



# Exploring Archaeological Sites and the Transformative Power of Local Practices of Heritage in the Caribbean: A Haitian Case

Joseph Sony Jean<sup>1,2,3</sup> 

Accepted: 10 November 2023  
© The Author(s) 2024

## Abstract

This article combines ethnographic and anthropological research with archaeology to explore the significance of archaeological sites as historical elements and their continuous reinterpretation in Haiti. By examining the connection of people with traces of colonial plantations, caves, and Indigenous rock art, this study contextualizes archaeology and heritage within the current social context. The research reveals archaeological sites are characterized by contemporary traces of uses by individuals today. These traces are associated with stories tied to renegotiations of meaning to places, and their contestation, construction of belonging, and memories are among the elements that make sense of heritage-making. The study emphasizes the importance of place meaning and heritage, offering valuable perspectives for future archaeological investigations and contributing to broader discourses on material history in the Caribbean.

**Keywords** Caribbean Archaeology · Heritage Studies · Haiti

## Rezime

Atik sa a baze sou rechèch akeyolojik avèk travay etnografik ak antwopolojik pou eksplòre siyifikasyon sit akeyolojik yo kòm eleman istorik moun kontinye ap re-entèprete ann Ayiti. Lè n egzamine koneksyon moun etabli ak *mazi* abitasyon yo, gwòt ak atizay wòch endyen yo, etid sa a raple nou travay sou akeyoloji ak *eritaj* sipoze marande ak kontèks sosyal aktyèl la. Rechèch la revele gen kèk moun ki itilize sit akeyolojik jounen jodi a. Tras sa yo asosye ak istwa gen rapò ak (re)negosyasyon

---

✉ Joseph Sony Jean  
jean@kitlv.nl

<sup>1</sup> Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Humanities, Institute for History, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> ISPOLE, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

sou siyifikasyon kote yo, ak kontèks yo, konstriksyon apatenans yo, ak memwa yo, se pami eleman ki fè sans nan fabrikasyon *eritaj*. Etid la mete aksan sou enpòtans siyifikasyon plas ak eritaj, ofri pèspektiv valab pou investigasyon akeyolojik nan lavni epi kontribye nan diskou pi laj sou istwa materyèl nan Karayib la.

