

RECONSIDERING TAÍNO SOCIAL DYNAMICS AFTER SPANISH CONQUEST: GENDER AND CLASS IN CULTURE CONTACT STUDIES

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Despite the fact that the Taíno people of the Caribbean were the first Native Americans to encounter and coexist with Europeans after 1492, there has been almost no archaeology of Taíno response to that encounter. This study explores the reasons for (and consequences of) this neglect, and their larger implications for American contact-period archaeology. It also challenges prevailing historical models of Taíno social disintegration, drawing upon six years of archaeological work at the En Bas Saline site in Haiti, the only extensively excavated Taíno townsite occupied both before and after contact. Our results, organized by a household-scale analytical framework emphasizing Taíno constructions of gender and class, suggest that there were few major alterations to traditional Taíno social practice during the post-contact period, and most of these were related to activities thought to have been the domain of non-elite Taíno men. It is suggested that the relatively nonspecialized gender roles among the Taíno, as well as the clearly differentiated nature of their social classes, may have served as mitigating factors in the disruption of Taíno cultural practice under Spanish domination. This work also reveals a marked Taíno resistance to the incorporation of European cultural elements, which provides a striking contrast to the Spanish patterns documented in contact-era European towns, and underscores the critical importance of incorporating gender relations into studies of culture contact.

A pesar de que los Taínos del Caribe fueron los primeros indios americanos en confrontarse y coexistir con los europeos después de 1492, no ha habido casi ninguna investigación arqueológica de la respuesta Taína a este encuentro. Este estudio explora las razones y consecuencias de este descuido, y sus implicaciones mayores para la arqueología americana del período del contacto. Desafía también los modelos históricos predominantes sobre la rápida desintegración social de los Taínos, en base a seis años de trabajo arqueológico en el sitio de En Bas Saline, Haití, el único pueblo Taíno excavado extensivamente, y ocupado antes y después del contacto. Nuestros resultados organizados bajo un nivel de análisis doméstico que enfatiza las construcciones Taínas de género y clase, sugieren que hubo pocas modificaciones mayores a la práctica social tradicional Taína durante el período posterior al contacto, y que la mayoría de estos cambios estuvieron relacionados a actividades que han sido pensadas del dominio de varones no-élite Taínos. Esto sugiere que los papeles de género relativamente no especializados entre los Taínos, así como la naturaleza claramente diferenciada de sus clases sociales, pudieron haber servido como factores mitigantes en la ruptura de la práctica cultural de los Taínos bajo la dominación española. Este trabajo revela también una marcada resistencia de los Taínos frente a la incorporación de elementos culturales europeos, lo que proporciona un contraste llamativo con el modelo español documentado en pueblos europeos de la época del contacto, y subraya la importancia crítica de incorporar las relaciones del género en estudios del contacto cultural.

One of the central and most enduring themes in American historical archaeology has been the effort to understand social change provoked by the encounter of indigenous American and immigrant European groups after 1492. A great many questions of deep interest to archaeologists are embedded in this larger project, including those related to cultural survival and continuity, identity formation and transformation, accommodation, transculturation, resistance and power nego-

tations. These issues have been of particular concern in recent years, as archaeological attention has focused on the roles of small-scale aggregate groups (such as households) and individually held group attributes (such as gender, class, and race) as productive pathways in understanding how and why the diverse social landscapes of post-Columbian America emerged.

This paper is concerned with post-contact social dynamics among the Taínos of northwestern His-

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paniola (today Haiti), and the larger implications of this for archaeology in early contact period sites. The Taínos were the first group of indigenous American men and women to encounter and live with Europeans, beginning with the first voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492, and continuing into the sixteenth century. The critical first decades of interaction between Taínos and Spaniards had a profound influence on subsequent European beliefs about, understanding of, and policy toward America and its inhabitants (Jara and Spadaccini 1992; Rabasa 1992; Williams and Lewis 1993). Nevertheless, very little is known archaeologically about the Taíno during this period. My discussion has two primary objectives: the first is to explore the epistemological and methodological reasons underlying the absence of archaeology in post-contact era Taíno sites; the second is to offer a reconsidered model of Taíno social dynamics after Spanish contact and conquest, using gender and class as primary structuring elements. This is derived through a household-scale analysis of archaeological data from the site of En Bas Saline, Haiti (Figure 1).

En Bas Saline is the only systematically excavated Taíno town site in the Caribbean that was occupied both before and after Spanish contact, and our work there between 1983 and 1988 has provided the first archaeologically derived understanding of Taíno response (and resistance) to post-conquest circumstances in Hispaniola. It reveals a considerably more pronounced regimen of post-contact cultural continuity and maintenance of traditional practice than has been previously recognized. This argument runs counter to the standard historical assessment (discussed below) of near-immediate and monolithic Taíno social collapse. I suggest that the continuity in cultural practice at post-contact En Bas Saline was clearly conditioned by the nature of gender roles in both pre-contact Taíno society and Spanish-Taíno interaction, and was mediated by social hierarchy among the Taíno.

Archaeology and Contact-Era American Encounters

More than fifty years of archaeological research exploring Native American people's responses to European arrival have generated an immense body of literature, which obviously cannot be assessed fully here (for useful synthetic overviews of much

of this work see Cusick 1998a, 1998b; Dillehay and Deagan 1992; Fitzhugh 1985; McEwan 2000; Ramenofsky 1987; Rogers 1990; Rogers and Wilson 1993; Smith 1987; Thomas 1989, 1990, 1991; Wesson and Rees 2002a; Wood et al. 1989). It is useful to note, however, the striking variation and diversity in the paths of American and European encounter across space, time, ecology, and culture. Archaeologists in recent years have concentrated on understanding and explaining this variation in terms of the specific social and historical circumstances of both indigenous and immigrant groups, embedded in the local American settings in which Old World newcomers found themselves.

Through these efforts, it has become increasingly evident that gender roles and relations—both between groups in contact and within groups experiencing contact—are consistent and important conditioning factors in intercultural interaction and its consequences (Deagan 1974, 1996; Deetz 1963; Ettiene and Leacock 1980; Ewen 1991; Fairbanks 1962; Mason 1963; Rothschild 2003). Gendered roles both within and between groups in contact have complex and often subtle influences on the ways in which culture contact unfolds. They also help structure the ways in which social behavior is manifest in post-contact cultural settings. Depending on the context of intercultural interaction (e.g., conflict, trade, religious evangelization, slaving, consensual intermarriage, etc.), the gender relations of social control, food production and procurement, trade, rituals and healing, craft production, or warfare might potentially either promote social continuity or predict social collapse. For example, contact involving armed conflict and military resistance to intrusive populations tends to involve men, potentially creating a demographic imbalance favoring women in the local groups. In such a case, the degree to which a post-contact gender imbalance would encourage or mute social disruption would be profoundly influenced by whether men or women were traditionally the primary food producers or ritual specialists.

Attention to gender is but one example of increasing subtlety in the ongoing archaeological study of European-American culture contact. Nevertheless, the disciplinary tensions inherent in contact period studies—pointed out by Kent Lightfoot nearly a decade ago (Lightfoot 1995)—remain largely unresolved. European-American culture

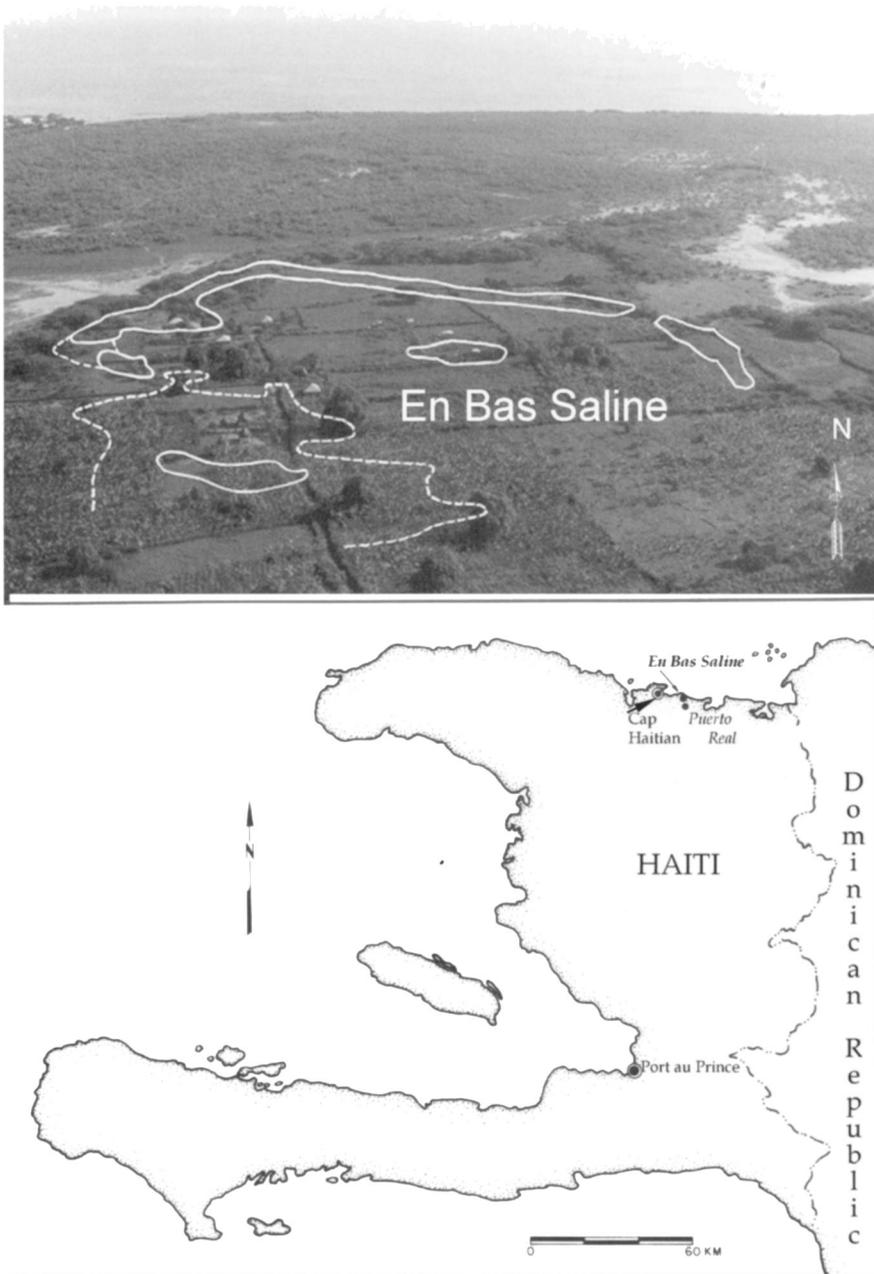


Figure 1. Location of En Bas Saline.

contact studies necessarily involve both articulation of and overlap among precolumbian archaeology, postcolumbian archaeology, ethnographic analogy, and document-based history. Although all of these sources of evidence about the past have long been acknowledged as essential to understanding the

European-American encounter and its consequences, their balanced articulation remains inadequate in practice, particularly in our tendency to privilege one line of evidence (usually but not always text-based) in both constructing models and interpreting evidence.

