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Memories
from Darkness

JUICIO Y
CASTIGO

Archaeology of Repression
and Resistance in Latin America

Springer

Memories from Darkness

CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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Editors

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Cover image: Representation of a *desaparecido* (disappeared person) created by survivors and victims'
relatives of state terrorism at the ruins of Club Atlético Clandestine Detention Center (Buenos Aires,
Argentina). This large-sized image is lighted up with torches on specific days commemorating those who
were killed at the place in 1977 (Photo by Melisa A. Salerno 2009).

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Foreword

To Write What one Could Not Tell Anyone

You who live in all tranquility
So warm and comfortable in your houses,
You who come home at night to find
The table laid and friendly faces around you,
Consider if this is a man,
He who toils in the mud,
Who knows no rest,
Who fights for a crust of bread,
Who dies for the slightest reason.
Consider if this is a woman,
She who has lost her name and her hair,
And even the strength to remember,
Her gaze blank and her bosom chilled,
Like a frog in winter.
Do not forget that this happened,
No, do not forget it:
Engrave these words in your heart.
Think of them in your home, in the street,
When you sleep, when you rise;
Repeat them to your children.
Or else your house will crumble,
You will be overcome by illness,
And your children will turn away from you
(Levi 1987:9, the translations is mine).

At Auschwitz, Filip Müller was assigned to the *Sonderkommando*. Every day, with his fellow prisoners, he emptied the gas chambers of their piles of defiled corpses and loaded them into the crematorium furnaces of the extermination camp. He had already dealt with thousands and thousands of corpses of men, women, old people and children. On that day, at crematorium 2, he witnessed a scene which overwhelmed him: he saw before him an entire convoy of his Czech compatriots refusing to undress themselves and, the SS powerless to stop them, singing all together their national anthem and the *Hatikva*. On that day, as he tells the film-maker Claude Lanzmann in his film *Shoa* (Lanzmann 2001:234–235), "I realized that my life no longer had any value. What was the use of living? And what for? So I went into the gas chamber with them and decided to die. With them. Suddenly, some of them who had recognized me came towards me (…) A small group of

women approached me. They looked at me and said (…): 'So you want to die / But there's no sense in it / Your dying wouldn't give us back our life / It would be a pointless act / You must get out of here / You must testify to our suffering / And to the injustice we are the victims of'."

The man who wanted to die to share the fate of his fellows, and who was actually entering the gas chamber, was sent back over the threshold by those naked women already prepared for death, already there on the other side, in the cold semi-darkness of the gas chamber. They forced him back out onto the side of light and life; they ordered him to live, those women who were to die in the minutes that followed. He had to live, "to get out of there," so that he could "tell" what he had experienced, so that he could "testify" to the suffering endured and the injustice committed.

This book is a testimony too. It too tells of the sufferings undergone and the injustice inflicted. It transmits the words of those who were lucky enough to get out and to be able to tell us "what was committed." It bears the memory of the victims, of the mass of all those on whom injustice was inflicted. It is an enterprise of truth and justice. I say this all the more forcefully as I do not necessarily share the positions of all the authors whose contributions made it possible for this essential book to be published. Indeed I do not believe in the natural goodness of a so-called "left-wing" archaeology: any archaeology which sides with oppression does not deserve to be called archaeology. And those who serve it do not deserve to be called archaeologists. This is "equally valid" for archaeology of left-wing or Marxist leanings as for that of right-wing tendencies; whether the archaeology of democracies is concerned or that of totalitarian regimes, the same question is posed. Be that as it may, this work is an essential testimony, a fundamental contribution to the contemporary archaeology of Latin America, of that considerable part of the New World which has never been American.

Someone who testifies exposes himself and this book is a particularly courageous enterprise which must be saluted with all the respect it deserves. Why, indeed, take such a risk? Why unearth painful events that most people nowadays would prefer not to hear about any more? It is a regularly observed fact that periods of terror produce an incredible need for eye-witness accounts. "I write what I could never tell anyone," Primo Levi (1987:151) confesses, to explain why, while he was a prisoner at Auschwitz, with no other thinkable outcome in view than death, unceasingly put pen to paper and recorded what was happening in the minutest detail, amid the absolute disaster that was the *Lager*, the Nazi extermination camp. To transmit the unspeakable to those living afterwards: the survivors want to bear witness, beyond their personal history or that of their fellow prisoners who died; they want to tell a story which far exceeds their own experience because they know, fundamentally, that it addresses humanity at large. They want to bear witness, beyond the insignificance of their own existence, to the sacrilegious offense committed against humanity, to the irreparable attack carried out on what must not be infringed upon in the human being on pain of being cursed. As Bartolomeo de la Casas wrote in the sixteenth century, to explain the reasons why he bore witness to the genocide of the Indians by the Spanish in the New World: "If these acts were

permitted, they would take place again. Since these acts […] are iniquitous, tyrannical and condemned by every natural, divine and human law, detested and cursed, I have decided, so as not to be guilty by my silence of the innumerable losses of souls and bodies caused by the tyrants, to print a few that I have chosen among the innumerable examples I could speak of in truth…" (Las Casas 1996:46)

"If these acts were permitted, they would take place again": four hundred years later, these words are a forceful echo of Primo Levi's when, on the subject of Nazism, he says that "as long as the idea is considered acceptable, the consequences are a threat to us" (Levi 1987:7). To reveal the truth about what happened is first of all a demand made by one's conscience. Faced with the enormity of acts calling for some sort of biblical punishment, the person who bears witness tries to save himself. By breaking the silence, he tries to dissipate the immense burden of guilt weighing down on those monstrous acts. He does not do this for himself; he does it for humanity as a whole, to save what must not disappear from humanity.

Of course, as the cynics and the corrupt say, all this is "naïve and ridiculous," and those who embark on such an undertaking expose themselves to many an attack. And it is highly probable that the authors of this book will come under fire. I am sure that they will experience disappointments and disillusions. Some of their colleagues, whom they thought were their friends, will send letters or publish articles denouncing them as both incompetent and malicious: they will say that the authors of this book are not properly qualified to bring up this question because they are not historians, they will say that they distort the facts and that they make personal attacks on people of merit and excellent reputation, and finally they will wax indignant that these authors set themselves up as judges when the scientific code of ethics demands that they should remain neutral, that is to say, they should keep silent. The most treacherous will deplore the fact that the contributors to this book are doing a great disservice to their cause by claiming to defend it with such poor arguments. It is obvious that these writers will know nothing of what is happening for the time being; they will become aware of it gradually. Moreover, they will not learn everything, and years later they will still discover that they have been denounced by colleagues they never suspected of hating and despising them. In the professional milieu, many will talk about them: the most virulent to denigrate the work they have carried out; the most moderate to diminish its importance, hiding behind pretexts of impartiality and objectivity. Those who do not know all this, or, more precisely, do not wish to know it, will spontaneously find it wiser not to commit themselves. Their friends will say to them, embarrassment plain to hear in their tone of voice, "I stood up for you," and very soon they will prefer not to know exactly the whys and the wherefores.

From colleagues they once respected they will hear statements which will fill them with dread. Some of these will put forward the argument that it is not because many individuals worked in the service of fascism that they themselves were fascists; some will go so far as to claim that it is not because certain archaeologists were self-confessed fascists that their personal scientific contribution should necessarily be qualified as fascist. And even though, generally speaking, these detractors have no knowledge of the historical proofs scattered among the archives, they will accuse the authors of this book of lumping ideas together anyhow, of deliberately

simplifying a complex situation in which nothing is black or white. Technicians will break down their arguments point by point: they will emphasize, using tedious analyses, that everything under fascism was not fascist, on the contrary. They will show that many of its realizations, laws and modes of organization had been thought up before the event and that they were partly taken up again afterwards, which, they insinuate, clearly means that the historical reality of the situation has been grossly misunderstood by these authors who, they imply, have let themselves be taken in by misguided sentimentalism.

I know this situation well. I have experienced it personally ever since I, with 20 or so other researchers from different European countries, dared to tackle the tabooed subject of the situation of archaeology under the Third Reich and its impact on postwar European archaeology (Legendre et al. 2007). And yet it was a far less burning issue than that chosen by the researchers working with Pedro Funari, Andrés Zarankin and Melisa Salerno. Nazi Germany had collapsed for good 60 years before, most of those in authority during the period were dead and the criminal nature of the national-socialist enterprise had been recognized without doubt. The situation is completely different in Latin America: the events that interest us here took place for certain people hardly more than 20 years ago and, in most of the countries concerned, those who served those dictatorships are still alive, some, indeed, probably still occupying posts of responsibility. As, in view of the subject, I find myself close to the approach of the authors working in this book, I should like to say something here that we were not able to speak of in my case, something with which, I am certain, the authors of this book would agree: we are not judging those who carried out these acts. We were not in their place at the time. As for me personally, I do not know – deep down inside myself – whether, in their situation, I would not have come down on the side of the persecutors: out of fear, cowardice, blindness or for any other reason I am unaware of. Deep down, nobody can know for sure what they would have done. Whether or not those people who committed criminal acts must be judged and punished is a matter for justice to determine. As for knowing whether they acted rightly or wrongly, it is a matter which only concerns themselves and their consciences.

As archaeologists, we are neither police, nor judges nor spiritual advisers. If we take an interest in these questions, it is precisely "because" we are archaeologists; it is basically because the acts committed in the name of these dictatorships have left traces. For the more one seeks to keep one's acts secret, in fact, the more traces one accumulates. In *The Purloined Letter*, the American poet Edgar Allan Poe (2008) clearly demonstrated that the best way to keep something secret is to expose it to the eyes of all. The more one hides the results of one's acts and shelters these traces from the risk of alteration, the more surely one entrusts them to the future by attempting to conceal them from the present. These traces will inevitably come to light again. The bodies of the "desaparecidos" (that is to say, disappeared people) will be found when a road or a school is being built, or an old building demolished. With the remains of the corpses will be found the evidence of their murders and the unmistakable proofs of the identities of those who committed them. Such traces will endlessly go on being unearthed; they will still be found for centuries to come.

It will be archaeologists who will find them and, in any case, archaeologists will be called upon whenever these traces come to light. Moreover, these traces have already begun to surface: this book draws up a first account, a first typology to be of use to future archaeologists who will then discover others.

Most important of all, the third generation will come. Today they are still children. They are the grandchildren of both the perpetrators and the victims. When they grow up to be men and women, the ghosts of the past will not frighten them, as they still haunt the survivors of the period of terror every day of their lives. They will not be afraid, but they will want to know those things that were hidden from their parents, and were known to their grandparents. They will want to know the truth, not for reasons of revenge or of pride, or indeed of recognition, but simply to establish the truth of what really happened. Because it is a question of History. They will want to do it because one cannot live humanely in a world of secrets and lies, because they will no longer want to go on bearing the burden of a secret which is not theirs. The third generation will be that of historians. For the time being they are playing with dolls and toy soldiers. It is to them that the witnesses of those times of inhumanity must speak. They "must" speak, before their houses crumble, before they are overcome by illness, and before their children turn away from them.

<div align="right">Laurent Olivier</div>

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Preface

"Choosing not to remember is like choosing not to smell a scent, because memories –like scents– strike us even when they are not evoked"

(Sarlo 2005:9)

Introduction

When most people think of archaeology, one of the first things that comes to their minds is the search for a treasure of an ancient and somewhat puzzling civilization (an idea probably created by the influence of Hollywood films such as Indiana Jones or Tomb Raider). Common sense portrays archaeology as a discipline closely connected to exotic, distant and luxurious things. Although it seems simplistic and fantastic, this idea has deep roots in reality. We must remember that the origins of archaeology were associated with imperialism and the interests of colonial powers. During a long period of time, archaeologists focused on the study of prehistoric groups and ancient societies (both in Europe and other regions of the world). In this context, researchers were particularly interested in studying objects with aesthetic and monetary value (for instance, artifacts created for elite groups). In general, the work of archaeologists was considered to be scientific and neutral. The traditional definition of the discipline clearly ignored recent past, ordinary people and subjectivity (including researchers' political commitment).

Thanks to the influence of socio-political movements and epistemological transformations in social sciences, this situation has experienced some changes over the years. After World War II (1939-1945), the process of decolonization and the creation of civil rights movements (as well as women rights movements) became highly influential in the recognition and respect for social heterogeneity. Social scientists stressed the importance of including multiple voices in the analysis of cultural dynamics. All perspectives were thought to be legitimate. Researchers only offered a particular point of view. It was not necessarily superior, but different. Researchers' ideas were very similar to other agents' opinions: they were fully permeated with social and individual interests (Shanks and Tilley 1987). The ideal of objectivity and neutral science was no longer attainable (Hodder 1982; Shanks

and Tilley 1987). These circumstances brought researchers and society together, promoting new epistemological programs and increasing interaction with local communities. Without a doubt, this new scenario led to the construction of post-modern approaches in social sciences.

In the case of archaeology, changes were expressed in the development and spread of new theoretical currents –mainly contextual or symbolic archaeology (Hodder 1982; Hodder *et al.* 1995; Funari *et al.* 2005). They also appeared in the creation of the World Archaeological Congress, which counted on the participation of several social groups and the contribution of researchers from different disciplines. Especially in the 1980s, archaeology was understood as the study of people through material culture (Miller 1987). This definition freed the discipline from time and space constraints. Consequently, archaeologists started to study the recent past of their own society. In this context, stepping back in time was relevant to understand present-day reality. The new trend in archaeology was committed to give voice to a plurality of social actors (not only elites). In this way, researchers intended to break down monolithic approaches to the past (Johnson 1996). Among many other things, the construction of alternative visions of history considered researchers' subjectivity (Tilley 1993). That was the first time archaeologists stressed the importance of identifying and fighting the biases of their own work.

Interest in the recent past and a new political commitment were necessary to study the historical consequences of political and economic systems (Trigger 1990). Following this trend, several researchers decided to discuss the characteristics of twentieth-century conflicts (Carman 1997; Hall 2001; Saunders 2004; Schofield *et al.* 2002; Schofield 2009; Galaty and Watkinson 2004; Ruibal 2008; Myers 2008; among others). In our case, we are particularly interested in dictatorships. From an analytical standpoint, we think it is possible to divide archaeological works on dictatorship into two main groups. Some investigations focus their attention on the existent relationship between archaeology and dictatorial governments. In general, these studies try to find out how archaeological discourses were politically used to legitimate the groups in power. Some other investigations intend to shed light on the darkest aspects of dictatorial governments –mainly political violence. The first set of works can be included under the term "archaeology under dictatorship"; the second set, under the term "archaeology of dictatorship" (which is, at the same time, what we call an "archaeology of repression").

Although this book primarily (though not exclusively) deals with an archaeology of dictatorship, in the first part of this preface we thought it was important to offer a general overview of an archaeology under dictatorship on a world stage. Without a doubt, archaeological works under authoritarian governments developed well before the transformation of the positivist and scientific paradigm of the discipline. Therefore, they included disciplinary projects we previously associated with the construction of monolithic visions of the past. Several investigations interested in discussing archaeology under dictatorship were presented in a book edited by Michael Galaty and Charles Watkinson (2004) a couple of years ago. Most contributors to this publication studied the complex dialogue

between dictatorial governments and archaeology. The understanding of the bonds between nation states and science is necessary to learn more about dictatorships and the challenges researchers face to create an archaeology of these political regimes.

In the second part of this preface, we will try to analyze the main goals of an archaeology of dictatorship and political repression. Works on the subject have experienced an accelerated growth since 1980. This process was particularly intense in the case of Latin America. Violent events caused by 1960s and 1970s dictatorships were forgotten, ignored or distorted by official discourses. In this social setting, Latin Americans felt the construction of a new social project depended on the possibility of digging and questioning the past. Archaeologists played a key role in this process. As a discipline mainly concerned with material remains, archaeology was able to provide an alternative vision of the history of repression. It could also make significant contributions to human right causes. The chapters in this book mainly discuss the interests of an archaeology of dictatorship in Latin America. Although we acknowledge the regional nature of these contributions, we hope they will provide useful theoretical and methodological tools for studying political violence in other contexts. Furthermore, the book is completed by two other articles written by Laurent Olivier (Foreword) and Martin Hall (Concluding Remarks) which –along with this preface– will allow the reader to understand repression in a world perspective.

Archaeology Under Dictatorship in World Context

Archaeology, since its inception, has been closely linked to the state. This was so in the first decades of the discipline, during most of the ninenteenth century. Archaeology was part of an imperial project and it was often a military endeavor, as a side effect of colonial policies both inside the colonial powers and in their relationship with peripheral peoples. Nationalism was also important for archaeologists in Europe and the United States. From the start, archaeology was a state matter. It is however true that archaeology was imperialist in relation to the colonized, be it a Native American Indian or an Australian aboriginal, be it the plethora of foreign subjects: Indians, Africans, Middle-Easterners, Latin Americans. The modern nation states, though not usually dictatorships, were aristocratic but liberal polities, such as Britain, the United States, France, or the newly created states of Italy and Germany (Thiesse 2001). Of course, this is not to say that there were no conflicts, for there is no community free from them (Grosby 2005:15), but they were not totalitarian states.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, archaeology was affected by the upheavals in several countries and particularly by World War I and its aftermath. In Europe, dictatorship spread rapidly; either conservative or revolutionary, they shared a strong unitary approach, inhibiting dissent. Just after the war, communism and fascism established themselves as models for revolutionary and conservative

autocratic rule. Communism established itself in the former Russian Empire and Mongolia, but communist parties were established all over the world. On the other side, fascism not only set up mass movements in several countries but gained power. Fascist parties were established in Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Baltic Countries, Finland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, Germany, Scandinavian countries, Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Spain and Portugal, to mention only Europe (Nolte 1966). In other continents, and particularly in Latin America, several fascist parties were also created. Fascist dictatorship started in Italy in 1922 but several other countries followed in the next few years. Nazi Germany from 1933 is the most extreme case of a general trend. This had a direct effect on the archaeological endeavor.

Archaeology is always linked to the state, we said. It is so for several reasons: it is a collective activity, it needs funding and it is dependent on regulation by the authorities. It is impossible to disentangle archaeology from politics, as it is not a private, purely theoretical and isolated intellectual effort (even if we consider that isolation is itself a political statement). Archaeology was thus particularly affected. Furthermore, dictatorship typically uses the past for ideological purposes (Galaty and Watkinson 2006:14), as a way of legitimating oppression. In a way, dictatorial rule can be defined by the denial of the other (Todorov 1989), and in this sense, any dictatorship is as mischievous as any other. Usually, Nazi Germany is taken as a model for the mishaps of dictatorial rule and there is indeed much evidence for the extreme brutality of the regime (Hofer 1957). Nazi Germany also occupied several countries and exported its nationalist and racist archaeology (Legendre *et al.* 2007) to the occupied lands. But it is also true that archaeology was used in other fascist states with no participation in World War II, such as the infamous Spanish case during the civil war and the dictatorship lasting until the mid-1970s (Graham 2005).

After World War II and the fall of fascism in Western Europe, archaeology was free to develop, even though communist rule in Eastern Europe continued to affect it until the end of the Cold War. This brings us to Latin America. This huge area south of the Rio Grande extends from Mexico to Argentina, comprising several countries. Latin America has been considered a peripheral area since colonial times, in the first three centuries (16th to 19th centuries), but it continued so afterwards, taken as a backyard of the British first and of the Americans later on. Latin America has been directly affected by the mass movements described, as communism and fascism spread throughout the area from the 1920s onward. The patriarchal, oligarchic and rural elites were also used to autocratic rule, and this combined in several countries with the decisive role the military played in social life. Military coups and different kinds of dictatorial rule sprouted in the continent, especially during the 1960s and 1970s (the period we are particularly interested in). Military rule was bound to affect archaeology extensively and this is most relevant issue. As Bettina Arnold (2006) states, archaeology and archaeologists face a Faustian dilemma: accept the ideological projects of dictatorships and continue their careers, or oppose all forms of repression and bear the cost of this decision. Nowadays, the discipline is turning to its history and dictatorial rule. Next, we will discuss this issue in detail.

Archaeology of Dictatorship in Latin America

Since the Cuban Revolution in 1959, leftist movements spread all over Latin America (Avelar 1999). As Wright (2007) pointed out, this accelerated growth was expressed in the creation and consolidation of revolutionary groups, the rise of strikes and protests, and farmers and workers' discontent and organization. In some cases, left-wing parties managed to gain significant positions in democratic elections. The populist government of João Goulart in Brazil and Salvador Allende in Chile provide some examples of this process (Becker 2008). On other occasions, leftist groups encouraged militarized actions against the governments of the moment. In this way, they became involved in guerrilla-like actions (Wright 2007). In spite of their significant diversity, leftist movements usually shared Marxist ideology. From this perspective, they stressed the connection between inequality and capitalism, and the possibility of creating a fairer society.

During the 1960s and 1970s, several Latin American countries became ruled by dictatorships. Among them, it is worth mentioning Argentina (1966-1973, 1976-1983), Bolivia (1964-1982), Brazil (1964-1985), Chile (1973-1990), Ecuador (1963-1966), Honduras (1963-1971, 1972-1982), Panama (1968-1989), Peru (1968-1980) and Uruguay (1973-1985). Other countries suffered dictatorial governments which dated back to previous decades. For instance, Dominican Republic (1930-1978), El Salvador (1931-1982), Guatemala (1921-1986), Haití (1957-1990), Nicaragua (1936-1979) and Paraguay (1949-1989). Without a doubt, this overview gives the reader an idea of the strength of authoritarian governments in Latin America. These governments were not mere transitional systems, but managed to remain in power for long periods of time.

Dictatorial regimes might be defined in opposition to democratic governments. According to Przeworski *et al.* (2000), democracies constitute political systems where government offices are filled by contested elections among several parties. Meanwhile, dictatorships refer to political systems where government positions are filled without contested elections. These circumstances are associated with the absence or the presence of only one party. Dictatorships are frequently the result of coups d'etat; that is to say, of political changes in the succession to power. In Latin America, 1960s and 1970s dictatorships were headed by military groups. They established particular forms of government, usually known as "juntas" (Feitlowitz 1999). Juntas were political committees or boards composed of army officers. Once in power, military groups instituted "martial laws", which implied an exception to ordinary laws (the political order defended by national constitutions). They held extraordinary powers to face "states of emergency" (situations where judicial institutions were supposedly unable to ensure peace), and they appropriated the right to limit and/or suspend civil liberties, conducting short trials and imposing severe punishments.

Dictatorships in Latin America intended to legitimate their power through several discourses. In the 1970s, military groups insisted on the need to protect the values of Western and Christian civilization. Leftist movements were considered to be an actual or latent threat against social order. Furthermore, democratic

institutions were said to be unable to cope with political tension. In this context, military groups defined themselves as "the guardians of their own nations." In general, military takeovers were supported by different groups of civilians (Jordán 1993). Well-off people thought dictatorships would ensure the *status quo*. At the same time, working class people thought military forces would cease violence caused by guerrilla.

Dictatorships used repressive forces on the pretext of protecting "the interests of their nations". Thus, they engaged in "dirty wars" against all forms of political opposition. Repressive devices included censorship, exile, detention, torture, murder and disappearance. State terrorism usually employed psychological methods to spread fear, diminish political resistance and encourage "witch hunts" among civilians. Dictatorships also attempted to control access to critical information. This is why they decided to censor the media, and hide and destroy official documents. Dominant visions of history tried to silence the voices of the victims.

Repression in Latin America developed in an international setting dominated by the Cold War (Acuña 2003). The Cold War was a period of rivalry experienced by capitalism (represented by the United States of America) and socialism (represented by the Soviet Union) after World War II. This period was marked by a permanent state of tension, without an explicit declaration of war. The United States felt the growth of leftist movements in Latin America threatened their national security policy. For this reason, they decided to support the presence of military forces in the region. Dictatorships were expected to control dissidence against capitalism. In general, the United States provided political, economic and military support to military regimes (including intelligence services and military instruction).

It is possible to identify some similarities among the repressive methods employed by Latin American dictatorships between 1960 and 1980. Some of these patterns account for the existence of a coordinated strategy among several countries of the region (Acuña 2003). Declassified documents state that some Latin American governments elaborated a joint plan of political repression in 1975. *Plan Cóndor* (Operation Condor) was a military program developed in the Southern Cone. It involved Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, and –only peripherically– Perú and Ecuador. *Plan Cóndor* attempted to conduct intelligence activities, and persecute and exterminate political opposition.

Dictatorships in Latin America started to collapse at the end of the 1970s. This process began in Ecuador (1979), and spread over Peru (1980), Honduras (1981), Bolivia, El Salvador (1982), Argentina (1983), Brazil (1984), Guatemala, Uruguay (1985), Chile, Paraguay (1989), Nicaragua and Panama (1990) (Rico 1997). In most cases, the fall of military governments was not associated with abrupt revolutionary changes (Catterberg 1989). On the contrary, it was closely connected to national and international long-term factors (Rico 1977). At the end of the 1970s, authoritarian governments suffered profound economic, political and social crisis as a result of past decisions. Almost at the same time, they started to feel the consequences of an adverse international context. After the Cold War, military governments could no longer use the threat of communism to justify their presence.

Some years after the fall of dictatorships, victims' relatives and human rights organizations decided to ask for justice. For the first time in history, Latin Americans felt the need to know the truth about repression. At first, investigations attempted to gather evidence to identify and punish the guilty. Later, they intended to create and maintain a social memory of repression. Since the 1980s, archaeologists have become interested in studying the consequences of political repression. With the return of democracy, new generations of researchers sought to shed light on the darkest side of dictatorships. In general, Latin American archaeologists had to face political threats, academic criticism and their own fears to achieve their goal.

History –as a discipline primarily concerned with the analyses of documents written by people in positions of power– has traditionally offered a partial view of the past, leaving aside "marginal" or "unnoticed" groups (Funari *et al.* 1999). These groups perfectly match what Eric Wolf (1982) calls "people without history." As mentioned above, written sources on clandestine repression are scarce and fragmentary. "Disappeared people" (*desaparecidos*[1] from now on) can be considered to be people without history, whose lives were sadly interrupted by kidnapping and disappearance. From that moment on, they were neither alive nor dead. They simply had gone missing. In general, archaeology has the potential to be "democratic," as it deals with material remains or "garbage" everyone produces. Archaeology creates alternative histories, giving voice to invisible, minority and oppressed groups. All this means the discipline has the power to tell a "history of the people without history". Therefore, archaeological analyses can help us to shed light on repressive mechanisms, recovering missing people's histories and remains.

About this Book

This book is composed of ten chapters written by contributors from different Latin American countries, and a concluding chapter written by a South African colleague. This must not be regarded as a matter of chance. Considering *Plan Cóndor's* extension, it is relevant to stress that repression was not a result of isolated decisions, but a common practice which united Latin America through fear. Although each chapter focuses on particular goals and perspectives, all of them share an interest in discussing the repressive methods used by dictatorships in the region (and, in some cases, different forms of resistance to state violence). In order to become acquainted with specific lines of inquiry, we divided the contributions into five major groups.

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[1] *"Desaparecidos"* was the word used by Latin Americans to refer to people who were kidnapped, tortured, and murdered by repressive forces which intended to destroy or hide their bodies. As CONADEP (2005) points out, this word is frequently used in Spanish/Portuguese by the international press, representing a sad legacy of past repression in the region.

Theoretical Discussions

Some archaeologists intend to discuss the epistemological, conceptual and methodological basis of an archaeology of dictatorship in Latin America. These researchers frequently ask questions such as the following: What are the main goals of this kind of archaeology?; are there any particular ways in which repression should be addressed?; what are some of the academic and social consequences of an archaeology of dictatorship?; are there any theoretical frameworks which deserve archaeologists' special consideration?; what are the main challenges of dealing with the material aspects of repression? In some way, all contributors to this book discuss some of these topics. However, in this section we have decided to include investigations primarily concerned with theoretical subjects. Chapters written by Alejandro Haber, Carl Langebaek, Pedro Funari, Nancy Vieira de Oliveira and José María López Mazz provide a clear example of this trend.

These chapters also discuss the position of researchers and the characteristics of an archaeology under dictatorship. Thus, they attempt to understand the multiple ways in which the discipline transformed itself into an ideological tool to legitimate authoritarian governments (Galaty and Watkinson 2006). Archaeologists like Alejandro Haber and Carl Henrik Langebaek consider it is necessary to deconstruct archaeological discourses. In this way, they try to emphasize that researchers could have protected the interests of power through a systematic manipulation of the past. In *Archaeology and Left in Colombia,* Langebaek highlights the relationship between Marxism and the study of the pre-Hispanic past in Colombia. With this objective in mind, he analyzes archaeology from a sociological standpoint, establishing connections between its development and twentieth-century political and academic history in Colombia. In *Torture, Truth, Repression and Archaeology,* Haber draws a symbolic comparison between representations of the European conquest in the sixteenth century, and the genocide committed by dictatorships in the twentieth century. His work considers the existence of different regimes of truth in archaeology, as well as the multiple ways in which these regimes influenced (and still influence) the analysis of the past.

Following this line of inquiry, Pedro Funari and Nancy Vieira de Oliveira study how certain socio-political contexts may have hindered the opportunity to develop archaeological projects on dictatorships and their legacy. In *Archaeology of Conflict in Brazil,* Funari and Vieira de Oliveira analyze some of the circumstances which promoted the absence or failure of archaeological works on repression several years after the return of democracy. From this perspective, the authors discuss some of the problems faced by a 1990s Brazilian project interested in studying forced disappearance in the country. This work specifically takes into account the epistemological basis of an "an archaeology of conflict" in Latin America.

José María López Mazz also highlights the importance of approaching political violence in Latin America. In *An Archaeological View of Political Repression in Uruguay (1971-1985),* he recognizes the need to strengthen an archaeology of repression in Uruguay. He defines it as the archaeological study of state terrorism and related events which remained invisible until today. In this work, López Mazz

(who runs several projects focused on the search for and identification of *desaparecidos*) uses Uruguayan prisons as his main case study. During the military government, political opponents were frequently held captive there. However, disciplinary devices were resisted through prison escapes and innumerable small practices which allowed victims to escape everyday violence.

Search for and Identification of Desaparecidos

Disappearance was one of the most frequent and pervasive tools used by Latin American dictatorships to eliminate opposition. Disappearance included shooting and burying people in unmarked mass graves, and throwing them from airplanes or helicopters into the ocean (Belleli and Tobin 1985; Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992; Doretti and Fondebrider 2001). As Amnesty International (the translation is ours) points out: *"Due to its nature, disappearance conceals the author's identity. If there is no legal prisoner, corpse, or victim, then nobody is presumably accused of anything"*. For that reason, thousands of people of all ages and occupations were kidnapped and still remain missing in some Latin American countries –30,000 people in Argentina; 5,800 in Peru; 3,000 in Chile; 1,500 in Brazil, among others.

Since 1984, several interdisciplinary projects (including archaeologists, anthropologists, physicians and lawyers) have exhumed and identified hundreds of bodies. The first of these projects was developed by the *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (EAAF – Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team). Its pioneering work and experience transformed it into one of the most outstanding forensic projects in the world (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1991, 1993; Doretti and Fondebrider 2001). The activities of EAAF extend far beyond Argentina, including other Latin American countries and regions. In *Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology: A Balance Sheet*, Luis Fondebrider offers an interesting overview of the main achievements and experiences of this organization in the last decades. The origins, results and challenges of forensic archaeology and anthropology are clearly explained in this article.

Clandestine Detention Centers

Clandestine detention centers were frequently used by military governments in Latin America. They were places of torture and death, as well as material metaphors codifying authoritarian discourses. Their analysis reveals a systematic plan of military dictatorships to annihilate political dissidence. The materiality of clandestine detention centers can be transformed into an auxiliary tool to reconstruct the forgotten history of repression. At the moment, there are few archaeological projects interested in analyzing clandestine centers. Due to the extent of state terrorism in Argentina,

investigations on the subject frequently focus on this case study (Bozzuto *et al.* 2004; Equipo de Investigación por la Memoria Político Cultural 2004, 2008).

In *The Materialization of Sadism; Archaeology of Architecture in Clandestine Detention Centers (Argentina's Military Dictatorship, 1976-1983),* Andrés Zarankin and Claudio Niro discuss the architecture and spatial organization of clandestine detention centers in Argentina from a theoretical and experiential point of view. In this work, the authors analyze the materiality of these (non) places and their relationship with repression. Zarankin and Niro use El Atlético clandestine center as their main case study. They also make reference to another center called El Vesubio, where Niro was imprisoned during dictatorship.

Objects and Representations

The archaeological analysis of repressive methods and devices should not be limited to clandestine detention centers. Inside and outside those buildings, several expressions of material culture –including objects and representations– played a key role in domination and resistance. In *'They Must Have Done Something Wrong…' The Construction of 'Subversion' as a Social Category and the Reshaping of Identities through Body and Dress (Argentina, 1976-1983),* Melisa Salerno discusses some of the strategies used by military forces in Argentina to define and subsequently transform the identity of political opponents. In this case, Salerno studies the meanings and experiences associated with the discourses and practices imposed on victims' bodies and dress. Official documents, survivors' testimonies and fragments of clothing recovered by EAAF constitute the evidence used in this chapter.

Showing a similar interest in material culture, other works analyze the material expressions of resistance to repression. In *Scratching Behind the Walls; Graffiti and Symbolic Political Imagination at Cuartel San Carlos (Caracas, Venezuela)*, Rodrigo Navarrete and Ana María López explore the potential of archaeology to study prison imaginary. Navarrete and López particularly discuss the meanings of Cuartel San Carlos' graffiti, including other figurative and textual images painted on walls, floors and ceilings. Without a doubt, these "parietal art" expressions represent prisoners' intentions to create an alternative scenario for their daily life.

Emblematic Case Studies

Archaeological projects widely known to the public usually match what we call "emblematic case studies". These works do not only catch people's attention. They also make them understand some of the most controversial aspects of dictatorship. In *Archaeology of a Search; An Archaeological Search,* Roberto Rodríguez Suárez thoroughly describes the search for and localization of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's remains. This paper shows the analytical and technological methods used by

archaeologists and physical anthropologists to find the body of one of the most legendary twentieth-century characters –whose localization remained unknown until the end of the 1990s.

Another emblematic case study is portrayed in *Mexico 1968; Among Olympic Fanfares, Government Repression and Genocide*. In this work, Patricia Fournier and José Martínez Herrera analyze the biggest massacre in recent Mexican history. In 1968, thousands of people were killed by repressive state forces while they were participating in a massive demonstration against the government. Almost forty years later, Mexicans still ask for truth and justice. In this context, Fournier and Herrera point out the need to create an interdisciplinary project to recover historical memory. As a consequence, one of their goals is to shed light on violence, finding *desaparecidos* once and for all.

Final Words

The study of repression is not a neutral historical exercise or a problem objectively tackled by scientist, but a political commitment we make as researchers. We know that poverty and exclusion in Latin America are closely connected to the recent past. We hope this book will help us accomplish the difficult task of understanding some of the causes and legacies of dictatorships and repression.

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Chapter 1
Torture, Truth, Repression and Archaeology

Alejandro F. Haber

During the most recent military dictatorship in Argentina, torture committed in *pozos* (clandestine detention centers) was not only aimed at obtaining information but at getting prisoners' self-narratives in accordance with the executioners' rules. As a consequence, torture involved the establishment of a certain regime of truth. Although this regime was necessarily authoritarian, it did not include passive descriptions (DuBois 1990). DuBois defined torture as the ultimate domination of bodies and – above anything else – ideas. From this point of view, torture did not limit itself to the extermination of enemies. On the contrary, it tried to impose a particular interpretation of history; that is to say, a particular "truth" in the struggle for understanding. Taking into account the undeniable disparity between the number of combatants and the number of people imprisoned and tortured during the military government, DuBois' thesis brought to the foreground the enormous social cost of establishing "truth".

If archaeology has the potential to reveal the traces of state terrorism, and dictatorship depends on torture as the guardian of a certain regime of truth, then it is possible to ask: What is the relationship that archaeology establishes between truth and self-narrative?

It was not in the context of an archaeology of repression that the discipline became a regime of truth, but archaeology broadened its scope to cover the recent past of torture, disappearance and death. This broadening did not only entail the application of particular techniques and methods. It also involved the extension of the validity claims of what is said about the past. Truth claims are carried from one field to the other in the institutional framework of an academic discipline whose validation criteria are supposedly methodological and technical; that is, independent from the interpreted reality. It is still troublesome to resort to a disciplinary regime of truth in the context of a new field of investigation, for the value of neutrality and

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objectivism breaks apart when the facts the discipline needs to analyze are so unquestionably atrocious that they are not only part of a reality which cannot be denied, but also which must not be denied. The most recent works in archaeology of repression do not explicitly question the objectivist (and scientificist, given that science is considered a value in itself) self-understanding of archaeology as an academic discipline. However, the conditions of the relationship of knowledge of both the archaeology of repression and that of other fields of study are sufficiently different to implicitly involve different research models.

Drawing the boundaries of the subject matter of academic archaeology – what is usually called the archaeological record or past material culture – involves a certain positioning of the observer that structures her/his knowledge acquisition processes. While the observer constitutes herself/himself as an agent of knowledge, she/he "over-constitues" her/his objectual domain both as an object of contemplation and as a material object. At the same time, it is through objectivation that the truth claims of narrative discourses are made. As a consequence, the objectual domain bases the knowledge relationship on three complexly related levels: the ontological (where archaeological objects are defined as material), the methodological (where archaeological objects are considered to be the remains of a past which is known through study) and the epistemological (where an essential and asymmetrical distinction between subject and object allows the former to know the latter such-as-it-is; that is to say, free from values and interests). The joint operation of these three levels produces the conflation of physicalism, empiricism and objectivism, providing a hard bed-rock over which the disciplinary building rests (Haber and Scribano 1993).

This idea does not represent a mere rhetorical exercise. It is not an attempt to describe the discipline, assigning a home address to seek theoretical refuge. The political sign of the knowledge relationship of archaeology rests on the above-mentioned bed-rock. What remains unsaid, or better, what remains mute, the speechless and inert archaeological object, expresses itself through its silenced talkativeness: the interests of those who are excluded from the archaeological relationship given it is established as an epistemological and disciplinary domain (Haber 1994; Haber and Scribano 1993). The exclusion of the subject is a key element in the constitution of the disciplinary *habitus* of archaeology. A large part of the archaeological disciplining consists of learning to ignore the knowledge interests of the co-present subjects (Gnecco 1999). Using a biological metaphor, it is possible to say that this disciplining operates both phylogenetically and ontogenetically.

Phylogenetical disciplining took place between 1875 and 1900, at a liminal stage of Argentinean archaeology (Haber 1995). At that stage disciplinary sanctions were not established, objectual domains were not defined and co-present subjects were not completely excluded. A group of authors – known as "philologists" – used contemporary indigenous names (*huaca*, *puco*, *virque*, *antigal*, *pucará*, *pueblo viejo*, *piedra pintada* and *conana*, among others) to designate archaeological remains. They narrated past events appealing to folk traditions and colonial chronicles, and they assumed the meaningfulness of archaeological objects. Another group of authors – called "naturalist travelers" – made a significant effort to define descriptive terms to characterize and classify objects. They argued that objects lacked meaning – or, at least, that the

material description and analysis of archaeological remains could disregard it. The institutionalization of the discipline at the *Museo Etnográfico de Buenos Aires* (Ethnographic Museum of Buenos Aires) and the *Museo de la Plata* (La Plata Museum, nowadays of Natural Sciences) implied the exclusion of philologists' styles, methods and interests, as well as the approval of naturalist travelers' as the disciplinary standard. When the Argentinean war against the indigenous peoples was about to finish, Moreno – who was then trying to design a new programme for his museum at La Plata – stated that archaeology should "at least provide a sketch of the civilizations which became extinct in this land" (Moreno 1990, the translation is mine).

The ontological disciplining, at its turn, takes place during the first stages of disciplinary education. Pedagogical discourses encourage students to incorporate the archaeological language that designates the objectual domain of the discipline. It usually does not take longer than a year to forget personal, family and community interests that led them to come into archaeology in the first place, and to replace them for other self-representations which reproduce disciplinary definitions and established aims. Either students learn to ignore their previous interest in the consequences of past repression on present social structuration, or they quit their studies as the only possible alternative to ontological training.[1]

Once the "genetic" devices operate successfully, the disciplinary *habitus* reproduces itself through a tacit combination of meaning repression and agency "preterization." In general, the natural muteness of objects does not allow researchers to listen to subjects – including themselves. Thus, subjects remain excluded from the past, which – enunciated as history – is expropriated from memory.

The mechanisms that archaeology uses to objectify the indigenous do not depend on actors' awareness. They are not a matter of individual will, but of disciplinary *habitus* maintained by culturally reproduced prejudices.[2] All citizens – disciplined or not by archaeology – have been previously disciplined by the educational system. At school, children learn the immutable progressive sense of historical time. We have been taught that the most horrifying events of history might be subject to colorful debates presented as legends or opinions. Genocides – including the biggest of them all, the conquest of the Americas – are described as painful and unavoidable distant horizons which allowed the normal development of civilization. Stressing how positive or negative the past could have been is only part of the possible spectrum of options where the truth can be found.

Archaeological representations of the exploitation/domination of certain indigenous groups by others are produced without a serious reflection on the relevance

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[1] More than 10 years ago, I had the opportunity to prove these circumstances at the *Universidad Nacional de Catamarca* (National University of Catamarca). At the beginning of their first year at college, students were able to express their extra-disciplinary goals and interests. One year later, they forgot their previous conversations, and they structured their interests and answers in strictly disciplinary terms.

[2] Culturally reproduced prejudices might change if society thinks they have to be modified through criticism (which is partly self-criticism).

these representations had in the ideological and political support of the process of conquest. The subjugation, kidnapping, torture and death of millions of people, as well as the establishment of a colonial order of exploitation, were supported by particular representations of indigenous peoples and conquerors' behaviors towards them (Todorov 1987; Vollet 2001). Without a doubt, this is the most controversial legacy South American archaeologists have to bear. These circumstances have been clearly revealed by the descendents of genocide survivors.

The colonial order did not only have an impact on the color spectrum of representations that traditionally shaped our sense of history at school. The cultural colonization of indigenous groups was organized by repressive actions conducted by the state, the church and particular individuals. These actions were intended to convert indigenous peoples to Catholicism, making them abandon and repress their cultural and religious practices and beliefs. The so-called "extirpation of idolatries" was a long campaign of ideological domination based on repressive actions, torture and the death of thousands of indigenous (Duviols 1977, 1986). The thin line between the definitions of ethnocide and genocide was not particularly considered by colonial agents. The repression of ancestor-worship practices involved the destruction of sacred objects and places, mummified bodies, graves and monuments. It also meant the persecution (followed by torture, punishment and – in many cases – death) of indigenous suspected of professing the cult (Duviols 1986; Farberman 2005). The extirpation of idolatries was subsequent to war. It was an attempt to extend the domination of individual bodies over the social imaginary. The aim of torture was to create an enemy – the evil indigenous – and obtain her/his self-narration in accordance with the torturer's worldview as a key for establishing a regime of truth.

