

Chapter 2

LINKING HISTORICAL AND MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

'We must never forget that we try to write in a present that is the creation of those past lives; a present whose turbulence and tensions can be traced back to the concerns and conflicts of those past lives; and also a present whose sense of its own history, identity and social and moral dimensions are re-cast by us in the way that we think, write and act' (Johnson 1996: 212)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally archaeology has been seen, especially in North and South America, as the study of non-literate, prehistoric and ancient pasts. These studies have also been mainly restricted to terrestrial research. Fortunately, archaeology as a discipline has been developing and this limited landward stance is not restricted merely to the study of the distant past anymore. Recently, there has been a growing interest in integrating land and maritime spaces. These two principal growth areas in the discipline have become known as historical and maritime archaeology. Historical and contact archaeology has generally been associated with the beginning and development of the 'Modern World', from the 16th century onwards (see Orser 1996a and Section 4.2.2). Maritime archaeology has mainly been related to the analysis of historic wrecks (see Babits & Van Tilburg 1998). In this chapter, I discuss the necessary definitions, differences and validity of the three interlinked processes of capitalism, colonialism and consumption, in historical, contact and maritime archaeology. I also examine how material culture and written evidence can be integrated through an archaeological perspective.

2.2 HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

This section is not intended to be a comprehensive review of works dealing with historical archaeology because this would result in several hundreds of entries (see South 1977: 2-29). Nevertheless, it discusses what it is understood by historical archaeology within the framework of this research. In general, the story of historical archaeology illustrates that it is not necessary to stick to the notion of prehistory as 'pure' archaeology; the archaeology of historic periods raises equally relevant and complex problems of interpretation (Cleland 2001: 2; Johnson 2000: 161). History is the act of selecting, analysing and writing about the past (Beaudry 1993a: 1) whereas archaeologists interpret what happened in the past through the analysis of material evidence. The integration between the study of material remains of past societies and written records has been associated with defining historical archaeology (Cleland 2001: 3; Funari et al 1999: 1).

In general, from a North American perspective, the recent development of historical archaeology can be understood as a method for studying the formation processes of the Modern World (Hall 2000: 2; Orser 1996a: 26-28; Orser & Fagan 1995: 11-14; Schuyler 1988: 37; Shott 2005: 2-4). Usually, the Modern World is attributed to the era that begins with European voyages of colonial discovery and exploration and continues to the present day. For example, several archaeological studies have been undertaken to further the knowledge about the European occupation of America (Deagan 1988; Hutchinson & Mitchem 2001; Ramenofsky 1987; Thomas 1989, 1990, 1991 among others). Others have studied European expansion and colonialism, the mechanisms of domination and resistance involved, and the economic and political structures generated by the spread of capitalism with a worldwide orientation (e.g. Johnson 1996; Leone & Potter Jr. 1988a; Leone & Potter Jr. 1999; Orser 1996a; Paynter 2000). These themes involve obvious maritime concerns; *i.e.* European expansion walked hand in hand with the circulation of goods, people and ideas and shipping was an important component on this movement. However, this approach seems to be forgotten by the above-mentioned studies. For example, Adams et al. (2001) examine the flow of commodities to Alaska but the maritime component is overlooked (Adams et al 2001). Matthew Johnson recognises that his studies have focused on the built environment and portable goods in England and that he has therefore omitted how these goods arrive to England (Matthew Johnson *pers. comm.* Nov. 2004), being shipping the evident answer.

Recently some researchers have focused on social processes of colonialism as well as the spread of a capitalistic world economy and how

they served to incorporate non-European societies as active agents within history (Funari et al 1999: 4). Some historical archaeological studies have emphasised the individual and their identity construction focusing on, for example:

- how consumer choice shaped people's identities (Webster 1999),
- how individuals manipulate material goods to construct and maintain social group identities and ethnic boundaries, and the role of individual creativity and innovation within that process (Fennell 2000, 2003), and
- how 'to struggle past' identity politics and the individual in colonial and capitalistic contexts by understanding people as products of social relations (McGuire & Wurst 2002).

2.3 HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OR THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE 'MODERN' WORLD'?

