

## CHAPTER 19

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# THE BAHAMA ARCHIPELAGO

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The people who permanently settled the Bahama archipelago are known as the Lucayans; from the Spanish "Lucayos" and the Arawak "Lukku Cairi." Disentangling the linguistic, ethnic, archaeological, and political origins and identities of the Lucayans is complicated because the archaeological data and ethnohistoric accounts are incomplete. Moreover, ethnohistoric descriptions mask temporal and geographical variations. During the fifteenth century, the Lucayans of the northern and central Bahamas spoke Ciboney Taíno, a Taíno dialect of northern Cuba and the northwest and western Hispaniolan provinces of Marien and Xaragua (Granberry, this volume; Granberry and Vesceius 2004:15). In contrast, the Lucayans of the Turks & Caicos spoke Classic Taíno. Because of similarities in language and some forms of material culture, it is suggested that the Lucayans of the central and northern islands shared economic and cultural ties with the people of northern Cuba and were ethnically the same or biologically descended from them and the Lucayans who inhabited the Turks & Caicos were directly engaged in the Hispaniolan Taíno interaction sphere and were politically subsumed by them. The early history of the Bahamas can be divided into three periods: Non-Lucayan (A.D. 700 to 1300), Early Lucayan (A.D. 700/800 to 1100), and Late Lucayan (A.D. 1100 to 1530).

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## NON-LUCAYAN (A.D. 700–1300)

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The Turks & Caicos islands served as a colonial enclave on the northern periphery of a Hispaniolan sphere of influence beginning in the eighth century A.D. (Keegan 2007; Keegan et al. 1998; Sinelli, this volume). The earliest evidence for human occupation comes from the Coralie site on the north coast of Grand Turk. The site was repeatedly occupied by Ostionan peoples from northeastern Hispaniola or Puerto Rico between cal A.D. 705–1100. This occupation briefly overlaps with Meillacan and Lucayan colonists in the twelfth century.

The Ostionan part-time residents consumed a wide range of land and marine fauna, including birds, sea turtles, iguanas, large fishes, tortoise (*Geochelone* sp.), and minor quantities of mollusks (Carlson 1999; Carlson and Keegan 2004). These food remains allow us to gauge the impacts of humans on animals that had no prior human predators. The earliest occupants mainly consumed large ground-dwelling birds, iguanas, green sea turtles, and large carnivorous fishes. During later occupations, consumption patterns shifted to smaller, tree-dwelling birds, smaller sea turtles and iguanas, and a large tortoise. Extinctions specific to Grand Turk were observed (e.g., parrots, boobies, tortoise, sea turtles, and iguanas); these animals are not found in deposits post-dating A.D. 1200. The Coralie site was abandoned permanently before the end of the twelfth century.

A second wave of people established outposts in the Turks & Caicos from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. They are distinguished by their Meillacan pottery, which has a petrographic source in Haiti (Cordell 1998). These sites were exploited repeatedly until the fourteenth century when the Meillacan occupation abruptly terminates in the Turks & Caicos and coastal sites on the north coast of Haiti are also abandoned.

The earliest known Meillacan site is located on Pelican Cay, Middle Caicos, and dates to cal A.D. 1050 (2 sigma = 980–1180) (Sinelli 2010). The twelfth century was a time of interaction between peoples whose pottery reflects different identities. Ostionan people were abandoning the Turks & Caicos, Meillacan peoples were arriving from the south, and Lucayan peoples were entering from the north. The earliest Meillacan settlements in the Turks & Caicos produced calibrated radiocarbon dates of A.D. 1160–1170. These sites were intermittent, perhaps, seasonally settled occupations. Sinelli (2010) argues that the communities were initially set up to export resources (e.g., conch, fish, etc.) to a growing Hispaniolan population that could no longer support itself locally. Over time, these sites also focused on shell bead production. Middletown Cay, located near South Caicos, was the first seasonally occupied Meillacan site; it grew into a large, permanently occupied settlement containing a large dense midden, numerous residences and a north–south oriented oval plaza. Because of its size and large public space, Sinelli (2010) has suggested that it was home to a *cacique*, who coordinated its economic activities. As a result of its burgeoning population, a sister settlement was established on nearby

Long Cay. Like other Meillacan occupations, Middleton Cay was abandoned suddenly (Sinelli 2010).

