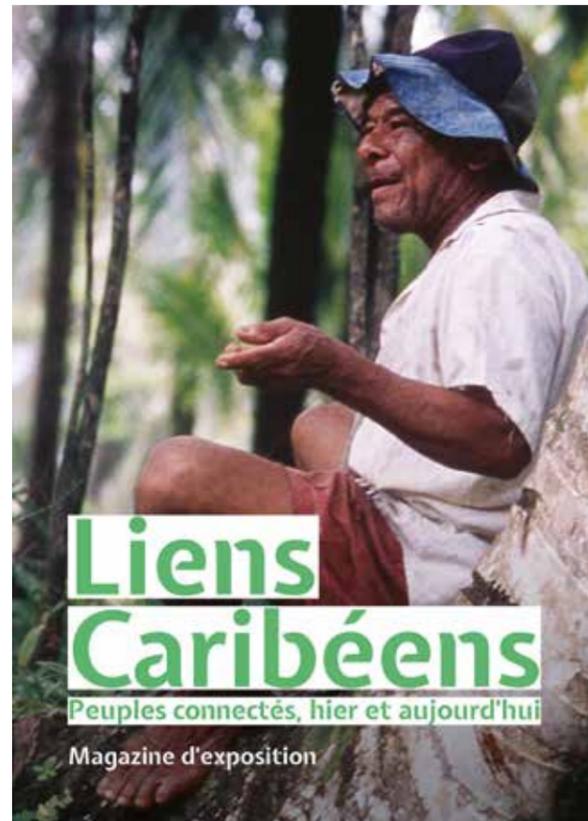
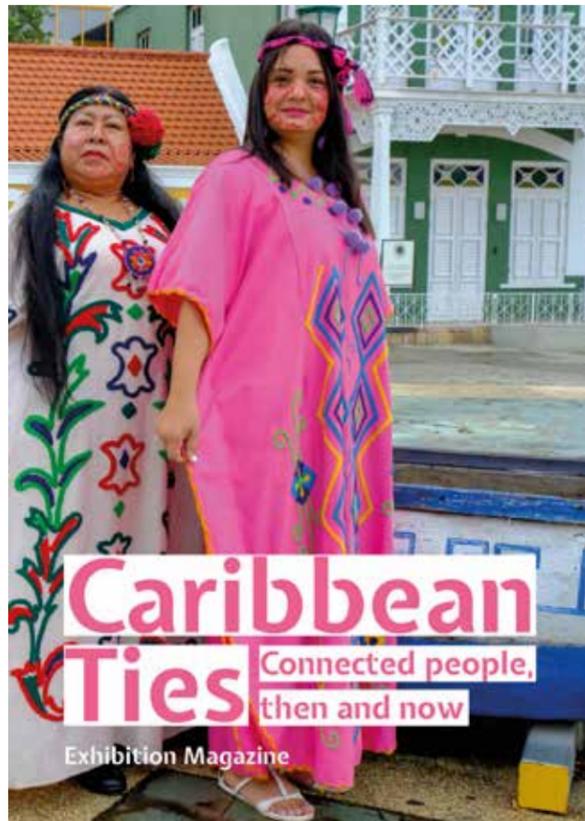


Caribbean Ties

Connected people,
then and now

Exhibition Magazine



By Corinne Hofman, Jorge Ulloa Hung & Tibusay Sankatsing Nava

Introduction



Corinne Hofman is the corresponding project leader of ERC-NEXUS 1492. Her research is highly multidisciplinary and centers around mobility and exchange, colonial encounters, and inter-cultural dynamics. Her projects aim to contribute to the valorization of heritage in the culturally and geopolitically diverse Caribbean.

The colonization of the Americas is one of the most transformative but neglected episodes in world history. The Caribbean was the port of entry to a universe of wealth that allowed for the construction of the largest colonial empire of the 16th century. The indigenous peoples of the Caribbean were the first in the Americas to have suffered the impact of Spanish invasions.



Jorge Ulloa Hung is a researcher in the NEXUS1492 project, Museo del Hombre Dominicano and INTEC. He studies changes in material culture in relation to social and cultural landscapes, as well as indigenous legacies in current Caribbean cultures.

The Caribbean was the first place where Amerindian-African-European intercultural dynamics were played out. Particularly in the Greater Antilles, the Spanish experimented and developed strategies of conquest which turned out to be essential to the gradual expansion of their control over the rest of the continental Americas. Although indigenous Caribbean peoples were at the center of the first waves of contact, they became largely invisible within colonial narratives. Instead, these narratives shifted their attention to the growing conflict between colonial powers, the emergence of the plantation system, and the consequent intensification of the African slave trade.

important role and impact of the first peoples of the region throughout the history of colonization. This has been further exacerbated by the strong divide that exists between pre-colonial archaeology and investigations of the colonial period, and has clearly led to the disregard of indigenous cultural legacy in today's multicultural Caribbean society.



Tibusay Sankatsing Nava is the project coordinator of the international Caribbean Ties exhibition. She focuses on co-creation and the co-production of research.

The marginalization of Caribbean indigenous peoples in colonial narratives, in contrast to the 'great' civilizations of the Maya, Inca and Aztec, has obscured the



Sardo Sutherland, Kalinago from Saint Vincent, participating in the experimental construction of the Argyle village on Saint Vincent in 2016. Photo: Menno Hoogland.

NEXUS1492: New World encounters in a globalizing world is a project funded by the European Research Council and is based upon many years of research and mutual collaboration with partnering institutions throughout the Caribbean. The project addresses the impacts of colonial invasion, exploitation, and the transformation on Caribbean cultures and societies. Furthermore, the project seeks to increase the historical awareness, protection, and safeguarding of the tangible and intangible heritage of the Caribbean region.

This transdisciplinary project brings together international researchers, institutes, NGOs, governmental organizations, and local communities. It addresses major themes, including transformations in landscapes, health, foodways, funerary practices, migration, mobility and exchange, and material culture repertoires. It also focuses on oral traditions, the resilience of indigenous cultural and religious practices, legislation, heritage management, museum collections, and education.

“The exhibition focuses on the connections between past and present indigenous cultures and our current multi-ethnic communities.”

