The Mona Chronicle: The Archaeology of Early Religious Encounter in the New World

Jago Cooper (British Museum, Americas Section, Great Russell Street, London, UK)
Alice V.M. Samson (University of Cambridge, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, UK)
Miguel A. Nieves (Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales, Bureau of Coasts, Reserves and Refuges, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico)
Michael J. Lace (University of Iowa, Coastal Cave Survey, West Branch, Iowa, USA)
Josué Caamaño-Dones (Universidad de Puerto Rico Río Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, San Juan, Puerto Rico)
Caroline Cartwright (British Museum, Conservation and Science, London, UK)
Patricia N. Kambesis (Western Kentucky University, Department of Geography and Geology, Bowling Green, USA)
Laura del Olmo Frese (Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Programa de Arqueología y Etnohistoria, San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Introduction

Mona Island in the Caribbean preserves some of the most astonishing and under-researched evidence for Indigenous - European interaction in the Americas. The archaeology of the island’s caves provides an opportunity to study personal responses to an indigenous ritual landscape through evidence of the early translocation of Christianity to the New World. This article discusses a body of uniquely preserved inscriptions and iconography which captures the intimate dialogue of spiritual encounter between Christian and Native worldviews in the Caribbean. This unique, and unorthodox Chronicle is examined through the archaeological, palaeographical, and historical perspectives of early colonial encounters to situate the dialogue within the wider context of cultural interaction in the Americas.

The transformative potential of an archaeological perspective of the early arrival of Europeans and Africans in the indigenous Americas has become increasingly evident since the quincentennial of Columbus’ landfall in the Caribbean (Lightfoot 1995; Deagan 1998; Van Buren 2010; Liebmann & Murphy 2011; Funari & Senatore 2015). Archaeological research has focussed on indigenous perspectives underrepresented in
historic texts, breaking down traditional dichotomies of what indigenous, Spanish, or mestizo means in colonial contexts in terms of material culture, landscape, and identities (Voss & Casella 2012; Hofman et al. 2014; Silliman 2015). Increasing use of high resolution material and archaeometric analyses have provided new understandings of colonial processes that are more nuanced than mere oppression, domination and, in the case of the Caribbean, indigenous extinction (Deagan 1998; Lalueza-Fox et al. 2003; Cooper et al. 2008). Archaeological perspectives on the ways colonialism reconfigures landscapes and material relationships (Gosden 2004) bring out the forging of new material relationships and identities. Be it in the re-use of European clothing and fastenings as jewellery by indigenous populations (Martinón-Torres et al. 2007; Valcárcel Rojas 2016) as they resonate with pre-existing value systems, or the creolisation of religious beliefs in newly built churches (Graham 2011), or the processes of coloniser familiarisation with new environments, foodways, and ecologies (Deagan & Cruxent 2002; Rodríguez-Alegría 2005). What these demonstrate are that encounter left all sides changed. New identities and practices emerged in local contexts which underline the importance of archaeological research to provide a counterpoint to grand narratives (Voss 2015). In this paper we focus on archaeological evidence for religious engagement between European and indigenous individuals. We see how European perspectives were challenged by indigenous cosmology, and witness the creation of a highly personalised yet syncretic Chronicle. This not only provides a counterpoint to official metropolitan histories, but tracks the beginnings of new religious engagements and transforming cultural identities in the Americas.

