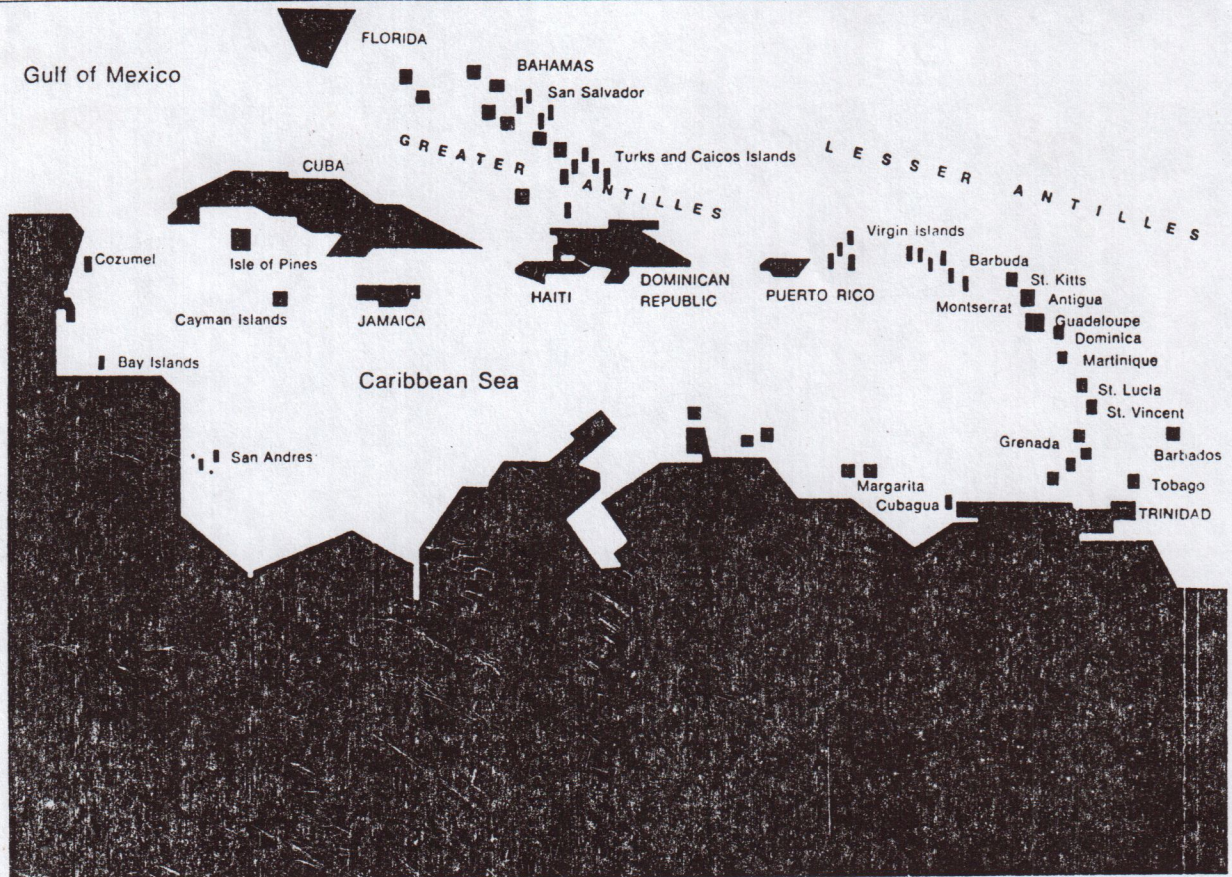


Seafarers and Sculptors of the Caribbean

Elizabeth Kennedy
Easby



The original discoverers of the islands we call the Antilles or West Indies came at least 4000 years before Columbus and his band of ninety seamen. When he sighted the famous flickering light and stepped gratefully ashore next day, he never wondered at finding the innocent and semi-naked Arawaks already there, since he did not realize how far he was from the mainland or indeed that it was no part of Asia. The Spaniards soon became accustomed to seeing native boats that aroused their admiration and compared in size with their own. The small but dependable Niña, for example, which Samuel Eliot Morison estimates at about 70 feet, sailed with a crew of 24 though she carried more than 100 safely to Spain after the disastrous hurricane of 1495. Meanwhile Columbus had reported huge dugout "canoes" with 70 and 80 paddlers, and one in Cuba big enough for 150 men and 70 feet long. Later in Jamaica he measured one of 96 feet. The large vessels had sails that could be used if the wind and strong currents were favorable. The ubiquitous dugouts ranged in size down to one-man canoes, and there were also rafts.

