

# Reimagining Creolization: The Deep History of Cultural Interactions in the Windward Islands, Lesser Antilles, through the Lens of Material Culture

Corinne L. Hofman , John Angus Martin, Arie Boomert, Sébastien Manem, Katarina Jacobson, and Menno L. P. Hoogland

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*People from different areas of the insular Caribbean and the coastal zone of mainland South America moved in and out of the Lesser Antilles throughout the archipelago's history before the European invasion. Successive migrations, the development of networks of human mobility, and the exchange of goods and ideas, as well as constantly shifting inter-insular alliances, created diverse ethnic and cultural communities in these small islands. We argue that these processes of alliance-building and ethnicity can be best understood through the concept of creolization. We examine this idea first in terms of the cultural interactions reflected in the pottery traditions that emerged among the Windward Islands before colonization, and second by analyzing the historiographical and emerging archaeological information available on the formation of the Indigenous Kalinago/Kalipuna and Garifuna identities from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. Finally, we discuss the colonial and contemporary Afro-Caribbean pottery traditions on these islands, in particular Grenada and Saint Lucia. The embedding of this study in a deep historical framework serves to underscore the divergent origins and developmental trajectories of the region, including the disruption of the Indigenous cultures and the impact of European colonization, the African diaspora, and the emergence of today's cosmopolitan Caribbean cultural tradition.*

**Keywords:** Caribbean, creolization, ceramic traditions, cultural interactions, deep history

*Las Antillas Menores son conocidas como una arena de ida y vuelta de personas de diferentes áreas del Caribe insular y de la costa de América del Sur antes de la invasión Europea. La migración y las extensas redes de movilidad humana e intercambio de bienes e ideas crearon un mosaico cultural de comunidades en las islas. Argumentamos que estos procesos de construcción de alianzas y etnicidad pueden entenderse mejor a través del concepto de criollización. Examinamos esta idea primero en términos de las interacciones culturales reflejadas en las tradiciones de alfarería que surgieron entre las Islas de Barlovento antes de la colonización, y segundo, analizando la información historiográfica y arqueológica emergente disponible sobre la formación de las identidades indígenas Kalinago / Kalipuna y Garifuna desde finales del siglo XV hasta principios del siglo XVII. Finalmente, este artículo analizará las tradiciones de cerámica Afro-Caribeña del período colonial y contemporáneo, en particular en Granada y Santa Lucía. La integración de este estudio en un marco histórico profundo sirve para subrayar los orígenes divergentes y las trayectorias de desarrollo de la región, por ejemplo la disrupción de las culturas Indígenas y el impacto de la colonización Europea, la diáspora Africana, y el surgimiento de la tradición cultural cosmopolita del Caribe actual.*

**Palabras claves:** Caribe, creolización, tradiciones cerámicas, interacciones culturales, historia profunda

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### Toward an Alternative Understanding of Cultural Interaction in the Caribbean

The mixing or blending, the homogenizing or cultural merging, the diverging or converging cultural, linguistic, and genetic transformations or transitions from one culture to another or in acquiring another culture as a consequence of or related to European colonization processes, the plantation economy, subjugation, cultural hegemony, or globalization have been referred to as processes of acculturation, deculturation, syncretism, transculturation, ethnogenesis, hybridization, *métissage*, and creolization (e.g., Cusick 1998; Glissant 1997; Hannerz 1987; Mintz and Prize 1976; Mullins and Paynter 2000; Ortiz 1995; Silliman 2015; Stewart 2016; Stockhammer 2012). These concepts vary in meaning among scholars, countries, and world regions, and their use has been challenging because of their different meanings in diverse settings, the differential impact of colonialism on the various peoples still visible today, and the incorrect analysis of the long-term and spatially diverse processes with unlimited sociocultural interactions and inclusion of all peoples (for a general review and reflection on these concepts, see Silliman 2020).

The development of the concept of creolization has been synonymous with the Caribbean and the formation of its multi- and transcultural societies following the European invasion of the Americas. The voluntary and involuntary cultural interweaving of various communities through conquest, enslavement, and colonization forged new societies and identities, making the Caribbean a unique microcosm of cultural interaction and change (Bolland 1998; Glissant 1997; Hannerz 1987; Palmié 2006; Webster 2001). Creolization was viewed as having occurred in a precise time and space and under the specific conditions of the cultural interactions between primarily Europeans and Africans, melding in a cauldron of enslavement and colonialism, with the role of the Indigenous peoples who occupied the Caribbean islands not seen as integral to that process (Brathwaite 1971; Glissant 1997, 2008; Mintz and Price 1976). Recently, it has become evident that this process can be applied to multiple societies worldwide and in various eras by

using similar metrics to understand their formation (e.g., Hannerz 1987; Khan 2001; Palmié 2006). As a result, the process of creolization is being applied to the broader understanding of blended societies as old as the Roman Empire and as far away from the Caribbean as the Pacific, demonstrating the applicability of the approach in examining cultural interaction and change under variable conditions and in fluctuating time periods and locations (Birmingham 2000; Webster 2001). In the broader context of the research presented here, it has also been applied to study material culture and the processes of appropriation, integration, and reinterpretation of objects produced by interacting populations. Since the late 1970s, it has been used to describe stylistically mixed artifacts, with a focus on cultural dynamics and social interactions with diverse spatiality and temporality (see Ferguson 2000; Stewart 2016; van Pelt 2013).

