

Chapter 2

Maroon and Leftist Praxis in Historical Archaeology

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Not long ago, an editor told me that there was no need in my submitted manuscript to include discussions of how brutal and oppressive enslavement was for those African Diasporans who endured it. This editor thought that such language was mere hyperbole and that everyone is aware of how awful enslavement was because it has been so well discussed. I remember thinking that this was an interesting opinion. In my submission, I was writing about the Maroons and other Diasporans of the Great Dismal Swamp (ca. 1607–1860) in the mid-Atlantic USA and the sites I have been working on for about a decade. And I thought that if there was ever a context for which assessments of the quality of life people experienced under enslavement were requisite to any reasonable narrative, this was it: people inhabited the swamp permanently because of those very horrid conditions they faced in the enslaving world outside the swamp. Also, I surmised that there is always a need to remind ourselves of what these modern modes of production and systems that we collectively have created, transformed, and eliminated do to us while we live within them. Finally, and more personally, I simply wanted to discuss lived social history in evocative terms and, as the author, I thought I sort of had that right. But, alas, some opinions have more weight than others and most reviewers independently agreed with the editor's ideas; meanwhile, my analytical temperament was to be more or less dismissed, chided even. Apparently, this sort of episode is not uncommon (Schmidt 2009, pp. 4–5).

The racialized social and political-economic world enslaved Africans had to contend with was inhumane, brutal, and alienating. And while enslaved Africans, and Indigenes, did find ways to dream, hope, laugh, develop friendships and close family bonds, and any host of “positive” experiences and states of being, those phenomena stand in extremely stark relief to the brutal, violent, and existentially constraining political economy and social world they found themselves born into. Whether in Brazil, Suriname, Mexico, Cuba, the US Deep South, or New York City,

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P. P. A. Funari, C. E. Orser Jr. (eds.), *Current Perspectives on the Archaeology of African Slavery in Latin America*, SpringerBriefs in Archaeology,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4939-1264-3_2

the systemic enslavement of people was malicious and something we should all collectively regret as being part of our history, not cast it aside as a *passé* observation. And, I do not think that the books and essays that draw our attention directly to this part of the past are doing a disservice to the readers thereof, the people of the past, or our collective recognition of banality of our evils and the commonality of our potential for inhumanity. Rather, consistently realizing the awfulness of enslavement, describing it in evocative though accurate terms, and exploring how people negotiated the difficult contours of that world serve a wider political purpose: to anger us, inform us of the past, and possibly temper our own collective future.

Activist practitioners of historical archaeology have long recognized the implications of underscoring and discussing the brutal conditions people of all walks and backgrounds have faced in order to bring to light the human capacities to overcome, sidestep, and undermine systemic maltreatments and depravities. As many practitioners have observed, with political approaches in archaeology comes a range of decisions that we must make collectively and individually, perhaps more so the latter. Being an activist, or engaged practitioner, or advocate for a group is no small matter or one to take as simply being a given aspect of what needs to be done without much thought as to consequences and impacts of our decisions and actions. We must consider the impacts of our research on current groups of people, we must contemplate indigenous and human rights, we must develop politically and socially important insights through our work, and we must consider various issues of possession and dispossession pertaining to the very archaeological collections we develop through fieldwork (Agbe-Davies 2007; Blakey 1997; Duke and Saitta 1998; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Leone et al. 1987; Little and Shackel 2007; McDavid 1997; McGuire 2008; Stahlgren 2010; Stottman 2010).

Within this kind of professional evaluation, there is one family of issues that is particularly germane here. For example, how and why do we choose the sites on which we choose to work? What are the analytical, political, or other motivations that drive us down certain avenues of research and historical inquiry? Of course, there are many instances where our employment or other conditions essentially pick the sites for us: a mitigation project, a site discovery on the government-owned land for whom we work, and any host of other scenarios where a site or sites come to us, or so it might seem. But, for those of us who choose the sites at which we are going to work, and probably many cases where the sites we work at come to us, this family of questions is pretty pressing because it is at once political and potentially ideologically driven. And, the choices we make with regard to sites at which we work must be key elements of our individual praxis.