Nothing is left of early Caribbean watercraft, but ancient settlements throughout the islands offer evidence enough of long-standing maritime ties. Archaeological finds also reveal connections with various parts of the mainland, especially eastern Venezuela, where the island chain of the Lesser Antilles swings southwestward within 90 miles of Trinidad and Tobago to parallel the coast

all the way to the tip of Colombia. At the other end, the Bahamas and small islands off Cuba come even closer to Florida's coast and keys. The 120-mile Yucatan Channel is the most difficult crossing, and there is no trace of frequent contacts with the Maya. Relationships with lower Central America seem more evident, and possible by way of the small islands, cays and shallows scattered across the 400-some miles between Jamaica and the projecting Honduras-Nicaragua coast. This would have been the route referred to by informants who told Columbus of land that lay ten days' voyage by canoe from Hispaniola and Jamaica. Such information, fairly accurate and no doubt freely given in the hope that the Spaniards would move on, led them to the main sources of gold in Costa Rica and Panama. For two decades thereafter they explored the Caribbean world (half the size of the Mediterranean), consolidating their positions around its shores before venturing into the continents, where resistance was more formidable and travel, for them as for the native peoples before them, so much more difficult overland than it was by water.

Under Spanish rule the West Indians fared perhaps worse than their kinsmen on the mainland; their tragedy inspired Father Bartolomé de las Casas to his lifelong battle against colonial injustice, softening the blow however slightly for the rest. Native culture was in the end extinguished. Slavery, overwork and new diseases against which they had no immunity carried off

1 Prismatic stemmed blade of flint. Central Valley (Cibao), Dominican Republic, c. 500 B.C. Length, 19 cm. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

2 Incised rim of a large Taino bowl. San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. A.D. 850-1500. Width of band, c. 4 cm. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

most of the people, and the traditions of those who survived were soon submerged in the alien ways of Europe and West Africa.

The ill-fated islanders belonged to three major groups, the Ciboney, the various branches of the Arawak, and the Carib. They shared a seafaring background but differed greatly in their way of life and history, which is being reconstructed as best may be from contemporary reports and from archaeological work.

The Ciboney of the fifteenth century had retreated to the far western parts of Cuba and Hispaniola and nearby small islands. Considered backward but harmless, they lived on wild foods and small game, fish and shellfish. Their remote ancestors, living in essentially the same way, had left artifacts of chipped and ground stone, bone and shell elsewhere in the Greater Antilles. Beyond, non-ceramic sites have been identified only on St. Thomas and Antigua, probably dating from the fifth century B.C. The earliest radiocarbon dates are around 2500 B.C., from the southern shore of the Dominican Republic, but Irving Rouse estimates that the first inhabitants may have arrived as early as 5000 B.C. Since the world's oceans were then only beginning to rise to their present levels with the melting of the great glaciers, land masses were larger and more numerous. Early boatmen could have reached many of the islands, including some now submerged, without going out of sight of land. They came evidently at different times and from different parts of the mainland; assemblages of artifacts from certain sites resemble those from the coast of Florida or Venezuela more than they do those from the next island. Some that appear unique were probably developed in the islands or derived from sources still undiscovered in Central America.

Many times fishermen and boatmen pursuing manatee (sea cows) or turtles were undoubtedly driven toward the islands by storms, but the first to make their way out intentionally may have been hunters more interested in game than seafood. Though there are no large native land animals now, Spanish accounts mention several tasty species no longer extant that have been identified with bones of large rodents excavated from refuse heaps in the Greater Antilles. These also contained bones of extinct ground sloths, the largest being *Megalocnus rodens* (Leidy), a creature about the size of a black bear. The great sloths, exterminated on the mainland about the time of man's first appearance in the islands, survived there much longer, perhaps (the records are not clear) until well after the arrival of pottery-making peoples.

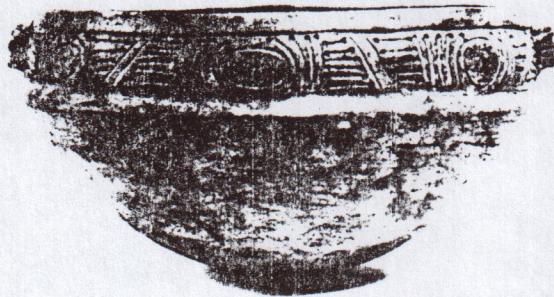
The oldest sites known are in localities on Hispaniola where early hunters found flint at hand for making crude tools and heavy flake blades, the heads of thrusting spears. Later they used stemmed blades with an unusual dagger-like shape. These, as William Coe first noticed, are also found on the mainland, predominantly in Central America, strengthening the possibility of early voyages across what is now the Mosquito Bank.

Such blades, of both flint and obsidian, were sometimes included in Maya ceremonial caches of late Preclassic times (A.D. 1-250) and they may likewise have had some special significance to the predecessors of the historic Ciboney.

The Island Arawak were the predominant people of the Antilles. Unlike the Ciboney, they depended mainly on farming as did the Arawak of Venezuela, the Guianas, and the Amazon valley. The staple crop was bitter manioc (familiar to us only in the form of certain farina breakfast cereals and tapioca, regrettably). The manioc root, grated and freed of its poisonous juice, was baked in flat cakes on the heavy pottery griddles that are found at nearly every site along with the finer ceramics by which Arawak history is traced.