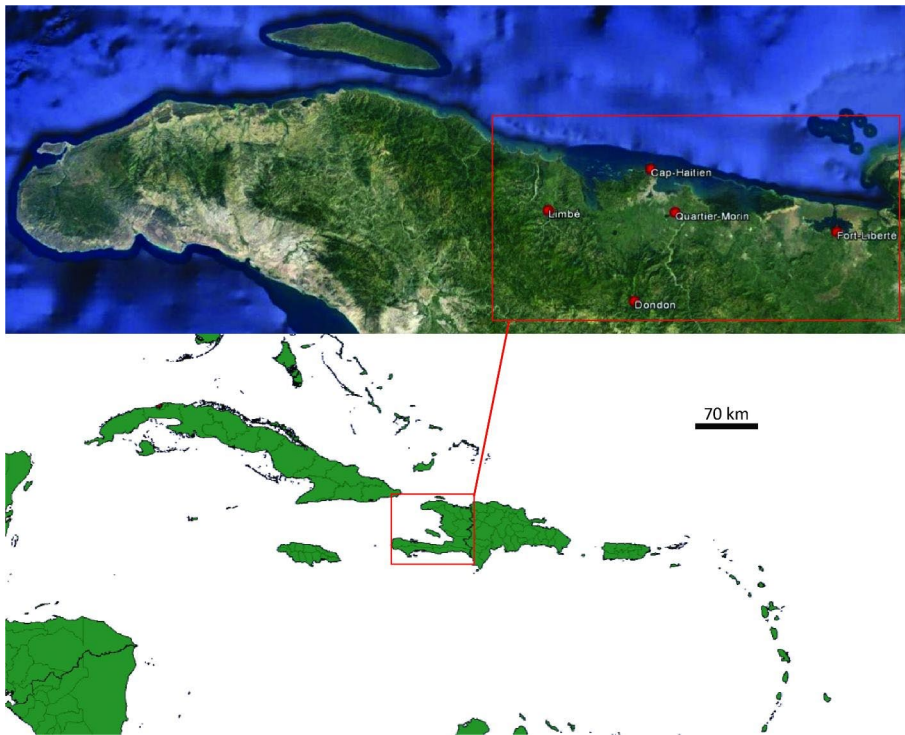
## Introduction

Several recent archaeological studies have accumulated helpful information on how past Indigenous communities in Haiti shaped their landscapes through complex relationships with their transforming environment, through the rich heritage from the period of Spanish colonization to post-revolutionary times (e.g., Deagan 2023; Jean 2019; Jean et al. 2020, 2021; Martinez Rocourt 2023; Monroe 2020). Many archaeological sites that reveal Indigenous history during the colonial era have been destroyed, impacted, and erased in Haiti over the years (Jean et al. 2020). Beyond socioeconomic issues, this can be explained by how Haitian society has chosen to construct its memories of the past, and the dynamics around broader social and ecological factors. A heritage conservation perspective may consider these unstudied and unprotected sites as “abandoned places,” since institutional strategies to safeguard them are slow to be implemented. A critical heritage analysis can help develop an understanding of people’s experiences of archaeological sites that may clash with authorized conservation practices. However, critical conservation discourses and practices are also vital for supporting heritage, since Haitian history has so much to offer global archaeological debates. For instance, when elucidating Indigenous ways of living and their resistance to the Spaniards, the stories about the *Santa Maria* shipwreck in 1492 (Davis 1953; Morison 1940) or the life of enslaved African life in the colonial plantation, archaeological research can resonate across the globe.

Besides the study of archaeological sites from an excavation perspective, local practices related to places – caves, rock art, historical sites, and landscape – can reveal comprehensive knowledge about how people connect to them today. Indeed, consideration of these matters ahead of site excavation remains critical for collaborative archaeological practices, as discussed by Gonzalez-Tennant (2014). In this article, I explore the connection between people and archaeological sites, as historical elements that carry the meaning of their original creation and use in the past – as well as their ongoing renegotiation in the present.

Previous ethnographic studies in Haiti have found that communities understand the Milot heritage site in northern Haiti as *eritaj* (heritage) since it brings a “comprehensive understanding of the past and its ties to the present” (Geller and Marcelin 2020:68). In addition, Rodrigo Bulamah’s (2018) study on the relations between life and history found that traces of the past are connected through current daily and ritual experiences, which allow for the interpretation of the remains as *eritaj*. This also echoes Jean et al.’s (2021) point of view on remains that have been reused and reappropriated by individuals in Fort-Liberté (Jean 2019: 143–146, 179–183). When deepening the relationship between official” and unofficial forms of heritage, one may ask about the way heritage is imbued with meaning by different actors in Haiti (Michel 2021, 2022). In some cases, institutional heritage practices can choose some

specific sites to brand for tourism, as an authorized form of heritage practices. Additionally, other interesting avenues of inquiry need to be explored. When we scrutinize the connection of people with archaeological sites, and their use and interpretation, how do we promote a better understanding of the way places are reimagined by people today? In this case, I explore this question in relation to practices, narratives, journeys, and curiosities about caves, rock art, historical sites, and landscape, as embedded in processes of reimagination and representation. Such social practices through places are portals into an understanding of why and how people connect to them, as well as the implications for discussing the intersections between archaeological and heritage practices. In this article, I build my argument from ethnographic and anthropologic research related to archaeology in northern Haiti (Fig. 1), and then, based on my local experiences including multiple journeys to heritage sites, I focus on people's experiences to formulate an understanding of their connection with various sites. Consequently, this article aims to help reconsider the role of nonofficial heritage in place-making practices as a relevant perspective for future archaeological and heritage investigations.



**Fig. 1** Areas in northern Haiti where the research has been undertaken (Images derived from Google Earth and <https://maps-for-free.com/>)

