

ELEVEN

THE SCALE OF THE INTIMATE

Imperial Policies and Sexual Practices in San Francisco

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Sexuality and intimacy are often conflated with the micro-scale realms of social life: the marriage bed, domesticity, the household, the family. Archaeologists studying sexuality and colonization have consequently focused directly on household deposits and personal identities. This study, like many others in this volume, rejects this simplistic equation between sexuality and the micro-scale. Rather, I understand sexuality and intimacy to be *points of articulation* among personal, familial, institutional, economic, religious, and governmental fields of social practice. In this, I take inspiration from Foucault's observation that sexuality is "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power . . . useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies" (Foucault 1978: 103).

In this chapter, I explore multiple scales of intimacy and sexual politics by juxtaposing two historical contexts that have rarely been considered related. One context is the Spanish "discovery" and subsequent settlement of the San Francisco Bay in California in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – events that were, without question, colonial. The other is the influx of Chinese immigrants to the same region in the mid- to late nineteenth century, following the U.S. annexation of California. Although immigration policies during this period are rarely interpreted as "colonial," attention to macro- and micro-scale sexual politics exposes the "imperial effects" (Coronil 2007) of sexual regulations aimed at Chinese immigrants to the United States during this period.

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This unlikely comparison reveals surprising consistencies in the deployment of sexuality across two quite different historical periods. In both instances, the intersection of racial segregation with sexual regulation resulted in profound disruptions of familial relations among subjugated populations. Simultaneously, same-sex labor regimes generated new homosocial contexts in which affective relationships among men became increasingly central to daily life.

SPANISH-COLONIAL SAN FRANCISCO

The San Francisco Bay (Figure 11.1) offers one of the most protected natural harbors along the Pacific Coast of North America. Anthropologists have conventionally described Native Californian societies before colonization as “complex hunter-gatherers” (e.g., Blackburn and Anderson 1993) who lived in villages ranging from 150 to 300 people, with groups of villages comprising a district that shared a common dialect and political and religious leadership (Milliken 1995).

The San Francisco Bay region was largely unaffected by European empire-building until the late eighteenth century, when Alta California came under Spanish rule during that empire’s final territorial expansion into North America. In 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza led a caravan of 193 settlers – 2 priests, 37 male soldiers, 11 male civilians, 35 adult women (mostly wives of the male soldiers and civilians), and 110 dependent children – on a nine-month journey from Tubac, Arizona, to the San Francisco Bay (Langellier and Rosen 1996). The colonists established three settlements: a military presidio (San Francisco) at the mouth of the bay; a religious mission (also named San Francisco but more popularly called Dolores) about 4 miles inland from the Presidio; and a civilian pueblo (San José) at the south end of the bay. Colonial settlement of the San Francisco Bay region eventually expanded to include six missions and three civilian pueblos, along with two additional military fortifications along the mouth of the bay.

Following the Spanish imperial policy of *reducción*, colonists directed Native Californians living in the San Francisco region to live in missions, where they were converted to Christianity and instructed in agriculture and colonial trades. Although some Native Californians came to the missions voluntarily, most relocations occurred under duress (Milliken 1995). Other Native Californians were recruited or impressed as laborers at the Presidio of San Francisco (Voss 2008a) and at *ranchos* granted to colonists (Silliman 2004).

Marriage in Colonial San Francisco

From the beginning, imperial policies shaped the sexual and gendered composition of San Francisco’s colonial settlements and the relationships that formed between colonizers and Native Californians. Marriage was a particularly contested institution, not only in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century San Francisco but throughout the history of Spain’s empire in the Americas. Debates centered on two interrelated themes: the validity, and advisability, of cross-racial marriage and the relative authority of parents, the Church, and the state in granting and sanctioning marriages. In



FIGURE 11.1. Map of San Francisco Bay, showing locations of Spanish-colonial settlements and the site of the Market Street Chinatown.

some contexts, intermarriage was promoted to foster alliances between prominent colonial and indigenous families. Simultaneously, from the early 1500s onward, military policy and colonial laws such as the 1629 Policy of Domestic Unity and the 1776 Royal Pragmatic on Marriage established barriers to interracial marriages in the colonies (Mörner 1967: 26–27; Castañeda 1993).

Archaeological scholarship on interethnic households in the Spanish Americas has demonstrated that negotiations of Spanish-colonial regulations of marriage varied considerably across location and period (Voss 2008d). For example, although racial intermarriage was commonly practiced in some colonial settlements (e.g., Deagan 1983), in others, many male colonists elected to remain legally single rather than marry indigenous women (see Voss 2008d: 86g). Colonial regulation of intermarriage concerned the legitimation of colonial households and the classification

of their offspring and did not suppress interracial sexual relations. The pervasive archaeological evidence for indigenous women's influence in the material culture of colonial homes in many regions of the Spanish-colonial Americas has led Rothschild (2003) to note that intermarriage was only one of several ways that colonists acquired Native American women's labor and services, including sexual services.