Ceramics and associated radiocarbon dates show that farming peoples began migrating into the Lesser Antilles just before the time of Christ, bringing with them a tradition of painted pottery (Saladoid) derived from the Orinoco valley. Within two hundred years they had reached Puerto Rico. Between A.D. 700 and 1000 the islands were fully settled, with all the best farm land brought under cultivation and dotted with villages. Pottery was no longer decorated by painting; plainer wares, the first to appear on some islands, were made throughout the Greater Antilles. A more elaborate style soon emerged in the eastern part of Hispaniola and spread westward into Cuba and eastward through Puerto Rico into the Virgin Islands and the Bahamas, marking the expansion of the most advanced Arawak group, the Taino. Their pottery, characterized by fanciful shapes, modeled adornos, and incising, especially with lines that end in punctations, also reflects a Venezuelan tradition (Barrancoid) but not a specific style. Other highly ornamented monochrome wares are found in the Amazon valley and all around the Caribbean except the Lesser Antilles and Maya Yucatan, but are rarely encountered elsewhere in the Americas. This pattern implies contacts that may explain in part why the Taino developed a more complex culture than their island neighbors.

Taino society seems to have been much like that of Central America, with towns and villages ruled by local chiefs, sometimes under more powerful district rulers. Ceremonial life centered around plazas or ball courts that were well surfaced and enclosed by stone columns, slabs, and boulders carved with representations of deities. Since temples as well as dwellings were built of



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perishable materials, nothing is left to mark the sites except the plazas, and burial and house mounds. Nevertheless the mountains contain many caves once used for religious rites and burial, where the finest pottery and outstanding sculpture in stone and even wood were preserved.

The Island Carib, the third major Indian group, can be thought of as the Vikings of the Indies except that their name was preserved not only in "Caribbean" but also in the word "cannibal." They were farmers, mariners and warriors, whose raids and conquests had terrorized the Arawak. Moving out from the South American coast, they had completely taken over the Lesser Antilles by the late fifteenth century and gained footholds as far west as Puerto Rico for further raiding into the Greater Antilles. According to oral tradition they achieved all this within only a few generations, but archaeological confirmation is curiously lacking. The only pottery identified even tentatively as Carib appears as early as A.D. 1000. The ceramic record, even when it becomes better known, may remain unclear; the Carib customarily appropriated the Arawak women, who probably continued to follow their own ways in weaving, pottery making and other domestic arts just as they are known to have continued speaking their own language.

The chronological framework established for the Antilles and Venezuela by Irving Rouse succeeds in ordering the complex history of the ever-moving and changing island peoples within four major time divisions, approximately as follows:

I: 5000-1000 B.C. The Meso-Indian Period of Venezuela, roughly the preagricultural and Early Preclassic of Middle America. Some islands of the Antilles were inhabited by hunting-gathering peoples with a lithic technology.

IIA and B: 1000 B.C.-A.D. 300. The first of the Neo-Indian Periods, corresponding to the Middle and Late Preclassic. Ceramics and agriculture appeared on the mainland in IIA (before A.D. 1) and in the islands in IIB.

IIIA and B: A.D. 300-1000. The Middle American Classic Period approximately. All the islands were settled by farming peoples, pushing back the Ciboney. Diverse pottery styles in IIIB (after 700) include the early Taino in the Dominican Republic.

IV: A.D. 1000-1500. The Postclassic of Middle America. Taino culture dominated the Greater Antilles while the Carib invaded the Lesser.

In the Antilles, as in most other places where little architecture is left, knowledge of the past is based on study of the humblest remains: broken pottery, discarded or ill-made tools, and the like. Handsomer things, which originally had more value and meaning, come mostly from unrecorded excavations in burials and offerings and it is often nearly impossible to be sure of the date or place of origin of any except the ceramic objects. However, the outstanding art of the West Indies was not ceramics but the carving of ritual objects of stone, shell, bone and wood. Most of these seem to be the work of the Arawak peoples, principally

the Taino who flourished during the final five hundred years.

The range of forms appears small, and might seem even smaller if it were not for the remarkably preserved wooden pieces. Platform-topped human figures, for example, were nearly always



1
Figural altar of stone. Probably Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Height, 33.5 cm. American Philosophical Society.



2
Wooden stool (*duho*). Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Height, 46.5 cm. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

3
Classic Taino pendant of shell. St. Kitts, A.D. 1000-1500. Height, 4 cm. Olsen Foundation.

4
Effigy offering tray or seat. Probably Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Length, 41 cm. American Museum of Natural History.

5
Stone ball-game belt. Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Length, 48 cm. Smithsonian Institution (Latimer Collection).



