunities to exercise power, this analysis challenges researchers to view "what constitutes power," in non-Western ways. For example the shaman, residing in Structure 12, does not appear to have been the wealthiest member of the community, perhaps not possessing a great deal of economic power, but, likely had a great deal of power, in terms of spiritual affairs. Power may not be exclusively indicated by Western concepts of "wealth" as was proposed in Brown's (1996) commentary on Maya "service" institutions. This point mirrors Kehoe's warning for researchers to be suspect of Western assumptions of power being embodied in conspicuous display. Power can and does reside in inconspicuous people and places. The challenge taken up here is to try to envision where, beyond the conspicuous, power exists.

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Notes

1 The approach laid out here is based on Spector's (1983) "task differentiation" approach.
2 Residences had five female- and two male-associated artifacts, bodegas had ten female- and eight male-associated artifacts, the kitchen had two female- and one male-associated

artifacts, Structure 10 had two female- and one male-associated artifacts and Structure 12 had five female- and zero male-associated artifacts. Total for the site: twenty-four female- and twelve male-associated artifacts.

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Part IV

Discussions

9 Gendering power

Suzanne M.Spencer-Wood

Introduction

This chapter discusses how contributors to this volume use a variety of feminist theoretical approaches to challenge androcentric conceptions of power and constructions of past cultures in the shape of modern Western stereotypes about gender identities and relationships. These stereotypes are derived from the binary opposition in the dominant Victorian gender ideology, which identified men as public, active, powerful, and dominant over women, who were considered intrinsically subordinate, domestic, passive, and powerless. This hierarchical gender ideology has been projected into the past to interpret all men's activities and roles as powerful and high status, while devaluing women's roles and activities as unimportant and low status (Spencer-Wood 1993). For instance, Kent points out that when hunter-gatherer women hunt, even with the same tools as men, it has been devalued as a type of female gathering, while men's hunting role retains its pre-eminence. In this framework men's views and behaviors are represented as the ungendered cultural norm or ideal, while women's different views and behaviors are marginalized as gendered deviations from the norm (Conkey and Spector 1984:4). The case studies in this volume show how deeply assumed Victorian gender stereotypes have pervasively shaped anthropological interpretations of other cultures and historic documents (Spencer-Wood 1992).

Domestic and public powers

Most chapters in this volume show that the monolithic Victorian gender dichotomy does not accurately describe the full range of diversity in actual gender roles in the past. At a deeper epistemological level this corresponds to my feminist inclusive "both-and" theoretical approach that challenges the persistent structuralist belief of some archaeologists that binary "either-or" thinking is biologically universal (cf. Deetz 1988; critiqued in Spencer-Wood 1992; 1993:129–130).

Some chapters raise questions about the validity of the female-domestic/male-public dichotomy by showing how women's domestic roles were important in the public sphere. For instance, Tate shows that Mayan women's domestic roles and products (textiles, ceramics, paper) were essential for men's performance of

some public roles. The McCafferties make a strong case for the public power of Aztec women's domestic production and reproduction, not only in religious rituals and ideology, but also economically, politically and socially.

Some chapters further break down the identification of public power as exclusively male by showing that some women held powerful public positions in some cultures. Kent mentions archaeological research that shows women ruled as queens in early historic Japan and Korea. Both Trocolli and Levy present evidence of American Indian women chiefs, while the McCafferties found evidence that some Aztec women held high status positions as warriors. Sweely found evidence in one structure suggesting that a powerful Mayan shaman was a woman. Tate found, contrary to androcentric assumptions, that Mayan women as well as men could impersonate the powerful Maize Deity. Further, women were required as spiritual partners for men to hold political positions. A few stone monuments depict powerful women's public rituals. Contrary to normative assumptions Kehoe found that at public powwows the Blackfoot high priestess of the Okan (Sun Dance) expressed her power through an undecorated dress and headdress of symbolic items, in contrast to the elaborate costumes of less powerful young male dancers and ornaments in the graves of favored children and concubines. For the Danish Bronze Age, Levy critiques the exclusive identification of rock carvings and bronze ritual objects with men and argues instead that women as well as men were depicted as having ritual power involving participation in ceremonies. Levy found that women as well as men controlled imported and locally produced metal wealth, including daggers and axes.

Without explicitly making the point, most chapters further reveal that the idealistic gender dichotomy did not represent reality because women's roles were *both* domestic *and* public (implicitly an inclusive feminist approach). Further, the categorization of women as exclusively domestic is contradicted with evidence of women's multiple *both* domestic *and* public uses and meanings of material culture. For instance, Woodhouse-Buyer critically read documents to reveal that nineteenth-century Alaskan Indian women's fishing, food gathering, and clothing production were essential to *both* the domestic *and* public economies of the Russian fur trade. She found that Creole households could not be classified as only domestic. Sweely found Mayan women's "domestic" pottery and artifacts for producing food and textiles in public ritual buildings, suggesting access to supernatural knowledge and power. Levy argued that Danish Bronze Age women's traditional domestic roles were extended to the control of bronze domestic vessels used in public ritual feasts. The McCafferties demonstrate that some Aztec women had *both* domestic roles *and* public religious and warfare roles. Women's spindles and weaving battens were used not only for domestic textile production but also as women's weapons in public warfare. Further, Aztec ideology and practice identified women as simultaneously domestic and public by considering women as domestic warriors equal in status and parallel to male public warriors. Tate found that in Mayan ideology *both* masculine *and* feminine aspects were unified in each individual and the Maize deity.

While women are shown to have powerful public as well as domestic roles, less evidence is presented that men had domestic or feminine roles as well as public roles. A few chapters to some extent do address men's domestic or culturally labelled feminine roles. Tate discusses how men's claims to political power were supported by bloodletting that appropriated female generative and spiritual powers. Sweely identifies both male and female associated artifacts in some domestic and storage contexts, although she realizes the assumption that celts and hammerstones were used only by men may be incorrect. The McCafferties present evidence that Aztec noblemen attempted to domestically control and dominate noblewomen by urging them to stick to textile production, while threatening that the gods would punish female prostitution with disease and death. However, Aztec women's ideology about certain goddesses supported women, especially haughty prostitutes, in resisting male domination.