The substitution of the word "huaca", used by Samuel Lafone Quevedo in 1891, for the expression "archaeological site" looks like a question of terminological updating. For Lafone, the inhabitants of the north-western region of Argentina were indigenous. He borrowed the name "Chañar Yaco" from them to designate the place he had decided to study. Lafone used to consider the indigenous meaning of the ruins in his interpretations (Lafone Quevedo 1891). Nowadays, these events represent a mere anecdote. In north-western Argentina, the practice of popular cults in archaeological sites is punished by the same positive law that sanctions these places as "archaeological" (Archaeological and Paleontological Heritage Protection Law 25,743/2003). This could be part of the same process of cultural colonization. Our world is heir to a colonial order based on race, class and gender privileges, which were established and maintained by practices and discourses defining the indigenous. In this context, it cannot be neutral to circumscribe the management of ancient objects and monuments to the field of an academic discipline. Management is far from neutral when scholars intend to transform archaeology's subject matter into something distant and physical. It is time to leave behind the cultural legacy that considers past indigenous traditions as archaeological, living indigenous practices as folkloric, indigenous peoples as part of the past and archaeological remains as a series of objects ready-to-be-grasped by scientific knowledge.

It is usually thought that the broadening of the scope of archaeology to include the study of recent state repression proves how useful the discipline might be to

discuss new subjects of interest. Notwithstanding this, the regimes of truth of different kinds of archaeologies are based on fundamentally distinct conditions. Among them, it is relevant to mention the exclusion or inclusion of extra-disciplinary interests (Bellelli and Tobin 1985; Bozzuto et al. 2004; Cohen Salama 1992; Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992). The mere enunciation of the objectual domain of archaeology excludes those who have other interests than the academic or scientific knowledge of the historical reconstruction of the past. In contrast, in the archaeology of recent repression the regime of truth cannot be based on the exclusion of memory; in all case, it depends on memory's support and contribution (Bianchi 2008; Cohen Salama 1992). These circumstances do not imply that the resulting historical narratives are less true, academic, or scientific, but quite the contrary. The process of research is both academically and socially relevant, as long as it includes extra-academic subjective interests in the definition of its goals and conditions (Bianchi 2008; Equipo de Investigación por la Memoria Política Cultural 2004). It is neither possible to objectify relatives' remains, to manipulate historical narratives to fit wide-scope theories, nor to use academic research to prove models of behaviour without jeopardizing the work of archaeology and transforming it into a new kind of repression. Some survivors of *El Pozo* clandestine detention center, located in Rosario's downtown (Santa Fe, Argentina), rejected their own and their dead comrades' representation as victims of the repressive military machine, because the meanings of their experiences in prison (which are constantly narrated as never ending sources of pain) would be repressed along with the denial of their political identities. In DuBois' terms, survivors and researchers are reluctant to extend the submission of their bodies over their minds. They also resist the substitution of collective memories for controversial and colorful historical narratives which frequently refer to the actions of people that have nothing to do with us.

The archaeology of recent repression stems from extra-academic interests. In general, this kind of archaeology develops from complex negotiations between different perspectives, many of them equally respectable. At this point, the unavoidable question is: Why is the disciplinary manipulation of archaeology possible in the case of indigenous studies? The answer, which is no other than the explanation of differences found in the regimes of truth and self-narration, cannot be referred to the issue of identity without undermining archaeology's claim to public interest. The privilege of archaeologists to elaborate discourses on indigenous peoples and objects is doomed to disappear, as it is politically and theoretically untenable. Most likely, the main effect of the archaeology of recent repression is the incorporation of intersubjective dialogue beyond disciplinary boundaries. The opportunity to learn from mutual partnership with interests other-than-knowledge stresses the social and political relevance of history as collective memory.[3] If this turns to be the case, one of the tasks of archaeology within the project of decolonization should be the critical revision of the deep rooted relationships among torture, truth, repression and archaeology.

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[3] Some symptoms – such as Río Cuarto's declaration (2005) – could indicate that archaeology is ready to undergo a major transformation in the treatment of emancipatory practices.

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Chapter 2
Archaeology and Left in Colombia

Carl Henrik Langebaek

Introduction

Colombia is not a country of dictatorships. It is usually known for its civic tradition, alien to military governments (Deas 1999). These circumstances do not imply that repression did not exist in Colombia or that archaeologists did not suffer persecution – especially during Laureano Gómez's conservative administration (1950–1951, 1953). But the thing is that the most well-known academic magazine in the country, *La Revista Colombiana de Antropología* (The Colombian Journal of Anthropology), first appeared during Lieutenant-General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's government (1953–1957). He was practically the only dictator Colombians had to endure in the twentieth century. His military populist and corrupt regime – which initially had consensus among traditional political parties – was not interested in persecuting archaeologists, whose work was perceived as politically neutral. For that reason, Pinilla's government bore no comparison to dictatorships in the Southern Cone of South America, where military forces attacked universities and condemned researchers to exile. In contrast to other Latin American countries, Colombia did not develop an explicitly Marxist archaeology. However, it developed a Marxist sociology, history, economy and even anthropology (Miranda 1984). If Marxist archaeology was not able to succeed in Colombia, then it becomes necessary to look for its causes – not in political repression, but in the particular evolution of the discipline in the country.

Culture-history has been the dominant paradigm of Colombian archaeology for the last 50 years. Despite the development of new theoretical currents, Colombian archaeologists seem reluctant to change this archaeological framework (Gnecco 1995, 1999; Langebaek 1996). Colombia is one of the few Latin American countries where Marxist archaeology did not develop, and processual archaeology did not come to the fore. It is worthwhile to remember that Colombia went through a

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particular political process. Unlike other South American nations (Politis 1988, 1995), Colombia did not develop an evolutionary archaeology during the nineteenth century. In contrast to Mexican, Peruvian and Venezuelan researchers, Colombian archaeologists were not interested in Marxism. As in most Latin American countries (Politis 2002:196; Funari 2004), an empiric and culture-historical view of the discipline still dominates Colombia. Culture-history was particularly accepted by liberal hegemony, and anti-evolutionary and supposedly apolitical thought (Langebaek 2003). Once again, it is relevant to stress that alternative theoretical frameworks have been surprisingly weak in Colombia, and that Marxist archaeology has been non-existent (or almost non-existent) in the country (Langebaek 1996; Mora 1997).

In Colombia, culture-history grew through the influence of the Boasian tradition, the works of Alden Mason in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (1931–1939), the French (Lehman 1953) and American missions (Ford 1944) and Paul Rivet's presence. By the mid twentieth century, culture-history in Colombia defined its goals: provide detailed descriptions of material culture, and establish chronologies and cultural "relationships" assuming that the traits of material culture reflect specific "mental patterns" (Schottelius 1940, 1946). Nowadays, investigations in Colombia – probably, most of them – use these ideas (Santos and Otero 2003).

This chapter is aimed at analyzing the relationships between Marxism and the study of the pre-Hispanic past in Colombia, showing that Marxist discourses on the past did not break with cultural-historical ideas – despite the dissatisfaction of Marxist researchers with the work of archaeologists, their normative definition of culture and their anti-evolutionary explanations of the past. Although Colombia did not develop a Marxist archaeology (or a school of "social archaeology"), a leftist intellectual tradition worried about the pre-Hispanic past. In other words, although there was not a group of archaeologists who used Marx's work to interpret the indigenous past, there was a tradition of leftist thinkers who tried to do so from outside the discipline. These thinkers were active between 1930 and 1980. They did not share a common perspective. However, they experienced a common reaction against archaeology – but they did not provide an alternative explanation for the classic understanding of the past. The analysis of their production is useful to understand and critize culture-history from a different point of view. It also represents a new way to evaluate the challenges and limitations of Marxism in the study of the pre-Hispanic past.

The Development of Culture-History

Once Archaeology was transformed into a professional and systematic endeavor, its political commitment became increasingly innocuous. In Colombia, the heyday of the Liberal Republic (1930–1946) coincided with the institutional support the government provided to archaeology. It would be obviously exaggerated to state that culture-history laid the scientific basis for social exclusion – at least, in the same manner that studies on race, degeneration, decadence and evolution did

in the past. The influence of Rivet and Boas confronted archaeologists with racism. In addition, it is worthwhile to stress that most archaeologists who worked (and still work) in culture-historical archaeology were critical of the elemental forms of exclusion – for instance, racism. However, the truth is once archaeologists set aside political debate and adopted neutral description, they stopped studying social conflict.

From that moment on, the discipline was transformed into a conservative and even reactionary practice. Anthropologists such as Milcíades Chávez criticized the obsession of archaeologists with describing (though not interpreting) the material aspects of pre-Hispanic cultures. They also criticized archaeologists' lack of commitment to the interpretation of their own society (Chávez 1986). The answer of contemporary researchers – such as Hernández de Alba (Langebaek 2003) – to culture-history's "neutrality" and "objectivity" was to abandon archaeology and turn to applied anthropology. Except in a few cases, archaeologists – extraordinarily conservative until today – were not interested in Marxism. Nevertheless, outside archaeology some scholars became interested in the pre-Hispanic past. In general, these researchers were leftist thinkers. As a matter of fact, some aspects of culture-history were criticized by some intellectuals – not necessarily archaeologists, but researchers who believed that the past was important in political terms. Probably one of the first Colombian scholars who rejected culture-history was Antonio García. I will return to him later. In 1937, Antonio García wrote *Geografía Económica de Caldas* (Economic Geography of Caldas – 1978), where he pointed out that the work of archaeologists in pre-Hispanic Caldas was useless. At that moment, García referred to the "Christian morality" supposedly hidden in the archaeological investigations of the indigenous past (García 1978). Finally, many leftist thinkers decided to abandon culture-history, criticizing its ideas and offering alternative reconstructions of the past.

Leftist Criticism to Culture-History Archaeology

In a national context, two different circumstances allowed some scholars to abandon culture-history and develop new investigations on the indigenous past. First, it is relevant to notice the introduction of Marxist historiography in Colombia. This theoretical perspective suggested that traditional historiography did not have anything to offer. Since the 1950s, traditional analysis were accused of attaching too much importance to information and little to analysis. Second, it is relevant to notice the new role given to indigenous societies. Since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars from other disciplines, particularly lawyers, economists and historians associated with communism or the liberal left, found powerful reasons to study native societies and their past. The first edition of *La Cuestión Indígena en Colombia* (The Indigenous Question in Colombia – 1975) was published in 1947. The author, Ignacio Torres Giraldo, a historian interested in workers' movements who was also Secretary-General of the *Confederación Obrera Nacional* (National Workers'

Confederation), criticized traditional indigenism. He said indigenism was a white and Creole movement, but not an indigenous one (Torres Giraldo 1975:3–5). He rejected the tendency to isolate the "indigenous problem" from other relevant subjects in Colombia – mainly, the rural and working class project. Torres Giraldo stated that the defence of indigenous people could not be based on racial superiority. He insisted that the indigenous struggle should include cultural demands – not only land demands. Leftist thinkers asked for a better understanding of cultural diversity. As a consequence, the study of the past gained importance. For Torres Giraldo, it was relevant to prove the existence of extraordinary cultures before the arrival of the Spaniards. In his opinion, indigenous groups from Colombia shared some cultural traits with the Maya. Their culture was even more outstanding and ancient than the Egyptian civilization. Torres Giraldo thought that the Catíos in Antioquia were connected to the Mayas and Inkas. They mastered metallurgy and created complex alloys which could not be deciphered by current researchers in Medellin. In Alto Sinú, Quindío, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and other places in Colombia, conquerors found something more than savage tribes (Torres Giraldo 1975:12–13).

Nevertheless, Torres Giraldo's work was not mere romantic nostalgia for the indigenous past. On the contrary, he criticized romantic views of pre-Hispanic civilizations. The main goal of his book was to change the focus of the indigenous question, setting aside the contemplative perspective, "the abundant purely speculative literature, the abstract intellectualism, and the simple sentimental yearning" (Torres Giraldo 1975:12, the translation is mine). In this sense, archaeologists and those who studied contemporary indigenous groups were put in a difficult position. The latter were especially interested in race. According to Torres Giraldo, archaeology could be important: it was necessary to determine the truth; that is to say, the high level of development of pre-Hispanic civilizations, and their cultural differences with Greece and Rome. Nevertheless, he simultaneously accused archaeologists of being "those who wonder at the two hundred monuments of the Augustinian civilization; the roots of the Inka Temple of the Sun; the artworks of the Quimbaya and the traces of the Paeces culture in Tierradentro (…) mainly with the criteria of an antique collector, a museum businessman who thinks more about tourism than about aboriginals' fate. Aboriginals vegetate in a [nation] state which is indifferent to them, a [nation] state that does not appreciate their potential vitality as a force of progress, but as a shadow of a past that is blurring" (Torres Giraldo 1975:13, the translation is mine).

In the same period, a lawyer, a leader of the Communist Party and one of the most charismatic ideologists of the agrarian reform, Guillermo Hernández Rodríguez, became interested in pre-Hispanic indigenous communities. He studied in Moscow, New York and Paris, and in 1949 he published *De los Chibchas a la Colonia y a la República* (From the Chibchas to the Colony and the Republic). In this book, Hernández Rodríguez said it was necessary to study the economic forces that had shaped the history of Colombia. He thought the disintegration of indigenous clans after the conquest had given birth to a political society based on land. The indigenous workforce could be considered older than other modern

forms of work, including the colonial use of the workforce and the origin of the worker class. The Colombian society emerged from a pre-Hispanic economic organization which was worth studying. This opinion added another significant justification to Marxist studies on the indigenous past. Although *De los Chibchas a la Colonia y a la República* was the more detailed study of the Muisca social organization at the moment, the author included little archaeological information. Culture-history did not shed light on different aspects of social organization which were relevant to Marxism. Furthermore, the very few times that Hernández Rodríguez (1949) used archaeological information, he did not tell anything different from the dominant ideas of his time. For the author, the Muiscas occupied the third place in political complexity after the Inkas and the Aztecs. This idea had been proposed by Creole leaders in the eighteenth century with the aim of strengthening national identity, but it had not been seriously evaluated since that moment. Hernández Rodríguez (1949) believed that it was valid to reduce pre-Hispanic history to a process of migration. He defended the existence of a migratory route from the Eastern Plains and Central America – including the Muiscas.

Antonio García was also interested in indigenous economic organization, and he offered one of the first critiques of archaeology in 1937. García was dean of the *Facultad de Economía* (Faculty of Economy) at the *Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano* (Jorge Tadeo Lozano University). He was also professor at the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* (National University of Colombia), where he became vice-chancellor, consultant of the Colombian agrarian reform and director of the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (Indigenist National Institute). His ideas on the pre-Hispanic past – and, even more important, on archaeology – can be found in *Bases para la Economía Contemporánea* (Basis for the Contemporary Economy – 1973) and *La Crisis de la Universidad. La Universidad en el Proceso de la Sociedad Colombiana* (The Crisis of the University. The University in the Process of the Colombian Society – 1985). Although García was not a member of the communist party, in his first book he intended to reconcile himself with the orthodox Marxist doctrine – especially with its evolutionary and materialist aspects – avoiding the "dogmatic fetishism" of the Soviet Union. In his opinion, the history of mankind could be divided into different phases which ranged from primitive collectivism to planned socialism. This classification could be hasty when "geo-cultural" aspects were not included – that is to say, when purely economic factors, sociological types and cultural differences were ignored. For instance, primitive collectivism was adopted by several indigenous societies, including the contemporary Kofán in the Amazonas and the ancient pre-Hispanic Inkas in Peru. Nevertheless, collectivism had different characteristics in different societies. In all case, it always involved the absence of individual personalities and the scarcity of technical means to dominate nature. Collectivism had a huge evolutionary potential. It encouraged the accumulation of surplus, the systematization of barter, agriculture and animal domestication. Its development (like agricultural progress) was slow in tropical areas. Only after gaining some experience and reaching a high density of population (as in the case of the Muiscas), it was possible to switch from migratory to sedentary agriculture. García did not mention archaeological investigations in his work. Anyway, as these studies

opposed evolutionism, he must have believed they were useless. His opinion on archaeologists was rather negative, partly because of his conflict with Luis Duque Gómez. Gómez, the chancellor of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*, removed García from his position. García answered him back. He sent a letter to the conservative President Misael Pastrana, who had appointed Duque as chancellor. He told Pastrana that Duque would make Colombian scholars have "the same status and innocuity that archaeologists trained in the United States." According to García, Duque (it is fair to say that he did not study in the United States, but attended only a few courses in that country) was appointed by a government which rejected scientific commitment. García's statement should be understood in a context of increasing American influence and investigations supported by grants from American institutions. For García, the analysis of the pre-Hispanic San Agustín – precisely, Duque's case of study – did not require the same commitment that social investigations of contemporary peasants – who spent their lives next to the statues.

Diego Montaña, another member of the party, tried to arouse archaeologists' interest in evolutionism. His most important works on the pre-Hispanic past were *Sociología Americana* (American Sociology – 1950), *Colombia, País Formal y País Real* (Colombia, Formal country and Real Country – 1963) and some articles in his *Memorias* (Memoirs – 1996). In *Sociología Americana* (1950), Montaña criticized the studies which reduced history to race or geographic determinism. This book did not go beyond the critique of the most questionable ideas of evolutionism. Theories of race were based on the analysis of skulls, and made archaeologists venture hasty hypothesis on indigenous groups. Environmental analysis claimed that people had to endure the "law of the soil" (Montaña 1950:19–20). Nevertheless, Montaña did not disregard the relevance of physical aspects. It was not by chance that the Muiscas developed their culture in the Andean environment – characterized by a rarefied atmosphere and a uniform temperature (Montaña 1950:21). Nor was it by chance that an industrial, sedentary and agricultural society (associated with the production of ceramics and fabrics) emerged in this context. For instance, Muiscas' short fingers could have been relevant for industrial tasks (Montaña 1950:22).

Geological aspects were also important. South American geology was unique in comparison to that of other continents. As a consequence, it was not strange that the formation of social groups in South America was also particular (Montaña 1950:63–65, 86). Colombian communities were the result of three migratory flows. The most ancient groups corresponded to the megalithic cultures of Titicaca, which were related to San Agustín. The first migratory wave included the Pastos, Quimbayas, Catíos, Zenues, Chibchas and Guanes. The second one followed the Orinoco and could have had – although it was not confirmed – Fenice influence. Finally, other groups – such as Panches, Pijaos and Caribes – followed the Magdalena river (Montaña 1950:159–163). Based on these ideas, Montaña decided to abandon evolutionism. Nevertheless, he recognized some stages in the development of certain cultures. For instance, the Muiscas could have faced a period of geological cataclysms, followed by the consolidation of their culture. Montaña's interest in the Muiscas was not a coincidence. His bachelor's thesis at

the *Facultad de Derecho* (Faculty of Law) of the *Universidad Nacional* was an attempt to recover the aboriginal past. In *Memorias*, he included an article entitled *La Cultura Chibcha Vista desde Abajo* (The Chibcha Culture from Below – Montaña 1996:113–127).

In *Colombia, País Formal y País Real* (Montaña 1963), it is possible to find a more elaborate argument against environmental and racial determinism. The so-called "evils" faced by Colombian people were social conditions which could be changed. For this reason, Montaña devoted an entire chapter, *La Realidad Física y Social de Colombia en la Época Primitiva* (The Physical and Social Reality of Colombia in the Primitive Times – Montaña 1963:29–56), to understand several aspects of the social organization and the development of the productive forces before the arrival of the Spaniards. However, he believed that the environment and migrations were necessary to discuss the pre-Hispanic past. For instance, the Muiscas stood out as hardworking people who endured cold weather conditions and the absence of cattle. The statues in San Agustín showed a strong Polynesian influence (Montaña 1996:35). Even leftist politicians, those who had the best arguments against culture-history but also defended evolutionism, such as Hernánez Rodríguez and Montaña, adhered to a traditional view of the pre-Hispanic past. According to this perspective, anti-evolutionism and migrations exercised an enormous influence on the discipline.

In the 1970s, when Marxism influenced Colombian universities – as well as American and European colleges – several researchers used its concepts to study pre-Hispanic societies. At that moment, Marxism was being debated in other Latin American countries. The discussion on the feudal or capitalist character of colonial America became increasingly relevant. Some researchers who participated in the debate – such as Andre Gunder Frank, Rodolfo Puiggros and Ernesto Laclau (1972:56–61) – thought it was necessary to determine the nature of indigenous societies during conquest. The concept of "mode of production" and, in particular, the definition of an Asian mode of production became popular. In 1975, Roger Bartra wrote *Marxismo y Sociedades Antiguas* (Marxism and Ancient Societies) in Mexico. The Spanish version of Maurice Godelier's *Sobre el Modo de Producción Asiático* (On the Asiatic Mode of Production – 1977), Jean Chesneaux's *El Modo de Producción Asiático* (The Asiatic Mode of Production – 1969) and Antonine Pelletier and Jean-Jacques Goblot's *Materialismo Histórico e Historia de las Civilizaciones* (Historical Materialism and the History of Civilizations – 1975) were also published in Mexico. Marx and Engels's *Las Sociedades Primitivas y el Nacimiento de las Sociedades de Clase* (Primitive Societies and the Origins of Class Societies), with foreword by Jorge Orlando Melo, was translated and published in Colombia in 1969.

Following Hernández Rodríguez, García and Montaña, some researchers became interested in studying the pre-Hispanic past – particularly, the Muiscas. The possibility of exploring their own history and shedding light on the origins of Colombian society and social inequality was stimulating. Some of the first researchers who adopted this perspective were influenced by Marx's work, but also by American sociology. A second generation of researchers was also enthusiastic. They were

influenced by the Soviet University and other European colleges, although there were few solid contributions from these institutions – especially, from the first one. In Moscow, Svetlana Sózina published *La Formación de los Estados Muiscas* (The Formation of the Muisca State – 1978). Nevertheless, the impact of this work was minimal, as it lacked precision in the handling of information and its Marxist approach did not add much to the nineteenth-century classic studies on the Muiscas.

In the mid-1970s, different books were on sale, such as *Ensayos Marxistas sobre la Sociedad Chibcha con Contribuciones de Francisco Posada, José Rozo y Sergio de Santis* (Marxist Essays on the Chibcha Society with Contributions of Francisco Posada, José Rozo y Sergio de Santis – Posada circa 1970); *Los Muiscas: Organización Social y Régimen Político* (The Muiscas: Social Organization and Political Regime – 1978), written by José Rozo, who studied at Patricio Lumumba University in Moscow; and *Notas Sobre el Modo de Producción Precolombino* (Notes on the Pre-Columbian Mode of Production – 1974) and *La Formación Social Chibcha* (The Chibcha Social Formation – 1978), published by Hermes Tovar. All these books were available in an economical format with the aim of reaching the general public. This small, but active group of scholars (not one of whom was an archaeologist), was interested in the indigenous past and attempted to develop new interpretations of history – keeping distance from the explanations developed by "experts." Like Hernández Rodríguez, Francisco Posada was a lawyer who continued his studies in philosophy in France and Germany. He was interested in the Muiscas, as well as in the agrarian and the community movements. Although he was only 34 when he died, he was chancellor of the *Facultad de Ciencias Humanas* (Faculty of Human Sciences) of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia.* The main goals of his *book Ensayos Marxistas sobre la Sociedad Chibcha* (Posada circa 1970) were to identify Muiscas' stage of development within the evolutionary scale, define the notion of community, analyze the family structure, and understand the forms of work and the development of the forces of production. He was interested in national traditions, the society that emerged after conquest, and the impact of cultural contact (Posada circa 1970:6).

The case of Hermes Tovar is something different. He was one of the first graduates in History of the *Universidad Nacional de Colombia.* He also studied in Chile and England, and was a professor at the *Universidad Nacional.* Following Antonio García, he became interested in the study of pre-Hispanic societies. He stressed the need to study land tenement structures and forms of work to design an appropriate agrarian reform and understand Andean peasantry (Tovar 1974:5–14). The reason he had to do it was similar to Posada's: he claimed that it was necessary to make a structural analysis of Latin American history, including the analysis of the societies found by Europeans during conquest and the transformations experienced by these groups as a result of capitalism. His investigation stressed the relevance of understanding the indigenous modes of production in their own terms, avoiding the use of models defined for the Old World.

The works of Posada, Rozo and Tovar were not the only ones that intended to abandon official archaeology. Posada focused on the sixteenth-century Muisca society. For this reason, conquest chronicles provided him with information – if not

sufficient, at least satisfactory. Posada did not ignore the social dynamics prior to the sixteenth century; for instance, he accepted the existence of an archaic stage dominated by food gathering and followed by food production. Similarly to García and Montaña, he acknowledged the role of the environment in this process. He pointed out that while resources were abundant on the Caribbean coast, indigenous groups could have lived on gathering. Nevertheless, the Andean groups were "forced to open a new path: the strangeness of food provided by nature made them produce it" (Posada s.f:14, the translation is mine). Moreover, Posada's work stated that the Muiscas were in a transitional stage, where classical forms of property did not exist. Contrary to Hernández Rodríguez, who considered the Muiscas as a "barbaric" society, Posada thought that the Neolithic barbaric traditions had disappeared. Nevertheless, he did not make a dynamic interpretation of Muiscas' state of transition. When he turned to archaeologists – for instance, Emil Haury, Julio César Cubillos and Sylvia Broadbent who had recently arrived at the *Universidad de los Andes* (University of the Andes) – it was only to support the idea of a dispersed settlement, which could also be known through documentary sources. On certain occasions, he also used archaeological evidence to support the idea of technological development – or the lack of it – among native communities. Nevertheless, at that moment archaeologists were interested in determining which kind of pottery was the most ancient, and they only could make a limited contribution to Posada's work.

Hermes Tovar (1974) admitted that, in many cases, archaeological information was the only way to reconstruct the past of certain communities. However, when he classified typical social forms in pre-Columbian America (tribal, composed and extended communities; communitarian kingdoms and empires) the contribution of archaeology was minimal. Caribbean groups were an example of tribal societies; Quimbayas, of composed communities; Muiscas, Taironas and San Agustín, of extended groups. However, archaeologists' work did not support Tovar's ideas. When he explained the nature of tribal communities, he used information provided by historical chronicles of the Caribbean people. Ethnographic analogy was used to prove ecological determinism, and to compare present "primitive" societies to historical ones. Tovar used information on the contemporary societies of the lower lands – from the Amazon and the Orinoco – with the aim of understanding "tribal communities", as he thought that this kind of social organization was extended in the lower lands. José Rozo (1978) stated that social change went through the following stages: pre-state, semi-state and state. The Caribbeans were part of a pre-state; some Caribbean and Arawak groups, of a semi-state; and the Muiscas were in the process of becoming a state. Social class organization was attributed to the development of agriculture (in contrast to animal domestication, which explained the same process in the Old World). For this reason, it was comparatively slow. Nevertheless, when Rozo referred to the process of state formation among the Muiscas, he focused on historical chronicles describing wars among indigenous chiefdoms little before the Spanish conquest. According to him, Muiscas' development could only be recognized from a historical perspective – in other words, indigenous memory. Some time before, archaeologists only talked about "chronological sequences" without considering social change.

Not every Marxist essay arrived at the same conclusion. Most scholars believed, as nineteenth-century Creoles did, that it was important to show the cultural achievements and remarkable degree of civilization of indigenous groups. That was the case of Torres Giraldo. Hernán Sepúlveda (1978) rejected the idea that social differences could have emerged among the Muiscas. Sepúlveda stated that pre-Hispanic societies were so egalitarian that they could be a source of inspiration to discuss the existence of societies without classes or exploitation. From this perspective, he rejected what he considered to be historical distortions associated with cultural colonialism. However, as other researchers, Sepúlveda seldom referred to archaeological analysis. Many scholars interested in the past, but not in Marxism, focused on topics very similar to those raised by Rozo, Tovar and Posada. There are many examples: Germán Colmenares, Juan Friede, Darío Fajardo, Fals Borda and Broadbent – who arrived in Colombia as an archaeologist and wrote *Los Chibchas, Organización Socio-Política* (The Chibchas: Sociopolitical Organization – 1964). Almost all of these researchers studied work, economic organization and demography. But none of them based his or her work on archaeology. In the 1970s, Germán Colmenares (1970), Juan Friede (1974) and Darío Fajardo (1964) became interested in the indigenous social organization during conquest. They wanted to reconstruct regional histories based on demography and land distribution. With this objective in mind, they analyzed documentary information, ignoring the work of culture-historical archaeologists. Not even Broadbent (1964), who had first-hand archaeological information, used material culture to reconstruct Muisca social organization.

Final Words

Marxist archaeology did not develop in Colombia during the twentieth-century, but one or several leftist currents (influenced by Marxism in different degrees) certainly did. These theoretical currents dealt with pre-Hispanic societies. For them, it was difficult to make the most of archaeological information. At that moment, archaeological analysis was primarily aimed at describing pottery and defining cultural areas. Nevertheless, archaeologists were not interested in discussing other subjects which were promising in the 1970s – not only for Marxist researchers, but also for those who shared their interest in evolutionism. The result was an abundant bibliographical production. Outside archaeology, evolutionism and the idea of reconstructing social organization and historical change gained importance. For researchers who were not archaeologists, resistance to evolutionism was perceived as a strategy for not studying the past, and not imagining – and constructing – the future.

However, Colombian leftist models of the pre-Hispanic past were full of problems. They were distant from the empirical investigations which could support their interpretations of the past. The discussion of how scientific categories articulated with the archaeological record was non-existent or almost non-existent. In some cases,

they adopted some ideas uncritically – including the influence of the environment, migrations, diffusion and some notions of race. They frequently could not avoid environmental determinism and naive ethnographical comparisons. They could not elaborate a concept of culture different from the normative conception of institutional archaeology. In other cases, they simply adopted typological schemas to classify ethnographical and archaeological information with little critical analysis. Nevertheless, despite all these limitations, Marxist works were far more interesting than the efforts made by traditional archaeologists to "understand" the past. Migrations, diffusion and classificatory schemas do not prevent us from thinking about the advantages of their proposal – especially with respect to the "scientific" and neutral descriptions of archaeology.

However, culture-history distrusted – and still distrusts – any idea of change. Leftist proposals did not catch archaeologists' attention. And, as mentioned above, leftist thinkers ended up making interpretations based on migrations, diffusion and external influences – that is to say, culture-history's main ideas. When processual archaeology was introduced in Colombia, its contributions were also rejected by culture-history – a more conservative and positivist proposal. Once again, a new theoretical current was incorporated by a long-standing tradition.

This lesson does not apply to culture-history. This theoretical current resists all kinds of reforms. Although it uses the fashionable terminology of the time, it is immune to conceptual change. This lesson proves useful to Marxist archaeology. Marxist intellectual production is attractive for the strength of its materialist philosophy, its academic goals and political intentions. But until today, its empirical and methodological results were limited. The remarkable persistence of traditional archaeology in Colombia might be exceptional, but culture-history is also present in other Latin American countries. Latin American Marxist archaeology was sometimes understood in paternalist terms (McGuire 1992), as it was not able to depart from the paradigm of traditional archaeology. The history of Latin American Marxist archaeology still needs to be written, although some relevant studies were developed by different researchers in the last decade or so (McGuire 1992:64–68; Patterson 1994; Politis 1995; Politis 1999; Zarankin and Acuto 1999). Regarding this, it is relevant to make a comment. According to Oyuela et al. (1997:371–372), Latin American social archaeology ("Marxist" archaeology) does not exist, as most researchers who adopt it do not a share the same school of thought. These authors are right to complain. Latin American archaeologists usually argue that they share a common practice ("social archaeology"). From another perspective, this statement can also be questioned for several reasons. First, it is dominated by a positivist bias, which considers a "unified" school of thought as a symbol of maturity. Second, Marxism is – independently from any judgement on its utility – a supposedly unified theory. In practice, there seems to be a unified body of theory behind most of Latin American Marxist archaeology. The point is that this body of theory is connected to culture-history or cultural-ecology.

According to McGuire (1992:65), Cuba inspires a good deal of Marxist archaeology in Latin America. In Cuba, most works ritually involve Marxist terminology, but they are closely connected – in practice – to culture-history (see Tabío and Rey 1966;

Guarch 1987; Domínguez 1995, for classic examples). For instance, Tabío (1995:134) believes it is his duty to follow historical and dialectic materialism, but his study of the Antillas is reduced to discussing Rouse's chronological model (Tabío 1995:134). In another case, Guarch (1987:53–58) defends the concept of "tradition" – virtually impossible to distinguish from the 1950s American definition of the term.. Besides, he says that the three-dimensional location of artifacts and the defence of stratigraphical excavations represent an innovative contribution of Cuban archaeology (Guarch 1987:60–67).

In Peru (Lumbreras 1974) and Mexico (Gándara 1981; Gándara et al. 1985), some researchers have made several theoretical contributions, criticizing processual and normative archaeology. Without a single doubt, these works give the most negative critique of processual archaeology. However, when they try to interpret the pre-Hispanic past, Marxist approaches did not abandon the conventional practice. After a broad theoretical debate on the necessity of using the concept of mode of production, Lumbreras (1981:45–52) did not criticize the archaeological interpretations based on Reichel-Dolmatoff's cultural-ecological model. Moreover, he explicitly accepted the culture-historical concepts of "horizon" and "tradition" which had been previously criticized in Colombia. Most theoretical "Marxist" contributions in Mexico (Sarmiento 1992) use 1950s schematic proposals, and other theoretical models – such as Service's (1962) sequence "band-tribe-chiefdom-state". Academic production has been important in Venezuela (Sanoja and Vargas 1995). Nevertheless, setting aside the terminology employed, archaeologists have been especially associated with culture-history and cultural-ecology. The interpretations of the pre-Hispanic past in Venezuela still adhere to a normative vision of culture and the analysis of migrations, diffusion and cultural influence (Vargas y Sanoja 1991). These interpretations reject more dynamic explanations on social change.

According to my knowledge, two professional archaeologists in Colombia have adopted "social archaeology". Both of them are under the influence of Mario Sanoja and Iraida Vargas. The foreword to Carlos Angulo Valdéz's (1995) book stated that there were three kinds of archaeology: the first one assumed that archaeology was an "anthropology of the past", interested in finding "atemporal" and "aspatial" regularities among extinct cultures; the second one, processual archaeology, generated "atemporal and ahistorical laws"; and the last one, archaeology as social science, considered that the discipline should produce historical knowledge. As a matter of fact, this book presents a historical vision of Colombian-Caribbean "ways of life": simple communitarism, tribal production and village-chiefdom. Nevertheless, the synthesis of the Caribbean culture is described in the same terms that Angulo's work (except for some sites and time periods); that is to say, within the framework of cultural-ecological interpretations. Another example is the recent work of Rodríguez (2002) on the Valley of Cauca. The foreword, written by Mario Sanoja and Iraida Vargas, congratulates the author for the correct application of the categories of social archaeology. But the archaeological sequence of the Valley of Cauca is not interpreted in a different way from conventional works, although it uses categories such as "social formation" and "way of life". It absolutely does not mean that Angulo and Rodríguez's works are not valid. It means that, deprived of certain terms, they are

as Marxists as other works that do not turn to those concepts. It also means that in both cases, the legacy of culture-history and cultural-ecology is enormous.

The challenge is to prove that Marxist archaeology does not suffer from the same syndrome that culture-history: repeating the same old things, independently of any contact with the real world, simply modifying the rhetoric. Moreover, the challenge is to make it clear that (leaving aside academic and political terminology) culture-history and Marxist archaeology are not the same. The example of the relationships between Marxism and Colombian archaeology allows us to illustrate the state of affairs of archaeology in this country and other Latin American regions. One of the most severe limitations of Marxist investigations in Colombia was the lack of reflection on the archaeological record. This duty was left to other schools, losing the opportunity to evaluate the strength of Marxism in the study of the pre-Hispanic past. Borrero (2004:76) has recently asked if it is necessary or useful to consolidate a national or South American archaeology with its own school of thinking – which, in practice, are claimed to be necessarily Marxist (Benavides 2001). Borrero is right when he states that what South America needs is a good archaeology. This archaeology should not avoid political commitment. However, it should not discuss "correct categories" or "politically correct ways of thinking".

As Valdez (2004) points out, social archaeology will not make any progress as long as it thinks of itself as a "national" or "Latin American" school of thinking closed to world contributions, or as long as it considers the works produced outside a certain group of colleagues – or even worse, outside Latin America – as reactionary and colonialist. There will be no Marxist archaeology without a deep critique of culture-history and cultural-ecology; without a serious and committed study of the archaeological record. Otherwise, every time we would like to discuss theory or the "correct" way to do things in archaeology we will read the works of "social archaeologists", but every time we would like to learn more on the pre-Hispanic past we will turn to other sources. And that is a luxury we cannot afford.

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Chapter 3
The Archaeology of Conflict in Brazil

Pedro Paulo A. Funari and Nanci Vieira de Oliveira

Introduction

> "With the coup of 1964, the University of Sao Paulo, like every other university in Brazil, was handed over to the rhinoceros and their ruthless policies. They dreamt of a university only for professors, without students. The rhinoceros were supported by [the political] conditions imposed in 1964" (Duarte 1970:371, the translations is mine).

The recent history of archaeology in Brazil has been troubled. Brazilian archaeology emerged in the nineteenth century. However, it was only after World War II that it acquired academic status, especially thanks to Paulo Duarte's initiative. The military coup in April 1964 marked a turning point for the discipline, which tended to follow French humanism inspired by Leroi-Gourhan and human rights respect. From that moment on, the country suffered at the hands of an increasingly repressive regime. At first, many politicians, trade union leaders and intellectuals were dismissed. Finally, political violence gave way to the *Ato Institucional N° 5* (Institutional Act Number 5)[1] (1968), military government (1969), and the exile, detention and murder of political opponents. In 1964, the political alliance between the United States and Brazil encouraged the creation of a *Programa Nacional de Pesquisas Arqueológicas* (National Program of Archaeological Research) with headquarters in Washington. In 1969, the promotion of pro-government researchers proved to be connected with the dismissal of critical thinkers such as Paulo Duarte and the intention to destroy the *Instituto de Pré-História da Universidade de São Paulo* (Institute of Prehistory of the University of Sao Paulo – Duarte 1994).

Despite the relative openness of the regime, stimulated by the general amnesty of 1979, the government kept research institutions under control. This was particularly true in the case of archaeological research centers. Military leaders exercised

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[1] Act Number 5, usually known as AI 5, was a military decree which led to the dissolution of the National Congress of Brazil.

their influence over investigations, and put some of their political supporters in positions of power. Democracy had to struggle with this legacy. Since the return of civil rights in 1985, archaeologists have explored new theoretical approaches and subjects of investigation. However, the heirs to the military rule (who call themselves "democrats") have usually made it difficult for researchers to study social conflict from an archaeological perspective. In the 1990s, the excavation of *quilombos*[2] and Canudos opened up new avenues of inquiry. The analysis of political repression in Brazil followed a somewhat different path, as archaeologists had to face the long-standing influence of military forces (Funari 2002, 2003a). Without a doubt, this is the reason why so little research has been done on dictatorship. Nowadays, Brazilian archaeology has a new place within the discipline (Funari et al. 2005), and new generations of researchers study political repression with total autonomy. We hope present and future investigations will shed light and make significant contributions to the subject.

In this chapter, we will discuss the epistemological basis of the study of social conflict in archaeology. Later, we will present a particular case study concerning the archaeology the *desaparecidos* (disappeared people) in Brazil. We will finally set an agenda for future research and social action.

The Archaeological Study of Social Conflict

Researchers have recently shown interest in exploring the use of material culture to study social conflicts, and the ways in which past events are interpreted on the basis of modern ideas. Past conflicts and their interpretation are a matter of present concern. Society is always defined by conflict. From a dialectic standpoint, the experience of past societies is part and parcel of a constant struggle among social actors. The history of class societies involves the analysis of surplus appropriation, internal contradictions, domination and resistance. The interpretation of conflict is always subjective. Therefore, we can interpret past events as a series of texts defining a discourse.

If conflict and subjectivity are integral to archaeological evidence and interpretation, then it is impossible to reject the existence of multiple perspectives. There are different ways of knowing the past. Regarding this, we must answer some significant questions: Who is in a position to gain access to knowledge? Who is in a position to participate in the creation and reinterpretation of the past? In this chapter, we will refer to the archaeological study of conflict during military dictatorship in Brazil (1946–1985). We will also present a particular case study and the specific way in which we approached it. Material culture is a powerful tool to shed light on subaltern stories. Two good examples of the relevance of the past to present social reality are the transference of power to social agents and the controversies surrounding the interpretation of repression. This chapter poses many questions and provides

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[2] *Quilombos* were settlements mainly founded by runaway and free-born African slaves.

some answers. However, rather than presenting a definite solution, we will encourage a pluralistic discussion of the subject.

To describe and interpret past cultures, it is convenient to analyze artifacts, and oral and written texts when possible. This is particularly relevant for the study of political repression in Brazil. Textual, oral and material data can be interdependent, complementary and contradictory "at the same time." The analysis of social conflict requires an interdisciplinary approach combining textual, oral and artefactual analysis with sociological and anthropological studies, among others.

Conflict was traditionally interpreted by dominant social groups. Until the 1960s, archaeologists were almost exclusively interested in studying rich and famous people. Conservative ideologies were thus supported and reinforced. Later on, some archaeologists decided to emulate social scientists' concern for subaltern groups. The analysis of material remains allowed them to gather information on the life of people who were under-represented in written sources. Although some researchers openly questioned archaeologists' contribution to the study of past events, the publication of several books and articles showed that material evidence was important to broaden the understanding of social conflicts.

The interpretation of social conflict depends on the way we see our own society. Researchers traditionally thought societies were homogeneous and well-defined entities. In archaeology, this idea was proposed by Vere Gordon Childe (1933):198–199): "culture is a social heritage; it corresponds to a community sharing common traditions, common institutions and a common way of life." This definition assumes there is harmony and unity within society; that is to say, common interests and lack of conflict. The origins of this idea can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Aristotle defined society as *koinonia* or community. According to this notion, sharing values in a homogeneous culture would imply the acceptance of common traits and traditions (Aristóteles 1994).

Homogeneity was a concept frequently used by nationalist and capitalist movements in clear opposition to internationalism. Bourgeois ideologies claimed that nations were homogeneous entities, while history was a result of their actions and events. The search for national solidarity was seriously questioned by Marx and, particularly in recent years, by several scholars who believe that society is largely based on conflict.

The concept of "archaeological culture" should be discussed in this context. Homogeneous material assemblages were usually interpreted as a product of past cultures. From this perspective, the members of past social groups were thought to share a set of prescriptive rules learned since childhood. The very notion of child indoctrination was influenced by the role of education since the construction of modern national identities, such as in the case of post-revolutionary France. Archaeological cultures were frequently understood as organic unities equivalent to bourgeois nations. In epistemological terms, the analysis of conflict only became possible when societies were defined as heterogeneous entities.

Generalization involves homogenization. Nowadays, researchers show an increasing dissatisfaction with normative interpretations of social life. The holistic and monolithic nature of society has recently been questioned by empirical and

theoretical studies. Homogeneity, order and boundaries were traditionally connected to an a priori assumption which pointed out that societies were better explained by stability. This idea was highly conservative and ahistorical. The critical study of social life intends to challenge this perspective. As a consequence, researchers have started to define society as a heterogeneous entity with conflicting ideas on cultural identity. Heterogeneity, fluidity and change presuppose the existence of multiple social identities (Funari 2003b; Oliveira 2004). The archaeology of conflict during dictatorship is grounded in this theoretical setting.

The Archaeology of the *Desaparecidos* in Brazil

In Brazil, as well as in most Latin American countries, archaeologists and physical anthropologists are frequently reluctant to participate in the study of human rights violations. Government institutions show little interest in hiring forensic anthropologists or archaeologists, and justice departments do not train researchers in exhumation techniques. In spite of this, there were some attempts to create specific projects of forensic investigation. In 1992, the *Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais/Rio de Janeiro* (Group Torture Never More/Rio de Janeiro) counted on the collaboration of the *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (Argentinean Forensic Anthropology). Some time later, physical anthropologists of the *Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública* (National School of Public Health) and the *Museu Nacional* (National Museum) asked anthropologist Douglas Ubelaker to teach a course on forensic anthropology.

