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Islands of Impermanence: Historical Archaeology of Campsites in the Venezuelan Caribbean, 1530-1840

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> But the culture of the Caribbean, at least in its most distinctive aspect, is not terrestrial but aquatic, a sinuous culture where time unfolds irregularly and resists being captured by the cycles of clock and calendar. The Caribbean is the natural and indispensable realm of marine currents, of waves, of folds and double-folds, of fluidity and sinuosity. It is, in the final analysis, a culture of the meta-archipelago [...]. (Benítez-Rojo 1996:11)

Abstract

This chapter deliberately looks beyond Caribbean plantation landscapes and beyond households—both a mainstay of Caribbean historical archaeology—turning our archaeological gaze on what initially seem like unremarkable campsites located on small islands. Firstly, I define "small island seascapes" and unpack what I mean by liminality and impermanence in an early modern aquatic milieu abuzz with maritime mobilities. Then, by comparing five early modern campsites found in the Venezuelan Caribbean, I reveal how the surprising richness of these sites lies precisely in their un-householdness, as maritime sites contingent on impermanence and situated in liminal island seascapes. These groupings of tents, tarps, and makeshift shelters, temporarily or seasonally inhabited by highly mobile seafarers, were in fact places where often unusual and even socially subversive material entanglements and practices occurred, complicating any facile assumptions of the Caribbean past. Careful future analyses of such atypical sites can throw new light on often overlooked people groups in the early modern Caribbean and their local, regional, and global material entanglements through time.

Keywords: seafarers, small island seascapes, liminality, commodities, assemblages of practice

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Introduction

The Early Modern Venezuelan Caribbean was a vital and vibrant maritime region intimately entangled with the greater Caribbean and the broader Atlantic World (Antczak 2024). Well into the nineteenth century, it attracted a motley assortment of seafarers of all stripes, offering a rich buffet of coveted commodities that could be extracted from its uninhabited islands or smuggled from the Spanish Main through its waters.

But, to begin with, what is this "Venezuelan Caribbean"? It may surprise many readers that Venezuela has the second longest coastline in the Caribbean after Cuba, 3,758 km in length and comprising 2,718 km of continental and 1,040 km of insular shoreline (figure 9.1) (Moreau 2007:405). Likewise, it may come as a surprise that the lengthy coastline embraces an expanse of Caribbean sea that contains more than 90 islands: from archipelagos of coralline cays to islands of vast desert and exuberant tropical peaks, forming a chain called the Leeward Antilles, beginning with the Los Testigos Archipelago and ending with the Dutch ABC islands (Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire) and the Venezuelan Los Monjes Archipelago. Among these Venezuelan islands are La Tortuga, which is larger than Montserrat, and Margarita, which is larger than Martinique and is the second most populated island of the Lesser Antilles after Trinidad. Moreover, the present-day territorial waters of Venezuela extend far into the Caribbean Sea 320 km north of Isla de Aves, which lies on the same latitude as Guadeloupe, and 550 km north of the Venezuelan coast. Venezuela thus, among others, shares a maritime border with the USA (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), the UK (Monserrat), and France (Guadeloupe and Martinique). These geographical realities, however, often go unnoticed and unacknowledged within a larger Caribbean that is still fractured along colonial lines and represented in British, North American, and English-language Caribbean literature as a predominantly anglophone region (Benítez-Rojo 1989; Cubero 2017:9; Henessy 2000; Trouillot 1992). Nevertheless, Venezuela is, through and through, a Caribbean nation and the Venezuelan coast and Leeward Antilles have been historically as involved, influential, and imbricated in the histories of the broader Caribbean and Atlantic worlds as the Greater and Lesser Antilles.

Based on the above considerations, I define the Venezuelan Caribbean as the broad maritime zone of influence of the colonial-period Spanish provinces of *Tierra Firme* (northern South America) and republican-period Venezuela that not only encompassed the Venezuelan islands and the continental coast, but extended beyond them to include the waters surrounding the ABC islands, the Los Monjes Archipelago, and the La Guajira Peninsula to the west, and Trinidad and Tobago to the east (figure 9.1). Drawing on historical archaeological research undertaken in the Venezuelan Caribbean from the 1980s until today, I offer a comparative analysis of five campsites on four islands of the Leeward Antilles inhabited temporarily or seasonally, beginning in the 1530s and ending in the 1840s. The campsites on these mostly uninhabited islands have little-to-no standing architectural remains—no great houses or slave quarters, no adjacent sugarcane fields or coffee stands. Rather, the *raison d'être* of most of these campsites were coveted non-agricultural commodities such as sea salt, pearls, and sea turtles that were found in abundance on various islands of the Venezuelan Caribbean. On other islands, endowed with fewer natural resources, it was their strategic proximity to the mainland that made them ideal clandestine trans-shipment points for smuggling other (*e.g.*, agricultural) commodities such as cacao, mules, tobacco, and hides from the Spanish provinces.

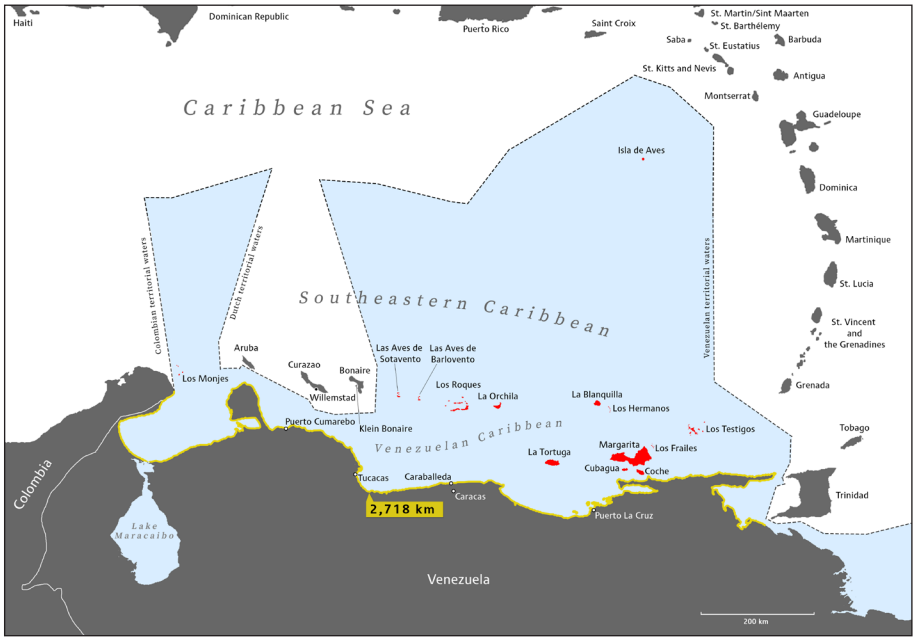


Figure 9.1: The extension of Venezuela's maritime territory highlighting the more than 90 Venezuelan islands in red and the 2,718 km of Caribbean continental coastline in yellow.

What these campsites lack in built environment, however, they make up for in artifactual richness and diversity. As I argue in this chapter, the peculiar liminality of these uninhabited islands at the edge of the Spanish Main—inhabited impermanently by highly mobile groups of seafarers—created the stage for social behaviors that were different from everyday life on land and at sea, and that could range from the unusual to the subversive. A comparative analysis of the *assemblages of practice* (Antczak and Beaudry 2019) from these five campsites provides an intriguing window into the often-elusive lives of early modern and modern seafarers, their material entanglements, and their social behaviors.

Curious Campsites: Maritime Mobilities, Impermanence, and Liminality in Small Island Seascapes

Before presenting the islands and discussing their archaeological sites, there are a few conceptual and theoretical concerns that need to be addressed both to ground the current discussion and, ideally, to offer a broader replicability and applicability of this study, making it comparatively useful for other archaeologists working with small islands and insular campsites in the Caribbean and beyond.

Small Island Seascapes

First, these campsites are all located within what I term small island seascapes. Here I want to make a fundamental distinction between *maritime landscape* and *island seascape*, since historical archaeological research in the Caribbean (e.g., Hatch 2013; Siegel 2011; Stelten and Antczak 2023) still tends unconsciously to employ terra-centric language in such a vast meta-archipelago, where the sea is more often than not central to human

social and cultural life. While inland sites on large islands can realistically have little to do with the sea and there are certainly cases where the term maritime landscape has its uses, describing coastal island spaces and places merely as maritime landscapes can be problematic, as the adjective "maritime" only flavors the firmly terra-centric concept of *landscape* without fundamentally altering its nature. Likewise, some authors have used the concept of *islandscape* (*e.g.*, Bright 2011; Broodbank 2000; Hofman et al. 2007), and while it seeks to harmonize seascapes and island landscapes and can be useful in certain case studies, I find *islandscape* still to be too terra-centric: urged by Antonio Benítez-Rojos' insistence that "the culture of the Caribbean… is not terrestrial but aquatic," we need a more unabashedly *aqua*-centric term to use on small islands.

