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## **Historical and Maritime Archaeology: Two Sides of the Same Spectrum**

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Traditionally, archaeology has been considered the study of culture through old things (Orser 2004:3). These ancient people were usually part of non-literate societies in the prehistoric past and have been studied by archaeologists through extant remains found in and on the ground. Since the 1960s, however, the discipline of archaeology has grown to include the study of people who lived in the recent past, or the modern world (Beaudry 1988; Deagan 1996; Hall and Silliman 2006; Little 2007; Leone and Potter 1988; Orser 1996, 2004; Orser and Fagan 1995; Shackel 1993), as well as to include the study of material remains underwater (Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Delgado 1997; Green 2004; Muckelroy 1978; Staniforth and Nash 2006). Over the past few decades, several researchers have provided a detailed historiography of historical archaeology (Deagan 1996; Hicks and Beaudry 2006; Little 2007; Orser 2004; Orser and Fagan 1995) and maritime archaeology (Delgado 1997; Green 2004; Nash 2007; Staniforth and Nash 2006). Consequently, it is not within the scope of this chapter to detail the discipline's development. Instead, this chapter considers the fields of historical and maritime archaeology by presenting some of the seminal developments within the two disciplines that are relevant to this study. This, in turn, allows for a discussion about how historical and maritime archaeology evidence represent two sides of the same spectrum. Commodities are material culture exchanged through consumption networks, and to artificially separate one (as dry) from the other (as wet) is to amputate part of the interpretive process. It is also only through combining historical and maritime archaeological evidence that the link between production and consumption can be made, thus providing a more inclusive view of the development of capitalism and consumption than either field can achieve alone.

## Historical Archaeology

Historical archaeology is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on the recent past and seeks to understand the global nature of modern social life (Deagan 1996:17; Hall and Silliman 2006:2; Orser 2004:19). It is multidisciplinary in that much of the theory and methods used by historical archaeologists are borrowed from related fields, such as anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, ecology, biology and geology (Orser 2004:19; Orser and Fagan 1995:16). Historical archaeology shares a special relationship with history it incorporates archival research and documentary analysis familiar to historians (see also Chapter 5) (Deetz and Scott 1995; Beaudry 1988; Little 2006; Wilkie 2006). In this way, historical archaeology studies literate cultures, or societies that used texts as a form of communication. Additionally, despite the existence of ancient civilisations that used text, such as the Romans, Egyptians and Mayans, historical archaeology focuses on the post-colonial world, which is generally considered to have begun around the fifteenth century (Orser 1996:24).

The fifteenth century AD, during which time intercontinental nation-states such as Spain and Portugal began expanding their empires around the globe (see Chapters 3 and 5), is widely seen as marking the inception of the modern world (Deagan 1996:17; Hicks and Beaudry 2006:1; Orser 1996, 2004:21). Historical archaeology is the study of the recent past, or what Ascher (1982) refers to as “tin\*can archaeology.” Using tin\*can as a metaphor for archaeology as the study of the modern world is, according to Charles Orser, the world “in which we live now” (Orser 1996:27). Orser proposes that historical archaeology, as the study of the modern world, includes four global processes which ‘haunt’ every site: global colonialism, Eurocentrism, capitalism and modernity (Orser 1996:27; see also Hall and Silliman 2006; Staniforth 1999, 2003). These four haunts are always present in an historical site, though, depending on the interpretive framework of the archaeologists, sometimes only one or two may come to the forefront, while the others lurk in the shadows. In this study, capitalism takes centre stage, while strands of global colonialism, Eurocentrism and modernity play important supporting roles. Like Hall and Silliman (2006) and Staniforth (1999, 2003), this study places the global process of consumption on centre stage with capitalism (see Chapter 3). The trans-oceanic Spice Trade and its grandeur over the course of 500 years presents an excellent example of capitalism and consumption, as symbolised by the Spanish and

Portuguese empires in their search for a trade route to access eastern commodities, such as teas, silks, porcelains and spices (see Chapters 3 and 5).

Historical archaeology is also about the small things found in the shadows of larger processes (Deetz 1977; Orser 1996:107). Thus, in addition to a global perspective, historical archaeology is about our daily lives and use of everyday material culture (Orser 1996:10). It uses archaeological sites and material culture to discuss how these global processes impact on our daily lives on a local or regional level. In this way, it is concerned with small-scale particulars and interpretations of how societies were affected by large-scale processes (Hall and Silliman 2006:8-9; Orser 2004:21). These small-scale investigations can, in turn, give rise to new insights about large-scale global processes (Orser 2004:22). Historical archaeology, Orser (2004:6) contends, “because of its more recent focus holds a mirror directly before the face of the contemporary world and reflects the complex roots of our own increasingly diverse society. This unique reflection of our recent past is a vital tool for achieving a better understanding of ourselves.”

Historical archaeology investigates people who may be generally recorded in history, like slaves, colonists, seamen, merchants, farmers or labourers, but about whose daily lives little is known (Hicks and Beaudry 2006:2-3; Little 2006:403; Orser 2004:23). It also examines marginalised groups, who have often been excluded from recording their histories and their associated self-empowerment (Voss 2006; Wegars 1993; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005). Douglas Armstrong (2001:10) postulates that historical archaeology’s strength lies in its ability to bring forth new insights on topics that were once considered peripheral or lost to history, but in one or another way have been central to the study of anthropology—such as ethnicity, class, status, social structures, gender dynamics and age. He continues that historical archaeology can also contribute to broader and dynamic questions involving cultural contact, social interaction, cultural transformation, economic conditions and the mode of production (Armstrong 2001:10). Deagan (1991:105) lists five ways in which historical archaeology can provide information about those without history: 1) knowledge of colonisation processes, impacts and results; 2) knowledge of the physical world in the past; 3) knowledge about health and nutrition in the past; 4) the documentation of disenfranchised groups without written history; and 5) the documentation of illicit or illegal behaviours in the past. In short, by considering local manifestations of wider global processes, as well as groups traditionally ignored by history, historical archaeology allows for new insights and deeper understandings of the origin of contemporary society. Through historical

archaeology those without history can be understood through things rather than words, but only if things are considered in the broader context within which they exist (Deetz and Scott 1995:110).