## Approaching People's Experiences

The material past has played a fundamental role in reliving people's history in the Caribbean. For many years, Caribbeanists have combined the disciplines of archaeology and heritage studies to capture sociocultural landscapes from the area's deep history. Along with excavating archaeological sites in relation to narratives of the past, landscape studies have focused on how past inhabitants created and transformed landscapes through time (e.g., Herrera Malatesta 2018; Jean 2019; Pagán-Jiménez et al. 2020). Within this debate, some studies have considered the complex relationship between contemporary society and place, offering innovative perspectives on Caribbean archaeological debates (see Gonzalez-Tennant 2014). The point of departure of these archaeological studies considers landscapes as created by people in the past, bringing narratives about the past and their current comprehension of the Caribbean (post-)colonial situation (e.g., Jean 2019; Pesoutova 2019). In this context, social practices that encompass religious uses and the appropriation of places are promising for archaeology and heritage studies, as they bring the study of the past into the present (e.g., Beauvoir-Dominique 2009; Pesoutova 2019). At the intersection of practices, discourses, and interventions by researchers and individuals who engage in one way or another with the material past, understanding the interactions of people with historical places can also help bring more inclusive, emancipatory stances to the discipline of archaeology and heritage studies (Haviser 2015a). Notably, some discussions about archaeological narratives and contemporary society have echoed significant steps made in the slow memory work related to archaeology, for instance, in the Caribbean (Sesma 2022). Like other relevant sources of knowledge on archaeology and heritage practices, oral accounts reveal critical tools for knowledge production when emphasizing history and heritage awareness (see Delancy 2020; Siegel and Righter 2011).

This includes the relevance of oral narratives in strengthening the meaning of heritage in society. Webb et al. (2020:6) have stated that “oral histories help to emphasize the rich tapestry of Caribbean lives as opposed to an imposed colonial narrative” (see also (Fricke 2020; Stewart 2020). Taking a living heritage approach through which oral traditions are vital, other authors believe that narratives form a core community (Delancy 2020; Jean et al. 2020) and can explain the lived experiences of individuals and communities with the material past, revealing their relationship with heritage. The relationship between people and archaeological sites can be interpreted in relation to the religious activities of descendants of Indigenous peoples and the African diaspora – observed, for example, in caves in Haiti and the Dominican Republic (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009; Pesoutova 2019), as well as colonial plantations in Haiti (Jean 2019), offering coherent patterns of place-making and belonging. Many disciplines across the social sciences and humanities, such as psychology, geography and anthropology, have widely contributed to the theorization of belonging in place-making. While Antonshich (2010) argues that we can consider this notion as vaguely defined and ill-theorized, place-making more broadly has widely inspired archaeologists and heritage specialists to theorize and describe the intersection of people and places (Jones and Russell 2012; Schaepe et al. 2017). The backbone of the belonging approach in archaeological discussions relies on community archaeology practices,

but also on the conception of “place attachment.” Viewed in this context, according to Jones and Russell (2012), “Sites, specifically archaeological sites, can play an important role in terms of providing the material dimension of the past to which people express their affiliation, sense of belonging and social identity” (Jones and Russell 2012:275). Nevertheless, by discussing belonging through archaeology and heritage studies, place attachment can emerge as a key notion to study such relationships (e.g., Jones and Russell 2012).

Moreover, at the center of Caribbean studies, discussions about religious practices, creolization, negritude, hybridization, transculturation, and identity have produced a wealth of theoretical reflection over many decades (e.g., Price-Mars 1928; Brathwaite 1971; Césaire 1947; Balutansky and Sourieau 1998; Bernabé et al. 1989; Glissant 1995, 1997; Ortiz 1995; Puri 2004). By expanding these lines of inquiry, Besson and Olwig’s (2005:1) edited volume *Caribbean Narratives of Belonging* brings to the forefront the importance of narratives – accounts of people’s lives that explore “how Caribbean sites of identity are defined and maintained by people whose lives unfolded within complex fields of relations that emerged within the context of close colonial encounters and extensive mobility.” When it comes to reflecting on the Caribbean region’s complex history, identity, and place-making, scholars might explore how individuals and communities develop connections to specific places such as caves, archaeological sites, historical towns, and symbolic landscapes. To illustrate this in a Jamaican context, Benson (2005:17–43) studied sacred sites situated in the “land of the maroons” – the Cockpit Country, composed of land, trees, mountains and forests. Similarly, Davis-Palmer (2005:44–62) focused on the religious spaces in Sligoville village to depict people’s narratives of place-making, belonging, and place attachment.

In the study of cultural heritage in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, Pesoutova (2019: 9–10) has theorized places as “healing landscapes,” “which are grounded within the context of healing practices, focusing on human interaction with divine and ancestral beings residing or manifested in places, plants and natural features.” A major part of Pesoutova’s research comes from ethnographic practices that focus on healing practices in landscapes charged with symbols and material traces. Viewed in this context, Pesoutova (2019:293) has suggested “the voices of contributors (in the research) as crucial epistemological factors that underpin the relevance of the past in the present with a potential to decolonize contemporary ideas about the past.” Her study of healing practices has demonstrated the rich symbolism surrounding landscapes where rivers, trees, plants, and archaeological/historical sites, and artifacts are integrated in the religious realm.

