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Jamaica's pre-Columbian Heritage in International Collections (ca. 1680-1970): History, Extent, Relevance

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This article charts three hundred years of collecting and curating Jamaican pre-Columbian heritage in international institutions. The 17th century marks the first documentation of Jamaican artifacts entering private collections in Britain – including those acquired by Hans Sloane, who visited Jamaica in 1687, and Ralph Thoresby, whose “Museum Thoresbyanum” (est. ca. 1692) included Jamaican “idols.” As Jamaican estates expanded during the 18th century and surveyors began to map the island, other artifacts came to light, some sent to Britain to be exhibited at learned societies, eventually to enter museum collections, such as those of the newly established British Museum (from 1753). More detailed archaeological investigation emerged in the late 19th century, with the work of Lady Edith Blake, R. C. MacCormick and Rev. W. W. Rumsey, and continued with the work of Theodoor de Booy, George C. Longley, and Robert R. Howard. These early antiquarians and archaeologists, among others, contributed to expanding the holdings of international museums, particularly in Britain and the United States. Their largely forgotten collections hold considerable potential, basically untapped, for investigating Jamaican prehistory. This paper will introduce the range and scope of these collections and explore some of the ways in which they are being re-examined, as well as how they inspire new artistic engagement, such as the art of Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

Cet article retrace trois siècles de collecte et de conservation du patrimoine précolombien jamaïcain dans des institutions internationales. Le 17^{ème} siècle marque la première documentation d'artefacts jamaïcains entrant dans des collections privées en Grande-Bretagne - y compris ceux acquis par Hans Sloane, qui a visité la Jamaïque en 1687, et Ralph Thoresby, dont le "Museum Thoresbyanum" (fondé vers 1692) comprenait des "idoles" jamaïcaines. Alors que les domaines jamaïcains se développaient au 18^{ème} siècle et que les géomètres commençaient à cartographier l'île, d'autres artefacts ont été découverts, certains envoyés en Grande-Bretagne pour être exposés dans des sociétés savantes, pour éventuellement entrer dans des collections de musées, telles que celles du British Museum nouvellement créé (à partir de 1753). Des recherches archéologiques plus détaillées apparurent à la fin du 19^{ème} siècle, avec les travaux de Lady Edith Blake, RC MacCormick et le révérend W. W. Rumsey, et se sont poursuivies avec les travaux de Theodoor de Booy, George C. Longley et Robert R. Howard. Ces premiers antiquaires et archéologues, parmi d'autres, ont contribué à élargir les avoirs des musées internationaux, en particulier en Grande-Bretagne et aux États-Unis. Leurs collections largement oubliées recèlent un potentiel considérable, fondamentalement inexploité, pour approfondir nos connaissances sur la préhistoire jamaïcaine. Cet article présente la gamme et la portée de ces collections et explore certaines des manières dont elles sont réexaminées, ainsi que la manière dont elles inspirent de nouveaux engagements artistiques, tels que l'art de Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

Este artículo traza trescientos años de coleccionismo y conservación del patrimonio precolombino de Jamaica en instituciones internacionales. El siglo XVII marca la primera documentación de artefactos jamaíquinos que ingresan a colecciones privadas en Gran Bretaña, incluyendo los adquiridos por Hans Sloane, quien visitó Jamaica en 1687, y por Ralph Thoresby, cuyo "Museum Thoresbyanum" (est. ca. 1692) incluía "ídolos" jamaicanos. A medida que las propiedades jamaicanas se expandieron durante el siglo XVIII y los topógrafos comenzaron a mapear la isla, salieron a la luz otros artefactos, algunos enviados a Gran Bretaña para ser exhibidos en sociedades científicas, y eventualmente para ingresar a las colecciones de museos, como las del recién establecido Museo Británico (1753). Investigaciones arqueológicas más detalladas surgieron a fines del siglo XIX, con los trabajos de Lady Edith Blake, R. C. MacCormick y el reverendo W. W. Rumsey, las cuales fueron seguidas por los trabajos de Theodoor de Booy, George C. Longley y Robert R. Howard. Estos primeros anticuarios y arqueólogos, entre otros, contribuyeron a expandir los fondos de museos internacionales, particularmente en Gran Bretaña y los Estados Unidos. Estas colecciones, muchas de ellas ya olvidadas, poseen un potencial considerable básicamente sin explotar para la investigación de la prehistoria de Jamaica. Este artículo presenta el rango y alcance de estas colecciones y explora algunas de las formas en que se están reexaminando, así como también inspiran un nuevo compromiso artístico, como el arte de Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

Introduction

This paper highlights some of Jamaica's dispersed pre-Columbian archaeological collections, focusing mainly on those in institutions in the Britain, Europe and United States, acquired between the late 1600s and the mid 1900s – a span of some 300 years (Table 1, Map 1). While it is by no means exhaustive, it does document through some key examples the increasing importance of this material to Jamaican cultural heritage and our emerging understanding of prehistory. It

explores selected collections and their histories, the studies and artistic engagements they inspire, and their ongoing legacies. The paper progresses chronologically from the earliest references to the most recent, charting the hands of individuals in the creation of these artifact collections; this historiography is in no way intended as an homage to, or glorification of, the collecting undertaken by these individuals, often firmly entrenched in a colonial context. It is a matter of ensuring that the history of acquisition and investigation is clear.

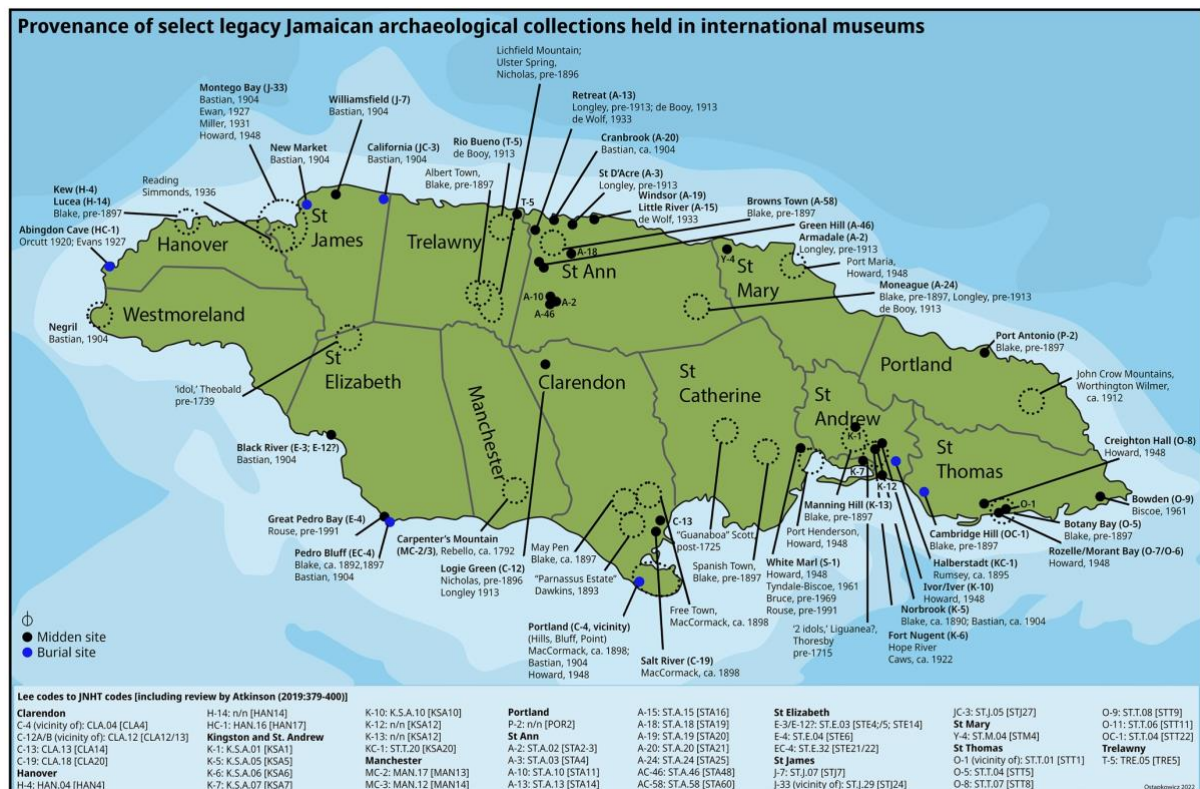


Figure 1. Map showing locations of the sites discussed in this article, as well as collector and year of acquisition (by museum) (cross referenced with Table 1). For brevity and ease of reference – as well as the historic nature of our subject matter – the Lee site code system has been used for known sites (Allsworth-Jones 2008). These codes are aligned in the legend with the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) site inventory database codes as well as codes in Atkinson's (2019) recent review of known Jamaican sites. Site locations are guided by the maps in Atkinson (2006:4-5; 2019). Note that site names appearing in historical documents (e.g., "Bratt's Hill District," Clarendon), which could not be linked to a documented site, were not included in the distribution map. The name 'Bastian' subsumes both Adolf Bastian's investigations and those of Adolf Reichard, as it is currently not entirely clear who undertook work at which site. It should be stressed that there is still a degree of uncertainty in linking the descriptive site titles used by the historic investigators to a code, first established by Lee in the 1960s/80s – this awaits further archival work alongside the study of collections themselves. [click for higher resolution image]

Table 1. Overview of collections discussed in this paper, in chronological order of documentation or accession into museum collections. Note that provenance is listed according to information in the museum history files, typically provided by donor/collector. The James Lee site codes (e.g., MC-3) are used (see Figure 1 for alignment with the Jamaica National Heritage Trust site codes and Lesley-Gail Atkinson's [2019] review). Note caveats as per Figure 1 regarding uncertainties of linking descriptive titles with site codes without further archival/collections-based research.

Year	Collector	Collection	Site/parish/region (according to archival or museum records)	Institution
1715	Ralph Thoresby	2 "idols"	"Liguanea," St Andrew	/
1725	Hans Sloane	various; incl. ceramics, stone celt	Jamaica	/
1725	Rev. Mr. Scott	"idol"	"Guanaboa," St Catherine	/
1739	James Theobald	"idol"	St Elizabeth or St James	British Museum, London, UK
1792	Alves Rebello	3 "idols"	"Spots, Carpenter's Mountains ('Vere')," Manchester (MC-3/MC-2)	British Museum, London, UK
1825	Abner William Brown	stone maul and carving	Jamaica	British Museum, London, UK
1850	Ephraim George Squier and Edwin Hamilton Davis	5 stone celts	"Richmond Hill," St Thomas (?), Jamaica	British Museum (from Blackmore Museum), London, UK
1853	W. R. Cull via Rev. Clarke	skull	"found by Rev. Clarke and sent to W. Cull in 1853"; acquired from Mrs. W. R. Cull	Natural History Museum, London, UK
1854	Thomas Jenner Sells	stone anth. pendant	Jamaica	British Museum, London, UK
1854	Rev. Dr. William Sparrow Simpson	celts	Jamaica	British Museum, London, UK
1870	Henry Nottidge Moseley	stone celt	Jamaica	Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK
1877	Rev. John Pulkabeck	celt	Jamaica	Völkerkundemuseum, Herlnhut, Germany
1880	Rev. Theophilus Winckler	5 celts	Jamaica	Völkerkundemuseum, Herlnhut, Germany
1890	Briggs Collection	celt	Jamaica	National Museum Scotland, Edinburgh, UK
1892	Lady Edith Blake	human remains	"Pedro Bluff" (EC-4), St Elizabeth	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA
1893	Lady Edith Blake	human remains	"a cave in Jamaica"	Natural History Museum, London
1893	William Gregory Dawkins	grinder	"Parnassus Estate," Clarendon	Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK
1895	Rev. W. W. Rumsey	human remains	"Halberstadt Cave" (KC-1), Kingston and St Andrew	Natural History Museum, London; Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge, UK
1896	F. S. Church (via A. W. Franks)	28 stone artifacts	Jamaica	British Museum, London, UK
1896	Dr. Francis C. Nicholas	250 ceramic and stone artifacts	"Lodgie [Logie] Green" (C-12), Clarendon; "Morant River," St Thomas; "Lichfield Mountain" and "Ulster Spring," Trelawny	American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
1897	Lady Edith Blake	celts, chisels, stone implements, ceramics	"May Pen," Clarendon; "Vere," Clarendon/Manchester; "Lucea" (H-14) and "Kew" (H-4), Hanover; "Coachman's Cave"; "Labour Hard Settlement"; "St John's Hill"; "Stelten"; "Norbok" (K-5), "Manning's Hill" (K-13), Kingston and St Andrew; "Port Antonio" (P-2), Portland; "Brown's Town" (A-58) and "Moneague" (A-24) St Ann; "Spanish Town," cave near, St Catherine; "Pedro Bluff" (EC-4), St Elizabeth; "Cambridge Hill Cave" (OC-1) and "Botany Bay" (O-5), St Thomas; "Albert Town" and "Lorimers," Trelawny	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1898	R. C. MacCormack	ceramics, celts, stone artifacts (pestle, stone pendants, beads and cylinders), shell tools, human remains	"Vere," Clarendon/Manchester; "Salt River, Vere" (C-19), "Bratt's Hill District," "Freetown midden," "Portland Hills" (vicinity of C-4), Clarendon	National Museum of the American Indian; National Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology (human remains), Washington, USA
1901	J. Brennan	130+ ceramics, celts	Jamaica	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA
1903	Rev. G. H. Lea	2 celts	Jamaica	Bristol Museum, Bristol, UK
1903	R. H. Miles	4 celts	Jamaica	Bristol Museum, Bristol, UK
1904	Adolf Bastian and Adolf C. Reichard	various artifacts, including ceramics, stone artifacts and human remains	"Portland," "Portland Bluff," "Portland Point" (vicinity of C-4), Clarendon; "St Ann"; "Townend"; "Norbok" (K-5), Kingston and St Andrew; "Cranbrook" (A-20), St Ann; "Black River" (E-12), and "Pedro" (Pedro Bluff EC-4), St Elizabeth; "Montego Bay," "New Market," Williamsfield (J-7), "Spring Garden" (Montego Bay), "California" (Cave) (JC-3?), St James; "Negril", Westmoreland	Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, Germany
1905	Erlend Nordenskiöld	3 stone artifacts	Jamaica	Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
1906	George J. Neish	stone artifacts	"Middlesex county," Clarendon/Manchester/St Mary; "Surrey County," Portland/St Thomas; "Cornwall County," St Elizabeth/Trelawny.	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1912	S. G. Perceval	celt	"Hector's River," Portland	British Museum, London, UK
1912	Lt-Col L. Worthington Wilmer (via the Christy Collection)	celt	"John Crow Mountains," Portland	British Museum, London, UK
1913	George C. Longley	ca. 1200 artifacts, including ceramics, celts, stone mauls, pendants	"Logie Green" (C-12), Clarendon; "Retreat" (A-13), "Moneague" (A-24), "St Acre" (St. D'Acre, A-3), "Scarborough" (A-10), "Green Hill" (A-46), "Armada" (A-2), St Ann	American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA; 1 celt at the British Museum, London, UK.
1913	Theodoor de Booy	645 artifacts, including ceramics, stone and shell celts	"Retreat" (A-13) and "Moneague" (A-24), "Orange Valley," St Ann; "Rio Bueno" (T-5), Trelawny	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1914	Theodoor de Booy	ceramics, celts (from 1913 excavations)	"Salt River" (C-19), Clarendon; "Retreat" (A-13), St Ann; "Loquitta, Jamaica"; "Clarendon, Vere"	Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm (via NMAI – exchange), Sweden
1914	Rev. J. P. Hall	80+ artefacts, including ceramics, stone and shell artifacts	"Retreat" (A-13); "Brown's Town"; "Orange Valley," St Ann	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1915	Claudius Dionysius Hotobah During	celt	Jamaica	National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
1920	Various collectors, incl. A. R. Brailey	celts, ceramics	Jamaica	Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK