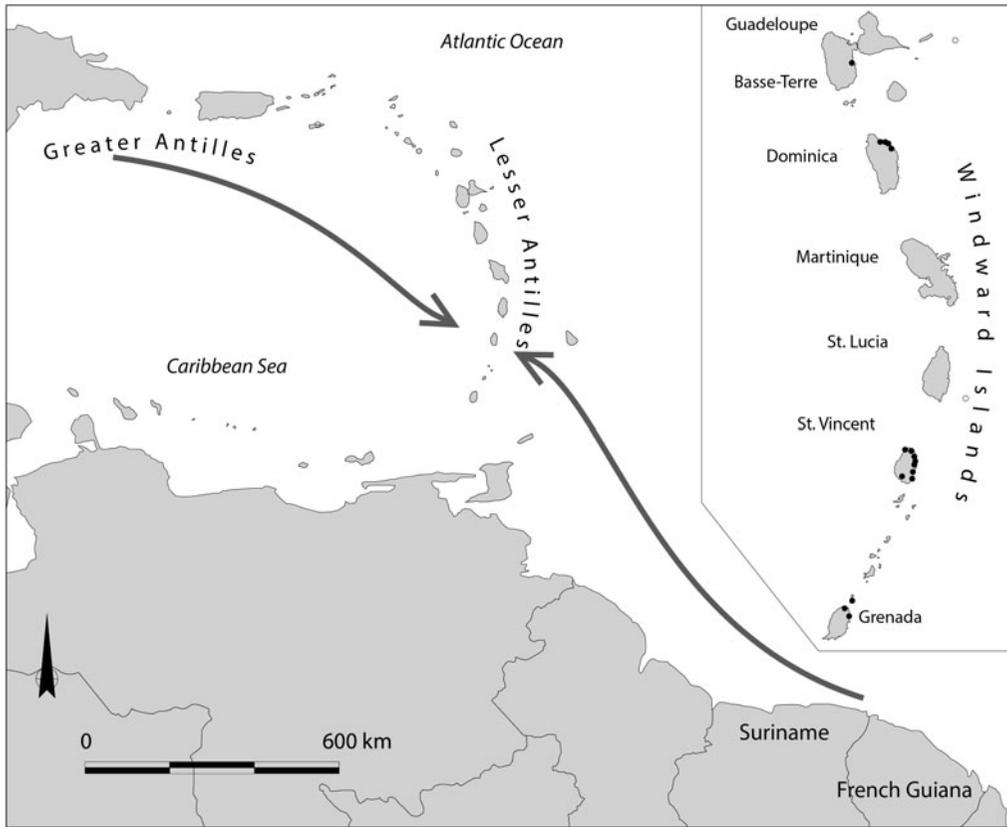
This broader application of creolization has in turn had an impact on how the process is understood in the Caribbean. It is now clear that the concept should be used to increase understanding of the region's entire history, including before European colonization; of cultural interactions seen through human mobility and the exchange of ideas and goods; and by incorporating the Indigenous population as an integral part of the process in the colonial period (Curet 2011; Khan 2011). An area such as the Windward Islands, for example, was a space where peoples and ideas from both the Lesser and Greater Antilles blended with those from the South American mainland and later with those from Africa and Europe, creating new identities and societies (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Hofman, Borck, et al. 2021; Hulme 1986; Sued Badillo 1995). The Windwards can be described as a Caribbean crossroads because of its geographic position and the spontaneous creation of a cultural and biological open space. From the onset of settlement, these islands received a continuous infusion of people, materials, and ideas, which increased after European colonization (e.g., Boomert 2000; Curet and Hauser 2011; Hofman and Bright 2010; Hofman et al. 2014). The Windwards retained strong and continuous links to the South American mainland after colonization; there was a constant movement back

and forth in almost every aspect of society. For example, legal and illegal trade between the southern Caribbean and northern South America occurred well into the 1800s (Goslinga 1971; Watts 1987). The islands also retained a strong Indigenous heritage via the Kalinago, Kalina, and other ethnic groups for a sustained period. Biological and cultural diversity continued because of the islands' crossroads status and the diversity of European colonizers—Spanish, Dutch, French, English, and even Portuguese from South America—who visited and partly settled the archipelago. The interactions among the Indigenous populations (on cultural and biological levels) of the Kalinago, Kalina, the so-called Taino, and others, and later with Africans, Europeans, and Asians, resulted in the creole societies that are celebrated today. Thus, the Windward Islands can be viewed as a fluid space up until the 1760s, by which time all the islands had fallen under the control of European colonizers, with Indigenous-dominated islands (Saint Vincent and Dominica) losing their status as “neutral” territories (Hofman et al. 2019).

The first objective of this article is to examine some possible witnesses to the complex process of creolization<sup>1</sup> in the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles (Figure 1) through the lens of material culture and via a *longue durée* perspective (sensu Braudel 1958). We look at the cultural interactions expressed in stylistic data and the manufacturing processes of ceramic traditions that emerged among the Indigenous inhabitants before European colonization. These interactions increased after colonization, expanding to include interactions between the various Indigenous peoples and diverse African ethnic groups. We discuss contemporary Afro-Caribbean potters in the southwestern district of Saint Lucia where the legacies of the Indigenous–African–European cultural dynamics in society today come to the fore. The second objective of this article is to demonstrate how a detailed and homogeneous technological analysis of the ways of doing things makes it possible to better understand the similarities and differences in ceramic assemblages, which contributes to the debate on creolization. We review published data and conclude with an example of a detailed analysis of the *chaîne opératoire*, or operational sequence.

### Kalinago/Kalipuna Society in the Windward Islands

The Lesser Antilles were first settled between about 8,000 and 5,000 years ago by people traveling to the islands from both South America and possibly Central America via the Greater Antilles (Hofman and Antczak 2019; Pagán-Jiménez et al. 2015). These first settlers occupied both the coastal and interior parts of the islands, transformed the island environments, practiced plant management, and maintained a yearly mobility cycle based on seasonality and resource availability. The onset of agriculture in the archipelago was not a sudden event, but on the contrary was the result of a process of fusions and mixtures of endogenous and exogenous traditions among myriad groups of peoples in the so-called Archaic and Ceramic ages (Hofman and Antczak 2019; Rodríguez Ramos 2010). Between cal 400 BC and AD 400, most islands of the Lesser Antilles were inhabited, gradually intensifying their social relationships and creating a vast web connecting island communities to each other and to mainland communities (e.g., Bérard 2019; Crock 2001; Hofman et al. 2007). Throughout their entire precolonial history, the Lesser Antilles are known to have been a dynamic arena where people from different areas of the insular Caribbean and the coastal zone of mainland South America interacted (Boomert 2000; Hofman et al. 2011). Intensive networks of human mobility and exchange of goods and ideas created various ethnic and cultural communities across the region, today designated with such labels as “Taíno,” “Carib,” “Huecoid,” “Saladoid,” “Ostionoid,” “Troumassoid,” “Meillacoid,” “Suazoid,” “Chicoid,” and “Cayoid” (e.g., Boomert 2000; Keegan and Hofman 2017; Rouse 1992). However, it is important to realize that these labels mask a diversity of human agency reflected in the archaeological record of the Caribbean, resulting from complex fissions and fusions and the constantly shifting alliances among its various Indigenous peoples (Bright 2011; Hofman et al. 2014; Rodríguez Ramos 2010; Ulloa Hung 2014). In other words, the process described today as creolization invariably formed an attribute associated with the archipelagic



**Figure 1.** Map of the Caribbean with insert of the Lesser Antilles showing the Indigenous sites mentioned in this article (figure by Menno L. P. Hoogland).

constellation of Caribbean society before European colonization.