Interdisciplinary integration is also made problematical by the fact that textual and material evidence bearing on the early years of American and European encounter is only rarely generated at comparable scales of observation, intentionality, or resolution (see Lightfoot 1995; Ramenofsky 1987:2–5, 1991; Wesson and Rees 2002b; Wilson 1993). The case of Taíno-Spanish encounter clearly illustrates the ways in which these factors both shape and bias our understanding of the contact period in the Americas.

Taíno Cultural Practice and Gender in Late Fifteenth-Century Hispaniola

The first European settlements in America were established on Hispaniola during 1492 and 1493 in the densely populated territory of the Taíno Indians (among the numerous recent synthetic overviews of Taíno life and culture, see Anderson-Córdova 1990; Bercht et. al 1997; Guitar 1998; Keegan 1992, 2000; Moscoso 1981, 1999; Oliver 1998:59–93; Rouse 1992; Veloz Maggiolo 1997; Wilson 1990a, 1997a). The term “Taíno” has been traditionally used to designate the inhabitants of the Greater Antilles and Bahamas at the time of European arrival; however, most researchers recognize that this usage inappropriately reduces the considerable diversity of social, political, and economic formations among these people. While noting that the term is still a topic of lively debate among Caribbean archaeologists, my use of “Taíno” in this study corresponds to Irving Rouse’s designation of “Classic Taíno” in Hispaniola, characterized by complex chiefdoms, social hierarchy, a horticultural economy based on root crops, and the highly artistic craft and ritual expressions associated with the Ostionoid cultural tradition (1992:9–17).

The Taíno are thought to have been matrilineal, and it has been suggested that some may have practiced avunculocal residence (Keegan and Machlachlan 1989). The Taíno of Hispaniola were politically organized at the time of contact into at least five hereditary chiefdoms (*cacicazgos*), each with a clearly recognized regional power hierarchy and paramount ruler. It is estimated that the *cacicazgos* incorporated between seventy and a hundred communities, some of which had populations numbering in the thousands (Wilson 1997b:46).

At least two distinct social categories were rec-

ognized by the Taíno as subordinate to the caciques. The *nitainos* were equated by the Spaniards with nobles and appear to have assisted the caciques in the organization of production. *Behiques*, or shamans, were part of the *nitaino* group. A second category, known as *naborias*, seems to have referred to laborers, although it is not clearly understood whether this refers to the entire non-elite laboring population, or to certain specific subgroups (Anderson-Córdova 1990:52–56, 187; Moscoso 1981:216–241; Moya Pons 1992; Rouse 1992:9). Some scholars have interpreted this organization as an accurate reflection of precolumbian class difference among the Taíno (Moscoso 1981; Moya Pons 1992), while others suggest that this was a post-contact, Spanish-influenced structure (Alcina Franch 1983).

The fifteenth-century Taíno residents of northern Hispaniola (the focus of this study) were among the most politically complex of those documented by the first European chroniclers (see Curet 2002; Keegan 1996; Veloz Maggiolo 1997:36; Wilson 1997b:55). Most researchers infer that they were organized as complex redistributive (possibly tributary) chiefdoms with well-defined patterns of social differentiation and inequality (Alegría 1997a; Curet 2002; Keegan et al. 1998; Moscoso 1981, 1999:7–9; Rouse 1992; Siegel 1999; Veloz Maggiolo 1997:36; Wilson 1990a, 1990b, 1997b). Both of the principal early sixteenth-century chroniclers of the Taíno specifically recorded that caciques controlled production of both subsistence and craft goods by assigning specific tasks to individuals or groups, appropriating the fruits of their labor, and subsequently redistributing goods to community members (Las Casas 1958 [IV, 305]:242; Martyr D’Anghiera 1970:[II] 252).

Documentary accounts at the time of contact indicate that although the paramount rulers among the Taíno were most often men, women could also be caciques. Women seem to have participated at all levels in the political hierarchy, both wielding power and accumulating wealth (Sued Badillo 1979:29–32). Elite women, for example, are known to have amassed valued craft items and used them for trading and as gifts (see discussion by Wilson 1990a:141). Pre-contact gender roles among the Taíno are incompletely understood and often contested among contemporary scholars, who tend to refer to the “natural division of labor” as a basis for

assigning gender to activities (e.g. Cassa 1990:82–83; Stevens-Arroyo 1988:47). The few studies that have systematically investigated Taíno gender constructions conclude that gender roles among the Taíno were generally nonexclusive in most activities, ranging from political leadership and fighting as warriors to food and craft production (Guitar 1998:36–45; Sued-Badillo 1979). There are few documented social or economic functions that can be attributed exclusively to the domain of either men or women.

Taíno economy was based on intensive root crop (primarily manioc) agriculture supplemented with abundant wild estuarine resources. Both men and women were reported by chroniclers to have fished, although it is not known whether this was a regular or universal practice. Cultivating and gathering manioc roots were apparently not gender-specific activities; however, the clearing of fields and preparation of *conucos*—the raised mounds in which manioc was planted—is assumed to have been done by men. The transition from slash and burn farming to *conuco* farming among many Caribbean peoples after about A.D. 700–800 served not only to greatly increase the yield of manioc, but also to decrease the total amount of labor required to farm it (see, for example Moscoso 1999:103–110; Veloz Maggiolo 1977[2]:202–207). Once the *conucos* were constructed, all that was required for manioc was periodic planting, weeding, and harvesting—all tasks that both men and women carried out.

While this process considerably reduced the labor investment of men, larger yields greatly increased the labor investment of women, as those who carried out the long, laborious process of converting bitter manioc roots to bread (see, for example Roosevelt 1980:129–137). This division tends to lend credence to the 1494 pronouncement by Michel de Cuneo—a member of Columbus's second expedition—that “The women do all the work. Men concern themselves only with fishing and eating” (Cuneo in Parry and Keith 1984:92). Columbus himself observed that “it appears to me that the women work more than the men” (Columbus to Santangel, 1493, in Parry and Keith 1984:61).

Both women and men served as leaders and participants in community rituals (*areytos*, described below) and ballgames (see Guitar 1998:39; Sued Badillo 1979:41). The pantheon of Taíno deities and *zemi* images includes both males and females, and

both figure prominently in Taíno mythology (Arrom 1989; Stevens-Arroyo 1988:155–180). Male and female sexuality are openly expressed in Taíno art, and shocked Spanish accounts imply that chastity was not valued for either gender (see discussion in Sued-Badillo 1979:49).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of fifteenth-century Taíno society (at least to the modern observer) is a vibrant sense of artistic creativity and exuberant innovation in material expression. Taíno artisans produced a wide variety of craft items, including elaborate decorated ceramics, cotton and cotton products, ground and polished stone beads and ornaments, carved shell and bone ornaments, tools of stone, shell and bone, carved wooden objects, tobacco, various foodstuffs, and exotic birds and feathers (Bercht et. al. 1997; García Arévalo 1977; Kerchache 1994; Rouse 1992:17; Wilson 1990a:49–51). Chroniclers note specifically that women spun and wove cotton into clothing and hammocks, made baskets and mats, and carved some ceremonial wooden items, and pottery production is assumed by most contemporary authors to have been done by women (Cassa 1990:82; Guitar 1998:41–42). There is less textual evidence for craft activities done specifically by men, but it is generally assumed that men carried out the fabrication of heavier wood items, such as canoes and buildings, and produced stone tools and objects (e.g., Veloz Maggiolo 1997:38).

Encounter and the Assumption of Collapse: Why Is There No Postcolumbian Taíno Archaeology?

Shortly after Columbus's arrival in Hispaniola, the Taíno caciques formed inter-chieftdom alliances to oppose the Spanish invaders. Nearly five years of open conflict ultimately resulted in Spanish political subjugation of the island, the cessation of open warfare, the imposition of tribute on the Taíno in 1495, and the formal implementation of *encomienda* 1503. Under this institution the Indians were obliged to exchange their labor for instruction in Christianity and “civilization.” Spanish governors assigned entire Taíno towns to individual Spaniards, with labor organized and mediated through the Taíno caciques (Arranz Marquéz 1991; Moya Pons 1992). Spanish respect for chiefly status differentiation was explicitly articulated from

the first days of contact in 1492 onward, and quickly became a centerpiece of Spanish policy regarding the American Indians (see, for example, Ramos Gómez 1993:124–167; Hanke 1949).

Encomienda Indian conscripts spent from four to six months in service to the Spaniards (the *demora*) and the remainder of the year in their villages. In order to make this more efficient, the Taíno villages were sometimes moved and consolidated at locations convenient for Spanish labor exploitation (*reducción*), which exacerbated both exposure to and spread of European diseases among Indian population (the practice of *reducción* was not universally implemented, however, and tended to be concentrated in the areas of major gold production).

The combined effects of military defeat, near-slavery, forced physical relocation, social abuses, and new diseases that confronted the Taíno of early sixteenth-century Hispaniola created severe demographic pressure and population loss within 20 years of their first encounters with Spaniards (recent synthetic studies of sixteenth-century Taíno demography include Anderson Córdova 1990:41–160; Cook 1998:19–46; Mira Caballos 1997:34; Moya Pons 1992; Wilson 1990a:90–92). By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Taíno were no longer identifiable as a social entity.

A great deal of historical and ethnohistorical research over the past 500 years has been devoted to this encounter, most of it based ultimately on a relatively few primary, Spanish-produced documents. The most important of these include those of Christopher Columbus (Varela 1982), Ferdinand Columbus (Keen 1959), Bartholomé de las Casas (1951, 1958), Peter Martyr D'Anghiera (1970), and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1959) (for a synthetic discussion of Caribbean contact period documentary sources in general see Alegría 1997b; Wilson 1990a:7–13).

These early chroniclers inspired a model of Taíno response to the Spanish conquest of Hispaniola that, until very recently, dominated nearly all subsequent ethnohistorical understanding. The central elements of this model include the stunningly rapid population decline and concomitant social disintegration of a largely helpless Taíno population in response to Spanish-introduced epidemic disease, warfare, and fatally abusive labor exploitation. The theme of post-contact Taíno cultural collapse was repeatedly

and vociferously asserted by Bartolomé de Las Casas in particular (1951, 1958) and became codified as part of the anti-Spanish “Black Legend” throughout the English-speaking world. These assumptions were reinforced during the years of the Columbian Quincentenary observations, when most popular and much scholarly attention was justifiably devoted to the negative consequences of European invasion and exploitation (see, for example, Axtell 1995; Sale 1990; Stannard 1992; Sued-Badillo 1992).

A widely accepted and often implicit corollary theme to the demographic collapse of the Taíno is that population decline was paralleled by an equally rapid and devastating disintegration of traditional Taíno social, economic, political, artistic, and ideological organization. It has been difficult for most twentieth-century researchers to contemplate the panorama of events in early contact-period Hispaniola without assuming a considerable degree of social, material, and ideological alteration among the Taíno (see, for examples, discussions in Alegría 1997a:31–33; Cook 1998:19–46; Deagan 1988a; Deagan and Cruxent 2002:209–11; Deive 1995:72–76; Hanke 1949; Mira Caballos 1997:33–47, 409–412; Moscoso 1981:339–351; Moya Pons 1976, 1981, 1992:132–33; Sauer 1966; Wilson 1990a:96–98). Such alteration, however, may not have been equivalent to total collapse.