In their recent book *Materialities of Religion: Spiritual Traditions of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Caribbean*, Finneran and Welch (2023) examine the material manifestations of Caribbean religious expressions, as well as those imported via colonialism and subsequently changed and adapted within the Caribbean Islands. In the discussion about the Haitian case, the authors focus on Vodou’s material culture implication, the ritual space for dancing and drumming, and the representation of spirits (Finneran and Welch 2023:160–171).

Trouillot’s (1995) critique of historical knowledge production in *Silencing the Past* allows us to think about what narratives of place can tell us when we carry out

archaeological and heritage investigations, and how they may reveal knowledge that has been hidden by mainstream narratives. In the case of this present research and drawing upon archaeological surveys, and combining anthropology and ethnography, I look at traces of colonial places, caves, and rock art beyond their most distant uses, and the current meanings, (re) connection, and stories related to them. People's social practices can be understood in the entanglement between individual and archaeological sites. In this case, their stories cannot be omitted in archaeological and heritage interpretation with a more engaged archaeological surveys that take into account current contemporary social practices.

## Surveys Engagement

This article is based on diverse archaeological, anthropological, and ethnographic research conducted in northern Haiti between 2014 and 2022. Through a multitemporal approach, I expand my previous work (Jean 2019; Jean et al. 2021) to focus on historical and colonial sites, caves and rock art situated in different regions in the northern Haiti. While the aim is to understand local practices and people's experiences with archaeological and heritage sites, the surveys were guided by the following general question: What methodologies or approaches can be used to critically assess ongoing renegotiations of archaeological sites? I conducted non-systematic archaeological surveys while observing different contemporary uses and the traces of on-site religious activities, forcing the researchers to rethink an archaeological interpretation. For instance, why must we be aware of what we see and do not see at a site? What is visible or invisible besides the materiality of the distant past? How can we see features other than those of the archaeology of the distant past? How can we make them visible in the narratives we are trying to relive about the past and trying to narrate to a larger population? Such critical self-reflection frames my various research methods in many ways.

During the non-systematic archaeological surveys, I rely also on observations to evaluate contemporary features such as modern glass bottles used by individuals for ritual purposes found on site. Regarding some places, I use participant observation techniques, which allowed me to get a better understanding of the sociocultural context by documenting people's practices in situ. In this case, I visited some places multiple times to obtain a broader picture about people's experiences and different types of materiality related to their activities, visits, and journeys. On some occasions, I rely on informal and non-directive conversations with individuals encountered at the sites or living nearby to get insight into their experiences with heritage. These conversations are aimed to collect detailed information from people encountered around the sites without planning the questions (Gray 2021; Jamshed 2014). After explaining the research to them, many conversations took the form of opportunistic questions and answers (O'Reilly 2009). An interpretation of people's relationship with places cannot be completed without the inclusion of their narratives. In this context, I followed some baseline questions such as: Why do you come here? How do you use such place? What are the meanings of this place for you?

The analyses of the findings including field notes, features observed in situ, and conversation with people are grounded in a decolonial qualitative approach (Stewart 2020; Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021) that allows one to center the knowledge, practices, and experiences of communities who have developed long-term relationships with the archaeological sites. A decolonial qualitative approach (DQA) provides insight into critical reflexivity, acknowledgment of local knowledge for transformative praxis (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). In archaeological and heritage research, it calls for different scales of ethical collaboration with local voices and their narratives for a more emancipating investigation (e.g., Rizvi 2016). In this context, the implementation of people's narratives about a site, contribute to capturing how contemporary materialities and social beliefs and practices can reshape our understanding about an archaeological site.