The politics and practices related to marriage in Spanish-colonial San Francisco illustrate the complex interactions between imperial regulation of sexuality and colonial sexual practices. Juan Bautista de Anza enrolled San Francisco's colonial settlers during a special campaign that recruited not individual soldiers but married couples with proven reproductive capabilities. He planned that each soldier–wife pair would bring six children with them to the new colonial settlement; in the end, the actual average was closer to three children per couple (Chapman 1916).

State involvement in the colonists' sexual relationships continued far beyond their initial recruitment. As the settlement matured, the colonists were almost entirely endogamous. This was not simply a matter of personal choice: under frontier military regulations, marriages had to be approved by the Presidio's commanding officer, who was charged with enforcing the Royal Pragmatic on Marriage. Similarly, Native Californians living at missions, classified as *neofitos* (neophytes), found that mission priests had complete authority in sanctifying preexisting indigenous marriages (including dissolution of polygamous marriages) and in permitting new marriages (Milliken 1995; Newell 2009). Both Presidio commanders and mission priests discouraged colonial-indigenous intermarriage in San Francisco. During 1776–1834, only six marriages between colonists and Native Californians were recorded in San Francisco. Most of these were among older widows and widowers whose first marriages had been within their community of origin (Milliken et al. 2005: 128–129).

The archaeological record of the Presidio of San Francisco provides a window into the material outcomes of colonial endogamy. In La Florida, the Caribbean, and the U.S. Southeast and Southwest, where interracial marriage and concubinage were common, colonial household deposits usually contain high frequencies of Native American material culture and foodstuffs (e.g., Deagan 1983; Deagan and Cruent 1993; Loren 1999; Rothschild 2003). In contrast, excavation at the Presidio of San Francisco indicates that colonists there maintained firm material boundaries between themselves and local Native Californian populations. Only 10 of approximately 465,000 artifacts – approximately 0.002% – recovered during excavation of the Presidio of San Francisco's main quadrangle during 1993–2000 are objects that are associated with Native Californian material culture traditions (Voss 2008a: 160). For example, colonial households used vesicular basalt grinding stones imported from present-day Mexico rather than adopting ubiquitous groundstone tools used by Native Californians. The content of the colonial diet consisted overwhelmingly of cultivated cereals and legumes and domesticated stock. Although this staple diet was supplemented by a small quantity of wild game, those foods most closely associated with Native Californians – shellfish and acorns – are conspicuously absent from colonial residential deposits, even though they are abundant in the environment surrounding the Presidio. Similarly, none of the ornamentation typical of Native Californian dress – beads, earrings, pendants, and hair ornaments carved from

shell, bone, and antler – is present in the deposits associated with colonial households (Voss 2008a).

This paucity of Native Californian artifacts in the Presidio's main quadrangle is especially puzzling because historical records indicate that many Native Californians labored in the quadrangle, as servants, construction workers, crafts workers, prisoners of war, and Indian Auxiliary militias. Despite constant physical proximity between colonists and Native Californians, Native Californian material culture was not incorporated into colonial residential life. It is only in areas well outside the quadrangle itself that archaeologists have encountered colonial-era deposits that contain substantial quantities of Native Californian material culture and foodstuffs. It was not a lack of contact between colonists and Native Californians but rather the imperial regulation of intimate relationships that fostered a material divide between the Spanish-colonial settlers and the Native Californians among whom they lived.

Military Conflict and Labor Regimes

At the same time that colonial marriages were highly regulated, military conflict during San Francisco's Spanish-colonial era was highly gendered and sexualized. Only men could enlist in the colonial military. Consequently, combat zones – located well beyond the colonial settlement – were highly masculinized regions of social life. Soldiers from the Presidio of San Francisco routinely attacked Native Californian villages in the coastal mountain ranges and the Central Valley to the east, south, and north of the Presidio. This created a region of colonial encounters in which colonial women were largely absent.

Not coincidentally, rape was sometimes deployed as an unofficial military tactic, generating “a disturbing pattern of wholesale sexual assault” against Native Californians (Castillo 1994: 283). Ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence has shown that some Native Californian communities reconfigured their villages to resist sexualized military violence, relocating areas for food processing, basket making, hide preparation, and other tasks from the villages' periphery to the center of tightly packed houses. In some cases, ditches were excavated around housing clusters to deter colonial troops from entering on horseback (Voss 2008c: 197–198). At the very least, these spatial transformation moved Native Californian women's daily routines to the interior of indigenous villages; perhaps Native Californian women's movement across the broader landscape was also circumscribed by the threat of colonial sexual violence.

Sexualized warfare produced gendered labor regimes. After a battle victory, colonial soldiers separated prisoners of war by age and gender, sending women and children to the nearest mission to be converted to Christianity. Captured Native Californian men were usually escorted to the Presidio of San Francisco, where they were sentenced to convict labor – primarily construction and agricultural work – for several months to a few years (Figure 11.2). As military conflict increased throughout the colonial occupation, so, too, did the number of adult Native Californian men laboring at the Presidio of San Francisco, from five to twenty workers in the 1780s to as many as a hundred during the 1800s–1810s (Voss 2008a: 77–83).