The concept of *seascape*, on which *islandscape* in fact builds, more effectively foregrounds the ever-present role of the sea in everyday insular life. Seascapes have received much attention in recent years: Gosden and Pavlides (1994) provided a classical archaeological definition, while Herrera and Chapanoff (2017) suggest *maritorium* as an alternative term and Pungetti (2022) offers a broad approach. I define *seascape* as the maritime domain of human-thing entanglement (Antczak 2019:131), and *island seascapes* are therefore insular domains where everyday life and human-thing entanglements are primarily determined by the sea. Thus, I argue that that the turn from *maritime landscape* to *island seascape*, rather than being merely a lexical gimmick, puts the necessary onus on the sea as central in shaping human-thing relations and structuring human habitation, especially on small islands dwarfed by the immensity of the maritime realm. Most importantly, the term conceptually breaks free from the terrestrial circumscription of land-centric definitions of space and place, countering the colonial narrative of small island ahistoricism and isolation, and opening-up small island histories to reconnect with the broader oceanic histories of which they were an integral part (Cubero 2017:7; DeLoughrey 2007:2-3; Dunnavant 2021). As we will see below, small island seascapes provide a potent liminal setting for the confluence of seafaring mobilities and impermanent habitation that led to surprising entanglements and often unusual and even subversive social behaviors. And this is where we now turn to discuss maritime mobilities.

Maritime Mobilities

Over the past two decades, the interdisciplinary field of mobility studies has flourished in the social sciences and humanities (*e.g.*, Creswell 2011; Faulconbridge and Hui 2016; Sheller 2014; Urry 2007). In archaeology, mobility is also receiving ever-increasing attention (*e.g.*, Barnard and Wendrich 2008; Beaudry and Parno 2013; Leary 2014; Leidwanger and Knappett 2018). The maritime mobility I refer to here is not only the movement of humans across the surface of the sea, but also involves the itineraries of things that people carry with them on their vessels as they traverse the waters (Antczak 2019:40-42; Fontijn 2013). Maritime mobility thus underlines the fact that seas, while occasionally being a boundary (due to difficult currents and winds, treacherous coastlines and reefs, or occasional storms), are most often hyperconnected highways. In the past, therefore, seas were not merely the passive interstices of the Atlantic World (or any other maritime world, for that matter), but the vital and pulsating connective tissue without which it could not have existed. Since the seascape is the domain of mobility *par excellence*, when you take *small island seascapes* and plug them into the current of

maritime mobilities, rather than remaining isolated and locked in, maritime mobilities fundamentally unlock islands to the vibrant aquatic world in which they are immersed. It is in this way that the uninhabited islands discussed in the case studies below can be intimately linked and even—through the commodities that seafarers extracted from them or trans-shipped by way of them—impact large-scale economic and geopolitical phenomena far beyond their shores. On the other hand, maritime mobilities enable seafarers to become entangled with a diverse panoply of material things from around the globe, things they used and discarded on their visits to small islands, leaving behind rich archaeological sites replete with artifacts from distant shores. In these ways, maritime mobilities conflate spatial scales, enabling the local to impact the global and the global to reside in the local (what Blok [2010] terms "situated globalities"), challenging simplistic and belittling conceptions of peripheries and frontiers.

When highly mobile seafarers arrived at uninhabited and often inhospitable islands to extract natural resources or to use the islands as *entrepôts* and places of rendezvous for contraband, they set up campsites. In the context of this research, I define a campsite as a place with temporary accommodation of tents, huts, or shelters, typically inhabited by highly mobile people or those undertaking activities of a transient or seasonal nature. In other words, campsites are places of impermanence inhabited by wayfarers (Ingold 2007:100–101). These campsites, however, are markedly different from the temporary campsites of transhumant (terrestrial) pastoralists that not only are archaeologically ephemeral and difficult to locate by using conventional methods, but often present low artifact densities (Biagetti *et al.* 2016; Wendrich and Barnard 2008:1). Rather, while also ephemeral and generally lacking in architectural remains, temporary insular campsites inhabited by maritime wayfarers tend to have high artifact densities due to the unique mobility potential of the seascape and the particularity of the activities that seafarers undertook on the islands.

Impermanence

It is also vital to mention here that campsites and the modality of seasonality and impermanence are deeply rooted in time in the Venezuelan Caribbean and transcend the "Columbian divide," reaching back to the first Indigenous seafarers who visited the islands as early as 200 B.C. (Antczak and Antczak 2006). Seasonal queen conch (*Aliger gigas*) and fishing campsites were set up on all the Venezuelan offshore islands and on many of the cays of the archipelagoes (Las Aves de Barlovento, Las Aves de Sotavento, and Los Roques). The most intensively inhabited campsite was that of Dos Mosquises Island in the Los Roques Archipelago, where, over a span of 300 years, parties from the Lake Valencia region of North Central Venezuela exploited up to six tons of queen conch meat per year, bringing with them an array of utilitarian ceramic and stone artifacts, as well as shamanic ceremonial equipment, including hundreds of ceramic female figurines that they then left behind on the island (Antczak and Antczak 2006). To this day, the seasonally inhabited campsites or *rancherías*—a group of *ranchos*, which are impermanent huts or shacks made from often improvised materials—of fishermen from the island of Margarita and the mainland port of Cumaná can be found in the bays and coves of most Venezuelan Islands (figure 9.2). I thus argue that campsites are a deeply rooted way of inhabiting space and of informal and impermanent place-making in the Venezuelan Caribbean (Andres *et al.* 2023; Beaule and Douglass 2020:5-6; Creswell 2004; Ingold 2007:101).

Figure 9.2: *Rancherías* (seasonal huts) built by fishermen in the Venezuelan Caribbean: (*top left*) Abandoned *ranchería* in a bay of the Island of Coche (photo: José Voglar); (*top right*) *rancheria* on Isla Agustín, Los Roques Archipelago in the 1980s (photo: Andrzej Antczak); (*bottom left*) *rancherías* on Carenero Island, Los Roques Archipelago in the 1980s (photo: Maria Magdalena Antczak); and (*bottom right*) temporarily abandoned *ranchería* on the island of Testigo Grande, Los Testigos Archipelago (photo: Konrad Antczak).

Liminality

Small island seascapes and impermanence, furthermore, contribute directly to the liminality experienced by the seafarers visiting them. Liminality is an anthropological concept deriving from the work of Arnold van Gennep (1909) and later expanded by Victor Turner (1967) to address changes and transformations in social arrangements where social structure is undone or inverted during states of transitional in-betweenness in ritual processes. Since then, liminality has been broadly used and applied to myriad cases in the social sciences and humanities, often modifying the Turnerian definition (Thomassen 2009). Archaeologists have since found liminality to be a very versatile concept, especially when applied to space (Bubel 2022). I have utilized the concept in a previous study of the salt-raker campsites on La Tortuga (Antczak 2015) and revisit it here, since I consider liminality to have a broader applicability and explanatory potential for island campsites. There is also a rich and growing body of literature on how contemporary camping activities and campsites are liminal places that create *communitas* or temporary moments of anti-structure in space and time (*e.g.*, Ayazlar and Ayazlar 2023; Bannister 2022; Brooker and Joppe 2014; Foster and McCabe 2015). These studies consider the contemporary hedonistic camping experiences of tourists and the formative experiences of scouts; but they also offer a useful entryway into the past camping experiences of seafarers on uninhabited islands because, by retooling the original concept of liminality, they recognize the liminal spatial nature of campsites and the effects these have on the people camping, particularly people who are away from home in natural or uninhabited surroundings.

Figure 9.3: Arid and inhospitable vistas of small-island seascapes in the Venezuelan Caribbean: (*top left*) aerial view of the harsh and arid interior of the island of La Tortuga (photo: José Voglar); (*top right*) view of the scorching saltpan of Cayo Sal, Los Roques Archipelago (photo: Konrad Antczak); (*bottom left*) view of the arid hinterland of the site of La Tortuguita, Margarita Island (photo: Maria Magdalena Antczak); (*bottom right*) view of the dry scrub in the interior of the island of Klein Bonaire with Bonaire visible in the background (photo: Maria Magdalena Antczak).

However, unlike modern-day leisure camping experiences, the liminal experiences lived by seafaring campers were not artificially set up and sought after for their liminality. Rather, they simply happened as a result of their maritime mobilities and what were not always leisure, but rather, labor activities (Thomassen 2009:18).

