

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING: EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG RECIPROCITY IN THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

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Abstract

When discussing exchange in the archaeological record, this often entails a prehistory of exchange that is focused on the economic or the political aspect of exchanges. These particular views very often suppose a direct quid-pro-quo attitude to exchanges. Although direct reciprocity was no doubt important for the constitution of pre-Columbian sociality, many other social strategies are available that were at least as important. This article focuses on the possible role of strong reciprocity in pan-Caribbean interactions. This entails that objects and concepts should not be only considered for their value as exchange valuables in an economic or ideological sense, but also from their ability to create material manifestations of social strategies and their resulting relations. This position will be illuminated by a case-study taken from Melanesian ethnography and Caribbean archaeology.

Résumé

Lorsque l'on traite des échanges dans les travaux archéologiques, il est généralement fait référence à une préhistoire des échanges centrée sur les seuls aspects économiques ou politiques. Ce point de vue implique très souvent une attitude de contrepartie directe dans les échanges. Bien que la réciprocité directe occupât sans doute une place importante dans la constitution de la sociabilité précolombienne, beaucoup d'autres stratégies sociales, au moins aussi importantes, étaient envisageables. Cet article se concentre sur le possible rôle de la réciprocité stricte dans les interactions pan-caribéenne. Cela implique que les objets et les concepts ne doivent pas être seulement considérés pour leur valeur comme objets précieux d'échange, au sens économique ou idéologique, mais doivent l'être aussi pour leur capacité à créer des manifestations matérielles des stratégies sociales et des relations résultantes. Cette réflexion sera illustrée d'une étude de cas tirés de l'ethnographie mélanésienne et de l'archéologie caribéenne.

Resumen

Cuando se habla sobre intercambio en el registro arqueológico, esto implica a menudo la asunción de una prehistoria centrada en los aspectos económicos o políticos de los intercambios. Estos puntos de vista, frecuentemente suponen una disposición directa quid-pro-quo, a los intercambios. Aunque la reciprocidad directa fue, sin dudas, importante para la constitución de la sociabilidad pre-colombina, hay muchas otras estrategias sociales que tuvieron al menos, tanta importancia como esta. El presente artículo se centra en el posible

papel jugado por una “reciprocidad fuerte”, en las interacciones pan-caribeñas. Esto implica que objetos y conceptos no deben ser solo considerados por su valor como bienes de cambio, en un sentido económico o ideológico sino también por su habilidad de crear manifestaciones materiales de estrategias sociales y de sus relaciones resultantes. Esta posición será ilustrada por casos de estudio tomados de la Etnografía de Melanesia y de la Arqueología del Caribe.

Introduction

A theory of a pan-Caribbean sphere of interaction - i.e., the notion of the “Greater Caribbean” (Rodríguez Ramos 2007) - states that the pan-Caribbean has to be envisaged as “one landscape whose inhabitants played an active and significant role in the establishment and maintenance of local and regional circuits of mobility and exchange as they navigated its waters and trekked across its (is)lands, without downplaying their cultural, social, biological, or linguistic particularities” (Hofman, personal communication 2007).¹ Accordingly, one of the many challenges that this theory has to meet is to come to an understanding of how the precolonial Greater Caribbean world was affected by a greater number of much further-reaching social interactions that were far more complicated in practice than Caribbean archaeologists could previously have envisioned. Ironically, this dilemma must also have been one of the greatest challenges for the individuals and communities operating within a pan-Caribbean interaction sphere: they would have had to mediate and integrate many more extra-local, extra-cultural and, thus, extra-social elements in the form of culturally and linguistically distinct groups of the region in order for them to successfully transform Greater Caribbean value systems into local systems of value. Here, I will follow this line of thought in a discussion of a pan-Caribbean theory for precolonial exchange. By using and expanding on the concept of the “social valuable” and the

social narratives that would have been an integral part of them I will concentrate in particular on the overrated significance of direct reciprocity as a social strategy among precolonial communities and individuals.

