University of California, Merced

Cave Vodou in Haiti:
The Use of Caves as Sacred Space in Modern Haitian Ritual

Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

World Cultures

by

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DEDICATION

To my wife Marieka, without whom none of this would have been possible,
and
to the people of Haiti, who welcomed a *blan* with open arms and hearts.

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ABSTRACT

Cave Vodou in Haiti:
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by
Patrick Wilkinson

Doctor of Philosophy in World Cultures
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Professor Linda-Anne Rebhun, Chair

Haitian Vodou is a syncretic religion that combines elements of West African beliefs and indigenous Taíno culture with a rigid framework of forced Catholicism. Western cultures have always been fascinated by, yet fearful of, Vodou and commonly depict it as devil-worship and witchcraft. It is in large part due to this pervasive view of Vodou in Haiti, as well as the challenging conditions that come with working in Haiti, that little academic interest has been paid to the nuances of the modern practice of Vodou, particularly the use of caves. In this dissertation, I incorporate ethnographic and archaeological methods to present the first comprehensive study of how modern Vodou practitioners across Haiti have incorporated caves into their syncretic ritual repertoire.

Through interviews, observation, participation, and an assessment of the ephemeral material remains left behind by Vodou practitioners, I describe what forms and purposes these rituals take, determine which parts of caves are associated with different aspects of Vodou, and compare the demographics of cave practitioners to those of Vodou practitioners in general. I argue that while Vodou, as it is practiced in public and at home, follows the definitions of religion, the aspects of Vodou as it is practiced in caves are more in line with definitions of magic, and I propose three reasons for this.

This research has two purposes. First, it is an ethno-archaeological study intended to fill in gaps in the academic body of work regarding Vodou in Haiti where cave usage has been ignored. As ethnography, it has the potential to inform not just academics, but a broader audience, and to correct misconceptions regarding Vodou in particular and Haiti in general. Second, this project may be of use to archaeologists, particularly those who work in caves or other ritual spaces, whose data may be influenced by the activities of past caretakers. Every cave that in this study had some form of active caretaker and the model of caretaker presented in this study may be of use in interpreting archaeological sites that share a similar economic and social structure to modern Haiti.

FOREWORD

My first exposure to both the Haitian people and to Vodou was in October of 1994, when I was sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as a consultant to teach at a police academy set up in the Haitian refugee camp by the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), part of the U.S. Justice Department. The academy was training refugees in the camps who had volunteered to be members of the Interim Public Security Force (IPSF), an organization that was supposed to help secure and protect the people of Haiti after Raoul Cedras was removed from office by the U.S. military. While the project was a failure, I found the Haitian people to be warm and friendly. I developed a life-long fascination with both the people and culture that made me aware not everyone in the world thought the way I did, and has led me, 24 years later, to write my dissertation on Haiti.

But in 1994 I was uneducated, untraveled, and the most exotic culture I had been exposed to was during my 18 months stationed in Germany while in the U.S. Army. This had led me to believe that world-wide, barring small differences like language, menus, or skin color, we were all basically the same, saw the world the same, and had similar experiences, beliefs, expectations, and values. The time I spent in Guantanamo opened my eyes to a world much more varied, exciting, and exotic than any I could have imagined.

The academy that had been set up for the Haitians required approximately 40 hours of training, compared to the 500-hour academy I had attended as a California police officer. The training was a bit compressed, focused on issues of civil rights, excessive force, and responsibility, and classes took place inside several green canvas tents set up on the derelict runway beneath the old control tower, affectionately known on base as the Pink Palace. I was teaching a course on arrest techniques which emphasized not using excessive force and the responsibility an officer has for the safety of his arrestees, a concept that was new to the Haitian students. The courses were taught with the assistance of a Haitian interpreter, and my interpreter that day had been a lawyer in Haiti before emigrating to the United States. At the end of the class, hands were raised for questions as usual, and one student asked his question in Kreyol. I saw the rest of the class nodding as if to say, “good question”. I turned to my interpreter, who was desperately trying not to laugh, and he translated “what do you do if you arrest someone, and on the way to jail, they turn into a goat?”

I asked him to repeat it, asked if he was serious, and then asked if the student was serious. The interpreter was enjoying my consternation, but explained that yes, it was a serious question, and yes, the entire class wanted to know what to do. Through the interpreter I stated my ethnocentrically American opinion that it was impossible for a man to turn into a goat. At this point it had not really sunk into my brain that the students before me believed it possible for a man to turn into a goat, but I was sure I could clear this up quickly.

As the interpreter translated my statement, the entire class erupted in protest to my ignorance. Statements such as “you don’t know Haiti” and “it happens all the time” were being thrown at me, but I was finally able to calm the class to continue. I asked the class “who actually believes a man can turn into a goat” and to my surprise, 30 hands shot into

the air, indicating everyone there believed. Ah, I thought, I will use logic, so I asked, "How many of you have ever seen a man turn into a goat?" and 15 hands shot into the air. At this point I was defeated, and with the original question still unanswered, I replied "take the goat to jail."

As humorous as that may seem, it is not all that unusual. Since 1994 I have, about every 2 years, read articles from around the world detailing how criminals have transformed themselves into goats, and the goats have been arrested and taken to jail to await there transformation back to human form. This is really not all that different from the midnight conversations I would have with a police officer friend on the graveyard shift where he explained to me that Adam and Eve were real, dinosaurs never existed, and evolution is a lie. I have always considered myself an agnostic (I don't like to pick sides) but to learn in this way that my world view, my reality, was not the only one, was not even the most common one, and had no more claim to being the "right one" that any other view changed the way I saw the world.

And so, a few days later while teaching a class on jail operations, when the question and answer portion of the class came, a portion I had come to dread by the way, I steeled myself to face the questions. The first question was fairly harmless. "What do you do if a prisoner escapes?" It was a question that I felt qualified to answer, and so I replied (a bit flippantly, I must admit) "If a prisoner escaped from my jail, I would hunt him down, arrest him, and throw him back in jail." A simple and safe answer I thought, although I think the language used may have been a bit more colorful. The students all nodded as if to say, "good answer" and began writing furiously in their notebooks.
The Haitian students I taught were the most respectful and attentive students I have ever seen, and every word spoken by the instructors in the program was written down as if each were a grain of gold to be treasured. When they were done writing, a different student raised their hand and asked, "What do you do if they escape again?" To be honest, I thought I had answered the hell out of that question already but maybe I wasn't clear the first time, so I responded, "If a prisoner escaped from my jail… again, I would hunt him down…again, arrest him…again, and throw him back in jail…again." It had seemed much wiser and more astute the first time.

After the mandatory pause for writing my now repetitive answers, a third student raised their hand. "What do you do if they escape again?" Alright, time to start over. I explained that I had not given them the complete answer before and apologized. Yes, I would hunt them down. Yes, I would arrest them, and yes, I would throw them back into my apparently permeable jail, but I would also determine how they had escaped to make sure it could never happen again. Then I asked, "How did he escape?"

After some consultation among themselves, the students told me that a Vodou *bokor* (a "sorcerer" who practices both beneficial and harmful Vodou, or "Vodou with both hands") could cut open the straw mattress inside his cell and remove a piece of the string used to tie the straw together. By tying that string around his big toe of his left foot, he would become invisible and could then walk out of the jail unseen.
There seemed to be a general consensus among the students that this was the correct method, so I responded (rather patronizingly, I now painfully realize) that turning invisible is impossible and tying a piece of string around your toe will not make you

disappear. However, if that became an issue in my jail, I would eliminate the straw mattresses in the jail and replace them with foam rubber.

The response was overwhelming. I was held in awe by the students, who after that began to approach me for advice on all things spiritual. My popularity began to undermine the status of the real spiritual leaders within the camp, and I was eventually asked to refrain from giving advice (which I gladly did) except in areas related to law enforcement.

But the damage was done, the seed was planted, or any other metaphor you chose. I knew then that there were people out there who did not see the world the same way I do. Their reality was markedly different than my own, and to expect them to respond to situations the same way I would was foolish of me. My fascination with Haiti and Vodou began there in Guantanamo Bay, among the refugee tents on the old navy runway beneath the Pink Palace.

I would like to take this opportunity to make clear that I am not a Vodou believer. That is the question I am asked most often, both by Haitian believers and American skeptics, and I am always careful to reply respectfully and truthfully. I would also add that I wish I was a believer. The world would be a much more interesting place if I were.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

On Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at just before 5:00 PM local time a catastrophic 7.0 magnitude earthquake ravaged the nation of Haiti in the Caribbean. The earthquake's epicenter was near the town of Léogâne, 16 miles to the west of the capital city of Port-au-Prince, the largest city in the country (Schuller 2010, 227). As a direct and immediate result of this earthquake 316,000 people died, another 300,000 were injured, and over 1 million people were left homeless (Farmer 2011, 6,198). To put those numbers in perspective, the number killed during the earthquake is roughly three times that of the number of combatants and civilians from both sides killed in the five preceding years in Iraq, according to the Associated Press (2009), Iraq Body Count Staff (2010a; 2010b).

Pat Robertson, a U.S. televangelist, host of the 700 Club and chairman of the Christian Broadcasting Network responded to the death and suffering in Haiti by announcing that the earthquake was punishment from god because the Haitians had made "a pact with the devil" during their revolution, selling the soul of Haiti in exchange for victory over the French Forces of "Napoleon the Third" (Associated Press 2010). To Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and others, the "norm" in the United States of America has historically been that of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, or WASP, and all others have been grudgingly accepted or marginalized when possible. Haitians are predominantly Catholic, but along with Catholicism they practice Vodou, an African based religion that has become a fusion of African, Taíno, and Catholic beliefs (Fernández-Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert 2003, 216; Métraux 1972, 35).

While the U.S. claims to embrace the concept of religious tolerance and acceptance, and while the search for religious freedom is the purported cornerstone of our national origin myths, the fact is that in general the U.S. is not tolerant or accepting of any religion that is not protestant Christian. The U.S. and other western cultures have always been fascinated yet fearful of Vodou and have depicted it as devil-worship and witchcraft, a depiction which followed Haitian Vodou to New Orleans and the more familiar Voodoo of that city, without really understanding what it is. It is in large part due to this pervasive view of Vodou in Haiti, as well as the challenging conditions that come with working in Haiti, that little academic interest has been paid to the nuances of the modern practice of Vodou. A testament to this oversight is that, following a trip to Haiti to gather data for an earlier research topic, I witnessed Vodou ceremonies taking place in caves across the North of Haiti. Curious about this practice, I was dismayed to find that the entirety of literature on cave practices in Vodou consisted of only five pages in one 50-year-old book (Métraux 1972, 226-233).

Having spent years prior to this research studying the pre-Columbian Maya and other Mesoamerican cultures through archaeology and being very familiar with how central caves were and continue to be for these nearby cultures, I decided to switch my research focus to exploring these practices. In this dissertation, I present the first comprehensive study how modern Vodou practitioners in northern Haiti have incorporated caves into their syncretic ritual repertoire. I argue that while Vodou as it is generally practiced in Haiti – in honfours (public buildings for Vodou ceremonies and

practices), at home, and through public ceremonies, pilgrimages, and festivals – is practiced as a religion, what the aspects of Vodou that are happening in the caves are more magic following Malinowski's definitions of religion and magic (Malinowski 1948:67-70). I propose three reasons why practitioners of Vodou incorporate caves practices into the more standard Vodou practices.

The first reason that people incorporate cave practices into their ritual repertoire is that these practices are forms of magic performed with a specific and immediate goal in mind – that of connecting with the *lwa*[1], the spirits of Vodou, and effecting an immediate response to a specific request (Malinowski 1948, 67-70). This could be a manifestation of a new Haitian cave cult that meets "the need that the faithful feel periodically to tighten and strengthen the bond between them and the sacred beings on which they depend" (Durkheim 1995, 60). Since the same spirits are being worshiped in both the honfours and the caves, the trips to the caves could represent reoccurring attempts to reconnect with the lwa or to demonstrate to the lwa that personal sacrifice has been made and thereby demonstrate their personal commitment to the lwa, in much the same way as pilgrimages are made (Pechilis 1992, 73). This is also constant with Frazer's description of religion as "man's surrender to nature" and magic as "his attempt to manipulate it" (Skrydstrup 2006,132). John Middleton wrote that:

> …the realm of magic is that in which human beings believe that they may directly affect nature and each other, for good or for ill, by their own efforts (even through the precise mechanism may not be understood by them), as distinct from appealing to divine powers by sacrifice or prayer. (Middleton 1967, ix)

This could be exemplified by the Bizango secret society cult that reappeared in Port-au-Prince in the 1970s and is reflected in the grotesque dolls sold in the Iron Market and that were recently the subject of an exhibit at the Field Museum (Beauvoir-Dominique 1995, 156).

A second reason that people incorporate cave practices into standard Vodou is that cave Vodou is an exercise in "Creole Nationalism" (Anderson 1983, 127) and an attempt to reaffirm and reconnect with the mythical Taíno roots of Haiti (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009, 85-87). Nationalism took root in Haiti long before it did in most other parts of the world (Anderson 1983, 113), and part of being Haitian and Vodou is to acknowledge and embrace the (mostly mythical) Taíno ancestry of all Haitians.

A third reason for the incorporation of cave practices into Vodou is that they represent the attempts of common Vodou practitioners to effect a change and take greater individual control over the common religion in response to worsening economic conditions, inequality, disease and natural disaster that the current religious system seems unable to cope with (Aldenderfer 2010, 81). Along these lines, the cave practices may be a form of revitalization movement, where Haitians are attempting to go back to their vision of what the pre-contact Taíno society embodied – one without the blood

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[1] Also commonly spelled "*loa*".

This research has two purposes. First, it is an ethno-archaeological study intended to fill in gaps in the academic body of work regarding Vodou in Haiti. There has been much research in Haiti on Vodou, but no one has published anything regarding cave usage to date. As ethnography, it has the potential to inform not just academics, but also the general public and to correct misconceptions regarding Haiti in general and Vodou in particular. Due to the subject matter, there is the possibility that it could find some small audience outside academia. Second, this project may be of use to archaeologists, particularly those who work in caves. The documented existence of the methods, reasons, and beliefs of caretakers should have some influence on how archaeologists interpret their excavation sites, particularly those who work in similar ritual or cave settings. Likewise, the distribution of material remains may be useful in interpreting the material culture patterns that occur at ritual sites.

A Brief History of Haiti

Haitian history consists of a long string of bad luck and unfortunate circumstance. The beginnings of Haiti's bad luck can be traced back to December 24th, 1492 when the Santa Maria, one of Columbus' ships, ran aground near the modern city of Cap Haitien (Rouse 1992, 143). Columbus left behind 39 men who founded the first European settlement in the new world, La Navidad (Dubois 2004, 13). The settlement was built with the intended purpose of acquiring gold from the indigenous Taíno/Arawak people (Rouse 1992, 143). When Columbus returned in 1494, he discovered the settlement destroyed and all 39 men he had left behind were dead (Rouse 1992, 147).

The gold fields that Columbus discovered in the central part of Hispaniola produced little gold, and in an attempt to placate his investors in Spain, he sent a shipload of kidnapped Taíno people back to Spain to be sold as slaves. Because of their susceptibility to European disease, they were not good workers, and the Spanish crown ordered all of the surviving Taíno slaves freed and shipped back to Hispaniola (Rouse 1992, 151).

The Taíno natives were forced to work in the Spanish mines through *encomiendas*[2], and those who refused were executed (Rouse 1992, 154-157). Along with forced labor, the Spanish also brought a variety of European diseases for which the Taíno lacked immunity (Wilson 2007, 150). This led to a desperate attempt by the indigenous people to evict the Spanish, and the remaining Taíno population, led by Queen Anaconana rose up in armed resistance. Up against more the powerful weaponry of the Spanish, she, along with 80 nobles were captured and publicly executed in 1503 (Maxwell 2003, 23-26).

By 1514, only 22,726 Taíno capable of work were left on the island. By 1517, the indigenous population was so decimated that the Spanish began bringing in African slaves to mine their gold. By 1524 African born slaves outnumbered the indigenous

[2] A grant given by the Spanish Monarchy to colonists giving them the right to demand forced labor from the native population in the specified area.

Taíno population, and by 1540 the Taíno had been completely replaced (Rouse 1992, 158).

Between 1517 and 1685, Spanish and French settlers grew tobacco and cotton on the island through slave labor (Dubois 2004, 15-19) By 1530 there were at least 30 sugar mills in San Domingue, and with sugar production the number of African slaves imported annually increased dramatically (Dubois 2004, 15). In 1697 the Treaty of Ryswick was signed which ended the 1689-97 Nine Years War between France and the Grand Alliance of England, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Dutch Republic (Abbott 1991, 10). One of the outcomes of the Treaty was the division of the island into the French Saint-Domingue (later Haiti) in the west and the Spanish Hispaniola, (later the Dominican Republic) spurring on a dramatic increase in the number of French settlers (Dubois 2004, 151).

By 1767, two thirds of the sugar, coffee, cotton, and other products from the tropics that were sold in Europe came from French Saint-Domingue (Dubois 2004, 172) and by 1790 Saint-Domingue was the wealthiest colony in the world (Dubois 2004, 172). Due to the harsh climate and brutal working conditions, about one third of newly imported slaves died within the first three years of arriving in the Caribbean (Dubois 2004, 172). The French, instead of treating African slaves as investments approached slavery as a disposable, renewable source of labor, and continuously imported newly captured slaves long after the United States had stopped the process. In 1789 about 40,000 French lived in Saint-Domingue, ruling over roughly 400,000 African slaves and 100,000 free Blacks (Dubois 2004, 39).

Inspired by the French Revolution and the execution of King Louis XVI, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789 (Dubois 2004, 151), 1791 brought about the beginning of what would become the first successful slave rebellion in the post-Columbian New World. While the French elite in Saint-Domingue attempted to use the Declaration as a basis for a demand for full independence from France, slave rebellions in the north were forcing many French to flee to New Orleans (Dubois 2004, 151). After France refused full independence, the so-called "free men of color" in Saint-Domingue demanded that at least they, as higher on the socio-economic pyramid than the black slaves, gain the right to vote. When this appeal was also turned down by France, the mulattos put aside their long-standing notions of racial superiority and joined with the black rebellions to form an organized, large-scale resistance (Dubois 2004, 152-158).

On the night of August 14th, 1791 slave representatives from plantations all across the north of Haiti meet at Bois Caiman where plans for the start of the Haitian Revolution were finalized. During the meeting, the Vodou spirits were consulted by a *hougan* (Vodou priest) named Dutty Boukman and a mambo named Cécile Fatiman. A black pig was sacrificed to Ogou, the spirit of the warrior, who then possessed Boukman and called for revolution. (Dayan 1998, 29,46,70; Dubois 2004, 99-102). Haitians tell me this moment create both the Haitian Revolution and of Haitian nationalism and identity. These rebellions were not intended to drive the French from Saint-Domingue, but instead to fight for the right of having the provisions detailed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) apply to all men regardless of color or class (Dubois 2004, 151).

These rebellions were not intended to drive the French from Saint-Domingue, but instead to fight for the right of having the provisions detailed in the French Declaration of

the Rights of Man (1789) apply to all men regardless of color or class (Dubois 2004, 151). Three years later, in 1794, France abolished slavery in an effort to regain peace, but in 1802 Napoleon Bonaparte sent his brother-in-law, Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, to take control in Saint-Domingue and to re-institute the practice (Dayan 1998, 152-156). By 1803, France, after suffering crushing losses to the fierce Haitian revolutionaries, and suffering from even fiercer tropical diseases, had withdrawn and given up on Saint-Domingue to focus on the war in Europe (Dubois 2004, 160-162). The first successful slave rebellion of the New World led to independence and a new country: Haiti. With independence, the remaining French Creole settlers fled for the United States and by 1806 Haiti had split into Henri Christophe I's kingdom in the north and Alexandre Pétion's republic in the south (Dubois 2004, 234,254).

However, this was not the end of Haiti's bad luck. The idea of a free black country in the new world frightened Europeans and Americans alike. The United States refused to recognize Haitian independence because of legitimate fears that the success of the Haitian revolution would stir similar activity among American slaves - if the tiny country of Haiti could throw off the colonial yoke through a slave revolution, the same could happen to larger, more powerful colonies (Horsman 1981, 280). These U.S. concerns were particularly strong at this time because the expansion of the United States further south and west following wars with Mexico and the California gold rush, while increasing the resources of the United States, had already led to an increase in free states in opposition to slave states and holding the senate equally divided (Dubois 2004, 225). Gabriel Prosser's 1800 slave rebellion in Virginia was directly inspired by events in Haiti as well as the Vesey rebellion in South Carolina in 1822 (Abbott 1991, 17; Dubois 2004, 305). In fact, Vesey was Haitian born, and his uprising was inspiration for John Brown's own attempts at armed insurrection at Harper's Ferry later in 1859 (Abbott 1991, 17; Egerton 1993, 23). If the latent power present in American slaves could be stirred in the same organized way as the Haitians, the United States way of life and economy would both suffer greatly, particularly in the southern states.

During these early years of Haitian independence, many ships pulling into southern ports in the United States were quarantined for fear of news of the Haitian revolt spreading among southern blacks (Dubois 2004, 305). It was in the best interests of the Americans at the time to keep Haiti at arm's length, and to do anything possible short of invasion to insure the failure of the new republic. With this in mind, the Haitian Revolution was either ignored by U.S. media or portrayed as murderous savages who sacrificed children to bloodthirsty gods, and the French were shown as cultured, passive, innocent victims of Black violence (see Chapter 2). The United States even imposed a trade and arms embargo on Haiti as an aggressive action intended to ensure their eventual failure (Maxwell 2003, 157-158). The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1862, one years after the start of the American Civil War and one year before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (Farmer 2011, 128; Ramsey 2011, 63).

The European powers had their own reasons for wanting the Haitians to fail, first to make sure that they did not set an example for other colonies, and second, to hopefully move in and restore Haiti to the generator of wealth it was under the French. Several European countries as well as the United States attempted to either seize Haiti as their own or control it over the following two centuries (Farmer 1994, 252-259). Haiti was

again attacked by France in 1825, and this time, in order to retain independence, Haiti agreed to pay France 90 million francs (approximately 21 billion U.S. dollars today, adjusted for inflation) in exchange for France's recognition of Haiti's independence (Farmer 2011, 127-128). This payment bankrupted the new country, and Haiti has never recovered. Haiti paid an estimated 80% of its annual budget in payments to France and did not pay off the "debt" in full until 1947 (Abbott 1991, 39).

Under the pretext of quieting civil unrest, but actually intended to protect U.S. and German investments and set up a strategic U.S. military post on the island, the United States invaded in 1915 and occupied Haiti for nearly twenty years, reinstituting slavery in all but name and suspending the Haitian constitution (Farmer 2011, 126). A pattern of debt involving rebel groups borrowing large sums of money to finance their coups to be paid back with treasury funds after a successful revolution and fiscal corruption led the already weakened Haitian economy into an ever downward spiral (Abbott 1991, 31). Haiti fell into the trap of borrowing to repay, and American and European powers took full advantage of Haiti's vulnerability. It was the money owed to American railroad interests that finally led to the invasion by U.S. troops, to demand repayment for a poorly constructed and unwanted railway system that was never placed into effective use (Abbott 1991, 34).

The other reason for the United States' invasion was Haiti's strategically important location and deep-water harbor. With the U.S. aspiring to be a new modern naval power, coaling stations in Haiti enabled the U.S. Navy to effectively control the entire Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean and operated as a strategically advantageous jumping off spot for military operations along the eastern coast of South America (Abbott 1991, 47). Most important was Haiti's potential to control of all Atlantic approaches to the new Panama Canal only 600 miles away and recently completed by the United States in 1914 (Panama Canal Authority 2017). The United States had long dreamed of expanding into the Caribbean, and had tried to purchase Cuba from the Spanish in the 1850's. The United States envisioned the Caribbean as a New World Mediterranean, with a ruling white class that governed a dark lower social stratum made up of slaves and mulatto classes. This never happened, in part, because of the fear that the addition of slave-based Caribbean economies would tip the political power in the United States to the South (Horsman 1981, 280).

This view of race and social stratification greatly affected how the Haitian population was treated during the 20 years that the U.S. Marines ruled the island with military strength and brutal repression. The entire U.S. military force was white and from the South and brought with them the racial prejudices of their culture (Abbott 1991, 39). Haitian society at the time was segregated according to skin color, with darker skin at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid and light skinned mulattos at the top. To the arriving U.S. Marines, they were all black, less than human, and not to be trusted. (Abbott 1991, 39).

One of the first publications was *Through Santo Domingue and Haiti: a Cruise with the Marines* by Samuel Guy Inman, an American missionary, diplomat, and social reformer. Inman describes Haiti as a "…black man's paradise…" and states rather boldly that Haiti's problems are rooted in the "…lack of white blood in the inhabitants" (Inman

1919, 54). His opening descriptions of Vodou in Haiti are just as baseless and are quoted here in full.

> It is impossible to find out just how far the Voodoo worship still exists. No white man has ever been allowed to witness the Voodoo Ceremonies and since the Americans entered the country, they have done all in their power to prohibit it entirely. The Gendarmes will tell you however that it still exists in spite of their vigilance. The Ceremony is presided over by a native priest or what would be called in Africa a "witch doctor." A ceremony very much like the Mass is used at the beginning. Afterwards the child which is to be sacrificed is brought in and at a certain stage it is killed, its heart being taken out and the participants drinking of its blood. The more recent form of the ceremony substitutes a goat for the child. Sometimes the child is used up till the critical time for it to be sacrificed and then the goat is substituted. It is said that the result of Voodoo worship is plainly registered on the faces of those who participate in it, making them look like devils " (Inman 1919, 79).

There are two things to remember when reading this. First, this is Inman's official report of his fact-finding tour for the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, and second, that there has never been a documented case of human sacrifice in Haiti. Yet Inman claims that "Many and wonderful are the tales of human sacrifice, raising from the dead, cannibalism, etc., practiced by these people…"" (Inman 1919, 87). Statements like these, in official US State Department reports helped to sculpt the public opinion of Haiti and Vodou in America.

In 1923 *Weird Tales* magazine first appeared on news racks in the United States, and one of its most prolific writers was Arthur J. Burk. Burk had served in the US Marines during World War 1, and after the war was stationed for a short time in Haiti. Burk wrote over 50 books and 800 short stories for various pulp fiction magazines, making him one of the most popular writers of his time (Locke 2004, xi). In 1924 he published "Voodoo" in *Weird Tales*, and the following year "Black Medicine" in the same magazine. Both stories follow the same pattern, the White American hero overcoming the evil, superstitious Haitian. The stories drip racism into the readers lap in a way that must have been offensive even in the 1920's. If a Haitian was strong, he was monstrous, if he was intelligent, he possessed animal cunning, and if he displayed any characteristics the author found admirable is was only because he somehow overcame his nature due to his association with Whites (Burke 1925, 17).

In 1929 William Seabrook introduced the world to the Zombie. In his book, *The Magic Island*, Seabrook "documents" his adventures in Haiti during the US occupation. Seabrook, an admitted occultist, attended many Vodou ceremonies while in Haiti, and according to his book, believed deeply in the religion at the time (Seabrook 1929, 67). While his descriptions of Haitians and Vodou are definitely racist and superficial, there are some interesting and possibly accurate accounts of Vodou ceremonies that are very interesting. In particular, his chapter on Zombies stirred the imagination of Americans, and its effects are still seen in popular culture today.

In 1932 the Halperin brothers produced the movie *White Zombie* staring Bela Lugoisi as a white Vodou priest, the first in a very, very long line of zombie movies that continues to the present. This movie, based in part on Seabrook's Magic Island, introduced Vodou and zombies to the masses, and created stereotypes about Haiti that have continued to the present (Senn 1998, 14).

In 1933 John Houston Craige wrote *Black Bagdad*, and the following year *Cannibal Cousins*, both supposedly true accounts of his adventures in Haiti. In *Black Bagdad* Craige goes into great and gory detail about the cannibalistic practices of the Haitians. In the chapter titled "Goat Without Horns" Craige details the murder and consumption of Marine Private Mike Morris. In Craige's telling, Morris was at least partly responsible for becoming a main course because he was a pacifist by nature and lacked in manliness. Craige discusses how the Haitians consume their enemies in order to absorb their strength and power and prefer the flesh of white men because of the power associated with them (Craige 1924,77).

In *Cannibal Cousins*, Craige continues the theme. With chapter titled "The Heart of Sergeant Muth," "Burning Blood," and "Dr. Faust, Cannibal," the table of contents reads more like a menu that a serious book. Considering the rate of consumption described in Craige's books, the population of Haiti should have been greatly decreased had his stories been accurate (Craige 1925, 27-41).

When the United States withdrew from Haiti in 1934, Dominican Republic dictator Trujillo moved troops into the border region and attacked and murdered all Haitians along the border, killing approximately 20,000 Haitians in three days in was to known as the Parsley Massacre. Dominican Republic soldiers and civilians forced those suspected of being Haitian to say the word "perejil", Spanish for parsley. In Haitian Creole the "r" has become silent or even omitted, making it very difficult for a Haitian to correctly pronounce the Spanish word. Those unable to correctly pronounce "perejil" were either expelled from the Dominican Republic or murdered by soldiers and civilians. (Farmer 1994, 89)

In 1957, only 10 years after Haiti had finished paying their "debt" to France, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, a country general practice doctor was overwhelmingly elected president (Abbott 1991, 76). Papa Doc was initially very popular among the black population of Haiti, but his rule quickly evolved into a brutal dictatorship that sent Haiti deeper into debt and killed and imprisoned countless Haitians for political crimes. Papa Doc ruled through fear and Vodou. His "Tonton Macoute", an informal, unofficial secret police that eliminated opposition and spread fear throughout the country (Abbott 1991, 86-88). They were named after a traditional Vodou boogeyman, "Uncle Knapsack", who carried away children who misbehaved in his pack (Brown 1991, 184-191). In order to use Vodou as a tool of control, in 1958 Papa Doc traveled to *Trou Foban* (Troublemakers), a cave located near a mountain top somewhere in the Artibonite Valley. The cave is notorious for its evil spirits, and Papa Doc reportedly returned to the presidential palace with a host of these evil spirits who then resided in a special room in the palace and were there to be called on to do his bidding (Abbott 1991, 81-82). When Papa Doc died in 1971, his son, Jean-Claude was named president for life. Jean-Claude, also known as Baby Doc, was forced from office in 1986 (Farmer 1994, 89), and a series

of elections and coups followed until 1990, when Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected (Farmer 2011, 133).

Aristide was a laicized Catholic priest and revolutionary theologist (Rohter 1994, 1). He was somehow able to survive assassination attempts and an aborted coup by the former leader of the secret police before being sworn in (Farmer 2011, 132). Aristide was in office for only one year before being forced into exile by a coup led by General Raoul Cedras. Cedras remained in power through the use of his own version of the Tonton Macoute, the Attaches, until being forced out by a second U.S. occupation force in 1994. This allowed Aristide to return to power briefly to finish his term as president (Farmer 2011, 134-137).

In 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck, killing hundreds of thousands. The earthquake continued a series of natural disasters including other massive earthquakes in 1564, 1701, 1751, 1770, 1842 and 1946, and the nearly annual hurricanes that hit Haiti. Combined with deforestation, these natural disasters have led to a cycle of erosion and flooding that have devastated Haiti's ability to provide for itself (Famer 2011, 261-288). This was quickly followed by a cholera outbreak unintentionally triggered by United Nations troops from Nepal in the north near Cap Haitien who were there to help with the earthquake recovery (Frerich et al. 2012, 158-160).

Slavery, Inequality, Isolation, and Debt

What is it about Haiti that makes its history so different than our own? On face value, Haiti and the United States share many commonalities and should share a certain fraternal relationship that does not, unfortunately, exist. Both countries are former colonies of European powers, both fought successfully for independence, and both formed republics in the new world. In 1776 when the United States declared its independence from England, it was white upper-class colonials leading a revolution against the white European establishment. When the British were successfully expelled from the original colonies, no power vacuum attracted other European powers since the new United States of America already had treaties with France and other European countries. The United States as an independent country was recognized even before the fighting ended.

On the other hand, Haiti was first recognized by France, but only after paying staggering reparations. The people of Haiti, unwilling slaves kidnapped from Africa and forced to work in horrible conditions, where then forced to pay a crippling indemnity to their kidnappers for the crime of wanting to be free. The United States was not required to pay such reparations. This 90 million Franc assessment bankrupted the fledgling country of Haiti and forced it into economic hardship from which it has never recovered. Today, a common political promise made by those seeking office in Haiti is the promise of forcing France to return the assessment, with interest, and many unrealistic Haitians have pinned their hopes for the future on this unlikely refund (Farmer 2011, 128).

This long history of racial discrimination, isolation, and socio-economic equality within a globalized world has led to a preponderance of cultural misconceptions and stereotypes based primarily on sensationalized American and European pop culture. Apart from the occasional news story about yet another natural disaster in Haiti, these

misconceptions are often the only knowledge cultures outside of Haiti have of what remains a relatively isolated country. Haiti's struggle for stable independence is riddled with constant interference with and control by external political powers. This has led not only to these external powers choosing to justify their presence by fabricating myths about the "savage" or "primitive" nature of Vodou but has led to a slew of other cultures passing through and creating sensationalist stories about their time in this unknown country (Dayan 1998, 37).

In the following chapters, I present an overview of the relevant literature that does exist on Haiti and the practice of Vodou which further demonstrates the lack of pre-existing accounts of these practices in any academic arena. Following this, I outline the methods that I used to collect data and record the views of the Haitians that practice Vodou in Haiti, a methodology which draws heavily from my background in archaeology but with (for an archaeologist) a strong advantage in actually being able to ask people why they did the things I observed. I then move on to several case studies of some of the rituals that I both observed and in which I participated, and interviews with Vodou practitioners and leaders. Departing from typical cultural anthropological studies, I then present an overview of the material culture found in the caves I focused on. Drawing on my prior life as an archaeologist, this research takes a decidedly material culture-focused approach to collecting data on the objects used in these practices with an eye to illuminate some of the questions that archaeologists have about the life cycles of ritual objects. Through these chapters I provide an objective summary of how modern Vodou practitioners across Haiti have incorporated caves into their syncretic ritual repertoire. With this research, it is my hope that many of the prevalent Western beliefs about Vodou are challenged, and previously ignored Haitian voices are heard.

CHAPTER 2: VODOU IN HAITI: SYNCRETISM AND SOCIALIZED AMBIVALENCE

Haiti's long history of racial discrimination, isolation, and socio-economic inequality is readily apparent in the prevalent stereotypes of Haitian culture in both pop culture and academic writings. This sensationalized depiction of the country, its people, and its religion has historically done Haiti a great disservice. From external political interference and control, to the missions of primarily protestant religious groups, to an unfortunately persistent othering in academic writings, Haiti continues to be portrayed as an otherworldly place where magic and mysticism reign. Anthropological work on Haiti has been moved by both racism and a tendency to exoticize Haitians, especially in depictions of Vodou.