1920	C. R. Orcutt	human remains	"Abingdon Cave" (HC-1), Hanover	National Museum of Natural History, Dept of Anthropology, Washington, USA
1921	/	ceramics	"Hope River, near Kingston Harbour," St Andrew	Royal Institution Cornwall, Truro, UK
1922	Maj. Byron Caws	ceramics	"Fort Nugent" (K-6), Kingston; "Hope River," St Andrew	British Museum, London, UK
1927	J. T. Thompson Evans (via Christy Collection)	ceramics	"Abingdon Estate cave" (HC-1), Hanover	British Museum, London, UK
1927	K. M. Ewan	celt	"Montego Bay," St James	British Museum, London, UK
1929	Charles A. Sangster	22 ceramics and human remains	Jamaica	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA
1929	C. R. Orcutt	human remains	Abingdon Cave, Hanover	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA
1931	Gerrit S. Miller, Jr	239 artifacts, including ceramic, stone and shell	"Montego Bay," St James	National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA
1931	J. R. Macdonald	celt	"Rose Hall," Trelawny (J-20, St James?)	British Museum, London, UK
1933	Marian DeWolf	various artifacts, including ceramics, worked stone; faunal	"Retreat" (A-13), "Windsor" (A-19), "Little River" (A-15), St Ann	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1936	Mrs. Derwent Simmonds	12 celts	"Potters Hill," St James	Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK
1942	Mrs. Derwent Simmonds	11 celts	"Reading" and "Reading Pen Estate," St James	Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK
1948	Robert R. Howard	2000+ artifacts, incl. ceramics, worked stone and shell; faunal remains	"Alley, Portland Point" (C4?), Clarendon; "Caymanas," (White Marl - S1), St Catherine; "Port Maria, St Mary,"; "Tower Hill, Port Henderson" (K-7), "Seven Mile Hill" (K-12) and "Iver" (K-10), Kingston and St Andrew; "Montego Bay (Fairfield) and Montego Bay Point," St James; "Creighton Hall" (O-8) and "Morant Bay (Rozelle)" (O-11), St Thomas	Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, USA
1954	Irene Beasley (via Harry Geoffrey Beasley)	celt	Jamaica	National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
1956	Dr. D. A. Campbell	16 stone artifacts (mostly celts)	"St Thomas", St Catherine	British Museum, London, UK
1956	Various collectors	10 celts	Jamaica	National Museums Liverpool (via Norwich Castle Museum), Liverpool, UK
1961	J. S. Tyndale-Biscoe	ceramic sherds	"Rico Chico," St Ann; "White Marl" (S-1), St Catherine; "Hatfield Midden" (J-1), St James; "Bowden" (O-9), St Thomas	Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, UK
1966	Daniel Bruce	80+ artifacts, incl. ceramics, worked stone and shell	Including "Breadnut Gully" (C-13), Clarendon; White Marl" (S-1), St Catherine;	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, USA
1969	Daniel Bruce	2000+ artifacts, incl. ceramics, stone celts, shell ornaments; faunal remains; human remains	"Breadnut Gully" (C-13), Clarendon; "Tower Hill" (K-7) and "Jack's Hill" (K-1), Kingston and St Andrew; "Tydenham" (A-18), St Ann; "White Marl" (S-1), St Catherine; "Rio Nuevo" (Y-4), St Mary; "Belvedere" (O-1, vicinity of), St Thomas	British Museum, London, UK
1991	Irving Rouse	300 artifacts	"White Marl" (S-1), St Catherine; "Alligator Pond" (E-1), "Calabash Bay" (E-11) and "Great Bay" (Great Pedro Bay, E-4), St Elizabeth; "Fairfield (Montego Bay)" (J-3), St James	Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, USA

One compounding factor is that, with few exceptions, there is little in the way of information about the scale, range and current locations of Caribbean archaeological collections acquired prior to mid-20th century; this is true for Jamaica, as it is for many of the Caribbean islands (e.g., Pateman 2011; Françaço and Strecker 2017; Schiappacasse 1994; 2019; Ostapkowicz in press). And as in the wider Caribbean, prior to the implementation of heritage protection laws, many artifacts – then as now – entered private collections or were acquired during expeditions sponsored by foreign institutions, and were eventually dispersed beyond local shores. Whether this was a single "curio" in the 17th century, or thousands of artifacts from fieldwork conducted by both avocational and professional archaeologists well into the 20th century, this history has resulted in large

numbers of artifacts in international museum collections (ca. 10,000 in the six main repositories herein discussed,¹ excluding smaller holdings). The collections that emerged from these investigations rarely illicit comment within the academic community, and have largely remained unknown for the last century. Yet these legacy collections – here defined as older collections that have been "inherited" by institutions – offer largely untapped potential to broaden our understanding of the pre-Columbian past, whether through the application of ongoing developments in archaeological science (aDNA, radiocarbon dating, isotopic analyses of human and animal diet and mobility, material identifications and sourcing, residue analyses of pottery, etc.) or more traditional approaches, such as stylistic and iconographic investigations of ceramic typologies. They also enable us to explore the

¹ American Museum of Natural History, New York; National Museum of the American Indian and National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington; Peabody Museum of

Natural History, New Haven; Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin; British Museum, London. A large proportion of holdings from the mid-17th century are fragmentary ceramic sherds.

history of people's interest in the past, the impact of early exploration, settlement and development on the archaeological record, and the emergence of Jamaican archaeology as a discipline. We simply must step away from the perception (often erroneous) that these collections are mute, essentially compromised due to a lack of associated information, and that the only way to do archaeology is to excavate yet more sites: "interpretation at the trowel's edge" (Hodder 2003, as cited in Voss 2012:146) is not the only way forward in Caribbean archaeology, methodologically and theoretically.

Several authors have suggested that of all Caribbean islands, Jamaica is perceived – incorrectly – as the least studied, the "black hole" of Caribbean archaeology (Atkinson 2006a:6; Wilson 2007:104); it is "an enigma, or at least, a lacuna" (Keegan 2019:191). But the history of archaeological investigation on the island differs little from that of the wider Caribbean, with early finds and an array of interested collectors and avocational archaeologists acquiring artifacts before archaeology emerged as a profession. The results of their efforts are held in various museums, but – with the notable exception of the James Lee and C. S. Cotter collections (Allsworth-Jones 2008; Woodward 1988) and select early wood carvings (Ostapkowicz et al., 2013; Ostapkowicz 2015a, b) – they have not been re-evaluated and re-contextualized into current discussions. As Allsworth-Jones and Wesler (2012:7) point out "while amateur and professional contributions have provided an array of data, these have not always been adequately documented, and long-term, systematic, problem-oriented research by fully trained professional archaeologists has been scarce" – not least on resulting collections. It must be kept in mind that the foundation upon which our emerging understanding of Jamaica's earliest inhabitants is built on a combination of historic chance finds (such as those made prior to the 20th century), the dedicated efforts of interested locals (who provided the first comprehensive site distribution maps for the entire island) and the

systematic excavations of professionally trained archaeologists (e.g., Allsworth-Jones and Wesler 2012, Burley et al. 2017). These various strands need to be better integrated as we move forward.

And these legacy collections are not simply of academic interest about past Jamaican cultures – they are of relevance to current heritage issues within Jamaica itself, and the Caribbean more widely. Notably, Jamaican Independence (1962) spurred a deeper exploration of the past: in the words of Frank Hill (in Modest 2012:191), Chairman of the National Trust Commission and the Institute of Jamaica, there was (and remains) a concerted effort to reach "back more than five centuries into our past, into the most ancient Jamaican times long before the European stumbled into our land and gave a new twist to the history of our people. We are unlocking a door to the room in which our earliest origins are stored." This material heritage speaks of the first settlers of *Xamayca* or *Yamaye*, the "old indigenous peoples," which in turn speaks to those who have a long history of settlement in Jamaica – the "new indigenous" Afro-Caribbean and multi-ethnic majority (Modest 2012). And while debate continues about the relevance of the "Taíno"² to, for example, Jamaica's coat of arms (Modest 2012:192-193), or the direct impact of their "primordial art" to colonial and contemporary fine arts (Chacko 2002:203, 217, n.9), it is a dialogue inextricably linked to issues surrounding colonial legacies, cultural representation, connectedness and self-determination. How Taíno material culture integrates with these narratives of nationhood and identity is just emerging, a subject increasingly being explored by Jamaican cultural commentators, artists (**Figure 2**) and, not least, politicians, who are escalating the focus on cultural reparations (e.g., Brown 2019; Rea 2019). Many of the historical collections discussed below, and indeed the majority of Caribbean collections in European institutions, lie outside the scope of the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions established in 1970 and 1995,³ respectively (see Françaço and Strecker 2017:461; 473-474). However, as

² "Taíno" has been used as a convenient umbrella term for the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean (at least those at the cusp of European contact), though it masks the cultural diversity that likely existed. However, Chicoid material culture, which for the

wider region is synonymous with the "Taíno," does not occur on Jamaica (Keegan and Hofman 2017:195).

³ The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export

noted by Françaço and Strecker (2017:467; 474) “legal claims are not the only avenue for pursuing returns or facilitating access” to legacy Caribbean collections – cultural diplomacy, underpinned by international

human rights and ethical considerations, can play a critical role. The emerging discussions and decisions will have ramifications not only for Jamaica, but the Caribbean, and the wider world.



Figure 2. *Proof of Spirit*, 2017, Jasmine Thomas-Girvan (full figure on left, detail on right). According to the artist, this multivalent artwork references how “the seen and unseen, visible and invisible, sacred and secular worlds and realities are inseparably related.” The Carpenter’s Mountain anthropomorph, recovered in 1792 from a cave in the old parish of Vere (now the parish of Manchester), is depicted within the folds of the figure’s open cloak. H: 58cm; W: 36cm. Bronze, wood, sterling silver, rubies, citrine, fishbone, calabash. Image courtesy and © Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

17th-18th century Jamaican “curiosities”: the collections of Thoresby, Sloane, Scott, Theobald and Rebello

As British settlements and plantations expanded on the island from the mid-17th century and increasingly detailed surveys of Jamaica were commissioned, discoveries of archaeological sites were inevitably made. For the handful of finds that were fortuitously documented, there were undoubtedly many others that were not. These likely disappeared into private hands (if they were collected in the

first place), and were eventually lost (or lost their associated provenance⁴). Those that made it into public collections are therefore only a fraction of the material culture that was encountered during the 17-18th centuries; nevertheless, they offer an exceptional window not only onto the material culture of pre-Columbian Jamaica, but also the emerging interest in antiquarian collecting and the “curio” cabinets of the affluent, far from the source island.

and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, with 134 signed parties, is non-retroactive, applying only to the date it came into force (Françaço and Strecker 2017:463). The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention (Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects) is also non-retroactive (Françaço and Strecker 2017:464).

⁴ The British English definition of “provenance” - referring to both place of origin (e.g., archaeological context) as well as collection history – is used here for consistency, as the distinction between the two is not always clear in early collection histories.

The Jamaican carvings in the Museum Thoresbyanum (late 1600s)

The earliest reference thus far found to a Jamaican carving in a British collection comes from Leeds-based Ralph Thoresby (b. 1658, d. 1725), an antiquarian and fellow of the Royal Society, whose collection became “an object of curiosity to strangers visiting Leeds” from about 1692 (Hunter 1830:vi). In his catalogue to the “Museum Thoresbyanum,” under the section “Heathen Deities, Amulets and Charms,” is a reference to a

“deformed Idol from the West-Indies; it is of white Stone, but scarce any Thing so much as Humane in the Figure, yet adored by the Natives of Jamaica (who had fled with it to the Mountains of Leguanee⁵), whence it was brought me by Mr. Sam. Kirkshaw Merchant. Another of black [stone?], yet more deformed with a Beasts Head, etc., Don. Sam. Molineux Arm.” (Thorseby 1715:493).

Thorseby (1715:447) was also in correspondence with Hans Sloane, “by whose Kindness I am furnished with 30 different sorts of these very rare exotic plants” from Jamaica, and his collection also featured shells from the region (Thoresby 1715:440). Unfortunately, the collection was dispersed after Thoresby’s death, and in 1764 the remaining holdings were sold at auction (Hunter 1830:xi); the fate of these carvings is currently unclear.

Hans Sloane and Rev. John Scott (late 1600s/early 1700s)

Sir Hans Sloane’s (b. 1660, d. 1753) visit to Jamaica, between 1687 and 1689, was the making of his career and inspired a collecting habit that would lead to one of the world’s most significant collections, eventually destined to become the foundation of the British Museum. During this time, and aside from his duties as personal physician to Governor of Jamaica, Christopher Monck, 2nd Duke of

Albermarle, he “devoted 15 months to an exhaustive study of the island and its flora, fauna and human inhabitants” (Wilson 2002:95). Sloane mentioned archaeological sites, which he personally visited (“I have seen in the Woods, many of their Bones in Caves” – Sloane 1707:I:iv) or those discovered by others, such as Mr. Barnes, a carpenter, who lived in the Red Hills (in the Guanaboa region, in today’s St Catherine Parish) and had:

“...found a Cave... fill’d with Pots or Urns, wherein were Bones of Men and Children, the Pots were Oval, large, of a redish [sic] dirty colour. On the upper part of the Rim or Ledge there stood out an Ear, on which were made some Lines, the Ears were not over an Inch square, towards the top of it had two parallel Lines sent round being grosely cut in the Edges near. The Negroes had remov’d most of these Pots to boil their Meat in. The Cave was about eight or nine Foot Diameter, roundish, and about five Foot high, it was on a sufficiently high Precipice, of nine foot steep ascent before one came to it. It was before opening curiously shut in on all sides with thin, flat stones” (Sloane 1707:I:lxx-lxxi).

The description of the ceramics echoes the illustration Sloane featured in Plate II of the same volume (**Figure 3**), and it is not clear whether Sloane was gifted or purchased any of the material recovered by Barnes or whether the illustrated sherd was acquired during Sloane’s own investigations. There are three ceramic sherds listed in Sloane’s “Antiquities” catalogue, described as “part of an earthen urn found full of Indians bones in a cave in Jamaica” (King 1994:236, n. 100); these, unfortunately, are not among the ca. 100 artifacts (of an original collection of ca. 2000 ethnographic and archaeological artifacts listed in Sloane’s *Miscellanies*) currently linked to Sloane at the British Museum (King 1994:239).

⁵ Leguanee (also spelled Languanee by Hans Sloane) is most likely Liguanea, Jamaica, though this is a relatively level, rather than mountainous, region. The reference to “Sam. Molineux Arm” likely refers to the Prince of Wales’ secretary –

Samuel Molyneux – who had an estate (Castle Dillon) in Co. Armagh, Ireland. Molyneux was elected to the Royal Society in 1712 (https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Molyneux_Samuel/).