NEXUS1492 uses cutting edge methods and techniques (e.g. ancient DNA, isotope, paleobotany, use-wear analysis, forensic studies, remote sensing, and network science) and develops new analytical tools to understand the transformation of indigenous cultures and societies at the advent of the European invasion. Knowledge exchange and public outreach are at the fore of **NEXUS1492**. The project also aims to contribute to the current societal debates on decolonization, inter-cultural dynamics, inclusivity, social cohesion, identity, and climate change.

The present exhibit - **Caribbean Ties, Connected People Then and Now** - is a joint effort that reflects the complex diversity that existed in the Caribbean archipelago before the arrival of Europeans and which remains a vibrant reality in the region today. The exhibition is developed through international collaboration with over 20 partners across the Caribbean and Europe. The main themes, presented internationally in museums and community centers across the region, are expanded with locally relevant content in each country. The design of the exhibition is a state-of-the-art modular concept, which allows each host partner to select the appropriate module for their space constraints, local context, interests and budget.

Caribbean Ties features the results of the latest scientific research undertaken by the **NEXUS1492** project. Combining local, regional, and global perspectives, the exhibition focuses on the connections between past and present indigenous cultures and our current multi-ethnic communities, and as such explores the living and current impact of indigenous heritage

The exhibition opens in 2019 across 15 Caribbean and European nations. It is presented in Spanish, English, French, Dutch, Creole, and Papiamentu. The structure of the exhibit follows a narrative over four interrelated themes:

1. *Multicultural landscapes,*
2. *Travel, migration, exchange,*
3. *Changing diets and beliefs, and*
4. *The future of the past.*

With the present exhibition, the **NEXUS1492** team and partnering institutions hope to engage the general public and contribute to the consciousness and safeguarding of an indigenous heritage which is shared by all of us.

Construction of an indigenous house at the archaeological site of Argyle with members of the Garifuna community from Greiggs. Cayo village, Argyle, Saint Vincent.
Photo: Menno Hoogland.

Caribbean Ties

The Caribbean is home to over 40 million people. Every island and the neighboring mainland has their own languages, traditions, and landscapes.

Between 8000 and 6000 years ago, the first indigenous peoples, also known as Amerindians, moved from South and Central America into the islands. Thereafter, the archipelago was populated by communities related to each other through family and social networks of travel, migration and exchange.

When Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492, a brutal history of colonization began. The indigenous societies were dramatically uprooted, their peoples were enslaved and exposed to war, disease and involuntary mass relocation. The exploitation of the Caribbean helped transform Europe into the world's economic and political center of power. New relationships were created from the mix of Amerindians, Europeans, enslaved Africans, Jewish people and later indentured laborers from Asia. This is the origin of today's multicultural Caribbean.

Scientific research reinforces the importance of the Caribbean for world history. Archaeology and the study of contemporary cultural practices highlight the indigenous voices. This heritage remains vibrantly present in Caribbean life today.

Caribbean Ties invites you to explore the role that the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean played in global history and continue to play today.



Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Santa Rosa First People's Dance Group performing an offering, Trinidad, 2018. Photo: Zara Ali.

Multicultural landscapes

The indigenous Caribbean was inhabited by peoples who spoke Arawakan and Cariban languages, with loan words from Warao, Tol, and Chibchan and Tupian languages. The European colonizers and later scientists used names such as Arawak/Taíno and Carib to erroneously label the peoples of the islands as peaceful versus warlike. But we know now that these labels, still present in schoolbooks, are incorrect and misleading.

During colonization, indigenous peoples from Central America and the mainland Caribbean were translocated and enslaved. Together with the displaced population of the islands and enslaved Africans they were forced to work in the pearl fisheries and goldmines, and made to cultivate fields and build towns and forts for the Spanish colonial enterprise.

Indigenous societies were gradually destroyed and their social networks disrupted. However, survivors resisted and managed to integrate into the colonial system. The indigenous world is still remembered and forms a shared legacy within today's multicultural landscape.



According to scientific research, more than 20% of the indigenous peoples in the Caribbean were not born on the islands where they were buried. Just like today, migration was always an important part of Caribbean life.



There are many indigenous words that we still use today. Think of originally Arawakan words like hurricane, canoe, barbecue, and hammock, or Cariban words such as papaya and morrocoy (turtle).



Did Columbus discover the Americas? The word 'discovery' is still used today, as if this region and its peoples did not exist before Europe found out about them. Its continued use neglects the perspective of the indigenous peoples already living in the region for thousands of years.



The Caribbean islands served as a base for anti-colonial resistance by their indigenous inhabitants. In the Lesser Antilles for example, the mountains of Dominica provided refuge for the indigenous people escaping the brutality of the early colonists. Today, the largest indigenous population in the Eastern Caribbean, the *Kalinago*, lives on Dominica.



In this exhibition, the word 'indigenous' is used to refer to the diverse groups of people who lived in the region before European invasion. Indigenous is also used for the peoples who continue to identify themselves as descendants of these groups today.



Afro-Caribbean potter Ms. Sandra making a traditional cooking pot with clay coils in Morne Sion, Saint Lucia. Photo: Katarina Jacobson.

By Marlieke Ernst, Andrzej Antczak, Katarina Jacobson & Floris Keehnen

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Pottery styles and transculturation

Left: Marlieke Ernst studying traces on pottery. Photo: Marlieke Ernst.

Right: Traces on a pot seen through a lens. Photo: Marlieke Ernst.



We study the incorporation and transformation of cultural and material elements by looking at late precolonial and early colonial ceramics. We analyze what kind of ceramic objects were exchanged and how they were integrated into colonial societies. We study both the stylistic appearance of the pots as well as how they were made by looking at the manufacturing traces. To do this we use archaeological methods and approaches combined with information from historical sources and contemporary potters who still often preserve indigenous knowledge.

Katarina Jacobson from Guadeloupe studying archaeological pottery in the laboratory of Loma de Guayacanes, northern Dominican Republic. Photo: Menno Hoogland.



Top: Excavations at the site of El Flaco in the northern Dominican Republic in 2013. Photo: NEXUS1492.

Bottom: Excavations carried out in 2014 by the Departamento Centro Oriental de Arqueología at the Managuaco archaeological site, Cuba. Archaeological evidence was found here related to a colonial *hacienda* (estate) where indigenous peoples lived and worked. Photo: Roberto Valcárcel Rojas.