During the early to mid-thirteenth century, Meillacan sites were established on Grand Turk and its offshore cays. The Governour's Beach, Corktree Beach, Gibbs Cay, and Cotton Cay sites were also shell bead-making locales that were occupied repeatedly, perhaps seasonally, for short periods of time (Carlson 1993, 2010; Sinelli 2010). By the late A.D. 1200s/early A.D. 1300s, Meillacan peoples ceased to visit Grand Turk. The sudden abandonment of the Governour's Beach site is attributed to a growing and expanding Lucayan presence and reflects the dominant position they were assuming in the Turks & Caicos (Carlson 1993; Keegan 2007).

The Meillacan dietary profile is known primarily from Grand Turk and the data suggest that the Meillacan protein diet differed significantly from the Ostionan residents at Coralie. The Meillacan diet consisted of a range of reef and shallow-water fishes (e.g., grunts, bonefish), intertidal mollusks, with a minor contribution of terrestrial fauna (Carlson 1993, 2010; Sinelli 2010). Like the earlier Ostionan occupation, the Corktree Beach site yielded evidence for sea turtles, iguanas, and possibly land tortoises (Carlson 2010). This overlap in species suggests that extirpation and not cultural preferences was responsible for the change in dietary practices. Economic plant remains have not been recovered despite efforts to collect them.

The Meillacan occupation of the Turks & Caicos fits the *modo de vida* proposed by Veloz Maggiolo et al. (1981). Meillacan peoples practiced a dispersive strategy with small colonies established in strategic locations. The emphasis was on the efficient extraction of resources versus the consolidation of political power.

## EARLY LUCAYANS (A.D. 700/800–1100)

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Evidence for the earliest human occupation of the central and northern Bahamas is known provisionally from Preacher's Cave (Eleuthera) where a triton shell (cal A.D. 560–720, 2 sigma) was found adjacent to the cave (Carr et al. 2006). The shell has a circular hole cut in the outer wall attributed to human modification. More certain evidence for human occupation comes from the cave itself, a burial dating to A.D. 810–1010 (Schaffer et al. 2012). Human skeletal remains from Sawmill Sink blue hole on Abaco date to 1040 ± 40 B.P. (Steadman et al. 2007:19899) suggesting that the northern Bahamas had been settled or at least visited by that time. Evidence from cores from several ponds on Abaco suggests human landscape modification as early as 1200 B.P. (Slayton 2010) suggesting that Abaco may already have been seasonally or permanently settled.

By the A.D. 800s, the Lucayans had become established on San Salvador and New Providence. Three open-air residential sites have been excavated: the

Three Dog and the Pigeon Creek dune 2 sites (San Salvador) and the Pink Wall site (New Providence) (Berman and Gnivecki 1995; Berman and Hutcheson 2000; Bohon 1999). Early Lucayan sites are small with shallow middens and low artifact densities suggesting that they were made up of small communities composed of extended families or small lineages who moved their villages every few years. No structural supports indicating house size or shape have been found. A hearth and adjacent windbreak have been excavated at the Pigeon Creek site. Discrete, gendered, activity areas (plant processing, pottery manufacture, cooking) have been identified for the Three Dog and Pigeon Creek sites (Berman and Pearsall 2000, 2008; Berman et al. 2012). Several other sites on San Salvador have yielded radiocarbon dates from this period but the artifact assemblages associated with the dates are undescribed.

The early Lucayans were horticultural fisher-collectors whose diet consisted of reef and pelagic fish, sea turtles, fresh-water turtles, intertidal mollusks, root, tuber, and seed crops, wild and managed tree fruits, and wild plants and fruits (Newsom and Wing 2004). There is no evidence for the exploitation of monk seals, which were abundant in the archipelago until their extinction in the twentieth century; however, the early Lucayans on San Salvador depicted them in worked stone. Terrestrial fauna contributed secondarily to the diet. Starch grain and phytolith evidence on chert microliths demonstrates that the early Lucayans grew *Capsicum sp.*, *Zea mays*, *Manihot esculenta*, squash (*Cucurbitaceae*), and several kinds of wild and domesticated roots and tubers (Berman and Pearsall 2000, 2008; Berman et al. 2012).

