

Studying Creolisation in Household Archaeology: Comparing Approaches of Archaeological Analysis in Spanish and Russian Settlements in the New World

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Abstract

European expansion in the New World during the fifteenth century created inter-ethnic households and relationships, which led to the creation of newly creolised and distinct cultures. Inter-ethnic relationships also lead to retention of culture, for both First Nations peoples and Europeans as well. Specifically focusing on Russian and Spanish settlements in North America, this paper examines creolisation by studying the household archaeologically to determine the daily activities of creole cultures, First Nations peoples, and European settlers.

Keywords: cultural studies, creolisation, household, archaeology, syncretism

Introduction

Starting in the late fifteenth century, exploratory expeditions began to search for new trade routes and items of richness in uncharted waters. Russian and Spanish colonizers engaged in different colonial endeavours—mercantile and missionary, respectively—which, as a result, produced relationships with varying degrees of positive and negative impact with aboriginal peoples in the New World. These different relationships created “divergent trajectories of culture change” (Lightfoot et al. 2005), depending upon their interactions.

In this paper, I will focus on two main colonial endeavours in the New World with an archaeological perspective: 1) the Russians’ participation in the fur trade and their settlements along the western seaboard, and 2)

Spanish-American missions in the Southern United States in the present-day Florida area. First, I will discuss a brief history that describes both Russian and Spanish colonies, and the similarities and differences in their imperialistic motives. I will then provide a discussion of the theory of creolisation, and its application to studies of inter-ethnic archaeological sites. I will also discuss the study of household archaeology and how it may be applied to the study of creolisation. I have chosen to focus on both the Russian western seaboard and the Spanish southern United States because of geographical, imperial, and cultural differences, and their simultaneous dependence upon aboriginal peoples. I believe that the different geographic areas and resulting interactions from these areas can be studied within the same archaeological realm: the household. I have also chosen these two areas to focus on because of the colonizers’ differing attempts to create self-

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sustainable settlements. By studying, analyzing, and understanding the traditional patterns of each separate ethnic group in a colonial settlement, one can begin to recognize adapting culture systems that are produced from inter-ethnic households.

It is important to note that in this paper I am not attempting to establish a direct analogy between Spanish and Russian colonies, but rather to recognize a broader study that may incorporate dynamic approaches and further the study of creolisation and ethnogenesis in the archaeological record. I am also not attempting to devalue past archaeologists' research, but I am drawing upon and critically assessing past archaeological work as a means to focus on the domestic sphere, and the activities and interactions that occur within it. I am also not trying to depreciate the importance of studying creolisation in other contexts, but instead I present a perspective that incorporates a more inclusive evaluation of creolisation.

Background

Russian-American Company

The Russian fur trade was primarily driven by an Asian demand for sea otter pelts (Allan 1997). The Russian fur trade was also driven by competition to succeed; the establishment of the Spanish missions in the southern United States (Allan 1997) allowed the Spanish to create sustainable agricultural settlements which were run by aboriginal labour forces (Lightfoot et al. 2005), and drew the Russians to establish their own colonies as well.

Working their way through Siberia and across the Pacific Ocean to Alaska, California, and even Hawaii, smaller Russian companies eventually consolidated and established the Russian-American Company (RAC) in 1799 for the purpose of establishing mercantile colonies (Lightfoot et al. 2005). Here, in Russian colonies along the western seaboard, conversion of aboriginal beliefs was not a priority; however, exploiting resources was a priority. For example, the Russian settlement of Colony Ross was strictly capitalistic (Allan 1997; Wake 1997). Because of the Russian-American Company's capitalist motives, the Russians were completely reliant upon traditional aboriginal techniques of sea otter hunting and whaling. The RAC understood its own dependence, and realized that aboriginal hunting techniques were crucial to the success of Russian colonies in the fur trade. Therefore, the RAC created mandatory aboriginal workforces, made up of aboriginal Alaskans and aboriginal Californians, to take part in the western seaboard fur trade, agriculture, and whaling (Ballard 1997; Crowell 1997).