**Mona Island**

Christopher Columbus stopped at Mona Island on his second voyage in AD 1494 (Figure 1). Despite its small size (50km²) and seemingly isolated position in the Mona Passage halfway between the newly named islands of Hispaniola (native name Hayti) and Puerto Rico (Borinquen), Mona Island (Amona) plays a crucial role in the establishment of the first European towns and the globalisation of the Caribbean. In AD 1494 one or more indigenous communities lived on Mona’s coast, a day’s canoe journey from the neighbouring larger islands, tending agricultural plots, and taking advantage of the abundant terrestrial and marine resources. Stone-lined plazas in the centre of the island and a long history of use of the island’s many caves, indicate these communities were tied into inter-regional networks (Dávila Dávila 2003; Samson & Cooper 2015a).
The accounts of Mona in the early colonial documents (Samson & Cooper 2015b) identify that indigenous populations on the island were fully immersed in direct contact with Europeans and Africans throughout the sixteenth century. The *indio* population, composed of local and Spanish trafficked individuals from other islands and mainland areas, experienced a generation of transformation as Spanish power was increasingly projected into the Caribbean. Islanders produced and exported agricultural products, especially cassava bread, and women crafted finished goods such as cotton shirts and hammocks for the first Spanish settlements of San Juan, increasingly supplying food and water to European ships on their way to or from the Indies (Murga Sanz 1960; Wadsworth 1973; Cardona Bonet 1985). Mona’s location in the heart of Spanish colonial projects, and on one of the main Atlantic routes from Europe to the Americas, allowed inhabitants to exploit the geographies of opportunity, although precarious, of this early colonial world. Communities on Mona were exposed to the earliest waves of European impact at a time when Europeans themselves were in an alien environment, gathering knowledge, making decisions and learning patterns of behaviour that became more firmly entrenched as the colonisation of the Americas continued. This is a critical period of creolisation in which the first and subsequent generations of inter-continental Americans were born. Therefore there is great potential for the archaeology of Mona to provide insights into the transformation and forging of new identities.

**Indigenous Amona**

Archaeological evidence of an indigenous presence on Mona spans over five thousand years (Dávila Dávila 2003; Samson & Cooper 2015b). The population that saw Columbus’ ships were part of a large complex cultural network of territorially, genetically, linguistically and artistically interweaving chiefdoms stretching from the Bahamas to the Lesser Antilles, with some population estimates for Hispaniola alone of over one million people, and Puerto Rico 100 000 (Rouse 1992; Anderson-Córdova 1990; Moscoso 2008). During later pre-Columbian times, from AD 500, Mona was a hub of interaction between the chiefdoms of Boriquen and Hayti. In the latest pre-Columbian period from AD 1300-1500, a spike in cave exploration suggests subterranean spaces were a major draw for people to the island, and cave practices were instrumental in late pre-Columbian ethnogenesis (Samson and Cooper, forthcoming). The earliest Spanish accounts of Mona
emphasise Spanish dependence on indigenous labour and products (Fernández de Oviedo y Valdénz 1851:bk 16, ch 1; Samson & Cooper 2015b).

European encounter on Mona
The adoption and use of European material culture, products and technology on Mona is immediate and profound. During recent fieldwork European objects have been recovered within indigenous settlements and activity areas. These include glass beads, new types of European storage jars, ceramic vessels, and monetary currency at sites along the south coast and inland (Figure 2). Imports span the period from AD 1493 to 1590 and are found in multiple site settings from residential settlements, agricultural fields, to cave refugia. The presence of European ceramics, European livestock, and Spanish coins in direct association with indigenous ceramics, tools and food processing equipment capture this changing material world and indigenous transculturation (Dávila Dávila 2003; Cooper et al. 2008). However, as a counterpart to technological and economic transformation, the subterranean landscape of Mona reveals extraordinary material evidence of the face-to-face ontological encounter, providing a window into the spaces and experiences of the spiritual transformation of the Americas.

Caves of Mona
Mona Island is one of the most cavernous regions in the world per square kilometre (Frank et al. 1998). Limestone cliffs dominate Mona on all sides, falling away to beaches along the south and west coasts. These cliffs provide access to the majority of the island’s two hundred separate Pliocene era cave systems that inhabit the geological interface between the harder lower Dolomite and the porous upper Lirio Limestone (Kambesis 2011; Lace 2012; Lace 2013). The caves exponentially increase the experience of the island’s size, providing access to a subterranean realm often more easily traversed than the harsh and densely vegetated world above. For example, Cueva Lirio is one of the largest coastal caves in the world with 21kms of mapped tunnels (Mylroie 2012). Caves on Mona represent a palimpsest of human activity spanning the pre-Columbian past to the present day, with clearly identifiable peaks in human cave use (Samson et al. 2015). The importance of caves within the spiritual, or from a European perspective ‘religious’, framework of indigenous populations across the Americas is well established (Brady & Prufer 2005; Moyes 2013). In the Caribbean, late fifteenth-century accounts collected from indigenous informants on Hispaniola relate the emergence and origins of
the first humans from two separate caves (Pané 1999). And indeed, archaeological evidence from across the archipelago shows that caves were used for a variety of purposes such as the deposition of human remains and social valuables, and locations of symbolic iconography.

