



# Valdivia: Intercultural Relations along the Southern Frontier of the Spanish Empire in America during the Colonial Period (1552–1820)

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**Abstract** This article presents a synthesis of regional archaeological investigations in the city and region of Valdivia during the colonial period (1550–1820). Previous studies have traditionally been centered on Hispanic mindsets and the role of conflict, the frontier status of colonial society in southern Chile, and the dispersed character of indigenous settlement. Here local sequences of material culture are reconsidered together with previous conceptual frameworks proposed by historical and anthropological research. Our research is based on new field surveys, the study of standing buildings, and assemblages of finds. These have been

linked to different types of sites, including urban centers, fortifications, and mission posts. The results allow us to investigate the intercultural character of local society, settlement patterns, and the role of Valdivia in the context of the Peruvian viceroyalty and the Spanish Empire as a whole. Conclusions reveal the specific colonial processes that characterized the region and the sequence of founding, abandonment, and refounding of the urban center of Valdivia, which, in turn, impacted patterns of indigenous settlement and provoked technological hybridization in local ceramic industries. These changes can be linked to the emergence of an intercultural society, the definition of which proves more complex than that accepted by current binary categories.

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**Resumen** Este artículo presenta una síntesis de las investigaciones arqueológicas regionales en la ciudad y región de Valdivia durante el período colonial (1550–1820). Los estudios anteriores se han centrado tradicionalmente en la mentalidad hispana y el papel del conflicto, el estatus fronterizo de la sociedad colonial en el sur de Chile y el carácter disperso de los asentamientos indígenas. Aquí se reconsideran las secuencias locales de cultura material junto con los marcos conceptuales previos propuestos por la investigación histórica y antropológica. Nuestra investigación se basa en nuevos estudios de campo, el estudio de edificios en pie y conjuntos de hallazgos. Estos se han vinculado a diferentes tipos de sitios, incluidos centros urbanos, fortificaciones y puestos de misión. Los resultados nos permiten investigar el carácter

intercultural de la sociedad local, los patrones de asentamiento y el papel de Valdivia en el contexto del virreinato peruano y del Imperio español en su conjunto. Las conclusiones revelan los procesos coloniales específicos que caracterizaron la región y la secuencia de fundación, abandono y refundación del centro urbano de Valdivia, que a su vez impactaron patrones de asentamiento indígena y provocaron la hibridación tecnológica en las industrias cerámicas locales. Estos cambios pueden estar vinculados al surgimiento de una sociedad intercultural, cuya definición resulta más compleja que la aceptada por las categorías binarias actuales.

**Résumé** Cet article présente une synthèse des recherches archéologiques régionales dans la ville et la région de Valdivia durant la période coloniale (1550–1820). Les études précédentes se sont essentiellement intéressées de manière traditionnelle aux mentalités hispaniques et au rôle du conflit, au statut de frontière dans la société coloniale du Chili septentrional et au caractère dispersé de l'implantation indigène. Les séquences locales de la culture matérielle font ici l'objet d'un nouvel examen conjointement aux cadres conceptuels antérieurs proposés par la recherche historique et anthropologique. Notre recherche se fonde sur de nouvelles études de terrain, l'étude des bâtiments anciens et les assemblages des découvertes. Celles-ci ont été liées à différents types de sites, notamment les centres urbains, les fortifications et les postes de mission. Les résultats nous permettent d'étudier de manière globale le caractère intercultural de la société locale, les modèles d'implantation et le rôle de Valdivia dans le contexte de la vice-royauté péruvienne et de l'empire espagnole. Les conclusions mettent en lumière les processus coloniaux spécifiques ayant caractérisé la région et la séquence de fondation, d'abandon puis de refondation du centre urbain de Valdivia, laquelle à son tour, a eu un impact sur les modèles d'implantation indigène et a provoqué une hybridation technologique dans les industries céramiques locales. Ces modifications peuvent être liées à l'émergence d'une société interculturelle, dont la définition s'avère plus complexe que celle acceptée par les catégories binaires actuelles.

**Keywords** Chile · regional field survey · colonial period · intercultural society

## Introduction

Archaeological case studies of cities and regions colonized by the Spanish Empire are crucially important in order to advance understanding of the formation of colonial society in the Americas and the dynamics of power and domination in historiographical discourse, especially as developed through the reading of Hispanic documentary sources.

After two decades of archaeological research in the city of Valdivia and its hinterland, it is timely to attempt a synthesis of this large set of data and its interpretations, and place these in the context of macroregional debates. In South America, our perspective has traditionally had its origins in the analysis of the foundings of cities and interactions between Hispanic and local indigenous populations during the colonial period (Chiavazza and Cerutti 2010; Calvo and Cocco 2016); such an approach follows earlier traditional studies of pre-Columbian and Latin American urban planning (Palm 1951:5–27,264–269; Hardoy 1964; Schaedel 1972; Guarda 1978; Hardoy and Gutman 2007; Luque 2018).

One of the keys to the archaeological study of Valdivia is the contribution of historical and ethnohistorical studies in the extensive southern region of the Capitania General de Chile (the Captaincy General of Chile, commonly referred to as the “Kingdom of Chile”), which is characterized by frontier relations among Spaniards, creoles, and local indigenous communities, the latter generically referred to as “Mapuche.” Different borders existed during the Hispanic colonization of this territory: the first one, “de Arauco” or “del Biobío,” in the north, and another, to the south, referred to as the “upper frontier,” which coincides with the study area in this article (X. Urbina 2009); the latter is an area hitherto unstudied from an archaeological point of view. When compared to areas farther north, the use of written sources for the colonial period (1552–1820) here facilitates the study of the archaeology and allows better correlation between different types of evidence and the distribution and chronology of settlements.

In this article we focus in detail on four “nodes” in densely populated areas around permanent settlements that were occupied for a long period of time as major axes in regional networks (in the sense used by Nielsen et al. [2019]). Our surveys are based around these “nodes,” whose location is considered representative of regional processes over four centuries, and we have used them to test our methodology discussed below.

Our results consider the different forms of indigenous and Hispanic occupation and their interaction in the 16th century. We ask how these different spatial patterns and the distribution of material culture, whether mixed (hybrid) between both groups or not, were transformed depending upon their strategic and geographical location, and the dynamics of negotiation typical of this border area to create societies that reflected factors other than ethnicity.

Our analysis and discussion are centered on intercultural or interethnic relations in the city of Valdivia and its hinterland from the 16th century, and adopt a theoretical approach to border relations (Lightfoot 1995; Lightfoot and Martínez 1995; Van Valckenburg 2013). Similarly, we explore both the continental and global networks through which a cluster of southern cities bordering the Pacific Ocean, including Valdivia, maintained imperial traffic and communications through the Strait of Magellan during the decline of the Spanish monarchy's hegemony in the 17th and 18th centuries (Garavaglia and Marchena 2005; Gascón 2011).

### Historical Archaeology of the Governance of Chile

The development of historical archaeology in South America, particularly in Chile, has been slow and erratic, despite the abundance of the surviving archaeological record. Casual discoveries are frequent, and planned research has sometimes been possible as cities of colonial origin have expanded, as at La Serena, Santiago, Mendoza, Valparaíso, Concepción, Valdivia, Osorno, Castro, and elsewhere (Fig. 1).

These investigations have mainly focused on how the Spanish population occupied and configured early settlements. In Santiago, the focus has been on the relationship between the preexisting Inca groups and Hispanic occupation strategies (Prado and Barrientos 2011; Stehberg and Sotomayor 2012). For later phases, aqueducts, cemeteries, rubbish dumps, and slag heaps of the colonial period all cast light on aspects of engineering, industry, and the evolution of buildings (Prado and Gómez 2012).

In Mendoza, research has centered on the Inca presence and its interaction with local populations before and during Spanish occupation (Prieto-Olavarría and Chiavazza 2010). Links between Mendoza and other Chilean cities to the west of the Andes have been highlighted, not least to explore whether the earliest

settlements were complex villages rather than consolidated urban settlements (Chiavazza 2016).

In Valdivia, the major research themes are the relationship between the city and previous phases of occupation and later development. Four phases have been identified during the colonial period, from its first foundation in 1552 to the modification of its status as a walled settlement in the mid-17th and 18th centuries (S. Urbina, Adán, Munita et al. 2012; S. Urbina, Adán, Mera et al. 2016).

Settlements and their architecture have been studied using historical maps and archaeological records. Here the relationship between the first urban settlements and other fortified settlements has produced a wealth of literature. These are found in Chile, both on the River Biobío border, created at the beginning of the 17th century and where Valdivia and its port are located, as well as in the Chiloé area (Guarda 1990; R. Urbina 2012; S. Urbina and Chamorro 2016b). Mission posts, for which there is valuable historical information at Concepción, Imperial, Valdivia, Chiloé, and Nahuelhuapi, have also begun to attract archaeological research, for example at Niebla at the Franciscan mission of Christ Crucified, some 15 km east of Valdivia (S. Urbina and Adán 2014:49–53).

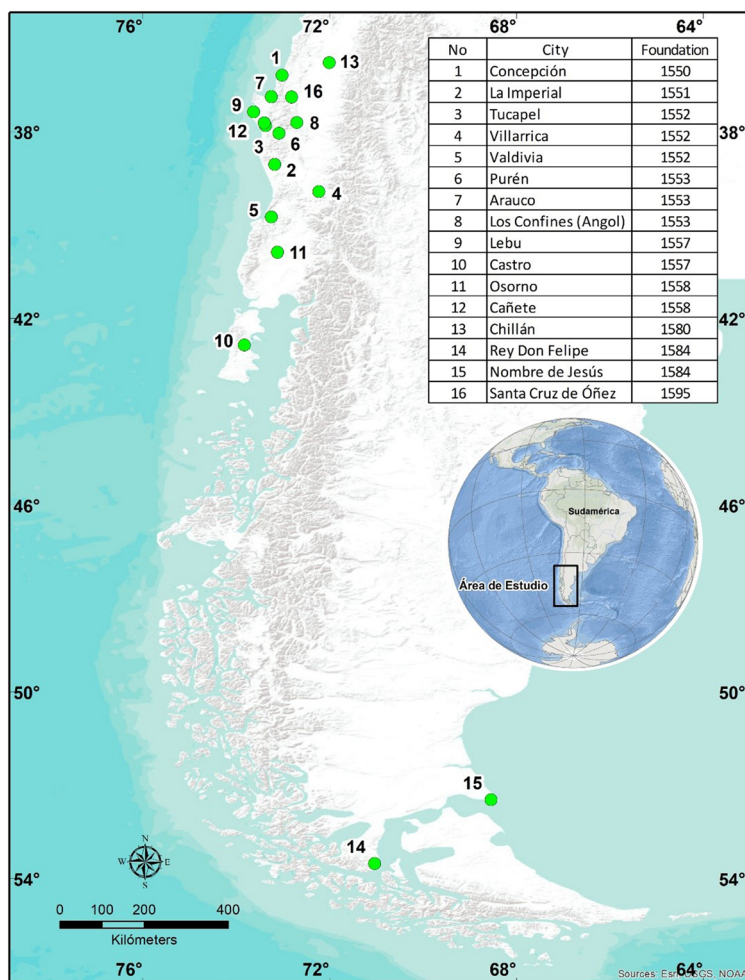
Another area of research interest is indigenous and European material culture during the 16th to the 19th centuries. Intercultural relations, trading practices, and links between Hispanic administrative centers and production areas are all important themes here and provide clues to social differences. The study of European colonial tablewares, for example, whether manufactured on the Iberian Peninsula, in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, or in Peru, confirms documentary evidence and archaeology to be in broad agreement with one another (Prado 2010:1015–1021, 1030–1031). This research model can also be applied to other colonial cities of Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina, where work of this kind has not yet been undertaken.