Spanish-American Missions

Spaniards arrived in the New World in 1565 in present day Florida with the intention of establishing a new colony. The Spanish monarchy allowed the religiously driven colonization and proselytization to establish a colony. Disease, warfare, and enforced labour systems decimated aboriginal populations, weakening aboriginal resistance to Spanish subjugation (Merritt 1983). Spanish missions were established as a way to convert aboriginal peoples, as well as to use aboriginal labour in order to feed and sustain the Spanish settlements, construct early forts, and provide sexual partners for the Spaniards (Merritt 1983; Deagan 1983). Despite the enforced aboriginal labour, Spaniards were heavily "reliant upon native labour, knowledge, [and] resources" (Merritt 1983: 128).

St. Augustine was established as a coastal settlement in Florida. With a Catholic mission established at the heart of the settlement, conversion of aboriginal beliefs was an essential factor in Spanish-indigenous interactions there. Aboriginal peoples converted to Catholicism, termed *neophytes*, were rewarded with Spanish-prescribed high status, made evident with more elaborate homes and European items (Deagan 1983). Inter-ethnic unions occurred at these sites, including marriages, primarily between aboriginal women and Spanish men, as well as sexual unions, and concubinage (Deagan 1983; Voss 2008). Missionaries tended to incorporate many European goods in order to help the conversion process and assert their own status upon the converts. Despite this assertion of status and prestige, however, Spaniards were dependent upon aboriginal labour for their own sustainability as a missionary settlement, as well as reliance upon traditional aboriginal resources.

Creolisation

The term "creole" was initially used to define the emergence of Spanish-American societies in the Southern United States during the colonial era, beginning in the late fifteenth century. However, the beginnings of the emergence of the term "criollos," or people of Spanish descent born within the New World, became a new Hispanic cultural tradition outside of the Old World. Tending to maintain political, religious and social traditions from their homeland, creoles or criollos formed a distinct social community (Deagan 1983). This newly emerging social community combined aboriginal peoples, Europeans, their offspring from inter-ethnic unions, and African slaves (Deagan 1983). Since then, the term "creole" has been adopted much more broadly, defining the syncretisation of cultures that occurs within colonial settlements (Loren 2005) and seen as a term defining the process of cultural change, rather than focusing on assimilation or acculturation.

In more recent use of the word, creolisation has begun to take on a more extensive meaning which is no longer limited strictly to populations of Spanish ancestry. Creolisation is now viewed as the ethnogenesis of a new, distinct, and separate cultural group formed from inter-ethnic interactions, as seen in pluralistic environments (Lightfoot et al. 1998; Voss 2008). By maintaining a broader focus, creolisation can include identity transformations within multi-ethnic contexts, and can incorporate the interrelations of differing cultures from many different backgrounds (Loren 2005). More inclusive definitions of the term allow aboriginal agency to become part of the analysis of colonial archaeological sites.

In past archaeological studies, the theory of creolisation was studied from the viewpoint of acculturation (Deetz 1977; Deagan 1983; Loren 2005), where a colonial state and a colonial subject come into contact (Lightfoot et al. 2005). The theory surrounding acculturation measures “the degree and rate of change by examining the transfer or acceptance of different traits” of a subjugated culture by a dominating culture and, thus, implies a passive acceptance of the dominant, colonial traits within the contacted subjects (Deagan 1983; Loren 2005). This view of the colonial relationship is one-sided and neglects the aboriginal side of the interaction as a whole, as this idea classifies aboriginal peoples as passive and without agency. However, Deetz explains that acculturation is too simple a term for creolised interactions, and rather, these interactions must be “between two or more cultures to produce an integrated mix which is different from its antecedents” (1977: 213).

