



Northwestern
University

Testing Hypotheses of Carved Disc Usage: A Comparative Analysis of the Assemblage from Morne Patate, Dominica

Lynsey A. Bates¹, Jillian E. Galle¹,
Khadene Harris², and Mark W. Hauser²

¹Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, Virginia, USA

²Northwestern University, Illinois, USA

IACA July 27th, 2017



COURTESY HIERAKONPOLIS EXPEDITION

Hierakonpolis, Predynastic Egypt
(Geller 2009)



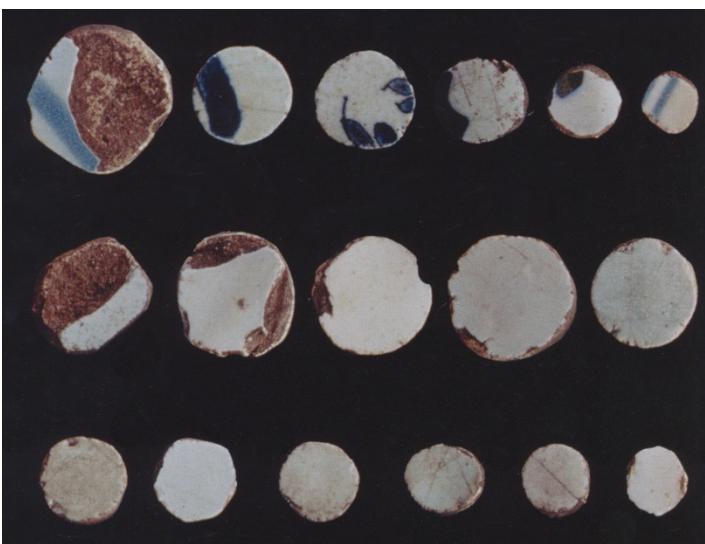
Swift Creek¹



Contact Period Pennsylvania²



1880s Cape Town,
South Africa
(Jordan 2005)



Contact Period Illinois (Walther 2005)

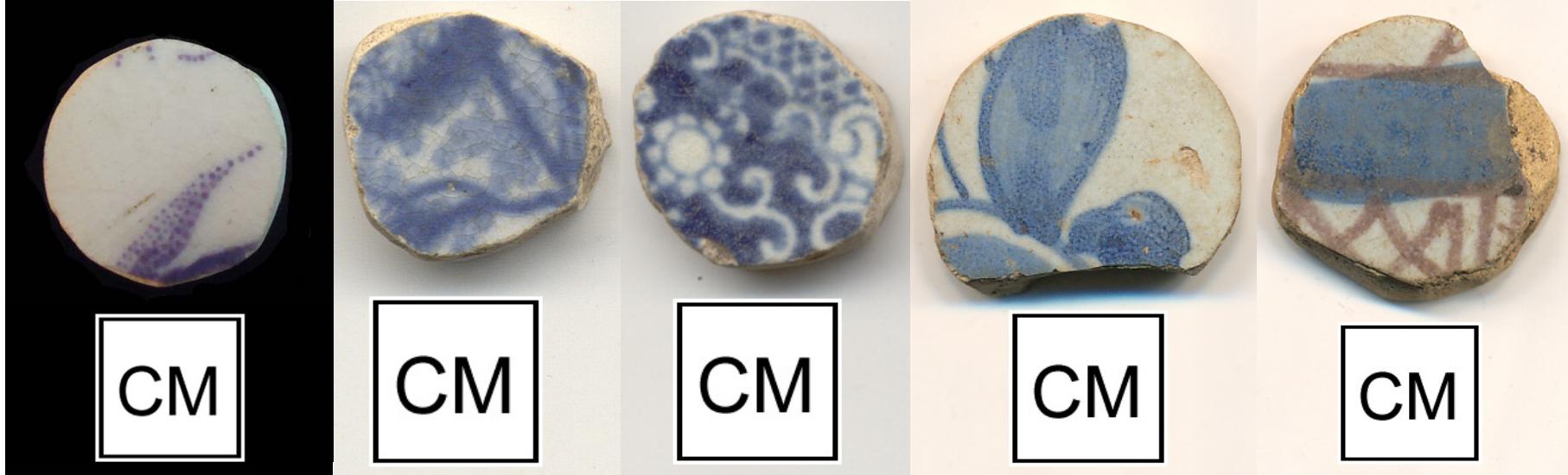


Etowah Mounds¹

¹<https://peachstatearchaeologicalsociety.org/index.php/22-game-stones/145-ceramic-discoidals>

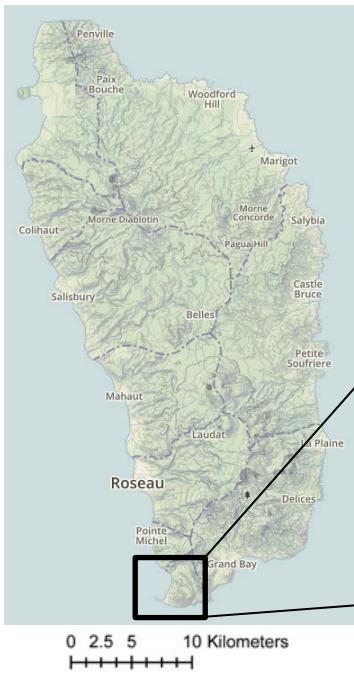
²<http://twipa.blogspot.com/2010/04/ceramic-disks-childrens-play-and-adult.html>

Carved Discs in Archaeological Assemblages



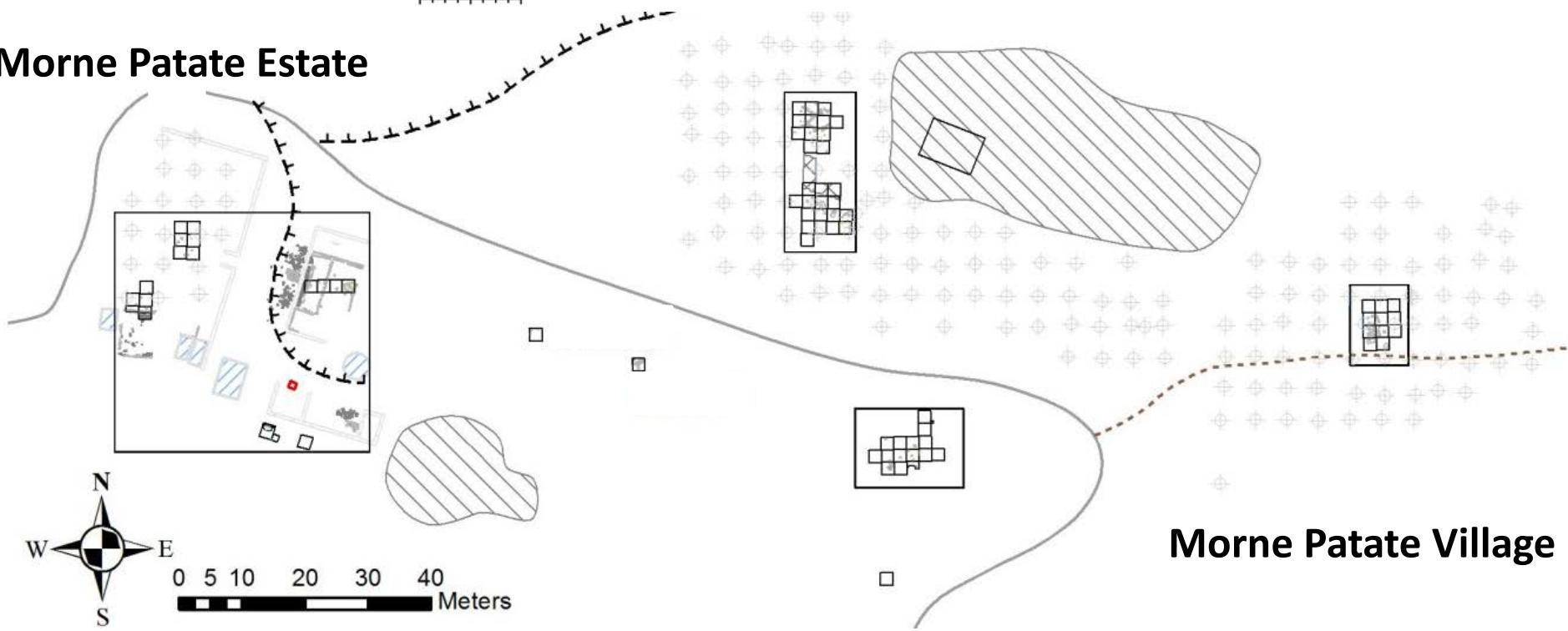
Historic Period ceramic discs from DAACS sites





Morne Patate Site Location

Morne Patate Estate



Sample of Morne Patate Carved Discs



Buttons?