### Regional Context

#### Historical Background

In the jurisdiction of Valdivia, historical, ethnohistorical, and archaeological studies have documented part of the indigenous Mapuche-Huilliche territory, an area densely populated in pre-Hispanic times, but

**Fig. 1** Map showing the southern urban settlements founded in Chile between 1550 and 1595. (Map by Aldo Farías, 2019.)



different from the northernmost region traditionally known as the “State of Arauco” (Zavala and Dillehay 2010). This Mapuche territory was composed of different regions and is far from being a homogenous environment or culture. To the north of the River Biobío, Valdivia was not under the Hispanic control of the border, and for that reason the region is described as a “second border,” known as the “upper frontier” (X. Urbina 2009).

Valdivia was founded in 1552 by the conqueror Pedro de Valdivia, only 11 years after the founding of the city of Santiago. Several factors contributed to help establish this new city: the existing high density of population, rich agricultural production, timber, and reports of gold mines, together with a magnificent port and the river that connected it with the northern and mountainous areas to the east (Guarda 1994). As in other American cities, Spanish

immigrants given the legal status of citizens were granted plots of land in the city together with *encomiendas* or labor and taxes that were extracted from indigenous people.

During the 16th century, settlement in the Kingdom of Chile remained unstable because of the constant threat of war, the decline of the native population, the weakening importance of gold extraction, and also natural disasters, such as the great earthquake of 1575. At the end of the century, in 1598, a major indigenous uprising razed all the cities founded south of the River Biobío (excluding Castro on the island of Chiloé), leaving Valdivia uninhabited by Spaniards for 40 years after 1604.

After this general uprising, Hispanic control was gradually taken up from the north by establishing a border on the River Biobío, the refoundation of Concepción, and the installation of an army paid

from Lima through the *real situado* after 1603.<sup>1</sup> After 1593, Father Luis de Valdivia's Jesuit mission work sought to subject and convert local populations through the establishment of peace agreements and missionary posts (Díaz Blanco 2010). From the late 16th century, indigenous groups recognized a new political and military system based on the *ayllarewe* and the subsequent emergence of the *butalmapus*, which controlled elongated blocks of territory, thereby enhancing the leadership of the *toquis* (Goicovich 2006; Ortiz 2006).<sup>2</sup>

The Crown, on the other hand, saw its control of the Pacific, and places such as Callao (Lima), threatened by Dutch expansion. Dutch forces settled briefly in the port of Valdivia (Corral) toward the spring of 1643, and, although their occupation was brief (two months), this alerted Viceroy Marqués de Toledo, who, in 1645, sent a fleet to repopulate and fortify the port. The advance of a land army under the governor of Chile led to negotiations with the Mapuche populations in parliaments (e.g., Quillín) and the establishment of “peace treaties” that allowed the installation of a fortification, the Plaza Fuerte, or Plaza Real, in the ruins of Valdivia. This site later became one of the southernmost prisons of the Peruvian viceroyalty.

Valdivia was maintained from the second half of the 17th century by the *situado* tax (Guarda 1973). From that time, Valdivia acted theoretically as a “type of island” (Guarda 1973:207), given that it was the only permanently occupied Hispanic site between Concepción to the north and Chiloé to the south. The second half of the 17th century is probably the least known period for this region, and only the devastating effects of the great uprising of 1655 are identified. These impacts highlight the importance of the “upper territories” (or south of Toltén) for Mapuche resistance and reorganization.

<sup>1</sup> The *situado* was a tax paid first from Lima (1603–1687) and later from Potosí. This money paid for the construction of defense works and army salaries.

<sup>2</sup> These terms are levels of social organization in the Mapuche population and documented from the 16th century (Adán 2014:50–64). *Ayllarewe* is a group of seven *rewes* (each *rewe* being formed by smaller social units, such as *lebos* and *cabis*). These were seemingly more prominent during periods of conflict. *Bultalmapus* are Mapuche territories reflecting social lineage that adopt north–south routes so that the three main geographical territories of the Mapuche are the coast, the central plains, and the uplands. *Toqui* is a political role assumed by the Mapuche during times of conflict.

The Bourbon changes that affected the 18th century locally (Garavaglia and Marschena 2005) are expressed in Valdivia through different events and processes related to distant viceroyalty power centers and the global context of empire. During this century the city expanded toward the interior, and the Chilean authorities, such as those at Lima, sought to interconnect occupied settlements and also to establish settlements in close proximity to one other to eliminate empty spaces and those controlled by indigenous populations; the overall aim was to protect themselves from the threat of foreign powers (the UK, the Netherlands, and France) that now threatened Hispanic possessions.

The global administrative transformations of the 18th century had an impact on the relationship between Valdivia and the Kingdom of Chile in 1740–1741, although the city remained subject to the viceroy of Peru on military matters and to the king of Spain on the appointment of its governor. A regulation issued in the city in the 1750s sought to expand the fortified area of Valdivia and involve soldiers in trades that would stimulate the growth of the settlement. Similarly, increased spending on defenses oriented toward the Pacific Ocean now energized the economic and political functions of the town and other places with castles, forts, and missions.

Finally, the expansion of Valdivia into its hinterland required permanent investment in and negotiations with the local population, something that was made possible in 1792 by the Treaty of the Canoes. This agreement allowed for the refounding of Osorno as an intermediate settlement midway between Valdivia and the island of Chiloé (Alcamán 1994, 1997). Apart from some anthropological studies (Vergara 2005), 20th-century historiography was less interested in interethnic or intercultural relationships between the Hispanic-creole and the indigenous populations of the region. Archaeology itself has only begun to address these issues during the 21st century.

## Nodal Settlements and Spatial Distribution

Archaeological research in southern Chile began in the early years of the 20th century, with interest centered on the pre-Hispanic period. It is only in the last two decades, however, that historical archaeology has turned its attention to post-16th-century urban contexts, investigating interethnic relations after Spanish colonization

and local expressions of industrial capitalism in the 19th century (Adán, Mera, Navarro et al. 2016).

### Regional Survey

Systematic fieldwork was conducted around four “nodes”<sup>3</sup> that offer new information about patterns of occupation across the study region. These nodes were centered on the castle at Cruces (founded ca. 1647), the Franciscan mission of Quinchilca (ca. 1778), an extensive indigenous cemetery on the southern edge of Lake Ranco (18th century), and the city of Valdivia (ca. 1552/1647) (Fig. 2).

The results indicate that these four nodes behave differently (Table 1). In effect, the densest area of settlement, when judged by number of sites per linear kilometer, is Valdivia, followed by Ranco, Cruces, and then Quinchilca. The dominant pattern is for areas of occupation to extend over fewer than 0.1 hectares (ha), and this includes small residential settlements. They are most frequent in the Cruces node, where they account for 60% of all the identified sites. Settlements from 0.1 to 1 ha are less frequent (15%–29%), whereas larger sites (>1 ha) are present in all the nodes, and extensive settlements, those larger than 20 ha, only occur in the nodes far from the city: Quinchilca and Lago Ranco (Table 2). Residential or domestic sites dominate in all the nodes, being more than 78% of those recorded; some of these combine other functions, such as cemeteries, defense, roads, or ceremonial sites. The dating of the ceramics recovered shows that about 70% of the sites are of pre-Hispanic origin, while about 25% produced Hispanic American or European material of the colonial period (Fig. 3) (Table 3).

From the data gathered it seems that pre-Hispanic ceramics are of greater importance in the nodes of Quinchilca and Lago Ranco, where there are fewer sites with European components and a significant presence of large (>5 ha) and very large sites (>20 ha). Cruces, on the other hand, has about 30% of sites with European elements, 21% of the sites are exclusively colonial or mostly colonial, and there is only a single large site (>5 ha). In the Valdivia node more than 52% of the sites contain European material culture, 7.5% of the sites are

exclusively colonial, and only two sites are greater than 5 ha.

### Settlement Types

Taking data from fieldwalking, together with that from previous studies (Adán 2014; S. Urbina and Adán 2014; Marin-Aguilera et al. 2019), we can reconstruct the spatial distribution of the main archaeological settlements and confirm that there is a range of settlement types during the colonial period (Fig. 4).

*Domestic Sites* In this category there are different housing sites with indigenous ceramics and some European or European American materials, and structures of *ruka* type: a single-story building, classified as a “shed” by the Hispanic population, with an oval, sub-circular or sub-rectangular plan, and built with perishable materials, such as wood, brush, and straw (Campbell 2012:363; Adán 2014:159–213). This type of occupation represents more than 70% of the archaeological sites identified in the study area, (S. Urbina and Adán 2014:39), most of them (69%) producing materials from the late ceramic period (1000–1552), but remaining in occupation in the 16th and 17th centuries.

*Funerary Settlements* In general, indigenous cemeteries of the colonial period are characterized by the predominance of handmade, monochrome ceramics painted red, although sometimes including the red-on-white decoration (“Valdivia style”) typical of the region. In some cemeteries individual burials contain hybrid ceramics that combine formal elements of both indigenous and European traditions (Adán, Mera, Munita et al. 2016). European materials are also deposited as offerings or ornaments next to human remains.

The main cemeteries are 50 km from the city of Valdivia. To the southeast of Valdivia, the cemetery at Cocule, near Río Bueno and La Unión, has produced Tringlo-style bowls similar in form to majolica dishes or plates. To the east, the cemeteries of Malihue have yielded water containers, or *meshen*, similar in shape to Spanish “olive jars.” To the northeast, at the cemetery at Puile, there are burials in canoes (*wampo*) and indigenous-ceramic offerings, together with British fine earthenwares traded after independence from Spanish rule in 1820 (Brooks et al. 2019). There are many cemeteries within the urban area of Valdivia (e.g., Las Mulatas, Collico, and Angachilla) that are now known

<sup>3</sup> The term “node” here denotes an area with significant evidence of occupation. These nodes were first identified from historical sources, where main settlements are described. Fieldwalking was then undertaken using each node as a base point.