Social Valuables

“Social valuables” (Spielmann 2002) are often finely manufactured items that in some cases take months to create, nevertheless they are valued even more than their production costs. These valuables can be material in nature, but also function on the level of what is nowadays termed “intellectual property”, for instance knowledge of a certain ritual, a dance, or how to cure a certain disease. In addition to their production cost these items derive their value from a distinct uniqueness: a personal character (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986). When a social valuable is exchanged it is not only the item that is exchanged, but also the narrative around it: its life trajectory (Weiner 1976). This narrative can be given context in a variety of manners: by acquiring items through special means, e.g., over long distances (Helms 1988); making an item with exceptionally exquisite craftsmanship (Helms 1993); associating an item with the ancestors (Helms 1998); and/or other means. The transfer of these objects between exchange partners serves to (re)produce the reputation of communal structures and individual agents within that structure and thereby doubly reaffirms its social value

(Munn 1986).

It would seem that the most closely correlated concept in anthropology is that of the 'gift,' as first put forward by Mauss (1925). This is true in the way that social valuables are best understood as the physical manifestation of the "personal relations between people that the exchange of things in certain social contexts creates" (Gregory 1982: 8). Indeed, a social valuable should be seen as a gift in the way that it is paradoxically personal and interpersonal in nature and that as a rule a social relation is hardly ever valued without it. Yet, by using the term social valuables rather than gift I would like to shift the focus away from what is inextricably attached to the Maussian gift: its reciprocal nature.

Marcel Mauss' seminal essay "the Gift" starts by asking (1990: 4, his *italics*) "[w]hat rule of legality and self-interest, in societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?" Mauss established and cross-culturally discussed the obligation to give, receive and give back; this has led many scholars to view "the Gift" as one of the first substantive anthropological inquiries into "archaic" economy (Sykes 2005). It is undeniably one of the most important anthropological texts of the 20th century. However, the application of Mauss' ideas in practice often comes down to a quid-pro-quo formalist version of reciprocity, i.e., a prehistory of market exchange (Godbout and Caillé 1998).² The problem is that these kinds of models ignore opposite views on the foundation of exchange as it is understood through a large and still growing cross-disciplinary corpus of scholarly work. Using theories from Evolutionary Psychology I wish to expand the horizon on gift exchange by

considering reasons, tactics and benefits of a model of exchange that does not work from a formalist type of reciprocity. First I will present and explain the model. Then I will present two short case-studies and discuss why this model is also integral to a pan-Caribbean theory of exchange.

Tracking exchange

It is my hypothesis that in its social foundation the exchange of a social valuable is precisely not about reciprocity, but about showing more dedication than you would strictly need in order to have a balanced equation (Mol 2007; cf. Ssorin-Chaikov 2006). The direct consequence for archaeologists is that we should not always take for granted that when we "find" exchange, reciprocal action is to be expected. This would certainly be a normal reaction when an elite valuable is found at a location that is exotic to the object, but in fact the expectations of reciprocal modes of exchange are far more widespread in Caribbean archaeology than only models of elite interaction. For instance, when evidence is found for the import of all sorts of objects from other islands by communities from one particular region or island, one side of the story would invariably focus on what the receiving community would have been exporting. If it is not clear what the recipient could have exported we postulate that it must have been dependent on and thus subordinate to the donor community. In other words when talking about archaeologically established exchange from one region to another, we often seem to feel that we are missing one end of the spectrum. It seems that the receiving party has not reciprocated and has gained something for nothing. Sometimes this can be explained by the incompleteness of the archaeological representation of the exchange system, because it is to be expected that a considerate

part of the objects that were exchanged are of a perishable nature. Nevertheless, it is a fact that among sedentary peoples across the globe one of the most valued qualities of successful social valuables is their durability (Clark 1986; Jacobson 1987; Weiner 1992). Therefore I would argue that the lack of visibility of perishable materials in the archaeological record cannot be the whole story.

The norm of direct reciprocal gain is so ingrained in our system that it almost seems naïve to postulate the existence of indirect reciprocal patterns of exchange. Because of its perceived irrational economic inefficiency philosophers, evolutionists and economists have been puzzled by altruism, i.e., indirect reciprocal behavior, to such an extent that it was even not supposed to exist (Alexander 1987). Yet, there is a growing community of scholars who posit that human beings can act in a way that, on the face of it, is altruistic. Research in primarily the area of the evolution of human social behavior, suggests that there are those who do not expect to be reciprocated as a necessity for being social (Sober and Wilson 1998). Through various in-depth and cross-cultural studies it has been shown that non-reciprocal action may be undertaken because humans as highly social beings are continuously checking on the social acts of others (Henrich, et al. 2006; Henrich, et al. 2004). This universal process that is called “tracking” is vital to our survival in an environment that consists primarily of non-kin (Goodnight 2005; Richerson and Boyd 2004; Sober and Wilson 1998).