Frequently, liminality on small islands is produced, not—as is often the case with liminal places (Ahlrichs *et al.* 2015)—a result of their remoteness or their geopolitical marginality, but rather because of their hostile natural environment. Since the small islands discussed below are mostly uninhabited, arid, and uninviting to human life, they push seafarers seaward, making it clear that their habitation can only last as long as their supplies of food and water (figure 9.3). Furthermore, these islands were not home, but places far from home, socially estranged from structured life (Ahlrichs *et al.* 2015:205). They were locations fraught with dangers, be they the specter of pirates and corsairs, or the risk of abandonment, dehydration, and death. In some of the cases below, these aspects of liminality are further exacerbated by the fact that—for the non-Spanish seafarers visiting them—Punta Salinas on La Tortuga Island and Uespen de la Salina on Cayo Sal in the Los Roques Archipelago, for example, were effectively borderlands. They were Spanish islands located within the porous Venezuelan Caribbean and facing *Tierra Firme*, and visiting them must have thus accentuated the anxieties arising from the close proximity of the imperial Other (Bubel 2022:161). It is also important to stress here that liminality for seafarers in these different case studies was not necessarily always a shared

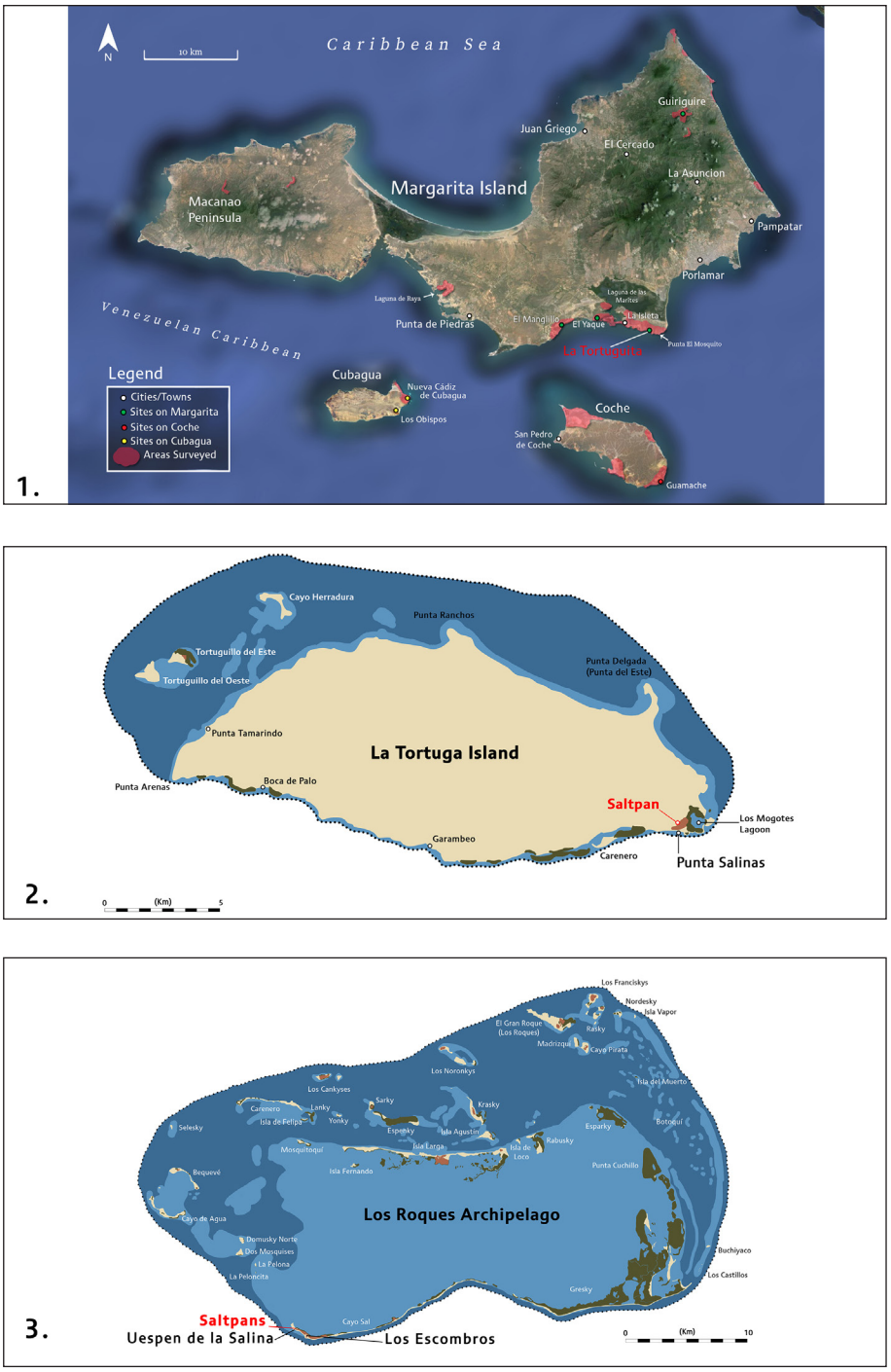


Figure 9.4: (1) Map of Margarita Island and the adjacent islands of Coche and Cubagua with the site of La Tortuguita in red (map by Oliver Antczak); (2) map of the island of La Tortuga and its adjacent islands, indicating the location of the saltpan and the archaeological site of Punta Salinas; (3) map of the Los Roques Archipelago indicating the saltpans of Cayo Sal and the site of Uespen de la Salina.

experience, and the degree, or intensiveness, of liminality experienced from case to case, person to person, and season to season, could be variable (Thomassen 2009:17).

Campsites on small uninhabited islands also facilitate liminality because the mode of engagement with them is often transient, and their habitation is impermanent. Impermanent place-making on these islands can therefore be considered as a liminal undertaking with a known expiration date that ends either when provisions run out, the natural resources being exploited are depleted, or imminent danger requires a rapid abandonment of the campsite, as could have occurred in the cases of clandestine trans-shipment points for contraband. Such unpredictable but certain impermanence contributes to the out-of-the-ordinary, unstructured, and unhomelike character of these island campsites. It is for these reasons that, as liminal places, campsites in small island seascapes can trigger the relaxation of social structure and allow for the temporary abandoning or transformation of normal social rules and practices. In the campsites of the small island seascapes discussed below (figure 9.4), the imbrications of mobility, impermanence, and liminality often led to unusual, playful, and even socially subversive behaviors characteristic of states of anti-structure. On these small uninhabited islands of the Venezuelan Caribbean curious things occurred, and it is these curious happenings that we explore here from the perspective of material things.

A Comparative Historical Archaeology of Campsites in the Venezuelan Caribbean

Pearl-Fishery Rancherías: La Tortuguita, Margarita Island (c. 1530-1650)

In the first case study we begin, not on a small island, but on the large island of Margarita in the *Oriente* (East) of Venezuela (figure 9.5). *Margarita* was often the term used for "pearl" during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, thus the name given to the island implied the importance of its pearl-oyster beds to the colonizers. The first pearl-oyster *rancherías* were set up on the arid island of Cubagua to the south of Margarita in the mid-1510s and, by 1528, they had flourished into the famous and short-lived *ciudad* (city/town) of Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua that only lasted until the oyster beds were exhausted and the city was abandoned in the 1540s (Antczak *et al.* 2019:149, 152). Concurrently with Nueva Cádiz and after its decline, pearls were also fished on the southeastern coast of Margarita, utilizing Indigenous and, later, African enslaved labor (Rodríguez Velásquez 2023).

The site of La Tortuguita, located on the arid, sandy shore between the modern-day settlement of La Isleta and Punta El Mosquito, was located by Venezuelan archaeologists Andrzej, Maria Magdalena, and Oliver Antczak in 2016 and probably corresponds with the site of "Las Maras" described by José María Cruxent in the 1950s (Antczak *et al.* 2019:153). Surface collection revealed an abundance of material remains, whose sub-surface continuity was confirmed through several test pits, although without any discernible stratigraphy. The earliest ceramics recovered, Plain White Morisco Ware plates (in English often termed Columbia Plain) from Seville, indicate that the site was inhabited contemporaneously with the city of Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua in the 1530s (figure 9.5, 5) (Goggin 1968:120; Gutiérrez 2000:46). Various other ceramic types from Seville in a range of forms including plates, bowls, and jugs, as well as numerous *botijas* (olive jars), were found and can be dated to *c.* 1530-1600 (figure 9.5, 6-8). Other European ceramics include Ligurian *berettino*