Brazilian physical anthropologists and archaeologists usually study material remains from the distant past; that is to say, from a distant socio-political reality. Researchers need to fight the assumption that science is neutral, connecting academic experience to present social demands (such as the claim to find *desaparecidos*). They also need to make significant contributions to the analysis of contemporary problems (such as social violence in rural and urban settings). Where are the scientists who conduct relevant investigations of society? Where are the scientists who use specialized techniques to reconstruct life and death scenes? Where are the scientists who show a clear understanding of Brazilian society and its cultural practices?

In 1992, we took part of an archaeological work at Ricardo de Albuquerque cemetery (Rio de Janeiro). As we were used to study precolonial populations, this opportunity mixed up different emotions and feelings. For this reason, we thought it was a real challenge.

The excavation of recent osteological remains involves police bureaucracy. It requires the integration of archaeological projects into cemetery administration and official institutions. According to *Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais/Rio de Janeiro*, 14 political *desaparecidos* were found in a clandestine grave. It contained almost 2,100 bodies which came from ordinary graves and homeless people's burials. Although in the late 1970s government authorities made it compulsory to individualize human remains in ossuaries (at least through the use of plastic bags), archaeological excavations at Ricardo de Albuquerque cemetery proved this rule was not always observed.

At the beginning of the investigation, we expected to identify individuals through the spatial localization of their remains. However, the bodies were completely disarticulated and damaged. Bones were mixed up with plastic and metallic remains from coffins. Physical violence was indicated by the presence of a bullet which could not be associated with any particular body. It is worth mentioning that the *desaparecidos* found in the grave were white people between 18 and 45 years old. They were shot at the beginning of the 1970s and some of their bodies were burnt.

The spatial arrangement of the remains proved that the bodies had been carelessly buried. Several bones showed pick marks. Some of the bodies could have been buried at the same time. Although we had the opportunity to study morgue records, this situation made it difficult to identify the remains. Our last chance was to analyze the skulls. However, most of them were fragmentary and lacked the bones of the face. As this work was conducted by voluntary researchers, it also faced financing problems. As a consequence, dental and DNA analysis were limited to certain groups of skulls that could have been associated with the *desaparecidos*. These groups were difficult to define, rendering impossible the identification of the bodies.

It could be interpreted that the conditions in which the remains were found were a result of intentional actions aimed at preventing the identification of *desaparecidos*. However, the inhumation of homeless people could have destroyed relevant archaeological information as well.

The bodies found in the clandestine grave were probably buried after government authorities made it compulsory to individualize human remains in ossuaries. Maybe this procedure was not considered by the cemetery administration. Most human remains were associated with homeless people. For this reason, we think it is important to point out that individuals who were socially excluded in life could have been also excluded in death (by means of anonymous graves and destructive inhumations).

Although we could not achieve our goal, we believe physical anthropology and archaeology can make a significant contribution to the construction of a Brazilian forensic anthropology. Physical anthropologists, archaeologists and forensic pathologists need to share their technical knowledge and train researchers in new methods of identification. This possibility demands the recognition of these areas of investigation in medico-legal cases.

Final Remarks: Balance and Prospect

The archaeology of repression in Brazil is just beginning. In this chapter, we have only discussed a particular subject: the search and identification of *desaparecidos*. There is a myriad of other relevant subjects which deserve attention. Following the interests of the history of science, the study of military rule needs to consider the multiple relationships between power and the constitution of an empiricist and

positivist "orthodoxy" (following Bourdieu's notion of *doxa*). Although the history of Brazilian archaeology has been frequently explored by several colleagues, the impact of political repression has not been sufficiently discussed from a social perspective – traditionally proposed by Bruce Trigger (1990) and Thomas Patterson (Patterson 2002; Funari 2003c). It is impossible to study military repression without understanding the political circumstances which forced archaeologists to avoid this subject for so many years.

Archaeology should cover the study of the multiple aspects of repression, including prisons, legal and illegal detention camps, and disciplinary institutions in dictatorial contexts. The discipline should also consider the whole range of artifacts connected to military violence, such as torture instruments and some other objects which could have served different ends. In the case of Brazil, it is possible to mention the repressive use of cars – which were frequently employed to kidnap people – or simple handkerchiefs. When Caetano Veloso sang about a life "without handkerchief or identification card," he did not only refer to the rejection of bourgeois practices – for instance, the use of a handkerchief to blow your nose or of an identification card to get into the movies. He particularly referred to the repressive use of such artifacts during dictatorship. Identification cards were employed to identify "subversive" individuals, while handkerchiefs were used to tie and kill them.

More than 20 years after dictatorship, there are increasing possibilities for archaeologists to study political repression in Brazil. Nowadays, those who benefited from and supported military rule are forced to live with contradiction and diversity. The contribution of the archaeological study of repression should not be underestimated. It can help us to guarantee freedom and understand the complex reality of violence. This is a necessary condition – although not sufficient – to prevent barbarism from returning.

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Chapter 4
An Archaeological View of Political Repression in Uruguay (1971–1985)

José María López Mazz

Archaeology of Repression

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Uruguayan repressive system was part of a broader (geo) political movement which included other South American countries, as well as the coordination of specialized organisms and American agents. The establishment of dictatorship in Uruguay was preceded by the implementation of repressive measures and legal restrictions on citizens' rights. According to the Parliament, "immediate security measures" were the only way to face internal war (Martínez 2005).

The declassification of American and Uruguayan files provided new evidence to prosecute civil President Juan María Bordaberry and Minister Juan Carlos Blanco, as they proved their possible connection to *Plan Cóndor* (Operation Condor) and the murder of dissident Uruguayan and Argentinean politicians on both sides of the Río de la Plata.

"Full-stop laws" attempted to perpetuate impunity in cases of torture and murder committed for political reasons. Only recently, the government has resumed investigations into political violence (including imprisonment and disappearance). Historical revision is necessary to strengthen democracy, construct citizens' memory and do justice. This is particularly relevant in South America, where young nations emerged with difficulty from colonial order.

An archaeological approach to political repression intends to broaden the understanding of social facts and events which were invisible until today. It uses archaeology as a tool for decolonization, and it helps to create new citizen identities much more appropriate for this century. Foucault (1975) pointed out some of the virtues of undertaking a "genealogical" study of western disciplinary institutions which were responsible for "surveilling and punishing" state citizens.

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This archaeological approach – successfully employed in different countries – attempts to shed light on the relationship among repression, material culture and human rights (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992). Contextual analysis is necessary to find out the social or individual behaviors which created the material record. Archaeological contexts can provide significant information on the repressive and asymmetrical relationships which connected social actors in the 1970s and 1980s.

An Archaeology of Political Repression

Violent repression against political opposition should be understood in the broader context of dominant economic, political and geopolitical interests. We are not facing an isolated fact. Violence is neither a result of ideological diversity nor a consequence of party rivalry. On the contrary, violence and repression are means to an end: the discretional exercise of economic and socio-political control.

In the 1970s and 1980s, political repression depended on the use of coordinated and specialized devices. It also involved torture, assassination, forced disappearance and imprisonment without a fair trial. Violence not only affected the members of the Parliament and the supporters of political parties, but it also affected people from different classes, genders and ages (including workers and students). Some military and civilian groups benefited from repression, as they maintained their political power and took advantage of the new economic situation.

Activities involving political repression are frequently associated with human remains, objects and places that serve as testimony to violence. This paper attempts to recognize and understand the material production of repression. It portrays a series of social events experienced both by oppresors and their victims. We think political violence has a distinctive archaeological record. It is mainly composed of osteological remains, and objects created in prisons and other places connected to repression. Material remains are relevant to study different aspects of the "technologies of power" and the social actors involved in political violence. Archaeological information represents an original and interesting tool for writing the recent history of Uruguay. However, an archaeology of repression must distinguish the nature of its subject matter (that is to say, the materiality of objects and places) from the present political interpretation of repressive violence in the past. This situation not only concerns archaeology, but other social and human sciences as well.

The political context and the interest in science – in this case, as a tool for the decolonization of social relationships and academic prejudices – are two relevant dimensions of the archaeological practice. Archaeological studies of present and past societies have recently expanded in Latin America, showing a remarkable change in theoretical and professional praxis.

Archaeology looks forward to studying "forgotten" and "oppressed" groups which were invisible to history until today. Only in this way, historical memory will be democratized, present will be better understood, and identities will be defined. Beyond good intentions, archeology needs to develop a specific methodology to turn repression into a concrete subject-matter.

Graves and Human Remains

Human remains are frequently necessary to reconstruct the life history of past individuals. In the last three decades, systematic approaches under the name of "archaeology of death" aroused a good deal of interest among researchers. They also made a significant contribution to the study of present societies. Several scholars analyzed graves with the aim of understanding hierarchies and social relationships (Binford 1972; Lull 1998; O'Shea 1984), social "work" and cooperation (Lull 1998), contextual symbolism – mainly from a structuralist point of view (Hodder 1982) –, the amount of energy invested in tomb construction (Tainter 1977), and the presence of conflict in human remains (Gianotti and López Mazz 2002; Moreno 2004). The archaeological study of death has been particularly successful in prehistory. From a methodological perspective, it has contributed to the creation of a "taphonomy" of human remains (Turner and Turner 1992; Gianotti and López Mazz 2002; Moreno 2004). Researchers usually consider the intentional and formal character of the location of graves (Buikstra 1995). The identification of clandestine graves where *desaparecidos* (disappeared people) were buried may transform irrelevant spaces – which could be termed "non-places" (*sensu* Augé 1996) – into "places of repression."

The physical disappearance of prisoners is a central theme of repression. On the one hand, it diminishes the rights of victims and threatens the resolution of legal cases on the basis of people's absence. On the other hand, permanent disappearance represents an open wound for missing people's relatives and friends. Repression indirectly affects them in an extemporal dimension. When the remains of disappeared prisoners are finally found, two different things become important (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992): identifying the body and clarifying the circumstances of death.

The work of anthropologists has usually stood out among contemporary investigations on repression (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992). In general, forensic anthropology has made significant contributions to justice. On some occasions, researchers intend to unveil the truth about political violence and recover the remains of the victims. On some others, they try to gather evidence to start a case and encourage a historical revision of the events.

In the case of Uruguay, forensic anthropologists conducted the analysis of some of the bodies recovered at Colonia del Sacramento cemetery. The *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team) could not identify Uruguayan disappeared prisoners among the osteological remains. However, it is possible that these bodies had reached the coast after being thrown into the ocean by Argentinean military airplanes (Comisión para la Paz 2004).

Another case study involved a "no-name" corpse recovered at Castillos cemetery (Rocha Department). DNA analysis could not confirm that the body was in fact a disappeared prisoner (Comisión para la Paz 2004). Rocha's fishermen frequently remember that dead bodies possibly coming from Argentinean "death flights" reached the coast on several occasions. DNA analysis finally supported this hypothesis. From a methodological perspective, it was possible to obtain different results

from DNA analysis and digital juxtaposition of images (Comisión para la Paz 2004; Informe de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos 2005).

As a result of a pact of silence and repressive technologies, it was almost impossible for anthropologists to find meaningful remains of disappeared prisoners. The finding of Roberto Gomensoro's dead body floating in Rincón del Bonete (a lake in the central region of Uruguay) was an exception. Although most of the skeleton was subject to a second disappearance at the hands of the intelligence service, a physician managed to keep the skull safe. Researchers performed DNA analysis (Comisión para la Paz 2004) and digital juxtaposition of images (Mhemet et al. 2005) on the bones. The remains were finally identified and returned to Gomensoro's relatives.

An extraordinary forensic case concerns Chilean scientist Eugenio Berríos, who was murdered by a Chilean-Uruguayan command unit in 1998. Berríos' remains were buried on a beach near Montevideo, and they were identified by technicians of the Forensic Institute (Solla and Mehmet 2000). The finding of a watch, a chain and a medal (with a motif of the protective virgin of Chile) provided contextual archaeological evidence coincident with forensic data (Solla and Mehmet 2000).

It is possible to create a typology of death in times of repression. We consider this is one of the main aspects of the study of repressive technologies. The body of a person who is subject to repression provides direct evidence of violence. The recovery of human remains has a documentary value, as it reveals critical moments in the lives of victims. It also returns a sense of history to those who were kidnapped and killed. For several reasons, the fate of missing and dead people was frequently assimilated to that of the bodies. This situation was particularly connected to certain political circumstances and strategic military actions before and after *Plan Cóndor*. The treatment of the bodies included:

– Human bodies returned to relatives (before *Plan Cóndor*).
– Human bodies buried in formal cemeteries, without identification (Castillos).
– Human bodies buried in clandestine cemeteries, in individual or common graves (Battalions 13 and 14).
– Human bodies clandestinely buried outside military areas (Berríos).
– Human bodies abandoned without being buried (Soca).
– Human bodies thrown into the ocean by airplanes (Colonia, Rocha).
– Human bodies, carrying a heavy burden, thrown into the ocean by airplanes.
– Human bodies buried and dug up (Battalions 13 and 14).
– Human bodies buried, dug up and reburied (secondary burials; Battalions 13 and 14).

Technology of Repression and Resistance

Michel Foucault (1975) claimed that disciplinary spaces were part of a bigger strategy of social control and repression. The possibility of "reading" architecture (which dialectically circumscribes different areas of socialization by means of exclusion)

was later expanded to other repressive realms. After the Paris Commune, the city undertook the construction of boulevards to facilitate the circulation of repressive armies. Jeremy Bentham's panopticon provided a useful model for understanding the repressive prison system (Foucault 1975). This model was later used by archaeologists to study mid-nineteenth-century fortlets in Argentina's "Conquest of the Desert" (Gómez Romero 2002). It was also used to study the spatial organization of schools and cities as disciplinary institutions (Zarankin 2002).

Violence systems articulate different places. As a consequence, they connect repression to a given territory and create spaces for their own reproduction. In the early days of dictatorship, order depended on institutional models, and violence was concentrated in official military locations. With the establishment of *Plan Cóndor* and the internationalization of state terrorism, a new model of repression finally emerged. It involved the creation of a complex network of clandestine detention centers. While some clandestine centers were placed inside buildings taken from the enemy; some others were built in basements, wagons and sheds (usually in the backyard of military headquarters).

These places were given code-names, as well as torturers and physicians who participated in torture sessions. Clandestine detention centers represented virtual horror tours. During dictatorship, the word "transfer" acquired evil connotations. People could be arrested in Argentina, sent to the *Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada* (Army School of Mechanics), Orleti or Pozo de Banfield clandestine detention centers (*chupaderos*), and later moved to Uruguay. They could be tortured at Infierno Chico, transferred to Infierno Grande del 300 Carlos (Batallón No.13), and finally be killed (Batallón No.14) or imprisoned at a maximum security institution (Penal de Libertad, Punta de Rieles). Citizens who died or were executed during torture sessions were clandestinely buried in unknown locations.

Testimonies gathered by human rights organizations mention several places associated with military repression. Nevertheless, the complete lack of evidence regarding clandestine cemeteries has seriously questioned the results of the *Comisión para la Paz* (Peace Commission) between 2000 and 2004.

The history of the material conditions and physical actions usually performed to escape repression has just begun and still needs to be written. Holes in walls, excavating tools, tunnels, sewers, disguises and many other elements can lay the foundations for what we call "liberty or anti-repressive archaeology." In Uruguay, prison break scenarios were particularly created or simply appropriated for escaping. In the latter case, it is important to take note of Montevideo's sewer system. This place was taken over by the urban guerrilla to facilitate prison breaks and the clandestine circulation of people. Guerrilla men exercised control "under" the city. Although military forces exercised control over the surface, they were usually afraid to venture into underground spaces.

Resistance is dialectically connected to repressive conditions. Prison breaks – such as those headed by political prisoners at Jefatura, Cabildo and Punta Carretas – are a common anti-repressive behavior. They took place in different historical periods, standing for the universal value of freedom. Prison break archaeology frequently deals with clandestine tunnels connecting indoor spaces (prison cells, yards, infirmaries and bathrooms) to outdoor spaces (freedom).

In 1971, Uruguayan prisons increased their population, as people were not released after the completion of their sentences. Detainees were indefinitely imprisoned under the regime of "immediate security measures." In this context, 111 political prisoners escaped from Punta Carretas. This situation expressed their will to escape repression and solve practical problems regarding prisoners' release.

Some other prison breaks took place in Punta Carretas, showing they were not isolated events but repeated anti-repressive behaviors. The first break (1931) was conducted by a group of anarchists. These prisoners escaped through *Carbonería del Buen Trato* (*Del Buen Trato* coalyard), crossing Solano García Street (Fig. 4.1). The second break (1971) was usually known as *El Abuso* (The Abuse). It was conducted by *tupamaro* guerrilla men who connected prison cells to Solano García Street. The third break (1972) was called *El Gallo* (The Cock). It involved a bunch of prisoners who left the infirmary and finally reached the sewer system near the promenade. In all these cases, prisoners dug a tunnel to escape.

Other prisoners did not use a tunnel, but other methods of escape. A prisoner called *El Sátiro* (The Satyr) climbed up Punta Carretas' walls and reached Solano García Street (1969); a guerrilla man escaped in a garbage truck (1970); and another prisoner changed places with his brother (1972). On one occasion, a group of bank robbers could not break out of prison (1966). Although they managed to go past the first security precinct, they could not reach Ellauri Street. They had to retreat and hide in their prison cells, where penitentiary officers found them. Finally, some of the prisoners were violently killed.

It is possible to create a prison break typology. A well-documented archaeology will contribute to the study of its materiality. A specific theoretical and methodological
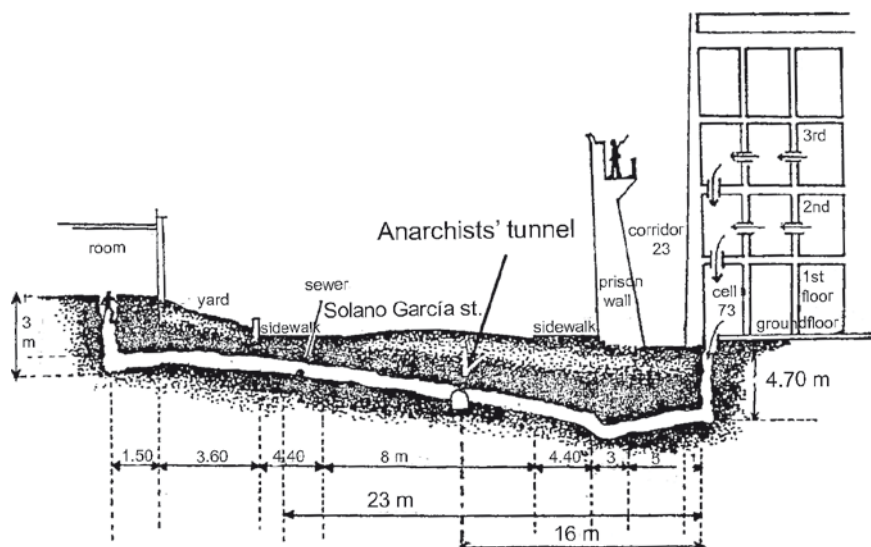

Fig. 4.1 Tupamaros' tunnel map (Redrawn from Fernández Huidobro 2004:199)

framework should consider the number of prisoners involved, the strategies employed (simulation, tunnel, wall jump), the amount of energy invested, the risk, duration (planned or opportunistic) and the beneficiaries of the actions. *El Abuso* was planned by engineers and specialists. These circumstances explain some of the sophisticated characteristics of the main tunnel – which included light, air and earth evacuation systems (Fernández Huidobro 2004). *El Gallo* made it possible to reach the sewer. In this case, 21 prisoners used small cars to increase their displacement speed in limited spaces. *El Abuso* used a dance party as a cover-up; *El Gallo* took prisoners to the shore. The archaeological analysis of prison breaks should fill in the blanks of historical memory. At the same time, it should stress the universal value of human dignity which is part and parcel of resistance to authoritarian governments.

Toy Production in Jail

The effect of political repression extends far beyond the direct victims of violence, including their neighbors, friends and relatives. This is the case of political prisoners' sons and daughters. These children were subject to indirect repression, which finally had a profound impact on the whole family. During prison visits, parents and children engaged in emotional relationships. In this chapter, we will analyze – from an archaeological perspective – some of the toys prisoners created for their own children and other kids.

Archaeology has recently noticed the presence of children in history. Children used to be invisible for some theoretical frameworks which focused on society and ignored individuals (Politis 1999). Some of the problems faced by children during dictatorship have been especially relevant to families, public authorities and human rights organizations. Children were considered spoils of war. They were used in their parents' interrogatories. And they were sometimes punished and separated from their families. Here we will consider prisoners' children as consumers of a specialized toy production which took place in jail.

Toys were manufactured with materials easily obtained in prison cells. These materials were closely associated with prison domestic activities and strict control. Paper, fabric, leather, bone and wood were commonly employed. Toy production was regular and periodical. However, it was particularly intense during Christmas, Epiphany, Children's Day and birthdays.

Hand-made toy production is a unique testimony of children's presence in prisons. This presence was metaphorical, but it helped prisoners counteract the repressive effects of seclusion and forced separation. Toys represented parent–children relationships in contexts of social repression. Hand-made toy production was frequent in prisons. However, nowadays it is hard to find one of the toys that everybody remembers with love. As time went by, they usually got lost in drawers and house removals.

Toys were created for children and teens. Bone polishing techniques were frequently used. Bone was obtained from food waste. Glass, nails and sandpaper were

Fig. 4.2 Luis Ifrán's bone "totem." Libertad prison, 1983 (Photo by López Mazz, 2007)

Fig. 4.3 Pedro Buffa's fabric clown. Libertad prison, 1980 (Photo by López Mazz, 2007)

essential for the manufacture. Bone and wooden objects were popular (Fig. 4.2), as well as fabric and woolen artifacts (Figs. 4.3 and 4.4). It is also worth mentioning the systematic use of cardboard and paper in hand-made products.

Fig. 4.4 Wooden tortoise (Photo by López Mazz, 2007)

In this context, hand-made production was a new practice for many men and women. It established a real communication between prisoners and relatives, defying physical separation. Toys and adornments were used as bodily symbols, easily identifiable in interpersonal relationships. They were placed in almost ceremonial family life places. They had a polysemic character, accounting for interpersonal relationships, prisoners' means of production, and tolerance or *apriete* in jail.

Final Remarks

Archaeology has proved to be a useful auxiliary discipline for history and justice, especially in the case of political repression in the 1970s and 1980s. Archaeology gives researchers the opportunity to focus on concrete materialities that, in certain aspects, lack the subjectivity of people's testimonies.

The consolidation of forensic anthropology as a specific field of study is part of a current trend in South American anthropology and archaeology (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992). This orientation intends to make visible oppressed social classes; that is to say, people who were frequently ignored by official history (Politis 2002:194).

Archaeology has a distinctive material record. Without a doubt, archaeological remains can shed light on different aspects of same old problems. They also provide relevant information to discuss new subjects of investigation, such as repression and resistance.

The contribution of archaeology to the study of political repression is just beginning. We believe that in the near future archaeology will be the only way to deal with some issues.

Archaeologists have studied the remains of the *desaparecidos*, confirming our worst fears: the existence of past systematic murders and exhaustive technologies for hiding the bodies. They have also found some contradictions among different techniques of identification (for example, between DNA analysis and digital juxtaposition of images).

Archaeology allows us to recover the memory of those who were victims of repression. Children were consigned to historical oblivion because of "friendly or nonhostile fire." Toys and adornments should be included in future "horror museums" devoted to memory and justice.

The archaeological record gives us the opportunity to recreate an alternative scenario, rather different from prison repression. It is associated with a defying dimension of human nature; that is to say, the endless pursuit of freedom. Prison breaks provide direct evidence of that phenomenon and will always do so.

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Chapter 5
Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology: A Balance Sheet

Luis Fondebrider

Introduction

On a cold July morning in 1984, a group of young people gathered around a grave at San Isidro cemetery (Buenos Aires, Argentina). They were not alone; a cordon of about 40 policemen surrounded the area. Some women wearing white scarves on their heads looked at the scene with anguish. Silence was broken by their cries, the sound of cameras clicking, and the police radio that – every now and then – emitted mechanical noises.

After 8 years of dictatorship, democracy and the need to find more than 10,000 people who had disappeared at the hands of the military government returned to Argentina. Many of these people's bodies were buried without identification (as "NN" or "no-name corpses") in cemeteries all over the country.

The group of young people was confused and frightened. It was made up of archaeology, anthropology and medicine students who had never thought of being involved in such a situation. Democracy was still fragile, nobody knew for sure if it was going to last, and a few months ago the police forces that protected the students at the cemetery had brutally chased them.

Some other people around the grave had never interacted with the students. They were lawyers, judges and police physicians. They used a particular jargon, largely composed of words difficult to understand. An elderly man who did not speak Spanish stood next to these people. Despite the circumstances, he looked quiet and confident. He had invited the students to participate in the exhumation of a *desaparecido* (a disappeared person). His name was Clyde Snow, a well-known forensic anthropologist from the United States who had come to Argentina to recover and identify the victims of political repression (Snow 1984).

Clyde Snow spoke calmly, with a strong Texan accent. He was one of the first forensic anthropologists who decided to use archaeology in medico-legal cases.

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His presence in Argentina had been specially requested by human rights organizations. A few months ago, some of their supporters had seen bulldozers, gravediggers and police physicians digging up hundreds of skeletal remains without any concern for the methodology used. These bodies apparently belonged to *desaparecidos*. They had been buried in cemetery areas usually reserved for "NN" people – mainly the needy and homeless. The images of the excavation had been sarcastically called the "horror show," not so much for the way the work had been done but for the tragic reality it had revealed.

As one of the gravediggers removed the top 20 cm of soil, the students realized they were not at the cemetery because the local archaeological department had asked them to go. As a matter of fact, none of their professors were involved in the project. The students were at the cemetery because of their own initiative and will to do something at a crucial moment in Argentinean history. Only one graduated archaeologist took part of the excavation. The rest of the scientific community – for example, the archaeologists and physical anthropologists – showed no interest for one reason or another. It is relevant to stress that this pattern of behavior was later detected – with some individual exceptions – in other Latin American countries.

One hour later, soil changed color and texture. This was something the students could easily recognize. At that moment, one of the police physicians came close to a gravedigger and said: "we are almost there; let me know when you hit bones with the shovel." Once he went away, all of the students shouted at the same time: "no, no, that is not the way it should be done!" One of the students jumped into the grave before the eyes of the judge and the rest of the people. He started to scrape the ground with a trowel, while some of his partners picked up the sediment and sieved it. It was probably the first time that archaeology shook hands with law, justice and medicine. Nevertheless, the scene looked more like an unexpected irruption than a previously arranged procedure. The students and Clyde Snow finally took control of the exhumation. From that moment on, it started to resemble an archaeological fieldwork. But that is another story.

Some Years Later

It has been 20 years since that experience. Nowadays, talking about forensic archaeology and anthropology in Argentina does not sound strange to lawyers, prosecutors and forensic professionals in general. In several countries, victims' relatives strongly oppose exhumations and osteological analysis conducted by non-forensic archaeologists and anthropologists.

Many Latin American countries have recently included forensic archaeologists and anthropologists in their medico-legal services. Their opinions and analysis are usually respected and taken into account at the police and judicial level.

Outside Latin America, when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia decided to conduct large-scale exhumations, the task of Argentinean,

Guatemalan, Peruvian, and Colombian forensic anthropologists and archaeologists became relevant – not only for their experience but also for their capacity.

In 2003, all previous experiences led to the creation of the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología Forense* (Latin American Association of Forensic Anthropology). This association represented a new way of working in forensic archaeology and anthropology. It included: (a) an interdisciplinary relationship with other fields of anthropology – that is to say, cultural, archeological and biological anthropology, (b) a social interest in relatives' cultural and religious practices, as well as in their "right to know."

Summing up, during the last 20 years, archaeologists and anthropologists from different countries have played a significant role in forensic investigations and human rights causes. This is sometimes reflected in scientific production (Doretti and Fondebrider 2001; Haglund 2001; Skinner and Steremberg 2004; Fondebrider 2005). In general, recent studies focus on the development of archaeological techniques for excavating mass graves, the duty of anthropologists in massive disasters, and the relevance of pathological lesions and *perimortem* trauma in osteological analysis.

Challenges

Despite recent achievements, there is still a long way to go. For instance, although there are some graduate courses in forensic archaeology and anthropology in Colombia, Peru and Mexico, there are few in Latin America as a whole. Therefore, graduated students frequently move to the United States or England to complete their education.

On several occasions, the contribution of forensic archaeology and anthropology to medico-legal cases depends on the good will of the authorities in charge of the investigations – prosecutors, judges and homicide detectives. As a matter of fact, most countries have not stated yet that the exhumation of skeletal bodies should be carried out by archaeologists only.

In the academic realm, researchers have shown little interest in developing a forensic line of inquiry – although archaeology and anthropology students have insisted on taking part in forensic projects every time they had the opportunity to do so.

Balance

The contribution of forensic archaeology and anthropology to the study of political/ethnic violence in the last 20 years has been unquestionable.

Archaeological exhumations in Latin America, some African countries and former Yugoslavia – just to mention the most notorious cases – allowed researchers to recover and identify the bodies of hundreds of people who were kidnapped and killed mostly by national security forces (Figs. 5.1 to 5.6).

Fig. 5.1 Excavation of "NN" graves in Argentinean cemeteries (Photo by EAAF - *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* 2001).

Fig. 5.2 Excavation of mass graves containing the bodies of people killed by the most recent dictatorship in Argentina (1976–1983) (Photo by EAAF 2003).

Fig. 5.3 Excavation of mass graves containing the bodies of people killed by the recent dicatatorship in Argentina (1976–1983) (Photo by EAAF 2003).

Forensic archaeology and anthropology have been especially useful to return victims' bodies to their families, providing scientific evidence to prosecute people responsible for the crimes.

At present, forensic archaeology and anthropology pursue their own goals and interests, promoting interaction between different specialties and social actors. Both disciplines have shown that anthropology in general and archaeology in particular can make significant contributions to the understanding of recent past and the preservation of memory.

Fig. 5.4 EAAF excavations in Congo (Photo by EAAF 2003).

Fig. 5.5 EAAF excavations in Ethiopia (Photo by EAAF 1997).

Fig. 5.6 EAAF member explaining the results of skeletal analysis to prosecutors in Ethiopia (Photo by EAAF 1997).

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Chapter 6

The Materialization of Sadism; Archaeology of Architecture in Clandestine Detention Centers (Argentinean Military Dictatorship, 1976–1983)

Andrés Zarankin and Claudio Niro

Introduction

> "Those who were not in a concentration camp will never be able to get in there, to imagine what it means; and those who were there will never be able to completely get out." Daniel M., Club Atlético survivor (Benítez et al. 2001:10)

ONE DAY AT VESUBIO

On May 9, 1976, I arrived at Vesubio, a clandestine detention center at Camino de Cintura and Richieri highway (Mantanza Department). Four individuals following Suárez Mason's orders got me out of a Ford Falcon. I was hooded and my hands were tied behind my back. Meanwhile, the four individuals insulted me and hit me, forcing me into a room. Once inside, they made me stand against a wall with my legs extended. Several torturers kicked me in the testicles again and again. This procedure was called *ablande*. It was intended to intimidate the prisoner before taking him/her into the torture room.

All these events took place at House 3. The clandestine detention center was composed of three areas, each one serving a different purpose. House 1 contained the headquarters; that is to say, the head office and the manager's house. The torture rooms –usually called operating theaters or infirmaries– were at House 2. House 3 contained the prison cells or *cuchas* (literally, doghouses).

Cuchas were small rooms were four or five people were kept hooded, handcuffed and leg-ironed to walls and other prisoners. Once in the *cuchas*, the kidnappers told us to take off our clothes and wear some brown uniforms. This procedure made us lose – along with our clothes – all contact with an exterior life.

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At first, we were puzzled. We were unable to fully understand the situation we were in. We did not know where we were. Nor did we know what was going to happen. In the first week, I could not eat anything. The meals they gave us (stews urinated on by the guards) and the way they forced us to have them (we were supposed to eat from a big pot using our hands) made me feel sick. The next week I was so hungry I ate everything they put in front of me.

One of our partners who had been kidnapped a long time ago used to give us water. We called him "Hueso". He was the only person we saw when we managed to take off our hoods – especially on the few occasions when guards were not watching the area.

My hood smelled horrible. That was the reason why I suspected it had been previously worn by other prisoners. There was a little hole in my hood. It allowed me to see Richieri highway and 86 line buses through the window of an old dining room in House 2.

After spending some time at the *cuchas,* we started to recognize the place through Hueso's descriptions. We finally found out that the food came from La Tablada military barracks, being subsequently spoiled at Vesubio. Hueso told us that our captors thought that the girls and boys who had been kidnapped at Carlos Pellegrini and Juan José Paso high schools were *perejiles*.[1] He also told us that the torture rooms were located at House 2. Hueso sometimes gave us pills which he took from the infirmary to relieve our pain.

When all this happened, the 1978 Football World Cup was held in Argentina. The guards used to watch football games on TV. Some of the female prisoners were allowed to watch them too. Women were kept in separate prison cells. We knew they were engaged in domestic activities in the detention camp.

The guards were trained at Lemos and Cabral army schools. Many of them came from the provinces and listened to *chamamé* music. They frequently insulted the prisoners they identified as Jews, as well as everybody else.

I remember one occasion when I met two guys who had been recently kidnapped. We had a conversation. Of course, we did not talk about food or anything like that…We talked about the Russian Revolution! I could not believe it. I was really touched by the situation. We were talking about the Russian Revolution in a clandestine detention center! I thought the guys were trying to lure me into Trotskyism. I was happy: if the guys were there and I could hear the words "Trotsky" and "Lenin" in the same conversation, it meant that the kidnappers were not able to beat us!

The walls of the torture room were covered with Styrofoam and written with burning cigarettes. One of the writings said: *"Si lo sabe, aguante"*[2] (*"If you know something, hang on a bit longer"*). Styrofoam walls were stained with blood. Inside the room, there was a bucket filled with water, a photograph of Hitler with the words *"Heil Hitler!"* written below, and a wooden table covered with iron.

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[1] Literally, *perejil* means "parsley." It is a kind of herb used by Argentineans to decorate their foods. This is why the word was frequently used to describe people who were kidnapped in order to draw attention from real important things.

[2] This phrase comes from a 1970 TV program *Si lo Sabe, Cante* (If you know it, sing it).

Vesubio reminds me of several things. It particularly reminds me of the ancient city of Pompeii, which was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. The Argentinean Vesubio (1975–1978 AD) destroyed the lives of hundreds of people, imposing the logic of fear – in this case, the logic of state terrorism – upon them. Volcanic lava spread over Pompeii. Almost two thousand years later, Ford Falcons[3] spread over Argentina.

Before being tortured, my comrade Leonardo – my superior at the political organization where I was involved– told me that we needed to "break the chain". We should not betray one another. Nor should we recognize we were part of the *Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios* (High School Students Union) or *Montoneros*. We had to pretend we did not know anything. The problem was that some of the prisoners had admitted they were members of the *Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios*. The rest of us tried to convince our torturers that we were no longer affiliated with this political organization; that we had left it before the coup.

In the torture room, they asked me about my superior, but I did not betray anyone. The torturers repeated words frequently used in political organizations. We had to feign ignorance to avoid being accused.

Some time later, we were transferred to Logistic Unit 10 (Villa Martelli). Our prison cells were guarded by three soldiers and a sergeant. There, we had the opportunity to take off our hoods. Mayor Teslaf usually turned up, playing the good guy. Finally, I found out he was one of the heads of Vesubio.

Thanks to some degree of friendship we had with one of the soldiers, we managed to send a secret letter to our families, telling them we were alive. The soldier could not tell our relatives where we were. That was the only way he could protect his life and ours. The soldier's name was Horacio Sap.

Three partners – Mauricio Westein, Juan Carlos Martire and Gabriela Juárez Celman – who had been kidnapped some days before us still remain missing.

Horacio Sap brought us letters from our families. On one occasion, we could hear a conversation among high ranked military officers. They said we had been divided into several groups of four people, and locked up in different barracks. This information was important to us. Although we could not tell our families where we were, we could tell them we were all alive.

During captivity, we could not sleep for more than forty days. It was impossible to get asleep and forget what was going on. It was impossible to dream about anything. Hoods isolated people from the outer world. At the same time, there were other sinister details: screams, insults – *"Fucking subversive", "Bolshevik son of a bitch", "Heil Hitler"* –, *patotas* (gangs) chasing us, brutal beatings.

When Leonardo was taken to the infirmary, we found another way to resist. He was forced to lie down on the *parrilla* (a metal frame – literally, a cooking grill) and was tortured with a *picana* (a prod which delivers an electric shock to torture somebody). Torturers wanted him to betray his sister. At a certain moment, Mauricio Westein and Juan Carlos Martire (who still remain missing) were forced to get into the room.

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[3] Ford Falcon was a car model often used by the Argentinean police and the secret service.

The *patota* (gang) offered them the opportunity to torture Leonardo. As they rejected the idea, Mauricio and Juan Carlos were tied to the same *parrilla,* next to Leonardo. The three of them were tortured.

Three or more groups were on guard duty for 24 hours. One of them was headed by Fierrito and his *patota.* Fierrito loved listening to national rock music (for instance, Spinetta's song *Plegaria para un niño dormido* – Prayer for a boy who has fallen asleep). We used to think: *"Motherfucker. How can he like that song?"* He also said he was fond of Igmar Bergman's films. He usually talked about his family and sons.

Pancho was in charge of the other group. He sometimes gave us bread. He also brought us a blanket to protect us from the cold winter. One day, he did not bring us bread. We asked him for food, but he said the baker had been kidnapped.

On a certain occasion, some *colaboradores* (collaborators, members of political organization who changed sides while being imprisoned) visited Vesubio. One of them was called Lucho. He was a physician. During kidnapping operations, he gave those who had taken the cyanide pill an injection to make them throw it up. The *colaboradores* also lived at the *chupadero* (clandestine detention center), in a room called "Q"(which stood for "quebrados"; that is to say, broken down). The group we saw at Vesubio was formed by Lucho and three women. One of them, La Negra, also applied *picana* to the prisoners.

On another occasion, the *colaboradores* came to House 3. They took our hoods off, and we could have a look at them. They finally made a sort of survey. They wanted to know our class, religion and political affiliation. We obviously did not answer these questions; they represented an interrogation without *picana.* We realized the *colaboradores* were well dressed and clean. They wanted us to "collaborate". Meanwhile, they talked badly of the leaders of political organizations. They said we were useful idiots.

After twenty days in captivity, Hueso told us they thought we were *perejiles.* Another rumor was that we were to be taken to a "reeducation camp". I was frightened by this idea. They said that they were going to "wash our brains" to transform us into another kind of people. I associated our future "domestication" with some sort of mental, moral and physical slavery. As time went by, Orwel's book *1984* reminded me of that feeling.

Another group of guards was called the Nazi. They announced their presence hailing Hitler with a song that said: *"Here comes Adolph walking down the street, killing Jews to make soap".* These executioners played records where it was possible to listen to Hitler. Every time they came for us, they beat us hard, frequently breaking some of our bones. The problem of wearing a hood is that you do not know where the beats come from. You are completely helpless. These guys forced us to do exercise (including leapfrogs) and kept us chained to the walls for hours. They yelled at us, and they frequently said that they would use the *picana* in case we ignored their orders. As a matter of fact, if somebody could not resist this, he or she was taken to House 2 – where the operating theater was located. Executioners hurt people for the pleasure of torture. While all this happened, we heard the 1978 Football World Cup broadcast on TV. Every time a rival team scored a goal, it was very sad for all of us: our captors took revenge beating us hard.

The bathroom in House 3 did not have a door but only a curtain. I remember a latrine and a shower that actually was a pipe with running cold water. It is impossible for me to forget that instead of toilet paper, there was a pile of Marx and Lenin's books, the correspondence between Perón and Cooke, and magazines such as *El descamisado*.

Due to the lack of food, we had lost a lot of weight. Moreover, weakness made some of us suffer from hallucinations. I remember I used to pray and think of the forty days of fasting of Jesus Christ. Jewish guys prayed to Jehovah. As we offered less resistance, weakness made it easier to torture us. We lost so much weight at Vesubio that when we were finally transferred to Villa Martelli, I looked in a mirror and I could not recognize myself. I looked like another person, a living dead man. I was like an Auschwitz prisoner: *"People who suddenly turn up, always frighten us"* (Jorge Semprún, in Barros 2001:10, the translation is ours).

I have recently returned to the place where Vesubio was located. The ruins are the first thing you see when you get there. Vesubio was demolished at the end of 1978, as a consequence of the arrival of the Organization of American States' Commission for Human Rights. The remains of Vesubio are enclosed by a barbed wire fence and you cannot enter the area. A person who lives there denies access to the ruins, threatens Human Rights Organizations, and unleashes his wild dogs on everybody. Anyway, on one occasion I managed to get in and recognized some red tiles which covered the bathroom floor. I closed my eyes and thought: the camp remains, the horror. I remembered the time when they made us wait in front of the operation theater. We heard screams of pain, *chamamé* music, and the executioners' voices. At that moment, I asked myself how torture would feel, and if I was going to stand it. It was impossible to know the answer. My body and my partners' bodies shook with fear. I was forced into the operation theater. They took my hood off and I was blinded by the light. A loud voice asked me to collaborate. I recognized it. It was Vasco's voice. Four guys held me tightly, undressed me, soaked me up, and tied a wire to my big toe. They started electrocuting me with another wire. Emptiness. I did not actually know for how long they tortured me. I felt they took my soul away from me. They finally took me completely injured to the *cuchas* with my partners. One day, a partner who was on medication for psychological disorders started to suffer from persecution paranoia. We asked him to be silent to avoid repression. Nevertheless, he kept on yelling. At the end, a repressor's voice said: *"Why are you complaining about your persecution paranoia if we have already caught you?"*

Claudio Niro, El Vesubio survivor.

This story portrays some of the mechanisms used by military dictatorship in Argentina (1976–1983) to destroy the identity of prisoners. Deprivation of vision, limitation of movement, torture, food scarcity, extreme climatic conditions (cold/heat), lack of communication, and substitution of names for numbers are some of the devices which had a profound impact on prisoners' minds and bodies. We are facing a new punitive model which used some elements of past repressive systems. For instance, physical torture and the destruction of the body were typical of the

Middle Ages. However, the organization of time in daily routines was typical of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century disciplinary institutions.

Taking into account the real experience of one of the authors, this work attempts to discuss – from a theoretical and bodily perspective – the architecture and spatial organization of clandestine detention centers in Argentina, as well as their impact on prisoners.

The architecture and spatial organization of clandestine detention centers can be considered tools that guarantee the correct operation of power. In this case, we are interested in analyzing power strategies from an archaeological point of view. We believe the word "archaeology" has two different but related meanings. On the one hand, archaeology is the study of people through material culture. On the other hand, "…archaeology does not try to restore what has been though, wished, aimed at, experienced, desired by men in the very moment at which they expressed it in discourse… (…) It is nothing else than rewriting, it is to say (in the maintained form of exteriority) an average transformation of what has been said and written. It is not the return to the secret of the origin, it is the systematic description of a speech object" (Foucault 1970:235).