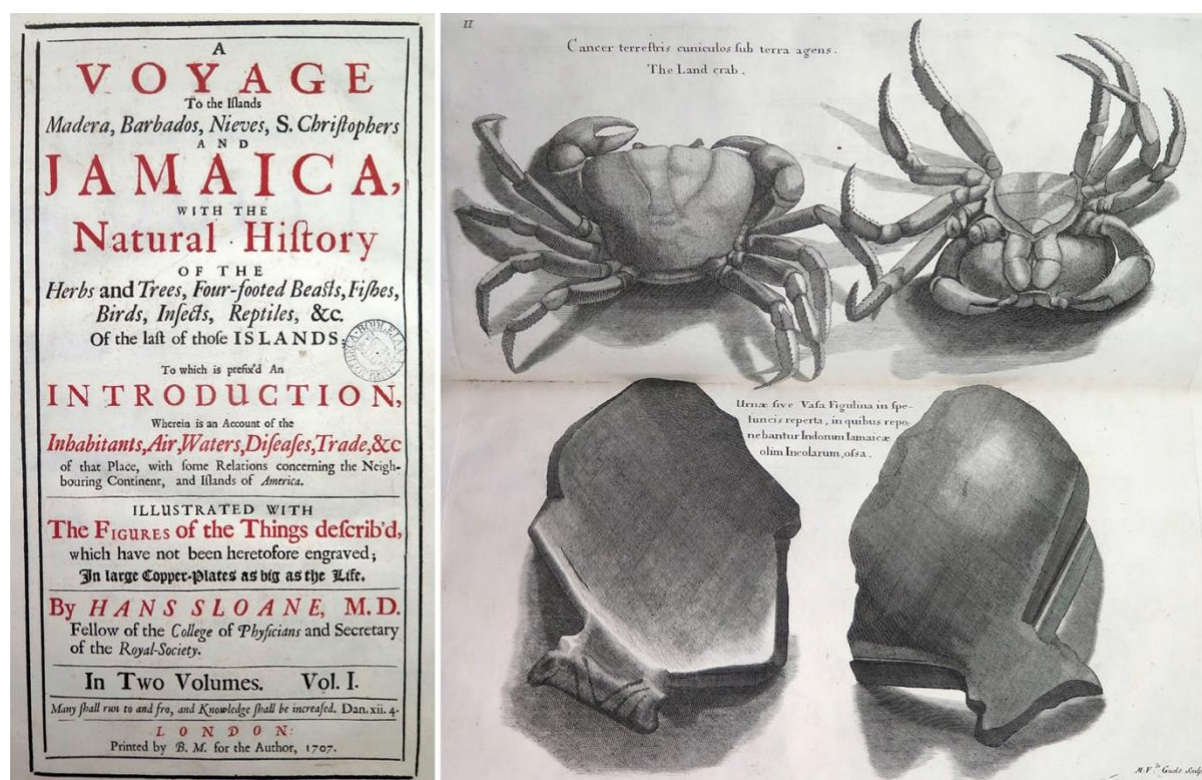


Figure 3. Title page (left) from Hans Sloane's (1707) *A Voyage to... Jamaica*, and Plate II (right) showing two sides of a land crab, above two sides of a Meillacan sherd. The comparative display of both in the same illustration underscores how pre-Columbian material culture was, in essence, equated with natural history when viewed through the lens of a man interested in botanical taxonomy, and self-educated as a collector of natural history (King 1994:228). This approach was not unusual for the time, as 'natural history' was viewed as encompassing humanity, art, technology through to geology and astronomy. The Latin text associated with the ceramic reads: "... pottery urns found in caves, in which lay the fragments [bones] of the Indians formerly inhabiting Jamaica." This ceramic may be the same as that which is described in Sloane's catalogue as "Part of an earthen urn found full of Indians bones in a cave in Jamaica" (King 1994:243, n 100). Image courtesy, The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Ashm. G2, Vol 1, title page and plate II.

As noted by Sheller (2003:16), it is specifically Sloane's "connections to Jamaica, and... the mobilisation of material things, information and wealth from Jamaica that underpinned his life's work." His wealth came largely from his wife's Jamaican sugar plantations where her "human property" labored for the benefit of the estate (e.g., Olusoga 2020). Sloane returned to England in 1689 with 800 plants, "most whereof were New" (only to a western audience; they were certainly known and used by the island's inhabitants), a lucrative recipe for hot chocolate (again, a known remedy on the island), and a "Miscellanies" collection that spanned indigenous and Afro-Caribbean artifacts. His catalogue includes reference to "a ladle made of a Calabash for taking water from the Jarrs,

made by the Indians in Jamaica" (cat 45); "a spoon used by the Indians & Negros of Jamaica, made of the side of a Calabash" (cat. 503) and "an Indian hatchet made of nephrite stone or Piedra Hajada. From Jamaica, by Mr. Barham" (Sloane's *Miscellanies*; see also King 1994:234-236); none of these items have been located in the current British Museum collections (King 2000:238).

Sloane continued to add to his collection during his later years, and an entry made in his *Miscellanies* catalogue at some point after 1725, notes "1686. An image of a heathen pagod [idol] found in a cave at Guanaboa [St Catherine's parish]. Supposed to have been [several] hundred years buried in that place. From Jamaica from the Revd. Mr. Scott." Rev. John Scott (b. 1696, d. 1734) was stationed

at St John's parish since 1716 and was rector of the Cathedral of Spanish Town, St Catherine's parish from 1720 until his premature death in 1734 (Ostapkowicz 2015b:94). It is at this point unclear how he acquired the "pagod" or how it entered the Sloane collection (directly or indirectly, as gift or purchase, etc.) or whether it was part of the Sloane collection at the time it was accessioned into the British Museum; in any case, it has not, as yet, been identified in the museum holdings. Together with the carvings in Thoresby's collections, these are the earliest references currently known to indigenous Jamaican sculptures in British collections.

James Theobald, Alves Rebello and the documentation of archaeological sites and finds (mid-/late-1700s)

Sloane's catalogue continued to be added to after his collection had been acquired by the newly founded British Museum (1753; opened in 1759) – and one such addition was made on 20 May 1757: "2108. A wooden image brought from Jamaica, given by James Theobald Esq and supposed to be an American idol" (Ostapkowicz 2015b:95). Theobald (b. 1688, d. 1759) was an antiquarian of some standing, being a member of both the Royal Society and Society of Antiquaries, eventually elected to the vice-presidency of the latter in 1750; he was also a friend to Sloane, pallbearer at his funeral and one of his trustees (Appleby 2004:222). Theobald exhibited the figure at the Royal Society some two weeks prior to donating it to the British Museum, sending the carving with a letter to the attention of the Royal Society's president, Lord Macclesfield. The letter (see Ostapkowicz 2015:96 for the full transcript), was read at their 05 May 1757 meeting, with the minutes recording the event (Royal Society Vol XXIII:551-552):

"[the letter] gives an account that a Gentleman who had a considerable plantation in the Island of Jamaica, having sent out a party in quest of some runaway Negroes, they met with a cave, which they resolved to search to the bottom. They found it to enter a considerable way under the

Hills and quite dry, at the further end they found nothing but two wooden Images, much of the same form, one of which was produced to the Society. By the form of the cave, the persons who went in, took it to have been a place of worship, and that these Images had been the deities they worshiped, and they imagined that no person had ever entered so far into the cave since the Island had been in possession of either Spaniards or English.

The Image was shewn to the Gentlemen present, it appeared to be of rude workmanship and might probably have been designed for the same purpose, and worshiped as the God Priapus was among the Romans. It is about sixteen Inches high the head five, the body six, and the legs and things five.

Thanks were ordered to Mr. Theobald for his communication."

The event was not dissimilar to the exhibit of the three Carpenter's Mountain carvings at the Society of Antiquaries some 40 years later, in 1799 (see below), and must have created some animated discussion. Unlike the other objects discussed at the meeting, such as the books, antique manuscripts and a "Snipe or Tringa bird lately shot at Sower bridge, Yorkshire," the carving was not presented to the Society – Theobald clearly had other plans for it. Some further context can be gleaned from Theobald's letter, which suggests that the figure was found at some point during the first Maroon War (ca. 1728/1730-1739),⁶ perhaps in the parish of St Elizabeth (see Ostapkowicz 2015b:96).

Although the figure was one of the earliest acquisitions from the Americas in the fledgling British Museum, until recently it could not be conclusively identified in the collections (McEwan 2008: 234, n. 39) – no artifact in the museum bore this particular provenance, or was linked to the donor. Theobald's correspondence, and the minutes of the Royal Society meeting, however, provide

⁶ The dates of the First Maroon War are at best vague, given that conflict between the Maroons and the British emerged shortly after the latter occupied the island in 1655 (Patterson 1970). There is,

however, broad consensus on the escalation of the revolts from ca. 1728/30 until the signing of the first treaty in 1739 (Patterson 1970:301; Wright 1970).

sufficient detail (measurements⁷ and references to its “rude”, or ithyphallic, nature) to tentatively link with a small anthropomorphic carving that had lost its associated documentation and was only formally accessioned into the museum collections in 1997 (see further discussion in Ostapkowicz 2015b:96-97).⁸ Stylistic similarities between this sculpture and the large anthropomorphic carving recovered from Carpenter’s Mountain (Saunders and Gray 1996:801) alongside strontium isotope results provide further support for a Jamaican provenance (Ostapkowicz et al., 2013:4683).

At this time the island was being explored and documented, and other archaeological sites were undoubtedly found – though not all were safeguarded: Edward Long’s (1774:II:42-43) *History of Jamaica* made reference to a large cave at “Salt-pond hill,” near Port Henderson, where

“... the floor... is strewed with human bones; and there runs a tradition among the Negroes, that a white person many years ago collected a vast pile and consumed it to ashes: a large quantity still remains; and, from the conformation of the skulls, they are thought to have been Indian. Some have imagined that the Indians made use of these recesses as a sort of catacombs, or ossuaries, for their dead.... These rocky chasms and cavities, frequent in many parts of Jamaica, naturally offered as convenient and durable sepulchres.”

Another cave, on the “northern side of Old Woman’s Savannah,” contained “... a few years since... a great many human bones, which were probably... Indian” (Long 1774:II:65). Indeed, in his writings, Long (1774:II:153)

suggests that encountering burials in caves was relatively common: “... in most [caves] are found large quantities of human bones, almost consumed by time, the teeth alone being in a tolerably perfect state... the bones belonged to those poor Indian natives who fell victims to the barbarity of their Spanish conquerors.” Bryan Edwards (1793:I:130), writing nearly two decades later, noted that “caves are frequently discovered in the mountains, wherein the ground is covered with human bones; the miserable remains, without all doubt of some of the unfortunate aborigines.” Unlike the artifacts, these appear to have held little interest (with a few notable exceptions, see below), and as the above reference to the burning of some remains attests, many were likely destroyed. Later references to human remains also note that some were “removed by obeah men for their superstitious practices, while others have been buried by the people themselves” (Duerden 1897:28 when discussing Rev. Rumsey’s investigations of Dallas Castle cave, St Andrew in the 1890s; see also Howard 1950:105).

In 1792, three substantial carvings were found by a surveyor “in a natural cave, near the summit of a mountain, called Spots, in Carpenter’s Mountain, in the parish of Vere, in the island of Jamaica” (Society of Antiquaries 1799:302; see Ostapkowicz 2015a for overview of their historiography). The Carpenter’s Mountains are located in the parish of Manchester, which was formed in 1814, merging portions of St. Elizabeth, Clarendon and Vere (Senior 2003:298). Indeed, Lee (1966) suggests that the three figures were found in “Image Cave (MC-3),” in the south of Manchester parish (see also Aarons 1994:15; Atkinson 2006: Figure A.1).⁹ In 1866, what remained of the old parish of Vere merged into Clarendon, and essentially disappeared from Jamaican maps.

museum’s history goes back to the 1830s, when “obscene” collections started to be segregated; it was officially created in 1865 with some of the collections later dispersed in 1930s and 1960s (Gaimster 2000:12; 15; Wilson 2002:166).

⁹ The inventory coding (MC-3) is that established by Lee, who relocated many of the archaeological sites documented by earlier investigators, as well as added considerably to the list of sites with his own discoveries.

⁷ The measurements listed in the minutes are particularly useful, almost identical to those of the surviving small carving: “The Image is about 16 inches high, the Head 3 Inches, the Body 6 & the Legs and Thighs 5” (Ostapkowicz 2015b:96).

⁸ The carving is inscribed with the number M700, and the M prefix may pertain to the Museum Secretum (Jim Hamill, BM, personal communication 2014), which housed artifacts historically considered as erotica, and hence not fit for public viewing at the British Museum. The secret

The surveyor, whose name is currently unknown, was likely commissioned to map a plantation in late-18th century Vere parish. There were a number of surveyors working in this region, including “Rome and Barry” and David Low, who published maps of Clarendon in 1791-1792; others, such as “Graham, Murdoch and Pierce” were very prolific in the early 1790s, working in neighboring parishes (St Ann, St Catherine, St Mary and St Andrew) (Higman 2001:295; 297). The escalation in surveying in the 18th century was due to the demand of the wealthy plantocracy in documenting and setting the boundaries of their lands (Higman 2001:31). The carvings from the Carpenter’s Mountains clearly raised sufficient interest with the surveyor, and by extension, the landowner, that they were removed from the cave (no small feat given the weight of the two largest sculptures) and eventually shipped to England. It is not clear how Alves Rebello, presumably the owner who displayed the figures in London in 1799 (Society of Antiquaries 1799), acquired the carvings; his connections to Jamaica are, as yet, unknown.¹⁰

As is clear from the above, the earliest documented Jamaican carvings became part of British collections a few short decades after Cromwell’s 1655 attack on the Spanish colony, and the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, which officially ceded Jamaica to England. Jamaican stone and wooden artifacts were acquired by the most influential collectors in the country, exhibited at the meetings of learned societies in London and circulated as far north as Leeds, Yorkshire. While Sloane may have collected some of the artifacts personally during his visit to Jamaica, others acquired theirs at distance – chance finds by new landowners or those acquired by merchants extracting resources from the newly established colony, eventually to be sold or gifted to antiquarians, some of whom in turn would donate their collections to

newly established museums. Only a select few artifacts have been identified from this period – it is likely that many others, as well as many cave burials (as evidenced by Edward Long’s comments), were destroyed. If this was the case for the English – what of Spain’s possible acquisitions during their time on the island (1494-1655)? Unfortunately, very little information is available on this period, apart from brief mentions in 15th century documents about early exchanges: Michele da Cuneo, for example, writing of Columbus’ first visit to Jamaica in 1494, mentions that the Jamaican natives brought to the Spanish “all of their possessions, including... weapons” (Symcox 2002:59). These, and subsequent early acquisitions by the Spanish in Jamaica, appear lost to time; as far as can be gathered, there are no indigenous artifacts surviving in European collections from this earliest colonial period in Jamaica, or at least nothing documented as coming from the island prior to ca. 1650 (the same could be said for the earliest Spanish collections from, for example, Hispaniola – Cabello Carro 2008:205).¹¹ Ironically, the country that held the first colonial empire in the Americas, and efficiently extracted its riches, has a notable absence of 15-17th century “artifactual curiosities” from the Caribbean;¹² rather, the earliest surviving Caribbean artefacts are held in German and Italian collections (Ostapkowicz 2013; Ostapkowicz et al. 2017).

Investigations and collections in the 1800s: Blake, MacCormack, Rumsey and the Institute of Jamaica

In Britain, acquisitions of Jamaican archaeology continued, albeit infrequently in the 19th century: the first Jamaican artifacts to be documented as entering the British Museum collections after the Theobald’s 1757

¹⁰ The surname Rebello does appear in Barnett and Wright’s (1997: no. 288, p. 51, 188) *The Jews of Jamaica: Tombstone Inscriptions 1663-1880*: David Gomes Rebello (d. 27 November 1786) is buried in Kingston, but whether this is the same family as Alves Rebello is currently unclear.