The tendency to uncritically accept the notion that Taíno social formations suffered swift and monolithic collapse in Hispaniola after 1492 has encouraged the premise that the post-contact Taíno experience is largely inaccessible to archaeology and, by extension, an unfruitful focus for archaeological research. Moreover, as a source of national identity, the story of post-contact annihilation of the Taíno people has been considerably less appealing to both historians and archaeologists in the region than has the study of the pre-1492 Taíno chiefdoms (García Arévalo 1988).

As a consequence of both of these assumptions, and of certain methodological problems discussed below, archaeologists have largely ignored questions of post-contact Taíno social dynamics in Taíno-occupied sites. Important studies have been directed toward the Taíno in Spanish town contexts (García Arévalo 1990; Ortega 1982; Smith 1995), but postcolumbian Taíno occupation sites have rarely been identified and even more rarely exca-

vated (Keegan 1996; Rouse 1992:139), and there exists no materially grounded, Taíno-generated basis for assessing Taíno action in response to European presence. This has served in turn to tautologically reinforce the notion that the Taíno did not survive contact long enough to generate significant archaeological deposits.

Historical assumptions about the Taíno in Hispaniola have been challenged in recent years, however, by such researchers as Karen Anderson Córdova (1990:122–133) and Lynn Guitar (1998:222–227) through their anthropologically informed reconsiderations of important primary Spanish documents (the most important of these is the Hieronymite Interrogatory of 1517, reproduced in Rodríguez-Demorizi (1971:273–354). These documents indicate that nearly a quarter of a century after European arrival, most of the Taíno *encomienda* workers in Hispaniola continued to serve in the Spanish labor drafts out of obedience to their caciques, whose status remained largely intact in both Spanish and Taíno eyes. Once the conscripts' labor service was completed, they returned for the rest of the year to their village homes and traditional practices, including the ritual communal feasts and dances known as *areytos*, and their spirit symbol (*zemí*)-based religion (for a similar argument concerning cultural survival among the Taíno of Cuba see Domínguez and Rives 1995).

Despite the inarguable facts of post-contact turmoil and dramatic loss of life among the Taíno, it appears that in some places at least, Taíno political organization, patterns of social and economic differentiation, village organization, and community ritual may have remained largely intact through at least the first 30 years of contact. This assertion challenges the more common assumption that Taíno social reproduction quickly collapsed under the pressure of labor exploitation and disease. It also offers a more inclusive alternative text-based model that can inform the archaeological investigation into the diversity of Taíno experience under Spanish dominion.

Methodological Issues in Contact-Era Archaeology

The (until recently) prevailing assumptions about the archaeological inaccessibility of post-contact Taíno social action have been exacerbated by

methodological issues related to site recognition. As in most parts of the Americas, archaeologists generally assume that European contact with Native Americans implies the introduction of European material things and their use by indigenous Americans (albeit often with new meanings, uses, and symbolic significance conferred by the American groups). Following from this, most post-1492 archaeological contexts are identified by the presence of recognizable European artifacts or structural features. Unfortunately, easily identifiable European objects artifacts may not be abundant or even present in Native American sites occupied early in the contact period. This problem is frequently confronted by researchers working in the "protohistoric" American era (that is, after the arrival of Europeans to the continent but before regular contact between them and native people; e.g., Galloway 1995; Smith 1987; Wesson and Rees 2002b).

The data from En Bas Saline suggest that even under conditions of direct encounter, European materials may not be particularly evident. The *termini post quem* for post-1492 deposits were provided by European faunal remains and tiny fragments of glass, metal, and earthenware (some of which might go unrecognized by excavators unfamiliar with late fifteenth-century European material culture) (Figure 2). These items were recovered through relatively fine screening (¼-inch or smaller) of all excavated soil, as well as the recovery and identification not only of all cultural materials, but also of faunal and floral remains.

This latter observation is particularly important and potentially problematic in that it requires at least rough-sorting and identification of all faunal and floral remains excavated at a site, a practice not normally required for environmental or subsistence reconstruction. Many sampling designs rely on column samples or samples from specific kinds of features or deposits for subsistence analyses. While these may be statistically appropriate methods by which to sample subsistence behavior, they are unlikely to recover all of the European plant and animal remains which serve, like European artifacts, as unequivocal *termini post quem* for post-contact deposits. In some early contact-period Native American sites European plant and animal remains may, in fact, be more frequent than European artifacts in the archaeological record. Unless

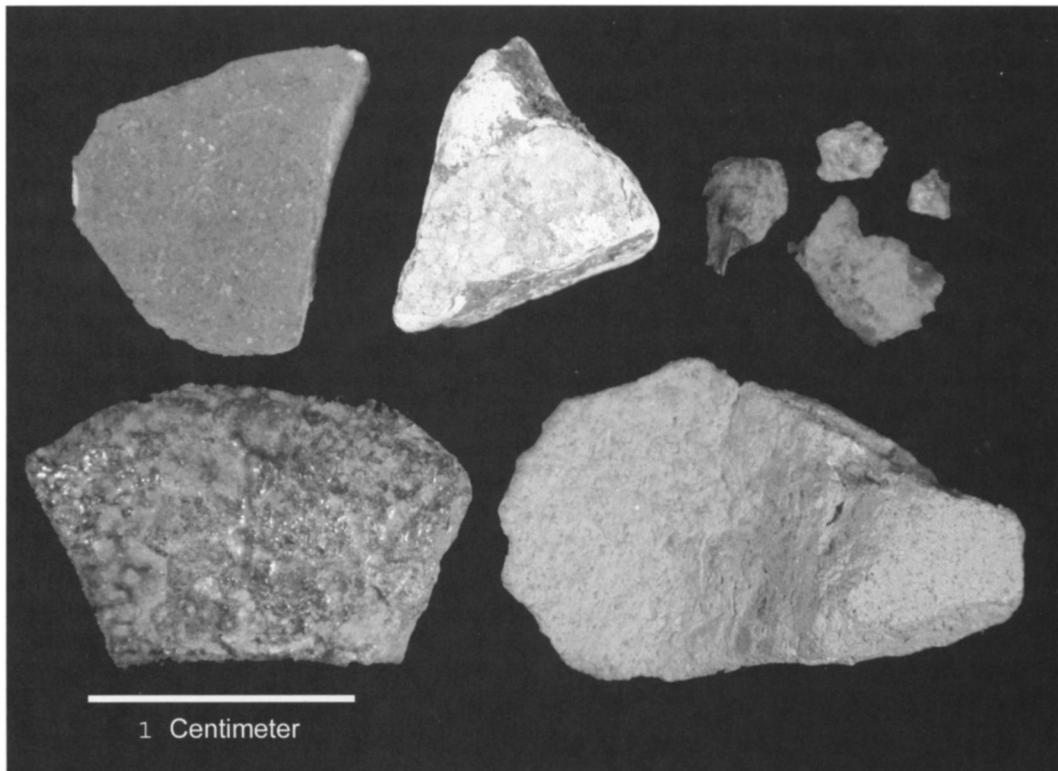


Figure 2. Late fifteenth-century Spanish artifacts from En Bas Saline. Top row, left to right: Melado glazed earthenware, Columbia Plain Majolica, fragments of iron. Bottom row, Left to right: Burned green glass, Redware earthenware.

these nonartifact remains are sampled and analyzed in the same way artifacts are, the extent and nature of post-contact activity and change can be considerably underestimated.

Another potential bias that may affect both the recognition and study of early contact-period contexts is the granularity of sampling and analytical scale. As Antonio Curet (2003) has pointed out, Caribbean archaeologists have only rarely (and only recently) employed a household scale of recovery or analysis. Caribbean archaeology and its methodologies have been dominated by regional-scale concerns of culture history, artifact taxonomy, migration patterns, and only recently, the emergence of chiefdoms (Curet 1992, 2003; Keegan 1994, 2000, see also Rouse 1992). Because of their regional focus, these issues have not traditionally required close attention to either individual households or single-event deposits. Whole sites generally provide the basic unit of analysis and comparison, often based largely on surface collections, a few test trenches, or random test pits. While this has often been quite appropriate for the kinds

of questions being asked by the researchers, it has rendered very difficult the isolation and segregation of post-contact occupation contexts within sites. As a result, post-contact Taíno occupation at many multicomponent sites has undoubtedly gone unrecognized.

In summary, there exists a dearth of information generated in Taíno contexts about Taíno responses to the arrival of Europeans in Hispaniola. This is attributed partly to an uncritical acceptance of the assumption (generated by documentary accounts) that Taíno demographic and social disintegration took place so rapidly after contact that no recognizable Taíno occupation sites were formed. The neglect of post-contact Taíno sites is also in part a consequence of assumptions about the recognition of the sites and components themselves. Many early post-contact occupation strata and depositional events are dateable only through the presence of European fauna or flora, and European objects may be quite rare. This renders the recognition of very early post-contact occupation problematical without a recovery strategy designed

to identify floral and faunal remains at the scale of household or event.

All of these contributing factors are being gradually mitigated in the Caribbean. Ethnohistorical studies such as those of Anderson-Córdova (1990) and Guitart (1998) have challenged the document-based models of post-contact Taíno cultural persistence, change, resistance, and adaptation. Fine-grained household studies are increasingly being called for and carried out in Antillean sites (Curet 1992, 2003). The En Bas Saline project, summarized in the following discussion, is one of the first programs to draw upon these developments and offer insights into post-contact Taíno social dynamics that are grounded in a Taíno-generated archaeological record.

En Bas Saline

En Bas Saline is the site of a large classic Taíno town located on the northeastern coast of Haiti about one kilometer from the village of Limonade Bord de Mer, and about 12 kilometers east of present day Cap Haitien (Figure 1). It is one of the largest Taíno village sites reported in Haiti, encompassing an area of some 95,000 square meters. No other site in this region, which is one of the most intensively surveyed parts of Hispaniola (Moore 1997, 1998), comes close to it in size or organizational complexity, strongly suggesting that this was a central town of the *cacicazgo*.

The site was first located and tested in 1977 by medical missionary and avocational archaeologist William Hodges of Limbé, Haiti, as part of his lifelong search for Columbus's lost fort of La Navidad (Hodges 1983, 1986). Hodges carried out limited test excavations at the site, the results of which led him to bring the site to the attention of the University of Florida. A collaborative program of survey, mapping, and excavation was carried out at En Bas Saline between 1983 and 1988 by the Florida Museum of Natural History, the Bureau National d'Ethnologie d'Haiti, and the Musée de Guahabá in Limbé, Haiti (Cusick 1989, 1991; Deagan 1986, 1987, 1988b, 1989, 1993; Hodges 1983, 1986).