Early Lucayans made and used tiny shell beads, tinklers, and pendants from different shell species. They manufactured microliths from imported chert, using them in a variety of tasks, including grating and scraping plant materials, and incising shell, wood, and bone (Berman and Pearsall 2000, 2008; Berman et al. 1999, 2012). Early Lucayans made and used scrapers, pounders, and axes from local limestone. Various species of coral were used for scraping, polishing, and shaping wood, bone, and shell artifacts. Wood for constructing residences, cooking, and other purposes was procured from local plant communities (Berman and Pearsall 2000).

Lucayan pottery consisted of hemispheric, carinated, and boat-shaped vessels and flat, mass-molded griddles that were made from local clays and crushed shell-temper. Three types of pottery are known for this period: Crooked Island ware, a red-slipped, reduced shell-tempered ceramic; Abaco Red Ware, a buff-slipped, partially oxidized shell-tempered pottery, and Palmetto Ware, an unslipped, shell-tempered oxidized pottery (Berman 2011c; Granberry and Winter 1995). Only a small percentage of early Lucayan pottery possesses decorations, which consist of fine-line incision and incised appliqué not unlike the Meillacan pottery found in north central Cuba (Tabío and Guarch 1966) and northwestern Hispaniola (Rouse 1939) at the same time. Nonlocal pottery constitutes a small portion of the ceramic assemblage. Early Lucayan pottery is thinner than Late Lucayan pottery (Berman 2011c).

## LATE LUCAYAN PERIOD (A.D. 1100–C. A.D. 1530+)

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Late Lucayan sites occur on all islands in the archipelago and include open-air residential, special purpose, burial, and rock art sites. Population increase is reflected by greater numbers of larger sites. Thicker middens indicate that people lived at these sites for longer periods of time. On San Salvador (and likely on other islands), late occupations lie above or are adjacent to earlier occupations. On Middle Caicos, the Lucayans and Meillacans coexisted until the late A.D. 1200s/early A.D. 1300s. According to Sinelli (Sinelli 2010:313) competition between the Meillacans and Lucayans for land and marine resources may have spurred the Meillacan exodus.

Late Lucayan village sites are typically located on the crests of sand dunes that are situated along tidal creeks. The settlements are near agriculturally productive soils and places where canoes could be beached. Water seeps or inland lakes with fresh water lenses, and fishing and shellfish collecting areas are located in close proximity. Site survey data suggest that most Lucayan sites occur as paired settlements, defined by Keegan (Keegan 1992:83) as “sites that are situated within each other’s catchment areas.” Although post molds, hearths, activity areas, and middens have been located in the northern and central Bahamas, no site has been excavated extensively enough to expose residential or community structure. Subsurface testing at the Ward Minnis site (San Salvador) has revealed five artifact concentrations believed to be houses (Blick 2003), but it is not known if these structures were contemporaneously occupied. Community layout is more fully understood in the Turks & Caicos and house structures, middens, and public spaces have been identified and excavated at MC-6, MC-12, and numerous sites located on nearby cays (Keegan 2007; Morsink, this volume; Sinelli 2010).

During this period, economic and political interaction intensified with Cuba and Hispaniola. The increase in imported raw materials and items such as greenstone, basalt, and jadeite petaloid axes, diorite beads and figurines, quartz crystals, and copper speak to trade and exchange with Cuba and Hispaniola that might have been politically motivated (Berman 2011b). By the A.D. 1400s (and earlier), many categories of locally produced material culture similar to that of Hispaniola and northern and eastern Cuba, such as wooden, shell, coral, and limestone *cemís*, pendants, and figurines, are universally present throughout the archipelago. Wooden *duhos*, found in the central Bahamas and the Turks & Caicos (although not in the northern Bahamas), share many features with those from Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, but possess characteristics that make them uniquely Lucayan, including the largest sized examples and some of the most complex two dimensional designs known from the Caribbean (Ostapkowicz 1998, 2008).