¹¹ For the exhibit, *Xaymaca: Life in Spanish Jamaica 1494-1655* the curators noted that it was not an easy subject “largely because of the paucity of material remaining in Jamaica”; much of the archival documents had to be supplied by colleagues at Spanish institutions, though no artifacts were

forthcoming from Spain (Tortello and Greenland 2009:4, 5, 10). Rather, casts of the Carpenter’s Mountain figures, sent by the British Museum in 1930s, were used in the section dedicated to Jamaica’s indigenous people, alongside archaeological material from the Institute of Jamaica.

¹² The assumption is that any early Americas collections within the royal collections were destroyed during the 1734 fire that devastated the Alcázar palace in Madrid (Cabello Carro 2008:205).

donation¹³ were an anthropomorphic maul and stone carving “found under the surface of the ground near a coffee plantation in Jamaica” and donated to the museum in 1825 by Abner William Brown (McEwan 2008:235).¹⁴ London’s Natural History Museum acquired a skull in 1853 which was found by Rev. Clarke at “a burial ground, Savannah la Mar, Jamaica.” In 1854, a small jade anthropomorphic pendant was acquired via Dr. Thomas Jenner Sells,¹⁵ while a number of celts entered the collections from Rev. Dr. William Sparrow Simpson. In 1890, the National Museum of Scotland purchased the “Briggs Collection,” predominantly of artifacts from the Lesser Antilles, which also included a celt from Jamaica. Further afield, in Germany, Moravian missionaries Rev. Theofilus Winckler¹⁶ and John Pulkrabeck,¹⁷ donated a small group of celts – some acquired through ‘excavation’ – to the Völkerkundemuseum, Herrnhut by 1880 (Figure 4). Other chance finds undoubtedly made it into other international collections, though a thorough listing of these is beyond the scope of this overview paper. While hinting at nascent interests in the island’s prehistory, most of these collections were primarily a by-product of surveying and developing the land for plantations, settlements and missions (i.e., colonial “resources”). The late 19th century, however, saw the intensification of antiquarian interest in the prehistory of Jamaica, as well as more concerted – or at least better documented

– “excavation” efforts focusing on specific



Figure 4. Three (of five) celts acquired by the Völkerkundemuseum, Herrnhut in 1880 from Rev. Theofilus Winckler (inv. no. 67209-67212; 69083). Photo J. Ostapkowicz, courtesy Völkerkundemuseum, Herrnhut, 67209-67211.

¹³ The Carpenter’s Mountain carvings, although displayed in London at the Society of Antiquaries in 1799, and likely acquired by the British Museum at some point in the 19th century, were not accessioned into the collections until 1977 (see Ostapkowicz 2015a:53).

¹⁴ Abner William Brown (b. 1800, d. 1872), was son to wealthy plantation and slave owners, James and Ann Brown, and was baptised in St Andrew, Jamaica; the family moved to Britain ca. 1803, and Abner William was educated in Cambridge and Lincoln’s Inn, spending the rest of his life in England (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146663919>). Given his limited time in Jamaica, it is likely that the artifacts were part of the family collection, or were acquired indirectly.

¹⁵ Thomas Jenner Sells, a doctor, was born in 1811 in Clarendon, Jamaica, and lived on the island until 1826, when he left for England

(<http://www.hospitalproject.co.uk/thomas-jenner-sells/>).

¹⁶ Theofilus Winckler appears to have spent much of his life in Jamaica: he was born in Chichester, Hannover parish, Jamaica on 25 December 1840 and died in Neu Carmel, Westmoreland parish, Jamaica on 01 March 1881 (Johanna Funke and Frank Usbeck, Völkerkundemuseum, Herrnhut, personal communication 2022).

¹⁷ John Paul Pulkrabeck worked in Jamaica between the years 1858-1861

(https://collections.mun.ca/digital/collection/cns_permorv/id/15994/) and specifically in St James parish, Jamaica in 1869-1870

(<http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/1870c06.htm>). He also appears to have worked in Mile Gully, Manchester parish in 1878 (<http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/dmanc02.htm>).

sites. With the establishment of The Institute of Jamaica in 1879, which focused on the promotion of local history and arts, the foundation was set for a growing awareness of Jamaica's cultural resources, though this in itself did not restrict the continued export of this heritage from the island.¹⁸ Indeed, material from some of the first excavations carried out under the auspices of the Institute of Jamaica by Lady Edith Blake and R. C. MacCormack in the 1890s are currently dispersed in museums in the United States and United Kingdom.

In 1895, the Institute of Jamaica inaugurated its new museum with an exhibit focusing on "Arawak Remains." One critical issue, however, was the lack of collections:

"[the board] brought out prominently the fact that Jamaica possesses but a very indifferent public collection of objects connected with its aboriginal Indian inhabitants. There is, however, evidence that many specimens of interest and importance are to be found in the possession of private individuals.... The Board of Governors therefore... appeals to the private possessors of such remains to help, either by the loan or the gift of specimens.... The Board hopes that by means of the Exhibition not only will the public interest in everything that pertains to the past history of the Island be stimulated, but also that a more valuable and representative collection of objects may be accumulated by the Museum, where they can be kept properly labelled and exhibited, and remain of permanent public value" (Duerden 1897:1).¹⁹

Many collections were loaned for the exhibit, including those of Lady Blake (some of which were from the Turks and Caicos Islands)

and Miss Moulton Barrett, who provided a collection of pottery from her investigations at the Retreat site (Duerden 1897:19). Some 40 implements were presented to the museum by Dr. G. J. Neish, W. H. Plant loaned 21 stone artifacts (Duerden 1897:31), while B. S. Gosset and Rev. W. W. Rumsey provided finds from Halberstadt cave (Duerden 1897:1). While the expectation was that the collections acquired by the Institute would remain in Jamaica, this was not always the case (see discussion for the Halberstadt collection below). There was, at this time, a growing awareness of the dispersal of Jamaican collections (both in the past, with specific reference to the Carpenter's Mountain pieces, and in the late 1800s), and "the negative effects that this would have on the development of science, particularly archaeology in the island" (Cundall in Modest 2012:187).

Lady Edith Blake (active in Jamaica, 1888-1897)

"...the carvings investigated by Lady Blake at Saint John's, have awakened considerable interest in the subject [prehistory/archaeology] in the Island, and indicate that much more may still be done, if sufficient encouragement is given" (Duerden 1897:1).

Lady Blake (b. 1846, d. 1926), wife of Sir Henry Arthur Blake, Governor of Jamaica between 1888 and 1897, had a keen interest in archaeology cultivated by her "Grand Tour" of southern Europe in the 1860s (Iona Murray, personal communication 2019). She put these interests to use when first stationed in The Bahamas between 1884 and 1887. W.K. Brooks (1887) described her as "most enthusiastic and indefatigable" in her archaeological investigations: "she herself visited a small cave in the interior of the island of New Providence and had superintended the excavations which

¹⁸ Such regulations did not come into effect until the late-20th century, with the Jamaican National Heritage Trust Act of 1985 (based, in turn, on the Jamaica National Trust Law of 1958), which has responsibility for "identifying, protecting, restoring and developing" Jamaica's heritage resources (Atkinson Swaby 2021:114-115). Artifacts, however, still do not have statutory protection – they "remain the property of the owner... who can

dispose of cultural material at will" (JNHT 2009 in Atkinson Swaby 2021:119).

¹⁹ The board had specific artifacts in mind – "The following objects are those specially desired: 'Thunderbolts,' darts, war-clubs, arrowheads, stone-hatchets, stone-hammers, bead ornaments, Indian pottery, remains from kitchen middens (marine shells, bones, pottery), human skulls and bones, canoes, old vessels, old coins, inscriptions, objects of worship, articles of clothing" (Duerden 1897:1).

resulted in the discovery of... two Lucayan skeletons.” During her time in Jamaica, she was involved with a number of archaeological investigations, published on her excavations (Blake 1890; also in Ober 1894:283-284) and inspired, with her support and enthusiasm, the work of J. E. Duerden, curator of the Institute’s museum between 1895 and 1901, and Frank Cundall, the Institute’s secretary and librarian between 1891 and 1937 (Howard 1956:45; Wesler 2013:250); they, in turn, were “the two individuals largely responsible for an awakened interest in Jamaica’s earliest inhabitants” (Howard 1950:36; Conolley 2014:130; Allsworth-Jones 2008:9-11). In 1890, she excavated at the Norbrook midden – “the first [investigation] carried out with any degree of thoroughness, [and] undertaken by a Committee of the Board of the Institute of Jamaica” (Duerden 1897:13). Her collection became the foundation for much subsequent research: Cundall’s (1894) work “largely derived from artifacts excavated from... Norbrook, St Andrews.... which were, at the time, in the collection of Lady Blake” (Howard 1950:37; see particularly Cundall 1894:72; Figs 18 and 20). She also worked at Richmond Hill with Duerden and Rev. W. W. Rumsey (Duerden 1897:45). Lady Blake no doubt had a hand in arranging, and contributing directly to, the Jamaica Exhibition of 1891, where artifacts from Jamaica were featured alongside those from The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands, many from her own collections (Ober 1894). Ober (1894:284) notes that during his visit to Jamaica in 1891, Lady Blake was “industriously collecting Indian antiquities.” By all accounts she was a remarkable woman, supporting early archaeology in both The Bahamas and Jamaica where she resided, and also undertaking her own excavations – quite a feat at the close of a conservative century.

Lady Blake started donating some collections from Jamaica to international

museums as early as 1892, when the U.S. National Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History [NMNH], Smithsonian) acquired skeletal remains from Pedro Bluff.²⁰ In 1893, she presented post-cranial skeletal remains to London’s Natural History Museum, with provenance given as “from a cave in Jamaica” (Rachel Ives, NHM, personal communication 2021) and in 1896, she donated cranial and post-cranial fragments from “Limestone Cave” to the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University (Duijvenbode 2017:137). She retained the artifact collections, displaying these at the Governor’s residence in Kingston, and eventually, after Sir Henry Blake’s subsequent posts as governor elsewhere (Hong Kong, 1898-1903; British Ceylon, 1903-1907), they likely featured in their private museum at Myrtle Grove, Co. Cork, Ireland (Simon Murray, personal communication 2019). In correspondence with Caribbean archaeologist Theodoor de Booy in 1913, Lady Blake mentions that should he ever visit Ireland, she “would have much pleasure in showing you our [Caribbean] collection.”²¹ In 1916 she was in communication with George Heye, founder and director of the Museum of the American Indian (MAI, now the National Museum of the American Indian, or NMAI), and clearly a decision had been reached to part with the Caribbean artifacts: she notes “I am looking forward with great interest to hearing what the professors in your museum think of the more interesting things, and am glad they will more be studied and hope they may prove of some use in throwing more light on the early civilisation of America” (Edith Blake to George Heye, 13 November 1916, letter on file at the NMAI Archives). Henry Blake, on behalf of his wife, finalized the sale of the Caribbean holdings to Heye for £750 based on estimates from the curators of the British Museum²² and the Dublin Museum. He noted “Under the

²⁰ The skeletal remains represented a minimum of six individuals (James Krakker, NMNH, personal communication 2021), provenanced to “a cave in a cliff face in the vicinity of San Pedro, St. Elizabeth Parish, Jamaica.” The remains were received by the museum in 1892, and were transferred to the Department of Physical Anthropology in 1904 (acc. 025976; Duijvenbode 2017:139).

²¹ Jesse Walter Fewkes, another Caribbean archaeologist working for the Smithsonian Institution, was also in touch with her: he notes

“Sent to Lady Blake for pictures and article on Jamaica and Bahamas,” this was after he “saw new figures” in Cundall’s 1894 *The Story of the Life of Columbus and the Discovery of Jamaica* (4408:59a).

²² “The British Museum Expert, who has twice seen and examined [the collection] I have seen today [5 September 1916]. He says that if the usual grant to the British Museum were not withheld in consequence of the war the Museum would be recommended to acquire the collection...” (Henry

present circumstances in Ireland I approve of my wife's disposing of the collection, the acquisition of which brings back many happy memories" (Henry Blake to Heye, 5 September 1916). The invoice, dated 14 November 1916, lists the following Jamaican material: artifacts, including "ancient pot[tery]" and stone balls from Cambridge Hill Cave; "Ancient Jamaica pottery" (provenance not listed); and various collections from Pedro Bluff. Several bowls, particularly those from Cambridge Hill Cave, are nearly complete (e.g., NMAI 059121.000 - 059124.000). There are also 30 stone celts in the inventory attributed to Blake with a generic Jamaica provenance, as well as 36 celts and pottery from Clarendon. Other sites represented (mainly by celts and ceramics) include Botany Bay, St Thomas; Albert Town and Lorimers, Trelawny; Manning's Hill and Norbrook, St Andrew; Port Antonio, Portland; Spanish Town and St John's Red Hills, St Catherine; Browns Town and Moneague, St Ann; Kew and Lucea, Hanover; Vere and May Pen, Clarendon.²³ As was common practice (see, for example, Françaço and Strecker 2017:457-459), some of the artifacts acquired via Blake were subsequently exchanged with European institutions, such as the Nationalmuseum Copenhagen, Denmark in 1922²⁴ and the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde, Leiden.

R. C. MacCormack (active in Jamaica from ca. 1895)

R. C. MacCormack was a government surveyor who, in 1895, conducted several excavations of caves and shell middens in Vere, Portland Hills and Braziletto Hills, Clarendon (Howard 1950:38). In his own words, his investigations were directly inspired by the "exhibition of objects connected with the Aboriginal Inhabitants of this Island, in 1895, and the discovery of remains at Halberstadt, and at various other parts of the islands" (MacCormack 1898:444). He published his findings three years later (1898), where he lists his collections as comprising "143 stone implements, 3 shell implements, 5 calcedony beads, 1 stone image, 13 human skulls, along with other bones and 6 perfect earthenware vessels" (MacCormack 1898:444) (**Figure 5**). The human remains and some of the vessels were from "17 caves and one burial place." Aside from what he clearly considered "highlights" there were also various ceramic sherds, animal bones, coral and ashes from "several caves and the opening up of four Mounds or Refuse-heaps" (MacCormack 1898:445). His collection "obtained a prize at the "Competitions" held by the Institute of Jamaica, in 1897" (MacCormack 1898:445). Indeed, the Institute, with Duerden at the helm, was encouraging collectors to donate their finds, actively trying to augment their own holdings through donations (Duerden 1897:1), and offering collectors recognition through being credited on labels in displays and in the form of a "prize" from the Institute.

Blake to George Heye, 5 September 1916, letter on file at the NMAI archives, 25-OC123).

²³ There are over 200 Jamaican artifacts from the Lady Blake collection, some of which are available to view on the NMAI web pages https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/search?edan_q=Lady%20Edith%20Blake%20Jamaica

²⁴ A petaloid celt from "Jamaica," one of 26 originally accessioned into the Museum of the American Indian (ex- MAI 5/9171) as part of the Blake collection, was among two Jamaican artifacts

sent in exchange to the Nationalmuseum in 1922. The other exchanged artifact, a "fragment of boat-shaped vessel. Moneague Midden, Moneague, St. Ann's Parish, Jamaica" (ex-MAI 3/3242), was part of the material acquired by Theodoor de Booy in 1913 (see below). The artifacts were accessioned into the Nationalmuseum as 04680 and 04681, respectively (Mille Gabriel, NMD, personal communication 2021). The Nationalmuseum holds only two other Jamaican artifacts, a ceramic fragment (ODIg.59) and a flint "spearhead" (ODIg.60) both acquired via A. B. Meyer in 1860.