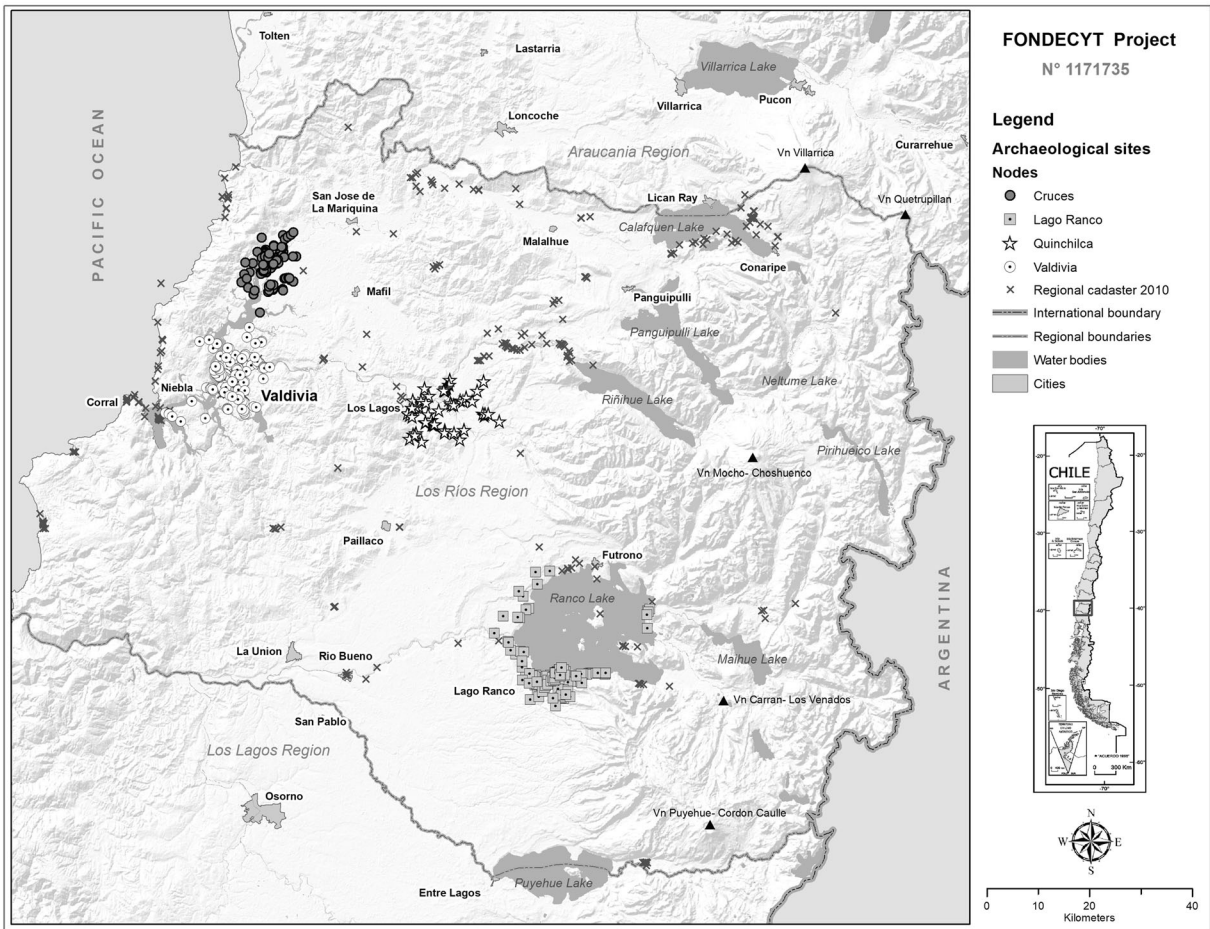


Fig. 2 Archaeological sites in the area of Los Ríos region. (Map by Aldo Farías, 2019.)

only from historical collections at museums, but they do contain indigenous elements (S. Urbina, Adán, Munita et al. 2012), perhaps dating to the late ceramic period

Table 1 Areas of field survey: frequency and density of sites by node

Survey Node	Distance Traveled (Km)	Area Covered (Km <sup>2</sup> )	No. of Sites	Percentage	Density (Sites per Km)
Cruces	162.0	0.65	98	24.3	0.6
Quinchilca	142.0	0.57	53	13.2	0.37
Lago Ranco	127.1	0.51	118	29.3	0.93
Valdivia	108.55	0.43	134	33.3	1.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>539.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.75</b>

Source: Munita (2016).

and the beginning of the *encomiendas* system in the 16th century (S. Urbina and Adán 2013).

*Fortress or Defensive Complex* This category includes settlements fenced with palisades; small forts, or *fortines*, placed next to housing; and forts placed strategically at crossroads. They have rectangular, square, oval, or irregular plans and are of two sizes: small (0.01–0.1 ha) and large (0.2–3.5 ha) (Adán 2014:325–326). Although these sites are traditionally dated to the colonial period, the fort of Arquihue (100 km southeast of Valdivia), on the tributaries of Lake Ranco, has produced evidence of indigenous occupation from the 15th to the 17th and 18th centuries. Among the fortified sites is the *casa de mita*, or “strong house,” typical of Hispanic settlements outside 16th-century cities. Archaeologically, only Santa Sylvania (Villarrica) seems to have been erected

**Table 2** Absolute frequency of site size for each node surveyed

Survey Node	<0.1 Ha	0.11–1 Ha	1.01–5 Ha	5.01–20 Ha	>20.01 Ha	No. of Records	Total
Cruces	60	21	7	1	—	9	<b>98</b>
Quinchilca	22	21	4	—	5	1	<b>53</b>
Lago Ranco	51	46	9	4	1	7	<b>118</b>
Valdivia	75	46	6	2	1	4	<b>134</b>
Total	<b>208</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>403</b>
Percentage	<b>51.61</b>	<b>33.25</b>	<b>6.45</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>5.21</b>	<b>100</b>

on a previously occupied indigenous settlement, which covered 0.5 ha (Sauer 2012, 2015).

On the other hand, the Spanish defensive system, created in 1647, was composed of batteries, forts, and castles of diverse configurations, sometimes built over preexisting indigenous settlements. According to surviving plans of 1755, the castles of Valdivia, which are small in comparison to those of Callao or Acapulco, varied in size from 0.3 to 2.4 ha, with between 8% and 28% of this space being roofed (S. Urbina and Chamorro 2016a). Existing inventories for these buildings refer to walled settlements, which, besides having defensive features (pits, curtains, batteries for cannons, and bastions), also include churches, gunpowder stores, barracks or guardhouses, a “house for the Spaniard,” kitchens, on certain occasions *pulperías*,<sup>4</sup> rooms for the constable, a prison, and houses for the chaplains. In the middle of the 18th century at the headquarters of this defensive system in Valdivia, the walled area or barracks (2.4 ha) housed 36 different buildings, with administrative, religious, military, and residential functions.

*Missions* In Valdivia there were mission posts administered by the Jesuit (1645–1767) and Franciscan (1770–1820) orders. The Jesuits based themselves in the city, and from there they developed their religious efforts, preaching peripatetically. From 1740 they held two farms in the interior (San José de La Mariquina and Mulpún) in addition to smaller properties and paddocks (Valdés 1986; Guarda 1999:55–58, 2011:217). After the expulsion of the Jesuits this missionary work was taken up by the Franciscans, who converted the base at Valdivia into a hospice (Guarda 2001:285). It was the

Franciscans that established permanent mission posts, creating a further 11 to add to the 3 earlier Jesuit projects (Toltén Bajo, San José, Nahuel Huapi) (Guarda 1999:65–67). Two of the former have been recorded archaeologically: Niebla and Quinchilca. Both were built with local stone (schist and *cancagua*, a volcanoclastic sandstone), using the same construction design as the fortifications. The stone architecture of both missions is a good example of the ways masonry and stonework were organized as part of missionary work. According to historical records, mission posts were established in indigenous territories or in their vicinity.

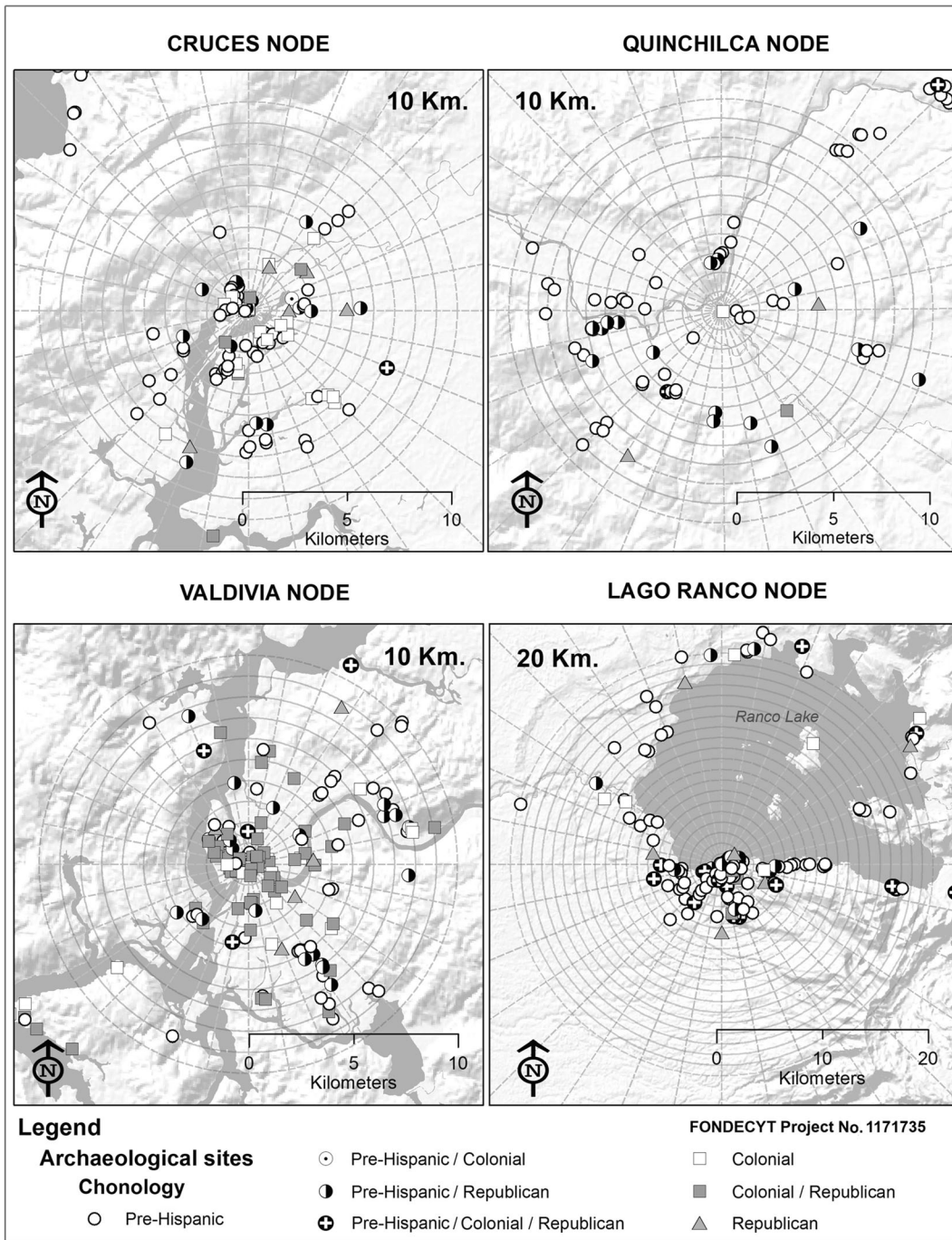
The mission of Niebla, founded in 1777–1778,<sup>5</sup> was composed of three main rectangular buildings (mission house, chapel, and “house of Indians,” or kitchen) on a plot of 0.25 ha and did not include defensive elements, such as moats or perimeter walls. The layout consisted of buildings arranged around a central space for open-air meetings. The material culture provided by the archaeological excavations consists mainly of monochrome ceramics of indigenous tradition, with a very few Hispanic or European objects of the 18th and 19th centuries.