By the fifteenth century, the Turks & Caicos was a colonial Lucayan enclave, possibly a provincial chiefdom to one of the larger Hispaniolan Taíno chiefdoms (Keegan 2007; Keegan et al. 1998). Las Casas (1951) noted that *Caonabó*, the fifteenth-century Taíno *cacique* of Maguana, was from the Lucayan islands, and

Keegan (2007) has suggested that MC-6, replete with a plaza, a central court, astronomical alignments, earthen embankments, and a road system leading to a salt pond (Sullivan 1981) may have been his birthplace. The site may also have functioned as a “port-of-trade” where local goods such as salt, salted fish and conch, cotton, parrots, and other items were exported to Hispaniola in exchange for non-local goods and Taíno succession rights. Other sites, mainly on Middle Caicos and its cays, such as Middleton Cay and Long Cay, which the Lucayan reoccupied, were tied to the export economy (Sinelli 2010).

The sociopolitical organization of the central and northern islands is less well understood. Lacking evidence for craft specialization, expansive public spaces, and other features associated with chiefdoms (Torres, this volume), it appears that late Lucayan society of the central and northern Bahamas may have been organized along egalitarian or ranked lineage lines where leadership, power, prestige, and authority were achieved through competition or seniority and vested in chieftains, “big men” or “great men” (Berman 2011b). Here, local group leaders might have appropriated symbolically powerful objects such as *duhos* from Hispaniola or eastern Cuba (which became a Taíno chiefdom in the latter half of the fifteenth century) (Rouse 1992), using them to assert authority and manipulate their constituents. Using these and other nonlocal materials and objects as gifts, Antillean elites created political and trade alliances, establishing loyalties in those areas of the Bahama archipelago not directly under their control.

The frequency and volume of pottery from sites is greater than from the earlier Lucayan period. Pottery is thicker, vessel sizes increase, and twilled and wicker basketry-impressions appear on the bases of some griddles and the lower portion of bowls (Berman 2011c) (Figure 19.1). Experimental work suggests that the impressions, which often exhibit complex forms, were purposefully executed (Hutcheson 1999; Berman and Hutcheson 2000). Basketry-impressed pottery is a uniquely Lucayan tradition, found primarily in the southern and central Bahamas and Turks & Caicos.

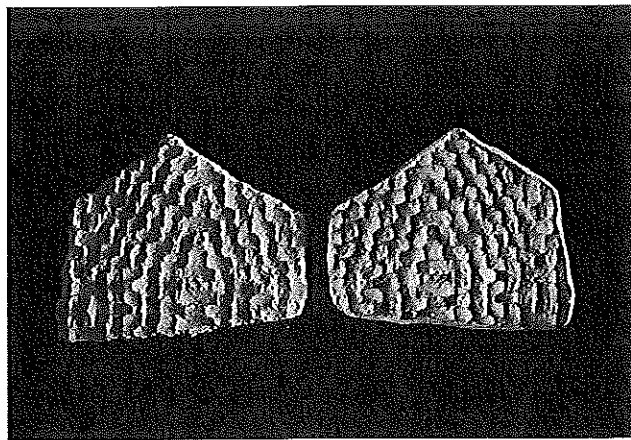


Figure 19.1. Mold and cast of Palmetto basketry-impressed pottery from the Pigeon Creek Site, dune 1 (San Salvador) (Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Berman and Perry L. Gnivecki).

The intricate woven designs most likely possess symbolic meanings and recent findings indicate inter- and inraisland differences in weaves (Hutcheson 2009).