Household Archaeology

One of the ways in which colonial settlements can be studied archaeologically is through the study of the household. According to Wilk and Rathje, the household is defined as “the most common social component of subsistence [and] the smallest and most abundant activity group” (1982: 618). The household is part of a social sphere that is constructed by the people living within it (Deetz 1982). It is composed of social, material, and behavioral units, which in sum create a “domestic strategy to meet the productive, distributive, and reproductive needs of its members” (Wilk and Rathje 1982: 618). The household, whether made up of smaller dwelling units or not, serves as a strategy to adapt to and meet diverse requirements of those living within it (Wilk and Rathje 1982). Households can vary greatly from society to society; therefore, the study of households allows the variability within a society to be compared to the variability within another society. By interpreting objects and their spatial relationships within the household, archaeology can determine many possible

meanings and interpretations for the artifacts left in the archaeological record. Household archaeology leans away from a binary analysis and focuses on a broad perspective to analyze the archaeological record. By doing so, household archaeology incorporates the variable roles of economics, ethnicity, occupation, and labour which are present within the heterogeneity of mixed-ethnicity societies (Shephard 1983).

Within creolised households, people of mixed and non-mixed ethnicities interacted and impacted each other on a daily basis. Interacting cultures within creolised settlements left their footprint in the archaeological record by both actively and inactively using material culture to do so. Studying the household reveals relationships between peoples, which can be applied to study the processes of the past (Deetz 1982). Creolised relationships and inter-ethnic interactions combine different sources in their analyses (Loren 2005) to begin to interpret and understand new social traditions that came about in colonial settlements. Studying households archaeologically can provide an insight into the colonial relationships that occurred at colonial sites, such as intermarriage between colonial and indigenous peoples (Voss 2008).

Within the study of the household, other sub-studies occur and influence the domestic sphere as a whole. Household archaeology is influenced directly and indirectly by processes of daily life, such as gender, consumption, economic status, and beliefs systems, and is not limited to just one factor (Brandon and Barile 2004). Because the household includes the interaction of peoples’ daily lives, it involves “the maintenance of residential space, the organization of trash disposal, the menu and preparation of food, the material culture from settlement contexts, and settlement layout” (Lightfoot et al. 1998). These aspects of the household intertwine and can be interpreted from similar material culture as preserved in household sites in the archaeological record. Antoinette Martinez writes that “many of the daily practices evident in the archaeological record emanate from the home” (1997: 152), which in the context of creolised homes makes the domestic sphere an ideal place to understand the changes and adaptations of culture. This is further emphasized by Ballard who writes that the “interactions of ethnic groups [have] the potential to produce a unique material culture resulting from the incorporation or adaptation of new ideas” (1997: 124). I would argue that both the theory of creolisation and the study of household archaeology rely upon the interacting activities of people on a daily basis. Because of the importance of the domestic sphere to both creolisation and household archaeology, I suggest that it would be beneficial to study both topics with a focus upon the activities and processes that occurred on a daily basis.

Furthermore, the processes and activities within domestic areas not only had a direct influence upon the

people of that household, but are also well reflected in the archaeological record. This directly applies to creolisation. Martinez points out that “patterns in archaeological spatial contexts can [...] be used to infer changes in [...] economic, political, and social organizations and their implication for production and relations of production” (1997: 146). For instance, the emerging traditions and cultural adaptations that occur from creolised interactions are a product of the inter-ethnic society itself. It is this multi-dimensional aspect of household archaeology that can allow the study of creolisation in the archaeological record in a dynamic way.

Creole Societies and the Domestic Sphere

Food Preparation and Ceramics

In relation to subsistence and food preparation, artifacts tend to exhibit a mixture of European and indigenous origins in creolised households. Foodways and ceramics generally indicate very complex relationships within colonies (Voss 2012b: 43). For instance, Deagan writes that in the Spanish-Aboriginal site of Maria de la Cruz, the “food preparation complex shows the expected admixture of aboriginal and [Spanish] traits, although in this case the aboriginal elements are clearly the most influential in the diet and food preparation activities” (1983: 123). This is similarly seen in the Russian settlement of Ross Colony, where, despite consumption of European food, such as cattle, sheep, and pigs, the hunting and procurement tools remained of aboriginal origin (Wake 1997). Once again, this ties into the dependence on aboriginal hunting techniques, technologies, and strategies for the success of the European colonists, and presents the complexity of interpreting ethnogenesis as well.

