A Desire for Fired Clay from Far Away: Analysis of Ceramics from a Seventeenth-Century Domestic Site in Bridgetown, Barbados

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A Desire for Fired Clay from Far Away: Analysis of Ceramics from a Seventeenth-Century Domestic Site in Bridgetown, Barbados

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary
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Master of Arts

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Barbados was considered to be the wealthiest English colony during the seventeenth century because of extensive sugar production for a demanding market in Europe at the time. The wealth accumulated from sugar in Barbados attracted many merchants whom traded various goods with the resource-starved colonists in exchange for sugar. Yet, the Barbadian colonists were not just passive recipients of goods from a hierarchical world system with Europe at the top and Barbados at the bottom. People living on the island probably had more choice in who they traded with and what they obtained from trade in terms of style or fashion than what has been believed. These choices made for different reasons would have the power to exert force on those at the top of the world system. In order to understand how the Barbadians negotiated their economic and social standing on a local and global scale, artifacts from the Jubilee Gardens archaeology site were analyzed. At the site, archaeologists discovered wall remnants and artifacts associated with a seventeenth century wealthy household. Out of the thousands of collected artifacts, ceramics were specifically analyzed to understand consumerism on the island. Slipwares, German stonewares, Delftware, and rare porcelain along with primary and secondary written sources provided information in how the house owner(s) and wealthy Barbadians in general lived. The ceramics and sources indicate that the Barbadians had strong trading ties with the Dutch, which caused England to react by making all trade with foreign nations illegal. The Barbadians continued to trade with the Dutch despite heavy restrictions for economic reasons and possibly duty. The household owner(s) not only traded with the Dutch, but obtained some ceramics that conveyed ideals of status or followed larger trends found in Europe and other ceramics that displayed almost the opposite. These results show that the settlers in the Barbados colony were active consumers making choices, which affected the economic and social scenes found on local, regional, and global scales, in the growing system of Capitalism.
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For my parents, Steve and Denise Gibson
And for my little sister Katie
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2005, construction began on Jubilee Gardens as part of the Urban Renewal Project in Bridgetown. The project was created for the purposes of beautifying the city for the upcoming Cricket World Cup. During construction, archaeologists and students took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the history and people of Bridgetown and to excavate three units. Excavations in one unit revealed the cobbled stone surface, which once belonged to a public market place that operated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In another unit, excavation extended below strata associated with the market. What archaeologists discovered were the remains of an English household from the seventeenth century, a time when the Barbados colony prospered.

The Jubilee Gardens site provides a unique opportunity to study a seventeenth-century English colonial settlement on a local and global scale through the examination of an excavated ceramics collection. The inhabitants of the site were not only members of a global network of trade, but their choice of ceramics made them active participants in the development of Atlantic exchanges. It is the choices that they made that, using a multi-scalar approach, can show how Barbados fit into a growing world economic system and how individuals negotiated their place in that system.

The evidence from Jubilee Gardens indicates that early colonists in Barbados were tightly interwoven with Atlantic trade networks and that they had access to the most expensive and fashionable ceramics from Europe and elsewhere. The wealth generated by
sugar, Barbados’ location along trade routes, and the eminent position of Barbados within the Atlantic trades facilitated the Barbadian’s access to such fashionable goods. Yet, the impact was not unidirectional. The demand for fashionable ceramics and other goods helped stimulate pottery industries, shipping, and merchant activity in Europe. Controlling the power of this trade led British parliament to restrict Barbadians from trading with strangers, especially the Dutch, who were instrumental in stimulating Barbados’ economy in the early years of settlement. Yet, despite these restrictions, Barbadians continued to seek and acquire fashionable ceramics from foreign traders. The need for fashionable tableware in the transient and sociable environment of Bridgetown fueled the licit and illicit trade in fashionable ceramics. The desire for Dutch ceramics may also reflect the Barbadians’ good opinion of the Dutch, who saved the island’s economy from collapse during the early years of settlement. The Barbadians, in short, desired things that were “Dutch.” The access to such luxury goods is evident in the archaeological assemblage from Jubilee Gardens.

In order to understand the role of Barbadian colonists in shaping the emerging Atlantic trade I will draw on archaeological evidence, as well as primary and secondary documentary sources concerning the role of Barbados in the Atlantic world. Chapter 2 synthesizes world systems theory and outlines its strengths and weaknesses giving special attention to the issue of human agency. The world systems model provides a fitting framework for understanding Barbadian consumer demands and its impact in the broader Atlantic world. In chapter 3, I will examine the history of Barbados highlighting the nature of trade and trade relations with the British and the Dutch. I will also provide a
brief history of the seventeenth-century component of the site and concentrate on defining the character of this Bridgetown neighborhood. Chapter 4 investigates most of the archaeological data associated with the site including information about the excavation, artifacts, dates, and problems with the data. It will also include a detailed analysis of ceramic types. In chapter 5, I will bring all bodies of information together to shed new light on the way Barbadian consumers who inhabited the Jubilee Gardens site over three hundred years ago shaped trade networks in this emerging Atlantic economy.
World systems theory was developed after a growing interest in studies on colonialism and a desire to analyze cultures of the past and present on a global scale. Immanuel Wallerstein is the sociologist most cited as the father of world systems theory. In his three-volume work, *The Modern World System* (1974), Wallerstein addressed unequal exchange in a closed world system. He identified capitalism as the basis for the modern world system (due to the lack of other world systems since the 16th century) and examined the unique failure of capitalism to move from a world economy to a world empire. He proceeded to use an evolutionary model to create three types of geographic/economic locales based on differential forms of labor that were created through the world economic system. Wallerstein named these the core, semi-periphery, and periphery.

The *core* is defined by Wallerstein as having a centralized government and bourgeois capitalists controlling labor in the periphery. The core is able to exert force on the periphery through government legislation, military action, or other means to extract raw materials through the use of cheap labor. The *periphery* is dependent on the core. The periphery lacks a centralized government and is comprised of people stuck in a system of unequal exchange. People in the periphery are exploited for labor and such labor is used to recover valuable raw resources that are sent to the core through unequal trading. The *semi-periphery* is defined as being somewhere in between the core and periphery. The semi-periphery is considered to be either a periphery that has gained
enough political or economic power to have an advantageous relationship with another periphery, but unable to rise to the level of a core or was once a core that has lost political or economic power.

Through these three categories, wealth, power, resources, and energy flow unequally to and from each place with the core exerting force down on the semi-periphery and the periphery. The periphery is exploited to extract raw materials and produce goods that end up in the semi-periphery and finally core.

A flaw of the evolutionary model is that it creates a scheme in which power and change flows in one direction, from the core to the periphery. For example, if a major change in material demands occurs in the core then a domino effect takes place in which the change trickles down to the semi-periphery and then eventually to the periphery. Anthropological theorists have challenged Wallerstein’s unidirectional model to argue that the direction of change is not only from metropolitan core to satellite periphery, but also from the periphery to the core as groups in the periphery can also induce change and influence at the metropolitan core. Also, the core-semi-periphery-periphery breakdown ignores the different political, economic, and social relationships that encircle the semi-periphery. Finally, there was an added assumption that the single system of capitalism equally impacted and influenced everyone, everything, and every region of the world. Given that Wallerstein defined a social system as something internally oriented, Eric Wolf pointed out that the world system described in Wallerstein’s work seemed to be limitless in its spreading and operation (1982).