In the edited volume *Decolonizing Qualitative Approaches: For and by the Caribbean* edited by Saran Stewart (2020), authors stimulated discussions on research strategies and direction in the Caribbean. Through the debates, Stewart (2020: ix) argues that, “common to the Caribbean is an understanding of how colonial legacies of research have ridiculed oral traditions, languages, and ways of knowing, often rendering them valueless and inconsequential.” To echo Stewart (2020), I recall Katherine McKittrick's (2020:4) argument in *Dear Science and Other Stories*: “Within black studies and anticolonial studies, one can observe an ongoing method of gathering multifariously textured tales, narratives, fictions, whispers, songs, grooves.” Intersecting ethnographic and anthropological research is a way of centering local experiences and practices that are critically informative to archaeological research. A critical reflexivity during the archaeological investigations (Hamilakis 2004; Hodder 2003, 2010; Londoño 2014) creates paths to consider lived experiences and people narratives and practices while doing archaeological surveys by analyzing social practices through documenting contemporary features on sites and narratives of people about social practices, this bring to light often overlooked components of archaeological sites described and discussed in the following sections.

## Mapping and Revealing the Stories of Sites

Drawing from the guided methodological questions and the general line of inquiry about how people reimagine places as a process of place-making, I present in this section the research findings, highlighting general contemporary features of archaeological sites, and underlying local practices in historical and colonial sites, caves, and rock arts sites. I argue that beyond the material remains of the distant past, there exists a realm of other visible and invisible aspects that influence what is perceptible or concealed. To illustrate, Table 1 and the following sections will help to navigate the ways that archaeological features can be combined with ethnographic and anthropological data to offer unique insight into the dynamic relationships between material culture and individual practices. Correspondingly, Table 1 presents a general overview of different features encountered on site during the research – among them, perishable components such as candle stubs, the remains of calabash bowls (*kwi*), visual inscriptions made with white powder and colored chalk on earth (*vèvè*), colonial



**Table 1** General features observed in situ during surveys

Types of sites	Location	General features
Caves	Dondon, Cap-Haitien	Candle stubs, glass and plastic bottles, animal remains, fragment of calabash, white powder, pieces of clothes, pieces of written paper
Old colonial plantation	Fort-Liberté, Quartier-Morin	Pieces of clothing, metal tools, candle stubs, glass and plastic bottles, white powder, drawing on wall with white powder and geometrical drawings on earth ( <i>vèvè</i> ), traditional kerosene lamps ( <i>Lanp tèt gridap</i> ), candles, pieces of written paper
Colonial fort	Fort-Liberté, Cap-Haitien	Pieces of clothing, metal tools, pieces of written paper, candle stubs, glass and plastic bottles, fragment of calabash geometrical drawings on earth ( <i>vèvè</i> ), a basketry tray ( <i>Laye</i> )
Rock art	Limbé, Sainte-Suzanne	Candle stubs, metal tools, burned fire marks (only in Limbé)

walls, as well as nonperishable materials such as metal elements, animal remains, and glass bottles (Table 1).

The items highlighted in Table 1 are evidence mainly of the multidimensional uses of archaeological sites, showing that behind their material aspect, there is often also nonvisible religious significance that stimulates the current use. The ethnographic objects deposited by practitioners in archaeological sites during religious practices described in Table 1: are *entangled features*, because they convey the material and non-material significance of a place. Hodder's book *Entangled* (2023) shows the complex co-dependencies between humans and things, exploring the intricate and evolving relationships between humans and material things, emphasizing how material things play a major role in human history and culture (see also Keehnen and Mol 2021). In this research I describe *entangled features* as traces of contemporary uses in archaeological sites that can be perishables and nonperishable objects deposited by people on sites during their visits for personal purposes. It includes other visible features that can be found in caves such as traces of charcoal and/or marker stains used by visitors or practitioners. In this case, entangled features are fundamentally associated with personal and common stories and beliefs, and lived experiences relative to a specific context. Generally, the features expose the scenes of contemporary social practices in caves, rock art, colonial forts, and structures of ancient colonial plantations. Commonly, calabash bowls and modern glass bottle remains can be found in many parts of a site. According to individuals I spoke with during my research, practitioners also use colonial wells to establish contact with spirits. During conversations, most of the answers highlight the individuals' claim of these places as living sites and places of ancestors, often mentioning: "I go to this place, I come (back) to this place, or return to this place." Certainly, going to a place generally allows individuals to foster their practices and significances of this particular site. It is plau-



sible that some historical sites like structures of colonial plantations may function as spaces of ritual performance, entertainment, dance, and even the pursuit of curiosity.

