

on the environment. As Hegmon (2003) notes, we no longer view humans as a backdrop for adaptation, which was foundational to the processualist approach; we now view humans as a “part of the environment,” where human agency is responsible for wreaking environmental instability and disequilibrium, as well as maintaining stability. Several Bahamian studies have addressed these questions. The exploitation and consumption of animal protein continue to intrigue Bahamian archaeologists and numerous studies such as Blick (2007, 2012), Carlson (1999), Carlson and Keegan (2004), Morgan and Albury (2013), and Wing and Wing (1995) have examined changes in faunal profiles, including extinctions and the decline of certain species, which has been attributed them to anthropogenic behaviors.

Wilson (2007, 2010) notes, too, that we now have enhanced tools to understand past ecosystems, including climate change. On San Salvador and Eleuthera, archaeologists are involved with geologists and botanists in coring projects that are collecting environmental and geological data to be used in long-term climatic and environmental reconstructions. Through this collaborative work, the impact of hurricanes, periods of temperature increase (Medieval Warming Period) and temperature decrease (Little Ice Age), sea level rise, other environmental disturbances, and periods of stability will add to understanding Lucayan responses such as migration, colonization, settlement and land use patterns, while contributing to an understanding of long-term global climate change.

Wilson (2013) also encourages us to examine demographics, which he notes is “uneven” in terms of settlement data. While, as mentioned previously, many of the islands in the archipelago have been surveyed and small-scale surveys continue to be conducted thanks, largely to environmental and cultural resource

management projects, some islands, such as the Turks & Caicos (Keegan et al. 2008; Sinelli 2001, 2010) and San Salvador (Blick 2011) have received greater areal coverage than others. Although we have a general picture, at least on San Salvador, of how site location co-varies with natural features (Blick et al. 2011), questions such as the numbers of people who occupied the sites (the demographics to which Wilson refers), the length of occupation, residential mobility, seasonal occupation, and the function of special purpose sites remain largely unexplored. Except for San Salvador and Middle Caicos, island chronologies are still not worked out fully. Another challenge is to locate more Early Lucayan Period sites; only a handful of occupations from this period have been excavated (Berman 2011a, b; Berman et al. 2013; Bohon 1999; Sinelli 2013); consequently, the measurement of demographic change and migration and colonization patterns and sequences cannot be approached fully until we have an improved understanding of this period. Finally, the islands of the Bahamas need to be resurveyed regularly to assess the impact of human development and climate-related events on sites. In January and June 2013, Perry L. Gnivecki and I noted that many of the sites that Sullivan (1974) recorded on Eleuthera have been wholly or partially destroyed due to storm erosion and modern day construction.

Wilson (2007, 2013) has provided Caribbean archaeologists with a challenging set of questions to pursue, yet one topic he fails to mention is gender, a subject that Caribbean archaeologists, including those working in the Bahama archipelago have neglected. Hegmon (2003:216) has noted that the archaeology of gender is “paradigmatic of processual-plus” archaeology; in other words, the study of gender has become mainstream archaeology. Its notable absence from our Bahamian (and

Caribbean) scholarship serves as an example of where we have lagged behind other areas of study.

In a somewhat related re-envisioning of archaeological directives for the discipline writ large, Kintigh et al. (2014) have identified a series of 25 “grand challenges;” major archaeological issues that the authors believe should guide contemporary archaeological research and scholarship. They are organized into five topics 1). the emergence of communities and complexity; 2). resilience, persistence, transformation, and collapse; 3). movement, mobility, and migration; and 4). cognition, behavior, and identity; 5). human-environment interactions. A few of the study’s authors also argued that the “grand challenges” should be relevant to current-day issues (Kintigh et al. 2014:7).

In another recent re-charting of contemporary archaeological research, Hegmon (2014) and others have challenged the discipline to explore the “archaeology of the human experience.” Such an approach requires us to first identify past threats to human well being and situations in which societies are vulnerable (e.g., food insecurity, physical safety) and then study strategies that people used to improve their lives, protect themselves from harm, and build systems to insure their physical, social, and cultural quality of life. While several paradigms are being explored, Hegmon (2014) advocates the use of the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) approach to human security (<http://www.undp.org>). This approach should make archaeological research and scholarship more relevant to contemporary global concerns.

