Introduction: Households and landscapes

From the top down?

This issue asks how households, both individually and collectively as communities, choose to embed themselves in landscapes. In different ways and at different scales, these papers explore how their actions shaped, defined and delineated their landscapes through everyday practices. Often, the evidence that archaeologists recover on the ground may be most directly the result, sometimes in aggregate, of decisions taken by individual households. Their choices were not made in isolation since households generally act in awareness of a range of wider contexts and imperatives, for example, environmental, social, community, political, economic, religious and legal settings and demands. For the most part we are concerned with investigating the relations and behaviours associated with the realm of what Lori Khatchadourian (2016: 74-5) calls 'affiliates' in her study of the material agents underpinning imperial rule, out of the direct reach of central political powers. In some cases the evidence for these wider contexts is at least in part derived from other kinds of source material, notably textual and iconographic data. However, archaeological approaches provide a distinctive view of the wider landscape settings of the habitus of households and the material and spatial ramifications of the quotidian rhythms of households and community life.

This starting point gives us a new perspective for reconsidering the core premises underpinning our understanding of the political and social construction of past landscapes at different scales. There are important implications for how archaeologists detect and interpret the subtleties of the implementation of community conventions and, where relevant, political authority in the broadest sense. However, there are important elements that archaeological data and approaches can add to wider debates about territory, authority, sovereignty and other related issues spanning a range of disciplines including geography, politics, history and sociology.

Frequently archaeologists, like scholars in other fields, have slipped into perceiving landscapes as 'territories' based largely on notions of 'territory' emerging from modern nation-states, that is, the delimited spatial expression of a polity (e.g., Sassen 2006: 32-4, 40). In consequence, 'sovereignty' in ancient and early states and polities is still frequently perceived as exclusive authority overlaid on and coterminous with a bounded geographical space (Smith 2011: 416-17). Several lines of archaeological research have consciously or unconsciously embodied these assumptions by focusing on the targeted use of violence along with a range of ideological strategies by elites in increasingly complex societies mobilised to impose power and to subject others, through military conflict, colonialism and colonisation, monumentality, spectacle, ritual and religion, social or economic stratification and other kinds of, broadly speaking, political imperatives (Smith 2011: 417-21).

In contrast, recent studies of earlier prehistoric societies have put far less emphasis on the spatial and landscape elements of the deployment of power, taking them as a given, and focusing much more on social practices and relationships which hierarchically entangle people with the material world, and their manifestations in practices such as feasting (Hodder 2012: 214-16; Hayden 2014: 2-3). Even though embeddedness in landscapes must have underpinned many of these practices and relationships (Hodder 2012: 216), studies such as Hayden's recent masterful overview of feasting have skirted the spatial and landscape aspects of the generation of surplus and the political outcomes of feasting (Hayden 2014: 158-60). More widely, there is little sense of how the entanglement of material objects with the habitus of human life has also a spatial dimension, as for example where the deployment of spaces between houses in a Neolithic community can play an active role in the transformation of households into a larger corporate group (Baird, et al., this volume). More recent attempts to understand sovereignty in ancient states predating the modern nation-state have also moved away from a focus on 'territory', grasping it instead through the embeddedness of material objects in social and political relations, pointing out the relevance of these approaches for today's world (Smith 2015; Katchadourian 2016).

1

Katchadourian's (2016) important study of the active agency and affordances of materials and things in the performance of imperial rule, strongly influenced by Latour (2005), argues that they achieve this by taking on particular kinds of roles, which she terms *delegates* (materials of particular significance to imperial rulers, Katchadourian 2016: 68-9), *proxies* (aspirational things mimetic of delegates in form but not in matter, Katchadourian 2016: 7-1), *captives* (dislocated, appropriated materials and things, Katchadourian 2016: 73) and *affiliates* (everyday things and the practices which surround them which may or may not become entangled to varying degrees in the dependencies of imperial control, Katchadourian 2016: 74-5). Her focus on material agency supplants consideration of its spatial and landscape settings, even though some of the things and materials she investigates are themselves significantly embedded in landscape (Katchadourian 2016: 151-2). Given the large scale of her intellectual project this is not altogether surprising. But, beyond this, she argues that the core cosmological and theological precepts underpinning Persian theory of governance and sovereignty were not grounded in space or territory. Rather, she claims, it was the Greeks, notably Herodotus, who mapped the notion of satrapy on discrete spatial units, although in neither of the two passages she cites (Herodotus 1.192; 3.89) does he highlight spatial territories (Katchadourian 2016: 5). Significantly, Herodotus conceptualises the Persian satrapy in Greek as ἀρχὴ (*archē*), a protean word which in these contexts is perhaps best translated as 'realm, domain', the units into which power was divided, which though broadly geographic need not be defined as precisely bounded, since the term deflects emphasis away from the spatial.