During the sixteenth century, most of the larger Caribbean islands and parts of the mainland were settled by the Spanish (Keehnen et al. 2019). Their lack of interest in the Lesser Antilles and a series of settlement ventures that failed partially because of the fierce resistance of Kalinago/Kalipuna kept these islands beyond their control. During the early years of colonization, Spanish slavers raided the Lesser Antilles, and from 1503 Real Cédulas were issued by the Spanish Crown, legally permitting the capture and enslavement of the Indigenous peoples under the pretext that they were man-eaters (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Hulme 1986). Simultaneously, the Lesser Antilles functioned as a *refugium* for peoples from the Greater Antilles, as well as the South American mainland, who in some cases served as “middlemen” in the

trade between the Spanish Caribbean and continental South America (Hofman et al. 2019; Sued Badillo 1995). Approximately 130 to 150 years passed until other European nations permanently settled in these small islands despite fierce “Island Carib” (Kalinago/Kalipuna) resistance. The Kalinago/Kalipuna claimed origin from the mainland and lived in a series of strongholds between Tobago and Saint Kitts (Allaire 1997).

The Island Carib represented a creole society as shown by linguistic, anthropological, and archaeological evidence (Honychurch 2000; Taylor and Hoff 1980). They spoke two variants of what was basically Maipuran Arawakan: a female and a male register, of which the latter showed numerous Cariban lexical borrowings. This male register originated as a contact vernacular (pidgin) bridging the gap between Maipuran Arawakan, the women’s native tongue, and Kalina, the Cariban language of the men

(and women) who had immigrated into the Lesser Antilles from the South American mainland and mixed with the local population. The persistence of the Cariban-affiliated male register can be ascribed to the continuous interaction between the Island Carib and the Kalina of the Guianas for joint (male) expeditions of trade and war. Sociopolitically, Island Carib society closely resembled that of the mainland Kalina as is reflected in, for example, the layout of their villages (Boomert 1986). The Island Carib men used the name “Kalinago” to refer to their people, a term derived from Kalina to which the honorific suffix *-go* was added, illustrating feelings of joint ethnicity with their mainland kinsmen. The Island Carib women, however, used the Maipuran Arawakan term “Kalipuna” as the name of their people (Hoff 1995; Taylor 1977; Taylor and Hoff 1980).

The early chroniclers depicted the southern Lesser Antilles as land and seascape contested by the various Indigenous peoples and the Europeans (e.g., Anonyme 1975 [1659]; Anonyme de Carpentras 2002 [ca. 1618–1620]; Breton 1665, 1666, 1978; Chanca 1988 [1494]; Coppier 1645; Du Tertre 1667–1671; Labat 2005 [1722]; Nicholl 1605; Pinchon 1961; Rochefort 1658). The Windward Islands, containing dominant populations of Indigenous peoples with direct links to South America where they raided and traded, represented the last remaining stronghold of the Kalinago (Hofman et al. 2019). Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there are multiple reports of concerted efforts by the Kalinago/Kalipuna and others to defend this highly contested space against the Spanish and their local allies (Boucher 1992; Cody Holdren 1998; Martin 2013; Shafie et al. 2017). However, from the 1620s onward, the Indigenous peoples of the Lesser Antilles were besieged by the English, French, and Dutch who invaded the islands and successfully established colonies (Du Tertre 1667–1671).

The existence of the early colonial Island Carib has long been doubted because of the lack of archaeological evidence (Davis and Goodwin 1990; Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Hulme and Whitehead 1992), and they were regarded by anthropologists and archaeologists as a culture that developed after European

colonization. They were seen as the inheritors of all the cultural traditions of the Indigenous Caribbean peoples and the mainland Kalina/Galibis, who temporarily manifested themselves on the empty stage of the early colonial period (Boomert 1986; Hofman and Hoogland 2012; Honychurch 2000; Sued Badillo 1995). A pattern of exchange developed in the late sixteenth century between the European nations and the Kalinago/Kalipuna, which culminated in their cultivation of tobacco for sale to passing European traders (Boomert 2002; Hofman et al. 2019) and in the first European trading posts on the islands with evidence of Kalinago/Kalipuna presence (Hauser et al. 2019). Early colonial Spanish, Dutch, French, and English sources provide vivid testimonies of the slow but inevitable encroachment of European nations in the Lesser Antilles and the marginalization of Indigenous culture and society. Meanwhile, Island Carib communities on some of the islands absorbed increasing numbers of escaped enslaved Africans (originally from west and west-central Africa), leading to the formation of a “Black Carib” ethnic identity alongside those communities that remained purely Indigenous (“Yellow Carib”; Gullick 1995). Many “Black Carib” were deported from Saint Vincent to Central America in 1797 by the English, where they still self-identify as *Garifuna*, which obviously is a derivative of Kalipuna, the name by which women in Island Carib society referred to their people. The Kalinago/Kalipuna on other islands of the Lesser Antilles such as Grenada are known to have taken both Africans and Europeans as captives, shaving their hair and piercing their ears as signs of enslavement (Hofman et al. 2019; Martin 2013).

The Indigenous peoples of the Lesser Antilles first encountered captive Africans by the mid to late 1500s. They had been brought to the region by the Portuguese and others and put to work on the Spanish plantations in the Greater Antilles and South America. There are reports of several enslaved Africans being captured by Indigenous groups like the Kalinago/Kalipuna as part of their raiding, captive-taking, and trading activities (Barome 1966; Boucher 1992; Moreau 1992; Pritchard 2004). These African captives were taken to the Indigenous villages where

they were reportedly kept as “slaves,” working as household workers, concubines, and laborers for menial tasks. As late as April 1658 two Africans who had been captured from the Portuguese and enslaved by the Kalinago were caught running away by French colonists; the Africans begged to be rescued because they could not live among the “savages” as they were “Christians” (Anonyme 1975 [1659]:163). Incidents like these, though limited and also little researched, suggest early interactions between Africans and the Indigenous peoples of the region. But it is the often-reported wrecking of a slave ship on Saint Vincent in the sixteenth century and the immigration of escaped slaves from other islands, especially Barbados, that resulted in the creation of the historical “Black Carib” of Saint Vincent, which probably led to the most-referenced interaction between the two groups (Honychurch 2014; Taylor 1977).