A Historiography of Haitian Vodou

In 1853, Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau published *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races), a pseudo-scientific thesis that, in keeping with racial thinking of the time, attempted to prove the existence of race as the single determining factor in culture and 'progress' through the use of scientific techniques. De Gobineau's work found acceptance both in Europe and in the United States. In the United States the economy and morality of slavery was the predominant social and political issue, and de Gobineau's research helped to bolster the arguments of those in favor of slavery (Fluehr-Lobban 2000, 457). Germany had only recently become a unified state, and de Gobineau's proclamation that the German Aryan was the pinnacle of humanity was something of an ego boost and of great assistance in creating a German national identity. Not only did this study lead to many Germans joining the Gobineau Society, but it formed the foundation for Nazi ideology later in the 20th century.

De Gobineau claimed the existence of three races, white, black, and yellow, and believed that anyone not fitting into these three categories was the result of miscegenation. With France still bitter about the independence of its former slave colony, de Gobineau was anything but kind as he described the people of "Hayti".

> "We are in a different world at once. The manners are as depraved, brutal, and savage as in Dahomey or among the Fellatahs. There is the same barbaric love of finery coupled with the same indifference to form. Beauty consists of colour, and so long as a garment is of flaming red and edged with tinsel, the owner does not trouble about its being largely in holes. The question of cleanliness never enters anyone's head. If you wish to approach a high official in the country, you find yourself being introduced to a gigantic negro lying on his back, on a wooden bench. His head is enveloped in a torn and dirty handkerchief, surmounted by a cocked hat, all over gold lace. An immense sword hangs from his shapeless body. His embroidered coat lacks the final perfection of a waistcoat. Our general's feet are cased in carpet slippers. Do you wish to question him, to penetrate his mind, and learn

> the nature of the ideas he is revolving in there? You will find him as uncultured as a savage, and his bestial self-satisfaction is only equaled by his profound and incurable laziness… He speaks like Baron Holbach, argues like Monsieur de Grimm, and ultimately has no serious preoccupation except chewing tobacco, drinking alcohol, disemboweling his enemies, and conciliating his sorcerers. The rest of the time he sleeps (de Gobineau 1853, 48-49)".

De Gobineau's detailed description of life in Haiti is surprising considering that he never visited the country, although his mother was born there, and he had a lifelong fear that he might have black ancestors on her side (Biddiss 1970, 92). He goes on to describe the tensions within Haiti between those described as being of pure African descent, and those "mulattoes" of mixed ancestry, and attributes the elevated social positions and education of those with lighter skin to the influence of their European forefathers, and ignores completely (or was completely ignorant of) the complex system of slavery and emancipation that governed the offspring of slave owners and their slave mistresses, and likewise does not address the jealousy and resentment of the slave towards the free blacks that was the natural and logical result of the French social construct (de Gobineau 1853, 50).

De Gobineau describes the African majority in Haiti as ignorant and violent, and the history of Haiti as a continuous series of massacres of Haitians by Haitians based on skin color, claiming that "their most cogent argument is murder" (de Gobineau 1853, 50). The numerous atrocities inflicted on both dark and light skinned Haitians by the "superior" white French is not a factor in de Gobineau's equations. Likewise, he notes that the Haitian Constitution, a document that claims enlightenment, "has no influence whatever" (de Gobineau 1853, 50). He fails to note that the it was because a similar document, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, likewise had no influence in Haitian society, and it was to obtain the rights promised in that declaration that the revolutions was formed (de Gobineau 1853, 51).

De Gobineau predicted that with Europeans removed from Haitian society, the light and dark skinned Haitians would separate themselves both culturally and geographically, with the pure African people moving to the interior of the island, and the lighter skinned people moving to the coasts where they could engage in trade and stay in contact with the European world, and that under French direction "…would gradually be improved and lose their African character in the same proportion as their African Blood" (de Gobineau 1853, 50). Those of purer African decent would eventually descend into a network of small tribal factions constantly at war with each other and oblivious to the rest of the world. History has proven de Gobineau wrong (Biddiss 1970, 27).

At the time of its publication, de Gobineau's work did receive some criticism, but the first thorough and systematic rebuttal was published by Joseph Auguste Anténor Firmin decades later in 1885 (Fluehr-Lobban 2000, 449). Firmin was the diplomatic emissary from Haiti to France, and while in Paris was one of three Haitian members of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris (Society of Anthropology of Paris). Although he attended many meetings, he was marginalized because of his race and the prevalent belief in biological determinism. Only two transcripts of the meetings minutes record his

speech. In one of those instances, he stood to challenge the issues of race, and in rebuttal was asked simply if his intellectual ability was the result of white ancestry (Fluehr-Lobban 2000, 450).

Faced with such close-minded racism, in 1885 Firmin published *De l'égalité des races humaines* (On the Equality of Human Races). Firmin argued that "… all men are endowed with the same qualities and the same faults, without distinction of color or anatomical form. The races are equal" (Firmin 1885, 451). Unfortunately, Firmin's work was all but ignored in France, and was not translated into other languages until the year 2000, 115 years after its publication (Fluehr-Lobban 2000, 464). In his work, Firmin challenged many of the renowned current anthropologists' stance on race and describes in detail his vision of the future of anthropology, describing what in essence eventually becomes today's four-field approach. Firmin is often referred to as the first Haitian anthropologist (Fluehr-Lobban 2000; Fluehr-Lobban 2005).

Firmin greatly influenced one of his Haitian students, Jean Price-Mars. Price-Mars, much like Firmin, was also a diplomat, spending much time in both Washington and Paris. In Paris he was one of the intellectual fathers of the Negritude movement, a movement created by French-speaking blacks from the colonies in Africa and the Caribbean that believed a shared African heritage, both in Africa and in the Diaspora, was the most effect way to counter political and economic dominance by France. The movement was influenced by both Firmin and the Harlem Renaissance writers, and Price-Mars was a frequent contributor to their publications (Fluehr-Lobban 2005, 107).

Price-Mars' studies of Haitian culture and society focused on the both the roots of Haitian identity and on the growing rift between the elites and the poor of Haiti. Price-Mars recognized both the African and French influences on Haitian identity, but eventually determined that slavery, and to a lesser extent Vodou, were the key sources of Haitian culture. It was slavery that forged the Haitian national identity which enabled the former slave population to come together to withstand invasion attempts from the U.S. and European powers (Price-Mars 1919, 45,192).

In his investigation of Haitian society, Price-Mars attacked the Haitian elite for their abandonment of the Haitian poor and for their Francophile leanings. The elites publicly justified their behavior by pointing out their superior education, all while continuing to restrict access of the poor to education, something Price-Mars detested. His term "collective bovarism" described the way Elites had adopted the belief that they were, in fact, white and French instead of Haitian and African (Price-Mars 1919, 143).

In his study of Vodou, he developed a position that would later be called cultural relativism (Locke 1924, 190). Price-Mars spent a great deal of time developing comparisons and analogs between Vodou and Eastern and Western religions and put great effort into debunking the myths of Satan worship, zombies, black magic and human sacrifice that had plagued Vodou for centuries. Among his other pursuits, Price-Mars corresponded with a young American anthropologist named Melville Herskovits and assisted him with some of his work in Haiti (Coupeau 2008, 211).

In 1934, Herskovits spent three months in Mirebalais, and the research he conducted there was documented in his book (and film) *Life in a Haitian Valley* (Herskovits 1937). The book detailed the life of Haitian poor and determined that Vodou was the primary focus of life for the poor. Herskovits work was done during the U.S.

military occupation, a time during which Vodou and its ceremonies were strictly prohibited. However, Herskovits was able to obtain permission from the General Vogel, the U.S. Army Commander, to conduct his research (Herskovits 1937, 41).

One of the primary concepts to emerge from Herskovits work was the idea of "socialized ambivalence". Herskovits attempts to reconcile what he sees as a conflict between the two different cultures, African and European, which he feels make up Haiti. Herskovits did not see these two parts as a mix, but as two separate identities that each Haitian possessed. This dichotomy produced by an incomplete union of the two halves causes Haitians to deal with social and cultural incongruities on a continuous basis. The best example of these incongruities is the together-but-separate nature of religion in Haiti, where Vodou is banned by the Catholic church, and Catholicism is held in disdain by Vodou, and yet the vast majority of people in Haiti practice and believe in both, and Catholic churches often become the focus of Vodou ritual. Socialized ambivalence is the internal mechanism that Haitians use to deal with these incongruities (Herskovits 1937, 188). After his three months in Mirebalias, Herskovits never returned to Haiti, but he did spend the rest of his life editing and compiling work done in Haiti by other researchers, and even remotely supervised the field work of graduate students in Haiti, one of whom was Zora Neale Hurston.

Zora Neale Hurston, who in later life became a famous writer of fiction, traveled to Haiti in 1936 to conduct research on a Guggenheim Fellowship (Hurston 1938, 308). While in Haiti, she conducted interviews and did fieldwork that was later included in her book *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. In her writing on Haiti, Hurston focuses on Vodou and the politics surrounding the recently ended U.S. military occupation. Hurston's work, while popular in the United States, is problematic. Her glowing support for the brutal and unnecessary U.S. military occupation leads one to wonder if she was in fact in contact with the Haitian commoner or if her opinions on the occupation were influenced more by the elites who profited by it (Hurston 1938, 26, 177). As Hurston wrote: "The smoke from the funnels of the U.S.S. Washington was a black plume with a white hope. It was the end of revolution and the beginning of peace" (Hurston 1938, 272). Likewise, her description of Vodou and its rituals is very dramatic, and while she excels at vivid descriptions of rituals and regalia, she seems to lack any understanding of what is happening, and instead promotes the mystery and mysticism of Haitian Vodou and treats it as a curiosity instead of a serious religion followed by over ten million people (Dutton 1993, 132-149).

Following the publication of these earlier works, in 1948 Swiss anthropologist Alfred Métraux, an anthropologist known for his diverse interests in cultures around the world including Eastern Island and the Andes (Métraux, 1972, 3), decided to go to Haiti for two years to study Vodou. His book *Voodoo in Haiti* is perhaps the best book written about the syncretic Haitian religion (Métraux, 1972). Métraux's approach to anthropology was to focus more on ethnography than theory, and the volumes of ethnographic research he has published attest to his approach. In *Voodoo in Haiti*, Métraux goes into great detail regarding religion, participants, and the meaning behind the ceremonies. He does an admirable job in refuting many of the myths and misconceptions regarding Vodou, and his explanations regarding the meanings and

purposes of various actions in Vodou go a long way towards de-mystifying the religion and removing much of the exotic veneer it had accumulated.

Métraux is one of only two scholars to have previously mentioned caves in their writings on Haiti or Vodou. He discusses the usage of caves in one fleeting passage, and then only as background information to his explanation for the need to travel to the cave named Source Balan with a Mambo (Vodou priestess) and her entourage to collect water from the water source for specific Christmas ceremonies: "The subterranean cavern from which [Source Balan] emerges is said to be the dwelling place of numerous lwa: Damballah-wedo, Agwe, Maitresse-la-Sirene and Grande=Bossine" (Métraux 1972, 226). Métraux gives the best descriptions of the personalities and characteristics of lwa that I have found, making *Voodoo in Haiti* one of the most useful books on Vodou. Perhaps because he was a product of his age, Métraux's main flaw was down playing the important role of women in the religion, something that Karen McCarthy Brown later rectified.

Karen McCarthy Brown is today considered one of the preeminent feminist ethnographers of her time. She published her book *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* in 1991 (Brown 1991) after almost 20 years of one-on-one research and friendship with Marie Therèse Alourdes Macena Champagne Lovinski, more commonly known as Mama Lola. Mama Lola was born in Port-au-Prince in 1936, and moved to Brooklyn, New York in 1962. In 1965, at the age of 29 she established herself as a mambo, or Vodou priestess. Brown became friends with Mama Lola, and her book both examines the importance and prominence of women in the Vodou faith and helps to expel the negative myths and stereotypes that have surrounded Vodou in the United States. The extremely long time she spent collecting her data allowed Brown to produce a book that not only examines the religion, but also the lives of those who practice it, and to observe first-hand what it means to be a Vodou priestess (Brown 1991, 209-212).

Wade Davis's the *Serpent and the Rainbow* (1985) is probably the most famous book about Haiti and was unfortunately turned into a horrible and exploitive movie by Wes Craven (Senn 1998, 254-261). In many ways, the book does represent Davis' academic goals in Haiti, but is incredibly self-serving and self-promoting. Other, similar books written by academics that describe their research adventure all seem to have this tendency to be self-promoting, but Davis' is the most extreme of this academic-adventure genre.

Apart from Métraux, the only other scholarly writing about the religious use of caves in Haiti is by the late Rachel Beauvoir-Dominique, a Professor of anthropology at the State University of Haiti. Beauvoir-Dominique was also a mambo and the daughter of the late Max Beauvoir, the former Supreme Servitur and Chef Supreme of the Konfederasyon Nasyonal Vodou Ayisyen. She was a contributor to the edited volume, *Rock Art of the Caribbean* (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009) in which she gives an overview of the state of Haitian archaeology in general with an emphasis on cave art. There are descriptions of several caves, but they are very general in nature and while some mention is made of cave usage in the post revolution and modern era, it is primarily focused on the Taíno petroglyphs that have been destroyed since first being recorded in the 1940's.

Other volumes of relevance to this dissertation, even though they do not focus on Vodou, include those of Paul Farmer and Laurent Dubois. Paul Farmer is perhaps the

most famous anthropologist to write about Haiti. He is a physician, medical anthropologist, and Professor at Harvard who has a long history in Haiti (Kidder 2003, 12-15). While his early work focused on issues dealing with health and medicine in the country, as of late he has concentrated on issues of justice, corruption, and economic stability (Kidder 2003, 21,62). Farmer has become so influential in Haiti that he has even inspired a biography that details his work there. The book *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracy Kidder (Kidder 2003) is the detailed story of Farmers struggles to build his hospital outside Mirebalias.

Laurent Dubois's *Avengers of the New World* (Dubois 2004) is the most accurate depiction of the history of the Haitian revolution available. The biggest weakness in the book is that it tends to focus on the internal workings of Haitian history and minimizes the influence of international politics on Haiti's lack of development. This internal focus is typical of this historical genre, but with Haiti, it is impossible to understand what has happened without looking at the larger picture.

Syncretism and Socialized Ambivalence as Illustrated through Modern Vodou Pilgrimage

In many ways, Vodou is simply a reflection of Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular. In Catholicism, God is accompanied by a host of angels of various ranks, at least one of which is powerful enough to have challenge God for supremacy in the past, plus a myriad of saints who have supernatural powers (Métraux 1972, 324-327). It is not uncommon for places of worship to be built to honor these saints and for people to pray directly to them for intervention in their lives. Christians make a distinction between these 'other holy beings' and gods, a distinction that is not readily discernible from the outside. Catholics may, for example, pray to Isadore of Seville, the Patron Saint of computer programmers, Columbanus, the Patron Saint of motorcycles, or Gang Bing, the Patron Saint of eunuchs. The list of Patron Saints is exhaustive (Jenkins 2010, 276) and it was the Catholic emphasis on these saints that likely made Catholicism well-suited to integration with the polytheistic religions of the African cultures who were brought to Haiti.

Vodou beliefs are very similar to Catholic beliefs. Vodou comes from the Fon[3] word *vudon* which means "spirit", and while it was Americans who first called the religion Voodoo, Haitians have adopted and embraced the term as their own, leading to the subtle change in spelling from "Voodoo" to "Vodou". A Vodou practitioner believes in one God, called Bondye, a variation of the French "*bon dieu*" for "good God" (Loederer and Vesey 2005, 23). Unlike the Catholic god, Bondye is a busy god and does not have time for or interest in the daily machinations of men, and so Vodou practitioners do not pray to him. Instead, they pray to the lwa the lesser gods that do have an interest in human affairs and can, sometimes, be persuaded to assist the faithful and punish the transgressor, or in the case of an extremely powerful shaman, manipulated or coerced.

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[3] African ethnic group from Benin, Nigeria and Togo.

The lwa were mostly brought over from Africa, with a few spontaneous creations in the Caribbean, and when African slaves were forced to convert to Catholicism by the French the lwa, while keeping their old names, were also given new names to correspond with the Catholic saints. To complicate matters, these connections can be made through the names of the saints/lwa, through their actions, through their physical resemblances, or through their associated symbolism. For example, Papa Ogou, the lwa of war, strength, iron, rum, tobacco, and courage is also Saint Jacques Majeur. Damballa, the snake god, is associated with Saint Patrick. As with the Catholics, Vodou has its "niche markets" as well, with Pie, the lwa of floods, Dan Petro, the lwa of farmers, and mambo, the lwa of storms, to name a few (Métraux 1972, 97).

Outsiders often describe Vodou as satanism (Associated Press 2010; Craige 1934, 212) but, unlike Catholicism, Vodou does not actually have a devil. Instead, the lwa all have their good and bad sides, much like people, and in some cases, people may make requests of the darker aspect of a particular lwa (Métraux 1972, 90). Still, Haitian Vodou is equated by outsiders with satanic practices and witchcraft, both of which are seen in an unfavorable light (Louis 2007, 178). The truth is, those who practice Vodou mostly pray for the same things that other Catholics pray for, to heal the sick, to succeed in life, to be relieved of hardship, and for financial success. While the method of prayer is different, it is not as different as most would believe.

Haitian Vodou, with its strong connections to features of the natural landscape and their ability to be inhabited by spirits, has been discussed by several leading Vodou scholars as nonetheless being unable to be fully classified as "animism" – a type of religion which is "characterized by gods of the natural elements and by the belief that trees, stones and other such material objects are rendered animate by spirits" (Deren 1983, 86). Alfred Métraux (1972, 153) declares that "[a] number of vague animistic beliefs are to be found floating, so to speak, in the margin of Vodou. They … do not fit into the main pattern of the Vodou religious system". Maya Deren (1983, 86) explains any ability to fully classify Vodou as animism as inevitably failing because "…any effort to systematize the Voudoun pantheon in terms of the major elements – earth, air, fire and water – becomes a Procrustean operation which amputates such major divinities… Moreover, although the lwa may reside in trees (and, as a matter of fact, in stones, streams, etc.), these serve merely as physical vessels for them…". Deren criticizes another scholar on Vodou who has consistently forced a definition of animism onto Vodou by pointing out that this approach has forced them to eliminate major lwa in doing so (Deren 1983, 296). Thus, because the lwa are able to identify simultaneously with many different natural features, and because any natural features of the landscape may or may not have a spirit inhabiting them (depending on many factors including the fickle nature of the lwa and their tendency to move around), Vodou cannot be strictly classified as pure animism.

As Jennings points out, "core beliefs shape and in turn are shaped by a changing reality. The most rapid and far reaching religious changes can occur in moments of catastrophe. Catastrophes are unsettling moments for survivors because of 'the shock of knowing that the world is not as we thought it was and that we are not as we thought'" (Jennings 2008: 179). Catastrophes often require, and indeed force, a group to re-think its place and security in the world around them. Connerton notes how groups that have

undergone rapid social change invent rituals and construct ritual spaces which end up being stricter in their invariance than other rituals or myths (Connerton 1989: 51, 57). In such cases, a return to rituals and acts which have their place in the past are re-born in attempts to find legitimation for why the catastrophe happened in the first place, and future security through a return to a perceived safer past. Catastrophes or traumatic events, such as the Haitian revolution, the terrifying political rulership of Papa Doc, and the recent slough of natural disasters, demonstrate a potential for some of the aspects of Haitian Vodou ceremonies and rituals, particularly those that include Taíno objects and spaces such as caves, may in fact be a form of revitalization movement as Haitians try to reconnect to a perceived Taíno ancestry.

It is inescapable and imperative that a study of catastrophe will have to define what is meant by the term. Following Post (2003), it is more useful to define it in terms of a 'working definition', or simply characteristics. It is important to also recognize, that what may be a catastrophe or disaster to one individual or group, may not necessarily be recognized as such to an outsider. Post emphasises three main qualifiers of disasters: they are extensive in their destruction and human suffering, large scale with great impact; their effects are felt by the collective, not individual; and they are sudden and unexpected (Post 2003: 24-25). Cashman and Cronin, publishing in the Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research focus on the effects on the physical landscape in describing how "…the aftermath of an eruption leaves a much-altered environment that is perceived as ruined, ugly, blackened, burned, and an abomination" (Cashman & Cronin 2008: 417). Jennings describes "disasters such as floods and wars are events that create sudden social upheaval and population loss…" (Jennings 2008: 177). Raphael points to the effects in the psychosocial sense because of the stressors they represent for individual and society – they are, of course, often a threat to survival and the source of extraordinary destruction of person, structures, and social frameworks (Raphael 1986: 5). Clifford Geertz points to the social effects of such events on groups:

> "There are at least three points where chaos – a tumult of events which lack not just interpretations but interpretability – threatens to break in upon man: at the limits of his analytic capacities, at the limits of his powers of endurance, and at the limits of his moral insight. Bafflement, suffering, and a sense of intractable ethical paradox are all, if they become intense enough or are sustained long enough, radical challenges to the proposition that life is comprehensible and that we can, by taking thought, orient ourselves effectively within it – challenges with which any religion, however 'primitive,' which hopes to persist must attempt to somehow cope" (Geertz 1973: 100).

Following these varying and all-encompassing definitions of catastrophic events, catastrophes are here defined as large-scale, severe, often sudden disruptions in the daily lives of a group with long-lasting repercussions, which often require, and indeed force, that group to re-think its place and security in the world around them as can be demonstrated through a return to the archaic.

Experience of catastrophes can be a very individualizing experience. "Psychological studies of disaster aftermaths have shown that trauma can shake the very foundations of a person's faith and trigger a search – supernatural, religious, or scientific – for answers" (Cashman & Cronin 2008: 407). These "…traumatic and mysterious memories become a reference point for individual reflection on the possible meaning of the vents that gave rise to them. Such reflection, often experienced as divine revelation or personal inspiration, leads people to draw their own associations between the images and symbolism involved in the rites" (Laidlaw 2007: 5). The result of extreme events can lead to an inability to articulate individual feelings or experiences to others (Ricoeur 2004: 161). "Indeed, the experiences and memories may be so traumatic and disturbing that there is very little discussion of them, and so there is almost no occasion to come to an agreement of the shared meaning. In these circumstances, such leadership as may arise will be weakly placed to shape and police any systematic body of shared belief, or to organize and direct any program of action based on shared belief" (Laidlaw 2007: 5). In fact, there may be a reluctance to respond if ambiguities in goals and roles lead to fear of taking responsibility for the event and the ensuing response (Raphael 1986: 294). Finding the means to communicate amongst a group following a catastrophe is essential to maintaining group cohesion. This cohesion is what will enable a group to survive the ordeal.

The threat to their most general ability to understand the world and the raising of uncomfortable questions of whether "the beliefs they held about nature were workable, the standards of truth used valid" are the issues that are most at stake in these situations (Geertz 1973: 101). "The strange opacity of certain empirical events, the dumb senselessness of intense or inexorable pain, and the enigmatic unaccountability of gross iniquity all raise the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world, and hence main's life in the world, has no genuine order at all – no empirical regularity, no emotional for, no moral coherence" (Geertz 1973: 107-108). The response of the group and their ability to return a sense of stability through continuity is of paramount importance in determining the survival of the group – the survival of their identity.

Several means are available to a society, depending on the cultural attributes they possess. "A relationship with the event may be constructed by adapting existing cosmological, ancestral, or scientific frameworks, as well as through creative and artistic expression" (Cashman & Cronin 2008: 407). Just as in individual response, "the community system goes through a pattern of phasic response to disaster. …The trust placed in the authorities, the communicational system, and the costs of preparedness and response may decide the likely outcome... In the immediate post-impact period the community is shattered, fragmented-perhaps dazed and stunned, as the individual with a disaster syndrome" (Raphael 1986: 293). Many groups, regardless of their categorization as either 'hunter-gatherer' or 'modern capitalist', choose to return to a ritual response as an integral part of the healing process. Rituals "specify the relationship that obtains between the performance of ritual and what it is that the participants are performing. … And indeed, many traditional societies in which symbolism appears to be immutable act as though they had seen the risk of too rapid an evolution: they do everything to impede its change" (Connerton 1989: 57). The nature of commemorative ceremonies, as discussed below, are stable physical manifestations of belief based on the authority of the

archaic, yet with the inherent ability to change in meaning over time, provides an exemplary outlet for the healing process of a group in crisis.

Even though we may have memories which don't involve others, the ways we remember that event, the filters we place on that event to determine how to remember them, are based on our social group and language (Halbwachs 1992). These cultural factors become so implicit that we are unable to recall them or communicate them to others (Halbwachs 1992: 43). Among the most salient manifestations of memory which demonstrates this collective function, are those that can be termed 'religious memories. As opposed to other group memories, "…the memory of religious groups claims to be fixed once and for all. It either obliges others to adapt themselves to its dominant representations, or it systematically ignore them; contrasting its own permanence with the instability of others, it relegates them to an inferior rank" (Halbwachs 1992: 92). As such, religion can be a powerful force in unifying a group or building a new national identity.

National memories are linear in their conception of time and are usually created by the bourgeoisie for the bourgeoisie (Fentress & Wickham 1992: 132-144) - they are hegemonic and alternative memories are to be regarded as irrelevant, inaccurate or illegitimate. This is demonstrated in the persistence of the story of the eve of the Haitian revolution and the current acceptance of Bois Caiman as the location of these events, even though this location remains contested by academics and historians. Anderson (1983: 187–206) presented a compelling case for the structural necessity of forgetting in order to create an image of the nation along principles of historical continuity and homogeneity. What "…distorts memory is not some inherent defect in the process of mental recall, but rather a series of external constraints, usually imposed by society" (Fentress & Wickham 1992: xii). These socially relegated abuses of memory can be manifested through iconoclastic acts.

Christina Schwenkel discusses differing concepts of iconoclastic acts as they can signify not only the collapse of overthrown regimes and the desire to induce forgetting, but also an act of reclaiming history, and of constituting a new regime of memory (Schwenkel 2009). Iconoclastic acts, in other words, are as much about the future as they are about the past (Schwenkel 2009: 111). The materiality of iconoclastic acts means that these acts are often the only evidence for transitions of social memory, religions, and social structure of societies that have experienced these events.

Tying together the ideas of communal forgetting and traumatic events or suffering, Schwenkel notes that national history acts as a "technology of territoriality" that produces a particular self-image of the nation as a united and spatially delimited geo-body (Schwenkel 2009). But it is precisely the assumption that experiences of suffering can be shared, geographically contained, and evenly mapped onto various cultural and economic spheres of the nation that are troubling (Schwenkel 2009: 204). Traumatic events are typically difficult to communicate outside of the group in which they have been experienced. The lack of ability to express verbally an event which escapes categorization, description and understanding within the worldview of a group often leads to the victims of these events seeking other means to express themselves.

Aside from remembering, the acting out of performances in front of a group is one way of bringing the past into the present. "Acting out consists in a type of action in

which the subject, in the grip of unconscious wishes and fantasies, relives these in the present with an impression of immediacy which is heightened by the analysand's refusal or inability to acknowledge their origin and, therefore, their repetitive character" (Connerton 1989: 25). These performative habit memories, when expressed in a group or even on their own, are socially determined. From this, Connerton develops the concept of a 'social habit-memory':

> "For the meaning of a social habit rests upon others' conventional expectations such that it must be interpretable as a socially legitimate (or illegitimate) performance. Social habits are essentially legitimating performances. If habit-memory is inherently performative, then social habit-memory must be distinctively social-performative" (Connerton 1989: 35).

Connnerton's book on *How Societies Remember* is one of the leading authorities on commemorative ceremonies and their role in social memory. Rather than being forms of memory themselves, he argues that they are the means by which memories can be transmitted across temporal and geographic spaces (Connerton 1989). Commemorative ceremonies, such as the many annual ceremonies discussed later in this dissertation, are forms of social habit-memory which rely on repetition which takes the form of calendric, verbal, and gestural repetitions (Connerton 1989). Winter argues that there are three stages in the history of rituals surrounding public commemoration: the first is the construction of a commemorative form; the second is the grounding of ritual action in the calendar and the routinization of such activities; and the third is their transformation or their disappearance as active sites of memory (Winter 2010: 322-323). These transformations can provide much insight into the workings of the social memory of groups, which are particularly evident during times of intense stress.

With regards to gestural repetition, particularly in archaic rituals, it is the repeated presence of ancestors or otherworldly spirits which is represented most vividly (Connerton 1989: 68). The performer of the ritual "ceases to exist, as it were, and is preplaced by 'another'", becoming possessed and embodied by them (Connerton 1989: 68-69).

The need to base rituals on the archaic is not unique to any society. Religion works because it provides a group with a way of understanding the world (Jennings 2008: 178). In a considering the effects of catastrophes on the manifestations of religious and cultural change it is important to remember that "…the most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten because constraints are felt only so long as they operate and because, by definition, a past constraint has ceased to be operative" (Halbwachs 1992: 51). The basic beliefs in religions can become part of a culture in such a fundamental way that they become naturalized within a society (Jennings 2008: 178). Reliance on the past builds bridges between the present group and their ancestors. "In this way, although religious memory attempts to isolate itself from temporal society, it obeys the same laws as every collective memory: it does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of… the present" (Halbwachs 1992: 119).

Creating these connections to the past takes two inextricably intertwined forms: the form of the rituals or ceremonies themselves, and the spaces in which they are enacted. Research into commemoration and catastrophes or disasters has tended to focus on the topic of the commemoration *of* catastrophes (Gray 2004; Hoffman 2002; Post 2003). However, there are numerous cases of ceremonies which are not related to the commemoration of catastrophes, disasters, or single 'great' events. These ceremonies are instead altered by these events and often take the form of revitalization movements. Just as commemorative ceremonies participate in the ever-changing landscape of a group's ritual identity, so do the geographic and cultural locations in which they are performed. Sites of memory "…arise out of the needs of groups of people to link their lives with salient events in the past. When that need vanishes, so does the glue that holds together the social practice of commemoration" (Winter 2010: 324). Sites of memory act as physical reminders of a part of the past which a group does not want forgotten or as a salient reminder of an idealized past that the group is actively trying to revitalize. In the Haitian case, these are often features of the landscape such as Bois Caiman, former forts such as Fort Picolet, and caves that remain associated with the Taíno due to the rock art still visible on the walls. These sites, often based in the archaic serve to do more than simply remind people of their past, they are physical markers to others of a groups claim to their history.

The landscape as a social space encompasses all the activities, meanings, memories and emotions which are triggered by the physical landscape and which are enacted within the physical landscape through practices such as rituals. All physical landscapes have a social element to them, whether it is consciously apparent or not. Tim Ingold has been influential highlighting the temporality of landscape and the importance of landscape to the construction of identity. For Ingold, human life is a process that involves the passage of time and as a result, "this life-process is also the process of formation of the landscapes in which people have lived" (Ingold 1993: 152). Landscape is not merely land and space, but "becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it" (Ingold 1993: 154). In differentiating landscape from space: "whereas with space, meanings are attached to the world, with the landscape they are gathered from it" (Ingold 1993: 155). Wescoat notes the importance of sites of conflict to the ways in which cultural landscapes are formed (Wescoat 2007: 62). Explicitly ritual sites, such as shrines and temples, have long been the focus of social landscapes in which Wescoat emphasises the importance of providing "safe places and spaces for people to reflect upon this heritage, advance it collectively…" (Wescoat 2007: 72).

These social spaces provide groups with the frameworks to make sense of their world and understand why certain things happen to them. It provides them with a template from the past to deal with the future. "Groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are localized - and memories are localized by a kind of mapping" (Connerton 1989: 37). Halbwach refers to such frameworks as forming the landscape of our recollections, the place in which our recollections are located and which without, our recollections would be left without context (Halbwachs 1992). "A recollection is the richer when it reappears at the junction of a greater number of these frameworks. …Forgetting is explained by the disappearance of these frameworks or of a part of them…" (Halbwachs 1992: 172). Beverley Raphael, in her book *When Disaster*

Strikes: How Individuals and Communities Cope with Catastrophe, outlines the importance of these frameworks in dealing with such an event:

> "A disaster experience creates not only special roles, but also a special time framework. People may refer to things as having happened before or after a certain catastrophe. Because such an event is so remembered, much may be attributed to it, and subsequent happenings may even be interpreted in terms of it. In looking at retrospective accounts, it is important to keep in mind that disasters exert a powerful influence on perceptions and attributions" (Raphael 1986: 28).

The disjunction that occurs within the known frameworks of a group is a very important point in the society's growth, as it provides infinite opportunities for change. It is the change that occurs in the commemorative ceremonies of groups that experience disaster and how those rituals change to accommodate the groups new worldview that we turn to now.

Most of the Caribbean islands have some form of African-based religion. In Cuba there is Santeria, a Yoruba based belief system that developed through syncretism with Catholicism under Spanish Colonial rule (Long200,24). In the Dominican Republic there is Santeria and Vodou, and in Puerto Rico there is Santeria and also Espiritismo, a form of spiritualism that originated in New York's Burned-over District at the tail end of the Second Great Awakening and became blended with aspects of Santeria (Olmos 2001, 203). In Jamaica there is Obeah and Myal. Myal is a Congo based religion blended with Anglican Christianity, and Obeah is an Igbo based (West African) form of spiritualism (Olmos 2011, 155). Belief systems were brought to the Caribbean islands from different parts of Africa, and then subjected to either French, Spanish, or English colonial oversight and oppression. Subsequent importation of African Slaves from other parts of Africa caused the religions in each island to slowly shift away from each other, making each unique.

In Haiti the shift was perhaps the greatest. The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) (Dubois 2004, 99, 298) resulted in the vast majority of the European trained clergy leaving Haiti. In 1860, a concordat between the Vatican and Haiti resulted in European bishops and priests returning to Haiti. In the interim, lay Haitians took over the church, resulting in a uniquely Haitian form of folk Catholicism taking root. A prime example of this can be found in Filomez, or Saint Philomene.

Every Tuesday and Friday, like clockwork, the population of the tiny village of Bord-de-Mer (which translates as "Sea Side") explodes from less than one hundred people to over a thousand. Faithful followers of Filomez, or Saint Philomene, flock to one of the two catholic churches there to attend mass and to pray to the sacred statues that reside in the sacristy of the older, smaller church dedicated to Philomene. The newer church, perhaps four times the size of the older one and about 300 meters away sits empty and unused, a disappointment to the Catholic Church that no longer recognizes the festival and ritual associated with Saint Philomene.

Along with the hundreds of faithful, come the merchant stalls that spring up all along the road in front of the church, in the church yard, and along the beach, selling

pictures of Saint Philomene, baby powder for prayer and for drawing vèvè (Vodou symbols of the Lwa), perfume, plastic flowers, Florida Water, candles and rum for offerings, and of course, fish. The mass is given at 1:30, but long before then a line has formed at the rear of the church to enter the sacristy to speak directly to the saint and leave candles burning for her. Here baby powder is spread on the cabinet containing the statue of Philomene. The powder is then wiped off the cabinet and transferred to the skin of the petitioner to receive the blessings of Philomene.

