

Foreword

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Dedication

This special volume is dedicated to two inspirational individuals in my life.

*In loving memory of my grandmother Elsie Dorothy Adair (1926-2021).
For your unwavering strength and faith, regardless of the context and conditions.
You were the best role model any child could ask for.
For all you were, embodied, and said.
My forever love and gratitude, your grans.*

And

*To my favorite archaeologist, Prof. William F. Keegan.
You gave me my first trowel, tolerated my endless questions, and “pie in the sky” theories.
You saw my potential, encouraged and invested in my growth.
Thank you for your continuous support, L-G.*

Introduction

This special volume of the *Journal of Caribbean Archaeology* is entitled “Yamaye: Jamaican Prehistory and Contact Period – Current Research and Challenges.” The use of the name “Yamaye” is both an acknowledgement of the Indigenous name of Jamaica and its people. Jamaicans have been taught that *Xaymaca* was the Taíno name given to the island, meaning “land abounding with springs”, from which Jamaica – “land of wood and water” evolved. The presence of the letter “x” is highly problematic, as very few of the known Taíno words commences with this letter. It does suggest that this perceived “indigenous” name of Jamaica has been influenced by another language, more than likely Spanish.

According to Morales Padrón, in Columbus’ diary the island of Jamaica was

recorded as *Yamaye* (2003:1). Barry Higman and B.J. Hudson stated that the “ca” in *Jamaica* is a locative suffix typical of Amerindian languages (2009:24). Higman and Hudson believed that *Jamaica* meant the place or location where the “*Jamai* or *Yamaye* people lived” (Ibid). I, however, believe Jamaica’s name was associated with its geography. The environment was very important to the Taíno. Their love for the landscape was spiritual and this transcended all aspects of their lives. This is reflected in the poetic names of other regions in the Greater Antilles, such as *Cuba*, which probably means “where fertile land is abundant.” *Ayiti* is the indigenous name for Haiti, meaning “land of high mountains.” The Dominican Republic was known as *Quisqueya* or *Kiskeya*, believed to mean “Mother of the Earth.”

Over the centuries there have been many variations in the spelling of the island including *Jamaiqua* (Bordone 1528), *Iamayca* (Ruscelli 1562), *Iamaique*, Jamaica, and *Xamaika*. I have also seen the island referred to as *Amayca*. The only constant part of the name throughout these variations has been the root which is “ama.” In Taíno *ama*’ means “river or body of water.” As the Jamaican saying goes, “If a nuh suh, a nearly suh;” the indigenous meaning of Jamaica could be “land of many rivers.” The figurative meaning is also a literal description of the island’s numerous riverine resources. This could have been the origin of the associated meanings such as “land abounding with springs” and “land of wood and water”.

Turning now to the recognition of the Indigenous peoples in Jamaica. In Jamaica, there has been relatively consistent anthropological and archaeological research on the island’s Indigenous culture since the late 19th century. This fascination with the material culture associated with the contact Taíno populations and their ancestors commenced much earlier. It is believed that this interest in the Indigenous cultures of the Caribbean evolved from the initial contact with the Spanish in the late 15th century, and the subsequent settlement of the region in the early 16th century.

Sir Hans Sloane in 1696 published his *Catalogus Plantarum Quae in Insula Jamaica Sponte Proveniunt [Catalogue of Jamaican Plants]*. According to E. Kofi Agorsah this publication contains an illustration of a Pre-Columbian sherd from Jamaica, which is believed to be the first published record of a Jamaican artifact (Agorsah 1991). Between the 16th and 19th centuries there were sporadic accounts of Jamaican discoveries. The Carpenters Mountains *Cemís* discovered in the late 18th century are examples of these significant events. In the late 19th century the most notable site discovery was Richard Hill’s 1860 report on the finding of White Marl, St. Catherine. Then it was known as Caymanas Hill, and had been discovered prior to that date (Hill 1860). Even after 160 years, White Marl remains Jamaica’s most important pre-Columbian site.

The establishment of the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ) in 1879 under the governorship of Sir Anthony Musgrave (1877-1883) for the

promotion of Literature, Science and Art was an important event in the development of archaeological studies in Jamaica. It was the first of its kind, not only in Jamaica, but also in the Caribbean. Under the administration of the IOJ, in 1890 Jamaica witnessed the earliest recorded systematic investigation at a pre-Columbian site at Norbrook, St. Andrew led by Lady Edith Blake, the wife of Governor Sir Henry Blake (1889-1898). The IOJ supported and was responsible for the archaeological surveys, expeditions and exhibitions from its inception up to 1985 when the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) was established. It also “created an avenue for promoting archaeological research” and the dissemination of the results through its features, reports and publications (Agorsah 1991:4). The IOJ also produced two principal characters, J.E. Duerden and Frank Cundall, whose research made important contributions to Jamaican prehistoric scholarship from the late 19th century to the 1930s.