If we agree that archaeology is a cultural construction of the past, then we could also agree that it makes an adequate tool for political transformation. As archaeologists challenge official history or "master narratives" (Johnson 1996), they can play an active role in the interpretation of the past (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Funari 1988, 1999).

Material culture is symbolically constituted (Hodder 1982). It is a product and a producer of people and subjectivities (Andrade Lima 1999). Objects are active and dynamic elements which can only be interpreted within the historical and social setting they belong to. Understanding clandestine detention centers requires contextualization. As a consequence, we divide this chapter into two different parts. In the first one, we will present a summary of the history of punitive institutions in Western society and a general overview of military repression in Argentina. In the second one, we will work on a specific case study: Club Atlético clandestine detention center. Finally, we will discuss the architecture and spatial organization of clandestine prisons.

Punitive Institutions

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1976) analyzed the birth of disciplinary institutions between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. He established a solid connection between different forms of repression and punished objects – which gradually changed from body to soul/mind during the period. Foucault claimed that "*the prison replace[d] the patibulum*" (1976:233). This historical transformation reflected in the development of a whole series of disciplinary devices oriented towards the creation of docile individuals in orthopedic institutions – schools, factories, hospitals, prisons, mental hospitals and orphanages (Bentham 1786; Goffman 1974; Gaudemar 1981; Donzelot 1981). At the same time, cities became increasingly organized by disciplinary strategies

such as vigilance, control and domination (King 1980; Markus 1993a, b; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994).

The goal of prison is to deny freedom as a form of punishment. Confinement does not only intend to punish people, but also intends to reform them. As a consequence, prison represents the most civilized and humane sort of punishment. According to Foucault, prisons reproduce every single mechanism of the social body, turning people into docile and disciplined individuals. Prison architecture sets up artificial boundaries within which bodies are controlled and confined (Grahame 1995, 2000; Zarankin 1999, 2000, 2002). These institutions became highly specialized over time. For instance, at present there are different kinds of schools (for children, adults, rich, poor, blind, and mentally or physically "disabled" people) and hospitals (for eye, heart and cancer care). The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the rise of minimum/maximum security prisons, concentration camps, psychiatric prisons, reformatories, among many other institutions.

Argentina has made a bloody contribution to this extended list. Clandestine detention centers emerged during the last military government (1976–1983). Although they had deep roots in history, clandestine detention centers only became massively and systematically used during the 1970s. They combined and reinforced the worst traits of previous punitive institutions. Their goal was no longer to imprison and correct people, but to destroy and eliminate them: "Entering a [clandestine detention center] implied in all cases STOP BEING. For that reason, it was relevant to deconstruct captives' identities, change their temporal and spatial references, and torture their bodies and souls beyond imagination" (CONADEP 1984:55).

The Military Coup

On March 24, 1976, a military coup overthrew democratic President Isabel Martínez de Perón (General Juan Domingo Perón's widow) on the pretext that her government was unable to control "subversion"; that is to say, a series of political organizations which tried to impose a social order different from that dictated by "tradition." At that moment, a junta consisting of Lieutenant-General Jorge Rafael Videla, Admiral Emilio Massera, and Brigadier-General Orlando Agosti seized power. The *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* (National Reorganization Process) was one of the darkest and most sinister periods of Argentinean history.

Extremely liberal economic policies (Forrester 1996, 2000) were introduced by Minister of Economy José Martínez de Hoz, exponentially increasing public and private debt (the latter eventually transformed into state debt). In order to guarantee economic success and the destruction of popular resistance, the military government created a project to physically destroy political opponents (institutions and individuals). This objective was finally achieved through a clandestine organization, including undercover military and police operations, kidnapping, and murder.

Military repression was based on a perfectly structured plan. It was aimed at oppressing citizens and imposing a particular order without discussion. This criminal

plan involved the disappearance of political dissidents in clandestine detention centers, where they were tortured and held captive before being killed.

Forced Disappearance

Disappearance was a mechanism frequently adopted by the military government to eliminate opposition. This procedure – which included the use of a particular jargon – consisted of marking individuals (*objetivo* – target) who were subsequently kidnapped (*chupados*) by paramilitary command forces (*grupo de tareas* or *patota* – gang). Victims were imprisoned in clandestine detention centers (*pozos*), where most of their belongings were taken away from them. Military agents did not call prisoners by their names. Instead, they were assigned letters and numbers. Individuals had no legal rights and they were at the mercy of their captors. Disappearance was frequently completed when people were thrown from military airplanes or helicopters into the Río de la Plata, or shot and buried in unmarked mass graves (Bellelli and Tobin 1985; Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense 1992; Doretti and Fondebrider 2001). As Amnesty International (the translation is ours) points out, "Due to its nature, disappearance conceals the author's identity. If there is no legal prisoner, corpse, or victim, then nobody is presumably accused of anything".

Thousands of people of all ages and occupations (Table 6.1) were kidnapped and still remain disappeared. In 1983 and 1984, a human rights commission –CONADEP– registered more than 9,000 cases of disappearance. Meanwhile, human rights organizations registered more than 30,000.

It is important to note that, although disappearance did not begin in 1976, its transformation into a generalized model of destruction was absolutely new. At the beginning of the 1970s, paramilitary *Triple A* groups headed by José López Rega employed disappearance as a repressive tool.

Table 6.1 Distribution of "*desaparecidos*" according to their occupation (CONADEP 1984:234)

Occupation	Percentage (%)
Workers	30
Students	21
Employees	17.8
Professionals	10.7
Teachers	5.7
Conscripts and subaltern agents of the security forces	2.5
Housewives	3.8
Self-employed workers and others	5.0
Journalists	1.6
Actors and artists	1.3
Members of religious orders	0.6

Clandestine Detention Centers as Non-Places

There are few works on clandestine detention centers.[4] This situation is probably connected to the horror they inspire and the need some people have to deny recent history (CONADEP 1984; Calveiro 2001; Barros 2001; Di Ciano et al. 2001; Benitez et al. 2001; Daleo 2002; Calvo 2002; Bozzuto et al. 2004). Pilar Calveiro (2001) analyzes concentration camps in Argentina from the point of view of a former prisoner and a social scientist. In her PhD thesis, she states that the military government considered clandestine detention centers to be "operation theaters" where "major surgeries" were performed in order to "save" society. Clandestine detention centers were also thought to be the starting point for "a new, ordered, controlled and horrified society" (Calveiro 2001:11). Summing up, "The concentration camp resembles a machine that comes to life. It gives the impression that nobody can stop it. The feeling of helplessness stemming from its secret and hidden power – which is perceived as omnipresent – plays a key role in its acceptance and the generalized attitude of submission to it" (Calveiro 2001:12).

Calveiro points out that the first concentration camps in Argentina were established during María Isabel Martínez de Peron's democratic government, when authorities signed a decree for the "annihilation" of subversion. Nevertheless, it was only after the 1976 coup that disappearance and concentration camps turned into the most used repressive devices. During the most recent dictatorship, military forces operated more than 340 clandestine detention centers. It is estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 people were held captive there; 90% of whom were killed (Calveiro 2001).

What is the source of inspiration of clandestine detention centers? Were they influenced by other institutions? Calveiro (2001) does not believe that the military forces in Argentina were imitating Nazi or Stalinist concentration camps. Clandestine detention centers merely reproduced typical practices of totalitarian powers, including concentration camps. We think it is necessary to explore the repressive models used by the French army in Argelia, where people were tortured and killed in clandestine locations. We must not forget that a large number of Argentinean officers were sent to France to be trained in the fight against subversion.

It is possible to find some characteristics of nineteenth-century prisons in clandestine detention centers, such as the principle of prisoners' isolation from the rest of the prisoners and the outside world. According to Foucault, "loneliness is the first condition for total submission (…) isolation ensures the dialog between the prisoner and the power which is exercised over him" (1976:240; the translation is ours).

In some way, clandestine detention centers resemble concentration camps: they are used to gather, isolate, and held enemies captive. However, concentration camps are "places" ruled by a series of international laws which provide some kind of respectful treatment to prisoners. Clandestine detention centers cannot be defined as places because they "do not officially exist." Secrecy offers them invisibility and impunity.

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[4] It is worth mentioning that almost every work on clandestine detention centers was written by the survivors of military repression.

These "non-places" transform prisoners into *desaparecidos* (disappeared people). As a consequence, prisoners are nowhere to be found.

In Argentina, the invisibility of clandestine detention centers usually depended on the fact that they operated within pre-existing buildings (CONADEP 1984:58). With the return of democracy, one of the things that struck Argentineans was finding out that in "neighboring buildings" thousands of people had been tortured and killed by military forces (although nobody had noticed it).

The Functioning of Clandestine Detention Centers

The management and organization of prisoners in clandestine detention centers was systematic, proving the existence of a criminal plan to eliminate them (CONADEP 1984). As Claudio Niro mentioned above, there were some steps prisoners had to go through once they entered a clandestine detention center. First, they were fully undressed. They were also assigned letters and numbers which became their new form of identification. Later, prisoners were systematically tortured to deepen the loss of their identities.

Why was it so important to deny prisoners' names and identities? Without names, there are no individuals; only anonymous bodies subject to punitive and bureaucratic forces. Without identity, individuals lose the connection to their own history and past. These circumstances usually pushed prisoners to betray their partners and obey military orders.

Torturers did not use their real names, but nicknames such as Ángel, Gordo, Turco, Doctor K., Padre, Calculín, Raúl or Karateka. This transformation allowed them to preserve their identity while interacting with the prisoners and their own partners. It also allowed them to develop multiple personalities; for instance, a good father and a sadistic executioner.[5] Clandestine detention centers also received symbolic names. Some examples were Olimpo, Club Atlético, Vesubio, Garage Azopardo, or Talleres Orletti.[6]

Prisoners spent days, months, or even years in clandestine detention centers, until military authorities decided to transfer them – which in the jargon meant to kill them – or legalize them – that is to say, to transform them into ordinary prisoners of the penitentiary service. Most of the time prisoners were hooded or blindfolded. This situation constituted another form of torture (Fig. 6.1): "Although they are two completely different things, the psychological torture of being hooded is worse than physical torture. [The latter] attempts to reach the threshold of pain. The hood attempts to cause desperation, anguish and madness. When I was hooded, I became completely aware that contact with the outer world does not exist.

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[5] In *El Señor Galindez*, Eduardo Pavlosky gives a good example of this situation.

[6] "Clandestine detention centers have names; they do not have numbers like police stations. Do they exist? Do they disappear?" (María X. Senatore personal communication).

Fig. 6.1 Artists' homage to Club Atlético prisoners (photo by Zarankin 2003)

Nothing protects you, loneliness is complete. The feelings of vulnearbility, isolation and fear are pretty difficult to describe. Not being able to see undermines morality, diminishes resistance" (CONADEP 1984:59).

Benítez et al. (2001:11) define the goal of this terror machine as follows: "Life in the camp and torture sessions were planned to achieve the destruction and denigration of the captives". At the same time, several devices prevented prisoners from committing suicide or escaping. "The person in charge of Club Atlético was Police Inspector Antonio Benito Firovanti, alias 'Tordillo', 'Coronel', or 'De Luca'. He devoted long hours to talking to prisoners. He interrogated them about their families and the plans they had in case they were released. This policy had a specific purpose: creating false expectations to reduce suicide attempts and discourage prison escapes. The policy sketched out here was finally improved and developed in other camps in mid-1978" (Benítez et al. 2001:11).

Despite their secret nature, clandestine detention centers were perfectly organized. These killing machines included the participation of several groups:

– *"Patotas"*. Task groups in charge of kidnapping people.
– *Intelligence groups*. Groups in charge of managing information, choosing victims, and torturing them.
– *Guards*. Agents in charge of watching prisoners and maintaining clandestine detention centers.
– *Corpse cleaners*. People in charge of killing prisoners and hiding their bodies.

For Calveiro, the division of labor was created so that no one could feel completely responsible for the crimes. The organization of clandestine detention centers sought to strip prisoners of their human condition, ensuring the functioning of these places as assembly lines. In clandestine detention centers, "Everything took on the appearance of a bureaucratic procedure" (Calveiro 2001:39).

Club Atlético

Due to its history (Benítez et al. 2001), Club Atlético makes an appropriate case study for discussing some of the ideas presented above. We know Club Atlético was the result of the closure and removal of another clandestine detention center: Garage Azopardo. The latter operated between 1976 and 1977, in the same neighborhood where Club Atlético was later established. At the end of 1977, Club Atlético was dismantled and the prisoners were taken to El Banco. Finally, in 1978 El Olimpo replaced El Banco (Table 6.2).

Club Atlético received its code name from the initials of the real name of the institution: *Centro Antisubversivo* (Antisubversive Center). This center was in operation in the basement of the Federal Police Warehouse on Paseo Colón Avenue (between Cochabamba Street and San Juan Avenue, Buenos Aires, Argentina) (Fig. 6.2). Approximately 1,500 people were taken and imprisoned there. Most of them still remain missing. Club Atlético could accommodate 200 prisoners at the same time. The building was demolished in 1977, as it was on the route of 25 de Mayo Highway.

The Archaeological Project

In 2003, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires opened a bidding process for the excavation of Club Atlético's remains.[7] Our project, "Archaeology as Memory: Archaeological Interventions at Club Atlético Clandestine Center of Detention and Torture" was finally chosen (Bianchi Villelli and Zarankin 2003a).

Table 6.2 Clandestine detention centers' period of operation

Clandestine detention center	Period of operation
Garage Azopardo	August, 1976–February, 1977
Club Atlético	February, 1977–December, 1977
El Banco	December, 1977–August, 1978
El Olimpo	August, 1978–January, 1979

[7] Marcelo Weissel (2002) conducted previous excavations in the center.
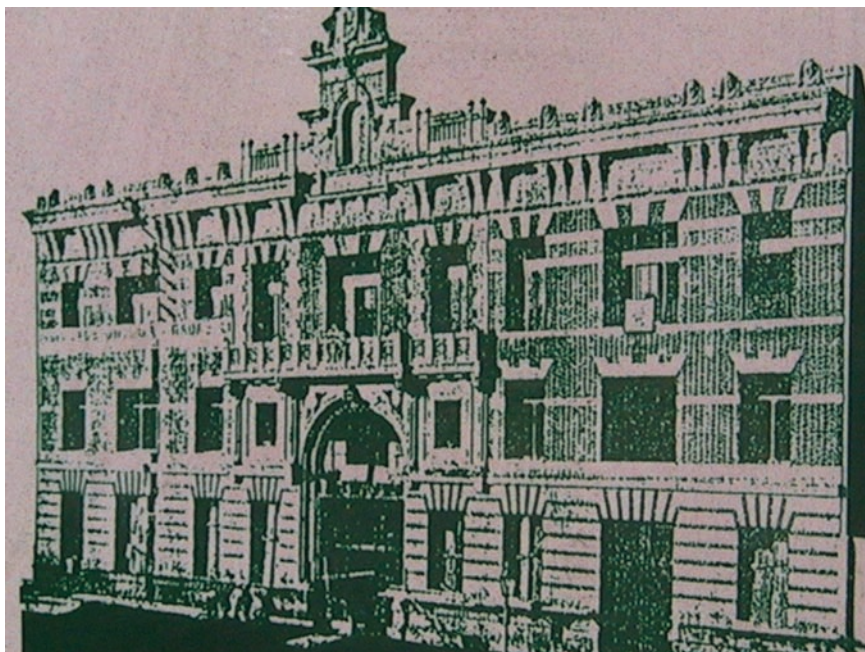
Fig. 6.2 View of the building's facade where Club Atlético operated

The project had two main goals. On the one hand, we attempted to understand the operational and organizational logic of Club Atlético's space and architecture. On the other, we wanted to make a contribution to the construction of material memory. We tried to turn memory into something physical, making it possible to perceive history in a different way from written or oral records. Material memory can be touched, smelled, and experienced (Fig. 6.3). A simple ping-pong ball[8] recovered during the archaeological excavation became a symbol for Club Atlético survivors. As Delia Barrera (2002:4) pointed out: What would those who played ping-pong in front of the "leonera" [literally, lion's den] while we were tortured think of the little ball we just found under the elevator?

We must consider that the history of illegal repression during the recent military government has been frequently hidden or told from an "official" perspective. The excavation of Club Atlético represents a way of recovering memory and confronting dominant history. The project included the participation of survivors and victims' relatives who were willing to reappropriate their own history – which, in a certain way, was everybody's history.

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[8] It is a ping-pong ball used by military agents while prisoners were tortured.

Fig. 6.3 Archaeological excavation at Club Atlético (photo by Zarankin, 2003)

The Analysis of Club Atlético's Spatial Organization

It was impossible to find architectural drawings describing the real spatial organization of Club Atlético. It was also impossible to draw them on the basis of the ruins. More than 80% of the building remains unexcavated and it will be very difficult to have it dug as it lies under the highway. As a consequence, we decided to study survivors' testimonies and a drawing they made with the aid of memory[9] (Fig. 6.4, Table 6.3). These records were subsequently compared with the spaces we found during the excavation, showing some remarkable similarities.

The drawing made by Club Atlético survivors was analyzed through a series of architecture and social sciences models, such as Hillier and Hanson's Gamma Model[10] (1984) and Blanton's (1994) indexes. Architects Hillier and Hanson (1984)

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[9] As CONADEP's report points out (1984:60), this procedure was used to reconstruct the structure of other clandestine detention centers: "the bodily memory of prisoners was decisive; how many steps they had to go walk or up when they were taken to the torture room, how many steps where necessary to get to the bathroom, what jolting, turn, or speed defined the vehicle used to take them in or out of the clandestine detention center".

[10] These models were previously applied with success in other kind of buildings (Zarankin 1999, 2002).
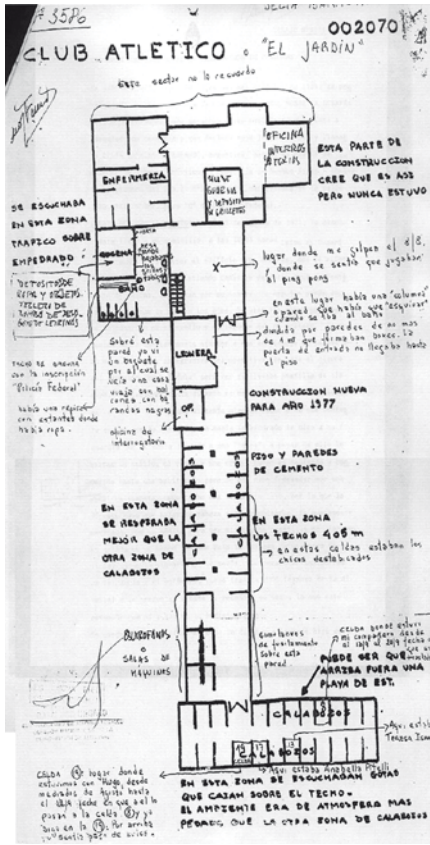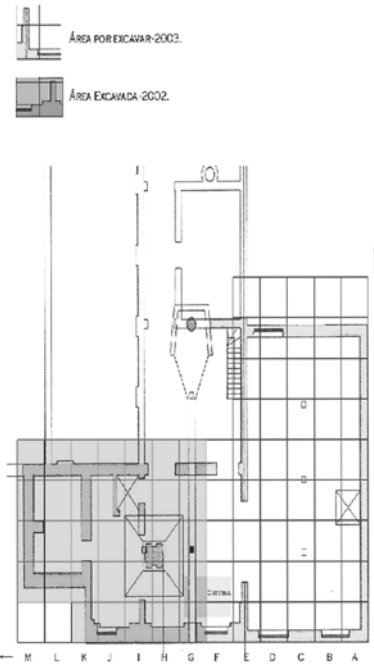
Fig. 6.4 *Left*: Drawing made by Club Atlético survivors (taken from Benítez et al. 2001:10). *Right*: Drawing of the excavated area (taken from Bianchi Villelli and Zarankin 2003b:4)

found that decomposing a building in a series of graphics was useful to examine its spatial organization. Gamma graphics represent the inner structure of a building, which is made up of nodes (spaces) and connections (doors connecting one node to another).

Archaeologist Richard Blanton (1994) created several indexes on the basis of Hillier and Hanson's Gamma Model. In this way, he managed to deepen the analysis of spatial organization. The scale index measures the size of a given structure; the integration index determines the degree of communication and circulation within that building; and the complexity index defines the distribution and isolation of different spaces (Tables 6.4 and 6.5).

A high-scale index determines a high degrre of spatial segmentation. In the case of Club Atlético, the space is divided in such a way (59 nodes) that it increases the isolation among different rooms; for instance, among the prison cells and the torture rooms. This structure reveals that a key aspect of clandestine detention centers was their cellular and panoptical space.

Table 6.3 Some testimonies of Club Atletico survivors

Testimonies	Description
Delia Barrera (Benítez et al. 2001:10)	"The building had two floors. You entered the first one through a glass door. There was an office where you could observe two desks, typewriters, and a telephone…
	The basement had no ventilation or natural light. It was pretty damp and hot. You entered the basement through a narrow staircase which led to a room with a ping-pong table used by repressors. On one side, there was a guards' room, two solitary confinement cells, a torture room, and the "leonera" – a room divided into boxes, with a cement floor, and a one meter high wall.
	The structure was completed by 41 small cells containing cement beds provided with thin foam rubber mattresses and blankets. Doors had a small peephole. On the floor, there were containers filled with bleach where prisoners were supposed to urinate.
	Cars entered through Paseo Colón Avenue. At that moment, neighbors could observe that behind the access gate there was a dark curtain which fell after the cars. Once the prisoners were got out of the cars, they were pushed down the staircase to the basement…"
CONADEP (1984:90)	"First level: glazed tile room, glass doors, a big and a small desk. Each prisoner was identified and given a number there. Concealed access to basement.
	Basement: No ventilation or natural light. Temperature between 40 and 45°C in summer. Very cold in winter. Very damp. Walls and floor oozed water all the time. The staircase took to a room provided with a ping-pong table used by repressors. On one side, there was a small guards' room. Two solitary confinement rooms. One torture room and some infirmary rooms. Kitchen, laundry, showers. The latter had a slit which led to the external surface – where the guards watched women's bottoms. Another section was used to store the booty.
	The "leonera" had partition walls which divided the room into 1.60×0.60 m boxes. Eighteen cells on one side and 23 on the other. Each cell was 2×1.60 m, and between 3 and 3.50 m tall. Three torture rooms, each of them contain a heavy metallic table. Blood and sweat stained small foam rubber mattresses."

The integration index (1[11]), as well as the complexity indexes (112 and 4.5[12]), indicate that Club Atlético was made up of nondistributive and highly isolated spaces. This kind of structure is typical of disciplinary and authoritarian institutions, where the spaces for circulation are controlled and regulated.

Based on these results, it is possible to state that in Club Atlético the space was structured around the functionality and maximization of repression. Room

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[11] It is important to note that although a service elevator reached the basement, it was out of order when the building operated as a clandestine detention center. As a consequence, access to the basement was limited to the staircase.

[12] In this case, 4.5 stands for the average number of spaces needed to gain access to the top floor – which additionally had four or more spaces which separated the staircase from the street.

Table 6.4 Table for estimating Blanton's indexes

Node	Connections	Ext. dist.	Node	Connections	Ext. dist.
1	1	4	31	1	4
2	3	3	32	1	5
3	3	2	33	1	5
4	1	3	34	1	5
5	1	4	35	5	4
6	1	2	36	24	5
7	1	3	37	1	6
8	2	2	38	1	6
9	5	1	39	1	6
10	1	3	40	1	6
11	4	2	41	1	6
12	1	3	42	1	6
13	20	3	43	1	6
14	1	4	44	1	6
15	1	4	45	1	6
16	1	4	46	1	6
17	1	4	47	1	6
18	1	4	48	1	6
19	1	4	49	1	6
20	1	4	50	1	6
21	1	4	51	1	6
22	1	4	52	1	6
23	1	4	53	1	6
24	1	4	54	1	6
25	1	4	55	1	6
26	1	4	56	1	6
27	1	4	57	1	6
28	1	4	58	1	6
29	1	4	59	1	6
30	1	4	Total	117	269

Table 6.5 Blanton's indexes

Scale index: 59	Integration index: 59/59=1	Complexity index A: 117 Complexity index B: 269/59=4.5

isolation and restricted and controlled circulation were the basis of this building.

Club Atlético could be divided into two different areas (Fig. 6.5). The top floor, which served as an administrative center, covered approximately 20% of the surface. The basement contained the prison cells and the torture rooms. This organization divided and classified people within the building, defining their circulation and permanence in different spaces.

Torture rooms were strategically placed in the middle of the prison cells. As a consequence, victims could be easily taken there, and their cries could be heard by the rest of the prisoners.
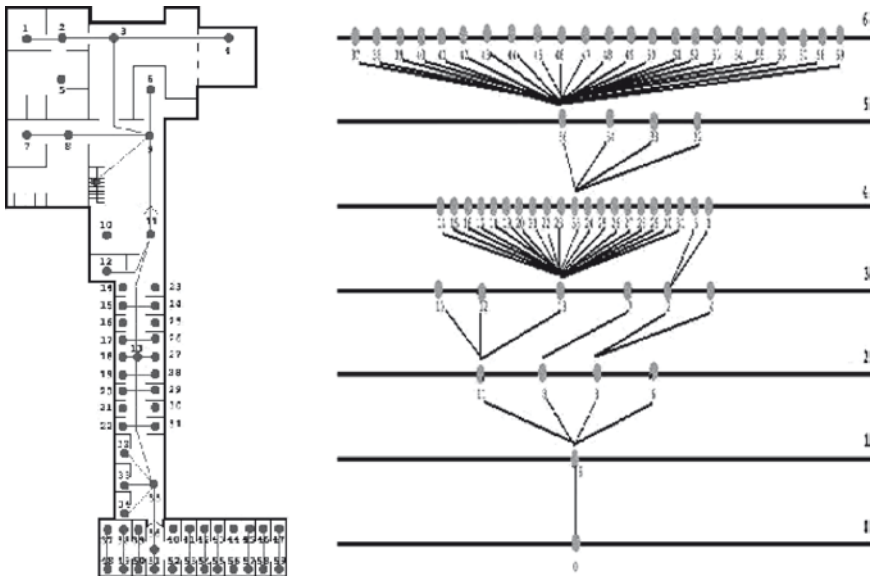
Fig. 6.5 Sketch of Club Atlético's spatial organization (sketch by Zarankin and Salerno 2004)

There is a strong symbolic aspect attached to Club Atlético's spatial organization. The amount of suffering increased as people walked inside the building. As prisoners were hooded, they needed to perceive the surrounding space through other senses than sight. The smell of bodies and fluids, humidity and lack of fresh air, heat and cold, the cries of other prisoners, and the hardness of walls and floors were some of the things they could feel in the basement. Club Atlético was perceived through touch, sound and smell. The torture room was the heart of the building, and it represented the materialization of sadism used to construct clandestine detention centers.

As prisoners were tied (handcuffed or leg-ironed to walls and floors), isolated, and deprived of their names, their bodies gradually became part of Club Atlético's structure. Clandestine detention centers absorbed people's essence, transforming them into simple objects upon which power could operate. Social existence depends on interaction; that is to say, on the possibility of recognizing other people and being recognized by them. Clandestine detention centers attempted to destroy prisoners' identities denying the social components of their life. This process led to the construction of what we might call "non-people": people who gradually disappeared from a symbolical and physical perspective.

Final Remarks

"Monsters exist, but they are too few in numbers to be truly dangerous; those who are dangerous are the ordinary men" (Levi 1988:14).

Our interest in the architecture and spatial organization of clandestine detention centers stems from the idea that buildings materialize ideologies. The transformation of ideology into something material is a necessary condition for its existence. It is well established that material culture communicates ideological values and meanings through nonverbal discourses (Fletcher 1989; Monks 1992). Our bodies have the ability to unconsciously decode material discourses as they move within a given structure (Markus 1993a, b; Grahame 1995, 2000; Zarankin 1999, 2002).

In the case of clandestine detention centers, architecture and spatial organization represent alternative languages which communicate messages in a much more concrete way than spoken word. As the discipline is focused on the study of material culture, archaeology gives us the opportunity to discuss some of the discourses and ideologies contained in the walls of clandestine detention centers (Leone 1977, 1984; Funari 1988; Andrade Lima 1999).

Clandestine detention centers are at the same time power devices aimed at destroying prisoners' bodies and souls, and material metaphors codifying authoritarian discourses. Their analysis reveals a systematic plan of the military government to annihilate all dissidence.

The study of the materiality of clandestine detention centers is a relevant tool to construct the neglected history of a repressive device conceived to "disappear" people. As George Bataille (1992:117) points out: "Architecture is the expression of the very being of societies." It is by understanding clandestine detention centers as "monuments" of military dictatorship, that we will learn more about the perversion and sadism of the people and ideologies behind the system.

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Chapter 7
"They Must Have Done Something Wrong…": The Construction of "Subversion" as a Social Category and the Reshaping of Identities Through Body and Dress (Argentina, 1976–1983)

Melisa A. Salerno

Introduction

–What was the story?
–Tenório came to play with Toquinho and Vinicius at the Gran Rex (…) They gave two shows, on March 17 and 18, two days before the coup. After the second performance, Tenório went back to the hotel (…) At 2:00 AM [he] went for a sandwich, and he was never seen again (…)
–Does anybody know what happened?
–There were many theories. The more solid testimony was given by Argentinean Corporal Claudio Vallejos 10 years later. (…) Tenório had been kidnapped because of his appearance. He had long hair, and he wore a beard and glasses. He was the portrait of a leftist intellectual.
(Dialog between reporter Sandra de la Fuente and movie maker Fernando Trueba, who is currently making a film on the life and death of Brazilian piano player Tenório Cerqueira at the hands of Argentinean military forces – De la Fuente 2006, the translation is mine).

The story of what happened to Tenório provides an appropriate starting point for exploring some of the strategies used by the most recent military government in Argentina (1976–1983) to define and subsequently reshape "subversion" as a social category. Here I will focus on military strategies addressing the materiality of bodies and dress during the stigmatization and disappearance of political opponents. In the first part of the chapter, I will analyze dominant discourses on the

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physical appearance of persecuted people. Based on official documentary sources, I will discuss the symbolic representations with which these persons were negatively associated and explicitly marginalized. In the second part of the chapter, I will examine the extreme practices that military forces imposed on prisoners in clandestine detentions centers. Survivors' testimonies and fragments of clothing recovered by the Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team provide the evidence needed to achieve this goal. This research attempts to broaden the understanding of repression in Argentina and other Latin American countries, stressing the contribution that the study of corporeality and material culture could make to the subject.

"Everyone in His/Her Place": Social Categorization and Military Dictatorship in Argentina

Official discourses use categorization as a means to produce and reproduce social differences. Categories do not exactly match what people think of themselves; that is to say, they do not involve self-determination, but rather the imposition of social identities (Jenkins 1996; Senatore 2004). Therefore, categorization might be understood as a strategy of domination. Domination represents the ability some people have to impose their will on others (Frazer 1999). Following De Certeau (1980), strategies presuppose a place that some people define as their own. From that position, they manage the relationship with other subjects, providing the mechanisms necessary to guarantee the reproduction of a given social order (Zarankin and Senatore 2005).

Many scholars stress the effort people make to break the conditions imposed by other social actors. Resistance can be defined as a conscious or an unconscious ability to face domination (Frazer 1999). Some researchers believe that power is not an exclusive possession of people in positions of privilege. As Foucault (1980) points out, power has the potential to circulate among different actors, creating a dynamic network of multi-directional relationships. As a consequence, the analysis of power needs to evaluate the role played by people in different social settings. Nowadays, some researchers explain the difficulties of restricting the study of social life to the analysis of domination and resistance. According to them, this situation usually leads to the construction of simplified views of politics and society (Hutson 2002).

I think the concepts of domination and resistance still prove to be useful. However, it is completely relevant to justify their use. The analysis of the historical circumstances surrounding the establishment of military dictatorship in Argentina needs to consider how power relationships were produced and reproduced. Here I will study some of the mechanisms used by military forces to exercise control over social reality. With this objective in mind, I will discuss the construction of social categories in Argentina between 1976 and 1983. I will particularly focus on the

definition of persecuted people as "subversive," and the role played by physical appearance in the stigmatization of political opponents. The discussion, rejection and reinterpretation of official discourses is out of the scope of this chapter, but it will be studied in future works.

This research embraces and combines different theoretical frameworks under the premise of an "active appropriation." According to Bourdieu (1989:64), the latter involves the extrapolation of ideas, and their subsequent reactivation and re-signification in the context of a new investigation. This procedure allows researchers to stress similarities among different theoretical models, thus providing more flexibility to approach different subjects (Zarankin 2002). Despite the heterogenous character of the concepts used throughout the chapter, I would like to point out that most of them are consistent with a postmodernist stance in social sciences; that is to say, with a series of theoretical approaches rejecting positivism, objectivism and neutrality.

Categorization has an ideological, disciplinary, economical and effective character. I will try to delve into this statement, exploring some of its most outstanding features during the recent military government in Argentina.

Categorization and Ideology

Some scholars believe that culture represents a cognitive system which creates order through evaluation and classification. Within this framework, ideology refers to the multiple connections between consciousness and power. Therefore, it is thought to mask or naturalize the character of social relationships, reproducing inequality (Beaudry et al. 1991; McGuire 1988). Dominant ideologies respond to ideas elaborated by privileged groups in established hierarchies. During the most recent military dictatorship in Argentina, these groups included the military forces and other people (mainly industrial, financial and political groups) who supported their presence. In general, social categorization consolidated and mystified their interests. The same happened in other Latin American countries.

Following Leone (1984, 1988), categories created by dominant ideologies need to strengthen themselves when the order they propose is at risk of losing ground. Argentinean military forces took power in 1976, after a coup d'etat. From that moment on, they sought legitimacy through the construction of several discourses. The latter encouraged the development of a new social order, and their repetition promoted the unconscious reproduction of social distinctions. Military discourses particularly referred to history, nature and religion; that is to say, unquestionable aspects of social life. Next, I will describe some of its features.

The most recent military government created a new way to divide historical time. By the same token, it defined itself as "National Reorganization Process." This denomination proved effective, as it is still used in Argentinean history books – specially in school books. In general, the term "reorganization" intended to mark a historical turning point. Chaos and violence generated by guerrilla groups were connected to the recent past. In this context, the military forces took on the responsibility

of restoring harmony and peace (Junta Militar 1980). That is why they glorified their action in the distant past, stressing their role as liberators and guardians of the interests of the nation.

Dominant discourses metaphorically referred to the natural world and the possibilities to control it through medical procedures. These discourses frequently stated that the "social body" was ill. Based on the Christian doctrine, security forces believed that the social world was suffering a deep ethical and moral crisis. Therefore, the military government stated that their goal was to return health and faith to the nation (Junta Militar 1980). I will engage on this particular issue later (see "'The Witch Hunt': Subversion as a Social Stigma" below). Here I find it relevant to stress that the above-mentioned discourses were key to the construction of social categories.

In short, official discourses attempted to divide Argentineans. In the first place, they intended to distinguish military forces from ordinary citizens. Military forces were in charge of the "National Reorganization Process." That was the reason why they were the maximum authority of the nation. In the second place, official discourses divided citizens into two major groups. "Good" citizens wanted to collaborate with the military forces, and they were respectful of order and morality. "Subversive" citizens threatened the reconstruction of the "greatness of the republic" (Junta Militar 1980), expressing ideological and practical opposition to the rules and living conditions in the country.

Categorization and Discipline

The construction of social categories serves the disciplinary interests of domination. Discipline seeks to exercise control over meaning production. For this reason, it divides individuals into different groups and intends to break their "dangerous" communications (Hutson 2002). Segmentation offers the opportunity to know in advance the practices expected for each individual at each moment. According to Foucault (1977), legibility and panoptism encourage vigilance on the part of the system, as well as self-vigilance on the part of the subjects. Material culture and bodily practices play an active role in the development of control strategies. The creation of work uniforms represents a clear example of these circumstances (Salerno 2006a). The physical appearance expected for each social category during the recent military government – specially, the so-called "subversive" citizens – is of particular interest in this study.

Categorization and Effectiveness

Social categories have an effective character. This is the reason why they are capable of shaping people's identities. On the one hand, social categories are supported

by state powers. As a consequence, their use is frequently guaranteed by repression and propaganda. On the other hand, discourses have a "constitutive dimension" that produces the existence of social reality. According to Hutson (2002), words transform people's representations and self-representation, creating new identities. Material culture and bodily practices reinforce the acts of speech inscribed on things and bodies. This possibility was considered by the most recent military dictatorship. The expected materialization of social categories in physical appearance was particularly connected to this strategy.

Categorization and the Economy of Social Interaction

Finally, it is relevant to mention that social categories have an economical character. They use stereotypes with the aim of diminishing the efforts of evaluating and classifying individuals in social interaction. The construction of stereotypes is associated with the selection of a series of attributes which apparently define the members of a category – leaving aside some other characteristics. This process reduces the possibility of distinguishing diversity within a class. In short, the construction of stereotypes depends on the generalization of specific characteristics to all the members of a given group – regardless of the exceptions identified (Archenti 2005). Material culture and bodily practices are frequently used in the creation of stereotypes, as they are part and parcel of social interaction.

"The Witch Hunt": "Subversion" as Social Stigma

"First, we will kill the subversives; then, their collaborators; later, their sympathizers; soon after, those who remain indifferent; and finally, the undecided" (General Ibérico Saint Jean, Buenos Aires' Governor, May 1977 – Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología 2006, the translation is mine).

Once the process of categorization was set in motion, one of the main goals of the military regime was to identify and punish the individuals suspected of being "subversive." The *Anexo 15 del Plan del Ejército* (Ejército Argentino 2006) suggested that the government should develop psychological actions to encourage the popular acceptance of military missions. Therefore, military forces applied "techniques of information" and "indoctrination" to spread their values and stress the negative consequences of opposing them. These strategies frequently made people reject and denounce alternative ways of action and thinking. The military forces finally led a "witch hunt," in which everyone – because of fear or his/her own conviction – kept an eye on himself/herself and the others. This situation contributed to the development of feelings of distrust, reinforcing the power of the military government. The repeated phrase "They must have done something wrong…" accounts for the impunity that repressive forces enjoyed during the period. The persecution of

individuals classified as "subversive" demanded their previos stigmatization. For Goffman (2003), stigmas are a series of "undesirable" attributes which discredit people in social interaction. Stigmas turn people into weak, dangerous, and evil beings, usually distant from human condition. According to Goffman, not all attributes perceived as negative are subject to discussion, but only those incompatible with the ways we expect someone to behave. The Greek term "stigma" referred to: "…bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor – a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places" (Goffman 2003:11). Next, I will explore some of the signs that – according to the military government– described the "negative bodies" of persecuted people (Kaplan 2006).

Goffman (2003) said that stigmas included individuals' defects of personality, such as domineering passions, and false or rigid beliefs. During the recent military government in Argentina, "subversion" was considered to be part of these defects, as it represented an "extreme" political behavior. "Subversion" was associated with the "international terrorism" promoted by the "faithless and antichristian Marxism" (Asociación Patriótica Argentina 1978). It was also thought to be a disease which affected people's bodies (Schindel 2000). Several cultures understand the human body as a suitable metaphor for the social world (Tilley 1999). Modern society is not an exception. The Argentinean military government considered that the social body was composed of different organs, represented by different social groups. If one of those organs showed signs of malfunction, then the whole social body could become sick.

Several discourses refer to the above-mentioned circumstances: "On March 24, 1976, you were relieved: you knew that order had returned [to Argentina]. You knew that the sick social body was about to receive a saving blood transfusion. All right. But this optimism – at least, in excess – was also dangerous. A seriously ill body needed time to recover. Meanwhile, the bacillus continued their destruction" (Gente 1977 in SUTEBA 2004, the translation is mine); "Without a doubt, in March 1976 the country was adrift, lacking [political] leadership (…) The faceless enemy had infiltrated society. Where were the antibodies? Eventually, where they were [supposed to be]: in the Security and Army Forces, and the consciousness of a huge number of Argentineans who had no means of defense, but trusted them. This is said without messianisms and without considering them the 'only ones.' However, as part of a sick and paralyzed society, where antigens outnumbered antibodies, they had to face reality" (Asociación Unidad Argentina 1998, the translation is mine).

The information provided during social interaction is reflexive and embodied (Goffman 2003); that is to say, it is transmitted by the same person it refers to and it depends on the use of regular and repetitive symbols expressed in bodily practices. As any other disease, "subversion" was supposed to have specific symptoms. Most of them apparently affected people's appearance. According to Butler (1990, 2002), it is impossible to conceive the existence of a presocial body, distinct from cultural gestures and discourses. As a consequence, bodies are constituted by their stylization (Alberti 1999). Dress can be defined as a series of bodily practices

(Entwsitle 2000; Salerno 2006a) materialized in modifications and supplements (Eicher and Barnes 1994; Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1994; Eicher and Sumberg 1995). At present, some scholars claim that dress is a powerful system (Squicciarino 1990; Davis 1992; Barnard 1996; Crane 2000; Entwsitle 2000) which employs sensory symbols to communicate with others (Eicher and Barnes 1994; Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1994; Eicher and Sumberg 1995).

Goffman (2003) stressed that stigmatized people could be analytically divided into "discredited" and "discreditable" individuals. In the first case, their condition was previously known or easily detected; in the second case, it was unknown or difficult to perceive. In the early days of the regime, military forces spread the idea that the members of left-wing political organizations could be clearly identified by their appearance. "Museums of subversion" made use of this idea. There, Argentinean citizens were taught several strategies to recognize their "enemies," exaggerating and caricaturing their bodily image (Pigna and Seoane 2006). In general, "subversive" mannequins wore uniforms, and carried weapons and political pamphlets. It is rather unbelievable that persecuted people would have dressed like this –doing so would have rendered them identifiable and punishable targets.

Uniforms were expected to point out general and particular characteristics of "subversive" organizations. According to official discourses, uniforms were necessary to distinguish "subversive" individuals from the rest of the population. Military style clothing –including combat dress, boots, and badges – made "good" citizens think "subversive" people were similarly organized to the army forces. As a consequence, they were considered to be part of a "fair war" which should not be confused with a "dirty" one; that is to say, with the intervention of state terrorism against an unprotected population. Military discourses also stressed that uniforms were key to distinguish among left-wing parties – such as Montoneros, ERP and others. In the same way, badges were considered useful to identify ranks and hierarchies within political organizations. The recognition of these traits was apparently relevant to classify groups and individuals responsible for "subversion."

A short time later, the government understood that "subversion" did not exclusively involve "guerrilla" men/women who openly participated in political organizations. On the contrary, it also included seemingly harmless people – such as students, teachers and priests. Thus, "subversion" stopped being represented as an easily identifiable enemy. In 1977, the political advertisement "Do you know where your son is now?" (Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología 2006, the translation is mine) intended to warn families against the proximity of "subversion." After the coup, some guerrilla organizations decided to withdraw from public life. Maybe, their attempts to hide from the military government spread the idea that "subversion" could be anywhere. Military forces' attempts to justify their presence in the political arena added another factor. Whatever the reasons, official discourses started to recognize "subversion" in informal dress – clearly distant from military style clothing.