Behind the church, a walled in courtyard fronts directly onto the small lagoon beside the village. A gate here, decorated with paintings of Saint Philomene is manned by a Vodousant (initiate) who allows people in to a small bathing area where ill health, bad luck, and bad spirits can be washed away with water from the lagoon sanctified by the saint.

Across from the church, other ceremonies are being prepared. Vèvè for Papa Legba, the gatekeeper, are being drawn on the hard-packed sand with baby powder or corn starch in several locations, and the" Rada Battarie", or drum sets are being brought out. Space is at a premium for the Vodou ceremonies that follow the mass, as Bord-de-Mer has at least seven resident Hougans and Mambos (priests and priestesses) and many out of town practitioners come to sell their services and perform ceremonies as well. Many arrive early to claim the spots closest to the church, and those that arrive late have to take less ideal spots. On September 5th of each year the Festival of Saint Philomena draws over ten thousand to tiny Bord-de-Mer, with the festival spilling over into Limonade, six kilometers away.

On May 24th, 1802 in the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome a small niche was discover sealed by three large clay tiles that read *lumena paxte cumfi*, a meaningless phrase. It was agreed upon at the time that the tiles were in the wrong order, and should have read *Pax Tecum Filumena*, or Peace with you Philomena. The tiles were also adorned with the images of a lily, palm, arrow, and an anchor. Inside the niche was found the skeletal remains of what appeared to be a young girl, possibly between the ages of 13-15. Nothing was known of the history of the deceased, when she died, or how, but it was assumed based on her location and method of burial that she was virgin martyr buried with honor during the Roman era (Thurston 1903, 299).

In 1805 Francis de Lucia was visiting the Vatican's Treasury of Relics, seeking a holy relic to take back to Mugnano, a small village to the south of Rome. He found the remains of Philomene and requested permission to take them back and inter them in his church. Because there was no information available on Philomene, the Vatican initially refused but eventually allowed de Lucia to take her remains. She was buried as a martyr in the church in Mugnano, and miraculous cures to wounds, cancer, and heart disease began to occur almost immediately. In 1837 Philomene was canonized, and to this date is the only person recognized as a saint based solely on the miracles she has performed after death, as nothing was known about her activities when alive (Thurston 1903, 299, 300).

1n 1833 Mother Maria Luisa de Gesu was praying before a statue of Saint Philomena when she heard a voice coming from the statue that told Maria that August 10th, the day her remains were brought to Mugnano, was the anniversary of her death, and

the timing had been arranged that way by God. This was, coincidently, already the day for the local festival in Mugnano in her honor (National Shrine of Saint Philomena 2018).

Not long after Maria was visited by Philomene again, this time in a dream, and was told her life story. Philomene was the daughter of a Greek Prince and was herself of royal blood. Her parents were not born Christian but were converted by a doctor from Rome who lived in their palace. When she was 13, she visited Rome with her parents and met the Emperor, Diocletian (ruled from 284-305AD), who immediately fell in love with her and demanded her hand in marriage. Philomene had pledged her virginity to Jesus and refused both her parents and the Emperor's orders to marry. In his anger the Emperor ordered her tortured, then publicly flogged with palm fronds, bound to an anchor and thrown into the river, and shot with arrows, but in each case, Jesus saved her and healed her. This enraged the Emperor, who again ordered his archers to kill her, but the archers only succeeded in killing each other. Only after the Emperor had been public defeated and Philomena released from the threat of marriage did she die in her sleep to be with Jesus (National Shrine of Saint Philomena 2018).

The cult of Saint Philomene spread throughout Europe and the new world but was not well known or popular in Haiti. In Haiti, most of the saints are associated with Vodou spirits, but it is usually the saints brought over and taught by the French Colonial power. Philomena's tomb was discovered as the Haitian Revolution was winding down, and her canonization occurred during the period (1806-1860) the Catholic Church had withdrawn from Haiti completely. There is no clear evidence that, when the Catholics returned in 1860, they brought Saint Philomene with them.

In 1950, a Haitian man named after Toussaint Louverture was on the beach fishing in the village of "Piquolet" near Cap Haitian and Fort Picolet on the north coast of Haiti, when he observed a woman rise out of the ocean and stand upon the water, holding an anchor. The woman spoke to Toussaint, stating that she was Saint Philomena, and instructed the man to take her body, now turned to stone, to the town of Bord-de-Mer just outside Limonade, about 64 kilometers away. Toussaint did as he was instructed, and the townspeople of Bord-de-Mer built a church to house the statue with the assistance of then President Paul Magloire, who was a native of the area. The Church was consecrated on September 5th, 1953, and that date has remained as the date of the feast of Saint Philomena in Limonade. Today the town of Limonade has grown considerably to contain the yearly feast of Saint Philomena, with hotels and nightclubs that are only open one week a year. (Rey 2005;172).

During the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) Saint Philomena was removed from the Liturgical Calendar and attempted to relegate her to obscurity, but with limited success. (Thurston 1903, 301).

Figure 1 Cabinet located in the sacristy of the Church of Saint Philomena, Bord-der-Mer. Inside the cabinet is the statue of Philomena found by Toussaint Louverture.

Today, 80% of the schools in Haiti are operated by Protestant missions (Louis 2007, 213) that are working to undermine the Haitian national religion and culture. These missionaries have taken it upon themselves to raise funds to build schools and medical clinics to help the Haitians, but in most cases their care and services come with a hefty price tag: conversion, and intolerance towards Vodou and traditional Haitian culture. Many have made it their stated public purpose to eliminate Vodou in Haiti, and many of the rites and practices of Vodou, such as annual pilgrimages, come under direct threat (Louis 2007, 231-293).

In her 1992 article, Karen Pechilis discusses the idea of "…pilgrimage as a form of ritual negotiation…" (Pechilis 1992, 62). This approach to understanding the people traveling to the caves works exceedingly well for the majority of the intentions behind the people during most times, but with time reliant pilgrimages, such as traveling to festivals or the Hajj (Pechilis 1992, 62; Wesler 2012, 261-262) the intent changes, and personal negotiation does not seem to be the primary motivation. Turner's processual view of pilgrimage as an agent of change in religion is less appropriate, as Vodou lacks canon, and is in a state of constant flux already (Turner 1973, 107).

Haiti has a long history of pilgrimages, tracing back to pilgrimages that occurred in Catholic Congo prior to the participants being captured and sold into slavery (Rey 2005, 161). Most anthropologists describe Vodou as a syncretic religion composed of French and Spanish Catholicism and Fon and Yoruba beliefs from West Africa (Métraux 1972, 25-35) , but in actuality the vast majority of slaves brought into Haiti in the thirty years prior to the revolution were from the Congo in Central Africa, an area were Catholicism had already been a major influence for 250 years and where pilgrimages devoted to the Virgin Mary were common as far back as 1741 (Rey 2005, 162). Thus, the fusion of Catholicism and African religion may have occurred in the Old World and not

the New (Rey 2005, 169). Due to the complex religious syncretism and Haitians' socialized ambivalence, it is easiest to more fully comprehend the nature of Vodou through some examples. The following case studies focus on pilgrimages in Haiti to better demonstrate the multifaceted relationship that Haitians have with Vodou and Catholicism.

Saut d'Eau

Beginning July 16th of every year, for three days Vodou faithful travel from all over Haiti, the United States, Canada and France to worship at the waterfall of Saut d'Eau, or "The Waterfall", near the Village of Bonheur about 40 miles northeast of the capital city of Port au Prince. They congregate at the waterfall to worship Ezili, the Vodou lwa of love, who is also known as the Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. In 1847 Ezili/Mary appeared to a group of local Haitians in the top of a palm tree besides the falls and began to heal the sick and injured (Maxwell 2003, 158). Since then, Haitians have been traveling to the site on the Day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel to seek divine intervention in their lives. In addition to prayers to the Virgin Mary, they also pray to the Vodou serpent lwa Damballah-wedo and Simbi, two aquatic gods that are said to inhabit the pool at the base of the falls, along with Ayida-Wedo, the wife of Danbala, who lives in the falls themselves. They pray to Damballah and Simbi for rain and to Ayida for fertility for their crops (Métraux 1972, 333).

Early in the morning on July 16th the faithful begin the two-mile trek from Ville Bonheur to the falls, dressed in white but wearing pink and blue scarves in honor of Ezili. The bring gifts of food, rum, and candles, which are deposited in the rocks around the waterfall and pool. The devotees remove their scarves and tie them around a large fig tree beside the water, as the original palm that supported Ezili was cut down over one hundred years ago by an overzealous Catholic priest attempting to stop the pilgrimage (Edmonds and Gonzalez 2010, 109). Haitians also tie themselves to the roots of the tree with short pieces of string in an attempt to become one with the lwa. After making an offering, the faithful will bathe in the pool and under the waterfall, purifying themselves and opening themselves up to be 'mounted' by either Damballa or Ezili. Mounting, or *chual* (Kriol for horse) occurs when a lwa temporarily possesses a believer, riding him or her like a horse. Haitians believe that while a person is mounted by a lwa that they can come to no harm, but still the un-possessed in the pool are always careful that the mounted do not drown (Brown 1991, 273). In the afternoon the faithful walk back to Ville Bonheur, many carrying flasks of water to purify or heal loved ones at home who could not make the pilgrimage. As many as 100 thousand people have been known to make the pilgrimage in a single year, and it is considered one of the largest religious events in Haiti (Métraux 1972, 335).

It may be that the rituals performed there could be performed at other locations, but since this is the location of an historical miracle, the same ceremony performed elsewhere could never have the power or importance that a purifying ceremony performed at this one place on earth could have for a Vodou believer.

Plaine-du-Nord

On July 25th the largest pilgrimage occurs in Haiti in the northern part of the country about 150 miles north of Port au Prince. Unlike the pilgrimage to Saut d'Eau, this festival continues for up to fifteen days, with many smaller side-pilgrimages in the surrounding area. The feast of Saint Jacques during the Plaine-du-Nord festival honors Papa Ogou, the lwa of blacksmiths, warriors, weapons, courage, strength, and rum. According to Haitian tradition, the Haitian revolution that began in 1791 in north Haiti was inspired by Ogou (Fernández-Olmos Paravisini-Gebert 2003, 255). The pilgrims come dressed in blue costumes with red trim, clothing intended to mimic the military uniforms associated with both St. James and Papa Ogou (Rey 2005, 167). Today, pilgrims come to Trou-Sen-Jak, or "Saint James' Hole", a large mud pond in the center of town. While bands from all over the country compete in a music competition in the background, the faithful bathe in the mud, which is a mixture of soil, water, and blood and offal from sacrificed cattle. Pilgrims believe the mud has healing powers, and along with bathing in it, they also ingest it. While bathing, many followers are mounted by Ogou, who then answers their pleas and directs them in their lives (Rey 2005, 164).

In 1995, Professor Terry Rey of Temple University asked a pilgrim what made the mud at Plaine-du-Nord so much more powerful that mud found anywhere else, and the man replied that the water is the "simbi of our liberty" and is mixed with the earth of the ancestors to make mud. Simbi is a Congolese world meaning water spirits that live in streams, pools and small waterways and can have some influence on those in the immediate vicinity. To this pilgrim's mind, the mud at Plaine-du-Nord represents a pilgrimage tradition that predates Haitian independence (Rey 2005, 167).

Cave Pilgrimages

There are two cave sites that have become pilgrimage centers for Vodou believers. Caves have always been pilgrimaging destinations for Haitians, but with the increasing number of natural and man-made disasters that have been inflicted upon the Haitian people recently, the use of caves as ritual sites has increased (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009, 87). In contrast to the very open and accessible public pilgrimage sites detailed above, when caves are used, a supplicant wishing to visit a cave will typically contract with a local shaman who specializes in cave rituals in order to ask for specific actions from the lwa. The necessity to contract with a specialist may be due to the specific actions required to access the lwa in caves. Upon entering a cave, vèvè are drawn on the floor to begin the Vodou ceremony. Vèvè are symbols specific to each lwa that are drawn on the floor with cornstarch by the Shaman to attract the desired lwa.

There are two cave sites in particular that attract pilgrimages in Haiti, the Source Balan in central Haiti and the Saint Francis and Doco Caves in the North. Source Balan is located about 20 miles west of Port-au-Prince and is a sacred space used for Vodou purification ceremonies and for requests from the lwa (Métraux 1972, 237). The cave in reported to be the source of the Balan River, and is the home of Damballah, Agwe, La Siren and Gran Bossine, four of the more powerful sprits. Votive candles and rum are the accepted offerings for all who wish to enter the cave. In "Voodoo in Haiti" Métraux

reported that in 1947 this cave attracts pilgrims year-round, as ceremonies performed inside the cave are more powerful than those that take place in Vodou temples and are conducted whenever a supplicant wishes to contract a ceremony with a local shaman (Métraux 1972, 237). In 2014 and 2015 I searched for Source Balan but was unable to locate it or the river or find anyone who had heard of it. In 2016 I visited Saint Francis and Doco Caves during a festival for Saint Francis outside St Michel de l'Atalaye, where I interviewed volunteers and observed multiple ceremonies (see below).

Pilgrimage is pervasive in northern Haiti, and there are several sites that I regularly visited that host weekly pilgrimages around Cap Haitien. On Mondays and Thursdays hundreds flock to Bord-de-Mer outside Limonade to worship Saint Philomene. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, a stream of worshipers makes its way out to the caves at Fort Picolet to worship Klemzine and other lwa. On Fridays people gather to worship at Bois Caiman near Vaudreuil to worship Ogou, and on Wednesdays at least a thousand people gather in Trou-Du-Nord underneath the bridge where Highway 121 crosses the Riviere Trou-Du-Nord to worship Ti Jean Dantor, the aide-de-camp to Ogou. There are other weekly pilgrimage destinations in the area that I did not frequent, such as a waterfall site near Limbe, the mud bath at Plaine-du-Nord[4], the beach at Labadie, and Fort Liberte near the Dominican Republic Border. These sites also have yearly festivals which are considerably larger, and when possible, I attended them as well.

[4] I did, however attend the festival every year while I was in Haiti in from 2013 to 2016

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that the ways in which caves have been integrated into this modern belief structure and are more regionally specific than the standard Vodou practices. I argue that the aspects of Vodou that are happening in caves are fall under the category of magic rather than religion and propose three reasons that practitioners of Vodou incorporate caves practices into the more standard Vodou practices across the country:

1. As magic practices which effect immediate result to specific requests,
2. As a means of practicing and embodying nationalism,
3. As a means of regaining control over mainstream Vodou in response to group dissatisfaction with standard Vodou's ability to mend social and economic ills.

Through the evidence collected to demonstrate these aspects of modern Vodou, I also aim to correct misconceptions regarding Vodou in particular and Haiti in general, as well as to impact how archaeologists interpret similar ritual or cave settings. In order to accomplish these goals, I have focused on four areas of data collection in this study: material culture found in caves, observation at a distance of Caribbean Studies Association Vodou ceremonies in caves, participant observation of Caribbean Studies Association Vodou ceremonies in caves, and interviews of Vodou specialists and general practitioners/adherents.

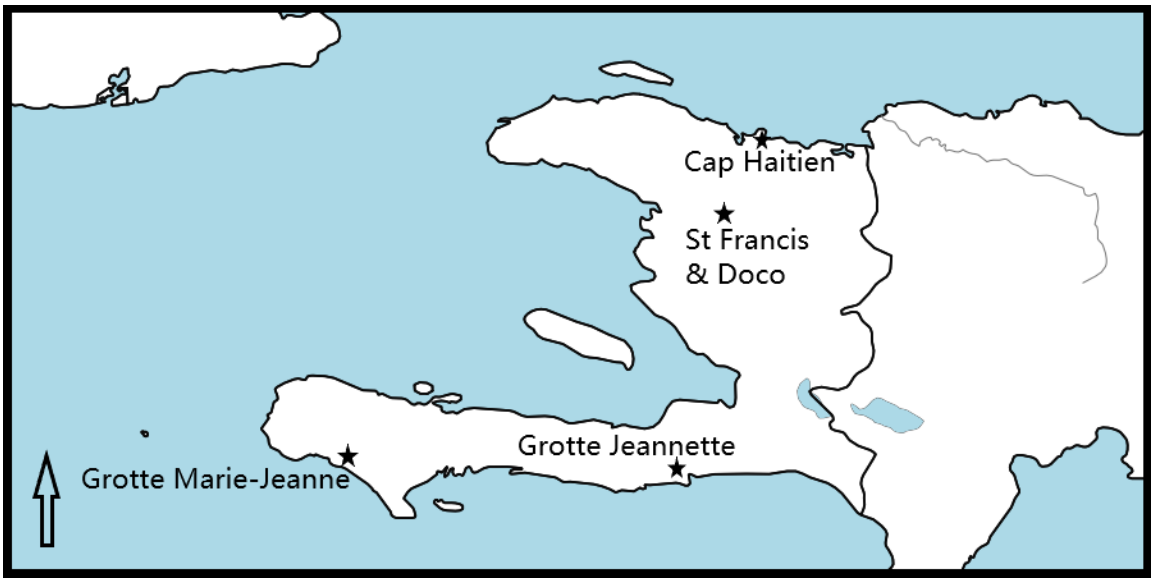

Figure 2 Map of Haiti showing the areas research was conducted. Map prepared with SimpleMappr (www.simplemappr.net/).

Material Culture

My first area of data collection focuses on recording the material remains left behind in the caves from Vodou ceremonies, and the tracking patterns and offerings in an attempt to interpret the activity that is occurring. Vodou ceremonies utilize unique paraphernalia and materials, and by documenting the material remains left behind after ceremonies I have been able to ascertain, in a general way, what ceremonies have taken place and their purpose. For example, every Vodou deity is represented with a different vèvè (sigil), and a careful examination can show to which lwa the ceremony was intended. Additionally, when appealing to the lwa, different offerings are made depending upon the request being mad. However, when a mambo or hougan (Vodou priest) enters a cave for a ceremony, the remains of previous ceremonies conducted by other practitioners are often swept away before the new ceremony begins, or after the current one is completed. One cave I entered had seven Vodou dolls left in various positions/conditions, all of which have different but specific meanings. By returning to the caves on a reoccurring basis I have been able to track their usage and the displacement of material remains, and create a database showing the usage patterns and how they may vary depending on geographic factors.

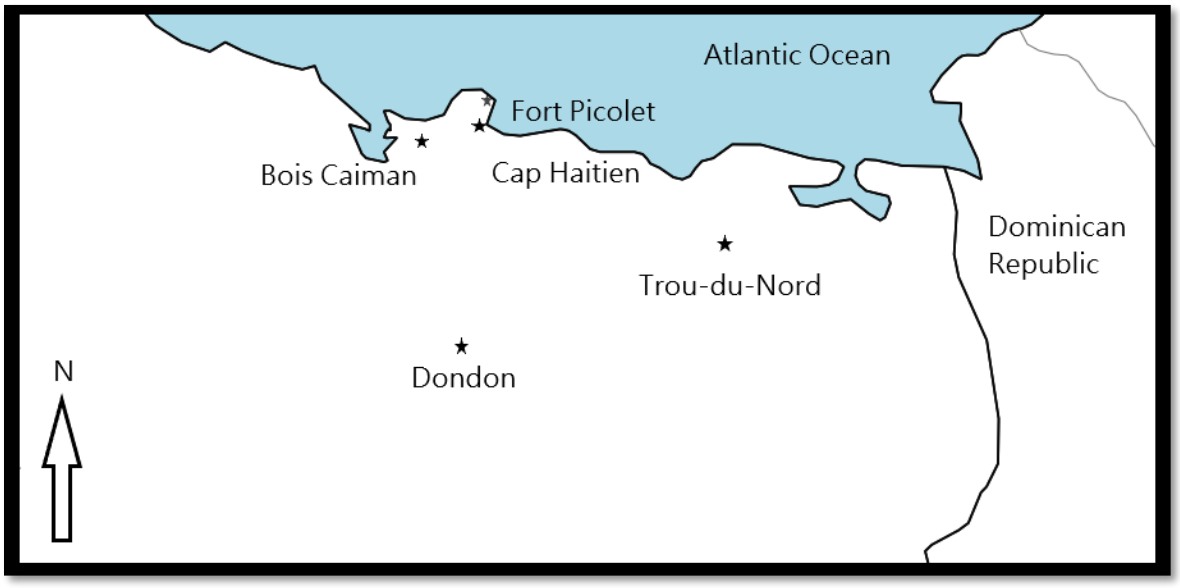

Figure 3 Map of the Cap Haitien area showing areas of research. Map prepared with SimpleMappr (www.simplemappr.net/).

Recording the material remains is a straightforward if time consuming process. Of the six caves I documented at Fort Picolet outside of Cap Haitien, I took fifty-four separate inventories, enabling me to track the accumulation of material remains in the caves over a month-long period in 2014 and make some inferences of use based on those remains. It was not unusual to find candles burning when entering the caves, indicating a Vodou ceremony had just been missed. These inventories have made it possible to

identify the movement of offerings between caves and to better understand the role of the "caretaker" in cave Vodou, something that has not been noted before. It has also made it possible to identify certain differences in ritual practices between the caves at Fort Picolet and those at Dondon, a site 30 kilometers to the south that is not on the coast or located close to a metropolitan area.

Observation at a Distance

My second area of data collection was to observe from a distance the activities that occur in the caves with special emphasis on the demographics of the worshipers, the patterns in the observed ritual circuits, and the frequency of use. Observation of groups as they move through public space, particularly at Fort Picolet, has helped to identify the spaces that are designated as sacred within the fort itself and to identify how frequently each cave is visited and what order the visits are made. For example, the caves I have identified as N005 and N-006 at Fort Picolet have never been visited while I was present, but material remains indicate that it is visited on at least a weekly basis, and I have found lit candles in both caves on several occasions. However, I have observed rituals being performed at the remaining four caves around the Fort.

Participant Observation

My third area of data collection was to attend as many ceremonies in the caves as possible as a participant-observer. Participation in ceremonies was of vital importance to this project but was also problematic. As a "*blan*[5]" or foreigner, contracting a ceremony with a local mambo or hougan runs the risk of research turning into theater, with the ceremony being something intended to entertain a tourist for cash and not an honest expression of religious belief. This became evident in January of 2014 when I contracted a cave ceremony with a well-known local mambo and ended up the center of a *Mèt Tet* ceremony that was intended to find my spirit father or "master of my head." While the ceremony appeared an accurate Mèt Tet ceremony, it was only performed in a cave at my request and I later learned such ceremonies are almost always performed in the Honfour (Vodou church). By making connections with local mambos and hougans who have shown interest in my project and a willingness to include me in their cave ceremonies when they arose, I was able to insert myself into the cave Vodou world at For Picolet on a limited basis.

A more practical approach to attending ceremonies turned out to be to simply ask members of the groups that visit Fort Picolet politely. Respect and rum (or other offerings) go far, and many people enjoyed the novelty of my presence, especially as I made no attempt to photograph the proceedings. This may be in part to my superficial resemblance to San Jak, the Catholic Saint Jacques Majeur. On one occasion I was

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[5] The literal translation of blan is "white", but it is used to describe all foreigners regardless of skin color. For example, I observed visiting African American medical staff in Les Cayes were called blan by Haitians.

included simply because I had matches, which the Vodou party had forgotten. On three occasions, small groups or individuals entered the caves to perform their ceremonies while I was working, and when I offered to vacate for them, they indicated that I could stay.

Interviews

The fourth, and most important area of data collection for this project, was to conduct ethnographic interviews in an attempt to define comprehensively the Haitian understanding of the sacredness of caves in Vodou. It was my intent to interview as many mambos and hougans as practical, and if possible, to interview bokors as well. One local bokor, known as "Willi Boko" claims control of two of the caves I visited above Cormier Plage, but I was never able to make contact with him.) While interviewing the hougans and mambos I asked them why caves are sacred, what ceremonies are performed in caves and why, and what are the origins of cave use as they understand it. They were also asked which spirits are associated with each cave, and why. With some caves it is easy to determine based on paint and other modification done to the caves, or by the artifacts left behind. For instance, the cave at Bois Caiman is the home of Ogou, which is immediately evident from the way the entire cave has been painted. In other caves, it was not as easy to determine which lwa they were associated with, and in fact different practitioners had different ideas on which spirit resides in a given cave. I also interviewed mambos and hougans who do not perform cave ceremonies to learn their thoughts on the activity. Learning the opinions and beliefs of those practitioners who are Vodou adherents but have decided not to participate in this practice gave me the valuable data on how the cave ceremonies are viewed in Haiti by the general population.

In addition to the hougans and mambos, I also interviewed as many lay Haitians as possible to learn their understanding of the caves as sacred space and find out why they travel to the caves to worship, or why they don't. Most of these interviews took place at Fort Picolet after they had performed their ceremonies, or at other pilgrimage sites around northern Haiti. I also interviewed the various cave caretakers I found. Every cave I have visited had some form of caretaker that has been assigned by the state, the community, or has taken the responsibility upon themselves. At Fort Picolet a small group of young homeless men who live in and around the fort attach themselves to groups that have walked out to perform ceremonies. It is customary for the person contracting the ceremony in these groups to give a small donation to the caretaker with the understanding that he would 'tidy up' the cave after the ceremony is performed as a courtesy to the spirit that lives in the cave. Watching and recording the impact these caretakers had on the modern material remains and attempting to find some "observed phenomena analogous to similar phenomena in the archaeological record" (Binford 1967, 8) could be of great use to archaeologists researching similar ancient activity.

The responses of the people I approached for interviews generally fell into one of five categories. Enthusiastic cooperation was by far the most common reaction I got when I explained my project. Most of the people I contacted were more than happy to participate in my research and were grateful for the opportunity to correct misinformation and to educate me in their beliefs. The second most common reaction was hesitant

cooperation. In a handful of cases, the people approached expressed misgiving about cooperation. I made no further attempts to persuade them to participate, however if they raised specific concerns, I did address them. This led to a few subjects that declined to be videotaped, declined to supply their names, or declined to answer certain questions[6]. It also led to individuals who had declined to be interviewed coming back latter and volunteering to be interviewed. The next most common reaction was simply politely declining to be involved in the project. When this happened, I made no attempt to change their minds or to determine why they were refusing, I simply respected their requests and politely wished them a good day. This was usually a friendly interaction. The least common reactions I received when approaching people near the caves was distrust, and animosity. Unfortunately, Haiti has been treated poorly by the outside world, and there is an understandable and justifiable distrust of foreigners in general and white males in particular that underlies most of my interactions with Haitians while I was there.

When I encountered distrust, I was honest about my project and intentions, and approximately half of the time, the individuals would agree to be interviewed. Those who did not agree were thanked for their time and I moved on. For the very few who were actively hostile towards me, I made no attempt to convince them to cooperate of to defend myself. In a few cases I was accused of stealing the secrets of Haitian Vodou, with the intent of either returning to the United States and practicing the faith, or of writing a book that would "make me a millionaire." In these cases, I made no further attempts to explain the dissertation process or academia, I simply respected their desire to be left alone and again, wished them a good day.

In the next five chapters I will describing the data collected during my research. In Chapter 4, I will start with defining what a cave is in this context and discuss the geology of Haiti and why there are so many caves there. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the ritual behavior observed both in the caves and at other sites, and the purposes behind those rituals. In Chapter 6, I detail the ceremonial remains used in Vodou and what has been left behind in the caves. Chapter 7 contains the results of the interviews with a representative sample of volunteers who agreed to speak with me about the caves. Chapter 8 discusses the effect that caretakers have on the caves, and how this might impact the archaeological record. In Chapter 9, I discuss the data collected and answer the research questions asked at the beginning of this dissertation.

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[6] There were also people who refused to answer certain questions simply because they wished to protect their "trade secrets" but were still willing and enthusiastic participants.

CHAPTER 4: THE CAVES

What is a Cave?

In July of 2013 I was taken by a guide who I would continue to work with over the next several years, Richnel Leconte, to see my first cave in Haiti at Fort Picolet outside of Cap Haitien. As we viewed what I would later designate cave N-001, I thought about what my understanding of the word 'cave' meant, and to mis-quote U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart (Stewart 1964, 197), "I know it when I see it… and this isn't it". The "cave" in question was an indentation in the karst hillside overlooking the ocean, roughly two meters high, 2.0 meters wide, and 1.5 meters deep. The entire "cave" was exposed to daylight, with no dark or twilight zones. I subsequently learned that overhangs, ledges, and even boulders are often included in the Haitian Kreyol term 'Gwòt', or cave, and that no real distinction is made in Vodou.

Geologists, archaeologists, speleologists, cave enthusiasts, and even the general public all have their own ideas regarding what constitutes a cave, and these definitions tend to address their own particular interest. For example, archaeologist James Brady's definition requires that caves be "humanly accessible natural cavities in the earth." (Brady and Veni 1992, 150). This reliance on human access and natural formation, while important to an archaeologist, is less important to a geologist. Likewise, the morphology of the cave has no importance in this context, and the average Vodousant visiting and worshiping in a cave doesn't care if the cave is a talus formation likes those at Fort Picolet and Bois Caiman, solutional caves such as those at Port-a-Piment and St Michel de l'Atalaye, or erosional caves like those at Dondon and Jacmel. And so, for this dissertation, I will use the term cave to designate any feature on the landscape that residents have identified to me as a Gwòt or Twou Woch (rock hole), and that houses a spirit[7]. This then raises the question of how big is a lwa, or "how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" It seems, based on the paraphernalia used in Vodou ritual, that the size of a spirit is variable, as demonstrated by the various sized chairs, or Ti Chez, used in binding (Chapter 6). This definition works well for this project, but please note I do realize a few of the following caves listed would not, strictly speaking, be considered caves by other disciplines.

Geology of Haiti

The Northern Department

The caves around Cap Haitian are located on a peninsula which juts out into the ocean to the north. The area of the peninsula closest to the city of Cap Haitian is composed of Cretaceous Period andesites (extrusive igneous, volcanic rock, intermediate

[7] During my time in Haiti I never observed or heard tell of a cave that did not have at least one spirit, although often people disagreed on which spirits lived where.

between basalt and dacite), dacites, and calcoalcaline rhyodacites which are typical of the Massif-du Nord (Northern Massif, the longest mountain range in Haiti), the Massif de Terre-Neuve, and of the North-West Peninsula in general. It is in these geological formations that the 'cave' Bois Caiman is located a well (Draper 1995).

Moving further inland, there is a small band of Cretaceous Period, Upper Senonian terrigenous deposits (slates and flysches of the Trois Rivières formation), conglomerates and limestones. The area the furthest north, and the area in which the caves of Fort Picolet, Labadie, and Comier are primarily located, is composed of Early-Middle Eocene conglomerates and volcanogenic sandstones typical of the Massif de la Selle (located along the southern region of Haiti), marls, sandstone, and marly limestone typical of the *Montagnes Noires* (Black Mountains), and platform limestones and pelagic limestones. It is this primarily limestone, karstic formations which has led to the larger number of talus caves around the fort (Draper 1995).

Dondon is located south of Cap Haitian on the opposite side the Massif-du-Nord on the edge of the Bouyaja River. This mountain range is an extension of the Cordillera Central in the Dominican Republic and extends to the northwestern tip of Haiti. While the Massif-du-Nord is primarily Cretaceous Period andesites, dacites, and calcoalcaline rhyodacites, the area around the river and around Dondon is composed of Upper-Middle Eocene pelagic biomicrite limestone (typical of the South Peninsula and the southern slope of the Massif-du-Nord), and the platform limestones typical of the Massif-du-Nord. The caves in this area consist or erosional caves near the river and talus caves further of the slopes of the hillsides (Draper 1995).

Artibonite Department

St. Michel de L'Atalaye is located in the northwestern edge of the Central Plateau of Haiti, between the Massif-du-Nord and the Montagnes-du-Nord. The areas surrounding this town are the same Upper-Middle Eocene pelagic biomicrite limestone, and platform limestones of the area around Dondon. This area is predominantly flat alluvial plains, with some isolated hills in which solutional caves, such as Doco and Saint Francis can be found (Draper 1995).

Department of the South-East

In the Southern Peninsula of Haiti, on the south coast and on the edge of the Massif de la Selle, Jacmel is surrounded by Upper-Middle Eocene pelagic biomicrite limestone (typical of the South Peninsula), and the platform limestones of the Massif-du-Nord. The hills around Jacmel are a complex of Creatceous tholeitic and sedimentary castings, as well as marls and marly limestones, clays and volcanic rocks, pelagic limestones. However, the caves in this area are all located in the biocrimite and platform limestone formations on the edges of ravines and rivers (Draper 1995).

Department of the South-West

In the western portion of the Southern Peninsula, the Massif de la Hotte contains the same complex of tholeitic and sedimentary castings, as well as marls and marly limestones, clays and volcanic rocks, pelagic limestones as the area around Jacmel. On the southern edge of the Massif de la Hotte, Gwòt Marie-Jeanne, near the town of Port-a-Piment is located in an outcropping of Middle Miocene peletic sandstone (typical of the Central Plateau), calcareous sandstone (typical of the Gros Morne Basin), and platform limestones (Draper 1995).

The caves on Hispaniola have been a place of religious practice for at least 500 years. The Taíno Hero Myth tells the story of the peopling of the island. In it two caves are found on the side of a mountain, one Cacibajagua (the Jaguar Cave) and the other Amayauna (the cave that is not important). The people who populated the island sprung from Cacibajuagu, and spread across the island, and caves were access points to the underworld, much like in the the Q'eqchi' Maya Hero Twins myth. While the Taíno did not live in caves, they did use them as places of sanctuary and for ritual purposes. (Stevens-Arroyo 2006, 136-139: Tedlock, 1996 : De Booy 1912,87). Las Casas noted that during the conquest Taíno people would hide in the caves to avoid the Spanish (Las Casas 1971, 123), much as the Zimbabwe people used them to hide from the English 400 years later (Ranger 2012, 312) and it is quite possible that the African slaves brought to the island did the same thing, either concurrently with the Taíno or after their decline. In my own experience, the caves are still used occasionally as places of refuge, now by criminals sought by the police and homeless people.

However, caves are no longer an access point to the underworld in Haiti. That role is reserved for the cemeteries and graveyards where Baron Samedi and his wife, Maman Brigette resides along with all of the Ghede spirits. Prayers and offerings to ancestors and deceased family members are made at there, and access to the underworld/afterlife is only possible in these burial sites (Métraux 1972, 114).

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Overview of the Caves

The caves have been numbered based on their location in the country and the order in which I first recorded them. Therefore, cave N-001 was the first cave I visited in North Haiti. SW-002 is the second cave I recorded in Southwest Haiti. This numbering system is only used in my research. The longitude and latitudes given are accurate to within three meters based on the accuracy of the GPS device used. This accuracy is more than adequate for locating the caves. The coordinates for N-014 and N-015 are accurate to within one Kilometer. Because these two caves are reportedly used by a single bokor, only the general location is given to preserve some privacy. All the other caves are open to the public, either for free or for a fee, so privacy is not an issue for them.