Figure 5. A nearly complete White Marl (Meillacan) vessel recovered by R.C. MacCormack from “caves at Portland,” and acquired by the U.S. National Museum in 1900. The ‘handle’ at one end (seen here on left) includes a human tooth (premolar?) – whether intentional or accidental, its presence has interesting implications. L: ca. 30cm; W: 23cm; H: 16cm. Photos J. Ostapkowicz, courtesy National Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, A205802.

MacCormack’s collection expanded initially through purchases, as well as chance finds and “excavations.” His collecting started through the purchase of stone “thunderbolts” or celts from Vere village communities: the celts “are always kept in their water-jars, in the belief that they keep the water cool” (MacCormack 1898:445). They were predominantly found in the fields:

“After heavy rains the peasantry commence cultivating their provision-fields, and, in digging the soil, they may turn up an implement; also, after such rains, the water may wash away the soil for many inches and reveal buried implements... Implements are also found in caves, associated with pottery and other remains; in mounds or refuse-heaps; and in the open fields. They are always to be found in mounds, but are there generally broken. On one occasion a peasant in Portland, while digging his field, discovered five large implements secreted in a small hole in a rock. I secured four of the number and one is the finest implement I have obtained. It is eight inches long, highly polished, and of a mottled blue colour. Of all the villages I have visited in Vere, those of Portland and Hayes have yielded the most implements” (MacCormack 1898:445).

In his discussion of “mounds and refuse-heaps,” which he clearly dug, he highlights the presence of different concentrations of animal bones at different sites – including crocodile, hutia and manatee bones, turtle carapaces and a diverse assortment of fish bones and shell remains. This attention to faunal remains was unusual for this time (MacCormack 1898:446; 448; see also Duerden 1897). His investigation of caves recovered ceramics as well as human skeletal remains; he describes their position, associated finds, and the presence of a type of constructed limestone barrier covering over some of the compartments. He also noted that one cave had already been “searched and its contents removed” (MacCormack 1898:447). Subsequent researchers have found MacCormack’s lack of site details and artifact descriptions frustrating in getting to grips with what he found (e.g., Howard 1950:96), but we should view his work within the context of its time – and for the close of the 19th century, his report was better than most; at the very least it was published.

Yet, despite the existence of the Institute of Jamaica, this material, like the Blake collections, was eventually sent off-island. In 1900, part of the collection – mainly celts and ceramics equating to some 153 catalogue records – was secured for the U.S. National Museum (NMNH) by W. H. Holmes, head curator of the Department of Anthropology (acc. No. 036678). A smaller group of artefacts was acquired in 1913 via

Theodoor de Booy on behalf of George Heye's MAI, now the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), also part of the Smithsonian.²⁵ The collections in the NMAI are provenanced to sites in Clarendon parish, including Vere, Salt River, Bratt's Hill District and Freetown Midden. The human remains he found in several caves in Portland Hills are curated at the Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) (Duijvenbode 2017:139). Some of his artifacts even ended up, via a convoluted route, in British collections – such as the celt now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (see **Figure 6**): it was purchased from the NMNH in 1916 by Lucas White King, whose estate was subsequently sold via Sotheby's in 1921, with the celt being purchased by Louis Colville Gray Clark, who in turn donated it to the Pitt Rivers (Hicks and Cooper 2012:406).

Rev. W. W. Rumsey (active in Jamaica from ca. 1895)

"Great interest has been aroused in the island within the past few weeks by the discovery of a cave containing the skeletons of at least twenty-four individuals.... Four of the skulls have been taken to England by Mr. Cundall, the Secretary of the Jamaica Institute, to be submitted to Sir William Flower" (Duerden (1895:173).

The discovery of Halberstadt cave caused a sensation, resulting in two announcements in the prestigious journal, *Nature* – in June by Duerden (1895) and in October by Sir William Flower (1895). Duerden (1897:26) recounted how Rev. W. W. Rumsey investigated the cave on the Halberstadt estate, located on "a wild rocky part of the Port Royal Mountains," some 610 meters above the sea, the narrow entrance covered over by limestone boulders. The cave was small, 6 meters long and maximum 1.5 meters in height, with a 30cm deposit of "fine, light yellowish

dust [bat guano]." The contents for so small a cave were remarkable: aside from the human crania reportedly arranged in a row, a 2 meter long "cedar-wood canoe" lay above the bones, with other artifacts close by: a mortar, two near-complete ceramic vessels placed on a small ledge and the fragments of another large vessel, marine shells, a flint implement, and hutia bones. Duerden (1895:174) noted that "the acquisition of the remains, which have been presented to the Museum, will be a great addition to the archaeology of Jamaica." There is reference to these being displayed at an exhibition held at the Institute of Jamaica shortly after their recovery (Duerden 1897:1).

Some of the human remains from Halberstadt were also exhibited at a meeting of the British Association held in Ipswich, on 12 September 1895 (Duerden 1897:22),²⁶ when Flower, noted doctor, comparative anatomist, Director of the Natural History Museum, London, and President of the Museums Association, summarized his initial observations.²⁷ Rather than four crania, as reported by Duerden's note in *Nature*, Flower discussed six adult crania (three male, three female) and two children's calvariae; he further noted that there were cranial "fragments of six others, giving evidence of fourteen individuals" and 22 lower jaws, "a number which indicates that many of the crania must now be missing from the collection" (Flower 1895:607-608). A. C. Haddon, who Flower arranged to oversee the detailed osteological study, noted "sixteen crania and numerous fragments of skulls and lower jaws, together with a vast number of bones of the axial and appendicular skeleton [which] were forwarded to me by my friend and late colleague, Mr. J. E. Duerden" (in Duerden 1897:23). Flower (1895:607) noted that "whatever the condition the bones were found in as they lay in the cave, they are now completely mixed up, and it is impossible to put together anything like complete skeletons, or even, except in very few cases, to associate the bones of individuals; and the number of odd bones and fragments show that large portions of

²⁵ Currently, some 20 accessions related to MacCormack's collection available to view on-line via the NMAI web pages (https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/search?edan_q=MacCormack).

²⁶ Indeed Duerden (1897:26) notes that "about half the quantity of the bones was first sent to the British

Museum and Sir. Wm. H. Flower arranged with Prof. A. C. Haddon to carry out the full details of the examination of these, and of the others transmitted later."

²⁷ Other human remains were also sent to Sir Fowler, such as two crania from Pedro Bluff Cave (Duerden 1897:22; 30).

the individuals who were buried or died in the cave are now missing.” Duerden (1897:27) would later note that “the bones coming under the observation of Prof. Flower necessarily did not show much corresponding completion, and even when compared with the remains which were then in Jamaica this feature is of considerable significance... the maximum number of individuals... of whom we have remains from the cave is thirty-four.” The discrepancy in the numbers remains confusing and awaits resolution (if indeed that is possible) in a dedicated study of the extant collections. Nevertheless, Flower’s and Haddon’s studies provided the first detailed osteological study on pre-Columbian human remains from Jamaica, establishing the foundation of biological anthropology on the island (Wesler 2013:250).

It is unclear what the arrangement was, if indeed there was one, for the return the remains to the Institute of Jamaica after Flower and Haddon’s study. But they remained in England, and are now curated at the Duckworth Laboratory, part of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge,²⁸ which also houses a number of other human remains recovered from Jamaica. A few retain some provenance – four are marked in script “Halberstadt Cave” and others “Institute of Jamaica” – but the majority, including 21 crania, are only listed as coming from Jamaica (Duijvenbode 2017:137). Further, London’s Natural History Museum also retains a part of the “Halberstadt Collection,” consisting mainly of a series of post-cranial remains (Rachel Ives, NHM, personal communication 2022). The source and acquisition date of these remains is as yet unclear, but further research is planned to review archival information, to better understand how and when the Halberstadt collections was dispersed between the two institutions.

The “indefatigable” Rev. Rumsey, who clearly had a keen interest in archaeology, also

worked the Richmond Hill and Botany Bay caves, and loaned the crania, vessels and associated artifacts he found to the Institute of Jamaica for their exhibit in 1895 (Duerden 1897:1). He also presented to the Institute a large ceramic vessel with associated human mandible from Dallas Castle cave, St Andrew (Howard 1950:105). Unlike the Halberstadt cave remains, which were documented in some detail, next to no information on these finds is given in subsequent publications.

Aside from the major collectors listed above, there were other investigations made on the island towards the end of the 19th century,²⁹ some of which resulted in international museum acquisitions. Twenty-eight stone artifacts bearing a Jamaican provenance entered the collections of the British Museum in 1896 via the Christy collection (acquired by Augustus Wollaston Franks), originally having been collected by F. S. Church. While “Inspector Church” loaned 171 stone implements to the 1895 Jamaica Institute exhibit (Duerden 1897:1), Duerden (1897:31) noted that “between one and two hundred [stone implements] have been... sent abroad by [Church];” some of these clearly ended up at the British Museum. Another collection, spanning ca. 250 artifacts (mainly ceramic fragments and shells as well as 32 celts), was donated by Dr. Francis C. Nicholas to New York’s American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in 1896. Nicholas, a geologist and mining engineer based in New York as well as an Honorary Associate of the Institute of Jamaica, published on Jamaican geology (Nicholas 1913) and one of his publications mentions collecting fossils in Jamaica (Nicholas 1903:360-361);³⁰ less is known about his archaeological activities, though the accessioned artifacts do have location information (“Morant River”, St Thomas; “Lichfield Mountain”; “Lodggie [Logie] Green”; “Green Island”; “Near Ulster Spring” and more generally “Central Jamaica”).

²⁸ Haddon was lecturer in ethnology at the University of Cambridge from 1900, until his retirement in 1926. The collection may have remained with the university because of Haddon’s long term affiliation.

²⁹ Duerden’s (1897) valuable account includes reports by various amateur investigators who acquired collections, including a Lieutenant J. E. Henderson, West India Regiment, who was

undertaking a military survey of the Halberstadt district in 1896, and took the opportunity of investigating many caves, including one at Bloxburgh, where he found human remains and ceramics (Duerden 1897:27).

³⁰ His interests appear to be quite wide ranging, including the ethnology of Colombian indigenous groups (Nicholas 1901).

By the turn of the 19th century, through the work of these interested locals and visitors, almost 37 prehistoric occupation sites had been reported, partially surveyed or mapped (Lee 1978; Agorsah 1991:4).

Investigations and collections in the early to mid-1900s: Bastian, Reichard, de Booy, Longley, Miller, Howard, Rouse, Bruce, Cotter and Lee

The turn of the 20th century saw escalating interest in the prehistory of the island, with visits from an emerging professional class of archaeologists. Their investigations resulted in considerable collections, many of which were eventually deposited in international museums. Equally, the activities of avocational archaeologists and collectors continued unabated; some of these were also dispersed beyond the shores of Jamaica. In Britain, for example, Jamaican artifacts (predominantly celts) are accessioned in numerous museums, including Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (six stone celts acquired ca. 1903, via Rev. G. H. Lea, and R. H. Miles; two bearing the provenance “Stone’s Hope Estate, Manchester Parish”). The British Museum accessioned Jamaican artifacts in 1912, 1913, 1922, 1927, 1931, and 1956, predominantly stone celts and ceramics from various sources, including “Hector’s River,” “John Crow Mountains,” “Fort Nugent,” “Abingdon Estate cave,” “Rose Hall, Trelawney” and “Montego Bay.” These appear to be, for the most part, isolated chance finds or purchases. Three celts from Richmond Hill and two with a generic “Jamaica” provenance were acquired by the British Museum when they purchased collections from the Salisbury and

South Wiltshire Museum (previously, the Blackmore Museum) in 1931;³¹ these were originally collected by Ephraim George Squier and Edwin Hamilton Davis, both noted American archaeologists in the mid-19th century. In 1920, the Cambridge Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology acquired a group of artifacts, predominantly stone celts and ceramics, via a number of collectors, including A. R. Brailey.³² The Royal Institution of Cornwall acquired ceramics sherds “found in a kitchen midden on western bank of Hope River near the head of Kingston Harbour” in 1924.³³ The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, contains some 30 archaeological artifacts from Jamaica, most of which are stone celts (Hicks and Cooper 2013:405) (**Figure 6**). While some material dates back to 19th century collections,³⁴ the majority entered the museum in the early part of the 20th century, including 12 celts provenanced “Potters Hill” and 11 to “Reading Pen Estate,” acquired in 1936 and 1942, respectively, from Mrs. Derwent Simmonds (Hicks and Cooper 2013:46). National Museums Liverpool has 10 stone celts from Jamaica, acquired as gifts from Claudius Dionysius Hotobah During (through A. Ridyard, 1915)³⁵ and Mrs. Irene Beasley (1954), wife of the prominent collector Harry Geoffrey Beasley, as well as through purchase from the Norwich Castle Museum in 1956.

³¹ Accession numbers AM.S.143-147.

³² This was an exchange with the British Museum (see Joyce correspondence dated 1 October 1920 and 14 October 1920). The CMAA would later (1961) acquire Jamaican material via J. S. Tyndale-Biscoe, including artifacts from locations spanning Hatfield Midden, St James; White Marl, St Catherine; Rio Chico, St Ann; and Bowden, St Thomas. Tyndale-Biscoe worked at such sites as White Marl in the early 1950s (Allworth-Jones 2008:162-163), and published on some of his excavations (Tyndale-Biscoe 1952; 1954; 1962).

³³ Accession number 1924.97.1. Records indicate that the ceramic was collected in 1921.

³⁴ These include a stone celt acquired during the voyage of the HMS *Challenger* in the 1870s by

Henry Nottidge Moseley (donated in 1915) and a grinder from Parnassus Estate, Clarendon Parish donated by William Gregory Dawkins in 1893 (Hicks and Cooper 2013:406).

³⁵ C. D. Hotobah During was a lawyer from Sierra Leone who travelled to London for study in 1908, and over the course of the next few years, was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Member of the Royal Anthropological Institute. He donated predominantly African artifacts to institutions in both London (Horniman Museum) and Liverpool (World Museum). He married a Jamaican, and travelled to the Caribbean ca. 1914, where he may have collected the stone celts (Kingdon 2019:141).



Figure 6. Jamaican celts in the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, U.K. (Left): chisel, labelled “Moy Hall, nr. Reading,” L: 7.8cm; W: 2cm; D: 1.5cm; 1936.41.? (center) large celt labelled “Jamaica, Tainan Tribe,” acquired via Harry Geoffrey Beasley in 1954, L: 21cm; W: 8cm; D: 3cm, 1954.8.159; (top right) celt, “nr. Montego Bay,” L: 7.8cm; W: 5cm; D: 2.4cm, 1936.41.? (bottom right) celt, ex-MacCormack collection, U.S. National Museum, L: 12cm; W: 6cm; D: 2.8cm, 1921.67.68; Photo J. Ostapkowicz, courtesy and © Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

Various European institutions obtained Jamaican material during this period, including Stockholm’s Etnografiska Museet: Erland Nordenskiöld visited the Caribbean islands of

Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad during the Swedish Expedition to South America in 1904–1905, and donated three stone artefacts from Jamaica to the museum in 1905 (Mia Broné, EMS, personal communication 2021). In 1914, they acquired 34 artifacts, including celts and ceramics, through an exchange with Heye’s MAI; these were predominantly from Theodoor de Booy’s excavations at the sites of Retreat and Salt River. In 1927, Gothenburg’s Världskulturmuseet acquired 63 chipped stone implements reportedly recovered from Old Harbour via Lieutenant A. F. Scholander (accession 1927.26), followed in 1932 by another group of 34 implements (accession 1932.12).³⁶ These were discussed by Lovén (1932), who saw no stylistic connections between the tanged points and chert tools from Cuba and the Dominican Republic. More recently, however, they have been attributed to Florida, as they are diagnostic of Middle Archaic points from southeastern U.S. (Keegan 2019:194), and their link to Jamaica is therefore a miss-attribution (see also Howard 1950:119). Other examples of such misattributions can readily be found among circum-Caribbean collections (cf. Ostapkowicz 1998). This clearly demonstrates the need to view early collections with uncertain provenance with a critical eye.