By Eduardo Herrera Malatesta, Jorge Ulloa Hung, Till Sonnemann, Joseph Sony Jean & Roberto Valcárcel Rojas

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Indigenous landscape research in the northern Caribbean

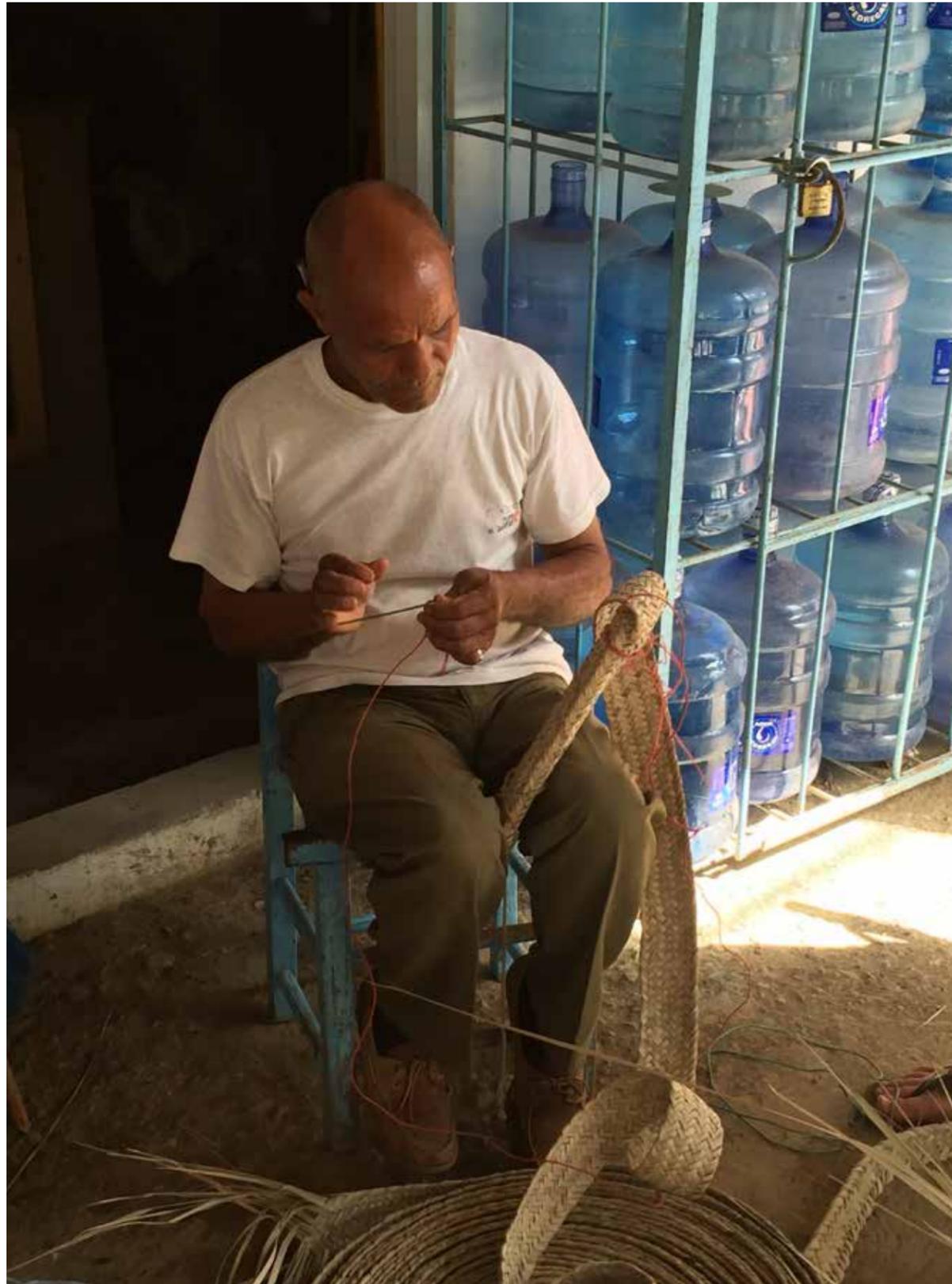
Our research focuses on exploring indigenous landscape transformations following the process of Spanish colonization. However, beginning with the early Spanish chronicles of the 16th century, most accounts about precolonial populations are biased narratives produced by European outsiders. This is also the case throughout the historiography of the 18th and 19th centuries and the archaeology of the early 20th century. To overcome this problem, we combine regional archaeological research, a comparative study of early Spanish chronicles, and advanced digital methods. This combined approach generates archaeological and historical data to develop new hypotheses about inter-community and inter-island connections and to create a less biased image of the indigenous landscape and its transformation after 1492.

Joseph Sony Jean from Haiti carrying out an archaeological survey in the Département du Nord-Est, Haiti. Photo: Till Sonnemann.





Ray Antoine from Grenada excavating at the archaeological site of El Carril, AD 1000-1400, northern Dominican Republic. Photo: NEXUS1492.



Traditional basketry (*macuto*) using leaves of the guano palm, community of Mamey in the Cordillera Septentrional, Dominican Republic. Photo: Corinne Hofman.

By Roberto Valcárcel Rojas, Corinne Hofman, Jorge Ulloa Hung, Marlena Antczak, Joseph Sony Jean, Eduardo Herrera Malatesta & Till Sonnemann.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Indigenous legacies

