The Global Spanish Empire

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The colonization of the Pacific Islands by the Spanish and other European powers was spectacular and profound in its consequences. Unfamiliar technologies, gender systems, material cultures, languages, disease pathogens, and worldviews altered the lived experience of native communities in unprecedented ways (Bayman 2008, 2107; Bayman and Peterson 2016; Cruz Berrocal and Tsang 2017; Flexner 2014; Hezel 1989; Montón-Subiás 2019; Montón-Subiás et al. 2018; Russell 1998:317–322; Stannard 1989). Because Guam’s native Chamorro were the earliest population in the Pacific Islands to experience contact with Europeans, they provide a compelling example of resilience spanning several centuries of colonialism by Spanish and subsequent powers (i.e., American and Japanese) (Map 9.1). Documentary accounts of Guam’s colonial history are abundant and richly detailed in aggregate, yet archaeology offers an underutilized resource for interpreting the materiality of its colonial history (for notable exceptions, see Dixon et al. 2013; Dixon et al. 2017; Dixon et al. 2010). We argue that archaeology in the Pacific (including the Mariana Islands) must make a sustained effort to engage in the production of knowledge about both the materiality and the intangible cultural heritage of Oceania’s traditional societies. Such research is necessary so that Oceania’s colonial past is featured in ongoing discussions of intangible cultural heritage elsewhere in the world. Because Guam was located on the maritime route of the Manila galleon (Chaunu 1960; Giraldez 2015; Schurz 1939; Spate 1979), it witnessed and experienced a tapestry of cultural influences from the Americas and Asia, particularly New Spain and the Philippines. Together, with the advent of the Jesuit mission in the Marianas, Guam is home to the earliest example of urbanism during the early modern period in remote Oceania.
Our chapter integrates a suite of archaeological and documentary sources to interpret the consequences of the *reducción* in the late seventeenth century and its ramifications through the nineteenth century. It was during this event that Guam’s native Chamorro were forcibly relocated into district villages in a colonial effort to control them following decades of strife and conflict. Although the implementation of the *reducción* introduced profound changes in Chamorro culture, land use at *lânchos* (ranch-farms) away from coastal villages ensured the persistence of particular customs and traditions beyond the reach of surveillance by Spanish authorities (Perez Hattori 2004:16). The success of native Chamorro in perpetuating vital aspects of their intangible cultural heritage (e.g., language, values, behavior, songs, stories) persisted into the twentieth century (Souder 1992:226–231; Thompson 1947:281–291) and reverberates to this day (Atienza and Coello 2012; Van Peenan 2008). Our use of the term “intangible cultural heritage” echoes dimensions of a statement by UNESCO: “Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants,
such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.” Because UNESCO’s use of this term is global in scope, it must be translated to local circumstances and cultural imperatives. In the Mariana Islands, we equate “intangible cultural heritage” with the concept of Kostumbren Chamorro, a term that encompasses the range of Chamorro practices, values, and customs (Perez Hattori 2004:15). To comprehend this phenomenon and the role of lânchos in perpetuating intangible cultural heritage, we must situate Guam and the Mariana Islands in their historical context.

GUAM AND THE MARIANA ISLANDS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In A.D. 1521 the fleet and crew of Fernando de Magallanes (Ferdinand Magellan in English) encountered Guam during his exploration for the Hispanic monarchy. Guam, the largest and southernmost island in the Marianas archipelago, was the first inhabited Pacific island witnessed by Europeans, and the Spanish contact period in the Mariana Islands began with Magallanes’s visit. Seventeenth-century Spanish accounts of trade with the indigenous Chamorro underscore their strong desire for iron and other nonlocal goods (García 1683:112, 195; Pobre de Zamora [1598–1603], in Martínez 1997:418, 442; see also Quimby 2011). Early Spanish-Chamorro contact remained volatile, so trade was undertaken by raising and lowering baskets along ropes that connected European ships and Chamorro canoes. Spanish accounts charged that the Chamorro people were crafty traders and offered baskets with thin layers of rice atop coconut shell and sand. The theft of a small rowboat from one of Magallanes’s ships also instigated a violent conflict when 40 men from the expedition landed, burned several houses and boats, and killed seven native Chamorro (Pigafetta [1525], in Riquer 1999:115–116). For these reasons, the Spanish name for the Mariana Islands was Islas de los Ladrones (Islands of the Thieves) (Russell 1998:13).