Jamaican collections also entered American institutions at this time, including the MAI, which acquired a collection of stone artifacts (predominantly celts) in 1906 via George J. Neish, a dentist in Bath, Jamaica (NMAI accession records).³⁷ In 1933, Marian deWolf presented finds and field notes from the three sites (Retreat, Windsor, and Little River) she excavated in St Ann’s parish to the MAI, publishing a report on her work two decades later (DeWolf 1953). Via the Bureau of American Ethnology, the U.S. National Museum (now NMNH), purchased over 130 artifacts (including celts and many ceramic sherds) from J. F. Brennan in 1901, and 22 ceramics (boat shaped and globular bowls as well as sherds and human remains) were acquired as a gift via Charles A. Sangster in

³⁶ <https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-vkm/web/object/54192> shows the first catalogue entry in the 1927.26 series; <https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-vkm/web/object/54227> showing the first catalogue entry in the 1932.12 series.

³⁷ The collection is available to view on-line: https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/search?edan_q=George%20J.%20Neish

1929.³⁸ A collection of human skeletal remains from Abingdon Cave (Hanover) was also acquired via naturalist C. R. Orcutt (b. 1864; d. 1929), who was resident in Jamaica in the 1920s (Duijvenbode 2017:136). Howard (1956:45) mentions that William Krieger, of the U.S. National Museum, carried out excavations in Jamaica but that this work was “never...fully described in the literature” (Howard 1956:45). There are no artifacts acquired by Krieger in the NMNH collections today that bear a Jamaican provenance, and the only mention of Jamaica in Krieger’s publications relates to comparative collections from the island from previous Smithsonian expeditions (Krieger 1938:95). Indeed, given the dearth of information available about Krieger’s Caribbean investigations (e.g., Ostapkowicz, in press; Davies and Oldfield 2003), it is unclear whether he did any work in Jamaica.

Adolf Bastian and Adolf C. Reichard (active in Jamaica in 1904)

Berlin’s Ethnologisches Museum holds a significant collection from Jamaica, acquired via noted ethnographer, founder and first director of the museum, Adolf Bastian, who had visited in 1904 specifically to “study the earlier history of Jamaica” (Tylor 1905:101; see also Kreinath 2013:53). He died unexpectedly in 1905 in Port of Spain, Trinidad, before he was able to complete an overview of his work in the

region.³⁹ The collection numbers in the thousands, spanning stone celts, shell tools and ceramics as well as human remains; it also contains archival photographs (notably with provenance information) documenting material in the Institute of Jamaica (**Figure 7**) (identical artifacts also appear in Duerden’s 1897 publication). The Director of the Berlin museum’s Americas department, Karl von den Steinen (1905:237, translation Ostapkowicz), in writing an *in memoriam*, noted that Bastian “zealously accepted our request to supplement the extremely patchy holdings from the Antilles and secured us a valuable collection from prehistoric sites, especially from Jamaican caves, which were brought together by Dr. Adolf C. Reichard. This was the last that Bastian won for ethnology.” Bastian excavated middens at “Black River,” “Pedro,” “Old Harbour Bay” and “Kingston,” while Reichard explored several burial caves near Montego Bay, as well as making collections of pottery and stone artifacts (Howard 1950:39). In addition, artifacts bearing the provenance of “Cranbrook, Townsend, Portland Point, New Market, Negril, Spring Garden and Mamma Hill” are also documented in the collections. Unfortunately, little is known of this work, though Reichard (1904) did publish the brief and unfortunately obscure article, *Discoveries in Jamaica*.

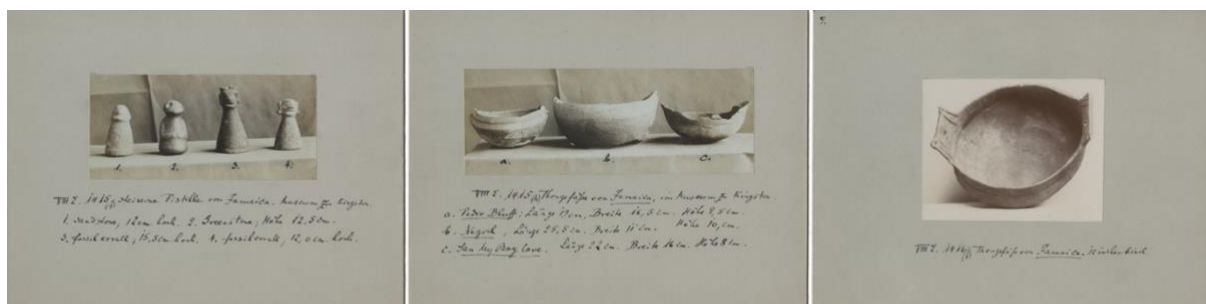


Figure 7. Archival photographs of Jamaican collections acquired via Adolf Bastian documenting collections at the Institute of Jamaica; these may prove useful in tracking provenance for pieces that have subsequently lost this information. Left: stone anthropomorphic pestles, VIII E 1415f.

³⁸ The accession records (Acc. No. 103642) note: “earthenware vessels found in a burial cave (no. 1) on his [Sangster’s] estate (Abingdon, Hanover), near Green Island, P. O. Jamaica, and presented to the United States National Museum by Charles Adolphus Sangster, through C. R. Orcutt (American Consul, Kingston, Jamaica, B.W.I.)” The human remains are catalogued under numbers 341678-82,

listing “skulls (parts of lower jaws) and incomplete skeletons.”

³⁹ There is some correspondence on file at the Ethnologisches Museum that could pertain to Bastian’s time in Jamaica, but his writing is reportedly very difficult to decipher. His documents are being digitised and should be available for study soon (Manuela Fischer, EMB, personal communication 2021).

These same pestles also feature in Duerden (1897: Plate IV, Fig 1-4). Center: three ceramic vessels, VII E 1415h. These also feature in Duerden (1897: Plate V, Fig 1-2, 4). Right: Complete ceramic vessel, VIII E 1416f. Courtesy, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin.

In his reconnaissance of Caribbean collections held in Europe in 1912-1913, Jesse Walter Fewkes (4408:59a, Saturday November 15, 1912) made a note to himself to acquire "... pictures of objects obtained by Dr. Bastian from Jamaica. Dr. Reichart [sic] probably has negatives." Whether he obtained these when visiting Berlin in September 1913 is unclear, but he did consult the Caribbean collections, noting "The Berlin Museum contains a number of good specimens among which are 1/ Bastian collection from Jamaica which has about 20 large rude bowls that look like good things but

may be doubtful.⁴⁰ There are also many specimens from 2/ Richard Reichard Coll, especially from Haiti...." (Fewkes 4408:59d). He illustrates several ceramics from the Reichard Jamaican collection in his notebook on 21 Sept 1913 (**Figure 8**) (Fewkes ms 4408:59d). But since then, and aside from Reichard's (1904) brief article, only summary statements on the work undertaken by the two German researchers have appeared in the wider literature on Jamaican archaeology (Howard 1950:39).

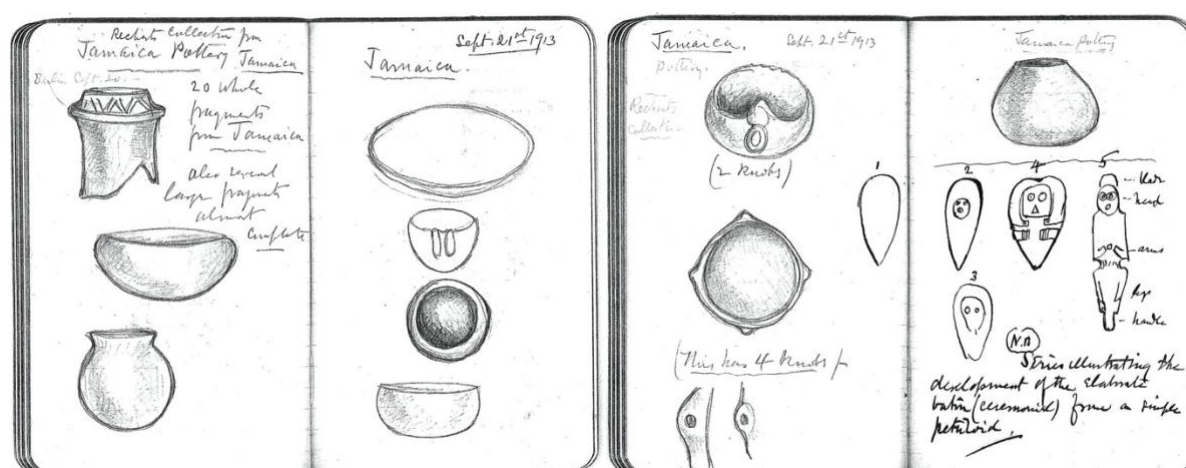


Figure 8. Jesse Walter Fewkes' notes from a visit to the Berlin Museum to consult the Caribbean collections, and the sketches he made of some of the Reichard collection of ceramics from Jamaica. Courtesy, the Jesse Walter Fewkes archives, ms 4408:59d, National Anthropology Archives, Smithsonian.

Theodoor de Booy (active in Jamaica in 1913)

De Booy visited Jamaica between January and March 1913, and cleared permissions for his excavations with the Reverend J. P. Hall (de Booy 1913:425). He returned to New York with 645 artifacts for George Heye's MAI, which were subsumed under 149 catalogue numbers (de Booy 1913:425; Curet and Galban 2019:5). The majority of artifacts are from the site of Retreat (252 objects under 68 catalogue numbers), where de Booy was able to excavate four (of 16) mounds that he reported in his subsequent publication (de Booy 1913), as well as a further

three mounds that did not make the report (de Booy 1913; Curet and Galban 2019:13). The NMAI collections have quite detailed information, organized by midden number and recovery date (Curet and Galban 2019:13). As Curet and Galban (2019:12-13) note, de Booy's report identifies the purpose of his excavations – namely, locating the position of the original dwellings, and how this reflects on settlement patterns, as well as identifying the subsistence strategies of the inhabitants. His work also focused on the site's stratigraphy and the distinguishing features of the local pottery, as contrasted by ceramic styles on other islands (he considered the Jamaican ceramic style a

⁴⁰ It is not clear why or in what sense Fewkes considered some doubtful, but there was clear

interest on his part in learning more about the collection (Fewkes 4408:59d).

“class by itself”; de Booy 1914:433). Other sites de Booy must have briefly assessed include “Moneague” (17 artifacts; 11 catalogue numbers) and “Rio Bueno” (204 artifacts; 7 catalogue numbers).

De Booy was also instrumental in securing through purchase or donation artifacts from local collectors, such as Rev. J. P. Hall and R. C. MacCormack (as discussed above) (Curet and Galban 2019:13). For example, Rev. J. P. Hall’s collection of ceramics, stone and shell artifacts from various sites in St Ann parish was accessioned by the Heye Foundation only a year after de Booy’s work on the island.⁴¹ De Booy also secured unique artifacts for the collections: for example, an anthropomorphic wooden sculpture from Cedar Valley, St Ann, possibly a historic grave marker (dating to cal AD 1666-1951, with the greatest probability [35.9%] of AD 1720-1784) (see Ostapkowicz et al. 2012).

A small assortment of stone artifacts collected by de Booy, including Jamaican material, was transferred from the MAI to the Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven (Roger Colten, PMNH, personal communication 2021), and a ceramic vessel from Moneague, St Ann, was sent to the Nationalmuseum Copenhagen, Denmark (see footnote 24).

George C. Longley (active in Jamaica from ca. 1906)

In 1913, George C. Longley donated ca. 1200 artifacts⁴² to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), accessioned under 494 catalogue numbers;⁴³ these went on display almost immediately in the South American gallery (**Figure 9**). A New York resident, and lifetime member of the AMNH, Longley had wintered in Jamaica since ca. 1906, though it was not until 1912 that he developed an interest in archaeology, digging a number of midden

sites (Longley 1914:295; Howard 1950:45). His investigations were primarily in the interior of the island, due south of Dry Harbour and Rio Bueno, Trelawny; he worked at St Acre, Scarborough, Green Hill and Armadale, St Ann, and at Logie Green, Clarendon Parish (Longley 1914:295; 296). He describes the natural progression of his study as follows:

“My first operations were at St. Acre where some few years ago I discovered large shell deposits when a new road was being cut on the property. The next season I unearthed some fragments of pottery in the deposits. This led me to conduct larger excavations, and I engaged native laborers to assist me in the task. I discovered several small hummocks on the St. Acre hilltop, and made trenches through these, sometimes five or more feet deep, and found deposits of shell, ashes, charcoal and fragments of pottery and stone implements at different levels, as if the Indians had abandoned the village site, and had returned after a time” (Longley 1914:296).

He mentions that his “work at Greenhill was the most extensive, and from the middens there – although they are similar to the St. Acre and other middens – I obtained the best specimens” (Longley 1914:297). He also paid for artifacts: “In this work I was frequently assisted by men who thought I was digging for gold. I paid them for any specimens they brought to light and in consequence the news spread after a while and I was paying real money for Indian stones, and I was rewarded by having many hatchets, stone pendants, and pestles brought into me” (Longley 1914:296-297).

⁴¹ Some of the Hall collection can be viewed on the NMAI web pages:

https://americanindian.si.edu/collections-search/search?edan_q=Rev.%20J.%20P.%20Hall

⁴² Reference has been made to 1500 objects being donated (Longley 1914:295; see also Howard

1950:39), though currently there are some 1200 artifacts accessioned (Sumru Arcali, AMNH, personal communication 2021).

⁴³ Longley also donated a celt to the British Museum in the same year (Acc no. Am1913,-.229-230).