By questioning assumptions about the existence of dichotomous gender roles this volume also challenges the widespread belief in the universality of male dominance and female subordination in gender ideology and relationships. Kent gives examples of societies along a continuum of variation in gender roles and relationships from equality between unranked roles through a complementary sexual division of labor to hierarchical inequality. Kent first developed a continuum model in 1984 (Kent 1984:205–222). The framework of a continuum is useful in problematizing other dichotomies as well, modelling the shades of grey between supposed opposites such as public versus domestic, rational versus emotional, black versus white, and objective versus subjective (Spencer-Wood 1993:129–130). It might also be possible to model diversity in gender ideology along a continuum from egalitarian, through complementary to hierarchical. Tate shows that in Mayan ideology separate gender spheres and roles were considered complementary rather than ranked. The McCafferties further showed that Aztec gender ideology was not monolithic, with evidence that women empowered themselves with positive ideology about Goddesses.

Some chapters explicitly challenge claims of male dominance with evidence of women's resistance and social agency. The McCafferties exemplify how feminists seek evidence that women were not passive victims of male dominance, but rather found and created sources of power to shape their own lives. Aztec women resisted male domination by subverting and appropriating the high status of male warriors as analogous to women's roles in giving birth and weaving. Considering weaving tools as women's swords and shields symbolically negotiated women's identity as warriors. Woodhouse-Beyer shows that Alaskan Indian women sometimes considered it to their own advantage to marry the dominant powerful Russian traders. Evidence indicates that some of these Indian wives had the power to select ceramics and jewelry and to control their own domestic space separate from the Russian men. Russian fur traders in Alaska who provided separate domestic work spaces for their Indian wives and children may have been expressing their Victorian ideology. The elite Victorian separate-spheres gender ideology resulted in separate household parlors and work spaces for middle- and upper-class women and men (Spencer-Wood 1999). In addition, the Russians appear to

have followed elite Victorian practice of depending on their wives to display family status through jewelry, clothing, and ceramics used at teas and dinners (Spencer-Wood 1993:121). Further, since the wives often came from elite Indian families, they may also have used jewelry and ceramics to display their own status as elite Indians. Finally, Woodhouse-Beyer argues that Indian women were the creators and maintainers of a new Creole identity. These two chapters present evidence that women not only resisted male dominance, but also were social agents creating their own identities and ideologies.

Reconceptualizing male hierarchical models of power

Male-biassed hierarchical definitions and models of power are the starting point from which most chapters in this volume reconceptualize power. For instance, Levy argues that in chiefdoms Wolf's first mode of individual power is significant, in contrast to Wolf's dismissal of individual and relational power as "*merely* interactionist" (Wolf 1990:591, my emphasis). Wolf's own presentation of his taxonomy of power is male biassed in a number of ways. Three of Wolf's four "modes" of power are dominating "powers over," (Shanks and Tilley 1992:129) including the ability to "impose" one's will on another, the power that "controls" settings for individual interactions, and the power to "allocate" social labor and "structure the political economy" (Wolf 1990:586–587). Further, Wolf has stated that his most highly ranked structural type of power controls lower levels of organizational power and individual power:

> Asking why something is going on and for whom requires a conceptual guess about the forces and effects of the structural power *that drives* organization and to which organization *on all levels* must respond.
>
> (Wolf 1990:590–591, my emphasis)

Thus, Wolf hierarchically structures his modes of power from what he argues are the highest level determinative large-scale cultural powers to low-level private individual powers. Feminists have shown how the devaluing of small-scale individual action is due to the androcentric claim that only men's public large-scale history is causally important (Conkey and Spector 1984:22; Spencer-Wood 1992:99; 1993:128; Wylie 1991:35–36). In the Introduction to this volume Sweely argues that such focus on the way that large-scale cultural institutions define people and their relationships neglects the importance of individual and relational power in creating and changing cultural institutions.

Wolf, as well as Kehoe and Kent, use widely accepted definitions of power that are male biassed in assuming that power must be hierarchical, involving dominance and subordination. Wolf reveals his dominating view of power by claiming that attempts to exert power always generate resistance (Wolf 1990:590). Kehoe's definition of power as "the capacity to impose one's will upon another" corresponds to Wolf's second mode of relational power. Kent uses Herbert's asymmetrical definition of power as "access to and control over people and

resources." Such Western male-biassed "power over" definitions, called "command-and-control" in business and the military, have been projected onto past cultures as the only type of power. Some feminists have critiqued the pervasive male bias resulting from such androcentric hierarchical assumptions about power (e.g. Crumley 1987; Nelson 1997; see also Kent, Levy, McCafferties, Sweely, Woodhouse-Buyer in this volume).

In contrast to many authors in this volume who accept androcentric definitions of power as inherently asymmetrical and coercive, I think the definition of power needs to be broadened to include what I call non-coercive "powers with" other people, such as dialogue, affiliation, cooperation, persuasion, inspiration, negotiation, empowerment, and collaboration. These interactive "powers with" influence others without the authority to control or force them. While these powers traditionally have been considered weak and feminine, the way that they engage willing cooperation is far more powerful than the "power over" type of authority to impose on, control, or command others, which usually generates resistance.