As one of the more famous political economists, Wolf in his book *Europe and the*
People without History (1982) recounted that classic world system theories failed to observe the reaction or even the existence of local cultures or those outside of the European domain – the “people without history”. The move to use world systems was initially embraced to understand processes occurring beyond the local, but for Wolf, the local perspective was ignored. Instead, Wolf believed consideration needed to be given to how the ‘subjugated’ peoples of the world played a role in shaping capitalism and the history of the modern world. Not only does the local need to be acknowledged, but the unit of analysis for studying the various scales needed to be converted from Wallerstein’s ideas of labor to the greater Marxist notion of modes of production, the way social labor is deployed to extract energy from nature, which Wolf argues was unnecessarily overlooked in favor of discussion of labor differences.

Towards a Global Perspective in Historical Archaeology

In historical archaeology, studies of world systems are widely used, but have changed over the past 50 years since the field of historical archaeology emerged. The most notable of these changes is the use of the term “global”, to replace “world” and the concept of core/periphery hierarchies, to refer to any systems or processes that have occurred on a large world scale. Like Wallerstein, historical archaeologists in the past few decades have embraced interpretations that go beyond the local or regional to produce global historical archaeologies (Deetz 1991; Falk 1991; Orser 1996; Schuyler 1988).

focuses on global connections that he describes as nets. These networks or webs of
interaction constitute near- and long-distant relationships and connections formed
between individuals, groups, and cultures. The nets tend to be finely and intricately
woven, have different sized meshes (Barnes 1954), and many overlap. For the
archaeologist, it is nearly impossible to study all aspects of one single net without being
led to other nets or getting lost in a massive amount of data and sites. Nets are also
mutualistic in that individuals act and react to each other within a group (Carrithers
1992). For archaeologists to understand global processes, it is necessary to know that nets
are abundant and are a complex weaving of social connections and exchanges. Orser also
identifies four “haunts” or themes of the modern world that are persistently present when
studying nets and are nearly impossible to ignore for historical archaeologists (1996). The
haunts or subjects identified are: colonialism, Eurocentrism, capitalism, and modernity.

As already mentioned, a social system is enclosed and bounded, but what else
constitutes a social system? According to Wallerstein, a social system “has boundaries,
structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence” (Wallerstein 1974: 347).
A social system is also self-contained and mostly internal so that if the system was to
operate without any sort of “external force”, the system should function about the same
as before (Ibid). For example, if a particular periphery suddenly interacted exclusively
with the core that created it and no other cores, semi-peripheries, or other peripheries,
then the political, economic, or social relationship between the periphery and core should
remain fairly unchanged. In addition to Wallerstein’s definition, when a change occurs in
the social system, the change spreads to all parts of the system and quite possibly to other
systems (Johnson 1999). Considering these points of intellectual tension, modernity and Eurocentrism do not fall under the category of systems, but colonialism and capitalism do.

The archaeology of colonialism has been the subject of research since the establishment of historical archaeology as a field and continues strong to this day. It has been reinforced by the recent surge in postcolonial theory. Colonialism itself is difficult to define, both as a social system, and in the grand picture of world systems, due to its more political nature. It is a system of domination that requires the help of other social systems to proceed. In the modern world, colonialism and capitalism are inseparable due to the continuing need for resources and cheap labor. However, if colonialism is a social system that is maintained by the association and use of other systems, can it really be a social system according to Wallerstein’s definition where the social system is self-contained and operational on its own? If capitalism was not an integral part of colonialism in the past, would it continue to function or would there even be a need for colonizing?

The largest body of literature pertaining to world systems and focusing on political economy is devoted to capitalism. Like Wallerstein and Wolf, capitalism is the central subject of analyzing the modern world. A vast range of approaches and studies have developed on the subject of historical capitalism and its presence in archaeology. What unites these archaeologies of capitalism is the idea that historical archaeology and capitalism go hand and hand (Leone 1999) or all sites of the modern age can be related to each other through this world system (Little 2007). Another idea not often argued in
regards to historical archaeology and capitalism is that historical archaeology and an
archaeology of capitalism are really the same thing (Paynter 1988).

An archaeology of capitalism consists of several research foci. First, there is the
more obvious aspect of labor, production, and means of production, but this is not solely
an issue addressed by historical archaeology. The subjects of inequality and materiality
comprise the other main part involved in studying capitalism in historical archaeology.

Inequality is a product of differential access to or control of power and resources.
According to Wallerstein, inequality is derived from labor (1974); for Wolf, it is means
of production within the capitalist mode of production (1982). Archaeologists have taken
a special interest in capitalism because of the effects of inequality found in gender, class,
race, and ethnicity (Delle 2000; Leone 1999; Little 2007). In the Preface of Lines that
Divide, “any consideration of class, race, or gender in colonial and postcolonial societies
must begin with the forces of capitalism” (Delle 2000: xiv). These four areas fall
naturally under studies of modern inequality since they are created and given identity
through capitalist inequality. According to Mark Leone (1999), identity is a product of
inequality; therefore, identity can also be addressed through capitalism.

The topic of inequality and all of its implications can be further analyzed by
materiality. James Delle, Stephen Mrozowski, and Robert Paynter all argue that, “as a
field concerned with the material dimensions of capitalism, historical archaeology must
examine how material culture relates to the social categories constructed within the
capitalist system, particularly race, class, and gender” (2000: xiv). Because of the Marxist
overtones of capitalism studies, the study of material culture is a logical focus. Materials
found in the archaeological record once held or still retain meaning and symbolism. These meanings and symbols reveal the underpinnings and connections of capitalism. In some of Leone’s works (1984, 1995), he shows how space, structures, and objects displayed certain ideologies that signaled to certain audiences, wealth, power, or control. However, issues with Leone’s work, other than his minimal references to archaeology, tend to only have a top-down interpretation based on his focus on rich, distinguished white men in the Chesapeake region.

Leone’s focus raises problems with interpretation, such as Eurocentrism, which is a primary drawback to world systems. Like its relatives in structuralism and functionalism, world systems theory fails to recognize individual or group agency at the local level (Gosden 2004). Agency at its most basic level has been defined as the active strategies of individuals (Johnson 1999). However, this definition fails to acknowledge the actions by groups of people, whom may share common ideas and wishes that are in conflict with social rules, structures, systems, etc. Using a combination of some of the more significant definitions, including those of Giddens (1979) and Bourdieu (1977), agency in relation to world systems theory for the purposes of this thesis will refer to the action or reaction people make for and against internal and external events, forces, cultures, and systems.

As an example of agency in world systems theory, an archaeologist can ask how an individual resisted the onslaught of capitalism. Yet, how can agency or resistance be detected in the archaeological record or even determined to be so? The question is more of an issue addressed by postcolonial theory, the binary opposite of world systems. Chris
Gosden (2004) sees that world systems theory lacks the ability or has failed to observe agency to the same extent that postcolonial theory has had when examining colonialism.

Matthew Johnson examined capitalism, but in a different way than other archaeologists. Johnson in *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (1996) approached agency within the capitalist world system. He points out that capitalism did not equally penetrate the minds of all the English and covert them into owners of enclosed land, Georgian style houses, complete sets of patterned ceramics, or moveable chairs. Instead, Johnson argued that individuals in the past were active consumers with the ability to choose or resist the various manifestations of capitalism. The English individual did not have to partake in or adhere to the styles associated with individualism. If someone wanted to become involved with the individualism movement, he/she did not have to participate or consume in all aspects of it. Some aspects of individualism and capitalism were resisted through the avoidance of purchasing particular goods or even through retaining older traditions and practices that may have been seen as illogical.