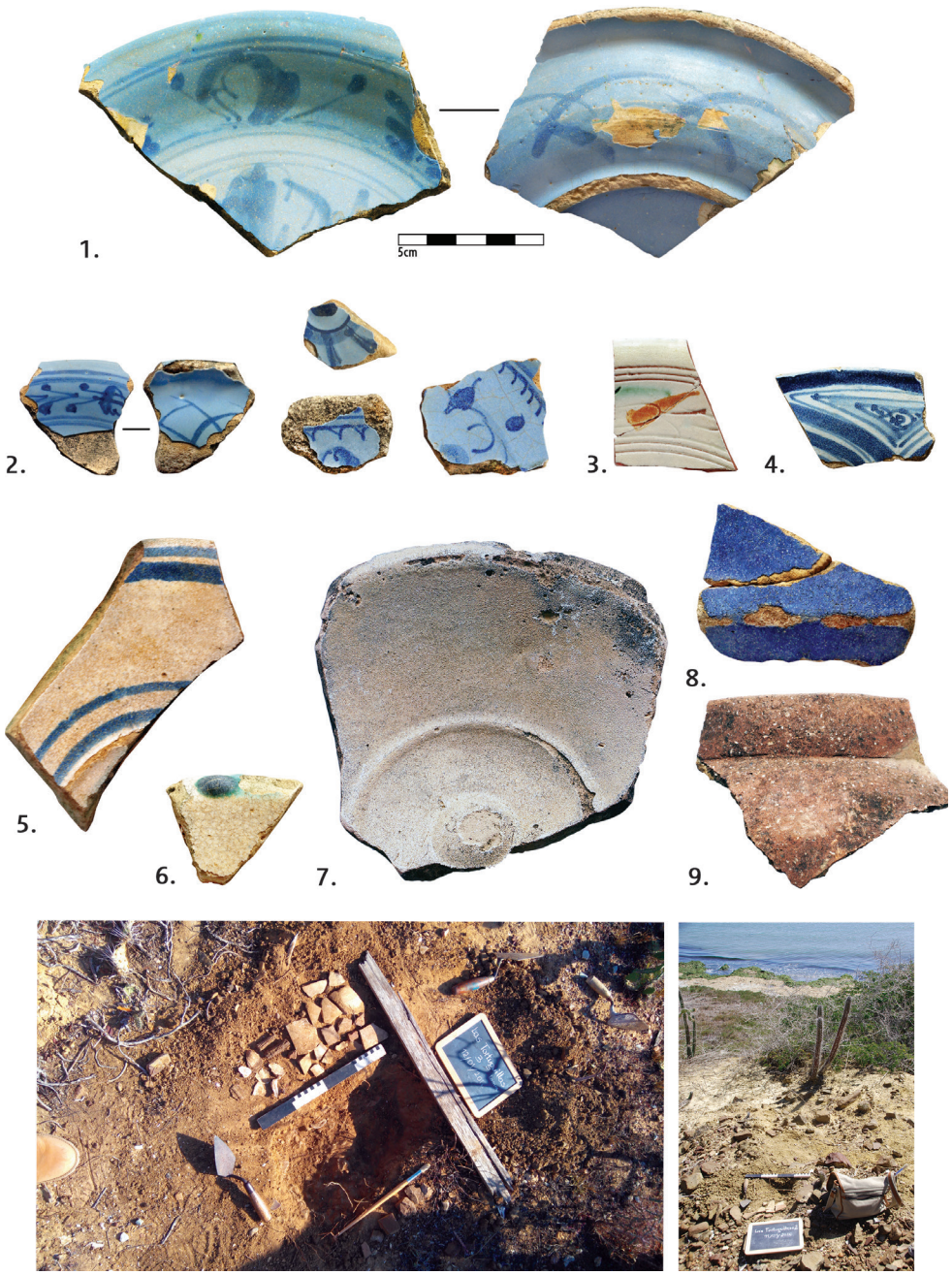
and blue-on-white *maiolica*, polychrome lead-glazed *graffita tarda* ware from Pisa, and Portuguese blue-on-white *faiança*, most of which can be dated to between the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth century, indicating the site of La Tortuguita was still occupied as late as the 1650s and pearl fishing, as well as other fishing activities, were probably still occurring there more than a hundred years after the fall of Nueva Cádiz (figure 9.5, 1-4). The presence of a large number of Indigenous ceramics at the site, all of which are utilitarian cooking vessels, some with simple incised, molded, or applied decorations, as well as multifunctional Indigenous tools made of quartz (no metal tools were found) suggests that the *rancherías* were probably not only inhabited by Spanish *peninsulares*, local *criollos* and their enslaved African divers, but also by Indigenous Guaiquerí people from Margarita and *mestizos* (figure 9.5, 9) (Antczak *et al.* 2019:159; Rodríguez Velásquez 2023; Warsh 2010).

Given the aridity of the coast and hinterland at La Tortuguita, it is possible that the *rancherías* would have been supplied with everyday items and provisions via the sea, at first probably from Cubagua and later from other larger settlements that were set up by the Spanish on the southern coast of Margarita, such as Pueblo de la Mar (Porlamar) and Pampatar. While Margarita's hinterland has been inhabited for millennia, before the construction of roads coastwise travel by sea in canoes and small vessels was more efficient than travel overland and probably the norm in this island seascape. A preliminary analysis of the ceramics found at La Tortuguita suggests that elegant Italian *maiolica* replaced more rudimentary Sevillian wares towards the end of the sixteenth century. These, along with a fragment of fine Venetian glass, may indicate that the *señores de las canoas* (canoe owners), who ran the *rancherías*, had the buying power and commercial connections to import these fine ceramics instead of Seville Blue-on-Blue, a most probably cheaper and more poorly executed imitation (Gutiérrez 2000:51-52; Lister and Lister 1976:37). While seventeenth-century contexts in Venezuela have seen only limited archaeological investigations, clearly identifiable Italian *maiolica* has yet to be reported or found in national or foreign collections deriving from Cruxent's excavations at various sites throughout Venezuela, as well as more recent excavations in the city of Coro, where Seville Blue-on-Blue was found instead (López *et al.* 2024).

While tentative, the presence of Italian *maiolicas* at the *rancherías* of La Tortuguita suggests that these impermanent huts, probably not much different from the *rancherías* of present-day Margariteño fishermen (figure 9.2), presented atypical material entanglements due to the wealth derived from the pearl fishery and their liminal location in an island seascape connected to the broader Atlantic World via maritime mobilities. Guaiquerí

Figure 9.5: (opposite page) A selection of artifacts recovered at La Tortuguita, Margarita Island: (1, 2) Ligurian *berettino maiolica*, with *calligrafico a volute* design, bowls and plates, late sixteenth to first quarter of seventeenth century; (3) polychrome lead-glazed *graffita tarda*, plate, Pisa, *c.* 1550-1650; (4) possibly Portuguese blue-on-white *faiança*, plate, 1625-1650; (5) Linear Blue Morisco Ware, *plato* (plate), Seville, prob. pre-1550 due to well-defined angle between the rim and the center of the interior surface Spanish majolica *plato* from Triana, Seville, second half of eighteenth century; (6) Plain White Morisco Ware with Green Edge, *cuenco* (bowl), Seville, prob. pre-1550; (7) Plain White Morisco Ware, *plato*, Seville, pre-1550 due to marked central boss and well-defined angle between the rim and the center of the interior surface; (8) Plain Blue Morisco Ware, *escudilla* or *albarello*, Seville, *c.* 1500-1570; (9) large indigenous cooking *olla*, prob. sixteenth or seventeenth century. (*Bottom left*) View of a test pit excavated in January 2016 at the site of La Tortuguita on the Island of Margarita with clearly visible indigenous and European ceramics, (*bottom right*) view of another test pit at La Tortuguita with the sea in the background (photos: Maria Magdalena Antczak).

earthenwares, quartz tools, and stone mortars and pestles were utilized alongside fine imported Italian *maiolicas* and glass in what can be imagined as practices combining European refinement with Indigenous know-how in a rough and rustic setting. Those utilizing these fine wares, however, were most probably the Spanish and *criollos*. Future excavations at the site, and a more fine-grained analysis of the assemblages of practice of dining and drinking at La Tortuguita, are poised to continue revealing the surprising material entanglements at these early colonial campsites.



A Tavern of Tarps by the Saltpan: Punta Salinas, La Tortuga Island (1638-1781)

In the next case study, we start moving westward across the Venezuela Caribbean to the island of La Tortuga (not to be confused with the Haitian island of the same name) which is the largest still-uninhabited island in the Caribbean region, 100 km northwest of the Venezuelan port of Puerto la Cruz. During the colonial period, dry and hostile La Tortuga was largely ignored by the Spanish from *Tierra Firme* and only first drew the attention of the Dutch from the Low Countries who in 1624 began to cultivate and harvest sea salt on the large saltpan of Punta Salinas at its southeastern end. Several bloody confrontations with the Spanish, however, resulted in their eventual ousting from the island in 1638 (Antczak *et al*. 2015). Not long after, the Anglo-Americans from the British colonies on the east coast of North America were drawn to the island's free and abundant sea salt. What began as small-scale salt-harvesting ventures to La Tortuga during the seventeenth century eventually led to the formation of the Saltertuda Fleet at the onset of the eighteenth century, involving dozens of ships and a British Navy escort vessel that would sail to rake salt on the island nearly every year. During the eighteenth century the deserted island would become a key cog in the Atlantic World commercial system as the most important Caribbean salt island, since its free salt was used to preserve refuse fish from New England's economically crucial fishing industry, which were then sold on the British and French sugar islands to feed enslaved laborers. In short, La Tortuga's salt helped fuel the muscle of empire.