At contact, Chamorro lived in buildings atop megalithic pillars (baligi) and caps (tasas); today such structures are known as latte, and they were initially constructed no later than 1000 (Athens 2011; Carson 2012; Graves 1986). Unfortunately, however, detailed descriptions or drawings
of them were not made by early European visitors (Russell 1998:221), yet the megalithic pillars are often preserved in the archaeological record. The construction of latte buildings began to wane sometime after Spain’s formal claim to the Mariana Islands by Miguel López de Legazpi and the inception of the galleon trade in 1565 and especially after the establishment of a Jesuit mission in 1668 (Map 9.2).

The Manila galleons had arrived in Guam on a sporadic basis for 250 years, from 1565 to 1815, ending a few years before Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821. The export of New World silver (from Potosí and other mines in the Americas) to China in exchange for spices, porcelains, silk, and other luxury goods was a source of great wealth for some Spanish elites. Galleon ships averaged 1,700–2,000 tons and were loaded with up to 1,000 passengers along with mail, supplies, and silver to trade for Oriental valuables once they arrived in the Philippines. Once

![Map 9.2 Map of churches and villages in Guam about 1672 by Padre Alonso López (from the collection of the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam).](map)
the galleon trade captured the attention of various world powers, such as the Dutch and the English, the Spanish constructed forts in Guam to protect their dominance of Pacific maritime trade. Guam also benefited from annual *situado* payments of silver and other goods from the Spanish Crown to its colonial governors, missionaries, and soldiers on the island.

Not all Chamorro welcomed the 1668 Jesuit mission, and violent conflict ensued for three decades until Spanish governors and their soldiers stifled indigenous opposition in 1698 (Hezel 2015; Rogers 1995:58–73; Russell 1998:300–315). Key to the success of the Spanish in dominating the native Chamorro was their forcible relocation into large villages on Guam and on the islands of Saipan and Rota. By 1730, however, most of the Mariana Islands north of Guam and Rota (e.g., Aguijan, Tinian, and Saipan) were depopulated until the nineteenth century (Rogers 1995:73). The implementation of this policy, known as the *reducción* (1697–1698), was instigated by the Spanish governor with the support of the military and Jesuit clergy. During the *reducción*, the colonial government, under the authority of Governor Quiroga y Losada, divided Guam into six administrative districts (*partidos*) (today known as Hagatña, Jinapsan, Pago, Agat, Umatac, and Inarajan) to facilitate Spanish rule. Each district centered on a *pueblo* (village) and a parish church. Governor-appointed *alcaldes* (mayors) ruled each district via a hierarchy of soldiers and converted Chamorro leaders whose families comprised the indigenous elite (Rogers 1995:64). Priests were also fundamental in the parish churches, but their policies and interests frequently conflicted with those of *alcaldes* and governors. While native Chamorro were not required to pay taxes, and an encomienda system was not “officially” installed on Guam, the natives were in practice obliged to work on the lands that belonged to the Crown, as well as those owned by the governors, the *alcaldes*, and the Jesuits. Such labor also sustained other agents of Spanish rule, including some (but not all) soldiers. Chamorro who managed to retain access to their ancestral lands worked them as *lánchos*, where they cultivated crops such as corn, sweet potatoes, rice, and fruit trees and raised pigs, chickens, cattle, and Asian water buffalo (Rogers 1995:75). As Chamorro were compelled to attend weekly religious services, many families practiced a dual-residence system whereby they worked their rural *lánchos* during the week and returned to their district village to attend weekend services and comply with civic obligations.
Spanish contact and colonialism also brought tragedy as the Chamorro population plummeted in the face of diseases that arrived with the Spanish galleons, mission clergy, and soldiers. This was especially true in Guam and the southern islands (e.g., Rota, Saipan), which experienced the earliest and most frequent contact with the Spanish. In contrast, some of the Mariana Islands to the north (e.g., Pagan and Sarigan) maintained their relatively high populations until they were relocated during implementation of the *reducción* (Athens 2011:328). An estimated 50,000–150,000 Chamorro resided in the Marianas at the onset of the Spanish mission, but their population decreased to 5,000 or less by the early eighteenth century (Underwood 1976:203). Over 50 Spanish governors ruled the Marianas during a period of 230 years, and most of those who ruled after 1744 resided on Guam in the Plaza de España, the governor’s palace (Figure 9.1). Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, Spain surrendered control of Guam, and it became a colony of the United States along with the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Although Chamorro

![Figure 9.1](image) Spanish governor's palace remnant at Plaza de España, Hagatña, Guam (Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository).
society suffered astonishing impacts—particularly after the reducción—
their agency in perpetuating various traditions in the context of their rural lâächos (Perez Hattori 2004:16) is a hallmark of their resilience.