Kehoe critiques the common archaeological assumption that power is isomorphic with ostentatious display and provides examples in which the more powerful gender is plainer in appearance. However, Kehoe uncritically accepts the validity of Veblen's (1899) male view that in Victorian society the plain clothing style of elite men signalled their dominance over "their" ostentatiously dressed women. Although nineteenth-century Western civilization was male dominated, women steadily gained new public and domestic powers during the century as elite women's dress styles fluctuated chaotically from simpler than men's styles at the beginning of the century to much more elaborate at mid-century and becoming somewhat simpler by late century. Women's amount of power was not directly correlated to elaborateness of dress styles, which changed as a result of the complex interaction of a large number of historical contingencies, including democratic revolutions, technology, fashionable activities and sports, and styles adopted by leaders (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978:120; Kerr 1951; Laver 1943:3–22; Sichel 1977, 1978; Spencer-Wood 1996a). Further, dress styles and the dominant gender ideology had different and changing meanings for diverse women and men. My research shows that the dominant Victorian gender ideology in which public men dominated subordinate domestic women was successfully contested by women's ideologies and a large number of reform organizations that transformed Western culture and the dominant ideology to make it acceptable for women to have public professions. Women reformers were also instrumental in gaining female suffrage (Spencer-Wood 1991a:240; 1991b; 1994:176, 180; 1996b:407, 415–416; 1997). Dress reformers contested elite styles and advocated less restrictive clothing as early as the 1840s (Beecher 1841:96–99; Hayden 1981:47).

Many authors in this volume critique male-biassed assumptions that men were always more powerful than women. Kent critiques the assumption that a sexual division of labor always results in ranking men's roles as more powerful than women's roles. Sweely critiques the tendency to construct the past using only

"power over" dominance models that do not address resistance as a "power to" transform society (Shanks and Tilley 1992:129–30). For the Danish Bronze Age and the Mississippian, Levy contests several sexist assumptions: that only men had powerful positions in the social hierarchy, that only men had weapons, that men alone participated in rituals and controlled the Danish trade in bronze imported items. Trocolli critiques archaeological and historical biasses toward identifying Indian chiefs as exclusively male. She critiques the sexist discounting of female chiefs as anomalous exceptions who had not achieved power on their own, but only as widows of male chiefs. Kent also critiques the androcentric assumption that women rulers are anomalies. Woodhouse-Beyer critiques a "top down" approach that views invading Russian male traders and their settlement designs as completely dominating and controlling the supposedly passive Alaskan Indian women. The McCafferties critique the negative male ethnohistoric view of Aztec goddesses and suggest an alternative more egalitarian view of Aztec gender ideology and relationships, in which both women and men have powers.

Some chapters extend beyond male hierarchical constructions of power to suggest more inclusive models of the full range of power relationships. Woodhouse-Beyer suggests expanding our definitions of power beyond "control over resources and decision-making." Levy introduces Crumley's framework of power heterarchy, which comprehensively includes hierarchy, a possible lack of ranking, and lateral and situational types of power usually associated with women, which I call "powers with" people. Kent proposes the framework of a continuum to model the diversity in types and amounts of gendered powers from very hierarchical cultures with great asymmetry in power, sexist concepts, and oppression of women at one extreme to highly egalitarian cultures without ranked gender roles, which Kent argues involve an absence of power because of equality in gendered power. I prefer the view that a balance of gendered power exists in egalitarian cultures, because my definition of power includes non-coercive "powers with" people and "powers under," as well as the domineering "powers over" definition used by Kent. I argue that the term "power under" is more parallel to "power over" than the term "power to" as used by Shanks and Tilley (1992:129–30). Kent's critique of the Western (male) view that power is ubiquitous, and her creation of a larger framework are both insightful. Kent, Kehoe, and Sweely (Introduction) further recognize that power is a dialectic or a dialogue that depends on the viewpoints and perceptions of the participants. Sweely contends that resistance and the interplay between contesting interests in interpersonal interactions is "the driving force of culture change." Further, Kent, Levy, Trocolli, the McCafferties, and Sweely view power not as a static hierarchy, but as a dynamic negotiation between individuals. My research provides examples of dynamic power negotiations in dialogues between nineteenth-century women reformers and participants in reform over the uses of built environments and material culture for reform programs (Spencer-Wood 1994:191–98).

Some questions remain about who controlled different cultural gender roles and relationships. The conventional use of passive voice results in statements such as Kent's that G//ana women "are permitted to handle hunting gear" or

"(!Kung) women, who do not hunt, are forbidden to touch men's hunting equipment" without addressing the question of who had the power to permit or prohibit women's behavior. So deep is the normative Western androcentric assumption that men always have the controlling power, that this is clearly understood as implied from the use of the passive voice. When the subject of a sentence is obscured by using the passive voice our androcentric culture has taught us to assume that men are the subject.

The use of the passive voice removes from our consideration, questioning and analysis the acts of male dominance that control women's behavior in gender roles and relationships. Similarly, although Levy avoids the normative classification of chiefdoms as male-dominated hierarchies, she instead argues that they are limited to Wolf's first level of culturally valued individual characteristics, resulting in turnover among powerful persons and settlements. The question here is, culturally valued by whom? Culture is not monolithic. The use of the passive voice masks the portrayal of one voice as normative, making it difficult to impossible to challenge the accuracy of truth claims. In Wolf's hierarchical framework culturally valued probably means valued by the dominant group, which usually is assumed to mean the dominant male subculture.

Feminists must be careful not to use such male-biassed frameworks and linguistic conventions, because their controlling assumptions produce androcentric knowledge, as exemplified by Rosaldo and Lamphere's (1974) finding of universal male dominance due to their use of male-biassed data, binary categorizations of women's and men's activities, and overgeneralizing cross-cultural methodology (Spencer-Wood 1993:129). Most chapters in this volume not only present monolithically ideal cultural gender roles, but also provide evidence of individual variation in behavior. The McCafferties further show diversity in gender ideologies. Feminists contest monolithic constructions of a culture's gender ideology, roles, and identities. Instead we are usually concerned with women's abilities to contest and subvert the dominant ideology and create their own identities and ideologies. These abilities are valued by subordinate groups and subcultures but usually not by dominant male-defined subcultures. Women and men often construct different meanings for the dominant gender ideology and material culture, as shown for the Aztecs by the McCafferties, and for nineteenth-century America in my research (Spencer-Wood 1991b, 1999).