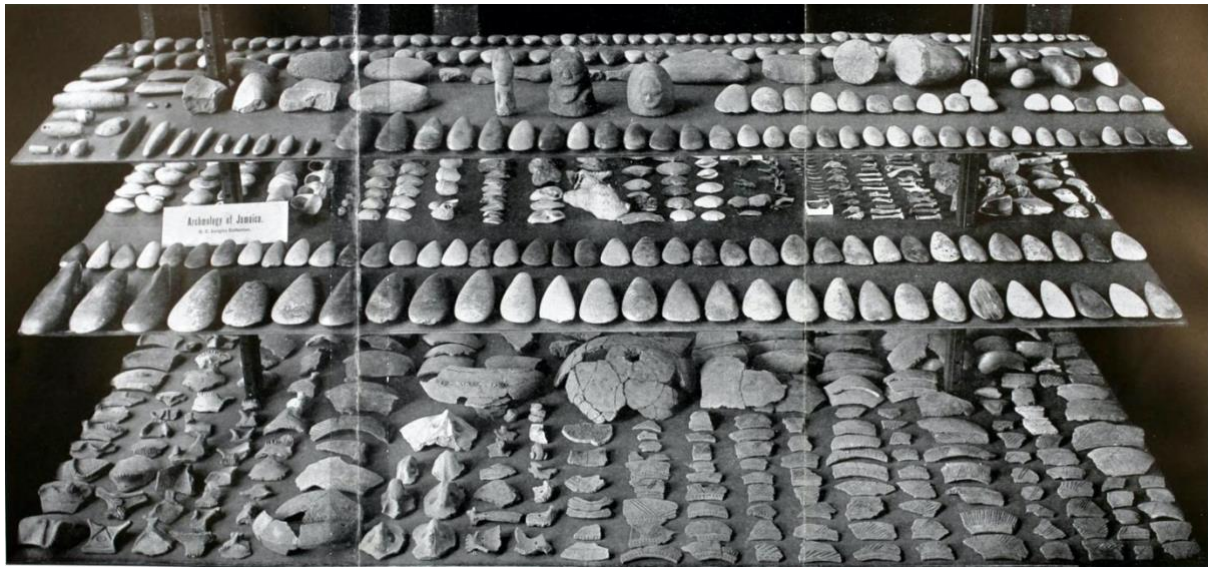


Figure 9. Plate from the Longley's 1914 article, with the caption "Collection from the kitchen middens of prehistoric Jamaica." Context information for some of the finds is provided, including for the bottom shelf: "near the center is a reconstruction from some forty pieces of the bottom of a pottery vessel. The fragments were found at a depth of five feet, associated with wood ashes, shells, and cony [hutia] bones." Photograph by Julius Kirschner, Courtesy American Museum of Natural History Special Collections, 34427.

The collection, acquired by the museum in two donations in 1913 and 1914, includes a large quantity of ceramic sherds, shell artifacts and faunal material, which presumably was acquired from excavation, as well as 300 celts and chisels, most of which were likely purchased; there are also three "stone idols" (two of which are maul-like – see discussion in Howard 1950:116) and cylindrical stone pendants (**Figure 10**). Many of these more elaborate artifacts are provenanced to "vicinity of Brownstown" in the accession records. In the May 1914 edition of *The American Museum Journal*, reference is made to Longley returning from five months' "archaeological study" in Jamaica, where he continued to excavate middens, and added to his previously donated collection, "two human skulls found in a cave in the northeastern end of the island, a stone idol, two perforated

cylindrical stones, usually called 'chief's stones,' more than one hundred stone axes..., and a large number of broken pottery vessels which show the manner of decorating by incised lines and dots" (Dickerson 1914:215). Some of these later additions came from caves, as the *Report of the President* notes that Longley "enriched his Jamaica collection by a large number of stone celts, potsherds and bird, fish and animal bones from cave deposits. This gift has been added to the very large collection previously presented by Mr. Longley..." (Wissler 1916:77). The range of materials held at the AMNH is clearly impressive in both scale and research potential, yet the collection has, to date, remained unstudied, perhaps because the "record of the excavations is sparse indeed" (Allsworth-Jones 2008:10). This, however, does not negate the information inherent within the artefacts themselves.



Figure 10. Stone artifacts from the Longley collection at the American Museum of Natural History. Left: “stone idol,” H: 12.4cm; W: 3.8cm; D: 2.5cm; “vicinity of Brownstown,” Jamaica; AMNH 25.0/1147. Center: stone pendant (“chief’s stone”), H:13.9cm; W: 3.5cm; D: 3.3cm, “vicinity of Brownstown,” Jamaica; AMNH 25.0/1150. Right: stone pendant (“chief’s stone”), H: 9.9cm; W: 2.7cm; D: 2.8cm, “district of Vere,” Jamaica; AMNH 25.0/1591. Photo J. Ostapkowicz, courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Gerrit S. Miller, Jr. (active in Jamaica 1931)

Miller, Curator for the Division of Mammals at the U.S. National Museum (now NMNH), visited Jamaica for three months in 1931, focusing primarily on acquiring mammal bones from the pre-Columbian middens and cave deposits he excavated in the vicinity of Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay (Miller 1932:65). Aside from archaeology, he also gathered together a large collection of plants and wood samples, as well as reptile, treefrog and bat specimens (Miller 1932:68). While he revisited some of Duerden’s sites, he also documented previously unknown sites, including one near the mouth of the Montego

River, which was undergoing active erosion into the sea. Here, numerous ceramic fragments were strewn on the beach and in the water: “how much has been removed... cannot be determined, but I was told that the land extended at least...[40 meters] beyond the present shoreline within the memory of persons now living” (Miller 1932:70). He cut several trenches into three of the site’s mounds, which yielded ceramics “of the usual type,” chipped flints and shell utensils (Miller 1932:70). The faunal, botanical and archaeological collections he acquired during this trip were largely deposited in the U.S. National Museum, and of the archaeological material comprising some

239 artifacts (celts, stone debitage, shell artifacts, ceramic sherds, pestles, a shell trumpet and beads, and even a charred corn cob), the majority are from Montego Bay and “St James.” Some shell artifacts were also deposited at the Institute of Jamaica (Miller 1932:72). Miller clearly consulted the collections at the Institute, and was aware of what material was curated there, donating those artifacts from his excavations that were not represented.

Robert Randolph Howard (active in Jamaica from 1947 until 1965), with a note on C. Bernard Lewis

According to Agorsah (1991:5), Jamaican archaeology truly emerged in the 1940s, when “deliberately organized projects were undertaken, interest in historical archaeology began and attempts were made to develop an overall chronological scheme.” Foundational to these early efforts is the work of C. Bernard Lewis and Robert Howard. While the focus of this paper is international museum collections outside of Jamaica (and hence on Howard’s work), the efforts of C. B. Lewis on behalf of the Institute of Jamaica are significant and merit a more detailed overview than possible here. Briefly, Lewis was curator, and eventually director, at the Institute of Jamaica, and had excavated Cambridge Hill cave, where the remains from 40 burials and numerous ceramic vessels were recovered, alongside the only duho discovered *in situ* on the island; these were deposited in the collections of the Institute of Jamaica (Howard 1950:103, 129).⁴⁴ Lewis made efforts to track down information on far flung Jamaican collections, sharing this with his colleagues (Granberry 1955:256; Howard 1950:130). He supported Howard’s work, accompanying him into the field and facilitating access to local collections; his influence on Howard’s emerging understanding of Jamaican archaeology is clearly acknowledged in the latter’s thesis: “[Lewis] gave me every possible help and invaluable practical advice. What work I was able to do would have been quite literally impossible without his enthusiastic and unfailing cooperation” (Howard 1950:3).

Howard initiated his fieldwork in 1947 with a dedicated effort to review local collections, particularly those of the Institute of Jamaica (Howard 1950:11; 41) as well as the private holdings of collectors such as Cyril Huckerby of Spanish Town, Harry Vendryes of Kingston and C. S. Cotter of Golden Spring (Howard 1950:11; 40). Huckerby and Vendryes made surface collections as well as undertaking small scale excavations at White Marl and other smaller sites in the parish of St Catherine. Indeed, Howard (1950:3) credits Huckerby “for the loan of one of his trained assistants who helped me greatly in the surface collections I made at the White Marl site” – another example of locals guiding archaeologists to findspots, common across the Caribbean (e.g., Ostapkowicz, in press). Cotter, aside from his significant work at Sevilla la Nueva (New Seville), St Ann, made “important investigations in various burial caves and middens on the northern and southern coasts of the island” (Howard 1950:40). Howard considered Cotter the “most enthusiastic and certainly the best informed amateur archaeologist on the island” who proved an “invaluable source of information.” Howard relied on access to these private collections as well as to published sources for information about sites he was unable to visit personally (Howard 1950:12), but he was clear on the limitation of these sources. Attempts at assessing ceramic typologies and chronologies – one of Howard’s key aims – were particularly difficult:

“Virtually all the pottery collections to which the author had access were made without any such [typological/chronological] problems in the mind of the collector. In this respect, even the forces of nature seem to have conspired against the archaeologist. When the earthquake of 1907 destroyed the building which then housed the Institute of Jamaica, most of the documentation which was present with the collections was lost or misplaced and the result was a good deal of inevitable mixing and

⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Lewis did not publish a full report of the excavations. Howard (1950:129) noted that the “exceptionally well preserve [human remains] and would repay study by qualified physical

anthropologists,” and in the early 1960s, W. F. Harper was able to study 24 crania (Allsworth-Jones 2008:12; 125) noting marked cranial modification on all.

confusion. What destruction the earthquake failed to accomplish was completed by the termites and their kin so that during the long period when archaeological interest was at a low ebb in Jamaica, the few remaining labels and other identifying data were, in many cases, consumed by the hungry insects. As a result, it is very difficult to discover where most of the extensive sherd collections now in the Institute originally came from or who collected them. The various collections in different museums in the United States are almost all from limited areas and are poorly documented” (Howard 1950:135).

It is for this reason that he turned to excavation during the “Yale-Jamaica expedition” of 1947-1948, and amassed a collection of over 2000 artifacts, under 186 catalogue entries, that were accessioned into the Peabody Museum of Natural History on 30 September 1948 (Roger Colten, PMNH, personal communication 2021). Howard’s thesis provided information on 75 middens, 27 caves and nine rock art sites (Howard 1950; Allsworth-Jones 2008:11). His assessments established and defined the White Marl ceramic series (the type site of the Jamaican Meillacan Ostionoid subseries), which remains valid today (Allsworth-Jones 2008:12; Lesley-Gail Atkinson-Swaby, personal communication 2022), and documented artifacts (including a wooden “canoe” fragment from Halberstadt cave, recovered by Duerden in 1895) in the collections of the Institute of Jamaica, little known outside the country. He noted sites that were irrevocably damaged since their initial documentation by Duerden (Howard 1950:42), as well as sites that had not previously been recorded (many of which could not be relocated by James Lee – Allsworth-Jones 2008:11). In all, he did a remarkable amount in the two short field seasons, totaling four months, that he was on the island. But despite his contributions to Jamaican archaeology, Howard was surprisingly dismissive of the material culture he excavated and studied (“not very spectacular and offer[ing] few features to excite the interest or curiosity of the casual observer” – Howard 1956:45). Further, he considered the cultures inhabiting the island prehistorically to be “sub-

Taíno” – featuring a state of development he termed a “cultural retardation” (Howard 1950:169; 437) in comparison to cultures to the north (e.g., Hispaniola, the homeland of the “Taíno”). As Allsworth-Jones (2008:13) notes, “Despite Howard’s own enthusiasm for the subject, and his sterling work, it is possible that these remarks did a disservice to the country, since they were not at all calculated to arouse the interest of outsiders in the years to follow.”

Howard would continue work at White Marl in the late 1950s/early 1960s, publishing a few articles on Jamaican archaeology (e.g. Howard 1965) before his untimely death in 1965. Work at the site would continue between 1965 and 1968 under the direction of Howard’s former graduate student, R. L. Vanderwal, who together with his colleagues at the Institute of Jamaica helped to establish the White Marl Museum. It is clear that unlike Howard’s initial excavations, all material from the 1960s excavations stayed on-island at the museum and laboratory, though damage from Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, and the unstable and volatile location of the museum (which led to numerous closures over the years - Lesley-Gail Atkinson-Swaby, personal communication 2022), resulted in the collection being transferred to the Jamaica National Heritage Trust in Port Royal (Allsworth-Jones 2008:15), with some reorganization of the assemblage needed (Allsworth-Jones et al. 2007:374). As Allsworth-Jones (2008:15) notes, the collection “has never been systematically studied. Despite all the work done over the years, therefore, White Marl remains, thanks to various misfortunes, essentially a lost opportunity, a headless colossus of Jamaican prehistory.” The potential to review and reassess the assemblage, however, remains (e.g., Allsworth-Jones et al., 2007).

Since the 1960s Jamaican archaeology has grown exponentially, as have museum collections with the excavated materials, most remaining in Jamaica (this itself presents its own “curatorial crisis,” with significant demands on funding for the long-term care of these collections – a subject beyond the scope of this paper). There are other international collections of Jamaican material that extend beyond this date that can only be briefly mentioned here – such as those acquired over the years by Irving Rouse via various sources (some through his own work, some given to him by local residents and fellow visitors), and

likely used as part of his comparative collections; all were transferred to the Peabody Museum of Natural History in 1991.⁴⁵ These comprise over 300 artifacts from the sites of Alligator Pond, Calabash Bay, Fairfield (Montego Bay), Great Bay and White Marl. They were catalogued by Rouse, but there do not appear to be any field notes associated with these collections (Roger Colten, PMNH, personal communication 2021). Another significant collection is held by the British Museum, which curates the material acquired via Daniel Bruce in 1969, resulting from his investigations of several Jamaican midden, cave and rock art sites.⁴⁶ Bruce undertook small scale excavations at White Marl, Vere/Breadnut Gully, Tydenham, Tower Hill, Belvedere, Jack's Hill and Rio Nuevo; he also and worked with José M. Cruxent at Braziletto in 1964 and participated in Robert Howard's field school at White Marl (ca. 1966-67) (Daniel Bruce, personal communication 2021). He photographed petroglyphs at Mountain River cave and took plaster casts at Gut River cave, east of Alligator Pond. The collections, comprising ceramics, stone tools, shell work, faunal and human remains, were catalogued, with all documentation, including a series of 1:50000 maps with site locations, transferred to the British Museum. Bruce worked at the British Museum between 1969-1971, also acquiring contemporary Jamaican materials at the request of the museum, including basketry, pottery, tools and fishing equipment (Daniel Bruce, personal communication 2021). In addition, he exchanged collections with the MAI and the Arizona State Museum in 1966; all exchanged items, as well as a small representative selection of Jamaican artifacts, were eventually donated to the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

A brief note on the Lee and Cotter collections: benchmark research on legacy collections

A review of this period of Jamaican archaeological investigation and resulting collections cannot be complete without a brief mention of the holdings that remained on the island, most significantly those which resulted from the work of James Lee (ca. 1951 to 1986) and Capt. Charles Cotter (Sevilla la Nueva excavations 1953-1968). Lee was instrumental in mapping the pre-Columbian archaeological sites on the island, documenting 265 middens and caves (alongside 77 other sites reported in previous studies which he could not relocate – e.g., Duerden 1897, Cundall 1939 and Howard 1950; see above). He made surface collections from 191 sites (164 middens and 27 caves), amassing a staggering 28,149 artifacts, 1221 identified shells, 393 animal bones and 389 human remains, the majority of which he donated to the University of West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston in 2000 (Allsworth-Jones 2008:20; 61). These were meticulously documented in Allsworth-Jones' (2008) publication and accompanying CD-ROM – without doubt the most comprehensive treatment of a single Jamaican collection to date, and a benchmark for the potential of such collections to inform on Jamaican archaeology. The collections analyzed – from the varieties of ceramics (Redware, White Marl and Montego Bay [Meillacan]) and their potential to inform on distinct cultural groups, to animal and shell remains, informing on subsistence practices, to stone ornaments reflecting social identities, to shell inlays which hint at the more complex creations that existed for ceremonial and/or political purposes – are also discussed within the context of other examples in the wider Caribbean. This is a mutually beneficial contextualization, for the artifacts in the collections, and Jamaican and Caribbean archaeology. This goes directly to the point that to ignore such resources as available in museum collections is essentially to remain blind to an important portion of (pre-)history. As

⁴⁵ This large collection consists of material from various sources: "(1) potsherds and stone and bone artifacts from Colombia, Venezuela, Grenada, Martinique, Guadeloupe, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas in the Caribbean area; (2) potsherds

and stone and bone artifacts from South Africa, Taiwan and Japan" (Accession YPM.07610).