To comprehend the formation of the Modern World, the processes of capitalism, colonialism and consumption and their effects on different societies must be understood at both local and global scales (Chapter 5). But, what does it mean to be modern? How is modernity defined? (This issue is further discussed in Chapter 5). I argue that the 'Modern World' does not begin at a specific point in time. Rather, its definition, construction and reconstruction are the result of the continuous flow of past and present human actions. Historical archaeology does not study a time period or modern times that began some time around 1492 as argued by Orser (Orser 1996a: 27). Notions of 'medieval', 'classical' and 'historical' periods lead us to linear concepts where humans 'evolve' in different stages. Furthermore, the use of the term modern implies that there is something that is non-modern, thereby creating a fixed opposition that separates behaviour patterns into abstract categories that lack meaning (Latour 1993).

In this book, historical archaeology is considered to be a multidisciplinary field linked to anthropology and history which deals with the post-prehistoric past and which seeks to understand the global nature of post-prehistoric social life (Connah 2003: 149-151). By following this approach the archaeological discourse can be enriched as a whole (see Johnson 2000: 149-161). In this way, historical archaeology is not a different kind of archaeology (South 1977: 2). Just as archaeology analyses other moments or chronologies, historical archaeology can generate its own inferences about past human behaviour from the

archaeological record (Little 1994). The material remains of the past can be understood as a source of information about human history that is independent of written records (Lightfoot 1995; Trigger 1996). The process would otherwise be tautological, using archaeological evidence as the material expression of what was predicted to be found (Andr  n 1998: 3; Beaudry 1993a: 1). Furthermore, material goods and written sources are social products. Material culture allows people to construct, maintain and transform social relations. It also contributes to the positioning of people in time-space through heterogeneous networks that bind people and things together (Thomas 2000b: 152). Although historical data can be biased because of political and social assumptions, it has the potential to offer different insights of how the world was perceived and experienced. Hence, a combination of different sources of data is needed but a deeper understanding of the material world will challenge these assumptions and this is where differences with history lie. Therefore, archaeologists study and interpret the human past through material remains, rationalising the difference between prehistoric and historic only in the presence of another source of analysis: the documentary record.

2.4 HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF CONTACT

The sea is one of the major components in culture contact studies. Much research has been performed lately relating to historical archaeology and culture contact studies (Auger et al 1995; Dobyns 1993; Gullov 1985; Ramenofsky 1987; Rubertone 2000; Wilson & Rogers 1993 among others). Because the bibliography on this topic is very extensive, I will mention a few examples to illustrate some tendencies in dealing with archaeological contact research. By integrating historical and archaeological evidence, Fitzhugh (1985) reviews European interactions with natives in the Eastern Arctic. He discusses the probable effects of these contacts especially focused on the Eskimo communities (*ibid.*). Hutchinson and Mitchem (2001) focus on culture contact and colonialism to develop a model regarding epidemic diseases and depopulation. They integrate demographic evidence from historical, archaeological and ethnographic observations. Silliman (2001) applies social theory and the theory of practice, based on Bourdieu (1990) and Giddens (1984) (discussed in Chapter 4), to colonial and culture-contact studies focusing on a case study in the 19th century in Northern California. By combining historical and archaeological data, Silliman (2001) investigates changes in the negotiation of politics of social position and identities in daily practices or what he defines as ‘practical politics’ (*ibid.*: 194). He analyses

how colonial material culture was used to convey social relations and strategies and the way that natives could appropriate those items to negotiate social positions and relations (Silliman 2001). By combining historical and archaeological sources, Gibbs (2003) considers the shipwreck survivor camp as a contact site to analyse the relationships between Europeans and natives and whether contacts were in the form of conflict or cooperation (*ibid.*: 136-137). I would like to highlight that only Gibbs (2003) of the above-mentioned authors explicitly combines terrestrial and maritime concerns. He clearly integrates the physical nature of the ship, the environmental constraints of life at sea, the predictable norms and social organisation on vessels and the physiological or crisis aspect when facing a wreckage situation (Gibbs 2003). However, the above-mentioned examples illustrate that culture contact studies may revitalise holistic anthropological approaches considering multiple lines of evidence (e.g. ethnohistorical accounts, ethnographic observations, linguistic data, native oral traditions, archaeological remains and biological remains) (Lightfoot 1995). Human societies were and are complicated entities. As part of the natural world they share its complexity by having a social entanglement of their own (Johnson 2000: 9). Therefore, the past needs to be viewed as intricate, ambiguous and peculiar rather than simple, straightforward and always conforming to general laws. Just as the world of the past fails to conform simple and singular notions about it, so historical archaeology and contact study theories need to be accepted as diverse and complex. This book, with a strong social orientation, draws on a wide variety of theoretical approaches on the basis that

‘a diversity of theory in archaeology is desirable and essential, rather than a problem’ (McGuire 1992: 7).