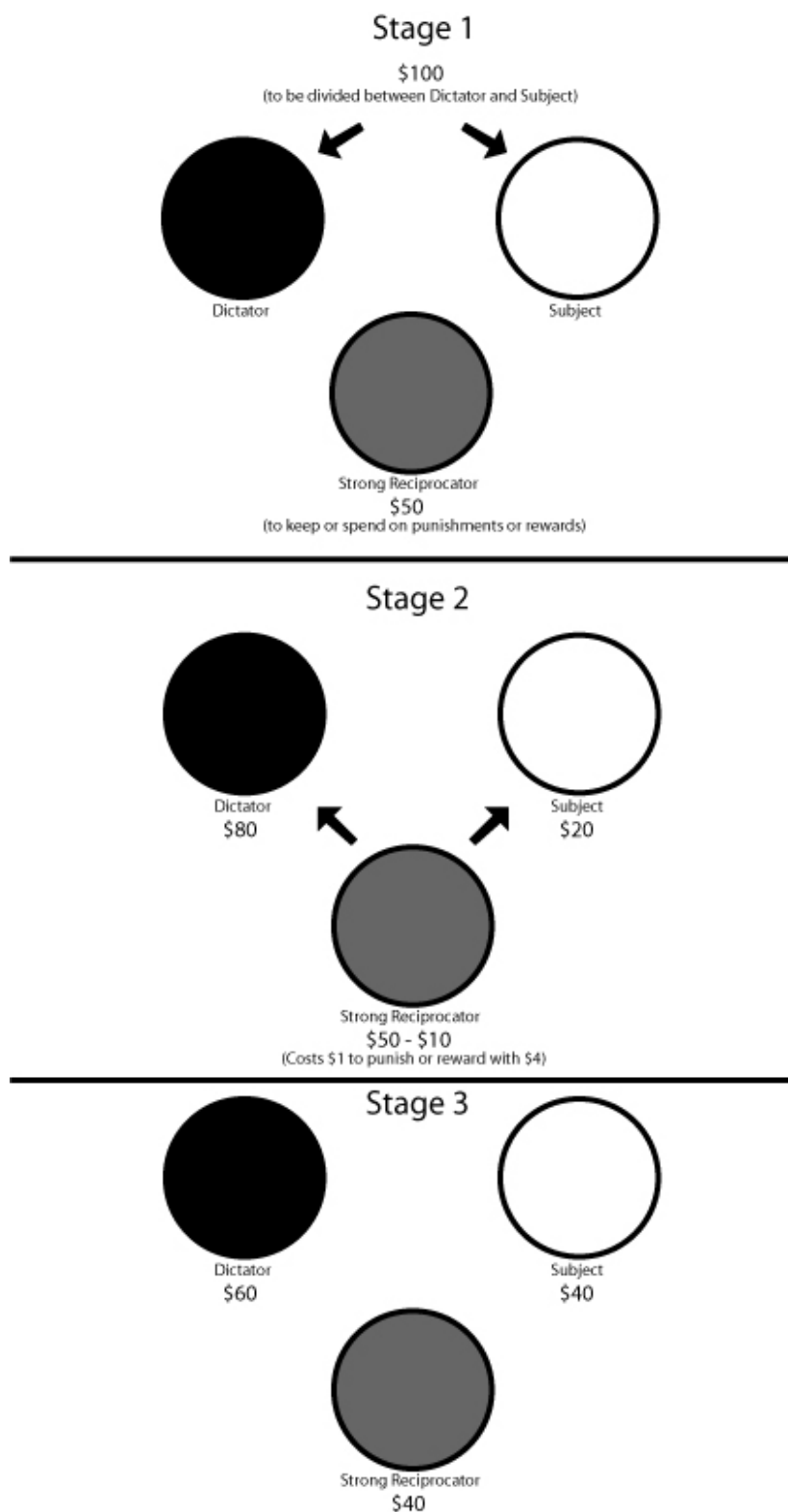
Tracking is done by “strong reciprocators”. Strong reciprocation, also called generalized reciprocity or altruistic punishment, is a type of behavior that is engaged when a “freerider” engages in anti-social behavior.³ As a reaction to this anti-social

behavior a strong reciprocator will punish a freerider. Conversely, a strong reciprocator also rewards social behavior. Punishing or rewarding is altruistic, because it is costly to the one who is meting out the reward or punishment (Fehr and Fischbacher 2003, 2004; Fehr and Gächter 2000; Gintis 2000; Gintis, et al. 2001; Gintis, et al. 2005; Gintis, et al. 2008).