Since 2013, archaeological survey of ca. 70 cave systems as part of an interdisciplinary study of past human activity on Mona Island has revealed that Mona’s caves provided a range of symbolic, economic and subsistence resources to resident and visitor, indigenous and historic populations. Indigenous presence has been identified in 30 cave systems all around the island. Evidence includes the greatest diversity of preserved indigenous iconography in the Caribbean, with thousands of motifs recorded in darkzone chambers far from cave entrances (Lace 2012; Samson et al. 2013; Samson & Cooper 2015b). Mark-making consists of geometric motifs, meanders, and areas where the soft cave crusts have been deliberately and systematically removed, as well as extensive and complex imagery of anthrozoomorphic and ancestral beings (*cemíes*) (Figure 3). Cave chambers both large (>50m diameter) and small (<1m wide), their surfaces covered with iconography, must have been a unique architectural experience for indigenous populations, very different from the biodegradable and permeable domestic architecture of their settlements (Cooper et al. 2010; Samson 2013).

As well as symbolic resources, caves on Mona, as in much of the karstic Antilles, are sources of important subsistence resources. On Mona Island they contain the only current sources of permanent fresh water. From dripping stalactites, to large reservoirs of fresh water, different cave systems have very different hydrolgical personalities. There is a clear association between the underground sources of fresh water and the concentrations of indigenous mark-making (Lace 2012). The role of the caves as a source of life-giving water is referenced in the iconography (Figure 4). The iconography on the cave walls and extraordinary acoustic, olfactory and haptic properties of the environment offer a powerful experience of alterity, enhanced by the lack of usual sensory stimulation, disorientating and heightening awareness, and morphing perspectives of space and time (Siffre 1964). Hundreds of metres underground, the torch and lamp light flickering across representations of *cemíes* on walls and ceilings, some reflected in pools of water, would have made a powerful impression on indigenous, as well as any new visitors to the caves.
Cave 18

In this paper we focus on archaeological, chronometric, palaeographical, and historical evidence for a series of early- to mid-sixteenth century cave visits which illuminate previously unknown aspects of the indigenous-European spiritual encounter.

Cave 18 is a cave system on the south coast of Mona. One reaches the cave entrance by traversing the foot of a cliff, climbing a vertiginous cliff face, and scrambling through a human sized entrance. Cave 18’s chambers and tunnels run for more than 1km with around half a dozen balcony entrances in the cliff face which provide access to dendritic pathways leading back to deep darkzone cave chambers. Tunnels emerge into a series of low rooms, high vaulted chambers, and areas of water pools and flowstone. After around 50m of walking, in darkness, one begins to see the material record of indigenous, followed by historic mark-making.

Indigenous mark-making

Evidence of indigenous activity occurs within a large yet delimited darkzone area in chambers A-K (Figure 5). Mark-making consists of ca. 250 separate motifs made by dragging one to four fingers, and finger-sized tools through the soft deposits of the cave surfaces. Indigenous iconography covers the walls, ceilings, and alcoves in 10 chambers and interconnecting tunnels over some 6500sqm, or about 15 per cent of the cave system. Execution of the imagery necessitated active body positions such as climbing and crouching to reach desired surfaces. The indigenous origin of the mark-making is supported by the clearly identifiable style of Late Ceramic Age iconography, as well as from Capí (thirteenth to sixteenth century) pottery found in the same chamber (Figure 6). Two radiocarbon dates (OxA-31209 & OxA-31536) from charcoal (Amyris elemifera and Bursera simaruba) recovered from untrammelled edges of two separate chambers date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (1272-1387 cal AD, and 1420-1458 cal AD 95.4% Oxcal v4.2, using IntCal13).