According to the military forces, "subversive" people frequently looked untidy and dirty. From the eighteenth century onward, tidiness and cleanliness became

structuring principles of the dominant discourses of order and hygiene promoted by capitalism (Salerno 2006a). Several works discuss the relationship between these discourses, and the reproduction and disciplining of the workforce (Armus 2000; Norverto 2004; Vigarello 2005). In some cases, the appearance of persecuted people could have been connected to living conditions in clandestinity. The following testimony provides relevant information on the subject: "When I moved to that apartment (…) I had a jacket, a pair of pants, and two shirts. Furthermore, half of these clothes were not mine: I had borrowed them from my partners. When [military forces] broke into your house, it was no longer safe to go back for your stuff" (Actis et al. 2006:42, the translation is mine).

It is possible to understand other aspects of persecuted people's appearance through several testimonies. In *Mujeres Guerrilleras*, a woman who survived repression described her partners' dress, while making reference to the appearance of her captors: "Finally, they stopped torturing me (…) They made me take a seat, and they took my blindfold off (…) They were very young. They wore jeans, checked shirts and leather boots; they had long hair and they even smoke Parissiens, my favorite cigarette brand! I could not believe my eyes. Except for two or three who wore suits the rest of them looked similar to my partners. 'Yes, we usually try to go unnoticed' they admitted when I asked them [about their appearance]" (Diana 2006:150, the translation is mine).

Military forces' contempt for certain dressing practices was expressed in several circumstances. *Confirmado Magazine* mentions an interesting case: "Three women were arrested for wearing excessively short skirts. One of them got her knees dirty at the police station. A dozen of long-haired men had their heads shaved in Lanús. They were fined two hundred pesos for the procedure" (Confirmado 1966 in Caraballo et al. 1999:23, the translation is mine). These statements were made during Onganía's dictatorship (1966–1973). Nevertheless, they were still valid one decade later. It is worth mentioning that during the "National Reorganization Process" schools punished students who did not observe "accepted" rules of appearance – including uniforms and short haircuts (Garaño and Pertot 2002). Similarly, dress transgressions were responded with repression. The story of Tenório Cerqueira, presented at the beginning of this chapter, provides a clear example of these circumstances. In short, the Brazilian musician was arrested and murdered "…because of his appearance. He had long hair, and he wore a beard and glasses. He was the portrait of a leftist intellectual" (De la Fuente 2006, the translation is mine).

Dressing practices rejected by official discourses were frequently associated with the "subversive" intention of changing social order. Informal appearance – as that of intellectual and young people – was sometimes connected to hippiesm. This movement was largely an expression of resistance to dominant traditions, including capitalist state policies. During the 1960s and most of the 1970s, jeans, long hair, beards and bright colors were symbols of nonconformity. On the one hand, jeans made it possible to break modern gender and class distinctions. On the other, they were not as influenced by fashion changes and consumerism as other garments. Long hair and beards were symbolically connected to the loss of discipline.

Meanwhile, bright colors represented – beyond a simple allegory to psychedelia – a way of escaping fashion trends. The Argentinean hippy style included garments and adornments manufactured with indigenous techniques (Saulquin 2006). The use of these objects stood for the rejection of cultural homogenization and the defense of local traditions.

Summing up, in the first part of this chapter I have intended to discuss some of the ways in which dominant discourses constructed social categories during the most recent dictatorship in Argentina. I have also pointed out how the materiality of bodies and dress was particularly used to create social stereotypes and stigmas. Next, I will explore several strategies used by military forces to transform the social categories they had previously intended to define.

Rituals of Oblivion: The Reshaping of Identities

> "They are not here, they do not exist, they have disappeared" (Lieutenant-General Jorge Rafael Videla. President of Argentina. December, 1977 – Página 12 2006, the translation is mine)

According to Augé (1998), oblivion defines several ritual events in indigenous and non-indigenous communities (including our own society). Transition rituals attempt to create changes in social categorization (Turner 1988) and the perception of subjectivity. Despite the obvious differences, the kidnapping of people during the most recent dictatorship in Argentina had some similarities to these rituals. Repressive strategies intended to erase people's past – as it was supposedly connected to "subversion." During kidnapping/detention, the condition of prisoners could no longer be grasped by the ordinary categories of the social structure. Death perpetuated this situation. Meanwhile, the very few prisoners who entered what military authorities called the "recovery process" were expected to reborn as "useful citizens." In this section, I will analyze the extreme practices that military agents imposed on prisoners' bodies with the aim of reshaping their identities. I will particularly discuss the embodiment of different expressions of material culture, considering the meanings and experiences associated with them.

Kidnapping

During the recent military government, political repression was closely connected to the kidnapping of people suspected of being dangerous. Kidnapping usually took place at the victim's house. It was carried out by an armed group – frequently called *patota* or *grupo de tareas* (gang or task group) – who identified themselves as military agents. Although they were part of the security forces, the kidnappers did not wear uniforms: "…several men broke into my house dressing civilian clothes;

they were heavily armed and they told us they served the Navy and the Federal Police…" (CONADEP 2005:21, the translation is mine).

Civilian clothes were "misidentifying" symbols. According to Goffman, these symbols are responsible for breaking the coherence between "virtual social identity" – the categories and attributes we expect to find in people – and "real social identity" – the categories and attributes people actually possess. For this reason, witnesses (such as neighbors and relatives) had difficulties identifying kidnappers as part of the military forces. However, on several occasions, some details suggested that their casual appearance was just a disguise: "30 people in civilian clothes went down, although they wore military shirts under their jackets" (CONADEP 2005:23, the translation is mine).

Western society considers sight to be our most treasured sense, as it allows us to know the world around and the people we interact with. During kidnapping, victims were deprived of their vision. The following words give us an example of this situation: "She was arrested at the hall, and we do not know what they did to her, as long as my other daughter was being interrogated with her eyes covered in the dining room, and my wife was blindfolded in the bedroom" (CONADEP 2005:21, the translation is mine). In general, blindfolds were aimed at preventing the identification of kidnappers and places of detention/torture.

Tabiques were blindfolds or simple pieces of fabric used to cover people's eyes. During kidnapping, they were frequently made of victims' clothes, such as shirts and sweaters. Something similar happened with the bonds, which were used to tie people's hands and feet. Some references are worth citing: "He tried to take his ID with him, but they told him he would not need it where he was going. Instead, they told him to take a sweater, which was used to cover his head when he got into the car…" (CONADEP 2005:381, the translation is mine); "The kidnappers forced me into a van and hooded me; I was half-dressed and my hands were tied with my own belt" (CONADEP 2005:194, the translation is mine). In a few words, victims' clothes were used as torture instruments which finally turned against them. For military agents, "subversion" and its associated bodily practices were responsible for subjecting people to different forms of punishment, only mediated by torturers' actions. In this way, victims were found guilty of their own pain.

Detention

Although they did not have a trial, prisoners were sent to clandestine detention centers where they were held captive for days, months or even years. I think it is relevant to study some of the circumstances in which repression affected prisoners' bodies, taking into account the presence/absence of certain expressions of material culture: nudity, torture and dress changes. These moments were intimately connected. Nevertheless, I will distinguish among them with the aim of simplifying the description.

Nakedness

Nakedness was widely used as a means of torture. Survivors' testimonies usually repeat phrases like this: "I think I did not have enough time to put my feet on the ground that I was forced into a building, a house, at that moment I did not know. Once inside, they asked me to undress" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006, the translation is mine). Enforced nakedness was intended to achieve several interconnected goals. Western society frequently denies the social condition of naked bodies. In this specific context, dress creates a symbolic line between culture and nature. Therefore, naked bodies can be understood as entities close to animals. Under these circumstances, when military agents asked prisoners to undress, they wanted them to know that all their rights as human beings – for instance, the right to freedom and life – were about to expire.

The identity of naked bodies is sometimes denied, as it does not respond to social categories. As mentioned above, dress uses sensory symbols to communicate who we are, what we do, and who we pretend to be. The absence of dress breaks the communication code, offering the possibility to create new interpretations on the meanings of bodies. For the military forces, when prisoners were naked they lost every trace of their "subversive" character. In this way, they became subjected individuals. Naked bodies made it difficult for victims to recognize themselves and others. In Western society, individual identities reside in bodies (Tarlow 2002). If bodies suffered significant changes in clandestine detention centers, then prisoners' identities and the relationships among them could blur or "disappear."

The absence of dress can have a major impact on the psychological constitution of individuals. Some scholars have traditionally studied the relationship between dress and modesty – a culturally heterogenous notion (Ellis 1964; Flügel 1964; Hegel 1989). Modern society tolerates nakedness on limited occasions – mainly, in the context of intimate and private relationships (Rella 2004). Out of these circumstances, it is frequently condemned. In clandestine detention centers, nakedness was intended to break the boundaries of modesty, fostering feelings of humiliation among the victims. These words have a clear message: "They asked him about his ideology; he answered he had none; and every time he gave a negative answer they made him take off one of his clothes, until he was completely naked" (CONADEP 2005:33 the translations is mine); "Every time we took a shower, guards stayed at the entrance, making jokes or comments about our bodies" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006, the translation is mine).

Military forces attempted to have total control over prisoners' bodies. They were in charge of designing the circumstances surrounding their captivity and death. Nakedness was aimed at breaking resistance. Without their clothes on, prisoners could not use them as a direct or indirect means for suicide. The following testimonies are shocking: "Liliana—. The first days, I thought I could commit suicide (…) Miriam—. What did you imagine? Liliana—. That I put a spoon in my throat, that I choked with a piece of fabric, that I used my dress to hang myself" (Actis et al. 2006:49, the translations is mine); "La Gabi tried to commit suicide three times

with three different [cyanide] pills (…) She had hidden two pills (…) [One of them] was in her bra (…) She did not give them time to undress her" (Actis et al. 2006:53, the translations is mine).

Some researchers claim that dress – specially, clothing – serves a function of protection (Ellis 1964; Flügel 1964; Hegel 1989). From this perspective, it represents a nexus between the naked body and the environment. In clandestine detention centers, the absence of dress facilitated torture. During interrogation, military agents tried to obtain information on prisoners' political affiliation. Naked bodies had no protection. They experienced the action of different elements with greater degrees of intensity – including the *picana* (a mechanical device used to give electro-shocks) and cold weather. Survivors' testimonies refer to these circumstances: "…they dragged me, pushed me, and took off my clothes. They strapped me to a table. The interrogation began. They used a *picana* I do not know for how long (…) Temperature started to go down, and my weight and defenses too. I stayed for several days wearing only a pair of pants. Every time I could, I asked them for a shirt or a t-shirt, something to cover my body" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006, the translation is mine).

Torture

This chapter is not aimed at discussing the diversity of torture procedures used by military forces in clandestine detention centers. Nevertheless, I think it is relevant to deepen the understanding of the multiple relationships among torture, body and identity. Western civilization considers bodies to be alienated from our real selves. Therefore, we are supposed to fight our physical condition in order to control it (Becker 1995; Le Breton 1995). Some examples of these circumstances can be found in contemporary practices of dress, nutrition, fitness and hygiene. Cultural representations define health as a victory, expressed in the lack of perception or the ritualized absence of the body (Le Breton 1995). Meanwhile, sickness represents a state of disorder that increases alienation, isolating the individual in an experience hardly understood by others (Becker 1995). For military agents, the experience of pain made prisoners aware of their own "sick" body. Based on different aspects of the Christian doctrine, military forces attempted to purify "subversion" through punishment. For them, it was the only way to heal prisoners' minds and bodies.

Torture changes physical constitution, leaving perceptible traces on people's bodies – scars and burns, among others. During the most recent military government, bodily marks could have extended the stigmatization of former prisoners outside clandestine detention centers. It is worthwhile to remember the contempt some people felt for Nazi prisoners' tattoos. Bodily marks produced during torture sessions constitute "mnemonic devices" that stimulate the evocation of the past in the present (Kwint 1999; Acuto and Gifford 2005). According to Turner (in Potteiger and Purinton 1998), narrative is a form of knowledge acquired through lived experience. If experience has a somatic dimension, then it is possible to state that life histories can be inscribed on people's bodies. Bodily changes – usually

experienced when we grow up and get older – give us a clear sense of time. With the creation of new bodily marks, military forces intended to control survivors' (as well as society's) histories.

I would like to add that torture did not only have a physical dimension, but a psychological one too. In this way, the suffering of one person could be projected onto others. On some occasions, prisoners were forced to attend the interrogation of their own relatives or friends. On many others, they were forced to recognize their clothes while being tortured. Military agents attempted to tell prisoners that the people they loved were in danger, and that the only way to save them was to obey. The following testimony provides relevant information: "I had previously been threatened: 'if you open your mouth, your son will pay, and they showed me one of his jackets" (CONADEP 2005:211, the translation is mine). Some societies believe that people's identities extend beyond the physical boundaries of the body, including the community, the environment and some material belongings (Becker 1995). Some elements of this belief can also be found among us. As mentioned above, there is a close connection between dress and identity. For this reason, we often feel that the clothes we wear constitute an extension of ourselves.

Dress Changes

Military forces' attempts to destroy people's identities were essential to discourage any form of resistance. Some testimonies point out that in clandestine detention centers prisoners were given a code which replaced their real name: "I was informed that I had a new name (a letter and two numbers), which I think was G-61. I was warned that I would be punished if I answered to another name (my own) when I was asked" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006, the translation is mine). Countless testimonies state that – after being naked and tortured – prisoners were forced to dress other clothes but their own. These garments were obtained from other prisoners or the looting of domestic units: "I was given a pant and a pullover (…) I realized some of the prisoners were wearing the clothes I had in my car" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006, the translation is mine).

On limited occasions, prisoners received uniforms similar to those worn in state prisons. The following is a transcript of a survivor's testimony: "Once in the 'cuchas', the kidnappers told us to take off our clothes and wear some brown uniforms" (Zarankin and Niro this volume). One of the purposes of wearing uniforms is to suppress individual identities (Anta 2004). In this way, different bodies can fuse into a single and undifferentiated appearance. Military forces opposed "subversive ideas" which encouraged collective work and threatened the "normal" development of individuals. For this reason, the use of uniforms was not a common option at clandestine detention centers.

Dress changes were necessary to achieve several goals. The use of clothes different from their own made prisoners drift apart from the objects which reminded them of their life prior to captivity. As a consequence, they became tied to the absolute presence of horror and pain. Dress transformations – as well as the

consequences of torture – contributed to alter prisoners' bodily perception. *Ese Infierno* presents a revealing testimony: "…they gave me a pair of pants and a t-shirt in order to change clothes (…) When I put on [these garments], I realized they were pretty tight and, for the sake of…protection…, I asked them to give me something larger. From that moment on, I disguised myself" (Actis et al. 2006:121–122, the translation is mine). The use of new clothes prevented prisoners from identifying other detainees at clandestine detention centers. In this way, it was difficult for survivors or military agents to talk about the victims of political repression.

Prisoners' outfit included blindfolds, hoods and chains. As mentioned above, prisoners were taken blindfolded or tied with their own clothes to secret locations. Later, these artifacts were replaced by others especially designed by the military forces. Miriam Lewin remembers: "…the first night [at the ESMA], I was still wearing the blindfold I was given by the Air Force, and a hood over my head. My partners laughed at me, and they called it 'the Air Force blindfold'. It was completely different: it was a 3-centimeter-thick layer of foam, wrapped in denim, with an angle cut to make space for the nose. The blindfold I wore at the ESMA was similar to the ones you use to sleep on an airplane, with a similar shape, though manufactured with black cloth" (Actis et al. 2006:76, the translation is mine).

The main goal of blindfolds and hoods was to suppress the sense of sight. In Western society, vision has been historically connected to contemplation and abstraction. From this perspective, it represents a necessary tool to gain knowledge through experience. If knowledge is power, then the gaze is part of its dynamic. Those who play the role of watching have the opportunity to exercise control over objects which can – in capitalist terms – be possessed (Thomas 2001). Blindfolds and hoods transformed prisoners into passive and observed entities. As a consequence, they were denied the possibility of recognizing the ways in which they could be attacked. A survivor states: "When I was hooded I became completely aware that contact with the outer world does not exist. Nobody protects you, loneliness is complete. The feelings of vulnerability, isolation and fear are pretty difficult to describe. Not being able to see undermines morality, diminishes resistance" (CONADEP 2005:60, the translation is mine).

Being blindfolded and hooded, prisoners had to develop other senses – usually considered "servile and animal" by western philosophical tradition (Stewart 1999) – to identify moments of tension and calm. Former prisoners stress: "We heard sounds, steps, gun noises, and when they opened the gate we prepared for execution. Military boots went round and round" (CONADEP 2005:60, the translation is mine). In the first place, blindfolds and hoods prevented former prisoners from reporting military agents. In the second place, they were used to change prisoners' identities. Finally, they were torture instruments which could hurt the eyes.

Chains – as well as blindfolds and hoods – limited prisoners' movements. This caused a significant restructuration of their motor practices. It is possible to point out that "in-bodied" material culture modifies people's psyche through experience. For this reason, it is important in the construction of new subjectivities (Warnier 2001;

Phillips 2002). These ideas are clearly explained by the following testimony: "Munú – The goal of handcuffs, ankle shackles and hoods was not to prevent us from escaping. From that place, you could not escape (…) Cristina – Having your feet tied it was difficult to walk (…) your steps had to be necessarily short, you were not free to move. This also made it possible for them to take you like a package. Munú – I remember they shouted: 'There goes a package!' And the package was one of us who was taken from one place to another" (Actis et al. 2006:78, the translation is mine).

Recovery Process

At the end of the military dictatorship, some clandestine detention centers – such as the ESMA institutionalized the "recovery process." The latter was aimed at transforming some prisoners into "useful citizens." Thus, they were required to collaborate in different activities at clandestine detention centers (including maintenance and intelligence). In exchange for their services, they were promised an immediate improvement in their living conditions and a future possibility of release. Prisoners participating in the "recovery process" had to show – especially in the case of women – significant changes in their appearance. In general, they were asked to abandon the dressing practices which military forces associated with "subversion." Military agents and other prisoners supplied everything needed for the transformation.

Several testimonies describe some strange situations experienced at clandestine detention centers: "Chiqui came to see me at the room where they had locked me up, and she was wearing an embroidered tunic and some glass bead bracelets. I was completely untidy, with a black t-shirt, a huge pair of pants (…) She was neat and tidy, and she was wearing make-up. She explained to me that navy officers wanted us to look good because that was a symptom of recovery" (Actis et al. 2006:57, the translation is mine). It is interesting to describe the meanings that prisoners gave to these circumstances: "…they wanted to show us the benefits of capitalism. It was just like saying: 'look everything you are missing. You could have had the possibility to dress up well, go to shows, travel, have meals in fine restaurants, but you decided to waste your time in a political organization, worrying about the needed…'" (Actis et al. 2006:170, the translation is mine).

Prisoners' Release

When prisoners were released, military agents gave them clothes so they could leave the clandestine detention centers. The physical appearance of prisoners was completely affected by torture and inhuman living conditions. Wearing clothes which were not theirs only made them look worse. Once again, prisoners faced the

possibility of becoming stigmatized individuals. Some testimonies refer to the feelings of uneasiness produced by this possibility: "…an officer gave the order to take the chains off my feet. They gave me a shirt, a pair of big black shoes, and even some pesos for my return home (…) I realized that my appearance at that time and in that place, my zombie way of walking, my clothes, my beard, everything, made me almost a ghost. I was horrified at the thought of an encounter with a police patrol. Looking the way I did, having no ID, I would not have had any chance" (Asociación ex detenidos desaparecidos 2006).

Released prisoners were warned that they would be watched by "security forces." They knew they had to control their bodily practices to prove that they were fully "recovered." Survivors frequently rejected dress expressions considered to be "subversive" by dominant discourses – including certain kinds of clothes and haircuts. Without a doubt, clandestine detention centers transformed prisoners' condition. There, people were forced to internalize symbolic and sensory-motor practices which completely altered their subjectivity. These practices were subsequently reproduced in social life. In this way, military forces intended to destroy the social category they had previously defined; in other words, "subversion".

Death

Not all prisoners involved in the "recovery process" were released. On the contrary, most of them were killed as part of the "fight against subversion" (Comandante General del Ejército 2006; Consejo de Defensa 2006). Survivors' testimonies and forensic evidence show that the *desaparecidos* were frequently shot in executions, thrown from airplanes into the Río de la Plata or tortured to death in clandestine detention centers.

In this case, the relationships among dress, death and identity will be discussed through the analysis of an archaeological collection (Salerno 2006b). The latter was recovered by the *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (EAAF, Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team) during the course of the project *Search for an Identification of Disappeared People in Argentina: The Way of the Truth, Justice and Memory.* The collection under study was composed of several fragments of clothing (297 pieces of fabric and leather from 79 garments and shoes) associated with 38 bodies exhumed at Lomas de Zamora cemetery (Buenos Aires, Argentina). According to documentary, osteological and genetic studies conducted by EAAF, these bodies were the skeletal remains of *desaparecidos.*

One of the first goals of my study was to transform dress into a complementary line of analysis for the identification of missing people. For this reason, I decided to compare the garments that witnesses believed the victims were wearing the last time they were seen alive with the garments found on the bodies. In general, bodies (12) exhibited clothes different from those people were wearing at the time they

disappeared. Furthermore, some bodies had none (8) or few pieces of apparel (18) associated with them (for instance, some pieces of underwear or other pieces of clothing covering the upper or lower part of the body). These circumstances made me think of the strategies the military forces used to destroy or hide the evidence of their crimes.

The differences found in the appearance of victims at the moment of disappearance and death were closely associated with the time people spent at clandestine detention centers. It is worthwhile to remember that military agents forced prisoners to change clothes when they arrived at these places. Besides, on several occasions people sentenced to death were asked to wear clean clothes – different from those worn in the centers – under the promise that they would be released. Finally, they were shot in fake confrontations with security forces, and entered the morgue as "NN" or "no-name" bodies. Clothes were part of the setting created by military forces to cover up their crimes. Some other objects were intentionally placed to establish victims' guilt; for instance, weapons and pamphlets apparently connected to left-wing political parties.

Dress contributed to shed light on the fate of the victims. In general, shirts, t-shirts, sweaters and pants presented different signs of damage (Fig. 7.1). Among them, it was usual to find bullet holes, tears and possible blood stains. It is worth noting the large number of holes found in some garments. Without a doubt, they account for the cruelty of the murderers. Some damages found on the clothes were absent on the bones. Blindfolds and ties proved that victims were not involved in confrontations with military forces, but they were simply executed (Fig. 7.2). Dress provides forensic anthropologists with additional information on the circumstances surrounding the death of the *desaparecidos*. Garments also help archaeologists to construct a material memory of genocide. This is why they should be appropriately valued and preserved.

Nakedness, dress changes, physical deterioration and – in some cases – pathologists' complicity made body identification difficult in the 1970s. In general, military forces used these strategies to perpetuate victims' disappearance. In Western society, identities reside in individual bodies. Death and the loss of corporeality threaten personal relationships. Relatives and friends try to reestablish the connection with the dead, developing material and symbolic actions on the bodies – such as wake, burying and cremation (Tarlow 2002). The impossibility of finding and identifying the bodies causes anxiety. These circumstances only increased the pain caused by political repression in Argentina.

Final Remarks

The material study of dress and its multiple connections represents an interesting tool for broadening the understanding of the past and present of our societies. In this chapter, I have explored some of the strategies used by the recent military
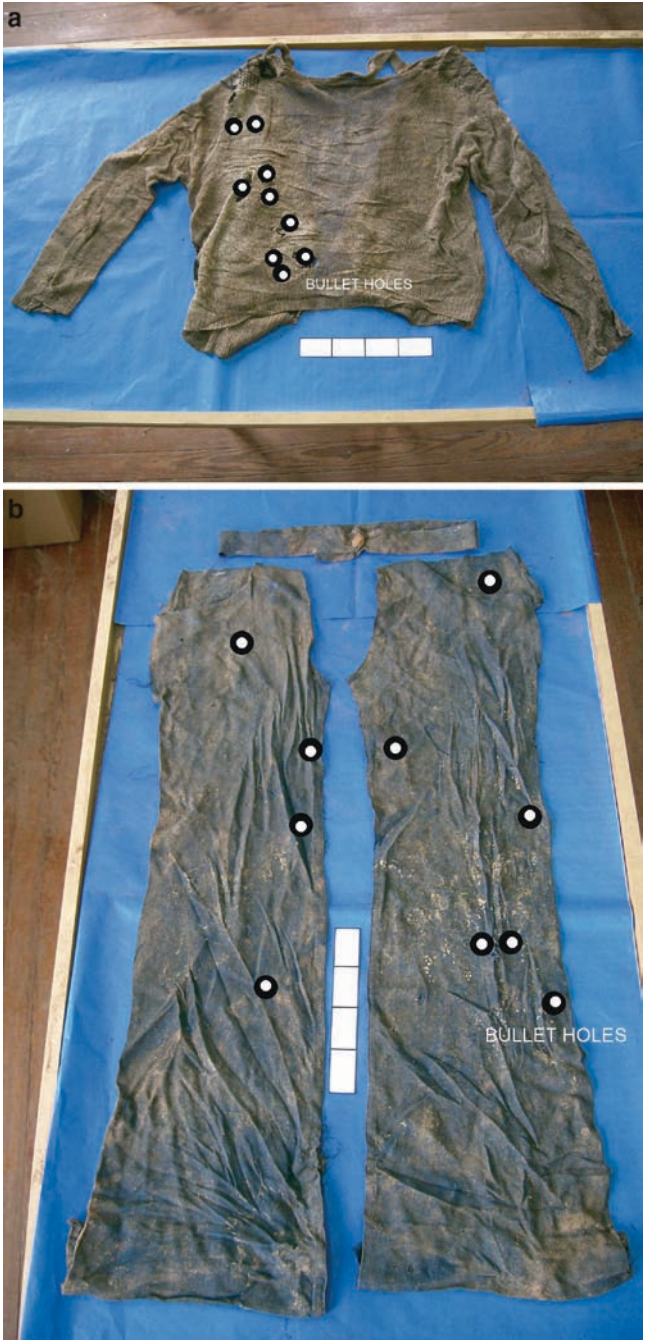
Fig. 7.1 Cardigan (*above*) and pants (*below*) showing abundant signs of damage (firearm holes in *white*). Clothing remains excavated by the "Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense" at Lomas de Zamora cemetery (photos by Salerno 2006)

Fig. 7.2 Blindfold (*above*) and tie (*below*). Clothing remains excavated by the "Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense" at Lomas de Zamora cemetery (photos by Salerno 2006)

government in Argentina (1976–1983) to define and subsequently reshape "subversion" as a social category. Several aspects of this problem of investigation should be further studied. In the first place, it would be relevant to discuss the experiences of men, women, elderly and young people, ethnic and religious

minorities in clandestine detention centers. As Edholm (1993) points out, no particular experience or perspective is adequate. On the contrary, the analysis of identity depends on the possibility of blurring the boundaries of its domains, considering their multiple connections (Meskell 2001). Second, it would be relevant to study persecuted groups' acts of resistance – even in clandestine detention centers, where the possibilities to face repressive forces were frequently thought to be inexistent. Finally, I would like to say that this chapter is just an attempt to deal with a subject that has not been adequately studied yet. I hope to improve the results obtained here in future works.

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Chapter 8
Scratching Behind the Walls; Graffiti and Symbolic Political Imagination at Cuartel San Carlos (Caracas, Venezuela)

Rodrigo Navarrete Sánchez and Ana María López

Graffiti and Their Connection to Archaeology

Rock art is as old as human history. South American rock carvings and paintings provide invaluable evidence of our aboriginal past. As a matter of fact, spontaneous artistic interventions on buildings and walls (equivalent to modern graffiti) appear for the first time in Ancient Egypt and Greece. But urban graffiti is definitely a modern phenomenon. It is typical of late capitalism and, for some researchers, of postmodernity. Graffiti generally started to cover big cities' walls in the 1970s (Silva Téllez 1987).

These inscriptions became an expression of ideological tendencies, and social, artistic, political or philosophical behaviors rejected by official authorities. For instance, graffiti appeared in New York during the 1960s. Almost at the same time, graffiti and political murals appeared in Latin American cities. Young people used New York subway cars and Santiago de Chile's walls as blackboards. They attempted to subvert the established order, write their names and project their political world facing persecution – mainly from public transport authorities or the political-repressive apparatus (Silva Téllez 2007). In this way, graffiti managed to become part of the landscape as a transgressive artifact and message in public spaces. In Latin America, graffiti is closely connected to mechanisms of diffusion and protest against state-repressive devices – both in dictatorial regimes and democratic systems like Venezuela, where political opposition has been systematically attacked since the 1960s (Jaimes Quero 2003; Navarrete 2004).

As a means of visual, spontaneous, ephemeral, impersonal, clandestine and alternative communication, graffiti has become one of the most powerful and multivocal political–esthetical expressions and cultural artifacts. Its transgressive and communicative action allows artists to recover spaces for the expression of passive and/or

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active resistance against ideological repression. Furthermore, graffiti represents a public space for alternative communication where urban memory shows the passions, conflicts and rivalries of constant sociopolitical changes. Graffiti has recently become an open means of communication, with an esthetic and identity value for certain social groups – especially young people (García Canclini 2001; Navarrete 2005).

The inner strength of social agents frequently appears in prison space. Being both public and private, prisons represent appropriate spaces for indirect or alternative communication among individuals. As a matter of fact, the inner space of a prison cell is a white, empty surface; a "blank page" that invites the prisoner – most frequently without another means of expression – to communicate his/her messages, anxieties, and political, social, racial, sexual and gender needs and interests.

A Brief History of the Political Importance of Cuartel San Carlos

Cuartel San Carlos is located in the Plains of Trinidad, in the northwestern region of Caracas (Fig. 8.1). Since it was built, during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, it functioned as a militia house. Cuartel San Carlos provided defense, shelter and military refuge. It also served as an arms depot during most of the twentieth century. The military barracks were named after Carlos III,

Fig. 8.1 Different views of Cuartel San Carlos (taken from IPC 2000:27-28)

but later they were called *Cuartel de Veteranos* (Veteran's Barracks – Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural 2000). This building was associated with Agustín Cramer's strategies for control and military defense. The Brigadier of the Royal Forces sought to strengthen European dominance and commercial exchange in Caracas. He also intended to fight the first signs of political crisis and anticolonialist upheaval which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century in the region. Fortlet San Rafael and Fortlet San Agustín in Ciudad Bolívar, Fortlet Puerto Cabello, the Royal Road leading from Caracas to La Guaira, and the fortlets in Barra de Maracaibo were part of the same project (Amodio et al. 1997).

Cuartel San Carlos is a brick-walled square building, with an inner yard surrounded by corridors and galleries. It has several rooms divided into three different wings (west, east and south), and a fountain at the north end of the yard. The building was designed by Fermín de la Rueda, Chief of the Engineer Battalion of the Province of Venezuela. The construction began in 1790 and it was completed in 1812 (González 1998).

Since the so-called democratic period in Venezuela (1958–1999), after Marcos Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship (1948–1958), Cuartel San Carlos became a detention center for military, political and, in some cases, ordinary prisoners until the end of the twentieth century (Fig. 8.2). Following the collapse of Jiménez's dictatorship in 1958, right-wing political parties such as *Acción Democrática* (Democratic Action), *Unión Republicana Democrática* (Democratic Republican Unit) and *Comité de Organización Política Independiente* (Committee of the Independent Political Organization) formed a coalition government. They excluded the *Partido Comunista de Venzuela* (Venezuelan Communist Party), which played an active role in the fall of dictatorship. The exclusion of the Left from the new democratic government created tension and incited rebellion. This situation led to the creation of armed guerrilla forces against the government – which eventually attacked these subversive groups. This period of confrontation began with Betancourt, grew increasingly bitter during Leoni's government, and finally came to an end during Caldera's administration. The final stage included the arrest of the main leaders of the movement,
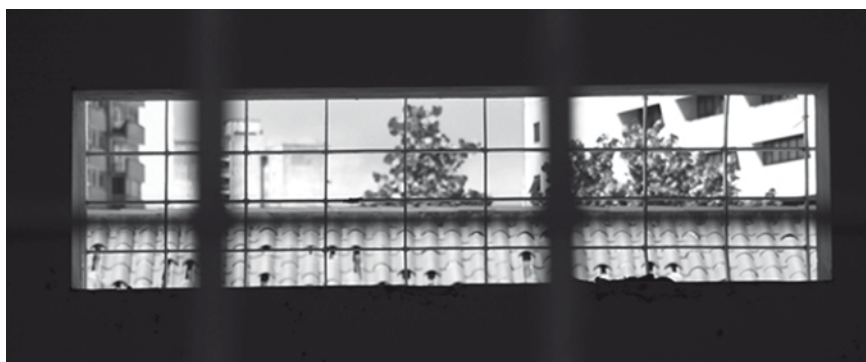
Fig. 8.2 View of San Carlos' inner yard from one of the cells (photo by Korin 2004)

the dissolution of the rural and urban tactical units, the militarization of the *Universidad Central de Venezuela* (Central University of Venezuela) in 1970, and the signing of a peace treaty including the *Partido Comunista de Venezuela* and the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Left Movement) – but no other political parties such as the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement for Socialism – Cadena Carriles 2000).

In this way, Cuartel San Carlos was transformed into a detention camp for political prisoners. Several members of the rural and urban guerrilla forces – the *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional* (Armed Forces of National Liberation) and the *Unidades Tácticas de Combate* (Tactical Combat Units) being the most important – who confronted Rómulo Betancourt (1959–1964), Raúl Leoni (1964–1969) and Rafael Caldera (1969–1974) were held captive and tortured in this place. When the Mixed Military Police Detachment No. 1 was created in 1961, the Military Prosecutor's Office of Caracas was moved to Cuartel San Carlos by decision of President Betancourt. It was in that period, paradoxically called "democratic," when most architectural interventions were made in the barracks. These interventions were associated with the new role the building was playing as a prison. Extensions, refurbishments and alterations changed the structure of Cuartel San Carlos. The relationship of the prison with the urban landscape, its spatial perception and its material representation gradually evolved into a highly segmented space (with increasingly secluded areas). In 1961, a group of Army officers were transferred to Cuartel San Carlos. These people were imprisoned for being involved in the coup attempts of July 22 and September 7, 1958, in Caracas, and the so-called "Barcelonazo" – a military uprising which was expected to take place in the city of Barcelona on June 26, 1961. Other regional insurrections which increased the number of political prisoners – not only of military officers, but also of civilians – were the *Carupanazo* and the *Porteñazo.* They combined the action of military forces with that of leftist groups who attempted to overthrow President Betancourt. During this regime, on February 5, 1967, several leaders of the civil–military movement participated in a massive prison break at Cuartel San Carlos.

During the 1970s, Cuartel San Carlos continued to be a political prison for revolutionary leaders who committed subversive actions against Caldera or Pérez's administrations (1974–1979). The escape of political (Pompeyo Márquez, Teodoro Petkoff and Guillermo García Ponce) and communist leaders who were charged with rebellion on February 5, 1967, and the subsequent break of 23 prosecuted members of left-wing parties on January 15, 1975 (Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural 2000; García Ponce 1968), became a milestone in the democratic history of Venezuela and played a significant role in the political memory of the nation. Other subversive leaders were imprisoned in Cuartel San Carlos for blowing up a Cuban airplane in 1976. Two of them escaped from prison on August 8, 1982.

However, one of the most relevant events for our research was the imprisonment of military officers prosecuted for the rebellion of 1992. Among these military leaders, it is worth mentioning the current President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez. Between February 3 and 4, 1992, there was a coup attempt – usually called Zamora Operation – against President Carlos Andrés Pérez. The *Movimiento*

Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 (Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement 200), an organization clandestinely founded in 1983 by captains Hugo Chávez Frías, Luis Felipe Acosta Carlés and Jesús Urdaneta Hernández, claimed responsibility for the action. As most of its members were middle-ranked officers (commandants, majors, captains, lieutenants and lieutenants-colonels), the movement became known as *Comacates* (Rodríguez 2000).

The officers who led the coup expressed dissatisfaction with President Pérez's political and economic decisions, corruption, and social inequality (especially brought by the so-called democratic period), the state of corruption in the highest ranks of the military forces, and the participation of the Army and the National Guard in the repression of the popular uprising of February 27, 1989 – the *Caracazo* – among many other things. The insurgents (including the leader of the operation, Commandant Hugo Chávez Frías) surrendered when troops loyal to Pérez took control of Miraflores Palace on the fourth day, at about midday. The uprising also took place in other important cities, such as Maracaibo, Maracay and Valencia. Regional leaders laid down arms in view of the failure of the operation in Caracas. Commandant Chávez and other high-ranked military officers involved in the insurrection were imprisoned in Cuartel San Carlos, in Caracas (and later, in Yare Prison, in the Tuy Valleys). As time went by, the period of prosecution of several prisoners prescribed; some other prisoners were discharged, while others were finally pardoned by President Calderas in 1994 on the condition that they would retire from the Army Forces – as it was the case with the leaders of the operation (Rodríguez 2000).

In the last years, Cuartel San Carlos was at the center of several cultural projects, which attempted to restore the building as a symbol of freedom and democratization, and as a space for cultural, educational and artistic activities. Nevertheless, none of these projects were completed. Cuartel San Carlos was declared National Historical Monument on October 6, 1986, and it was proposed to be the seat of the *Museo Nacional de Historia* (National Museum of History 1986), the *Centro Nacional de Culturas* (The National Centre of Cultures 1999) and the *Universidad de las Artes* (University of the Arts 2003) (Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural 2000). Leaving aside the archaeological projects in 1998 and 2004 (Sanoja 1998a, b, c; Sanoja and Vargas 1998), the building – managed by the Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural (*Institute for Cultural Heritage*) – is currently the seat of the *Foro Latinoamericano de las Artes* (Latin American Forum of Arts). In 2004, the building accommodated the victims of a series of natural disasters which swept the country.

Recent interventions (uses and reuses) unfortunately threatened the structural and architectural integrity of the building, as well as the conservation of its graffiti, murals and writings.

Cuartel San Carlos is a milestone in the history of Caracas and Venezuela. Since its construction at the end of the eighteenth century until relatively recently, this building was a place for action and coercion, a silent witness to rebellion. At the same time, it was part of the daily life and the collective memory of the capital city. Several neighborhoods and communities grew around the barracks, interacting with the building and assuming its physical and/or symbolic uses.

We believe the importance of this building depends on its multiple connections with the events that marked the history and the construction of the citizens of Caracas. Refurbishing, and the symbolic value of past and recent material conditions, will not only give the building the relevance that it should have in the identity and historical consciousness of the people from Caracas. It will also reintegrate it into the cultural dynamics of citizen participation.

Fieldwork Methodology and Goals

One of the most remarkable features of Cuartel San Carlos is the abundance of graphic expressions such as graffiti and murals on walls and other surfaces. Many of these graffiti are historically connected to the imprisonment of the military officers who incited a rebellion against President Andrés Pérez in 1992. As a consequence, they are part of the national contemporary history closely associated with the present constitutional period.

As it represents a communicative and aesthetic representation, and a cultural and political expression, graffiti has become a major issue in cultural studies. Even though some researchers focused on graffiti at Cuartel San Carlos, they did not use a systematic approach or a cultural symbolic perspective (Ramírez 2000).

Therefore, we thought it was necessary to develop a strategy for the overall survey of graffiti, taking into account archaeological strategies frequently used to gather information on cave painting (De Valencia and Sujo 1987). Our approach included a photographic and graphic survey of the graffiti and other cultural expressions on the walls of Cuartel San Carlos. This methodology allowed us to obtain a systematic and detailed inventory of the graphic and/or pictorial representations in the building. In this way, we could make some suggestions for the conservation, popularization and possible transformation of Cuartel San Carlos into a museum.

When we first approached Cuartel San Carlos, we realized that we were facing an exceptional context for the production of cultural expressions. Later, we realized that these expression were particularly connected to different historical moments; moral codes; aesthetic and technological perspectives; ideological, religious and ritual discourses; and personal stories.

The fieldwork took place on July, 2004. It began with the systematic exploration of Cuartel San Carlos. At that moment, our goal was to make a preinventory of the graffiti and paintings. We adopted a rescue methodology basically inspired in the traditional procedures used to survey cave paintings.

The preinventory was organized on the basis of 41 units of analysis, each of them corresponding to a major entity or meaningful group of motifs which represented our main object of study. The units of analysis were selected from the paintings located on the first and second floors of Cuartel San Carlos. As a methodological

resource, we decided to outline the possible organizational structure of the places associated with the concentration and production of graffiti. Each unit of analysis had its own motifs (graffiti and drawings, among others) displayed on different media and material structures (floors, ceilings and walls). In order to survey the paintings (units of meaning and motifs alike – Table 8.1), we decided to move clockwise, following the original plan of the building.

The photographic record was made during the second phase of the fieldwork. It considered specific motifs and small groups of them. Most units of meaning lacked a coherent corpus of signification, making it difficult to analyze and interpret them as a whole. In some other cases, it was possible to group different motifs together. It is possible that they were the result of coexistence and similar activities within a given space. Most pictorial expressions had been exposed to harsh weather and social conditions. In many cases, it was impossible to recognize their shape. It is worth mentioning that – in the case of Cuartel San Carlos – the surfaces where graffiti were placed were not moveable or removable. As a consequence, the understanding of individual motifs (or groups of motifs) depended on the comprehension of the physical context. Some of these surfaces were structurally altered and some of their images were superimposed. Recent drawings and writings (mainly associated with occasional visits) were registered when they were meaningfully related to other historical units or groups of motifs.

The third stage of the fieldwork focused on the systematic survey of every recognizable motif in Cuartel San Carlos. With this objective in mind, we decided to describe their location, subject and field of production. We also decided to transcribe the writings, many of which referred to the authors and the time of production. Given the ephemeral character of graffiti, and the weather and social conditions they were exposed to, we thought it was relevant to conduct an exhaustive survey of the images. This survey allowed us to find similarities and differences among paintings (including their formal features, and their place and time of production).

The survey was complemented with the analysis of written testimonies found in the scarce literature on the subject (books and newspapers) and the interviews made to some of the main characters of Cuartel San Carlos. Summing up, the methodological approach of this research covered two major topics (1) the fieldwork, including the space survey, the preinventory of the paintings, the photographic record, the description and classification of the images, and the interviews; and (2) the documentary research, including the analysis of maps, books, newspapers and web sites.

We used a record sheet to classify the paintings, and we created a systematic numerical catalog. Record sheets described, located, and established physical and temporal connections among units. They also documented the technological, formal, ideographic, symbolic, or contextual features of the motifs. The fields taken into account were unity, group, surface, formal description, transcription – texts were transcribed with the original spelling –, subject, manufacture technique, date, author and state of conservation (Table 8.2).