The settlement's increased reliance on Native Californian laborers transformed the gendered relations of local production. For example, the soldiers and their families were initially responsible for constructing their own houses. Archaeological research has revealed that over time, architectural production shifted from a small-scale endeavor shared by colonial men, women, and children to a centrally organized undertaking carried out by work gangs of Native Californian men under the direction of colonial soldiers (Voss 2008a: 173–202). Analysis of locally produced ceramics indicates a similar shift from household-based production to centralized production in workshops run by master crafts workers and colonial soldiers who supervised Native Californian laborers (Voss 2008a: 203–232).

The homosocial environments created by sexualized military combat and colonial labor regimes linked the violence of colonization outside the Presidio settlement to the mundane routines of production within the settlement itself. Whereas the outcomes of combat were uncertain and posed significant risk to the colonial soldiers, construction projects and craft production were venues in which small numbers of colonial men could more securely control the labor and bodies of male Native Californians. Perhaps the most significant product of these male homosocial labor regimes was not the buildings and craft goods themselves but the routine interactions that consolidated hierarchical relationships between colonial officers and rank-and-file soldiers, and between colonial men and indigenous men. The sexual politics of empire forged tight interconnections among colonial policies, military strategies, and the daily routines of colonial domestic life.

FROM FRONTIER OUTPOST TO SETTLER STATE

Typical of many regions of the world, the colonization of the San Francisco Bay region occurred in multiple waves. Spanish rule was supplanted in 1821 by California's incorporation into the newly independent nation of Mexico, a period in which subjugation of Native Californian populations shifted from mission and military institutions to privately held agricultural *ranchos* (Silliman 2004). The Mexican *ranchero* economy ended abruptly when the United States annexed California as part of the spoils of the 1846–1848 Mexican–American War. With liberal relocation and immigration policies bolstered by sensationalist accounts of gold discovery at Sutter's Mill, the newly formed State of California was rapidly occupied by both U.S.-born and foreign-born settlers. In 1845, the nonnative population of California numbered 5,600 people. By 1850, it had surged to 93,000; by 1860, to 380,000; and it reached nearly 2.5 million by 1900 (Hornbeck and Fuller 1983: 51, 68).

Because California's statehood is often framed in U.S. history as the "liberation" of California from Mexican rule, the historical events that followed are rarely interpreted as imperial projects. However, Coronil's (2007: 243) model of "imperial effects" (see also Voss, Chapter 2, this volume) draws attention to the *intensification* of colonial projects during early California statehood. For example, Native Californians were targeted by military extermination campaigns and forced removal to reservations (Hurtado 1988). California's former Spanish-colonial/Mexican population was largely politically disenfranchised and dispossessed of their landholdings



FIGURE 11.2. Native laborers being escorted by a Presidio soldier. Detail from *View of the Presidio of San Francisco*, by Louis Choris, 1816, color engraving. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

(Haas 1995; Sánchez 1995). Immigrant workers, recruited as laborers in the rapidly expanding resource extraction, transportation, and manufacture industries, were differentially treated and at times segregated on the basis of country of origin. In sum, California quickly came to resemble other breakaway settler colonies through rapid geographic expansion into previously uncolonized inland regions, the formation of “internal colonies” through Indian reservations, and the racial segregation of worker populations.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION AND POST-STATEHOOD IMPERIAL EFFECTS

The case of Chinese immigration provides a poignant example of neo-colonial sexual politics in the early decades of California’s statehood. Chinese immigrants, most from the southern province of Guangdong, comprised a significant portion of new settlers in California, numbering 35,000 in 1860 and 120,000 in 1900. In San Francisco Bay area counties, Chinese residents consistently accounted for 7 to 15 percent of the total population during 1860–1890 (Yu 2001).

Even as California’s politicians and business owners promoted Chinese immigration as a reliable source of cheap labor, state and federal laws aimed to ensure that Chinese residents remained “perpetual foreigners” (Lowe 1996), ineligible for citizenship, unable to testify in court, and prohibited from owning land (Baxter 2008; Voss and Allen 2008). Because the U.S. Constitution grants citizenship to all persons born within the country’s borders, preventing Chinese citizenship required intensive regulation of Chinese immigrants’ sexuality and reproduction. All the immigration laws aimed at Chinese immigrants specifically targeted their sexual and reproductive relationships. The 1875 Page Law prohibited the immigration of Chinese and Japanese “prostitutes,” a category that was indiscriminately applied to nearly all single Asian women attempting to immigrate. This was followed in 1882 by the Chinese Exclusion Act (renewed in 1892, 1902, and 1904), which prohibited Chinese laborers from sponsoring the immigration of their wives and children. Concurrently, in 1880, California’s anti-miscegenation laws were expanded to prohibit marriage between whites and “Mongolians,” the legal term used at that time for people of Asian descent (Gyory 1998; Hsu 2000; Takaki 1998).