Bahamian archaeologists have not been particularly attentive about making their research relevant to today’s concerns, but the possibilities to do so are great and the overlapping programs proposed by Hegmon (2014), Kintigh et al. (2014), and

Wilson (2007, 2023) can be accomplished, particularly in areas for which we have greater empirical evidence. For example, because rich bodies of paleoenvironmental and archaeobiological data have been collected through archaeological excavations and geological and botanical research, Bahamian archaeology has the potential to answer questions related to long-term human-environment interactions. Human response to climatic and environmental issues such as global warming, sea level rise, forest fires, and hurricane frequency, duration, and intensity can be tracked through the archeological record. These findings can provide data for predictive models that can influence potential solutions and policy decisions. Blick (2011, 2012) has charted changes in marine species size and richness at several Lucayan sites on San Salvador; such longitudinal work can be very useful to the Bahamas Department of Marine Resources in understanding intensified or over-harvesting of fish and shellfish due to tourism. Did the Lucayans respond to diminishing returns and if so, how? Another example draws upon paleobotanical remains. Berman et al. (2014) have found evidence for *Calathea latifolia* (leren) in Lucayan sites, yet this crop plays no role in contemporary Bahamian agriculture. Leren offers a nutritious, filling, tasty, easily grown, harvestable, and sustainable food source that can be grown in house gardens or at a larger scale. The production of such plants would be attractive to household subsistence economies, as well as local and global markets (Martin and Cabanillas 1976).

Finally, islands possess profoundly fragile ecosystems (Walker and Bellingham 2011), and the destruction of the Bahamian landscape due to construction, road building, traffic, pollution, population increase, hurricanes, torrential rains, rising sea level, erosion, and a host of other natural and

human-induced factors make it imperative that we intensify environmental and cultural heritage preservation efforts before evidence for the past is compromised or compromised further (Pateman 2011). We must weigh our efforts to understand the past, but at the same time figure out ways to preserve it. Interestingly, neither Kintigh et al. (2014) nor Hegmon (2014 al. (2014) spoke to the role of archaeology in nation-building and cultural heritage management, two important contemporary issues with significant national and global economic and political implications.

Summary

The purpose of this brief historical overview was to contextualize the intellectual trajectory of Bahamian archaeology and to position the papers presented here in Lucayan, Caribbean, and disciplinary theoretical contexts. As the papers demonstrate, today's Bahamian archaeology represents mainly a mix of perspectives largely representative of behavioral archaeology and processual plus paradigms. Like much of the archaeological research being conducted today in North America (Hegmon 2003) and the Caribbean (Keegan et al. 2013; Siegel 2013; Wilson 2007, 2013), the papers in this volume speak to a range of topics including artifact replication, indigenous encounters with Europeans, mortuary variability, and local and regional differences in material culture. Gerace and Winter's contribution falls clearly into the behavioral archaeology paradigm, which has a rich history in Bahamian archaeology. Their work will contribute to a better understanding of Lucayan ceramic variability as observed by Bate (2011), Berman (2012), and Granberry and Winter (1995). Ostapkowicz's work

exemplifies the processual plus paradigm. She demonstrates how questions work related to Lucayan political economy, symbolic systems, and identity can be investigated through a variety of traditional (e.g., stylistic) and cutting edge scientific methods. Hutchison, too, raises issues of individual, community, and island identity by way of the analysis of perishable technologies such as basketry. Morsink's work pushes us to think in terms of world-systems, while Figuerdo's paper urges critical and judicious use of the chronicles that describe indigenous lifeways. Similarly, Schaffer's study demonstrates the importance of constantly revisiting data to correct previous studies or secure new findings and provide new interpretations. His work has the potential to contribute to the "archaeology of human experience" paradigm, as he addresses skeletal pathologies and trauma that speak to disease and other conditions brought on by pathogens and social causes. The "grand challenges" raised in the Kintigh et al. (2014) study are not explicitly addressed in these papers, but the potential to address them exists. For example, Ostapkowicz's and Hutchison's studies contribute to the "grand challenge" topics of cognition, behavior, and identity.

In summary, the papers presented here demonstrate that contemporary Bahamian archaeologists are applying a mix of last 20th century and early 21st century models and methods consistent with archaeologists who work in other areas of the world. The challenge to make Bahamian archaeology relevant to contemporary problems offers exciting opportunities, along with the pursuit of the important Caribbean-specific questions laid out by Wilson (2007, 2013).

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Notes

¹ Throughout this essay, my use of the term Bahamian archaeology refers to the archaeological record of the early peoples who colonized the Bahama archipelago. These include the people who preceded the Lucayans, the Lucayans, and the Spanish. I do not like to distinguish between the “prehistoric” and “historic” periods,

although it is necessary to observe convention. Bahamian archaeology includes the rich European (post Spanish) and African material record, but, here I focus on the pre-European, pre-African past.

² Sullivan's dissertation was completed in 1981, but was based on research conducted in the 1970s.

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