Until 1781, when the Anglo-Americans were definitively expelled from the island by Basque corsairs, the almost yearly presence of hundreds of seafarers at the saltpan of La Tortuga and the temporary habitation of a makeshift campsite of tents and tarps during the weeks of salt harvesting, led to the deposition of an enormous array of well-preserved material remains at the site of Punta Salinas. The site was discovered and excavated by Andrzej and Marlena Antczak in 1993, with excavations continuing with my participation in three fieldwork campaigns from 2009 to 2010. Most of the things found at Punta Salinas were *intentionally* brought from ship to land and thus offer an exceptional window into the material lives and everyday practices of seafarers far from their homeports. The findings include an astonishing 790 individual ceramic, glass, and metal vessels pertaining to a wide range of forms and functions. Most of these vessels were found in the Dunes activity area, a ridge of low dunes overlooking the saltpan beyond, that I suggest was the place where sea captains camped and socialized with each other as they oversaw the labor of their crews raking, bagging, and carting the salt to the ships in the bay. The assemblage of drinking practices from Punta Salinas (vessels for beverage storage, serving, and consumption) is the most remarkable as it accounts for nearly 74% (MNV [Minimum Number of Vessels] = 584) of all the vessels (figure 9.6). Such a percentage falls amply within the definition of a tavern site (Bragdon 1988:90) and is greater than the assemblages of vessels for serving and consuming beverages from a tavern in late seventeenth-century Port Royal, Jamaica, and the late phase of Shields Tavern in Williamsburg, Virginia (1738-1751) (Brown 2011:64; Brown *et al*. 1990:99). Drinking occurred at La Tortuga on a large scale and the focal point of this assemblage of practice was punch.

Every year when the salt ships arrived, Punta Salinas became a peculiar open-air tavern of tents and tarps by the saltpan, with tents clearly attested to in the documentary

Figure 9.6: A selection of artifacts recovered at Punta Salinas, La Tortuga Island: (1) Spanish silver 1 real *macuquina* or cob from 1687 and ½ real *columnario* from 1754; (2) three lead dice; (3) tarso-metatarsus possibly from a fighting cock; (4) Whieldon-type Melon-ware teapot, Staffordshire, *c.* 1747-1780; (5) English delft saucer and tea bowl set, poss. Bristol, *c.* 1730-1750; (6) English delft tea bowl, prob. Bristol, *c.* 1730-1750; (7) probably Bohemian glass mug, eighteenth century; (8) English white salt-glazed stoneware mug, *c.* 1740-1776; (9) debased "scratch blue" white salt-glazed stoneware mugs, Staffordshire, *c.* 1765-1790; (10) five small English delft punch bowls or "sneakers", *c.* 1720-1760 (drawings by Andrzej Antczak, Konrad Antczak, and José Miguel Pérez Gómez). (*Bottom left*) Excavation of the trench in the Fringe activity area in August 2010, and (*bottom right*) aerial view of the site of Punta Salinas with the flooded saltpan and the Los Mogotes Lagoon in the background (photo: José Voglar).

evidence (Anonymous 1768:92). However, unlike the taverns of ports around the Atlantic World where punch was served in tavern-owned punch bowls, at La Tortuga enterprising captains could show their tastes for the fashionable and their acquisitive power through the crockery they brought to the island and the often-exotic ingredients it contained. Punch epitomized fashionability and exoticism, as not only could the small and individual ceramic punch bowls or "sneakers" be made of trendy creamware, delftware, or Chinese porcelain, but they could contain expensive ingredients from faraway, such as nutmeg from the East Indies and seltzer water from Germany, or from Caribbean plantations, such as refined sugar and limes (figure 9.6, 10). Capitalizing on the liminality of the site, captains made good use of the unique opportunity that Punta Salinas offered for material showmanship and display of good taste, utilizing fancy and *à la mode* ceramics that had just come out of the potteries in Britain, often before these ever made it to New England homes.

Most striking and disruptive of the masculine caricature of the bibulous and simpleton Jack Tar of the age of sail (Gilje 2016)—of men who, in Daniel Defoe's (in Earle 2007:13) words, "swear violently, whore violently, drink punch violently, spend their money when they have it violently…"—is the assemblage of tea-drinking practices from Punta Salinas (figure 9.6, 4-6). Alongside the numerous punchbowls and the evidence for rowdy and stereotypically masculine tavern behavior, we have clear evidence of much more genteel and sedate tea drinking, often associated with elite female domesticity (Harvey 2008; Kowaleski-Wallace 1994). The campsites of Punta Salinas on La Tortuga are thus a prime example of how the temporary maritime activity of salt raking, in a liminal small island seascape far from home, had the potential to produce moments of anti-structure and even be socially subversive to more well-established norms of gender and gentility. Punta Salinas was a large yearly campsite where, on the one hand, liminality produced by the island's inhospitable and arid interior and, on the other, its Spanish ownership and proximity to the Spanish Main, made it a borderland. The liminality experienced by the seafarers at the site coupled with their maritime mobility, resulted in the presence of abundant personal items that could be used to affirm status and taste, and unusual material behaviors or "complex amalgams" (Lawrence 2003:220) such as the paradoxical combination of raucous and masculine punch drinking with genteel and feminine tea-sipping. Clearly, the temporary liminal state of anti-structure reigning on the island campsite allowed middling captains to play with and transform the well-mannered terrestrial practices of New England elites in their own unconventional ways.

Turtlers' Tents, Salt-Raker Shelters, and Barracas for Contraband: Uespen de la Salina, Cayo Sal, Los Roques Archipelago (1700s)

We move westward again, this time to the large archipelago of Los Roques with its many low-lying coralline cays, and specifically to its southwestern end and the long island of Cayo Sal, snaking along the archipelago's southern border. At the Cayo Sal's western end there are a series of large lagoons that were probably visited by seafarers for the sea salt they produced beginning in the early eighteenth century. The archaeological site of Uespen de la Salina, bordering the northwestern end of the saltpan (figure 9.7), was discovered and excavated by Andrzej and Maria Magdalena Antczak in the early 1980s and further excavations were performed with my participation in 2007, 2009, and 2010. Documentary evidence indicates that, during the eighteenth century, the island was

visited by seafarers from around the Caribbean. These included Curaçaoan slaves and freedmen who were left on the island to rake salt for periods of time and temporarily inhabited makeshift shelters or *barracas*, Bermudians who probably also raked salt, caught sea turtles, and salvaged goods from wrecks, and "turtlers" from Anguilla, St. Kitts, Nevis, Saba, St. Eustatius, and the French Antilles who also engaged in smuggling cacao and mules from *Tierra Firme* in exchange for clothes and alcohol (Antczak 2019:102; Cromwell 2012:25; Davies 1963:11; de Amézaga Aresti 1966:49; Jarvis 1998:445). Small Cayo Sal was a veritable island at the crossroads.

Analysis of the ceramics and glass from the site indicates that Uespen de la Salina was visited from *c.* 1720 to the end of the century. The minimum number of 270 ceramic, glass, and metal vessels attest to the medley of seafarers the documents describe, with six broad categories of provenance: 1) British; 2) Spanish (Iberian); 3) French; 4) Dutch; 5) Mexican; and 6) as yet unprovenanced morrowares and probably local Venezuelan coarse earthenwares (figure 9.7). Unlike Punta Salinas (MNV=4), most vessels at the site (MNV=64) are related to cooking vessels, which indicates that at Cayo Sal—much like modern-day Margariteño fishermen—the French and English turtle fishermen probably inhabited the *barracas* and tents seasonally, for longer periods of time than the few weeks during which salt raking took place on La Tortuga. The Kittitians "turtling" on Cayo Sal, moreover, slept in a "small tent" (Nationaal Archief Nederland 1738). Furthermore, if these turtlers acted as intermediaries of sorts—safeguarding, on the one hand, alcohol and clothes left by the Curaçaoans and, on the other, contraband cacao, hides, and mules left by the Spanish for the Curaçaoans to pick up—they must have been stationed at Uespen de la Salina for longer periods of time.