Christopher Columbus's flagship, the *Santa María*, wrecked in December of 1492 off the north coast of Haiti, in the vicinity of En Bas Saline. After the disaster, Columbus established La Navi-

dad in the town of the Taíno cacique, Guacanagarí, who was the principal chief of the province of Marien at the time of contact (today northern Haiti and northwestern Dominican Republic). En Bas Saline is thought to be the site of Guacanagarí's town both because of its singular size and prominence in the region, and because its location conforms very closely to the accounts of Columbus's wreck (Deagan 1989; Hodges 1983; Morison 1940).

The loss of his vessel forced Columbus to leave 39 crew members behind in Guacanagarí's town with instructions to build a fortress and search for gold, and a promise to return for them the following year. Columbus did return for his crew nine months later during his second, colonizing voyage, but found the fort burned and all of the men dead. Guacanagarí claimed that some had died fighting with one another, and most had been killed when a rival Taíno cacique attacked Guacanagarí's town and burned the European compound. Although Columbus accepted Guacanagarí's story, he chose to abandon the area as a site for his first intentional settlement, and sailed eastward to establish the town of La Isabela near present-day Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic (for expanded discussion of these events and their modern interpretations see Deagan and Cruxent 2002; Morison 1940; Wilson 1990a).

This marked the end of documented European presence in Guacanagarí's town, although Guacanagarí himself remained an ally of Columbus, providing food and gifts of gold, visiting him in La Isabela, and fighting with him against the rest of the caciques of Hispaniola in the final years of the fifteenth century (Wilson 1990a:79–80). The Spanish town of Puerto Real was established in 1503, reported in the sixteenth century to be very close to where the fort of La Navidad had been, and located today about two kilometers from the site of En Bas Saline (Deagan 1995) (Figure 1). The subjects of Guacanagarí's chiefdom, perhaps including the residents of En Bas Saline, may have been pressed into *encomienda* service to the Spaniards at Puerto Real. In 1514, citizens of the Spanish town were assigned 12 caciques (one of whom was a woman), controlling 945 Indians (Arranz Marqués 1991:547). The region around En Bas Saline was also the center for some of the final Taíno resistance to Spanish dominion, the

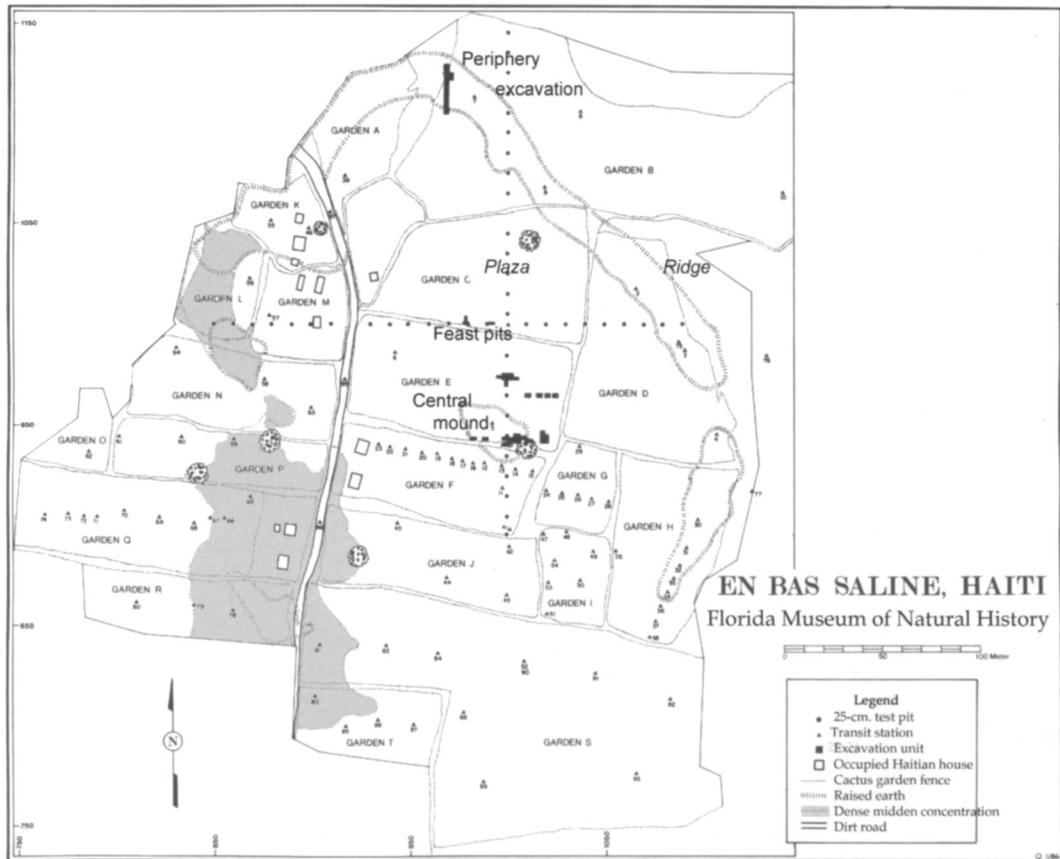


Figure 3. Archaeological basemap, En Bas Saline. Dashed lines indicate raised earth features. Shaded areas indicate the primary midden locations.

guerilla-style “Baharuco wars” of the 1530s, during which a number of Spanish settlers in and around Puerto Real were killed (see Deive 1989:30–42; Mira Caballos 1997:313).

The archaeological program at En Bas Saline was initially oriented principally toward locating La Navidad, which has been documented elsewhere (Deagan 1987, 1989). It has included programs of topographic mapping, surface collection, electromagnetic conductivity survey, transect test pits, and extensive areal excavations. Although the La Navidad fort was not unequivocally identified, the ephemeral nature of that occupation required a fine-grained excavation strategy that served ultimately to isolate the post-contact Taíno occupation of the site in a way that might not have otherwise been possible.

The Taíno town at En Bas Saline was roughly oval, oriented from northwest to southeast, and was bounded by a curved, raised earthen ridge in the

shape of a squared “C,” open to the south and southwest (Figure 3). The ridge is about 20 m across, with elevations ranging from .5 to .8 m above the surrounding areas. Distribution of the surface materials from the site (representing total coverage) reveal that the densest Taíno occupation refuse midden is also concentrated in a squared “C” shape, opposite to and in a mirror image of the raised earthen ridge (Figure 3). The ridge and the midden are separated by a flat, open area that is relatively clear of occupational evidence, and is presumed to have been a plaza, dance court, or ball court. Three raised areas (approximately .8 m in elevation and from 15 to 30 m across) are aligned east to west across the plaza area, dividing it into two sections. Following what is known of Taíno town organization, these are presumed to be elite residential areas, a presumption subsequently confirmed by excavation (for discussion of Taíno village organization and settlement patterns see Alegria 1985; Oliver

Table 1. Radiometric Dates from En Bas Saline.

Sample ID	Field Provenience	Material	Uncalibrated ¹⁴ C Years ± Φ B.P.	Cal A.D. Yrs. ± 2Φ	Cal A.D. Yrs. ± 1Φ	δ ¹³ C‰*
Beta 47758	FS7399 (A18) Mound structure	Charcoal	810 ± 70	1040 (1240) 1300	1180–1280	-25
Beta 46760	FS7126(A21,L3) Mound structure	Charcoal	800 ± 60	1060 (1250)1280	1090–1280	-25
Beta 46759	FS7123(F26,L4) Mound structure	Charcoal	720 ± 50	1230 (1280)1310	1270–1300	-25
Beta-18173	FS6851 (PM6) Mound structure	Charcoal	680 ± 80 BP	1210(1290)1420	1270–1320 1340–1390	-25
Beta 18172	FS6316(F11,L5) Feast pit	Charcoal	600 ± 70 BP	1280 (1320,1340, 1390) 1440	1300–1420	-25
Beta 01527	FS3888 (A6) Post underlying burial pit	Charcoal	640 ± 260	1270 (1300) 1420	1290–1400	-25
Beta 10526	FS3885 (F4, L11) Burial pit	Charcoal	430 ± 80	1400 (1450)1650	1420–1510 1600–1620	-25
Beta 018469	FS6882 (A6,L6) Burial pit	Charcoal	440 ± 60	1410 (1440) 1530 1560–1630	1420–1480	-25
Beta 010528	FS3897 (F8, L3) Burial pit	Charcoal	340 ± 70	1430 (1520, 1590, 1620) 1670	1460–1650	-25
Beta 046761	FS7185 F31L2 Non-elite ridge structure	Charcoal	320 ± 70	1440 (1530, 1560, 1630)1670 1770–1800 1940–1950	1470–1650	-25

* - Variables: est. C¹³/C¹² = -.25;lab. mult =1

1998:28–48; Rainey and Rouse 1941; Rouse 1992:9–10; Siegel 1999; Veloz Maggiolo 1993: 148–154).

Between 1984 and 1988 we excavated 238.5 m² at En Bas Saline, accounting volumetrically for approximately 216 m³ of soil, divided among 814 discrete field excavation proveniences (that is, five-centimeter increments of individual soil zones and features). Radiocarbon dates from the lowest strata and features at the site indicate an initial date of occupation at around A.D. 1250, and continuous occupation into the historic period is supported both by post-1492 European materials and radiometric dates (Table 1). Excavations concentrated on the central and largest mound (as a chiefly residence), the earth ridge bounding the site (to understand its chronology, construction and function), and a location in the plaza area that contained electromagnetic anomalies (Figure 3).

The earth ridge was apparently constructed purposefully in a single episode prior to contact, with a series of borrow pits on the village side, and a very low density of cultural material in the ridge fill. The configuration and material content in the area we tested suggests that earthwork was not used

for domestic occupation before contact, but rather served as a boundary for the village or for a plaza. A portion of a small wattle and daub structure accompanied by refuse deposits was located on the top of the earthen ridge, and was occupied exclusively during the post-contact period. Without additional testing, however, we cannot determine if this represents an isolated phenomenon, or a site-wide change in settlement pattern after contact.

The central mound excavations revealed remnants of at least two very large, presumably elite, superimposed or reused residential structures. They were oval in shape, exceeding 15 m in diameter, and were supported by posts measuring at least 50 cm in diameter. The initial structure was probably constructed between A.D. 1200 and 1250 and burned at least twice during its occupation. It burned for the first time during the second half of the thirteenth century (Table 1), and then again during the early post-contact period, indicated by the presence of European elements in several of the structure's later posts and burned fill layers.

Adjacent to and probably outside the structural complex on the mound, we located a deep pit in which the remains of an infant were interred (Fig-

ure 4). Included in the fill of the burial pit were large quantities of ceramics (many elaborately molded) and what we interpret to be the remains of feasting. A post-contact date for the burial is confirmed both by the presence of *Sus scrofa* and *Rattus rattus* bones in the lowest levels of the feature (underlying the burial), and by radiometric dates (Table 1).