The assumption that sovereignty is consistently imposed from the top down and coincides with defined geographical spaces in polities and ancient states is only now beginning to be questioned. Recent studies of 'territory' in Mycenaean and Iron Age Greece (Foxhall 2014), the Early Bronze Age city of Ebla (Cooper 2010), the limits of Hittite hegemony in Bronze Age Anatolia (Glatz and Plourde 2011; Glatz 2012) and the Iron Age polities of southeastern Turkey (Osborne 2013) all demonstrate that even in the case of relatively well organised or centralised ancient states the exercise of authority and control is patchy and inconsistent. Often authority as enacted in specific places, especially those at a distance from political centres, is underpinned not (entirely) by force, but through well-developed relationships with key individuals and families in local areas. Moreover, in all of these cases, the archaeological evidence suggests practices of territory, sovereignty and authority different from those presented in the textual sources.

Beyond the institutions of polities and states, the agency of households in devising their own ways of habituating space, whatever the parameters, has largely been overlooked. Including a household perspective in our investigations and analyses, as the papers in this issue show, produces a far more complex, fragmented, nuanced and multi-layered picture of how landscapes might be constructed and operate as 'territories', in a rather different sense than the one discussed above. Instead of thinking of 'territory' as something imposed from above by political or social authority, this perspective reveals how individuals, households and communities embed themselves in landscapes through action on, movement through, and engagement with the material world in which they lived. This is the conceptualisation and reification of a territory through practice, generating a concept of territory based on the aggregate of whatever those households and communities on the ground think it is, whether or not every household or individual is operating within the same parameters. Indeed, in some cases, for example colonial situations, different households and communities may occupy the same space and place, but practice two different conceptualisations of territory (Foxhall and Yoon, this volume).

Territory in a global world: the place of the past

In modern geo-political debates the study of globalisation from a range of disciplinary perspectives has challenged traditional notions of territory and sovereignty as incorporated in the concept of the nation state. Global phenomena such as multi-national companies, large-scale migration and

international political movements and terrorism transcend the geographical boundaries of nation-states while simultaneously making such boundaries permeable to the implementation of international authority, making territorial integrity and sovereignty (in its traditional sense) contingent (Elden 2009: 176-7; Sassen 2006: 415, 417). Briefly, I will reflect upon the work of two scholars, Stuart Elden and Saskia Sassen who have interrogated periods of the past before the modern nation-state to understand the conceptualisation and operation of territory and sovereignty in its absence (Elden 2009, 2013; Sassen 2006).

In his ambitious work on the history of territory as a concept and political principle, Elden (2013: 10), a political geographer, locates it at the intersection of place and power as, 'a distinctive mode of social/spatial organisation, one that is historically and geographically limited and dependent', depicting it as a relationship which varies and changes over time. Elden uses his historical investigation to argue that the notion of territory 'as a bounded space under the control of a group of people, usually a state, is historically produced' (Elden 2013: 322) and that by the eighteenth century this included the principle that sovereignty was inextricably intertwined with territory (Elden 2013: 329). In his discussions of earlier periods, for example classical antiquity (Elden 2013: 21-95), he shows that the ancient Greek ideal of *polis* (city-state) and *chora* (rural territory of a city-state) do not conform to a post-eighteenth century notion of territory (Elden 2013: 51-2), and he argues that ultimately Roman efforts to impose territorial control as far as the frontiers of the empire was limited by technological constraints (Elden 2013:87-95). However, Elden's perspective on the relationships between place and power remains fundamentally text-based, and therefore limited for the most part to elite ideologies taking top-down, urban-centred perspectives. Although he recognises some of the complexities and unevenness of territorial sovereignty in the ancient classical world, he is unfamiliar with the landscape and material realities on the ground, and the insights that archaeological approaches can offer.