*Urban Settlements* Between 1550 and 1595 a dozen Spanish cities were founded between Chillán and the island of Chiloé (S. Urbina and Adán 2018). These urban centers, La Imperial (96 ha), Valdivia (54 ha), Villarrica (53 ha), and Osorno (46 ha), for example, had either a grid-pattern or irregular-grid design, with a central square and square or rectangular blocks around

<sup>4</sup> Shops where Spaniards could buy provisions. These shops were administered by governors or their aides (Real Academia Española de la Lengua 1737).

<sup>5</sup> The mission was founded on land donated by several indigenous authorities (*lonko*) on the coast: José Alba (or Pelquiñanco), Juan Suichas, Antonio Guínteo, Lorenzo Bancupillán, and Gabriel Guichipán (Guarda 1999:68–69). Occupation dates have been confirmed by TL (ca. 1755) and <sup>14</sup>C (1729–1812), which would predate the official date of founding.





**Fig. 3** Relative chronology of archaeological sites found during field survey. (Maps by Aldo Fariás, 2019.)

it separated by perpendicular streets of differing dimensions (S. Urbina and Chamorro 2016b).

Each urban settlement had its own phases, although all were established at strategic locations of pre-Hispanic indigenous occupation whose place names

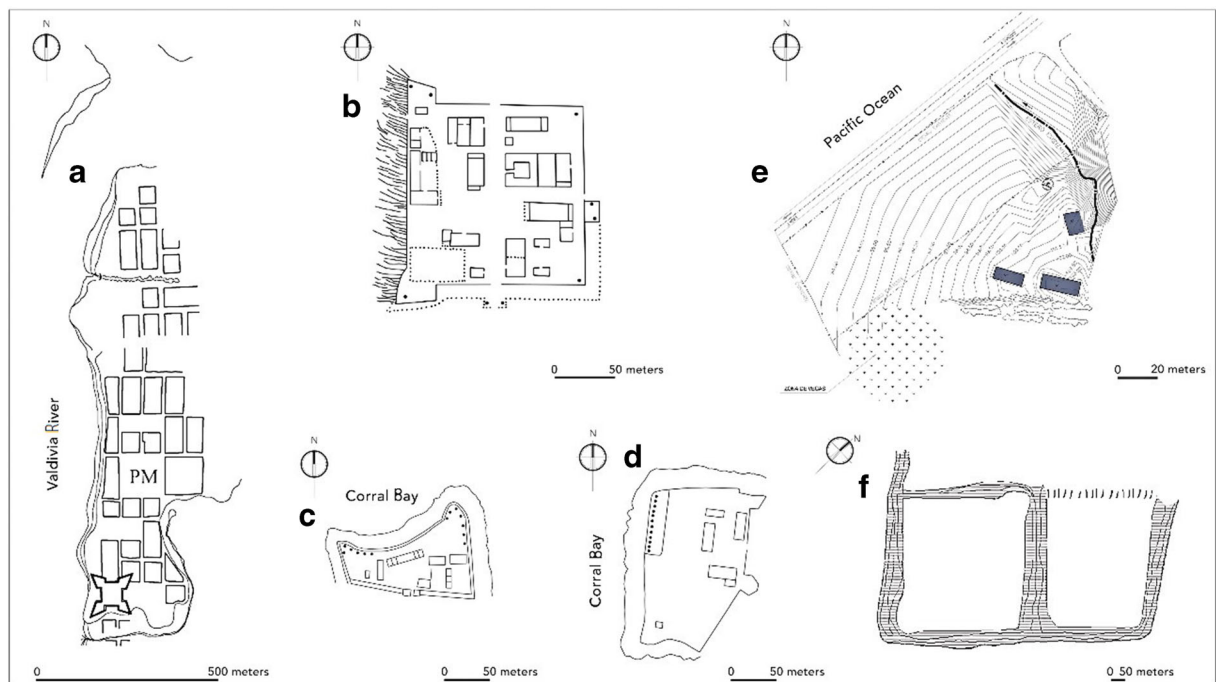
have survived in contemporary cartography: “Guadalafquén,” in the case of Valdivia, and “Chauracahuín,” in the case of Osorno. Similarly, written and archaeological evidence confirm that local populations were actively involved not only in the

**Table 3** Relative chronology of archaeological sites found during field survey

Survey Node	Single Component Sites			Multicomponent Sites		Total
	Pre-Hispanic (Pre-1552)	Colonial (Ca. 1552–1820)	Republican (Post-1820)	Indigenous Components Present	No Indigenous Component Present	
Cruces	50	21	5	17	5	<b>98</b>
Quinchilca	32	—	3	17	1	<b>53</b>
Lago Ranco	81	2	7	24	4	<b>118</b>
Valdivia	36	10	4	28	56	<b>134</b>
Total	<b>199</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>403</b>
Percentage	<b>49.38</b>	<b>8.19</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>21.34</b>	<b>16.38</b>	<b>100</b>

formation of these settlements, but also in supplying provisions and labor for their maintenance. Proof of this are the pre-Hispanic floors and dates determined from the foundation levels of Villarrica and Valdivia, and, more importantly, the indigenous ceramics that appear there together with European ceramics from the Iberian Peninsula and from other American sources as well (Adán, S. Urbina, Prieto-Olavarría et al. 2016).

*Terrestrial, Fluvial, and Mixed Routes* The study of mobility, routes, and points of connection (ports, docks, resting places, etc.) is key to understanding how the territory and its settlements or nodes of colonial occupation were articulated and connected around Valdivia. Our surveys, which have covered about 543 linear km, allow us to characterize seven routes interconnecting networks of pre-Hispanic and colonial sites (Godoy 2018).



**Fig. 4** Plans of the main site types found in the region: (a) Valdivia City in the 16th century (Urbina and Chamorro 2016b:123); (b) Valdivia in 1755 (Urbina and Chamorro 2016a:510); (c) Mancera Castle in 1755 (Urbina and Chamorro

2016a:510); (d) plan of the castle of Niebla in 1755 (Urbina and Chamorro 2016a:510); (e) layout of the mission post at Niebla, ca. 1778 (Urbina and Adán 2014:52); and (f) the fort at Arquihue (Adán 2014:317). (Figure by Constanza Chamorro, 2019.)

They include land and river routes, articulated or linked by ports, resting points, and roads associated with occupation sites, fortifications, missions, and the city of Valdivia itself. There was a network of connections through coastal environments, water systems, and rivers, estuaries, and wetlands, including unflooded river terraces and mountainous terrains with evergreen rainforest.

A “mixed mobility” is identified for the nodes of Valdivia and Cruces, one that included terrestrial-fluvial and terrestrial-maritime traffic between different locations and two preferred destinations: the city of Valdivia and the port of Corral. This created a center/periphery relationship in which the areas surrounding Valdivia gave preference to the city as a destination for their goods and raw materials, while Corral Bay was the main point of supply in the maritime routes that articulated the viceroyalty of Perú, the Kingdom of Chile, and the Atlantic side of the Americas and Europe through the Strait of Magellan.

Finally, our field survey emphasizes that paths and trails were the principal routeways for internal land traffic, many of them connected by rivers. River transport depended on navigation systems and knowledge of tides and seasonal variations. In the ethnographic record reference is made to remains of the Camino Real (“royal path”) on the north bank of the River Futa, in sectors bordering the River Pichoy and in the southern sector of Valdivia (Angachilla). Nevertheless, we still know very little about the layout of this royal road and how it connected with secondary roads and trails used by the indigenous population.

### Chronology

A range of 235 absolute dates by radiocarbon ( $^{14}\text{C}$ , 49 dates) and thermoluminescence dating (TL, 186 dates) from about 80 archaeological sites located in the region of Los Ríos have been gathered by different projects and research teams between 1993 and 2017.<sup>6</sup> The main results are summarized here.

First, 85 dates (33  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 52 TL) correspond to the pre-Hispanic layers prior to the founding of Valdivia in 1552. Of these, 49 (10  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 39 TL) come from the late ceramic period. In the modern urban center of

Valdivia itself, there are 9 dates (1  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 8 TL) for cemeteries and residential sites between 1100 and 1515, among which two (A.D. 1463 [Beta 462287] and A.D. 1475 [UCTL 2826]) come directly from the foundational area.

Among the 150 dates after 1552 (17  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 134 TL), 113 dates correspond to the colonial period (1552–1820) and 37 date to Chile’s republican period (1820–1960). Within the first group, dates for the colonial period offer a complex panorama of the historical phases during which Valdivia was founded (1552), abandoned (1604), and refounded (1647). The first urban phase of Valdivia is characterized by 14 dates between 1552 and 1604, within which two TL dates correspond to samples of brick and curved roof tile from the earliest area of occupation.

For the abandonment phase of the city of Valdivia (1604–1647) there are 14 regional dates, two of which correspond to hearth samples that confirm indigenous occupation prior to the founding of the castle at Cruces and the construction of the colonial site of Mancera (ca. 1760). The remainder correspond to 11 dates from Valdivia-style ceramics from the coast and valleys, with only one from the urban perimeter.

Finally, the lapse between the refoundation of Valdivia and independence from Spain (1647–1820) is the best represented at a regional level, with 85 dates that report all the different types of settlement described in the previous section (7  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 78 TL). Of these, there are 25 dates from the second half of the 17th century (1650–1700), and 60 belong to the 18th and the first two decades of the 19th (1701–1820). Almost half (45%: 3  $^{14}\text{C}$  and 35 TL) come from the current urban perimeter of Valdivia.

Dates have also been recovered from ceramics, many from a European source, such as olive jars, majolicas (Panamá type blue on white, Panamá polychrome A, “Beyond Polychrome,” and Escapaláque/Popayán), lead-glazed red earthenwares, and stonewares, all found in Valdivia (20 TL dates), fortifications (forts and castles), indigenous settlements 5 km (Paillao 3) and 40 km (Millahuillín 1) distant from the city. The same number of dates (20 TL) has been provided by ceramics of indigenous tradition (monochrome, corrugated, decorated with inlays, Valdivia style, Tringlo style) from indigenous settlements, but also from Hispanic fortifications and the urban perimeter of Valdivia.

Finally, 36 samples of ceramic building materials are dated by TL (mainly curved roof tiles and bricks). These

<sup>6</sup> We are grateful to Dr. Roberto Campbell for kindly making available his database of regional data, including 60 dates included here (Campbell and Quiroz 2015:appendix a).

are both locally produced and imported from other places within the Peruvian viceroyalty or the Kingdom of Chile, reflecting their intensive use during the 18th century. This type of material has only been found in Valdivia city center (0.5 km around the current Plaza de la República) as well as at defensive and missionary sites along the coast (the castle at Mancera and the mission post at Niebla).

## Material Culture

In this section we consider movable and immovable materials recovered from the archaeological contexts excavated or found in the topsoil in the Valdivia area.