Saint Vincent and Dominica were not officially colonized. The French and English designated these islands as “neutral” and left them in the possession of the Kalinago/Kalipuna until well into the eighteenth century. By 1800, a major collapse in the Indigenous population dramatically reduced the Island Carib presence in much of the Lesser Antilles, and the Indigenous populations became increasingly marginalized (Hofman et al. 2019). Descendants of the Kalinago/Kalipuna, however, still live today on Dominica, Saint Vincent, and Trinidad and are dispersed on other islands where they actively proclaim their Indigenous origins as an integral part of their identity in Caribbean society (Boomert 2016; Honychurch 2000). The persistence of the Indigenous cultural traditions and knowledge in present-day creolized Caribbean society strongly counters the idea of their substitution, displacement, or disappearance, as suggested by traditional historiographies. Indigenous elements exist along with African and European ones and are still visible in forms of traditional agriculture (slash-and-burn; *conucos*, or small plots of cultivated lands), house building, an array of cultural traditions and ritual practices, and the intensive use of Indigenous plant species for economic and curative purposes, all aspects that constitute an important part of everyday life in the Caribbean today (Boomert 2016; Ulloa

Hung and Valcárcel Rojas 2016; Valcárcel Rojas and Ulloa Hung 2018). As such these intercultural dynamics are mirrored in today’s locally produced creole, Afro-Caribbean earthenware or folk pottery, evidencing Suazoid and maybe some Cayoid influences (Fay 2017; Hauser and Handler 2009; Hofman and Bright 2004; Vérin 1967). The *longue durée* approach taken in this study is thus more than justified, and our emphasis on ceramic traditions as an expression of sociocultural behavior in the creolization process is useful in reimagining the concept and emphasizing the oft-forgotten Indigenous component. It should be clear, however, that caution is called for in assuming that ceramics, traits, or, in this case, technological operations reflect specific identities (Dietler and Herbich 1994; Hauser and deCorse 2003; Mouer et al. 1999).

### The Kalinago/Kalipuna Ceramic Tradition

The development of ethnological research in Caribbean ceramic studies has revealed the importance of technological studies focusing on pottery manufacturing processes (for a review, see Hofman et al. 2008). Such studies investigate the link between *chaînes opératoires* and social groups (Roux 2019). A social group may consist, for example, of a family, clan, caste, or ethnic group. Variability in the “way of doing” may be related to differences in these social groups, with each embedding potters in different social learning networks (Hofman, Hoogland, et al. 2021; Manem 2017; for studies outside the Caribbean, see Roux 2019). Indeed, a way of doing things is “part of a heritage that develops on an individual (learning) [involving an interaction between a learner and a tutor whose way of doing things is the model to be reproduced through the acquisition of motor habits] and collective level (transmission)” (Roux 2019:4). Therefore, a technical tradition is an inherited and transmitted way of doing things reflecting a social group. The social perimeter of its transmission is superimposed on the social boundaries of the clan, the ethnic group, and so on. Here, we focus on some steps of the production process—from clay sourcing to the finished product—illustrating the similarities and differences in technical and

stylistic traditions through space and time to highlight possible processes of creolization. We argue that these processes reflect the cultural, economic, and social dynamics of a social group, as well as the persistence and continuities or discontinuities and transformations of practices through time.

#### *Seventeenth-Century Descriptions of Island Carib/Kalinago/Kalipuna Pottery*

According to the seventeenth-century European chroniclers, the production of Island Carib/Kalinago/Kalipuna pottery was in most cases carried out by women (Breton 1665, 1666). Few illustrations of this pottery are known, and their reliability is doubtful. The pottery includes open bowls and necked jars, some with handles and pointed or rounded bases. The descriptions allude to the existence of a ceramic repertoire of well-finished ceremonial vessels with Cariban names related to the men's realm, and of less finished domestic pottery with Maipuran Arawakan or European names related to the female sphere of activities (Boomert 1986, 1995). The male-connected vessels were employed for communal use during meals, the preparation of cassava beer, or serving that beer during drinking feasts. In contrast, the female-affiliated forms were used for purely domestic purposes. In all, 10 vessel shapes are described, of which some have both a female- and a male-associated name such as the griddle (*boutalli* or *bourrelet*) and the pepper pot (*tomali acae* or *tomali hiem*). The exclusively male-affiliated vessels include the *chamacou*, a beer-brewing container; the *rita*, a drinking bowl; and the *taoloua* or *touloua*, a serving bowl for cassava beer. The female-connected vessels comprise the *rouara*, a cooking pot, and the *comori* and *boutella*, both cooling jars for keeping liquids (Boomert 1986, 1995; Breton 1665, 1666; Hofman and Bright 2004). The manufacturing process is described in great detail in terms of clay processing, shaping, finishing or surface treatment, decoration, and firing. The mention of a wild tree resin used for the coating of vessel surfaces is noteworthy (Breton 1665, 1666). All-over red painting or the application of black designs on red surfaces is mentioned for *couis*, small calabash containers used for serving food and cassava beer, but not for pottery.

#### *Suazoid and Cayoid Pottery before European Colonization until the Early Seventeenth Century*

The archaeological quest for identifying the material evidence of the Island Carib presence in the islands has lasted decades (Bullen and Bullen 1972; Davis and Goodwin 1990). In the 1960s and 1970s a link was established with the so-called Suazoid ceramic series, which is still recognized as such in several islands. In the 1980s and 1990s, initial attempts were made to associate the Cayo complex of Saint Vincent with the Island Carib presence on the islands. This was based on stylistic and morphological similarities between Cayo and Koriabo ceramics from the Guianas (Boomert 1986, 1995). Koriabo is regarded as the ancestral pottery tradition of the contemporary Kalina or "Mainland Carib" of the Guianas and Orinoco Valley, which emerged in Suriname, French Guiana, the interior of the Guianas, and northeastern Brazil around AD 1100–1250 and continued to exist well into the early colonial period (Barreto et al. 2021; Boomert 1986; Rostain and Versteeg 2004). Currently, about 20 Cayoid sites have been identified in the Lesser Antilles in the area between Grenada and Guadeloupe, with the majority documented on Saint Vincent, Grenada, and Dominica (Boomert 2004, 2011; Bright 2011; Hofman, Hoogland, et al. 2021).

Suazoid pottery (AD 1100–1500) clearly reflects a local development from the previous so-called Troumassoid series of ceramic styles in the Windward Islands (Rouse 1992). The Suazoid series appears somewhere around AD 1100 and is suggested to end with the colonial period. But, in fact, its end date is virtually unknown, and it may well have continued into the early colonial period (Hofman and Bright 2004). In archaeological surveys late Suazoid pottery is often very difficult to distinguish from present-day Afro-Caribbean or folk pottery (Figure 2; see also Hofman and Bright 2004).

The Suazoid potters used forming techniques such as coiling and molding that were applied not only independently from each other but also in combination, depending on the size and shape of the intended vessel. Ceramic or calabash molds were probably used for this purpose. Scraping of the vessel wall was done with a



Figure 2. Suazoid pottery from the Windward Islands (figure and photos by Menno L. P. Hoogland). (Color online)

shell or calabash sherd, and many utilitarian vessels have rather thick walls and a clumsy appearance. Most are crudely finished and show scratched surfaces. These scratches are the result of rubbing the surface with grasses when the clay was in a wet condition. In addition to purely domestic pottery, especially during early Suazoid times, a fine ceremonial ware often with polychrome painted designs was manufactured. Vessels were fired in an open fire in a controlled way, oxidizing to neutral conditions at low temperatures. The fire was built up as an open structure so the wind could blow through. Vessels were placed upside down in the fire to obtain a more equal spread of the heat (Hofman and Bright 2004).