For Marx, praxis meant far more than simply “practice” or even “best practice.” By praxis, he described human action and activity that was driven or guided by sustained intellectual critique of the wider world (“the relentless criticism of all existing conditions”; Patterson 2009, p. 59; also, Gadsby and Barnes 2010, p. 49; McGuire et al. 2005; Patterson 2009, pp. 57–63). Intellectual critique without action is only partially baked as is action without intellectually driven critique. And, the specific contours and forms one’s praxeological critique takes are not all created equal: some are off base, some too abstract, and some are just simply inaccurate.

In another way, truly effective praxis is driven by an appropriately powerful and effective intellectual critique rather than one that simply gets one through the day. Meanwhile, the praxes that emerge from misguided critique, like some that emerge among liberal and conservative activists, suffer accordingly.

Not long ago, during the fall semester of 2011, I taught an upper-level undergraduate and graduate anthropology course of my own invention called “Leftist Anthropological Archaeology.” I made the point at the outset that really, for all practical purposes, leftist archaeology does not really exist as a movement in our profession; liberalist archaeology, yes, but leftist, no. And, a large part of the course was establishing what a leftist archaeological movement might look like, and how can we contribute to its emergence.¹ So, at the outset, I provided several key questions that I thought might help us in developing this vision of a possible leftist archaeology. One key question was: Do we need to be politico-intellectually strategic in choosing the sites (and historical actors) we study? Or, is the study of anyone who ever lived potentially germane to developing leftist praxes in the profession? Second, what would a leftist archaeology look like, in its details, in its productivities? I ended up providing my answers to these questions as follows. We must be politically and praxeologically strategic when choosing the sites and historical actors we are to explore and critically evaluate; while every human who has ever existed was or is important on many levels, as are all social formations, developing historical knowledge about anyone and/or everyone is not necessarily germane to fomenting systemic transformation of capitalism in the present and near future. In another way, some sites and associated historical groups are more important to effective leftist praxis than are others. A leftist archaeology would involve the development of an international group or contingent of archaeologists who envisioned the praxeological power of archaeology in similar ways, with generally congruent visions of the importance of specific kinds of social formations and political-economic developments in our understanding how to proceed into our future.²

¹ I also pointed out that there are very few people practicing leftist archaeology today, which follows of course, more or less, the fact that there is no leftist movement in the profession. This position begs for a definition of “leftist” because one person’s left is another’s liberal or even, occasionally, right. I ended up suggesting a simple definition of leftism: acting with the intent to help entirely transform the capitalist system or mode of production in order to create an egalitarian and novel mode(s) of production in which human beings live minimally alienated lives (in the Marxian sense). Meanwhile, liberalism is more like doing something within the system to make some or all people’s lives qualitatively better than they are at present. The remaining political positions (e.g., centrist, right) are simply about individuals staying as comfortable and minimally importuned by their society and economy as is possible or conceivable—to put it nicely.

² After writing this essay, I had the pleasure of talking at length with LuAnn Wurst of Western Michigan University in the fall of 2013. It became clear in the course of our conversation that LuAnn and I had been lately thinking along very similar lines about many aspects of leftist archaeology and specifically the need for our developing strong national and international connections through conferences, consortia, and other means. I am indebted to LuAnn for helping me to clarify my thoughts on many issues pertaining to the Left and for revitalizing my hope in seeing a truly leftist archaeology emerge in the future.

As I will suggest in the following few sections, the exploration and specific angles of analysis of Maroon communities and the process of marronage can emerge as vital to a leftist movement or momentum in the field of historical archaeology. I have been archaeologically and historiographically studying Maroons in the USA for well over a decade, and while I would certainly not suggest that Maroons and only Maroons are potentially significant to a truly leftist historical archaeology, they do stand as historically important liberationists and revolutionaries.