A contraband trans-shipment point such as this was already a liminal place, operating stealthily in the shadows of Spanish *Tierra Firme*, and its liminality was exacerbated by the fact that Cayo Sal had no freshwater sources and was, like La Tortuga, a harsh and unforgiving environment where, without a constant supply of provisions, the campsite would become unviable. The liminality of this small island seascape lent itself ideally to subversive informal trade, as the myriad cays and coves of Los Roques offered a relatively concealed space for Curaçaoan traders to make trans-imperial rendezvous with Spanish smugglers. Furthermore, the peculiarity of this trans-shipment point also led to the recovery of unexpected artifacts such as a Mexican majolica *pocillo*, a specialized vessel intended for cacao drinking, and a carefully cut coconut shell, which might be the remains of another cacao-drinking vessel, a *jícara* or *coco chocolatero* (figure 9.7, 2-3). Why not? Perhaps the turtlers on Cayo Sal not only facilitated the smuggling of cacao from colonial Venezuela, but also took advantage of opportunities to savor its world-renowned flavor beside the blazing saltpan.

Contraband Warehouse and Trans-shipment Campsite: Pos Kangreu, Klein Bonaire (early to mid-1700s)

Finishing our westward trajectory across the Venezuelan Caribbean, we reach Bonaire, and the small, low-lying, and uninhabited island of Klein Bonaire situated one kilometer west of the island's capital Kralendijk (known, in Papiamentu creole, as Playa) (figure 9.1). While the island is not geopolitically part of the Venezuelan Caribbean, historically the ABC islands were inextricably part of the same shared sea and were joined with the Spanish mainland in a close mutuality—their commerce depending nearly entirely on

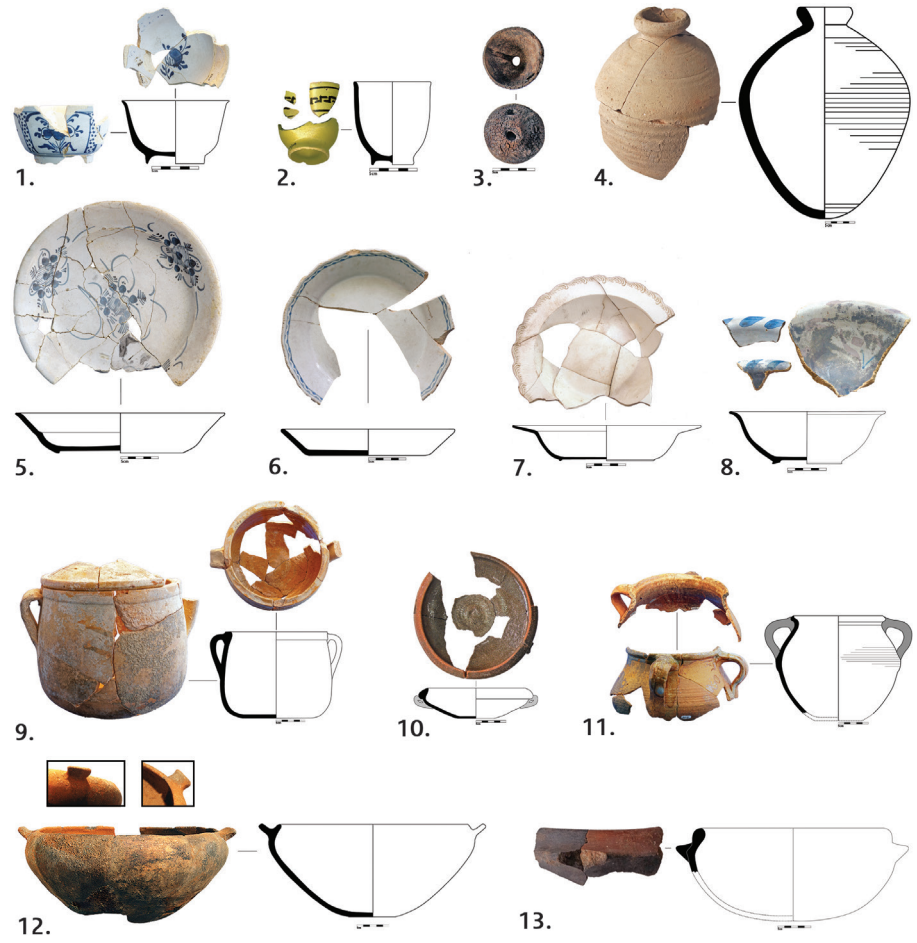
the commodities that could be smuggled from colonial Venezuela. Documentary evidence indicates that during the eighteenth century Bonaire was a key waystation for Curaçaoan Sephardic merchants on their voyages to sell and buy commodities clandestinely on the colonial Venezuelan coast. For a fee, WIC (Westindische Compagnie) officials provided warehouses on the island to store textiles and other goods to be sold on the mainland, as well as cacao and other commodities being brought from *Tierra Firme* (Klooster 1998:129). Klein Bonaire was the location of one of these warehouses.

The site of Pos Kangreu on the northern shore of Klein Bonaire was discovered by Maria Magdalena Antczak, Oliver Antczak, and myself during a pedestrian survey in 2019. The site has a brackish well and a limestone and coral structure that is probably the remains of a warehouse. In 2020 I undertook excavations near the ruin in what I identify as the warehouse administrators' campsite. These investigations revealed an array of everyday items including a minimum total of 117 ceramic, glass, and metal vessels, the largest proportion of which were Dutch Delftware (*faience*) plates and dashed (*kabelrand*) bowls, followed by coarse earthenware cooking vessels (figure 9.8). The ceramics, as well as two coins dated 1710 and 1693, indicate the site was utilized between the beginning and the middle of the eighteenth century. Two copper-alloy ramrod pipes from a musket and lead shot indicate the campsite inhabitants were armed and probably protecting the goods stored in the warehouse, while the coins suggest that monetary transactions might have occurred there, probably payments for storage services (figure 9.8, 9, 4-5). The discovery of two lead bale seals furthermore confirms that textiles were being stored and possibly even repackaged on site, as suggested by the depositional context of one rudimentary and unmarked seal surrounded by lead slag (figure 9.8, 1-2).

The campsite at Pos Kangreu must have been inhabited whenever there were goods stored in the warehouse and, since the contraband trade with Venezuela was constant, it is possible there were always people stationed there who rotated only seasonally. Provisions could be easily brought to the island by canoe from adjacent Bonaire and, even though Klein Bonaire was arid and only had a brackish water well, there was little risk that those at the campsite would be abandoned or not supplied. Mollusk and fish remains, however, indicate that apart from provisions, local resources were also foraged in the surrounding waters. The recovery of a coarse earthenware *aripo* or griddle for cooking *arepas* (Indigenous Venezuelan corn cakes) suggests that Indigenous Bonaireans were present at the site, as they had a strong presence on the main island well into the nineteenth century and were tasked by the Dutch WIC with the island's

Figure 9.7: (opposite page) A selection of artifacts recovered at Uespen de la Salina, Cayo Sal, Los Roques Archipelago: (1) English delft tea bowl, *c.* 1720-1740; (2) Esquitlán-ware *pocillo*, prob. Puebla, Mexico. Late eighteenth to early nineteenth century; (3) Cut coconut shell, possibly intended to become a *coco chocolatero or jícara*; (4) eighteenth-century Type B *botija, poss.* from Puerto de Palos, Huelva; (5) Spanish majolica *plato* from Triana, Seville, second half of the eighteenth century; (6) French faïence blanche, Normandy blue-on-white, second half of the eighteenth-century; (7) creamware soup plate, *c.* 1762-1810; (8) prob. Dutch Delftware basins or bowls with dashed (*kabelrand*) rims, prob. first half of eighteenth century; (9) French lead-glazed earthenware *marmite/canari* from Vallauris, eighteenth century; (10, 11) "El Morro"-type (morroware) lead-glazed coarse earthenware *cazuela* and *puchero*, eighteenth century; (12, 13) prob. Venezuelan coarse earthenware *ollas* (drawings by Andrzej Antczak and Konrad Antczak). (*Bottom left*) Excavations in the main trash midden at the site of Uespen de la Salina in 2010, and (*bottom right*) aerial view of the western end of Cayo Sal and its saltpans (photo: Konrad Antczak).

subsistence agriculture, cattle herding, and overseeing the enslaved laborers on the southern saltpans (figure 9.8, 11) (Dampier 1699:48-49; Hartog 1957:76-77). While not subject to the same liminality as Spanish La Tortuga and Cayo Sal, uninhabited Klein Bonaire was nonetheless a liminal place caught between Curaçao, Bonaire, and the Spanish mainland, where goods smuggled from the continent were stored and trans-shipped out of sight from the small Dutch WIC settlement on Bonaire. Once again, small and liminal island seascapes and their campsites lent themselves ideally to clandestine and illegal activities.