3



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carved of wood, as were the low curved seats called *duhos* and other flat forms with four legs that may also have been seats. Large, complete figures or idols like the rare wooden ones seem never to have been attempted in stone. The very few stone sculptures which seem to be idols are much smaller and simpler, and entirely different, hinting at a wealth of wooden sculpture that has disappeared. The oval ball-game belts called "collarstones" are clearly modeled after wooden prototypes, of which none has been discovered. The other major categories of stone sculpture, as yet unknown in wood, are "three-pointed stones" or "*zemis*," decorated mortars and pestles, small carvings worn as jewelry, and ceremonial axes and celts.

The largest Taino sculptures are the columns, slabs, and boulders that surround plazas and ball courts. Faces and figures are delineated on them in relief that ranges from large-scale incising to sculpture in the round on the columnar stones. Size, more than sculptural quality, makes them impressive. Slabs at Capá near Utuado, Puerto Rico, are six feet in height and some of the boulders more than a ton in weight, all of granite raised to the site from a ravine some sixty feet deep. Such enclosures, identified as ball courts by local tradition and by inference from sixteenth century Spanish accounts of the game, demonstrate the degree of social organization reached by the Taino and the value they placed on the contests, which they regarded as religious observances as well as sporting events. The game was played at that time much like soccer, with a large, heavy ball that was later found in Middle America to be made of rubber, a material unknown until then in Europe.

Just as the most notable constructions at Taino sites are courts on which the ritual ball game was probably played, the largest portable stone sculptures are representations of heavy belts worn by the players. Fragments of these were found during excavation of a court in Puerto Rico, where most of the complete examples have been collected. There are two types, a massive oval that may weigh over sixty pounds and a slender, usually more pointed form weighing as little as seven. They average about thirty-four and eleven pounds respectively. While this may seem too much for actual play, Gordon Ekholm discovered that the interior dimensions vary much less than the weight; that they can be put on by a person of average size and worn fairly comfortably around the waist and hips. They are at least faithful copies of real belts, and some show details of construction from a branched sapling. All have a thick front section with a flat striking surface on either the right or left side, often balanced on the other by handsomely carved ornament.

Also demonstrated to have been ball-game belts, either commemorative or real, are the stone "yokes" of Mexico. They are somewhat heavier and differently shaped, no doubt reflecting regional variation of rules and equipment. Though

the ancient ceremonial game was widespread in Middle America and the Antilles, even extending into northern South America, nevertheless the extraordinary custom of carving stone belts appeared in only two areas, centering in Veracruz and the Taino part of the Greater Antilles. This must surely indicate a real connection between the two. The time spans of the Mexican and Antillean stone belts seem to overlap around A.D. 700-1000, but dating is still uncertain and many questions arise. In Mexico the yoke type that most resembles the Antillean, being closed at the end and oval in outline and cross section, appears to have been earlier than the open, straight-ended type common at the likeliest time of contact. In the Antilles, a few plain stone ovals much smaller than the belts suggest local development of the idea rather than importation.

Another island mystery that implies connection with the mainland concerns the origin and purpose of various carefully shaped, solid-stone balls of many sizes. The earliest, seemingly, come from the non-ceramic, long-lived Ciboney cultures of Cuba and Hispaniola in the period from A.D. 350 to 1100. Only an inch or two in diameter and too smooth and evenly spherical to be hammerstones, they are sometimes found in burials.



Larger examples, as much as two feet in diameter, are from burials, ball courts and plazas of the latest period. On the mainland, stone balls are most notable in eastern Costa Rica where they reach monumental size (seven feet). Smaller ones also occur plentifully in Honduras, and are known even in the coastal regions of Venezuela and Colombia. The earliest stone balls are at Olmec sites in Mexico (c. 1200-600 B.C.). A number came to light recently at Dainzú, Oaxaca, where a series of extraordinary low reliefs shows ballplayers engaged in a Protoclassic version of the game in which the ball was held in the hand.

In contrast to the sculptures that echo mainland forms, the distinctively West Indian three-pointed stones have little formal resemblance to artifacts from any other part of the Americas. All the names applied to them, which include "three-cornered stone," "tricorn," and "*zemi*," are awkward; very few really have three points, while the Taino word *zemi* meant deity and was applied, by the Spaniards at least, to idols of all sorts,

which they reported were kept in every house as well as in temples, and to representations of deities on other objects. One early account from Haiti mentioned *zemis* with three points believed to make the manioc crop thrive. Whether it is the same one or not, the three-pointed type that survives is said to be found, like the stone balls, in the vicinity of plazas and courts. These were of course the ceremonial centers of the towns, used for many purposes, but some connection of the stones with the ball game is possible.