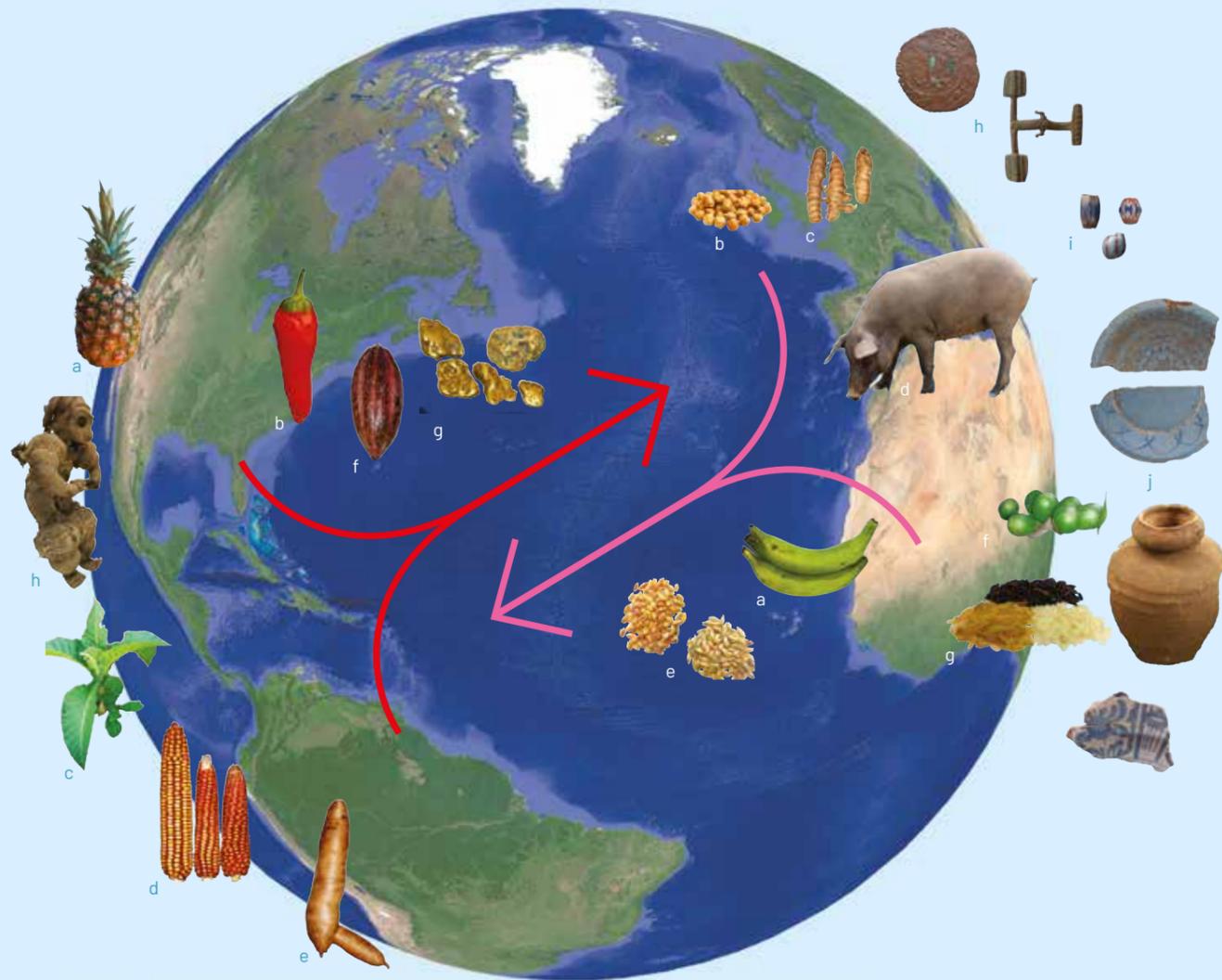
It is still possible to observe the persistent traces of indigenous ancestry among individuals in present Caribbean populations. By conducting archaeological investigations at early colonial sites, studying historical accounts from the first European travelers, and carrying out ethnographic research in present-day communities, we can unravel the wealth and complexity of the region's Amerindian heritage. Today, this heritage is reflected through language, healing and religious practices, foodways, and economic and cultural activities, as well as through popular legends.



Haitian fisherman using traditional canoe, Département du Nord, Haiti. Photo: Joseph Sony Jean.

Travel, migration, exchange

The indigenous peoples travelled in dugout canoes across the Caribbean Sea, visiting each other to maintain social ties. They exchanged marriage partners, foods, basketry, pottery, beads, pendants, stone tools, and ideas. Gold ornaments, foodstuffs, cotton, and exotic birds were the first items that were bartered with the Europeans for beads, bells, bowls, glass, metal tools, and textiles.



Map of the world showing the flow of goods between the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. Plants, animals and goods, but also people and diseases, were transported across the Atlantic Ocean from 1492 onwards.

From the Americas to Europe: (a) pineapple, (b) chili pepper, (c) tobacco, (d) maize, (e) manioc, (f) cocoa, (g) gold, ore and objects, (h) religious objects, but also enslaved indigenous peoples.

From Europe and Africa to the Americas: (a) banana, (b) chickpeas, (c) turmeric, (d) pig, (e) wheat and barley, (f) coffee, (g) rice, (h) metal objects, (i) glass beads, (j) European ceramics, but also infectious diseases, enslaved Africans, and the Christian faith.

Mixed object styles, foodways, and even new landscapes emerged from this interface of cultures. In early colonial times the Caribbean served as a way to move the riches from America to Europe. European goods were taken to the Americas and sold. From Africa, people were violently removed and brought to

the Caribbean. This was the beginning of one of the largest forced migrations in history. In geographical and commercial terms, the world became interconnected, with the Caribbean as the port of entry for the colonization of the American continent.



The sea connected indigenous communities on different islands. Often, a community was more closely linked with people living on nearby coasts on different islands than with the communities on the opposite side of the same island.

Indigenous peoples exchanged objects across the region. Check the contents of your pockets or bag. How many different countries do these objects come from?

From 1492 onwards, a movement of peoples and goods began between the Caribbean and Europe.

By tracing the movement of objects between communities, archaeology shows that the indigenous peoples had extensive and region-wide relationships.

This exhibition is based on the latest research results, achieved using state-of-the-art scientific methods and techniques from archaeology, isotope geochemistry, genetics, remote sensing, forensic science, network science, and heritage studies.



Top: Gareth Davies and Laura Font preparing human teeth samples for isotope analysis in the mass spectrometry lab at the Free University, Amsterdam. The study of strontium isotopes offers new perspectives to better reconstruct the migration and mobility of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean. Photo: Advalvas, VU magazine.

Bottom: Using optical microscopy, Thomas Breukel studies a stone axe excavated in the northern Dominican Republic. Photo: Leiden Laboratory for Material Culture Studies.