Saltworker Huts and the Overseer's House: Los Escombros, Cayo Sal, Los Roques (1830s-1840s)

In the final case study, we return to Cayo Sal, this time to the site of Los Escombros, found in between the island's large internal lagoons, one kilometer to the east of Uespen de la Salina. Like the other Venezuelan sites, Los Escombros was located and excavated by Andrzej and Maria Magdalena Antczak in the 1980s, and excavations were renewed at the site in 2006, with further campaigns in 2010, 2012, and 2013. The site consists of the ruins of a coral and lime-mortar house for the overseer, a salt-packing patio (figure 9.9), various coral stone structures interpreted as saltworker shelters, and two extensive trash middens, one of which (CS/B/W) has been interpreted as most clearly the site where the saltworkers camped. Los Escombros was the site of a short-lived salt harvesting concession given in 1834 by the young Venezuelan Republic to US entrepreneur Jeremiah Morrell. Morrell invested significantly in the saltpan by constructing walkways, dikes, and sluices, as well as the house and patio, and brought 120 free Bonaireans and Curaçaoans (probably mostly Bonaireans) to undertake the project, some of whom he then employed as saltworkers, given their expertise in saltwork and their savvy of the harsh island environment (Bosch 1836:307; Stelten and Antczak 2023). Morrell's saltpan venture lasted sometime into the 1840s and the salt from Cayo Sal was principally exported to the east coast of the USA (Antczak 2019:117).

The saltpan was probably inhabited seasonally, primarily during the first part of the year, when various environmental and climatic factors created ideal conditions for concentrating seawater into brine and then leaving it to crystallize into salt in the blazing Caribbean sun (Antczak 2018). While there is standing architecture at the site, the numerous free Bonaireans who were first brought to Los Escombros to build the saltpan, and the later smaller cohort of saltworkers, must have lived in makeshift huts or tents beside the saltpan. The environmentally conditioned liminality of the island, discussed in the case of Uespen de la Salina, was here moderated by the fact that the saltwork had legal Venezuelan approval and Morrell provisioned his workers from the Venezuelan port of Puerto Cabello where he resided. A minimum number of 422 ceramic, metal, and glass vessels was recovered at the site. These materials are homogeneous in terms of date range and provenance, with most of the dateable ceramic and glass vessels manufactured in the 1830s and 1840s and the ceramics being principally refined white earthenwares from Britain. The abundance of expensive slipped, painted, and transfer-printed handled cups and matching saucers, bowls, painted and transfer-printed plates and soup plates, and specialized serving and storage vessels such as soup tureens, pitchers, and sugar pots, as well as colorful chamber pots—and the near total absence of plain whitewares—on

Figure 9.8: (opposite page) A selection of artifacts recovered at Pos Kangreu, Klein Bonaire: (1) British crowned rose lead bale seal, poss. 1700-1727; (2) unmarked lead bale seal; (3) lead fishing weight; (4) unidentified pierced copper-alloy coin, dated 1710; (5) Spanish 2 real silver *macuquina*, dated 1693; (6) lead pistol and musket shot; (7) red drawn cylindrical glass bead; (8) 6-pounder and 18-pounder iron cannonballs; (9) flintlock musket ramrod pipe and finial, eighteenth century; (10) coarse earthenware *olla*; (11) fragment of possible coarse earthenware *budare* or griddle; (12) prob. Dutch Delftware basins or bowls with dashed (*kabelrand*) rims, prob. first half of eighteenth century; (13) Dutch Delftware or English delft plates, prob. first half of eighteenth century (drawings by Konrad Antczak). (*Bottom left*) the author excavating a trench at the site of Pos Kangreu (photo: Valeria Corona), and (*bottom right*) view of the ruins of the probable trans-shipment warehouse at Pos Kangreu (photo: Flavio Maestroni).

this arid and hostile island suggests that Morrell was perhaps an extravagant and even eccentric businessman for his time, who spent more money than necessary on equipping a short-lived salt enterprise (figure 9.9).

Moreover, the recovery of these more expensive wares not only in the middens adjacent to the overseer's house, but also a smaller number of them in the CS/B/W midden where the Bonaireans would have camped, tentatively suggest that these were tablewares provided by Morrell for the freedmen to dine and drink from and that he was

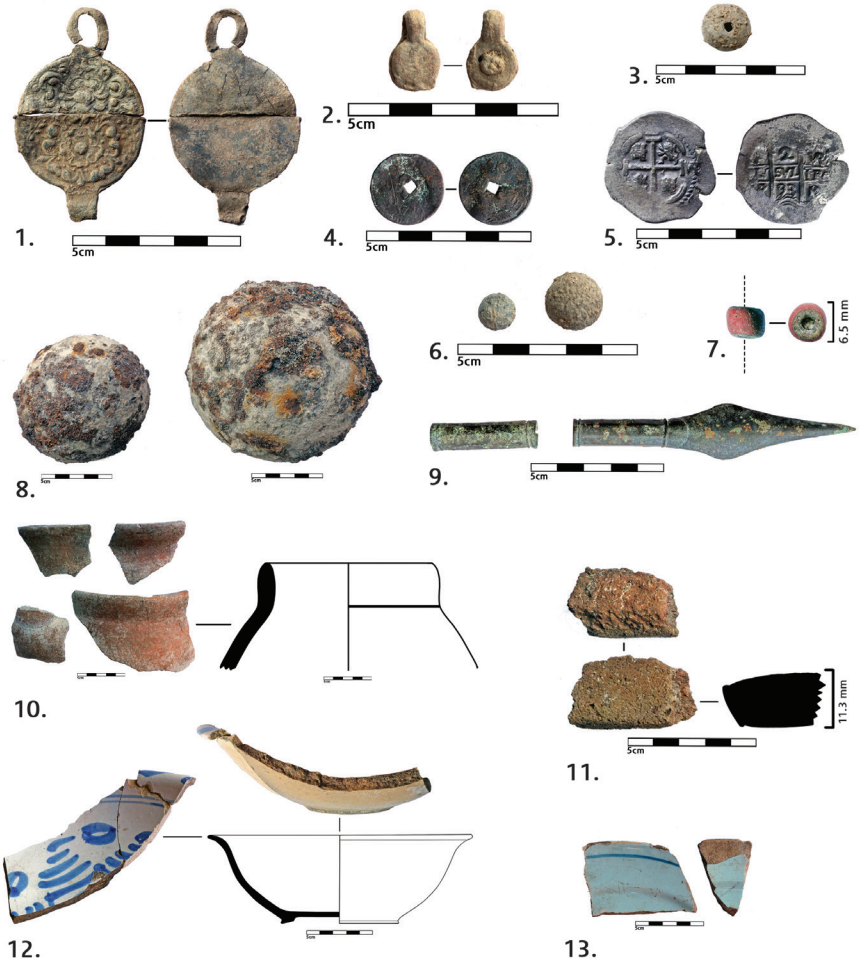


Figure 9.9: A selection of artifacts recovered at Los Escombros, Cayo Sal, Los Roques Archipelago, all dated to the 1830s and 1840s: (1) Painted whiteware London-shaped teacup; (2) industrial slip mug; (3, 4) coarse earthenware *aripos* used for cooking *arepas*; (5) blue shell-edged whiteware soup tureen; (6) four painted whiteware saucers; (7) spatter-sponged hemispherical profile whiteware bowl with raised footring; (8) industrial slip bowl with cabling decoration. London-shaped profile; (9) industrial slip bowl with cat's eye decoration. London-shaped profile; (10) industrial slip bowl with mocha decoration. London-shaped profile; (11) industrial slip bowl with annular decoration; (12) manganese transfer-printed whiteware bowl; (13, 14) Whiteware bowls painted in colorful and large underglaze polychrome floral patterns; (15) shell-edged whiteware plate; (16) painted whiteware soup plate; (17) painted whiteware chamber pot (drawings by Andrzej Antczak and Konrad Antczak). (*Bottom left*) Excavations at Los Escombros in 2013 (photo: Konrad Antczak), and (*bottom right*) view of the partially standing coral stone and lime mortar house (photo: José Voglar).

indeed spending more money on his laborers than was customary, rather than buying cheaper plain whitewares. From what could be reassembled of the assemblage of dining practices it can be suggested that, as on Klein Bonaire, *arepas* were cooked on *aripos*, and most of the meals at the site were cooked in locally made (probably Venezuelan) coarse earthenware *ollas* (cooking pots) and involved a variety of local marine species as well as seabirds (figure 9.9, 3-4). Even though Morrell might have provided his laborers with fancy crockery, it seems that he had problems with provisioning them, as suggested by the hundreds of upturned rainwater-collecting conchs and the large proportion of local marine and avian remains. When no supply vessel arrived, the liminality of the small island seascape forced the Bonaireans to catch pelicans and spear parrotfish on the reef, that they would then serve on colorfully painted British whiteware in the blinding glare and suffocating heat of their campsite by the saltpan. Meanwhile, in the shade of the equally suffocating house, the overseer—perhaps Morrell himself—would have his soup of the day served in a shell-edged tureen and ladled into a transfer-printed bowl. Once "nature called" he would politely use one of the various painted whiteware chamber pots found at the site and did not have to resort to the mangrove thickets, as did the freedmen (figure 9.9, 17). Clearly, there was differentiation between those in charge at Los Escombros and the Bonaireans working on the saltpan; but this differentiation, as reflected in the material entanglements at the site, was not as sharp as could be expected in the 1830s and 40s, when slavery was still rampant and entrenched in the Dutch and Spanish Caribbean.