Thus, as with the settlement of the Presidio of San Francisco nearly a century earlier, the gendered and sexual composition of the Chinese population of the San Francisco Bay area was profoundly shaped by state regulation. By the late nineteenth century, the ratio of Chinese men to Chinese women in the United States had increased to 21 to 1 (Yu 2001: 5). The combination of anti-miscegenation laws, the Page Law, and the Chinese Exclusion Act generated profound structural constraints on the sexual and reproductive lives of Chinese immigrants.

Sexual Politics and the Archaeology of the Market Street Chinatown

My own research on Chinese immigration has centered on the Market Street Chinatown in San Jose, California. Located at the southern tip of the San Francisco Bay, San Jose was one of three core population centers for Chinese immigration from the 1860s onward (the other two being San Francisco and Los Angeles). The Market Street Chinatown encompassed a two-block area of downtown San Jose that had formerly been the site of the Spanish-colonial pueblo. Artifacts from the site were recovered in the 1980s through a salvage excavation during urban development. Local Chinese Americans were instrumental in advocating for archaeological excavation at the site before its destruction. Their involvement continues through the current Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project, which is a collaborative partnership between Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, History San José, Past Forward, Inc., and Stanford University.

Founded in the early 1860s, the Market Street Chinatown housed more than 1,000 Chinese, predominantly adult men alongside a smaller number of merchant and professional families (Figure 11.3). It was also the cultural and economic headquarters for more than 2,000 additional Chinese, also predominantly adult men, who worked in agriculture, industry, mining, and domestic service in the surrounding area. The community was a thriving center of Chinese American culture and a fragile refuge from anti-Chinese racism and violence. In May 1887, during a period of heightened hostility against San Jose's Chinese residents, the Market Street Chinatown was destroyed by an arson fire. Despite open pressure to leave the region, within a few days, its former residents established two new communities on the outskirts of the growing city (Yu 2001).

The spatial organization and material culture of Chinese American archaeological sites such as the Market Street Chinatown cannot be understood without taking into account the effects of ethnosexual discriminatory legislation. Prohibited from owning land, Chinese immigrants formed business consortiums that rented urban lots from white landowners and developed these leaseholds into mixed residential/commercial Chinese neighborhoods. Residential and commercial buildings faced inward toward a shared internal network of alleyways, outdoor cooking facilities, and other public spaces in the center of the block. By and large, people in the Market Street Chinatown lived in two kinds of residences. Tenements provided short- and long-term housing for adult men, who slept in shared rooms and used common cooking areas and other facilities. Merchants, who could sponsor their wives and children for immigration, operated stores that provided housing not only



FIGURE 11.3. Market Street Chinatown, San Jose, California, in 1877. Courtesy of History San Jose.

for the merchant and his family but also for business partners, clerks, employees, boarders, and visitors (Yu 2001).

State regulation of Chinese immigrants' sexuality is reflected in the very structure of the archaeological record. In city blocks adjacent to the Market Street Chinatown, non-Chinese archaeological deposits dating to the same period consist largely of informal trash pits and household privies located in the rear yards of discrete house lots. In contrast, the Market Street Chinatown archaeological record consists primarily of formally constructed wood-lined trash pits that were located along the edges of buildings, public outdoor areas, and alleys (Voss 2008b). Such deposits cannot be attributed to individual households or families. Instead, they indicate community-level organization of refuse disposal along with the collective organization of residential life and spatial integration of commercial and domestic activity.

Split Households

The scarcity of conventional "households" in historic Chinatowns has led many scholars to mistakenly characterize these communities as bachelor societies. Yet for many Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans, a flexible understanding of the relationship between family and place enabled the endurance and reproduction of Chinese families despite forced separation. About two-fifths of Chinese men residing in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were

married to women who lived in China, forming bi-continental “split households” (Hsu 2000). Some married before immigrating to the United States, whereas others returned to their home villages to wed after arranging the marriage through correspondence with family members and the fiancé. In split households, the timing of sexual affection between spouses, and the couple’s management of sexual reproduction, required careful planning and considerable expenditure.

Although physical contact was infrequent, the marriages and extended kin networks formed through split households were characterized by strong emotional and economic bonds, maintained through correspondence and remittances. For male kin, reunification was possible through immigration, and fathers and uncles living abroad encouraged their Chinese-born sons and nephews to join them as laborers in the United States. This practice led to multigenerational chains of immigration within families. By the mid-twentieth century, some Chinese families had lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay area for three or more generations, but all of the family members were Chinese-born.

Because most Chinese immigrants maintained familial and social lives that spanned two continents, the materiality of their daily lives was geographically dispersed. For example, members of Chinese Historical and Cultural Project have cautioned that archaeologists should not expect to be able to evaluate economic status from the household objects recovered from the Market Street Chinatown (Voss 2005).