By Catarina Guzzo Falci, Thomas Breukel,
Alice Knaf & Gareth Davies

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

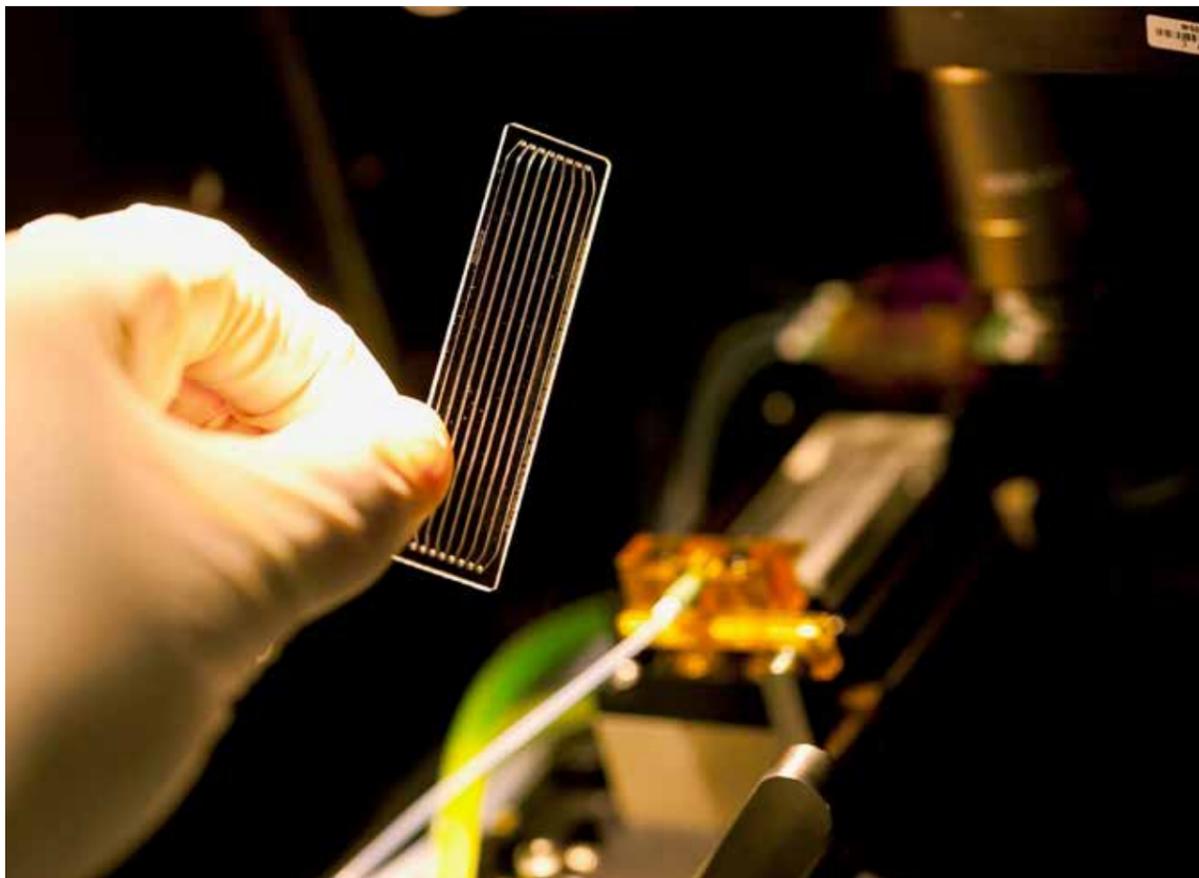
Exchange of objects

By analyzing the material characteristics of objects or artifacts, we can trace the past interactions between different societies and with their natural environment. The geographic source of the objects' raw materials can be determined by identifying the precise mineral elements composing each object, through geochemical characterization. We take small samples of the material that are invisible to the eye using a portable laser to avoid damaging the artifact. With the information from these samples, we assess the exchange networks linking communities throughout the Caribbean.

By studying these imperceptible traces of surface wear, we can also uncover cultural preferences that different peoples may have had in making and using these objects. We combine optical microscopy and experimental archaeology to understand how artifacts were produced and used. By integrating all these approaches, we reconstruct the biographies of artifacts.



Jadeite axes found at many archaeological sites in the islands (AD 600-1492). Jadeite occurs naturally in northern Dominican Republic, Cuba, Guatemala and possibly in northern South America. Photo: NEXUS1492.



By Hannes Schroeder & Jason Laffoon

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

People on the move

The original inhabitants of the Caribbean were a people on the move. We can reconstruct their movements using scientific methods, such as isotope or ancient DNA analysis. Isotope analyses of dental enamel can be used to determine whether an individual migrated during their lifetime and where they originated from, while ancient DNA analysis provides information on their genetic ancestry, kinship ties, and geographic origins.

Sample preparation for ancient DNA work at the Center for GeoGenetics, Copenhagen. Photos: Center for GeoGenetics.



Beads and amulets from semi-precious stones found at many archaeological sites on Puerto Rico and the Lesser Antilles (400/200 BC- AD 600). Semi-precious stones such as carnelian, turquoise, amethyst, serpentine, nephrite, and jadeitite occur naturally on certain islands of the Antilles and in parts of the mainland and were exchanged either as a raw material or as finished objects. Photo: NEXUS1492.



By Lewis Borck, Emma Slayton & Ulrik Brandes.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

