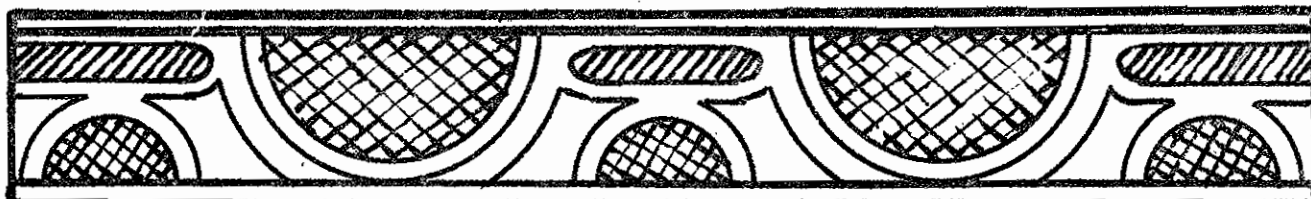




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MARTINIQUE

COMMUNICATION FROM MR. ALFREDO E. FIGUEROA

CURRENT RESEARCH IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Since 1972, the Virgin Islands have been the object of considerable archaeological field work ; this activity has not been adequately reported, largely owing to its on-going status. New evidence that is related to both the Archaic and later occupations of these Islands, however, justifies a preliminary release of data.

ARCHAIC PERIOD

Work by the Virgin Islands Museum has determined two Archaic site clusters in the island of St. Thomas ; one of these is on the southern coast, and includes the well-known Krum Bay site ; another is on the northern coast, adjacent to the ceramic Magens Bay site. Both clusters exhibit common characteristics that allow them to be subsumed under a Krum Bay Complex ; within this Complex, three phases have been defined

KRUM BAY COMPLEX

The Krum Bay Complex is characterized by a heavy reliance on shellfish for subsistence and a stone industry based upon fine-grained basalt flakes struck from unprepared cores with oval hammerstones. Sites are not found isolated, but clustered within, say, a kilometer of each other (at times much less) in such a manner as may indicate specialized site function attendant to contemporaneous occupation. Verification of this taxon must await further research, as now it is fully coterminous with the entire St. Thomasian Archaic Period, and our definition may be discovered to be that of said period.

Arboretum Phase

Subsistence was predominantly based upon shellfish, specially Lucines, while there are a few reef fish remains. Nuts have also been found. Oval hammerstones were used to produce rough flakes from unprepared cores of fine-grained basalt. Chipping (presumably the result of use) marks the edges of a minority of flakes. One small inlay of ground shell was found, and shell picks are common.

Whereas the stone industry of the Arboretum Phase is definitely cruder than that of any other Krum Bay phase, and both the shell and stone assemblages are much more limited, the actual subsistence pattern may be the result of site location rather than cultural motivation; all the sites of the Arboretum Phase are in the vicinity of Magens Bay, which may not have been abundant in fish, and where Lucines predominate.

No radiocarbon dates are yet available from this Phase.

Krum Bay I Phase

Arks and oysters supplied the basic diet, which was heavily supplemented by birds, turtles, and fish. Unidentified seeds are found in the deposits. The same basic stone industry as in the Arboretum Phase is present, except that it is enriched by used cores (as choppers and hammers) and a ground stone assemblage including small beads, pendants, and long, narrow, thin axes. The shell assemblage includes shell picks and qualified ground shell of indeterminate use.

The Krum Bay I Phase lies stratigraphically under the Krum Bay II Phase, and is therefore conjectured to be older. A radiocarbon date (450 ± 175 BC) published by Bullen and Sleight may be correlated with this Phase.

Krum Bay II Phase

Arks and oysters supplied the basic diet, supplemented, as in Krum Bay I, with birds, turtles, fish, and here, presumably rodents. Seeds have also been found in the deposits of Krum Bay II. The hammerstone/core/flake industry of both the Arboretum and Krum Bay I phases carry over into the Krum Bay II Phase, but the small stone beads of Krum Bay I cease to appear, and shell beads are present instead. No stone axes are found. The shell assemblage is much more varied in Krum Bay II, and includes shell discs, pendants, cups, and picks.

The Krum Bay II Phase lies stratigraphically over the Krum Bay I Phase, and may therefore be conjectured to be younger. A radiocarbon date (225 ± 160 BC) published by Bullen and Sleight may be correlated with this Phase.