Since the 1930s there have been a number of seminal publications on Jamaican prehistory by researchers such as Robert Howard, Ronald Vanderwal, James W. Lee and the contributions of The Archaeological Society of Jamaica. Many of these research projects have received limited regional and international dissemination. Another drawback is that very few of these influential researchers were Jamaican. The most distinguishable Jamaican researcher was George Anthony Aarons, fondly known as “Tony.” Aarons is recognized as the island’s first professional archaeologist. Tony Aarons trained and inspired the successive generations of Jamaican archaeologists. However, the number of professional archaeologists in Jamaica does pale in comparison with our Greater Antillean neighbors.

A major challenge with Jamaican prehistoric scholarship is the limited dissemination of research. This is exacerbated by the reluctance of Jamaican archaeologists to participate in collaborative projects and academic conferences outside of the national sphere. *The Earliest Inhabitants: The Dynamics of the Jamaican Taíno* (2006) was the first academic book dedicated solely to Jamaican prehistory. It was published largely to counter the insular habits of Jamaican archaeologists and to promote

current research projects on the island. Approximately 15 years has passed since this publication and the dissemination of Jamaican research has still remained largely sporadic.

This special volume seeks to highlight some of the recent anthropological, archaeological, geological, and cultural resource management (CRM) projects in Jamaica. The publication comprises of 14 articles by approximately 20 contributors from diverse disciplines. These contributors include not only Jamaican professionals, but also international colleagues who have worked in Jamaica, or on Jamaican cultural material over the years. Eight of the participating authors were contributors to *The Earliest Inhabitants: The Dynamics of the Jamaican Taíno* (2006). Namely, William F. Keegan, Philip Allsworth-Jones, Mitko Voutchkov, Gerald C. Lalor (now deceased), Simon F. Mitchell, Robyn Woodward and Andrea Richards.

The articles are organized under five thematic headings: Cultural Periods; Natural and Biological Resources; Cultural Contact Studies; Climate Change and Mitigation Strategies; and CRM Issues and Challenges. The first two thematic sections of the volume include assessments of Jamaican cultural complexes as reflected by excavations, analysis of archaeological data, and material culture studies. Currently, there has been no confirmed archaeological evidence of the Lithic and/or Archaic Age cultures that occupied the neighboring islands of Cuba, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico (Atkinson 2019). Evidence of two of Irving Rouses' Ceramic subseries, the Ostionan and Meillacan Ostionoid have been found across the island. The Ostionan Ostionoid or as they are known locally "Redware" was present in Jamaica by 1300±120 BP (Yale-1897).

Lesley-Gail Atkinson Swaby opens the Culture Periods segment with a review Jamaican Ostionan scholarship. In her article she analyzes data from Ostionan sites to provide insight on distribution patterns, subsistence strategies and associated material culture. The Montego Bay Style is classified as a Jamaican variant of the Meillacan Ostionoid. Ivor Conolley explores the significance of the fillet rim as an indicator of socio-political changes among the Jamaican Meillacan Ostionoid culture. The third article in

this section is by William Keegan who details his research at the Paradise (Ostionan) and the Sweetwater (Montego Bay Style) sites. Keegan's article reveals the differences in material culture despite both sites occupying similar environmental settings. The final article in this section is also by Atkinson Swaby. Here, I discuss Jamaica's dependence on relative dating methods, the limited use of absolute dating techniques and some of the implications observed in the scholarship of the island.

The second section focuses on "Natural and Biological Resources," in particular studies pertaining to human osteological remains, zooarchaeological and geological data. Ana Luisa Santos and Philip Allsworth-Jones highlight the range of studies on Pre-Columbian human remains since the 19th century. Santos and Allsworth-Jones discuss the observed mortuary practices, associated grave goods, dietary indicators, in addition to congenital and infectious diseases revealed from human osteological remains. As stated previously White Marl is Jamaica's most important Pre-Columbian site. Since its rediscovery in 1944, the site was intensively excavated both legitimately and illegitimately until the 1970s. Since 2016 there has been collaborative research efforts by the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Leiden University and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. In this volume, Gene Shev, Romaine Thomas and Zachary Beier report on the human and animal relationship reflected in the zooarchaeological and isotopic data. Shev and colleagues reveal a preference for marine species in comparison with terrestrial species at White Marl, despite evidence of the reliance and management of the Jamaican hutia. There have been limited clay sourcing and provenance studies on Pre-Columbian pottery, in particular in the Caribbean context. The contribution by Sherene James-Williamson, Simon Mitchell, Jorjan Dolphy, Philip Allsworth-Jones, Mitko Voutchkov and Gerald Lalor highlights the importance of provenance studies and range of insights they provide. James-Williamson et al. detail the results of elemental analysis conducted on pottery and clay samples from pre-Columbian sites and clay deposits across Jamaica. In this paper James-Williamson and colleagues explore

the possible relationships or correlations between pottery and the clay deposits.