Ceramic variation is not well understood because archaeologists have tended to lump all locally made pottery from this time period into one category, Palmetto ware (Hoffman 1970; Sears and Sullivan 1978). Re-examination of written reports and analyses of excavated materials (Berman 2011c) confirm that there are three ceramic subzones as suggested by Granberry (1955, 1956). In the northern Bahamas (the Pine Islands), Abaco Red ware dominates. Palmetto plain ware occurs in lesser amounts, and only trace amounts of its decorated variants (Sears and Sullivan 1978) are present. Decorative treatment consists largely of parallel and cross-hatched designs (Berman 2011c; Berman et al. 2006; Granberry and Winter 1995; Vernon 2007) similar to late Meillacan ceramics found contemporaneously in north-central Cuba (Valcárcel Rojas et al. 1996) (Figure 19.2). In the central Bahamas, Plain Palmetto ware dominates. Surface decoration, characterized by rim points, sigmoid and incised sigmoid appliqué, and occasional crosshatched and parallel incision are rare. Bate (2011) also found Abaco Red and Crooked Island wares in the Long Bay site (San Salvador) ceramic assemblage; we believe they exist in other Late Lucayan assemblages. In the Turks & Caicos, Palmetto ware and its variants are the dominant pottery; typological variation has been overlooked here, as elsewhere. Decorated locally produced sherds reflect late Meillacan and Chican Ostionoid influence reinforcing the notion that the Turks & Caicos were part of a Taíno polity with close ethnic and social connections to Hispaniola.

The ceramics suggest that the Lucayans participated in different Antillean interaction spheres: the northern islands with northern Cuba, the central islands and the Inaguas with northern Cuba and Hispaniola, and the Turks & Caicos with Hispaniola and eastern Cuba. The Lucayans used their ceramics (and possibly basketry) to create and maintain social boundaries, build alliances, and assert territorial ownership of farmlands, fishing areas, and/or sacred areas. Because of the



Figure 19.2. Incised-crosshatched sherd from the Clifton Site (New Providence) (Photo courtesy of William Keegan).

spatial correspondence of the three pottery zones to the archipelago's three climate/vegetation zones (*sensu* Sears and Sullivan 1978), Berman (2011c) hypothesizes that cultural identity was intimately tied to space and place. Colonization histories and interisland competition for resources and expansion particularly after A.D. 1100 may have been motivating factors in the creation of distinct expressions of regional Lucayan identity, at least in the central and northern islands, which does not appear to have been ruled directly from Hispaniola, as observed in the Turks & Caicos.

Like the earlier peoples who settled the archipelago, the late Lucayans were horticultural fisher-collectors. Fish and shellfish were procured from reefs and offshore waters in close site proximity (Newsom and Wing 2004). A focus on parrotfish characterizes early and late Lucayan fishing patterns on San Salvador (Newsom and Wing 2004). Wooden fish hooks, shell spear points, wooden fids, and charred *Piscidia* sp. (Berman 2000; Granberry 1955; Keegan 1992; Keegan and Carlson 2008) provide direct technological evidence for a variety of procurement methods that include hook and line, nets, basket traps, spears, bows and arrows, weirs, harpoons, and possibly fish poison. Freshwater turtles and several species of sea turtle were also actively exploited (Blick et al. 2006; Newsom and Wing 2004; O'Day 2002). The Lucayans also gathered a wide range of near-shore and intertidal mollusks such as conch, West Indian topsnail, and nerites. Late Lucayan sites typically contain large amounts of *Codakia* sp. not observed in such great quantities at earlier sites. Crocodiles, which were consumed (Keegan 1992), may have also served as mortuary accompaniments (Carr et al. 2006) and wooden and shell figurines depicting crocodiles (Berman 2000; Vernon 2007) suggest they figured significantly into Lucayan life. A few sites have yielded remains of iguanas and hutías. Oviedo y Valdéz (1959) noted that the Taíno regarded iguanas and sea turtles as prestige foods that the elite distributed at ceremonial feasts (Keegan 2007:179). Birds contributed little to the diet (Newsom and Wing 2004; Whyte et al. 2005), but some birds may have been captured for their plumage because of their mythical significance. Fish and other meats were roasted on above-ground frames known as *barbacoa*, while fish, hutía, iguana, plants and invertebrates were likely cooked in a pepper pot stew. Throughout the occupation of the archipelago, beginning with the Ostionoid presence, a common practice for cooking sea turtles was to roast them on their backs in a hearth.