Consequently, I argue that culture contact studies should not be restricted to the study of contacts between native people and Europeans (e.g. Orser 1996a) because contacts can be intracultural (e.g. among the Europeans themselves) as well as intercultural. For example, did the contact between the British and the Spanish in the Malvinas/Falkland Islands condition British action? And what about the French and British presence on the Southeast Australian coast at the end of the 18th century? Were British settlements built in these areas, where competition with other European countries was always latent, to legitimise and reassure Britishness and the British position in the world as a way of consolidating their power? Or was British action also conditioned by the establishment of their own social networks involving commercial and geopolitical relations? How can this be observed in the material evidence? For example, fur trade companies established a network of multiethnic trade outposts by recruiting cheap sources of labour from across Europe, North

America, and the Pacific Islands (Lightfoot 1995). Is there any relationship between this and the situation in the South Atlantic in the 18th century? These questions and some preliminary answers are explored:

- a) locally through the examination of pottery cargoes by interpreting them as the material projection of British identities in the Royal Navy and colonial spaces (Chapter 7); and
- b) globally, by analysing British maritime activities through the construction of social landscapes (Chapter 8).

Wallerstein's work (1979a, b, 1980) has introduced the notion of World Systems Theory which has been widely used and discussed in contact archaeology (e.g. Champion 1995b; Jeans 1988; McGuire 1995; Rowlands 1987; Rowlands & Gledhill 1998). This theory is not presented in this book because it is not directly relevant to the aims pursued in this research. However, to summarise the main advantage in the Wallerstein model is that in historical archaeology the relevant systems were and can be understood within a worldwide perspective which facilitates comparative analysis at global levels. Nevertheless, the World Systems Theory is a functional theory that struggles to integrate the social dimensions of mutuality and materiality, in dealing with 'native' cultures, and in dealing with a world that is constantly changing (*cf.* Friedman 1994: 12; Leone & Potter Jr. 1988b: 7; Wolf 1982).

2.5 MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

Maritime archaeology has strong links with both historical and contact study archaeology because so many underwater sites found to date are related to historical moments or as Beaudry defined it, documentary archaeology (see Beaudry 1993a: 1-3). Sites of maritime activity and sunken watercraft are segments of the archaeological resource because they were part of a dynamic landscape of human action; they were elements of a larger historical context (Anuskiewicz 1998).

The 'traditional' differentiation of underwater, maritime, nautical and marine archaeology has been made in the development of archaeology interested in submerged material culture (Muckelroy 1978). In this book, I understand underwater archaeology as referring to the environment in which the practice of archaeology is undertaken. Maritime archaeology is the study of material remains relating to human action on seas, interconnected waterways and adjacent coastal areas (Adams 2002; Orser 2002) including sites that are not underwater but that are related to maritime activities such as lighthouses, port constructions or shore-based whaling stations. Nautical archaeology, like maritime archaeology, can include sites that are not underwater but that are related to ships and

shipbuilding including ship burials, shipwreck remains in the terrestrial environment or shipbuilding yards. Marine archaeology relates to the study of the marine environment and its effects on archaeological remains. These terms are used for explanatory purposes in defining an area of research within archaeology rather than as separate entities, because the main goal of archaeology is to understand the human past whether the research is undertaken in prehistoric, historic, submerged or land contexts. What can be different are the physical environment, field techniques and classes of material culture analysed where the archaeological discipline is put into practice.

Shipwreck archaeology, as part of maritime archaeology, was traditionally the domain of maritime historians and classical archaeologists who have very different perspectives on the types of data they wish to collect from the material remains of archaeological sites (Lenihan 1983: 38). The early development of underwater and maritime archaeology was limited by diving equipment and techniques and a poor development of theoretical approaches (for further reading see Babits & Van Tilburg 1998; Barstad 2002; Broadwater 2002; Muckelroy 1978, 1980; Watson 1983, among others).