For Johnson, one of the keys for archaeologists to understanding consumption and individual choice is to comprehend the meaning of materiality. As seen in the capitalist-associated trend of individualism, material objects, such as complete sets of Wedgwood ceramics, were bought and used for the meaning, or possible new meaning, with which they were imbued. The meanings of materials were advertised, heightened, and directed towards an increasingly literate population. The presence of a certain material object signaled messages about identity to a growing consumer public. Yet, material meaning was also renegotiated by consumers to satisfy individual needs or beliefs that may have
challenged larger stylistic trends. For example, Johnson argues that the presence of a Medieval piece of pottery set on the fireplace mantle of a Georgian style home was a challenge to the consumer revolution (1996). Other examples include an asymmetrical Georgian Order house, an enclosed community piece of land, or a complete dinnerware set with non-matching patterns. These cases show agency through consumption choice and yet still address the larger implications of the capitalist world system. Johnson (1996) and other historical archaeologists (Gosden 2004; Leone 1999) have made great efforts through careful wording to recognize that global systems, like capitalism, did not affect everyone or everyplace in the same way or to the same degree over time. Global systems of the past had a great influence, but it must not be forgotten that there were individuals with a will of their own and groups participating in these systems.

Archaeological evidence from Bridgetown, Barbados provides a unique opportunity to explore issues of world systems and agency in a tropical periphery. While clearly a colonial satellite of the metropolitan English core, Barbados was an experiment in colonial tenacity and enterprise. It was an exile for political prisoners at home and the first British New World colony to adopt African slave labor on a major scale. As a periphery, however, its production of sugar greatly shaped the English core. As Eric Williams (1944) and Sidney Mintz (1985) have shown, Barbadian sugar production helped fuel the industrial revolution in the core and altered the taste of British metropolitan consumers. Bridgetown was the interface between core and periphery, and a huge amount of wealth flowed through its port. The study of elite ceramic materials in Bridgetown sheds light on this emerging Atlantic economic system and the agency of
individuals within it.
Chapter 3: Historic Background of Barbados and the Jubilee Gardens Site

In Bridgetown, Barbados, in the seventeenth century, wealthy individuals were tightly woven into the fabric of the Atlantic system of trade. Though a satellite of English colonialism, the wealth generated by sugar production and the constant flow of travelers fostered close political, economic, social, religious, and ideological connections with the English core. In many ways, Bridgetown was merely an extension of London, and Barbadian elite in the city sought to recreate their urban homeland in this new Caribbean environment. For example, the use of London place names in Bridgetown, such as Cheapside, reveals the efforts of English colonists in Barbados to maintain national and cultural links to the English core. Bridgetown was for all intents and purposes a tropical London. Yet, Barbadian elite consumers in the city were not entirely wedded to the English system of trade. In the early years of settlement, they had foreign options in their business transactions, especially with Dutch traders, and agency in their choice of material comforts. These choices are evident in the archaeological record from seventeenth-century sites in Bridgetown.

Sugar and Trade

The island of Barbados was discovered by the Portuguese or Spanish in the 16th century and settled by the English some years later in 1627. For the English, the island was unique when compared to the other colonies in the Caribbean in that the island’s native inhabitants had been wiped out by Spanish-introduced disease and slave raiding prior to the arrival of the English (Hoyos 1978). The emptiness of the island allowed the English colonists to quickly settle in and begin extensive agriculture practices on the
fertile land without threats of attack from a native population (Beckles 2006; McFarlane 1994). Because colonists used most of the land for profitable crops, such as tobacco, cotton, and indigo, the settlers of Barbados lacked the means to properly support the population in food provisions (Harlow 1926; McFarlane 1994). As a result, the Barbadians were forced to import foods and other provisions to sustain a comfortable English lifestyle in the tropics. For several decades, the colonists’ needs were met by traders from the English motherland, as well as her economic rival, the Dutch.

The Dutch were a significant source of trade for Barbados in several ways. First, the Dutch rescued the colony from absolute economic collapse. The tobacco produced on the island was considered to be of poor quality and it paid a very high duty in Europe (Harlow 1926). Because of these factors, Barbadian tobacco was the least preferred, compared to Virginia tobacco, by consumers in England and even failed to sell well in the Netherlands (Puckrein 1984). The tobacco crops did not create much profit for the struggling Barbadian colony. Things reached an all time low when tobacco prices fell in England, which forced Barbadians to seek new crops (McFarlane 1994). Cotton and indigo replaced tobacco in the late 1630s and 1640s, but they faced similarly poor results due to sharp price declines in England. At about the same time, the Dutch, who had traded with Barbadians since the first days of settlement, began to lose control over their rich sugar producing colonies in Brazil and were in need of a new source of sugar (Beckles 2006; Puckrein 1984). When the Dutch saw that the Barbadians were failing to produce a sufficient cash crop and had an interest in sugar, they seized the opportunity to expand their commerce and reestablish their sugar industries in Barbados (Harlow 1926;
The Sugar Revolution

Sugarcane was introduced to Barbados during the early years of settlement, but the Barbadians lacked the knowledge and proper equipment to produce refined sugar. Realizing this problem, the Dutch passed on the knowledge of sugar production and refining they had obtained from the successful sugar plantations in Brazil. They also took Barbadians on guided tours through Brazilian sugar factories, gave them credit, and trained Barbadians in the art of sugar making so that they could produce high quality, marketable sugar (Beckles 2006; Harlow 1926; Hoyos 1978). From the Dutch, the sugar planters of Barbados acquired the needed equipment, as well as the enslaved African laborers needed to cultivate, harvest, and process the sugarcane crops. Labor was an important component of a successful sugar industry because sugarcane is a labor-intensive crop. Enslaved workers became the primary source of labor after the decline in the number of poor indentured immigrants, whom provided the basis for labor in the early years of settlement (McFarlane 1994). The early relationship that developed between the Barbadians and the Dutch was symbiotic: the Barbadians now had obtained the ability to produce a highly popular and profitable crop and the Dutch now had quality sugar to sell to the expanding European market. The Dutch also benefited by having wealthy Barbadian consumers heavily dependent on outside sources for their basic goods. Dutch merchants became a source for just about everything the Barbadians needed or wanted. They brought food, beverages, textiles, ceramics, glass, firearms, luxury items, and anything else that would help the Barbadian planters survive and live comfortably.
Yet, if the Dutch were such an important part of the success of the island, what was the influence of English merchants in Barbados? In the early years of the settlement, London merchants showed little interest in Barbados. In the 1640s, civil war shook England, which limited the availability of English supplies and provisions (McFarlane 1989). Also, Barbadians preferred the Dutch traders to the London merchants. According to one author, “The islanders here much desire commerce with strangers, our English merchants traffiquing to those parts being generally great extortioners” (Butler 1655 cited in Harlow 1926 and Israel 1989). The Dutch merchants sold similar goods at much lower prices than their English rivals. Not only did the Dutch traders undersell English merchants, but trade with England came with added taxes.

Larry Gragg (2003) argues that, despite the emphasis on the Dutch traders, English merchants played a key role in financing the sugar revolution and provided much needed supplies to the Barbadians. Gragg acknowledges the Dutch presence and influence in early Barbados, but believes most of the credit for the success of the sugar industry and survival of the colony belongs to the many brave English entrepreneurs who set out to trade with the colony (Ibid). To what extent did both the English and Dutch contribute to the financial success of the Barbadian colony? Clearly, the Dutch did play a significant role in shaping the Barbadian economy. The Dutch influence was so great that Britain’s Parliament took legal action against Dutch trade and even went to war with the Netherlands on three separate occasions (the First Anglo-Dutch War 1652-4, the Second 1665-67, and the Third 1672-74) in order to gain dominance in world trade.
Trade Restrictions and Reactions

Because of the large amount of trade with foreigners, as well as controversial political movements occurring in Barbados, the English sought to curtail and eliminate the competition in their own colonies. In 1650, an embargo or Act of Trade was placed on Barbados and a few other colonies as an act of punishment for engaging in trade with foreign merchants and “because of their rebellion against the Commonwealth and Government of England” (Beckles 2006; Harlow 1926). The Barbadian planters responded to this action with a declaration addressed to Parliament. In terms of foreign trade, they said that the Dutch saved the colony from ruin and brought the colonists “necessary comfort...dayly (sic.)” at a low cost (Declaration of 1651 cited in Harlow 1926).