Sassen (2006), perhaps best described as a political sociologist, turns to history to understand the phenomenon of globalisation. Her methodology is to investigate the interplay between three 'transhistorical components', territory, authority and rights, in different historical settings as a tool for analysing the 'assemblages' of the national and the global in the modern world (Sassen 2006: 4-5). Historical contexts offer the possibility of investigating these three key components 1) in the absence of the modern-nation state and 2) in terms of how elements of past formulations of these components developed specific capabilities which at particular tipping points fed into the developing formations of these three transnational elements as ultimately manifest in modern nation-states and the trans-national phenomena of a global world. This enables her to move beyond the argument that globalisation entails the dismantling and disintegration of the elements of the nation-state, so-called 'denationalization' (Sassen 2006: 404). Rather, Sassen argues, those elements were always there in previous historical contexts albeit differently formulated and in contexts of state and wider world that were not like those today (Sassen 2006: 12-14). For Sassen, the configuration of territory, authority and rights first emerges in its modern formulation in the sixteenth century sovereign territorial state (Sassen 2006: 74-6).

The strength of Sassen's intellectual framework is that she is able to take account of some of the complexity and unevenness of the implementation of territory in past polities, and its incomplete relationship to authority (Sassen 2006: 32-41). Her analysis offers some interesting insights and comparisons between the pre-modern worlds which concern many of us as archaeologists, and the implementation of territory and authority in our globalising present. However, Sassen's engagement is with institutions, not actors. And, while the fine granulation of historical detail is critical for her argument (Sassen 2006: 11), her intellectual framework is not historical but theoretical (Sassen 2006: 7).

What both of these important and challenging explorations of territory and sovereignty offer for us as archaeologists is a significant large-scale set of debates within which much of our research on how people materially embedded themselves in landscapes is highly pertinent. What these analyses

miss, however, are the actors on the ground; the people, households and communities shaping places through their engagement with material objects and landscapes. Variations in compliance with authority or social convention (e.g., McCoy and Codlin, this volume; Quintus and Clark, this volume), resistance, rhetoric, cooperation, associations which operate alongside mainstream socio-political conventions and hierarchies (Oosthuizen, this volume) and disjuncture are potentially visible through analysis of the material remains.

One of the weaknesses of Elden's and Sassen's overall arguments is their dependence on a limited range of written texts which present a one-sided picture, for the most part emerging from elite perspectives and sometimes presenting ideals and intentions rather than practice. Here, the archaeological analysis of households and communities in landscapes has much to add to discussions and debates about the everyday practices of territory, authority, and the bottom-up conceptualisations of occupying space and engaging with others in space. Even where texts exist, investigation of the material and landscape remains regularly tells a story which may not straightforwardly align with written accounts, and this should open up opportunities to investigate the significance of apparent contradictions. This has the potential to add another dimension to the development of theory in this domain.

The papers: from the ground up

The papers in this volume address a diverse range of practices through which households embed themselves in landscapes, in many different times, places and contexts. Baird et al.'s (this volume) analysis of the non-domestic buildings and spaces between houses suggests that these played an important role in corporate ritual activities as well as inter-household activities relating to communal activities which happened beyond the settlement. The ways in which objects and artefacts, including human bodies, are divided between spaces inside and outside houses is potentially significant for the generation of corporate identities in a society in which there was considerable emphasis on the structural continuity of individual house sites over time and the formalised division of space within them.

Robinson and Wienhold (this volume) reconsider the case of the Chumash of southern California, documented historically, ethnographically and archaeologically. They also focus on the spaces between houses and villages in this complex, hierarchical hunter-gather society where the house was the main focus of activity. The locations of rock art sites in places where intensive food processing took place in relation to competing villages suggests that these sites represent the formation of territory through action and practice. In contrast Wynveldt et al. (this volume) investigating the changes in the Belén culture of northwestern Argentina before and after Inka conquest (CE 1400-1500), take a relational landscape approach to understand households' and communities' complex and fragmented engagement with landscape, in a period when considerations of defence played an important role in shaping these engagements. By considering 'sites' as points of engagement for movement through a landscape, and architecturally defined space as distributed practice created by tasks, they explore the flow of bodies through space as shaped by practices. In different contexts, and using different methodologies, both of these papers demonstrate how practice and movement performed at household and community level shapes and defines wider landscapes and the self-identification of communities with them.