In European archaeology, the 1960s-1970s saw a rapid development in methods, techniques and scientific aspects that has now given way to self-conscious and more theoretically informed enquiry about the identity and goals of professional underwater archaeology (Barstad 2002: 4-6; Lenihan & Murphy 1998: 234-236; Renfrew & Bahn 1991: 81-94; Watson 1983: 24-27). Despite Muckelroy's latest work being done in 1980, his work, ideas and methods of explaining material culture still have a significant impact on current maritime archaeology. He was the first to define maritime archaeology in a wider way as 'the scientific study of the material remains of man and his activities on the sea' (Muckelroy 1978: 4). He also introduced systematic research with a strong 'processual' and explicit theoretical framework. His primary concerns were to explain archaeological problems and to understand human past activities rather than simply describing objects recovered from shipwrecks or any other submerged archaeological site within which the researcher is immediately confronted. From a functional perspective, Muckelroy (1978) underlined the idea that maritime archaeology is not just concerned with technical matters but with all characteristics of maritime culture where social aspects play a key role. He stated that archaeology, and its sub-discipline maritime archaeology, can be described by considering the problems towards which research is currently directed, the specific questions being raised, and the ways in which workers are seeking to answer them (Muckelroy 1978, 1998: 25). But can maritime archaeology be defined as a sub-discipline? Adams (2002) opens this debate by mentioning that 'as

maritime archaeology progressively developed its identity, a recurring question has been whether it is a discipline in its own right or, as Muckelroy saw it, a sub-discipline of archaeology, or simply archaeology' (Adams 2002: 330). From my point of view, historical, maritime and contact archaeology should be used as 'terms' to emphasise aspects of the problems being studied. Archaeologists study the human past whether its material expression is found on land or underwater and the discipline involving this study is archaeology itself.

Bass points out that 'perhaps the most crucial advance made in underwater archaeology between 1950 and 2000 was not technical, but philosophical. Archaeologists themselves began to dive and direct underwater projects.' (Bass 2002: 804). However, diving and direction of underwater projects are related to technical aspects of archaeological research. From my point of view, I believe that there has been a combination of both technical and philosophical concerns (see Dellino & Endere 2001: 224 and Section 3.2.1.1). Theoretical approaches to understanding shipwrecks and their cargoes as social products and their integration with land and maritime spaces are relatively recent (e.g. Adams 2003; Corbin 2000; McCarthy 2000; Souza 1998; Staniforth 2001a, 2003a; Stuart 1998; Veth & McCarthy 1999). Maritime archaeologists need to continue developing theoretical frameworks and models that contribute to the understanding of past human action. In this way, we would go beyond descriptive analysis especially when understanding material culture as part of a social world in constant transformation.

This book follows an integral analysis between land and sea because knowledge of both of these landscapes is important to anyone who intends to understand maritime aspects of the past. Nowadays, the relevance of maritime archaeology lies in the fact that further knowledge can be gained not only of ship construction and trade routes but also about social relations that can be derived from ancient cargoes, shipwrecks, forts and the location of temporary settlements. For example, by integrating historical and archaeological research, Breen et al (2001) contribute to understanding the event of the wreck *La Surveillante*, a French frigate lost in Bantry Bay (Ireland) in 1797, as a result of human activities and historical circumstances. The term maritime involves aspects that are cultural as well as environmental, metaphysical as well as material, and symbolic as well as functional. It includes the prominent interests of water transport technology, trade and exchange, waterborne industries, seafaring, coastal settlements, harbours and waterfronts, ritual and funerary deposits recognised as Westerdahl's definition of 'maritime cultural landscape' (also see Adams 2002: 328), briefly discussed in section 4.2.1.1. Today maritime archaeology is the study of material

remains relating to human action on water and adjacent coastal areas (*ibid.*) but above all it is about the social dimensions of mutuality and materiality developed through time-space (Chapter 4). For example, it has been mentioned that one of the latest achievements of maritime archaeology has been to demonstrate that the context of coastal and island sites are maritime as well as terrestrial, analysing them from a seaward perspective (Hunter 1994). Leone (1983) explores the Patuxent River on Chesapeake Bay and the relationship between land use, river conditions, towns and boat life as part of the impact that the capitalistic economic system has both at local and global levels. Stuart (1998) analyses sealing and whaling activities in South Australia through a landscape approach. He emphasises the integration between land and sea by defining landscape as an area of land, and seascape as an area of land and sea (*ibid.*: 99, discussed in section 4.2.1). This important recognition of linking land and sea spaces is key in this research, where I argue that by combining land and maritime perspectives a better understanding of British action in the 18th century can be achieved (Chapter 8).