Somewhat later, the most significant piece of legislation imposed on the English colonies in terms of trade was passed: the Navigation Act of 1651. The Navigation Act proclaimed that goods are to only be carried by English ships or ships coming from English colonies. The Navigation Act was meant to cut out the Dutch middleman and any interaction between the colonies and foreign merchants by forcing the colonies to make direct transitions with England. Along with the Act, came new or increased duties on certain goods. In a Wallersteinian sense, the British core sought to ensure that Barbados was her periphery and the Navigation Act was aimed at controlling the periphery by reducing foreign influence.

The initial reaction from Barbadians was somewhat relaxed considering their
great reliance on foreign trade. The reason was that the Barbadians essentially ignored the Act and continued to trade with the Dutch or any foreign ship with cheap goods. They saw that there was little to no English military presence to enforce the Act, and, thus, continued to trade with strangers (Harlow 1926; McFarlane 1989). In the 1650s, Parliament sent several military expeditions to Barbados to surprise and seize foreign vessels found trading in Barbadian waters. An expedition in 1651, for example, resulted in the capture of 24 vessels (Israel 1989). At least 32 foreign vessels were captured in subsequent expeditions (Harlow 1926). The turning point of trade and the enforcement of the Navigation Act was after 1655 when there is a sharp decline in the number of foreign vessels present in Barbados (Israel 1989). Surprise seizures would continue over the next few years until foreign ships did not dare enter Barbados ports for fear of being captured. After about 1660, the presence of Dutch or any foreign merchant vessels in Barbados had been greatly curtailed and trading with the Dutch on a large scale all but ended (Israel 1989).

With the enforcement of the Navigation Act nearly a decade after it passed and with amendments to the original Act, Barbadian planters became frustrated with the limited trade options available (Hoyos 1978). Their rights to free trade had been taken away and they were forced to engage in trade only with the London merchants, who many felt were unfair. Moreover, by the 1660s, many of the London merchants and their charges had taken over politics and found seats in the Island’s Assembly (Harlow 1926; Israel 1989). Yet, the Barbadians did find other avenues for profit and trade by both exploiting a loophole in the Navigation Act and by illegal means.
The loophole in the Act allowed the Barbadians to directly trade with New England and Virginia to a lesser extent by using vessels that fall under English naval regulation. The loophole allowed Barbadian planters to trade without the high duties and let them avoid dealing with the London merchants and companies. From New England, Barbados received foodstuffs, beverages, timber, and other basic commodities. During the early decades of the Barbados colony and throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a large portion of food items, such as meats and fish, came from New England (Harlow 1926). Virginia provided some foodstuffs, but more importantly, in terms of social practices, gave the Barbadians direct access to high quality tobacco (Ibid). By the late seventeenth century, a third North American trade source opened in South Carolina, which was essentially established as a provisioning colony by Barbadians for the purposes of creating more food and other supplies. In other words, it was established to be a Barbadian periphery. South Carolina provided some resources and new wealth for the island, but failed to accommodate much in terms of food needs for Barbados (Ibid).

Eventually, the London merchants and English lawmakers realized the extent of damage the loophole had done to business and thus closed it by putting duties on all goods being traded in between colonies. This action, known as the Plantation Act of 1673, gave England almost complete monopoly over all trade (McFarlane 1994). For Barbadians, the restricted trade, English control of Barbados sugar, and a recession caused by competition and falling sugar prices led many to plead for the lifting of some of these Acts to avoid absolute ruin of the colony (Harlow 1926). However, very little
was done in reaction to these pleas.

The last resource for Barbadians was the illegal trade. After the enforcement of the Navigation Act, Dutch merchants, many of whom were Jews, were able to smuggle in goods through Jewish merchants living on the island. In the 1640s and 1650s, a governor remarked that there were about thirty or so Jewish families living on the island with connections to Amsterdam (Israel 1989). By 1681, it was reported that there were about 260 Jews living on the island (Harlow 1926). The Jewish merchants on Barbados had strong connections to London and Amsterdam. From Amsterdam to England, the Dutch merchants placed the cargo under the name of an Englishman to avoid heavy duties. Through bribery of officials at small ports, only the top part of the cargo was checked and taxed before being shipped to Barbados. The concealed items were then sold by the Jewish merchants consistently at prices much lower than the London merchants (Harlow 1926). One customs officer remarked that “the Jews in Barbados Sell more Hollands [sic] there, than all the English merchants do...Sell 20 per cent cheaper than the English. And this is the main, if not the only Reason, our merchants have to complain of the small advance they make in Plantation Trade...the Jews can undersell us there” (Hayne 1685 cited in Harlow 1926). Although the illegal trade towards the end of the century never gained the level that was seen at the peak of Dutch trade in Barbados from 1645 to 1655, it did offer the Barbadians the option of another source outside of the English monopoly on trade.

A Neighborhood in Bridgetown

Bridgetown was founded in 1628 shortly after the establishment of Holetown, the
first English settlement. Bridgetown was built on thin, sandy soil and much of the area was described as little more than a “bog” (Gragg 2003). The main attraction of the Bridgetown region was the coastal geography; the settlement boasted a large calm bay that served as the largest port of the island. Because numerous ships could anchor in the bay at any one time, Bridgetown became the central location for commerce. During the height of the sugar revolution, the settlement developed into a large metropolitan city and the center for most social and economic activities occurring on the island.

The western side of Bridgetown became a wealthy residential district in the second half of the seventeenth century. It is in this residential area along Cheapside Street that the Jubilee Gardens site was located (Smith and Watson 2007). According to a few historical resources and data from the site, the houses in the area were initially simple wooden structures until c. 1650, the start of the sugar revolution. After this date, houses were built with imported sawn timber and were raised off the ground by coral rock foundations to keep pests out (Potter 1992). In this neighborhood, a Jewish merchant owned a brick house, one of the few in Bridgetown (Lucas Manuscript cited in Smith and Watson 2007).

The neighborhood where the archaeological excavations took place was affluent. In the seventeenth century, residents in this neighborhood paid some of the highest taxes in Bridgetown, which is indicative of wealth (Smith and Watson 2007). Some of these residents included at least one Jewish merchant and two physicians (Ibid). More importantly, from an archaeological perspective, the evidence excavated from the site reveals that those living in the area had the means to obtain materials associated with the
higher classes of English society. A visitor to the colony in the 1660s exclaimed that the more affluent inhabitants showed off their wealth in jewels, various household objects, and had “houses like castles” (Beckles 2006: 30). The Barbadian colonists, especially those with wealth, continued to live English ways of life despite a new and different tropical setting. They resisted major changes to diet and household, but submitted to a few minor alterations like larger windows for cool breezes (Gragg 2003). Instead of adapting, the wealthy settlers of the island simply transferred the familiar English culture across the Atlantic and applied it to a new geographical location.

The area where the archaeological investigations took place remained a residential neighborhood until around the turn of the eighteenth century (Smith and Watson 2007). Archaeological evidence and a 1722 map of Bridgetown (Fig. 1) show that the block ceased to be used as residential space. By the early eighteenth century it had become a public market.