Electromagnetic survey in the plaza located two very large, deep pits between the central mound and the earth ridge. Initially hypothesized to have been part of a potential moat, it became clear upon excavation and analysis that the pits dated stratigraphically to the pre-contact era, and chronometrically to the mid-fourteenth century (Table 1). The pits were rectangular and straight sided, measuring approximately one by two meters, and extending to a depth of more than 1.5 meters (Figure 5). They were filled with ceramic vessel fragments, broken ceramic griddles, burned manioc tubers, animal bone, layers of ash and shell, and were apparently used for communal feasting. Ceramic crossmends show that these were single-event pits (the features and their remains are discussed in Cusick 1989; Deagan 1986; Newsom 1993). Extensive testing in other parts of the central plaza revealed very shallow cultural deposits (less than 30 centimeters) with few intrusion, low artifact density, and obvious disturbance by modern hoe farming.

Of the 188,482 artifacts recovered through excavation, 30 percent came from the upper-level plow-zone or from disturbed contexts; 41 percent were from undisturbed, sub-plowzone deposits dating to after 1492, and 29 percent came from pre-contact contexts (Table 2). As noted earlier, faunal remains, studied under the direction of Elizabeth Wing of the Florida Museum of Natural History, proved to be critical in the identification of post-1492 deposits. The animal bones from all 814 excavated proveniences were sorted to look specifically for European species, and remains from pigs (*Sus scrofa*), mice (*Mus musculus*), rats (*Rattus rattus*) and/or cats (*Felis domesticus*), all unequivocal indications of European introduction, were found in 17 undisturbed sub-plowzone features. The faunal and floral remains from 42 undisturbed contexts were further analyzed using detailed measurements and allometric studies in order to characterize Taíno subsistence (Newsom 1993; Newsom and Deagan 1994; Newsom and Wing 2004; Wing 1989, 1991, 2001).

Given the temporal contrast between the centuries-long pre-contact occupation and the decades-long post-contact occupation, the high proportion of material from undisturbed, post-1492 deposits was unexpected. Sampling bias possibly contributed to this distribution, in that much of our excavation was concentrated in the central area mound where several very large, very rich, and unequivocally post-contact features were located (thereby appearing to be a good candidate for the fort of La Navidad). This cannot, however, account fully for the large proportion of historic contexts located throughout the site. Undisturbed, sub-plow-zone, post-1492 contexts occurred in all parts of the community we tested (Table 2), and the occupation of En Bas Saline clearly continued well after the first introduction of European materials and animals.

It is quite possible that En Bas Saline may have incorporated additional population after 1492 if other, smaller communities in the *cacicazgo* collapsed under the pressures of disease and Spanish labor demands. If this did, in fact, occur, it suggests that there was a strong material homogeneity in the region from which refugee populations were drawn, since no significant differences in artifact types and styles could be detected in these later deposits.

Articulating Material and Written Sources: The Analytical Framework

The analysis of archaeological data from En Bas Saline was organized to address the questions of post-contact change and/or continuity in the community, and was informed by documentary-based information about general patterns of Taíno society and Taíno-Spanish interaction (discussed above). The organization of labor was central to this, since labor exploitation was the defining element in Spanish-Taíno relations after the initial period of conflict. As noted earlier, the well-documented structures of social differentiation and political inequality among the Taíno of Hispaniola helped provide the foundation for Spanish exploitation of Taíno labor. Spanish recognition of and respect for chiefly status privileged the caciques, who were generally exempt from labor requirements and instead organized their subjects for the *encomienda* labor drafts. The *demora* labor drafts thus probably affected non-elite Taíno men dis-

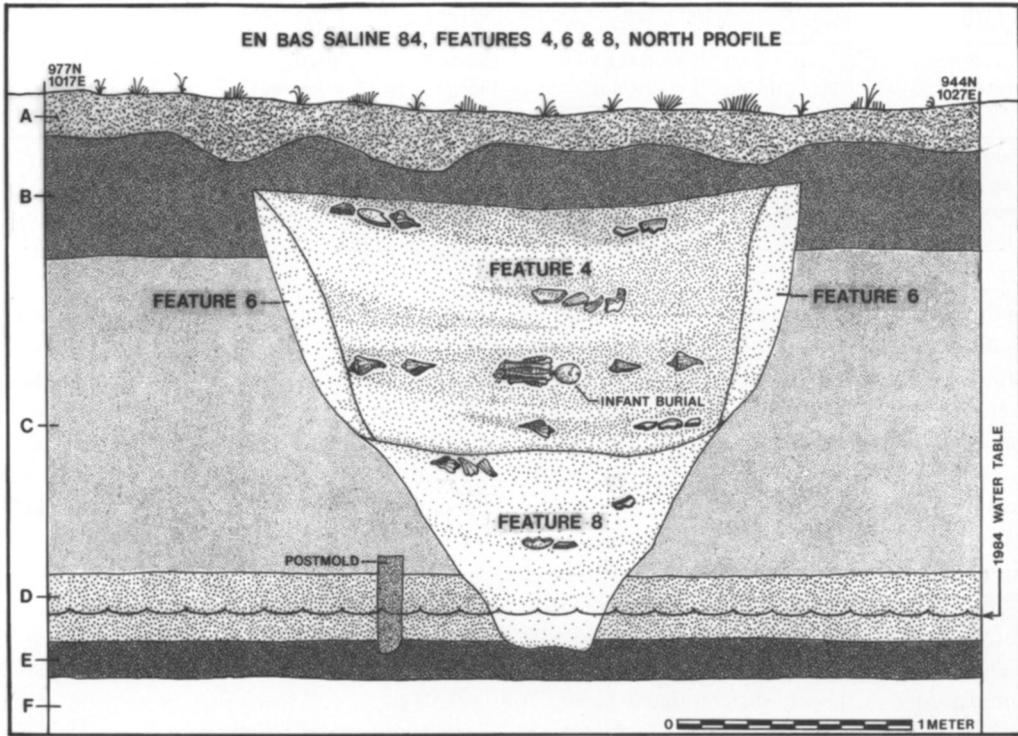


Figure 4. Post-contact burial pit, En Bas Saline (Features 4, 6, 8). A—Plowzone; B—Midden zone; C—Culturally sterile yellow sand; D—Culturally sterile clayey sand; E—Grey clay; F—Sterile white sand.

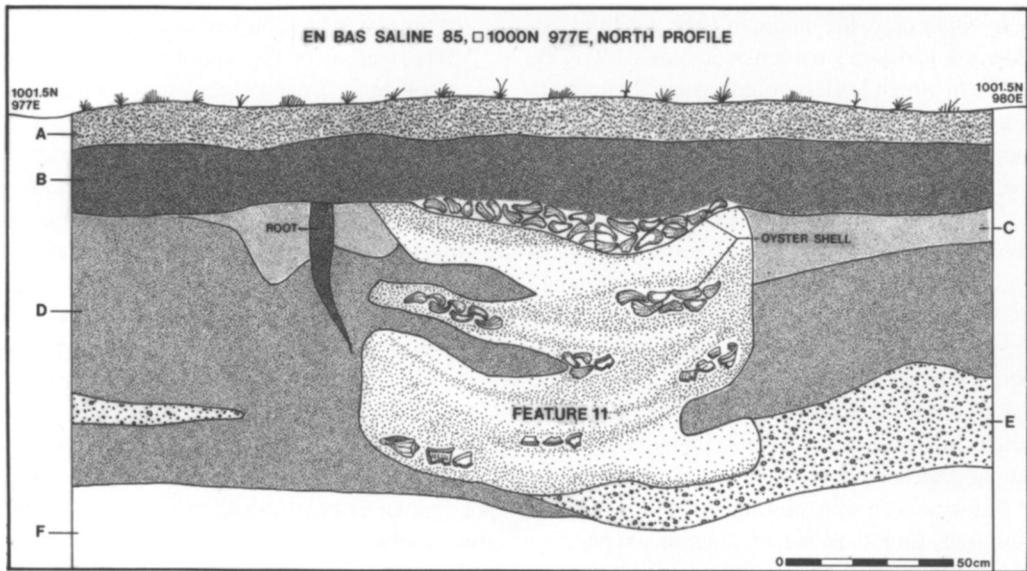


Figure 5. Pre-contact feast pit, En Bas Saline (Feature 11). A—Plow zone; B—Midden zone; C—Mottled tan clayey soil; D—Culturally sterile yellow sand; E—loose gravelly sand; F—Grey clay.

proportionately, implying that the direct impact of Spanish dominion may have been experienced most keenly along class and gender lines, specifically

non-elite households and men. Although Taíno women often served the Spaniards in several capacities (particularly producing cotton cloth), it was

Table 2. Distribution of All Excavated Cultural Materials Through Site Areas and Temporal Periods at En Bas Saline.

	Boundary Ridge		Feast Pit Units		Central Mound		Plaza Excavations		Burial Pit		ALL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Plowzone/Disturbed	11895	58.16	2949	16.93	31020	27.05	9420	52.81	1071	15	56355	30
Contact Period	6631	32.42	2416	13.87	58776	51.26	3402	19.07	5950	85	77175	41
Precontact	1928	9.42	12056	69.2	24866	41.7	5014	28.1	11088	30	54952	29
All	20454		17421		114662		17836		18109		188482	

for the most part non-elite men who were recruited for distant work in Spanish-owned mines, agricultural fields and town construction. As a consequence, it is likely that gender ratios in many Taíno communities were altered after contact.

The extent to which the removal of men would have disrupted domestic and community patterns depended on a number of factors. Removal of men from a setting characterized by an inflexible or highly differentiated gendered division of labor, in which men contributed heavily to the production of staples, would be expected to create considerable disorder. A weakly differentiated gendered division of labor might provoke less disruption, if women (or children) were able to accept and assume some of the functions normally assigned to men.

In either case, the nature of such potential disorder would depend to a considerable extent on the degree to which leaders could sustain their ability to organize, control, and consolidate labor and production in order to balance the demands of the Spaniards with their own community needs in the face of an altered labor pool. Chiefly power could have been enhanced by Spanish reinforcement of the existing Taíno social hierarchy, which could presumably serve to maintain continuity. Conversely, the imposition of Spanish labor requirements, loss of population through disease, and disruption of the Taíno sense of world order after contact might have diminished chiefly power, provoking disorder and change.

In the interest of exploring some of these possibilities at En Bas Saline, we constructed our analytical frame to compare pre-contact and post-contact patterns of gender-linked activities, social differentiation, and community ritual (as an index of political control). Excavation data were organized into five "socio-temporal" units that represented single households or single ritual events, each dating respectively to either the pre-contact

or post-contact period ("pre-contact" and "post-contact" are obviously arbitrary divisions, and undoubtedly reduce variation in the much longer pre-1492 period quite severely. While acknowledging this, we accept it for the purposes of this particular inquiry into the nature of change stimulated by the imposition of European dominance in the region after 1492).

The resulting analytical units included:

1. A **pre-contact ritual event**, comprised by the feast pits in the central plaza, dated at ca. AD 1350;
2. A **post-contact ritual event**, comprised by the post-1492 burial pit adjacent to the central mound;
3. A **pre-contact elite residential area**, comprised by the earlier large burned structure and its associated features on the central mound, which was occupied from early in the establishment of the site (at ca. A.D. 1250) to the late fifteenth century;
4. A **post-contact elite residential area**, comprised by the latest large burned structure and associated features on the central mound, dated to after 1492;
5. A **post-contact non-elite residential area**, comprised by the small wattle and daub structure and associated features on the earthwork ridge periphery of the site.