2.5.1 Two Main Approaches: ‘Pompeii Premise’ versus ‘The Archaeology of the Event’

The archaeological study of wreck sites is common to natural and social sciences because shipwrecks can tell us about people, human behaviour and human cultures (Gould 2000: 2, 7-10). Therefore, shipwreck archaeology, as archaeology in general, is considered part of social sciences (Gould 1983: 22). Thus, underwater sites must be contextualised within an interdisciplinary framework. Many underwater sites have been presented as merely a description of the artefacts recovered resulting in extensive catalogues (e.g. Amsterdam 1986; Goddio & Jay 1988), avoiding theoretical issues and using micro scales of analysis focused simply on the description of wrecks (Lenihan & Murphy 1998). These studies have disregarded that even the ‘shipwreck event’ involves complex human relations, which comprises people with different experiences and perceptions of the world. Archaeologists interpret what happened in the past through material culture (e.g. shipwrecks and their associated contents). These interpretations are varied and conditioned by research questions, past and present knowledge gained by the researcher and social interests in its wider sense. However, recognising this limitation does not render archaeological research fruitless or unworthy of further exploration.

Consequently, shipwrecks can be analysed from two main approaches. The first one considers ships as unique events, as individual time-capsules. The concept of ‘time-capsule’ or ‘Pompeii premise’ neglects

topics such as post-depositional processes and environmental dynamics of the area under study. This has been part of an archaeological debate that occurred in the 1980s, between L. Binford and M. Schiffer, questioning assumptions that were being made about the ways in which sites were created and transformed (Binford 1981; Schiffer 1987). In this debate the concept of ‘time-capsule’ arises because many archaeological sites were not created like Pompeii where everything was ‘frozen’ in a single day in time. In shipwreck archaeology, the ‘Pompeii premise’ idea appears regularly because shipwreck sites involve aspects of a specific event (Gould 2000: 12-14), the shipwreck event, generally disregarding other cultural and natural factors that alter its natural formation. For example, it has been said that ‘a ship is an encapsulated society, a technological microcosm, and an expression of predatory, mercantile, or military endeavour unique to its particular time and associations’ (Martin 1997: 1). Nevertheless, shipwrecks cannot be considered as a direct reflection of the general society. They are complex entities involving a wide spectrum of different choices and individual decisions which are not necessarily a direct analogy of the general society (Adams 2001). It has also been argued that during historical times, the nautical archaeological record was complemented by documentary evidence and other sources of information like paintings, drawings, etc. Ships usually represent a massive capital outlay to states or mercantile companies, and consequently generate an abundance of paperwork: building specifications; accounts relating to running, maintenance and repair; tonnage and capacity calculations; manifests of cargo, provisions, equipment and armament; muster lists; etc. (Martin 1997). These can help to ‘reconstruct’ the specific event of wreckage. Nevertheless, shipwrecks are complex archaeological phenomena whose processes of loss, disintegration and eventual stabilisation (within the coastal, intertidal and undersea environment) can be sometimes difficult to understand and quantify.

The second approach, which is followed in this book, interprets wreck material culture in the form of cargo, understanding it in terms of social products from the societies from which it came. Watercraft and their associated material culture are understood as a consequence of motivated social actions (Adams 2001: 302) where wreck data does not only provide evidence for transport but also for production and consumption (Gibbins & Adams 2001: 281). This approach is linked to historical archaeology because it treats the transport of cargo as a step in a wider trajectory or ‘system of use’ where global mechanisms became useful tools (Staniforth 1999: 50). In this way, Staniforth proposes ‘the archaeology of the event’ as an alternative to the Pompeii premise (Staniforth 2001a, 2003a, b). Based on the *Annales* approaches he utilises Braudel’s three scales of history: 1) the short-term or *événements*: events and individuals, 2) the

medium-term or *conjunctures*: processes and social time, and 3) the long-term or *longue durée*: structures, worldviews, *mentalités*, and geohistory (Braudel 1979, 1980). He understands the shipwreck event as unique in time and space but also as a result of human actions and interactions and groups of people leading up to and including that particular event (Staniforth 2003b: 104). He analyses four particular wreck events in Australia: *Sydney Cove* (1797), *William Salthouse* (1841), *James Matthews* (1841) and *Eglinton* (1853) (Staniforth 2003a), but he adds that