Figure 1. William Mayo Map of Bridgetown (ca.1722) showing location of Jubilee Gardens site (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith).
Chapter 4: The Jubilee Gardens Site: Artifact Analysis and Data Issues

In 2005, students from Western Michigan University, under the direction of Dr. Frederick H. Smith, excavated the Jubilee Gardens site in Bridgetown, Barbados. By the time the field school started, construction workers had removed the pavement covering the site and layers of twentieth-century fill dirt. The top level recorded was a nineteenth century context. Four levels, mostly eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century deposits, were excavated at 10 cm increments before revealing seventeenth-century layers and features.

The most obvious seventeenth-century feature was a coral rock wall that was clearly part of the foundation of a mid- to late seventeenth-century domestic structure. The foundation wall divided the excavation unit. Seventeenth-century soil layers were located on either side of the wall though the wall did not cut through these layers. In other words, the wall was built first (probably in the 1640s or 50) and mid-seventeenth-century debris was deposited on either side of the wall. The archaeologists divided the seventeenth century layers into two contexts: East and West. After the discovery of the wall, excavations continued, and the levels were designated as East Level 1 and West Level 1. On the East side of the unit, soil stains of a floor storage pit and a post-hole were found to have been cut into the subsoil, which was white beach sand. These stains were likely part of an earlier wooden structure that had been built there in the first years of Bridgetown settlement. (Smith and Watson 2007)

Artifacts

From the East and West sides of the foundation wall, about 4,000 artifacts were
recovered and catalogued. Glass, bone, metal, shell, and ceramics made up the majority of artifacts. All glass was separated by the factors of light and dark shards and occasionally color. Much of the glass was determined to be black wine bottle glass believed to have been brought to Barbados by Dutch merchants (Smith and Watson 2007). Among the faunal material were pig, cow, and a few fish vertebrae. The majority of the seven hundred plus metal artifacts were either iron nails or heavily corroded iron scraps. However, there were a few significant metal pieces in the wall feature layers: a gold pendant with sapphires, two window leads, and several copper alloy pieces. Shell was numerous in this setting, which is to be expected considering the proximity of the site to the shore. Out of all the shells, seashells were the most frequent, but some sea urchin shells, snail shells, and oyster shells were identified and may have been be associated with household food practices. Some of the shell, especially the conch (Strombus gigas) may have been left there by the earlier Amerindian inhabitants of Barbados who are known to have occupied this area of the island for hundreds of years prior to British settlement in 1627. Over a hundred pieces of charcoal were recovered in the East level, a couple gun flints, slate (possibly from slate roofing tile), red roofing tile fragments, some plaster, a few bricks, and several round stones that are not native to Barbados that likely came over as ballast on England ships. Imported white clay pipe stems and bowls were present, but a large portion of the fragments were ubiquitous, including many with early seventeenth-century bowl forms.

Problems with the Data

In the summer of 2009, the artifacts collected from the site were catalogued and
analyzed with an emphasis on the seventeenth century material, especially ceramics. When examining the artifacts in the lab and at a later time comparing the collected data with the Smith and Watson article about the site (2007), it became quite apparent that the contexts had been disturbed within the artifact collection. A large number of bags had been put into different boxes (the boxes were labeled with what was inside) and a large number of unlabeled bags that had been originally placed with corresponding level bags were mixed around. Within some bags, artifacts from erroneous contexts were found in large numbers. An example would be that there were almost 200 fragments of pearlware (c. 1775-1835) found in the East Level 1 bags, which based on other materials was clearly a mid-seventeenth-century context. Another example was a seventeenth-century Delftware teacup base that was found in the bag for an eighteenth-century context. Also, artifacts pictured and discussed in the Smith and Watson (2007) article were nowhere to be found among the hundreds of artifacts counted and examined.

The causes of these problems stemmed from various sources. One possible cause is that some artifacts may have been knocked into the unit from the ongoing construction at the site. Also, construction workers would give the excavators artifacts they had found nearby and some of these artifacts may have been placed in the closest bag. Another cause could have been that some artifacts were misplaced by accident during the washing and re-bagging process carried out in the lab. Some special or unique artifacts were removed for safe storage at the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. For example, a gold pendant with sapphires was found at the site, but was taken to the Barbados Museum for safe keeping. The most probable source for most of the data problems is that the
artifacts were stored in the local university’s archaeology lab over the past four years. In this lab, students took the bags out of the boxes and artifacts out of the bags to look at them, compare, and cross mend. Because none of the artifacts had been numbered, certain actions like cross mending caused a lot of artifacts to be taken out of certain contexts, grouped by type in order to glue similar pieces together, and put into one bag, probably the most convenient. The artifacts provided an excellent learning opportunity and experience for archaeology students, but they may have accidently skewed some of the contexts in the process of studying the artifacts.

Since some of the data is a bit unreliable, information presented in the Smith and Watson article (2007), which was based on data collected directly from the initial excavation, will have to fill in some of the gaps.

**Analysis of Ceramics from Mid- to Late Seventeenth-Century Contexts**

Out of the thousands of artifacts recovered from the site, over two thousand were ceramic fragments. The ceramics recovered from the levels in the East and West sides of the wall feature that are indicative of the second half of the 17th century serve as the basis for a detailed ceramic analysis that seeks to shed light on the pattern of ceramic use among elites in Barbados in the mid-seventeenth century. From the East and West sides of the wall levels, there were nearly 1,200 ceramic sherds, over half of the total amount of ceramics from the entire site. The majority of the ceramics are remnants from hollow ware vessels, such as cups, bowls, and jugs; however, there were a few pieces with characteristics found only in flatware plates and chargers. The ceramic collection
was also dominated by tablewares and teawares with very few kitchenwares present. In terms of ceramic type, a large variation was identified, which is typical of many seventeenth century European related sites in the Western Hemisphere.

Because of the data problems mentioned above, almost 500 sherds of pearlware, creamware, and English white salt-glazed stoneware, all produced beginning in the 18th century, were found in the 17th century layer bags. In consideration of this, these ceramic types will be excluded from the analysis as well as unglazed and lead glazed coarse earthenwares due to the lack of distinguishable characteristics observed at the time of data collecting. All other ceramics found in the bags from the East and West sides of the foundation wall will be considered in this analysis.

![Wall Feature Associated Ceramics](image)

Figure 2: Frequency of ceramic types in the East and West levels

The ceramic analysis has several purposes beyond simply recounting how many sherds of each type were present or merely describing unique fragments. The hope is to briefly investigate the English and/or Dutch aspects of each type, the possible economic and social values placed on each type, and time ranges in relation to particular events that
affected access to or value of certain ceramics. The information from this analysis will help create a clearer picture about the inhabitants of the site as well as their relationship to the world outside of Barbados.

On a side note, it should be mentioned that several sources were used as basic guides in initially identifying the ceramic fragments, but were not used for specific information in the following sections. These sources were: the 2009 Artifact Identification Manual from the Department of Architectural and Archaeological Research of Colonial Williamsburg; the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory’s Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland web site, which had quality pictures for comparative purposes; and gotheborg.com, a web site with an extensive guide to Chinese and Japanese porcelain marks based on data collected from museums, collectors, and porcelain salvaged from dated shipwrecks. The general information obtained from these sources was concerned with the ceramic basics: body, glaze, form, decoration, use, and date ranges of certain types.