Historical Maroons and Marronage

Historical Maroons, in contrast to contemporary Maroons who are descendants of the former, have typically been defined and described by scholars in whole or in part as “runaways,” “fugitives,” and/or “escaped slaves” (Aptheker 1939; Franklin and Schweninger 1999; Lockley 2009, pp. vii–xxi; Price 1996, p. 1). I define Maroons as people of African descent who self-extricated from the conditions of enslavement on temporary or permanent bases; I define it this way in order to avoid using the descriptive terms enslavers used while at the same time placing the power of self-removal where it should be, with Maroons themselves (Sayers 2012). Richard Price (1996, p. 3) provides a basic distinction between *petit* marronage, or short term or temporary self-extrication, and grand marronage, the permanent or indefinite self-extrication from enslavement. Typically, scholars of Maroons are most interested in the grand forms and episodes of marronage throughout the globe, though short *petit* forms or instantiations are by no means ignored entirely. In any event, grand marronage has been a focus in such research because so often individuals or families of Maroons would collectivize in remote parts of the modern world, beyond the immediate reach of colonial or republic enslavers, forming communities thus. And, once we recognize the emergence and persistence of communities, we then are plainly dealing with social formations, behaviors, and organizations. Meanwhile, marronage, as commonly as it is used in scholarship, remains somewhat under-defined. Price (1996, p. 1) defines or describes marronage as “flight.” But, it is also clear that to most scholars it means much more than the act of flight (or self-extrication in my terms) from enslavement conditions. Marronage, rather, is a complex process of a global and local nature even if individuals who participated in it were not aware of all others participating in the same process: the phenomenon of hundreds of thousands of individuals marooning around the globe between ca. 1500 and 1900 manifested very locally in swamps, mountains, cities, maritimes, and in various nation-states. The Maroons of Palmares, Rio Real, Camamu, and Cachoeira in Brazil shared something with the Maroons of Nanny Town and Moore Town in Jamaica, Suriname, Martinique, Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Fort Mosé, Pilaklikaha, and the Great Dismal Swamp in the now USA, Canada, and West Africa. Part of that which they shared were similar ideas on how to go about eliminating the conditions of thralldom that each individual experienced, through self-extrication. Additionally, their decisions led to the formations of various social groups (e.g., communities)

in most cases of grand marronage. At the same time, each context of marronage was historically contingent in nature, unique in appearance, and situated in local conditions. Finally, it must be noted that in all cases of grand marronage, people made, acquired, and used material culture, and within cultural landscapes, they created in the course of marooning—hence, most Maroons, in theory, left behind archaeologically detectable presences.