### Historical Buildings and Colonial Dwelling

In the north of Haiti, a famous archaeological site is the ruins of the colonial sugar plantation Habitation Duplaa, renamed Lakou Lovana by the community (Fig. 2) The locals' connection with this place is generally for entertainment, curiosity, and pilgrimage (*pelerinaj*). The site has a variety of archaeological features, including canals, wheels, aqueducts, remaining houses, industrial buildings, fragments of bricks, and colonial ceramic vessels. During the colonial period, the Duplaa plantation was a large plantation in Plaine du Nord; after Haitian independence, the site was resettled by King Henry Christophe's family. Over the intervening years since then, the micro-landscape of the place has changed, and it is now owned by more than one landowner. The site is enclosed by sugar fields, with mango trees and calabashes among the most dominant trees. The central remaining building has a large waterwheel dedicated to irrigating the sugar fields during the colonial period. Today, this waterwheel is a pool (*basen dlo*) of water in which a spirit commonly called *Lovana* or *Manman Lovana* lives, which manifests in the form of a fish, according to local narratives (see also Curci 2008:126–127).

Based on conversations and observations, it became clear that the central building is sacred. Painted in sky blue and white, harmonizing with the color of Sainte

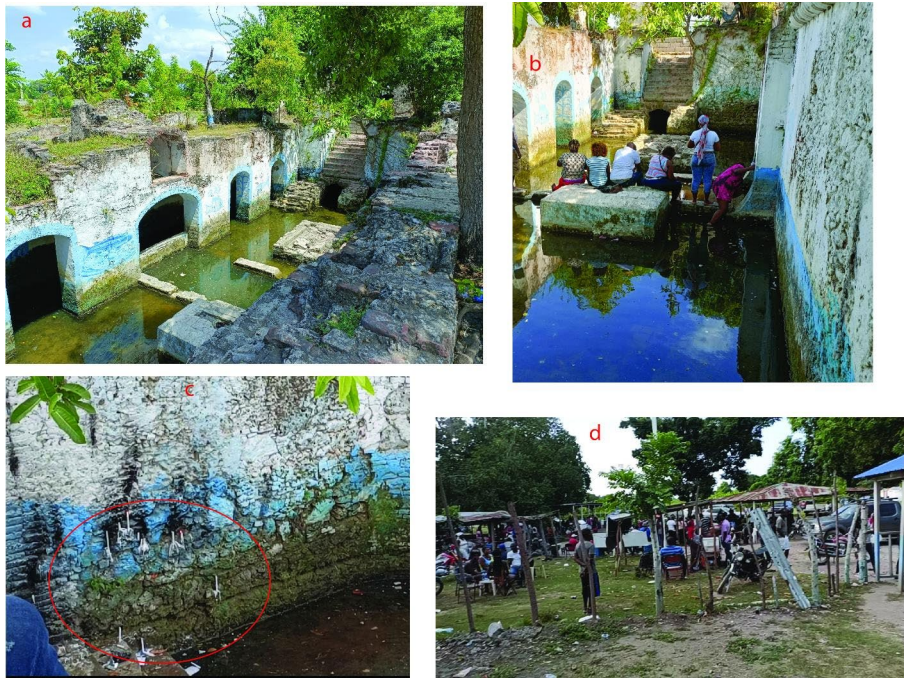
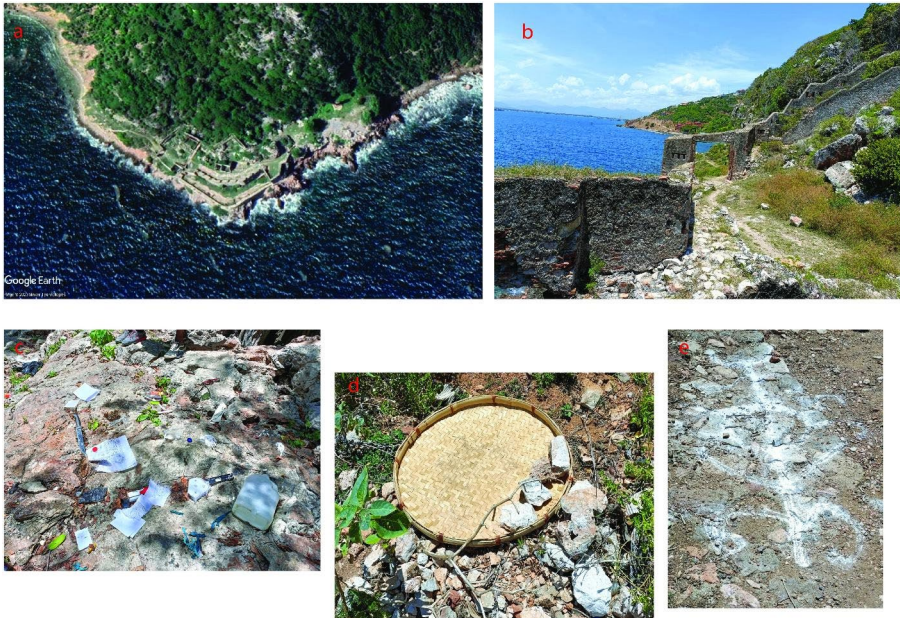