**Slipware**

On the west side of the wall feature, about 40 fragments of Staffordshire type slipware were excavated. Staffordshire type slipware was a cheap, utilitarian ware produced in Staffordshire, England. It was popular among all economic classes due to its low cost and wide range in design options (Grigsby 1993). At least two hollow ware vessels, one being a cup, and a flatware dish were identified in the collection. The cup fragments had characteristics, like dots surrounding marbleized patches of clay, similar to those found on Wrotham slipware (Gaimster 1997; Grigsby 1993, Lewis 1999). Wrotham
slipware was made throughout the seventeenth century, but was the most popular in the last 30 years of the century and in the early 1700s (Lewis 1999). The flatware sherd had a combed pattern, which was fairly cheap and simple to produce when compared to the more elaborate designs found on other vessels of this type (Grigsby 1993).

Figure 3. Staffordshire slipware from Jubilee Gardens Site (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith)
Another type of slipware that must be mentioned briefly is North Devonshire ware. The ware is an English coarse earthenware with a white slip and lead glaze produced mostly in the seventeenth century. A few sherds of this ware were excavated from the wall levels, including a large fragment from a charger. According to Smith and Watson (2007), a sgraffito North Devonshire sherd with a floral pattern, similar to punch bowl fragments from the nearby Suttle Street site, was also found in the seventeenth-century wall feature context at the Jubilee Gardens site.
Figure 5. Fragment of a North Devon sgraffito from Jubilee Gardens (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith).

**Tin-enamed ware: English and Dutch Delftware**

Over one hundred fragments of Delftware were present in the wall feature context. Most pieces were hollow ware vessel forms, but a few sherds had the thickness and shape found in plates or chargers. The most notable fragments of Delftware were the base of a small teacup with a blue floral design, the edge of a plate or charger decorated with the Wan-li pattern, and a small piece with a red glaze that could be an imitation of Yixing pottery (see Stoneware section below).
Figure 6. Base of a small Delftware teacup from Jubilee Gardens (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith)

Figure 7. Delft with Wan-Li border pattern (top middle) and Yixing imitation Delftware
Delftware was first created by Dutch majolica potters in the 1620s as a response to the introduction of porcelain in Europe (Wilcoxen 1987). Porcelain was favored over majolica because of its strength, lighter weight, and whiteness (Knowles 1913; Scholten 1993). In order to compete, potters developed Delftware as a cheap alternative to porcelain and as a ware that could copy the elegant forms and designs found in Chinese porcelain (Lewis 1999; Scholten 1993). The ware was marketed to those in the middle class and even advertised as “porcelain” (Knowles 1913; Lange 2001). Decoration on seventeenth-century Delftware closely imitated designs on Chinese porcelain, including the common Wan-li pattern found on many early Delft pieces (Lange 2001; Lewis 1999; Ray 2000; Wilcoxen 1987). Yet, the ware was not cheap because very few pieces would survive the firing process (Ray 2000). Along with this issue, the popularity of the ware was also hindered by the fact it could not withstand excessive temperatures, limiting its use in tea, coffee, and chocolate practices commonly associated with porcelain (Ray 2000). Delftware finally took off in the mid-seventeenth century when a civil war in China limited the amount of porcelain coming into Europe (Lange 2001).
At around the same time, the production of Delftware started in England. Archaeologically, English Delftware is hard to distinguish from Dutch Delft in that English Delft potters came from Holland (Ray 2000, Wilcoxen 1987). These Dutch potters in England used the same techniques and designs found in Dutch Delftware (Ibid). Even the same clay was used for both Dutch and English Delftware (Wilcoxen 1987). With this in mind, the Delftware fragments from the Jubilee Gardens site have an equal chance of being either of Dutch or English origin.

**Stoneware**

*German Stoneware*

The majority of German stoneware sherds from the entire site were found in the East and West layers. Most of the stoneware, about 50 sherds, was brown salt-glazed,
including some Frechen Bartmann jug pieces (one fragment had the famous bearded man motif). Although the origin of these pieces is Germany, how they got to Barbados is a different story. The Dutch and English both traded heavily in German stoneware throughout the seventeenth century. Millions of German brown stoneware vessels were directly imported into England in the first two quarters of the century before internal conflict and trade regulations largely halted imports (Gaimster 1997). The Dutch dominated the trade in the ware to the Americas and even to England until the last quarter of the century (Ibid). It is believed for the seventeenth century that “most Rhenish stoneware was carried to England and elsewhere in Netherlandish ships” (Thwaite 1973 cited in Wilcoxen 1987: 73). In the last quarter of the century, competition from the glass industry and English stoneware potters caused the decline of German brown stoneware imports in the American colonies (Gaimster 1997). As a result, the stoneware sherds from the site probably date from 1650-1680 and were more than likely bought from Dutch merchants, although there is still the possibility the stoneware could have come from England.
Not much German blue and gray or Westerwald stoneware was found in the wall feature levels, but a larger number was found in level 4 above the wall feature. Given the small number of artifacts in this level and the fact that Westerwald became more widespread through English trade towards the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century (Gaimster 1997), the level most likely dates to the turn of the century and when the site ceased to be a homestead.

Yixing pottery

A fragment with a dense reddish-purple body and a blue glaze was found in East
Level 1. The fragment is a type of Chinese stoneware, known as Yixing, made from purple clay. Most pieces of Yixing were unglazed, but a few were glazed with a deep royal blue in the Qing Dynasty (Baiquan 1991:155, 193). Yixing was introduced to the European market in 1635 where Yixing teapots became highly desired for tea sets (Pan 2004). The pottery was largely exported to Holland and England and was eventually copied by potters in the last quarter of the seventeenth century (Lewis 1999; Neurdenburg 1923).

Other stoneware

There was one fragment of gray stoneware with some mossy green glaze that was identified as a piece of Dutch stoneware. However, not much information is available on Dutch stoneware other than that it seems to have had limited production due to competition with German stoneware. A few sherds of Fulham (English) stoneware may have been present, but were misidentified due to the great resemblance with German brown stoneware.

Porcelain

Chinese Porcelain

In the wall associated levels, there were almost 200 fragments of blue and white Chinese porcelain and another 50 sherds in unmarked bags in the same boxes as the East and West bags. Among these fragments was a vase or cup base with a dynastic marking. The marking says the piece was from the Chenghua period, about mid-fifteenth century, of the Ming dynasty. However, the porcelain is not Ming, but really an imitation made in the Qing dynasty based on the painting style of the characters and the fact that “the
The majority of the small stem cups and wine cups penciled in underglaze blue with Cheng Hua and Hsuan Te marks were made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” (Jennyns 1988: 122). The mark of Chenghua was commonly used on Qing transition porcelain to both imitate and honor some of the finest porcelain ever produced (du Boulay 1984).

Figure 10. Porcelain base with Kangxi mark (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith)

The style of the mark specifically indicates that the porcelain was probably made in the early period of the Kangxi reign, 1660s to 1680s. During these times, porcelain production was limited due to an ongoing civil war, which resulted in a cease on porcelain exports, especially out of the Imperial kilns, until the 1680s (du Boulay 1984; Jörg 1997; Wilcoxen 1987). However, the Dutch East India Company continued to gain access to porcelain through means of private kilns and smuggling carried out by Chinese
middlemen in the 1660s and 1670s (Little 1983; Wilcoxen 1987). Due to the rarity of porcelain at this time, porcelain was highly valued and prized by the middle and upper classes of European society (Newman 2001).

Other than the marked base, most of the other fragments had little to no diagnostic features. Fragments of a wine cup, with a flower pattern which combined the traditional artistic symbols of bamboo and pine, may perhaps be from the Transition Period (early Qing that includes early Kangxi). The painting on the wine cup is not the best quality with sloppy lines and a lack of consistency, a characteristic often seen in Transition porcelain (du Boulay 1984; Jörg 1997).