The reason for the strange three-pointed shape is unknown. The purpose of such sculptures may correspond to that of the puzzling Mexican forms called *hachas*, *palmas*, kneeguards, and thin stone heads which, with yokes, make up the body of Classic Veracruz sculpture. They too are oddly shaped and of obscure use, but surely associated in some way with the ball game, as court markers, trophies or commemorative sculptures that duplicated objects attached to the player's belt or body. The three-pointed *zemis* are shaped for attachment to something, being more or less grooved for lashing at each end, and slightly arched and concave on the base. The pointed top often leans forward and to one side.

Three-pointed *zemis*, however, are older than any surviving evidence of the ball game or of the Taino culture in which it figured so prominently. Their development has been traced by Fred Olsen in the Lesser Antillean islands of Antigua and Guadeloupe from conch-shell miniatures associated with early painted pottery and third century radiocarbon dates, through stone miniatures (seventh century) to full-sized decorated versions that disappear about the tenth century, perhaps as the result of Carib invasion. Plain, blunt-ended shapes predominate in the Lesser Antilles and, before full development of the Taino style, in the Greater Antilles as well. An early shape (850-1000) with one or both ends nearly flat may have a face carved on each end, or on one side rather than centered over the point.

A striking round-topped example with blunt ends incorporates a sideward-facing Taino head. Since it appears to be transitional, it suggests a distinction between early and late carving within the Taino style. The strong sculptural treatment of the face, with its polished, deeply-hollowed eyes and simple forms, contrasts with the less shapely but more detailed and decorated mode seen in many other Taino works. The differences may result merely from individual or regional variation, but it seems reasonable that the broader style of some sculptures may reflect the difficulty of early attempts at carving stone rather than wood.

Similar stylistic variation can be seen among small pendants carved of stone and shell, though there is almost no archaeological basis yet for time distinctions. One type of human figure known to be pre-Taino has a face defined only by pits or hollows and a simplified frog-like body with arms and legs drawn up at the sides. An unusual semi-cylindrical pendant is simplified in a different

1
Stone ball with spiral relief. Oncion, Dominican Republic, A.D. 1-850 (?). Diameter, 6.5 cm. American Museum of Natural History.

2
Three-pointed stone. Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Length, 29.5 cm. Smithsonian Institution (Latimer Collection).

3
Semicircular stone. Puerto Rico, c. A.D. 1000. Length, 17 cm. Museo de Arte de Ponce, Luis A. Ferré Foundation.

4
Figural stone pestle. Heine River, Dominican Republic, A.D. 850-1500. Height, 22.5 cm. University Museum (gift of John S. Durham, 1891).

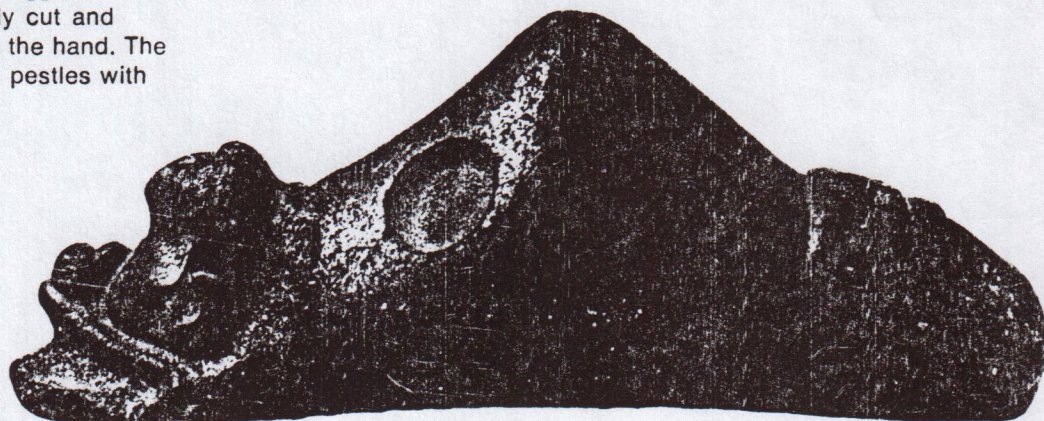
5
Stone figure pendant. Dominican Republic, A.D. 850-1500. Height, 11.5 cm. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

6
Stone pestle with Taino head. Probably Puerto Rico, A.D. 1000-1500. Height, 11 cm. University Museum.

mode that contrasts just as much with the sharply detailed carving seen in more typically Taino ornaments, in which the teeth and eyes are emphasized and sometimes inlaid.

Decorated stone pestles show the same range from engagingly simple forms that suggest half-used soap figures to more precisely cut and pretentious ones that fit less well in the hand. The more elaborate carving appears on pestles with

knobbed or flaring base and many of this type are, curiously, almost indistinguishable from those of eastern Costa Rica (800-1500).