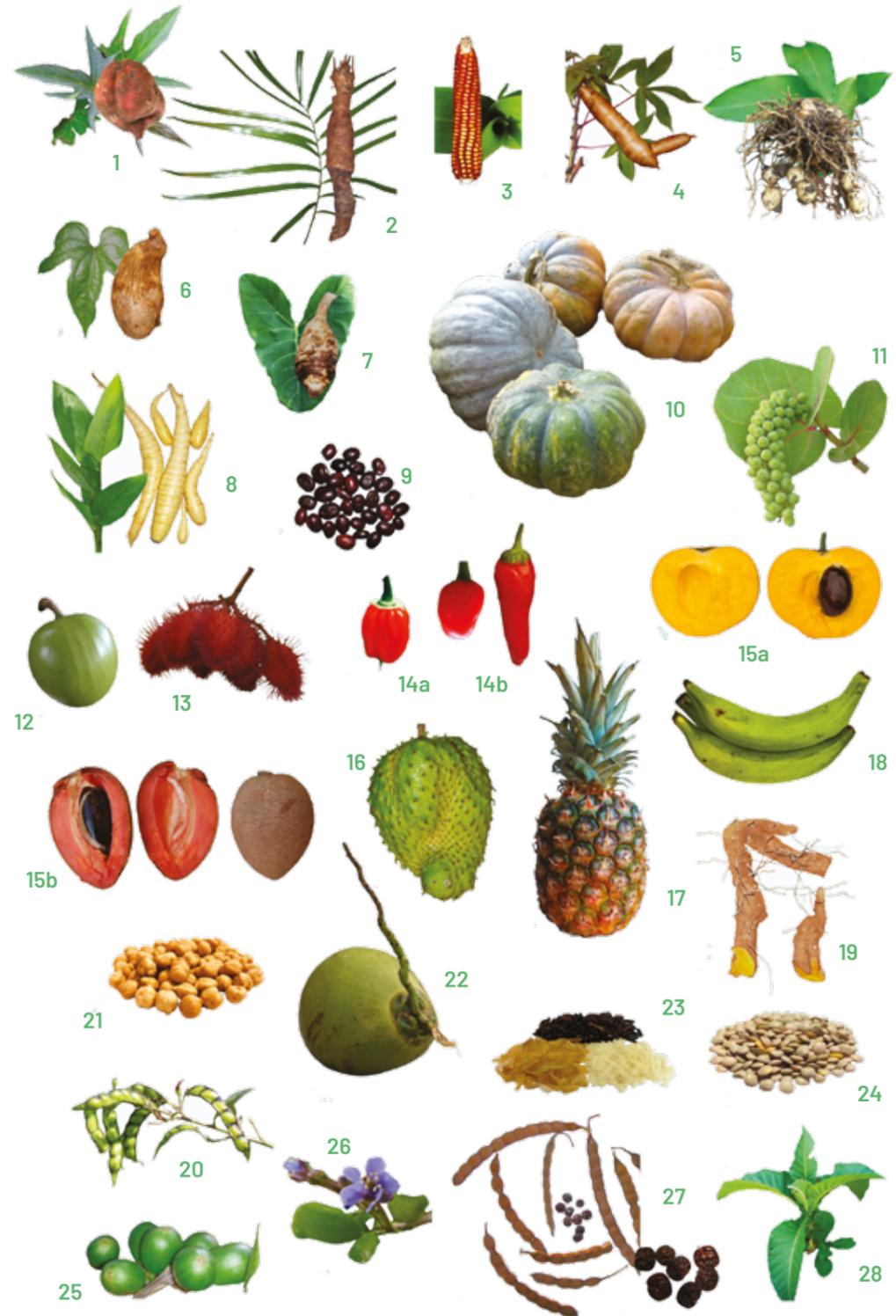
Social relationships, trade, and travel



We analyze archaeological data that reveals where people, their objects, and their ideas originated. We analyze this data using network science and statistical models that help us to better understand how people and objects in the Caribbean were connected. We refine these models by recreating movement throughout the archipelago. For example, we determine how difficult it is to travel between islands by modeling changing wind patterns, tides, and currents throughout the year. We combine all of this information to improve our understanding of how people, the objects they created, and the foods they grew tied the Caribbean together in a complex web of interactions through time.

Map of the Caribbean showing human mobility and the exchange of goods and ideas from 8000 years before present to 1492. Map: Menno Hoogland.

A wide range of edible plants, mostly crops from the South American continent, were produced, prepared, and eaten. These were consumed together with a diversity of wild animals. During colonial times plants and animals from Europe and Africa were incorporated into Caribbean diets. Photos: Jaime Pagán-Jiménez.



Indigenous Caribbean food plants

1. Sweet potato
2. Coontie
3. Maize
4. Manioc (cassava)
5. Sweetcorn root
6. Yampee
7. Cocoyam
8. Arrowroot
9. Common bean
10. Squash
11. Sea grape

Indigenous fruit trees and herbs used for culinary purposes and to make objects

12. Calabash
13. Annatto
14. a. Sweet chili pepper
b. Chili pepper
15. a. Yellow sapote
b. Mammee sapota
16. Soursop
17. Pineapple

Plants from Europe, Asia, and Africa introduced since early colonial times

18. Plantain
19. Guinea yam
20. Pigeon pea
21. Chickpea
22. Coconut
23. Rice
24. Lentil
25. Coffee

Indigenous plants used for making domestic and ritual objects and medicines

26. Roughbar lignum-vitae
27. Cohoba
28. Tobacco

Changing diets and beliefs

Indigenous Caribbean peoples lived in villages of various sizes, sometimes with courts or plazas. Communities were located inland or near the seashore where they had access to a variety of foods and raw materials for making objects for daily use. Their deities were everywhere. People communicated and negotiated with them about crops, water, animals, weather conditions, health, and also war.

During early colonial times, diets changed dramatically. Pigs, for example, were introduced by the Europeans and rapidly became part of the indigenous cuisine. Caribbean crops, like cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, and chili peppers, are foodstuffs that were transported to and adopted in Europe and the rest of the world. Some of these, however, were also crucial for the colonizing expeditions into the rest of the archipelago and the surrounding continent.

Spanish colonization suppressed the indigenous religious practices in favor of Christianity. Traditional indigenous deities were transformed and integrated into new belief systems. The result was the emergence of a mixture of Amerindian, European, and African religious practices. They are still strongly reflected in present-day rituals and folk medicine.



Did you know that there is a lot of indigenous ingredients to be found in famous international cuisines and traditions? Can you imagine the world today without potatoes, chili peppers and even cocoa (chocolate)?



Chili pepper (originally domesticated in Central and South America) was first used in the Caribbean thousands of years ago. During European invasion, this spice was spread from the islands out to Europe, Africa, and Asia, quickly becoming a key culinary item in Southeast Asian cuisine.



How do we know what indigenous peoples ate? Sometimes, there is left-over food stuck to excavated pots, bowls, mortars and human teeth found by archaeologists. When we look at these objects under the microscope, we can find small traces of the ingredients used by indigenous peoples.



The indigenous peoples of the Caribbean share traditions. Narratives about the Mother of the Water in Cuba and a mysterious serpent with a diamond in its forehead in the Dominican Republic show similarities with a Great Serpent from Dominica, a divine being who gifted the Kalinago with charm plants.



By Jaime Pagán-Jiménez, Zara Ali,
Andrew Ciofalo & Jason Laffoon.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Changing diets and beliefs: foodways

Indigenous Caribbean societies invested a considerable amount of time in securing and producing their food. The complex interplay among cultures, societies, and their respective environments influenced both the diversity of Amerindian foodways and the multiple approaches we use to study them. The recovery and identification of plant residues and animal remains, together with other specialized studies of human burials using isotope chemistry, dental wear, and pathologies, have contributed new insights into Caribbean sociocultural dynamics, within which unique culinary cultures have played a key role.



Process of preparing *guáyiga/marunguey* rolls. The skin is scrapped off the tuberous trunks of the *Zamia* plant **(1)**. The trunks are grated **(2)**, formed into balls **(3)** and left to rot. Then, rolls are wrapped in *cana* leaves (*Canna indica*) **(4)** and cooked. Ethno-experimental work. Photo: Jaime Pagán-Jiménez.