Understandably, Maroons have been a consistently referenced group within historical archaeologies of the African Diaspora for well over a couple decades (e.g., Agorsah 1994; Allen 2001; Deagan and McMahon 1995; Funari 1999, 2003; Leone et al. 2005; Nichols 1988; Singleton 1999; Singleton and Bograd 1995; Orser 1994, 1996; Orser and Funari 2001; Weik 1997, 2007, p. 319, 2009, 2012; White 2009; Wilson 2007). In the overarching discussion, generally speaking, the importance of Maroons as historical actors emerges along several lines, most of which overlap with others in some way or ways. Chief among the perceived significances of Maroons is their representing sustained novel African cultural and ethnic traditions, lifeways, and customs, or, in the same culture-focused anthropological vein, sustained and novel multiethnic or pluralistic cultural and ethnic lifeways and customs. This kind of cultural focus has long persisted in Maroon studies in anthropology, notably in the works of Herskovits (1990), Richard Price and Sally Price (Mintz and Price 1983; Price 1984, 1990, 2002; Price and Price 1980, 1999), and Kenneth Bilby (1981, 1997, 2005). Usually, when historical archaeologists focus on the cultural and ethnic dimensions of Maroon communities, groups, and polities (e.g., Palmares), key grounding concepts tend to be creolization and ethnogenesis (Funari 2007, pp. 360–367; Weik 2002, 2007, 2009), concepts that are also deeply rooted in wider anthropological discussions (Bilby 1984; Mintz and Price 1983; Price 1979, pp. 24–30). Meanwhile, resistance also tends to follow discussions of Maroons, indeed forming another central theme of the overall discussion (Orser and Funari 2001; Sayers 2004, 2006a; Sayers et al. 2007; Ogundiran and Falola 2007, pp. 31–34). In a recent work by Maroon sites archaeologist Terry Weik, resistance is foregrounded as a defining characteristic of marronage while also combining that recognition with ethnogenesis concepts and frameworks. For Weik, explorations of “antislavery resistance” through archaeology connect very explicitly with issues, like racism, cultural survival, and inequality by evidencing how “people of African descent sought to protect their human rights, escape from bondage, and combat exploitation” (Weik 2012, p. 1). It is clear that most archaeologists examining marronage and related phenomena would agree, more or less, with Weik’s assessment (Agorsah 2007; Armstrong and Wurst 2003; Funari 2007; Nichols 1988; Ngwenyama 2007; Sayers 2004, 2012; Wilson 2007). The final major theme in Maroon studies is nationalism. Kofi Agorsah (2007, p. 333) suggests, “Maroon societies or ‘runaways,’ wherever they were, formed colonies of core communities that preserved their freedom and identity as pioneers in freedom fighting, after escaping from bondage in the New World and becoming the symbol of a special type of nationalism.” Agorsah (2007, pp. 333–334) elaborates his view of Maroons, using terms evocative of a nationalist positioning, to describe Maroons around the globe as living “a purely

guerilla lifestyle,” risking “their lives for freedom” having achieved “respect for human dignity,” and forging political and cultural “alliances.” Meanwhile, Maroons and Maroon leaders or figures have long been symbolic of fights against oppression and subjugations in many nations. In Brazil, the last leader of Palmares, Zumbi, has just this kind of nationalist meaning as does the site itself (Funari 2007, p. 360). In Suriname, Maroon leaders Baron, Jolicoeur, and Boni are significant nationalist figures (Thompson 2006, p. 315). The idea that Maroons represent freedom fighters, were vanguard forces in the fight against the tyrannies of oppressive enslavement and colonialism, and were key people in the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness is very common in much Maroon literature in general and has certainly helped shape our general conceptualization of marronage and its agents (Leaming 1979; Sayers 2012; Thompson 2006, pp. 315–322).

Of course, such interests in and perspectives on Maroons and marronage are perfectly compelling, justified, anthropologically relevant, and politically resonant. There are other areas, though, that can be of interest to the archaeologist of Maroons and marronage especially, perhaps, among those who seek to do socially transformative research from the Left. In particular, there are a few aspects of marronage that merit closer attention than they typically attract in historical, archaeological, and wider discussions.

For all of the amazing cultural complexity, ethnic variety, and socio-identificatory diversity that has been discerned across the historical world of Maroons—the nation-scale complexity of Palmares (Davidson 1996; Funari 2007), the art and decorated calabashes of the Saramaka (Price 1983; Price and Price 1999, pp. 203–236), the kinship systems among the Cottica Djuka in Surinam (Köbben 1996), and the historically contingent and unique experiences of Jamaican Maroons (Bilby 2005), to name a few—there are some underlying aspects of marronage and Maroon life that are critical to this discussion. First, most scholars would agree that all Maroons developed a kind of consciousness that ran counter to the broader racialized enslaving world’s insistence on obedience, acquiescence, and conformity (Ogundiran and Falola 2007, pp. 32–33; Thompson 2006). For example, Richard Price has suggested that Maroons demonstrate the historical existence of a “slave consciousness” that was resistant to “white” enslaver’s efforts to undermine and/or manipulate it (Price 1990, p. 2; full quote in Sayers 2012, p. 137). Individual Maroons possessed it and lived by it, and marronage was a real process that emerged from it. That form of consciousness, or acute awareness, emerged from the lived experiences of the oppressive, violent, and alienating conditions in the world of racialized enslavement, and apparent possibilities for changing those conditions. While enslavement varied regionally and locally around the globe during the historical era, it was a mode of production with certain consistent qualities or aspects, and as a result, a consistent and fundamental form of consciousness developed among many of the enslaved—and, an appreciable number of those possessed of such consciousness acted upon it. This realization leads to the second key point: marronage was a process born of the actions of individuals all of whom (or most) developed a historically contingent form of consciousness that was a sustained critique of the social and economic world in which they lived. The act of marooning, and all subsequent life spent as a Maroon or Maroons, was a direct