![Figure 11. Chinese porcelain wine cup fragments from Jubilee Gardens site (Picture courtesy of Frederick H. Smith).](image)

**Imari**

A few fragments of Imari porcelain with red and gold enamel overglaze in the
pattern of plum trees were found on the first level of the West side of the wall. Imari, a type of Japanese porcelain, is different than “regular” porcelain in that it was created with the intention for export to foreign markets in Europe and China (Rotondo-McCord and Bufton 1997). The sherds are either a type of polychrome Japanese Imari that was first introduced in 1680 or Chinese Imari, an imitation of polychrome Japanese Imari, that was first produced in the eighteenth century (Mézin 2004; Shimura 2008). Considering the context that the sherds were found in and the time range of the household, the fragments are most likely Japanese Imari since a large amount (in the thousands) of Japanese Imari pieces were exported by the Dutch and, to a lesser extent, the English to European markets in the mid to late 17th century (Rotondo-McCord and Bufton 1997; Shimura 2008). During this time, Japanese Imari, despite being more expensive than Chinese porcelain, became very popular and sought after by European merchants because access to Chinese porcelain was heavily restricted by civil war (Little 1983).

Figure 12. Imari porcelain with polychrome plumb tree design from Jubilee Gardens
It is worth noting that there has been another mid-seventeenth century domestic site excavated in Bridgetown, and the ceramic materials recovered during that investigation provide important comparative evidence for understanding the ceramic assemblage from Jubilee Gardens. In the late 1990s, as part of his dissertation research, Frederick H. Smith (2001) conducted archaeological investigations on Suttle Street in Bridgetown. The site was located only 100 meters north of the Jubilee Gardens site. In his dissertation, Smith highlighted a mid-seventeenth century context from the site known as context 11. In it, Smith found a similarly high amount of course earthenware comparable to that recovered from Jubilee Gardens. Moreover, Smith recovered a large amount of Delftware, which he attributed to the Dutch trade influence. Moreover, Smith suggests that the large proportion of delftware at Suttle Street reflects the aesthetic tastes
of Dutch migrants in early Barbados. These factors increased the demand for delftware and, thus, explains the ubiquity of Delftware at Suttle Street (and perhaps Jubilee Gardens). The greatest disparity between Suttle Street and Jubilee Gardens is in the category of porcelain. Only a few sherds of porcelain were recovered from Suttle Street, while porcelain represented nearly a third of all ceramics recovered from Jubilee Gardens. The high proportion of porcelain at Jubilee Gardens may reflect the differential wealth of the households. In the seventeenth century, residents of Suttle Street (known at the time as Backside Church Street) paid one of the lowest tax rates in Bridgetown. Those on Cheapside paid the highest. The higher proportion of porcelain at Jubilee Gardens likely reflects the greater wealth of residents who lived on the wealthiest street in Bridgetown in the seventeenth century.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Seventeenth-century Barbados was a key fixture in the Atlantic economic system. In Wallersteinian terms it was a true periphery producing unfinished goods for the metropolitan English core. Yet the wealth generated by sugar production and the access to goods through licit and illicit trade with Dutch merchants ensured that at least some wealthy colonists in Bridgetown had access to the most expensive and fashionable ceramics in the Atlantic world. Though in the periphery, wealthy colonists in Bridgetown had ceramic collections that no doubt looked very similar to their elite counterparts in London. In order to understand this pattern we must look at the political economic trends that shaped residents of Bridgetown in the seventeenth century.

During the mid-seventeenth century, a power shift was occurring for dominance of sea trade and Barbados was in the midst of an economic transition from a heavy reliance on Dutch traders to one based on trade with English merchants. The island was also going through the height of the sugar revolution, which was stifled by the end of the seventeenth century by competition from emerging sugar producers in other British Caribbean colonies, especially Jamaica. Competition led to a steady decline of sugar prices in England. Thus, the Jubilee Gardens site is notable for its insight into the Barbadian transition from a free trade society to a mercantilist economic system of metropolitan control.

Who Lived at the Jubilee Gardens Site?

The names of the residents who lived at the Jubilee Gardens site during mid-
seventeenth-century are difficult to determine due to the limits of historical documentary evidence. Yet, there are a few conclusions that can be made about the identity of the residents. Given all the information presented in the background and data chapters, it is fairly clear that those living at the site were wealthy. Besides the sapphire encrusted gold pendant, the stoneware and the large number of porcelain vessels signify that the owners had money to spend on luxury goods. The porcelain, in particular, was the most demanded among all ceramic types during the seventeenth century and prices would reflect this (Newman 2001). The early Kangxi porcelain would have been especially prized. It was very expensive due to the fact that not much porcelain was coming out of China during the third quarter of the seventeenth century because of a civil war. A small supply of Chinese porcelain into Western Europe, where porcelain was in high demand, would have made porcelain at this time more expensive than before or after the civil war and only available to the upper class. It is not too surprising to find these types of artifacts in the wealthiest neighborhood in the wealthiest English colony during the seventeenth century. It can also be assumed that the residents were English or of English decent. The presence of English ceramics like North Devonshire slipware or Staffordshire slipware may show that the owner had some ties to England. If the owner were Dutch, one might expect more traditional Dutch wares in the collection that were cheaper than the English slipwares.

From the Top looking Down

Regardless of their national affiliation, the inhabitants of the Jubilee Gardens site were participants in a global economic system, merchant capitalism. Unlike later
capitalism created around wage labor and mass production, merchant capitalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries involved merchants trading with small commodity producers and offering credit. In seventeenth-century Barbados, the English and Dutch traded with individual planters for sugar in exchange for goods made at small production centers in Western Europe, the colonies of North America, and at this particular time, China, and Japan. Also, the Dutch and some English merchants gave out credit, partially as a result of some customers being cash poor, in order to finance sugar planters. The site inhabitants’ involvement in this world system is reflected in the international diversity of ceramics from Europe and Asia found at the site.

Along with the exchange of products came ideas that have become associated with the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe. As mentioned before, certain objects or design features were imbued with ideologies of power, status, etc. For example, a few plate sherds from the site may indicate separate place settings, an occurrence often connected to the growth of individualism within the capitalist system (Deetz 1996; Johnson 1996). If individuals in Bridgetown were beginning to adopt individual place settings in the mid-seventeenth century, then it would suggest that such ideological shifts toward individualism occurred in Barbados long before they did in the North American colonies. In Plymouth, James Deetz (1996), for example, identifies this shift occurring much later in the eighteenth century. Barbados’ prominent role in the Atlantic trades, therefore, may have accelerated its emphasis on individualism.

Although not strictly associated with an archaeology of capitalism like plates or symmetrical architecture, the popularity of tea as a luxury good at about the same time
provides insight on objects portraying a certain status. Luxury goods in world systems carry meaning that generates or reproduces internal and external social relations at the local, regional, and global level (Schneider 1977). Tea was an exotic commodity that required fine ceramics and knowledge of how to prepare and serve it “properly”. Thus, tea became associated with the upper class or elites of English society because of not only its expense, but because of the social rules required for the tea ceremony. The Delft, Yixing, and porcelain tea wares found at the site can be seen as status symbols and an attempt to recreate the lifestyle of English gentry in Barbados. The social attributes of tea were of great significance for the Barbados colonists in establishing or re-establishing a status similar to the English bourgeois class left behind in the old country.

*From the Bottom looking Up*

From what has been gathered and written so far, the inhabitants were wealthy, participated in merchant capitalism occurring on a global scale, and used items gained from trade to display certain ideologies common at the time. Yet, a much different picture emerges if the inhabitant is changed from being a part of a greater global economic system to a consumer within capitalism.