⁴⁶ The British Museum recently updated access to its Jamaican collections, particularly the material acquired via Daniel Bruce in the 1960s: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?keyword=Jamaica>

Allsworth-Jones (2008:133) notes: “without even the need for new excavations, there is much that can and should be done to study and publish material already excavated.”

Another excellent example of previously excavated material in Jamaican museum/institutions undergoing new research, is that of Robyn Woodward’s work on the Cotter collection – the “most complete and fully annotated collection of materials from Sevilla la Nueva” (Woodward 1988:143). In 1973, upon Cotter’s death, the excavated materials were bequeathed as a gift to the nation, and are housed at the Institute of Jamaica (Woodward 1988:4; 2006:165). The importance of the site and its finds cannot be overestimated: in the absence of detailed 16th-17th century Spanish archival records, the physical remains are critical to any assessments of this early period of Jamaican history (Woodward 2009:34). The collection, as documented by Woodward (1988), consists of thousands of ceramic sherds (local and imported), faunal remains, bricks, carved stones and glass beads, among other materials. Cotter kept detailed notes of his excavations, including site sketches and maps of areas worked, as well as an inventory of materials recovered (Woodward 1988:23). Woodward was able to reconstruct the location of specific finds, and among the most interesting aspects is the high concentration (63.3%) of indigenous (Meillacan) ceramics in the fortress (Woodward 1988:110; 131; 2006:165), which clearly underscores the reliance on native ceramics, and likely the adoption of native foodways, by the Spanish inhabitants. Further, there is evidence that native potters were creating a hybrid ceramic ware merging European ceramic styles with local technologies, identified as “New Seville ware” (previously “St Ann’s Bay ware”; Woodward 1988:111; 132; Woodward 2009:39). In featuring the adoption of indigenous ceramics by the Spanish, as well as hybrid ceramics merging indigenous and Spanish traditions, the Sevilla la Nueva artifacts in the Cotter Collection document the ways in which prolonged contact between the Spanish and indigenous groups affected material culture as well as foodways. Further, there has also been the suggestion that Taíno artisans worked under the direction of Franciscan monks to create the spectacular carvings destined for the newly founded abbey (ca. 1525-1530), known as the “Seville Pillars” (Curtin 1994; Mol and

Mol 2011:2). The *cronista* Bartolomé de Las Casas specifically noted that the stone carvers involved in the construction of the abbey and governor’s house were a group of Indians who were led by a local cacique, baptized Juan de Medina; under the *encomienda*, they were obliged to work for the Spanish (Mol and Mol 2011:2). As suggested by Sylvia Wynter (in Curtin 1994:23), the carvings represent “an inter-assimilation of the mimetic aesthetic of Renaissance Spain and of the dynamic aesthetic of the Arawak religio-symbolic system.” Mol and Mol (2011), for example, note that some of the iconography – such as the “frog-legged woman” flanked by two birds – is a syncretic merging of indigenous and Spanish symbolism. What this brief introduction to Sevilla la Nueva material underscores is the significance of revisiting these important artifacts and the details from the Cotter excavations in order to build our understanding of the very earliest colonial period in Jamaica, and indigenous agency within this context.

The results of these two studies offer excellent insights into what can be achieved with material now housed in museums or institutions. These collections often have site information, and in some instances, more detailed stratigraphic context, but even with artifacts that lack this detail, there is great potential in using scientific techniques to provide insights into these materials and their histories (see, for example, Ostapkowicz et. al., 2013; Ostapkowicz 2015). It is high time that other collections dispersed in international museums are also brought into wider discourse on Jamaican archaeology. While the primary focus here has been on prehistoric materials, the same point clearly applies to the island’s complex colonial and post-colonial histories.

Considerations, inspirations, aspirations

The above is a brief overview of the Jamaican pre-Columbian collections amassed ca. 1680-1970, a span of some three centuries; and these are only the collections that have been *documented* as bearing a Jamaican provenance. It is ultimately these collections, and those subsequently acquired, held both within Jamaica and abroad, to which we can return with new questions, in an ongoing reassessment of our understandings of the past.

And it is important not to underestimate the scale, significance and range of collections from Jamaica, and their impact on perceptions

of not only Jamaican, but world history. Their histories are entangled not simply with their island source and the hands of those who originally created them, but with the interests of those who found and safeguarded them,⁴⁷ those who took them as “curiosities” from the island since the 16th century or who viewed them through the colonial gaze as another “resource” to be acquired, to those who studied them as the field of archaeology emerged, and to those institutions which now care for them, reinterpreting them for local and world audiences. There are also many individuals on-island and among the diaspora who are re-engaging with these legacy collections to explore fundamental questions of heritage and identity. New histories, rather the repeated hegemony of colonial discourse, will undoubtedly emerge from this re-connection.

A clear example of this entanglement – of the imprint of multiple hands and perspectives on creation and re/interpretation of Jamaican and Caribbean pre/history – are the three Carpenter’s Mountain carvings, found in 1792. Over the last century, they have emerged

as icons of national identity, providing visual inspiration for both local and international artists, as well as being core to debates on repatriation (Boxer 1994; Ostapkowicz 2015a; Poupeye 2019; Rea 2019). Jasmine Thomas-Girvan’s *Weaving Hummingbirds* (2015; **Figure 11**) illuminates some of the complexities of these issues. It features the large anthropomorphic carving rooted to the ground on outstretched hands, with an exposed blood-red heart from which emerge hummingbirds trailing red, ribbon-like veins. His red eyes stare impassively, deep grooves channeling tears down the cheeks. An explosion of color and pattern, like the facets of a brilliantly cut stone, emerges from his head – this, a stylized depiction of a seed, the artist calls a “symbol of the infinite potential and life” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021). Set against a white backdrop, the focus is entirely on the powerful image of the anthropomorph, which the artist considers an “elegy to our neglected ancestral lineage” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021).

⁴⁷ Including, for example, local subsistence farmer Leonard Clayton who safeguarded the Aboukir cemís for five decades (from 1940s to 1992) before

they were passed to the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and eventually into the National Gallery of Jamaica collections (Chacko 2002:211).



Figure 11. *Weaving Hummingbirds*, 2017, Jasmine Thomas-Girvan. Acrylic ink, graphite and collage on paper, H: 111cm; W: 77cm. Image courtesy and © Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

But this is not simply an homage to the pre-Columbian past. As powerful as this single image is, it is but one component in a much more complex installation, *Of Flesh and Ether* (2015) (**Figure 12**), which is both a deeply personal work and one that explores the parallels and connections linking the peoples of the Caribbean. The cemí is set at one end of a large table, directly opposite an image embodying the “Archetypal Goddess,” with her heart also exposed, the red veins spilling onto the table in red ribbons. The interconnections of ribbon, glass and plant materials on and above the table are reminiscent of the inner workings of a clock, merging time and space between the Indigenous and African heritages – “an internal dialogue with our ancestral legacies.” These varied elements stretching between the two interlocutors are what the artist calls “an apparatus for safe passage,” referencing the fragility of life and our temporal existence, as well as connections that “are sometimes

tenuous and fragile yet strong and durable” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021). The Goddess, too, wears a faceted seed crown, a direct reference to Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano’s prose which pays homage to maroon communities, and the female ancestors who strategically hid seeds in their hair when escaping enslavement to guarantee the subsistence of future generations. She is “cloaked and protected in roots/tributaries/arteries and... armed with a feather – symbol of trust... strength, wisdom, power and freedom [in] honor [of] our indigenous cosmologies” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021). There are strong visual parallels between the two figures, who face each other in apparent dialogue. The artist sees these “conversations with history” as necessary to understand the present self, to explore the “infinity of traces” of historical processes (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021).

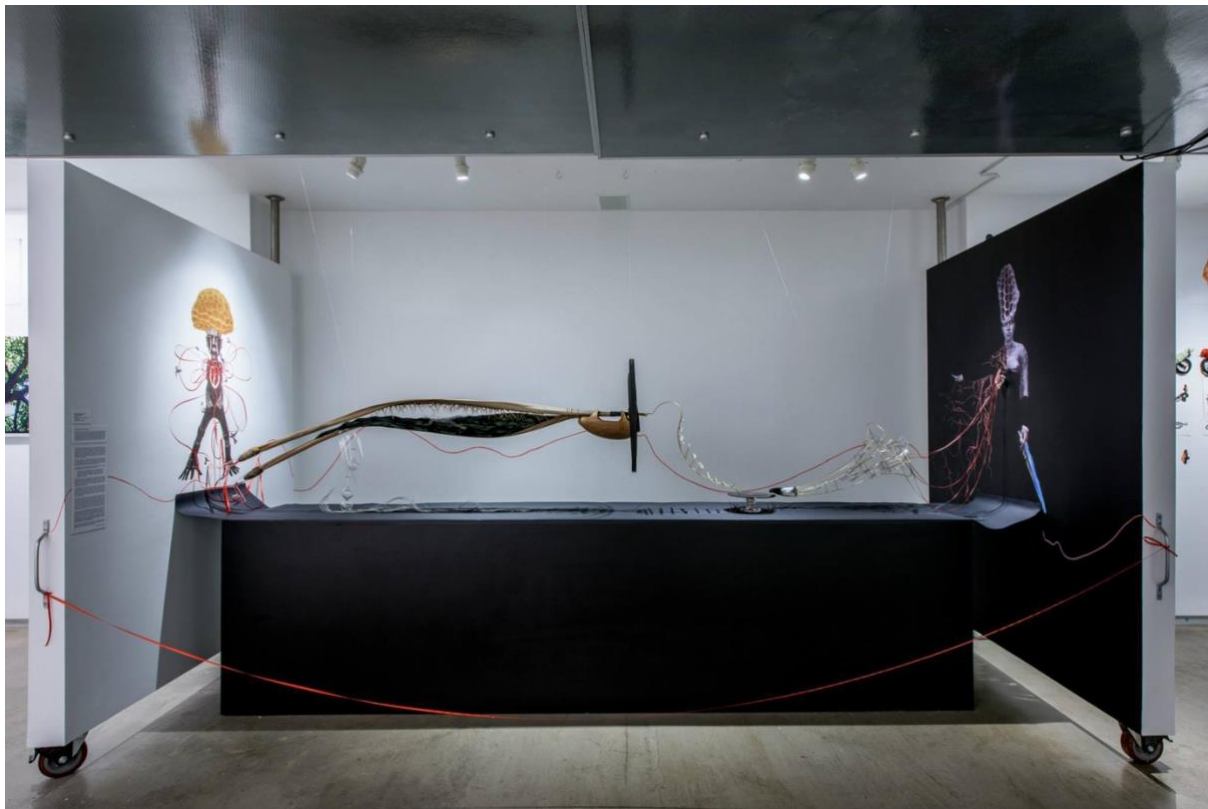


Figure 12. *Of Flesh and Ether*, installation 2015, Jasmine Thomas-Girvan. Collage, palm frond, glass, plexi, horn, paper, feather. Image courtesy and © Jasmine Thomas-Girvan.

Thomas-Girvan (b. 1961), a Jamaican national residing in Trinidad since 2000 and an internationally recognized jeweler and sculptor

(twice winner of the prestigious Aarons Matalon Award for the Jamaica Biennial in 2012 and 2017, and most recently the Jamaica

Art Society In Focus Fellow, 2021-2022), has taken inspiration from Taíno cosmology and iconography in works including *Terra Preta* (2015), *Real Princess* (2016),⁴⁸ *Ancestral Anguish Real* (2017), *Axis Mundi* (2018) and *Moon* (2019). She recalls that seeing images of Taíno artifacts in school history books had no initial resonance with her: “In our history books, the Taino/Arawak/Carib story was transcribed as incidental to our Caribbean story. Caribbean History taught the triumph of western systems over the perceived vanquished indigenous cultures” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021). Later in life, these indigenous creations became, together with African iconography, anchors to her intricate, eloquent artworks – the foundation for exploring the complexities of Caribbean cultural histories. She notes: “my most recent work considers the indigenous heritage of the wider Caribbean, particularly Taíno and African cosmology. This work is a tool for reflection, exhuming the forgotten mysteries of the Indigenous and African presence by creating visual poetry in sculpture that is saturated with metaphors, motifs and materials that celebrate our First Peoples” (in Mendes-Franco 2021). For *Weaving Hummingbirds*, created during a period of deep personal mourning, she “unconsciously retrieved” the imagery of the cemí, with its deep tear channels – a reference to “our collective/universal losses as I ruminated on life, death, legacy and spirit” (Thomas-Girvan, personal communication 2021). In other works, such as *Proof of Spirit* (2017) (see **Figure 2**), she calls the Carpenter’s Mountain anthropomorph a “witness to the atrocity of colonialism, crying blood, acknowledging suffering, torment, and greed” (Thomas-Girvan 2021). Her incorporation of Taíno iconography uniquely shapes poetic, surreal and ground-breaking images and concepts that explore transformation and identities, linking the indigenous past to the present, from the vantage point of both Caribbean and world history.

Jamaican Taíno artistry, as seen through the lens of a gifted artist, is here set in the context of contemporary issues within and beyond Jamaica. This is but one object – albeit an iconic one, which is well documented and

studied – used as a catalyst for (re-)connection. What of the unstudied objects in collections the world over? What reinterpretations can they inspire?

In this sense, and many others, it would be ill-advised to ignore these legacy collections. But in order to even begin to assess their potential relevance, we need to understand their scope, to document them and make them accessible for wider dissemination and public knowledge, their provenance and histories of acquisition engaged with openly. This information will undoubtedly benefit not simply the documentation in museums or our knowledge of prehistory; crucially, it will widen the information available to source countries, diaspora communities and those with a vested interest in heritage issues, to name but a few stakeholders. It is a way of encouraging much wider access to, and re-engagement with, this heritage – something that can begin to address a decolonization of collections acquired in various ways, including as part of empire, but no less early archaeological efforts. A re-evaluation – a full disclosure and recontextualization of these legacy collections – is imperative if we are to have an open dialogue, where all stakeholders can engage.

There is a strong push now to “reimagine” museum approaches in light of the many challenges of the 21st century, particularly exploring digitization and virtual dissemination (International Council of Museums 2021). And while some institutions have been proactive in efforts to bring their Jamaican and wider Caribbean collections online, there is still a considerable way to go before a full picture emerges of Jamaican archaeological heritage in museum collections. Overviews of collections in Europe are a good starting point (e.g., <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/nexus1492/about/interactive-nexus-1492>, which identifies 17 of 59 European institutions with Jamaican collections; see also Françaço and Strecker 2017), but the foundational work within these institutions – such as the accurate cataloguing of collections and their histories (e.g., their cultural attributions or the presence of forgeries) – is a complex and time-consuming task, one that in many instances requires external expertise and engagement. Going

⁴⁸ *Real Princess* explores the impact of colonialism and slavery, including a self-portrait which merges with the body of a Hispaniolan trigonolith (three-

pointed stone, often called a cemí), the head covered by a Mendé mask and a Sankofa bird (Thomas-Girvan 2018).

forward, we should keep Agorsah's (1992:1) call in mind, "not only for the development of better analytical approaches, but also collaboration beyond boundaries of evidence

and research" – as well as collaboration across physical boundaries, whether institutional, national, or international.

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