Because paleobotanical recovery and analyses have not been given high research priority for this time period, there is little direct evidence for late Lucayan plant use, although it is commonly believed that the Lucayans grew the same crops as the Hispaniolan Taíno (Keegan 2007). In his *diario*, Columbus describes what we believe to be maize (Dunn and Kelley 1989) and carbonized maize kernels radiocarbon dated to the late fifteenth–early sixteenth centuries from the Pigeon Creek site dune 1 (Berman 2011a), a carbonized corn cob from the Preacher's Cave site (Eleuthera) radiocarbon dated to the mid-fifteenth century (Carr et al. 2006), and *Zea mays* starch grains on chert microliths from the Long Bay site, San Salvador (Berman 2011a) confirm the observation. These finds, cf. *Calathea latifolia* starch grains on chert microliths from the Long Bay site (Berman et al. 2012), and evidence for local and introduced tree fruits from a cave site on San Salvador



(Winter et al. 1999) are the only existing tangible evidence for late Lucayan plant consumption. Like their early Lucayan predecessors, the late Lucayans used shell and limestone hoes to clear fields, and shell adzes and axes and fire to fell trees and clear vegetation. Prepared fields were located in inter-dune swales. Interisland differences exist in the choice of fuel woods, probably due to differences in availability of certain woods. We believe that the late Lucayans also cultivated other crops, herbs, fruit trees, and medicinal and pigment plants in house gardens and sinkholes, but neither the plants nor the plots have been found.

Stable isotope and osteological studies have contributed to an understanding of Lucayan diet (Keegan and DeNiro 1988; Pateman 2007; Stokes 1998). Stokes (1998) demonstrated that individuals who inhabited larger islands tended to rely more on terrestrial resources, while individuals from smaller islands initially relied on terrestrial resources then shifted to marine resources.

While much progress in dietary reconstruction from fauna has been made for this time period, most studies focus on procurement technology and habitat (Newsom and Wing 2004; Wing and Reitz 1982). Only a few investigators have examined quantitative methods (Whyte et al. 2005) or temporal variation. Blick (2007) found a reduction in number, size, and weights of land crabs, parrotfish, grouper, West Indian topsnail, and chiton from the tenth through the fifteenth centuries at the Minnis-Ward site (San Salvador), which he attributes to overexploitation associated with population growth. With the decline in the amounts, kinds, and sizes of protein sources, what coping strategies did the Lucayans implement; were lower-ranked species substituted (Keegan 1992) or other dietary shifts implemented? Was there intensification in plant production or interisland food exchanges? These and other questions such as the impact of decreased sea surface temperatures associated with the onset of the Little Ice Age (A.D. 1300) on fisheries and the timing of local extinctions of terrestrial fauna need to be investigated further. Moreover, in order to fully address these issues, the study of the botanical remains must be expanded and macro- and microbotanical recovery techniques and residue analyses should be regularized in our studies. Studies from the Early Lucayan period indicate that a multi-pronged approach is necessary to recover botanical data (Berman and Pearsall 2000, 2008). Such research can also inform on the environment and other forms of plant use. Finally, little attention has been paid to the symbolic meanings of particular foods, food preparation techniques (such as butchering and cooking practices), and the role of food in the political economy (see Keegan 2007; O'Day 2002, for exceptions).

## ROCK ART

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Rock art is found on East Caicos, Crooked Island, Rum Cay, and San Salvador in a variety of cave types (Hoffman 1973; Núñez Jiménez 1997; Winter 1991, 2009). New Providence is the only northern island to have yielded a rock art site. Petroglyphs are the dominant form; only a few pictographs are known. Rock art depictions are

primarily anthropomorphic; there are only a few known zoomorphic and geometric representations. Only a handful of realistic images such as a canoe paddle in Hartford Cave, Rum Cay, have been recorded.

Regional differences in the types of images and stylistic renderings suggest that rock art, much like Lucayan ceramics and basketry, was closely tied to identity and that the caves in which it is found may have served as territorial or ethnic signposts. In the central Bahamas, the dominant image is a human head, which is believed to represent ancestors, spirit helpers, or masked dancers (Roe 2009; Winter 2009). These representations consist largely of disembodied figures—faces without bodies, or faces with the upper half of their bodies. In contrast, all but one of the Jacksonville Cave (East Caicos) figures possesses appendages (de Booy 1912).