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, this volume applies a variety of feminist theoretical approaches to problematize the ways in which idealistic Victorian gender dichotomies assuming male dominance and female subordination have been projected onto a variety of cultures. In contrast, this volume presents evidence that women had powerful roles in public and/or domestic spheres. In some cases the male stereotype is challenged with evidence of men's domestic roles (Sweely) or female-identified roles (Tate). Without explicitly making the point most chapters show how the female-domestic/male-public dichotomy disappears as the ideal boundary between

these supposedly separate spheres is crossed repeatedly by women and men in some of their everyday activities and roles. Most chapters provide examples of diversity, variation or flexibility in gender roles and/or identities in the context of unitary generalizations about a culture's normative or ideal gender roles. However, cultural gender ideology is no more monolithic than are gendered behaviors. Some chapters challenge assumptions of male dominance in gender relations with evidence that women were not passive, but resisted male dominance and developed ideological sources of power to control and shape their lives, and sometimes aspects of men's lives as well (McCafferties, Woodhouse-Beyer). Further, the McCafferties challenge monolithic constructions of Aztec gender ideology with evidence of the ways that women created different gender ideologies and identities than those assigned them by men's ideologies. Similarly my research has revealed how domestic reformers transformed American gender ideology and culture by contesting male dominance both in public urban landscapes and in the dominant gender ideology voiced by Veblen and accepted by Kehoe (Spencer-Wood 1994:187). Finally, a number of chapters critique androcentric assumptions about power. Levy and Kent replace male hierarchical constructions of power in social relationships with feminist models of multiple types of horizontal and vertical powers, including complementary and egalitarian gender powers. As a whole this volume challenges the limitations of androcentric assumptions about power and its manifestations in gender relationships.

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10 Rethinking gender and power

Sarah Milledge Nelson

Introduction

The topic of this volume presents a challenge to reconsider previous assumptions about gender in the past and at the same time to question the assumptions about power that have inhered in archaeological interpretations. Power and gender are inextricably intertwined, and as I have argued elsewhere at length (Nelson 1997, 1998), concepts of power affect the ability to consider gender in archaeology at all.

The archaeological examples of gender and power presented in this volume take various approaches. In spite of a recent outpouring of papers and books on gender in archaeology, no consensus about either the methodology of studying gender or the underlying theory has yet been formed. This state of affairs indicates that the topic of gender in archaeology is still vital and has not congealed in either method or theory. However, it is time to acknowledge that some avenues into gender study are more productive than others. My aim in this chapter is to compare and contrast the concepts of gender and power found herein, and summarize these approaches. It is particularly useful to note that these chapters demonstrate increasing sophistication in ways of understanding gender in the past. As Kehoe reminds us, assumptions require continuous re-examination, and it is appropriate to seek "subtler contrivances."

The juxtaposition of gender and power helps to highlight some important new insights, in spite of the fact that the chapters in this volume utilize a variety of concepts of both gender and power. In cultural anthropology, gender has been examined in several ways which are re-examined here—the (disputed) split between public and private spheres (Trocolli, Woodhouse-Beyer), the division of labor (Kent, Levy), and ideological representations (McCafferty and McCafferty, Tate). Gender integration or segregation is a concept used by Sweely. Whether egalitarian treatment of the sexes has ever occurred, and if so under what conditions (Kent), are questions that continue the extended dialogues about gender in archaeology, churning over some old ground as well as proposing new insights.

Various approaches to power include the concept of heterarchy (Levy), the sense that power is not a thing but a condition that requires continual negotiation (Kehoe), and the recognition that power may not be unitary—multiple loci of

power may exist in a given society. These concepts allow more subtle critiques of prior understandings of gender differences.

Finally, an assumption that gender relations are the same thing as power relations has permeated many previous studies. Several chapters reveal that this approach is too simplistic, teasing out the strands of both gender and power.

Gender assumptions

Writings about gender in archaeology have taken a number of forms, which may spring from different epistemological grounds (Nelson 1997, 1998). For some authors, the issue is simply, "Where were the women and what were they doing?" (a stage that this volume has surpassed), while for others the relationship between women and men should take center stage (most of these chapters). Another approach is to question the underlying models of human life that inform many reconstructions of the past (e.g. Kent). Finally, it is possible to question whether androcentric concerns have shaped both the methods and theories of archaeology, and to reach for new models. All of these approaches lead to a fuller sense of the past, and expand our ability to "people" the past, to produce a truly social archaeology.

In spite of some differences in implicit goals, these chapters share important underlying assumptions about gender. Three of them deserve particular comment. These include the insistence that women as well as men shaped their societies, the need for a reappraisal of the sexual division of labor, and the importance of variations in women's roles within and between societies.

Women's roles as active players in their societies are demonstrated in several ways. In a particular culture women might have specific work which was done rarely by men, but their labor was valued equally. Differential valuation of men's and women's activities are a feature of our own society; these chapters avoid the trap of assuming that this is the case everywhere. In Mesoamerica, and particularly among the Aztec, women's roles in ritual were important, and reciprocal with men's ritual roles (McCafferty and McCafferty). Women might also become leaders and through that leadership they could be manipulators of wealth (Trocolli). Women's roles as traders in *artels* in the Arctic were central to the construction of the society (Woodhouse-Beyer). The structural equivalence of gender roles in some societies was stressed, as well as balanced endeavors by men and women. All chapters agree that women's roles were important, and that knowing about those roles in more detail changes the understanding, not only of gender and power relationships, but even of the whole culture.

Sexual division of labor may not always exist, but when it does it may take many different forms, and the kinds of labor seen as gendered differ from society to society. Trocolli notes that division of labor may have existed among native American groups, but was not rigid, while Kehoe reminds us that gender distinctions may be variable along many different lines.

A third important point is that women have varied roles in most cultures. A given woman may be mother, wife, and daughter in the kinship structure, a

weaver for both domestic and trade purposes, and may trade her own excess cloth. She may perform rituals or take leadership roles in particular contexts. The assumption that women in a given culture are all the same, whether weavers or cooks or food producers, is a pernicious one, creating blinders unnecessarily. It is important to ask to what extent multiple roles for women existed in a particular culture, some or all of which a given woman might fill. The homogenization of women's roles leads to distorted understandings of the past.