Table 8.1 Graffiti preinventory (unit 4, prison cell 1, inner hall, west yard, surfaces A and B)

Surface	Location	Number	Motif	
A	Roof	18	(01) *Yane MQR*	(10) *La masima*
			(02) *cumplaces*	(11) *Anteliz*
			(03) *Sierra*	(12) *Mariuuana*
			(04) *Kelvin 08-09-97*	(13) *5K5*
			(05) *(Dibujo de daga)*	(14) *PN Julio 92*
			(06) *SM (ilegible)*	(15) *IL 09 93*
			(07) *Cumana*	(16) *MI Serpa*
			(08) *enero 92*	(17) *Menutre*
			(09) *C/05*	(18) *Ilegible (01)*
B	North Wall	67	(01) *30 DIA (Dibujo de cuentas)*	(22) *Marino defensores de la patria por ella boy a dar la vida con juramento y honor entre puerto y mares de la nacion. cumplace armada*
			(02) *Sierra Miseria Guevara*	(23) *Dibujo ancla*
			(03) *Paracaidista (Dibujo de un paracaidista)*	(24) *Dibujo mujer desnuda*
			(04) *Orlando (Dibujo de corazón)*	(25) *pelusa 20-3-2001*
			(05) *Zulay y Oscar (Dibujo de corazón)*	(26) *C/02*
			(06) *Erick*	(27) *Lysbed y Cardenas*
			(07) *Dibujo de Guerrero*	(28) *Cebolla*
			(08) *Dibujo de Avión*	(29) *carsel*
			(09) *X-men*	(30) *fuerte uno*
			(10) *Abril 91 C/02*	(31) *fuerte Tiuna*
			(11) *21-10-93*	(32) *351 Batallon Jose Miguel*
			(12) *Jose Miguel Lanza 351*	(33) *El Caiman*
			(13) *Todo se vive una experiencia*	(34) *Pquito (dibujo ¿?)*
			(14) *14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30…16 dias*	(35) *Soldado de la Libertad*
			(15) *Dibujo de Escudo de la Armada*	(36) *Dibujo Tanque Naval*
			(16) *Dibujado por el C/07 Sierra Guevara Kelvin de mis dias preso matricula 79.53*	(37) *Símbolos patrios (dibujado por el C/07 Sierra G.)*
			(17) *El alma pensativa se aleja a la soledad. PN Sierra Guevara*	(38) *Ejercito de la Armada*
			(18) *4 dia y no me veo aquí en el pote*	(39) *Dibujo de Soldado*

Table 8.1 (continued)

Surface	Location	Number	Motif	
			(19) *Recuerdo de mis dias preso*	(40) *Soldado luchador de la Guerra*
			(20) *El amor a la Patria el amor a la ley (…) (borroso)*	(41) *Monopajaro*
			(21) *Dibujo de pulpo con uniforme de marinero*	(42) *Fuerte Tiuna grupo de la policia militar*
				(43) *Dibujo de Tanque Ejercito VZN*

Table 8.2 Motif record sheet

Unit. 4, cell 1, west yard

Group. C

Surface. South wall

Formal description or transcript. *Corpus delicti*, Love of mother. Black and white drawing of a naked woman on her back. The words *Corpus delicti* are stressed and put in quotation marks

Subject. Combination of sexuality and maternal-filial love

Manufacturing technique. Scraping

Size. 10×13 cm

Date. n/d

Author. Anonymous

State of conservation. Excellent

What do They Tell Us? The Analysis of the Evidence

Investigations at Cuartel San Carlos allowed us to create at least ten protocols for classifying messages communicated through graffiti and paintings. Although images connected to politics, human rights, justice and freedom were abundant, these were not the only themes depicted on the walls. The diversity of subjects, ideas and images represents a world dominated by stress, convergences and discrepancies; that is to say, a particular worldview shared by the individuals who were once held captive there. Somehow, graffiti contain part of the contemporary sociopolitical imagination of Venezuela. However, this imagination was also shaped by the intentions and needs of every single individual or group within the hierarchy of the prison.

One of the most recurrent themes found on the walls of punishment cells – where ordinary prisoners were usually locked up – was the continual representation of violence. These paintings provided relevant information on prisoners' living conditions inside and outside Cuartel San Carlos. These images reflected and resignified violence in a late-capitalist, highly stratified, and aggressive city like Caracas (García
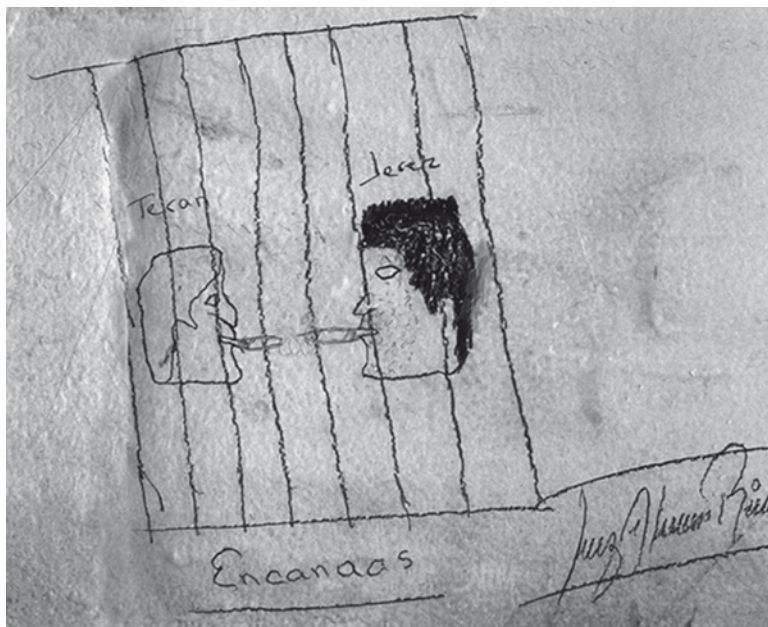
Fig. 8.3 Graffiti communicating prisoners' need to make a name for themselves (taken from IPC 2000:42-43)

Canclini 2001). Punishment cells, popularly known as "tigritos," displayed a wide variety of motifs which were frequently painted or written one on top of the other – given the excessive flow of prisoners within these spaces. Messages on walls, ceilings, floors and doorframes expressed the need some people had to stand out from the rest of the prisoners. In other words, they expressed the need that some people had to create their own identity through violence. These messages communicated a search for acknowledgment, an intention of making a name for oneself, pointing out that the author of the writing or painting was punished for "misconduct" or "violent character" (Fig. 8.3). Some of the messages probably made reference to the so-called "law of the jungle" – an expression which meant that only the strongest, toughest and most-resistant prisoners survived living conditions in Cuartel San Carlos (Fig. 8.4). Writings occasionally communicated a competitive attitude, showing that some people reoffended and were once again in prison.

In several *tigritos*, we usually found writings saying "the law of Pedro Navaja," "the law of 'el chuzo,'" "evil was here," as well as several drawings representing firearms, skulls, skeletons and swastikas, among many other things. These writings and drawing were almost exclusively made with other techniques than painting. In most cases, there was evidence of scraping with stone and metal instruments, as well as with other sharp objects.

Fig. 8.4   Graffiti making reference to the so-called "law of the jungle" (photo by Korin 2004)

Without a doubt, political militancy was a central – and quantitatively meaningful – theme in Cuartel San Carlos. Most motifs associated with political militancy were written messages referring to political and social protest. There was also a wide range of drawings depicting sociopolitical leaders of the history of Venezuela (Martí and Bolívar, among others). The recurrence of the figure of Bolívar (almost as a theological and political cult) in graphic and written messages was closely connected to the ideals, convictions and guidelines of the leaders of the *Movimiento*

Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 (Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural 2000; Rodríguez 2000). In general, the images of distinguished characters, national heroes, local leaders and revolutionary figures were huge, catching the attention of the passers-by. As a matter of fact, these representations usually covered the surface of walls and combined complex manufacturing techniques.

Drawings and murals usually accompanied writings. In a specific group of motifs, it was possible to observe the oversized face of Simón Bolívar framed by the signatures and messages of the prisoners – most of them, high-ranked military officers who participated in the coup attempt of November 27, 1992 (for instance, General Francisco Visconti Osorio, Logistic Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff; Navy Rear-Admiral Hernán Grüber Odremán, the highest-ranked officer who participated in the revolt; and Rear-Admiral Luis Cabrera Aguirre – Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural 2000; Rodríguez 2000 (Fig. 8.5). On several occasions, texts accompanying

Fig. 8.5 Oversized face of Simón Bolívar framed by the signatures and messages of high-ranked military officers (photos by Korin 2004)

murals referred to freedom, social justice and armed resistance, encouraging the fight for a more egalitarian society (that is to say, without class divisions).

Iconographic motifs and texts reflecting political militancy employed several simple or combined manufacturing techniques. They included the use of paint, chalks, pencils and charcoal. The authors – mostly military officers – might have had privileged access to these materials.

Among many other messages, it is worth mentioning:

– "Long live Red Berets!"
– "Bolivarian Bolívar is not a dead idea, even less a saint to light him a candle"
– "Governments' freedom cannot be bought, and a real man accepts his defeat and does not blind himself (...) with the aim of staying in power"
– "The struggle goes on, and prison bars do not silence the cry for freedom"
– "Those who stand up looking ahead are the ones who write history"

The last text fragment has a dramatic importance for Cuartel San Carlos' "symbolic aura," especially within the sociopolitical context of the country. Although there are no reliable references on this writing, its creation is attributed to Lieutenant-Colonel Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, current President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As a matter of fact, this cell is frequently visited by tourists as a result of the stories associated with this graffiti.

The military institution is deeply connected to the above-mentioned subject. Among political–military motifs we also found very simple and schematic icons. National symbols, personal seals, military and police signs proved the existence of a system of alliances and competition among different institutionalized forces and ranks. The representation of military insignia, mottos and acronyms was abundant and interacted – in a dialogical manner – with other informal and less institutional subjects. Some repeated writings were the following:

– Venezuelan Army, creator of freedom
– Sierra C/07
– Tiuna Fort military police group
– "Power" the force of C/07 July 92 *cumplace armada*

Some other references were associated with less structured urban groups – such as gangs, "tribes" and informal organizations – which created social categories to identify and differentiate themselves from the others. These organizations had their own identity and defensive symbols. They frequently used paintings or texts to depict individual or collective signs (a dagger, a star, an anchor, among many other things). These signs were "tribal" landmarks which created a common identity with the aim of protecting the members of the group and making them feel more power-ful. Multiple motifs combined images and legends, representing the aspirations of a community which inteded to define its own system of hierarchies, loyalties, and inter- and intragang recognition (Fig. 8.6). These motifs combined different subjects such as love, group loyalty, camaraderie, drugs, conflict and status. It is interesting to take note of the following:

Fig. 8.6 Motifs representing prisoners' intention to create a system of hierarchies within the prison space (photo by Korin 2004)

– Mariuuana
– Don't walk here
– The leaders of "Cuar Sanca"
– Drawing of a five-pointed star. "Death"
– Drawing of a dagger
– Drawing of a malt cross
– Ron for everybody and "mariguana," "perico," and "bazuco." Long live drugs

Graffiti connected to women, sex and love separated spaces and prisoners. Spaces assigned to ordinary prisoners – especially solitary confinement cells – concentrated most of the erotic images (Fig. 8.7). Meanwhile, spaces assigned to political prisoners – that is to say, areas with more public access and circulation – concentrated most graffiti on mothers and families. In general, political prisoners were supposed to maintain respectability and moral authority because of their rank. For this reason, sex found its clearest expression

Fig. 8.7 Erotic images found in the cells of ordinary prisoners – especially solitary confinement areas (photos by Korin 2004)

in punishment cells – which had room for only one person at a time. Here, artists did not only sublimate their sexual desires into erotic paintings, but also took pleasure in knowing that their paintings would be subsequently appreciated by other prisoners. In this way, sublimation was transformed into a powerful resource which acted upon the symbolic and physical space of the cell. Individuals did not only occupy that space, but also possessed it from a sexual perspective, expressing their power over representations – for instance, bodies depicted on the walls frequently had scars (Navarrete 2004).

In some other cases, graffiti objectified platonic love or the attraction to women – who were described or drawn following the artist's sexual interest (usually heterosexual and androcentric). Thus, in several cells we were able to find drawings of exuberant naked women. One of them even expressed the intention to reproduce the female body, with a hole in the area of the vagina. Many drawings were accompanied by erotic texts such as *Corpus delicti* – which was located near the image of a sculptural naked woman. Other drawings expressed contradictory feelings, typical of the way modern societies deal with sexuality: between desire and blame, virtue and sin. In some cases, we also found images of naked bodies associated with the words "Satan" or "evil."

In the cells containing motifs connected to love, family and social alliances, there were few drawings and lots of writings revealing regret, remorse, justification, apology, and – in many cases – love poems. These poems went hand in hand with feelings of hopelessness, and – on the contrary – mixed feelings of sadness and hope (especially for the possibility of meeting up with relatives and friends again) (Fig. 8.8). They represented the desire to return home, and values and emotions such as freedom and affection.

The following graffiti stood out among the others:

– Drawing of a broken heart. "One half for pure… – [the other] for my family"
– Drawing of a heart. "Zulay and Oscar"
– Drawing of a woman. "The beauty of women, her body, and style are the world's beauties. Drawn with love to women"

Fig. 8.8 Writings expressing
feelings of sadness and hope –
especially for the possibility to
meet up with relatives and
friends again (taken from IPC
2000:39)
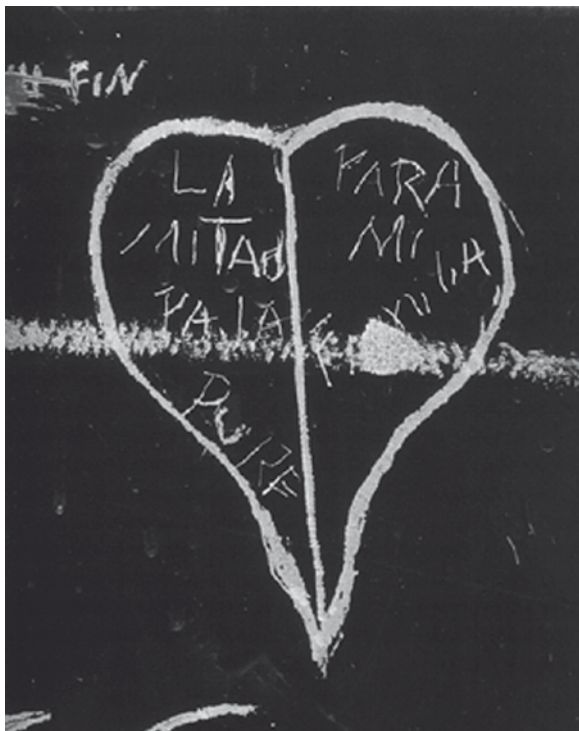
– Drawing of a naked woman on her back. "Love of mother," "Corpus delicti"
– Drawing of a woman. "The woman," "Erotic fashion model"
– Drawing of a heart stabbed with a dagger. "Love and peace, the law of love"

Another subject frequently depicted was religion and faith. Among Cuartel San
Carlos' graffiti, we could observe a wide variety of iconographic drawings and texts
connected to Catholicism – although it is also true that a small group of messages
was closely associated with *Santería*. Images included virgins, saints, crosses,
prayers, biblical stories and messages of faith. In this context, religion was trans-
formed into a primary resource for hope and emancipation (Fig. 8.9). Some graffiti
expressed love to God and requested the protection of the Patron Virgin of the
Army. For instance:

– "I am not afraid, I reject fear. God is love. There is nothing in the whole creation
   that is afraid [of anything]. I have faith, I want to feel faith."
– "Queen Virgin of the Eastern Valley, Patron of the Cunplace Army, 1981.
   Knights of the Sea Patrol."
– "In 1955, the Virgin of the Valley met the Virgin of [illegible] on board the
   destroyer ARV New Sparta of the Venezuelan Army, at the Port of La Guaira.

Fig. 8.9 Religion was a primary resource for hope and emancipation. It allowed prisoners to endure confinement (photos by Navarrete 2004)

Fig. 8.10 Graffiti expressing prisoners' sense of humor – especially dark humor (*Left photo* by López 2004; *Right photo* taken from IPC 2000:40)

This is the first time the Virgin was aboard a man-of-war. Witten by PN Sierra Nevada."
– Drawing of a Virgin in pencil; signed and dated (1991).
– "The 7 powers."

Another ordinary tool for escaping reality was humor, as it was a means of sublimating unstable living conditions at Cuartel San Carlos. Humor – in this case, irony or the subversion of the conditions of existence – interacted with reality in a playful way. It allowed prisoners to transform their life while looking for an imaginary way-out. Many graffiti and paintings contained a surprising amount of humor – especially dark humor (Fig. 8.10). In general, prisoners intended to make fun of their own traumatic experiences. We believe these messages contributed to neutralize a series of events which – otherwise – could have been much more harmful. On the contrary, hopelessness was part of other graffiti which reflected prisoners' feelings of powerlessness. For instance:

Fig. 8.11 Symbolical representations expressing prisoner's ideas of freedom and escape (photos by Navarrete 2004)

– "Please, lock the door after entering Block 04."
– "In this place, I spent my last days as a soldier, 10 pretty days before taking leave, because a criminal's morality is better than that of a million toads. There is no bullet that kills the truth when truth protects reason. I do not want luxury, but I do not want indecency either. Life is short. I do not know when I will lose it. A day without sunlight is irreparable."
– Drawing of a sun. Plastic artist sponsored by "matel."

We would like to mention an exclusively graphic element used by prisoners to escape reality. It is the representation of a series of artifacts and landscapes frequently associated with freedom, trips and evasion – for instance, ships, airplanes, beaches, and field open landscapes (Fig. 8.11). The emancipatory value of these symbolic representations went far beyond the cell and established some kind of communication among the prisoner, the outer world, and his own ideas of freedom and escape. Airplanes and ships were probably connected to the military training and professional skills of some prisoners. In the same way, open spaces – not crowded or enclosed cities – did not only have a symbolic relationship with nature and freedom, but also could be associated with the provenience of some prisoners (from rural areas or the countryside) and the aesthetic vision of landscape as art.

– Drawing of a propeller airplane on an "Eduanny" map of Venezuela
– Drawing of a ship on a red painting
– Drawing of the sunset at a beach with a ship setting sail

In this case, time – more than space (literally restricted and limited) – became a central theme of discourse. Several motifs were chronological indicators of the days spent in prison. Calendars, dates and lines were used to keep a record of prisoners' sentences. On certain occasions, we found complete calendars where people crossed out the days gone by – especially in segments, such as weeks or months. In other cases, we found writings referring to
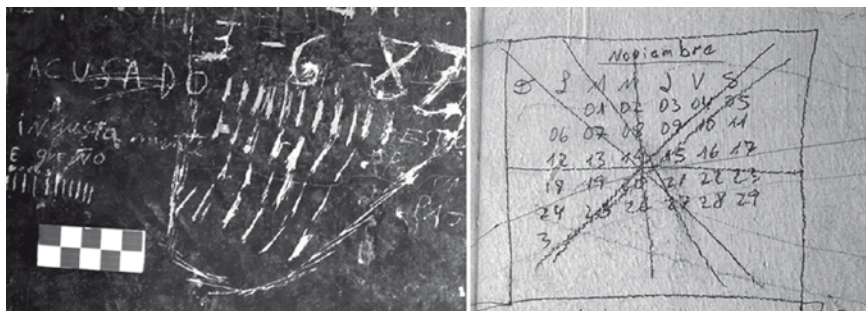
Fig. 8.12 Calendars were used to keep a record of prisoners' sentences and the last day they were supposed to spend in prison (*Left photos* by Korin 2004; *Right photo* taken from IPC 2000:35)

their last day in prison. Several representations intented to leave traces of prisoners' presence at Cuartel San Carlos. For instance:

– I have been here for only 4 nights and days, and I already want to get out
– Happy New Year 1989. It is Rifle's wish, 33 months
– Drawing of lines (Count)

Toward a More Integrative Vision of Historical Interpretation, Material Culture Studies and Contemporary Political Culture

An archaeological strategy for the systematic recovery of the historical, cultural and architectural information of Cuartel San Carlos – that is to say, a relevant building for the sociopolitical history of Venezuela and Caracas – would lead to an integral understanding of the national historical heritage and the definition of new value enhancement strategies in line with the structural, historical and symbolic conditions of the building.

When we talk about an integral perspective, we consider both the incorporation of the historical heritage – including the material remains of the building – and the symbolic integration of the political and cultural history of the country from an archaeological point of view. This perspective intends to discuss the individual and collective stories which took place at Cuartel San Carlos, and were expressed through its architectural structure and its physical and symbolic location. It also intends to analyze the incorporation of the building into the political history of the city and its resemantization. Citizens need to remember heroic acts and process of political repression/discrimination during the so-called democratic period in Venezuela. This is the only way we can establish a connection among the archaeological interpretations of material culture, the national consciousness of the recent past, and the contemporary political culture.

We believe that the work of archaeologists, as that of other social scientists, has a humanistic character. The study of the cultural expressions at Cuartel San Carlos represents another step toward the registration, social valuation, and collective reflection on past human experiences. Only in this way, we will be able to build future sociopolitical projects based on justice and freedom.

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Chapter 9
The Archaeology of a Search: An Archaeological Search; The History of the Finding of "Che" Guevara's Remains

Roberto Rodríguez Suárez

Introduction

1997 became a milestone in the history of the cultural meanings associated with the figure of Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his guerrilla partners. The well-known picture where his tough image was brilliantly captured by the Cuban photographer Alberto Kords turned him into a symbol of fight for many generations, not only in Latin America but also throughout the world. Without a doubt, the image of this Cuban-Argentinean guerrilla-man and his ideas became tangible when people heard his remains were finally found.

Archaeology, as a means of reconstructing past memory and recent past, was a useful methodological tool for searching the remains of the guerrilla men who died during the Bolivian internal conflict in 1967.

As it was expected, the time and silence surrounding the location of "Che" Guevara's remains required a particular approach to the search process. Therefore, it was necessary to develop an archaeological proposal to overcome these limitations. The main goal of this chapter is to describe this proposal. Although it is not the only possible alternative, it represents a suitable model, with a remarkable degree of generalization, for other case studies with similar characteristics. The methods, the analytical tools and the results obtained in this research prove their validity and applicability, even in dissimilar burial contexts. These methods and tools could be adopted as part of the "philosophy" (that is to say, the conditions and the objectives of the archaeological search) used to approach particular case studies.

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The Context of Vallegrande

The province of Vallegrande is located in the south-western region of Bolivia, 241 km away from the Department of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. It was originally inhabited by 26,027 people. It covers an area of 6,414 square km and it is situated at a height of 1,970 m above sea level.

Before the Spanish colonial rule, the region of the valleys suffered the attack of the Quechua, who came from neighboring provinces such as Carrasco and Campero (Department of Cochabamba). These attacks were ordered by Tupac Inca Yupanqui and his successor Huayna Kapac during the sixteenth century. They were aimed at Chiriguana and Yuracare groups who came from the north-eastern forest and moved through the valleys.

After the founding of the first colonial cities in the present territory of Bolivia (La Plata, La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, and Salinas del Río Pisuerga or Mizque), the communication between the eastern and western regions of the country was improved. However, in the central region of Bolivia, Chiriguano–Yucarare raids posed a serious danger to travelers who dared to take the Inka road. This situation led the President of the Real Audience of Charcas, Lic. López Cepeda, to accept several requests demanding the creation of colonial towns to guarantee safety. On March 30, 1612, the Peruvian Viceroy commanded Captain Lucio Escalante de Mendoza to found two cities in the valleys.

Captain Escalante de Mendoza – Viceroy Don Juan the Mendoza y Luna's nephew – was particularly interested in founding a new city for white people, which could serve as a connection between Charcas and Santa Cruz. With this objective in mind, Escalante left Lima with 30 Spanish families. One hundred and seventy families joined the original group in Potosí.

When Escalante de Mendoza founded the city of Jesús de Montes Claros de los Caballeros on March 30, 1612, he found some Spaniards living there. The first houses of the town were protected by a north–south wall. This wall protected the inhabitants from the continuous attack of Chiriguano groups, who defended their territory since 1583. In January, 1584, after Villa San Miguel de la Laguna was founded, they killed the first settlers.

The architectural characteristics of Jesús de Montes Claros de los Caballeros (nowa-days, Vallegrande) were similar to those of other colonial villages founded by Spanish settlers in the Americas. The *Plaza de Armas* (Main Square) was at the center of the city, where the *Cabildo* (Town Hall), the church and its authorities were established.

As time went by, thousands of Chiriguanos decided to stop fighting and came to the city. Cultural integration was finally achieved when Vallegrande authorities offered refuge to runaway slaves from Santa Cruz during the war of independence. These people had turned against their masters and adopted the national flag first raised in 1809 (Díaz de Oropeza 1997).

With the construction of the road from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz, Vallegrande was consigned to oblivion and it lost its prominent position in agriculture and exchange. Due to the incorporation of new tropical lands (some of which were

filled with rivers) during the National Revolution and the oil boom, big agroindustrial projects encouraged migratory movements from Vallegrande to other regions – especially the Cruceños plains (Peña 1997).

At present, the area is only inhabited by 6,000 people. As a result of the lack of employment and the indifference of the government, people left for other prosperous cities like Santa Cruz and other neighboring countries like Argentina.

Peace is interrupted during specific celebrations (processions, carnivals and national commemorations), when Vallegrande becomes crowded with people coming from different cities – especially, Santa Cruz. On these occasions, the houses which were closed during the year accommodate the visitors once again.

The spaces associated with the 1967 guerrilla arouse interest among natives and tourists. These places have been visited for years, although much more frequently since the finding of "Che" Guevara and his partners' remains.

Bolivia in The 1960s

November 4, 1964, marked the beginning of a long period of military government in Bolivia. The Army Forces, following the National Security Doctrine, played a leading role in this history. General René Barrientos Ortuño launched a campaign to mislead the population. This campaign was primarily aimed at country people, as they represented the less politically developed class. Barrientos respected the Agrarian Reform Law and even planned to speed up the hand-over of property deeds, paying compensations – with money stolen from the national treasury – to the former owners of the land. The plan finally sought to keep workers separate from political decisions – particularly, the Cabinet (Pérez Guillén 2004).

The rural–military alliance took advantage of the absence of workers' representation in the Cabinet. Therefore, rural militias and army regiments worked together to quell labor riots.

The military wing of the *Alianza para el Progreso* (Alliance for Progress), usually known as *Acción Cívica* (Civic Action), intended to fight insurgent forces. This political party had the support of the United States, which helped train and equip soldiers. The military forces controlled part of the *Acción Cívica*'s funds. Thanks to this policy, soldiers, military machines, and vehicles were used in civic capacities; for instance, the construction of schools, roads and bridges, among others.

Military presence was familiar to country people. Soldiers were thought to be playing a key role in the development of rural areas historically left behind by the government. Complicity was part of a political strategy. In this way, Barrientos took advantage of the circumstances. On April 11, during the elections, he settled the *Pacto Anticomunista Militar Campesino* (Rural Anticommunist Military Agreement) in Cochabamba.

Despite Barrientos' popularity in rural areas, he made several decisions which affected countrymen's achievements. Some people associated with the former landowners

managed to hold political positions in the countryside. Furthermore, the handing-over of property deeds – previously slow – finally stopped.

The 1960s were a controversial period in developed and Third World countries. In the twentieth century, the latter were still fighting colonialism. The impossibility of controlling the fate of these nations led to widespread discontent, and the creation and development of guerrilla groups which gradually expanded their area of operation (Pérez Guillén 2004).

Until the end of 1966, the Andean region was primarily used as a route by guerrilla groups. At that moment, national liberation movements were established in different countries. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, one of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, a theoretician of the "War of Guerrillas," a critic of the Latin American reality, and an anti-imperialist ideologist, chose Bolivia as the starting point for a political fight which could spread to the rest of the continent.

The area of Ñancahuazú, with its vast mountainous landscape, its scarce vegetation, and its irregular and damp weather, was the scene of the first guerrilla actions. "Che" Guevara, an "avant-garde" military strategist, thought that the natural setting of the rural area was ideal to create a popular army. In this way, the leaders of the revolution would remain in their positions, and the new members of the army would be taught combat strategies. Modest but continual victories over the enemy would finally establish "Che" Guevara's position in the country.

In the first months, guerrilla soldiers established their camps and received military training. At first, the training process was intended to create a "fighting" consciousness. According to Guevara, discipline was based on guerrilla-men's morality and the strength of their own character (Pérez Guillén 2004). In this sociopolitical setting, "Che" Guevara's movement was born and developed, until the revolutionary leader died in October, 1967.

The Archaeology of a Search

From the moment Commander Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his soldiers were captured and executed at Quebrada del Churo (October 8, 1967), the fate of the bodies became a mystery surrounded by military secrecy.

It took 28 years to shed light on the Commander's whereabouts and find his remains. The testimony given by retired General Mario Vargas Salinas encouraged the search for Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his guerrilla comrades. This testimony was published in the *New York Times* in 1995, as a result of an interview conducted by American journalist John Lee Anderson. Salinas stated that "Che" Guevara had been buried in a mass grave in the old landing runway of Vallegrande airport. This testimony conflicted with other sources which pointed out that "Che" Guevara's remains had been burnt. Although some testimonies had previously described the existence of a burial, rumors only gained strength when Salinas – a high-ranking military officer – confessed.

Once the news spread, the *Asociación de Familiares de Desaparecidos* (Bolivian Association of *Desaparecido's* Relatives) asked the government to search for the body. The request received a positive response. A presidential decree created a commission to carry out the research project. This commission requested the support of the *Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense* (EAAF, Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team) –initially represented by anthropologist Alejandro Incháurregui, and his colleagues Patricia Bernardi and Carlos Somigliana. Forensic anthropologists were assisted by soldiers, who started excavations in the runway at the beginning of December, 1995.

The archaeological excavation began in the southern area of the airport, behind the cemetery, and it lasted until mid-December. A georadar operated by Argentinean technicians was subsequently incorporated into the project. Nevertheless, it failed to produce positive results regarding the location of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's remains. At the same time, the bodies of three guerrilla men were found at Cañada de Arroyo, 5 km away from Vallegrande airport, thanks to the information provided by a witness.

Meanwhile, Jorge González decided to participate in the research. He represented the relatives of the Cuban guerrilla men who died in battle in Bolivia. The archaeological survey and excavation conducted between December 1995 and February 1996 did not provide evidence on the location of "Che" Guevara and his comrades' remains. EAAF members left the project due to the lack of financial support. Finally, a group of Cuban researchers created another team to continue the search.

An Archaeological Search: A Methodological Proposal

The possibility of finding the bodies of Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his comrades depended on the time elapsed since the burial and the circumstances surrounding the event – including political–military activities, as well as physiographic transformations in the landscape. Changes could have made witnesses – as well as the people who participated in the burial – feel disorientated. The relevance of "Che" Guevara should not be underestimated. There was a time in Bolivia when the mere mention of his name was dangerous. The lack of official information on the subject held back researchers from identifying "Che" Guevara's burial place.

Once Cuban researchers took control of the project, they decided to create a multidisciplinary methodological approach to circumscribe the objects of study and explore them in detail. An "expert committee" finally analyzed some of the "problems" created by time and the conditions of the terrain. There was a clear objective: find them all.

The creation of the committee involved the participation of more than 15 institutions, which provided technical information and highly qualified researchers to

define different subjects of study. These institutions pointed out that burials frequently create modifications and anomalies which could be scientifically detected in the terrain.

Along with the information provided by General Vargas, the decision to find "Che" Guevara and the other guerrilla men required a new historical investigation on the location of the burials – either in Vallegrande or other regions of Bolivia. Without a doubt, this was essential for the success of the endeavor.

The search project consisted of five main stages:

1. Historical research
2. Basic studies
3. Archaeological field survey
4. Archaeological excavations
5. Human remains identification

Researchers knew it was not simple to find human remains. They did not have to look for a needle in a haystack; instead, they had to look for the haystack where the needle was hidden.

One of the goals of the research was to detect stratigraphic changes caused by previous excavations. The archaeological work should be firmly based on historical research.

The Historical Research

When researchers started the archaeological survey of the old landing runway of Vallegrande, they also decided to gather information on "Che" Guevara's burial place. Besides General Salinas' statement, researchers found another 100 testimonies on the exact location of the grave. As mentioned above, time and physical transformations made it difficult – even for Salinas – to identify the burial. Thus, the historical research was aimed at searching, analyzing and proving testimonies. It was necessary to find more people directly or indirectly connected to the historical event; that is to say, military officers, soldiers, relatives and possible witnesses who could provide information on the exact location of the burial.

The first methodological step was taken in 1996, when researchers began the historical investigation. The amount of information finally obtained was overwhelming. Thus, it became necessary to refine the methods of investigation. Cross-checking information allowed researchers to evaluate the reliability of historical sources. This process proved to be useful, and the results provided evidence of its validity.

In the case of "Che" Guevara's burial, several testimonies stated that the grave was dug by a bulldozer (a machine used to push over large quantities of soil) on a rainy early morning. The grave must have been more than 2 m deep to accommodate 7 bodies.

Historical information mentioned the number and the names of the people who died with Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Researchers then had to confirm that all these people had been buried in the same location.

Of course, all of these men could have been buried in small, separate groups. If that would have been the case, the process of search would have been difficult. Later, I will explain that there was a correlation between the archaeological findings and the information obtained by the historical research.

Field survey activities began in January, 1997. They covered 20 ha of the airport. Based on historical information, researchers finally focused on twelve 25×30 m areas which amounted to 9,000 square meters. These areas were studied through 1-m sampling intervals. Following historical references, this procedure was particularly intensified in areas 1, 8 and 9.

The Basic Studies

Researchers had to gather information on the characteristics of the terrain with the aim of detecting soil modifications (primarily associated with burials) during the archaeological survey. For this reason, they had to study Vallegrande's soil in detail.

With this objective in mind, several experts joined the research – a pedologist and a soil physicist – among others. They provided significant information on the stratigraphy, geology, geomorphology, and the physical features of Vallegrande airport and the surrounding area. These studies allowed researchers to understand Vallegrande's geological history during the last 10,000 years.

This might seem extreme, but this level of detail was necessary to get a "tomographic" image of the valley. In this way, researchers were able to understand the results obtained by using different techniques during the archaeological field survey.

Almost at the same time, we conducted a topographical survey of the airport as a control for the archaeological excavations.

The Archaeological Field Survey

This stage included:

1. Aerial photographs
2. Geophysical techniques
3. Geochemical techniques

We took low-altitude aerial photographs using regular and infrared photographic film with the aim of detecting possible contrasts created by soil movement. Humidity, temperature, and color changes were particularly considered in this procedure.

We applied the following geophysical techniques: layer-by-layer measurement, electrical and seismic resistivity, georadar and electrical conductivity. In all cases, we used high-tech equipment.

We also conducted penetrability tests through manual and mechanical drills. Penetrability tests determined high and low degrees of soil compaction. Drilling at 4-m to 20-m intervals proved to be effective, as it allowed researchers to obtain soil samples for physical and chemical analyses.

It is important to mention some details of the investigation. The stratigraphy of the terrain was rather homogeneous. It contained *fragipán,* an intermediate and relatively thin layer of soil with particular color, hardness and permeability features. It was commonly used as a diagnostic guide for reading geophysical analysis.

At an average depth between 0.8 and 1.20 m below surface, *fragipán* showed significant changes in geophysical parameters. Based on historical sources, we expected to find that the bulldozer used to dig the grave would have broken the intermediate layer of soil. If the bodies of the guerrilla men were buried more than 2 m underground, soil alterations could be detected by geophysical procedures. Most geophysical techniques used in this research produced some kind of signal when they detected soil alterations – in this case, as a consequence of the opening of a grave and the burial of human remains.

We paid close attention to every single detail. To this end, we analyzed different types of excavations produced by different bulldozers. We considered their possible entrance into (and exit out of) a trench more than 2-m deep. This was a necessary step to fully understand the dimensions and other characteristics of the grave.

Geochemical tests helped us detect organic accumulations and activity areas. In this case, we used two geochemical tests which frequently provide information on human occupation: phosphate determination and pH measurement. We also used color determination as an additional test. We knew color changes could be a possible result of soil removal. We used *Munsell Soil Color Chart* as a means to identify these changes.

Phosphate determination is one of the most popular geochemical techniques in archaeology. Although it has been traditionally applied to agriculture and other related areas, it has also provided significant information on human activities.

Phosphorus comes from bone, feces, flesh and skin. This is why it is used as a geochemical test to find human remains.

Due to its chemical stability, phosphorus (in the form of phosphate) stays where it was originally deposited for a long period of time. Phosphate deposits can be related to human remains or other sources. Excavations are necessary to find out the specific source of phosphorus "contamination." In this research, we used a semiquantitative test particularly suited for fieldwork conditions.

We also tested the pH of the soil, which is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of the sediments. The soil pH scale ranges from 4 to 9 in natural conditions. It is a good indication of human activity, as waste disposal changes the acidity or alkalinity of the soil, and threatens or encourages the preservation of archaeological remains. In this case, we used a portable pH meter (Barba et al. 1991).

Animal and human remains transform the acidic or basic conditions of the soil as a result of putrefaction, humidity and diagenetic exchanges. Ionic mobility and pH variations are a function of water circulation.

In this research, soil samples allowed us to describe phosphate and pH patterns in the study area.

Vallegrande's soils are poor in phosphates and slightly acidic (almost neutral). Animal and human remains produced contrasting phosphate values which indicated the possible location of burials.

The Archaeological Excavation

As the research progressed, we decided to plan the archaeological excavation. According to the information gathered during the historical research and the archaeological field survey, excavations were conducted in the areas which could possibly contain burials. We had the instruments necessary to exhume the bodies, control the evidence, draw maps, take photographs and pack the remains.

The Identification of Human Remains

This was the final stage of the investigation. Researchers used appropriate techniques to identify guerrilla men without mistakes. Physical information was compared to the testimonies provided by relatives and friends.

Results

On June 28, 1997, at 9:30 a.m., we finally found a mass burial. Some time later, we confirmed that it was associated with Ernesto "Che" Guevara's guerrilla group. The grave was located 50 m away from the back of the cemetery, at Vallegrande's old runway.

This result was obtained through the work of researchers in field and laboratory activities. It was a truly interdisciplinary project. We believe it would have been difficult not to achieve this goal, considering the degree of detail of the analysis and the efforts made by all the researchers.

The abundance of historical information and its analysis were crucial in identifying the grave and other burials in Vallegrande and its surrounding areas.

Guerrilla men who fell in combat were buried by their comrades. In the case of Vallegrande, the guerrilla men who were ambushed in Quebrada del Churo and other nearby regions were taken to Pando Regiment to be buried. As it was a military area, access was restricted and the graves remained hidden. This practice started in August, 1967, with the physical extermination of Vado del Yeso group.

In the case of Ernesto "Che" Guevara and his comrades, we needed to confirm previous information on the location of the grave. The interpretation of the exact burial place at Vallegrande's runway was strengthened by General Vargas' testimony. This statement even allowed us to choose the most suitable way to conduct the excavation.

Basic studies provided relevant information on the physical–mechanical characteristics of Vallegrande's soils. These analyses were necessary to gather data which could be compared to the subsequent results of geophysical investigations. Geophysical analyses included testing excavations conducted in different areas of the runway. Testing excavations were suggested by researchers, and they were used as quality control samples.

Pedological and geophysical studies proved the homogeneity of the stratigraphy, the depth and inclination of different soil layers (mainly *fragipán*), the composition and size of the particles, and the conductivity of the soil. We literally X-rayed the area up to 4-m depth. This procedure can be compared to a medical surgery. When surgeons perform operations in patients, they also perform additional analysis on the exact location and dimensions of the diseased organs.

Geophysical techniques proved to be effective in practice. Georadar and electrical resistivity/conductivity analyses were necessary to determine suggestive anomalies. In the first case, we used georadar antennas to maximize the reception of signals; in the second case, we employed different procedures to gain access to vertical and horizontal information. Wenner and dipolar methods were more than helpful.

As mentioned above, 3 of the 12 areas thoroughly analyzed at Vallegrande airport (7, 8 and 9) had better chances of getting positive results. The choice of 1-m sample intervals and 1-m transect intervals reduced the possibility of leaving something out. Nevertheless, we did not ignore the possible existence of individual burials. Therefore, we previously planned this procedure and the reduction of sample intervals when necessary.

The knowledge of the possible depth of the burial and the hardness of the soil facilitated the analysis of soil anomalies. At that moment, sociopolitical conditions in Bolivia (such as the change of government and the possibility that the new administration could stop the research) forced us to quicken the pace of excavations. This situation helps explain the way in which we proceeded.

On May, 1997, Aleyda Guevara, "Che" Guevara's daughter, received a letter from Gustavo Villoldo – one of the chiefs of the CIA Teams in the 1960s. In the letter, he offered to collaborate with the research. He stressed that he had been an important figure in Bolivian history. He added that Cuban researchers lacked knowledge on the exact burial place, as well as efficiency in their work. Aleyda Guevara did not answer the letter. We knew we could only expect problems from Villoldo. He probably had the intention to stop or delay the search until Banzer could take power (the presidential campaign predicted the victory of the former dictator). The presidential decree which authorized the research was in danger. Villoldo finally wrote to the government.

Under these circumstances, on May 19, the presidential decree of November, 1995, was enforced. This decree was created to repeal another one signed by

Vallegrande authorities. These people had previously managed to stop the investigation for 2 months. The consensus between Cuba and Bolivia on the character of the research gave us some time to continue the search, focusing our attention on Vallegrande's most promising areas. Moreover, the government warned us that if we could not find "Che" Guevara's remains in a reasonable time, they would call Gustavo Villoldo (Pérez Guillén 2004).

Working under pressure, we realized we needed to gain some time. This is the reason why we decided to use a bulldozer. Even though it was not methodologically appropriate, the way in which we used it minimized possible damages on the remains. We tried to control the speed and depth of the bucket. The latter was used as a scraper, and its teeth reached 10-cm depth. During the first 150 cm, the bulldozer was used as usual. Then, it was controlled by one of the researchers.

Once we found the first human remains, we began to use traditional methods of excavation. The hardness of the soil complicated the procedure. According to historical sources, the bodies were buried in a rainy morning. Therefore, osteological remains should be almost cemented in the ground. We used hammers and cross-cut chisels to delimit the findings. When the trench was widened to facilitate the work and the preservation of the remains, we decided to lay out a 3×4 m grid. It was divided into twelve 1×1 squares in order to control and register the evidence. Later, we used archaeological tools once again (brushes, dentist tools, among others). We defined a conventional "level 0" to measure the depth of the findings. As the excavation proceeded, we exposed the original floor of the grave at 1.93-m depth.

We exposed and individualized the remains in order to understand the taphonomy of the assemblage. We found similarities between the position of the remains and the testimonies which stated that the bodies had been thrown from a van. This van could have parked at the north end of the excavation.

The osteological remains of four individuals (bodies 4–7) were found one on top of the other. Bodies 4–6 were separated, facilitating the excavation.

Given the similarities between the historical testimonies and the archaeological remains, we knew there was a high probability of finding "Che" Guevara's body. As it was a small group of individuals, the process of identification was simple.

The archaeological excavation was carried out by a team of Cuban researchers and three Argentinean colleagues. The latter participated in the first stages of the project and had wide experience in this kind of work.

Geochemical studies detected organic accumulations. During the archaeological survey, we took soil samples and analyzed them in the laboratory. We conducted several excavations in the areas where we had found high concentrations of phosphates. Even though these concentrations were not associated with guerrilla men's dead bodies, they were associated with different sources of "contamination."

We took 1,200 soil samples in the area of the airport and made 1,300 phosphate analysis. In the area where we thought the bodies where buried (that is to say, in the strip of soil parallel to the slope of the old runway), we drilled the soil at 1-m intervals. We could not use geochemical methods to find the grave, as it was impossible to

penetrate deep into the sediment with mechanical or manual drills. Drills wore out because of erosion. It was much more difficult to use manual drills.

We finally proved that in the areas where the Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team had conducted some of the excavations it was easier to penetrate the soil. We finally decided to determine the exact localization of these areas of the runway.

After the exhumation of the bodies, we realized that geochemical analyses would have provided more information if the drills would have penetrated deeper into the soil. As a matter of fact, several samples had been taken where the burial was eventually found. Nevertheless, they could only reach 0.90-m depth.