PLACE MAKING, LÂECHOS, AND THE MATERIALITY OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The investigation of land use and place making in the Mariana Islands offers an opportunity to understand the cultural imperatives that enabled Chamorro to perpetuate their intangible cultural heritage after Spanish contact and colonialism. The advent of lâechos following implementation of the Spanish policy of the reducción was profoundly significant, and their investigation through archaeology has recently intensified (Dixon et al. 2020). Integrating documentary and archaeological perspectives offers an approach to understanding lâechos that foregrounds Chamorro agency in accommodating and resisting Spanish colonial efforts to establish religious and political hegemony between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.

DOCUMENTARY PERSPECTIVES

Early seventeenth-century Spanish documentary records offer insights on the organization of land use and settlement prior to the reducción and colonization of the Mariana Islands. In 1602 Juan Pobre de Zamora, a Franciscan lay brother, spent several months on the Mariana island of Rota, where he wrote an account of his visit (Pobre de Zamora [1598–1603], in Martínez 1997; see also Driver 1983). His report reveals that 81 years after Magallanes’s landfall on Guam, the Chamorro still practiced their traditional lifeways (Rogers 1995:19–20). Precolonial Chamorro subsistence included a combination of farming and foraging for marine and terrestrial resources. Juan Pobre de Zamora observed that “they go to the hillside or jungle to see their farm plots where every able-bodied person goes to work” (Driver 1983:209). Farming and gardening in the Mariana Islands included a variety of root and tree crops: various species of taro (Colocasia spp.), yams (Dioscorea spp.), breadfruit (Artocarpus spp.), coconut (Cocos nucifera), banana (Musa sp.), pandanus (Pandanus sp.), Federico palm (Cycas circinalis), sugarcane (Saccharum officinarum),
betel palm (*Areca catechu*), and betel pepper vines (*Piper betel*) (Russell 1998:167, Table 8). Although the scale of its production is unknown, a suite of evidence indicates that rice (*Oryza sativa*) was also cultivated in the Mariana Islands (but not elsewhere outside of Southeast Asia) before Spanish contact (Hunter-Anderson et al. 1995).

Juan Pobre’s account implies that Chamorro subsistence at times included settings beyond their villages, along with a corresponding emphasis on marine resource consumption and coastal settlement during the early contact period. Documentary accounts by later visitors in the Mariana Islands, such as Louis de Freycinet (1825) in the early nineteenth century, assert that residents of coastal settlements (known as *matua*) were members of the highest class in Chamorro society, whereas inland residents (known as *mangatchang*) were in a lower class. However, Pobre’s early account in 1602 fails to draw such a distinction. Consequently, documentary claims of class divisions among the Chamorro by Le Gobien, a French Jesuit who never visited Guam, might simply be a reflection of his own society (Peterson 2012:202).