Historic mark-making

There are more than 30 historic inscriptions in Cave 18. These include phrases in Latin and Spanish, names, dates, and Christian symbols which occur within a series of connecting chambers (Figure 5). The inscriptions are all contained within the area of
indigenous iconography. Where indigenous mark-making and written inscriptions occur together, the average height of inscriptions and Christian iconography is 1.8m above floor height, compared to 1.5m for indigenous mark-making. There are no indigenous marks overlaying written inscriptions or Christian symbols. The majority of the inscriptions are single-lined strokes, which employ a variety of edged tools, distinct from the finger-fluted indigenous mark-making. In terms of the use of space and composition, the Christian imagery and inscriptions are predominantly at or above (European) head height, occupying flat, vertical wall surfaces and visible whilst walking upright through the space, distinct from the lower positions and multiple orientations of indigenous mark-making.

In terms of content, there are three phrases in chambers H and K. These read *Plura fecit deus, dios te perdona, and verbum caro factum est* (bernardo). Palaeographic analysis of letter forms, the use of abbreviation, and writing conventions are diagnostic to the sixteenth century (Samson et al. in press). *Plura fecit deus* or “God made many things” is the first inscription one encounters after entering chamber H. There is no obvious contemporary textual source for this phrase, and the commentary appears to be a spontaneous response to whatever the visitor experienced in the cave. There is a strong spatial inference that ‘things’ is a reference to the extensive indigenous iconography on the natural architecture of the same cave chamber. The phrase may express the theological crisis of the New World discovery, which throws the personalised human experience and reaction into sharp relief.

In the next chamber where the phrase *dios te perdona*, “may God forgive you”, is inscribed on a ceiling protuberance surrounded by extensive indigenous finger-fluting (Figure 7). This is a common Christian petition, which implies a separation between the author and the subjects or acts that require forgiveness, and the intercessional role of the author, perhaps akin to a confessional pardon between priest and sinner. Another implication is that it is the attendant practices, now invisible to us, require forgiveness as well as the images themselves.

The third Latin inscription, *Verbum caro factum est*, is a direct quotation from the Vulgate version of the bible, the Gospel of John 1:14 and “And the Word was made flesh [and dwelt among us]”. The biblical passage follows a description of the creation
of the world, and is the first announcement of Jesus (the Word) in the Gospel, followed by his baptism. This is one of the best known of all chapters of the Bible, and would have been familiar even to Christians without any formal Latin education (Richard Rex, pers. comm. 2015).

Particularly striking are two depictions of the Calvary. The first consists of three crosses, the central one with the Latin inscription “Iesus” (Jesus), standing over 3m high in Chamber G (Figure 8). Stylistically all three are barred cross-on-base motifs, in use in the sixteenth century with similar examples found from contemporary contexts in Europe and South America (McCarthey 1990; Hostnig 2004; Barrera Maturana 2011; Tarble de Scaramelli 2012). A second Calvary panel is made up of two crosses, one of which is a barred cross-on-base, the other a simple two-stroke Latin cross, which flank a pre-existing indigenous anthropomorphic figure. This triptych has clear compositional parallels with representations of the Calvary in which the central figure is strikingly cast as an indigenous Jesus.

Reinforcing the distinctly Christian character of the inscriptions are a series of 17 crosses, ranging from simple Latin crosses to more complex Calvary crucifixes (Figure 9). Crosses appear alone and also in direct association with names and phrases, and most often in association with indigenous finger-fluting and iconography. Analyses of the stroke sequences demonstrates that the vertical line is drawn first and the horizontal line afterwards, from left to right, in the gesture of a right-handed blessing. In terms of positioning, crosses are in visually dominant positions over cave entrances or on high walls. The majority occur, not superimposed, but placed vertically above indigenous iconography. This vertical ordering is a clear and cross-culturally understood visual convention of hierarchical relations, and seen elsewhere in rock art sites across the Americas (Hostnig 2004; Martínez Cereceda 2009; Tarble de Scaramelli 2012; Recalde & González Navarro 2015). Although indigenous cross motifs are common across the Antilles and Andean region, these are distinct, often framed, equal-armed crosses, produced in a different way in terms of directionality, style, method, and location (Dubelaar 1986: 102).