Discussion: The Subversive Historical Archaeological Potential of Island Campsites

Ephemerality has recently received much attention through a series of interdisciplinary conferences entitled "The Forgotten Canopy" (2022-2023) held at UCLA and exploring ephemeral architecture, especially thatched roofs, in the precolonial and colonial circum-Caribbean. In Caribbean historical archaeology, exploring ephemeral sites with new eyes holds great potential for the future, since, to date, investigations in the region have predominantly focused on sites with standing architectural remains. While in recent years there has been a growing interest in ephemeral plantation architecture in the Caribbean, especially houses of the enslaved made from perishable materials (see, *e.g.*, Delle and Clay 2019), the focus of the research presented in this chapter deliberately looks beyond plantation landscapes and beyond households altogether. The early modern and nineteenth-century campsites studied here are not generally representative of domestic units, nor do they have the potential of providing us with rich household data. Their richness precisely lies in their un-householdness, as sites contingent on impermanence and situated in liminal island seascapes connected to a constant stream of maritime mobilities.

A number of historical archaeologists in the Caribbean region have, in fact, engaged with campsites over the years, among which are terrestrial sites such as colonial-period Saramaka maroon campsites in Suriname (Ngwenyama 2007) and eighteenth-century logwood-cutter campsites of the Barcadares, Belize (Finamore 1994), as well as studies of maroon campsites in Jamaica, western Cuba (La Rosa Corzo 2005), and the Dominican Republic (Agorsah 1994; García Arévalo 1986; Vega 1979). Various campsites have also been studied on small islands around the world, among them

eighteenth-century pirate camps on Saint-Marie Island, Madagascar (de Bry and Soulat 2023), shipwreck survivor campsites in Australasia and on Roncador Cay, Colombia (Gibbs 2003; Gómez Pretel *et al.* 2023), nineteenth-century sealing campsites in the South Shetlands (Senatore 2020), the supposed eighteenth-century campsite of Alexander Selkirk on Robinson Crusoe Island, Chile (Takahashi *et al.* 2007), and various temporary nineteenth-century campsites in the Galapagos Islands (Froyd *et al.* 2010). The campsites presented in this literature can be divided into five broad categories: 1) those built by freedom fighters or maroons; 2) shipwrecked seafarer campsites; 3) industrial company work-camps related to resource extraction; 4) non-industrial, temporary or seasonal campsites for resource extraction; and 5) campsites used for illegal activities such as smuggling and clandestine hideouts such as pirate lairs. The cases discussed in this chapter fall within the fourth and fifth categories and it is the fact that these campsites were not set up out of dire necessity, nor subject to strict company controls, but driven largely by individual economic interests, that makes them particularly interesting as windows onto the material lives of regular middling seafarers and island peoples underrepresented in the documentary record, such as free blacks and Indigenous islanders.

As seen in four of the five cases above, the strongest factor contributing to the liminal character of small island seascapes in the Venezuelan Caribbean was that the islands of La Tortuga, Cayo Sal, and Klein Bonaire were all unable to sustain permanent human habitation and were therefore uninhabited. Such islands of impermanence and the campsites that were set up on them lent themselves to social behaviors and arrangements that were uncommon on land and in regular households, resulting in often atypical assemblages of practice—a product of the uncommon, un-everyday-like activities undertaken in these small island seascapes. In all of the cases studied here, the unique mobilities potential of seascapes resulted in surprising material entanglements at each of the campsites, whether it be the presence of expensive Italian *maiolicas* in the rustic *rancherías* on Margarita Island, the socially subversive tea-drinking assemblage of practice in the tavern by the saltpan of La Tortuga, or the fancy painted whitewares that the US entrepreneur supplied to his Bonairean saltworkers on nineteenth-century Cayo Sal. Since, in the words of Benítez-Rojo, the Caribbean is a sinuous "meta-archipelago," and the vibrant Venezuelan Caribbean was (and is) one of its intimately connected maritime realms, future excavations of campsites on other small islands in this Caribbean meta-archipelago promise to continue throwing open unexpected windows onto the past, revealing the unusual, playful, and often subversive material entanglements of their aquatic inhabitants.

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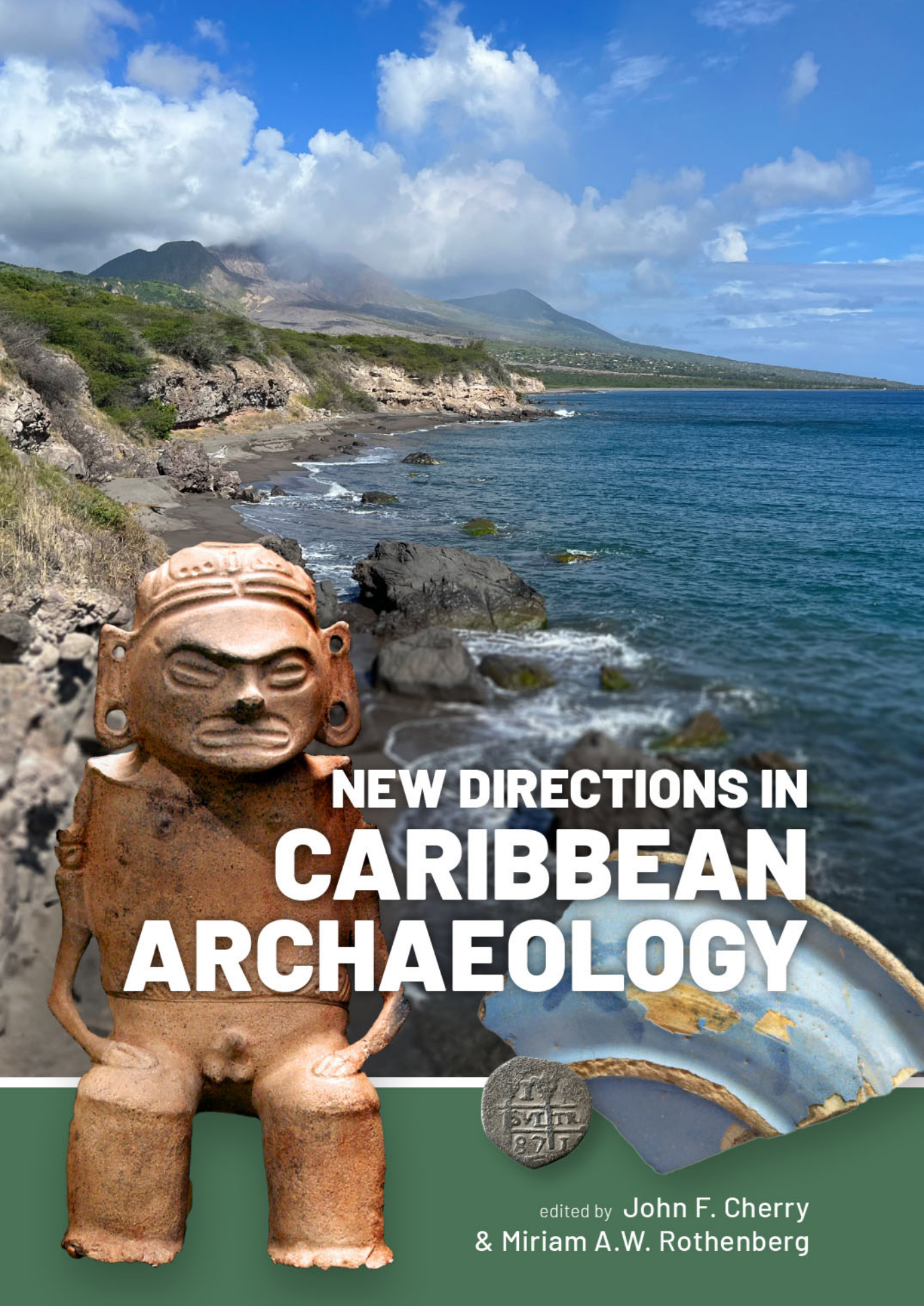

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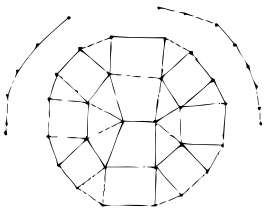

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