In either case, it appears that most Chamorro did not practice a formal dual-residence system of land use until the *reducción* was institutionalized in the late seventeenth century. Only then, it seems, did many Chamorro use two residences, a coastal village and inland *láncho* where they could freely practice aspects of their intangible cultural heritage beyond the view of Spanish colonial authorities (see Thompson 1947:294–295). This dual-residence pattern, wherein individual families maintained parcels of property for gardening and farming, was documented again in the late eighteenth century (1771–1772) by Julien Crozet’s voyage (Rochon 1891:92–93). By the late nineteenth century, land tenure on Guam had evolved as the church and elite Chamorro-Spanish mestizo (*manak‘kilo*) families acquired large hacienda estates that sharply distinguished them from impoverished Chamorro (*manak‘papa*), who typically lacked Spanish ancestry (Rogers 1995:75, 105). Although many Chamorro did not own property under Spanish rule and were compelled to serve as laborers, those who managed to retain or acquire their ancestral lands worked them as *lánchos*, where they engaged in subsistence farming and animal husbandry (Rogers 1995:75, 105). Moreover, Chamorro who operated *lánchos* were also well positioned to practice their intangible cultural heritage into the early twentieth century.
Following the Spanish-American War, for example, village health inspections by the U.S. Navy’s insular patrol were thwarted by Chamorro who hid at their inland lânchos (Perez Hattori 2004:30). Such locales enabled them to perpetuate aspects of their intangible cultural heritage, including (but not limited to) traditional herbal healing by suruhau (male healers) and suruhana (female healers). Other holdovers of intangible cultural heritage that persisted into the twentieth century included betel nut chewing, stone throwing, folk tunes (Kantan Chamorrita), ceremonies (birth, death, betrothal, and marriage), some forms of social organization, and certain attitudes and values, including respect for elders at home and ancestral sights at lânchos (Thompson 1947:281–291). Such customs and behaviors were more freely exercised at rural lânchos in the mid-twentieth century when regulations by the U.S. Navy impinged on rights as simple as whistling or spitting in the streets (Thompson 1991:83).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Archaeological evidence of land use in Guam’s interior and elsewhere in the Mariana Islands spanned several centuries, beginning by the first millennium, through the reducción, and into the early nineteenth century (Table 9.1). Resource extraction and settlement of Guam’s inland settings are signaled by rockshelters, campsites, latte sets, charcoal-stained mounds of soil, pottery scatters, stone and shell tools, stone piles, and low cobble walls (Bulgrin 2006; Carson 2012; Craib 1994; Dixon et al. 2011; Dixon and Gilda 2011; Dixon and Schaefer 2014; Dixon et al. 2010; Hunter-Anderson 2012; Moore 2005). The calibration of archaeology and paleoenvironmental signatures of climate change, as well as episodic events (droughts and high precipitation), hints that inland land use, resource extraction, and settlement varied across time on Guam (Hunter-Anderson 2012:164–173) (see Table 9.1).

Latte sets are widely distributed in both inland and coastal settings (Carson 2012; Kurashina 1991; Reinman 1977), and most of them exhibit features and assemblages indicative of resource extraction and/or low-intensity farming such as shifting cultivation (Table 9.2). Inland latte sets rarely exhibit the evidence of long-term residential settlement that is characteristic of coastal latte sites (Bayman et al. 2012; Craib 1986). The abundance of artifact scatters throughout Guam’s interior in those places
where latte sites are relatively scarce—such as the northern plateau—likely functioned as short-term lânchos. Residences at such locales were probably quite similar to the double “lean-to” structures (sadigane) of wood and palm fronds that were still used in rural Guam into the mid-twentieth century (Thompson 1947:282). Such structures are not easily detected in the archaeological record, yet careful fieldwork could enhance their documentation. Indeed, local cobble platforms of square and rectangular shapes have been noted on the surface at some pre–World War II lânchos in North Finegayan (Dixon et al. 2016; see Table 9.2); such features could have served as rough flooring for thatched structures that were temporary in nature. A correlation between such lânchos and deeper soil settings has also been documented (Dixon et al. 2020) at abandoned concrete water cisterns, stone or brick above-ground ovens (hotno), and glass, porcelain, or metal artifacts, occasionally with a metate or possible mano fragment (Dixon et al. 2016; see Table 9.2).

Although the so-called Lost River Village in inland southern Guam includes more than 33 latte sets (Table 9.2), evidence of long-term residential settlement is lacking (in all but one case): there are no burials, and the depth

### Table 9.1 Generalized model of inland settlement and land use on Guam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Land-Use Pattern</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Selected Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early latte (1000)</td>
<td>Early inland land use</td>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Moore 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle latte (1000–1400)</td>
<td>Acceleration of inland land use</td>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Hunter-Anderson 2012:164–166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late latte to contact (1400–1521)</td>
<td>Contraction of inland land use</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>Dixon et al. 2012:213–214; Hunter-Anderson 2012:167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact to the reducción (1521–1700)</td>
<td>Relocation to coastal district villages</td>
<td>European trade, introduced diseases, population decrease</td>
<td>Bayman et al. 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9.2  Information on selected inland archaeological sites on Guam that were occupied before, during, and/or after the reducción