The Caves of Fort Picolet

Figure 4 Fort Picolet. The approach to the fort is through the surf at the bottom of the bluff. The French colonial powers began construction on Fort Picolet in 1736, and it was completed in 1741 (Haitian Observer, 2013).

Cave N-001

Cave N-001 (**Error! Reference source not found.**), N19.783256° W72.189853°, is the first cave in Haiti that I visited and is the second most visited cave at Fort Picolet. The cave is readily visible from the back of the fort and has a large flat area in front of it that is often used for ceremonies. The cave overlooks the Atlantic Ocean, and according to most visitors is the home of Ogou, the lwa of iron, tobacco, rum, politics, and the warrior. Most of the debris left behind after Vodou ceremonies tends to support this, with rum, candles, and hot peppers being common items found. At least one of the young men that lives at the fort occasionally sleeps in the cave on the shelf in the back, as I have found his cardboard mattresses in there a few times. The tree root that drops straight down from above and splits the entrance is used as a *poto mitan*, or center post (Figure 5). The poto mitan is the center post in a honfour and connects the real and spirit worlds. In this case, it was extremely common to find votive offerings and Vodou dolls bound to the roots. The roots were cut down in 2016 by someone.

Figure 5 Cave N-001. Note the tree root that drops straight down in front of the cave. This is used by some as a *Poto Mitan*, or center post. This post connects the real world with the spiritual, and often is the focus of ceremonies.

Cave N-002

Cave N-002 (**Error! Reference source not found.**, Figure 6), N19.78313° W72.18969°, is located 50 meters south of N-001 on the same slope, and it also overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. People have differing opinions on which of the lwa reside in this cave. I have been told Gran Boa, Lenglensou Bassin (the heart of Jesus). La Siren, and Damballah. The Turquoise paint and view of the ocean tend to support the idea that La Siren is the lwa in residence, but there is no consensus (Figure 7).

Figure 6 N-002 from the outside.

Figure 7 Richnel Leconte and I examining the material left in the caves. Note the turquoise paint and extensive soot deposits on the cave ceiling N-002.

Cave N-003: Gwòt Klemzine

N-003, or Gwòt Klemzine (**Error! Reference source not found.**), N19.78270° W72.18997°, is the largest cave I visited at Fort Picolet and was also the cave most visited by groups and the cave used for the longest periods of time. A talus cave formed by the collapse of the coastal rock face, the entrance is a slot running across the hillside that measures four meters long and one and a half meter wide. Access is via an old aluminum ladder lashed in place at one end (Figure 8). It has a small open area at the transition between twilight and dark zone that is the primary use area and is marked A on the profile. There is a rickety wooden ladder made from lumber scraps that drops down from A to B. The location marked A is the primary ceremonial site, and B is where the trash and offerings are thrown during and after ceremonies. There are several other niches in the dark zone that get occasional use. Material from ceremonies at site A are usually thrown down into the dark zone area marked B. Signs of Vodou offerings were found as far back into the cave as I was able to access but very few people go past the A site. Interestingly, I never observed a Haitian using a flashlight in the cave. Navigation was usually accomplished in total darkness, by candle or lantern light, or occasionally by cellphone light.

Figure 8 Descending into Gwòt Klemzine using the aluminum ladders. Photo by Marieka Arksey.

Cave N-004: Agwe

Most of the people interviewed identified N-004 (**Error! Reference source not found.**), N19.78317° W72.18940°, as the home of Agwe. A few people stated that it was not Agwe but his wife, La Siren, who resided there. Agwe and La Siren are the primary male and female ocean spirits. Agwe is usually represented as an older man with a beard, and his vèvè is his ship, Imamou (Figure 9). La Siren is a mermaid, and is sometimes paired with St Philomene, although some say they are sisters, and not the same lwa. Candles are burned in the "cave", which is just an overhang but does help to block the wind. Some offerings are left there as well, but most are simply tossed into the ocean which is only two or three meters away.

Figure 9 N-004. Photo taken with back to the ocean. The area occasionally is subject to high surf washing away offerings. The blue and white paint represent Agwe and his ship, Imamou. The paint here appears to be Agwe's vèvè, Imamou, turned upside down.

Cave N-005

Most of the visitors to Fort Picolet walk past N-005 (**Error! Reference source not found.**) which is within the fort, N19.78275° W72.189318°, without realizing it is that, and I myself did the same for my first 15 visits. One day, while walking to Gwòt Klemzine, I was suddenly struck by the overpowering odor of klerin. Klerin is a raw, unfiltered rum made from sugarcane juice by small, cottage industry producers. The primary rum of Haiti, Barbancourt (pronounced "ba-ba-coo") is far too expensive for many Haitians, but klerin can be purchased for a fraction of the price and is just as potent. I began sniffing around the area to the amusement of my associates and followed my nose to the cave entrance. The entrance is quite narrow, and only one person may enter at a time (Figure 10). About 4 meters in the cave I found candles, rum bottles, and bound underwear.

The only person I spoke with that claimed to know the identity of the resident lwa in this cave said that it was the home of the Marrassa twins, two of the most dangerous lwa. The only Marrassa artifact that I found in any cave in Haiti were located in N-003 (Gwòt Klemzine), not this cave. That artifact was a set of three jars seen in chapter six.

Figure 10 The entrance to N-005 is somewhat obscured. This photo was taken while standing on the main path through the fort.

Cave N-006

Cave N-006 (**Error! Reference source not found.**), N19.782505° W72.189971°, lies on the slope above Gwòt Klemzine, and there is no clear trail up to it. The cave is a small chamber created by large boulders that have tumbled down from the hillside above and has been painted in spots with red and yellow paint to represent Ti Jean Dantor. Very little material is left behind here, and the cave appears to be used seldomly.

Figure 11 Aerial view of Fort Picolet with the cave locations marked. Photo from Haitianobserver.com.

Most of the people observed using the caves at the fort would visit N-004 first, then N-001, N-002, and N-003. Most visitors were not aware of the existence of N-005 or N-006. On rare occasions, a person or group would arrive and go straight to either N-001 or N-003 and not visit any other cave.

The Other Caves

Cave N-007: Bois Caiman

The Cave Bois Caiman (**Error! Reference source not found.**), N19.732557° W72.272561°, is located one kilometer north of the village Bois Caiman, the site historically linked with the start of the Haitian revolution. That site is located nine kilometers southwest of Cap Haitien. The cave is managed by Zazu (discussed below) who routinely cleans any debris left behind out of the cave. The cave is the home of Ogou Feray and is rumored to have been a hiding place for Dutty Boukman, the hougan who led the Vodou ceremony that started the revolution. The cave is created by several gigantic boulders and is open to the sky in most places (Figure 12). There is a very thin stream of water that runs through it, and the water is said to have powers.

Figure 12 View of Bois Caiman Cave from the outside. The red and blue paint, which mimics the Haitian flag and represents Ogou, continues inside.

Cave N-008: Voutamenge

Voutamenge, N19.52374° W72.26751°, is located on the southern bank of the Riviere Bouyaja outside of Dondon. To reach the cave, you must wade two and a half kilometers through the Riviere Bouyaja in water that varies from ankle to thigh deep. According to one local bokor who claims to use the cave often, it is the home of Damballah, the snake lwa. The cave is in the area being developed for tourism, and some attempt has been made to create trails out to the cave (Figure 13). The area marked A on the profile (**Error! Reference source not found.**) is where most of the ceremonies occur, and years of offerings have built up and litter the floor. The tree roots that descend through the chimney are used as a poto mitan, and over the years I have found numerous offerings tied or woven into them (Figure 14). The A area is, depending on the position of the sun, a dark zone or almost dark zone. When the sun is directly overhead some light penetrates through the chimney, otherwise it is total darkness. The area marked B is in the light zone, and had a large, flattop boulder that is used as an altar. The debris left in this area is considerably less. It was here that the large Damballah vèvè drawn by Henri was found (discussed below).

Figure 13 The entrance to Voutamenge. Note the concrete steps leading up to the cave from the river bank.

Figure 14 Inside Voutamange. Tree roots serving as a poto mitan at the back of the cave. I have found full rum bottles, chickens, and other offerings tied to the roots. On several occasions I have found snakes in the cave and in the roots, which would be in keeping with the home

Figure 15 Zemi carvings inside Voutamenge

In Voutamenge zemi face carvings adorn the rocks near the cave entrance (Beauvoir-Dominique, 2009:81, Rouse:1992:118). The term" zemi" refers not only the spirits of the Taíno religion, but also any figurine or physical depiction of them (Rouse:1992:13). The local residents have told me the faces were those of the original "Indian spirits" (they did not know the words "zemi or Taíno), and that offerings are made to them, usually candles, before entering the caves. These offerings are made

before the usual offerings and prayers to Legba. Legba is the gatekeeper to the spirits in Vodou, and all Vodou ceremonies begin and end with prayers and offerings to him. Since these offerings are made prior to the prayers to Legba, it means these spirits are somehow "outside" of Vodou, while still being worshiped. On inspection of the faces, it appears that they have been "refreshed" with sharp tools recently. I also noted candle offerings near the faces on every one of my visits to Voutamenge.

Cave N-011: Doco and Cave N-012: Saint Francis

Figure 16 The entrance to Doco Cave

Figure 17 The entrance to St Francis Cave

Every year from July 17th to July 24th, the town of St Michel de l'Atalaye in central Haiti hosts a festival for St Francis in the caves about the town. The caves are owned by a local business man, and he rents out space to merchants and large groups for camping. I rented a space from him in 2016 and set up a small office to interview volunteers. The two main caves, Doco (Figure 16), N19.391848° W72.312784°, and St Francis (Figure 17), N19.391848° W72.313047°, are significantly larger than those around Cap Haitien or Dondon, and while I was there I saw over a thousand pilgrims and dozens of dance troupes, including a few that I was familiar with from the Cap Haitien area. Over the one-week period, groups were shuffled in and out of the caves based on a tight schedule, ceremonies were conducted inside the caves and in the surrounding area.

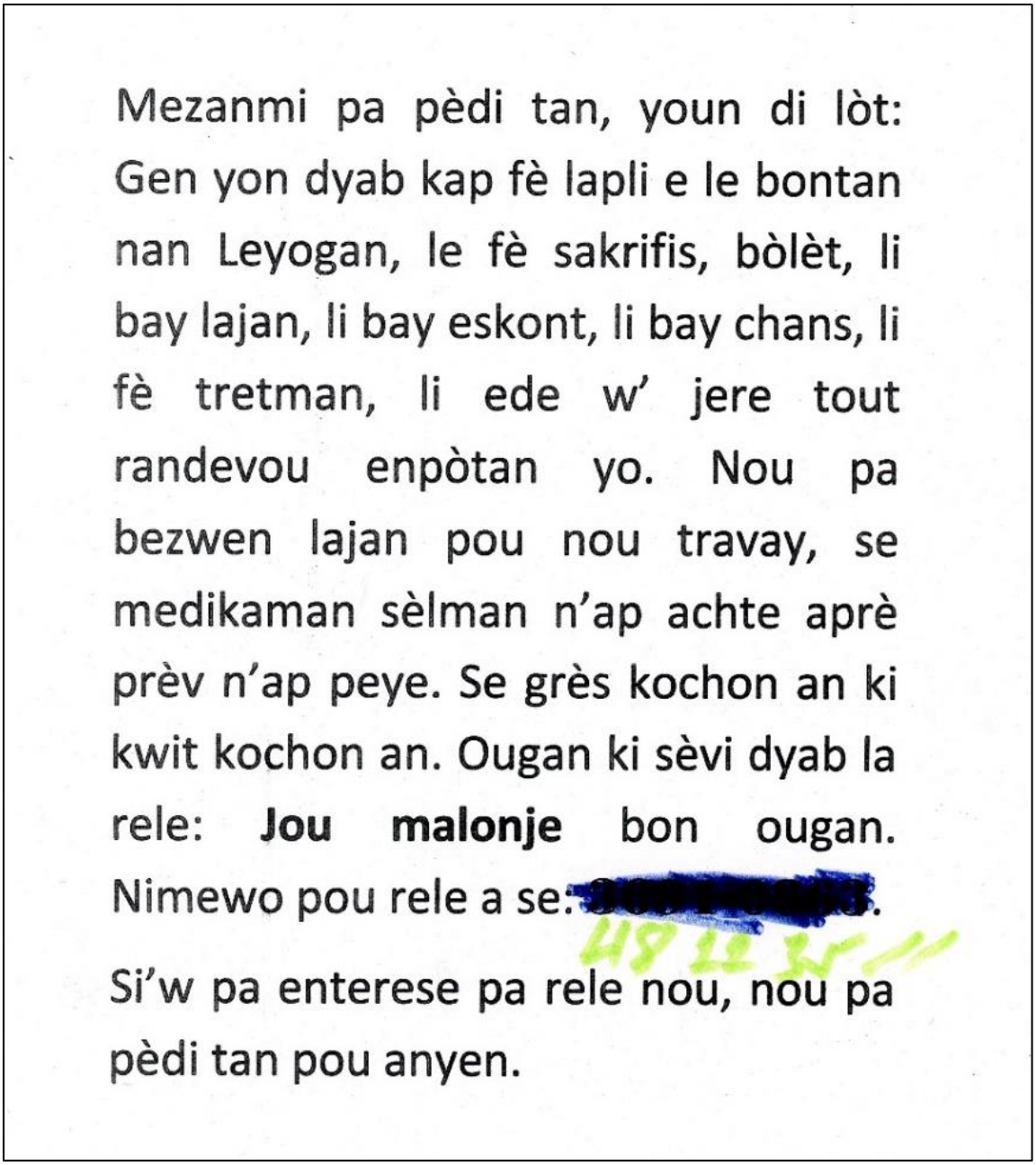

Figure 18 Scan of flyer handed out at the St Francis festival in St Michel de L'attalaye.

Numerous hougans, mambos, and bokors were there, working the crowd to drum up business. At one point a young man thrust a piece of paper in my hand, and when I read it I saw that it was a flyer for a hougans services (Figure 18). It translates as:

> "Beloved do not delay, tell one and other: There is a demon that brought rain for a long time to Leogane, and with sacrifice and proper treatment can give you lottery numbers, money, discounts, and can assist you with all important things. We do not need money for our work only for the

> medicine we are buying but you must pay in advance. It is the pig's fat that will cook the pig. The Ougan who uses the demon's spirit is: Day Malonge, a good Ougan. The number to call is 48-12-35-11. If you are not interested do not call us, we do not waste time for nothing".

One phrase, *Se grès kochon an ki kwit kochon an* translates as: "It is the pig's fat that will cook the pig". A Haitian proverb that references being able to support yourself without outside help. It is similar to 'God helps those who help themselves' in meaning.

Cave N-014: Makanal and Cave N-015: Comier

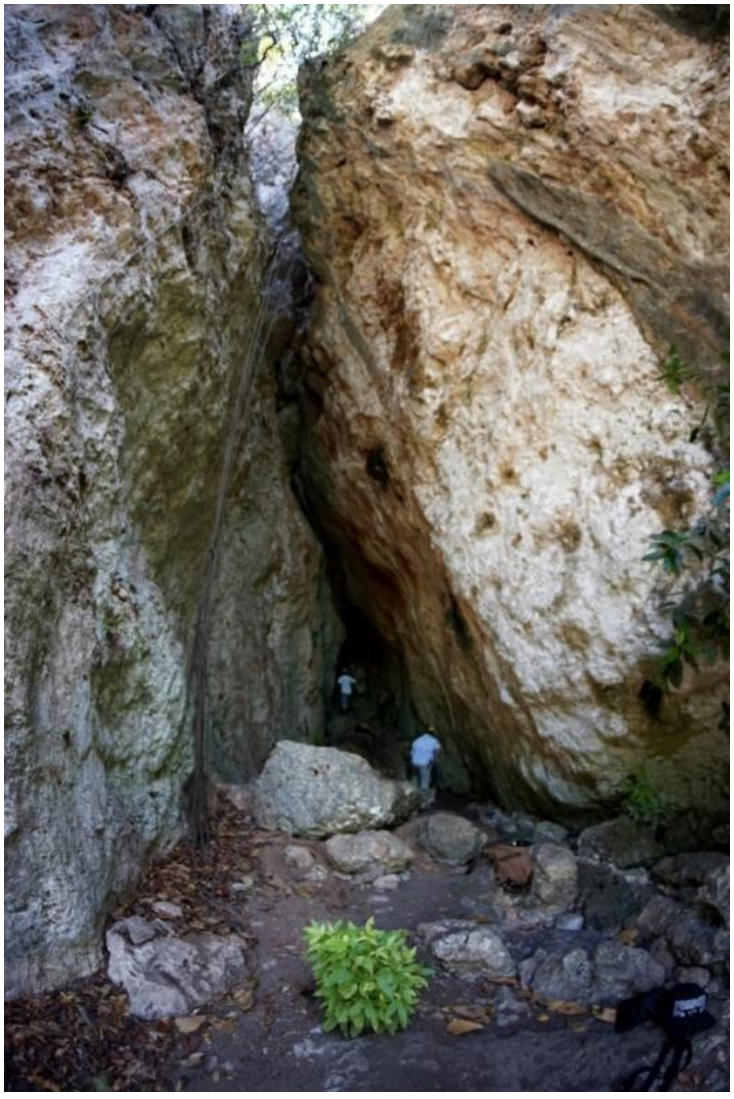

Figure 19 Cave N-014, Makanal.

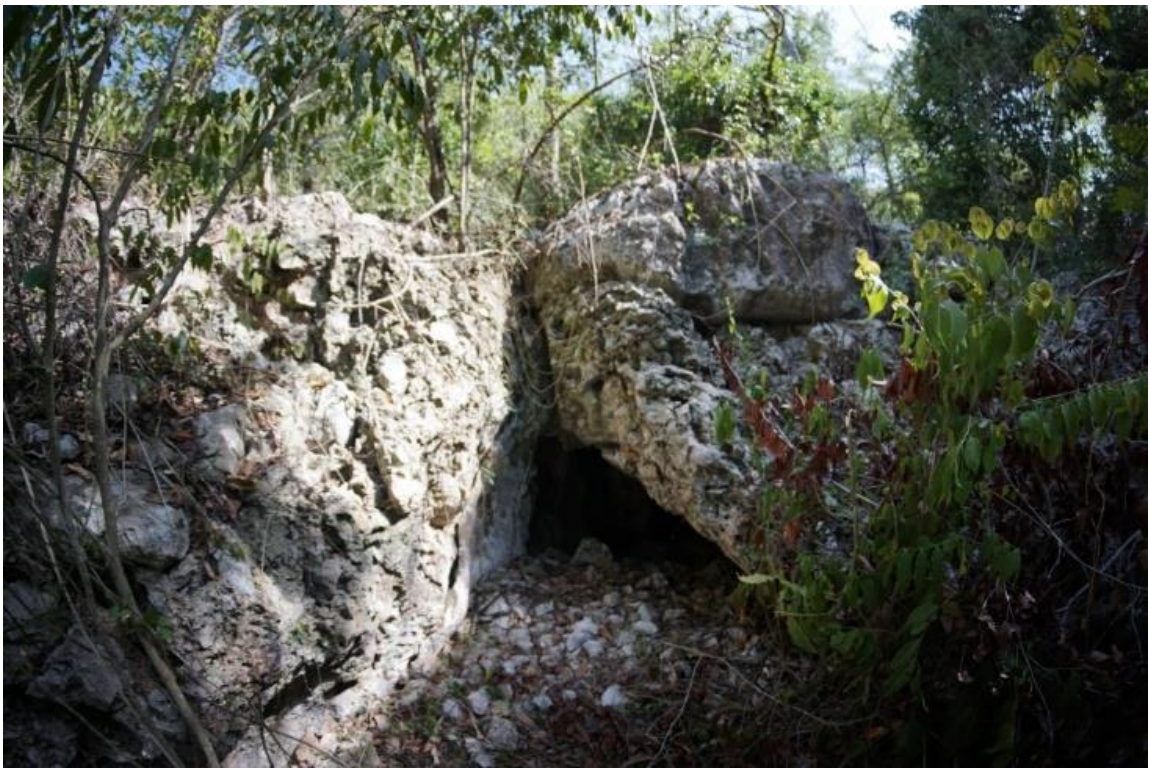

Figure 20 Cave N-015, Comier.

Caves N-014 (Makanal, Figure 19) N19.778° W72.221°, and N-015 (Comier, Figure 20), N19.778° W72.220°, are located on a hillside approximately 1 kilometer from the shore about Comier Plage on the Atlantic Coast. Both caves are extremely difficult to get to. A local farmer who showed the caves to me told me that the only person who used them was “Willie Boko”, a bokor from Cap Haitien. I attempted several times to contact Willie Boko, but he never returned my calls. The caves showed little accumulation of material, which would be in keeping with a single user. Because of the private nature of the caves and their single user, I did not photograph the interior and the GPS coordinates given are only accurate to one kilometer.

Cave SE-001: Grotte Jeannette

Figure 21 "Jeannette Cave, two hours from Bassin Bleu. Wow! Very Remarkable to the eye."

Grotte Jeannette, N18.23075° W72.60875°, is in the hills about Jacmel in the Southwest of Haiti. As I approached it in my car, I saw a sign (Figure 21) advertising the cave and stopped. I was immediately approached by a group of children, and hired them to guide me to the cave, which was about a kilometer from the roadway. On the way to the cave, I asked them about Vodou being practiced in the cave. They told me that a local hougan used the cave, but that he was a *fwod* (fraud) and no one in the local village would use him. He catered to rich people from Jacmel and would often hire someone from the village to hide in the cave and make sounds when he had customers, impersonating the lwa. They also told me there were other, real hougans and mambos in the area, but they did know if any of them used the cave. The declined to introduce me to any of these people.

Figure 22 Inside Jeannette. The cave consists of approximately 80 meters of crossing tunnels such as this, with at least 3 exits.

Figure 23 Inside Jeannette. Painting of a left eye inside the cave.

Inside the cave I found rum, wine, and other bottles consistent with Vodou use, along with bowls, knives, rope, perfume bottles, cattle bones, and other paraphernalia (Figure 22). The collection of material was much less than that noted in the northern caves, and there were no dolls or chairs, although these were available in the local market in Jacmel. There were also paintings on the wall that were close to the highest concentrations of debris (Figure 23, Figure 24).

Figure 24 Inside Jeannette. Painting of a flower inside the cave, signed by “Manu”.

Cave SW-001: Marie-Jeanne

Figure 25 Information sign posted at the entrance to the Grotte Marie-Jeanne.

I first visited Grotte Marie-Jeanne, N18.253371° W74.094881°, in the summer of 2013 on my first visit to Haiti. I was guided by Jean Baptist, the chief guide for the area (discussed below). The cave is located on the hillside overlooking the town of Port-a Piment, approximately 500 meters from the Caribbean Sea. The cave is the largest in Haiti and is being developed for tourism (Figure 25).

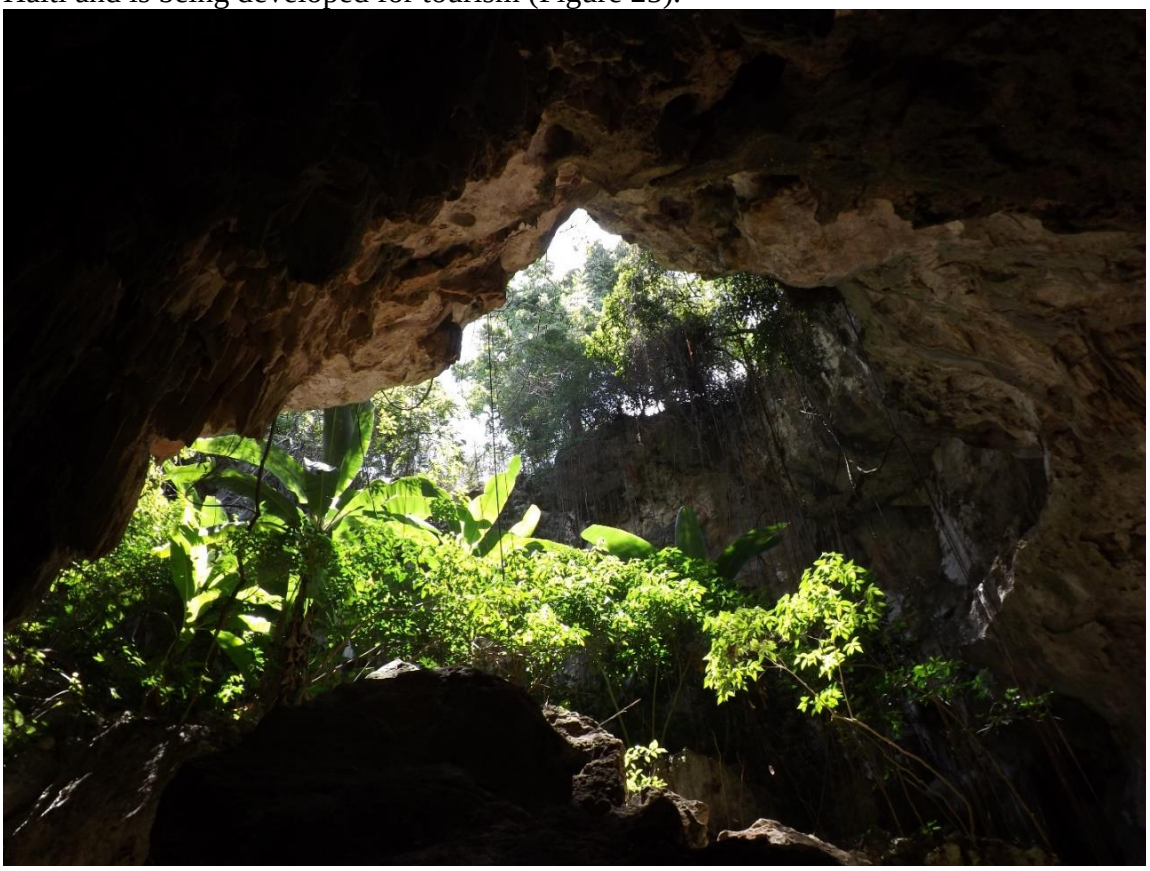

Figure 26 Inside Grotte Marie-Jeanne showing the sinkhole rim in the background.

The cave system consists of a central sinkhole with four arms radiating off of it (Figure 26). The cave has been cleaned, and the only material left behind are some graffiti on the walls and three objects: a chicken bone, a ceramic sherd, and a bouquet of plastic flowers. All of these items are kept in out of the way places and pulled out to show tourists. The sinkhole is the entrance to the cave and has been fenced off to control access. At the tourist entrance there is a locked gate. Inside the gate are a set of metal steps descending to the sinkhole floor, and outside the gate is a metal platform that anyone can access. On both my visits I saw evidence of ceremonial use, including candle wax and a string of rosary beads. Inside the gate, near the bottom of the stairs, I noted a broken Barbancourt rum bottle, that may have been thrown in from outside the gate.

Figure 27 A photograph of me inside the Grotte Marie-Jeanne.

The area has several other caves that are entered by descending into sinkholes, one of which was located about twenty meters from the locked gate. At the time I had no caving gear except a helmet and descending the five meters into the cave was not possible (Figure 27). From the rim it was possible to see numerous broken bottles and other evidence of ceremonial use, and there was some melted wax on rocks near the rim. I was told by Jean-Baptist that there were other caves in the area that were used for Vodou, but he would not guide me to them.

CHAPTER 5: THE RITUALS

Mèt Tet Ceremony

On Sunday, January 5th, 2014 Richnel arrived at my hotel (Hotel du Roi Christophe, Cap Haitien) at about 11:00 am, saying things were ready to go. I had met Richnel the summer before when I had arranged for a guide and driver through an online tour company called Destination North Haiti (http://destinationnorthhaiti.com/). Richnel had been a great guide and friend, and it was natural to have him arrange a cave ceremony for my wife and I through his employer, "Mr. William". He had brought his wife and teenage daughter with him and told me his wife is also a mambo. From my conversations with Richnel the previous summer I knew him to be an earnest believer in Vodou, and he had told me on several occasions that he, while not a hougan, was "very powerful" in Vodou and "had a spirit". All three were dressed in casual clothing, with Richnel wearing jean shorts and a yellow t-shirt. He asked me if I wanted to change into some old clothes, as the ones I was wearing were too nice. I told him that I was fine, as I was wearing my customary Hawaiian shirt and khakis. In fact, I had been worried that I was under dressed, so this reassured me greatly.

In the car on the way to pick up the mambo I asked him if he knew which cave we were going to. He told me it was the large cave we had visited together the summer before (Gwòt Klemzine). Klemzine is a female Petro lwa associated with healing water-related injuries and illnesses (Brown 1991, 227). This includes fishing related injuries, but also any sicknesses associated with bodily fluids such as having your blood "out of balance" or "too hot", a common affliction in Haiti (Davis 1985, 19). The previous summer I had spent some time at a pharmacist with Richnel while he waited to get a B12 injection to cure his blood being "out of balance". I later learned from several Vodousants that Klemzine is also commonly petitioned for those seeking justice, such as to free family members who have been wrongfully incarcerated.

I drove across the Rivière Mapou and parked off of Route Nationale 3 and walked several hundred meters to the mambo's house, located in La Petite Anse. The walk back was through a warren like maze of narrow passages where, in some spots I was required to slide through sidewise as the alleyways were so constricted by the concrete block homes on either side. When we arrived, we were all introduced, and I noticed that Mambo Manolita and Richnel's wife did not shake hands or acknowledge each other, although his daughter did greet Manolita.

Mambo Manolita was dressed all in white, with a white dress and white scarf on her head. She also wore two strings of brightly colored beads around her neck. The rest of the group were dressed in casual street clothing.

Richnel and the mambo had a short discussion, and I detected signs of consternation coming from Mambo Manolita. I asked Richnel if there was a problem, and he told me that Mr. William had arraigned for the ceremony but had neglected to tell the mambo that it was supposed to occur in a cave. After a short discussion, Richnel told me everything was taken care of and we would be leaving as soon as the tap-tap arrived. This particular tap-tap was a Toyota pickup with a modified camper shell on the back. The camper shell was raised about a meter above the sides of the truck and supported by

a frame of thin metal tubes welded to the truck bed. Their name comes from the practice of tapping the side of truck twice to signal the driver when a stop is requested. My wife, Marieka Arksey, Richnel, his wife and daughter, and Mambo Manolita all got into my rental car. Mambo Manolita's entourage, which consisted of eight women and four men, three of whom had drums, got into the tap-tap, and a fifth man drove. We drove out to Rival Beach, which is the closest point to Fort Picolet that you can drive to. On the way to the beach we stopped at a bakery in town to pick up a cake as an offering. The cake was white with white frosting, and heart shaped.

The beach was deserted, and the tide was high. When I had been here in July the beach had been packed with Haitians enjoying the water, so seeing it abandoned was unexpected. In order to get to the fort, we had to walk through the surf, which was knee deep in spots. The drummers had a short conversation with Mambo Manolita, then turned and started hiking back the way we came. I asked Richnel what was happening, and he told me the drummers were leaving because they were afraid of getting their drums wet, thereby ruining them. Mambo Manolita assured me that our ceremony would be successful without drummers. In the years since, I have never observed anyone taking drums out to Fort Picolet, or into any other cave except for Doco Cave during a festival.

Before we left the vehicles, I read aloud to them the consent document I had prepared, and Richnel read it to the group in Kreyol in accordance with my Institutional Review Board (IRB) stipulations for consent. Everyone present agreed to participate and gave permission to be photographed and videotaped and joked that they would be photographing and filming me as well with their cell phones, which of course I agreed to. The group began the walk out to the fort, which lies on a promontory at the entrance to the bay. Several members of the group carried large bags or baskets, and one carried the cake in a pink box from the bakery. The mambo carried her *Coco Macaque*, which is a magical walking stick carved with a human face near the top. People believe that some, but not all Coco Macaques have spirits that live inside them. A mambo or hougan who possesses one of these can send it on magical errands at night and striking someone with the stick will ensure their deaths within 24 hours (Métraux 1972, 311) Whether or not this particular stick had special powers was not mentioned, but the stick did have a black scarf tied around the top so as to resemble a top hat[8].

The walk out from Rival Beach to Fort Picolet is about one kilometer. Roughly two thirds of the way out we stopped at a large rock that blocked the view of the ocean, and Mambo Manolita lit a white taper candle in a small, natural alcove there. I could tell that this is a common event, as the alcove and the area around it were covered with melted candle wax and littered with burnt matchsticks. The rock was roughly the size of a four-story building and was the most prominent geological feature on the walk out to the fort. I also noted that there were dozens of small pills scattered in the area that must have been left since the last rain (three days before). I later looked them up in the Physician's Desk Reference (PDR) and saw they were diclofenac sodium (75mg) and are used to treat arthritis.

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[8] Several years later I was informed by Mambo Manolita that her stick was in fact capable of midnight errands and inflicting death.

We continued the walk until we reached the concrete steps that lead from the shore up to the fort. The original road to the fort had washed away decades before, and this was the only approach. Mambo Manolita gathered her entourage together, and the group began singing while she lit a white candle and placed it on the first step. The group continued to sing as we went up the steps and walked the last 25 meters to the main gate of Fort Picolet (Figure 28). As we walked Richnel told me that the group was singing so that the lwa in the caves above the fort would know we were coming and would not be surprised at our arrival.

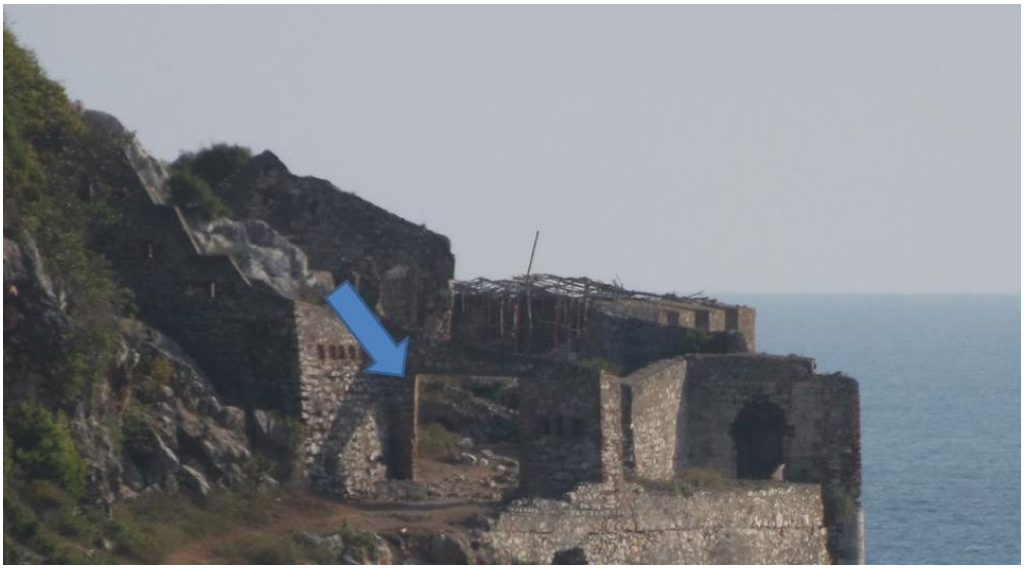

Figure 28 The main gate to Fort Picolet

At the gate we stopped to perform a ceremony. I was given a white enameled metal cup, and klerin, a raw cottage-industry, agricole rum, was poured into it. Agricole rum is made by distilling fermented sugar cane juice, not from processed sugar or molasses like other rums. (Smith 2005, 219) I was told to drink some, then to pour three small drops across the entranceway. I did and handed it back to the mambo. She took a drink, poured three small drops again, then took another mouthful and sprayed it on the black candles that had been lit on either side of the gate in small alcoves made of fallen stone. The klerin flamed brightly. I was given the cup back and told to repeat what she had done. While we did this, the group had continued to sing. After the klerin, the mambo lit a Haitian cigar and placed it in my mouth, the first of many that day. The group stopped singing, and the mambo began a low chant while shaking her *ason*, a rattle made from a dried gourd.