Top: Dominican filmmaker Pablo Lozano documenting oral legacies with José Sadi Cabrera Jiménez in the northern Dominican Republic in 2018. Photo: Tibusay Sankatsing Nava

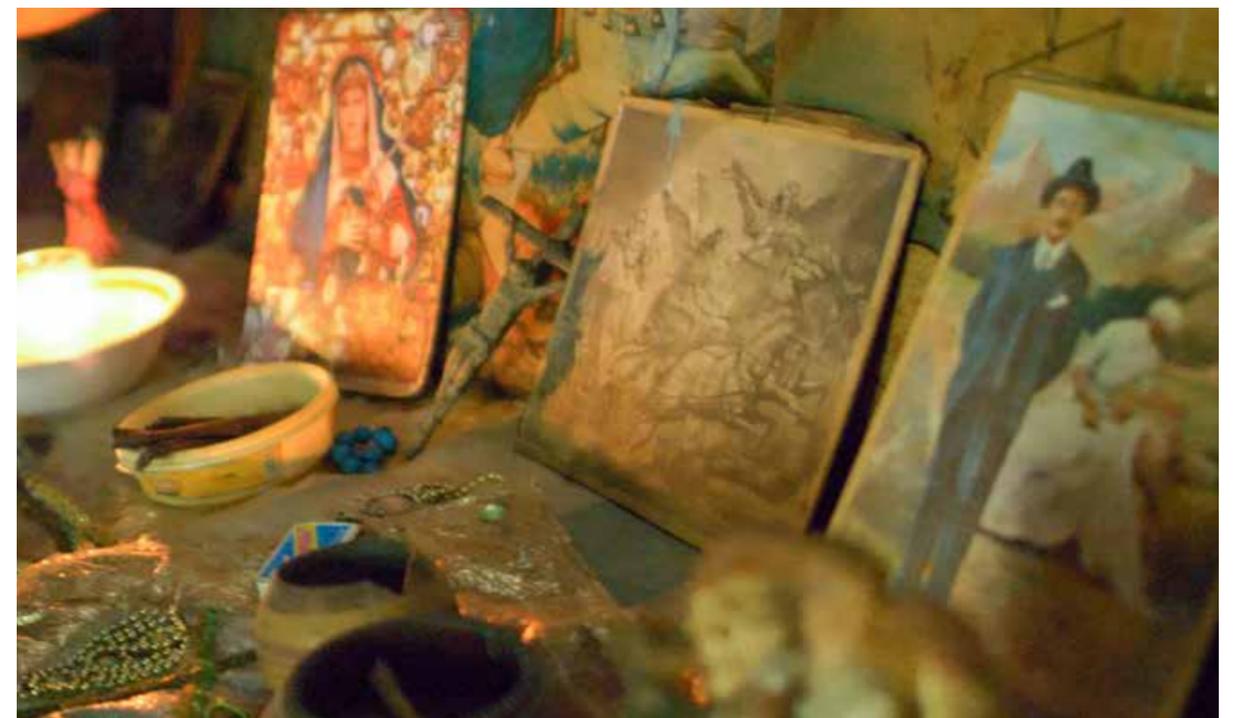
Bottom: Collection of information in a rural community in eastern Cuba. Photo: Roberto Valcárcel Rojas.

By Jorge Ulloa Hung, Jana Pesoutova
& Roberto Valcárcel Rojas

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Oral histories

In the Caribbean, oral traditions are one of the most important ways of transmitting knowledge and histories. Their recovery and study are essential in order to recognize their value and to understand the human interconnections among distinct local groups sharing different ancestries. Oral traditions reveal resilient connections and strong cultural links running through the shared cultures with their deep-rooted ancestral origins. Through interviews, text research and ethnographic work, we uncover oral myths and legends woven through healing landscapes, the sacredness of caves and water sources, the selection of places and materials to build houses, as well as a variety of rituals, crafts, and economic interactions. The study of oral traditions is also essential in engaging with communities and understanding past indigenous lifeways in combination with archaeology.



Present-day home altar in the northern Dominican Republic, showing influences from Amerindian, African, and Christian belief systems. Photo: Pablo Lozano.



Excavations at El Carril, northern Dominican Republic in 2018. Photo: NEXUS1492

By Menno Hoogland & Hayley Mickleburgh

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Funerary practices

Funerary practices provide important clues about the interaction between the living and the dead. The dead may be interred inside or outside the house, in raised earthen mounds, in communal spaces, or sometimes outside the settlement or in caves. As funerary archaeologists, we study the position of the skeleton and the articulation of the different bones in the grave to understand how the body was treated in death. Forensic studies help us understand the process of decay of the soft parts of the body, and how the bones subsequently become displaced within the grave. The pattern of displacement of the bones tells us if the deceased individual

was buried in a seated position, or on his/her back, side, or face down, and whether the burial pit was filled with soil at the time of placement, or left open for a while. The position of the bones can also inform us whether the body was mummified when placed in the pit. On many islands, we have observed that long bones and skulls were taken from the grave after the body had decayed to a skeleton. This practice, which was also described by early European chroniclers of the late 15th through the 17th centuries, is probably related to ancestor worship among the indigenous people. After the imposition of Christianity, such customs rapidly disappeared.



Forensic archaeologist Hayley Mickleburgh investigates how the position in which someone is buried can influence the decomposition on a body farm in Texas. Photo: Hayley Mickleburgh.



Excavations at El Flaco, northern Dominican Republic in 2016. Photo: NEXUS1492.

Archaeological survey carried out at the Las Flechas site, Punta Salinas, Coche Island, Venezuela. August 2016. Photo: José Volgar.



The future of the past

Indigenous traditions and knowledge are still very much present in daily life across the Caribbean, more than schoolbooks make us believe. This strongly counters the ideas of displacement and disappearance of the indigenous people. It connects us with a history that from its beginnings has been much more diverse and complex than that offered by conventional narratives.

Archaeology is an important means to unravel the unwritten indigenous histories and increase awareness about the past. The Caribbean archaeological record is threatened by natural and human impacts. Archaeological sites are looted for artifacts that are sold to local collectors and tourists.

Construction activities, sand mining and large tourist development projects accelerate coastal erosion. Legislation can help to protect our heritage under threat. Let us start today to secure the future of the past!