INTERPRETATIONS

While this must be in the nature of a very preliminary report, the Arboretum Phase seems as yet unrelatable to other complexes in adjacent areas. The Krum Bay I Phase, however, is relatable to both the Arboretum Phase and, presumably, the Carupano Complex of Venezuela (based upon supposedly similar stone axes) ; the Krum Bay II Phase, on other/hand, is relatable to the Manicuaroid Series of the South American mainland on the basis of its shell assemblage ; the last two phases also show a relationship to the Archaic complexes of the Greater Antilles in both subsistence pattern and artifact types.

CERAMIC PERIOD

SALADOID TIMES

Investigation of private collections has established the presence of three basic stages (or Substyles) within the local Coral Bay Style, roughly paralleling those of Saladoid pottery in Puerto Rico. The counterpart of Hacienda Grande has been dubbed 'Prosperity', that of Cuevas is termed 'Longford', while late Cuevas (transitional to Ostiones) is called 'Gun Greek'.

Excavations by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, at Fort Point and Gun Greek, Virgin Gorda, located two conch middens, yielding late Saladoid pottery. In the case of Fort Point, a mixed shell midden was superimposed (corresponding to later pottery), thus weakening an argument for environmentally determined shellfish gathering. Clay spindle whorls (ground from potsherds) and griddles may be construed as indirect evidence for both cotton and manioc (or maize). Large quantities of fish and turtle bones were present at both sites. No radiocarbon dates are available, but, on stylistic grounds, the remains could date to about 650 AD.

OSTIONOID TIMES

Research in the collections of the Virgin Islands Museum permitted the provisional definition of a new ceramic taxon, the Canaan Substyle, which is generally equivalent to late ostiones in Puerto Rico. Much more work, however, is needed toward the taxonomic organization of Virgin Islands Ostionoid pottery.

An early Ostionoid site was located in the foothills of St. Thomas' central ridge (facing the north coast), quite inland by island standards. Some sampling has resulted, but excavations have not been possible.

ELENOID TIMES

A large site of this recently established series is presently being excavated by the Virgin Islands Museum at Hull Bay, St. Thomas. These excavations have eased the definition of an Ensonhed Style to account for Elenoid pottery in the northern Virgin Islands. Within that style, a Manchioneel Bottom Substyle has been isolated in Virgin Gorda by a Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, field party.

The site at Hull Bay has so far yielded one extended burial in direct association with an early Elenoid pot. Preliminary results from radiocarbon samples are prehistoric, but two or three centuries later than anticipated ; sea water and other disturbances may account for these dates.

CHICOID TIMES

The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, team in Virgin Gorda was successful in defining a Fort Point Style within the Chicoid Series. This style is very different from Esperanza, its nearest serial affiliate, and shares many important traits with the Boca Chica Style of Hispaniola and southern Puerto Rico. A distinctive element is the presence in the Fort Point Complex of Clay Spindle whorls molded and baked as such, as opposed to ground from potsherds ; a minority of these are also decorated on one side with incised Chicoid motifs.

SUMMARY

Research, then, is being done by two institutions : the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, and the government of the United States Virgin Islands through its Museum. All the archaeologists involved in recent work, except three (marked with asteriks), have been associated with both institutions, and their names are : Theodore E. Bradstreet; Alfredo E. Figueredo, Jeffrey M. Gross, Katherine B. Kay* Vladislav I. Mikijanic*, Jonathan R. Stone, Bruce E. Tilden, and Jeffrey B. Walker*.

Presently, the Office of the Teritorial Archaeologist (Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs, Government of the United States Virgin Islands) employs one Archaeologist (Alfredo E. Figueredo), and two Assistant Archaeologists (Katheryne B. Kay and Bruce E. Tilden).

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COMMUNICATION DE M. Mario MATTIONI

MARTINIQUE

Le 12 mars 1974 a pris fin la fouille-sauvetage du site archéologique de VIVE (Côte nord-est de la Martinique). Cette fouille qui a porté sur une surface totale de 100 m² (10 x 10) a permis la récupération de 23.058 tessons (saladoïde insulaire). Elle a duré 5 ans.

Le nombre de pièces complètes ou dont le pourcentage de tessons a permis d'en établir le profil (ce mobilier étant "in loco") s'élève à 56. "Prima facie", le matériel faisant actuellement l'objet d'étude pour le C. R. de fouille, certains faits intéressants apparaissent :

- Existence du vase à "ouïcou" pendant la période "saladoïde insulaire"
- Type de poterie appelée "bouteille" de grande dimension (*)
- L'étude de la pâte du "brule parfum" apporte la preuve que cet objet était exposé souvent ou d'une façon prolongée au feu
- Existence de céramiques à "engobe rouge ou peinte blanc s/ rouge pendant la même période"
- Preuve supplémentaire (restes osseux et adorns sculptés) de l'existence de canidés

La fouille a permis de localiser 5 tombes dont une secondaire