Finally, historical archaeology is concerned with issues that are relevant today, and, as such, our interpretations of the past are influenced by our perceptions and attitudes about the present (Hicks and Beaudry 2006:4; Orser 1996:vii, 2004:22). These issues include topics such as feminism, diaspora, race, ethnicity and social inequality (Orser 1996:vii). In this way, historical archaeology is about analytically examining the past from the present (Hall and Silliman 2006:2). As Hodder (2003:242) further explains, "...our conception of the present is partly built out of the reality of the past...Archaeology, the present and the past, subject and object, are in a dialectical relationship which is always in movement. They, we, depend on each other and bring each other into existence."

This study finds it necessary to discuss a few of the seminal theoretical developments in archaeology in order to understand my point of view on the links between historical and maritime archaeology. Theory in historical archaeology has generally been borrowed from the broader fields of archaeology and anthropology, as well as from other social sciences. Historical archaeology became formalised as a sub field in archaeology during the late 1960s, during which time it was known as "historic sites archaeology" (Orser 1996:9). Furthermore, during this time a new school of thought appeared on the scene of the broader theatre of archaeology: New Archaeology (Binford 1962; Flannery 1967).

New Archaeology, or processual archaeology, was not a unified theoretical movement or set of beliefs; rather, it was a school of thought unified by a shared sense of dissatisfaction with the seemingly unscientific and non-anthropological interpretations that came before it. Instead, it looked toward anthropology for scientific objectivity. It should be noted, however, that this revelation was more widespread in North America than Europe, likely because European archaeology was more closely linked with history than anthropology, while American archaeology was primarily focused on prehistoric societies. Spearheaded by Binford in his seminal article "Archaeology as Anthropology" (1962), New Archaeology quickly became a movement that gained increasing support in archaeology and anthropology at large (see Clarke 1968, 1973; Flannery 1967; Fritz and Plog 1970; Tuggle et al. 1972; Watson et al. 1971).

New Archaeology sought to make cross-cultural comparisons and universal statements based on the role of particular environments in shaping larger systems (Hodder 2003:10-11). The individual was seen as irrelevant in the course of these external influences and, as such, avoided. Instead, basic, natural systems or adaptive mechanisms were the foundation for change (Hodder 2003:7). New Archaeology also sought to link observable traces in the present to those processes, be they economic, social or technological, in the past (Johnson 2007:73). Binford's Middle Range Theory (1983), South's pattern method (1977) and Schiffer's laws (1976) were not only attempts at understanding the taphonomic retreat, or how the archaeological record is created through the attrition of objects. These seminal studies were also ways of seeing material culture and behaviour as having an unambiguous relationship in terms of how behaviour influences material culture (Hodder 2003:14; Johnson 2007:73).

One of the key characteristics of processualism was that it was rooted in a positivist epistemology (Gibbon 1989:8-59; Johnson 1999:38-39; Wylie 1989:20). Positivism is a set of beliefs that includes the separation of theory and method, separation of the context of ideas and their evaluation, generalising explanations, avoidance of untestable statements, and a separation of scientific thought and independent value judgments. Positivism is also associated with the hypothetico-deductive-nomological model, which requires that a hypothesis be scientifically tested (Binford 1967). Thus, within this empirical mind-set, archaeologists put on their lab coats to objectively test hypotheses in a rigorous, scientific manner in order to make generalisations about past human behaviour. Agency, which is attributable to a human agent who initiates "causal sequences of a particular type, that is, events caused by acts of mind or will or intention, rather than the mere concatenation of physical events" (Gell 1998:16; see also Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Giddens 1984:9; Renfrew and Bahn 2005:3-6) was overlooked, and, as such, material culture was considered a passive reflection of behaviour.

By the late 1970s, a number of archaeologists recognised the limitations in processual archaeology. Along these lines, Johnson declared several years ago the need for academics to address cognitive factors, difficulties posed by a positivist epistemology, as well as problems inherent to the development of middle range theory, heralding a general move toward hermeneutic interpretations, or the study of meaning through the human condition (Johnson 1999:98, 102). This led to many scholars exploring theories of the mind, in particular structuralism (Deetz 1977; Glassie 1975; Hall 1992; Hodder 2003; Martin 1989; Shackel 1993). Structuralism

had its roots in linguistics and was first outlined by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (Saussure 1983). Saussure believed that language was composed of hidden rules understood at a subconscious level that could be interpreted through signs. The famous structuralist Lévi-Strauss (1963, 1970) asserted that the mind categorises and divides all things in a binary system of opposites (dualism), reflecting universal laws of how the world works. According to Clark (2004), Saussure and Lévi-Strauss were largely responsible for what has been termed the “linguistic turn” in the social sciences.

Those who subscribe to structuralism view material culture as “another expression of human culture in general. If you want to explain culture, then you need to uncover the hidden (cognitive) rules that generate cultural forms” (Johnson 1999:91). This was demonstrated by Glassie (1975) in *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: a Structural Analysis of Historic Artefacts*. He used the Chomskian (Chomsky 1957, 1965, 1968) approach to generative grammar in order to study the layout of houses in eighteenth century Virginia. He found that people designed houses by following artifactual grammar, or by applying a set of grammatical rules to create different house plans.

Drawing heavily from Glassie, Deetz’s (1977) seminal work, *In Small Things Forgotten: an Archaeology of Early American Life*, used structuralism to explore the ideology of an epoch, the Georgian mind-set, through seemingly unrelated objects. Deetz contended that thinking organised life according to habitual patterns, and that recognising the patterns would make them visible throughout the remainder of the built world. Deetz was able to define the Georgian order through small things found in the archaeological record. The order was in general characterised by an Italian Renaissance notion whereby people saw themselves as unique individuals, both in life and after death, despite increasing homogeneity in material culture after the early eighteenth century. As such, the world was full of individuals expressing their own individuality through portraits of themselves, individual place settings and individual gravestones inscribed with epitaphs. Activities like sleeping, eating, hygiene and cooking also became increasingly compartmentalised (see Chapter 3). People had their own bedrooms, slept in their own bed, ate from their own table setting, went to the toilet in a specified place and deposited their trash in discrete trash pits – all activities that we can see archaeologically (for further discussion see Leone 2005 and Mrozowski 2006). The work of both Glassie and Deetz was paramount in historical archaeology and anthropology in general, as they were the first to implement the concept of ideology as a worldview (Burke 2006:130).