Cayoid pottery (AD 1450–1620) is clearly an interweaving of local Windward Islands and Greater Antillean (Meillacoid/Chicoid) and mainland (Koriabo) traditions (Figure 3; see also

Boomert 1986, 1995; Hofman et al. 2019); it represents an outstanding example of a ceramic complex created by the process of creolization. A large variety of vessel shapes show modeled zoomorphic decorations, incisions, punctuations, notched fillets, and painted surfaces. Characteristic of these vessels are wide-mouthed bowls (so-called flowerpots) with lobed (indented) rims. Many have white-slipped interior surfaces, showing red, yellow, or black painted designs. These typical Koriabo bowls are known from the Guianas and as far as northern Brazil (Barreto et al. 2021). On the mainland they often show fine-line red- and black-painted motifs on white-slipped surfaces. Large, restricted jars with strongly corrugated inner surfaces are similarly characteristic; these most likely functioned as containers for cassava beer (*ouicou/cachiri*), also mentioned by early seventeenth-century chroniclers as the *ouchou*. Some have modeled anthropo-

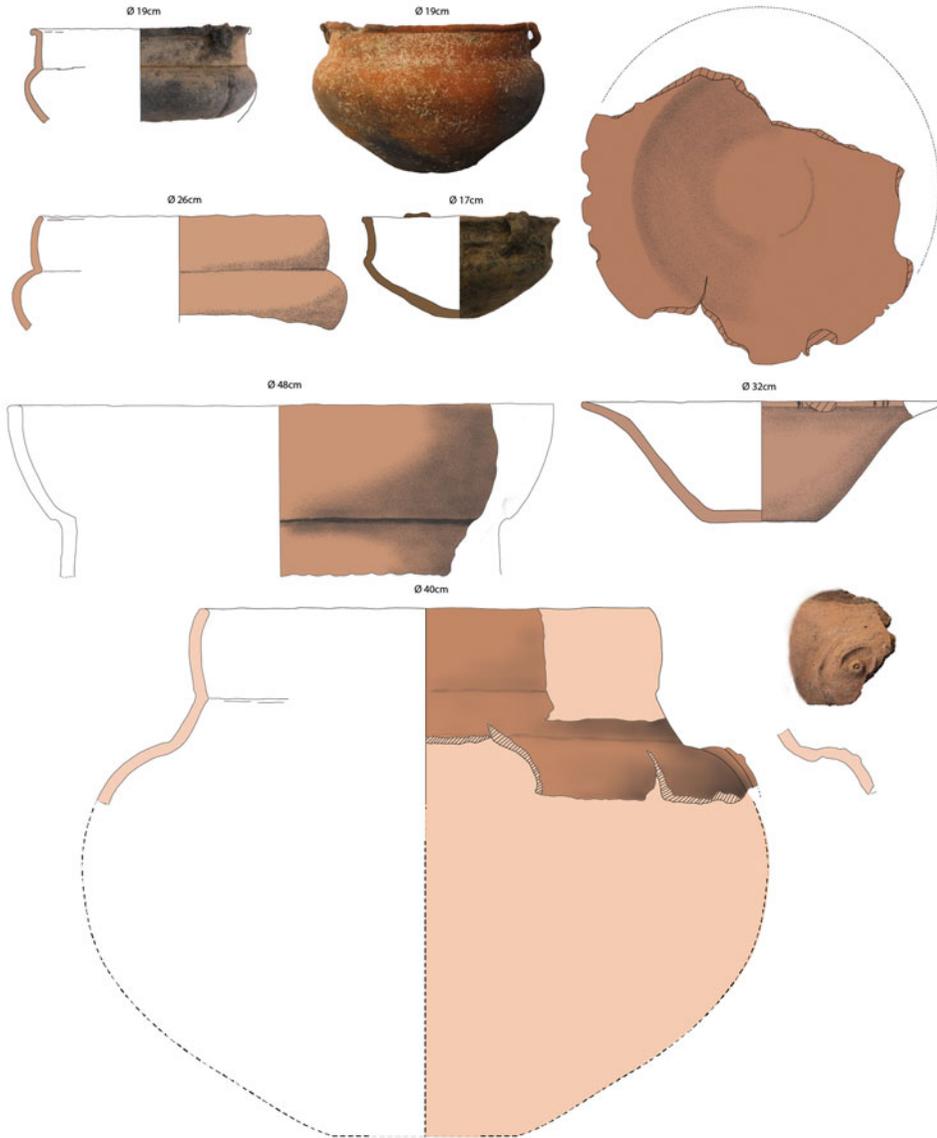


Figure 3. Cayoid pottery from the Windward Islands (figure and photos by Menno L. P. Hoogland). (Color online)

zoomorphic decorations identical to those of mainland Koriabo vessels (Rostain and Versteeg 2004). In contrast, various elaborately modeled-incised ornamental designs and some vessel shapes reflect direct influence from the Chicoid/Meillacoid ceramics of the Greater Antilles (Hofman, Hoogland, et al. 2021). Most likely they show the influx of people from the Greater Antilles (Hispaniola, Puerto Rico) into Island Carib society in the Lesser Antilles. This influx may have occurred because of the historically attested Kalinago/Kalipuna raiding

of these islands or the flight of Indigenous people from the Greater Antilles into the Lesser Antilles due to Spanish pressure in the sixteenth century, especially after the 1511 Indigenous rebellion in Puerto Rico. Clearly, all this reflects the composite origin of the Island Carib/Kalinago/Kalipuna ceramic complex.

Generally, there are notable variations in coiling techniques, including coiling by pinching and spreading. Surface finishing and decoration techniques also show some variability. XRF

and petrographic analyses have shown that 99% of the Cayoid pottery was locally made, confirming its production by communities that had moved to the Windward Islands, fusing their ancestral traditions with local ones (Hofman, Borck, et al. 2021). The painted “flowerpots,” which are tempered with *caraipé* (the burnt bark of a small savanna tree, *Licania apetala*), are the only exception. This temper material may have been brought in from the mainland (Scott et al. 2018).