The group packed up and began walking through the fort. The caves are located on the hillside behind the fort, but the easiest way to access them is from the far side of the fort. As we walked, the group continued to sing. I noticed that Richnel's wife did not sing, although both he and his daughter did.

As we walked, we were joined by a Haitian man wearing only boxer briefs who appeared to be in his early 20's. Richnel told me that he was one of several men that lived in the ruins and would join groups coming out to perform ceremonies. We would be

expected to pay him about 5 US dollars at the completion of the ceremony to clean up afterwards, so I should be ready for that. I later learned his name is Boudry, and on several occasions over the next few years spoke with him regarding his history and activity in the caves of Fort Picolet. In Chapter 6 I will talk more about Boudry.

At the entrance to the cave the group stopped singing and began to unpack their bags. We then went down the aluminum ladder to the entrance chamber of the cave, with the mambo going first. When we arrived in the cave my wife and I wedged ourselves into crevices on one side so as not to be in the way and began taking photographs and filming. As the group began singing a new song, they spread out to form a circle, and the sole male in Manolita's entourage (not counting myself, Boudry, or Richnel) began to draw a vèvè on the cave floor while others lit white candles. Because of the nature of the cave, the transition from the twilight zone to total darkness is very abrupt, and the location selected in the cave was right at this transition. It was unclear if the location was chosen because of some ideological reason or simple practicality. In the years since I have observed that roughly 90% of the ceremonies conducted in this particular cave are at this same spot.

The vèvè represented Papa Legba (Vokes 2007, 78-79) but was the most minimalistic vèvè I have ever seen in use. As soon as the vèvè was completed the mambo placed a large shallow basket called a layel (about 80 cm across) over the vèvè, covered it with a white cloth, then poured candy and popcorn into it (Figure 29). She brushed a clear spot in the middle, and then placed the heart shaped white cake we had purchased in the center.

Figure 29 Layel filled with popcorn and candy, surrounded by champagne, whiskey, perfume and soda rouge.

The basket was surrounded with items that Mambo Manolita told me were there to appeal to different lwa; bottles of perfume, cans of Hombre body spray (an aerosol cologne for men from the Dominican Republic) , two bottles of rum, a one gallon plastic jug of klerin, a one gallon jug of cold coffee, three Corona beer bottles that had been filled with a sweet red syrup called soda rouge, one bottle of whisky, and one bottle of champagne, several lit candles, and a piece of sisal rope.

At this point I pulled from my camera bag a bottle of Barbancourt 5-star rum to contribute. This was received with appreciation and applause by the group, which surprised me. The mambo silenced everyone, then began a low chant as she made passing motions with first her *ason*, then with a lit white candle, over the basket. She came over to me and began pulling on my shirt. Richnel informed me that since I had commissioned the ceremony, I had to sit in the center. Although this was not what I had in mind, I did not feel I could refuse without insulting the people there, so I gave my camera to my wife and fellow anthropologist, Marieka Arksey, and sat on a large rock near the mambo. I had my face towards the entrance, and 1 meter behind me was a four meter drop further into the cave and the dark zone. Directly behind me was the top rung of a homemade ladder that appeared unstable and incapable of bearing the weight of a child, let alone a person

of my dimensions[9]. Richnel stood beside me to translate and explain to me what was going on.

The first song sung was to Papa Legba, asking him to join us. Legba is the gatekeeper in Vodou, and all ceremonies begin and end with a request to Legba to open the door between the real and spirit worlds (Métraux 1972). If Legba declines to open the door, no ceremony can occur. As with most Vodou songs, it was repetitious and had to be sung three times. Legba did not appear (i.e., no one was "mounted" or possessed by him) and we continued the ceremony. Richnel told me that Papa Legba often will open the gate for other lwa but not appear himself. The mambo began a long process of making offerings to the lwa. The offering process consisted of opening a bottle, having me take a large drink which she ensured was large enough by holding the bottle back and forcing me to either drink or choke. After I drank, three small drops were poured on the ground, then Mambo Manolita handed the bottle to me and I was instructed to take a second drink and make three small pours, left, right and center. I passed the bottle back to the mambo, who then poured roughly half of the remainder over my head. She then capped the bottle, handed it to me, and had me throw it over my shoulder down into the dark zone of the cave. This was eventually done with all the rum, the whisky, the red sticky-sweet liquid in the Corona bottles (soda rouge), the coffee, and the champagne, which was vigorously shaken first by Richnel. The perfume and deodorant were also poured or sprayed all over me, then thrown into the dark.

In between drinks, the mambo kept a constant stream of lit cigars in my mouth. Between the alcohol I had consumed, the lack of oxygen in the cave due to the candles and people, fumes from the alcohol and perfume, the overpowering heat, and the cigars I was smoking, I quickly became light headed and was very grateful the drummers had not accompanied us. It was very easy for me to imagine myself slipping into a trance-like state.

Before the last bottle of rum was opened, the mambo began to shake and suddenly her eyes rolled back in her head. She stopped shaking, her eyes opened widely, and she stared at me and laughed in a deeper voice than she normally used. She reached over and took the cigar from my mouth and clenched it between her teeth and laughed in a hoarse voice and grabbed my hair. Richnel confirmed she was now mounted by Ogou, the Vodou lwa of rum, tobacco, iron, blacksmiths, politics, power, and the warrior, whose behavioral trademarks include smoking cigars and deep laughter (Métraux 1972, 80, 91, 185, 227). Mambo Manolita/Ogou reached down into a bag beside her and pulled out a red scarf, which she tied around my neck, signifying that I was a son of Ogou (Figure 30), and that Ogou was my Mèt Tet, (or Maître-Tete,) Master of my Head (similar to a spirit guide or guardian angel). (Métraux 1972, 202-203). This was not much of a surprise as Richnel knew of my past as both blacksmith and police officer and had observed me consuming rum and cigars on more than a few occasions. Aside from that, Ogou is synchronized with Saint Jacques Majeur, or San Jak, who is usually depicted as a large white male with long blonde hair and a beard. (Métraux 1972, 134,325). Whether Richnel passed this information on to Mambo Manolita I was never able to determine,

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[9] Several years later I was able to access the lower portion of the cave using specialized equipment brought from the U.S.

but in the preceding years it has become quite common to hear cries of "San Jak, San Jak" accompanied by laughs whenever I appeared at festivals. The mambo, as Ogou, then began to touch various parts of my body and to describe my sore knee and shoulder. The mambo also told me that I was too heavy and should lose some weight. All these physical issues, including the weight, were readily apparent on the walk out to the fort.

Figure 30 Me holding the cake and candle with the mambo's red scarf tied around my neck.

After Mambo Manolita/Ogou worked her way around the circle, talking to each person in turn and shaking their hands, she returned to my side and put her arms around me and hugged me close. I could feel her begin to shake, and when she stopped shaking her eyes were no longer opened extravagantly wide and her voice had returned to normal. She asked what had happened, and the group began to shout out to her all at once the details of the previous 10 minutes. The mambo seemed amazed at what had transpired and impressed that I had been selected by Ogou to be his child. When a Vodousant[10] is mounted by a spirit, they relinquish all control of their bodies to the spirit and are not responsible for anything they may say or do while possessed. (Métraux 1972, 120, 132-133). They also have no memory of the events that occurred while possessed, and the excited story telling of the group to the mounted is expected and evidence of a genuine possession. (Métraux 1972, 140).

[10] One who practices Vodou.

All during the ceremony, Marieka Arksey was in the corner taking photographs and video, the members of the groups were also taking video of the ceremony with their cell phones. According to Richnel they thought my being the center of the ceremony was very humorous.

The group continued to sing, and the mambo took out a very long and ornate knife and cut a circle in the center of the cake, removing a piece about 15cm round which was wrapped up in a scarf and placed to the side. She handed the rest of the cake to me, and through hand signals and Richnel, she instructed me to serve it to the entire group. With my bare hands I gave out fistfuls of sticky white cake to each and every one in the group, saving the last piece for myself, as instructed by Mambo Manolita. The cake was delicious, and everyone ate their share. I was still standing, and the mambo got down on her knees and rolled up both of my pant legs, which was a bit disconcerting. She instructed everyone present file past and wipe the frosting from their hands on my bare lower legs, my forearms, or on my head, adding sticky white frosting to the rum, whiskey, champagne, syrup, and perfume I was already covered with.

The singing had never really stopped, but the songs kept changing. At this point I noticed that the one male in the group, who had drawn the vèvè, was standing very erect, with his head back and eyes closed. He was a man of about 40 years old, and lithe. He began to sway to the music, and then leaned back until his head hit the cave wall. He began to writhe against the wall, and I recognized this behavior as being consistent with possession by Damballah, the snake lwa. (Métraux 1972, 105). After several minutes the man stopped writhing and opened his eyes. He was a tall and extremely thin man, and began to move through the group with graceful, I hate to say "slithering" movements but that best describes it. The members of the group asked him questions, but he only hissed in response, as Damballah cannot speak. Damballah is associated with the earth and is the most powerful of the lwa (Michel and Bellegarde-Smith 2006, 84-89), so his appearance inside a cave was not unexpected. As Damballah, the man picked up a blank piece of paper and began to draw on it, covering the front and back with asymmetrical scribbles (similar to others I had observed in several different caves) which he folded up and placed in my pocket when completed. He then lay down on the floor, closed his eyes as if going to sleep, then opened them as if surprised. Damballah was gone, and the group began shouting details of his possession to the astonished man, who claimed no memory of what had just occurred.

I was told to pick up the basket, and to hand out candy and popcorn to the group. One of the women present told me I was "cheap" in English because I gave out small handfuls, so everyone received a second handful which they ate. The remainder was thrown into the depths of the cave for the lwa that reside there. Mambo Manolita then told me that as a son of Ogou I had to purchase and wear a Christian crucifix necklace and had to wait 24 hours before engaging in sex. At this point the group began to tease my wife about this last instruction in a jovial, good natured manner.

I heard a commotion on the far side of the group, and Richnel told me that his wife had been mounted by Ogou now. I started to get up to see what was happening, and Richnel told me to ignore her, that she was trying to steal attention away from Mambo Manolita. He walked over and yelled at her in Kreyol, and Mambo Manolita walked over and threw a cupful for klerin in her face as she lay on the cave floor.

I had in the past witnessed people possessed by the lwa perform specific actions to prove that they were possessed, from which you can infer that Haitians do recognize the possibility that someone could fake being possessed for their own reasons. Richnel and Mambo Manolita's actions indicated to me their belief that Richnel's wife was falsifying her possession. From my perspective I did not see anything else that would make me suspect the possession was not "genuine".

And suddenly the ceremony was over, and everyone began to pick up their belongings. There was no more singing. I was reminded by Richnel to give Boudry, the young man in his underwear five dollars to clean up, which I did, and he promptly disappeared up the ladder. The rest of us packed up our things and left the cave. On the walk back to the car everyone engaged in normal conversation. There were no more stops to light candles, and no singing. I gave Mambo Manolita a ride back to her home, and then walked her back to her front door. She told me that, if I wanted to, she would conduct a second ceremony to cure my bad shoulder. She wrote out a list of the items needed for such a ceremony, but unfortunately the ceremony never took place. After dropping Richnel and his wife and daughter at their home, we returned to our hotel. I got more than a few strange looks when I walked into the bar at the Hotel du Roi Christophe, covered in rum, perfume, and frosting.

The ceremony that was performed was the Mèt Tet ceremony, one that every Vodou parishioner goes through to determine who is the "master of their head" similar to a guardian angel or spirit guide. This ceremony is usually conducted in a peristyle, or Vodou church, but subsequent observations proved it to be a valid representation of a cave ceremony (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009, 83).

Other Types of Rituals

I observed and participated in many rituals in Haiti after this initial one, in caves, in honfours, at festivals, and at various sacred locations. I have witnessed Vodou ceremonies take place in the middle of an intersection, base of a tree, in caves, under bridges, in the ruins of old forts, on beaches, in temples, in hotels and in private homes, and while the methods vary from practitioner to practitioner, they all seem to break down into two categories: general worship with no request for specific action, or religion, and requests for immediate results to specific requests, or magic (Malinowski 1948, 67-70). Most definitions of magic place it at odds with religion or occasionally at odds with both science and religion. Others view religion and magic as opposite ends of a single spectrum, with both opposed to science.

The following sections of this chapter provide some examples of the more common types of ritual that I witnessed across Haiti. The least complex type of ritual that I witnessed was performed in Gwòt Klemzine and is representative of the majority I witnessed. One day, I was working with Richnel and two of the young men who live at Fort Picolet that I had hired for the day to map the cave. As we worked, a man of about 45 years descended the ladder, and seemed surprised to find us there. He had come down to perform a ceremony by himself. I told him that we would happily take down our baseline strings and leave the cave to give him privacy, but he said we could continue

working and that we would not disturb him. While we continued our mapping, I could not help but see what the gentleman was doing.

He lit the candle and affixed it to a rock outcrop on the wall in the primary use area before the drop into the dark zone. He said what appeared to be a prayer, although we were too far away to hear what he said aloud, if anything. He then removed a piece of paper and pen from his pocket and began to draw on the paper. The drawing he made was similar to the prayer sheet shown in Figure 46. As he drew on the paper, he would occasionally pause and look up, as if thinking about what he was "writing", and then would continue to draw. When he had covered both sides of the paper, he folded it up into a small square and shoved it into a crack in the wall. He left the candle burning, said goodbye to us, and left the cave.

On my first visit to St Francis Cave I walked in on five women sitting in a circle in the twilight zone of the cave. In the center of the circle was a layel, or winnowing basket, that contained perfume and rum bottles, an assortment of vegetables, and a knife. From underneath the basket I could see part of a vèvè in white powder sticking out but could not tell what it represented. The women were singing a song to Legba. When they saw me they asked for privacy, and I left immediately.

My next visit was very different. This was during the festival held there annually, and thousands of people were in attendance. The owner of the cave had arranged a schedule, and while I was there a large Vodou troupe, all dressed in matching red and yellow outfits, descended into the cave leading a small bull. Once in the cave they began to sing to Legba, then danced and performed several purifying rituals to prepare the bull for sacrifice. During this time the drummers they had brought with them continued to play. Eventually, the bull was killed with a machete, and then disemboweled and dismembered and distributed to the people there, including those not part of their troupe. The ceremony was cut short because the time allotted to the group in the schedule was up, and they filed back out of the cave leaving only the head and blood behind. I later saw the troupe continuing the ceremony at their camp site some ways away. I observed similar ceremonies at Plaine-du-Nord and Bord-de-Mer where cattle or goats were sacrificed.

I also attended several ceremonies that took place in honfours in Limonade, Labadie, Vaudreuil, Corail, and Plaine-du-Nord. The only substantial difference I noticed was the value of the offerings given to the spirits, with the more expensive offerings, such as a bull, always done at a time and place guaranteed to be seen by the most people possible. These expensive offerings were almost always given by troupes who were able to share the expense, and not by individuals. On one day at Plaine-du-Nord I saw eleven bulls lined up for sacrifice in the mud pool (the Trou-San-Jak, or St Jacques Hole). One exception to this was at the same festival of St Jacques at Plaine-du-Nord. As I and scores of others watched, a man walked up to one end of the mud pit (not the end where the bulls are sacrificed) and threw approximately 40 1000-Gourde notes into the mud then turned and walked away. Forty thousand Haitian gourdes is equal to approximately 550 U.S. dollars. I was unable to get an exact count, because people began to snatch up the bills as quickly as they could, but for the offeree, his part was done, and he had no interest in what happened to the money. Whispers among the crowd who witnessed this offering said that he must have asked Ogou for something

significant which he then received and had come today to make good on his side of the bargain.

CHAPTER 6: THE RITUAL ASSEMBLAGE

In Haitian Vodou, devotees have a relationship of negotiation and bargaining with the spirits, and in addition to prayers and personal commitment, offerings of physical items are made during any entreaty to the lwa. The materials offered take many forms, and vary depending on the request being made, the spirit being appealed to, and the means of the appellant (Figure 31). The people select offerings to present to the spirits based on the personality of the lwa and the colors associated with them. Some things, such as the white taper candles, seem to be ubiquitous in Vodou ceremonies both within the caves and the peristyle, while others are rarer and more unique. This chapter looks at the material culture left behind in the caves after the petitioners have left, and briefly describes the most common types of items and their usage.

Figure 31 Ritual remains inside Voutamenge.

There are several botanicas in Cap Haitien that sell supplies needed for a successful Vodou ceremony, but my observations are that most Haitians make their purchases at the Marche Cluny, the main market in downtown Cap Haitien. There you can find several stalls, essentially identical in their offerings, that sell the specialized goods needed. They tend to have a better stock of the staple items and are much cheaper than the brick-and-mortar botanicas. These stalls, intended for the local market and not

the tourist trade (by comparison, the Iron Market in Port-au-Prince is designed for souvenir purchases, see Figure 32) and carry everything you need for a well-equipped ceremony. Non-specialty items, such as food or rum, can be purchased anywhere. On the approach to Fort Picolet, there are several stalls that, when open, sell some of the necessities but lack in selection. Here you can buy taper candles, rum, and occasionally other, more specialized items (Figure 33).

Figure 32 Botanica stall inside the Iron Market, Port-au-Prince

Figure 33 Impromptu stall selling Vodou paraphernalia at Bord-de-Mer, Haiti

	N-001	N-002	N-003	N-004	N-005	Totals
Barbancourt Rum 750 ml	6	7	22	5	4	44
Barbancourt Rum 250ml	3	2	4	2	3	14
Other Rum 750ml	3	1	11	1	1	17
Other Rum 250ml	0	0	7	2	0	9
Other Spirits	1	0	5	0	1	7
Campeon Wine	6	2	19	1	3	31
Champagne	0	0	7	0	0	7
Corona Bottle	12	1	3	1	6	23
Peppers	14	21	0	0	0	35
Condensed Milk Can	0	0	1	0	1	2
Other Food	4	2	0	4	0	10
Red Doll	3	0	3	0	0	6
Black Doll	2	1	1	2	0	6
Multi-color doll	1	2	0	0	0	3
Ti Chez (Small Chair)	3	0	3	0	0	6
Prayer Sheet	8	0	11	2	7	28
Candle White	12	4	13	4	0	33
Candle Red	0	0	1	0	0	1
Candle Blue	0	0	0	1	0	1
Candle Yellow	0	0	5	0	0	5
Lantern	0	0	2	0	0	2
Knife	1	0	2	0	1	4
Gourd Bowl	3	0	2	0	0	5
Perfume Bottle	9	2	7	0	3	21
Florida Water	6	0	5	0	0	11
Hombre	5	5	17	3	2	32
Match Box	0	0	1	0	0	1
Rope	6	0	2	0	0	8
Coffin Nail	7	3	3	0	0	13
Herb Bundle	0	0	4	1	0	5
Cigarette/pack	0	1	0	0	0	1
Glass Vials	0	6	0	0	0	6
Medication Bottle	0	1	0	0	0	1
Plastic Jug	1	0	3	1	0	5
Playing Card	7	0	2	0	0	9
Coins	3	0	7	1	0	11
Clothing Item	1	0	3	0	6	10
Donkey Saddle (Reed)	0	0	3	0	0	3
Totals	127	61	179	31	38	433
Total Rum Bottles from all caves	84					
Total Candles from all caves	40					
Total Dolls from all caves	15					

Table 1. Table showing the frequency of various items left in the caves of Fort Picolet over the summer of 2014, with three categories of the more common objects types totaled separately.

During the summer of 2014, I conducted 54 separate inventories of the five most commonly visited caves at Fort Picolet in Cap Haitien (Table 1). By returning to these caves again and again, I was able to keep track of the accumulation of material remains in the caves and determine that the caves were being used on a daily basis for rituals. I commonly found candles still burning in the caves when I arrived, or had people interrupt

my inventories to perform new ceremonies of their own. Subsequent visits to the caves in the fall, winter, and spring proved this was a year-round phenomenon. I was also able to identify and track the movement of specific artifacts between the caves and discovered the importance of "caretakers", a subject I will discuss in further detail in Chapter 8. What follows in this chapter is a breakdown of some of the more common items found in caves across all of Haiti, many of which are mentioned in Table 1. The order of the frequency of the most common artifacts found in the caves of Fort Picolet (rum, candles, dolls) is the same in all caves across all of Haiti. After dolls, however, each cave varies in the frequency of artifact types depending on which lwa is associated with that cave and which lwa is being supplicated to.

Rum

During my inventories of these caves, I most commonly found rum bottles. To determine the minimum number of individual (MNI) bottles, a bottle was only counted if more than half of the threaded collar was present. The bottles are routinely smashed as part of the ceremonies, and then subsequently stepped on by later visitors, so by only counting the threaded collar, I could accurately track the accumulation of new material. The most common bottle I found was the 750ml Barbancourt three star (Figure 34). Barbancourt three star is a sweet, aged rum that sells for approximately $8 USD in Haiti. Other brands of rum included Bakara, Green Label, and Maréchal, but in limited numbers.

Rum is not the only spirit used in Vodou. Klerin, a rough, unaged, unfiltered agricole- rum is extremely common. Distilled by cottage industry distillers across Haiti, it sells for about one tenth the price of Barbancourt and is by far the most commonly consumed alcohol around Cap Haitian. Klerin is a local product made by crushing sugar cane in a mechanical press. The juices from the sugar cane are collected and placed into a large, open-topped, wooden vat that is left to ferment for days or weeks, utilizing naturally occurring native yeast, until the bubbling stops. The fermented juice is poured into a boiler and distilled, using the now dry sugar cane husks as fuel for the fire. The resulting liquor is mixed with water until the desired 40% alcohol (80 proof) is achieved. Proofing is done by either the use of a hydrometer, or more commonly, by shaking the liquor in a glass container and judging the strength based on the size and duration of the air bubbles, a trick that takes some skill and experience to master.

Figure 34 Barbancourt Rum. In the back are two 750ml bottles, in front one 250ml bottle. These bottles were purchased in the market in Cap Haitien.

I purchased 13 different samples of klerin to test for proof and taste from both distillers and vendors at various locations and found that all of them that were testable tested to between 40 and 45 percent (80 and 90 proof). Barbancourt and most American rums are 40 percent (80 proof). Klerin is usually purchased in recycled rum bottles, plastic soda bottles, and larger plastic cooking oil jugs, although there are a few distillers who bottle and label their product. This makes it impossible to say with any certainty if the bottles counted in my inventories contained Barbancourt Rum or klerin, but my personal experience in these ceremonies, based on taste and smell, would lead me to believe that over half of the bottles found had probably contained klerin, the other half Barbancourt. As an offering for a lwa, Barbancourt would be preferred, but in many cases, is simply beyond the means of a low-income petitioner.

Other alcohol bottles found include Campeon Vino Tinto and champagne. Campeon is a sweet red wine that usually comes in a 350ml bottle with a metal screw cap and is produced in the Dominican Republic. The champagne most commonly found in the caves was Earnest and Julio Gallo's André from California. The other bottle type found in large numbers was Corona Extra beer bottles from Mexico (Figure 35). The bottles are used because of the crown symbol on the bottle, and are refilled with a red, sweet syrup called "soda rouge" similar to grenadine that is alcohol free and used and consumed in ceremonies. While I was in Haiti, I never saw Corona beer for sale, but I did find numerous bottles of the syrup for sale in Corona bottles.

Most, but not all, of the spirits in the Vodou pantheon drink rum. For example, Ogou, the spirit of the warrior, steel, and tobacco is particularly fond of both rum and klerin. Legba, the gate-keeper, drinks both rum and wine, while Ezili Dantor, the lwa of love, prefers white wine, champagne, or Crema. Crema is made from sweetened condensed milk and rum and is similar to Irish Cream.

Figure 35 From left to right, Soda Rouge in a Corona bottle, Bitasyon Rum, a bottle of Klerin marked "Marie Martha", and a bottle of Crema. Note the vèvè in the label corners on the Bitasyon Rum. These bottles were purchased in the market in Cap Haitien.

Candles

Although candles were the second most numerous items found in the caves, from personal observation they are the most common offering, in part because they are a practical light source. Because candle wax is organic, it deteriorates quickly in the tropics

and is eaten by roaches or collected for re-use by third parties (Chapter 8). The candles found can be divided into two categories, the white, straight sided taper candles commonly found in the United States and the *bougies*, handmade candles made by dipping twisted fabric into bee's wax (Figure 36). The boujies are locally made of canvas or more commonly of blue denim scraps from the Levi's factory in Port-au-Prince (also a canvas source for Haitian art painters). The boujies come in several colors depending on which spirit you are appealing to and your need, with white, yellow, red and black the most common. The taper candles are the ones most often used and are universal offering for all the spirits (Figure 37), while the boujies, are less used, smoke more, and can be difficult to light or keep lit.

Figure 36 Boujies candles in red, blue, yellow, black and white along with white taper candles. These candles were purchased in the Iron Market in Port-au-Prince.

The use of fire has been noted as a strong commonality between almost all Latin American, Caribbean, and African-based New World cultures (Long 2001, 13-15). It is only the specific use of fire through candles that demonstrates a European influence (Long 2001, 15). Indeed, Deren (1983, 65-66) draws upon fire being integral to the major faith ordeals of both the newly arrived African slaves to Hispanola and the remaining indigenous populations – a commonality which she argues may likely have led to "amalgamation, mutual assimilation and confusion". In present-day Afro-Caribbean religions, a commonality between Santeria, Spritism (and the Cuban/Puerto Rican version Espiritismo), and Vodou is the use of candles on altars for communing with the ancestors (Long 2001, 29). This is even true of the early New Orleans version of Haitian Vodou, Voodoo, practiced by Marie Laveau during which she would place candles on tables at the four corners of the room before performing her weekly services (Long 2001, 50). In

1930s New Orleans, in order to embark upon a career in Hoodoo, one had to first call upon Papa Legba by setting up an alter with his symbolic image (St. Peter) and several white and green candles, after which new practitioners were advised that the spirits could be used by calling upon them by leaving offerings or burning candles on an altar (Long 2001, 61-2, 63). Candles and the use of fire remain a strong feature of New Orleans Hoodoo today for calling on spirits (Long 2001, 56, 155, 165, 166) but can have more negative connotations, such as the belief in so-called "death-candles" used for harming others (Long 2001, 65, 85, 206, 225, 245).

Figure 37 Taper candles left in cave N-003. The candle in the back was still burning when found.

In Haitian Vodou the use and symbolism of fire maintains many forms. Bonfires are specifically connected to the ritual "re-heating" of the sun (Deren 1983, 299). Larger fires are also tied to creation myths which, in Vodou, combine the birth of the world and the birth of the sun into one event (Deren 1983, 96). "In Dahomey, this fire of life in which divine creative power was first made manifest, was Legba; and today, in Haiti, the ritual bonfires burn for him" (Deren 1983, 96). Legba, the "gatekeeper" lwa, belonged to the Dahomean Sky Pantheon and in certain districts of Haiti, not only is a special bonfire is lit for him, but when he possesses someone, he is said to be walking in fire (Deren 1983, 299; Herskovits 1938). Alfred Métraux recounts an event when he was travelling to a ceremony in the mountains with some Vodou practitioners – they were required to stop at a crossroads to pay homage to the patron spirit of crossroads, Legba:

> "The god's emblem was quickly traced out in flour in the middle of a clearing a small fire was lit and into it each in turn made libations and offerings. The hunsi[11] sang hymns to Legba, and the standard-bearers, having done the rounds of the fire, kissed the earth" (Métraux 1972, 228).

The use of fire in Vodou is no more apparent than in the specific ceremony of bule-zin, also known as the "ceremony of the 'burning-pots'", which closes any initiation rite in which a practitioner is assigned their met-tet, or the lwa who is to be their master of the head (Métraux 1972, 203-210). This portion of the initiation rite begins by invocations of Legba to open the barrier, proceeded by some libations, dancing, a procession of standard-bearers, doling out of necklaces by the mambo, and then the mambo is brought a plate of flour and a lighted candle. The mambo makes a "few ritual movements", after which she traces out, all round the poteau-mitan, the vèvè of the various lwa honoured in her humfo" (Métraux 1972, 204). Following this, the zin, globular clay pots which are regarded as living pots (with the exception of two consecrated to the dead), are, after another elaborate ceremony, placed on top of tripods made of three nails in the ground. They have a candle and other lit sticks placed under them, and are filled with a combination of water, wine, syrup, grains of maize, and other small foodstuffs until they boil (Métraux 1972, 205-207). The end goal of this process is to eventually heat up small balls of maize mixture through which those being initiated are tested by being told to hold the hot maize balls straight out of the boiling mixture in the pots (Métraux 1972, 208). After this test, the pots are cleaned and the final closing of the bule-zin portion of the initiation ceremony takes place. The pots are filled with a bit of oil and placed back on their tripods, as many sticks as possible are placed under them to get a good blaze going, the mambo and her colleagues recite prayers and incantations, the hunsi prostrate themselves when the fire is at its highest and then bring out the ritual objects from the sanctuary to pass through the flames before returning them again to the altars (Métraux 1972, 208-209). When the peristyle is entirely lit by the flames, the hunsi disappear into the darkness only to return possessed, final offerings are made into the flames, and as the fire dies down, those possessed return to normal and participants keep dancing until dawn (Métraux 1972, 209).

Just as larger fire ceremonies are common in Vodou peristyles for calling upon certain lwa, so too is the use of fire in the form of candles in the smaller Vodou ceremonies, especially those that take place in darker caves. It is common in Vodou to light a candle to make contact with the lwa (Métraux 1972, 169), particularly by placing it on a drawing the vèvè of the specific lwa who the practitioner wishes to call (Métraux 1972, 165). During the same ceremony recounted by Métraux earlier in which his procession paused to call on Legba, the final destination was a spring-fed watery cave to collect "magic water". Numerous candles were lit not only for pragmatic illumination purposes during

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[11] Bride of the lwa

the ceremonies in the cave, but they were also placed in a tree near the opening of the cave afterwards along with a drawing of the vèvè for Damballah, the snake lwa who is also associated with water (Métraux 1972, 229-231). When clients seek the advice of a mambo or hougan, their prescription, as dictated by the lwa, typically included offerings and candles (Long 2001, 23). In instances of animal sacrifices, candles are occasionally placed on the horns of goats, thereby affirming the semi-divine nature of the animal being sacrificed (Métraux 1972, 169). In addition to Legba being connected with fire, Ogou, the "God of War", has fire as his characterological symbol (Deren 1983, 86) and it is not uncommon to see many candles lit for ceremonies attempting to contact him.

Scents

Scent plays a crucial role in successfully attracting a spirit to a ceremony and in negotiations, so it is not surprising that scented products are the next most common item left behind in the caves (Table 1), with Hombre, an aerosol spray deodorant manufactured in Miami being the most frequent (Figure 38). Hombre comes in a red and white metal can, and the name Hombre infers masculinity and strength. Hombre is used to scent the air, sprayed on devotee's face and bodies, and used for pyrotechnic displays during ceremonies. Cans are routinely found burned or crushed in the caves. Florida Water, another Unites Stated import, is the next most frequent, and both 7.5 ounce and 2-ounce dasher bottles are found in the caves. Florida Water has a citrus/lilac scent that is very distinctive. A large variety of perfume bottles, many of which are intended for specific spirits were also located in the caves (Figure 39).

Figure 38 Hombre spray deodorant and cologne for attracting Ogou. In the front is a bottle of Agua De Florida (Florida Water) used to attract female lwa. These items were purchased in a botanica in Cap Haitien.

Figure 39 Perfume and turquoise paint for attracting La Siren, located outside N-002.

Dolls

Vodou dolls are commonly used in ceremonies to bind or control spirits or people that are somehow annoying a supplicant. The dolls come in red or black, or less commonly white or a mix of white and red/black. They are made from cloth, stuffed with cotton batting, and often decorated with human hair and occasionally anatomically representative sexual organs. Their construction is rough, and they are relatively inexpensive, indicating they are meant as a disposable supply (Figure 40). Some of the dolls are asexual, and the colors being used do not seem to be gender based, but instead are based on the lwa's nation of family. For example, the black dolls are more commonly used for Ghede ceremonies that honor deceased ancestors. Some dolls, however, do possess oversized cloth genitalia, leaving no doubts to the gender in question.

Figure 40 Four dolls showing the various materials used, including human hair. Note the cloth penis on the red doll, indicating it is male. These dolls were purchased in the market in Cap Haitien.

Figure 41 Two dolls nailed to a tree outside Gwòt Klemzine. Placing items upside down is intended to make the spirits contained in them uncomfortable, so they will quickly do what is asked. Then the dolls are taken down or turned right side up after the request has been fulfilled.

In a ceremony, an offending spirit is trapped within the doll, then the doll is bound to prevent it from further mischief (Figure 41). For example, the spirit responsible for a sickness might be bound in a doll to cure the victim. The doll then is a vessel used for containing some supernatural force that is vexing the human commissioning the ceremony. Another use of the dolls is to influence interpersonal relationships. To attract someone to you, their spirit and yours can be placed in the dolls, and the dolls then bound together. More commonly the spirit of someone who is a negative factor in your life can be trapped in the doll, then bound to a small chair (Ti Chez) or covered with rocks so that they cannot continue to bother you (Figure 42, Figure 43).

Figure 42 The Ti Chez, or little chair is used for restraining dolls in rituals. All sizes of chairs may be used. This chair was purchased in the market in Cap Haitien.