result of that consciousness-based critique. That critique compelled the hundreds of thousands of individuals, and their offspring in Maroon settlements and collectivities, to permanently self-extricate from a mode of production that they abhorred and found to be existentially and socially malicious. And, common among Maroons was awareness that the entire slavery system needed to be overthrown and destroyed (Thompson 2006, pp. 316–317). So, we can be comfortable saying that marronage was a historically contingent process or mode of praxis. Through marronage-as-praxis, Maroons contributed to the transformation and dissolution of a pernicious mode of production through which millions were enslaved, and in some cases, to new noncapitalistic modes of production (Sayers n.d.). It is also important to note that in many cases, the sustained critique of the enslavement system compelled Maroons to conclude that effective action required their physical removal from the system itself rather than work from within it to transform it. The modern leftist must be impressed with this historical form of praxis that in fact was highly successful across most of the modern historical centuries.

One last point that must be made is at the surface nearly trite. And that is that Maroons were market-valued possessions to the enslaving classes and the individuals who claimed social and legal ownership of a given Maroon. And, given that a significant aspect of the social and legal fact of human ownership of other humans was the labor provided by the enslaved in perpetuity, the self-extrication of that human and her labor capacity (and potential) represented a multifaceted loss for the enslaver. Not only the initial investment necessary to own the Maroon but also the food, products, services, offspring, and other valued results of their labor were taken away from enslavers each time someone marooned. Now, surely, Maroons were very much aware of this fact or result of their action, and we must consider the likelihood that this basic observation fed the form of consciousness necessary for marooning and marronage and thus Maroon praxis. Scholars often speak of the desire for freedom, the resistance of oppression, and control of one's destiny as grounding causes behind each individual's marooning (Agorsah 2007; Thompson 2006)—and such thoughts and ideas were no doubt common among Maroons. But, I suspect, that the critique of the world of enslavement also very much included the recognition of the critical role their presence and labor played in its perpetuation. By marooning, they hurt the system and individual purveyors thereof, while also entirely transforming their own lives in the process—and Maroons knew this.

So, Maroon communities and settlements were loci of ethnogenesisian developments, unique cultural traditions, rich identity systems, vibrant arts and modes of expression, and resistance. Additionally, though, they were social and economic formations wherein and whereby individuals acting through the Maroon mode of praxis operationalized their critique by creating real social and economic conditions and formations that were closer to their ideal or idea of what their world should be. Labor, now their own, was acted out in the world in ways quite different than the now-distant enslavement system had made compulsory. So, in literature on Maroons, it is common to read of community-based subsistence and manufacturing practices among Maroons as well as limited notions of private property or individual ownership (Hall 1992; La Rosa Corzo 2003; Sayers 2008a; Thompson 2006,

pp. 239–251; Weik 2004). And yet, there is a general tendency for historical archaeologists to demonstrate that virtually no one in the modern historical world, including Maroons, lived without connections and various kinds of reliance upon the wider capitalistic systems, its markets, money, commodities, and institutions—everyone lived in entangled global modernity, within webs or tissues of multiscale connectivity. For example, Ogundiran and Falola (2007, p. 34), in summarizing most Maroon sites work in general, state that “Maroon sites shared intensely in the everyday material life of colonial America as evident in the presence of imported pipes, buttons, pharmaceutical bottles, ceramic bowls, plates, cups, buckles, iron nails, gunflints, fragments of gun barrel, and musket balls. All these show that the Maroons participated in the colonial economy of their respective regions.”