The Mayoid ceramics of Trinidad that appear around the time of colonization and the contemporary Kalina pottery of the Guianas are also tempered with *caraipé* (Boomert 2016; Boomert et al. 2013; Stienaers et al. 2020). Mayoid pottery is known from Trinidad’s first Spanish capital San José de Oruña (the present-day St. Joseph, founded in 1592) and various seventeenth- to eighteenth-century Spanish-Indigenous mission sites. It is typified by nine, relatively thin-walled vessel shapes, including open and restricted bowls, bottles, and sizable cassava-beer brewing jars. Jars with sharply everted necks, resembling the nineteenth-century Arawak (Lokono) “buck-pots” of the Guianas, are most characteristic. Another Mayoid necked vessel is nearly identical to the Cayoid necked jar. Decoration is rare, although a few vessels are monochrome red painted; others show narrow black zones along the vessel rims. Oval, undecorated, punctuated, or nicked wall and rim knobs are most popular (Boomert 1986; Boomert et al. 2013).

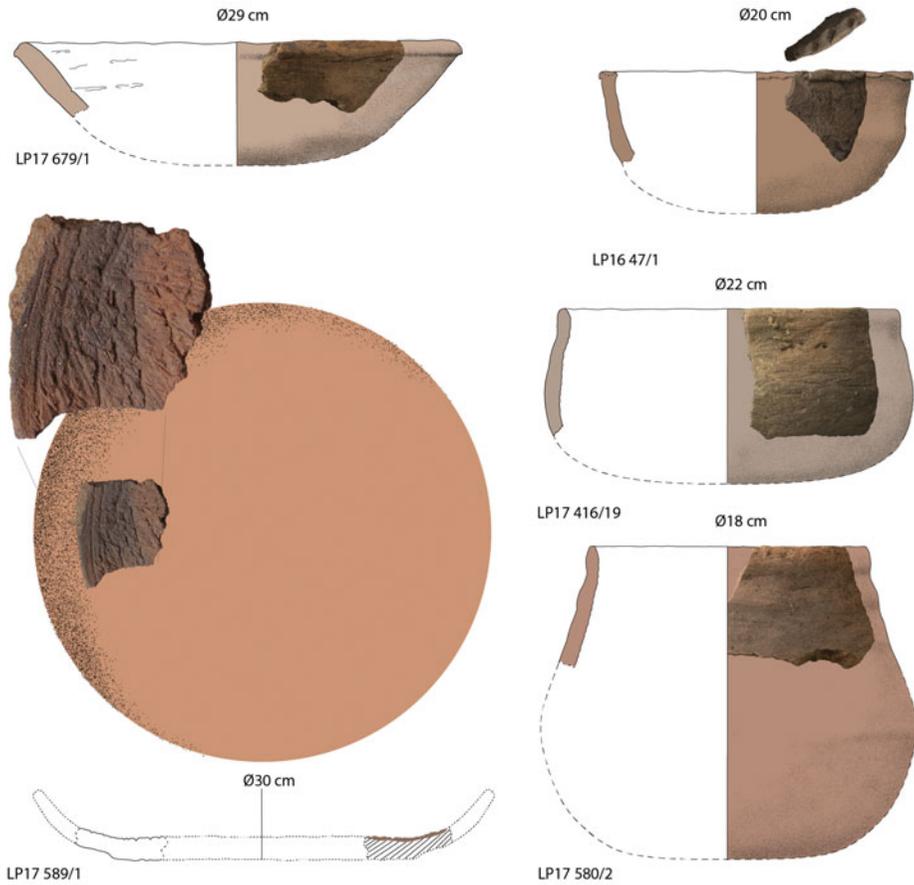
European trade wares (sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries) first appear in the Cayoid context when the Kalinago/Kalipuna strongholds participated in a complex transatlantic system that combined new colonial and trade strategies with preexisting Indigenous exchange and alliance networks (Hofman et al. 2014, 2019). Most of this trade took place with Spanish ships or along the coast of the Guianas, where the Dutch had settled since the early 1600s. Goods imported from Europe (Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England) were exchanged for foodstuffs, tobacco, cotton, turtle carapaces, hammocks, and Indigenous ornaments made of a gold-copper alloy (*kalikulis*). Iron implements—including nails, knives, needles, hooks, bills,

sickles, hoes, hatchets, saws, and griddles—were in great demand among the Island Carib, as were adornments such as colored glass beads, trinkets, mirrors, and combs. In addition, spirits and, rarely, firearms were traded (Boomert 2002, 2016). All these items were integrated into the Indigenous material repertoire and sometimes within one single object. An example of the latter is an Indigenous vessel inlaid with European seed beads found on an eroded cliff at the Cayoid settlement site of Argyle, Saint Vincent (Allaire 1994; Hofman and Hoogland 2012). Toward the end of the sixteenth century, iron nails and hatchets had in fact become indispensable to the Island Carib for the construction of their canoes, and vessels stranded in the Windwards were invariably stripped of nails for this purpose. The peaceful trade, especially with the nations of northwestern Europe, ended in the 1620s when they established plantation colonies based on the cultivation of tobacco in the Lesser Antilles. The site of La Soye 2 in Dominica is evidence of a very early trading post in which Cayoid pottery occurs in a European context (Hauser et al. 2019).

### Afro-Indigenous or Afro-Caribbean Pottery

#### *Seventeenth to Early Eighteenth Centuries*

Beginning in the 1620s when the first English, French, and Dutch planters settled in the Windward Islands and introduced European earthenware, Indigenous and African intercultural dynamics led to the development of another creole ware, in which Indigenous manufacturing techniques were sometimes combined with African vessel shapes and finishing techniques. The recent development of very detailed analyses of the *chaîne opératoire* according to a homogeneous observation procedure allows better understanding of the similarities and differences between ceramic assemblages from the settlement site of La Poterie on Grenada. At this site the ceramic material was found in the habitation area among a dense palimpsest of postholes. These features belong to a succession of structures dating between AD 600 and 1620, corresponding with Troumassoid, Suazoid, Cayoid, and Afro-Indigenous or Afro-Caribbean