Tableware ceramics, which are commonly used by historical archaeologists as an index of economic status, provide one example of this. The majority of tableware ceramics recovered from the Market Street Chinatown are inexpensive bowls and plates (Table 11.1). Bowls are overwhelmingly Asian porcelains. Nearly half (48.9 percent) of the bowls are decorated in a single pattern, Bamboo. Typically costing only two to five cents per piece (Sando and Felton 1993), Bamboo pattern porcelain bowls were the cheapest ceramic available at this time. Most plates recovered from the Market Street Chinatown are British-produced white earthenwares. Here again the most abundant category is the least expensive within its class – plain undecorated vessels (Miller 1980, 1991).¹

A conventional interpretation of this tableware assemblage would likely stress the impoverishment and low purchasing power indicated by the high frequency of cheap ceramics.² However, this archaeological index of impoverishment is contradicted by what might be termed the monumental landscape of the Market Street Chinatown and of the residents’ home villages in Guangdong. Within the Market Street Chinatown, merchants and district associations raised funds to construct a temple, which occupied a prominent central place in the community. Its wooden walls were festooned with papers publically displaying the names of those who donated cash and goods for its construction and upkeep. The open lower floor of the temple served as a multipurpose community room, and the upper floor contained the altar, constructed of ornate lacquer woodwork, gilt statues, incense burners and candlesticks, and a brass gong, all imported from China. Several elements of the temple survive today and are now curated in the Chinese American Museum in San Jose (Yu 2001).

Table 11.1. Bowls and plates cataloged from the Market Street Chinatown collection *

	Bowls		Plates	
	No. MNV**	% MNV	No. MNV	% MNV
Asian porcelains	328	91.6%	48	23.4%
Bamboo	175	48.9%	NA [†]	NA [†]
Four Flowers	81	22.6%	35	17.1%
Celadon	51	14.2%	0	0.0%
Other Asian porcelain	21	5.9%	13	6.3%
Euro-American improved earthenwares	30	8.4%	153	74.6%
Plain white earthenware	18	5.0%	85	41.5%
Shell-edged	0	0.0%	12	5.9%
Transfer printed	5	1.4%	29	14.1%
Other British-American improved earthenwares	7	2.0%	27	13.2%
Other ceramics	0	0.0%	4	2.0%
Total	358	100%	205	100%

* Approximately 40 percent of the tableware ceramic assemblage have been cataloged as of this analysis. This analysis includes all cataloged sherds that represent vessels that were conventionally used for single servings (ca. 10–25cm diameter). Smaller saucers and condiment dishes, and larger serving vessels, are excluded from this analysis.

** Minimum Number of Vessels

† The bamboo pattern was only used on single-serving bowls and was not available in plate form.

Similarly, nineteenth-century remittances sent by San Jose's Chinese to their home villages in Guangdong not only increased the personal wealth of the immigrants' families but also underwrote substantial building projects. "New Villages" were established throughout the region, composed of clusters of so-called foreign houses, built with brick and concrete and decorated with stained glass, Greek-style columns, domed roofs, and front porches. Remittances were also used to build schools, orphanages, hospitals, railroads, bridges, paved roads, electric grids, and public lighting that transformed the region's infrastructure (Dehua 1999: 28–29; Hsu 2000: 40–54). Patronage of public works and community facilities were highly prioritized by split households.

The contrast between daily life in the Market Street Chinatown, in which most residents slept in crowded tenements and ate simple meals off cheap ceramic bowls and plates, and the opulent architecture and high standard of living that was enabled by remittances to Guangdong, speaks to a materially divided life. Without doubt, most residents of the Market Street Chinatown worked in low-paid professions such as domestic service and agricultural labor. Archaeological evidence such as the ceramic assemblage would conventionally be interpreted as evidence of impoverishment. However, we must also ask whether the consumer purchasing patterns evident in the ceramic assemblage indicate economic *constraint* or deliberate *restraint*. Residents of the Market Street Chinatown appear to have responded to discriminatory regulations and separation from their families by developing a shared commitment to community-oriented spending.

Archaeological Traces of Homosociality

The geographic separation of adult men from their children and their female kin meant that the Market Street Chinatown was strongly characterized by homosociality. With a highly skewed gender ratio, many residents' daily interactions and immediate affective ties revolved around friendships, business relationships, and associations that formed among men.

Archaeologists studying Chinese immigrant workers in agricultural, mining, logging, and railroad camps have described collective bunkhouses formed by four to twelve Chinese men, who pooled resources to purchase food and other necessities and to hire cooks and housekeepers (usually other Chinese men who could not pursue wage labor because of injuries or poor health; e.g., Gardner 2004; Hardesty 1988; Van Bueren 2008). In urban communities such as the Market Street Chinatown, most immigrant men lived in tenements. Perhaps tenement residents also organized themselves into domestic units, as Chinese men living in more rural areas are known to have done. Historical accounts also indicate that stores were central to the lives of San Jose's Chinese men. Far beyond serving a mercantile function, stores served as headquarters for district associations and labor recruiters, offered inexpensive ready-made meals, and provided a sense of community perhaps comparable to present-day neighborhood bars or coffeehouses (Yu 2001).