Other archaeologists have also used structuralism in their analyses (e.g. Bintliff 1984; Hall 1992; Hodder 2003; Leone 1978; Martin 1989; Pearson 1982; Shackel 1993), and although structuralism was found to be useful in analysing hidden cognitive structures through an analysis of material culture, some found that it still did not account for the active individual or the reflexive nature of material culture (Hodder 2003; Johnson 1999; Preucel 2006:131). What eventually grew out of this new philosophical exploration was the postprocessual movement. Like New Archaeology, postprocessual archaeology is not a unified theoretical movement, but rather, an umbrella term used to refer to a school of thought that generally challenged what preceded it.

Strongly influenced by sociological thinkers like Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990) and Giddens (1984), postprocessual archaeology was a new approach that saw the individual as having agency. Bourdieu links agency to socialisation, maintaining that it is part of one's *habitus*. Bourdieu (1990:53) defines *habitus* as:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to obtain them.

Thus, *habitus* is built from experience, rather than consciously mastered (Gosden 1994:117). It also represents how past social actions become cemented in the body and guide future practices (Gosden 1994:117). According to Gosden (1999:126), individuals subconsciously absorb how to perform actions before they externalise them as part of their outward actions. It is skill learning but it also exemplifies an entire range of social distinctions, such as class or gender, that are related to bodily comportment (Gosden 1999:126). All social groups and fields of activity, Gosden (1994:119) further explains, “have their own forms of *habitus* enjoining and generating socially recognized patterns of actions.” In this way, a person is never wildly improvising nor mechanically reproducing social rules (Gosden 1999:126). Bourdieu uses *habitus* to understand the relationship between social structure and action. In doing so, his theoretical framework tries to achieve a balance between “subjective states and individual creativity” and “objective social structures which mechanically generate individual acts” (Gosden 1994:115).

Bourdieu (1984) also distinguishes class *habitus*, in which different social classes, specifically the working class and middle class, possess distinct and accepted ‘ways

of doing' as evidenced in tastes in art and social life, reinforcing and dividing one class from another. In other words, the way in which one dresses or eats, for example, is according to taste, and taste is how one class distinguishes itself from another (Mann and Loren 2001:283). Susan Lawrence defines it as "the understanding of the behaviours and practices appropriate to one's place in society" (Lawrence 1998:28). In this way, according to Gosden (1999:120), production of common knowledge is inherently linked with class-based views and patterns of conduct. *Habitus* is not learned through conscious learning; rather it is learned through emulation and encouragement within a particular social network (Gosden 1999:126).

Similar to Bourdieu, Giddens (1984) proposes as part of his Structuration Theory that agency and social structure have a relationship, i.e. social structure and human agency stand in duality. Structuration is the balance of agency and structure; the structure cannot exist without social action that guides a human agent in reproducing the structure. It also means that when people choose not to act, or when they act differently, the social structure can change, particularly when a different way of acting or not acting is adopted into the system. Thus, as involvement in the world and social action changes, so, too, do social structures.

One type of archaeological theoretical approach included under the umbrella of postprocessual archaeology is Hodder's (2003) contextual archaeology (see also Barrett 1987). Contextual archaeology emphasises methods of identifying and studying context in order to understand meaning. It is based on two lines of inquiry: firstly, the structured system of functional-interrelationship; and secondly, the content of ideas and symbols (Hodder 2003:156-205). The former places an object in environmental, technological, social, and economic contexts of behaviour to understand its relationship to the larger functioning whole. The latter involves reading material culture as text, or examining them in their context. This means that "items have symbolic meanings through their relationships and contrasts with other items within the same text," and encourages one to search "for other data along these dimensions of variation in order to identify the relevant dimensions which make up the context" (Hodder 2003:139). Therefore, each individual object means relatively little by itself. It is only when objects are examined in relation to the whole or with similar objects in a structured way that their meaning becomes clear.

The impact of postprocessual thought on the field of archaeology has resulted in many other offshoots of theoretical inquiry, including critical archaeology (e.g.



Conkey and Spector 1984; Gero et al. 1983; Handsman 1983; Handsman and Leone 1989; Hodder 2003; Leone 1981a, 1981b; Leone et al. 1987; Meltzer 1983; Palus et al. 2006; Shanks and Tilley 1987) and social archaeology (e.g. Hodder 2007; Meskell and Preucel 2007). Other types of archaeology have addressed concepts such as identity (e.g. Casella and Fowler 2005; Cochran and Beaudry 2006; Jones 1997; Meskell 2001; Meskell and Preucel 2007; Mullins 2007; Shackel 2000; Silliman 2006; Thomas 1996), memory (e.g. Hall 2001; Shackel 2000; Dyke and Alcock 2003; Wilkie and Farnsworth 2005), gender (e.g. Conkey and Spector 1984; Dyke and Alcock 2003; Voss 2006; Wall 1994), ideology (e.g. Burke 1999, 2006; Deetz 1977; Leone 1984, 2005), capitalism (e.g. Burke 1999; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Groover 2003; Johnson 1996; Leone 1984, 1988, 1995, 1999, 2005; Leone and Potter 1988, 1999; McGuire 1992; Palus and Shackel 2006; Paynter 1988; Shackel 1993; Staniforth 1999, 2003) and consumption (e.g. Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Gibb 1996; Klein and LeeDecker 1991; Mazrim 2002, 2008a; Palus and Shackel 2006; Spencer-Wood 1987; Staniforth 1999, 2003).

## **Maritime Archaeology**

Similar to historical archaeology, maritime archaeology, at least in the Americas and Australia, predominantly deals with sites associated with the modern age (e.g. Delgado 1997, 2006, 2009; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Staniforth 1999, 2003). Because maritime archaeology deals with the modern age, maritime archaeology should also be concerned with the four haunts of historical archaeology: global colonialism, Eurocentrism, capitalism, and modernity (Orser 1996:27). Most maritime archaeology deals with trade and most shipwrecks occurred during transport (Staniforth 1999:56). As such, maritime archaeology, particularly that conducted in the Americas and Australia, should be concerned with using the material culture associated with shipwrecks to address these larger global processes, and there have been several recent efforts to explicitly recognise this (Delgado 2006, 2009; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Staniforth 1999, 2003). This section discusses how Staniforth's (1997, 1999, 2003) 'archaeology of the event' is a useful tool for considering how material culture is shipped along trading networks, from production to consumption, and how shipwrecks represent a necessary link between sites of production and consumption.