These, then, are some of the assumptions about gender. In this context it is gratifying that biological essentialism did not rear its ugly head in these chapters, either in the form which ties women exclusively to child bearing and child rearing, or in the guise which asserts that all women have particular characteristics–peacefulness or submissiveness, for example. This result may be attributed to the fact that focussing on power tends to obviate the conflation of the categories "woman" and "mother," which often occurs in gender discussions in archaeology.

Confronting gender as a category allows moving away from essentializing women. Women are not always cooks, or potters, or gatherers, or any other of the occupations that frequently belong to women. When artifacts are used to delineate gender in these chapters, the attributions are specifically grounded, representing a giant step forward in gendered archaeology. This evidence for women's labor is derived from several sources. Sweely uses Maya sources for her site, noting the likely relationship. Woodhouse-Beyer argues for women as traders based on both archaeological and historic evidence, while Levy uses artifacts found in sexed burials and/or gendered depictions. Kent, on the other hand, uses ethnoarchaeologic data, and points to overlapping and contextualized habitual work assignments among some groups she has studied.

Cautions about interpreting these sources of evidence are also sounded. The McCaffertys note the problem of "medieval male mindsets," and Kent cautions about the "Western filters" through which we see the division of labor among other concepts.

Power assumptions

Power assumptions are more difficult to classify, because the term "power" is slippery, being infused with various meanings and connotations, as all the authors have acknowledged in various ways. Levy's discussion of power is particularly helpful in delineating meanings of power.

What kinds of power are relevant to a study of gender? The distinction between "power over" and "power to" is useful here, "power over" being the ability to cause someone else to do something not in their own interest, while "power to" constitutes autonomy. These ways to understand power are fundamentally different, and conflating them is the source of much confusion about power (Wylie 1992). Kent describes the "absence of power" (meaning the absence of "power over"), and provides a typology of symmetrical and asymmetrical power in gender relationships. Sweely notes power in social relations, access to knowledge, and access to the supernatural. Power can also be multi-centered. Woodhouse-Beyer

implies that power is the ability to send "messages" affecting "beliefs, emotions, and perceptions of indigenous populations"–thus power is perceived in the hands of the women mediators of a creolized culture.

These chapters demonstrate that power is not given or taken once and for all; it needs to be maintained, and must be negotiated. Several chapters acknowledge or imply that power cannot be reified as a "possession," but that it is contingent and shifting. Power may be manipulated through control of material items (Kehoe), control of space (Sweely), and/or through ritual performance (McCaffertys). Trocolli reminds us that hierarchical relationships, one type of power, are not static. Control of wealth is carefully delineated in Levy's chapter, with women and men controlling both locally produced and imported wealth.

The valuation of power is another thread that runs through these chapters. Kent points to the complementarity of men's and women's roles in some groups she has studied, and particularly takes issue with the Western male notion that hunting is a prestigious activity. Tate notes that women's spiritual power can balance men's secular power. Trocolli focusses on women chiefs among native Americans, noting that many have been overlooked. This work resonates with studies on queens of early Japan (Piggott 1999) and Egypt (Callender 1992) as well as my own work in Korea (Nelson 1991, 1993). Levy's distinction among several locations of power provides a possible path through this maze. She makes an important connection between ritual knowledge and ceremonial power with political power.

Another theme sounded several times in these chapters is the relationships of spaces and artifacts to power, whether it is creation of power or expressions of power. This is necessary theoretical work for archaeologists, whose ability to recognize power must be grounded in material culture and its contexts.

Spaces and places

Spatial analysis figures importantly in several of these chapters, including both ritual places and economic spaces. The meanings of spaces for the social community is raised (Sweely). Levy notes possibly symbolic spatial associations with gender, since women were more involved in deposits of artifacts in watery places, men more in depictions of processions and combat in Bronze Age Denmark. This observation has fascinating echoes in China, where *yin* (representing female) is also watery. The McCaffertys describe house and hearth as the nucleus of women's social power and prestige. Tate notes that the Maya house constitutes the base of women's power, an important space for women. Sweely locates ritual in one particular structure, and associates it with women's artifacts, while in another structure a group of grinding stones is argued to indicate a place where women gathered to work. However, spaces belonging exclusively to one gender were not identified. This type of detailed consideration of place is a highly productive direction for gendered archaeology.

Artifacts and objects

To shift from space to artifacts, how are material objects manipulated in the expression of power? Kehoe reminds us that ritual display, involving both spaces and artifacts, is not the same thing as power, and that the wielder of power may be some distance removed from the artifacts of power, although manipulating their display. Material culture, in fact, is seen to mediate power in active ways in most of these chapters.

A focus on power and gender

Why does power matter? More specifically for this book, what does it have to do with gender? The very notion that power is a salient category is male associated in our culture. The obsession with power, I have argued elsewhere (Nelson 1997), is an androcentric construct, one that resonates in our highly competitive society. Levy's discussion of the term "heterarchy" is useful in this context. Varieties of power, fluctuating power, less than absolute power, contested power, provide extremely relevant perspectives. To insist upon finding consistent gender hierarchies may be to miss the salient point of the distribution of power in many societies,

The revisionist nature of these chapters is worth noting. In our own cultural baggage, overt political power for women is not expected and the interpretation of powerful women is often actively resisted by archaeological gatekeepers (Trocolli). If the same kind of scrutiny were turned on artifacts, places, and activities implicitly or explicitly gendered male, a more nuanced view of gender would result. This has been rarely done because "female" is the marked category while "male" is unmarked, considered to be the standard of "human" (Bem 1993). When an androcentric perspective insists that to be male is automatically to be powerful, while to be female is to be powerless, the fact is obscured or mystified that not all men are powerful in stratified societies, where power is differentially wielded. And in some cases gender may be a less important category for conferring power than others, such as ability or class.