Stamped cu
alloy coat
button



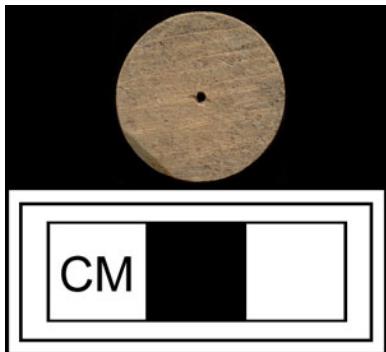
Mother-of-pearl
inlay button



Cu alloy
“Stag”
button



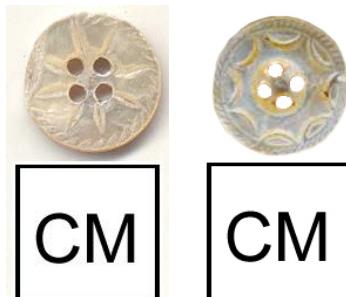
Cow scapula used
for button manufacture



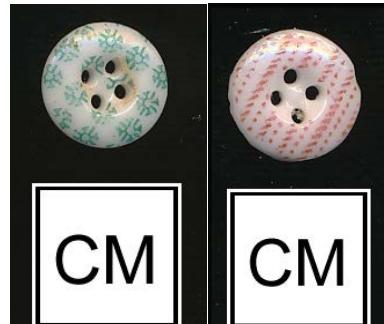
Carved bone
button blank



Faceted
glass button



Carved shell
buttons



Prosser molded porcelain
“Calico” buttons

Counters?



Lead alloy disc tokens or counters
recovered from East Sussex, UK
Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)
FindID: 624232, Old ref: SUSS-9A523E

Gaming Pieces?





Explore. Analyze. Discover.

[Learn More >](#)

Learn more about enslaved Africans and their descendants living in the Chesapeake, Carolinas, and Caribbean during the Colonial and Ante-Bellum Periods. Analyze and compare archaeological assemblages and architectural plans from different sites at unprecedented levels of detail. DAACS is a community resource, conceived and maintained in the Department of Archaeology at Monticello, in collaboration with the research institutions and archaeologists working throughout the Atlantic World.

Featured Galleries

[View All Galleries >](#)

New Street, Port Royal
Examine items recovered during excavations carried out at New Street Tavern in Port Royal, Jamaica.



The South Grove Midden
Explore objects found in the South Grove Midden, a site at George Washington's Mount Vernon.



The Triplex
View personal items recovered from the Triplex site at Andrew Jackson's The Hermitage.



Colonoware
View exceptional examples of colonoware vessels from sites in Virginia and South Carolina.

Archaeological Sites

Browse summaries of archaeological fieldwork for each Archive site. Explore site plans and stratigraphic diagrams.

Query the Database

Query the DAACS database for information on artifacts and their contexts. Download the results for further analysis.

About the Database

Learn more about the DAACS database and how to make the most of your query.

Papers & Manuscripts

Check out recent conference papers and reports that use DAACS data.

About DAACS

Find out more about the goals and organization of the DAACS project.

What's New?

- *Apply for a DAACS Fellowship.*
Deadline: November 1, 2015

- *DAACS receives grant from Mellon Foundation for innovative collaborative project known as The DAACS Research Consortium*

- *The South Carolina Institute for Anthropology and Archaeology and DAACS receive Save America's Treasures Grant*

- *Data from the Pope and Navair*

Artifact Class 1

$$AI = \frac{\text{Artifact Class 1}}{\text{Artifact Class 1} + \text{Artifact Class 2}}$$

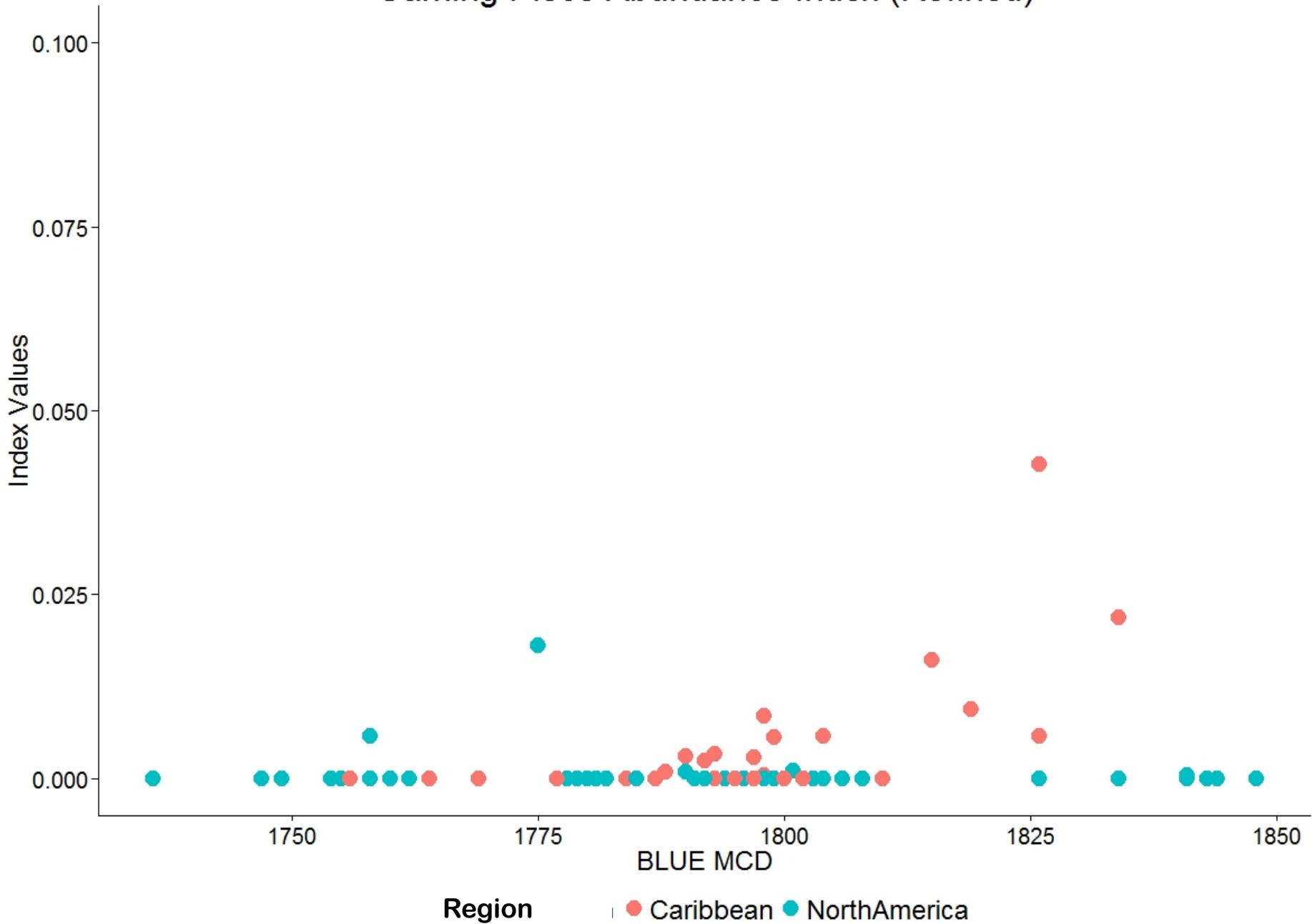
Ceramic Discs

$$AI = \frac{\text{Ceramic Discs}}{\text{Ceramic Discs} + \text{Wine Bottle Sherds}}$$