This behavior has been tested in a number of games. A clarifying example of one of these games is a variant of the so-called “dictator game” (Figure 1).

In this variant a certain amount of money is divided between two players by only one of the players, without the consent of the other. After this division a third player can decide to reward or punish the other two players by paying the amount with which he or she wants to punish or reward. It has to be pointed out that there will not be a subsequent round of payments. If the third player chooses to pay to reward or punish he/she solely acts on his/her sense of what is socially desirable. It appears that cross-culturally and in almost all the cases the third player chooses to punish or reward, although this comes at a cost to him or her and he or she cannot gain anything by it (Fehr, et al. 2002; Flesch 2007: 33).

Actually, strong reciprocation can only remain a guiding element in human interaction if we actually punish those who fail to punish. And punish those who fail to punish someone who fails to punish, and so on (Henrich and Boyd 2001). In effect, sociality necessitates that a social actor has a tendency to be a strong reciprocator (Boyd, et al. 2003). To keep a record of all these punishments and rewards humans have developed sophisticated tracking skills. These skills are so important to navigate in human social groups that we engage in it almost compulsively. Think for example about the hard-to-resist urge to gossip,



which is a very effective means of keeping up with the patterns of social punishment and reward and also punish and reward at the same time by spreading gossip (Axelrod 1997; Flesch 2007).

Furthermore, the literature critic William Flesch has proposed that the universal love for stories that are filled with heroic punishers and evil egoists stems directly from our interest in tracking social interaction (Flesch 2007). In other words the human urge to track is expressed in our love for narratives. It has been postulated that human folk psychology is designed to build narratives around social interaction (Hutto 2007, 2008).⁴ This would be a logical necessity since social exchange is almost never a simple matter of X giving to Y and Y reciprocating to X. A simple exchange situation might already resemble the following: X punishes or rewards Y, because Y has harmed or benefited Z and Z has harmed/benefited W in the past with whom X also has a social relation –e.g., the Hunter kills the Wolf because he has eaten Little Red Riding Hood, who did not deserve to be eaten because she has always been

Figure 1. A sample three party, two stage Dictator Game consisting of a Dictator, Subject and Strong Reciprocator.

people of whom the Hunter is also quite fond.⁵

Narrating exchange

The above are integral aspects of the concept of the social valuable. In the frame of mind of a strong reciprocator, a social valuable would be given and often reciprocated as a way of keeping track of the disposition of one's social partners to act in a socially desirable manner. Secondly, if a strong reciprocator gives away a social valuable without the intent to be reciprocated this shows to others that he or she is set on acting in a non-egoistic, i.e., altruistic, manner. This shows him or her to be a trustworthy and capable social actor who has proved to also act in the interest of others.⁶

Aside from the general suggestions above I would like to focus on another critical aspect of the tracking of social valuables. In addition to the exchange of services, the exchange of socially valuable objects would be one of the ways with which stories of the social capabilities of social actors would have been created. The action of giving, receiving, and reciprocation of social valuables that construct a pattern of social interaction is itself subject to narration. A gift of a social valuable from one community or person to another could be seen as a new page in the narrative of the social history between these persons or communities. It is in this sense that the exchange of social valuables is not a matter of quid-pro-quo reciprocity, but a process of the narration of one's own and others' social capabilities.

For archaeologists it is imperative to realize that the narrative contained in exchange also has a material reflection. One of the main reasons for the *social* value of a social valuable lies in the fact that it is ideally suited to hold a narrative.⁷ It is not a

new thought that what separates commodity from gift is that the latter holds a biography, while the former does not (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986). What makes a gift even more valuable is an extended pedigree that consists of a history of what has happened to the object (Gosden and Marshall 1999; Graeber 2001; Thomas 1991).⁸ This is framed in terms of where, when and, most importantly, by whom it has been held and exchanged (Thomas 1991: 100). So, if the act of exchange stands for the creation of a new page in the narrative, the exchanged object itself embodies the possibility for that narrative to be remembered and retold. To interact with an object in the present rekindles the memory of past social action and its rewards and punishments: the social valuable acts as a mnemonic tool for social exchange.⁹