Muckelroy (1978:4) was the first to specifically define maritime archaeology as “the scientific study of the material remains of man and his activities on the sea.” For Muckelroy (1978:4), maritime archaeology was “concerned with all aspects of maritime culture; not just technical matters, but also social, economic, political, religious, and a host of other aspects.” These aspects include nautical technology, naval warfare, maritime trade, and shipboard societies. This definition is problematic, however, because Muckelroy excluded related land-based communities and non-commercial activities, an essential component for interpreting shipwreck cargoes in terms of the society for which they were bound. Today, the definition of maritime archaeology includes all aspects of societies that are relevant to maritime endeavours, such as ships, trade routes, coastal sites and maritime infrastructure (Adams 2001:292-310, 2002:328-330; Gibbins and Adams 2001:279-291; Green 2004:2; Dellino-Musgrave 2006:23; McCarthy 2006:1; Muckelroy 1978:4; Orser 2004:86; Staniforth 2007:124). This definition includes sites underwater and on land, but also sites that are only partially submerged, as well as human activity that may have taken place on dry land but that has since become inundated or submerged.

Today’s definition of maritime archaeology overlaps with a few other terms related to the field, specifically underwater, nautical and marine archaeology (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:22-23; Staniforth 2007:124). Underwater archaeology refers to the environment in which archaeology is practiced. This includes any site, be it shipwreck sites, aircraft or other cultural remains, that is submerged underwater. Just as the site may lie on the seabed or be covered in sediment, it could rest in salt water or fresh water, in the ocean, or in an inland waterway or lake. Nautical archaeology, like maritime archaeology, can include sites that are not underwater, but focuses on sites related to ships and shipbuilding. This includes sites such as ship burials, shipyards and careening sites. Marine archaeology, on the other hand, refers to the study of sites and site formation processes associated with the marine, or salt water, environment. Dellino-Musgrave (2006:23) believes that these terms have explanatory purposes for “defining an area of research within archaeology rather than as separate entities, because the main goal of maritime archaeology is to understand the human past whether the research is undertaken in prehistoric, historic, submerged or land contexts.” What separates them from each other is the environment in which archaeology takes place, their field techniques and their differing classes of material culture (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:23).

The field of maritime archaeology began to develop with the underwater work of George Bass (1966) in the Mediterranean during the 1960s. Over the years, maritime

archaeology has grown tremendously in philosophical and methodological approach. For example, during the peak of processualism in the discipline of archaeology, efforts were made to bring the field in line with current archaeological thought. Muckelroy (1978) made the first attempt to place something other than the ship and its contents at the forefront of research. Drawing on Schiffer's (1976) C-transforms and N-transforms, he utilised the terms "extractive filters" and "scrambling devices" to describe site formation processes in the underwater environment. This was the first attempt to scientifically analyse underwater sites as something other than isolated shipwreck events, and this scientific approach still has resonance today (e.g. Richards 2002, 2008).

Theory and method in maritime archaeology were again thrust forward in 1983 when Richard Gould initiated a call to arms in *Shipwreck Anthropology* (1983). He demanded that maritime archaeologists: 1) systematically survey for, instead of search for, shipwrecks; 2) only partially excavate sites rather than totally excavate them; and 3) develop explicit rather than implicit research designs prior to fieldwork (Gould 1983:9-19). McCarthy (2006:5) states, "In keeping with the movement towards non-disturbance 'cultural resource management'...limited excavation and the gathering of data by surface recovery, sampling methods and historical research, became the preferred means of dealing with shipwreck sites by the late 1980s and 1990s."

During the 1990s, a different way of looking at maritime culture and infrastructure appeared. Christer Westerdahl (1992:6) originally coined the term "maritime cultural landscape" as the network of sailing routes, ports, harbours, related constructions and material and immaterial aspects of human activity, both terrestrial and underwater, mirroring the entire range of maritime economies. Researchers have implemented this concept in a number of ways: as a management tool for recognising remnants of maritime culture on land, as well as underwater (Aberg and Lewis 2000; Firth 1995; Vrana and Stoep 2003; Westerdahl 1994); as a way to examine maritime infrastructure and to link maritime culture to broader societal and economic processes (Firth 1995; Westerdahl 1980, 1992, 1994, 1998); as an avenue for comparing multiple archaeological sites in a region through time (McErlean et al. 2002); and as an approach to thematic studies such as pilotage, monuments, and fish traps (Bannerman 1999; Chapman and Chapman 2005; Parker 1999).

The maritime cultural landscape was believed to be a framework that would allow researchers to expand from a view of maritime culture as primarily including

technological and naval aspects to include contributions to cultural history in general (Westerdahl 1994:269), but it has been met with some resistance. Hunter claims that the concept was introduced with a political agenda to attract attention to the discipline. He goes on to assert that maritime culture constitutes “no more than extensions or reflections of the broader culture to which they belong and are integral rather than isolated economic or social elements” (Hunter 1994:262). This displeasure with the concept of maritime cultural landscape might be partly due to the fact that much research has been done on cultural landscapes over the last century or so, yet this work is overlooked in Westerdahl’s seminal publication. In some ways, then, as demonstrated by Hunter’s disagreement, the maritime cultural landscape may have created a barrier between maritime and historical archaeology, rather than brought the two disciplines together.

Despite the range of work published in maritime archaeology over the past several decades, the field of maritime archaeology has been criticised for being overly historically particularistic and not in keeping with mainstream philosophical thought (see Gould 1983, 2000; Lenihan and Murphy 1998; Martin 2001). Even though the position of historical particularism has been defended over the years (Bass 1983:91-104; Green 2004:354-357), some archaeologists have attempted to identify the cause of this criticism, and at least two reasons have been identified. First, Lenihan and Murphy (1998:234) claim that the field is overly particularistic because underwater archaeologists are confronted with an environment that requires specialised equipment and technologically novel approaches to fieldwork. Consequently, there has been a tendency “to fixate on narratives of how we came, saw, and conquered,” rather than philosophical interpretations. Second, Staniforth (1999, 2001, 2003) believes that the historical particularism in maritime archaeology is related to two different ways in which people interpret shipwrecks: as a unique time capsule or as an event along a trajectory.