‘each wreck site and its associated archaeological assemblage represent an opportunity to incorporate the archaeology of the event into the examination of larger forces or conjunctures such as consumerism, capitalism, and colonialism.’ (Staniforth 2003b: 104).

Burns (2003) focuses on the examination of the wreck event *Catherine*, a nineteenth-century Norwegian merchant sailor (Burns 2003). He studies this particular shipwreck, focusing on the ship’s history and the changing social factors involved within it (e.g. shipbuilding, ownership, Norwegian economic strategies, etc.). His interpretations are therefore enriched when historical and archaeological sources are integrated to understand the wider context surrounding *Catherine* (see Burns 2003). However, Souza (1998) analyses specific shipwrecks in Dry Tortugas, located at the edge of the main shipping channel between Gulf of Mexico and Western Caribbean (Souza 1998: 10). She investigates the persistence of sail in the ‘age of steam’ focusing on a specialised sector of capitalistic, industrialised society; specifically the merchant cargo trade of the 19th century (*ibid.*: 2). By exploring human interaction with sea, Souza interprets the wreck events in the context of human interaction of groups whose ships operated in the area and identifies patterns of human activity and behaviour in the 19th century (see Souza 1998). This book examines, from a social approach explained in Chapter 4, the events of wreckage of the *Swift* and *Sirius* which are understood as experiential circumstances situated in specific time-space dimensions but interpreted in a wider context: the context of a world in constant dynamism and expansion.

Maritime archaeology, or at least shipwreck archaeology, derives from specific events; shipwrecks in particular or what Staniforth defines as ‘the archaeology of the event’ (Staniforth 2003a: 28-29, 2003b: 104). However, it is when that event, at an archaeological level, is incorporated into a larger scale of analysis that the potential of maritime archaeology, with some of its most powerful explanatory value, can be realised. For example, the archaeological evidence in combination with historical documentation can provide a better understanding of the history of these events (like shipwrecks) in relation to human action. This book argues that the originality in dealing with both written records and material evidence is that the official historical versions can be challenged by the

archaeological analysis and interpretation of material culture. Large-scale issues of cultural change and continuity are analysed in this book through the specific event of HMS *Swift* wreck which is then put into a global context of understanding going beyond the wreck itself. This particular case is understood as the result of collective and individual interactions as well as the unconscious responses to social processes like capitalism, colonialism and consumption. Therefore, it becomes necessary to expand the horizon imposed on the event itself. It is here where the interplay among local, regional and global scales becomes useful tools. Furthermore, the introduction of comparative case studies (of other particular events) allows the evaluation of changes over time going before and beyond the particular event. In this case, a comparative analysis is made of the British maritime activities at the end of the 18th century in the South Atlantic with Australian case studies in NSW and in particular with the analysis of HMS *Sirius* wreck. The presentation of the Australian evidence does not provide an equally detailed analysis, but contributes to clarify aspects of British action in remote areas (Chapter 8). Going beyond the boundaries of the site allows understanding of the general structures and social processes within a broader perspective being cross-cultural comparisons a key issue in this matter (Deetz 1991: 2, 7; Feinman 2000: 34-36; Funari 1999: 51-53).

It is well known that ships and boats were products of contemporary technology and social structures (Muckelroy 1978; Steffy 1994). Rivers, lakes and seas challenged the development and improvements in watercraft technology understanding 'water' as means of connecting societies rather than dividing them. Consequently, the material culture of water transport and its interrelated social factors should be analysed to further enhance our knowledge about past societies (Adams 2001). In this way, the relevance of studying a shipwreck, or any other kind of underwater site, is to place it in context within a regional and/or global scale of analysis (Gamble 1993), understanding the processes of change and, in my case study, colonial and capitalistic dynamics at the end of the 18th century. Archaeologists examine and explain changes in material culture formulating models and ideas, and with the adoption and refinement of these, social action can be interpreted. Some of that information still survives and archaeologists interpret these remains according to their own questions and theoretical frameworks.