Hartford Cave contains the largest number of images in the archipelago and here images occur in zoned clusters (Núñez Jiménez 1997). One particularly graphic grouping consists of 13 petroglyphs: a swaddled image that appears to be giving birth, a set of images in which one individual appears to be crying adjacent to a headless woman lying in a birthing position holding her head in her left hand, and a series of faces, some of which appear to be masked or wearing costumes. In the Jacksonville Cave scene, one individual, who looks like he is wearing an owl mask, bears a spear or dance wand. Another wears a cap similar to those associated with highly ranked Taíno individuals. Another wears a bracelet, perhaps a wrist rattle. The scene appears to depict a dance ceremony composed of at least one shaman and a local leader.

There are numerous interpretive challenges to understanding Lucayan rock art, but an initial starting point is to treat the images as parts of scenes in which they occur. Of course, this is not always possible, since the images may not be contemporaneous and some sites contain only one image. Like all rock art, Lucayan representations are laden with metaphors, possessing multivalent meanings. Dualistic concepts such as life and death and young and old, typical of Antillean imagery in other media, populate the cave rock surfaces. Other oppositions are likely present but not understood. Caves with rock art can be conceived as “story walls,” where visual references to myths, stories, or real historical events were retold, perhaps through ceremonies. According to Keegan and Carlson (2007), caves were “sanctuaries for ritual purposes” and along with burial caves, served as entry points to the subterranean world. Consequently, images indicating movement and flight represented by bats, owls, and individuals wearing feather headdresses figure significantly. The Hartford Cave paddle may signify migration stories.

## MORTUARY VARIABILITY

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Human burials are known from throughout the archipelago (Keegan 1992). Unlike their Antillean neighbors, where large cemeteries were established in or adjacent to villages, Lucayan burials are confined to dry caves, blueholes, and caves with

direct connections to water. As symbolically charged spaces that figure significantly into pan-Antillean mythology, it is not surprising that they served as burial sites; the question remains as to whether caves were exclusive to the burial of only certain individuals. Furthermore, why were some individuals buried in caves and some in blueholes?

Most human remains and their accompanying grave goods have been recovered from dry caves, but due to human and animal disturbance, they are fragmentary and context has been lost. While skeletal remains and mortuary accompaniments from submerged contexts tend to be better preserved, they are difficult to excavate, require specially trained archaeologists, and need expensive conservation once they are removed.

A series of findings suggest that individuals with special statuses were buried in these contexts and that rituals unique to their social positions took place. A small canoe, part of the Stargate blue hole (Andros) burial assemblage, is believed to have served a ritual purpose, since it is too small for regular interisland travel (Callaghan and Schwabe 2001; Palmer 1989). The individuals found there may have been ceremonially interred. Three burials from Preacher's Cave (Eleuthera) possess unique mortuary treatments (Schaffer et al. 2012). Two late Lucayan individuals, one male, one female were each wrapped in a twilled mat. The male, aged 25–30 years old, was buried with an Atlantic trumpet triton in front of his thorax, parts of a sea turtle at his foot, and 29 sunrise tellin shells, a clump of red ochre, and a fish bone scarifier behind his shoulders. Each of these objects is symbolically significant; taken as a whole they suggest that the individual may have been a shaman, someone who possessed special powers or position. Another burial, which dates to the early Lucayan period, presents another enigmatic scenario. This 20–25-year-old male was wrapped in cordage and buried face down with his hands crossed in front of this waist. His lower legs and skull had been removed purposefully, although there was no sign of decapitation. Schaffer et al. (2012) have noted a cross-cultural pattern in which individuals who have been buried in this manner (face-down) may have been individuals who deviated from social norms.

Finally, some dry caves have yielded sherds, animal and plant remains, and wooden bowls (Granberry 1955; Pateman 2007; Winter et al. 1999), which Winter et al. (1999) have suggested was associated with feeding the deceased as they journeyed to the next place. We do not know if the inclusion of such items is proof that the individuals in these caves held unique statuses, however, as too few burials have been excavated to provide a comparative perspective.