Research conducted on the Market Street Chinatown collection by Michaels (2005) and Williams (2004, 2008) provides archaeological perspectives on homosociality in this urban Chinese community. Michaels' research centered on sixteen peck-marked ceramic vessels recovered from the Market Street Chinatown (Figure 11.4). Peck marks are Chinese characters chipped by hand onto mass-produced vessels; in many regions of China today, it is a common practice to peck-mark plates and bowls with symbols of good luck. It is likely that nineteenth-century immigrants carried this tradition to the Market Street Chinatown. Michaels' analysis, however, found interesting variations in both the meaning and the context of the peck marks. Of the twelve marks that could be translated, only five are wishes or blessings. These were recovered from features associated with stores that, as noted earlier, often sold ready-made meals. In contrast, seven peck marks represent individual names, family names, or nicknames, a practice that Michaels' sources indicate was not common in China itself. Interestingly, Michaels found these name-marked vessels were primarily recovered from features associated with tenements and were absent from the features associated with stores (Michaels 2005: 132). Michaels interprets this modification of traditional peck marking as a "hybridized art form" related to the stresses of daily life in the crowded living quarters in tenement houses (Michaels 2005:132).

Michaels' research on peck-marked ceramics is complemented by Williams's studies of opium pipes and alcohol cups at the Market Street Chinatown (Williams 2004, 2008). Although stereotypically associated with Chinese immigrants, opium consumption was widespread throughout the U.S. population during the mid- and late nineteenth century. In fact, the commercially available opiate-rich pills, tinctures, and patent medicines commonly used by Euro-Americans were far more potent and addictive than the opium paste that was smoked by Chinese immigrants

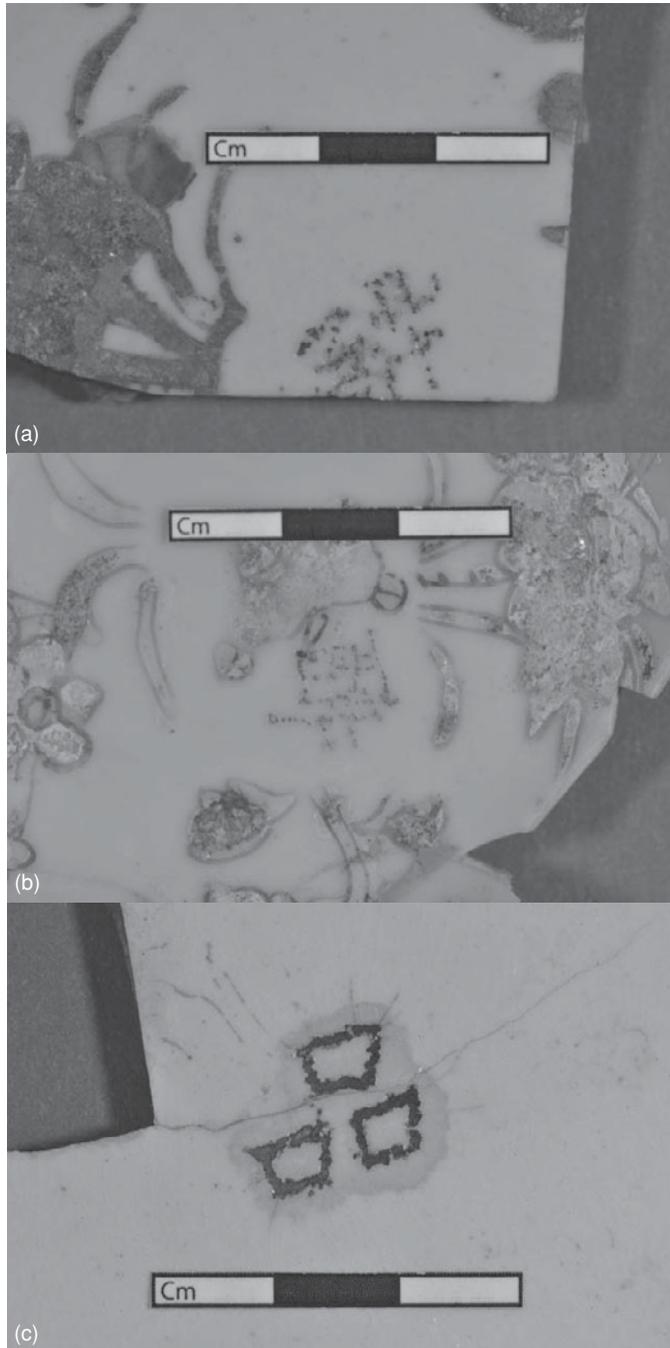


FIGURE 11.4. Examples of peck-marked vessels from the Market Street Chinatown. (a) “Mahn,” a family name, and (b) “Drunk,” possibly a personal nickname, are on Chinese export porcelain plates decorated with the Four Flowers pattern that were recovered near tenement housing. (c) “Sir,” possibly referring to a military rank, is on a plain British whiteware plate recovered from a feature near stores and a restaurant. Translations by Scott Wilson and Young Xie as published in Michaels 2005:129. Photos courtesy of the Market Street Chinatown Archaeology Project.