Simple crosses are also found adjacent to a series of Christograms (Figure 10). Christograms, or abbreviated forms of the name of Jesus Christ, were already in use for
over a millennium when these were incised in the walls of the cave. The ones chosen here were in common use from early medieval periods with the use of Latin and Greek characters to form a symbology of Christ’s name. The simplest form is IHS, the first letters of Jesus in the Greek alphabet. A more complex form is the abbreviated form of Jesus, IHS, followed by a cross and then XPS, or chi-rho-sigma for Christ. In all cases the H has a cross above it, also common in late medieval Christograms. The name of Christ engraved into the walls of the cave materialises a Christian characterisation of the space. The dominance of the Christ figure (as opposed to Mary or another saint) confers a Christocentric devotional character which was rooted in late medieval tradition and became increasingly popular in New World shrines throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Nolan 1991; Taylor 2010).

In addition to the Christian symbolism and religious commentary, the cave walls also bear a series of dated and named individuals. These include Myguel Rypoll 1550, Alonso Pérez Roldan el Mozo 1550 August, and Alonso de Contreras 1554. Other sixteenth-century visitors include a Canon (an ecclesiastical office), an individual named Bernardo, who wrote his name after the inscription “verbum caro factum est”, and an anonymous visitor in February 1554. Lastly, a Captain Francisco Alegre wrote his name prominently in chamber K.

Archival research

Many of the names on the cave surfaces are not listed in the official texts referring to the initial Spanish occupation of Mona. Searches of the early colonial chronicles, passenger lists to the Indies from 1500-1590, relevant sections of the digitized archives of Seville, and the Documentos de la Real Hacienda de Puerto Rico were consulted for individuals with connections to Mona, including the Baptismal-indigenous name combinations and Spanish rank titles of over one hundred indios. The most secure identification is Francisco Alegre who has been identified in historic documents and on the basis of handwriting similarities as having emigrated with his father to the Indies in the 1530s from Spain (Figure 11). Alegre became a prominent citizen (vecino) of San Juan and held a number of royal functions in Puerto Rico throughout the sixteenth century, including that of factor, or person in charge of royal estates, among which was Mona Island (1550) (Archivo General de Indias, Contratación, legado 1074, fol.1).
Discussion – The Mona Chronicle

In the sixteenth century, the persistence of Mona’s *indio* population, their relative autonomy, the island’s geopolitical position in a trans-Atlantic and Caribbean maritime thoroughfare, created the conditions for a century of spiritual encounter. The corpus of post-contact inscriptions and their physical interrelationship with indigenous iconography and practices strongly suggests authorship by people of European descent visiting Mona Island from the neighbouring Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. The position, relative sequencing, production methods, written dates, and content of the mark-making, as well as the biographic identification of Francisco Alegre as one of the authors in Cave 18, support this interpretation. Indigenous iconography, ceramics and two radiocarbon dates indicate that the cave was used by indigenous people during the mid-fifteenth century, directly preceding European arrival. The presence of an historically documented church in the Sardinera village in AD 1548 (Dávila Dávila 2003: 33), administered by indigenous converts, suggests that indigenous Christians were themselves part of this arrival of a new ideology and associated visual culture. It is possible that some of the finger-drawn crosses in Cave 18 may have been executed by *indios conversos*, as has been proposed for the colonial Andes (Hostnig 2004). Further research will consider whether at least some of the historic inscriptions and names may belong to indigenous individuals. Certainly, access to both the cave, and the relevant chambers necessitated preparation and knowledge of local geography. The presence of over half a dozen named individuals, different dates, the diversity of handwriting, suggests multiple visits through time, most notably in the 1550s. Of the nearly 30 currently known caves with indigenous activity on Mona, the fact that Cave 18 was singled out for visits suggests it was an established and meaningful indigenous space at the time of contact, and this was the impetus for its continued use into colonial times.