2.6 THE COMBINATION OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

In historical and maritime archaeology, documentary and other sources as well as material remains are generally used (e.g. Adams 2001; Beaudry 1996; Botwick & McClane 2005; Keith et al 1997; Kepecs 1997; Miller et al 1991; Staniforth 2000). The basic premise of historical archaeology is that history, culture and objects are interconnected. This premise is followed throughout this book through a social approach (Chapter 4) and applied to local case studies (Chapters 6 and 7) integrated in a global framework (Chapter 8). Because of the nature of historical archaeology, it allows the analysis of material objects in conjunction with different texts (e.g. Cleland 2001: 3; De Cunzo 2001: 21-23; Staniforth 1999: 18, 2003a: 14). This emphasis on texts and documents in historical archaeology has a variety of implications and Beaudry (1993b) highlights some of them. For example, the use of the documentary record treated as material evidence through quantification and the textual analysis of selected elements of certain kinds of documents show new insights into the human past (Beaudry 1993b: 43). Hence, there is an interaction between the material world and the documentary sources that are its verbal counterpart (Hall 2000: 21).

‘When the seafaring nations of Western Europe began to expand across the globe ..., the effects were documented in the social and economic stories of many nations. The impact ... was generally described by the conquerors in victorious terms’ (Little 1994: 69).

People create documents; they are not neutral renderings of previous times. Documents were generally produced, especially between the 16th and 19th centuries, by specific sectors in the society (e.g. bourgeoisie and aristocracy), giving a biased vision of reality, and so they are much more than lists and records of what happened in the past. In this way, written sources can provide an insight of how the world was experienced and perceived in different social contexts (see examples in Chapters 6 and 8).

Historical archaeologists researching the capitalistic period have not shown enough interest in trade as it impacts on issues such as ethnicity, status and gender (Orser & Fagan 1995: 199-235). Yet one of the common claims related to maritime aspects is that economic activity has been well documented during recent centuries with records of shipping movements and detailed cargo lists being both available and comprehensive (e.g. England’s Shipping Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund project (English Heritage 2004: 14)). However, as Staniforth suggests, while the available documentary sources are sometimes extensive, they are frequently not comprehensive (Staniforth 1999). Similarly, I assume that the

documentary record is a fragmentary and limited one. Archaeology has the power to testify more concretely as to how goods were moving throughout space and how material culture maintained and reproduced social relations through time and space. Hence, I believe that through a social perspective and by combining historical and archaeological research examining daily activities, archaeologists can illuminate different aspects of the past. In this book, I analyse British action through material relations by interpreting the consumption of pottery in the Royal Navy and colonial contexts (Chapter 7). Action is moved by conscious and unconscious motives. These are explored through the movement and trajectories of goods, people and ideas by integrating the analysis of historical documents, cargoes, wreck frequencies, coastal settlements and British interaction within the perception of social landscapes in a global framework (Chapter 8).

Historical documents are generated from two sources: those who experience the event and those who interpret it. In archaeology, processes are studied through the interpretation of the archaeological record, with historical documents providing an additional line of analysis. Critical analysis and evaluation of historical documents and their relationship to the archaeological record is therefore required (Lightfoot 1995; Yentsch & Beaudry 1992: 10). Generally, most of the historical documents that remain today were official records and largely constructed from an elite, aristocratic perspective. Ahlström underlines that written material can also allow researchers to fill in the gaps of information remaining from purely archaeological investigations (Ahlström 1997: 15). On the contrary, archaeologists do not fill in the gaps with historical information. In this sense, researchers must be aware of making direct analogies and/or tautological assumptions using documentary records, which is not a proper method for archaeology. It must be recognised that archaeology and history walk together but by testing the documentary information against the material remains, it is possible to discuss official versions and offer an alternative explanation to the existing documentary information (Johnson 1996, 1999a). The various types of historic and archaeological data convey different information. This differing nature of material and documentary sources enriches past interpretations (Little 1994). An example in shipwreck archaeology of this differing nature is the Dutch East Indiaman VOC *Amsterdam* (1749). Parts of the hull were recorded in detail, uncovering a discrepancy between the data obtained from the archival documents and from the archaeological research undertaken (Adams 2003: 192-193; Gawronski 1986, 1987; Gawronski et al 1992). This discrepancy was explained by the fact that in 1744, some French ships were captured by the British and sold to the VOC. As mentioned in Chapter 1, French ships designs were very much admired in that time, and