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name / #</th>
<th>Topographic Setting</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Material Culture</th>
<th>Period and Time Span</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Finegayan, 66-08-0141</td>
<td>Northern Plateau</td>
<td>Latte, rock ovens, ash and charcoal midden</td>
<td>Ceramics, adze fragments, marine shell, slingstone</td>
<td>$Latte$ to postcontact, 1295–1810</td>
<td>Dixon et al. 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost River Village</td>
<td>Southern Uplands</td>
<td>33+ latte, marine shell midden</td>
<td>Scatters of ceramic, lithic, and ground stone</td>
<td>$Latte$ to postcontact (?) , 690–1650</td>
<td>Dixon and Gilda 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M221</td>
<td>Southern Uplands (Ma-nenggon Hills)</td>
<td>2 latte, hearth, cooking and disposal mound</td>
<td>Ceramics, Spanish pottery, Ming porcelains, metal, ground stone, adzes, chipped stone, worked marine shell and beads</td>
<td>Late latte period to postcontact, 1400–1650 (latte no. 2), 1200–1400 (latte no. 1)</td>
<td>Craib 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M201</td>
<td>Southern Uplands (Man-genggon Hills)</td>
<td>3 plant cultivation pits</td>
<td>Ceramic scatter, yam ($Dioscorea$) thorns, coconut shell</td>
<td>Early latte period, 986–1210</td>
<td>Moore 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-08-1350, Feature 1</td>
<td>North Finegayan (Dededo)</td>
<td>Concrete water cistern</td>
<td>Porcelain, bottle glass, metal, possible stone mano</td>
<td>Historic, 1700–1945</td>
<td>Dixon et al. 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature Code</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Feature Description</td>
<td>Artifacts Found</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<td>Feature 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature 6</td>
<td>Junction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-09-2689,</td>
<td>Talofofo (Acapulco)</td>
<td><em>Latte</em> sets and late 1800 artifacts</td>
<td>Blue shell edge, red sponge ware, porcelain, while ware, green bottle base pontil, metal matrock head, <em>latte</em> period ceramics and lithics</td>
<td>Late <em>latte</em> period to historic, 1400 to 1945</td>
<td>Dixon et al. 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 5</td>
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and density of midden are relatively limited (Dixon and Gilda 2011:76). Still, archaeological evidence that Guam’s southern interior was used extensively before contact is abundant (Dye and Cleghorn 1990), even if such use may not have matched the intensity of coastal settlement with respect to the number of latte sets. However, it is likely that thatched houses atop wood piles were constructed at some inland locales where stone for making latte pillars (baligi) was lacking or otherwise difficult to quarry. Notably, thatched houses atop wood piles (rather than stone piles) were still used in Guam’s villages as late as the 1920s (Dixon and Schaefer 2014; Flores 2011:74; Laguna et al. 2012:85, 88, 107; Montón Subías 2019: 414; Thompson 1940:462, 1947:282). Moreover, the layout and ground plan of such rural settlements sometimes duplicated certain aspects of ancient latte sites such as paralleling coastlines or streams (Thompson 1947:282). The construction of relatively formal streets, however, was likely a Spanish introduction.

Confirmation that inland settings were used for several centuries prior to Spanish contact and colonialism is a key finding; it underscores the potential of historical memory in perpetuating intangible cultural heritage in Chamorro society at láncho settlements following the reducción in the late eighteenth century. Inland land use is especially well-documented in northern Guam, where a latte residential site with cooking features and plant microfossils (pollen, phytoliths, starch residues) from well-dated contexts signals farming and resource extraction both before and during the reducción (Dixon et al. 2020). Economic plants that were cultivated included pandanus, coconut, and taro (Dixon et al. 2020). This site is a striking example of a locale where inland farming and resource extraction were practiced in proximity to a standing latte set that witnessed use prior to contact, was abandoned, and was later revitalized into a Chamorro láncho during the colonial period.

Another apparent láncho site on Guam is the latte site of Pulantat (MaGYo-1 site designation). It includes no fewer than 34 latte sets in the south-central part of the island along the banks of two small streams (Reinman 1977:49). Although its midden debris is relatively limited, it includes stone mortars (lusong) and scattered pottery and stone tools (Reinman 1977:49–51, 153–154). Radiocarbon dates on excavated charcoal yielded postcontact dates ranging from 1710 to 1770 (Reinman 1977:51). Together, these late radiocarbon dates and the recovery of two porcelain sherds hint that this latte site was established as a láncho residence follow-
ing the advent of the reducción. Intriguingly, in the mid-twentieth century this site was regarded with “a superstitious reverence on the part of the natives . . . where a large stone is said to be growing” (Osborne 1947:34). This observation illustrates that Chamorro belief in taotaomo’na (ancestral spirits) in places that their families once lived or farmed persisted more than four centuries after contact with Europeans, as it does to this day in the twenty-first century. Cultural memory substantiates Chamorro claims to ancestral lands that were utilized as lánchos following the reducción.