New generations of Americans of diverse cultural heritage began to differentiate themselves from the cultures of the European metropole. New identities such as *indio* and *creole* are recognised as early as 1514 in historic records (Moscoso 2010). It is within this context that the first generation of Europeans who made their homes and careers in the Americas, and Christian *indios* from diverse American homelands, visited Mona’s Cave 18. At least some of the authors were elite males of Spanish ancestry, knowledgeable about certain aspects of indigenous culture, conversant with indigenous beliefs, and willing to engage with them. The presence of a canon, and those with basic
literacy and education, suggests both lay and church officials also made journeys to the cave.

One must consider the range of motivations for such visits. There were economic advantages to form alliances with the *indio* community on Mona, still an important centre of cassava production in the second half of the century. Similarly, *indios* may have gained economic and political advantages by pursuing alliances with *vecinos* such as Francisco Alegre. Beyond economic motivations, the construction of new colonial landscapes may have been related to the emergence of an *indio converso* identity, especially after the end of Spanish encomienda around 1546. Similarly, from a coloniser perspective, the founding of local Christian shrines was essential to carving out a local Caribbean identity, drawing on indigenous traditions, which fitted with a post-reformation trend for shrine formation (Nolan 1991; Coleman & Elsner 1995; Stopford 1999). The interaction between Christian commentary, and indigenous imagery, represents individual responses and a degree of mutual understanding, rather than a coherent programme or formal liturgy. Visitors engaged with cross-cultural preoccupations such as concepts of origins (expressed in phrases such as *plura fecit deus*), the afterlife (images of the crucifixion), the hierarchy of belief systems (the crosses on top of indigenous mark-making), and the place of the individual (names and dates). The emotional and theological character of the inscriptions is different from the censure of the inquisition in places such as contemporary Mexico, where the incorporation of indigenous iconography into a Calvary scene would have been deeply heretical (Figure 12). Moreover, from an indigenous perspective, the lack of clear evidence for resistance, such as the depictions of cross-bearing Spanish horsemen from indigenous rock art in the Andes (Gallardo *et al.* 1990; Martínez Cereceda 2009), and the lack of explicit continuity of traditional visual codes, suggests a degree of ownership of new beliefs and practices, whatever the range of possible reasons.

The historical legacy of 1492 fetishizes the incompatibility of native and European worldviews, leading to a one-sided picture of the spiritual conquest of the Americas, exacerbated by native ‘extinction’ in the Caribbean. Moreover, the sheer continental scale of colonisation means that grand narratives dominate our image of encounter. However, the individual level, and the temporal resolution of minutes, hours and days spent within this cave, reveals experiences which influenced early colonial attitudes and the pathways
of encounter, not from indigenous and European perspectives, but from an emerging
generation of Americans. The unorthodox Mona Chronicle, a multi-authored account of
the spiritual encounter, provides insight into intercultural religious dynamics in the early
Americas.