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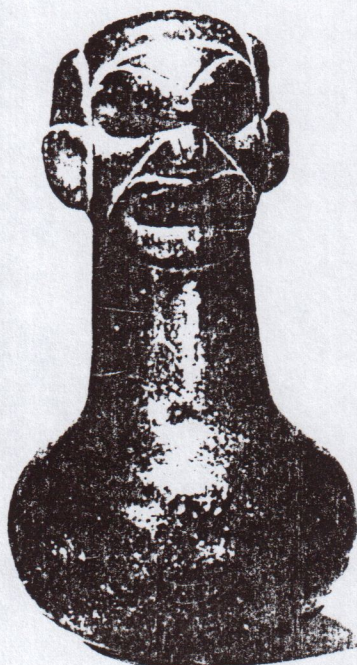
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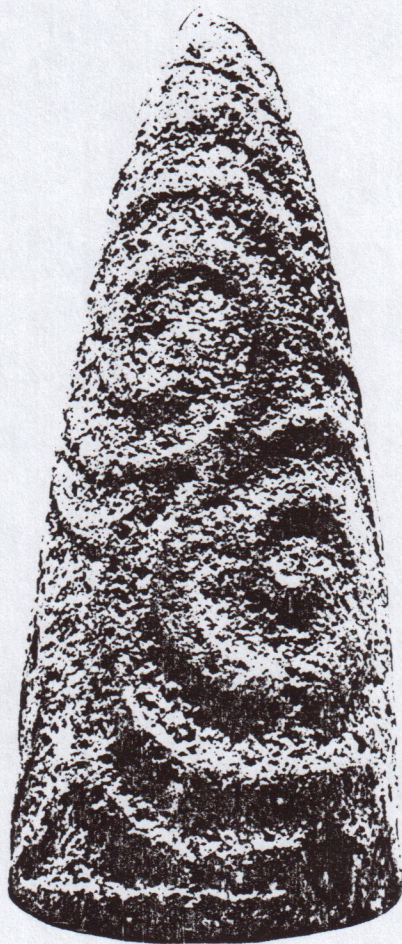
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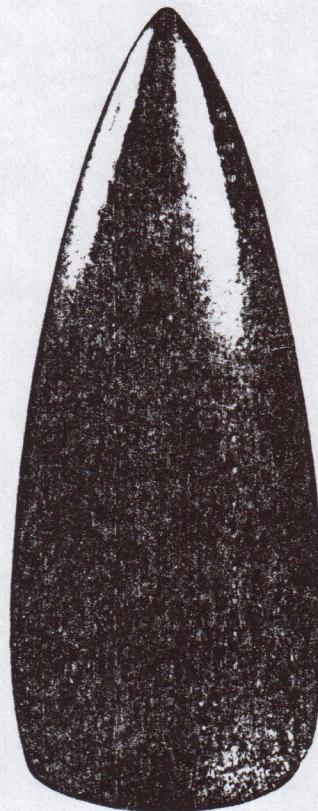
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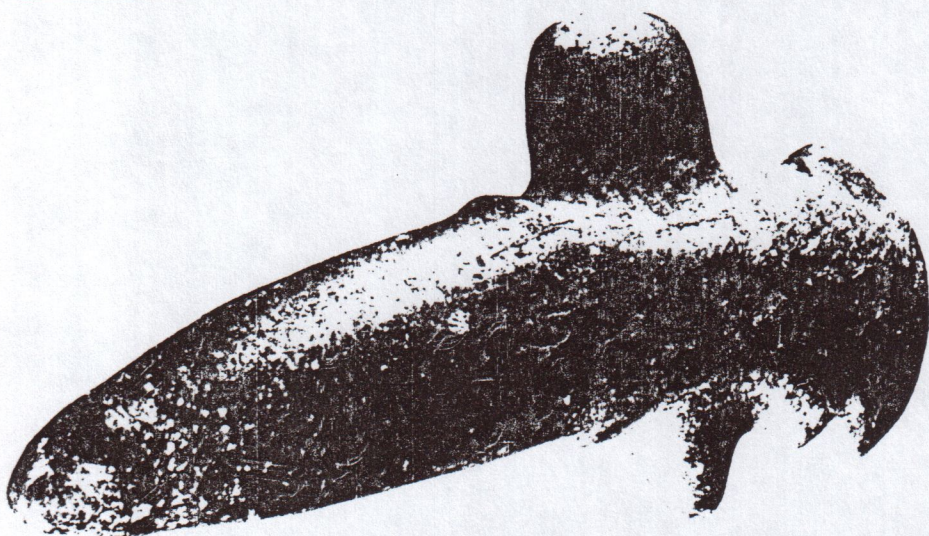
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1
Effigy celt. Trois Rivières,
Haiti, A.D. 1000-1500.
Height, 22 cm.
Olsen Foundation.

2
Carved exterior of oval
stone mortar. Puerto Rico,
A.D. 1-700 (?).
Length, c. 25 cm.
Museum of the American
Indian, Heye Foundation.

3
Conical stone pestle with low relief. Puerto Rico, A.D. 1-700 (?). Height, c. 5 cm. Olsen Foundation.

4
Polished jade or greenstone celts. 1000 B.C.-A.D. 1500. Length of each, 19 cm. (Left) Grenada. Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. (Right) Cuba (?). University Museum (gift of Francis C. Macaulay, 1889).