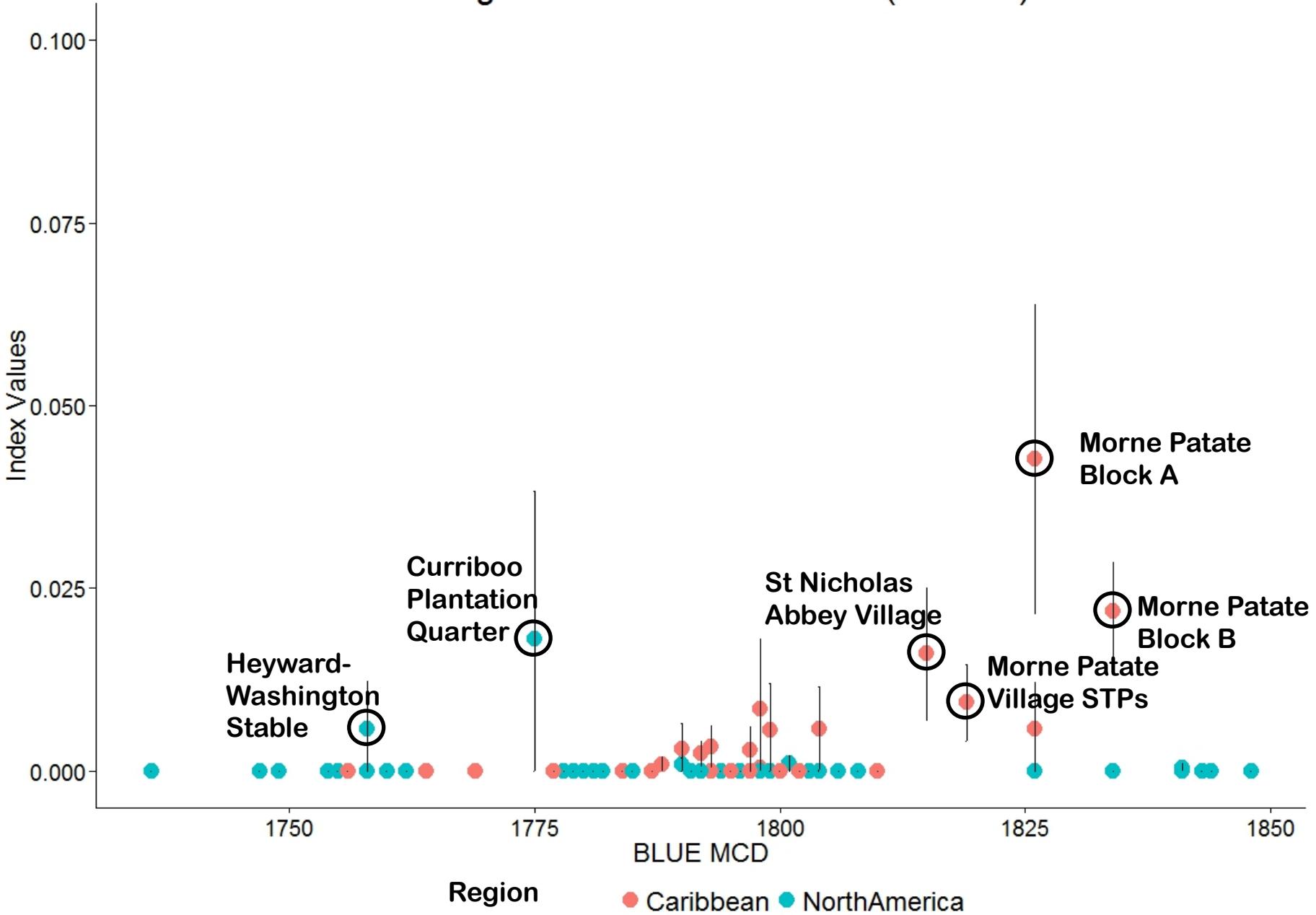
Ceramic Discs

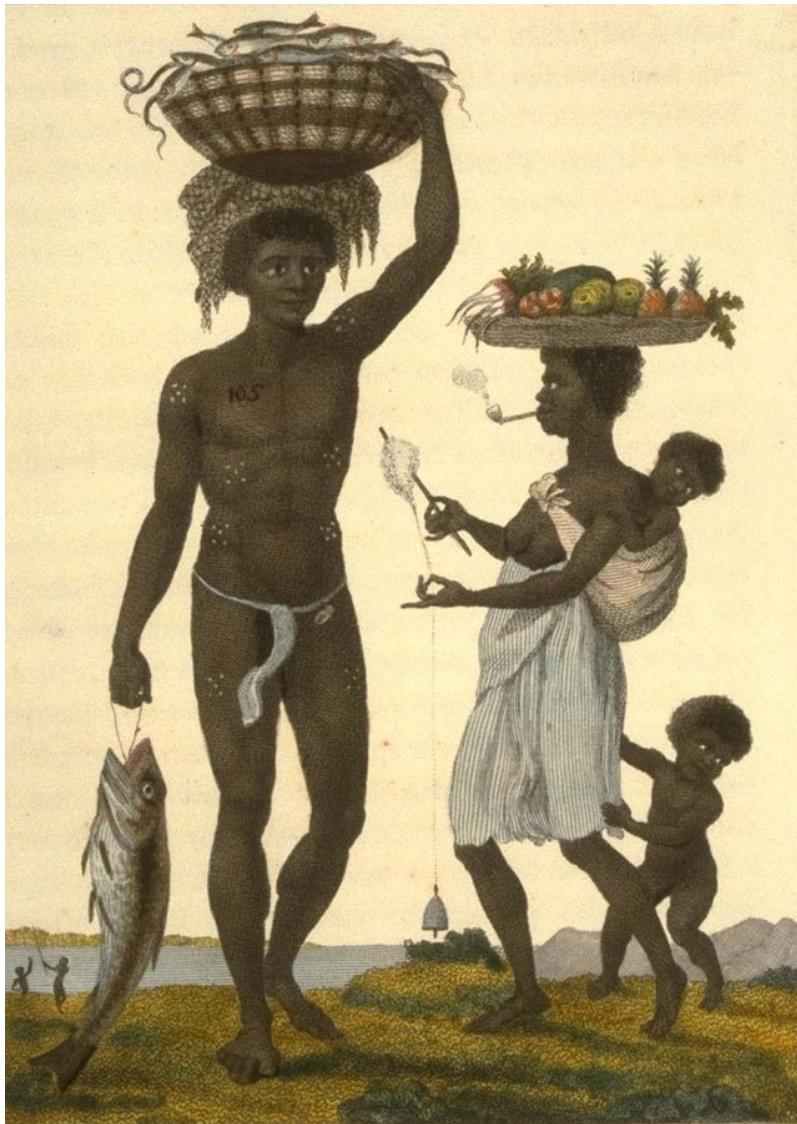
$$AI = \frac{\text{Ceramic Discs}}{\text{Ceramic Discs} + \text{Refined Ceramic Sherds}}$$

Gaming Piece Abundance Index (Refined)

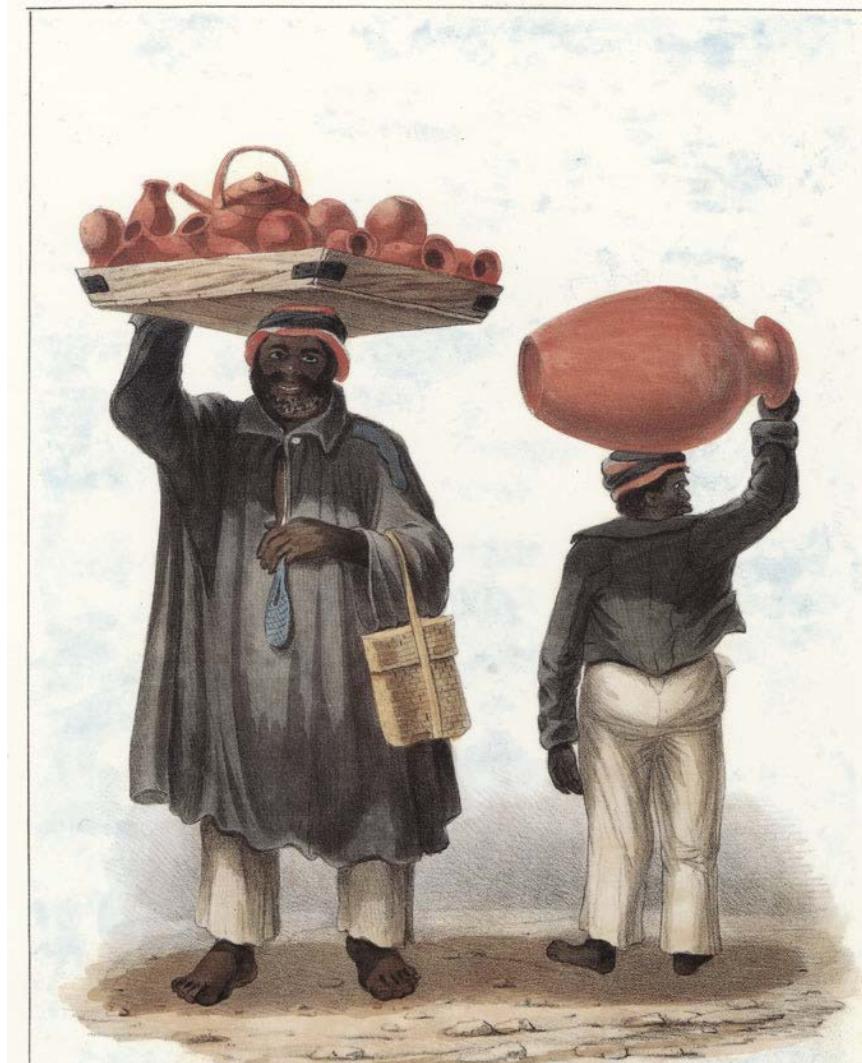


Gaming Piece Abundance Index (Refined)