(Courtwright 2001). Williams's analysis of ninety-five ceramic opium pipe bowls from the Market Street Chinatown collection provides a very different picture of the consumption of this social drug than historical accounts would suggest. First, although Euro-American observers described opium smoking as carried on in secretive gathering places ("opium dens"), Williams found that pipe bowl sherds were primarily found in association with domestic refuse and were distributed evenly throughout residential and commercial areas, indicating that opium was smoked in a wide variety of spatial and social contexts. Second, Williams found that the pipe bowls themselves showed "a remarkable degree of formal diversity both within and between features. . . . There are no two pipes that are exactly alike" (Williams 2004: 223), pointing to individuality within a widely shared social practice.

Williams has also studied alcohol-related artifacts from Feature 20, a trash pit located near a store, the temple, and several tenement buildings. Feature 20 included six glass Euro-American alcohol bottles, one small glass tumbler, and three tiny porcelain cups, decorated in Four Flowers pattern (Clevenger 2004). The tiny cups are particularly notable because they were traditionally used at festivals and other social gatherings to drink potent Chinese distilled liquors such as *ng ga pei* (Wegars 2001). In this case, the social context of alcohol consumption is ambiguous: the alcohol in the bottles, likely whiskey or gin, could have been served to customers at the nearby store, distributed at a temple festival, or passed among roommates in one of the tenements. In any case, Williams notes that the apparent use of the tiny porcelain cups to drink Euro-American spirits may indicate a novel articulation of Chinese *wu* masculine ideologies in this immigrant setting. *Wu* masculinity, hegemonically associated with the working class and with warriors, emphasizes the joining of strength with restraint and wisdom. Drinking potent alcohol in specialized tiny cups allowed men to display fortitude and self-discipline simultaneously (Williams 2008: 59–61).

Notably, both Michaels and Williams focused on commensality as routine yet significant material practices through which social relations among men were forged and negotiated. Interestingly, the objects related to these practices reveal a strong tension between collective allegiance and individual identity. Roommates might draw their meal from a common pot, but some men ate from personal rice bowls they had carefully marked with their nickname or family name. At the end of a long day, men relaxing together in their tenement housing might sit and smoke together, but each man's pipe bowl was uniquely decorated. Convivial drinking strengthened men's relationships with each other and also served as a venue for displaying individual fortitude and control of the self. Eating, smoking, and drinking were moments in the day when men living at Market Street consolidated their relationships with each other while simultaneously expressing their individuality.

It would be a mistake to celebrate the new social worlds forged by Chinese immigrants in the face of ethnosexual discrimination without also acknowledging the personal losses that resulted from U.S. immigration policy. Poems and letters written by Chinese immigrants frequently spoke of their loneliness. Merchants' children who grew up in San Jose's Chinatowns recalled being doted on by dozens of "uncles" who longed for their own families (Yu 2001). For most, family reunification was a

deferred dream “that stretched into decades until death made reunification impossible” (Hsu 2000: 91). Not unlike the Native Californian men laboring at the Presidio of San Francisco a century earlier, for Chinese immigrants in San Jose, one “imperial effect” was the profound disruption of family life.

DISCUSSION

Throughout this chapter, I have interwoven three core arguments: methodological, historical, and social. Methodologically, I have argued against the assumption that sexuality is only associated with the micro-scale and demonstrated that it is a point of articulation between macro- and micro-scale aspects of colonialism. An archaeology of the intimate thus requires us to investigate every scale available to our discipline. We are no more able to “find” the intimate only within the close confines of a dwelling place than we can investigate a world system solely through a map on the wall. It is only through tracing the material links that bind together colonial policy with so-called private life that we will be able to understand the links between imperial formations and intimate relations.

The second argument, historical in nature, uses Coronil’s model of “imperial effects” to question the “post”-colonial status of California statehood. Comparing the sexual politics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century California reveals some surprising congruencies: gender segregation, combined with the regulation of interracial sexuality, disrupted heterosexual kinship relations, and generated male homosocial environments among some subaltern populations. In both cases, the separation of adult men from their children and their female kin – by force or by design – was closely linked to labor regimes.

The ruptures between California’s Spanish-colonial period and its early statehood are substantial enough to resist interpreting these congruencies as continuity. Rather, the similarities between the two cases could be symptoms of what anthropologist James C. Scott terms a “structural family resemblance” (Scott 1990: 21) between these contexts of domination. Tracing the sexual consequences of statist policies in mid- and late-nineteenth-century California exposes a practical politics of imperialism that was cloaked with rhetorics of nation-building and economic development.