Termed the ‘archaeology of the event,’ Staniforth (1997, 1999, 2003) provides an alternative to the Pompeii premise, a concept that was part of a debate between Binford (1981) and Schiffer (1987) about how shipwreck sites should be interpreted. The Pompeii premise involves viewing shipwrecks as unique time capsules. Staniforth (1999:55) has asserted that the focus on the uniqueness or singularity of shipwreck events has in the past led to negative criticism being levelled at shipwreck archaeology, including charges of ‘historical particularism’. Staniforth reasons that the analysis of shipwrecks and their cargoes as a unique entity only tells us about the transport of goods between one port to another at a particular point of time in the

past. Despite the fact this provides insight into trade and commercial activity and provides a an idea of what objects may have been available to those in a particular port at some particular time in the past, it reveals little about the everyday use of consumer goods by society (Staniforth 1999:5). The second way of interpreting shipwrecks, Staniforth (1999:56) continues, is “to interpret the material culture in the form of the cargo in terms of the societies for which they were bound. This links much more neatly to historical archaeology since it treats the transport of cargo as a single step in a wider trajectory or system of use.”

Staniforth (1997, 1999, 2003) suggests that the work of Ferdinand Braudel (1972), who is part of the French *Annales* school of thought, provides a useful way of linking archaeological evidence, like shipwreck cargoes, to larger global processes (see also Burns 2003; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Delgado 2006, 2009; Gosden 1994; Knapp 1992; Leone 1978; Little 2006; Little and Shackel 1989; Shackel 1993). In *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Braudel (1972) demonstrates how different historical processes function on different temporal planes. Braudel divides these temporal planes into three major hierarchical levels, or time scales: *long durée*, *conjunctures* and *eventamentes* (Braudel 1972:20-21). The *long durée*, or long duration, represents “a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever-recurring cycles” (Braudel 1972:20). This level entails an examination of specific environmental regions and populations over several centuries and is imperceptible to the individual. The next level, *conjunctures*, encompasses social history of particular groups, economic cycles, societies, states, civilisations or warfare and is concerned with slow but perceptible rhythms spanning a period of usually 50-100 years. The third and shortest time level, *eventamentes*, or events, reflects individual actions, such as a voyage, a battle, or a political inauguration, whose “direction can only be discerned by watching them over long periods of time” (Braudel 1972:21). Braudel’s temporal planes are useful because they divide “historical time into environmental time, social time and individual time,” reflecting mentalities, or ways of interpreting human behaviour on different time scales (Braudel 1972:21).

Archaeology has generally been concerned with the *longue durée*, or long-term history, because it accords with long-term episodes of occupation, while interest in short-term history has been much less evident because “much of the archaeological record does not lend itself to event-based interpretations” (Staniforth 2003:104). According to Gosden (1994:9), Braudel’s temporal rhythms are a way of viewing “long term change as a human product, rather than as a result of natural forces

operating in abstract time.” Similarly, Barbara Little (2006:398) asserts, “Braudel’s scales of history are useful archaeologically in providing an organisational framework for considering relationships through time among actions and ideas and material culture.” In this way, Braudel’s time scales can provide a structure for interpreting both small-scale events, specifically shipwrecks, and broader social structures, like capitalism and consumption, as one can not be understood without the context of the other (Knapp 1999:13; Leone 1978:34-35). Since maritime archaeology derives its data from specific events, the archaeology of the event allows for the opportunity to examine groups of people as well as groups of artifacts associated with the ship, cargo, and personal belongings related to a single historical, shipwreck event (Staniforth 2003:104-105). Thus, Staniforth (1999:5) states, “It is necessary to examine artefacts through all stages of their life history from the sites of production through their subsequent trade, transport, selection, purchase, use and disposal or loss to their excavation from archaeological sites.”

Staniforth (1997, 1999, 2003) used the archaeology of the event to examine the shipwrecks *Sydney Cove* (1797), *James Mathews* (1841), *William Salthouse* (1841), and *Eglinton* (1852), all of which were bound for colonial Australia. Staniforth argues that before a consumer society could exist in colonial Australia, sufficient trade routes with which to supply suitable consumer goods had to be established. In this way, he demonstrates that, by looking at several different shipwrecks in terms of their cargo and the consumer society they supported, maritime archaeologists can move beyond particularistic interpretations and make a contribution to the interpretation of human behaviour in general.

Dellino-Musgrave (2006) has most recently utilised the archaeology of the event to analyse the cargo from two shipwrecks - HMS *Sirius* (1790) and HMS *Swift* (1770). She examined these shipwrecks against the backdrop of capitalism, consumerism and colonialism, using the concepts of *habitus* to examine the social action of the British. For example, Dellino-Musgrave (2006:116-177) interprets the high quality ceramics, such as Chinese porcelain teawares and Staffordshire dinnerwares associated with the officers of the HMS *Sirius* and HMS *Swift*, as the *habitus* of people on board and “as part of the conscious and unconscious material trappings of everyday life.” They are the “material manifestation of habitual activities,” reflecting differences in social status amongst those on board, as well as differences between the crew of the ship and other ships’ crews (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:117).

Another recent study by James Delgado (2006, 2009) used archaeology of the event and world systems theory to examine the mid-nineteenth century San Francisco waterfront as an entrepôt. World systems theory examines the development of the modern world system through the relationship of core and peripheral zones (Wallerstein 1974, 1982). Delgado (2006, 2009) and Staniforth (1997, 1999, 2003) both agree that individual shipwrecks can be viewed in terms of the system of trade, or a maritime system, in which it takes place. Through a discussion of archaeological excavations on several ships that were grounded and used as shops along the San Francisco waterfront during the time of the Gold Rush, including *General Harrison*, *Niantic* and *Apollo*, Delgado demonstrates that San Francisco was a true entrepôt in the world maritime system (see Chapter 6). The preservation of these storeships in the archaeological record was related to a unique depositional event – the San Francisco fire of 1851 – but, according to Delgado (2006:39), their true value and importance in interpreting the past lies in their “association with the wider infrastructure of the waterfront, the conjunctures or social processes of the world system in the industrial nineteenth century, and how this relates to the Pacific’s *longue durée*.” The archaeological material recovered from these sites was international in scope, including hats from Australia, silks and porcelain from China, tobacco from the Americas and olives from Spain, and was responsive to San Francisco’s market needs. Additionally, the trading connections and redirection of consumer goods between other entrepôts, such as Valparaiso in Chile, reflected the burgeoning nature of the semi-peripheral zone of San Francisco in this global maritime network.