**Family of Negro Slaves from Loango, c. 1790;
Image Reference NW0134**



**Water-Jar Sellers, Isaac Mendes Belisario 1837-1838
Image Reference Belisario07**

Morne Patate Village Assemblage



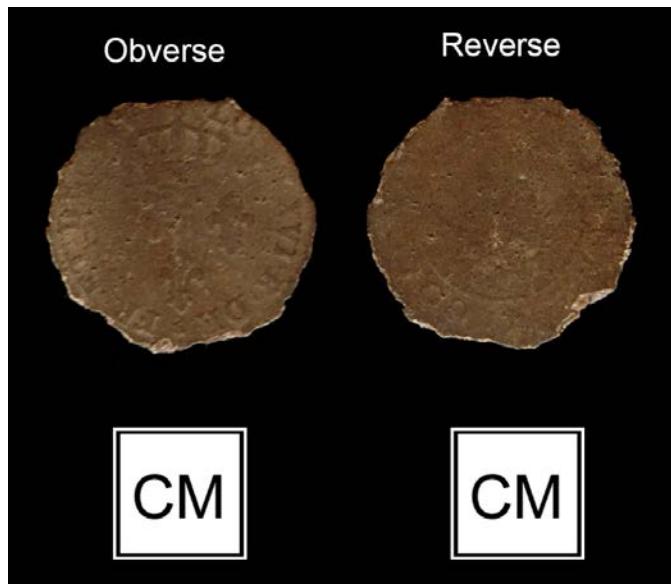
Whiteware transferprinted platter



17 vessel lids from a single context

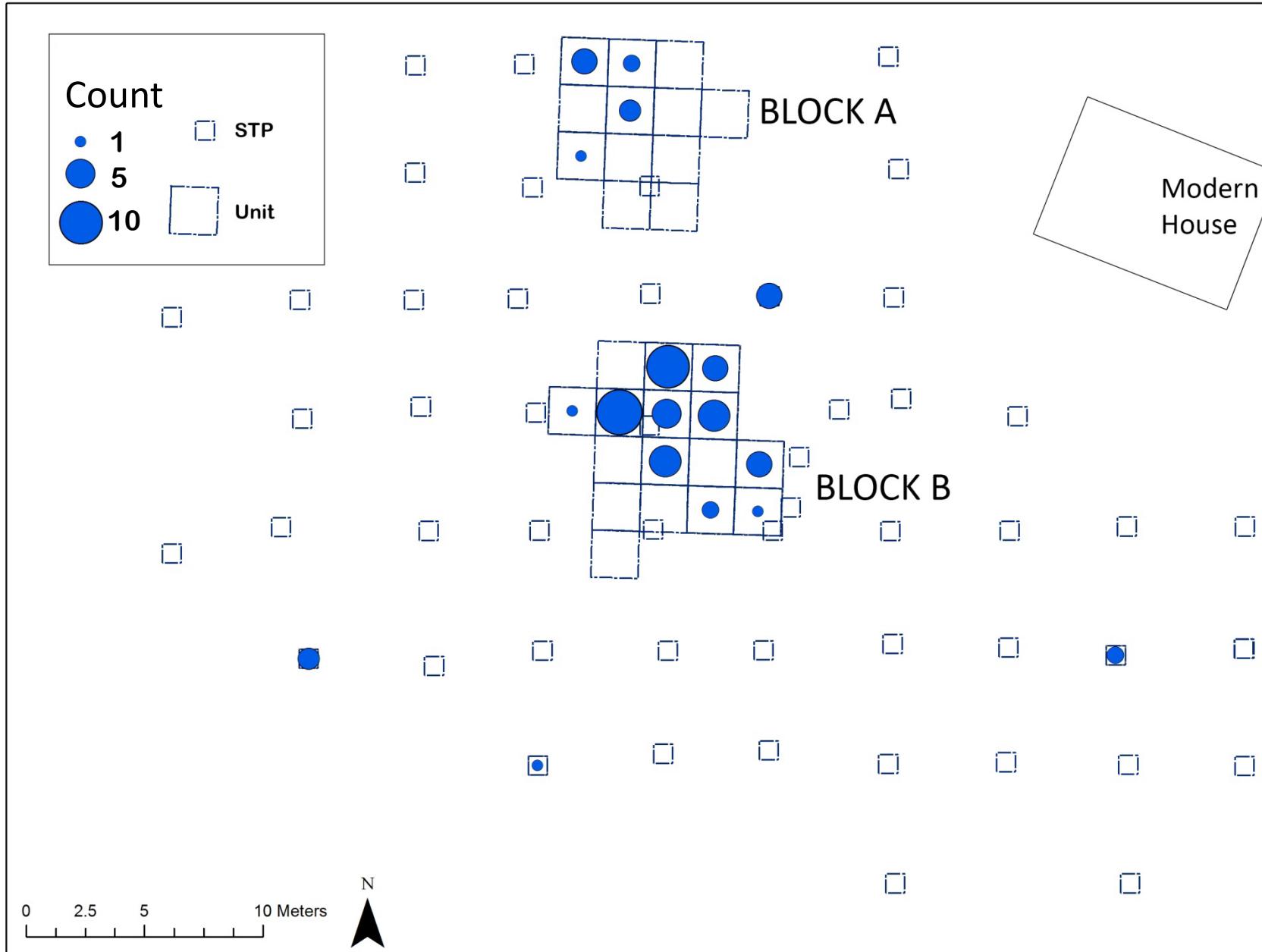


Cu alloy medal with Virgin Mary
and Crucifixion



Colonie de Cayenne coin

Carved Disc Locations at Morne Patate Village



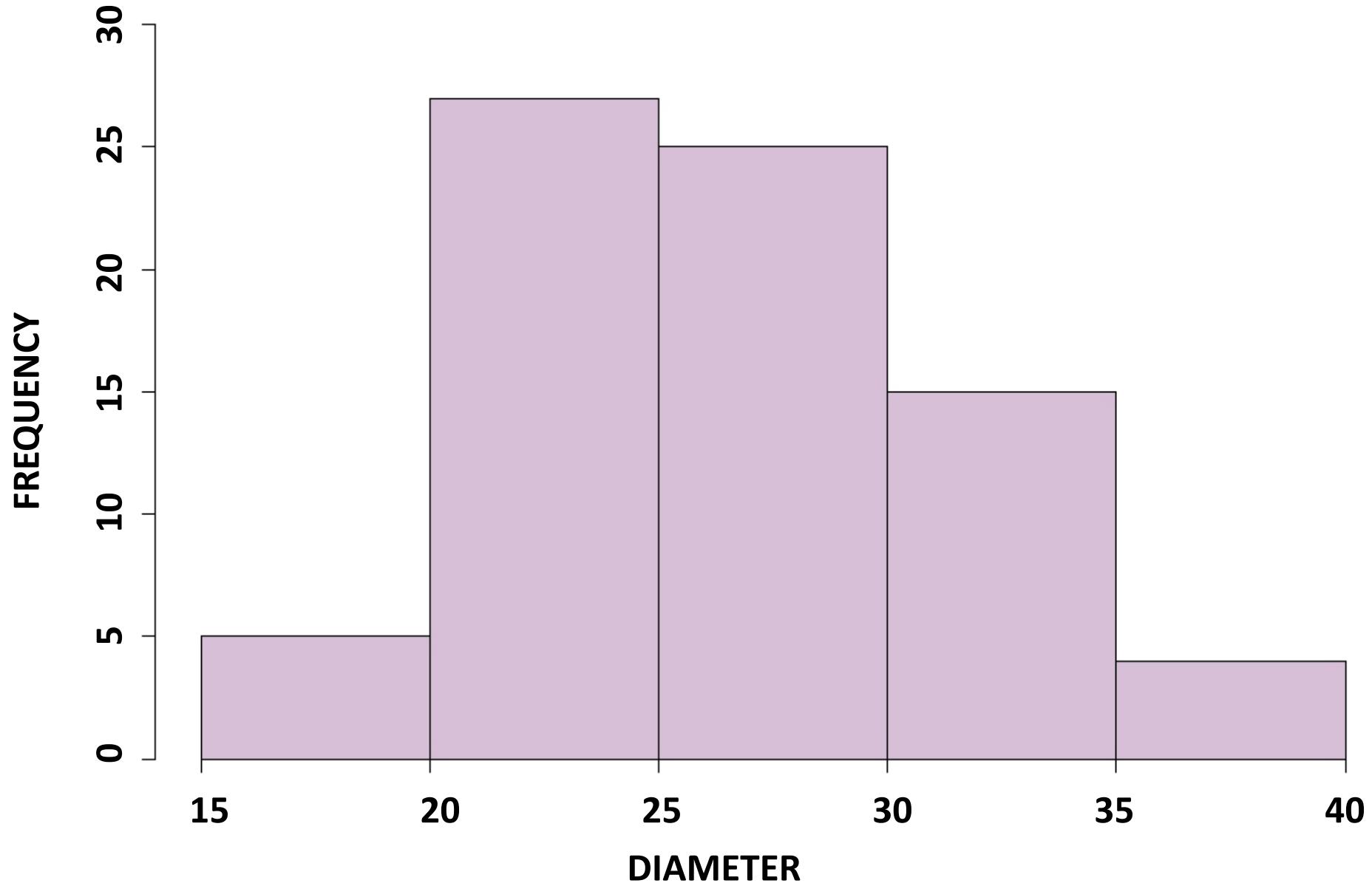
Buttons? Counters? Gaming Pieces?