The ceramics from the site lend insight into the choices made by those living in the homestead. When looking at the possible trade origins of each type, two specific types stand out: Staffordshire type slipware and the transition/Kangxi Chinese porcelain. The significance of these types is that the Staffordshire slipware, made in England, would have more than likely been carried on English ships from Britain or from English colonies in North America rather than Dutch ships. Archaeologists have found very few
English ceramics at seventeenth century Dutch sites (Wilcoxen 1987). Instead, large quantities of cheap Dutch utilitarian wares, like glazed redwares and green glazed earthenwares, have been found (Ibid). Thus, the possibility of English slipwares being carried and sold by Dutch merchants is fairly low based on archaeological evidence. The Kangxi porcelain would most likely have come to Barbados on board a Dutch ship because the Dutch had the best and sometimes only access to the limited amount of porcelain in China at the time (Little 1983; Wilcoxen 1987). The Kangxi porcelain could have been sold in England and then sold in Barbados, but it would have been more beneficiary for the consumer in Barbados to purchase porcelain straight from Dutch merchants since they generally had lower prices than their English counterparts (Harlow 1926). The Delftware, German stoneware, Japanese porcelain, and Yixing stoneware could have come from either trading power since both had equal access to these ceramic markets. Thus, the slipware and Chinese porcelain reveal that the inhabitants were probably trading with both sides.

Trade with Britain is not a major surprise considering the laws restricting trade and the wars carried out so that the English could have a monopoly over all world trade. On the other side, at the time the site was occupied, trade with the Dutch was very much illegal and had declined as a result of enforcement of the Navigation Acts by military force. If trade with large Dutch vessels was less likely in the years after the enactments of the Navigation Act, then it is probable that some of the porcelain and other goods from the site came to the owner through Dutch Jewish merchants residing on the island. But, why would the inhabitants of the site choose to trade with the Dutch, large vessels or
local merchants, knowing full well that their actions are considered illegal by the
governing country?

One reason could be an issue that is not commonly addressed by archaeology. As
argued or alluded to by several authors on the history of Barbados, the colonists had a
special appreciation to trade with the Dutch and for things Dutch. The colony had been
saved from economic ruin by the Dutch, whom provided the colonists with goods, credit,
sugar related materials, and most importantly, a thriving market in Europe for their sugar.
When restrictions were placed on foreign trade, the colonists protested. In the written
response of the colonists to the Act of Trade, the colonists declared that “we will never be
so unthankful to the Netherlands for their former help and assistance, as to deny or forbid
them, or any other Nation, the freedom of our harbours and the protection of our laws”
(Declaration of 1651 cited in Harlow 1926). Even though the Dutch probably saw the
relationship as being exclusively economic, the Barbadians seemed to have a relationship
based on some form of respect and morality duty and would protect it to the point of
almost completely rebelling against Britain.

There are other reasons why the consumers of the site chose to trade with the
Dutch. As mentioned before, the Dutch merchants could sell goods cheaper than the
London merchants. Because both merchant parties sold just about the same commodities,
the most logical choice would be to go with whoever offered a better price. Another
reason was that the Dutch could offer some goods that the English were limited or unable
to access. For example, the early Kangxi porcelain was difficult to find and acquire
because of a few private kilns operating in warring China. The Dutch were able to
smuggle some porcelain out, whereas the English resorted to the slightly more expensive Japanese Imari to fill the demands of consumers back home.

In the scope of world systems, the site consumers were still participants in a global merchant capitalism, but they chose between two separate, regional systems of capitalism. Because they traded with the Dutch, the site consumers resisted the economic and political powers of England.

The power of choice not only affects trade relations, but the ideologies connected to consumerism. From a top-down perspective, the inhabitants of the site were displaying their wealth, status, prestige, heritage, or independence through certain ceramic forms and types. As an example, displays of a particular heritage, in this case relating to ancestry, can be generated and shown through ceramic forms and types that are stylistically ‘old’ compared to contemporary trends, unique to a certain time or region, or incorporate newer materials and designs with well known characteristics of the heritage being present. In the present, a person in the Western Hemisphere with a British family heritage can purchase an antique English tea set with a rose pattern, an imitation piece of a Delftware charger with a painting of English monarchs made in whiteware, or a simple coffee mug bearing the family crest that has been recognized for centuries along paternal lineages. Any of these ceramic options would have the function of conveying a message that the owner might have connections with an English heritage. The opposite view creates a different image, one that in Matthew Johnson’s words would be “illogical”. Illogical in this sense means an object does not fit the preconceptions or ideas that are synonymous with what are considered standard, normal, or fashionable for a certain time.
period. For the Jubilee Gardens site, a closer inspection of the ceramics lends details in how the inhabitants were not following strict social rules in regards to English gentry lifestyles.

The Chinese porcelain, German stoneware, Delftware, and Japanese Imari sherds all indicate the inhabitants had the means to obtain high quality pieces for use and display. Yet, there were types present in the artifact collection that did not directly contribute to perceptions of a wealthy status or the following of trends. For example, the Staffordshire-type slipware from the site was a relatively cheap ceramic. The slipware was originally made with the intentions to be sold to the lower and middle classes. At least one of the vessels excavated used an easy technique and was considered to be the least costly to make. If this piece and the slipware cup were on display, the combination of inexpensive and expensive ceramics gives a mixed signal to those on the outside of the household. Another instance of this can be found among the tea wares.

Tea wares were commonly made out porcelain because the vitrified ceramic body could withstand the heat from hot tea and coffee. From the site, the tea ware ceramic pieces include some porcelain, a sherd of Yixing stoneware, a fragment of a Delftware teacup, and a Delftware imitation of Yixing stoneware, most likely a teapot. The last two artifacts are odd in that Delftware performs poorly with heat. Why would someone invest in Delft tea wares when he/she obviously had the money to buy the more durable porcelain pieces or a Yixing teapot? Why buy a low quality imitation when you already or can have the real deal?

Although the reasoning behind these purchases will remain unknown, they do
show that not everything on display in a wealthy English household is necessarily a signifier of some greater ideology. As consumers, the inhabitants of the site saw something worth buying in these Delft imitations whether it was exquisite decoration, an experiment of a cheaper product with the same function as porcelain, or just the newest fad from London. By not having all elite related ceramics, they created abstractions of the ideologies being produced, carried, and spread by merchant capitalism through personal consumption.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The seventeenth century household context of the Jubilee Gardens site has provided many insights into the external economic relationships of the Barbados colony as well as individual agency found within the local level. Based on historical information and data from the site, the inhabitants of the site were wealthy English colonists living on the edge of the empire. Barbados was part of a rather complex system in which it was a periphery to England by providing sugar to the increasingly demanding market for the crop. Because of external ties to other peripheries and cores, the Barbadians created tension with England by exerting force on the core, something not within Wallerstein’s definitions of the core and periphery, but may fall under the loose definition of a semi-periphery. As a periphery or semi-periphery, the Barbadians were heavily reliant on outside sources, mainly the English and Dutch, to maintain or reproduce a lifestyle similar to the one left in England. Barbadians not only traded with Dutch merchants over English merchants for monetary reasons, but also as a show of appreciation for how the Dutch helped the colony in its early years of struggle. Some ceramics reveal that the site’s residents traded with both trading giants, even at a time when trade with the Dutch was greatly discouraged and restricted. The ceramics also show that the inhabitants as consumers were not exactly replicating what would be considered to be the average lifestyle for English gentry at the time. It is in these behaviors regarding participation in systems and choice within these systems on different scales that the owner of the coral rock household reproduced many ways of old while forming new life ways to possibly accommodate a new place and new social scene.
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