The assignment of individual deposits to the pre-contact or post-contact period was based on stratigraphic associations anchored by the presence of European materials and radiometric dates. All plow zone levels ("A" horizon), any deposits with evidence of alteration or disturbance dating to after the mid-sixteenth century, and certain other site deposits (such as functionally undifferentiated sheet deposits in the central plaza) were excluded from this analysis for the purposes of this study.

Comparative analyses of households and ritual events through time, across class, and between public and domestic practice were organized by these units (Table 3). Because labor, gender, and power were central to our questions about Taíno response to Spanish *encomienda* domination, artifacts were quantified and grouped in categories that materially reflect gendered economic activities (food technology, fishing technology, tools and implements, lithic production by-products) and access to valued goods (ornaments and ritual items). Ethnohistorical documentation, the corpus of previous archaeological work on the Taíno, and archaeological context provided the basis for assignment of artifacts to specific groups.

The organization of archaeological materials into behavioral or functional categories for purposes of quantitative comparison is widely employed by historical archaeologists as an analytical methodology, derived from Stanley South's "pattern recognition" methods (1977). Pattern recognition has received widespread criticism for its reductionist statistical approach, and its often arbitrary assignment of function. The "pattern method" has, in truth, been too often used inappropriately, arbitrarily, and without careful thought (see South and Deagan 2002:44–45). Nevertheless, it is one of the few analytical techniques that permits us to organize and compare material remains from households (whether from historic or prehistoric) into informed categories appropriate to our questions. Such an organizational approach additionally helps avoid the privileging of a single activity such as food preparation (as represented by ceramics) in the material assessment of cultural practice. I suggest as a methodological note that comparative analyses at the scale of household and event rely somewhat more heavily on the articulation of artifact patterns than do the regional-scale or community-wide spatial approach in contact period studies called for by Lightfoot (1995:210–211).

Results

Food and Domestic Practice

Food preparation, pottery production, and domestic activities are assumed to have been dominated by and largely under the control of Taíno women.

Ceramic vessels used in food preparation comprise more than 96 percent of the domestic artifacts at En Bas Saline, and plant food preparation items such as *burénes* (ceramic griddles), grinding stones, and coral graters constitute the remaining food preparation items. The ceramic assemblage is overwhelmingly dominated by Carrier pottery, a local variant of the Chican-Ostionoid subseries distinguished by paste, manufacturing techniques, decorative modes and vessel forms (Cusick 1989, 1991; Rouse 1939:43, 55–56, 1941:122–154, 1992:110–112). Chican-Ostionoid ceramics in general are associated with the rise and spread of the Taíno in Hispaniola, and they dominated Taíno assemblages throughout much of the island at the time of contact (Rouse 1992:112). White-slipped pottery, a subcategory of the Chican-Ostionoid subseries, is also present at En Bas Saline and occurs most commonly in bottle forms. The paste is thin and distinctive, and the bottles are sometimes elaborately sculpted and incised in effigy images (Figure 6).

There were no significant differences in the proportions of ceramic types or ceramic decorative modes among the three households in the sample. Although the relative proportion of undecorated pottery increased slightly after contact, this was not a statistically significant change, and is accounted for by a concomitant decrease in white-slipped wares. This observation applies, however, only to the domestic household samples, in that white slipped wares in ritual contexts increased after contact, while undecorated wares decreased. The proportions of decorated wares in the ceramic assemblages did not change either through time or across household social divisions. These patterns imply that neither ceramic production nor ceramic distribution patterns at En Bas Saline underwent significant alteration in the post-contact period. The similarity of the elite and non-elite domestic assemblages furthermore suggests that the ceramic types themselves did not reflect distinctions in social affiliation within the community.

The major differences between the ceramic assemblages of elite and non-elite households are seen in the abundance of pottery and in vessel form diversity. The peripheral non-elite household has a dramatically lower ceramic density (142 sherds/cubic meter) than does either of the elite households (704 sherds/cubic meter in the post-

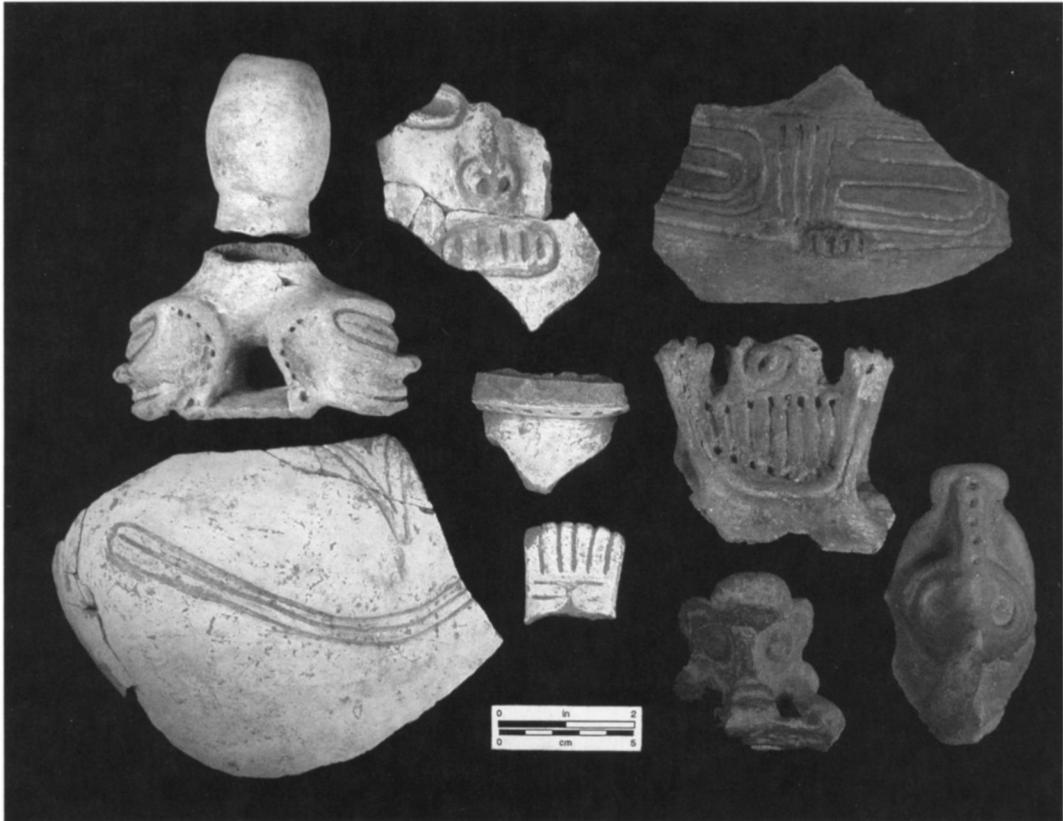


Figure 6. Taino ceramics from En Bas Saline. Left: White slipped, decorated bottle fragments. Right: Typical decorated Carrier sherds (local variety of the Chican-Ostionoid ceramic subseries).

contact elite household). The non-elite household furthermore used a more restricted range of vessels, which included only five of the eight vessel forms found in the elite households (Table 4). Boat-shaped bowls, platters, and small round bowls are absent from the non-elite household, and were probably associated with consumption or specialized functions unrelated to food preparation. This distinction suggests that the elite households had enhanced or exclusive access to vessels used for presentation, dining, and possibly ritual activity. They did not, however, evidence privileged access to food preparation vessels. Although the elite household had many more pots than the non-elite household, there was little difference between them in the forms or decorative styles of cooking ceramics.

These distributions imply a broad consistency in cultural practices related both to ceramic production and to food preparation—domains of women—both through time and across community elements. There is no indication that either the

relations of pottery production or preferential elite access to pottery changed after contact. Unfortunately, without a non-elite, pre-contact sample, we cannot assess patterns of non-elite access prior to contact. It seems likely, however, that the choices of the non-elite households in quantity and variety of pottery were considerably more restricted than those of the elite households both before and after contact.

A puzzling contradiction in assessing domestic practice at En Bas Saline is presented by the material evidence for manioc use. Bitter manioc (*Manihot esculenta*) was the staple crop of the Taíno diet, and its cultivation and arduous preparation were the province of Taíno women. Manioc also figured prominently—both literally and symbolically—in Taíno religion (for discussions of manioc in Taíno spiritual life and daily practice see Arrom 1989:20–44; Moscoso 1981:351–88; Newsom 1993:323–334; Sauer 1966:51–55; Sturtevant 1961).

Table 4. Ceramic Vessel Forms at En Bas Saline.

	Precontact Ritual (Feast)		Postcontact Ritual (Burial)		Precontact Residence (Elite)		Postcontact Residence (Elite)		Postcontact Residence (Non-Elite)	
	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion
<i>Bowl forms</i>										
Boat shaped	1	.00	7	.01	6	.01				
Carinated	88	.18	39	.15	157	.23	308	.31	42	.25
Round	5	.01	13	.05	2	.00	15	.02		
Shallow	13	.28	54	.21	113	.16	198	.20	18	.11
Unidentified	39	.08	42	.16	153	.22	122	.12	23	.14
<i>Other forms</i>										
Platters	3	.01	1	.00	1	.00	2	.00		
Bottles	104	.21	74	.28	109	.16	175	.18	28	.17
Jars	110	.23	38	.15	153	.22	165	.17	55	.33
<i>Total forms</i>	484		261		695		991		166	

The most frequently used archaeological index of manioc preparation and use are the ceramic griddles known as *burénes*. As noted, these are distributed evenly at En Bas Saline across all time periods, functional areas, and residential status distinctions, implying a stable, relatively unrestricted resource (Table 3). Another artifact category generally related to manioc preparation is that of the chert microlith chips or debitage thought to have been embedded as grating teeth in wooden manioc grating boards (Figure 7). The use of microlithic debitage in manioc grating has been discussed at length in the archaeological literature (Berman 1995; DeBoer 1975; Lewenstein and Walker 1984; Roosevelt 1980:129–130, 236) and many or most of those from En Bas Saline undoubtedly served this food preparation function. In contrast to manioc griddles, however, the proportional frequency of microliths increased dramatically after contact, in both ritual and residential contexts (Table 3).

The increase in microlith debitage would appear initially to imply a significant increase in the use of manioc graters during the post-contact period. However, because chert microliths used as manioc grater teeth and chert microliths that were simply debitage were not distinguished during analysis, we cannot dismiss the possibility of sample error in this distribution. The increase in chert debitage may therefore also imply a change in the regimen of lithic production, possibly including increased household production of stone tools after contact. This question is considered below.

Food Remains

Unlike either *burénes* (which remain constant through time and social context) or chert microliths (which increase through time), the remains of manioc tubers themselves at En Bas Saline vary in different ways both through time and according to social context. Carbonized tubers declined in frequency after contact in both ritual and residential contexts, although they were primarily associated with ritual activities (Table 5). Lee Ann Newsom, in her studies of plant remains from En Bas Saline (Newsom 1993; Newsom and Deagan 1994; Newsom and Wing 2004), identified more than 700 carbonized tuber ends in the pre-contact feast pit—undoubtedly remnants of a community-wide feast (discussed below). This was a dramatically higher concentration than that encountered in other site areas; however, it should be noted that these would have been the intact ends of tubers, which are inedible in their unprocessed state. The low proportions of tuber remains in other contexts—and particularly their decline in post-contact contexts—must be interpreted with caution, since tubers themselves would only be found in areas of grating activity, and then only if carbonized. As Table 5 shows, however, the overall proportion of cultivated edible plant remains declined in both ritual and residential contexts after contact, a decline that contrasts with the patterns of plant food preparation technology.