Disc Attributes

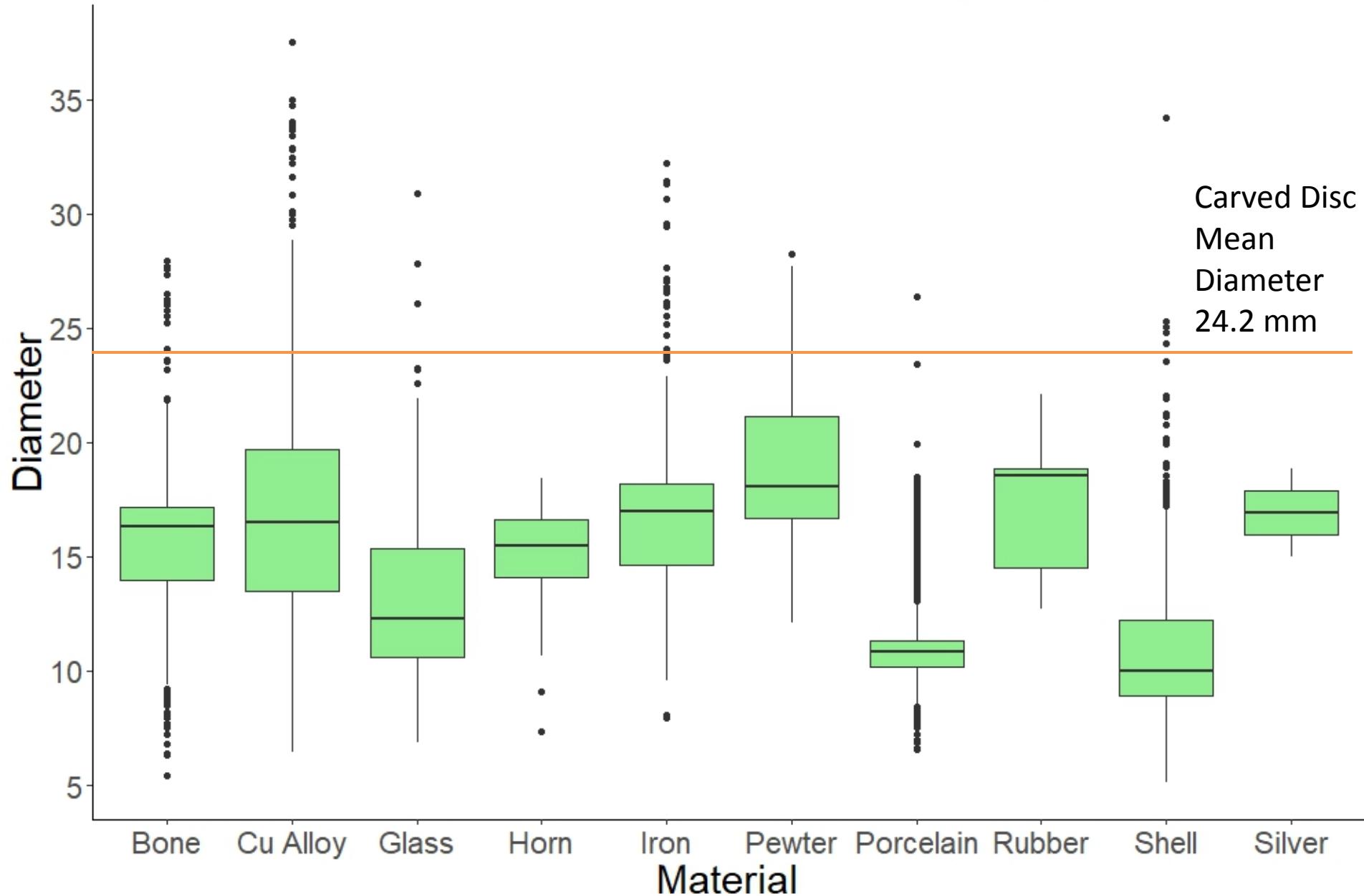
- Size
- Thickness
- Weight
- Form
- Material
- Decoration



Carved Disc Histogram



Box Plot of Button Diameter by Material

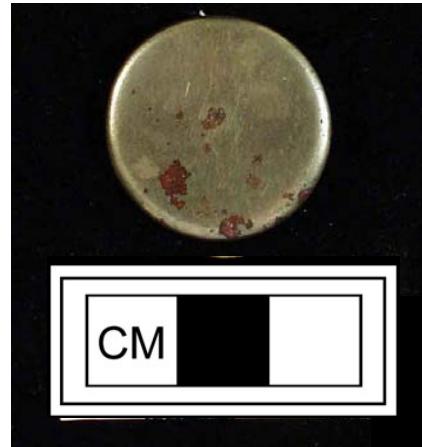


Coat Buttons



1840s men's wool frock coat
with large, fabric-covered
buttons.

MET Costume Institute
Accession Number: C.I.60.22.6

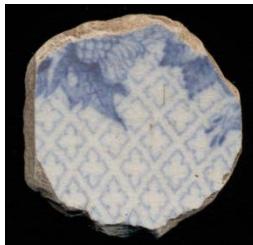


Gilt cu alloy button.
Building I, Monticello
daacs.org



Portrait of Yarrow Mamout, circa
1822, by James Alexander Simpson.
As shown on www.slaveryimages.org,
compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael
Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia
Foundation for the Humanities and the
University of Virginia Library.

Comparison of Mean Measurement Values



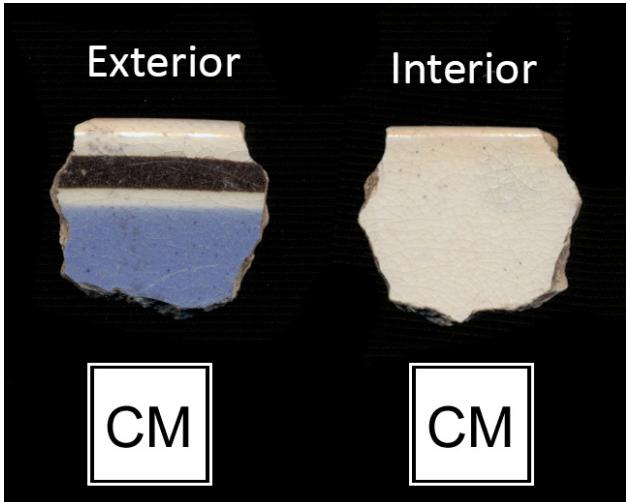
	Morne Patate Carved Discs (n=76)	Buttons in DAACS (n=4580)	Button Blanks in DAACS (n=247)
Diameter	24.2 mm	14.7 mm	14.2 mm
Thickness	4.69 mm	2.63 mm	1.61 mm
Weight	2.5 grams	1.2 grams	0.36 grams

Maximum Diameter of Morne Patate Carved Discs



Form Attributes of Morne Patate Carved Discs

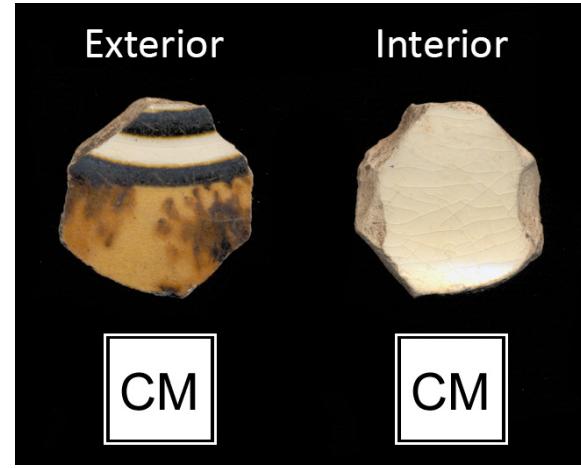
“Body, rim” Disc Example



“Base, body” Disc Example



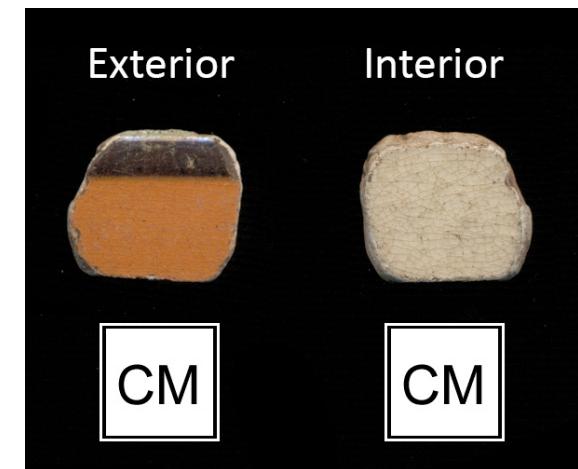
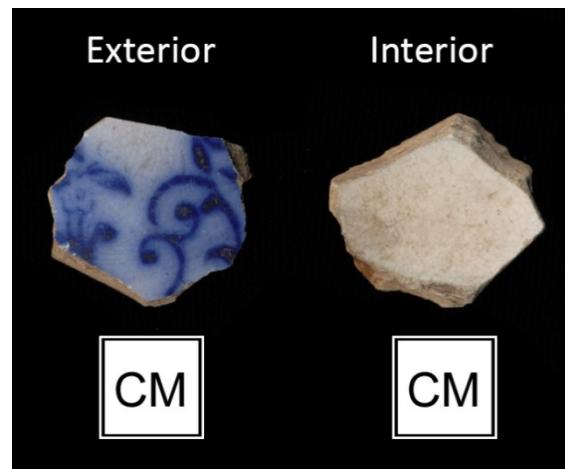
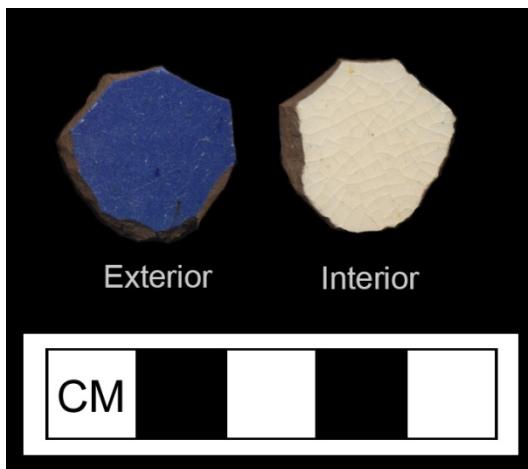
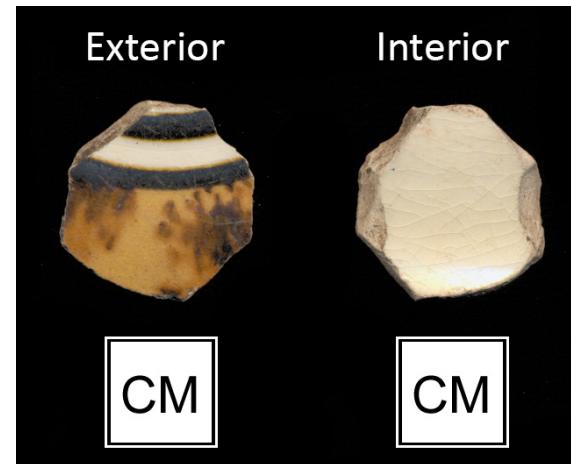
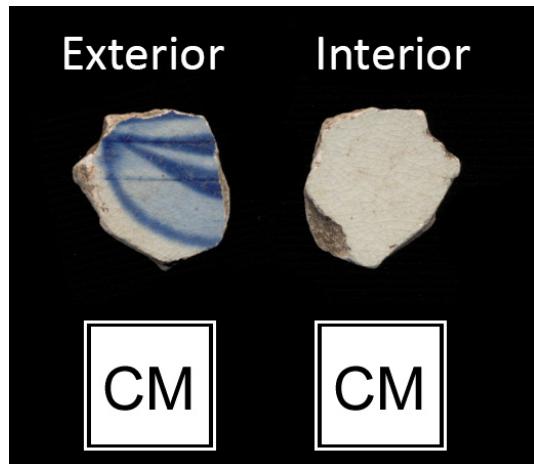
Lid Fragment Disc Example