Another useful attribute of these chapters is that many of them question the meanings of familiar categories–what it is to be, for example, a chief or a shaman. But because these are unmarked as male, to show that a female can hold one of these powerful roles, more tedious argument is required. Levy makes this point tellingly, showing that human depictions which are not explicitly gendered are assumed to be male, especially if the images are understood to imply power or prestige. I am reminded of the contrast between the naked Upper Paleolithic female figurines which are commonly assumed to be associated with fertility because of their nudity (Nelson 1990), and a statue of an equally naked male from Harappa, which prominently occupies a page entitled "Figures of Authority" (Hamblin 1973:133).

It is extremely difficult to divest ourselves of our cultural presuppositions that male traits, activities and artifacts are standard and female ones, in so far as they

differ, are deviant. Although Kehoe reminds us that status display can be remote from the person with the highest status, Levy appropriately reminds us of its inverse. For Bronze Age Denmark it is unreasonable to suppose that female access to wealth items and ideologically freighted artifacts was derived from relationships to high ranking men, for there is no evidence to support such a conclusion. Thus there are caveats on both sides of the issue of interpretation of whose status is being revealed in a given instance. Evidence should be equally required on either side; it is unreasonable to assume power for men (or even some men), but demand proof of it for women.

The cause of our skewed vision, I believe, is that we are victims of Wolf's Type 4 power (see Levy), in which powerful others have already defined power as male, and the very possibilities of our thinking about power are thus constrained. The power, however, that can be "created out of personal qualities and enhanced through public appearance and ritual performance," as Levy has noted, was demonstrated at the symposium that preceded this volume. The public appearances of the speakers and our collective ritual performance may have been a step in the negotiating of gender power in archaeology. This kind of a performance of power was unthinkable when I went to my first SAA meeting in 1969, and a book such as this one has become possible only in recent years. It is a sign of more reflective, and better, archaeological interpretation.

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11 Repudiating witchcraft

K.Anne Pyburn

Pushing the envelope: new answers for old questions

The discipline of anthropology has undergone an interesting transition since the early 1970s. In the 1960s and 1970s anthropologists were concerned with discovering dichotomies in nature: Chomsky found natural oppositions in linguistic structures; Lévi-Strauss found natural oppositions in social structures; Lee and DeVore found natural oppositions in adaptive structures; Binford found natural oppositions in technological structures. The ramifications of these oppositions were multifaceted, but a gender opposition was always implicit if not explicit. Language developed oppositions to create meaning in many human realms, by giving coherent structure to perception. So the concept of up presumes down, black opposes white, power requires subordination, and male engenders female. Social structure is more like a corbeled vault than a true arch–the opposing weights of structural parts hold the ideology up. So by opposing nature and eschewing incest, culture is born. For Lévi-Strauss male humans are to culture what females are to nature, male domination over females is equivalent to the triumph of culture over nature, the triumph of learning over instinct. Prehuman oppositions, nevertheless, parallel these categories, as when Washburn found a dichotomy between the political behavior of male baboons and the passive behavior of the females. Lee and DeVore situated the origin of human consciousness in the rise of "Man the Hunter" and warrior in opposition to woman the gatherer-nurturer. Binford saw female activity areas distributed in opposition to male activity areas. Flannery and Winter found female artifacts associated with private space and male artifacts associated with public activities.

Feminists have suggested that the locus of these dichotomies is less in nature than in the culture of anthropologists. Ultimately the dichotomy of most interest to all these earlier projects was between "us" and "them." Consistency in the findings among the many researchers that seemed indicative of the discovery of natural categories was largely a result of the consistency of perspective among the scholars collecting data. All were confident in their ability to be objective about their subject matter, and all found their mutual discoveries reinforced their explanatory models. And all of them were white men who grew up in Western cultures.

Postmodern critiques of these projects have taken a variety of forms. Edward Said and James Carrier have described how Western scholars created an orient and an occident out of oppositional reasoning characteristic of certain philosophical traditions with long roots in the West. Latour, Miller, Gunder-Frank, and others have shown how modernists created traditional society in opposition to an ethnocentric idea of progress. And feminist scholars, like those in this volume, have suggested that male and female (1) may not be "natural" categories, (2) may not be oppositional categories, (3) may not be economic categories, (4) may not be hierarchical categories, (5) may not be evolutionary categories, and (6) may not even be the only gender categories.

There are two ways that feminist scholarship is now altering the epistemology of gender. The first, which is most central to the authors in this collection, is to take a more careful look at the way data have been constructed and organized to see if they show what archaeologists have always said (or assumed) about the lives of women in the past. All of the chapters in this volume show how data organized and gathered according to a standard model of male dominance do not conform to expected patterns, but seem instead to allow for a degree of complementarity and mutual control over resources and decisions; a sharing of power. But the idea of "different but equal" roles is hard for Western anthropologists to either grasp or trust, because it is not borne out by Western experience (Pyburn 1993). Levy dubs this situation "structural equivalence" to describe how a hierarchical society (and Kent shows convincingly that all societies are hierarchical) can still have gendered roles without inherently gendered power relations.

The McCaffertys, Sweely, Trocolli, Woodhouse-Beyer and Kehoe all show how material culture that may appear to indicate male dominance or a gendered power differential may actually mean a contrivance more subtle than, or even exactly the opposite. Grinding, weaving, spinning and other domestic tasks rarely show spatial segregation from non-domestic tasks in the archaeological record. While this may sometimes be the result of site formation processes that disaggregate the artifact sets of human activities, Sweely offers an important counter, since her chapter deals with undisturbed assemblages. In fact, Sweely demonstrates the need to question traditional assumptions about what artifacts are "gendered." From what we know about the culture of Cerén, there is every reason to expect asymmetrical gender roles; there is certainly no problem identifying other types of power differential at the site. But despite the fact that the artifacts that Sweely analyzed were all from primary contexts, patterns of gendered differences were extremely weak. Clearly, we need an alternative way to organize these types of data. Traditional gender assumptions not only are simplistic, but also are often utterly wrong. For example, the idea that celts are masculine artifacts and indicate physical and political power, while spindle whorls are feminine and represent subordination, assumes first that celts were not used by women for "female" tasks, and second that male and female tasks conform to a simple hierarchy of power. Neither ethnographic nor archaeological data bear out either assumption.