### Indigenous Ceramics and Lithic Production

Indigenous ceramics produced locally and regionally and found in pre-Hispanic and colonial sites include monochrome ceramic tableware (jars, plates, jugs, vases, and large containers) and also those with painted decoration in the so-called Valdivia style and Tringlo style, with encrustations and incised motifs (Adán, Mera, Munita et al. 2016; Adán et al. 2018). Quantities vary from site to site and appear mixed with European ceramics and Asian porcelain at occupation sites, cemeteries (complete offerings), mission contexts, and fortification sites, as well as within the urban center of Valdivia; their frequency here seems to depend on the distance from the Plaza Mayor (1552–1599) and, later, from the Plaza Murada (1647–1798).

Whereas indigenous pottery is as frequent as European ceramics in the urban area of the city and in the fortifications that make up the defensive system in Corral Bay, it clearly dominates at the mission sites (Niebla) and interior fortifications (Cruces). A range of indigenous pottery (cups, vases, plates, and containers) (Fig. 5a–k) imitates European forms, despite the vessels being made without a wheel. The best example of this technological hybridization is plates with white-on-red decoration (Tringlo style) (Fig. 5f), cups and vases with complex handles, and the *meshen*, or containers (Fig. 5a–d, h–i), that imitate the Spanish olive jars or commercial containers (Fig. 5j).

On the other hand, the material recorded during fieldwalking around the settlement nodes shows that Valdivia and Cruces have very high densities of ceramics, as might be expected in the clustering around

the urban area and the fortification upstream (Table 4) (Fig. 2); there thick wall sherds from olive jars and indigenous containers (*meshen*) were also found (Table 4).

With regard to the colonial lithic industry, indigenous elements were maintained after the foundation of Valdivia, at the same time as a new post-Hispanic Mapuche lithic industry developed (Munita et al. 2018). Among the indigenous materials, the triangular points with a straight edge and concave base continued to be struck from different types of raw materials (quartz, obsidian, and basalt) and are widely found in the center-south of Chile in the late ceramic period (ca. 1000–1550).

The use of local raw materials, such as schist and quartz, was identified around the castle at Cruces during fieldwalking there. Schist was used for making ornaments, tools (e.g., agricultural tools, musical instruments, and household items, such as jars), and funerary structures (*cistas*); quartz was reserved for making tools using mono- and bifacial carving (Munita et al. 2018:100). Schist was also used profusely by the Hispanic population in construction, in the city itself, and at mission posts and fortifications.

In urban contexts, basalt and andesite are also recorded, as well as siliceous stone (such as chalcedony and green silica) of unknown provenance. Obsidian flakes found in occupation layers of the 16th and 17th centuries may be identified as reworked earlier tools (Mera et al. 2018). This reuse may indicate that previous distribution pathways for raw materials from their extraction sites in high mountainous areas were by then disrupted. Finally, it is worth highlighting the discovery of green glass flakes associated with Valdivia-style diagnostic ceramics at sites between the castle at Cruces and Valdivia, as well as in other contexts within the urban perimeter of the city (Casa Prochelle 1) and at fortifications at Corral Bay (the castle at Niebla), all associated with occupation layers of the colonial period (Munita et al. 2018:100–101).

### European and Asiatic Ceramics

Within the Valdivia area, all the main types of ceramics manufactured in Panamá have been identified (Rovira 2001), including Panamá plain, Panamá blue on white (plates and bowls), and Panamá polychrome A (plates of different sizes, bowls), as well as other polychrome majolicas (“Beyond Polychrome”), brown and green on yellow (Escapalaque, Popayán, or Cuenca?)



**Fig. 5** Indigenous and European ceramics found in the Valdivia region: (a, b) cups in Tringlo style (Colección Museo de Río Bueno and Colección Dirección Museológica, Universidad Austral de Chile, Valdivia [DM-UACH]); (c, d) pots in Tringlo style (DM-UACH); (e) plate in Valdivia style (Colección Malihue, comuna de Los Lagos [particular] [CM]); (f) plate in Tringlo style (Colección Museo Tringlo, Lago Ranco); (g) polychrome majolica

plate, decorated in yellow (DM-UACH); (h, i) indigenous containers, or *meshen* (CM, DM-UACH); (j) Spanish container (*botija*), late style, Form A (DM-UACH); (k) Panamá polychrome A majolica plate (Cruces, DM-UACH); (l, m) jars inlaid with plain and polychrome majolica sherds (DM-UACH). (Photos courtesy of the Dirección Museológica Archives, 2018.)

(Jamieson 2003:254–258), a wide range of glazed, slipped, and unglazed ceramics, and also burnished pots, known regionally as *búcaros* (Prado 2010).

Excluding Chinese porcelain, the assemblage is of the European ceramic tradition and includes a wide variety of forms, especially among the tin-glazed

vessels. Although the majolica assemblage from Valdivia is not as diverse as that from Santiago, Mendoza, or other urban centers (Chiavazza et al. 2003; Prado 2009; Prieto-Olavarria et al. 2010), this is the southernmost point on the continent at which majolica has been recorded (Adán et al. 2016c).

**Table 4** Pottery characteristics as recorded during field survey

Survey Node	Presence			Surface Treatment (%)		Wall Thickness (%)			
	Sites	Sites with Ceramics	Total Fragments	Undecorated	Decorated <sup>a</sup>	Thin (<5 Mm)	Medium (5–7.5 Mm)	Thick (7.5–10 Mm)	Very Thick (>10 Mm)
Cruces	98	87	1,025	99.2	0.78	2.5	48.2	38.7	10.6
Quinchilca	53	46	918	97.8	2.25	10.2	64.6	22.0	3.2
Lago Ranco	118	78	692	98.3	1.73	1.2	60.3	32.7	5.8
Valdivia	134	100	1,181	99.7	0.25	2.0	50.4	37.1	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>3,816</b>						

Source: Mera (2017).

<sup>a</sup> Decorated types include red- or white-painted pottery, Valdivia style (red on white), and incised decorated with circular incisions and quartz inlay.

According to Adán et al. (2016c:267–268), indigenous ceramics dominate most domestic contexts between the 16th and early 19th centuries. Hispanic ceramics (i.e., majolicas made in the Peruvian viceroyalty and glazed ceramics) are, however, recorded at most sites too. Among the majolicas, polychrome decoration is most frequent; the earlier Panama plain (16th century) has also been recorded in smaller quantities and in urban contexts and at the fortifications of Niebla and Mancera.

Taken together, the frequency of plain and painted majolica (blue on white, brown on yellow, and polychrome) is proportionally lower at most excavated sites, usually less than 10% of ceramics, while it represents between 12% and 20% at other sites, such as the central, earliest areas of occupation in Valdivia and the castles at Corral Bay. There its use is probably related to the socioeconomic status of the inhabitants and military officials. Nevertheless, as indicated by Jamieson (2001, 2003) in the case of Cuenca, tin-glazed pottery played only a minor role in the domestic life of settlements in Valdivia; indigenous ceramics were the vessels of choice in the daily life of colonial society in this region (Adán et al. 2016c:269).

Among the polychrome majolicas analyzed from Valdivia are the “Beyond Polychrome” types. These are only tentatively identified because of uncertainty around the continued production of polychrome ceramics in the north of the viceroyalty after the destruction of Panama la Vieja in 1671. This would help to explain the dates of painted majolicas, including blue on white, in the 18th century. Another possibility is that they derive from production workshops at Moquegua (Rice 1997, 2013), while burnished pots (*búcaros*) might have been manufactured at some nunneries in Santiago de Chile (Prado 2009; Prieto-Olavarría et al. 2010).

Storage and transport vessels of European or Spanish origin have been identified, such as the olive jars of middle (ca. 1580–1780) and late style (Forms B and C, ca. post-1780) described by Goggin (1960). Containers manufactured in the Peruvian viceroyalty (called here “*botijas peruleras*”) are also sometimes recovered and were used to transport wine and hard spirits; also present were polychrome majolicas from Panama, Colombia, Peru, and central Chile. As mentioned earlier, indigenous pottery imitates these containers and had a wide regional diffusion.

A few sherds of Chinese *kraak* porcelain (16th–17th centuries) and Imari types (17th–18th centuries) have been found in urban contexts, indigenous cemeteries, and the fortifications at Corral Bay. Nevertheless, quantities of both Asian porcelain and European ceramics are only significant in urban contexts and fortified and indigenous sites after independence from Spain (ca. 1820).

### Building Materials

The materials used in building are mainly roof tiles and bricks; they were made locally by the 16th century and also during the period of refounding and until the end of the 18th century (Guarda 1973). There are kiln remains, for example, in some of the fortifications at Corral Bay, and “royal kilns” on the island of Teja (opposite the city), from the second half of the 18th century. Besides local sources, records confirm that bricks, nails, and lime were also imported from Peru.

Bricks from urban contexts are still found in situ in buildings in Valdivia (e.g., in defensive towers) and are red or light red (10R 4/6, 10R 5/6, 10R 5/8, 10R 6/8), 25–31 cm long, 14–15.6 cm wide, and 5.1–7.5 cm thick. Roof tiles, or *teja muslera*, are either light red, yellowish red, or reddish yellow (10R 5/8, 2.5YR 6/8, 5YR 6/8, 5YR 5/6), and are 53 cm long, a maximum of 19.4 cm wide, and 1.1–2.4 cm thick. Both bricks and roof tiles have also been dated by TL to the republican period (1820–1960) (S. Urbina, Adán, and Chamorro 2017).

The distribution of roof tiles is concentrated in a radius around the Valdivia city center (0.5 km), mainly in the upper river terraces (>14 m asl) and along the riverbank east of the island of Teja. These tiles were used for private dwellings as well as public and religious buildings; they are not found outside a 0.5 km radius, that is, closer to floodplains, wetlands, or hills.

### Discussion

In this section we integrate archaeology with the historical background, starting with the intercultural context in which Valdivia and its populations developed between the 16th and 18th centuries. Next, we examine the range of settlement types and how these might reflect the complex regional culture of the area, which

far surpasses the binary model of resilient indigenous peoples vs. Spanish dominators; compare Lightfoot and Martínez (1995:483). We also propose a new interpretation of material culture that characterizes local and regional dynamics, as evidenced, for example, by the relationship with other American regions and the provisioning of supplies under the *situado* tax regime. We conclude by describing the role of the jurisdiction of Valdivia, both within the entire Hispanic global system and in regional dynamics to the south of the River Biobío frontier.

### Understanding Intercultural Relations

The study of historical archaeology in Valdivia offers the possibility of addressing the dynamics of interaction and cultural conflict between populations of European origin and the indigenous people, in this case the Mapuche-Huilliche. As for other important frontiers of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, Mapuche populations were culturally dynamic, being deployed in military and political efforts, and experiencing major transformations in their settlements (Adán 2014). This involved negotiation, appropriation, and adaptation to changes being imposed by new political, economic, and intercultural demands. In turn, Spanish conquest and colonization at the southernmost edge of the Peruvian viceroyalty or Kingdom of Chile developed a complex territorial and institutional network that is visible in the mixed forms of settlement that appear after the mid-16th century.