In the archaeological record, foodways—as studied with faunal analyses—can also be used to indicate many social aspects. In the past, food ways were often interpreted as indicative of status or reflecting the social subsystems that were once present within a site (Deagan 1982). Cuts of meat represented within the households also indicate differing costs and quality as seen by studying the distribution of carcass portions in the faunal remains, with the quality of meat cuts expressed by the presence of the bones associated with corresponding meat (Reitz and Cumbaa 1983). For instance, a use of a wide variety of food sources could reflect the wealth of a household, or perhaps the ability to exploit available resources (Reitz and Cumbaa 1983). However, widespread distribution of various cuts of domesticated animal meats may also indicate “intra-community redistribution of trade goods” (Voss 2012b: 42). By analyzing faunal remains to infer status, foodways within the household can be interpreted based upon

traditional or introduced food sources, as well as the portions that are related to economic status.

Previous archaeological study had focused on the idea that certain ceramics were indicative of status, gender, or even ethnicity. However, I would argue that it is imperative to look beyond a limited interpretation such as this. For example, in previous studies, the presence of majolica tinware in Spanish-American sites was indicative of high status and acculturation to Spanish traditions—an interpretation that ultimately creates a strict analysis of the presence of majolica. The presence of majolica may, perhaps, be more indicative of economic and cultural integration (Voss 2012b), rather than specifically an increased Spanish socioeconomic status associated with an increased presence of majolica ceramics and is no longer seen as an index artifact of Spanish colonization. Also, an increase in imported goods may indicate both an increased availability of these goods or perhaps a stronger attempt to obtain imported goods, and can provide insight into the social status of the occupants of the household.

Creolisation can be seen archaeologically with blended material culture. For instance, Aboriginal-made ceramics depicting cross motifs and crafted in a European style, exemplify creolisation. These aboriginally-made, European-styled ceramics were made by the labouring class, the aboriginals and mestizos; however they were found only within Spanish structures and households. This indicates a few possibilities: that aboriginal peoples were expressing personal agency and opting-out of participation in colonization, as well as the possibility that their aboriginal traditions were being exploited and adopted by the colonials.

However, it is with ceramics that differences between Spanish and Russian influence appear in the archaeological record. For instance, the presence of glass, beads, and Chinese porcelain in Kashaya Pomo middens indicated that the Russian colonies were participating in larger scale trade networks through North America, and were not as heavily reliant on their own country’s resources, but also incorporating goods coming from more extensive trade routes which included Chinese, European, and First Nations (Wake 1997). Because of limited supplies to Russian forts, less emphasis was placed on Russian goods. The presence of reworked European goods also indicates aboriginal incorporation of material goods into their own cultural adaptation (Lightfoot et al. 1998). This stands contrary to Spanish colonies that tended to have a greater access to European goods, as well as European styled goods produced in the New World. Because material culture can exhibit many different meanings archaeologically, it is important to study the interpretation within a broad perspective to eliminate narrow analyses of creolisation and ethnogenesis

Diet

One of the best ways to see creolisation within the archaeological record, and within the household, is by examining subsistence patterns, which includes diet, subsistence strategies, and food preparation.