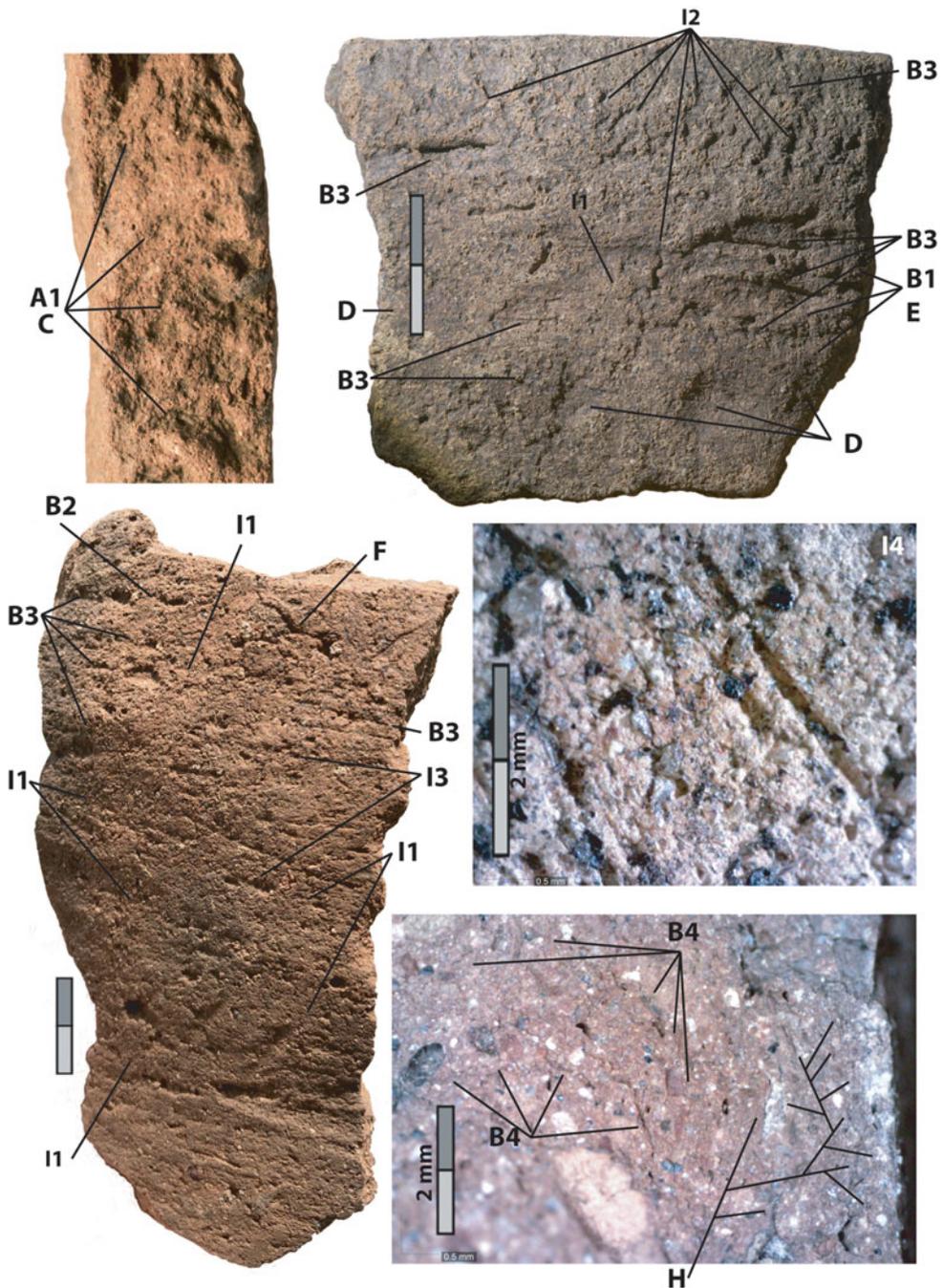
**Figure 4.** Afro-Indigenous pottery from the site of La Poterie, Grenada (figure and photos by Menno L. P. Hoogland). (Color online)

pottery (Hofman et al. 2019; Hofman, Borck, et al. 2021).

The *chaîne opératoire* shows continuity in the Suazoid and Cayoid ceramic manufacturing techniques, the selection of clay sources and temper materials, and use of the coiling technique. However, clear changes are apparent in vessel forms, techniques of decoration, and surface finishing (Figure 4). The most interesting changes between the Cayoid and Afro-Indigenous traditions at La Poterie are probably in shaping, because of the strong identity character of Afro-Indigenous pottery and the distinguishing of social groups through their technical traditions (Roux 2019); in addition, forming techniques appear to be more resistant to change than other traits such as

morphology and decoration (Manem 2020; Roux 2019).

A brief description of an Afro-Indigenous sherd from La Poterie, which only includes a vessel body and neck due to fragmentation, shows this difference from the Indigenous wares discussed earlier. The roughout was obtained from a heterogeneous elementary volume by which coils were made by pinching (Figure 5). The procedure for making coils seems to be a segment procedure with small segments or, in other cases, long segments. The junction between each assembled element is made by a semicircular (U-shaped) joining. Therefore, the coils are superimposed. The preform was obtained on leather-hard paste by shaving the clay using horizontal movements (see Supplemental Text 1 and



**Figure 5.** Afro-Indigenous ceramic tradition: roughing out by coiling technique, by pinching (a1 to f) and preforming on leather-hard paste by shaving (h and i). Diagnostics features: (a1) discontinuity, (b1) rhythmic and horizontal undulations, (b2) over-thicknesses, (b3) horizontal and equidistant fissures, (b4) relic coils on fresh section, (c) U-shape, (d) discontinuous pressures, (e) undulations on both surfaces confirming the absence of support, (f) joint between two ends of coils, (h) laminar fissuring subparallel to the wall visible fresh section, (i1–i6) crevices, compact microtopography with inserted grains, erratic striations and horizontal secant planes (see full descriptions in Supplemental Text 1; photos by Sébastien Manem). (Color online)

Supplemental Figure 1 for diagnostic features and a detailed description). The main difference between the Cayoid and Afro-Indigenous ceramic traditions is currently visible in the preforming techniques (see Hofman, Borck, et al. 2021; Hofman, Hoogland, et al. 2021:Figure 6). The preforming was achieved on wet clay by scraping in Cayoid pottery and on a leather-hard clay in Afro-Indigenous ceramics. These differences in ceramic technical traditions clearly indicate the presence of two social groups in La Poterie, as a result of the migration of a new group. A Suazoid sherd from a midden deposit of the settlement site of Giraudy on Saint Lucia seems to illustrate this diversity of technical traditions and social groups but with a certain proximity to Cayoid and Afro-Indigenous pottery from Grenada (see Supplemental Text 1 and Supplemental Figure 2 for diagnostic features and a detailed description). The roughing out—coiling by pinching—is similar to that of the Afro-Indigenous sherd, and the preforming, by scraping, is also a visible technique in Cayoid sherds of La Poterie. However, there are differences between these three cases. In contrast to the Afro-Indigenous and Cayoid sherds from Grenada, the Saint Lucia coils are not prepared beforehand by a revolving movement. The operating procedures for the junction between each coil are also different for the Saint Lucia sherd, which has a bevel joining. Our forthcoming cross-site analysis will allow us to better understand the similarities and differences among these three cases.