Once the bodies were exhumed, we took soil samples from the grave at 0.25-m intervals. As the grave had 12 square meters, we took 208 soil samples. We made phosphate, pH and color determinations. We finally proved that it was possible to find osteological remains using these tests. The results were shown in isoline maps. We believe these maps will be useful in future investigations, as they show the pattern of contamination produced by mass graves (Figs. 9.1–9.6).

Through phosphate, pH and color determination analysis we were able to find out:

1. The highest levels of phosphates were found in the area where the bodies were buried. Out of this area of intense "contamination," changes in phosphate concentration allowed us to determine the area of occupation. This is certainly useful, as it makes it easy to localize the burials.
2. It is possible to identify pH variations as a result of the movement and exchange of organic liquids. These variations depend on the hydrological regime of the area. In our case study, the lowest pH values were found in the burial. pH values gradually increased in peripheral areas, showing the movement of the ions which change this parameter.
3. The color of the grave's floor was rather homogeneous. Small variations in color were associated with the action of the bulldozer during the burial, the presence of the bodies, their decomposition and the sediments used to cover the remains. It was impossible to find contrasting colors with the aim of defining a diagnostic pattern for burials. When the stratigraphy was difficult to understand, color determination proved useful.

The "pattern of contamination" associated with human remains might be relevant to find individual or mass graves. This is the reason why we have insisted on the description of every single detail of the archaeological survey and the excavation.

Here we present some graphics of the burials detected in other areas near the runway. One of these graphics shows the results of pH and phosphate analysis in a mass grave (containing three individuals) and in an individual burial. In the first case, it is possible to observe a variation in the pH pattern as a result of water infiltration. In the other case, pH variations were produced as a result of the excavations conducted in the first stage of the project. As the excavation hole was left open, it became flooded. The excess of humidity produced additional ionic movement. Therefore, the characteristic pH pattern defining archaeological burials was modified. In our case study, it is possible to state that at least one of the bodies showed the expected pH pattern for this kind of context.

Fig. 9.1 Georadar (as well as electrical conductivity/resistivity analysis) was useful in determining anomalies – which provided information on possible places of burial
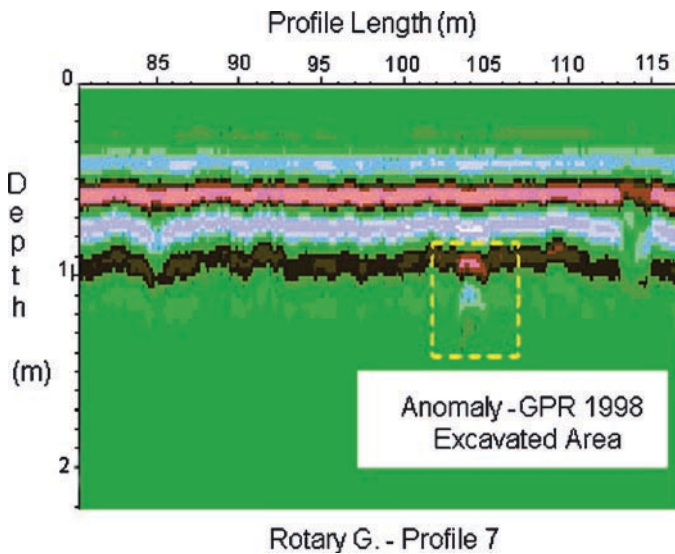
Fig. 9.2 Anomaly detected by the georadar. It suggested the possible presence of a burial – which was later confirmed by the excavation

The geochemical evidence of the individual grave showed the characteristic pattern expected for an individual buried in right dorsal decubitus position. This body was easily detected. Near its proximal region, researchers found 45 cm of contaminated
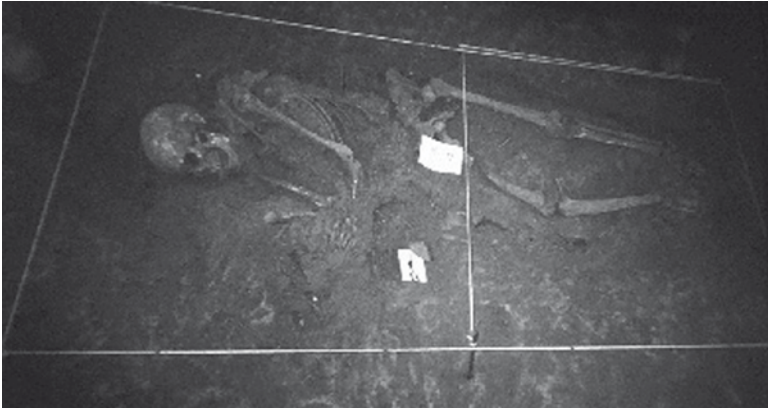
Fig. 9.3 Osteological remains of one of the guerrilla men we were looking for. The existence of the burial was detected by the georadar
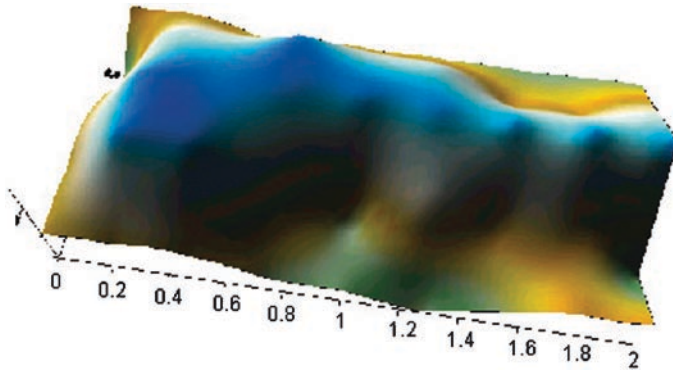
Fig. 9.4 Map of anomalies indicating high concentrations of phosphates. These concentrations finally coincided with the place of burial
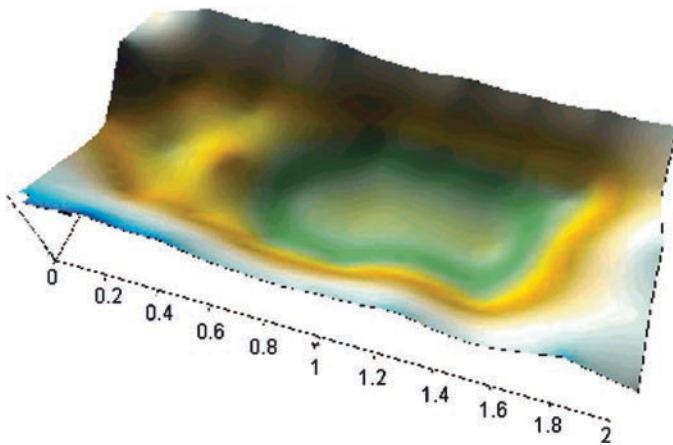
Fig. 9.5 pH values were low in the area were one of the bodies was buried
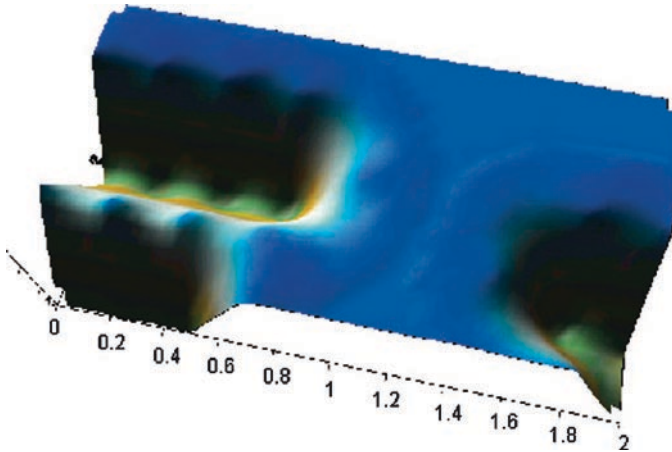
Fig. 9.6 Map of the color of the soil were one of the bodies was buried. It shows the conversion of Munsell color references to numbers

soil. The geochemical analysis of this kind of sediments leads to positive results when experts take samples at a controlled depth.

In the case of the mass grave, we decided to take a soil sample from the thoracic cavity of one of the bodies. We took samples at 10-cm intervals and conducted phosphate analysis. We finally realized that when drainage conditions were appropriate, it was possible to find 40 additional centimeters of soil with high phosphate values. These values indicated the presence of organic accumulations. This information is particularly relevant during archaeological surveys.

It is worth pointing out that the geochemical analysis performed in this research were valid for burials less than 30-years old, with specific sedimentary characteristics. However, in the case of pH and color analysis, it is necessary to understand the particular dynamics and exchange processes of each archaeological context. It is also important to consider the time and circumstances surrounding the burial, the associated materials and the hydrological regime of the area, among other factors. Nevertheless, phosphates show a more universal behavior. Even in soils with abundant phosphates, the presence of human remains can be detected after thousands of years.

Once the bodies were sorted out in the excavation, we decided to take photographs and make a video of the burial place and its surrounding area. We finally removed the bodies, storing the remains in separate containers. We washed the bones in the laboratory. Once they were dried, we tried to restore them. We analyzed one body at a time. Three Cuban and Argentinean experts worked in the final stage of the excavation and the identification.

The first step of the identification process was to determine race (technically speaking). We knew that it was a "closed group," made up of seven individuals: four Cuban, two Bolivian, and one Peruvian individual. Historical information provided clues to identify the bodies. It was possible to distinguish two different

groups of people: one of them was made up of four Cuban individuals, the other one was made up of the other three persons. In the latter case, the experts were able to identify the Amerindian pattern (which was not present among the Cubans), in some characteristics of the skull (for instance, the shovel-shaped teeth). The anthropological determination of age, sex, race and height provided relevant information. Dentograms, dental X-rays, cranial photographic superimposition and DNA analysis made it possible to identify each individual.

This procedure was repeated in each case where historical information pointed out the presence of guerrilla-men burials.

Final Remarks

This research proved the efficiency of our methodological proposal, as it allowed us to find the clandestine grave where the guerrilla men had been buried. Leaving aside the results of the investigation, it is important to stress the multidisciplinary work involved in the project. It can be considered an exemplary teamwork effort. None of the members of the project tried to stand out. Each of them played a particular role in the investigation. All the experts collaborated with the rest of the researchers. The experience represented a new way of learning.

In our opinion, the five stages of our methodological proposal are sufficiently general to be applied in other archaeological contexts and experiences.

Once again, archaeology proves to be an effective science. Interdisciplinarity plays a fundamental role in its development, allowing researchers to study human activities – such as individual and mass graves. This procedure was applied to find the bodies of other guerrilla men, not only in Vallegrande, but also in other places in Bolivia.

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Chapter 10
"Mexico, 1968": Among Olympic Fanfares, Government Repression and Genocide

Patricia Fournier and Jorge Martínez Herrera

And to that livid flash of light… who is it?, who is the killer? Who are the ones who breathe their last and die?
Who are the one who run away without their shoes on?
Who are the ones who go to a prison cell?
Who are the ones whose bodies decompose at the hospital?
Who are the ones who are left forever speechless with horror?

...
Do not look for what you cannot find: traces, dead bodies

...
Do not look in the files; nothing was registered there

...
I remember... let's remember
This is the only way we can help to shed light on
a stained consciousness,
a furious text, an open gate,
a face hidden behind a mask
I remember... let's remember
until justice could be felt among all of us"

(Tlatelolco memorial – Castellanos 1995:296)

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From The Ancient City of Tlatelli to Plaza de Las Tres Culturas

Tlatelolco – which in *Nahuatl* means the place of the mound – is currently located at the heart of the city of Mexico, and it was the scene of dramatic events during the last centuries. The pre-Columbian founding of the settlement dates back to the sixteenth century. It took place on a small islet in Texcoco lake. Tlatelolco flourished under the Aztec hegemony, and it was the seat of the most important market in the New World (Gibson 1980). Nevertheless, the city's progress was interrupted by the fall of the twin cities of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco on August 13, 1521. When the Spanish conquest was over, the vanquished stayed in Tlatelolco, and the Spaniards stayed in Mexico-Tenochtitlan (Berlin and Barlow 1980:75).

Once Tlatelolco turned into an "aboriginal town," it lost its political and economic importance at the hands of Mexico: the seat of the viceroyal powers. Since 1531, Franciscan friars intended to convert the indigenous peoples to Catholicism. They also constructed several buildings: a church to honor Santiago (St. James), a monastery, and a "school to make Indians study" (Villaseñor y Sánchez 1980:133). These structures were located in the center of the settlement, surrounding the plaza (Villaseñor y Sánchez 1980; Barlow 1987). After gaining independence in 1821, and once the "Indian Republics" were abolished, Tlatelolco survived as an impoverished neighborhood with houses in ruins. It gradually grew during the twentieth century, until it was included in an urban renewal project in the 1960s. This project involved the construction of apartment buildings, the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores'* skyscraper (Department of International Relations' skyscraper), and the development of an archaeological area. Many of the buildings which made up the sacred precinct of the pre-Hispanic city were left open (González Rul 1988). They blended in with the buildings near downtown Mexico City.

Plaza de las Tres Culturas was formed in this way, at the center of the architectural complex where aboriginal traditions mixed with Hispanic and modern Mexican symbols (Fig. 10.1). On October 2, 1968, 10 days after the start of the XIX Olympic Games, Plaza de las Tres Culturas witnessed the horrific murder of students (Labastida 1998) at the hands of the repressive state apparatus. This genocide took more lives than the 1985 earthquake, when the forces of nature made several buildings of the housing unit of Tlatelolco collapse.

"Poor Mexico, So Far from God and So Close to the United States"[1]

Since the first supposedly democratic government in the 1920s, the modern history of Mexico has been continuously bathed in the blood of workers, government

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[1] This phrase – which is still in use today – was coined in the nineteenth century, after the war between Mexico and the United States. It particularly refers to the feelings of despair created by American domination.

opponents, farmers, indigenous peoples, members of rival political parties and students (Labastida 1998).

Throughout the twentieth century, for more than seven decades and unlike most Latin American countries, only one political party (the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* – PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party) ruled Mexico, achieving success through all kind of illegal and obscure mechanisms (Story 1986; Reding 1995). This dictatorship largely depended on the control of workers and farmers' organizations, the infiltration of government agents into students' associations, and the management of the economic and political system to benefit those who concentrated power and money.

Public narratives were controlled by the government. The media were at the mercy of authoritarianism and censorship (Reding 1995; Monsiváis 2001:22). Mexican history was clearly written beforehand. The United States had to worry little about Mexican stability or the Communist threat in the southern frontier. Since the beginning of the Cold War and the red-hunt, the government of Mexico welcomed American military advisors and CIA agents. FBI and CIA reports and activities made it possible (and probably still make it possible) to maintain stability and guarantee foreing investment, capitalizing the poverty of the population.

According to Agee (1975:503), a CIA detractor, the operations conducted in Latin America at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s not only

intended to fight leftist movements, but also to strengthen the position of those in power. The latter were closely connected to financial activities and the United States government. They were interested in stability and making enormous profits from investments. The unequal distribution of wealth and the miserable living conditions in the country encouraged the creation of extreme political movements influenced by socialist ideas. The governments of Mexico and the United States wanted to eliminate these movements, as they posed a serious threat to capitalism.

Everything is Possible in Peace

In the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, foreign investment and the exploitation of natural resources stimulated industrialization and economic development. In this context, Mexico became an appropriate candidate city for the XIX Olympic Games. 1968 was a year of social unrest, associated with youth-led protests in Europe and the Americas. Mexican President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz earmarked a large sum of money (140 million dollars coming from international private capitals and the waste of national funds – Mabry 1982) to guarantee that the country was ready to receive sportsmen and tourists from all over the world.

The Olympic torch came from Greece under the motto "everything is possible in peace." It was going to light the recently remodeled stadium of the Autonomous National University of Mexico (the new Olympic Stadium) during the opening ceremony on October 12, 1968. The success of the event would be guaranteed at all costs. The ruling party wanted to be internationally acknowledged for maintaining an image of political stability and economic progress under the protection of American imperialism (Paz 1970). Nevertheless, once demagogy was left aside, reality was completely different. Despite its image of wealth and abundance, Mexico was "a country with 20 million hungry people and 10 million illiterate people, a country where a little political group stayed in power and imposed its own truth and law" (Ramírez 1998a:218, the translation is ours).

The 1968 Mexican student movement (Fig. 10.2) was the historical result of a decade of government repression on educational and working institutions. It was closely connected to the lack of economic support for popular education, the breaking up of protests, and the extrajudicial arrest of progressive trade union leaders who became political prisoners.

At first, students organized themselves spontaneously. They were particularly concerned about university and educational problems in the country. Later, in a context of increasing political authoritarianism, they expected to defy and confront PRI's despotic control (Álvarez Garín 2002:165, 167). The students rejected government domination and despotism, and they demanded an open dialog between the state and society. People wanted to enjoy freedom and democracy (Montes 1998), but they knew they were difficult to achieve while the PRI remained in power. Nevertheless, it is necessary

Fig. 10.2 Organization of the 1968 student movement (taken from Anaya 1969:16)

to make it clear that students had no intention of overthrowing the government. Although several members of leftist organizations participated in the movement, they respected its democratic structure and leading positions (Álvarez Garín 2002).

Police and army forces reacted with violence in a skirmish among pre-university students from rival public institutions which occurred near downtown on July 22, 1968. They even used bazookas against students in several demonstrations. They also used them against the educational buildings that the students had previously occupied as a sign of protest. By the end of July, there were 1,200 people under arrest and 400 people injured. There were rumors that the death toll rose to 200. Most people condemned the action of police and military agents in assaulting the *Instituto Politécnico Nacional* (National Polytechnic Institute) and the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (Autonomous National University of Mexico) (Menéndez Rodríguez 1968a).

The *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (National Strike Council) was established at the beginning of August. It was made up of students and teachers of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, the *Instituto Politécnico Nacional*, and several private and state schools and universities. The *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* had headquarters all over the country, and they decided to interrupt classes (Menéndez Rodríguez 1968a; Ramírez 1998b:81). On August 4, the student movement submitted a petition asking for (Menéndez Rodríguez 1968b):

1. Freedom for political prisoners.
2. Abolition of the Federal Legal Code defining the crime of "social dissolution." These articles allowed the government to break up student demonstrations.[2]
3. Dissolution of police shock troops known as "granaderos."
4. Dismissal of police chiefs.
5. Compensation for victims' relatives (dead and injured people involved in the conflict).
6. Define government employees' responsibility in the bloodbath.

Railroad workers, teachers, intellectuals, leftist organizations and other social groups finally joined the students (Fig. 10.3). They created a resistance movement based on moral indignation, anti-authoritarianism, and the fight for human rights (Ponce 1998).
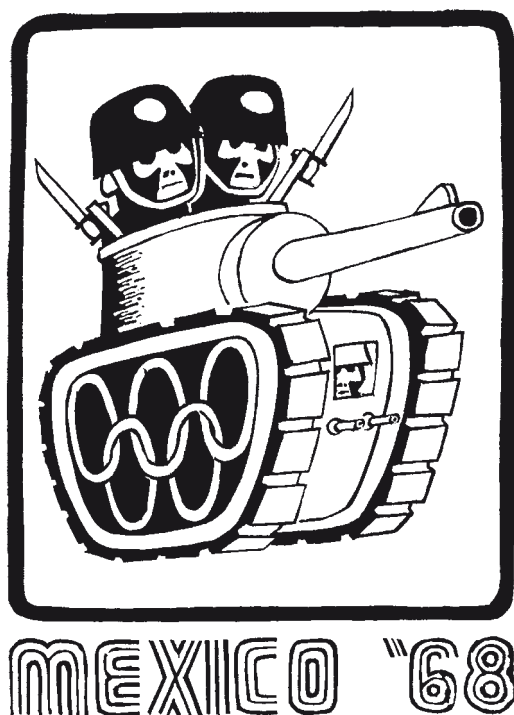
Fig. 10.3 Protest flyer of the 1968 student movement (Particular collection)

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[2] The crime of "social dissolution" was established by the Federal Legal Code in times of war. It allowed the government to act against people who were suspected of being dangerous. As a consequence, people with "leftist tendencies" could be arrested with a total lack of consideration.

There were several massive demonstrations in August and September. One of them was attended by 300,000 people who reached the *Zocalo*, in front of the National Palace. Several police officers were assigned to go undercover as students. They acted as agitators. They pretended to share extreme leftist ideas, but they committed acts of vandalism with the aim of gaining public support for government repression. The government stated that the student movement was part of a communist conspiracy[3] (Menéndez Rodríguez 1968a). There was no answer to the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga's* demands. Most of them were discredited by Díaz Ordaz, who rejected dialog and stated that he was more than qualified to guarantee national security. The president made it clear he did not want any problems whatsoever during the Olympic Games (Ramírez 1998a).

For this reason, government repression continued. On September 18, military forces occupied the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México's* campus, violating university autonomy. Demonstrations and clashes between police/military forces and students did not stop (Ramírez 1998a, 1998b). Social discontent grew, information was officially manipulated, the number of dead and arrested people was concealed, and the president did not consider the petition. In that context, the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* called for a meeting. The *Consejo* decided to organize a new demonstration on October 2, at Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Fig. 10.4) – a huge place where people could gather, as in the case of demonstrations held on September 7 and 27 (Ramírez 1998a). Neither the organizers nor the people in the demonstration suspected that Tlatelolco was about to become the scene of one of the most horrific genocides in recent Mexican history.

"We Do Not Fight for Victory, But for Reason"[4]

In recent years, several texts and images have shed light on the events of October 2, 1968. General Marcelino García Barragán, Secretary of Defense during Díaz Ordaz administration, left several military reports and other illuminating documents for the benefit of "history, which is written in long term" (Scherer and Monsiváis 2002:23 the translation is ours). In 1998, an important television network showed less than 10 min of a 24 h film record. The images were taken by several cameras set up around Plaza de las Tres Culturas by order of the Secretary of Government (Montemayor 1999:429; Gallegos 2000; Canal Seis de Julio 2002). Moreover, there

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[3] The government accused the students of creating chaos during the Olympic Games, attempting to overthrow the Bourgeois State, creating a focus of resistance and urban guerrilla, accusing Díaz Ordaz of being a puppet of the Yankee imperialism, embracing the ideals of the Cuban Revolution, fighting with workers for socialism, conducting terrorist acts against public buildings, adopting Marxist-Leninist ideas with the aim of making the government collapse (Corona del Rosal 1995).

[4] This and the subsequent subheadings are slogans of the 1968 movement.
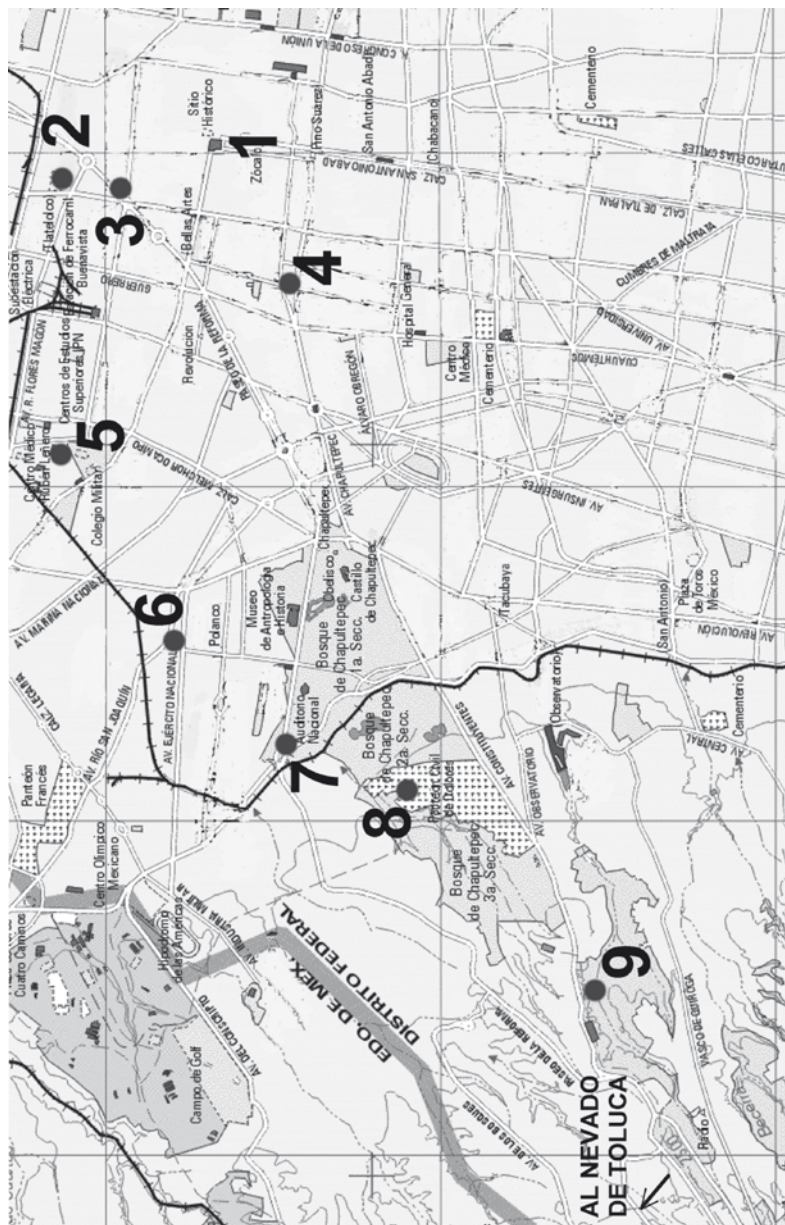
Fig. 10.4 Map of the central-western area of Mexico City, Federal District. Here it is possible to find some of the places mentioned throughout the text: 1. National Palace, 2. Tlatelolco: Plaza de las Tres Culturas, 3. '3° Delegación del Ministerio Público', 4. 'Servicio Médico Forense', 5. Green Cross (Rubén Lereño Hospital), 6. Red Cross, 7. Campo Marte, 8. Panteón Civil de Dolores, 9. Campo Militar No 1. Guía Roji 2005 (Edited by Fournier from http://www.guiaroji.com.mx

are several photographs which survived the government attack on journalism. *El Universal* published them in 2002 (Almazán 2002a; Rodríguez Reyna 2002), as well as some striking pictures taken by a photographer who captured the horror experienced by students arrested at Chihuahua building (Gil Olmos 2001a; Martínez 2001a).

At present, there are new testimonies given by witnesses who finally broke silence and told what happened in Tlatelolco. It is possible to access declassified documents of the CIA, the FBI, the United States Department of Defense and the United States Embassy in Mexico (Doyle 2003). Millions of files of the former *Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales* (General Direction of Political and Social Investigations) and the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* (Federal Direction of Security) are also available. Although most of these documents are mutilated, they provide relevant information on government repression in Tlatelolco (Scherer and Monsiváis 2004). These pieces of evidence are part and parcel of a complex puzzle. It is necessary to solve it to reconstruct Tlatelolco massacre. In this chapter, we use historical documents and other sources of information to present a canonical version of the events.

The demonstration was planned to go from Plaza de las Tres Culturas[5] to one of the main buildings of the *Instituto Politécnico Nacional*, which was located relatively near Tlatelolco. Because of its height and privileged location in front of the plaza, the speakers chose the third floor balcony of Chihuahua building to give their speech (Fig. 10.5). However, when everything was ready, the speakers told the audience that the demonstration was going to be canceled. They were afraid of agitators who could incite violence and government repression. They proceeded to explain the political situation, and they had the intention of talking about the international support the movement had received (Álvarez Garín 2002:85).

On October 2, 1968, at 17:30, approximately 10,000 people (Gil Olmos 2001b:18) filled the plaza, standing up or sitting on the ground. The peaceful demonstration gathered men, women, children, elderly people, students, teachers, employees, journalists, railroad workers who supported the movement (Mendoza Gaytán 2004), and ordinary people such as "street vendors, housewives with babies in their arms, inhabitants of the residential unit, curious passers-by, typical onlookers, and many other people" (Poniatowska 1969:166).

Nobody knew why military troops, policemen and even army tanks arrived to Tlatelolco and posted around the plaza and the main access points (Montemayor 1999). Everything seems to point out that most of the officers were not aware of the

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[5] "The plaza … is a flagstone rectangle raised 2 or 3 meters off the ground. It is surrounded by the ruins of Tlatelolco on the west; Santiago's Church and – behind it – the 'Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores' [Department of Foreign Affairs] on the south; the Escuela Vocacional Número 7' [Vocational School No 7] of the IPN ['Instituto Politécnico Nacional'] and some apartment buildings on the north; and Chihuahua building on the east. The main access points are two narrow corridors and a central 20-meter-wide staircase. The slope is lower on the north side and might be easily climbed" (Álvarez Garín 2002:86, the translation is ours).

Fig. 10.5 Panoramic view of Plaza de las Tres Culturas from Chihuahua building. *Foreground*: pre-Columbian structures of the city of Tlatelolco and Santiago's church. *Left*: 'Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores'. *Center*: Plaza's esplanade, commemorative monument to the fallen on 2 October 1968. *Background*: ISSSTE's building (Photo by Martínez Herrera, 2005)

historic role they were about to play. Their orders were to guarantee public security, "clear, with care, Plaza de las Tres Culturas of students" (Scherer and Monsiváis 2002:111), "repel the action of subversive groups in case of an armed conflict and avoid the killing of innocent people if possible" (Rodríguez and Lomas 2001:4).

Some days before, the High Command had planned an operation to stop the demonstration. Important decisions were made by Díaz Ordaz, the Commander-in-Chief, and probably the Secretary of Government Luis Echeverría Álvarez, who became President in 1970. As a matter of fact, Echeverría Álvarez represented Díaz Ordaz in the presidential elections. Echeverría used his influence and relationships with the CIA to propel his career (Agee 1975). He also ensured the continuity of Díaz Ordaz's policy of control (Flores 2002; Petrich 2004).

At about 18:10, a helicopter dropped flares to indicate the beginning of the operation. Major State snipers were posted at several buildings, including Chihuahua, and the vaulted roof of the colonial church (Fig. 10.6). They did not wear uniforms. They opened fire on civilians and military officers as well. They even shot the General in charge of the soldiers when he was asking the people to disperse (Montemayor 1999:46; Álvarez Garín 2002:86). Snipers created confusion. Their main goal was to unleash military forces' violence while they were trying to repel the aggression supposedly coming from radical students. Light tanks
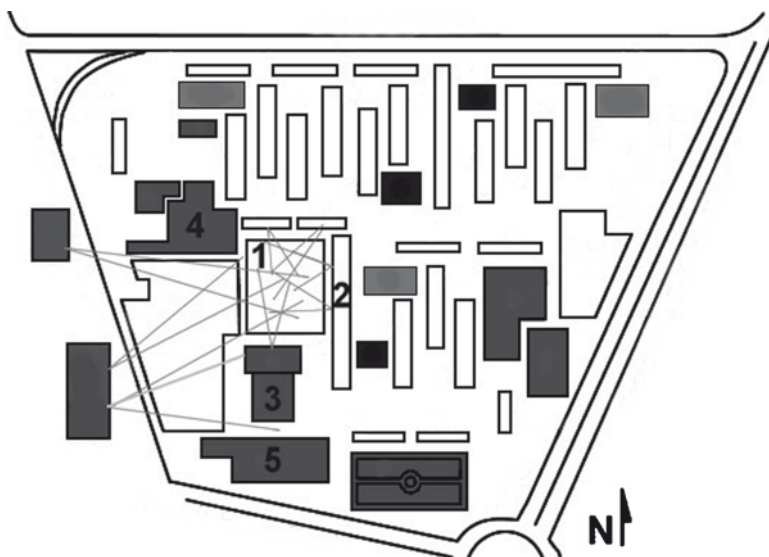
Fig. 10.6 Snipers position at several buildings surrounding Plaza de las Tres Culturas, and direction of the shots. 1. Plaza de las Tres Culturas, 2. Chihuahua building, 3. Santiago's Church, 4. 'Instituto Politécnico Nacional', 5. 'Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores' (Sketch by Patricia Fournier, 2005)

of the *Escuadrón Blindado* (Armored Squadron) entered the plaza, firing their machine guns at the crowd. The *Batallón de Fusileros Paracaidistas* (Parachute Rifle Battalion) and the *Batallón de Guardias Presidenciales* (Presidential Guard Battalion) also participated in the events. Being caught in the crossfire, civilians tried to get to the church, which was transformed into an execution wall. They also tried to run to the nearest exit: a corridor between the plaza and Chihuahua building (Álvarez Garín 2002:86). Right there, they were caught by soldiers who slaughtered them with bayonets and guns. Men, women (some even pregnant) and children were injured and killed (García Hernández 1998; O'Donnell 2003). They were everywhere, bleeding and receiving no medical attention (Rodríguez 2002). Some shots reached people in their apartments. In only 10 min, the plaza became a mousehole and Chihuahua building, a mousetrap (Gil Olmos 2001b:18).

The members of the *Batallón Olimpia* (Olimpia Batallion),[6] who were part of the Presidential Guard, wore civilian clothes and a white glove or handkerchief on their left hand as a distinctive sign. These military agents carried out their

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[6] "The 'Batallón Olimpia' was created in February, 1968, with the aim of watching the buildings of the Olympic Games and carrying out certain orders. It depended directly on the Joint Chief of Staff and, in consequence, on the president of the republic. It was made up of agents from different battalions all over the country, and it had an extraordinary number of noncommissioned officers… On October 2, it was increased by the addition of two cavalry units" (Taibo 1998:10, the translation is ours).

orders: block Chihuahua building, arrest the members of the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga*, take control of the second and the third floors, and shoot the crowd (Taibo 1998). Inside the labyrinthine building, people who sought refuge from the 90-min shooting were killed at point-blank range. Some of them were caught in the ground floor.

Outside Chihuahua building, the shooting became sporadic, but it was intensified around 23:00. At daybreak, dead bodies were piled up. Later, they were moved by unidetified vehicles (Alcántara 2002b; Castillo 2003). Firefighters showed up later and in the middle of the rain. They had to clean up the rivers of blood running through the plaza. The entire place was covered with clothes blackened by gunpowder or pierced with bayonets and bullets, shoes, pamphlets, pieces of skulls, fingers, among other things (Almazán 2002c; Rodríguez 2002).

The *Batallón Olimpia* broke into the surrounding buildings (including Chihuahua), where many students had sought refuge in the terrace floor or with some neighbors. These students were arrested, beaten up and forced to undress (Gil Olmos 2001a:12–13; Álvarez Garín 2002:88). Many young people who had been extrajudicially arrested were finally taken to army facilities (Almazán 2002b, c; Scherer and Monsiváis 2004:25).

"Violence is Against Us, but Not in Us"

Since daybreak, the relatives of the people who had disappeared at Tlatelolco tried to gather information on their whereabouts at hospitals (such as the Green or Red Cross Hospital Rubén Leñero), and judicial and forensic offices. In many cases, they did not succeed. Some of them were forced to accept death certificates stating that their relatives had died of natural causes to recover their bodies (Taibo 1998; Ramos Pérez 2002).

Some witnesses saw that the disfigured and damaged bodies of men, women, and children killed at Tlatelolco (Almazán 2002c) were at the *Servicio Médico Forense* (Forensic Medical Service) and the *3° Delegación del Ministerio Público* (3rd Office of the Public Department) (Fig. 10.7), among other places. Only a few dead bodies were taken there by ambulances or taxis. Most of them (especially those without ID cards) were taken by army trucks (Rodríguez Reyna 2002). In many cases, executors stripped the bodies and took their belongings. Even today, it is a mystery how many people died because of the injuries they received at Plaza de las Tres Culturas and what happened to their bodies.

Many activists who survived the massacre were persecuted. Some people were kidnapped; and hundreds of men and women were held captive at military facilities without an order of arrest. Later, most of them were sent to prison. Victims were subject to inhuman treatment and torture. They were forced to admit the official history of the events. Authorities planted evidence against them (Correa 2001:31; Álvarez Garín 2002:112–113), and they were summarily executed.

Fig. 10.7 Young people murdered at Plaza de las Tres Culturas (taken from Álvarez Garín 2002:35)

The media were forced to keep silent and the agents of the Government Department looted the written and graphic records of the event: "they were stealing history" (Almazán 2002c:14). Tlatelolco massacre was still taking place when the media communicated the official version of the events. According to it, the army had been attacked by students who acted as snipers; there was no choice but fighting the "terrorists" who attempted to overthrow Díaz Ordaz's government (Álvarez Garín 2002:89). In this way, victimizers were transformed into victims.

The agents of the American government were informed of all the stages of the student movement before the massacre. At first, they thought that government reports describing the connection between foreign communist groups and Mexican students were true. After October 2, they found out that foreign activists or communist conspiracies had never existed. In confidential reports to Washington, American agents stated that the Tlatelolco incident was a sign of Díaz Ordaz's clumsiness; that military agents did not carry out the orders correctly. They also added that students acting as snipers were responsible for the military counter-offensive (Doyle 2003).

In a political context close to martial law, massive demonstrations were forbidden as a means of denying "terrorists" the opportunity to threaten "public security." Although there were several demonstrations and meetings (some of them even headed by *desaparecidos'* mothers – Fig. 10.8), the student

Fig. 10.8 October 1968 demonstration headed by *desaparecidos'* mothers (taken from Scherer and Monsiváis 2002:148)

leaders were imprisoned and many activists run away to avoid arrest. Generalized fear destroyed the movement, but its political ideas survived and subsequently gave birth to other movements (Álvarez Garín 2002:199). All this happened in the presence of real state terrorism.

It is estimated that more than 8,000 soldiers, *granaderos*, Mexico DC police officers, secret, local and federal police agents, mounted policemen, members of the *Batallón Olimpia*, firefighters, and 300 vehicles (tanks, light tanks, armored cars and jeeps with mounted machine guns) took part of the massacre. There were more than 700 people injured, and the death toll is still a matter of speculation. The number of students and workers who were arrested climbed to 2,000. Some of them were finally released a couple of hours or days later. Most people were released in December, 1968. Meanwhile, more than 800 individuals remained in prison without trial until they were granted an amnesty in 1971 (Taibo 1998; Zarco 1998).

In September, 1969, Díaz Ordaz publically assumed responsibility for the events. As a matter of fact, it was part of the constitutional attributions of the president of the Republic. Some years later, he stressed that he was proud of having served the nation in 1968 (Canal Seis de Julio 2002). In short, state repressive forces ensured – to the sound of fanfares and before the eyes of foreigners – the development of the ironically called "Peace Olympic Games."

In the mid-1970s, a former CIA agent (Agee 1975) stated that the Mexican government smashed the movement and probably killed hundreds of people in October, 1968. He also said that similar events took place in other countries where people were trying to change the system.

"The Army's Duty is to Defend People, Not to Assault them"

In Mexico, the social and cultural dimensions of repression invest it with meaning and power. According to the national law, the state is entitled to manipulate the dichotomy of violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2005:1–2). In this way, violence unleashed by the government was legitimate. Meanwhile, the student movement was declared illegitimate on the basis of false evidence.[7] The members of the movement were forced to sign sworn statements, accepting the charges of rebellion, criminal association, sedition, property damage, robbery, plundering, attack and murder of authority agents (Martínez 2003).

Based on these statements, the intervention of the military forces seemed to be reasonable. Furthermore, agitators deserved to be punished for their actions. The very construction of an official historical narrative was an act of violence. Repressive states control social memory to eradicate moral indignation. Thus, historical memory is erased; protests are labeled as "subversive"; and death tolls are manipulated. Forced amnesia is a repressive instrument of the state (Monsiváis 2001:21–22).

According to international law, forced disappearance is a crime against humanity. In democratic political systems (even in the case of "supposedly" democratic governments, such as Mexico for more than 70 years), state crimes should be understood as state terrorism. State terrorism encourages impunity, as it hinders political investigations to prosecute people responsible for genocides such as the Tlatelolco massacre (Martínez 2001b:29, 31).

International treaties signed by Mexico define genocide as any act committed with the intent to annihilate – in whole or in part – national, ethnic, racial or religious groups. Genocide involves murder, physical and mental damage, and inhumane living conditions (United Nations 1951).

Furthermore, we should remember that the *desaparecidos* are not dead, but missing people: "A forced disappearance involves the deprivation of a person's

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[7] According to the government, the aim of the student movement was to "overthrow the constituted government of the Mexican Republic and replace it by a communist regime of workers, students, and peasants" (Castillo et al. 2002:48).

liberty, in whatever form or for whatever reason, brought about by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by an absence of information, or refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or information, or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person. As a consequence, the exercise of legal rights and pertinent procedural guarantees is impeded" (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos 1994).

Forced disappearance in Latin America dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, but it increased in the 1960s. The logic of this procedure (if there is one) is that victims should disappear in order hide victimizers and their crimes. This repressive policy was frequently adopted by military dictatorships, even though in some cases (such as Mexico, Colombia and Peru) it was also adopted by "democratic" governments (Molina Theissen 1998).

In the case of Mexico, the disguised dictatorship of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* and the power of the state (including rural and working stations) increased social subjugation. In this context, disappearance went unpunished until today. In December, 2000, Vicente Fox (representing the *Partido Acción Nacional* – National Action Party) won the elections. Based on his promises, people expected a true democratic "change" in the country. Mexicans, and especially *desaparecidos'* relatives and friends, were full of hope. The creation of the *Fiscalía Especial para Movimientos Sociales y Políticos del Pasado* (Special Prosecution Service for Past Social and Political Movements) seemed to meet their demands with transparency. But progress has been limited and impunity persists. Past (and even present) cases of forced disappearance and extrajudicial executions still go unpunished (Avilés Allende 2002; Correa 2001; Granma 2004; Amnistía Internacional Sección Mexicana 2005; Castillo 2005; Sullivan 2005).

People who disappeared during the 1968 student movement might be described as people deprived of freedom by state agents (or in any case, other agents authorized by the state). As a consequence, they cannot be considered dead. Some relatives still demand their "appearance with life." The Comité Eureka's[8] slogan (Eureka Comitte slogan) says: "They took them alive; we want them back alive" (Herrera and Castillo 2003:7, the translation is ours). Some people claim: "We will not decide whether they are dead or not. That sort of thing cannot be decided. They have disappeared. That is precisely what the government expects from us: to accept the worst, without talking about it or taking any responsibility; to forget; to believe this is a past issue instead of a painful, current one" (HIJOS-México 2005:62, the translation is ours).

It is necessary to reveal the whereabouts of people shot at Plaza de las Tres Culturas, as well as those of individuals who remain disappeared (some of whom were murdered). For this reason, we believe it is necessary to develop a forensic project to shed light on state terrorism.

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[8] The *Comité Pro-Defensa de Presos, Perseguidos, Desaparecidos y Exiliados Políticos* (Pro-Defense Commission of Political Prisoners, Persecuted, Disappeared, and Exiled People) was one of the first human rights organizations that was established in Mexico (Amnistía Internacional 2002).

"They Carried no Weapons, But Their Own Blood"

Several documentary sources state that in the early morning of October 3, soldiers piled up bodies at Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Alcántara 2002b). A General said that he had seen 38 dead civilians lying on the esplanade of the plaza, 4 dead soldiers at the same place, and a dead boy at Chihuahua building (Corona del Rosal 1995). Some demonstrators managed to survive, covering themselves with dead bodies. That was the case of a young South American man, who covered himself with the bodies of an elderly man and a woman – only two of the hundreds of dead people he saw at the plaza (Anonymous 1968:16). The testimony of a former pilot of the parastatal company *Petróleos Mexicanos* (Mexican Oil) revealed that some bodies were thrown into the ocean. This testimony bears similarities to other documents gathered by the Commission of Truth in the 1990s. These documents stated that military airplanes threw bodies into the Gulf of Mexico (Taibo 1998).