Jason Burns in *The Life and Times of a Merchant Sailor: The Archaeology and History of the Norwegian Ship Catherine* (2003) used historical documents and archaeological data to document the economic, political and social environments in which this nineteenth-century Pensacola, Florida, shipwreck was employed. He asserts, “It has been the fault of shipwreck archaeologists in the past to focus only on the shipwreck and the wrecking event itself” (Burns 2003:vii). Burns continues, claiming that by placing the shipwreck event of *Catherine* into a broader perspective of nineteenth-century Norwegian ships and their connection to Norwegian maritime economics, the interpretation of the site is put into a perspective that can be fully understood and makes a contribution to cultural history in general. For example, Burns was able to find archaeological evidence of repairs made throughout the ship’s working life, evidence of the Norwegian persistence in getting as many years out of their floating vessels as possible. He explains that a great many Norwegian ship owners found it more economically beneficial to extend the lives of second hand

ships through additions and alterations. The small amount of material culture associated with *Catherine's* crew, on the other hand, represents a commo bare-bones nineteenth century maritime assemblage, with the ceramics and glass representing typical low cost utilitarian wares and an elaborately decorated brass lamp base reflecting “a Victorian worldview caught up in details and ornamentation” (Burns 2003:75).

## **Linking Historical and Maritime Archaeology through the Consumption of Material Culture**

According to Jules David Prown (1993:1), material culture is “the manifestation of culture through material production.” The study of material culture is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on the relationship between people and things; it is the study of objects in order to understand culture (Beaudry et al. 1991; Brauner 2000; Burke 2006; Csikszentmihalyi 1993; Deetz 1977; Ferguson 1977a; Fleming 1974; Gould and Schiffer 1981; Karklins 2000; Lubar and Kingery 1993; Pearce 1989; Prown 1993; Schlereth 1982; Shackel 1993; Staniforth 1999, 2003; Sweeny 1978). Studies of material culture analyse objects made by humans, such as ceramics, paintings, furniture, etc., as well as natural objects modified by humans, including landscapes, gardens and foodways (Prown 1993:2). An artifact is a term used in archaeology to refer to material culture made or modified by humans in the past (Prown 1993:2). Artifacts are a primary link between historical and maritime archaeology because both utilise material culture in order to understand past culture.

Artifacts are objects that were made or modified in the past, but survive into the present (Prown 1993:2). William B. Hesseltine (1982:94) once said that “the history of mankind is marked and measured by artifacts.” It is ironic, then, that Hesseltine also argued that the artifact is not a useful or viable source for understanding the past, contending artifacts are only illustrative, rather than informative (Hesseltine 1982:96), a stance that has come to be known as the Hesseltine position (Schlereth 1982:94). Those who study material culture, on the other hand, believe that artifacts do indeed provide new and insightful evidence of the human past (see Chapter 4). Prown (1993:2-3) believes that “artifacts constitute the only class of historical events that occurred in the past but survive in the present.” In this way artifacts do represent history; they are a primary source of historical data.



As a form of historical data, artifacts impart meaning because material culture is meaningfully constituted, which is to say that an individual produced it with a purpose to do something (Hodder 2003:6; Johnson 1999:98; Tilley 1989:114). In other words, the production of material culture is based on human intentionality (Csikszentmihalyi 1993:21). The goal of the study of material culture is recovering mind, or to understand the meaning of things (Prown 1993:4). This includes the intentionality behind producing an object, how it was used and why it was discarded, as well as wider systems of beliefs that incorporate human beings in their material world. Beliefs are the values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a culture (Prown 1993:1). Mary Beaudry et al. (1991:150) state that artifacts are tangible manifestations of past social relationships, attitudes and behaviours. Prown (1993:1) contends that the basic premise behind the study of material culture is that objects reflect the desires and beliefs of the individuals who produced and consumed them and, by extension, the society as a whole. Prown continues, stating that as underlying cultural assumptions and beliefs tend to be taken for granted or purposefully ignored, they are not manifested so much in what society says does or makes. Instead, they are found in the *way* things are said, done, or made. In other words, they are found in the style of these actions (Prown 1993:4).

Style refers to groups of objects that share formal characteristics (Prown 1993:4). According to Diana di Zerega Wall (1994:138), style is a means of analysing the contours and upkeep of social boundaries between social groups. It is a way of marking group identity. It can also define social arenas in a particular social group, where style is used to display different messages within in a group. Changes in style through time reflect social changes in the meaning and social context in which it was used. It is a type of non-verbal communication based on doing something in a particular way that informs on relative identity (Weissner 1990:106-107; Hodder 1990:45). Hodder's (1990:45) argues that style is a "way of doing," in which "doing" includes the activities of thinking, feeling, and being. Weissner (1990) builds on this idea by adding a communicative role to style in the construction of relative identities. Archaeologists analyse style "as a composite or group process whereby one batch of elements (e.g., individuals, households, sites) distinguish itself from another batch according to some set of culturally defined and situation dependent rules..." (MacDonald 1990:53). As Weissner (1990:107) goes on to claim, "Stylistic comparison mirrors social comparison. When people compare their ways of doing things with those of others, they also compare themselves with those others and decide whether to simulate, differentiate, emulate...they decide how to negotiate their relative identity." Therefore, as Conkey and Hastorf (1990:1) assert, "Style is

not separate from the social contexts that give the cultural materials in question their social value.”

The meaning of material culture is temporally and spatially dependent. MacDonald (1990:52) explains that “social context defines the limits and modal constraints on the appropriateness of social behaviours [sic]; human social behaviour [sic] is situational and context dependent. Since patterns of social behaviour [sic] vary among particular situations, then it follows that style will also vary among social situations.” He continues to argue that variation expressed in material items is multi-referential, meaning that a single item can have a variety of messages depending on the social context in which that item is used (MacDonald 1990:53-53).

Staniforth (1999, 2003) echoes this temporality and spatiality in the meaning of things, but he goes further to add that the meaning of material culture is both embedded and attached. “Embedded meanings relate primarily to individual, culturally ingrained behaviours and habits that are largely taken for granted rather than consciously negotiated...” while “attached meanings...are mainly concerned with the construction and negotiation of social relationships...and can only exist if they are shared with others within the society” (Staniforth 1999:2). Although material culture has these meanings, supplementary materials, such as texts, are often required to ascribe contextual meaning to objects (see Chapter 4) (Andr n 1998:149). This is because the meaning of material culture can be quite complex and can shift over time (Andr n 1998:148; Kopytoff 1989:64; Maquet 1993:35; Orser 1996:116; Shanks and Tilley 1988:114).