The third argument concerns the intimate lives of subaltern populations. I have demonstrated that eighteenth-century Native Californians and nineteenth-century Chinese immigrants in the San Francisco Bay area came under increased sexual scrutiny and regulation. The options available to these subaltern men to form cross-sex romantic, sexual, and family relationships were starkly diminished. Indeed, the disruption and distancing of subaltern personal relationships is echoed in many other studies presented here (e.g., Croucher; Casella; Dawdy; Hull; and Tarble de Scaramelli, this volume).

In both Spanish-colonial and early American San Francisco, sex-segregated labor regimes produced new homosocial contexts in which affective relationships among men became increasingly central to daily life. While developing this chapter, I was often pointedly asked why I “avoided” discussing same-sex *sexuality* in the foregoing

discussions of same-sex *sociality*. Before addressing this persistent question, I want to draw attention to the politics of the question itself. Present-day folk models of sexuality, especially male sexuality, often posit that men living in single-sex environments “need” to turn to each other for sexual release. Such folk models resonate strongly with medico-psychological classifications that differentiated between “situational” and “congenital” homosexuality from the late nineteenth century onward (Bland and Doan 1998). They also evoke “hydraulic” models of sexuality, for example, those prevalent in Freudian psychology, that assume a universal sexual drive that requires management and release (Freud 1975 [1910]).

Cross-cultural studies have not only documented the ubiquity of same-sex sexual practices across cultures but also demonstrated that the cultural meaning of sexual practices, both cross-sex and same-sex, differs profoundly according to context. It is a reasonable assumption that in any social context—heterosocial or homosocial—there were likely a fair number of people who engaged in same-sex sexual practices. The question that seems anthropologically and archaeologically relevant is not *whether* some men in homosocial environments were having sex with each other, but rather what cultural forms and institutions gave cultural meaning to these sexual practices.

In the case of Native Californian men who were captured or recruited to work at Spanish-colonial presidios and Mexican-era *ranchos*, it is well-documented that laborers actively resisted Spanish-colonial/Mexican labor demands (e.g., Castillo 1989; Hurtado 1988). Group-level tactics of resistance, including negotiations, refusal, flight, armed resistance, and establishment of inland fugitive communities, most likely relied on strong affective relationships among the laborers who were willing to risk their individual safety for their fellows. Whether these affective relationships included sexual relationships is a matter of speculation (see also Funari and Carvalho’s discussion, Chapter 15 in this volume, of the historiographic challenges in reconstructing sexuality in Brazilian maroon communities).

For the immigrant men who shared tenement housing at the Market Street Chinatown several decades later, there is much stronger documentary and archaeological evidence of the social organization of formal and informal homosocial relationships. To the extent that same-sex sexuality was or was not part of Chinese immigrant men’s affective relationships with each other, same-sex sexuality does not seem to have contributed to specific categories of identities or relationships, nor is there any indication that same-sex sexuality was particularly stigmatized or persecuted. Instead, what is well documented are social institutions that tied individual men to larger communities. The men’s financial support of the temple and their patronage of Chinatown stores linked them with institutions that provided ritual and domestic services and fostered community sociality. District associations and inter-generational male kinship (especially father–son and uncle–nephew) forged strong bonds between immigrant men by reinforcing their shared connection with their home villages. These affective ties have left an indelible mark on the archaeological record: a shared commitment to faraway relatives fostered economic restraint in personal expenditures. Convivial eating, smoking, and drinking in these contexts were occasions when men used material culture to express their own, and witness each other’s, individuality.

CONCLUSION

This chapter, in dialogue with other case studies presented in this book, reveals strong structural similarities in the sexual politics of colonial projects. Through the intersections of racialization, labor regimes, and sexual regulation, the weight of imperial institutions bore down hard on the affective relationships of those subject to colonial rule. In such contexts, kinship, marriage, parenting, and sexuality were sites of struggle as well as locations of refuge.

Although there may have been structural similarities in colonial institutions, the case studies in this book show a great degree of variation in how subaltern communities responded to these oppressive conditions. From mine marriages in South Africa (Weiss, [Chapter 4](#)) to split households linking San Jose and Guangdong, from prison motherhood in Australia (Casella, [Chapter 3](#)) to rogue colonialism in Louisiana (Dawdy, [Chapter 16](#)), and from gladiators' memorials in the Roman empire (Garraffoni, [Chapter 13](#)) to stone monuments to Native American leaders in New England (Rubertone, [Chapter 14](#)), those subject to colonial rule fought to preserve affective and kinship relationships with incredible creativity and innovation.

NOTES

1. The less expensive Bamboo porcelain pattern was not produced in vessel forms other than single-serving bowls, so Bamboo would not have been an option for plate purchases.
2. Plain white earthenwares were preferred by some nineteenth-century consumers because of their aesthetic qualities. At the Market Street Chinatown, the consistency in the selection of lowest-cost bowls, which happen to be decorated, and lowest-cost plates, which were plain, suggests that price sensitivity was likely a stronger factor than aesthetics in consumer decisions about ceramic purchases.

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