The above suggests that on a proximal level we should not expect exchange to always be a reciprocal affair, because valuables can move back and forth between social partners. On an ultimate level strong reciprocity is reciprocal, because strong reciprocators get to enjoy the profit of continued or new social relations. So, on an archaeological level sometimes things will be given but nothing will be reciprocated due to the human tendency to be a strong reciprocator. Other objects will be received, yet will not be reciprocated, because they were a reward/punishment for social action. In even other cases objects might be given out of sheer interest for the narrative of a certain object and the opportunity to be part of that particular objects' narrative. I will now shortly explore two case-studies that will provide some background for the model outlined above.

Kula valuables

The Trobriand Islands are part of the Massim, an archipelago that trails of to the

south and east of the main island of New Guinea. It is on these islands that Malinowski conducted fieldwork from 1915 until 1918 and the subject of the most well-known ethnographic account of exchange, the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski 1922). In this work Malinowski describes in a most elaborate manner the practice of kula that was later used by Mauss in his cross-cultural discussion of gift giving (Mauss 1925). The kula is an exchange in which *vaygu'a*, kula valuables – necklaces of red shell, called *soulava*, and white shell bracelets, called *mwali* – are exchanged along “kula paths” between players from communities from different islands. A kula exchange consists of A giving to a desired exchange partner B an opening gift. This is done with the idea in mind that when B gets his hand on either a desirable soulava or mwali A will receive this as a return gift. In this manner a soulava social valuable travels in a clockwise manner through the area known as the ‘kula ring’, while a mwali social valuable makes this journey in a counter clockwise motion (Leach and Leach 1983; Malinowski 1922: 81-104).

The kula is the favourite example of ‘quid-pro-quo’ reciprocity among anthropologists (Sykes 2005). When it is quoted by non-Melanesian specialists it is often remarked how important kula is as an activity for males to increase their political power through prestige driven exchanges. Less often these non-specialists draw attention to the fact that the exchange of shell valuables is only a minor part of the totality of exchanges in the kula ring, among which a huge number of intra-island and inter-island perishable and non-perishable materials that function as the constituents of this exchange system (Weiner 1987). It is even less often acknowledged that, although kula is unmistakably connected to power,

the foundation of kula is that of an exchange game that is geared towards social standing and not power accumulation (Munn 1986).

When playing kula the central purpose is to gain “fame”, both at the level of the individual and at the level of the community (Damon 2002; Munn 1986). It appears that only a minor part of the measure of success of a kula player is ascribed by reference to how many kula valuables they have and what the values of the owned objects are (Campbell 1983; Weiner 1992). Instead, for a kula player the constitution of his success is for a great deal dependent on his fame, i.e., the narratives of what valuable he exchanged why, when, where and with whom. This spread of their fame is possible because kula valuables are individually recognizable artifacts to experienced players and are often named. In addition, the value of an individual mwali or soulava is constructed through its circulation - something Malinowski already remarked upon (Malinowski 1922: 511). Therefore, in order to know the value of a mwali or soulava those who participate in kula must also know the entire exchange history of the kula path that the object “travelled on.” For instance, for the documented case of the mwali “Nonowan” the recorded history runs from 1938 to 1976 and comprised a list of 24 different exchange partners who were divided among fourteen different communities (Damon 1980).

It is easy to recognize the skill in tracking which advanced kula players, partaking in several kula paths, should have in order to be successful and gain fame. I would also like to point out that fame in the kula ring depends largely on how strong reciprocal acts are remembered with the function of the kula valuable as focal point for the collective social memory. Additionally, it is important to stress that being social



Figure 2. Map of The Late Ceramic Age Caribbean indicating the spread of shell faces and the Chican Ostionoid heartland.

and open-handed are highly valued qualities in the communities that make up the kula ring (Munn 1986). Kula would be one of many ways in which these qualities would be made visible and traceable.