And, referring to early expectations that Maroon settlements would be important kinds of sites to explore “pristine” African cultural traditions and material culture, they continue: “The initial expectation that Maroon sites will necessarily preserve pristine and whole African material culture has given way to a more constructive quest to understand the dynamic nature of cultural interactions and syncretism that sustained Maroon communities” (Ogundiran and Falola 2007 p. 34). While in general, such a conclusion may be warranted from evidence across several Maroon sites, the overarching theme in historical archaeology, prevalent since the 1990s, that, basically, one could not and cannot escape the wrath and grip of modern capitalism—even, apparently, if you are self-extricating from one of its modes of production—is a bit gloomy and ominous, for me at least. Probably more important, though, is to ask if any archaeologists are actively seeking evidence for people having successfully removed themselves from the daily grip of capitalism by whatever name (e.g., colonialism, enslavement, or modern world). Are researchers even asking the question, Did Maroons largely eliminate or at least severely limit their reliance on the capitalistic world, its commodities and labor, and its consumerism? Or, is it always presumed that people had to have some interconnections and that a Ball clay tobacco pipe fragment or musket ball is an obvious indication of direct reliance upon or immersion in that capitalist world? Perhaps the regular focus on cultural and ethnic traditions in the Maroon archaeological record is compelling researchers into this, arguably, “constructive” avenue of inquiry—because we wish to find out about Maroon culture, and we are finding mass-produced global market items at their sites, and we are forced to see European or Western cultural influences within this community (see Christensen 2010, pp. 23–24). For my part, I am in fact asking such questions of Maroon settlements in the Dismal Swamp of North Carolina and Virginia, and the results of my work to date are showing a very different archaeological signature than those commonly found elsewhere (Sayers 2006a, b, 2007, 2008a, b, 2010, 2011, 2012; Sayers et al. 2007). At one swamp interior site, where a thriving diasporic, predominantly Maroon community was present, we have recovered primarily swamp-available material culture (ca. 95 % of 1600–1860 site assemblage), while only a small number of items in the assemblage (ca. 5 %) originated in the world beyond the swamp (e.g., white clay tobacco pipe fragments, clear glass microshards, British gunflint chips, and lead shots). And, I have marshaled this kind of evidence along with much other information to make a case for nearly 250 years

of highly effective praxis among Diasporans and Maroons of the swamp, effective enough to lead to the development of a heretofore unrecognized mode of production that stood in direct contradiction with the capitalistic modes of production dominant in the immediate world beyond the swamp (Sayers n.d.). In any case, I think we can certainly begin to ask different kinds of questions from site assemblages given the known basic motivations behind sustained marronage; if we find appreciable quantities of mass-produced commodities at a given Maroon site, in some cases they very well may represent something other than reliance of the capitalistic world and its damnable unevadable grasp.