In other words, artifacts have life histories; they are social things that exemplify spatial complexity along a trajectory from production to consumption, while at the same time often exemplifying temporal complexity over the course of these artifacts’ life histories (Kopytoff 1989). Orser (1996) expresses a similar argument. He interprets commodities as “the physical embodiment of human relationships” (Orser 1996:113). This means that they are not simply objects; rather, they are the link between individuals and societies. Orser (1996:113) writes,

At a bare minimum, a commodity involves two individuals: one willing to dispose of the commodity and one willing to obtain it. If the person who trades the object is not its manufacturer, then the commodity links three people. If the person who acquires the object is working as someone else’s agent, then four individuals are joined together through the one, seemingly inanimate commodity. Thus, we

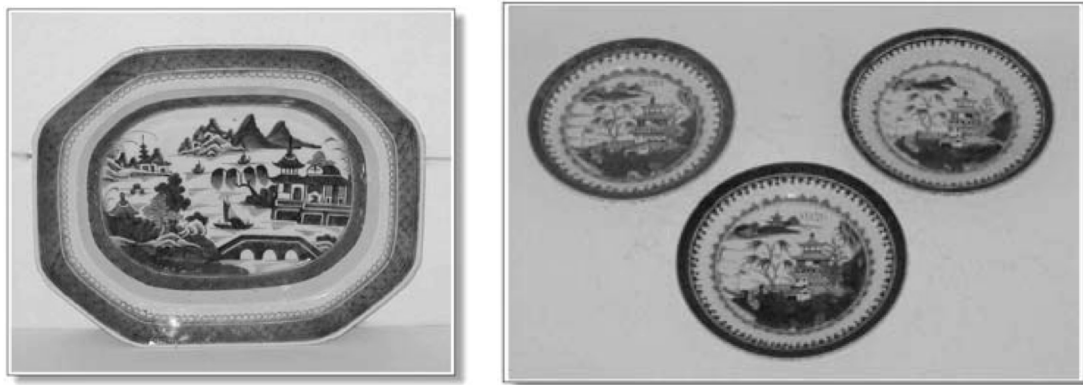
can easily see that commodities are social things. They are mutualist to the core.

This idea can be further exemplified when considering ship cargoes. Traditionally, it has been thought that one could generalise about society based on shipwreck cargoes and that these trade items represent what was used or important at that time (Bass 1983:97-98). At a superficial level this is true, but what is often overlooked is that a merchant on prospect frequently handpicked his cargoes, like those that were carried as part of the Spice Trade (see Chapter 5). Merchants were both the agents in selecting and providing consumer goods for the general public, and also the consumers of these goods (Goodwin 1999:11-12; Mrozowski 1988:189). As Goodwin (1999) has shown, a merchant based his purchase choice on his perception of necessity and seemingly fashionable material culture in that particular society. I believe that what a merchant perceived as fashionable or desirable was based both on other purchases made by other merchants (competition) and material culture bought and used by consumers (consumption). Therefore, ship cargoes not only represent what consumers considered to be important during that time, but also the individual choices of merchants based on their perception of what was in demand or fashionable. A merchant's perception of the world, in turn, influenced what consumer goods were important to society. Thus, shipwrecks should not be considered a passive reflection of society, but an active link in the complex chain of individual choices, decisions and symbolic meanings that underlay the capitalist system and its consumption-driven needs (Dellino-Musgrave 2006:26; see also Adams 2001).

Another way of considering the symbolic meaning of material culture is through reading artifacts as instruments or signs (Hodder 1992, 2003; Maquet 1993). According to Jacques Maquet (1993) an object as an instrument considers its design and place in the social and physical environment, while an object as a sign considers the meaning of an object in a particular culture (see also Hunt 1993). Paralleling Hodder's (2003) contextual archaeology, Maquet (1993:39) also reasons that objects should be read like a text. However, as Kouwenhoven (1982:83) remarks, words by themselves are only generalisations of objects, "at best a sort of generalized, averaged-out substitute for a complex reality comprising an infinite number of particular realities." For example, consider a set of six hand-painted Chinese porcelain bowls decorated in the Canton style and another set decorated in the Nanking style (see Figure 2). Although each bowl is unique in that they were hand-painted by an individual, who by nature is incapable of executing every stroke

exactly the same, the decorative style is similar because they were decorated according to a shared stylistic template. In other words, despite minor differences in strokes of paint, they are generally painted in either the Canton or Nanking decorative style. Words like ‘Canton’ or ‘Nanking,’ when used to describe a specific decorative style, only have meaning when communicated to someone who has a shared sense of the palate from which this generalising word was drawn (Kouwenhoven 1982:85). The particulars of things, on the other hand, are best understood by way of our existential experiences, specifically through sight, touch, feel, sound and taste (Kouwenhoven 1982:85; Staniforth 2003:25). Staniforth (2003:25) believes that it is not possible to successfully and completely reduce things to words:

The illustrations, photographs, descriptions and even interpretation of material culture can only provide the reader with a partial impression of the total physicality of a single object. It can not substitute for all of the sensory input associated with actually handling objects with all aspects of their three dimensional nature and their subtle differences in colour, decoration or texture.



**Figure 2.** Photographs of a Chinese porcelain sided platter decorated in the Canton style [left] and three Chinese porcelain plates decorated in the Nanking style [right], all of which were recovered from the *Ontario* shipwreck (reproduced from Brown and Thammapreechakorn 2005:4)

According to Susan Lawrence (1998:8), there are three broad groups of material culture studies – empirical, ethnographic and cognitive. Empirical studies stress the

“identification, chronology and typology of artifacts,” rather than interpretation and are heavily relied upon by archaeologists to properly identify artifacts (Cochran and Beaudry 2006:193; Lawrence 1998:8). More often than not, empirical studies focus on a certain type of artifact studied in isolation from other artifacts and the context within which they were found (Lawrence 1998:8). Empirical studies in historical archaeology have in the past focused on artifacts such as gunflints (Kenmotsu 1990), trade beads (Stine et al. 1996) and metal cans (Maxwell 1993), among others.