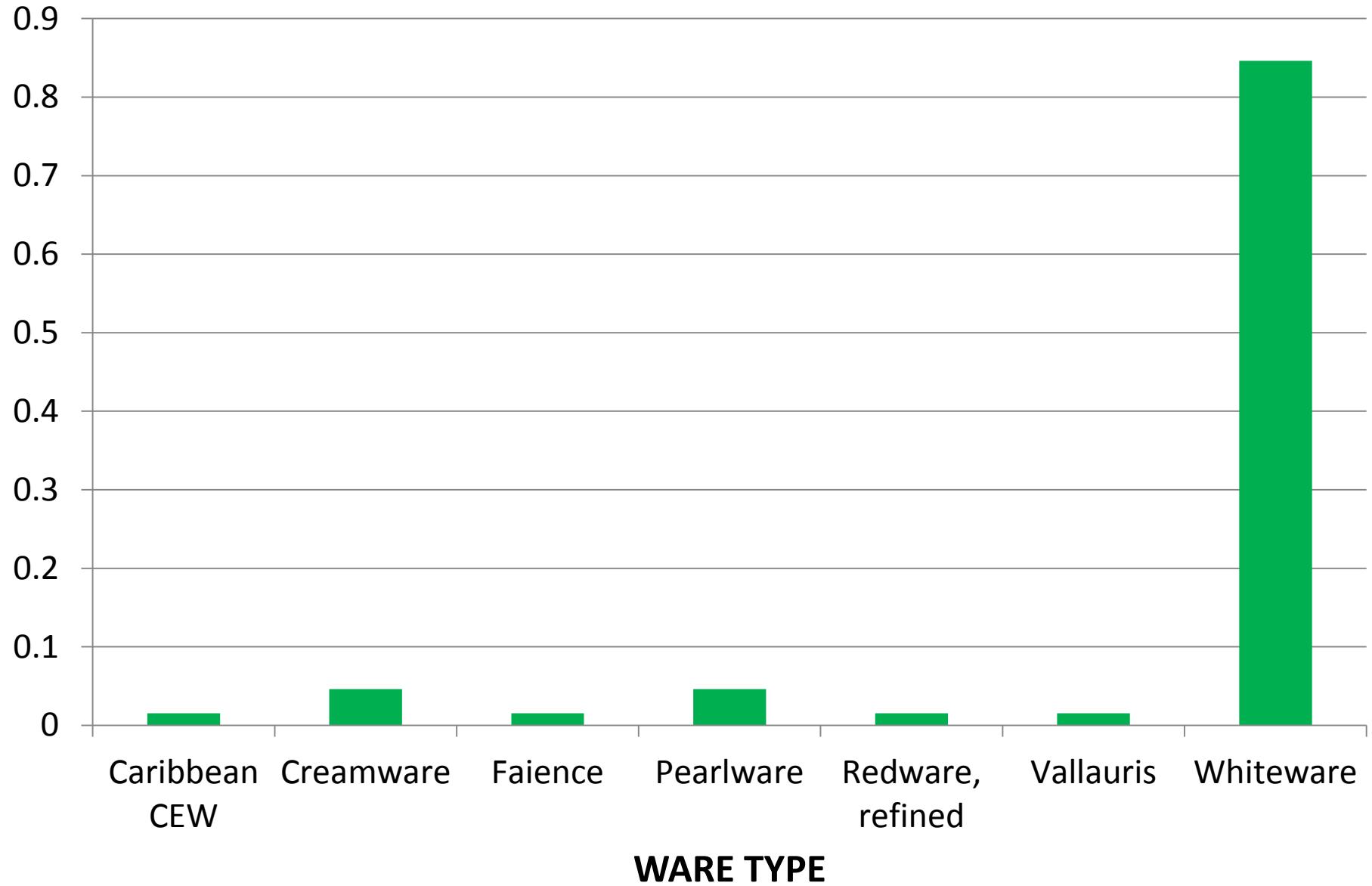
Discs made from

- Hollow vessels = 27
- Flat vessels = 27
- Unidentified category = 22

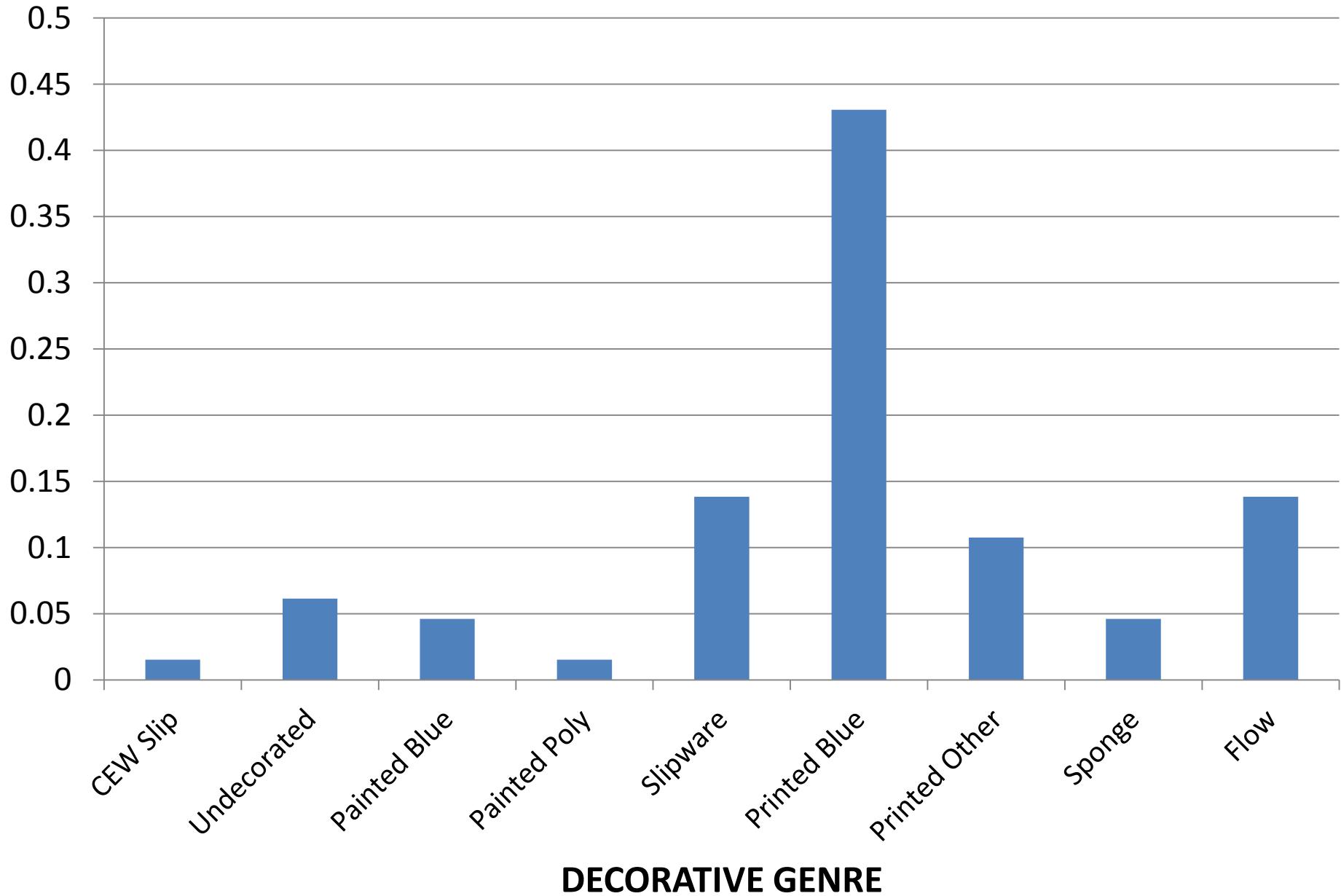
Sample of Carved Discs from Hollow Vessels at Morne Patate Village



Percent Ware Type of Morne Patate Carved Discs



Percent Decoration for Morne Patate Carved Discs



Multiple Discs from Similar Vessels



CM

Selection for Specific Stylistic Elements?