The other chapters take a less direct approach to reassessing data on gender. The authors writing about "simpler" societies seemed most willing to rethink the

bands–tribes–chiefdoms–states model in emphasizing types of power not usually recognized in archaeology, as Woodhouse-Beyer's discussion of the power of native American women to maintain ethnic boundaries. By brokering the economic and social impact of Western capitalism through their relations with their Russian husbands, these women reconstituted ethnic identity, despite their humble appearance in the ethnohistoric record. Similarly, Kehoe and the McCaffertys show how cultural context may imbue humble objects with great power.

Kent, Kehoe, and Levy take on the old power paradigm most directly. Working with examples from societies traditionally considered "simple," Kent shows that only our anthropological models are simple. Her typology of six ways to categorize gender relations could certainly replace the old idea that either a society is egalitarian or it is not. In a similarly critical vein, Levy has opened up the traditional model of chiefdoms to incorporate more than one scale of power and to argue that gender and other types of power relations are not static but constant points of negotiation. Feminist scholars in other disciplines are now beginning to suggest that gender may productively be understood as a social process, rather than a static structure (Hawkesworth 1997). Wilk (1996) has argued that under the influence of global forces, local categories of power do not dissolve but become points of negotiation with a larger world.

Trocolli provides excellent examples of power negotiation in which gender is not a paramount consideration. Her chapter points out the tendency to circular reasoning that often traps unwary archaeologists. Women and men are expected to have certain types of social roles. When the data do not match the expectations, they are likely to be ignored. So, societies in which women may work full time in production activities within the household such as spinning, raising children, weaving, curing and food preparations, are said not to have economic specialists: "the almost universal role of women in scraping and preparing hides in societies *without specialists,* in grinding foods and in processing fish for storage" (Hayden 1992:35, italics added). Tasks classified as women's work are simultaneously classified as non-economic. Similarly, as Trocolli points out, women chiefs were not really understood as women chiefs, but as placeholders for men when men were scarce. But if gender is the paramount issue, there are always some men around; clearly other social categories sometimes take precedence over gender.

Kehoe's chapter is a summary of many of the points made in this volume. She has provided examples that undermine most of the common assumptions about the relation between women, gender, and power. Spencer-Wood finds shortcomings with some of the particular interpretations offered by Kehoe, but Kehoe's central point certainly stands: relationships between material culture and gendered power are not simple and not easily predictable with the models we have. Kehoe's approach is to attack the cultural evolutionary assumptions inherent in much of the work on gender in archaeology by showing that these models implicitly derive from evolutionary biology Her point is not that biological evolution cannot provide a framework for understanding cultural evolution, but that current studies invariably show that the proponents of evolutionary models lack an adequate understanding of the evolutionary processes they invoke. Although I believe that

her point is well taken, I, for one, am ready for something more radical. Evolutionary biology was, after all, originated and constructed by some of the most dominant males in the history of Western thought, and is promoted today by many who would extend the domination of human females back 3 million years.

Opening the envelope: essential re-evaluations

The second way that feminist scholarship is now altering the epistemology of gender goes beyond checking the accuracy of former investigations into gender inequality to challenge the general framework of scientific inquiry. The problem is that we have accepted a set of assumptions that predetermine too much about what we can find out about the past. This problem was very clearly described in an article by Timothy Taylor (1992), that treats the mysterious origin of a hammered silver bowl found at the turn of the century in northern Jutland. Taylor argues that this magnificent object has been misinterpreted for many years due to the equation of archaeological styles with discrete cultures. Thus, the identification of an object, such as the cauldron, as "Celtic" immediately identifies it to many scholars as the product of an ancient cultural group with a distinctive language, physical type, religion, institutions, and material culture,

> equating archaeological cultures with peoples, implies an impossibly perfect coincidence of anthropological variables. In reality, these variables rarely coincide neatly. A nation, although governed by a dominant group, typically contains several religions, languages, and physical types; moreover, art and technology often cut across national boundaries. Yet the notion of "pure peoples" persists.
>
> (Taylor 1992:85)

This sort of reasoning, which Taylor calls "integralism" but which I term essentialism, is characteristic of several of the chapters in this volume. To my mind, archaeologists in general, and those studying gender in particular, continue to base their analysis and interpretations too readily on "what we know" about gender, Celts, the Maya, the Alutiiq, hunter-gatherers, the transition to complex society, the way in which material culture expresses not just cultural values but also cultural integrity. So the recovery of information about Alutiiq women casts them as cultural conservators, rather than innovators with transformational power; female spinners are comparable to warriors, not warriors to spinners; and shields do not symbolize spindle whorls, but the reverse. Women may have egalitarian beginnings, but must lose out when authority becomes institutionalized. But how can we possibly know these claims are true unless we search for the answer with archaeological data? Cross-cultural comparisons between cultures recorded by people unaware of their own biasses or of cultures deeply involved in and affected by the world system are not enough. This is the project that these chapters leave mainly unaddressed: the larger and more dangerous issue of essentialism among

archaeologistsis. Unlike heterarchy, complementarity, resistance, and power, which are common topics of calm investigation, the "naturalization" of gender is still on the debating table among feminist scholars in anthropology and the humanities (Grosz 1994). The issue has proven deeply resistant to resolution, perhaps because it is so deeply embedded in Western thought that it is difficult to conceptualize reality without a set of essentialist principles. Nevertheless, it is necessary to either address this topic with archaeological research, or at least be aware that essentialist perspectives on the past often have a pernicious effect on the present (Pyburn 1998). Furthermore, because the only data likely to seriously challenge gender essentialism must come from archaeological cultures that predate the world system, archaeological data present a unique opportunity as well as a special sort of responsibility to the present. If we, as feminist scholars, wish to speak with authority about the past, then we must acknowledge that ethical considerations accompany our bid for power.