The *Ti Chez*, or little chair, is a miniature version of the chairs common throughout Haiti. These chairs come in several sizes, from 6" up to full size, and are used in Vodou primarily for binding dolls. The dolls are tied to the chair as a form of restraint. The chair may be left like that, or covered with rocks, or bound to a tree. The spirit bound like this will not be able to bother the victim again until it escapes. The chairs are flimsy and degrade quickly when exposed to the elements, so it is necessary to reapply the treatment periodically. The smaller chairs are the most commonly found in the caves, but occasionally larger ones intended for use by adults are also found.

Figure 43 This Ti Chez was left in Gwòt Klemzine. A black doll was placed on the chair, then a large rock was placed on top of it. The doll, rock and chair were then bound with sisal rope and string.

Vèvè

Vèvè are sigils that represent different lwa and are drawn on the ground of a space to call that lwa to the ceremony. Vèvè vary from region to region and between individual practitioners. Vèvè are often combined to call more than one spirit, and are usually obliterated during rituals, after the ritual, or when the next practitioner wants to use the space (Figure 44, Figure 45).

Figure 44 This vèvè is drawn with white powder at the main gate to Fort Picolet outside Cap Haitien. The vèvè is for Papa Legba, the gatekeeper. Legba is the first and last lwa called at any Vodou ceremony and is associated with crossroads.

Figure 45 This was drawn in the temple of a Vodou troop in Vaudreuil, near Cap Haitien. The drawing contains a vèvè for Ezili Dantor (upper left) as well as Ogou (center) and Legba (bottom).

Prayer sheets

Prayer sheets are spirit writing left behind as messages for the lwa. Usually written on 8.5” by 11” blank paper with ball point pens, they are scribbles, geometric patterns, and occasionally include words or names written while either praying or in a trance state (Figure 46). I have observed several of these sheets being prepared, and in each case the creator was deep in thought while preparing the sheet. It appeared from my vantage that the authors were in fact writing a detailed letter the spirits, and it was only after the sheets were complete did I see that there were no recognizable words on the sheets. I was told by Mambo Manolita that as long as the author was thinking about the message as the sheet was being created, the spirits would be able to read it. In several instances, the authors of these sheets were able to fill out forms for me, so literacy was not necessarily a component. It is not possible for someone to read a prayer sheet left by another unless they include words or recognizable symbols, such as a vèvè. It is a fairly secure method of corresponding with the lwa as no one can break the “code” used by the writer.

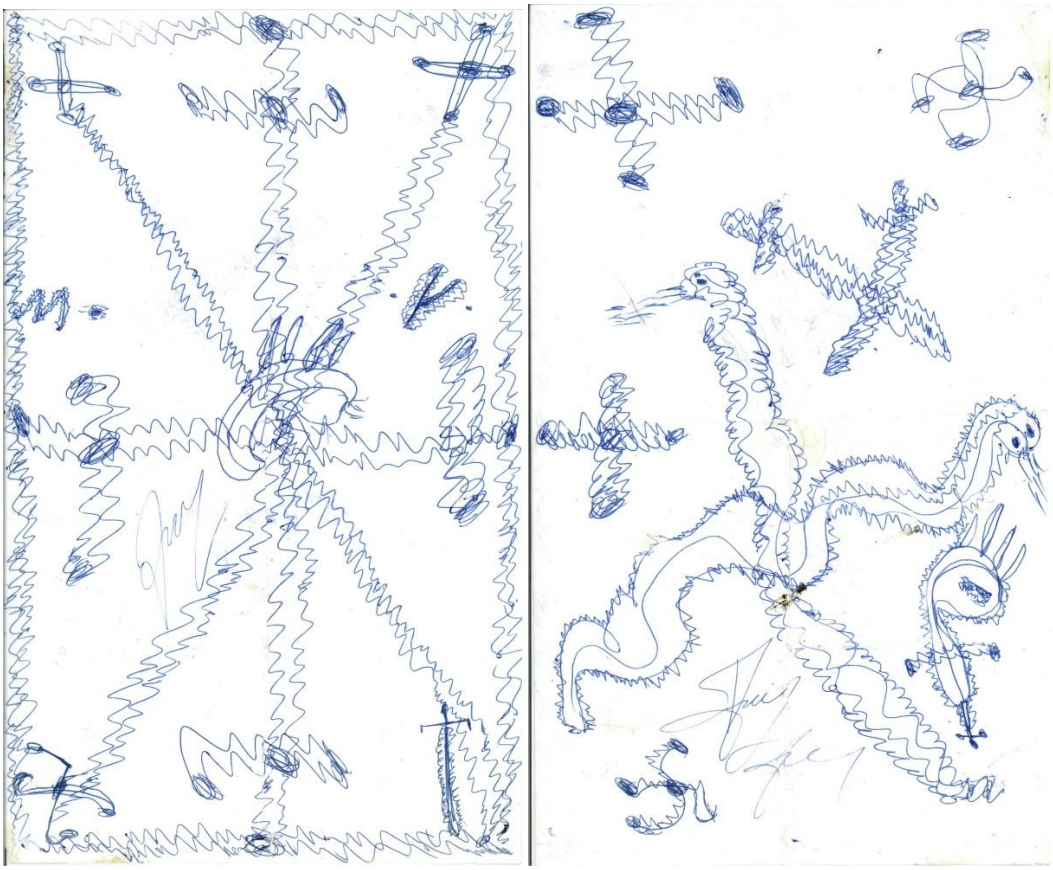

Figure 46 Sample of a prayer sheet, front and back.

Stamp Money

I found Stamp money, or photo-copies of money or stamps, in several caves (Figure 47). In some cases, this offering was used as the basis of a prayer sheet, but in

most cases the stamp money was simply left behind as an offering. As the spirits have no use for actual money, this symbolic gift of money can be just as effective.

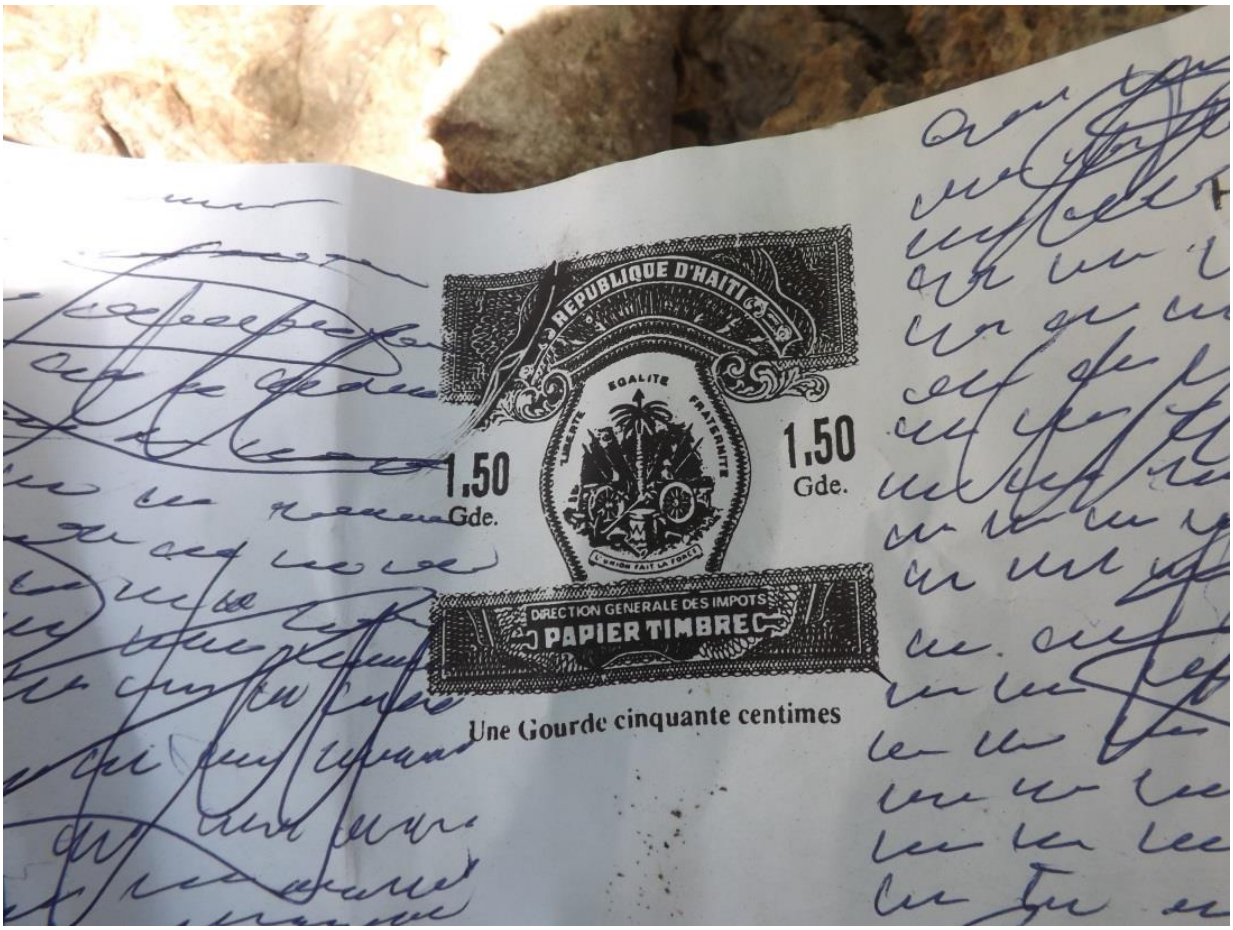

Figure 47 Stamp money found in Gwòt Klemzine.

Lanterns

Tin lanterns made from recycled cans (Figure 48) are often used in the cave ceremonies, and occasionally left behind as well. The lanterns have a cotton wick (Figure 49), and can burn kerosene, lamp oil, or even cooking oil. A few of these lanterns were left behind in caves, but many more were witnessed in use during ceremonies and then taken from the caves by their owners.

Figure 48 Lantern made from a large tomato can. Left behind in Voutamenge.

Figure 49 Two small lanterns purchased in the market in Cap Haitien.

Clothing

Clothing left behind in the caves is less common but not unheard off and can include scarves (Figure 50), shoes, and in one memorable case, three pairs of men's white Haines briefs. The briefs were tied into three individual torus (doughnut) shapes with twine and stacked at the back of a particularly difficult to enter cave (Figure 51). The weathering of the three pairs of underwear implied that the bottom pair had been there the longest, and the top pair had spent the least amount of time in the cave. Rocks were placed on the underwear "wreaths" to keep them in place. A local hougan explained to me that by taking the personal items from someone and binding them, you could, through the lwa, control their actions. For example, taking someone's shoes and binding them would prevent them from leaving. In the case of the underwear, the intent was to control the sexual activity of the supplicant's male partner.

Figure 50 Scarves represent Ezili Dantor (left) and Ogou (Right). Scarves like this are often used in rituals and left behind. These examples were purchased at a festival for Ogou in Plain-du-Nord.

Figure 51 Clothing can be taken from a person and bound to control their actions. In this case Hanes underwear was bound and left behind in N-005.

Animal Offerings

The sacrifice and offering of animals are intrinsic to Vodou rituals, but the practice in caves seems to vary based on region. In the seven trips I made to Cap Haitien, not once did I find any animal remains in any of the caves at Fort Picolet or Bois Caiman, but I did find animal (goat, rooster, and cat) remains in Dondon and observed ritual animal sacrifice at St. Michelle de l'Atalaye (cow and goat). In Dondon at Voutamenge cave I found a goat's hind leg hanging by a sisal rope from the front entrance of the cave (Figure 52). I originally saw the leg there in 2013, and the leg was still there during my visit in 2016. On the opposite side of the cave a cat carcass appeared in 2014 and was also still there in 2016 (Figure 53). This carcass was wrapped in brown wax paper and bound with rope, a doll and a Soda Rouge bottle. Inside the cave there is a chimney that opens to the sky, and a collection of tree roots drops down from above. In these roots were woven numerous offerings, including the carcass of a rooster in 2013. By 2016 the rooster was mostly decomposed, but bits of bone and feather remained.

Figure 52 Goat's foot left hanging above the entrance to Voutamenge cave outside Dondon.

Figure 53 Cat remains wrapped in heavy wax paper and hung above the entrance to Voutamenge cave. Bound to the remains are a black Vodou doll, a bottle of Soda Rouge, a red scarf, and a woven basket.

At St. Michelle de l'Atalaye in 2016 I witnessed the sacrifice by machete of a large bull inside the main chamber of Doco cave. After the sacrifice, the bull was cut into

pieces and the members of the party and hangers-on divided the meat and offal and took it back out of the cave, leaving only the blood and head behind. On the same trip I observed a group sacrifice a goat near a chimney, or secondary entrance, to Saint Francis cave. The head and offal of the animal were dropped down the chimney, and the edible portions and hide were taken away for use.

Other Offerings

I documented numerous other items found in the caves used as generic offerings. White foods, such as rice or condensed milk were intended for those spirits that require white offerings such as Ezili Dantor. Red chili peppers found in a fire were gifts to Ogou. Knives, gourd bowls, matches, would have been used for any ceremony or lwa, and plastic jugs found in the caves may have contained klerin, coffee, or even water, all liquids commonly used in ceremonies. On one occasion I found three wicker donkey saddles just outside N-001, They all appeared at the same time, and their purpose is unknown. One local mambo suggested they may represent a request to be relieved of a burden, or to have a burden travel away., while another suggested they were left behind by charcoal manufacturers and had no spiritual significance. Small car parts such as blinker flasher relays and hoses have been found in a few caves, left behind by petitioners seeking help with mechanical problems or parts acquisitions. This is fairly rare, but does occur, particularly at Fort Picolet. In Gwòt Klemzine, a triple jar and tray artifact, reserved solely for offerings to the Marrassa twins, was left in the cave with water inside (Figure 54). The jars had been removed by the next day (Chapter 8). Other items left behind in the caves include photographs, playing cards, brooms, and a bail notice from Miami-Dade County Jail.

Figure 54 A set of jars like this was left behind in Gwòt Klemzine and was removed by the next day. These jars are used only for rituals related to the Marrassa, twin spirits which are some of the most powerful and dangerous in Vodou. This example was purchased at a pottery shop that makes specialty items for practitioners.

CHAPTER 7: THE PEOPLE

During my research in Haiti, I had the opportunity to interview numerous people about their use of caves as ritual sites. My friend and guide Richnel Leconte acted as interpreter in these interviews, which were conducted at Fort Picolet, in honfours (Vodou temples) in and around Cap Haitien, at private homes, and at the several weekly festival sites that draw worshipers in the region. While most of the interviews were recorded, some volunteers requested that they not be recorded, or that only audio recording be used. What follows is a representative sample of the people interviewed, and the variety of beliefs and practices they reported to me. Unless otherwise noted, I use pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the interviewees**.** These names were taken from online lists of the most popular Haitian names. This is in accordance with the IRB[12] application that was submitted to and approved by the University of California, Merced Research Compliance and Integrity Office.

More than half of the people that I interviewed identified themselves as Mambos, Hougans, or Bokors, and most of them made no distinction between Hougans and Bokors. On the whole, these professionals were usually more comfortable speaking to me, and at many of the festivals where I conducted interviews there were over-represented. Another interesting thing I noted was that speaking to me was occasionally seen as either a positive or negative status symbol. On several occasions individuals approached me and demanded to be interviewed because I had interviewed an acquaintance or competitor of theirs, and they wanted the opportunity to also be heard and to correct whatever inaccurate information I had been given.

One hundred and ninety-three people visited Fort Picolet Between July 27th and August 5th of 2016 and conducted a Vodou Ceremony in N-001. The busiest day of the week was Saturday with 42 visitors followed by Tuesday with 35 visitors. The least busy day was Monday with 10 visitors, followed by Wednesdays with 11.5 visitors. The busiest time of day was from Noon until 1:00 pm. The mornings were slightly busier than the afternoons. Due to safety concerns, no observations were made at night.

Of the 193 visitors to Fort Picolet that conducted Vodou ceremonies within N-001 between July 27th and August 5th, 2016, females outnumbered males 105 to 88. The overall average age of the visitors was from 36 to 40 years old. Among males the average was 41 to 45, and for females slightly less at 36 to 40. These numbers are based on visual estimates of age and gender.

The average group size that visited the caves at Fort Picolet and conducted a Vodou ceremony in N-001 was 3.1 people. Within the groups some individuals were identified as mambos, hougans, or bokors by their dress, paraphernalia, or specific behaviors. Most of the larger groups were led by a mambo, hougan or bokor. Vodou ceremonies do not require a religious specialist to be conducted. Of the 193 people who visited the caves at fort Picolet between July 27th and August 5th of 2016, only 57 of them appeared to have a Mambo, Hougan, or Bokor with them. When conducting my interviews, I was told that the inclusion of a religious professional often depended on

[12] Institutional Review Board, a process intended to ensure ethical methods are used in research.

several factors. The first and most important was the relationship the specialist had with the lwa. In Vodou, networking is extremely important, and a Mambo or Hougan who has a special connection with the lwa is someone you might want to hire if your own efforts at influence have failed. These reputations of these religious specialists spreads, and so a customer might want to seek out one for illness, one for romance, and a third for business all depending on their special connections. Alternately, a customer might seek out a professional and receive instruction, but not assistance for a ceremony or offering.

Day & Time	Wed 7/27	Thurs 7/28	Fri 7/29	Sat 7/30	Sun 7/31	Mon 8/1	Tues 8/2	Wed 8/3	Thurs 8/4	Fri 8/5	Total
9:00 AM				3					1		4
10:00 AM		2		6	8	2		2		2	22
11:00 AM	3		8	13	2		10	1			37
Noon	7	8	2	8		3	7		7	3	45
1:00 PM			4	6	1		8	5	3	3	30
2:00 PM	1	6	1	6			7	4	1		26
3:00 PM		2	1		4	5				2	14
4:00 PM					7		3			4	14
5:00 PM									1		1
Total	11	18	16	42	22	10	35	12	13	14	193

Table 2 Visitors to the Caves at Fort Picolet by time of day and day of week. July 27th to August 5th, 2016

Age	Female	Male	Total
Under 15	1	1	2
15 to 20	3	0	3
21 to 25	11	8	19
26 to 30	14	13	27
31 to 35	17	14	31
36 to 40	15	12	27
41 to 45	13	13	26
46 to 50	14	11	25
51 to 55	11	9	20
56 to 60	5	5	10
61 to 65	0	2	2
over 65	1	0	1
Total	105	88	193

Table 3 Visitors to the Caves of Fort Picolet by estimated age and gender. July 27th to August 5th, 2016

Group Size	Without a Mambo or Hougan	With a Mambo or Hougan	Total
One	1	7	7
Two	18		18
Three	15	1	16
Four	11	1	12
Five	2	3	5
Six		1	1
Seven		2	2
Eight		1	1
Total Groups	47	16	62
Total People	136	57	193

Table 4 Visitors to the Caves of Fort Picolet by Average Group Size and Presence or Absence of a Mambo, Hougan or Bokor. July 27th to August 5th, 2016

Age	Female	Male	Total People	Uses Caves	Does Not Use Caves	Total People
15 to 20	3	2	5	3	2	5
21 to 25	11	8	19	13	6	19
26 to 30	9	6	15	10	5	15
31 to 35	13	9	22	15	7	22
36 to 40	15	10	25	14	11	25
41 to 45	10	13	23	16	7	23
46 to 50	9	11	20	13	7	20
51 to 55	11	9	20	10	10	20
56 to 60	5	5	10	4	6	10
61 to 65	5	3	8	5	3	8
over 65	3	2	5	2	3	5
Total	94	78	172	105	67	172

Table 5 Total number of people interviewed broken down by age and cave use.

Toni

Pierre Louis "Toni" [13], is a 39-year-old from Bord-de-Mer[14] de Limonade, a small fishing village on the north coast that is famous for its patron Saint Philomene. Toni describes himself as a fisherman and hougan (Figure 55). He has been a fisherman since he was 16 years old, and a hougan since the age of 19. Toni has lived in Bord-de-Mer all of his life and attended school through the 8th grade. His spirits came naturally, not purchased: Toni explained to me that there are many mambos, hougans, and bokors who are not selected by the lwa to receive spirits, and instead will visit a specialist and purchase a spirit. Once you have a spirit, whether purchased or natural, you have that spirit for the rest of your life. Toni's spirits are Toro Twa Grenn, Philomene, Ezili Dantor, Agwe, Brise Lakao, Jacque Diablen, and Jean Crab. Jean Crab is useful for winning lottery numbers and medicine. If the patient is going to die, Jean Crab will sometimes appear. Brise Lakao is the lwa of the hills and is very fierce. Philomene is useful for fishing, but he has found Toro Twa Grenn (the bull with three testicles) to be better.

Figure 55 Toni's honfour in Bord-de-Mer outside Limonade. Note the lwa names St Philomene, Legba, Jean Crab, and Toro

Toni is married to Philomene, as are many other people in Bord-de-Mer. Marriage to a lwa gives you a special connection to them, and many practitioners are married to multiple lwa. Toni travels from Bord-de-Mer to Fort Picolet (23 kilometers each way) when contracted by a customer. He only goes on Wednesdays. Sometimes he travels

[13] This is his real name, used with his permission.

[14] Bord-de-Mer translates as by the sea, or seaside, and there are several villages along the coast with the same name.

there with his customer, such as when the spirits tell the customers that they need to go the caves, but more often, he will go alone on their behalf. He only travels that distance for very specific reasons or if the spirits demand it. While at Fort Picolet, Toni uses Gran Boa Cave (cave N-002)[15], and described it as the one that is painted turquoise. Toni said that Gran Boa is useful for healing spells and he goes for Gran Boa's birthday or when he has problems with herbal cures. Gran Boa "has a house" in the cave, and another in the waterfall near Bas Limbe.

Toni identified for me which spirits reside in each of the caves at Fort Picolet. In Cave N-001 is Ezili Freda, a lwa sought out for romantic issues. In N-002 is Gran Boa, and in N-003 is Klemzine. N-004 is Agwe, the primary male ocean spirit, and in N-006 is Ti Jean Dantor, the aide-de-camp to Ogou. In N-005 are the Marrassa twins, two of the more dangerous lwa.

I showed Toni several pictures taken at Fort Picolet and asked him to explain what they depicted. He told me the bound underwear found in N-005 was done by someone to force their male partner to remain faithful. This confirmed what I had been told by another source. Two dolls that had been bound face-to-face in N-001 were intended to bring a relationship back together or to prevent a breakup. Had they been tied back to back it would have been meant to end a relationship. Two dolls nailed to a tree upside down outside of Gwòt Klemzine were intended to split up a couple. The dolls were upside down to vex the target couple and would be turned right side up when the breakup finally occurred. A similar tactic is used with pictures of San Expidito; he is more effective and faster when left upside down, but it is important to remember to right him when the desired outcome finally occurs.

Toni told me that the ceremonies that occur in the caves are the same as those done in his honfour but are stronger in the caves. The deeper in the cave the better, but deeper is also more dangerous. Toni goes as far in as possible, and when in Gwòt Klemzine goes past the drop to the very back chamber. All caves have spirits living in them, and he learned from the spirits which individual lwa were in each of the caves at Picolet.

Toni told me that there are four other hougans and two mambos in Bord-de-Mer besides himself, but as far as he knows, none of them use any of the caves in the area for their work. They only perform ceremonies in their honfours, behind the Church of Saint Philomene, or on the beach nearby. Both the church and the beach are pilgrimage sites for Philomene, and it is not uncommon to see dozens of ceremonies taking place at the same time with practitioners from out of town coming in for the day to offer their services to customers they meet there.

Nadège

One day, while sitting in the ruins of Fort Picolet observing the other visitors and noting the order in which most visited the caves, I saw two young women enter the fort.

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[15] I showed him photographs of N-002, and he confirmed that it was the same cave.

They stopped at the gate and made a prayer, then continued through the fort and down to N-004 near the water's edge. One of the women, Nadège, agreed to be interviewed and I arranged through Richnel for us to meet with her at her home in Milot.

Nadège is a 29-year-old single mother and mambo from Milot, 11 kilometers south of Cap Haitien. Nadège has lived in Milot her entire life and has a 7-year-old daughter. In addition to being a mambo, she is also in beautician school in Cap Haitien. Nadège got her spirit at the age of 6 and had her Mèt Tet (initiation) ceremony at eight. At age 20, she became a mambo. Her spirits are San Jak (Ogou), Ti Jean Dantor, Philomene, Gran Boa, and Ezili Dantor. She is married to Philomene, Ezili Freda, Boa, Ti Jean Dantor, and Ogou - neither gender or sex are issues in marriage to lwa. Nadège told me that based on her personal experience, 60% to 70% of the adults in Haiti are married to at least one lwa.

Nadège visits the caves at Fort Picolet four times a year to reconnect with the lwa that reside there. During these visits, she does not ask anything of the spirits, but is simply there to "recharge her battery". These visits are for her and are not commissioned visits for customers. Sometimes Nadège travels to Fort Picolet for customers if she has been directed to do so by the lwa. The lwa come to her in her dreams at 1:00 a.m., and sometimes direct her to visit pilgrimage sites in the region, including the caves at Fort Picolet. Sometimes she is able to visit the locations in her dreams, but more often she must go the sites in person. For these trips she only goes when directed to do so by the spirits. The dreams tell her which spirits live in which caves, but that all caves have at least one lwa in them.

The ceremonies that Nadège performs in the caves are identical to those she performs in her home in Milot. Nadège does not leave offerings in the caves that might be taken after she has departed. She blows out her candles and takes them with her. While Toni and most of the other people I spoke with felt that the depth of caves was most important, Nadège equates space with power. Of the caves at Fort Picolet, Gwòt Klemzine (N-003) has the most power because it has the most volume. Nadège is the only person I spoke with during my research that equated space with power.

She said that there are about 20 mambos and hougans in Milot besides herself, and she believes they all must travel to Fort Picolet to practice in the caves at times. Nadège told me that many of the mambos and hougans are *fwod* (frauds) who are only interested in making money, but that she is a true believer.

Samara and Marie

I met Samara and Marie at Fort Picolet and interviewed them as they were about to leave. They would only agree to be interviewed together. They both live in Cap Haitien by the bridge that crosses over the Rivière Mapou. Samara is an apprentice who is part of a mambo's entourage but is not a mambo herself. Marie became a mambo at the age of 11. They are friends, and both come out to Fort Picolet at least once a month. Marie and Samara both stated that the only come out to the caves when the spirits tell them too.

Marie had asked for help because she had a string of bad luck a month ago. Her luck changed for the better and so today he was coming back to the caves to thank Toro

Twa Grenn, the lwa that had changed her luck, by giving him the promised offering. Toro Twa Grenn has a house deep in the same cave as Klemzine, N-003. Marie identified the cave at the ocean edge (N-004) as that of La Siren, the mermaid lwa, and the turquoise cave (N-002) as the home of Lenglensou Bassin San (the Heart of Jesus), and the cave above Gwòt Klemzine (N-005) as the home of Ti Jean Dantor.

Maxi

Maxi[16] is a 68-year-old hougan who is very well respected in the area. He is married with children and grandchildren. I interviewed him in his honfour in the Bayi Rival neighborhood of Cap Haitien, which is very close to Rival Beach and Fort Picolet. He has been a hougan for 47 years. In addition to being a hougan he is the locally recognized spiritual administrator of Fort Picolet, and helps his wife run her small stall on Rival Beach selling snacks and Vodou supplies.

Maxi stated that you can call the spirit to come to your Honfour but going to them is more effective. If he calls a lwa, Klemzine for example, she might not come to him, but she is always at the cave and can be found there if he visits her. Klemzine's cave (N-003) has other spirits in deepest chamber, but he does not know the spirits' names.

Maxi's preferred method is to perform ceremonies for the spirits at his Honfour, and then take all of the physical offerings (rum, coffee, etc.) out to the caves where they are given to the spirits. If ceremonies are performed at the caves, they are the same as those performed in the Honfour. Maxi has never been in the caves, but instead hires others to place his offerings there. There are several young men, including Boudry (Chapter 7), who live at the fort and who Maxi hires for this task. He believes the spirits in the caves are dangerous, so he conducts his ceremonies at the openings, and others take his offerings inside.

Klemzine is the lwa that Maxi turns to when dealing with a customer's marital problems, unemployment, lottery numbers, or bad luck. Requests are made to Klemzine, and she expects payment after you are given what you asked for. Failure to repay a lwa can result in catastrophe. On one occasion, someone had left a large sum of money inside N-003 at payment to Klemzine. Maxi's wife went out to the cave to retrieve it, but a snake appeared and guarded the money. When Maxi's wife moved closer, the snake took the money in its mouth and disappeared. On a different occasion, someone left a set of Marrassa bottles (Chapter 6) in Gwòt Klemzine, and a local fisherman decided to take the bottles for himself. Again, a snake appeared and guarded the bottles. I have personally seen Marrassa bottles in Gwòt Klemzine, but they were unguarded and coincidentally were gone the next day.

Maxi never removes things from the caves but does buy things that have been scavenged from the caves by others. Taking things from the caves is dangerous and can result in your death at the hands of the lwa but buying them from the scavengers is safe. One such scavenger is Boudry, who I will discuss in Chapter 7. Maxi says that Boudry

[16] Maxi is his real name, he requested that it be used in this dissertation.

was mentally ill when he came to Fort Picolet a few years before, but that his removing offerings from the caves has caused the lwa to punish him and make him worse.

When I asked Maxi why he was not wealthy with lottery winnings if Klemzine could supply winning numbers, he burst into laughter and said "Kaka sa pa travay", which translates roughly as "That shit doesn't work". He told me that customers demand the lottery numbers, and he is honest with them about the chances of success, but if they still want to pay him, he will conduct the ceremony.

I asked Maxi about the 2010 earthquake, and he told me he will never forget that day. Maxi's home was about 150 kilometers from the epicenter in Léogâne, but his home shook and he was afraid his house would tumble down into the ocean. Several buildings in Cap Haitien were destroyed and several people died or were seriously injured. In the weeks after the quake, many people from Port-au-Prince came to Cap Haitien to stay with family because their homes were destroyed. Many of theses people came to him for help with the spirits locating family members and seeking healing.

Abraham

Abraham is a 49-year-old bokor and fisherman from Bord-de-Mer near Limbe. Abraham told me he knows many secrets that he could not tell me, and that he could easily kill me with his magic if he wanted to, but that he likes me and has no desire to harm me. This is a common boast that several practitioners, both men and women, used when I spoke to them to apparently elevate their reputation. They were always careful to say this in a non-threatening way. He also described several miracles that he could perform if he wanted to but said that he did not feel that he needed to prove anything to me, and I did not press the issue. He has practiced Vodou since he was a young child and got his spirit and became a hougan at age 15.

Abraham told me that spirits are everywhere, but if he can't find the particular spirit he needs locally to serve a customer, then he has to go to the caves at Fort Picolet or other places of power such as Plaine-du-Nord or Trou-du-Nord. This requires him to travel to the Fort Picolet from Bord-de-Mer three or four times a month. Half of his work is performed for customers in the United States who contact him by phone and pay for his services via Western Union, and the other half of his customers are local residents. As with all the practitioners I spoke with, traveling to any place of power requires an extra charge to the customer. At the Fort Picolet caves Abraham deals with Ezili Dantor, Boa, Klemzine, and Damballah, the serpent spirit. Abraham was the only person I spoke with that placed Damballah at Fort Picolet. Abraham declined to discuss any specifics about his practice and considers his methods to be trade secrets.

Michèle

I met Michèle while attending festival of St. Francis in the town of St. Michel de L'Atalaye, which is located 43 kilometers south (as the crow flys) of Cap Haitien on the south side of the Massifs du Nord mountain range. It is about two and half hours by car. She is a 52-year-old mambo that lives in the city of Gonaïves, 55 kilometers west of St Michel de L'Atalaye. She is a member of a local Vodou dance troupe composed of other

mambos and apprentices, and visits St Michel de L'Atalaye every year for the festival of St Francis where they dance for the spirits and make offerings. Her troupe had performed the day before and sacrificed a goat, and today she was watching other troupes perform. Michèle practices her faith in Gonaïves and has many customers that live in the area and in the Unites States. Most of Michèle's practice occurs in her home, on the west side of town, which is also her honfour. On rare occasions, such as when directed to by the spirits or when a customer requests it, she performs ceremonies on the beach on the other side of town. Since most of her practice involves healing and domestic issues, beach visits are not often required. Other mambos and hougans that live closer to the shore specialize in maritime issues.

She, like many of the people I spoke with, visit as many of the festival sites as possible each year. With the exception of the St. Francis festival, Michèle does not practice Vodou in caves. For her, the cave in St. Michel de L'Atalaye is special because it is the home of a spirit, in this case St Francis. She sees little difference between the cave of St Francis and the waterfall of *Sodo* (Saut-d'Eau, located outside of Mirebalais in Central Haiti) which is the home of Ezili Dantor, or the mud pool in Plaine-du-Nord which home to Ogou Feray (or San Jak). She mentioned that the summer before she had noticed me at both of these festivals, proving her attendance.

I asked her about the spirits that reside in the caves, and she told me that St. Francis lived in the eponymous St. Francis Cave, but that other spirits lived in there as well – she did not know which ones. The same was true of nearby Doco Cave, but she did not know any of the spirits that reside there. I asked her what St Francis's lwa name was, and she told me that St Francis was just St Francis, and was both a Saint and lwa. Most lwa correspond with a Catholic saint, such as St James the Greater (St Jacque le Majeur, or San Jak) and Ogou. A few saints, such as St Francis or Saint Philomene are worshiped as lwa with no Vodou name. Michèle also said that some lwa have no saint counterpart, but she was not able to give an example.

Anide

Anide Fouchè[17] is an agent of the tourism office in Dondon, 25 kilometers south of Cap Haitien. I first met Anide in July of 2013 when I went to her office in the city's administrative building to pay the small fee required of tourists to visit the caves there (Figure 56). She acted as my guide out to Voutamenge (N-008) and Mak Antwan (N-009). In July of 2016, I interviewed her in her home.

As part of her job, she has been working, along with a New York based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), to organize a yearly festival focused on the caves in the area and to promote them as tourism sites. The first year for the festival was in 2014. In 2016, the festival ran from July 12 to 19. When I asked her how many people came to the festival, she said she could not count them all, but that everyone from North, and Northeast Haiti came. I mentioned that I had come to Dondon on Sunday, July 17 during the festival, and found no one in the town square or in Voutamenge, Mak Antwan, or

[17] Her real name, used at her request.

Saint Matin caves. In the town square the stages were still set up for bands, and with the exception of a few small children, no one was around. Anide said that all of the people, about 1000 total, were on the other side of the mountains visiting other caves near the *Citadelle* Laferrière, five kilometers to the north. There are 23 known caves in the hills around Dondon, and likely numerous others that remain undiscovered or unknown beyond a few local residents.