Patterns of animal food use in the elite households of En Bas Saline also changed measurably

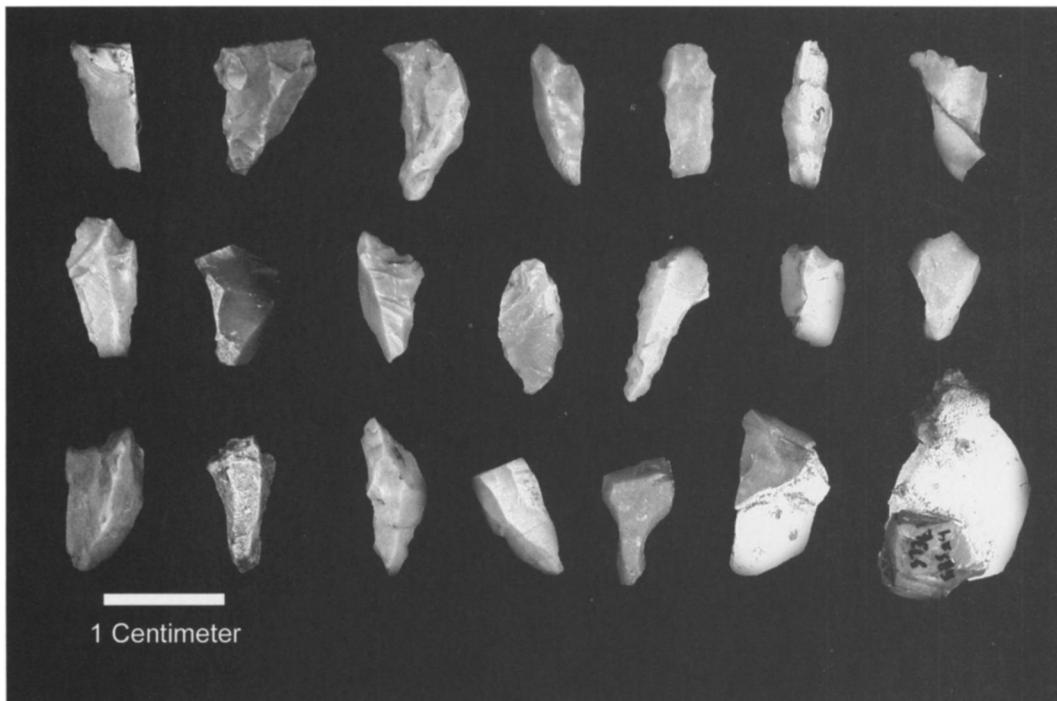


Figure 7. Chert microliths. Chert debitage possibly used as manioc grater teeth (the two lower right chert fragments have the lime mortar used to affix them to graters or other implements still adhering).

after contact, although the changes were not sufficiently dramatic to provoke a concomitant alteration in food preparation technology. Although they comprised a relatively small part of the Taíno diet at En Bas Saline, there was a sharp reduction after contact in the use of terrestrial mammals, whose hunting is thought to have been the domain of men (primarily *Capromyidae* and *Isolobodon portoricensis* rodents, Table 6). Trapping and hunting of these animals appears to have declined after contact, most likely through the removal of men from the community. Marine mammals (manatee), although rare in the community, occurred only in elite household and ritual contexts. European terrestrial mammals (rats, mice, pigs, cats, and dogs) did not constitute a major portion of the diet either numerically or in terms of biomass (Wing 1991). They were found most frequently in elite and contexts on the central mound, suggesting greater access to these exotic species by elite members of the community, either as food or curiosities.

There is a strong association of mammals in general with elite diet at En Bas Saline, and their acquisition may have been controlled or restricted by elites. In this regard, however, elites were appar-

ently unable to sustain their dietary preferences after the Spanish labor drafts began. Neither the members of the elite household nor those less affected by the labor draft (presumably women and children) were able to provide terrestrial mammal food resources at a pre-contact level. The post-contact decrease in land mammals after contact is accompanied instead by a significant increase in other kinds of terrestrial animal resources, such as turtles and lizards, which could be gathered without specialized hunting or capture techniques.

Marine fishes provided the major source of vertebrate biomass both before and after contact. There was a slight (although not statistically significant) increase in the use of bony fishes during the post-contact period in general, particularly in the non-elite household (Table 6); however, the predominant fish families exploited by the elite households remained the same. *Scaridae* (parrotfish), *Lutjanidae* (snappers), *Carangidae* (jacks), *Serranidae* (sea bass), and *Haemulidae* (grunts) together provided more than 50 percent of the fish consumed by both pre- and post-contact elite households. All of these fish can occur in relatively shallow inshore waters or on reefs, and could have

Table 5. Distribution of Plant Remains at En Bas Saline (After Newsom 1993).

	Precontact Ritual (Feast)		Postcontact Ritual (Burial)		Precontact Residence (Elite)		Postcontact Residence (Elite)		Postcontact Residence (Non-elite)		TOTAL	
	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion	#	Proportion
Float sample (liters)	30		30		20		62		103.3			
Charcoal (grams)	486.79		532.27		142.8		183.2		36.65			
CULTIVATED EDIBLE												
Maize	34	.04			6	.07	14	.05	3	.05	57	.05
Manioc	746	.95	2		43	.49	17	.06	6	.09	814	.66
Palm	2				1		1				3	
Guava					1		1		1		2	
Soursop							1		1		1	
Pimiento							5				5	
Subtotal	782	1.00	2	.33	49	.56	38	.13	11	.17	882	.71
CULTIVATED MEDICINAL (?)												
Primrose					3	.06	214	.71	2	.03	219	.18
Subtotal all cultivated	782	1.00	2	.33	52	.60	252	.84	13	.20	1101	
WILD EDIBLE												
Amaranth/chenopod					1		3				1	
Sapote family	2						3		2		2	
Goosefoot							3		6		12	
Guaba (tree bean)	1				2		2				2	
Nightshade							1		19		21	
Panicoid grass			2		1		1		24		53	
Purslane			2		25		4		2		40	
Trianthema					6		32		2		40	
Subtotal wild edible	3	.00	4	.66	35	.40	48	.16	53	.80	139	.11
TOTAL PLANTS	785		6		87		300		66		1238	

been captured by line, traps, or net fishing from boats on reefs, or on foot in shallow inshore waters. There is a slight increase during the post-contact period in the size of some of the groupers and snappers, possibly suggesting an increase in hook and line fishing, or a change in trap size selection (Wing 2001:Table 6; Newsom and Wing 2004:Table C-3). Chroniclers recorded that both Taíno men and women fished, although there is no direct information about differences in male and female fishing practices. It is likely that with the removal of men after contact, more women fished for the community, perhaps emphasizing line or trap fishing over net fishing.

The fish consumed in the non-elite household were quite different from those used by the central mound elite residents. Three families, including *Chaetodontidae* (butterfly fish, 23 percent), *Haemulidae* (grunts, 15 percent), and *Scaridae* (parrotfish, 15 percent) comprised more than 50 percent of the fish in their diet. Butterfly fish, prized today as tropical aquarium species, are very small and bony and are not generally used as a food fish. They were not present in the pre- or post-contact elite households, and their relatively abundant occurrence in the non-elite household may suggest that the peripheral household was using the non-preferred fish left from traps or nets after those with more power to exercise choice were supplied.

Dietary differences between the post-contact elite and non-elite households are also evident in the overall measures of faunal richness, diversity, and equitability (Table 6). The elite household vertebrate species richness and diversity values are the highest at the site, implying that a wide range of species was available to them. This was coupled, however, with a very low vertebrate equitability value, suggesting access to a wide range of vertebrate species, but with consumption focused on a few (presumably preferred) resources. The non-elite household, in contrast, had the lowest site-wide vertebrate and invertebrate richness and diversity values, as well as dramatically higher equitability values than did the elite households (although it should be noted that these values may be exaggerated by the small non-elite sample size). This pattern suggests not only that non-elite members of the community had a restricted access to food species, but also that they made broader, less choice-driven use of them. Regardless of who was

actually doing the fishing during the contact period, the elite household seems to have exercised control over procurement and distribution.

Crafts

Although they constitute a very small part numerically of the En Bas Saline assemblage, the proportions of ornamental items, finished tools, and non-debitage lithic production elements decreased significantly in elite domestic contexts during the post-contact period. At the same time, there was a dramatic increase in chert debitage, discussed earlier. These material changes suggest that the regimens of production, distribution, and perhaps use of nonceramic craft items were altered after 1492 at En Bas Saline.

If a large portion the producers of essential tools and implements were lost to Spanish labor demands or other Spanish-induced reasons, those remaining in Taíno communities and households may well have attempted to assume those necessary tasks. It is possible, for example, that the production of critical foodways-related implements such as manioc graters and stone knives shifted to household production, undertaken by those spared from the labor drafts, accounting for larger amounts of debitage in households.

More specialized artistic activities, however, such as production of carved ornamental items, may have declined as a consequence. This is consistent with the hypothesis that men were the primary producers of ornamental craft items, and that the removal of men from the community should be reflected by a change in the material products of their work. The production of beads and pendants did, in fact, continue in the post-contact period, but at a markedly reduced level. It should be noted that the highest proportion of such items at the site occurred in the post-contact burial (discussed below). Possibly as a consequence of reduced production, these ornamental objects seem to have been emphasized in ritual performance rather than in household use after contact.

Ritual Activity

The ritual activity complexes at En Bas Saline are particularly revealing of Taíno sociopolitical relations in that they involved the concentration and control of resources, including food, crafts, symbols, and labor. In the case of the Taíno, it is likely

that this was not a gender-specific arena, but rather one tied to political power and class (since Taíno caciques, nobles, and ceremonial participants included both men and women). The ritual assemblages used in this discussion included a pre-contact feasting pit and a post-contact burial with associated feasting.

Archaeological studies have underscored the importance of ritual feasts in providing important insights into politics and the negotiation of power, as well as into a variety of practices related to social cohesion, economic and craft specialization, symbolic systems, commodity value, and redistribution (among them, Dietler and Hayden 2001; Pauketat et. al 2002; Spielmann 2002). The Taíno community rituals known as *areytos* were documented in considerable detail in Spanish accounts, and involved feasting, dancing, singing, offerings to spirit deities and ancestors, and rites of purification (including the use of hallucinogens and induced vomiting). *Areytos* were held in the plaza to celebrate deeds of ancestors, at the time of harvest, before and after battles, in association with ball games, at the marriage or death of a chief, and undoubtedly on other occasions as well (Cassa 1990:174–177; Rouse 1992:14–15; Wilson 1990a:23, 58).