Indigenous heritage was transformed due to the colonial invasion and is still vibrantly present in Caribbean life today. Explore the exhibition carefully and ask yourself: Which elements of indigenous heritage can you recognize in your daily life?



“Indigenous peoples of Suriname and their living environment are severely under threat. The government and industry aim to prospect for natural resources in the interior. Non-Governmental Organisations endeavour to protect indigenous territories.”
Samoe, Kuluwayak, Suriname 2018



Caribbean indigenous houses had secure foundations and support posts, combined with light materials, and looked much like the shape of this exhibition structure. These houses would probably have resisted tropical storms, and would have been easy to rebuild when damaged.



“While the struggle for Kalinago indigenous people’s rights has shifted over the years, politically we have made progress with better representation. We are still disadvantaged without the financial facility to assist our economic development despite all the training that we receive. And our young people still have to go outside the Territory for secondary education which is another challenge for the maintenance of our culture. At that age (12), the mind is vulnerable to the adoption of other influences. We have recognized this as a serious problem.”
Irvine Augiste, Kalinago Territory, Dominica 2018



Indigenous site of El Flaco, northern Dominican Republic, then and now. Stratigraphy of a mound dating to AD 1100-1500, with a present-day house on top. Photo montage: Buro M2R.

By Corinne Hofman & Menno Hoogland

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Featured excavation: El Flaco

The site of El Flaco (AD 900-1490) is located in the northwestern Dominican Republic, at the foot of the Cordillera Septentrional. In 1494, Columbus passed through here while crossing the northern mountain range of Hispaniola and saw the Cibao Valley (the "Valley of Gold") for the first time. The typical indigenous village layout in this region consists of leveled areas with round houses between 4 and 9 meters in diameter. This type of settlement is often surrounded by earthworks, and multi-functional mounds with a height of about 2 meters. It was on these mounds that the inhabitants planted their crops, cooked their meals, disposed of their garbage, and buried their dead.



Still from drone footage of the archaeological excavation of El Flaco in 2014. Photo: Till Sonnemann.



Top: Corinne Hofman from Leiden University and Alec Charles from Grenada, rescue archaeological remains at the Sauteurs Bay site, Grenada, after the coastal erosion caused by both human and natural factors, including storm tides associated with Hurricane María, 2017. Photo: Sébastien Manem.

Bottom: Severe coastal erosion at the Brighton site, Saint Vincent. Sand mining activities have increased erosion over the past decades. Photo: Tibusay Sankatsing Nava.



By Corinne Hofman & Menno Hoogland

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Heritage under threat

Ever since they occupied the archipelago 8000 years ago, Caribbean communities have been confronted with severe natural catastrophes such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. These phenomena stimulated the Amerindian settlers to anticipate, respond, and adapt their lifestyles over time. People moved further inland, built hurricane-proof houses, and took shelter in caves. Throughout our projects, we aim to understand how people reacted and adapted to these phenomena. Together with local stakeholders, we also look at ways to protect their legacies from current climatic challenges as well as from human impacts.

Human and natural damage recorded in 2009 at Lavoutte, Saint Lucia. The white tags mark the locations of damaged burials next to tire tracks. Photo: Menno Hoogland.





Excavations at the site of La Poterie, Grenada. Photo: Menno Hoogland.

By Corinne Hofman & Menno Hoogland

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Featured excavation: La Poterie

The site of La Poterie faces the Atlantic Ocean on the northeast coast of the island of Grenada. From the late 15th through the early 17th centuries, this village was inhabited by a *Kalinago* community. Their pottery, utensils, and ornaments show that they interacted with people in the Greater Antilles and the South American mainland. During the early colonial period, the Lesser Antilles saw a fusion of different peoples, some of whom had fled to the islands to escape the Spanish invasion and European colonization. The *Kalinago* people fought and resisted the colonizers, but also traded with them, as evidenced by the European artifacts that were found at La Poterie.



Tivoli RC school visit to the archaeological site at La Poterie. Tivoli, St. Andrew, Grenada, 2017. Photo: Menno Hoogland.

Top: Private collection, Laguna Salada, Dominican Republic. Photo: Menno Hoogland



Middle: Barana autê, Kalinago territory, Dominica. Photo: Menno Hoogland



Bottom: Santa Rosa First Peoples' community center, Trinidad. Photo: Corinne Hofman



By Mariana Françaço, Csilla Ariese & Arlene Alvarez

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Caribbean collections

In our studies, we look at museums and community dynamics exploring practices of engagement, collection management, and outreach. In the Caribbean, we visited 195 museums of different kinds across the region. We reviewed their exhibitions and documented how they engage with local communities. We also analyzed the archaeological collections of 59 museums in Europe. We consulted their catalogues and collections to gain an overview of the Caribbean objects held in European museums. Our research relied primarily on museum visits and interviews with museum staff and communities. We have created databases and maps to visualize our results and make them available for local institutions in the Caribbean.



Mind's Eye. The Visionary World of Miss Lassie, Grand Cayman. Photo: Csilla Ariese.



Irvince Auguiste (Kalinago Territory, Dominica) and Corinne Hofman (Leiden University, The Netherlands) interpreting postholes of the indigenous houses at the archaeological site of El Flaco, northern Dominican Republic. Photo: NEXUS1492.

By Amy Strecker

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Revival, recognition, restitution: indigenous rights in the eastern Caribbean

We analyze the role of international law as related to the land, to its legal status, and to the cultural heritage of indigenous communities in the Eastern Caribbean. Moreover, our research illustrates not only how the law has impacted negatively (as a tool of Empire) upon indigenous peoples in the past, but also how the law can be instrumental (as a vehicle for change) in re-appropriating indigenous space today. This is especially so in the islands of Dominica, St. Vincent and Trinidad, where descendant communities have actively contested negative stereotypes, reasserted their presence, and have successfully agitated for their human rights in the post-independence era.



Symposium Caribbean Connections (2016) with speakers and participants from indigenous communities in Dominica, St. Vincent and Suriname. Photo: NEXUS1492.

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Indigenous family of La Caridad de los Indios village
in the region of Yateras, Guantánamo province, Cuba.
Photo: Caroline Glasius-Nyborg.



Colophon

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Wayuu women living in Aruba, standing in front of an indigenous canoe which they donated to the National Archaeological Museum of Aruba. The Wayuu are originally from La Guajira, Colombia.
Photo: Harold Kelly.