Concerning empirical studies in maritime archaeology, shipwrecks and their accompanying artifacts more often than not have a securely dated context, while similar artifacts from archaeological investigations can often times be more difficult to precisely date (Staniforth 2006:27). For instance, Julie Curtis (1988) discusses how shipwrecks can be used to establish chronologies of ceramics, specifically a *terminus post quem*. Additionally, for a number of behavioural and taphonomic reasons, artifact assemblages from terrestrial sites are often skewed, and shipwreck assemblages provide a unique opportunity to examine more complete and representative artifact assemblages (Staniforth 2006:27). Unfortunately, maritime archaeologists have only produced a few artifact catalogues, including that of the shipwrecks *Machault* (1760) (Sullivan 1986), HMS *Sirius* (1786) (Stanbury 1994), *Eglinton* (1852) (Stanbury 2003) and *Pandora* (1791) (Campbell and Gesner 2000) (for further discussion see Staniforth 2006).

The second type of material culture study, ethnographic, concerns the analysis of everyday material life and is an approach widely used by scholars in museum studies, history and art history (Lawrence 1998:8). In historical archaeology, ethnographic studies, for example, have been concerned with how a certain group of people dressed (e.g. Mann and Loren 2001; Parrington et al. 1984), what they ate and what types of dinnerware they used (e.g. Adams and Boling 1989; Baker 1978; Brighton 2001; Cembrola 1984; Ferguson 1977b; Martin 1989; Miller and Stone 1970; Otto 1977; Sussman 2000; Wall 1994), as well as how they furnished their homes (e.g. Mann and Loren 2001).

In maritime archaeology, as Staniforth (2006:28) posits, ethnographic studies have great potential for addressing daily shipboard life (e.g. Cembrola 1984; Corbin 2000). For example, excavations on HMS *Orpheus*, which ran aground off Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1778, revealed a small amount of Chinese porcelain, specifically plate fragments and saucer fragments, amongst other English produced

utilitarian stoneware, redware, creamware and earthenware (Cembrola 1984:89). Cembrola (1984:89) maintains that officers and seamen were of significantly different socio-economic status and this is reflected in the artifacts. Those on the lower end of the socio-economic strata would likely not consider ceramics an important thing to bring to sea, while officers could afford fine ceramics and were expected to use them along with the proper dining rituals to reflect their socio-economic calibre. The appearance of fine eating and drinking wares aboard *Orpheus*, “reflects a conscious effort by Captain Hudson and his officers to recreate a segment of English life and perhaps ameliorate the stresses of war and separation from family” (Cembrola 1984:89).

The third broad category of material culture studies deals with the cognitive aspects of material culture, and is founded upon the premise that material culture serves to embody codes of meaning that must be mastered by those who would use it to facilitate communication at a symbolic level with others familiar with the language (Lawrence 1998:8). James Deetz was one of the first historical archaeologists to explore cognitive aspects of varied types of material culture in his seminal study *In Small Things Forgotten* (1977). Other studies, such as *Mangling Symbols of Gentility in the Wild West* (2001) by Praetzellis and Praetzellis, *Personal Discipline and Material Culture* (1993) by Paul Shackel and *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital* (2005) by Mark Leone, explore how a particular style of material culture has been used as a symbol for etiquette to negotiate social relations. Others, such as Rob Mann and Diana DiPaolo (2001) and Susan Lawrence (1998) have used the concept of *habitus* to explain how people used material culture as a way to create and maintain social distinctions. In maritime archaeology, Staniforth (1999, 2003) has paved the way for others (Burns 2003; Delgado 2006; Dellino-Musgrave 2006), by exploring the symbolic meaning of things through shipwreck cargoes in the shadow of larger processes like capitalism and consumption. Staniforth has further argued that the consumption of goods played an integral role in social differentiation for Australian colonists (see Chapter 3).

Despite the increasing interest in recovering mind, Susan Lawrence (1998:9) argues that material culture studies, at least in Australian historical archaeology, tend to fall into the first category of empirical studies. She discusses how archaeologists have failed to engage material culture analytically because (1) artifact analysis is rarely completed after excavation, and (2) if it is completed, it only plays a minor role in the interpretation of the site. In addition to this, collections that are analysed are rarely analysed again, in spite of the fact that archaeologists continue to insist

museums keep collections for safekeeping when new theories and methods come about that can tell us something new.

In maritime archaeology, the consideration of the symbolic meaning of material culture has only recently been paired with notions that shipwrecks should be seen as a point along a wider trajectory and used to interpret the impact of larger global process, such as capitalism and consumerism, at local or regional scales (Burns 2003; Dellino-Musgrave 2006; Delgado 2006; Staniforth 1996, 1997, 1999, 2003). Because most ships were involved in transporting material goods, maritime archaeology seems ideally situated to explore larger global processes, like the four haunts of historical archaeology, through the material culture found on shipwrecks. The archaeology of the event provides a tool to view the shipwreck as a unit of analysis along a trajectory from production to consumption. Ship cargoes represent individual choices of merchants based on their perception of what was in demand or fashionable. They are not necessarily visible in consumer society because consumer goods become more dispersed in space the further they progress along a trajectory from the point of production and initial acquisition to the point where they are used and discarded. However, it is only by following these goods along this trajectory that we can interpret their everyday use and changing symbolic meanings. Thus, it is important to consider the society for which a ship is bound and, as such, to combine maritime and historical archaeological evidence to see how the meaning of small things at the local and regional level can provide new insights about larger processes like capitalism and consumerism at the global level.

## **Conclusion**

Historical archaeology deals with the modern world, and as such it is particularly suited to address the four haunts of archaeology (global colonialism, Eurocentrism, capitalism, and modernity) in light of small-scale interpretations. Maritime archaeology also deals predominantly with sites associated with the modern age, and as such should be concerned with the four haunts of historical archaeology to a greater extent than is presently the case. Since maritime archaeology deals with trade, and most shipwrecks occurred during transport, maritime archaeology should be concerned with using the material culture associated with shipwrecks to address larger global processes like the four haunts of historical archaeology. It is material culture that links historical and maritime archaeology in that if shipwreck cargoes are

considered as a single step along a wider trajectory of system of use, then maritime archaeology serves to fill a 'missing link' between the historical archaeological approaches to these artifacts at their point of production and at their point of consumption. Thus, artifacts recovered from shipwreck sites, when considered in conjunction with other shipwrecks and the insights provided through historical archaeology, are more easily situated within a context of longer time scales and larger global processes, which in turn make more apparent the fluidity of symbolic meaning in time and space.