Some Implications of the Praxis Focus

I argue that focusing on Maroon praxis rather than culture, ethnicity, ethnogenesis, creolization, cultural syncretism, and even resistance, compels a researcher to develop a differently productive point of view in their analysis. Guided by this view, we can extrapolate, generally, that any given Maroon site was occupied by people who were driven to that exact location out of an intellectualized critique of the system of enslavement, and a compulsion to personally transform their daily lives in positive ways through development and participation in controllable social formations. As a result, we can be comfortable in thinking that Maroon communities (*quilombos*, *palenques*, *rancherías*, *mambises*, *cumbes*, etc.) as novel social formations emerged directly from praxis rather than, say, capital flow and investment, strategic economic location, or simple migration which played roles in the origins of many communities throughout the modern historical world. And, of course, any social formation that persists does so because of the people who comprise it and through their daily work, actions, and relationships. So, we then ask, if a specific critique of the enslavement system drove the praxeological action of Maroons, what kind of social and economic world did they (try to) create upon marooning? And, I think it is relatively safe to say that Maroons did not simply recreate the enslavement system, and they probably did not commit to a life of swamp, mountain, or jungle living *solely* to express their beliefs, spiritualities, and social customs in ways that they wanted. Rather, I think the critique of enslavement that drove Maroon praxis was equally focused on the violence of labor, the elimination of control over the products of one's labor, the limited control over one's body, family, and community, and the limited control over the food one ate. And, so, I think many Maroon communities would have been organized and structured in ways very different to those of the enslaving world—community subsistence, community self-reliance, limited degrees of social ranking, production of material culture for personal and community use, etc. Additionally, I suspect that many Maroons were perfectly capable of conceptually connecting the commodities of the wider world and the enslaved laborers that produced many of them. A common characteristic of Maroon communities would have been either eschewing the commodities of the outside world as much as was possible in a given context or, more complicated perhaps, outside world materials and commodities would have been

perceived and utilized in contemporarily unexpected ways if they made their way into a given Maroon community. So, the recovery of modern world commodities at Maroon sites may not simply speak to the entanglements of reliance on colonialism or the enslavement system among Maroons, and they certainly do not necessarily speak to continued Western, colonial, or European cultural influences on Maroons living within a community or other social formation. Maroons, in many cases, may not have found their “Achilles’ heel” (Price 1990, p. 12) to have been the absolute need or reliance on the modern capitalistic world and its commodities, like firearms, as some scholars have argued (Lockley 2009, p. xxi; Thompson 2006, pp. 14–15). Perhaps, for example, Maroons acquired such modern materials well down the trade line—an indirect reliance at best and likely more an indication of trade convenience than anything else. Or, maybe some intentionally acquired such goods for symbolic reasons, to be used in community rituals (e.g., destroy the transfer-printed vessel and symbolically destroy exploitative labor regimes). Finally, acquisition of such commodities may have been strategic on the part of Maroons—they helped maintain strong trade relations with local indigenous populations, for example, who helped keep colonial enslavers away. In such scenarios, simply assuming the presence of commodities indicates Maroon reliance on the globalized market and its exploitative labor regimes, without any thought to how such an attitude on their part would be pretty contradictory to their critique that drove them to Maroon initially, may be problematic (see Christensen 2010, pp. 23–24; Little 1997).

Implications of Marronage for Leftist Archaeologies

From Marx down through to the present, leftists have characteristically sought ways to transform the capitalist mode of production or system or fundamental aspects of it (Baritz 1971, pp. vii–xiv; Marable 1983, pp. 255–263; Schecter 2007; Zinn 1980). Marx (1906, 1989, 1998) sought elucidation on how the future noncapitalist world would come to be and how it would appear through exploration of historical modes of production as well as the relatively recent historical development of the capitalist mode of production. Historical archaeologists of the Left may seek to develop a praxis that can contribute to wider contemporary critiques of and transformative efforts within the modern capitalist mode of production (McGuire 2002, 2008). Following Marx’s lead, we historical archaeologists can look for insight into how to proceed to our future through our explorations of the past. While one may wish to think that any site, any group of people, and any context could in theory help in such a project, I think we can refine our search, as it were, and seek out specific moments and groups in modern history who were successful, or even partially successful, in accomplishing the very thing we are trying to achieve for our future—systemic transformation. Though there may be other processes, groups, and contexts through which to praxeologically engage our craft in this way, it is within the process of marronage, and among people we call Maroons, that we certainly can recognize many examples of highly successful praxis. In many instances, Maroons did not

Current Perspectives on the Archaeology of African
Slavery in Latin America

Funari, P.; Orser, C.E. (Eds.)

2015, XI, 135 p. 50 illus., 25 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-1-4939-1263-6