Not surprisingly, essentialist assumptions about Maya cultures are the most worrisome to me, since this is an area where I have some expertise. (Spencer-Wood was similarly most troubled by the chapter closest to her own area of specialization.) Sweely's chapter begins with a set of assumptions about the "gender associations" of artifacts and argues that the distribution of gendered artifacts indicates gendered space and implies gendered power relations. While one may be sympathetic to the intentions of the chapter, it does not rule out competing hypotheses. Any archaeologist (even one taking a non-sexist perspective on the origin of complex societies) may challenge the assumptions that engender the artifacts of Cerén, and criticize the lack of attention to cultural formation processes. Artifacts relating to agriculture and hunting are likely to be stored in or near areas where agriculture and hunting take place; no one hunts in her house and people do not carry heavy farm implements any more than necessary (Schiffer 1976). If stone tools are manufactured in or near dwellings, people often care for their families by carefully disposing of the garbage in out-of-the-way spots (Schiffer 1976). Again, it is not that Sweely's suggestions are not valid and interesting, it is her lack of questioning that amounts to essentialist construction of an unchanging (in either time or space) Maya culture and gender that is problematic.

These issues are more emphatic in the chapter by Tate, who "orientalizes" Maya culture (as defined by Said 1978). Unself-consciously, she contrasts a magic-cosmic world view (of Maya people, both ancient and modern) with a Western rationalist-scientific one. Broad pronouncements about "Maya beliefs" and the "Maya world" are mingled with reassurances that such things have survived the passage of time, the passage of Cortez, and the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Data collected on the Tzutujil, the Quiche, the Caqchiquel, Chimaltecos, and the Otomi by people working within an explicitly essentialist paradigm are stirred together with ethnohistory and a highly selected set of iconographic details from the Maya Classic Period to reconstruct a unitary Maya world view. Tate tells us that "me Maya people consider themselves formed of maize dough," "the Maya see the genders as operating on different temporal cycles," and "the Maya believe that everything that fulfills its function unites

male and female aspects." Such statements, disembodied from space, time, and culture, are untested and untestable; data that do not fit the model are deemed inauthentic and ignored. Observations by Diego de Landa, a celibate male Spanish Catholic missionary, are cited uncritically as factual, as are interpretations by J.Eric S. Thompson, well renowned for his ethnocentricity and romanticism (Becker 1976). The resulting characterization follows the pattern of analysis identified by Carrier (1992), Obeyesekere (1992), Said (1978), and others, in which non-Western cultural systems are romanticized.

Women have long been romanticized, a perspective that purports to put women on pedestals and show great respect for their feminine characteristics. As women have seen, respect for essentialized characteristics readily translates into requirements for female authenticity. Despite Sweely's emphasis on the power relations as negotiated among individuals and Tate's interest in historical documents, both authors are influenced by personal beliefs about the essential and timeless differences between genders. Sweely struggles heroically with the ideas of gendered space and women's spiritual power, though her data could easily be interpreted to indicate an ungendered political economy at Cerén. Clearly her emphasis is on respect, but inside the traditional envelope, respect must find a traditional object.

Tate's interpretations are less heroic. "In Mesoamerica, both male and female children were exhorted from birth onward to fulfill archetypal roles but a woman's universe was circumscribed to her home, her waterhole, her family responsibilities." With this sweeping statement, Tate suggests that Maya women belong at home, inhabiting private space, concentrating on spirituality, leaving the political and economic spheres to men; otherwise they cease to be authentically Maya. And Maya authenticity resides in the mythical past, solidified forever in the icons and artifacts that Western archaeologists translate on behalf of the culturally bereft. Tate's familiar conflation of time and space (Gossen 1994) is undoubtedly related to her training in art history, where authenticity is of great importance in the determination of significance and value. She echoes this concern in her emphasis on "traditional" Maya, and in her confidence in her ability to delineate what Maya people of any time or place believe. Where culture is concerned, the issue of authenticity is complex, since individual practices and beliefs may vary, and even conflict, among people and groups who are all legitimately Maya.

As has been pointed out (Hervik 1998; Pyburn 1997, 1998; Wilk 1989), an admiring gaze at a glorious past patronizes living Maya by imagining an immutable essence (in the good old days), that has lost out in the modern world as living people "lose their traditions." First peoples often object to being cast as victims of progress, since this condescension may be used to justify perpetuating their exclusion from economic opportunity and political self-determination. And native people may have their own ideas about what traditions are authentic. The world is fortunate that Rigoberto Menchu has not defined Mayan womanhood as bounded by private space.

Tate's genre of analysis has a long history among Mayanist scholars, many

of whom provide the foundation for Tate's assertions. But the simple truth is that we know very little about the extent to which ancient Maya cosmology of either men or women was "ensouled," nor do we know how much variation existed in the political economies of the different Maya polities. While these are very good questions to ask, neither Tate nor many other Mayanists have ever asked them. Instead the common practice is to take refuge from complex data sets in an essentialist framework that predetermines all the answers we can get from the past.

Why do modern women, themselves the economic and political brunt of an essentialist construction of gender differences, so often promote essentialist models themselves? A similar question was once asked by historians studying the rise of European witchcraft (Macfarlane 1970). Why did some women accept the label of witch or even encourage their neighbors to believe they were witches, despite knowing such claims could take them to the gallows (Purkiss 1996)? I believe that the answer to both these questions is the same. In both cases the claim is a bid for power and authority in the short term. The witch could live another day by frightening a meal out of her neighbors. Feminist scholars accept essentialist constructions of women so we can continue to work and be heard within the sociopolitical framework we know from birth, and can claim the authority of the liminal, and carve out a gendered domain of power that is subordinate but still able to impose and threaten (Grosz 1994).

The alternative, to construct models without essentialist preconceptions and ask hard questions with inadequate and unresilient data, is infinitely more difficult and may severely constrain the conclusions we can draw about the past, at least for a while. But oversimplification is not a good solution. Worse than being condemned to repeat an unremembered past, we are condemning ourselves to what we imagine about an unknown past. And worst of all, by insisting that relations between male and female have been the same since time immemorial, we are denying that we, the women and men of living cultures, have both the ability and the responsibility to create a future for our daughters and sons that is different.

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