The subject of intercultural relations has a long tradition in anthropological and archaeological research, with a variety of interpretations being generated by different theoretical frameworks and historical contexts. As Young (1995:4,24) emphasizes in his already classic work, the issues of hybridity and miscegenation reflect a colonial anxiety that both reinforces and dilutes racial differentiation, making it a complex issue, and one in which it becomes necessary to define this mixture or hybridity. Burke (2017:89) has systematized different metaphors used to describe hybridity and situations of encounter and disagreement in cultural history, including references from biology to economics, metallurgy, and linguistics. Burke emphasizes the existence of a true “terminological jungle” and the consequent need to define frontier dynamics, interculturality, and cultural diversity (Burke 2017:89).

Our approach in Valdivia is developed from several perspectives. First, the theoretical trajectory of

Mapuche/Hispanic relations, which followed the same global trajectory that the social and anthropological sciences have experienced more generally, albeit with local overtones. We also gather diverse contributions from historical archaeology and colonial studies focused on identifying cultural diversity in frontier areas. In addition, we integrate archaeological data about the active role of material culture and the strong networks developed among people, landscapes, and things.

Early studies of original populations in the territories that today comprise Chile defined their first settlers as part of a national past; they were referred to as “wild populations” that advanced only through Inca influence, e.g., Barros Arana (2004:80). Native communities were therefore viewed as mere recipients of more developed cultures, backward populations that were gradually acculturated, becoming part of the national ethos that generated a mestizo population, the basis of Chilean nationality.<sup>7</sup>

Historical research into the colonial period emphasized its military context, and Arauco’s wars became famous as the “Flandes Indiano,” drawing on an epic panorama, the founding of national identity, in which the vanquished indigenous population was gradually integrated and merged with the Hispanic and creole. In this context, the emergence of so-called frontier studies revealed the discontinuities of this period of conflict and depicted a border society that experienced periods of peaceful interaction, while recognizing processes, institutions, and individuals that enabled communication between different cultures, identifying a space for hybridity in the colonial past; compare Villalobos (1982). The development of this perspective, which was fueled by Turner’s theoretical work in North America, was a very important advance, now updated and still currently in use. A fundamental new approach has been developed by X. Urbina (2009), who demonstrates the existence of an “upper border,” different from the better

<sup>7</sup> These perspectives were central to the creation of the Chilean nation state, which at this time was also bringing peace to the “Araucanía” and “chilenizaba,” formerly Peruvian and Bolivian territories. “En poco tiempo más desaparecerá de nuestro mapa Arauco independiente, pero la nación lejendaria que durante siglos se ha mantenido indómica contra la superioridad de la raza europea, subsistirá siempre por su influencia, sus recuerdos i su herencia en el suelo de sus antepasados.” In English: In a short time, independent Arauco will disappear from our map, but the legendary nation that for centuries has remained indomitable against the superiority of the European race will always survive due to its influence, its memories, and its inheritance in the soil of its ancestors (translation by Simón Urbina) (Medina 1882:314).

known northern border of the River Biobío, with its own populations, landscapes, and historical characteristics.

While recognizing the contribution of the “frontier approach,” a fundamental anthropological criticism questions the position from which the analysis was first made. The frontier approach privileges an asymmetric vision and the directionality of analysis from the dominator toward the dominated (Föerster and Vergara 1996; Boccara 2007), something that other studies of historical archaeology have considered for different colonial projects without abandoning the concept of the border (Lightfoot and Martínez 1995; Naum 2010). One alternative is to redirect the issue toward “interethnic relations,” to the dynamics of the encounter itself, the identities that were played out there and their political and territorial relationships. This approach has sought to make indigenous society visible as an historical subject.

At the same time, approaches were developed to examine the ethnogenesis of Mapuche society, the result of the process of colonial domination, and these focused on the development of indigenous society and how it resisted and took advantage of processes and communal spaces (Boccara 2007; Dillehay 2011). In this way, beginning with a picture of a savage and backward indigenous society that was simply diluted through interaction and miscegenation, new approaches have been developed that made clear the agency of indigenous societies and their position as historical subjects. However, the issue of the emergence of intercultural or diverse societies remains pending.

So far archaeology has been almost absent from research into Mapuche territory or the Hispanic southern border. This is mainly due to the dearth of research in historical archaeology and regional ethnohistorical studies generally, in addition to the unwarranted division between pre-Hispanic archaeology and historical archaeology (Lightfoot 1995).

In summary, our research attempts to reach a renewed understanding of these problems and different lines of reflection and scales based on a set of theoretical/methodological options that enable us to improve our study of a culturally shared region. These are (1) a regional and diachronic perspective, (2) an understanding of systems as a category of historical and archaeological analysis, and (3) the integration of the landscape and environment as an active and constitutive dimension of historical processes and cultural dynamics.

## Beyond the Isolated Settlement: Linked Regions and Long-Term Approaches

The regional approach developed here seeks to avoid considering sites in isolation, however relevant they may be to regional history, as is the case for castles and fortifications, for example; we also seek to study the entire Mapuche territory (between the Biobío River and Lake Llanquihue). As we have noted above, the Valdivia region was identified as a province from the very first contacts due to its different populations, landscape forms, and historical dynamics, although it still shares numerous common characteristics with neighboring areas, such as northern Araucanía and the Chiloé-Osorno region.

Examining the region holistically allows us to perceive the ways mobility was expressed between different nodes and settlements, and also to identify different spaces of interaction or internal frontiers that are as important as the role of the upper frontier that defined this entire region; compare Naum (2010:108). The inland fortifications built in the mid-17th century at Cruces and Mariquina, to the north of the jurisdiction, were defined by the Spaniards as a frontier with the domestic enemy, en route to the center of Chile and close to the mountains; it was an area inhabited by indigenous groups that were different from those surrounding the castle at Cruces, with whom Spaniards maintained unstable and conflicting relations. The area of the Llanos to the south, on the other hand, remained closed until at least the middle of the 18th century; this was a space of complex interaction and great conflict between the native populations (Alcamán 1994). A diachronic approach allows us to examine the relationships and links among these different groups (the Hispanic settlers of Valdivia, Osorno, and Chiloé; indigenous people of the jurisdiction of Valdivia, mountain Indians, and *juncos*), as well as their various geopolitical initiatives.

By adopting a regional perspective the connection between the pre- and post-Hispanic past can also be investigated. Colonization in Valdivia and at many of the sites settled by Spaniards in indigenous areas did not embrace a search for new places; instead the emphasis was on the appropriation of labor, resources, and information gained from the local population. The mixed sites that emerge from the 16th century onward are based on this pre-Hispanic substrate, linking, to a large extent, the indigenous past with new lifestyles and landscape.



## Settlement, Populations, and Material Culture

Within this regional perspective, a focus on settlements as a means of archaeological and historical analysis can be added. While for the archaeologist this may be obvious, it is not true for historical and ethnohistorical studies. This focus was proposed by the classic works of Murra (1972); with important contributions for the Andean zone, e.g., Hyslop (1984) and Morris (1987); and by recent interpretations of the Mapuche territory (Castro and Adán 2001; Adán 2014). It is an approach that confers two obvious advantages. On the one hand is the possibility of complementing, contrasting, and debating different lines of evidence as contributed by archaeology, history, and ethnography. On the other, as shall be seen, we can examine links with the landscape and, also, observe in it cultural dynamics and the historical processes that took place.

We have addressed three topics of interest. In the first place, we have demonstrated that the settlement system was made up of archaeological sites that reflect social interaction during the colonial period in different ways, and we have identified the strategies put in place by local populations, Hispanics, and Europeans: the residential space next to the town center develops in the style of the local populations and is described by officials as “a *rancheria* of Indians.” Local residential space, where Hispanic families and indigenous people lived under the same roof or within the same property (R. Urbina 2012), reflects an “Indianization” or “Mapuchization” that also exhibits different degrees of integration depending on the social status of the Hispanics. In the mission posts, however, other strategies are adopted, with a clear dominant/dominated, Hispanic/Indian approach to social relations and a policy of territorial and cultural domination implemented at the microlevel. While castles and fortifications impose a form of architecture that was unknown to some extent—at least in the case of those constructed using formal military designs and materials other than wood, thereby stressing difference with the local habitat—they also integrate the local habitat through the domestic spaces they created and the construction techniques employed (ceramics, indigenous boats, and thatched roofs, for example).

We have also been able to study the daily lives and diversity of populations that inhabited Valdivia. Historical records refer to the cultural diversity of the population, at least in Valdivia, as in other areas (Lightfoot and Martínez 1995). Nevertheless, the excavated material

culture does not reflect ethnic distinctions clearly enough to understand regional cultural composition; compare Emberling (1997). It is now more clear that Mapuche women had the role of cultural mediators through mixed marriages and other forms of cohabitation (e.g., domestic labor, catechumens) as in other cases in North America and the circum-Caribbean area (Deagan 1983; Voss 2012). The variety of trades developed by the military in castles and prisons (e.g., carpenters, canoeists, masons, blacksmiths, and shopkeepers) shows that there was a heterogeneous society able to develop a range of projects. The officers, the well-established families, and the captains of Indians interacted both among themselves and with indigenous communities through a range of social, commercial, and political administrative relations. As has been seen, the active role that material culture played in these relations and negotiations is extremely significant and is discussed further below.

### From Guadalafquén to Valdivia

We believe that the way in which contact and cultural interaction was developed in Valdivia is closely related to the cultural landscape of the local populations during pre-Hispanic times. An example of this has been documented in the area of Purén-Lumaco (northern Araucanía), which was occupied by warlike populations whose stronghold lay in an extensive wetland, and who were feared by the Spaniards (Dillehay 2011). In fact, the ways in which the populations of Concepción, Villarrica, Chiloé, and Valdivia interacted differed greatly due to their local environment; the availability of resources, raw materials (gold and wood), and accessibility were determining factors for human settlement in this area.

As we pointed out above, the city of Valdivia occupied Guadalafquén, which is described as a “province,” a valley with dense population, and, as a consequence, numerous *encomiendas*. Valdivia is dominated by rivers and had pre-Hispanic occupants who lived in among its interconnected wetlands. This is how the city is linked directly with the bay and the coast (and by navigation through the Pacific), while three routes connect it with the interior of the country: the Cruces River to the north (Concepción and Santiago), the Calle Calle River toward Quinchilca to the east, and the Futa-Tenguelén River toward Llanos and the Bueno River to the south, toward Osorno and the island of Chiloé.

In this coastal context Valdivia boasted a privileged position, and the first act of ownership by the Hispanic populations that settled there was to appropriate local knowledge and ways of life in this water-dominated geography, not only of rivers and waterways, but also the dreaded swamps and wetlands (Adán, S. Urbina, and Alvarado 2017).

## Settlement Systems in the Area of Valdivia

### Founding and First Encounters

Both archaeology and historical sources agree that the city of Valdivia was founded atop a preexisting Mapuche-Huilliche settlement that dates from at least the 14th century. This practice of founding new sites over earlier settlements was widespread across the Guadalafquén. Archaeological data confirm that occupation across the region was extensive during the late ceramic period (1000–1550), with a network of hierarchical settlements that produced different territorial identities (Adán 2014).

As Adán (2014:492–493) has pointed out, Hispanic descriptions highlight the abundance of inhabitants in the area where this first city was established and, also, the existence of scattered and little-organized settlements across the region. Today it is known that this description was intended to justify the presence of newcomers and their possession of land, handed down through generations, and the organization of *behetrías*, or benefactories. Our archaeological surveys contradict this description of indigenous settlements as being without control and distributed across the mountains.