according to the research performed at the *Amsterdam*, French ship construction and sailing qualities were subsequently noted and used for VOC ships (Adams 2003: 41-42, 192-193; Kist 1986: 43). Therefore, material and documentary sources allow the contextualisation of specific social settings critically and bring new understandings to social options, decisions and choices (Kelly 1997: 364).

The richness of the symbolic and material meaning preserved in historical documents should not be discarded but the material evidence takes precedence in the interpretation undertaken in this work. For example, through the notion of *praxis* the link between written sources and objects is explored in this research. *Praxis* implies a constant interaction between people and their material world. This concept and its applications are developed in detail in Chapter 4. Through *praxis*, historical information is used as a tool for specific archaeological interpretations, to explore some experiences and perceptions of the world in time-space and for more general contextual information. Nevertheless, material culture, the core of archaeology, is the active agent through which people's history is held and told to future generations (Yentsch 1993: 5). Archaeologists work with objects created in a social context formed through action until at some point in their existence they come to reside within an archaeological context (*ibid.*: 16). Therefore, the interpretations that we generate by analysing material culture are what enrich archaeology as a whole.

Consequently, to enrich historical archaeological research, it is important to integrate different spatial scales of analysis and variables which are derived from complex systems of human relations where social factors are the most influential. In this book, for example, these factors are integrated:

- a) through the interplay between local and global action by considering capitalist, colonial and consumer structures. British action is also explored through the acquisition of knowledge, which is understood and contextualised in a world perspective by comparing British action in the South Atlantic and Southern Australia (Chapters 4 and 8),
- b) by examining the material expressions of social relations (e.g. pottery assemblages recovered from the wreck of the *Swift* compared to those in HMS *Sirius*). The meanings embedded and attached to pottery (e.g. material distribution on the wreck, type and quality) and the processes of constructing and projecting identities are explored by integrating material and written information (Chapter 7), and
- c) by applying the concept of *praxis*, analysing the pottery assemblages of HMS *Swift* and *Sirius* and textual sources. Both

sources of data are combined to analyse how the materiality of social relations correlates in terms of Royalty, the Royal Navy, British commanders, sailors and the hierarchical decisions taken which were certainly valid in the social context of the 18th century (Chapters 7 and 8).

I assume that the material world was constantly implicated in constructing identities. For example, the everyday life domains and the conscious and unconscious expression of British identities manifested in the material culture transported in British ships and available in colonial settlements, the location of British settlements, their link with land and sea and other British colonies integrated in this way in a global chain of actions. Therefore, I argue that historical, contact and maritime archaeology are not different disciplines or separated from each other. They are combined in this book to bring a broad and better understanding of past human activities.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter underlined the idea that history and archaeology are bound to live together in the same general social and human science research field (Funari 1997: 198). Therefore, historical, contact and maritime archaeology cannot be considered as separate disciplines. As archaeologists our goal is to 'rediscover' the past and interpret it in the light of a present that it continues to shape (Mrozowski 1996: 472). I emphasised that archaeologists analyse human interaction with the world whether the research is based on prehistoric, historic, terrestrial or maritime contexts. It is in the understanding of past human action where historical and maritime research are linked. Furthermore, it has also been outlined that an understanding of the complexity of society, its features and changes, can only be gained from a pluralistic and interdisciplinary world perspective (Funari 1999: 58). In this sense, I agree with Funari (1999: 47-58) that we should shift our focus onto studies that transcend conventional boundaries between history and prehistory, modern and non-modern. We should explore similarities and differences in social contexts which are typical of societies with written records such as colonialism and capitalism, power and identity and relations between local, regional and global scales. These particular points are developed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

After establishing the general basis of historical, contact and maritime archaeology, the Argentinean and Australian contexts and two associated case studies are presented in the following chapter.

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