Changes to traditional foodways indicate both an adaptive diet and a changing way of life. Coming to a new environment with different natural resources made retention of traditional colonial foodways difficult for European colonists. In order to combat this pattern of mixing foodways, retention of specific traditional diet can be seen archaeologically in households with different economic and ethnic identifications (Reitz and Cumbaa 1983). Studying faunal remains from households and refuse pits can indicate the different types of foods consumed by the people living within the household. Colonial Europeans needed to adopt traditional aboriginal foodways in order to ensure their survival. Because of this dependence, aboriginal food traditions from pre-contact times continued even after European arrival. Food choices were also used as a way to further racial differences and cause segregation by solidifying non-aboriginal practices. This strategy can be seen with Russian managers who denied themselves traditional aboriginal foods as a way of asserting their own status (Crowell 1997).

The blending of both European and Aboriginal foodways into a creolised subsistence pattern shows the influence of all cultures within the site (Deagan 1983). For example, Ballard mentions that sea mammal consumption was more commonly practiced by aboriginal Alaskans, and the consumption of deer was more common for aboriginal Californians. Because of these dietary preferences and differences typical of each separate aboriginal group, the combination of diets within separate aboriginal households indicates an adaptive shift (Ballard 1997). Therefore, finding the faunal remains of both deer and sea mammals or an increased reliance on one or the other can indicate the formation of a syncretised diet. It is also important to recognize that adaptation occurred between different aboriginal groups when they were aggregated as a whole in colonial labour forces (Ballard 1997).

In the faunal remains, numerous domesticated pigs, cattle, and goats were found in Spanish-American household refuse pits (Deagan 1983). These animals were introduced to the New World by the Spanish as a way of reducing starvation and provide familiar food sources in colonial settlements, indicating the influence of Spanish tradition within the foodways. However, many colonial households show a mixture of aboriginal and introduced species in the floral and faunal remains, indicating collection of local resources alongside animal husbandry (Shephard 1983).

Refuse Patterns

The disposal of garbage can also be seen archaeologically as evidencing creolisation. Whether in organized trash pits or within the household, different patterns of discard are indicative of certain traditions. For example, at the Russian settlement of Fort Ross, the intermarriage of aboriginal Californian women and aboriginal Alaskan men left an interesting mark in the archaeological record, as a result from their inter-ethnic unions. The pattern of discard common amongst *Alutiiq* homes, or those of aboriginal Alaskans, was to dispose of waste in middens directly inside the home. However, Kashaya Pomo, or aboriginal Californian women in these same inter-ethnic unions had specific refuse pits outside the home, in addition to distinct organization within their homes (Lightfoot et al. 1998). This difference is very important for recognizing the cultural influence of the daily activities that occur within the domestic sphere as a product of creolisation.

Architecture and Spatial Arrangements

Architecture in colonial sites can be seen in the archaeological record as adaptive and reflecting creolisation. For example, in the eighteenth century, many of the town structures in Spanish-American St. Augustine were created using a cement structure, consisting of oyster shells, lime, sand, water, and sometimes a naturally occurring local rock called coquina to make a substance called tabby (Deagan 1983; Shephard 1983), as opposed to traditional Spanish forms of construction. By using local resources, the Spanish were able to adapt to a new environment and incorporate unfamiliar supplies, which were used by aboriginal peoples, into their own architectural productions.

The activities that occurred in private and public spaces left differing artifacts in the archaeological record. Private space was associated with the production and use of aboriginal material culture within neophyte villages (Lightfoot et al. 2005). Voss writes that "most commonly, residential architecture and public areas are partitioned or otherwise subdivided to create visual privacy and discrete enclosures, allowing women to conduct daily activities away from the public gaze" (Voss 2008: 199). Within the homes of neophytes, the presence of hearths, ground stone tools, and fire-cracked rocks in the archaeological record (Lightfoot et al. 2005) indicates the maintenance of aboriginal subsistence traditions within the missions. In terms of the spatial layout of Russian colonial villages themselves, aboriginal peoples were encouraged to stay within their own villages, located at a distance from the Russian settlements (Crowell 1997; Lightfoot et al. 2005; Martinez 1997).