The founding of the city required the movement of populations and acts of symbolic violence. Valdivia was founded directly on top of a *palin* court, a ceremonial space reserved for an intercommunity ritual game, a space not only of political and symbolic importance, but also central to the cultural geography of the local population. This space would never have the same political function again.

This appropriation and changing of the meaning of spaces had political and symbolic relevance that was accompanied by an absorption of local knowledge. Knowledge of rivers and routes was vital for the successful occupation of this heavily forested territory. The geographical location of Valdivia City demonstrates clearly the importance of the nodal areas in this territory,

nodes formed by river crossings that encouraged mobility between areas.

### The Sixteenth Century: Urban Founding, Land System, Fortifications, and “Resettled Indians”

Between 1552 and 1604 Valdivia developed as a colonial city. The first phase, between 1552 and 1575, was characterized by the classic grid system of blocks, square to begin with and rectangular after the 1575 earthquake and under the influence of ordinances decreed by Philip II of Spain in 1573 (Nicolini 1992–1993:20–21,25). The indigenous uprising (ca. 1559–1604) then transformed the city and its surroundings and gave way to a new urban phase.

Archaeological data have now been recovered from most of the historical center of Valdivia City. From the earliest phases of its foundation only a few architectural remains and ceramic building materials have been recovered, the distribution of roof tile being a good indicator of the presence of public administrative and religious buildings. Domestic pottery is dominated by indigenous material, which was either supplied by indigenous populations living in the city (as mentioned above, e.g., some Indians are documented as employed in domestic service) or as a result of manufacture by the *encomiendas* of the region.

The foundation of the city was accompanied by an unstable regime of *encomiendas*, the result of successive assignments by governors and other authorities of lower rank. The exploitation of gold mines was important until 1575, and with it there was a major movement of population that implied the partial destruction of the indigenous system, something that was also promoted by the constant threat of war throughout the period.

This system is documented in all the nodes analyzed, showing a greater variability than had previously been understood to exist. All the nodes have provided contexts dating to the 16th century, with significant diversity of settlement. The highest densities are recorded in the nodes of Valdivia and Lago Ranco, followed by Cruces and Quinchilca. Lago Ranco, some 100 km from Valdivia, is noteworthy, as it includes only a few European elements that seems to indicate the preservation of a dense system of local settlement with weaker Hispanic influence.

As for settlement sizes, large settlements, such as Ranco and Quinchilca, reveal concentrations of larger populations and reoccupied spaces. These results show

that, away from the main urban space, there was considerable variability and the survival of longstanding residential patterns in which traditional ways of life persisted despite the installation of the *encomiendas*.

The Hispanic colonization of the urban area of Valdivia and the castle at Cruces to the north, on the other hand, shows a clear dominance of Hispanic materiality or a mixture of native and foreign materials. There are fewer larger settlements here, and this allows us to infer that Spanish occupation had a greater impact on settlement with fewer nucleated and extensive settlements.

Mixed settlements stand out during this period; some were fortified sites (Fig. 4f) away from main centers and associated with laboring activities, probably mining. The archaeological records confirm historical sources that describe *casas de mita*, in which the Hispanic population settled at local farmhouses in order to protect their agricultural and livestock production, gold mining, and to collect tax. Various lawsuits mention these *mita* houses in the territory of Valdivia, in towns such as Palpalén, Angachilla, and Pudame (S. Urbina, Adán, and Bosshardt 2018:23). The existence of a specific tax for the official for the city of La Imperial shows how relevant this type of settlement was, one that required all goods to be brought to the *mita* houses in each village.<sup>8</sup>

The Spaniards made the decision to occupy indigenous settlements as the only means of levying taxes and receiving economic benefit. This had a double consequence for the local population: it allowed them to remain in the areas occupied in pre-Hispanic times, but, at the same time, Hispanic domination was exerted over their lands. Indigenous authorities taken over by Spanish officials, or *encomenderos*, show evidence for indigenous socioterritorial structure and its different levels of nucleation, i.e., *regua-cabi-machulla*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This is quoted in a 1572 document from the National Court of Chile regarding tax to be paid to doña Cándida Montesa, widow of Governor Francisco de Villagra (Góngora 1955:203). The tax was in the form of gold, woollen clothing, wheat, barley, as well as other items requested by the official and valued in gold.

<sup>9</sup> These terms are levels of sociopolitical organization in the Mapuche population and documented from the 16th century (Adán 2014:50–64). *Cabi* corresponds to one or more hamlets inhabited by relatives grouped by patrilineal affiliation. A *lebo* is the social unit in which issues of justice, alliances, war, and peace are resolved, while the *rewe* corresponds to the ritual space of the *lebo*. *Ayllarewe* were groupings of *rewe*, literally nine *rewe*, generated with warrior powers. The *machulla* is a small unit that makes up *cabis*, mostly mentioned south of the Toltén River.

Casa Santa Sylvia in Villarrica is one well-documented example of this type of fortified or defended settlement for an *encomendero* (Sauer 2012, 2015). It is close in form to other types of settlement, such as indigenous fortifications built to defend against the Hispanic advance in the early stages of occupation or those built to concentrate “friendly” Indians during periods of conflict. Nevertheless, wholly indigenous settlements can be differentiated from their forms, locations, and accessibility (Adán 2014:295–344).

The movement of people as a result of war and an economic system based on the *encomienda* had a profound impact on the original population. The city of Valdivia was located at the confluence of territories, and Spanish domination was extended under the unstable regime of *encomiendas*. In both cases—the city and the indigenous settlements with a *casa de mita*—there was cultural interaction, and sites of mixed population emerged where exchange processes and cultural hybridization become more evident during later periods.

#### Refounding: Prison and Defense System

During the second main phase of Hispanic occupation of Valdivia, between 1645 and 1820, the city became a military post and prison, while the *encomienda* system was by then absent. Historical records suggest that the settlement was isolated until 1740, when new political and military ordinances would affect its status as a military post in the wave of Bourbon reforms and promote urban life, with soldiers acquiring “citizen” status. Archaeology, however, tells a different story, signalling significant occupation during the second half of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries.

The Spanish Crown reoccupied Valdivia by sea from Lima and by land from the Kingdom of Chile. The route by land was only made possible by peace treaties and agreements with Mapuche political aides, who had themselves been involved in the Parliament of Quillín (1641). As a consequence, temporary settlements (*juntas*) were strengthened, while indigenous settlements became more open, receiving European items as part of the transactions involved in these negotiations.

The installation of fortifications in the port and bay of Valdivia had a huge impact on the territory and its peoples. This important task for the Peruvian viceroyalty was assigned to Antonio Sebastián Álvarez de Toledo, marqués de Mancera, son of Viceroy Pedro Álvarez de Toledo y Leiva, and a future viceroy of New Spain. It

also had a significant impact on coastal populations that, thus far, had only been impacted through the *encomiendas* regime. This defensive system, although it was not as well planned and maintained as the defensive systems at Acapulco and Callao, served to deter other European powers from seizing Valdivia from the Spanish Empire. It also established points of exchange and encouraged political alliances with the indigenous peoples along the coast (Vergara 2005); these efforts were considered by Spanish policy to be the key to insuring the safety of ports and the coastline of the South Pacific that were devoid of garrisons or cities.

During this phase, religious activities intensified. While previously they had been limited to the responsibility of the *encomendero*, chaplains were now installed at all the fortifications and castles along the coast (Niebla, Mancera, Corral, and Amargo) and the Cruces River (at San Luis de Alba). The Jesuits, based in Valdivia, also began their missionary work; they developed circuits (*correrías*), traveling across the territory during the summer each year and preaching to large crowds (Pinto 1988; Guarda 1999).

Cultural interaction was further encouraged by other groups. First, the men and women captured during the indigenous uprising were integrated into other indigenous populations, becoming integral parts of their families. Some did return to Valdivia between 1645 and 1647, to the places first occupied in the city (Guarda 1994:35). In other cases, such as those of the chieftains and families of the River Toltén (north of Valdivia), they set up networks of interethnic origin that became powerful as much because of their family ties, large-scale resources, and land ownership as for the political influence they leveraged through their mixed cultural backgrounds.

Secondly, there were *capitanes de amigos* and *comisarios de naciones*, roles instituted by Spain in order to maintain contact with the Mapuche-Huilliche populations of the interior (Villalobos 1982; Vergara 2005). They acted as cultural mediators and economic agents by occupying permanent dwellings in indigenous hamlets. Marriage to Mapuche women was resisted by missionaries from the middle of the 17th century; although it is only recorded in surviving church archives of the late 18th century, it is likely that the practice occurred after the refoundation of Valdivia, since a significant

number of its occupants, soldiers, and inmates, had come alone and without family.<sup>10</sup>

These links are reflected in the material culture of the period, with a mix of European and indigenous items found at all nodes and some sites within them. This reveals that, although there was a mix of cultures throughout the territory, this did not extend to every settlement; the impact of Spanish colonization was greater in the areas of Valdivia and Cruces where Hispanic sites with no pre-Hispanic occupation are found (8% and 21%, respectively).

This also shows that interrelationships were mobilized through informal processes, but it was a persistent and constant progression, as our dates for this phase suggest. The allocation of *encomiendas*, that is, the Spanish occupation of indigenous settlements, also continues in this period to some extent.

This situation mentioned above continued until 1740, when new political and economic ordinances came into effect, beginning the territorial expansion of Valdivia promoted by the Jesuits through the establishing of farms in some parts of the region (Guarda 1999:55–58). From 1770, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Franciscans continued the missionary effort from at least 12 different places in indigenous territories.

At Niebla, on the coast, the Mission of Christ Crucified is the only one that has seen archaeological and historical research. This site was intended to be part of a political program of domination and territorial control that would serve to articulate political, military, and ecclesiastical institutions led by the governors of Valdivia. For the mission to succeed, agreements were required with local indigenous leaders who eventually gave land for the building of the mission (the so-called Pampa de Chauma). Thus, the governors acquired a dominant position in the coastal territory—including castles and the city—as well as maintaining their position in the indigenous social fabric. The architecture of this settlement reproduces a Hispanic pattern, with stone buildings and features similar to those of castles, to which were presumably added rooms constructed from perishable materials more typical of the Mapuche settlements. Among the objects recovered during excavations were indigenous items, including lithic tools for

<sup>10</sup> In 1776 the priest and vicar J. I. Rocha informed the governor of Valdivia about marriages between prison inmates and indigenous women. From a list of 13 marriages, three of these were between Spaniards and Indian women (Rocha 1776).

hunting, showing that the mission took advantage of local lifeways.

It is in Valdivia itself that archaeological and historical research has the highest potential. Our work shows that, according to excavations outside the fort and within an approximate radius of 4 to 5 km, the initial walled settlement first outgrew its limits during the second half of the 17th century (Table 1) (Fig. 3). Study of written sources has allowed us to identify complex occupation patterns. There are domestic spaces for currently employed soldiers, also for “reformed” soldiers<sup>11</sup> and for others already with resident status, for example, inmates who had served their sentences and decided to stay on. The ordinances indicate that by 1741 there were 61 houses of officers and militiamen with their “families and orchards.” The 1749 census for Valdivia and its castles records a few marriages with Indian women, and sometimes these women are documented as heads of households. Around 30% of the population is settled in “Spanish houses,” where indigenous residents are listed as servants or *agregados*,<sup>12</sup> and 44% of registered families include residents of indigenous origin.