The next section “Cultural Contact Studies” highlights evidence of engagement among the Taíno, the Spanish and the Africans as reflected in the archaeological and genetic anthropological data. Maima was a Taíno village located within proximity of the *Sevilla la Nuevo*, Jamaica’s first Spanish capital (1509-1534). David Burley details excavations at Maima which highlight the architecture and material culture of the Jamaican Taíno on the eve of Spanish colonization. Burley’s research reveals evidence of the importance of the Taíno worldview in the layout of the village and house structures, and artifactual evidence of Taíno/Spanish engagement. Shortly after the Spanish settlement of Jamaica it was discovered that the island was not rich in gold. Jamaica subsequently, became an agricultural base for the Spanish. Robyn Woodward emphasises that one of Jamaica’s “greatest natural resources” was its Indigenous labor force. In her article, Woodward examines evidence of the *encomienda*, the forced Indigenous labor system, cultural survival, and adaptation at *Sevilla la Nueva*. Jada Benn Torres and Taiye Winful provide a genetic anthropological perspective on pre-Columbian and European contact in Jamaica. Genetic anthropology offers tremendous scope in understanding the biological relationships among the various migrants into the Caribbean region. Torres and Winful state that genomic approaches offer opportunities to address questions regarding the origin, timing and routes used to populate the island, and the range of interaction among the Indigenous, European, and African populations.

The penultimate section of the volume “Climate Change and Mitigation Strategies” addresses the potential and observed impact of climate change on archaeological resources and possible strategies to limit these effects. Andrea Richards highlights the vulnerabilities of Jamaica’s coastal pre-Columbian sites with regards to the impact of natural phenomena and climate change. Richards points out that many of these sites are already threatened by development. In this article Richards analyzes a selection of sites utilizing modeling tools and field assessments to determine present and potential impact of climate change on these sites.

Sherene James-Williamson, Jorjan Dolphy and Lesley-Gail Atkinson Swaby discuss the importance of applying multi-criteria analysis in the predictive modeling of pre-Columbian sites in Jamaica. The applied multi-criteria analysis includes physical characteristics of the landscape and cultural characteristics observed from known pre-Columbian sites. In light of the climate change and developmental threats the awareness of the potential location of prehistoric sites can possibly save many of these sites from destruction.

“Cultural Resource Management Issues and Challenges” is the theme for the final section of the volume. In this section the focus is on cultural material located outside of the country of origin, restitution challenges, illicit trade and the available international frameworks. Joanna Ostapkowicz highlights that interest in Jamaican pre-Columbian past dates to the 17th century if not possibly earlier. Her article discusses the range of Jamaican pre-Columbian material in overseas collections and the potential scope of these resources for investigating Jamaican prehistory. Ostapkowicz also addresses the importance of pre-Columbian material as inspiration and engagement for contemporary visual artists. Restitution of cultural property taken during colonial occupation has been a hotly contested challenge faced by many former colonized territories. Jamaica has been requesting the return of cultural property such as the Carpenters Mountains *Cemts* since the early 20th century. The profitability of illicit trade of cultural objects is a constant threat to cultural property across the globe. In the Americas archaeological and paleontological resources are deemed as very lucrative and particularly targeted by looters. Debra Kay Palmer highlights the efforts towards ratification of international Conventions in order to protect Jamaican cultural property. Palmer details current strategies including revision of the national framework, implementation of local and international instruments, and addressing challenging issues such as accountability and looting.

Finally, it is hoped that this special volume of the *Journal of Caribbean Archaeology* on Jamaica, will highlight the range of academic research projects and CRM challenges on the island. As guest editor, I hope that the audience

will not only find the included articles informative, but also the highlighted themes and discussions will stimulate future projects, programs and publications. I am grateful to Professor William F. Keegan and all the contributors to this special volume, not just for

participating in this publication, but for their continued relationship with Jamaica.

Seneko Kakona (Abundant Blessings)
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