Guaízas

Guaízas are a class of face-depicting objects from the latter part of the Late Ceramic Age (+/- AD 1000-1492) and are almost all made of parts of the *Strombus gigas* and (more rarely) *Srombus costatus* shell. They are far from a common find in the archaeological record, but they do occur in almost the whole of the Antillean archipelago with reported findings from central Cuba all the way to the Grenadines in the southern Lesser Antilles (Figures 2, 3 and 4).¹⁰

Additionally, they all have iconographic elements that are strongly reminiscent of the Chican or Meillacan Ostionoid style that is connected to the Taíno, yet they are in a sense all unique (Mol 2007). Through

analogy with contemporary Arawakan languages it is known that *guaíza* probably means “our face” (Brinton 1871; Oliver 2009). The shell face *guaíza* would have been worn in a configuration with other materials around the neck or around the waste as part of a girdle. It is very likely that it would have been further adorned with gold or *tumbaga* inlays (Alegría 1981). Together with statements in Spanish historical sources of the early contact period and other sources of information on Taíno worldview we can postulate that these shell faces are the materialization of the faces of superhuman beings and ancestors. They are also intimately linked with personhood and the lineage of the individual who is wearing the *guaíza* (Las Casas 1875, 1992; Mol 2007; Oliver 1997, 2000; Pané 1999 [1571]; Siegel 1998). Additionally, it is stated in one ethnohistorical source and further postulated through evidence from a petroglyph at the ball court site of Caguana in Puerto Rico that the

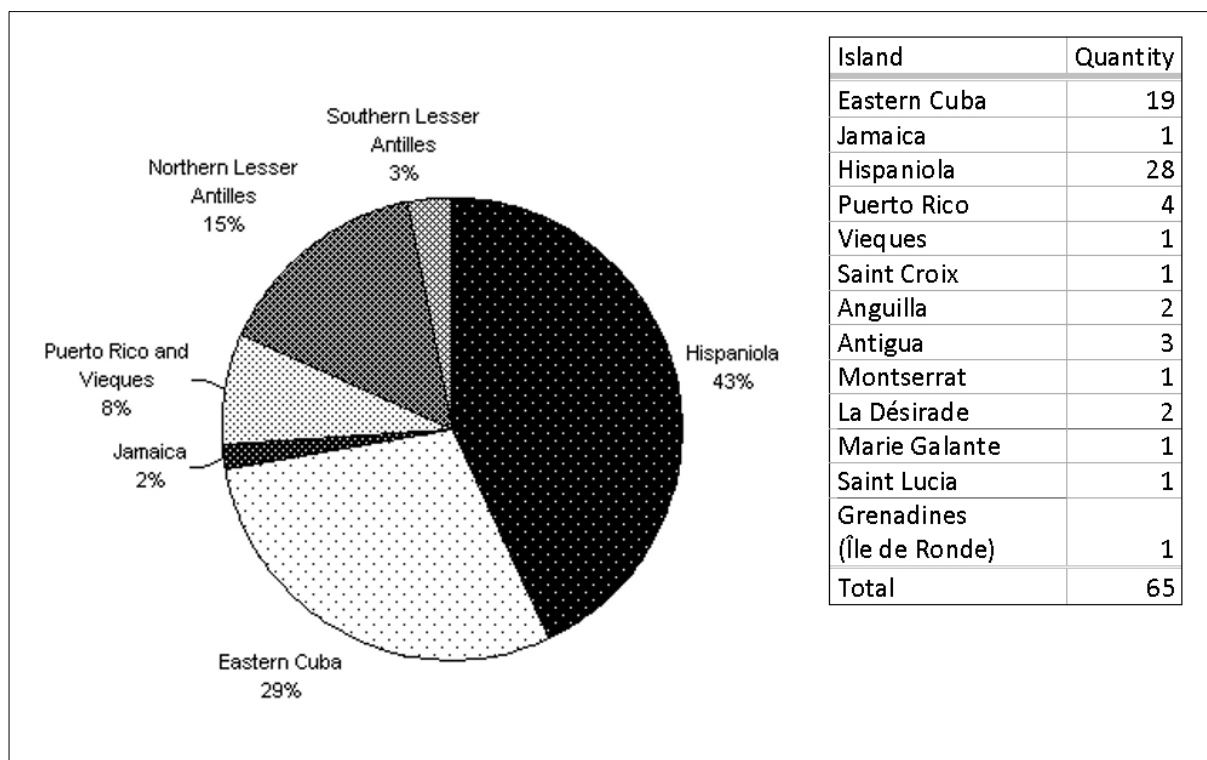


Figure 3. Table with absolute numbers of guaízas per island and pie chart with percentual distribution of guaízas per region.

guaíza was part of the “regalia” of Taíno caciques (Las Casas 1992: Chapter 59; Oliver 1998).