The existence of the prison at Valdivia facilitated the multicultural society there, and one that was highly mobile, as reflected in written records of the period. Between 1645 and 1820, about 40% of its inhabitants were Spanish; 40% of American origin, including Chileans of the Peruvian viceroyalty; while 15% came from other European countries. We also know that 73% of the population was passing through Valdivia, and that the permanent population amounted to only 20% of the inhabitants of the city (Guarda 1979: 39–43).

This social framework is clearly identified both in the buildings adjacent to the town wall in Valdivia and in those scattered across the surrounding hinterland, which some exasperated Spaniards indicated should be ordered more formally, so that “by changing to regularized streets, it will look as if the population is Spanish, and not as it is today, when it looks like Indian farmsteads.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Soldiers who have abandoned their military functions, perhaps for disability, but maintained their status as soldiers.

<sup>12</sup> The fiscal J. P. de Salas recorded 143 families in Valdivia, with a total population of 975 inhabitants (Guarda 1986).

<sup>13</sup> “[A]rreglándose a método regular de calles, parezca que la población es de españoles, y no como ahora se manifiesta en el Plano, que parece rancharía de Indios,” as noted in the record of the fiscal, J. P. de Salas (1749).

## Indigenous and European Ceramics

The pottery that dominates all sites in the region is locally made by indigenous people (Adán, S. Urbina, Prieto-Olavarría et al. 2016); in itself this demonstrates active commercial and social relations between local populations and Europeans. Local wares, particularly those that are decorated, are especially relevant in dining and social courtesy, and display a shared visual language expressed through their decoration (painted, incised, and encrusted). Indigenous vessels inlaid with fragments of majolica are also widely distributed. They are a unique example of cultural hybridization, whose manufacture integrates material from Latin American traditions into indigenous pottery. Their role in indigenous political acts is reinforced by the use of small fragments of one material world in another, and they also came to be consumed by the castles’ European inhabitants themselves.

Finds of European and European American ceramics help us to understand the position of Valdivia in the traffic and movement of people and goods within the Peruvian viceroyalty, as a port city and for its location in the South Pacific. This study is only preliminary, since many more analyses will be required to confirm the provenance and movement of objects.

Among the majolicas and green-glazed ceramics, we have been able to identify for the first time abundant material from Cono Sur, until now only known from Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires. Its distribution is difficult to identify in detail in urban contexts that are badly affected by modern development, but we have found that plain majolicas present during the earliest phases of occupation (1550–1600) became less popular in the middle of the 17th century. We have also noted the presence, since the 16th century, of decorated majolica both in the city as well as in the nodes that we have analyzed, perhaps as a consequence of the establishment of *encomiendas* and *casas de mita*, where numbers are low compared to finds of indigenous pottery.

After the refounding of Valdivia, European tableware arrived mainly as part of the movement of goods related to the *situado* and through trade implemented by governors from Lima, Valparaíso, Concepción, and Chiloé. Majolicas of this phase include Panamá polychrome, Panamá blue on white, and other types as yet unidentified (Adán, S. Urbina, Prieto-Olavarría et al. 2016). They appear at all castle sites, including Valdivia, as well as inland, being more frequent in the second half of

the 18th century, perhaps being linked to the ordinances of 1741, population growth, and the routine establishment of the *situado* by that date.

Through the macroscopic study of fabrics and decoration, we have identified American majolicas found during excavation, implying that Valdivia was looking to the Pacific Ocean to obtain ceramics from the main seaports and production sites in Peru. During the 17th and 18th centuries these were in Panama and, in the Andes region, Lima and Moquegua; vessels were also imported from the region of Ecuador (Cuenca), as well as from the center of Chile (Santiago and Mendoza). These are only hypotheses until we develop regional studies and perform further archaeometric analysis.

The relative disconnection or exclusion of the Atlantic area, as seen in the absence of ceramics from New Spain and Europe, would indicate a certain dependency on informal frontier markets as well as on local pottery. The indigenous populations provided the main utilitarian vessels for the Hispanic home across different kinds of settlements. In turn, Hispanic/indigenous assimilation and cohabitation, together with the selective circulation of valued European ceramics and Asian porcelains, which are found in domestic, ceremonial, and funerary contexts, all promoted innovation and the technological transformation of indigenous pottery traditions.

### The Place and Role of Valdivia in the Regional and Macroregional Context

Valdivia's role must also be evaluated from a diachronic perspective. During its first phase of founding as a city, its function was to exercise territorial control, allowing urban settlements to connect with each other, as well as to provide land and settlements to those who arrived with Pedro de Valdivia, but who had been denied land allocations in the northern cities. Along with other cities, such as Villarrica, Imperial, and Osorno, Valdivia was also a base from which routes toward the east in search of the Atlantic started.

The impact of the first 50 years of occupation of the Mapuche territory and the creation of a frontier along the River Biobío after the indigenous uprising at the end of the 16th century are factors that pushed the local population toward the south, but, according to the Marqués de Baidés, still left some 6,000 Indians in the

colonized area, including in Valdivia.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the populations of the southern area around Imperial, Toltén, and Valdivia had a determining geopolitical weight during the 1655 uprising (Adán 2014).

Valdivia, as an essential place for the defense of the Pacific, was established at the end of the 16th century when there were incursions of corsairs and pirates, but its role was strengthened after the Dutch incursions of 1643. This is the reason the bay was fortified and military personnel introduced (the “Fixed Battalion”).

During this second phase, that of the refounding, Valdivia depended on the Peru viceroyalty in the area of administration and military matters until 1740, after which dependency was only military. Economic dependence on the coffers of Lima through the *situado* generated a complex economic scenario. In fact, it is often pointed out that the maintenance of fortifications was the major and continuing expenditure for the Spanish treasury, although many people also benefited from this, e.g., governors, who over a very short space of time carried out a great deal of business for their own benefit, as recorded repeatedly in the written records. Merchants from Lima, in contact with Valdivia, developed an active commerce through the *situado*, reaping personal financial gain through the tax system and the presence of soldiers in the city. Archaeological research into the local fortifications confirms the great investment of labor and resources in a group of castles that were barely used and acted mostly as deterrents in their control of the Pacific.

Finally, it is clear that, despite Valdivia's preferred role as an “antemural of the Pacific” in this second period, archaeological research has been able to show that occupation of the region was already extensive before 1740, when inland exploration would have begun, theoretically, to mark the religious expansion associated with the new political and military ordinances. As has already been seen, undoubtedly, with lapses and interruptions, Hispanics residing in Valdivia and Cruces, as well as the surrounding indigenous population, were building relationships and a territorial network with different degrees of integration. The making of this region also recognized different frontiers, cultural diversity, and political projects within the indigenous population and between these and the Hispanic Valdivians.

<sup>14</sup> In a letter to the king of Spain, dated 19 March 1640, the marqués wrote about the condition of “all things in this province and its wars” (López de Zúñiga 1640).

Different forms of interaction and mediating agents shaped a culturally shared territory, although not without violence or asymmetrical exercises of power. The moveable and immovable materiality of the period presents a city peripheral to empire, one in which a new society emerged that transformed all the players caught up in the process.

## Conclusions

Research into the Valdivia region reveals the dynamics of intercultural relations in the 16th-century Kingdom of Chile, around one of the southernmost cities established by the Spanish Empire. In the past, intercultural relations in the Mapuche area have been addressed mainly from historical and anthropological perspectives, whereas here we make use of historical archaeology and integrate different sources of information. The lack of any previous collaboration between historians and archaeologists has thus far discouraged a more vigorous development of historical archaeology in Chile in general, and this partly explains the lack of informed debate about regional dynamics within the American viceroyalties.

It is important to define the particular theoretical approach being adopted when studying intercultural relations. In our case, we have deployed regional and national theoretical frameworks, especially those relevant to Mapuche cultural history, as well as results obtained in other frontier and colonized regions, in order to formulate a long-term regional approach to the study of settlements that can then be subjected to multidimensional analysis. To this is added the study of cultural processes in the landscape.

Within these parameters, we can stress that the city's creation itself constitutes an act of cultural, violent, and asymmetric interaction, one in which the Hispanic populations appropriated indigenous knowledge and the workforce. Across the region as a whole, however, the settlement pattern confirms the coexistence of different processes and dynamics—from mission posts that functioned with well-regulated discipline to residential spaces where material culture demonstrates a diversity of housing and occupations.

The history of settlement in this area varies between nodes. In Valdivia, for example, we can distinguish a residential area that reoccupied a pre-Hispanic settlement, with the highest density of population of all the

areas analyzed, but, at the same time, one that quickly fragments. The size of the settlement shrinks and indigenous sites remain at a distance from the urban core. The local character of the city is reflected in the construction techniques and materials of buildings, as well as in an irregular urban plan beyond the town walls after the mid-17th century. In the areas of Quinchilca and Lago Ranco, on the other hand, fewer sites are recorded, with lower population numbers, but with marked differences among them. Ranco was densely populated, despite being the most distant from Valdivia. In both areas, however, larger sites can be found, showing how an indigenous way of life could persist and local identity be maintained, while interaction with Europeans continued.

In summary, we can conclude that during the first 50 years, between 1552 and 1604 (the “early historical” period), Hispanic occupation was superimposed on a dense local settlement pattern, some of which retained political influence that was visible in the organization and hierarchy of the Mapuche Huilliche territory. The influence of newly arrived populations differed from area to area, with indigenous settlements of larger sizes farther away from Valdivia City being less impacted.

Something similar occurs on borders. It is clear that Valdivia's role as an upper frontier was defined by a set of internal borders, such as that of the Cruces node linked to cities to the north and finally to the Kingdom of Chile, or such as the southernmost border of the Ranco, with its large population and links to places outside Spanish rule and beyond the Andes. From the nodal perspective, Valdivia is an axis of pre-Hispanic and colonial occupation, although it became unstable during the 17th century. Cruces, on the other hand, was an extremely important internodal space because it linked Valdivia with the cities on the Arauco or Biobío border; the fact that it managed to convert into a node is demonstrated by the growth of its population in the 18th century. Quinchila seems to constitute an internodal border, with little Hispanic occupation and the unrestricted movement of indigenous people. Ranco is an important nodal territory, distant from mountainous areas, where a large number of cemeteries and large-scale indigenous settlements concentrate throughout both the late precolonial and colonial periods.

Finally, from the point of view of historical archaeology, the study of settlement and intercultural relationships in the Mapuche territory in the Valdivia region permits us to identify different degrees of integration,

dominance, and appropriation. This diversity is seen not only in the different types of settlement, but also in the variety of agency expressed by their populations. The cultural plurality of the colonial settlement of Valdivia is expressed in the relationship between Spaniards and the Mapuche-Huilliche populations, but also in the diverse origins of the European population, as well as through the social status of native and foreign populations.

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#### Compliance with ethical standards

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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