Burial data also contribute to our understanding of Lucayan health, fitness, diet, and body aesthetics. According to Pateman (2007), the age of death for most individuals was between 21 and 40, followed closely by individuals aged 41–60. Pathologies include degenerative diseases and metabolic disorders such as osteophytosis, arthritis, Scmorl's nodes, and healed fractures. Many individuals possess periodontis and carious lesions attributed to a diet rich in starch and sugars

(Pateman 2007; Schaffer et al. 2012). Individuals often show evidence for cranial (frontal) flattening.

## LUCAYAN DEPOPULATION

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Historians place Lucayan depopulation as early as 1530 or 1520, but a growing body of radiocarbon evidence suggests that Lucayan sites lasted into at least the first third or mid-1500s (Berman 2011b). Sinelli (2010) has suggested that some Lucayans may have survived into the 1600s.

After Columbus's encounter and material exchanges with the Lucayans on Guanahani (believed to be San Salvador) the archipelago sinks into relative historical obscurity, periodically cast into textual light by Spanish exploration and slaving operations (Gnivecki 1995; Granberry 1979–1981; Hoffman 1990). Las Casas (1951) and Oviedo y Valdés (1959) provide ethnographic descriptions, but these sixteenth-century accounts describe the Lucayans in their enslaved conditions. Material evidence for Spanish presence comes from a number of islands: earthenware sherds (Acklins, Conception Island, Cotton Cay, Exumas, Long Island, Samana Cay); majolica (San Salvador), metal artifacts (San Salvador, Middle Caicos); glass beads (San Salvador), and Norwegian rats (MC-32) (Gnivecki 2011; Hoffman 1987a, b; Keegan 1992, 2007; Sinelli 2010). Such artifacts may have entered the archaeological record through direct contact with the Spanish and then made their way to settlements via indigenous trade and exchange networks.

One of the most direct means of contact was through slaving operations. As early as 1499–1500, Amerigo Vespucci states that 232 Lucayans were brought from the Bahamas as slaves (Sauer 1966:112). Slaving operations centered on Andros Island where Francisco Gordillo and Toribio de Villafranco (1514–1517) “rounded up as many as nine hundred Indians, over half of whom died in pens in the Bahamas while awaiting supplies and ships so that they could be taken to Española for sale” (Hoffman 1990:5).

In Spanish legal terms, the Lucayans were classified as *naborias perpetuas* in that they were not bound to their lands. In contrast, the Greater Antillean *naborias* were bound to their *conucos* (Watts 1987:106). Consequently, the Spanish were legally able to relocate the Lucayans to Puerto Rico and to Puerto Real. Some were transferred to Cubagua to work in the pearl industry, which began in 1499–1502, where their egregious conditions and horrendous deaths were noted (Granberry 1979–1981).

Shipwreck sites constitute additional entry points of Spanish artifacts into indigenous exchange networks (Wright 1981:41–42). The St. John's wreck (Grand Bahama Island, pre-1550) included an iron conquistador's helmet (c. 1520–30), seven iron *versos*, three *barbardettas*, and olive jars (Marken 1994:16; 52–57). In 1500,

a hurricane in the Exumas resulted in the loss of two of Vicente Yáñez Pinzón's ships, with the two remaining ships damaged (Lemos 1998b:549). The Highborn Cay (Exumas) and the Molasses Reef wrecks (West Caicos Bank) constitute two additional wrecks that might have been salvaged by the Lucayans (Lemos 1998a:38–41; Smith 1998:31–33). The Molasses Reef wreck contained a pair of iron leg manacles suggesting that the ship might have been involved in slaving (Smith 1998:32).

Lacking from the historical and archaeological records is evidence for Lucayan resistance to Spanish enslavement. Sites reflecting Lucayan flight and acts of *maronage* may likely be located deep in the interior of the island and in inaccessible caves.

## CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations have increased greatly during the past two decades in *Las Islas de Los Lucayos* and continuing work promises to generate new questions and greater knowledge. In the past, archaeologists focused on studying colonization, island adaptations, and the impact of Hispaniolan cultures on the Lucayans, regarding them as recipients, not active agents in their culture making. Today archaeologists, taking a more regionally expansive agency-based perspective, have broadened these questions and are pursuing explanations for interisland social, political, and cultural relationships, variability in Lucayan material, social, political, and economic life, and early Lucayan–Spanish encounters in innovative and exciting ways.

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