Fig. 2 Colonial sites indicating current practices, Quartier-Morin, Haiti

Philomise, it is a colonial pilgrimage site situated in Bord de Mer, on the coast of Limonade town. The traditional yearly celebration days, September 26 and 27, at Lovana site date back to the colonial era and correspond to the feast of Pierre Toussaint, patron saint of the north, according to Catholic tradition (Fleury 2021; Paul and Sylvestre 2013).

From 2015 to 2022, I visited the site several times to comprehend people's social practices. At the time, the site received many visitors weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays. As a participant observer, my journeys centered on deepening the movements (in/out) of people on the site and their interactions with the place. The practices undertaken by individuals alone or with a mentor as spiritual chief – *houngan* – on the site can be in the form of repeated words and songs. Through this, one can observe performances of *ofrann*/carrying gifts to the spirit, libations, *beny chans*/swimming in the waterwheel, *limen balèn*/lighting candles, and expressing wishes in loud voices tone or quietly (Fig. 2b). Figure 2a represents the way the building looks when there are no visitors. Figure 2c shows several lit candles and candles stubs used by practitioners, and 2d illustrates a gathering of people at the site. Apprehending stories from practitioners during their journeys allowed me to understand people's ways of knowing and doing, which helped me to navigate the dynamic and complex meanings of the place. As a landmark of French colonization, the site was reoccupied during the Christophe Kingdom after the Haitian Revolution in the nineteenth century. However, today, the site carries other meanings in the community, such as entertainment and curiosity. For instance, several individuals who live near the site said that they came to the place almost every Tuesday and Friday just for entertainment and to enjoy time with friends. Other people who do not live in the community said that the primary purpose of returning to the site is to express gratitude for favors they received in the past. They also mentioned that they came to seek spiritual guidance that would allow them to heal illness, improve daily life, and realize personal or family projects in the future.

While similar practices can be found in small or large archaeological sites in other towns such as Cap-Haitien, Fort-Liberté, Dondon, and Limbé, where individuals expanded their social practices to caves, structures of colonial plantations, fortresses, and rock art sites. Another example that merits description is Fort Picolet situated in Cap-Haitien considered a true pilgrimage site (Fig. 3). Here there are several areas used for veneration, including a deep cavern situated in the rocks around the upper part of the site. Construction of the colonial fort began in 1739 and was completed in 1741 by the French colonists. It is the site where General Christophe resisted the French military expedition led by General Leclerc, Napoleon Bonaparte's brother-in-law, in 1802 during the Haitian independence war. Fort Picolet continued, uneventfully, throughout the nineteenth century in its role as a defense of Cap-Haitien city, which was falling into disuse (ISPAN 2011:6). As a result of its complete abandonment at the end of the nineteenth century, it progressively became a place reclaimed by individuals for its spiritual power and as a place to gain strength. Figure 3a and b present an aerial and spatial view of this coastal site. The other Fig. (3c, 3d, 3e) depict the material signs of individual journeys and experiences. Several objects such as pieces of paper describe people's wishes, metal, and bottles for libation (Fig. 3c). Practitioners used multiple areas such as the rock-space (Fig. 3d) to offer things to



**Fig. 3** Site Fort Picolet presenting different scenes of practices, Cap-Haitien

spirits, while Fig. 3e shows geometrical drawings (*vèvè*) that represent a spirit that lived at the site. When I asked about what it means to be coming to a such of place, one person encountered in Fort Picolet argued that: “even though the engineering experts in the eighteenth century were French, the labor forces of enslaved people made it possible to build the fort. People living in different locations in Haiti come here to seek strength and power.”