The above suggests that a guaíza would have probably been an important object for the establishment and symbolic expression of political power relations among the Taíno. However, the ethnohistorical record tells us that guaízas were also favoured as a gift by the Taíno to the Spaniards. From 1495 to 1497 Christopher Columbus received 45 guaízas and 6 girdles with faces at the settlement of La Isabela (Alegría 1980; Mol 2008). In a later shipping list from 1506, guaízas are still named as one of the few objects among shipments of gold (Mira Caballos 2000). We have several specific descriptions of the gift of a guaíza to Colón (Fernandez de Navarete 1922: 129, 154 & 229). The gift of a guaíza seems to have been aimed at drawing Columbus and other Europeans into the social sphere of the donor.¹¹

Ethnohistorical evidence might not be enough to definitely prove that these objects would have been exchanged in the pre-Columbian period or whether it is merely the idea of a shell face that was diffused through a larger area. It could be said that the archaeometric impossibility of finding a detailed provenance of seashell debilitates my argument for those who delude themselves that archaeology can ever find “proof of exchange.” Therefore, attractive as it might be, I am not out to show that certain guaízas were transported from certain islands to other specific islands. One could make a case against the notion that guaiza distribution is caused by the diffusal of an idea. First there is the stylistic similarity, balanced with the individuality of every artefact, which shows that the unique nature of a guaiza was more important than the idea behind it. Also, the small number of guaízas in the Lesser Antilles makes it less parsimonious to posit that the

idea of a guaíza spread through some or other means but was only put into material form once or twice for the islands in which they occur. In the end it is not the argument if they were exchanged or not that interests me, but how they functioned as social valuables in local social strategies and (re)

production of communal and individual reputations.

So, I would say that, analogously to the Trobriand kula system and many other exchange systems across the globe, the exchange of these guaízas was part of a strong reciprocal tactic. This tactic was



Figure 4. Greater and Lesser Antillean guaízas: a. guaíza from Potrero de El Mango, located at Museo Indocubano Baní, Banes, Cuba; b. guaíza with an unknown context, located at the Fundación García Arévalo, Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana; c. guaíza from Sandy Hill, Anguilla; d. Guaíza from Morne Cybèle-1, La Désirade, Guadeloupe; e. Guaíza from Potrero de El Mango, located at the Gabinete de Arqueología, Havana, Cuba (a, b & e photographed by author, c & d courtesy of Menno L.P. Hoogland).

used by the indigenous people of the Greater Antilles to influence and keep track of the disposition of extra-social others to engage in social behavior.¹² It would not be necessary for such an exchange to be reciprocal in nature. Indeed, a guaíza is an ideal artefact to have an object narrative. All guaízas share a similar style, but are unique individuals and therefore easily recognizable. Also, the fact that the guaíza seems to be connected to personhood gives it an identity that would have been retraceable in an exchange network. Although the specific histories are lost to us, a specific guaíza could have represented memories of past exchanges and could have held the names and biographies of previous owners. The biggest incentive for the gift of a guaíza might have been that it would add a new part of the donor's social narrative and that of the donor's lineage by spreading his/her social nature, name and "fame".¹³

Implications for a pan-Caribbean theory of exchange

Although the two case-studies above are not meant to be exhaustive, I hope they show that strong reciprocal interaction deserves a place as an alternative explanation alongside formalist models of exchange. Provided the cognitive foundations for the social system are not vastly different for contemporary human groups than for the indigenous groups of the pre-Columbian Caribbean we should expect distribution patterns and *emic* valuation of social valuables to be partly influenced by strong reciprocity instead of only direct gain through reciprocity. This would entail that less focus should be put on exchange as it is operated in conventional models of socio-political evolution (e.g., Earle 1981, 1997). When vesting the exchange of social valuables within this framework it politicizes exchange on a different level: in

the wider context of the politics of general human social interaction (cf. "practice of exchange": Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990, 1997). The exchange of social valuables is something that every member of society will engage in, not only aggrandizing elite men.