Leaves



CM



Willow Trees



CM



Pyramid-shape



CM

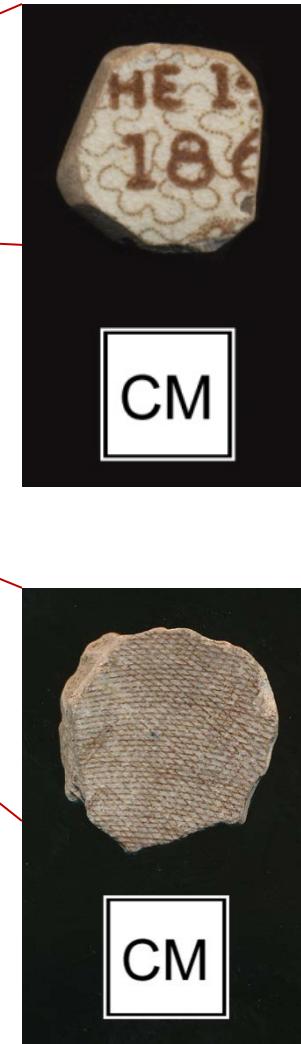


CM



Prince Albert Commemorative Plate c. 1862

Morne Patate Block B



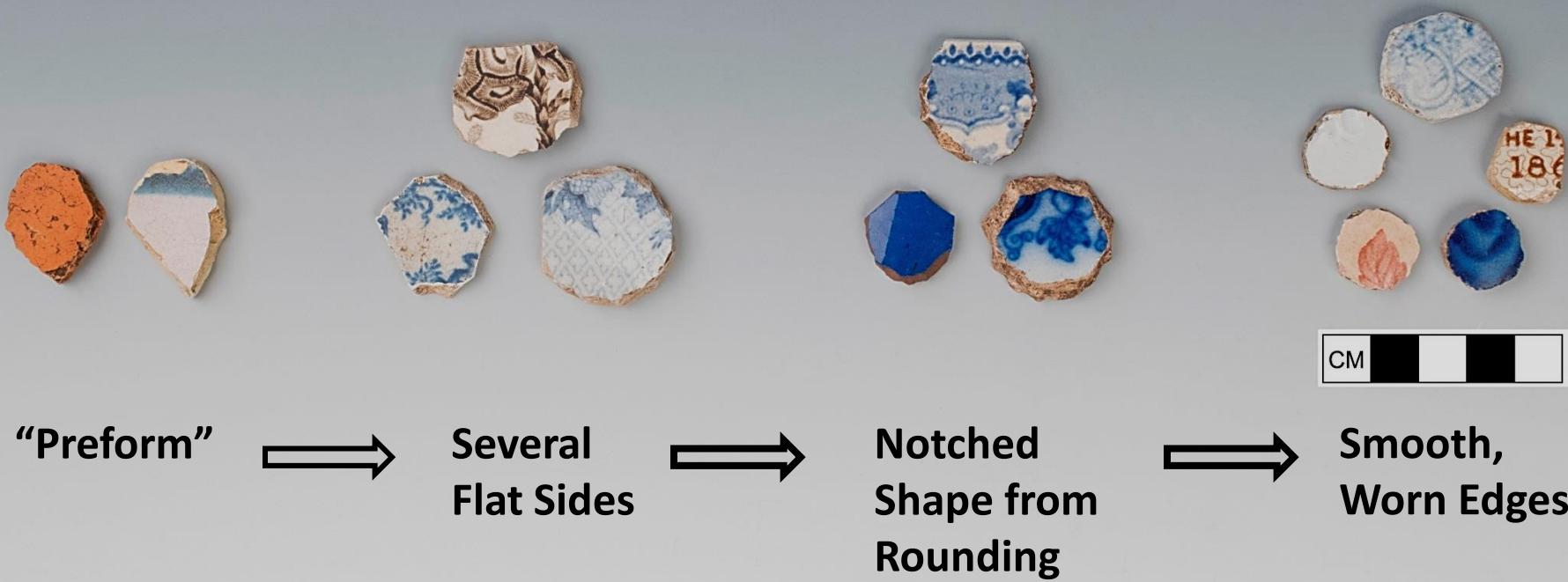
Side 1:
Decorated



Side 2:
Undecorated



Manufacturing Evidence of Carved Discs

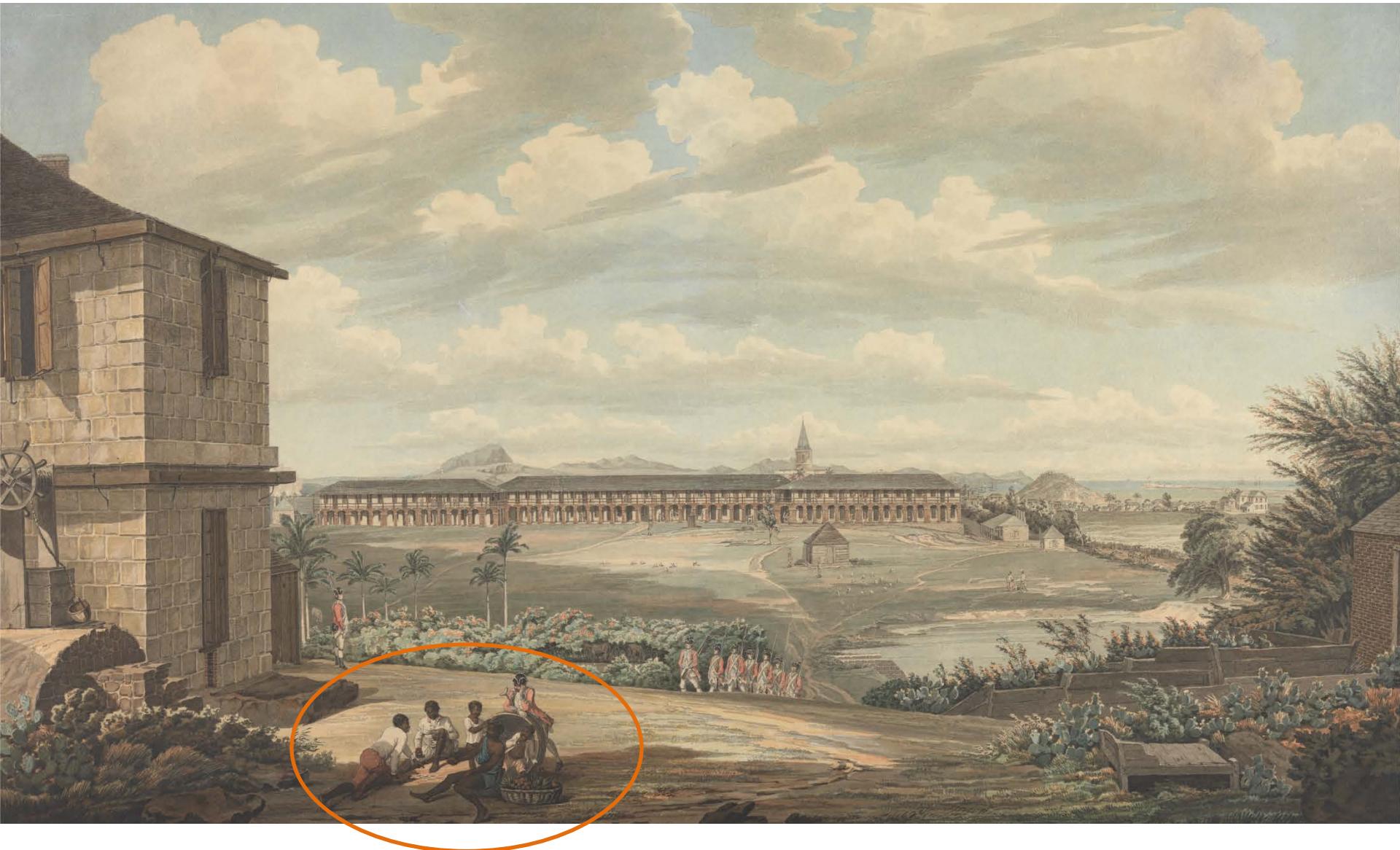


Jonathan Troupe August 1789, Dominica

“The New Negroes sometimes fall to play they have a Board wt No. of hollows in it & they pass from one hole to another a No. of small peebles so quick & they are so successful some of them that it surprises passengers to see them but they cant [...] & it is done so quickly that one cant understand it—**They will take pieces of bottles & stone ware & toss them up after they have rapidly mixt them from hand to hand & in this way gain plantanes”**