McCoy and Codlin (this volume) investigate how households address the separation of people and activities prescribed by the elaborate set of religious regulations known as *kapu* in pre-contact Hawai'i. Here elite-ideologies and hierarchies as manifest in religious authority were widely built into households' uses of space and landscape right across the society, but not all households did this in exactly the same way. On the one hand the pervasiveness of religious authority and ideology reveals the degree to which the underlying ideologies were widely internalised, although there was still room for variation. The conceptual logic of space in American Samoa discussed by Quintus and

Clark (this volume) is also intimately entwined with the social political hierarchies and ideals and how these might be dynamically performed on the ground. How and where structures are built in relation to the higher-status seaward areas and the lower-status inland shapes the physical landscape as well as how and where people move in it, and what precisely they do. Particular kinds of features such as the star-shaped mounds probably used for competitive pigeon-catching, associated with elites but situated in inland areas which would normally be lower in status, become places where status could be contested and questioned, cutting across hierarchies.

Oosthuizen (this volume) focuses specifically on a particular element of landscape, common lands in eastern England from prehistory onwards. She argues that their shaping, use and management might remain collectively structured through kin groups and other kinds of social, political and economic relationships in relatively similar ways over very long periods of time, in many cases cross-cutting other kinds of political and social hierarchies and relationships to property which changed considerably over time. The collective governance of common lands emerging from local notions of territory expressed at the level of the community, and rooted in practice, can be important for understanding how territory might be incorporated in and built up from daily practices in a range of different societies in this area over time.

Wynne Jones and Fleischer (this volume) investigate the African Swahili urban landscape of Songo Mnara, Tanzania. They argue that the townscape can be conceptualised as multiple overlapping territories which link households, activities and spaces/places within and beyond the town played out through shared practices and materials, as for example, by literally building elements of the marine environment into urban houses. Ritual and territories and the links of households with broader territories underpin and manifest political and social hierarchies, but as in Oosthuizen's study, other practices of territory, particularly those related to specialised craft production, appear simultaneously to cross-cut these hierarchies.

In a completely different context, Foxhall and Yoon (this volume) also explore the possibility of multiple notions of territory in the contested space between two classical (fifth-fourth centuries BCE) Greek city-states in southern Italy, Rhegion (modern Reggio Calabria) and Locri Epizephyrii. Here, the archaeological record of the rural countryside in the coastal zone suggests a very different notion of territory as played out in practice from that expressed in the written textual tradition emanating from urban-based elites. The written sources place considerable emphasis on hostility between the two city-states in the regional context of complex and volatile political and military alliances and conflicts. However, the archaeological record for this period does not suggest that defence was a major factor in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of the 'borderlands' (in contrast, for example with the considerations for defence which appear in the archaeological and landscape record in Wynveldt et al., this volume). This study suggests that in the period from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, boundaries might not be simple lines drawn across the landscape and that several different, though sometimes intersecting, notions of 'territory' might have been in operation simultaneously.

This varied range of case studies and approaches demonstrates that there is considerable evidence for the wide span of practices through which households and communities shape the landscapes they inhabit. Territories on the ground, as formed through the aggregate of these household practices and decisions over time are enormously complex and nuanced. In many cases, we can see in the archaeological record how, in Elden's terms, power and place intersect. What is interesting is how often in the studies presented here, power and place intersect because households have internalised ideologies of power and hierarchy, whether these were systematised as in Polynesian societies or more volatile and ephemeral, as in the prehistoric societies of Britain and Anatolia. In effect, households and communities have shaped their spatial practices and movement in landscapes to conform to dominant ideologies and social convention, though not always in the same ways. Moreover, some practices clearly cross-cut hierarchies and lines of authority. However and to whatever extent central polities, powers, or forces construct territories, local practices and

relationships forged and played out over time will shape how territories work on the ground. That sovereignty, emerging from a bundle of dynamic relationships and practices of territory, is often fragmented, patchy and uneven, is thus probably no surprise.

These archaeological studies have a wider resonance in considering the changing significance of territory and sovereignty in practice in our increasingly unequal and globalising world, in which nation-states have ceased to be the only bodies wielding political power, where the nature of states themselves is changing in various ways, and where the very meaning of boundaries and hierarchies is transforming. The potential for archaeological methodologies and intellectual frameworks to be deployed in tandem with more sophisticated uses of textual, visual and other methodologies and data sources on these big issues is tremendous. Such research will enable us to understand the operation of households and communities in their political and social landscapes over the very long term and to capture how a wide range of complex relationships emerged in the past at local scales and at high resolution. And, archaeology, at least sometimes, enables us to look beyond institutions to see actors.

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