5
Monolithic greenstone axe. Providenciales Island, Caicos group, Bahamas, A.D. 800-1500 (?). Height, 24.8 cm. American Museum of Natural History.

6
Eared axehead. St. Vincent, A.D. 500-1500. Length, 21.5 cm. Smithsonian Institution.

7
Grooved crescentic axehead. Montserrat, A.D. 500-1500. Length, 16.5 cm. University Museum.

Older perhaps than any of the three-dimensional sculpture of the Antilles is the curvilinear relief carving that appears on mortars, pestles, axes and other stone objects from widely scattered islands. Too few and diverse to constitute a style, the shallowly cut patterns are unlike anything known in Taino art, but are allied to the motifs painted on pottery in the early Venezuelan tradition, which disappeared from Puerto Rico about A.D. 700 but persisted several hundred years longer in the Lesser Antilles. The patterns seem to be entirely non-representational, and combine spiral and pointed elements in a sophisticated manner that presupposes development in another medium such as ceramics or wood.

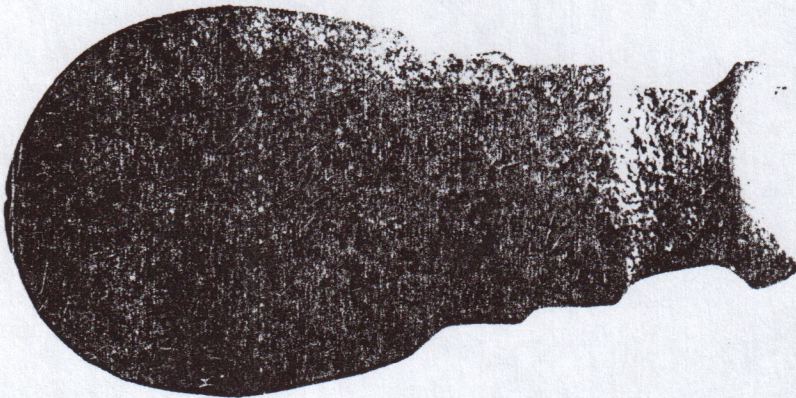
Stone mortars and pestles as handsomely made and decorated as these were obviously not primitive kitchen gear. They fit better into a widespread but vaguely defined complex of ceremonial grinding equipment that also included a great diversity of metates or footed milling stones. They appear not only in the Antilles but throughout Central America from the edge of the Maya area south into Colombia, and in some places constitute the most impressive form of stone sculpture. Common metates and mortars served for grinding corn (though not in the Antilles), palm nuts in lower Central America, cocoa beans, chili and other things, but no one knows what was ground ritually—one of these important foods perhaps, or tobacco or narcotic substances.

Undoubtedly a good many of the elaborately made objects that look like grinding stones were intended for other ceremonial purposes. Stools, seats and benches were symbols of authority and high rank throughout the "metate area" and beyond. In various styles and art mediums, unmistakably commanding figures are depicted sitting on them, though the seats themselves are rarely shown in any detail. The first Spanish accounts from the West Indies speak of carved seats called *duhos* that the leading men prized and carried about for use on public occasions. These are identified with the curved seats that survive principally in wood, but the name may have applied also to other forms without the curved back. Both of these appear in smaller stone versions that would be accepted as metates without much question if it were not for the Spanish references and the wooden examples.

Platform-topped human figures seem to be the type mentioned in connection with ceremonies in which snuff was inhaled through tubes from the top of an idol. The early reference and the wooden counterparts (whose cantilevered platforms were certainly not seats) help explain the rare stone examples as a kind of altar. A number of others, particularly the round ones of Costa Rica, may have had a similar use.

Another aspect of ceremonialism that the islands shared with the mainland was the ancient cult that centered around celts and axes. Certain of these innumerable and sometimes tiresome tools show no marks of use and are shaped from the most beautiful (but not always the hardest) minerals, ground and polished better than most sculpture from the same region. Axes of this kind, obviously not ordinary tools or weapons, must have been at the very least the insignia of chiefs and nobles. When in addition celts are discovered carved in human form, religious symbolism becomes evident. Most island celt figures come from the Greater Antilles and are carved in Taino style, though some may be earlier. Not many of them are cut from fine stone, but the best of the plain celts are among the handsomest to be found anywhere in the world. They are made of various fine-grained, often green, materials that take a good polish, including jadeite. (Though the presence of this precious mineral in the islands had been doubtful, a celt lent for the *Caribbean Splendors* exhibition was identified as pure jadeite by the late William Foshag during his investigation of American jades and their possible sources. While jadeite has not been discovered in the islands, all of the Greater Antilles do possess deposits of serpentine, a mineral that occurs in the same formations as jadeite and is used as an indicator in searching for it.)