Gender and sexuality were used as a tool of colonialism as a way to subordinate aboriginal women (Voss 2012a). Typical layouts of Spanish colonial settlements include female work areas around the periphery, leaving them exposed to what Voss describes as “sexualized warfare.” For example, in El Presidio de San Francisco, sexualized warfare produced a labour system based upon gendered divisions (Voss 2008). Voss explains how, in Spanish-American settlements, colonial soldiers would separate their prisoners based upon age and gender, bringing women and children to missions for purposes of converting them to Catholicism, and sending men to strict labour camps (2008). The separation and segregation of aboriginal people from their families that occurred in Spanish missions greatly affected the spatial arrangements within colonial settlements, working to break aboriginal kinships from the inside out (Deagan 1983; Voss 2008).

Gender

Separation of gendered labour roles can be visualized in architecture, village, or town spatial layout, and the material culture reflecting labour roles within the household. Kathleen Deagan states that “the strongest manifestations of [colonial] exchange would be apparent in areas associated with women’s activities, including food preparation, procurement of locally available plant food resources, child care, clothing manufacture and maintenance, and feminine adornment” (1983: 104). Many of these aspects of gender separation as a product of creolisation appear within the household. Here, in mixed-ethnicity households, women were often seen as a bridge between colonial and indigenous peoples (Voss 2008). These mediating roles were influential in the margin of different cultural traditions, practices, and life ways and helped create syncretised ethnicities in colonial settings.

In the Russian colony of Fort Ross, male influence on the household was primarily seen in architecture. Because aboriginal Alaskan and Californian men were often employed outside of the home, it was in the spatial layout and village patterning that their interaction in a creolised society can be seen (Lightfoot et al. 1998). For instance, at Fort Ross, *Aleut*, or Aboriginal Alaskan men, typically placed their dwellings alongside the ocean shore, maintaining a close proximity to their work spaces for hunting whales (Lightfoot et al. 1998), which is where the settlement of many Russians were as well. In Spanish colonial sites, male activity areas tended to reflect a greater European cultural influence, as aboriginal men were often working in mandatory gendered labour forces in a public area outside the household (Deagan 1983; Martinez 1997).

Intermarriage was viewed similarly in both Spanish and Russian colonial settlements. In Spanish colonial sites, inter-ethnic marriages were initially encouraged by the

Spanish monarchy in order to promote political and economic alliances (Voss 2008), as was the case in Russian colonial sites on the western seaboard (Crowell 1997). Other inter-ethnic unions also occurred in these areas, such as aboriginal peoples with Africans, termed *mulattos*, in Spanish-American sites (Deagan 1983), as well as aboriginal Alaskan men and aboriginal Californian women in the Russian colony of Fort Ross (Lightfoot et al. 1998).

In the archaeological record, certain items are better at depicting gender roles and divisions than others. For instance, aboriginal ceramics were related to the female role of food preparation (Deagan 1983). Other items reflecting women’s roles in the colonial household included items for clothing maintenance, child care, and personal adornment, whereas male-related objects tended to occur in refuse pits including items such as tobacco pipes, weaponry, and architectural and construction items (Deagan 1983; Lightfoot et al. 1998). Recognition of the patterns associated with deposition according to gender differences is important to note, as sexual unions and inter-ethnic marriages often occurred in colonial sites. By recognizing how genders and ethnicities can be seen archaeologically, interactions can be seen archaeologically with the presence of artifacts in atypical areas.

Status

Status was given to Europeans and to those individuals who acted as mediators between Europeans and aboriginal peoples. In Spanish colonies, *alcades*, or aboriginal people with aboriginal-recognized status, and women who were involved in inter-ethnic marriages and sexual unions were the primary mediators. In Russian colonies, women of inter-ethnic unions were instigators of cultural adaptation as well (Deagan 1983; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Voss 2008). In both Spanish and Russian settlements, creoles, or peoples of mixed Euro-indigenous history had higher social ranking than indigenous peoples. Such unequal status within creolised communities produced segregation in town layouts and divisions of labour, while simultaneously promoting social adaptations. From the viewpoint of aboriginal agency, retention of traditional materials, techniques, practices, and technologies can indicate personal preference to maintain aboriginal traditions, and aboriginal agency through neglecting European influence. Adoption of European materials, techniques, practices, and technologies, on the other hand, would be seen as an attempt at becoming creolised and acceptance of status, or personal preference.