The social functions of ritual feasting among the Taíno are not yet well understood, and they undoubtedly varied through time and among communities according to local traditions, resources bases, and political economy. Nevertheless, the comparison of pre-contact and post-contact ritual events at En Bas Saline provides an important insight into the degree to which continuity in power relations, resource values, and symbolic attribution were sustained (or lost) during the post-contact period by the Taíno of En Bas Saline.

Despite the three centuries and the different purposes separating them, the pre-contact feast and the post-contact burial possess similar material profiles and imply a consistent vision of appropriate ritual performance (Table 3). Obviously, certain differences material resulted from the different functions of the two ritual events, such as the higher proportion of white slipped, molded and sculptural Carrier bottle forms in the post-contact burial feature (Figure 6). The emphasis on these bottles in the post-contact burial suggests their symbolic importance for residents of En Bas Saline, and the

persistence of corollary belief structure and practice after Spanish dominion. A cut and polished bone tube made from an avian legbone was also present in the burial pit, and may have been associated with the inhalation of hallucinogenic powder during the Taíno *cohoba* ritual (Alegría 1997a:24; Caro Alvarez 1977).

In addition to their similar ceramic assemblages, both of the ritual contexts contained higher proportions of objects related to craft production, ritual, and ornamentation than did the residential contexts. Stone beads were, for example, twice as common proportionately in the ritual contexts as they were in the residential contexts (although they were few in number throughout the undisturbed contexts at the site). The pre-contact feast pits contained fewer finished ornaments, tools, and implements than did the burial, but also many more production by-products (including the problematic chert microliths) than did the burial. This may imply that the socially valued goods associated with the post-contact burial were gathered from those already existing, while the production of implements and craft items for ritual feasting or exchange was incorporated as part of the pre-contact event (see Spielmann 2002).

Food remains from both of the ritual contexts also illustrate the aggregation of resources and labor for these events both before and after contact. Although the kinds of animals targeted for feasting did not differ from those in the residential contexts, the vertebrate and invertebrate faunal species richness of the two ritual contexts (63 and 69) is much higher than in any of the residential contexts (46, 45, and 16 respectively) (Table 6). The high species richness and diversity in the ritual contexts suggests an intensive but broadly focused effort to accumulate a large amount of food for a single event. Like the diet of elite domestic households, however, the very low species equitability suggests that consumption was concentrated on certain preferred resources for these events.

Plant remains are less consistent between the two ritual contexts—in the pre-contact feast pit, more than 99 percent of the edible plants were corn or manioc, while in the post-contact burial pit only 33 percent of the edible plants were domesticated (Table 5). This decline in the proportion of cultivated edible plants after contact, as noted, is

Table 6. Summary Faunal Distributions and Proportions (Prop.) at En Bas Saline.^a

	Precontact		Postcontact		Precontact		Postcontact		Postcontact	
	Ritual		Ritual		Elite Residence		Elite Residence		Nonelite Residence	
	MNI	Prop.	MNI	Prop.	MNI	Prop.	MNI	Prop.	MNI	Prop.
VERTEBRATES										
Terrestrial mammals	27	.08	27	.05	26	.14	13	.06	1	.03
Marine mammals	0		4	.01	1	.01	2	.01	0	.00
European mammals			4	.01						
Freshwater turtles	9	.03	9	.02	1	.01	6	.03	1	.03
Marine turtles	9	.03	13	.03	1	.01	6	.03	1	.03
Snakes	8	.02	3	.01	4	.02	3	.01	1	.03
Lizards	18	.05	19	.04	2	.01	4	.02	1	.03
Toads	4	.01	4	.01	2	.01	0	.00	0	.00
Birds	8	.02	9	.02	2	.01	3	.01	0	
Bony fishes	269	.76	428	.82	147	.78	176	.82	28	.88
Sharks	3	.01	4	.01	2	.01	3	.01	0	
Subtotal Vertebrate MNI	355		524		188		216		33	
# families	37		46		37		38		18	
# species	64		69		46		45		16	
Class diversity (H')	1.44		1.66		1.63		1.63		.36	
Species diversity (H'')	3.57		3.52		3.36		3.67		2.77	
Species equitability	.04		.05		.08		.08		.34	
INVERTEBRATES										
Crustaceans	35	.01	159	.03	21	.01	19	.02	8	.05
Bivalves	2508	.90	4936	.92	1653	.92	1054	.91	147	.83
Gastropods	233	.08	288	.05	121	.07	88	.08	22	.12
Subtotal Invertebrate MNI	2776		5383		1795		1161		1	
# families	40		37		29		28		22	
# species	60		68		45		44		27	
Class diversity (H')	.16		.21		.29		.3		.93	
Species diversity (H'')	1.12		2.8		2.35		2.12		2.66	
Species equitability	.04		.05		.08		.08		.28	
TOTAL Faunal MNI	3131	.00	5907	.00	1983	.00	1377	.00	210	
	% all MNI		% all MNI		% all MNI		% all MNI		% all MNI	
Subtotal Vertebrates	355	.11	524	.09	188	.10	216	.16	33	.16
Subtotal Invertebrates	2776	.89	5383	.91	1795	.91	1161	.84	177	.84

^aBased on 42 field proveniences analyzed under the direction of Elizabeth Wing, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida. NISP=65,850

a general trend between the pre-contact and post-contact periods at En Bas Saline, albeit with the caveats of preservation vagaries as a source of sample error. Overall, however, it is the continuity in material profiles that is the most striking aspect of the ritual contexts, suggesting the continuing ability of leaders during the post-contact period to command what were probably increasingly scarce labor and commodity resources required for community ritual and social reproduction.

Discussion and Summary

This study has been concerned with the reasons for, and consequences of, the dearth of archaeological information generated about Native American responses to the arrival of the first Europeans in America. Using archaeological data from the Taíno town site of En Bas Saline, Haiti, it has also explored the nature of those responses, and offered substantive insights into Taíno cultural survival and dynamics after 1492.

The absence of archaeological attention to post-contact Taíno sites in the Caribbean is attributed to both methodological and epistemological biases in archaeological practice. One important factor has been a largely uncritical acceptance of the assumption—based in documentary sources—that Taíno demographic and social disintegration took place so rapidly after contact that no recognizable Taíno occupation sites were formed (or if they were, their ephemerality made them materially inaccessible). Not only has text-based assessment of Taíno collapse limited archaeological problem definition in the region, but archaeological practice has also been biased by assumptions about how we identify post-contact Native American contexts. In the case of En Bas Saline, European artifacts are few, unremarkable, and not easily recognizable. Many post-contact occupation strata and depositional events are dateable only through the presence of European fauna, implying a need to incorporate total recovery and sorting of these remains as a standard part of research strategy in suspected post-contact sites.

With these concerns in mind, archaeology at En Bas Saline has demonstrated that there was, in fact, a substantial post-1492 Taíno occupation at this site, and that traditional Taíno social and community practice in general was sustained here with few material alterations well into the sixteenth century. The documentary record makes it apparent that the most disruptive aspect of Spanish domination of Hispaniola (other than epidemic disease) was the annual labor draft, which removed Taíno workers from their towns for part of each year. Spanish policy accorded caciques themselves political recognition and exemption from labor, and it is probable that they, in turn, extended preferential treatment to kinsmen and elite community members in their organization of the labor drafts. These labor drafts furthermore seem to have impacted men (as workers in mines, construction, and agriculture) to a considerably greater extent they did than women.

The articulation of archaeological data with text-based information about this aspect of Spanish-Taíno interaction has made it possible to elicit the essential diversity of Taíno post-contact experience within the community, and the importance of gender and social class in conditioning that diversity. Archaeologically visible changes in Taíno domestic cultural practice at En Bas Saline after European imposition of the *encomienda* are most clearly

manifested in activities associated with men. These include lithic tool production, the production of shell, stone, and bone ornaments, hunting of terrestrial animals, and possibly some fishing practices. During the same period, there was a high degree of continuity in the kinds and proportions of items presumed to be associated with women's activities, or to have been produced by women, including manioc processing, shellfish gathering, food preparation, and ceramic production. There is the possible implication as well—at least in the case of lithic production and fishing—that women may have assumed some of the most critical subsistence and production tasks thought to have been traditionally performed by men. The relatively non-specialized gender roles and relations of the Taíno, outlined in this discussion, may in fact have served as a mitigating factor in the disruption of cultural practice provoked by the removal of men from the community.

The alterations in gender ratios created by the labor drafts do not appear to have affected ritual practice, or by extension, the power of leaders (be they male or female) to marshal people and resources for ritual events that were fundamental to community coherence and social reproduction. Residents of the elite household had access to and possessed a greater diversity of material objects and choice in food resources than did the post-contact, non-elite household, clearly implying a marked social inequality among households. In the absence of a pre-contact non-elite household sample, we can only presume that the social differentiation seen in the post-contact archaeological record of En Bas Saline represents the continuation of similar patterns before contact. Spanish accounts of such differentiation made at the moment of contact support this presumption.

The scarcity of European artifacts at En Bas Saline is conspicuous. Despite their location within a few kilometers of the Spanish town of Puerto Real, the people of at En Bas Saline only rarely incorporated Spanish items into their material life. This is consistent with Anderson-Córdova's suggestion that most Taínos retreated to their home villages when not working in labor drafts, and were largely insulated there from the Spaniards (1990). It also supports the suggestion of Taíno indifference to and rejection of Spanish cultural elements and values.

This rejection presents a striking contrast to the other side of the contact equation, that is, European response to interaction with Taínos. It is well-documented archaeologically that Spanish domestic cultural practice at Puerto Real and other sixteenth-century Spanish towns throughout the Americas was quickly transformed in response to contact with American Indians. Within a decade of contact, women's domains of food preparation and ceramic production in most households in these Spanish towns had thoroughly incorporated Taíno practices through the agency of Taíno women who married or lived with Spanish men (see Deagan 1995, 1996; Ewen 1991).

The reverse situation—Spanish influence in the households of En Bas Saline communicated through Indian men in contact with Spaniards—did not occur, providing a provocative illustration of how the nature of contact-provoked change can be grounded in gender roles, particularly as embodied in cultural brokerage. It also offers a dramatic departure from earlier models of acculturation and Euramerican culture contact (see Cusick 1998b). From an archaeological perspective, Taíno cultural continuity and Spanish cultural transformation in sixteenth-century Hispaniola suggests that contact-induced cultural change in household domestic practice was largely unidirectional—from Taíno to Spaniard.

En Bas Saline is the first post-contact Taíno community that has been studied archaeologically in order to understand post-contact response and action, and as such, may reflect a very local set of circumstances. There were undoubtedly many other Taíno households and communities that had very different experiences after 1492, although it is unlikely that the people of at En Bas Saline were the only Taínos who retained traditional cultural practices until epidemic disease finally overwhelmed them. The full panorama of post-contact organizational and experiential diversity cannot be articulated without an archaeologically informed reconsideration of documentary sources, a concerted effort among prehistoric and historical archaeologists to coordinate scale and strategy in the study of the early American contact period, and a genuine intellectual commitment to incorporate gender into those studies as a basic structuring element.

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