Corollary

In 1550, the year King Charles V of Spain presided over a theological debate in
Valladolid (Las Casas-Sepúlveda debate) about the whether the Indians of the New
World had rational souls (Hanke 1974), Alonso Pérez Roldan the younger, and Miguel
Rypoll partook in a procession to a local shrine, etched their names onto the walls of a
cave chamber, and joined a debate in this cave about the compatibility of the Catholic
god and ancestral spirits with the indios who led them there. The contrast between the
formal, intellectual, metropolitan debate immortalized in paper archives, and the dialogue
between colonial individuals of diverse origins, materialized in stone, could not be
greater. Nevertheless, both express the metaphysical schisms, anxieties, social
experiments, and transformations engendered on all sides by the European-American
encounters (Hanke 1974; Boxer 1978). It is often said that there was no conclusive
outcome to the Valladolid debate. Its Caribbean counterpart, the Mona debate on the
other hand, had some clearly identifiable outcomes, laying the foundations for emergent
forms of new religious identity in Latin America, and arguably one of the first
manifestations of a creole Christian identity in the New World.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted with the support of the British Museum Research
Committee, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research (University of Cambridge),
Centro de Investigaciones Históricas (University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras), Instituto
de Cultural Puertorriqueña, Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales de
Puerto Rico, the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y El Caribe. We are also
indebted to Herb Allen III, Monica de la Torre, Delise Torres, Osvaldo de Jesus, Victor
Serrano, Alex Palermo, Angel Vega, Kate Jarvis, Tiana Garcia, Daniel Shelley, Rolf
Vieten, Lucy Wrapson, David Redhouse, Tom Higham, Jose Rivera, Walter Cardona
Bonet, Ovidio Dávila Dávila and Miguel Bonet for their contributions to this research.
Amy Maitland Gardner for the figures. Natural Environment Research Council Oxford
Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit (Grant NF/2014/2/7) and British Cave Research Association (Grant CSTRI-2014).

References


HANKE, L. 1974. All mankind is one; a study of the disputation between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the intellectual and religious capacity of the American Indians. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.


Figure captions

Figure 1. Map of Mona Island in the Caribbean.

Figure 2. Early colonial Nueva Cadiz bead discovered at Playa Sardinera on Mona Island.

Figure 3. Indigenous iconography from Cave 18 showing ancestral beings and anthrozoomorphic figures.

Figure 4. Indigenous mark-making and its relation to sources of water in Chamber E.

Figure 5. Map of Cave 18 showing the locations and spatial relationships between the indigenous iconography and post-contact inscriptions.

Figure 6. Indigenous ceramics from Cave 18 with similar iconography from Cave 12 on the other side of the island.

Figure 7. Spanish inscription in Cave 18 that reads ‘dios te perdone’, God forgive you.
Figure 8. A Christian Calvary in Cave 18 with the name Jesus under the central cross.

Figure 9. Selection of three Christian crosses found in Cave 18 with stroke directions indicated.

Figure 10. An IHS Christogram that uses the first three letters of Jesus in the Greek alphabet to reference Jesus Christ.

Figure 11. The name of Capitán Francisco Alegre, royal official of Puerto Rico in the mid-sixteenth century. Note the similarities between the writing on the cave wall and his name in an archival manuscript from AD 1550.

Figure 12. Christian cross in a niche of Cave 18 directly facing an indigenous ancestral figure.
Map of Mona Island in the Caribbean.
296x210mm (96 x 96 DPI)
Early colonial Nueva Cadiz bead discovered at Playa Sardinera on Mona Island.
271x171mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Indigenous iconography from Cave 18 showing ancestral beings and anthrozoomorphic figures. 283x193mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Indigenous mark-making and its relation to sources of water in Chamber E.

202x216mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Map of Cave 18 showing the locations and spatial relationships between the indigenous iconography and post-contact inscriptions.

344x267mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Indigenous ceramics from Cave 18 with similar iconography from Cave 12 on the other side of the island.
297x209mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Spanish inscription in Cave 18 that reads ‘dios te perdone’, God forgive you.
178x157mm (300 x 300 DPI)

‘God forgive you’
A Christian Calvary in Cave 18 with the name Jesus under the central cross.
157x197mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Selection of three Christian crosses found in Cave 18 with stroke directions indicated.
225x154mm (300 x 300 DPI)
An IHS Christogram that uses the first three letters of Jesus in the Greek alphabet to reference Jesus Christ.

158x238mm (300 x 300 DPI)
The name of Capitán Francisco Alegre, royal official of Puerto Rico in the mid-sixteenth century. Note the similarities between the writing on the cave wall and his name in an archival manuscript from AD 1550.

267x192mm (300 x 300 DPI)
Christian cross in a niche of Cave 18 directly facing an indigenous ancestral figure.
181x209mm (300 x 300 DPI)