BITD - Bureau d'Information Touristique de Dondon
Complexe Administratif de Dondon, rue des Champs Élysées, HT1420 Dondon, Haïti, W.I.
Tél. : (509) 3768 4984, et via (509) 3760 4510, (509) 3607 9342
E-mail : tourisme.dondon@gmail.com

№ [illegible] - - 028

REÇU

Date 27/02/2016
B.P. : [illegible]

Reçu de M Patrick
La somme de 1400 gourdes
Pour une (1) **visite (s) guidée** du circuit grotte à Misquet
pour une (1) personne(s).
Remarques :
Signature Touché Anide

Figure 56 Receipt from the Bureau d'Information Toristique de Dondon for 1400 Gourdes, or about $20.00 USD at the time. The fee allows access to the caves around Dondon and provides for a guide if needed.

Not counting the festival, about 100 tourists a year come to her office and pay the fee to visit the caves. This does not include the Haitian people who visit the caves and use them for Vodou but who are not required to pay to enter. Part of the work her office has been doing is training the local hougans and mambos the clean the caves up after they finish using them so that the caves are clean for the tourists. I asked what the reaction of the hougans and mambos was to this requirement, and she replied that some may not like the requirement, but that the police and politicians would become involved if they refused to clean up.

Henri

Henri is a 32-year-old bokor from Dondon and is an acquaintance of Richnel's. Henri got his spirit when he was 15 and became a hougan at 20. His spirits include Damballah, Philomene, Ogou, La Siren, and Ti Jean Dantor. Henri is also married to La Siren and Philomene. Henri works out of his house and does not have a dedicated

honfour. Instead, most of his ceremonies take place at the various pilgrimage sites where I have run into him. The spirits, with the exception of Damballah, come to him in his dreams and direct him as to when he must visit a site – Damballah, the snake lwa, does not speak. Henri passes this information on to his clients, and they can make the journey to the site or hire Henri to travel for them. While at the sites, visitors often contract Henri to perform ceremonies, which he gladly does. Most of the material needs for these ceremonies, including those specific to the resident spirits, are available from several merchants who set up table-sized shops that also sell snacks and drinks. Henri specializes in traveling from Dondon to various pilgrimage cites around northern Haiti to perform ceremonies for his customers back home, and to work for any customers he happens to find at the sites. It is very common for hougans, mambos, and bokors to travel to these sites to sell their services.

I first met Henri at Trou-du-Nord, where he was selling his services at the Ti Jean Dantor/St. John the Baptist pilgrimage site under the bridge that crosses the river. A large concrete basin about two meters wide has been built under the bridge for ritual bathing and is filled with river water brought up with buckets. On the steel girders of the bridge overhead vèvè had been painted with white spray paint, representing Ti Jean Dantor, Ogou, Ezili Dantor, Legba, and other lwa. Several other basins are along the river, no further than 100 meters away, to serve the overflow crowd, which can be quite large. I have seen crowds of 2,000 people congregate there, with dance troupes, ceremonies, and impromptu honfours.

I asked Henri what it was about the site that made it special, and he told me it was the concrete basin in the bridge foundation that had power, and not the bridge itself. Henri said that the spirit dwelled in the basin, and that water that was poured in there gained powers for healing. There are other concrete basins on both sides of the river that were built for overflow crowds, but Henri told me they are powerless. Ti Jean only comes to the one under the bridge because it is cooler and more pleasant there. The bridge blocks both the sun and the rain, and lwa like to be comfortable. I asked Henri if that was why spirits are found in all of the caves, and he told me that was part of the reason, but that caves had a natural power that bridges and other man-made structures do not. This natural power could also be found in waterfalls, trees, and bodies of water.
I next ran into Henri at Bord-de-Mer near Limonade (a Philomene pilgrimage site) and then at Bois Caiman and Plaine-du-Nord, both Ogou sites. Over a two-year period, we ran into each other at least 20 times, and I eventually commissioned a ceremony from him that took place in Voutamenge (N-008), three kilometers outside Dondon (Chapter 5).

During the time that I knew Henri, he often talked about his “miracle” and how he hoped to be able to perform it for me. The miracle was part of a ceremony that he often performs, and finally, in 2016, I was at Trou-du-Nord and Henri rushed up to me and pulled me to the center of the crowd (about 100 people) around the main water basin, as he was about to start his ceremony and perform his miracle. At Henri’s request I video recorded the miracle:

Henri made offerings of klerin and candles to Ti Jean Dantor, and then asked the crowd for a cigarette. Richnel provided him one, and Henri began waiving it over the basin and reciting prayers. He placed the cigarette into his pants pocket while he washed

his hands up to the elbow with water from the basin, then poured more water over his head in a ritual cleansing. He took the cigarette back out of his pocket and waived it over the basin, again reciting a prayer to Ti Jean Dantor. Henri then rubbed the cigarette vigorously between the palms of his hands, and the paper and tobacco of the cigarette fell away into the basin and a single United States dollar bill remained in his hand. Henri showed the dollar to the crowd, then we moved away from the basin so that the next hougan could take over. Henri offered to give me the miracle dollar bill if I would replace it with a regular bill, which I did.

Henri told me that he often performs ceremonies in the caves at Dondon, with Voutamenge being the one he uses most. Voutamenge is the home of Damballah, the most powerful and important of the lwa. I showed Henri a photograph I had taken inside Voutamenge in July of 2014 of a Damballah vèvè drawn on the cave floor with white powder, and he confirmed that he had drawn it (Figure 57). The photo was the background on my personal business cards that I used in Haiti, and Henri asked for several to give to his friends.

Henri believes that the caves are powerful because of the spirits that dwell in them but does not see a difference between them and other places or objects that house spirits. Voutamenge is powerful not because it is a cave, but because it is the home of the most powerful and important lwa, Damballah. In this regard, the caves are no different than the beach at Bord-de-Mer or the mud pool at Plaine-du-Nord, or even certain trees know to locals that house spirits.

Figure 57 This vèvè is for Damballah, the snake lwa. It shows 2 two-headed serpents wrapped around a staff. This vèvè was found in Voutamenge outside of Dondon and was drawn by Henri.

Junior

While attending the festival at the cave of St. Frances outside St Michel de L'Atalaye, I rented a vendor booth from the organizer to contact people and to conduct interviews. On my third day, while waiting for an opportunity to interview someone, a young man later identified as Junior staggered up to me and demanded to be interviewed.

Junior was extremely intoxicated and introduced himself to me as San Jak (Ogou), the lwa of rum, tobacco, steel, and the warrior. Junior had two friends with him who were acting as caretakers to make sure nothing happened to him (a fairly common practice that I had observed before). They told me that Junior was a 26 years old Hougan from Hench. Junior had been "mounted" or possessed by the spirit of Ogou, and it was Ogou I was speaking with and not Junior. Junior demanded rum and cigars from me (I was smoking a cigar at the time), and I supplied him with the cigar but not rum due to his level on inebriation. Junior/San Jak agreed to be interviewed, although he/they had a hard time remembering which was speaking to me and kept "slipping out of character". Junior/San Jak repeatedly asked me for money because he was hungry, and I eventually had to conclude the interview.

Ingrid

While attending the Festival of Saint Anne in Limonade in Northern Haiti, I met Ingrid, who invited me to attend a ceremony at her honfour later that day. Ingrid was approximately 45 and lives in Miami where she is a practicing Mambo. Ingrid returns to Northern Haiti every year for the festival season and owns a compound outside of Limonade with a Honfour and a small wooded area. I explained to Ingrid what my research was, and she excitedly told me about her own experiences in the caves at Fort Picolet. She described Klemzine as one of the most powerful places she has ever visited and talked about how it was possible to feel the presence of the lwa the moment you approached the cave entrance. I asked her why the cave was so powerful, and she told me that she believes it is because you are able to get physically closer to the lwa while inside. Ingrid has not been to the caves for several years because of the difficulty of traveling to them from Miami. She would, however, make the journey if contracted to do so by a customer or if directed to by the lwa.

Ingrid began her ceremony by leading a group of about 30 attendees around her compound in a ritual circuit. The first stop was at a central altar that resembled a dry fountain, where prayers and offerings were made to Legba, the gatekeeper. During this offering Ingrid placed a white enamelware plate on the altar. In the plate were two black, tear-dropped shaped stone celts and a rusted leg shackle. Ingrid later told me that these offerings represent the dual ancestry that all Haitians share, of Taíno (the black stone celts) and African Slave (the rusty shackle).

Figure 58 Leg shackle and stone celts.

Wilson

Wilson is a 46-year-old Hougan that I met during a festival at Labadie, a small village on the north coast that can only be accesses by water taxi. Wilson is the leader of a Vodou *troup* in Vaudreuil (a suburb of Cap Haitien) that consists of himself, 2 other Hougans, 4 Mambos (one of which was his wife) and about 20 other members. They meet often for worship and for dance practice. Dance is one of the major activities that occur at the festivals in Haiti, and some troups have extremely elaborate dance routines and costumes, and competition between troups is fierce. Wilson invited me to visit his honfour and I spent quite a bit time there during the summer of 2016 observing their rituals and interviewing most of the troup.

Wilson became a Hougan when he was in his mid-twenties. He visits the caves at Fort Picolet about three to four times a year when directed to by the spirits, and the cave at Bois Caiman (which is only about a kilometer away on foot) once a year. On August 14th a special festival commemorating the Vodou ceremony that ignited the Haitian Revolution takes place at Bois Caiman, and Wilson attends each year with his troup. As part of the festival, Wilson travels up the hill about one kilometer to the cave of San Jak, where he makes an offering to Ogou, the lwa of the warrior and the spiritual father of Haiti.

Wilson visits the caves at Fort Picolet three or four times a year when directed to by the lwa. Wilson told me that the caves are the home of the spirits and going there for rituals and offerings is more effective that performing the same ceremony in the honfour. What makes the caves special is the spirits that dwell there, and in that way they are no different than any other place that houses spirits, such as the mud pit at Plaine-du-Nord, the beach at Bord-de-Mer, and any of the various waterfalls located in the area.

The cave at Bois Caiman is different because it is not just a cave, but also a historical site that has great spiritual and nationalistic importance to all Haitians. By visiting the cave at Bois Caiman it is possible to connect not only with Ogou but also with Dutty Boukman and Fatima, the catalyst of the Haitian Revolution.

Wilson showed me into his peristyle, and along with he usual Vodou paraphernalia I noted 3 human skulls that had been painted with red and black paint. When asked, Wilson told me that all three had been older wise people that he had known when they were alive, and that he brought their skulls to his peristyle so that he could continue to ask them for advice. He referred to them as "his Ghede". The Ghede are a family of lwa in Vodou that are led by Baron Samedi and contain all of the spirits of the dead.

Widelene

Widelene is a 22-year-old Mambo that is a member of Wilson's troupe in Vaudreuil. I first met her at the same festival in Labadie, and again later at Wilson's Honfour. On that occasion she was possessed, or "mounted" by the lwa Papa Legba, and so was not available for interview. Being mounted by a spirit often leaves the person exhausted afterwards. I bumped into her again at Bois Caiman, and that time she agreed to talk to me. Widelene told me that she became a Mambo at 17 and has been part of Wilson's troupe all of her life. Her mother is also a Mambo in the troupe. Widelene Has been to the Fort Picolet caves twice to visit the caves, and on both occasions her requests of the spirits were successful. On one occasion she sought assistance with a legal issue for a customer, and on the second occasion she sought romantic assistance for herself. Even though both visits were successful, she has not returned because she did not feel safe at the fort because of the young men that live there, which she referred to as bandits. She would like to go back but has had trouble finding someone to go with her.

Widelene does go to Bois Caiman and to Plaine-du-Nord two to three times a year, and told me that they are places of power, just like the caves. They are powerful because the spirits chose to live in them, and without the spirits they would have no power. They are similar to a Mapou (Ceiba) tree that grows not far from her home. In this Mapou tree Papa Legba resides, and conducting a ceremony at the base of the tree increases the likelihood of the spirits showing themselves. It is Widelene's frequent visits to this tree that have created her strong bond with Legba, which I witnessed on my first visit to Wilson's Honfour.

Islande

While attending the semi-weekly festival at Trou-du-Nord I met Islande, a Mambo from the border town of Ouanaminthe, about 40 kilometers to the east. Islande was 56 and had been a mambo since she was 15 years old. Islande told me that she has never been to any cave. She travels by tap-tap from the border once a week to make offerings to Ti Jean Dantor, the resident spirit that resides in the basin located under the bridge there. Ti Jean Dantor is the son of (and lover of) Ezili Dantor and the aide-de-camp to Ogou. Many of the people that come to worship Ti Jean Dantor come dressed is

a pseudo-military uniform, and Islande was a prime example of that, dressed in a khaki skirt and blouse with red trim. Many of the people present resembled Boy Scouts, and in fact I noticed that several were wearing old scout uniforms, complete with patches, that had red fringe added to the pockets and epaulets.

While she had never been in a cave, she told me that she believes the presence of spirits in the caves would make them sacred and powerful, in much the same way as the concrete basin located under the bridge at Trou-du-Nord housed Ti Jean Dantor. Ti Jean is a popular lwa because he provided access to both his mother Elili Dantor, and his superior Ogou. Islande also frequents the Dajabon River for contact with the Ghede spirits from the Parsley Massacre of 1937. Islande was very interested to learn of the caves at Fort Picolet and the spirits there and told me that had she known of them before she might have visited them. She has attended festivals at Plaine-du-Nord, Limonade, and Bois Caiman, but did not know about the cave there.

Simon

Simon is a 53-year-old man that I met while visiting the fortifications at Fort-Liberté in northeast Haiti. Simon told me that, while he believes in Vodou, he does not regularly practice it. Simon was working as a fisherman when I met him, but he told me that he usually works as a smuggler, transporting refugees to either the Turks and Caicos Islands or to the Bahamas. Simon would gather his customers in Fort-Liberté and set sail at night, sailing along the coast of Northern Haiti to a staging point on the Isla Tortuga. Before leaving Fort-Liberté his passengers would usually make some offering to La Siren and would often hire a local Mambo or Hougan to perform a ceremony to ensure the safety and success of the voyage. After the passage to Tortuga, Simon and his passengers would wait on the northern side of the island for ideal conditions. Simon preferred making this second leg of the journey on a moonless night in calm weather. His passengers would usually make a second offering at this time, and Simon would make his own offerings of rum and coffee to La Siren and Agwe. This second voyage was always the most dangerous, both because he would be crossing over 100 KM of open water and because he risked arrest and the loss of his boat if captured by the coast guards of Haiti, Turks and Caicos, Bahamas, or the United States. Simon told me that he had been arrested 3 times, losing his boat all three times. Each time he gave a different false name, and never carried identification, so there was no official record of his arrest. His last arrest was six months before our interview, and he was currently working as a fisherman on the boats of other men, or shore fishing, as he saved up for a new boat.

Simon told me that he has never been in a cave, and has no desire to visit one for spiritual reasons. He has traveled to Bord-De-Mer near Limonade to make offerings to La Siren and Agwe, but has not gone there for several years. His visit to Bord-De-Mer was not productive, and he believes making offering at sea from his boat is the most effective manner of eliciting the favor of the lwa.

Ester

Ester is a 35-year-old woman who lives in Trou-du-Nord with her husband and two children. She is not a Mambo but does practice Vodou. Ester attends the twice-weekly festival in Trou-du-Nord about once a month when she can. She also attends the festivals at Limonade, Bord-der-Mer, and Plaine-du-Nord every ear. Approximately once a year she travels to Fort Picolet, usually with her husband and children, to make an offering to La Siren. While at the Fort they visit several of the caves and make small offerings, but Ester said the main cave they visit is N-002, which she identified from photographs I showed her on my phone.

Ester said that while neither her or her husband work on or near the ocean, she has had a special connection to La Siren since childhood and that La Siren is her preferred spirit. Inside the cave Ester prays to La Siren, and leaves offerings which usually include a taper candle, klaren, and perfume. Ester also goes to Bord-der-Mer a few times a year, and feels the connection with La Siren is better there, but she continues to go to Fort Picolet as well "to be safe".

Daniel

I met Daniel on my first visit to Fort-Liberté in Northeast Haiti. Daniel is a homeless 62-year-old man who resides inside the fortifications of the old fort that lie just outside of the village of Fort-Liberté. He is a self-appointed caretaker for the fort, picking up trash and soliciting donations from visitors. Daniel is not a Hougan but does practice Vodou. Daniel told me that he has only left the village of Fort-Liberté once when he was younger to visit Cap Haitien but had not left since. He has lived in the ruins of the old fort for as long as he can remember. He lived in a house in the village with his parents when he was a child, but his parents and the house are now gone.

Daniel had never been in a cave or visited any of the other pilgrimage sites in the area, but he said that the ruins of Fort-Liberté are inhabited by many of the lwa, and that most of them are malevolent. As he guided me around the fort, I noticed dummies fashioned from clothing and stuffed with grass spaced out around the fort. Some were propped up like scare crows, but most where lying down and at first glance appeared to be sleeping people. Daniel told me that he creates the dummies to scare away the spirits. The spirits are very active at night when he is alone at the fort, and the dummies help him to feel safe. I asked Daniel to identify the spirits, but he refused to name them or talk about them anymore for fear they would hear us talking about them. I asked him why he stays at the fort if he doesn't feel safe there, and he told me he has nowhere else to go.

Rose

While attending the festival at Plaine-du-Nord I met Rose, a Mambo from Saint-Marc in western Haiti, which is 155 kilometers from Cap Haitien. Rose told me that she comes to Plaine-du-Nord every year for the festival of San Jak and had noticed me there the year before. Rose comes to Plaine-du-Nord to make offerings to Ogou (this year a black rooster and bottle of rum) and to collect some of the mud from the pool to take

back to Saint-Marc. The mud had incredible healing powers, and she uses it in her practice at home.

I watched as Rose first threw an unopened bottle of Barbancourt Rum into the pool. She began to sing to Ogou, then lit a candle and made several left-to-right passes with the candle over the bottle of rum. As she was doing this, several young men who were swimming in the mud and collecting the offerings waited for her to throw the bottle. Once the bottle was thrown, there was a mad rush to grab it and short tussle, until one man rose up out the mud with the bottle. He opened it, took a short drink, then recapped it and waded to the far side of the pool where he placed it along with a small collection of other offerings he had salvaged. As he was doing this Rose, who was still singing, took a small knife from her dress pocket and after making three passed over the mud with the rooster, slit its throat and held the bird over the pool so that it's blood could run into the mud. At this point in the day at least a dozen bulls had been slaughtered with machetes as offerings and their blood and other fluids drained into the pool. She then threw the rooster, still twitching, into the mud where the young men again scrambled for it. This time a different winner emerged and places the rooster on his own pile of salvaged offerings. Salvaging the offerings at Plaine-du-Nord is common and accepted. There is usually at least one young man in the mud during the festival dragging a large magnet through the mud to collect the coins that are thrown in as offerings while other men fight over the rum bottles, candles, and other offerings tossed into the mud.

Figure 59 The pool at Plaine-du-Nord with young men in the mud collecting offerings.

Rose has never been in a cave for any reason but does travel to the beach for offerings at least twice a month. Saint-Marc is a coastal town, and many of her customers are involved in the fishing industry. At the beach is better able to connect to both La Siren and to Agwe. She also travels each year to Plaine-du-Nord and Limonade

for the festivals there, as well as to Saut-d'Eau (Sodo) for the Festival of Our Lady of Carmel.

Summary

Not everyone I interviewed admitted to being Vodou believers. Some told me they were Protestants, and felt that Vodou was a form of devil worship. Others told me that they didn't believe in anything. Three fifths of the people I spoke with told me that they practice Vodou in caves, but theses numbers are almost certainly inflated because so many of those interviewed were first contacted at Fort Picolet.

One universal theme I found when speaking to people was that the caves and other sacred sites were not sacred themselves but were simply the vessel that contained a spirit. Caves, mud pits, trees, and waterfalls were powerful because of the spirits that dwelt in them, and in the absence of that spirit, there was no power. While all caves and bodies of water seem to contain at least one spirit, only select trees do. Lwa may restrict their dwelling to a specific specie of tree but are not found in every tree on that specie. Should a tree that houses a lwa die for any reason, the spirit relocates to another neighboring tree. I also found that many people made a distinction between natural and man-made vessels, and felt that natural ones such as caves, waterfalls, and the ocean were superior to human structures when it came to contact and negotiations with the spirits.

CHAPTER 8: THE CARETAKERS

The rough wooden chairs with woven palm frond seats are ubiquitous in Haiti, found in expensive restaurants and low-income houses alike. The chairs range in size from large chairs capable of accommodating an overweight American male of 270 lbs to the *Ti Chez* (little chair), the small seven-inch chairs most often used in Vodou rituals for binding dolls, and then all sizes in between. On Saturday, July 5th, 2014, while conducting an artifact inventory at cave N-001, I found a medium sized chair, about 18 inches tall, directly outside the cave opening.

This size chair is occasionally used in Vodou ceremonies, but not as often as the smaller Ti Chez. It also has the added benefit of being just large enough to support an adult, although uncomfortably. These chairs are sometimes used in the markets by adult merchants because they place the merchant close to the ground where their wares are, and they are light to carry. On this day, this particular chair was being put to a different use. The chair had a red cloth Vodou doll bound to it. The doll had about a dozen one inch-long, needle-like thorns stuck into it. On top of the doll were four pieces of limestone, the largest about the size of a bowling ball (Figure 60). The rocks almost completely hid the doll, which was only visible through gaps in the rock. After the binding, the Vodousant responsible had poured two bottles of soda rouge over the assembly as an offering, staining the chair, doll, rocks, and ropes red, then shoved the empty bottles into available spaces in the chair. I examined the artifacts as closely as I could without disturbing it, counted the chair and doll in my inventory, and continued on to the next cave.

I returned to Cave N-001 two days later on July 7th for another inventory, and noticed that the chair, rope and doll were gone. I searched the immediate area around the cave, but the only trace found was of a syrup stain on the ground beneath where the chair had been two days before. After conducting an inventory, I moved on to the other caves in the area. While working in Gwòt Klemzine, (N-003), I saw that an 18-inch chair with nothing bound to it had appeared within the last two days in the cave below the drop, which at that time was beyond my access due to safety concerns. By using the zoom on my camera, and by comparing images from two days before, I was able, by matching the red stains from the soda rouge, to determine with a great degree of confidence that this was the same chair I had observed two days prior at Cave N-001. A quick check confirmed that the chair was now absent from Cave N-001. I took note of this movement, and after finishing my inventory moved on to another cave at Fort Picolet.

Figure 60 Ti Chez with doll and Soda Rouge bottles. First observed at this location outside the entrance to N-001

While conduction an inventory at Cave N-004, near the water's edge about fifteen minutes later, one of the residents at Fort Picolet arrived at the site, carrying the same chair that I had just noted in Gwòt Klemzine. This was the same young man, Boudry, that I had met six months before while conducting a ceremony in the cave with Mambo Manolita (see Chapter 5: The Rituals). At our prior meeting, Boudry had been wearing nothing but boxer shorts, and had attached himself to our group without invitation. On that occasion I gave him $5.00 to clean up the cave after our ceremony, at the instruction of Mambo Manolita. This time, he walked straight into the area I was inventorying, placed his chair down, and sat down, blocking me from continuing my inventory or taking pictures. I have since learned this is a ploy Boudry and some others use to solicit donations, but on this day, after checking the stains on the chair to verify if it was in fact the same chair, I left Cave N-004 to Boudry to avoid conflict and returned to Gwòt Klemzine to verify the chair I had seen there earlier was now gone. It was.

Three days later, on Thursday, July 10th I returned to Fort Picolet for another inventory. As I was walking along Rival Beach towards the fort, I stopped at one of the vendor's shacks to purchase a small bottle of rum to use as an offering if the opportunity arose. While making the purchase, I noticed that the same 18-inch chair with syrup stains had made it down from Picolet to a merchant's stall on the beach, about a kilometer from the fort. The stall sold cold drinks, alcohol, and snacks to beach goers, and a small assortment of other wares. The merchant confirmed the chair was for sale along with a

few other Vodou paraphernalia items, some of them used, such as partially burnt candles and half-filled match boxes. The merchant was at first hesitant to say where the chair came from, but finally admitted to purchasing it from "the crazy boy" who lived in the ruins of Fort Picolet.

Figure 61 This photo shows the stops made by the Ti Chez. It was first observed outside the entrance of N-001 (#1) on July 5th. On July 7th it was inside N-003 (#2), and then later the same day it was carried into N-004 (#3). On July 10th it was observed for sale at a merchant's stall on Rival Beach (#4). (Photo from Google Earth)

Over a six-day period I had personally observed the migration of an artifact from its initial location to three additional locations within a ceremonial circuit (Figure 61). It is possible the chair had been left in additional locations in the intervals between my observing it. It is just as possible that when I first observed the chair at Cave N-001, it was not the first time it had been left behind after ritual use. Either way, the chair had made it back to a vendor and was prepared to begin the ritual cycle again, to be used by a new Vodousant.

On our previous meeting I had paid Boudry $5.00 to "clean up" the cave after our ceremony, and now I began to wonder what effect people like Boudry may be having on the material remains left in the caves and if similar caretakers in the past had affected the archaeological record, and how much their activity might be affecting my interpretation of the material remains I was finding in my research.

Caretaking Practices Across Haiti

At the caves of Fort Picolet it was young, homeless men like Boudry who scavenged the caves several times a day both for items of value for resale and for food, drink and tobacco for immediate consumption. They also, on occasion, preyed on the pilgrims coming to the caves to perform rituals, either through aggressive and intimidating begging or through outright theft or robbery. At Bois Caiman it was Zazu, a

state-appointed caretaker for an important historical site who was also a practicing hougan, and who expanded his duties to include control of the access to the cave nearby and the activities that occur there.

At Dondon in north Haiti, and again at Port-a-Piment in southwest Haiti local municipalities seized control of access to the caves that had until recently been open to all in order to monetize them, and who removed material remains to improve the caves attractiveness to tourists. This has, in the case of Port-a-Piment, essentially barred the use of the largest cave by local Vodousants in favor of foreign dollars, while in Dondon only the tourists pay for access. There residents still have free access, although activities are now more closely monitored, and attempts are being made to require Vodousants to clean up after themselves and not leave offering in the caves under penalty of law. At Saint Michel-de-Atalaya in central Haiti it was the property owner who not only seized controlled of access to the caves but hired crews to remove and recycle select ritual remains. Here, access fees are collected, stall space rented out, and during festivals, schedules are created to maximize the flow of people through the caves. Lastly, there was the bokor, or sorcerer, who claimed personal dominion over the caves on the hillside over Comier Plage (Comier Beach) and the hougan in Jacmel in Southeastern Haiti who did the same. With that in mind, I began to interview people who had assumed the role of caretaker at the caves I visited.

Boudry and Maxi at Fort Picolet

Boudry is a young Haitian male who appears to be in his early twenties. Speaking to Boudry can be difficult as he exhibits symptoms of mental illness, although I am not qualified to say if the manifestations of mental illness were genuine, the result of substance abuse, or affectations designed to solicit a donation. Regardless, the locals believe that Boudry is mentally ill, and have told me his mental state is punishment from the spirits for some wrongdoing. There are usually several young, destitute men who live at the fort or nearby at any given time, and all that I have spoken with have admitted to me they remove and sell items of value left in the fort, but only Boudry admits to consuming food, rum and tobacco left as offerings. The other young men are convinced that Boudry has been made crazy by the spirits as punishment for taking and consuming their offerings and are now scared to do the same. They also fear taking recyclable offerings like candles and chairs but do so anyway out of necessity. They justify this as a lesser insult to the spirits, and if they are punished, it will be a less severe punishment and they feel the risk is warranted.

Boudry has been in the Cap Haitien area all his life and has been living alone on the street for as long as he can remember. He lives in a cave about a kilometer down the coast from Fort Picolet with an unnamed woman who I have never seen but who was described to me as also being mentally ill. They survive by handouts, taking offerings from the caves, and occasional work as a day laborer. I attempted to find Boudry's cave but was unable to because the path along the coast is extremely treacherous. It is not in the area commonly visited by pilgrims, and with the exception of Boudry and a few others, I have never seen anyone walk into that area. The locals have told me that in addition to Boudry's cave, the area is also frequented by bandits hiding from the police,

with whom I have sporadically had contact with without serious conflict. Boudry has, on occasion, attempted to set up an impromptu toll both to charge me and others access to the fort, threatened to harm me if he was not given money, and tried to take my equipment. Still, I have found him to be relatively harmless, but other visitors to Fort Picolet may have differing experiences and opinions.

Boudry told me that he believes in the spirits living in the caves but does not fear them. When an opportunity arises, he will join with groups of Vodousants that travel out to Fort Picolet and act as guide to the caves and porter for any goods being carried. This gives him the opportunity to earn a small payment for his services, and to see exactly where offerings of value are left behind for later retrieval. He does not like to take the items while the Vodousants are present as this has in the past led to conflict. I have personally observed him removing items from the cave while I have been working in them. Occasionally there are fights between the men living at the fort for items left behind, so it is important to retrieve them quickly before someone else does.

When Boudry starts to become a nuisance at the fort, Maxi is called in to deal with him, or with any other problem at Fort Picolet for that matter. Maxi is a well-respected and distinguished hougan of 75 who lives near Rival Beach and is recognized by most as the unofficial superintendent of Fort Picolet. He is the person responsible for organizing the annual festival held each August and for collecting contributions from local hougans and mambos when repairs need to be made. Interestingly, Maxi told me that he has personally never been in the caves at Fort Picolet due to the extreme danger posed by the spirits who dwell there. When his work requires an offering or prayer inside the cave, he hires one of the homeless men, including Boudry on occasion, to place the offering inside. Boudry respects and fears Maxi, and usually changes his behavior when scolded.

Once a year Maxi hires a squad of young men and women, including those living at the fort, to clean the area and caves before the festival and to build merchant stalls and ceremonial spaces. When Boudry is hired to clean a cave by a Vodousant, he simply brushes the material away, or in the case of Gwòt Klemzine, throws the items deeper into the cave (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Maxi's crew removes the material that has accumulated and burns it outside the entrance to Gwòt Klemzine. This leaves two areas where artifacts accumulate, neither of which is actually used for ritual.

Zazu at Bois Caiman

The actual site of Bois Caiman has been lost, but a few locations around Cap Haitien claim to be the original. The one with the strongest claim, and the one recognized by the Haitian Government, lies 5 kilometers west of Cap Haitien near Vaudreuil. The site is managed by Zazu, who in addition to be being caretaker is also a respected hougan in his own right. Zazu is responsible for the upkeep of the area and for scheduling the many Vodou troops that wish to perform there on Friday evenings. He also controls access to the small cave in the hills above, a cave most people do not know about. The cave is rumored locally to have been a hideout of Dutty Boukman during the early days of the revolution and is now the home of Ogou, the lwa of war, courage, steel, rum,

tobacco, and politics. Zazu escorts visitors up to the caves, makes the proper prayers and offerings before allowing them in, and cleans up the caves afterwards (Figure 62).

Zazu keeps a terra cotta jug in the cave in which cash offerings can be made to Ogou, the resident spirit of the cave. This cash is used to supplement Zazu's income, and acts much like a donation plate in a Christian church. Items considered trash are removed from the cave and taken back down the hill or placed in a midden heap some distance from the cave and invisible to visitors, leaving very little evidence of ritual use behind. Zazu is also responsible for the painting of the cave, which needs to be redone every five to seven years. The cave is painted red and blue to honor Ogou and Haitian identity.

Figure 62 Bois Caiman where Zazu works as both a guide, interpreter, and caretaker.

Jean-Baptist at Port-à-Piment

Grotte Marie-Jeanne, located in the town of Port-à-Piment in Southwest Haiti, is the largest cave in Haiti. Access is through a locked gate, and in order to gain entry you must stop at the city hall and hire a guide. Jean-Baptist Eliovil is the chief guide, and his name and phone number can be found in guide books and web pages dedicated to Haitian tourism. In 2009 the local municipality, along with help from Western Kentucky University and other groups, began the process of turning the cave into a tourist

destination and source of income for the city. Staircases and walkways were built, and the entrance was gated and locked.

Jean-Baptist was one of several local residents who worked on the project. He told me that along with the construction, the caves were cleaned of all "garbage" that had been left in the caves. This included the material remains left behind by both casual users and Vodousants. In fact, when I first toured the cave with Jean-Baptist in 2013 and again in 2015 only three "artifacts" remained in the cave. One small bone and one small ceramic sherd where kept in a designated spot to take out to show to tourists, and one arrangement of plastic flowers was left in a secluded niche that Jean-Baptist showed me when I specifically asked about Vodou usage. In comparison it to every other cave I had visited in Haiti, I would describe the cave as not just cleaned, but sanitized. There was no graffiti on the walls, and no evidence whatsoever that the cave had ever been used for anything other than tourism.

Even though access to the cave is now restricted, the cave still attracts local worshipers. On both of my visits to the cave I noted offerings left at the locked gate when I arrived. These consisted of melted candles and on one occasion rosary beads. Jean-Baptist, as part of his duties as guide, cleared the items away when he noticed them. Jean-Baptist confirmed that other caves in the area are currently used for Vodou rituals but declined to take me to any for fear of offending local hougans and mambos.

Haiti is routinely and insultingly referred to in United States' media as "…the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere" and while the superlative is usually unnecessary, in this case it is important. With more than two thirds of the labor force either unemployed (40%) or underemployed (20%) (Central Intelligence Agency 2018), any possible avenue for creating income is quickly seized by Haitians looking for a means of support, even if they seem impractical. On one occasion, while watching a car race organized on downtown Port-au-Prince streets, I noticed an adult male with a bathroom scale working the crowd, offering to weigh bystanders for a small charge. Likewise, it is not uncommon to see people moving from house to house with small appliances like an electric iron offering to press clothing for a small fee. It is almost impossible to park a car in certain areas of Cap Haitien or Port-au-Prince without having the car washed by impoverished people, who then demand payment for the service. After the third carwash on the same day, the savvy tourist learns to tell any and all around not to wash his car, or to hire a watchman to guard it for him. These attempts at creating employment from nothing are manifestations of the desire to work when the opportunity does not exist.

Another very common sight is the impromptu road crew made up of local residents working (or in many cases, pretending to work) on filling in pot holes on the paved roads. These men will often feel that they have the right to charge vehicles that pass by for the work they have done. Sometimes a simple string or light branch is used to stop traffic, on other occasions a heavy chain or cable that threatens damage forces vehicles to stop and pay. Children, sometimes as young as 10 will occasionally imitate this scheme, attempting to inveigle payment for their pretend road repairs.

These cave caretakers feel a sense of ownership and justification in charging admittance to the caves for the "work" they have completed and the wages they are owed, even though the work is not done on the behalf of the visitor. This same thought process

can be seen in the United States, where usually homeless men will run up to vehicles stopped at a red light and clean the windshield uninvited then expect payment and become (or at least act) angry when it is denied. Boudry's attempt at charging admission to the fort is an example of this mind-set, and he is not the only person I have seen attempt this. In the United States, such subsistence strategies are usually reserved for 0.5% of the population that are homeless, and even they have other opportunities not available to Boudry.