The creolisation of a family reflected a social adaptation in the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine, Florida. *Mestizos*, *Indians*, *blacks*, and *mulattos* were segregated from the Spanish and *criollos* in Spanish colonial society, reflecting a lower status than the latter

(Deagan 1983). Africans, African slaves, and mulattos were at the bottom of the social hierarchy during the eighteenth century in Spanish colonies with First Nations peoples slightly above African slaves yet below creoles and Spaniards, who were at the top (Reitz and Cumbaa 1983).

For example, within the Russian-American Company, creoles were classified as a separate estate, and could serve in positions of power such as officers, clerks, and craftsmen (Crowell 1997; Lightfoot et al. 2005). Contrary to this, aboriginal peoples were considered by the RAC to be of lowest rank in the colonial hierarchy. They did not recognize status given within aboriginal culture and communities, and therefore did not incorporate aboriginal social statuses into the RAC social statuses; however, these boundaries of social ranking were not rigid. Self-declaration of creolisation or an acceptance of Russian allegiance could also gain higher social status for an aboriginal or creolised individual (Lightfoot et al. 2005).

In the archaeological record, certain kinds of material culture are indicative of specific culture traditions. Therefore, seeing cultures adopt material culture from another tradition may indicate a syncretisation or adaptation to varying aspects of an interacting culture. For example, higher status criollo households in St. Augustine, Florida, tended to show a higher presence of majolica, a tin-ware glazed ceramic, than did other households, as opposed to more traditional indigenous ceramics (Deagan 1983; Ewen 2000). Although likely linked with prestige and wealth as well, the criollo households in this example were expressing their culture in the forms of a newly adopted ceramics. Material culture was also often used in order to establish status and convey prestige within colonies. Status displays were used by Europeans as a means of establishing dominance over the aboriginal peoples. In Spanish missions, churches in the centre of colonial settlements used ceremonies, elaborate adornments, statues, paintings, and rituals in an attempt to convert and entice aboriginal peoples to become a part of Spanish missions (Deagan 1983). Prestige, status, and material possessions were offered as gifts to those who converted, which worked to destroy social relationships within First Nations groups by altering their belief systems and causing rifts within families. Likewise, in Russian fur trade forts, displays of Russian culture were used to assert status and act as a "tool of cultural conversion" (Crowell 1997).

Aboriginal social hierarchies, however, did not disappear. For example, in Spanish-America, aboriginal elites were occasionally incorporated into the Spanish system of status recognition. Alcades were often recognized by Spanish priests and given higher status amongst other First Nations peoples. Alcades were placed in a position of power over other First Nations peoples as a sort of self-governance (Deagan 1983).

Conclusion

The study of household archaeology and the study of creolisation, as seen in the archaeological record, both directly involve the study of the complex interactions of daily and personal activities. These daily activities provide a combination of racial, gendered, economic, and social status influences which each affect the deposition of material culture in archaeological settings. However, by understanding the traditional patterns of separate ethnic groups within a colonial settlement at the level of the household, the processes of culture change forming creolised communities can begin to be interpreted and understood from the archaeological record.

Applications for Further Study

The importance of household archaeology has broad applications: archaeological data from within a household is embedded within a larger scale of analyses, such as landscape archaeology and patterns within the society (Brandon and Barile 2004). A micro-scale analysis at the household level is needed in order to interpret archaeological data within a larger scope as a basis to establish patterns and trends in settlements such as colonial ones. Household analyses of creolisation takes an initial step into the study of broader and further encompassing patterns of human interactions.

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