Furthermore, strong reciprocity and tracking would be especially important in situations in which the disposition of social partners is something that should be carefully moderated or situations in which non-kin social networks take an especially important place among social relations. These would have been situations that would have been prevalent in the pan-Caribbean spheres of intensive and extensive interaction: e.g., exogamous marriage patterns (Keegan and Machlachlan 1989), network-type strategies for gaining political power (Blanton, et al. 1996), a combination of the above (Keegan, et al. 1998; Siegel 2004), intergroup contact (Hofman, et al. 2007; Hofman and Bright 2008), the problem of social distance and lifelines for migrants (Keegan 2004; cf. Kirch 1988), but also the interactions with superhuman beings and ancestors (Oliver 1997). In these and other situations the strong reciprocal giving of social valuables would be an important strategy to draw in extra-social others into one's sphere of familiarity and from thereon keep track of and influence their social behavior (cf. Mol 2007; compare Santos-Granero 2007).

What I hope this shows is that Caribbean archaeologists would do well to take account of exchange tactics other than direct reciprocity or chiefly redistribution. For future work I will continue to map and model various social strategies that can be retraced using ethnoarchaeological, ethno-historical and archaeological resources and present these in conjunction with new ideas on social networks in the Greater Carib-

bean (Mol and Mans in prep.). The examples of strong reciprocity given here is just one out of many available social strategies in the Caribbean Late Ceramic Age, but it would have been important to cement social relations along Greater Caribbean local and long-distance lines of exchange. So, although on a proximal level strong reciprocity entails that something could have been given away for nothing or next to nothing, on an ultimate level it would still have been a profitable exchange tactic in an interconnected pan-Caribbean exchange landscape.

1. This characterization of a pan-Caribbean sphere of interaction is taken from a 2007 NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) project proposal of Corinne L. Hofman.

2. This particular version of the Maussian gift became institutionalized for archaeologists in the works of another founding father of economic anthropology: Polanyi (1944; and for archaeologists especially 1957).

3. A freerider is someone who is not bearing the cost for communal efforts or who consumes more than his or her fair share.

4. In a recent book the cognitive psychologist and philosopher Daniel D. Hutto places narratives at the core of a child's development of its folk psychology, i.e., how one deduces how other people reason (Hutto 2008).

5. Or consider other variants: Christopher Columbus captures the cacique Caonabo, because the cacique Guacanagarí reports that Caonabo was responsible for the destruction of La Navidad, the first Spanish settlement on Hispaniola. Columbus believes Guacanagarí because he has helped Colón when he was shipwrecked during his first journey. Conversely it is possible to put into narrative form that Scholar A writes a damning review of a grant application by B, since scholar B did not support a major article by C, who was the mentor of D who is a collaborator on a research project with A.

6. It is reasonable to suspect that this trustworthiness may be a deciding quality in a struggle for leadership positions. In this sense being a leader is not about controlling wealth, but about being a clever social actor.

7. I would argue that certain objects are better equipped to hold narrative than others, although appearances can be deceiving. I think that this quality would be detectable by archaeologists because certain objects are more easily recognizable and memorable than others -, e.g., through the use of particular iconographic patterns. It certainly is the case that the more durable an object is, the more likely it will be that its narrative will be remembered (Helms 1998: Chapter 11).

8. Of course, it is impossible for archaeologists to reconstruct that narrative. Even if it were possible to compose such a narrative it would exist of a long list of names and in itself would not be that interesting (Graeber 2001: 33). However, for the understanding of exchange it is crucial to realize that narrative plays an integral part to the constitution of a social valuable.

9. Of course this focus on exchange valuables as mnemonic devices for social interaction is in line with the recent upsurge of memory studies in archaeology (Mills and Walker 2008; Van Dyke 2009; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003).

10. See Mol (2007) for an extended overview of theoretical, socio-cultural, ethnohistorical and archaeological contexts of *guaízas* and their exchange.

11. It has to be noted that in some cases Colón actually directly gives back object to the donors of a *guaíza*. However the initiation of gift giving comes from the side of the indigenous inhabitants of Hispaniola. Additionally, the gift of a *guaíza* often directly follows a precarious social situation, e.g., the shipwreck of Colón's flagship the *Santa María* (Fernandez de Navarete 1922: 129), the battle of the Bay of Arrows (Fernandez de Navarete 1922: 154), and the return of Colón on his second voyage at La Navidad, only to find the settlement deserted and burned to the ground (Fernandez de Navarete 1922: 229).

12. See Santos-Granero (2007) for an excellent discussion for motives and media of similar types of strong reciprocal exchange in Amazonia.

13. For an analogous argument concerning the exchange of Greater Antillean *zemi* objects and a similar discussion of *guaíza* exchange, see Oliver's thought provoking new monograph (Oliver 2009).

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