Some people told what happened at different hospitals. Hospitals received lots of patients, some of them injured to death. A photographer particularly "remembers a young man… who was lying down at one of the hospital halls: a bullet had perforated his stomach. The young man said to the photographer: 'I'm from Sinaola University'. 'Do you want me to call somebody in particular?' 'No, they are going to get mad, they are going to get mad'. 'Some time later, when I returned to take some photographs, the boy was still on the floor, but he was dead'" (Almazán 2002c:A15, the translation is ours). The use of brutal force was reported by the doctors who took care of the patients. The doctors from the Green Cross Hospital Leñero remember "…they arrived covered in blood, without hands, shot" (Aguirre 2002:A12, the translation is ours).

The assistants of the *Servicio Médico Forense* witnessed the killing. All the bodies "had something in common: they showed the skillful use of bayonets and expansive bullet shots. They knew where they had to attack. The arms, legs and feet were not injured. The injuries affected the heart and other vital organs." The situation was shocking: "Dead bodies had their chests crushed," and their "skulls were destroyed by short and blunt objects." "Brutal traumatism" was frequently evident. Doctors' testimonies describe things like this: "an expansive bullet injury in the head," "injuries directly affecting the heart," people who "had lost lots of blood through the stomach." Without a doubt, "these were army's bullets. In battle, the soldier has only one purpose: destroy, kill…" (Rodríguez Reyna 2002:A14–A15, the translation is ours).

Repression and cruelty also took place at the hospitals. Although doctors and nurses tried to do their job, "*granaderos* and secret [police officers] came to the hospitals, and took the boys away from the operating theaters. Nobody knows where these boys ended up, or if they died" (Taibo 1998:11, the translation is ours). Some witnesses said that in the *3° Delegación del Ministerio Público* there were more than 40 dead people between 18 and 20 years old (Canal Seis de Julio 2002). Their whereabouts remain unknown. Nevertheless, some neighbors stated that some days later the area "smelt like burning meat, as if -it was said- they were burning young people in ovens" (Almazán 2002b:A12, the translation is ours).

After being deprived of their personal belongings and ID cards,[9] many of the bodies at the Servicio Médico Forense disappeared at the hands of the army: "Military officers got in. They came to talk to the director. Military officers went down and up... The facilities were controlled by military forces. They were in charge. They got into the amphitheater; they were there... In the afternoon, military vehicles came to take the bodies without identification. The order was to take them away..." (Rodríguez 2002 A10, the translation is ours).

Where did they take the bodies to? What did they do to them? To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider several testimonies. These documentary sources state that some of the bodies could have been burnt or buried in military facilities (for instance, Campo Marte, Campo Militar No 1, Panteón Civil de Dolores – near Campo Militar No 1) or the slope of an extinct volcano near Mexico DC. Before the massacre and in the midst of repression, when "a foreign journalist asked if some of the students who were said to have died had been identified, the [strike] committee said that, on the one hand, 'it does not suit the government to return the bodies'; and on the other, 'we have news that the bodies were burnt in Campo de Marte'" (Ramírez 1998a:202, the translation is ours).

Furthermore, some activists knew that several bodies were taken to Campo Militar No 1 in military vehicles and tanks. They were burnt, although some individuals were still alive. It was possible to "hear their wail [coming out from the vehicles], and that was the way they were burnt… it was Mexican soldiers' idea" (Alcántara 2002a:A13, the translation is ours). Taking these shocking testimonies as a whole, it is suspicious that the High Command does not accept that the bodies were burnt in military areas and Campo Militar No 1: "Some people said 5,000 bodies were burnt there. It comes to my mind that it takes three hours to burn a single body and that, in the first place, there are no incinerators [in the military area]. In the second place, and this is the most important thing, where are the five thousand mothers [who look for their dead sons and daughters]? Because some people said that was the death toll at Tlatelolco… that they would fight like the mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina. If somebody is guilty, then charge him/her" (Garduño and Pérez 2001:13, the translation is ours).

Luis Echeverría Álvarez, the Secretary of Government in 1968, apparently played an active role in Tlatelolco massacre. When he became president, he launched another repressive operation on June 10, 1971. At that moment, a peaceful student demonstration was attacked by the "Halcones," a paramilitary group under the direct orders of the government. In this case, the unofficial death toll climbed to 125 (Ramírez Cuevas 2003). There is evidence that the president gave telephone instructions on what to do with the prisoners and the bodies.

Probably taking into account his experience in Tlatelolco, Echeverría emphatically said: "Injured people? Take them to Campo Militar. Do not allow photographs… One of us is injured or dead? Take him to Campo Militar. More confrontations, many dead bodies? Take them all to Campo Militar. Green Cross? No, no. Do not allow

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[9] On October 17, 1968, a report of the *Servicio Médico Forense's* director states that only "26 victims were identified" (Cuellar 2003:11).

photographs. 'Burn them'… Burn the bodies. Nobody should be left out. Do not allow photographs" (Scherer and Monsiváis 2004:52–53, the translation is ours).

Although this reference is not directly connected to Tlatelolco massacre, it is possible to point out that burning opponents' dead bodies was a practice already known and used by the government. If osteological remains were destroyed by fire, then forensic researchers will face enormous difficulties in their investigations.

One military area stands out among the others. It is frequently mentioned by the army[10] (Rodríguez and Lomas 2001) and the people who were imprisoned in October, 1968. One of our informants was arrested 2 weeks before the bloody event. He was not associated with the demonstration in Tlatelolco, but he was connected to leftist organizations since he was young. He was physically tortured, imprisoned and placed in solitary confinement in a big gallery located at the basement of Campo Militar No 1. He said that the worst torture was not talking to anyone. This situation almost drove him mad. Silence was finally broken by a soldier who tried to obtain information about the student movement. This soldier told him his superiors had punished him for talking. For that reason, he was not allowed to go to Tlatelolco despite his "desire to kill students." In the early morning of October 3, hundreds of demonstrators were imprisoned in the same gallery. Some of them had been beaten up. Some days later, the informant and other prisoners were released. He was forced to wear a military uniform. To his surprise, he found his name in the list of people who had disappeared or died on October 2. His partners told him it would be wise not to inform the military and police forces he was alive.

A *Consejo Nacional de Huelga's* activist who was imprisoned in Campo Militar No 1 until January, 1969, was never seen again. This is a case of forced disappearance associated with military repression (Castillo and Méndez 2005).

These testimonies complement others, pointing out that some people who were arrested in Tlatelolco were extrajudicially executed by their captors: "They fed us pretty well. But we heard shots at night. Some of the guards said that they were forming a firing squad, that they were killing people… In Campo Militar No 1 they took us to some galleries, with metallic beds. They woke us up at midnight, and they told us they were going to shoot us. There were railroad workers, bank clerks and students. They beat me up. They used psychological torture too. They took people out, we heard shots and trembled with fear. I never saw them coming back" (Gil Olmos 2001a:14, the translation is ours).

Some time ago, one of the members of the 1968 student movement told his partners that gravediggers at Panteón Civil de Dolores knew that some people killed at Tlatelolco were clandestinely buried under legally registered graves. Gravediggers told him where these burials were located. Nevertheless, the exact

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[10] 1968 government records are contradictory. For instance, a general denied the existence of torture in Campo Militar No 1 and the disappearance of students. According to him, the students arrested on October 2, 1968, were temporarily detained and subsequently sent to the civilian authorities (Garduño and Pérez 2001). Another testimony was provided by someone who claims to be the brother of a soldier. This soldier told him that thousands of bodies were buried in Campo Militar No 1.

information was lost when the informant died. For this reason, we do not know the location of the graves.

Furthermore, a well-known political cartoonist confessed that he was kidnapped at the beginning of 1969 (Sánchez González 2004). He was about to be executed by DFP agents, who finally told him that "at a certain place at Nevado de Toluca, there were some trees marked with crosses. Some people who had disappeared in 1968 were buried under those trees" (Aranda 2002:14, the translation is ours).

According to documentary sources and testimonies, it is possible to believe that human remains can be found at Campo Militar No 1, Panteón Civil de Dolores, and Nevado de Toluca. These remains probably belong to people killed at Tlatelolco, or people arrested there and executed somewhere else.

We wonder how many people we are talking about. The government created the official history of Tlatelolco. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate how many people died between October 2 and 3, 1968; between July and October, in confrontations between military forces and students; and between October and the beginning of 1969. In the mid-1970s, former president Díaz Ordaz tried to fight any attempt to shed light on the death toll: "…they said there were hundreds of people dead. Unfortunately, there were some, but not hundreds. As far as I know, there were more than 30, but less than 40, including soldiers, activists and onlookers. Some people will say it is easy to hide and reduce [the real death toll]. But I challenge anyone who values his/her own opinion to provide some evidence, even though it is not direct or conclusive. A list containing the names would be enough. Some might say, as they have said on several occasions, that the bodies disa… that someone made the bodies disappear, that they were hidden in clandes… that they were clandestinely buried, that they were burnt, that is easy; it is not easy to do it with impunity, but it is easy to do it…" (Canal Seis de Julio 2002, the translation is ours).

The words "As far as I know, there were more than 30, but less than 40" are certainly amazing for their arrogance and insolence. They seem to point out that the difference between one number and the other does not really matter. In the early morning of October 3, 1968, the official death toll was established by government agents who broke into newspapers' editorial offices, destroying evidence and taking all the photographs away. "The photographs, bastard, the photographs! … Only 33 dead people, 33! What? That is the official death toll! … These are government's orders, Echeverrías' orders! It is a presidential order! Díaz Ordaz wants to hide everything! Hide everything" (Almazán 2002c:A14, the translation is ours).

From that moment on, and for several decades, that was the official death toll. But survivors and witnesses started to talk. They said they had seen dead people at Chihuahua building: "…[They] were piled up at the exit. A soldier told me not to turn around, but I managed to see the bodies, one on top of the other, out of the corner of my eye; they were half-naked" (Gil Olmos 2001a:13, the translation is ours).

A father, who was desperately looking for his son, said he had seen 121 dead victims (Jardón 2003:38). Meanwhile, "… people started to gather [at the *Servicio Médico Forense*], looking for their relatives. There were long rows of hearses all morning. I saw more than 500 bodies, all of them shot" (Almazán 2002c:A14, the translation is

ours). A soldier proudly told a foreign student who was imprisoned at Campo Militar No 1 that military forces had killed "500 communists like you" (Anonymous 1968:16). The *Consejo Nacional de Huelga's* activists have recently stated that 635 students were killed at Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Alcántara 2002a). Agee, a CIA detractor, remembers that at the Embassy of the United States it was rumored that 82 people had been shot, although they could have been hundreds or more than 1,000 (Rocha 2002). The absence of formal complaints was a result of threats against witnesses, survivors, relatives and friends. "…In the days, weeks, and years following Tlatelolco massacre it was usual to listen to victims' relatives saying: 'In spite of our grief, they threaten us with death'. Many of them… finished their search for justice; others, organized or not, still go on" (Alcántara 2002a:A13, the translation is ours).

We are forced to return to our previous question: how many people died in Tlatelolco? This question has not been adequately answered yet. DFS showed many contradictions, but it finally put the death toll at 30. On October 4, 1968, the official report stated that 26 people were dead, including 4 women and a soldier. On January 31, 1969, the report stated that there were 26 dead civilians, 2 military officers, and a boy whose name appeared in the lists of dead and injured people (Jardón 2003:38). On October 6, 1968, the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga's* members stressed that, up to that moment, they knew that 100 people had died as a result of the massacre. However, they recognized that the death toll was still rising (Ramírez 1998b:410). Outside Mexico, journalists mentioned up to 325 dead people (including 130 students – Jardón 2003:40). A cameraman made a similar calculation, considering the number of trucks carrying bodies from Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Caballero 2003). Furthermore, it is important to take note of the declassified documents of the American intelligence services. There is a confidential report which states: "…as usual in Mexico, it is impossible to find death toll statistics of the battle of October 2. The reports we have received mention up to 350 dead people. The best estimation of the embassy indicates that this number ranges from 150 to 200" (Defense Intelligence Agency 1968:9 National Archives, RG 59, 1967–1969).

Several testimonies go far beyond the government's version of the events. These testimonies state that probably 500 people lost their lives in the violent events of October 2. We should take into account an indefinite number of people executed at Campo Militar No 1, as well as 200 bodies reported at the end of July (Menéndez Rodríguez 1968a). We do not know where they are, although it is possible that some of them were burnt. Therefore, it is necessary to shed light on the fate of about 700 people who died at the hands of the government in a series of violent events which began in July, 1968.

"United We Will Win!"

Leaving aside the particularities of forensic sciences and heuristic models of investigation, the participation of different disciplines in the analysis of violent events is determined by national legal systems which limit, deny or encourage their collaboration

(Stewart 1979; Boddington et al. 1987; Joyce and Stover 1991; Rodríguez 1994; Hunter et al. 1996; Cox 2001; Crist 2001; Doretti and Snow 2003; Sanford 2003; Skinner et al. 2003). In the case of Mexico, archaeology falls within the scope of the state. Heritage legislation establishes that archaeologists are the only people allowed to conduct investigations on past material remains. Prehistoric, pre-Hispanic and historical remains (until the end of the nineteenth century) are property of the nation. They include portable and nonportable cultural goods, as well as human remains. Physical anthropologists can participate in the recovery of human remains, as long as the recovery projects are supervised by archaeologists. Archaeological field surveys, excavations, analyses, projects and reports are overseen by the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (National Institute of Anthropology and History). The state can use this federal organization to prevent specific studies from being conducted. Scientific interventions in twentieth-century contexts are excluded from this legal framework. Therefore, forensic archaeology is not included in the same research strategy as historical archaeology (Cox 2001; Crist 2001).

Forensic anthropology is caught in a legal limbo too. Physical anthropologists can take part in forensic studies (mainly, in laboratory analyses). Nevertheless, they are subject to the guidelines of the *Servicio Médico Forense* and the *Procuraduría General de Justicia* (Attorney General's Office). These organizations state that forensic surgeons must provide expert reports that will be approved by the *Ministerio Público* (Public Prosecutor's Office) and special legal authorities in criminal proceedings. On certain occasions, physical anthropologists are authorized by the Supreme Court of Justice to act as external experts. This is one of the ways in which archaeologists and physical anthropologists can participate in the investigation of Tlatelolco massacre.

For this reason, it would be necessary to create an interdisciplinary project of investigation including archaeologists, physical anthropologists, criminal lawyers, physicians, historians, sociologists, economists, and experts in national and international law, crimes against humanity and human rights violations. The theoretical object and the practical consequences of the project should focus on the explanation of state crimes and the whereabouts of *desaparecidos*. These experts can be found in Mexico. They were trained in this country or they completed their studies abroad. The only thing that is missing is the political decision to encourage the scientific analysis of Tlatelolco massacre and its aftermath.

This kind of research would need an academic and social project to recover historical memory, including experts, survivors and victims' relatives. Studies should try to shed light on violent events and its causes, analyzing the history of the student movement and reconstructing its historical, political, social, economic and military context. Researchers should intend to identify the acts and actors of violence and state terrorism. They also should attempt to find dead and disappeared people (United Nations 1991; Etxeberria 2004), and gather evidence to prosecute the crimes.

Some aspects of this project are extremely difficult to achieve, as long as the state has destroyed or concealed significant pieces of information – such as the lists of victims. Furthermore, several victims' relatives and friends were silenced by the government (Castillo 2004:7). Although some testimonies provided information on the location of the burials (Campo Militar No 1, Panteón Civil de Dolores and Nevado de Toluca, among others), it was impossible to conduct

archaeological investigations there. Most of these places are military areas, rendering it difficult to prove the existence of clandestine burials.

This kind of research needs to consider two different issues. On the one hand, it has to gather information from government employees, ranging from the president – that is to say, the commander-in-chief of the army forces and the person in charge of the implementation of national policies – to federal, local, judicial and military authorities. On the other hand, it has to gather information from people "on the other side" – in this case, survivors and executioners – to reconstruct the events and learn more about the people involved in violence and repression.

The work of forensic anthropologists and archaeologists needs to focus on the recovery of the remains of people killed at Plaza de las Tres Culturas, or people arrested and killed in secret locations. Forensic analyses should follow five basic stages and a complementary one:

1. Historical studies: Collection of documentary sources (written, visual and audible).
2. Analysis of testimonies: Collection and analysis of oral information provided by direct or indirect witnesses, preserving their anonymity if necessary.
3. Legal work: Filing of formal complaints and permission requests to conduct fieldwork (archaeological surveys and exhumations of human remains).
4. Archaeological studies: Geophysical surveys and stratigraphic excavations; determination of cultural and natural formation processes (Schiffer 1987); detailed recovery and description of material remains; reconstruction of anatomical positions; artefactual analysis.
5. Anthropological analyses: *In situ* recovery of osteological remains; laboratory analyses to identify people and determine their cause of death (osteological, dental, genetic and chemical analyses, among others).
6. Psychological support: Mental health treatments and psychological help to victims' relatives.

The results of the anthropological and archaeological work should be included in technical reports, describing the activities conducted and the information gathered by researchers (for instance, testimonies and personal records of the victims). It should be relevant to explain the methodologies used to identify the individuals.[11] Based on these technical accounts, lawyers could prosecute people responsible for criminal acts.

"The Color of Blood is Never Forgotten"

In Mexico, the past (especially, bloody historical events) is embedded in social struggles, the social imaginary and the present. The memory of violence against people who fought for political openness is continually reproduced and preserved.

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[11] In 1998 and 1999, the *Equipo de Antropología Forense de la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (Team of Forensic Anthropology of the National School of Anthropology and History) established a methodology for identifying the remains of *desaparecidos* in Guatemala.

The state tries to silence social protests through terror and assassination. Some people still enjoy the privileges of a corrupt regime (Reding 1995). In spite of the claims for justice, political assassination, forced disappearance, torture and genocide go unpunished.[12]

Since 2001, the government has supposedly granted open access to information. Nevertheless, the ability to know the true causes of past tragic events is limited, as the only documentary sources open to public opinion are mutilated and other pieces of evidence are hidden in secret state files (Scherer and Monsiváis 2002, 2004). Some organizations like Amnesty International point out that illegal detentions, torture, human rights violations and forced disappearance (Amnistía Internacional 2001, 2002) mainly affect those who question the *status quo* in urban and rural areas. In the case of Tlatelolco, impunity finally prevailed as low-ranked executioners were silenced, and witnesses were threatened or even killed (Maza 1988). Another way criminals found to evade justice was by reinforcing an ambiguous legal framework which released them from their responsibility because of the time elapsed since the tragic events. This was an efficient device to hide the crimes against humanity that define the Mexican political system year after year, and administration after administration.

People guilty of political crimes must be identified. As the members of HIJOS-Mexico (2005) point out the only and possible public apology for those who grew up surrounded by absence and the rejection of death is to find the whereabouts of their relatives and friends (since the beginning of the Dirty War in 1968 to the end of the 1980s) despite the complicity of the legal system.[13]

Although social demands do not always have legal responses, memory still faces oblivion. Nowadays, survivors and victims' relatives demand the establishment of a Truth Commission. They do not want it to be a mockery of justice like the 1993 Commission. It is necessary to know the truth (Garrido 1998; Martínez 2004). The sociopolitical Mexican system – which claims to have adopted an open-door policy – should recover victims' remains. We wonder if the truth will be hidden once again to protect people responsible for crimes against humanity.

Our proposal would contribute to shed light on repressive events, even though it would be a first approach to the subject. The construction of this model should be based on documentary evidence. Given the apropriate sociopolitical conditions, it would be possible to develop specific research projects in Mexico. This model requires an interdisciinary approach. Forensic archaeology and anthropology would hold an important place within this project. Therefore, our proposal could provide new evidence to satisfy the need for justice – in particular, in the case of crimes against humanity (such as the massacre of October 2, 1968). Nongovernment

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[12] According to the code of war of the Mexican Constitution, the military personnel accused of committing any offense is not judged by the civil justice. It is judged by a military court and the trials ultimately depend on the orders of the Federal Executive Power; that is to say, the president of the Republic (Amnistía Internacional 2001).

[13] In Mexico, the "Dirty War" lasted from 1968 to the beginning of the 1980s. The number of *desaparecidos* in urban and rural settings reaches to, at least, 1,500 (Castillo 2003).

organizations should coordinate this kind of interdisciplinary research project. The government could also appoint experts from academic institutions, but it should not intimidate them. Any "truth commission" dependent on the government would obtain partial and biased results like the ones obtained in the past.

Summing up, this kind of research should satisfy social needs and demands, leaving scientific interests behind. Scientists cannot observe historical subjects under the microscope, as if they were part of depositional contexts or osteological remains analyzed in the laboratory. When we talk about social analysis, hard science is completely useless and futile. We should take into account a human perspective and people's needs to investigate the historical events surrounding the 1968 student movement. The social, ethical and professional aspects of the research are more than relevant, as they are closely connected to a historical, political, and social process which silenced the country for 40 years. The Tlatelolco massacre had serious consequences for Mexico, shaping the historical development of the country. It is an open wound for all of us. Therefore, experts need to acknowledge the social purpose of their work, and their commitment to survivors, victims' relatives and Mexican people in general.

An archaeology of the contemporary world would have the potential to recover historical memory through the analysis of material culture. Following the heuristic model of historical archaeology, it could use documentary evidence to conduct fruitful interdisciplinary investigations. We still have to determine to what extent Mexican archeologists would commit to modern society and the study of recent massacres, exceeding the legal role that the government has traditionally assigned them – that is to say, the protection, preservation, diffusion and analysis of the cultural heritage.

Although the government has frequently used oblivion with the aim of strengthening impunity, the killing of Tlatelolco has not disappeared from collective memory.[14] On the contrary, it was used by different groups showing specific interests and needs to construct their "relative identities."[15] Some people state that memory is a political obligation (Scherer and Monsiváis 2002:34). From this perspective, it is necessary to establish different political positions and take power. Some other people believe that memory is connected to past rebelliousness, which is present in visionary struggles (González Souza 1998). The people who took part in the 1968 student movement still go to Plaza de las Tres Culturas every anniversary of the massacre to protest against past and present injustice. Many Mexican citizens feel indignation at the killing; others wait for justice and punishment; some others have limited access to information. Nevertheless, all of them reproduce discourses and narratives that perpetuate the memory of state terrorism.

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[14] According to a phone poll conducted by *El Universal* in 2003, the massacre of Tlatelolco remains rooted in the collective memory. 53% of the people knew about the massacre, 49% believed that the federal government was directly responsible for the killing, 80% said it was necessary to shed light on the event, find the guilty party, and combat impunity. In spite of this, 54.2% of the people thought that this was unlikely to happen because of certain groups of power, incompetence and bureaucracy (Ordóñez 2003).

[15] According to Augé (1995) , "relative identity" has a spatial, social, or moral connection to an ethnic group, a nation, a religion, a community, or a corporative group.

As we walked along Plaza de las Tres Culturas, where we took some of the photographs shown in this chapter, we saw three kids (less than 12 years old) who made a stop at a monument commemorating the fallen on October 2: the stele of Tlatelolco (Fig. 10.9). One of the kids asked the others: "Hey, what is this?"; the only girl in the group gave a clear and quick answer which she did not learn in school textbooks: "The thing is that many students were killed here for protesting against bad things the government does to people."

Fig. 10.9 Commemorative monument to the fallen at Plaza de las Tres Culturas on October 2, 1968. It was erected on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the killing (Photo by Martínez Herrera, 2005)

The 1968 massacre is still present in the collective imagination, the social memory, the oral tradition, the written chronicles and survivors' testimonies. The need to shed light on the tragic night at Tlatelolco and other criminal acts of state terrorism is clearly summarized in the slogan created in the first anniversary of the killing (Pérez Arce 1998), a slogan which is valid among people who fight for a democratic Mexico: October 2 must not be forgotten!

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Concluding Remarks

Revealing Memories from Darkness

Martin Hall

The prisoner was taken away in the middle of the night nineteen months ago. He was hooded and brought to an undisclosed location where he has not been heard of since. Interrogators reportedly used graduated levels of force on the prisoner, including the "water boarding" technique – known in Latin America as the 'submarino' – in which the detainee is strapped down, forcibly pushed under water, and made to believe he might drown. His seven- and nine-year-old sons were also picked up, presumably to induce him to talk. These tactics are all too common to oppressive dictatorships. The interrogators were not from a dictatorship, however, but from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The U.S.'s prisoner is Khalid Shaikh Muhammad, the alleged principal architect of the September 11 attacks. Muhammad is one of the dozen or so top al-Qaeda operatives who have simply "disappeared" in U.S. custody. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the Bush administration has violated the most basic legal norms in its treatment of security detainees. Many have been held in offshore prisons, the most well known of which is at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. As we now know, prisoners suspected of terrorism, and many against whom no evidence exists, have been mistreated, humiliated, and tortured. But perhaps no practice so fundamentally challenges the foundations of U.S. and international law as the long-term secret incommunicado detention of al-Qaeda suspects in "undisclosed locations." "Disappearances" were a trademark abuse of Latin American military dictatorships in their "dirty war" on alleged subversion. Now they have become a United States tactic in its conflict with al-Qaeda (Human Rights Watch 2004:1).

Memories from Darkness is a contribution to an emerging "archaeology of repression." Focusing on the twentieth century, and on what González-Ruibal (2008) has usefully called "supermodernity," such approaches show how specialized technologies were developed and deployed to serve the ends of authoritarian regimes and state terror, with a lineage from German and Italian fascism, French colonialism in Algeria, a broad swathe of military governments in Latin America, and to the current "war on terror." They also show how we can trace and reveal evidence for resistance in the context of an explicitly engaged archaeology that recognizes the valency of political action in shaping our understanding of the past and the implications of research for social justice and human rights.

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   This characteristic stance of engagement, in which archaeological practice is enmeshed in political processes, is well demonstrated in Roberto Rodríguez Suárez's account in this volume of the execution of Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 and the excavation of his body 30 years later. Guevara – emblematic of revolutionary opposition to authoritarianism and one of the most widely recognized faces across the world – was long believed cremated until the confession of General Mario Vargas Salinas in 1995 described a common grave at Vallegrande Airport. Field survey and excavation was a diplomatic tightrope involving Bolivia, Argentina, and Cuba, complicated by the uncertain politics of Bolivia's election and neoliberal agenda. Soil analysis, resistivity studies, infrared photography, and sample excavations were interrupted by CIA-linked misinformation and the suspension of research by local authorities. When finally recovered, Guevara's remains were returned to Cuba and were interred with military honors in a dedicated mausoleum at Santa Clara, where he had won the decisive battle of the Cuban revolution in 1958.

   It would not have been possible to excavate the burial at Vallegrande Airport in a way that ignored Che Guevara as an emblematic figure of the twentieth century, or that was independent of the political configurations in Latin America in the 1990s, where countries were within a few years of the collapse of military dictatorships. It is equally impossible to imagine a "neutral" excavation of the site of Club Atlético in Buenos Aires, where over a 1,000 detainees were tortured and murdered in 1977 (Zarankin and Niro, this volume). Many of the relatives of the *desaparecidos* (disappeared people) still seek closure through the recovery of evidence of death and any archaeological interpretation will be incorporated into histories of vital importance to those still living. As Pedro Funari, Andrés Zarankin, and Melisa Salerno rightly observe in their introduction to this volume, subjectivity needs to be explicitly recognized for its role in interpretation. These are Latin American archaeologists and intellectuals writing about a period that had a profound effect on their families and themselves, in some cases using the memory of their own experience of detention and torture in their reading of the past. Here is Claudio Niro writing about his own detention: "On May 9, 1976, I got to Vesubio, a clandestine detention center at Camino de Cintura and Richieri highway (Mantanza Department). Four individuals following Suárez Mason's orders got me out of a Ford Falcon. I was hooded and my hands were tied behind my back. Meanwhile, the four individuals insulted me and hit me, forcing me into a room. Once inside, they made me stand against a wall with my legs extended. Several torturers kicked me in the testicles again and again. This procedure was called the 'ablande'. It was intended to intimidate the prisoner before taking him/her into the torture room (…) 'Cuchas' were small rooms were four or five people were kept hooded, handcuffed and leg-ironed to the walls and other prisoners. Once in the "cuchas," the kidnappers told us to take off our clothes and wear some brown uniforms. This procedure made us lose – along with our clothes – all contact with an exterior life" (Zarankin and Niro, this volume).

   Alejandro Haber (this volume) argues that an "objectifying" archaeology – that attempts to use the evidence from military dictatorships as if it were a set of neutral resources – would constitute a "regime of truth" that would itself be a form of repression and an extension of colonial attempts to contain and control indigenous

histories. This signals a decisive break with "objective" culture-history traditions of Latin American archaeology, as Carl Henrik Langebaek (this volume) argues. But this does not mean the abandonment of analytical rigor and the use of scientific techniques, as the Che Guevara project so clearly shows. If anything, engagement with archival evidence, oral recollection, and the complexities of past and present political interests makes the truth value of archaeological techniques all the more important, as is clear in both Pedro Funari and Nancy Vieira de Oliveira (this volume), and Luis Fondebrider's (this volume) chapters on the challenges that forensic archaeologists face in interpreting mass burials. When the results of such research may be critical in litigation and tested against the rules of legal evidence, there is no latitude for technical error or unjustified assumptions.

Indeed, cases such as those reviewed in this book show the futility of the assumption that archaeology can somehow be independent of the world in which it operates. An epistemology that better explains the compelling authenticity of these studies is Bruno Latour's insistence that "word" and "world" are part of a continuum of knowledge creation, a set of translations connected in a chain of "circulating references" that we "pass over" repeatedly and compulsively as we seek to deepen our understanding by both generalizing from particular instances, and by reducing the complexity of individual circumstances to their essential features (Latour 1999). In the context of an archaeology of repression, Latour's scientific process of "packing the world into words" is chillingly apparent. The chaos and terror of detention and torture is reduced into a survivor's narrative and assembled along with the material traces of the detention center and fragmentary police records as a set of "circulating references" that are evidence for a persistent "technology of power," a syndrome far more substantial than the individual experience. Because there are many who will gain by arguing that these references are fabricated, or exaggerated, these things and words – what Latour calls the "operators" in the chain of reference – are constantly challenged for their relevance or authenticity. The value in this system of circulating references lies in the continuity of enquiry, in the "reversibility" of the constant movement from word to world and from world to word that tests and retests the validity of testimony, the relevance of the material and the logic of interpretation.

In Latour's seminal case of an ecological study of the Amazon forest margin, the process of knowledge creation will cease if the continuing circulation between field site and laboratory – questions, answers, and new questions – is broken (Latour 1999). In the system of circulating references that constitutes the archaeology of repression, the process of knowledge creation will cease if the engagement with memory and social justice is broken and the authoritarian regimes of supermodernity are presented as settled history, removed from the issues of the present day. This essential contribution – the refusal of interruption in the name of "objectivity" – is well demonstrated in Claudio Niro's association of memory with the material remains of the detention center and the archaeological project: "I have recently returned to the place where Vesubio was located. The ruins are the first thing you see when you get there. Vesubio was demolished at the end of 1978, as a consequence of the arrival of the Organization of American States' Commission for Human

Rights. The remains of Vesubio are enclosed by a barbed wire fence. The problem is you cannot enter the area. A person who lives there denies access to the ruins, threatens Human Rights Organizations, and unleashes his wild dogs on everybody. Anyway, on one occasion I managed to get in and recognized some red tiles which covered the bathroom floor. I closed my eyes and thought: camp remains, horror. I remembered the time when they made us wait in front of the operation theater. We heard screams of pain, 'chamamé' music, and the executioners' voices. At that moment, I asked myself how torture would be, and if I was going to stand it. It was impossible to know the answer. My body and my partners' bodies shook. Fear. I was forced into the operation theater. They took my hood off and I was blinded by the light. A loud voice asked me to collaborate. I recognized it: it was Vasco's voice. Four guys held me tightly, undressed me, soaked me up, and tied a wire to my big toe. They started electrocuting me with another wire. Emptiness. I did not actually know for how long they tortured me. I felt they took my soul away from me. They finally took me completely injured to the 'cuchas' with my partners" (Zarankin and Niro, this volume).

*

Between 1920 and 1990, 15 Latin American countries experienced authoritarian regimes: Argentina (1966–1973, 1976–1983), Bolivia (1964–1982), Brazil (1964–1985), Chile (1973–1990), Dominican Republic (1930–1978), Ecuador (1963–1966), El Salvador (1931–1982), Guatemala (1921–1986), Haiti (1957–1990), Honduras (1963–1971, 1972–1982), Nicaragua (1936–1979), Panama (1968–1989), Paraguay (1949–1989), Peru (1968–1980), and Uruguay (1973–1985). Characteristically, military juntas usurped civil systems of government on the basis of "states of emergency," suspended civil rights, and instituted martial law that depended on suites of repressive measures, including censorship, exile, detention, torture, and murder (Funari et al., this volume).

At the heart of these regimes was a particular form of terror captured in the neologisms "desaparecidos" ("the disappeared"), "to be disappeared," or "to disappear" a person. When someone had been disappeared, the place and details of detention were unknown. Few returned and, since the fact or manner of death remained undisclosed, family, friends, and community were denied any closure. In the words of Amnesty International: "Due to its nature, disappearance conceals the author's identity. If there is no legal prisoner, corpse, or victim, then nobody is presumably accused of anything" (in Funari et al., this volume. See also Feitlowitz 1998). Disappearances were "an even more effective means of spreading terror than open massacres, so destabilizing was the idea that the apparatus of the state could be used to make people vanish into thin air" (Klein 2007:90). Although each junta had its own national characteristics, there was broad coordination of repression by a group of military regimes through a covert agreement known as "Plan Cóndor" (Operation Condor). They were supported by the US government, which provided advice, communication facilities, and intelligence support and – at times – active assistance with covert operations (Feitlowitz 1998; Dinges 2004; Klein 2007; López Mazz, this volume). "Condor was a Cold War-era covert network of U.S.-backed

Latin American military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, later joined by Ecuador and Peru in less central roles. The secret Condor apparatus enabled the militaries to share intelligence – and to seize, torture, and execute political opponents across borders. Condor agents also assassinated key opposition leaders around the world" (McSherry 2005:1). The discovery of the "terror archives" in Paraguay in 1992 provided evidence of some 50,000 murders, 30,000 disappearances, and 400,000 detentions by the security services of the participating countries.

*

Between 1980 and 1990, Latin American authoritarian governments began to collapse under the pressure of economic crises, international opposition and, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the removal of the perceived threat of communism. Removal of the most overt forms of repression strengthened broad coalitions seeking social justice and redress, increasing in turn the demand for evidence (Funari et al., this volume). See also Feitlowitz 1998). Taken together, and in this context, the chapters in this volume suggest a five-part outline structure for an archaeology of repression and resistance: stigmatization, disappearance, resistance, recovery, and engagement. Returning to Latour's epistemology of knowledge, this can be seen as an integral system of operators – circulating references that are continually interrogated to reveal memory from darkness.

Stigmatization was the process of marking out categories of people as opponents to order and stability. In general terms such people were "communists," to be identified by their appearance and choice of dress. Melisa Salerno (this volume) shows how militarized regimes, heavily invested in the symbolism of uniforms and bodily regimentation, claimed contrary appearance and dress as evidence of dissident beliefs and subversion. Through this device, victims could be detained and incarcerated without any explicit knowledge of their political beliefs or actions. In this set of references, jeans, bright colored clothing, long hair, and beards were in themselves sufficient evidence for subversion or subversive intent. By relating a generalized threat to order and established interests to a set of easily identified external characteristics, the military juntas manipulated fear and prejudice to justify arbitrary violence in a manner analogous to racial prejudices long entrenched in Latin America. The *desaparecidos* were most often killed in an attempt to eradicate identity and biography and terrorize a far wider range of people. The numbers of the *desaparecidos* are estimated at 1,500 in Brazil, 3,000 in Chile, 5,800 in Peru, and 30,000 in Argentina. Bodies were usually disposed of in common, unmarked, graves or dropped into the ocean from helicopters. The majority of the *desaparecidos* remain unaccounted for and their torturers and executioners unidentified (Funari et al., this volume).

Disappearance lies at the core of an archaeology of repression because, in the absence of documentary evidence and with only the fragmentary recollection of a few survivors, the material traces of clandestine detention centers offer some hope of substantiating the record of the past – of understanding what López Mazz (this volume) appropriately calls the "technologies of power."

Clandestine detention centers were usually set up in existing buildings and identified by code-names. Through *Plan Cóndor* each was part of a network that anticipated the system of "extraordinary rendition" characteristic of the post-2001 "war on terror": "People could be arrested in Argentina, sent to the Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (Army School of Mechanics), Orleti or Pozo de Banfield clandestine detention centers ('chupaderos'), and later moved to Uruguay. They could be tortured at Infierno Chico, transferred to Infierno Grande del 300 Carlos (Batallón No.13), and finally be killed (Batallón No.14) or imprisoned at a maximum security institution (Penal de Libertad, Punta de Rieles)" (López Mazz, this volume). Mapping this network and recording the remnants of its detention centers offer the opportunity of grounding the fragmentary recollections of survivors and the occasional documentary source in a substantial system of meaning that recovers memory and defeats the objective of eradicating the lives of the regimes' victims through the processes of disappearance.

Andrés Zarankin and Claudio Niro's report on archaeological research at Argentina's Club Atlético sets out a powerful methodology for investigating clandestine detention centers. Club Atlético was located in the Federal Police warehouse's basement on Paseo Colón Avenue, Buenos Aires and processed an estimated 1,500 detainees while it was operative in 1977. Because (by definition for a clandestine facility) there is no surviving documentation, and in this case the building has been demolished, floor plans were reconstructed from the accounts of survivors, cross-referenced with each other, configured using analytical techniques derived from urban geography and then tested against the results of archaeological excavation. From this, the team could establish the mechanisms of repression and de-humanization: the central torture chamber and the surrounding holding cells where prisoners were kept hooded, and in handcuffs and leg-irons.

More tenuous perhaps, but invaluable in augmenting the system of meaning and memory, is material evidence of resistance to the regime of humiliation, torture, and de-humanization in the detention centers. In his chapter in this volume, Mazz sets out two areas of possibility for an archaeology of resistance to disappearance: evidence for escape attempts and prisoners' craft work, such as toys made from wood and bone. For their part Navarrete and López (this volume) turn to graffiti, taking as a case study Cuartel San Carlos, Caracas, Venezuela, where they are able to identify at least ten different categories of expression by prisoners.

Such evidence for resistance will accumulate slowly, as more clandestine detention centers are opened for systematic investigation. Far more established is the recovery of corporeal evidence – the exhumation of bodies from unmarked graves that, more often than not, contain the remains of many individuals. Forensic archaeology is well established as a discipline in its own right with an arsenal of scientific techniques (Fondebrider, this volume). Its potential is well understood, particularly given the extensive use of forensic evidence in the war crimes trials that followed from the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s. However, as Funari and Vieira de Oliveira's account of work at Rio de Janeiro's Ricardo de Albuquerque cemetery shows, exhumation and the subsequent identification of victims was often very difficult in the years when these approaches were first being applied. The Ricardo de

Albuquerque cemetery contained more than 2,000 unnamed bodies, largely home-less people and in common graves, among which were believed to be the bodies of 14 *desaparecidos*. Bones were mixed with plastic and metal debris from coffins and bodies had been carelessly exhumed, with bones often showing damage from picks. Damage to skulls made it difficult to use dental records and lack of funding pre-vented DNA analysis. These challenges of identification are confirmed by López Mazz (this volume) for Uruguay. López Mazz suggests that, in some circum-stanced, we may need to be satisfied with a generalized "typology of death" which recreates categories of experience of victims in the process of being stripped of their identity rather than recovering specific histories. But at the same time it remains important to continue to refine forensic techniques in the interests of pro-ducing ever-more-accurate forensic evidence.

All of these aspects of an archaeology of repression are likely to share, in one way or another, the characteristic of engagement. Because the collapse of Latin America's military regimes prompted widespread movements pushing for the rev-elation of what had been hidden and for the punishment of perpetrators, any process of collecting testimony and recovering material evidence was bound to be socially and politically engaged. Although engagement is a theme that runs through all the chapters in this collection, it is most explicit in Patricia Fournier and José Martínez Herrera account of the 1968 killing of peaceful demonstrators by Mexican armed forces at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco. While the importance of recovering memories of the past has now been acknowledged by most Latin American governments, including in some cases formal commissions and enqui-ries, Mexico has yet to acknowledge the role of the state in repressing political opposition ahead of the 1968 Olympic Games. Fournier and Herrera's chapter is, as a result, as much a call to future action as a study of the past. They write: "The 1968 massacre is still present in the collective imaginary, the social memory, the oral tradition, the written chronicles, and survivors' testimonies. The need to shed light on the tragic night at Tlatelolco and other criminal acts of state terrorism is clearly summarized in the slogan created in the first anniversary of the killing, a slogan which is valid among people who fight for a democratic Mexico: October 2 should not be forgotten!" Their conclusion is prescient; in early October 2008, several thousand gathered in Tlatelolco Square to pay tribute to those who had died 40 years earlier and hear Mexico City's Mayor make a public commitment to uncover the truth behind the killings (BBC News 2008).

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Returning, one more time, to Latour's process of "packing the world into words," we can see how a growing understanding of the mechanics of authoritarian-ism in the Latin American juntas of the last century can serve as a laboratory for revealing pattern and meaning in our own times. The violent repression of opposi-tion by the Mexican government in its preparations for the 1968 Olympic Games anticipates the actions of the Chinese government 40 years later. State terror by means of disappearance in Latin America is built on precedents by French occupa-tion forces in Algeria, and prefigures the continuing use of this form of terror today

in Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and by Morocco in Western Sahara (see Project Disappeared 2009, International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances 2009). Clandestine detention centers such as Club Atlético in Buenos Aires prefigure Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay (McSherry 2005). In Latour's terms a range of operators (survivor's accounts, building plans, documentary fragments, forensic evidence, excavation results) are translated into words and are articulated as a common system of references that move from past to present, and present to past, as understanding of their meaning widens and deepens.

The outcome of such research, as the title of this collection of essays signals, is the restoration of memory. In contrast to a reactionary nostalgia, such as the yearning of military juntas and their civilian supporters for a prelapsarian world of regimented order, a restored memory assists in processes of restitution and redress by insisting on understanding historical sequences of cause, effect, and consequence (Boym 2001). Archaeology has always been part of such "memory projects," given that the recovery of material remnants from the past enhances recall through sensory experience and the claim of authenticity –the essential idea of the museum (Bennett 1995; Hall 2006).

We can perhaps think of the overall project of an archaeology of repression and resistance as the construction of a new, virtual museum in which the assemblage of material evidence, oral testimony, and documentary fragments both empowers those for who the history of repressive regimes has specific meaning and also serves as a set of references for questions of human rights today, and into the future. For in this circulating system of references the engagement with questions of justice and human rights in the present day is ineluctable. As Major General Anthony Taguba, who investigated torture at Abu Ghraib, wrote in the preface of a 2008 report by Physicians for Human Rights: "after years of disclosures by government investigations, media accounts, and reports from human rights organizations, there is no longer any doubt as to whether the current administration has committed war crimes. The only question that remains to be answered is whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account" (in Lewis 2008:49).

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