While Haiti is markedly stratified both racially and financially, Vodou is egalitarian, and access to religion and to spaces sacred in Vodou is open to all. There is no fee to enter Fort Picolet or the caves behind it[18], and people of all backgrounds travel to the site for worship. Likewise, status within Vodou is unimportant to access. Hougans or mambos alone, groups of lay people led by hougans or mambos, or groups or individual lay people without hougans or mambos travel in about equal numbers to the caves for religious purposes.

In another society with a much stricter social structure or less economic disadvantages, these opportunities might not exist. Archaeological excavations conducted at Actun Tunichil Muknal and Las Cuevas in Belize, to name only two, show evidence which could indicate that access to sacred space was less egalitarian, but may have been restricted to a select few who were able to leave their offerings in the caves to remain for millennia undisturbed. This restricted access was used by elite individuals to demonstrate the power they possessed (Moyes 2015; Moyes et al. 2015). In these cases, there is little to no evidence that caretakers recycled the offerings of others, perhaps indicative of hierarchical access to these sacred sites.

[18] Rival Beach, which you have to cross to get to Fort Picolet, does charge a small admission fee on weekends during the summer, which does impact impoverished Vodousants.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

What Makes a Cave?

Most of the people I interviewed did not describe the caves as uniquely special places. They viewed them the same as they might a waterfall, large tree, a beach, or highway bridge. It was the presence of the lwa, which may call all of these things home, that make caves sacred and a pilgrimage destination, particularly around Cap Haitien. Interestingly, while only a select few trees or bridges might be home to a spirit, all beaches, waterfalls, and caves are occupied. Beaches are easy to explain, because they all border the sea which is home to several ocean spirits. Waterfalls, rivers, and ponds are home to water spirits, and are all connected, explaining the ubiquitous presence of spirits there as well. Caves, however, are different. There is no family of spirits that are reserved for caves. Unlike other cultures, Vodou does not view caves as an access point to the underworld or afterlife, those are found in graveyards and cemeteries. All types of spirits from all families, or nations, of lwa were found in this study to inhabit caves (with the exception of the Ghede).

The caves can house a multitude of spirits at once, with each alcove and chamber potentially being the home of a different spirit. The size of the alcove is unimportant, as there seems to be no fixed dimension for a lwa. All caves have spirits that dwell in them, and a spirit can dwell in more than one cave or other location at the same time. Ogou, for example, dwells in Plaine-du-Nord, Bois Caiman, and a cave at Fort Picolet, and that is just in the immediate Cap Haitien area. There are undoubtedly other locations in the area where he dwells that I am not aware of. Likewise, it is common to visit one of these dwelling sites and find that the spirit who resides there is simply not home. Sometimes they can be called home, but often the petitioner simply had to try again another day. It seems that with caves, the likelihood of the spirit being home is elevated, though no one could explain why. No one I spoke with was able to explain the universal occupation of the caves. They did, however, say that in the caves it is possible to hear and feel the spirits in ways that are not possible at home or at most other locations. On a few occasions, while in caves, people reported noises they heard deeper in the caves, or the sudden breezes they felt on their faces as communications from the spirits. While these types of interactions with the spirits are possible anywhere, they seem to occur more frequently in caves.

Similarly, people I interviewed told me that mounting, or possession, of people by the spirits was more common inside caves. My own personal experience was that within a cave, with candles burning and rum flowing, it was easy to become disoriented and light headed, a factor that may contribute to possession or trance state. As I mentioned in Chapter 5, I became very lightheaded in the cave during my Mèt Tet ceremony. Most of the possessions I observed occurred in honfours under structured Vodou ceremonies or during festivals, but in most cases with drummers playing. I only witnessed a few possessions in caves, and some of these may not have been genuine (a sentiment expressed by other Vodou practitioners who were present). Even though most people told me that caves are just like other pilgrimage sites around the area, their accounts of personal activity in them indicates otherwise.

With one exception in my interviews with over 70 Vodou practitioners, it was agreed that the volume of the cave was not related to the amount of power within caves, but it was the depth (presence of dark zones), number of chambers, and of course the power of the specific lwa that resides there that matters. Likewise, the presence or absence of light was not an immediate factor for the ability of a cave to contain a lwa, with some of the shallower caves actually being only slight overhangs that were exposed to sunlight all day. Open-air or surface locations like Plaine-du-Nord and Saut-D'Eau are the home to only one or two spirits. When a choice of caves was available, such as at Fort Picolet, it was the cave with the most room for ceremonies to be performed that was most utilized.

Is Vodou in Caves Magic or Religion?

The vast majority of people visiting the caves at Fort Picolet were there to negotiate some form of personal assistance from the spirits. These requests included the release of loved ones from jail, ease of financial hardships, curing of health issues, and most commonly, relationship and romantic issues. Only a few of the pilgrims to Fort Picolet were there to worship the spirits without negotiating for personal gain. This is in marked contrast to the attendees at the various festivals who were mostly there to worship the spirits, seek a general benevolence from them, compete in group events[19], or to just have a good time. Following Malinowski's definitions of magic and religion (Malinowski, 1948, 67-70), the majority of the activity I witnessed in the caves could be classified as magic, while the activities in the honfours and at festival sites would qualify as religion.

Why Do Only Some Vodou Practitioners Use Caves?

Most Vodou practitioners do not utilize caves, and of those that do, some use them regularly but some only on very special occasions, such as festivals or in times of dire need. Of groups comprising three or fewer participants, mambos, hougans, and bokors[20] accounted for roughly 50 percent of the visitors. The rest were lay individuals there to perform personal ceremonies, either at the direction of the spirits or of a mambo or hougan. With groups of four or more, about 90 percent included at least one mambo or hougan, and occasionally more. The larger groups tended to spend more time at the fort and visit more caves in their circuit.

Most visitors at Fort Picolet performed some type of ceremony at the main gate of the fort, then at each of the caves. Offerings brought out to Fort Picolet varied from a single candle in many instances, to large baskets filled with food, liquor, and other items. The larger groups led by a professional tended to have more offerings. Those that skipped a cave usually did so because they were not aware of its existence and remarked that they

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[19] In particular, many of the dance troupes were there to be seen and to impress others with their costumes, dances, and ceremonies.

[20] Very few of the men interviewed self-identified as bokors, even though many of the people I spoke with told me hougans and bokors are the same thing, and hougans and mambos often "practice magic with both hands" as well.

would visit it from then on. In particular, many of the visitors were unaware of N-006, the red and yellow painted cave that is the home of Ti Jean Dantor. This particular cave is somewhat isolated and overgrown, and many of the hougans and mambos that visit Fort Picolet do not know it exists, but once informed, they all indicated they would visit it on all future trips to Fort Picolet. This attitude corroborates the belief that all caves in Haiti are inhabited by lwa.

From my personal observations at Fort Picolet, males and females use the caves on an equal basis, but people under 40 years old make up the bulk of the visitors. This may be because of the long walk through the surf to get to Fort Picolet, the difficulty in accessing the caves, or the belief that bandits occupied the area, because at other pilgrimage sites that were easier to access or lacked the reputation of harboring criminals, people over 40 and women were both disproportionally represented.

Earlier I proposed three reasons for why some Vodou practitioners make use of caves more than others: 1. To effect an immediate change or fulfill an immediate request; 2. To create ties to a national identity tied to a perceived Taíno ancestry; or 3. To gain greater control over aspects of the more common Vodou. After conducting over 70 interviews, participating in several rituals and festivals, and observing countless other rituals in caves, it has become apparent that it is not any single factor that influences why some people use caves, but a combination of each with a dominant reason which changes depending on the immediate needs of the practitioner and the local history of the cave. For example, several people I spoke with view visits to caves as a sort of recharging of their spiritual batteries, and the visits "...tighten and strengthen the bonds between them and the sacred…" (Durkheim, 1995, 60). Other's felt that visiting one cave in particular, Bois Caiman, helped to connect them to their slave roots and that visiting Bois Caiman, associated with the birth of the Haitian nation and identity, made them feel "more Haitian". Likewise, caves like Voutamenge, N-008, with its carvings attributed to the original Taíno inhabitants of Haiti are believed to help meld the African/French/Taíno ancestry claimed by many Haitians. In these latter cases, some cave rituals may be a form a revitalization movement by incorporating the long-gone Taíno beliefs.

Greater Implications of this Study

One of my main objectives in this dissertation was to examine the effect that various types of caretakers had on the material remains after the ceremonies were complete, and to provide this information so that archaeologist working in similar situations might better understand the process in which ritual remains might be moved from their original resting places in the archaeological record.

In every cave visited, in every region of Haiti, some form of caretaker was actively moving, removing, or reusing the material remains left in the caves after ceremonial use. In each of these caves, the location with the greatest accrual of votive offerings was not the actual ritual site, but instead the spot where trash was deposited when preparing the ritual site for the next user. These deposit sites were located within the caves, near the cave entrances, or in a few cases, a great distance away. While not applicable to all situations, in cases where there is a high frequency of use and egalitarian access, this model may be useful in interpreting similar archaeological sites.

In societies with stricter social structure or that are less economically disadvantaged these caretaker opportunities would not exist. In some locations, such as the caves sites of Actun Tunichil Muknal and Las Cuevas in Belize, archaeological evidence indicates that access to caves was restricted to elites, and so offerings left in the caves could remain in place for centuries undisturbed. Access to these restricted spaces may have been a demonstration of status and power, showing the elevated position these individuals would have had in the social structure (Moyes 2015; Moyes et al. 2015). There is no evidence that offerings were recycled or moved after ritual use. But in a society that did not use access to sacred sites at an indicator of status and which had a high percentage of its population struggling to subsist, this concept of the caretaker may be helpful in interpreting archaeological data recovered in sacred spaces.

My other main objective in this dissertation was to contribute to the body of knowledge about a culture and belief system which is surrounded by misconceptions and stereotypes. Hopefully I have helped to de-mystified some of the Vodou practices in Haiti dispelled some of the more fanciful misbeliefs outsiders have of Haitians.

APPENDIX A

The Caves

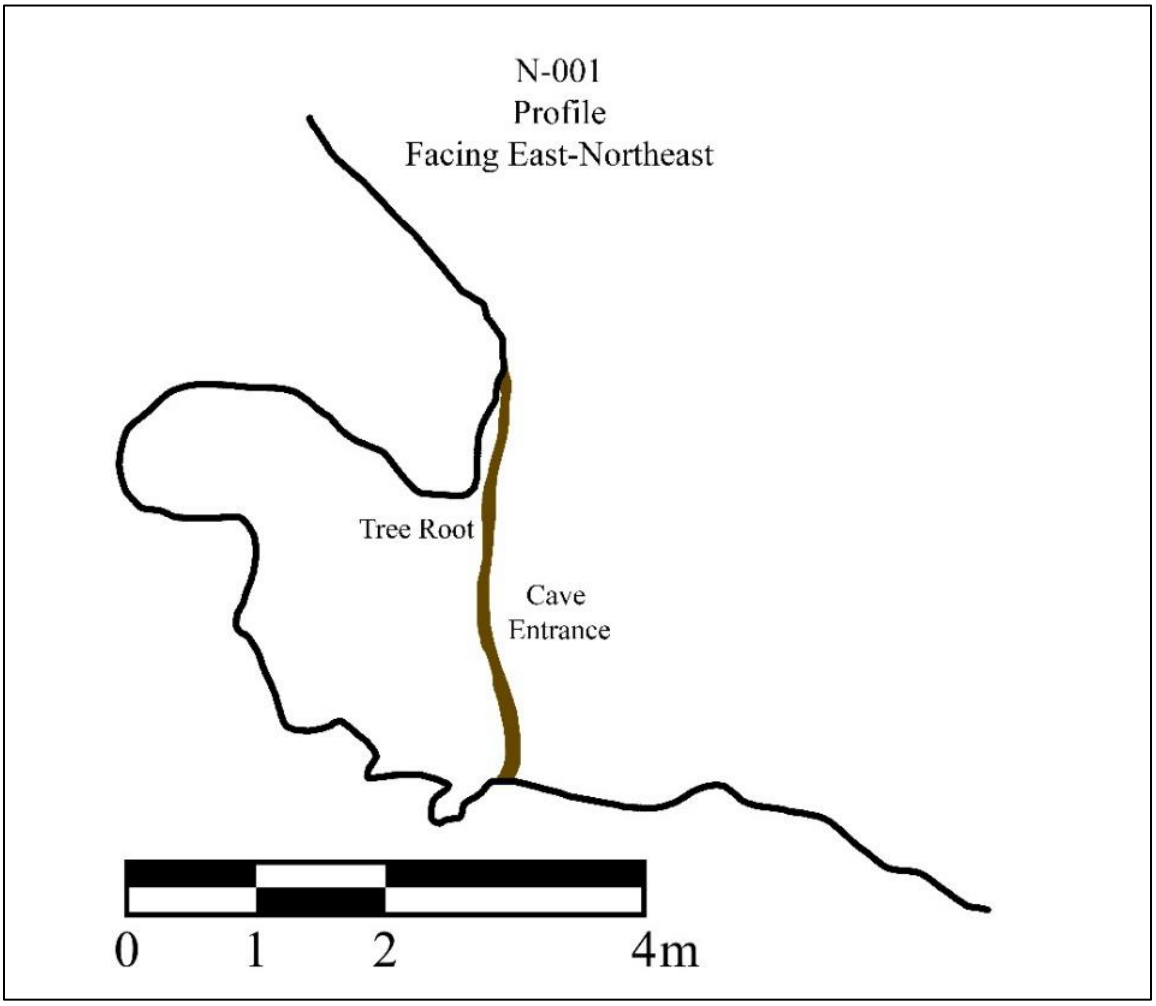

Figure 63 Cave N-001 in profile. Both the cave and the natural platform outside the cave are used for ceremonies.

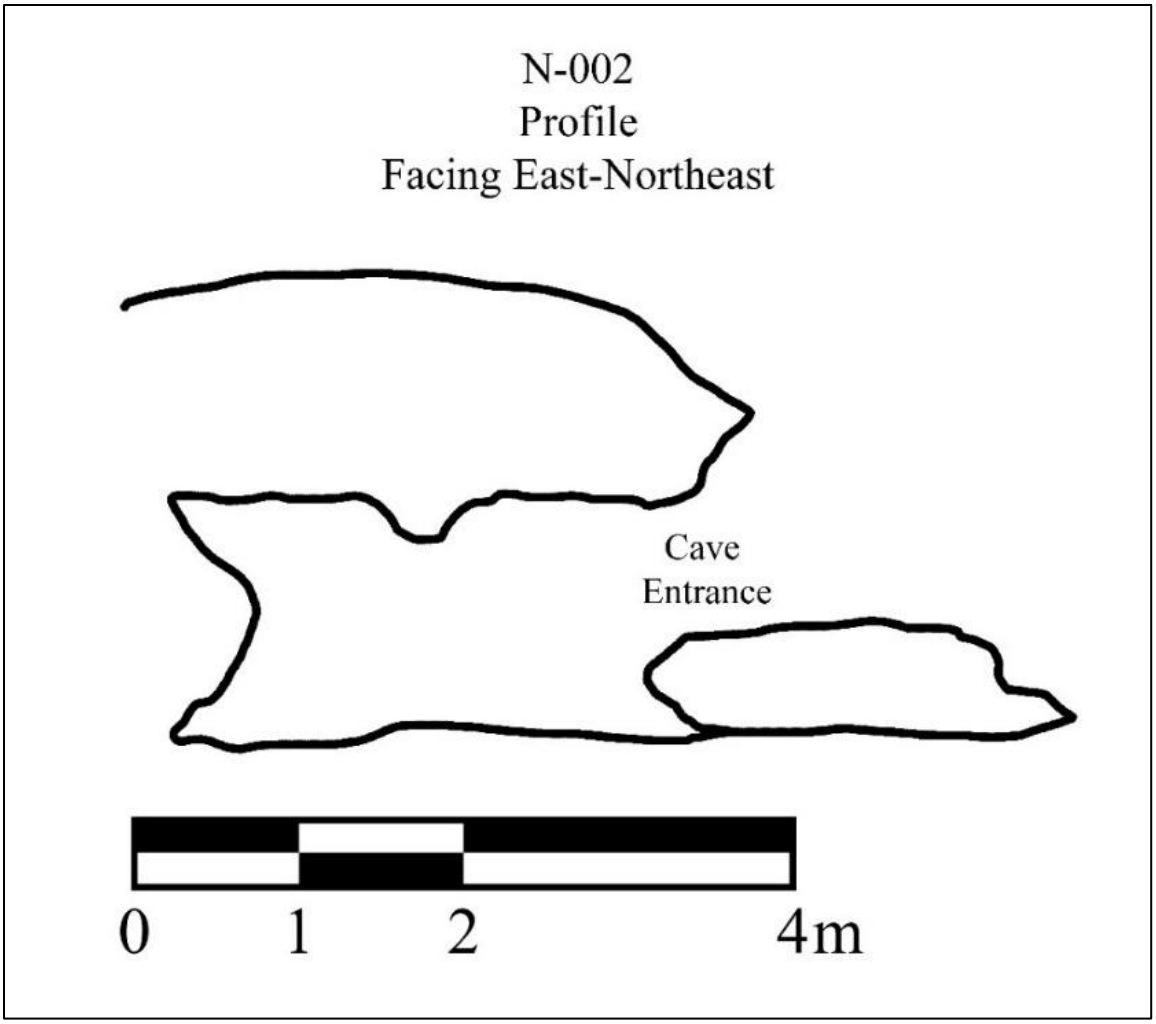

Figure 64 Profile view of N-002.

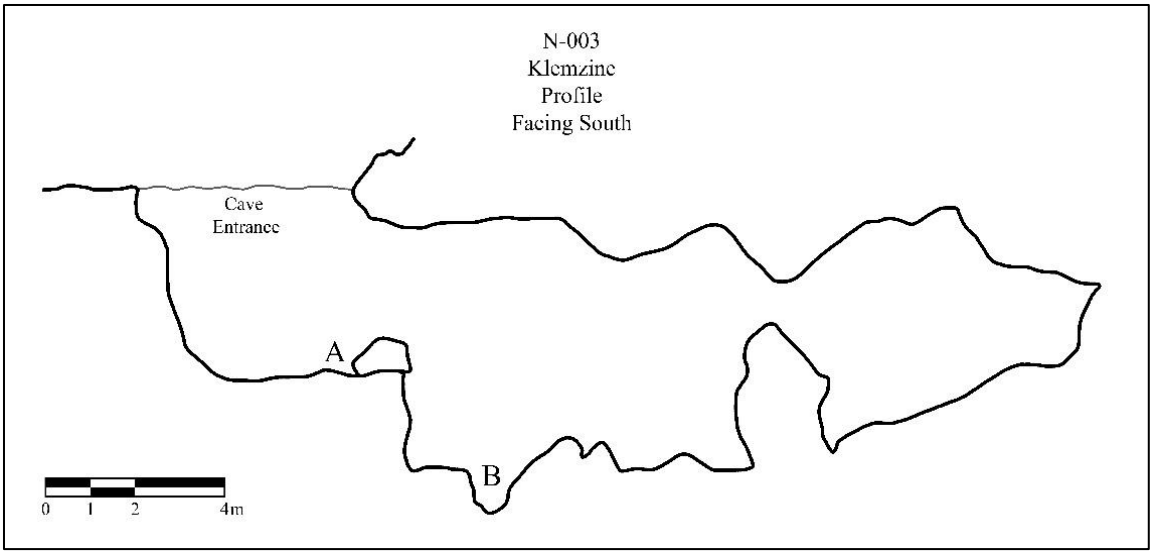

Figure 65 Gwòt Klemzine, N-003

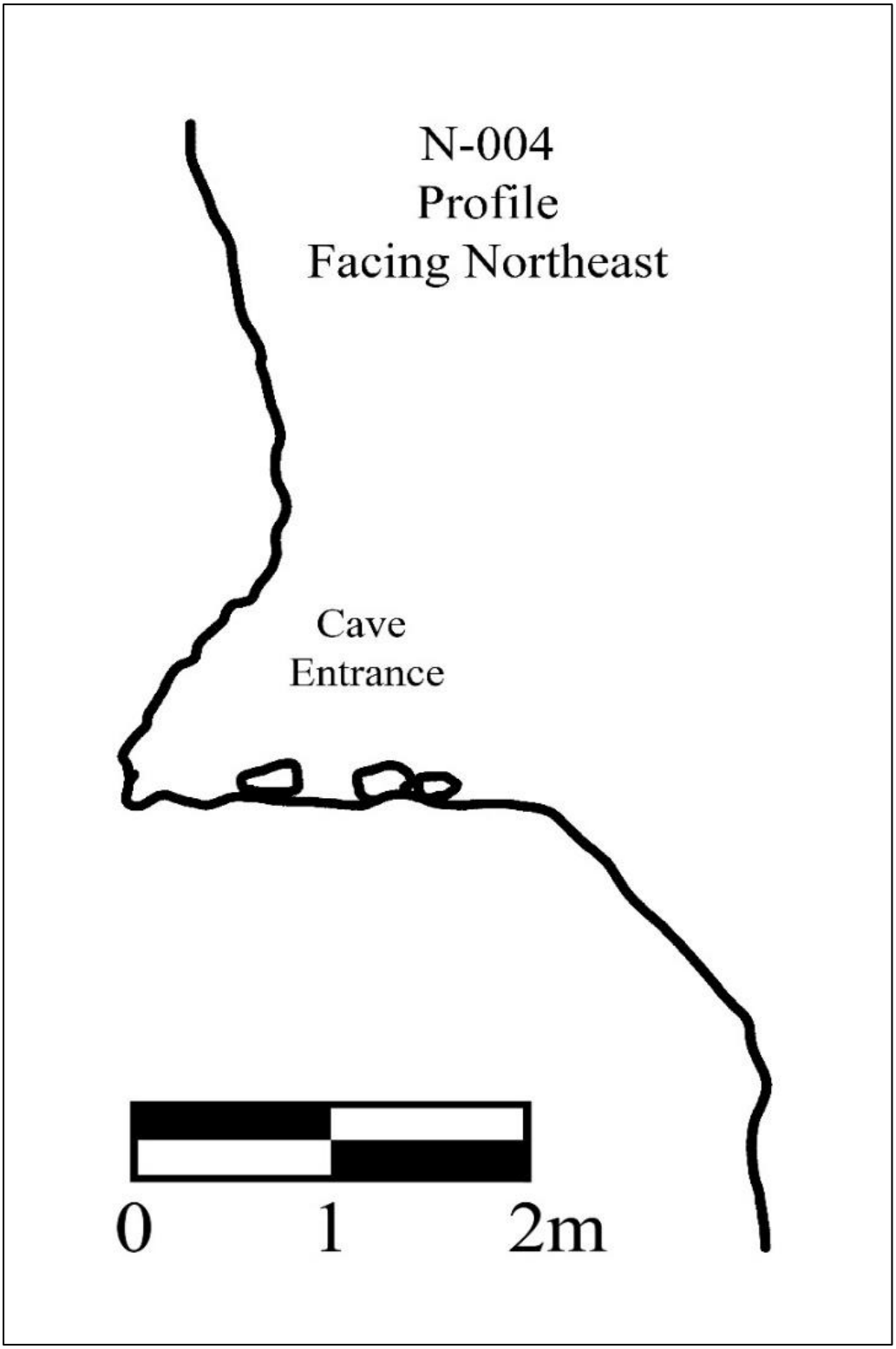

Figure 66 Profile view of N-004. This cave, which is really more of an overhang, is the home of Agwe, the primary male ocean spirit.

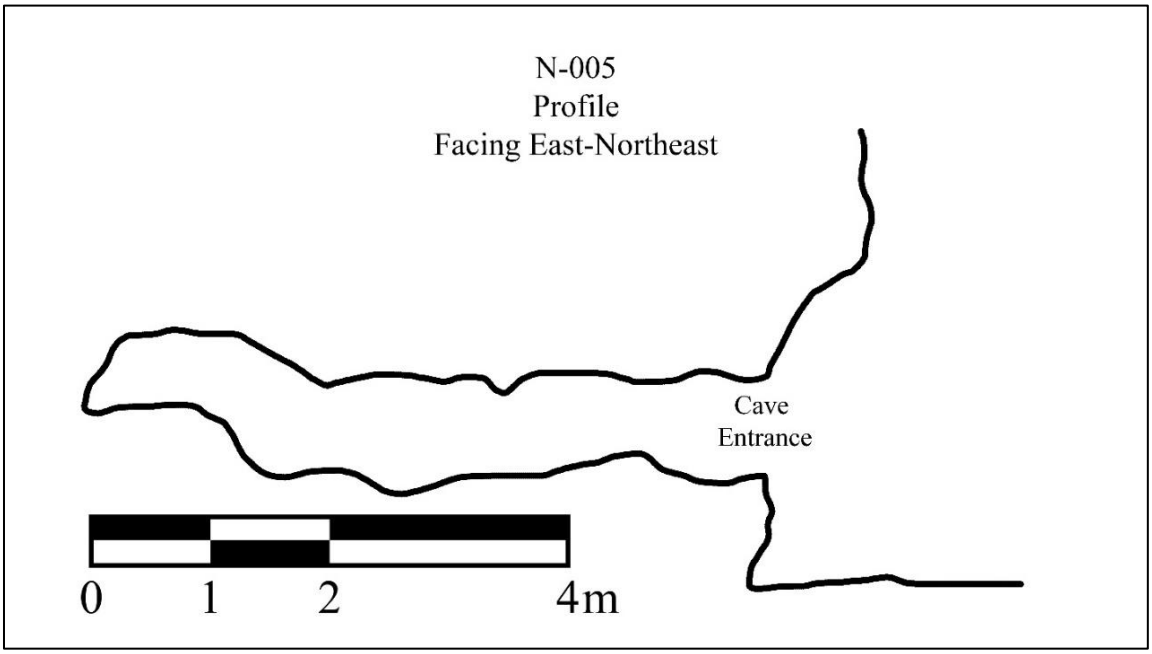

Figure 67 N-005 is located within the fort itself.

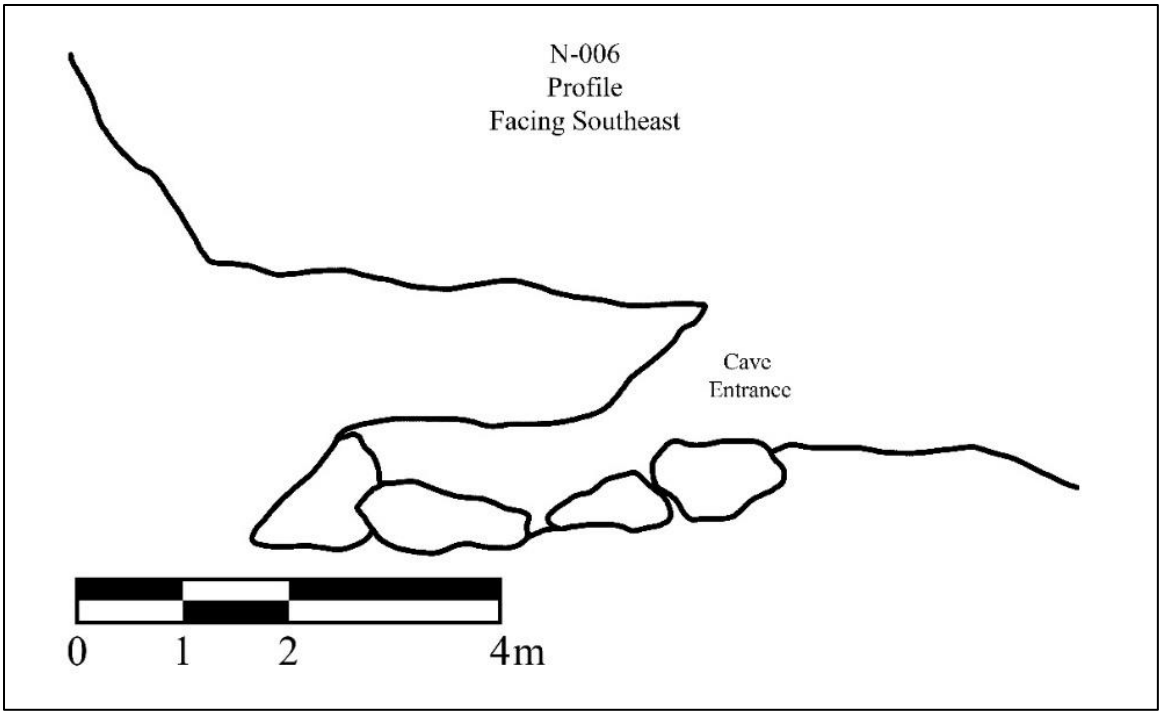

Figure 68 N-006. This cave is located on the slope above Gwòt Klemzine and is overlooked by most visitors.

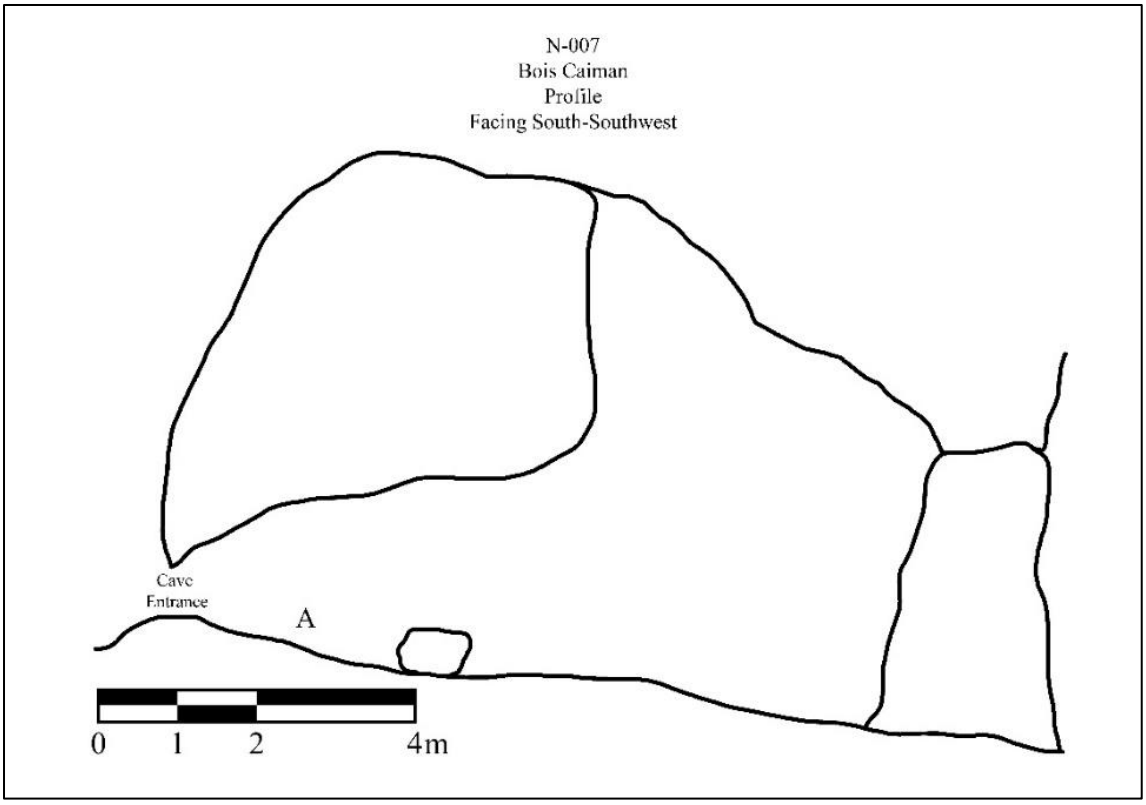

Figure 69 N-007 Profile view of Bois Caiman Cave. The area marked A is the primary ceremonial site and were Zazu keeps a large earthenware jug for donations to the lwa.

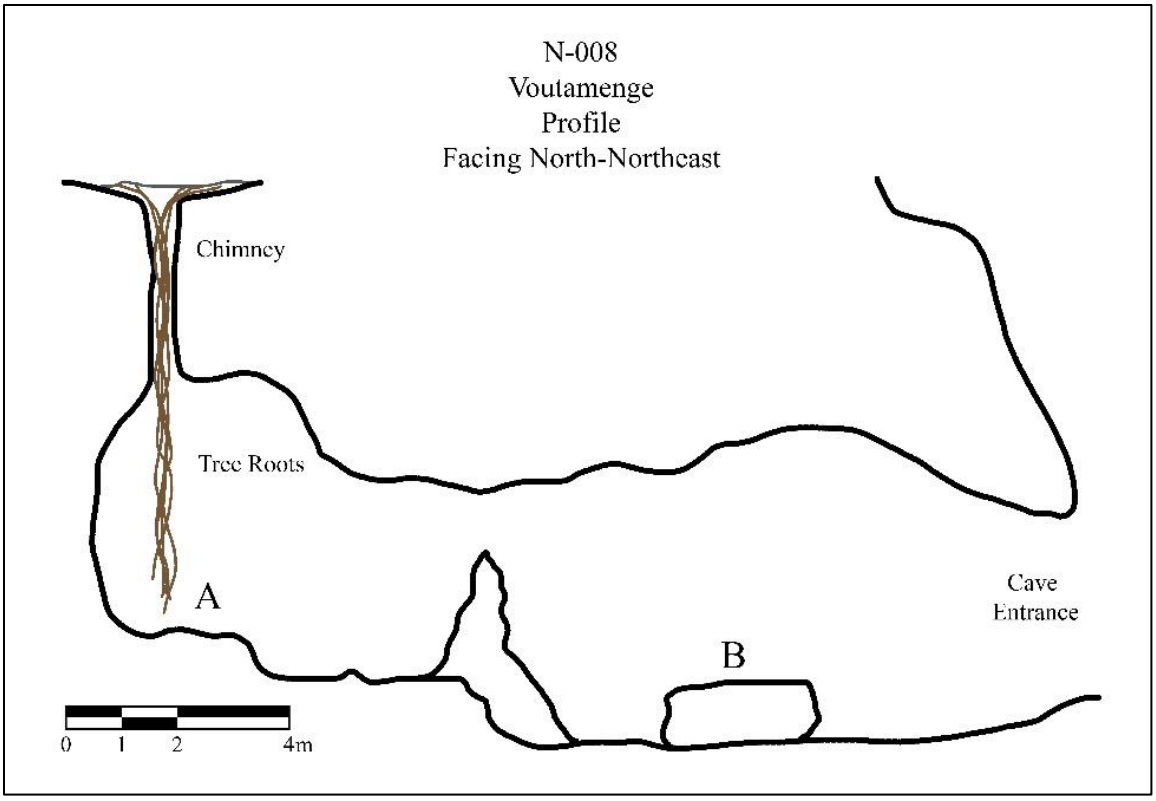

Figure 70 N-008 Voutamenge, or Vault of Menge, located on the banks of the Riviere Bouyaja outside Dondon. The site marked A is the primary ceremonial site, with B being used much less often based on the material left behind. The tree roots at sight A are used as a poto mitan, with offerings being tied or woven into them.

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