#### *Contemporary Potters at Pointe Caraïbe and Morne Sion, Saint Lucia*

Indigenous–African–European intercultural dynamics are still mirrored in today’s locally produced creole pottery in the Lesser Antilles, such as that of southern Saint Lucia (Pointe Caraïbe, Morne Sion, Delcer, Industrie, and Martin; Fay 2017). Most vessels produced in these villages have French Creole names. The *kanawi* (Fr. *canari*) or cooking pot is the most popular vessel type on the island today. It resembles the Island Carib *canalli* described by the early chroniclers of the seventeenth century. The *kanawi* is a vessel with a simple contour and a handle at opposite ends. The dimensions of this vessel

vary from small to very large and are also associated with the lid *couvèti kanawi* (Fr. *couvercle de canari*). For cooking, these pots are placed on three stones called *fouyé* (Fr. *foyer*). The *tèson* or coal pot is an outward-flaring vessel, sometimes with finger indentations on the rim, and is wider at the top than at the bottom. A perforated base separates the top from the bottom, which has an opening for the placement of fuel. The *chòdyè* (Fr. *chaudière*) is a large, flat-shaped vessel for frying. This flat-shaped pot is placed on top of the coal pot. Then there is the *téyè*, the teapot; the *pòt a flè* (Fr. *pot à fleur*), the flowerpot the *jar* (Fr. *jarre*), a water container the *pla* (Fr. *plat*) to put food on at meals, and the *téwin* (Fr. *terrine*) showing two loop handles, used for washing, cooking food, or to as a water container. Finally, there is the *platin* (Fr. *platine*), a very large plate to bake cassava bread, which is also recognizable from the Indigenous repertoire (Figure 6; see also Hofman and Bright 2004).

The pottery tends to be heavy and coarse. The mineralogical content of the paste is similar to that used in Suazoid and Cayoid pottery. The clay derives from the immediate environs of the potter’s workshop, the place known to hold the best-quality clay. It is used as such or sometimes with temper “*tè blan*” or “*tè roug*” (white or red clay). Coiling and modeling are used, rather than wheel manufacture. Decoration is rare, but the finger-notched or finger-indented patterns on rims are very similar to those on Suazoid ceramics. Firing is done very quickly and in an open fire where the clay pots are piled up and covered with branches, which is also very similar to what is assumed for the firing of Suazoid and Cayoid pottery.

#### **Discussion and Concluding Note**

Today, the Caribbean is celebrated because of its diverse and multicultural societies that have developed over the last five centuries. What created these diverse societies, however, was a painful and difficult process defined as creolization stemming from the European invasion of the Americas after 1492, followed by the colonization, destruction, and neglect of its Indigenous populations and the introduction and exploitation



Figure 6. Afro-Caribbean pottery from Morne Sion, Saint Lucia: (A) coal pot, (B) *pla, pôt a flè*, (C) *chòdyè, couvèti*, (D) Gwan kanawì, (E) *téyè*, (F) Gwan kanawì, (G) Kanawì (photo by Corinne L. Hofman). (Color online)

of enslaved Africans and indentured Europeans as part of the colonial enterprise. These creole societies are regarded as distinct in the way they were created under the dominance of Europeans over diverse peoples, often through violence; yet they were not culturally representative of any of the individual groups but of all of them (Brathwaite 1971; Glissant 1997, 2008; Palmié 2006; Mintz and Price 1976). This process of cultural change was a dynamic one that created societies that were new to the archipelago and differed from each other, as reflected in their overall cultures, with new languages, religious practices, music, rhythms, foods, architecture, dress, and even the people themselves. The Caribbean and its new societies came to represent the multi-loci process of cultural change established on an Indigenous landscape by multiple European colonial enterprises using enslaved Africans yet showing how each contributed to the formation of these distinctive societies.

In this article we highlighted the divergent origins and developmental trajectories in pottery tradition in the Windward islands of the Lesser Antilles from the time before European colonization until today, suggesting that creolization, as proposed earlier by Curet (2011) and Kahn

(2011), forms the central concept through which these processes of cultural interaction can be understood. We argue that the *chaîne opératoire* of pottery manufacture is yet another lens through which creolization can be visualized. It is also essential not to underestimate other processes responsible for the evolutionary trajectories of technical traditions; for example, a *chaîne opératoire* may be modified to produce a new ceramic shape to meet new functional needs of consumers, while other social groups will adopt (or not) the same vessel without modifying their tradition or will do in an even different way. The number of carriers of a technical tradition and thus the size of the transmission network (restricted to a few potters or a large number) will be affected if the social group is mixed with a new one that may or may not be a carrier of another technical tradition. Therefore, our perception of creolization will not be the same from one context to another, and this process will not necessarily affect material culture in a homogeneous way. Thus, creolization may affect only visible traits of the material culture (form or decoration, interaction between consumers), whereas in other cases borrowing processes will modify the technical tradition (interaction between producers).

Suazoid pottery represents an Indigenous tradition of the Lesser Antilles that probably partially carried on into the period after European colonization. Cayoid pottery is a development that started in the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries and continued until the early seventeenth century, reflecting the processes of population movement into the Lesser Antilles and the formation of a new Kalinago/Kalipuna identity. The Afro-Indigenous pottery identified at La Poterie is a first reflection of very early Indigenous–African interaction in the Windward Islands. Finally, present-day Afro-Caribbean pottery clearly has its roots in West Africa but is also the result of a creolization process involving Indigenous, European, and African traditions. The disruption of the Indigenous cultures, the impact of European colonization, the African diaspora, and the movement of indentured laborers from various parts of the globe to the region have led to the emergence of today’s complex cosmopolitan Caribbean cultural tradition. The spheres or lines of social interaction among communities from different parts of the world cemented a regional history marked by differential responses to the colonial incursion in which coexistence, interaction, and transculturation were fundamental in the shaping of modern creole society.

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*Data Availability Statement.* Data are not yet openly accessible.

*Supplemental Materials.* For supplemental text and figures accompanying this article, visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/laq.2021.102>.

Supplemental Text 1. Description of the *chaîne opératoire* of ceramic traditions from Grenada and Saint Lucia.

Supplemental Figure 1. Ceramic *chaîne opératoire* of an Afro-Indigenous or Afro-Caribbean sherd, Grenada.

Supplemental Figure 2. Ceramic *chaîne opératoire* of a Suazoid sherd, Saint Lucia, Giraudy.

## Note

1. The processes of creolization are very complex: as “a cultural process . . . which . . . can itself be divided into two aspects: a/culturation, which proceeds from the coercion (by force and example deriving from power/prestige) of one culture over another (in this case between the Slave/African and the European) and inter/culturation, which is not planned, nor structured, but the osmotic relationship arising from this coercion. The resulting creolization (and it is a process, not a product) becomes the provisional cultural norm of the society” (Brathwaite 1971:6).

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