Celts of the Greater Antilles, which first appear there in the period between 1000 B.C. and A.D. 300, have the petaloid or almond shape common in Middle America, but with a pointed poll that is also characteristic of the southern United States. Some, especially the celts from Cuba, have a distinctive flat facet along each edge.



6



7

The earliest and most conspicuous manifestation of the axe cult is in the Olmec culture of southern Veracruz and Tabasco (c. 1200-600 B.C.), where it involved figural or effigy celts and buried caches of celts to the number of several hundred together, made of jadeite and other materials as well as blanks or models of softer, unusable, green stones. The idea of the effigy celt reappears in the "axe god" cult of Costa Rica (c. 300 B.C.-A.D. 500) which was also present to some extent in Honduras and Nicaragua.

Monolithic axes, with celt and handle cut from a single piece of stone, are evidently ceremonial in purpose because they have no practical use and, in the Greater Antilles, the handles are often in effigy form. They are not Olmec, but appear prominently in the southern United States, Costa Rica and Colombia during periods corresponding more or less to the Taino.

In the Lesser Antilles, though the petaloid celt is rare, ceremonial axes of a different kind are truly spectacular. They are the grooved type typical of South America but developed into a form of abstract sculpture in fantastic shapes, some a foot or more in length, that have no real South American precedent. Though long called "Carib axes" because they came from those islands, the name was dropped when no archaeological evidence of Carib occupation could be identified. It may yet prove to be correct if the Carib invasion is confirmed to have taken place as early as A.D. 1000, thus allowing time for development of this surprising style in the Lesser Antilles. Even though their presence may have been obscured in the archaeological record by pottery made by captured Arawak women, the manufacture of ceremonial equipment as well as common axes and tools could be expected to remain in the hands of the men. A hint that something of the sort may have happened is the proliferation in the island of St. Vincent of small axe-like, semi-abstract and animal carvings that are referred to with good reason as "problematical stones" and "enigmatical objects." and locally, "Fancy stones" after (?) the name of the river where they are found. Though stylistically related to the axes, they show a diversity and indeed a sense of whimsy not often met with, suggesting that they were a post-Hispanic development on St. Vincent, the last stronghold of the Island Carib. •

Credits

All photographs are by the lending institutions. The drawing, page 8, #2, is Bureau of Ethnology 34th Annual Report, 1922, Pl. 112B.

CARIBBEAN SPLENDORS

The exhibition opened at the Museum on March 3 was an introduction and tribute to the pre-Hispanic cultures of the circum-Caribbean area, often eclipsed by the better-known civilizations of Middle America and the Andes. Through the years, knowledge of the region has been notably advanced by Philadelphians. George Latimer, born here in 1803, spent most of his life in Puerto Rico, becoming deeply interested in its antiquities; while serving as Consul General he formed the great collection which he left to the Smithsonian Institution. Joseph Leidy, whose bronze likeness guards the Academy of Natural Sciences, described and named the giant fossil sloth discovered in Cuba in 1861. J. Alden Mason began excavations in Puerto Rico in 1914, investigated coastal sites in Colombia and Costa Rica, and uncovered in Panama the goldwork that enriched the exhibition. Froelich Rainey's stratigraphic excavations in Puerto Rico and those of Alfred Kidder II in Venezuela provided the foundation for the relative chronology of the entire region.

The exhibition was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and by the generosity of the lenders:

*American Museum of Natural History
American Philosophical Society
Museo de Arte de Ponce, Luis A. Ferré Foundation,
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation
Olsen Foundation, Guilford, Connecticut
Peabody Museum of Harvard University
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Smithsonian Institution*

We appreciate the help of friends in all these institutions, with special thanks to His Excellency Governor Luis A. Ferré of Puerto Rico; to Betty Meggers and Clifford Evans in Washington; Gordon Ekholm, Melicia Skinner, Frederick J. Dockstader, Curt Muser and Alfredo E. Figueredo in New York; Mary D. Taylor and Fred Olsen in Guilford, Connecticut (who returned from Antigua to present a lecture) and to the other lecturers, Irving Rouse and George Kubler of Yale University.

The exhibition was mounted handsomely by David Crownover, James McCanney and their able helpers. •



Elizabeth Easby, working on the *Caribbean Splendors* show, returned to the University Museum cellar where her archaeological career began, studying the collection from Santarém, Brazil, for her thesis at Columbia, following undergraduate work at Cornell. Since then she has been a Research Associate at the Museum of the American Indian, a Volunteer Assistant at the American Museum of Natural History, Acting Curator of Primitive Art at the Brooklyn Museum, and a consultant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where she organized the *Before Cortés* exhibition of Middle American sculpture with her husband, Dudley T. Easby, who is a Consulting Fellow of the University Museum and a specialist in ancient American metalwork. Mrs. Easby studied jades at Tikal and plans to do a report for the Tikal publication.

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