Quotation courtesy of Mark W. Hauser,
Northwestern University

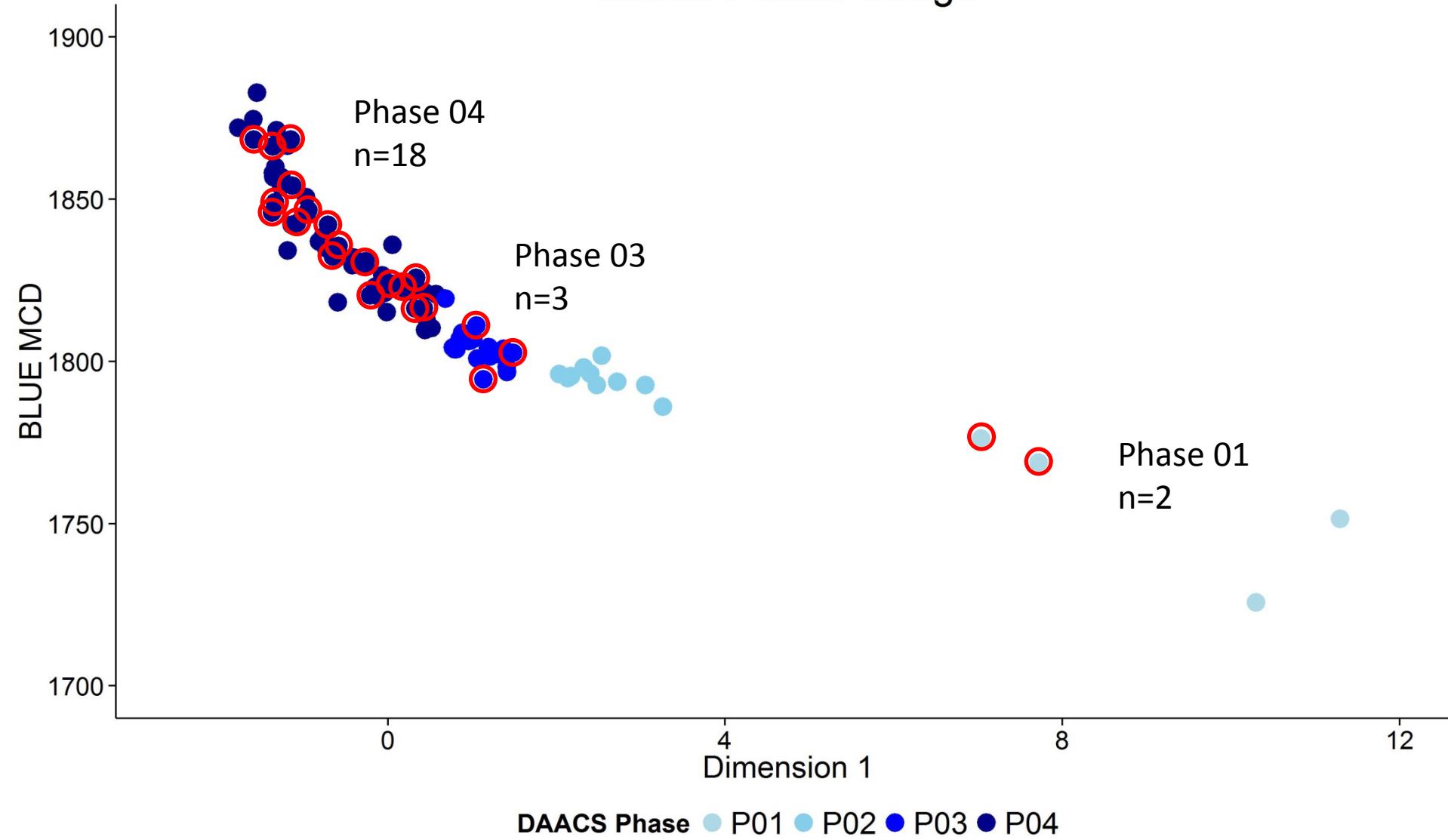
Thomas Hearne, 1775. A View On the Island of Antigua: The English Barracks and Saint John's Church Seen From the Hospital. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



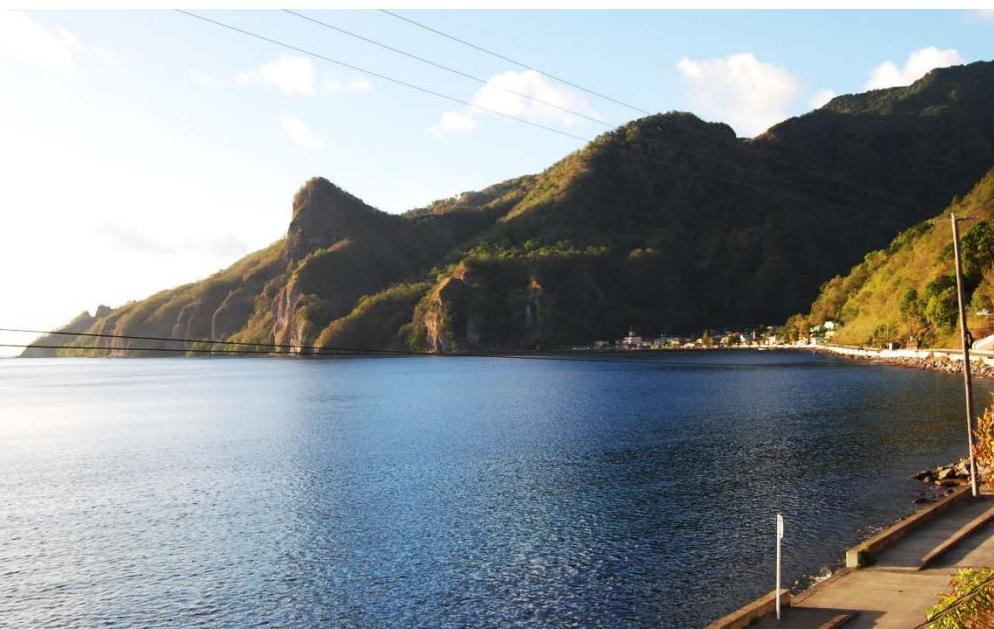
Thomas Hearne, 1775. A View On the Island of Antigua: The English Barracks and Saint John's Church Seen From the Hospital. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



Morne Patate Village







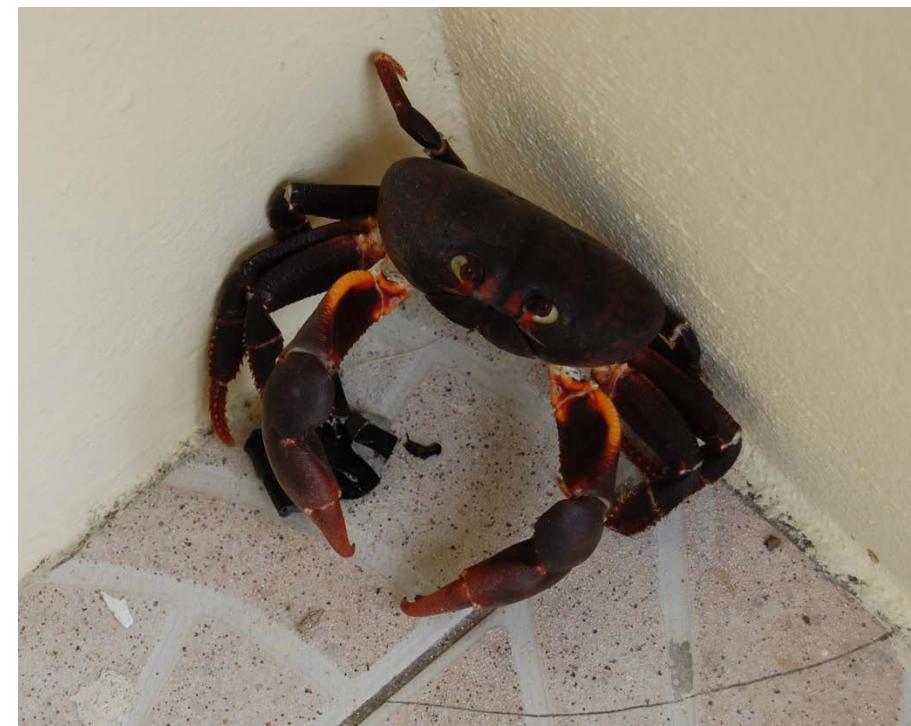
Dominican crew: Isaac, Greg, Khadene, Lauren, Togo, Dean, Edward, Dianne, Sarah, Dorival, Sandy, Alan, Tessa, Amanda, Dora, Carrim, Quincy, Sylvia, Paul, Danny, Kelly, Naphtalie, Samantha, Mitchell, Christopher, David, Kirsha, Michael, Bradley

Heyward-Washington data courtesy of the Charleston Museum and Sarah Platt

Thank you!

Jessica MacLean, Lindsay Bloch, Fraser Neiman, Leslie Cooper, Elizabeth Bollwerk, Simon and Wendy Walsh

Morne Patate Gaming Piece
Images by Katelyn Coughlan
(Monticello Archaeology)



Provision Grounds (Jamaican Estates)



Plat images courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Carved Disc Locations at Morne Patate

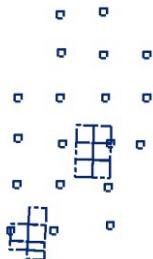
Count

- 1
- 5
- 10

◦ STP

□ Units

Stable and
Block E



n=1

Kitchen

0 12.5 25 50 Meters



n=75

Village

Block A

Block B

Block C

Block D