Guam’s landscape harbored many other Spanish-period lánchos, and they await recognition and detailed attention by archaeologists. For example, three inland sites in Geuss Valley (MaGMe-9 to MaGMe-11) (Reinman n.d.:41) with an abundance of “Spanish ware” ceramics and ground stone tools warrant intensive archaeological investigation to further ascertain the materiality of lánchos. Latte sets with similar late nineteenth-century assemblages have been identified in a locale named Acapulco in the middle of the Talofofo drainage (Dixon et al. 2014; see Table 9.2). Such places offered traditionally sanctified settings where Chamorro could practice and perpetuate vital dimensions of their intangible cultural heritage beyond the view of Spanish colonial authorities.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Together, documentary sources and archaeological materials offer an integrated perspective on the ancient history of land use and how it presaged the perpetuation of intangible cultural heritage in Chamorro society. Somewhat ironically, it was the materiality of land use at colonial period lánchos that facilitated the persistence of intangible cultural heritage that first crystallized by 1000 and perhaps even earlier. Farming and resource extraction at lánchos and other rural locales by some (if not all) Chamorro provided a degree of isolation that freed them to more easily behave and communicate how they desired, beyond the view of their colonizers (Perez Hattori 2004:16). They could enact precolonial customs and share traditional stories that honored the spirits of their ancestors (taotaomo’na).

That farming and resource extraction persisted at lánchos after the Spanish colonial period and into the early twentieth century should not be surprising. Such practices are corroborated by José R. Palomo’s
childhood recollections of resource extraction on his family’s farm on the inland plateau of northern Guam. Their lâncho offered deer and fanibi (fruit bat) along with plant materials and foods including fadang (Cycas cirinalis), Hibiscus tiliaceus bark, seeds of Artocarpus mariannensis (lemmai), and yams (dagù) (cited in Dixon et al. 2012:218). Census data in Guam reveal that 63 percent of Chamorro males in 1930 worked as farmers (Thompson 1947:352–353, Table 6). Again, the relative isolation of Chamorro farmers freed them to enact customary forms of behavior beyond the view of naval administrators. Perhaps ironically, this was only 13 years after the U.S. colonial governor sought to relocate Chamorro away from their clustered villages and onto their dispersed lânchos as a measure to improve sanitation and health conditions (Perez Hattori 2004:34).

Tragically, lânchos also served as refuges for Chamorro when they were colonized by the Japanese in the early 1940s (Rodgers 1995:162) and shortly thereafter when they suffered the violence of World War II. Inland (and even coastal) lânchos are still held by some families on Guam and elsewhere in the Mariana Islands, and such places serve as scenes for family events and activities (Bevacqua 2019). Similarly, use of plants for traditional medicine is still practiced by folk healers, suruhanas (female) and suruhanaus (male). Other examples of intangible cultural heritage include various customs such as chenchule’ (expected contribution), ayuda (helping and sharing), and inafa’maolek (being present at an event or expressing support) (Perez Hattori 2004; Na’ Puti and Rohrer 2017) and would have also been practiced among neighbors in rural lânchos. These instances of intangible cultural heritage are only a few of many that persisted in Chamorro society during and after Spanish contact and colonialism, and ongoing research promises to further illuminate this phenomenon (see Montón-Subías et al. 2018).

Cultural memory of inland land use after the reducción and resettlement in coastal villages ensured the perpetuation of intangible cultural heritage at rural lânchos beyond the reach of surveillance by Spanish authorities and subsequent colonial powers. In so doing, Chamorro charted a path that enabled them to both accommodate and resist hegemonic control of their destiny by Spanish authorities and subsequent colonial powers. While this particular example of place making is unique in some respects, it also echoes other strategies of accommodation and resistance that were devised by native peoples elsewhere in Oceania and beyond.
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