### Rock Art and Caves

While individuals negotiate the significance of colonial sites as visible materiality of the colonial landscape, Indigenous rock art and caves are also evidence through which individuals carry religious practices. The Limbé Rock site is a place with Indigenous drawings called *Roche à l'Inde* (Fig. 4). The site is located on both sides of the Limbé River. Indigenous iconography makes up the site's original patterns, but it also bears marks of reuse by many people since then. On the top of the rock (Fig. 4b) are candle stubs and traces of fire (*boukan difè*), which can be seen as signs of communication and interaction with a spirit. Individuals who live around the place mentioned that people in the community and from the north of Haiti believe that the site is a dwelling place for Indigenous and African spirits. People from the community also mentioned that visitors come to this site to ask for protection and request favors. In fact, veneration practices can be expressed secretly or openly. It is common for the community to gather on Fridays to play drums and sing (often religious) songs to honor spirits, during which local tourists and curious people can attend.

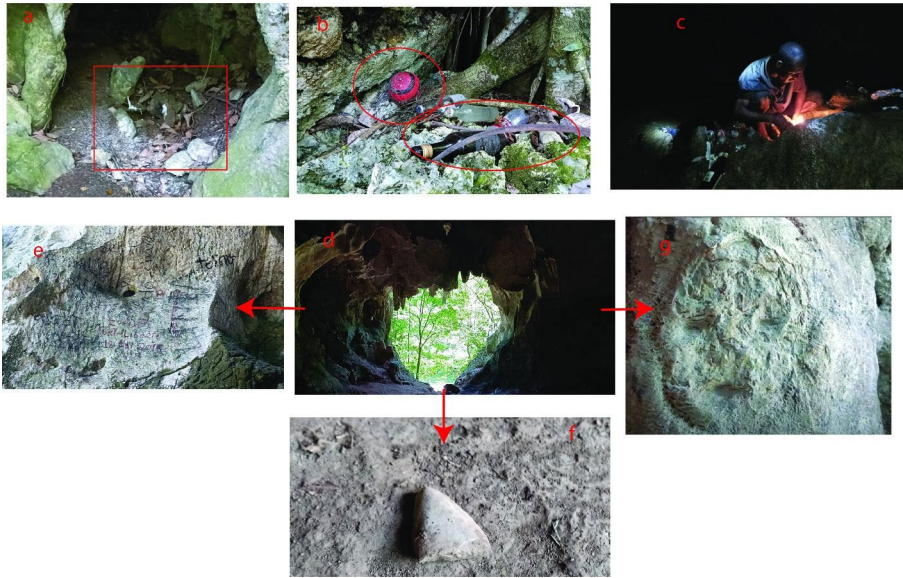




**Fig. 4** Roche à l'Inde site, Limbé

Past Indigenous communities often used caves in Haiti before Spanish colonization. Scholars working in the Caribbean claim that past Indigenous communities and enslaved Africans fled colonial settlements and towns to remote areas during colonial times to escape imperial rule (Altman 2007; Beauvoir-Dominique 2009; Ozuna 2018; Schwaller 2018). In this context, caves and mountain peaks may have played a key role for Maroon communities in establishing a novel social landscape in response to imperial rule. In addition, Cooper et al. (2016) examine long-term cave use in the Mona Chanel, Puerto Rico, and found that cave sites provide spiritual insight into the intercultural religious dynamics of Europeans and Indigenous peoples during early colonial times. In the Haitian context, besides their archaeological importance, caves are known both for their touristic and “sacred” values (Salgado 1980). Figure 5 presents elements found in Caves in Dondon, a location in the north of Haiti. Individuals living in and outside the town considered the caves as a place for healing and veneration, where secretive performances take place (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009).

As sacred places (Salgado 1980), caves can consist of an accumulation of entangled features, such as bottles used for libation, candle stubs, offerings of perishable materials, but also important traces of charcoal and marker stains. Figure 5a suggests several bottles used for libation. We can observe a practitioner performing rituals in Fig. 5b, while Fig. 5c is a cave that indicates different archaeological features (Fig. 5e and f), and modern drawing and writing features (Fig. 5d) performed by users and visitors. During an *in-situ* conversation, an interlocutor argued that not all caves have the same power; healers use one or another according to the type of motives and goals they want to achieve. When I asked one individual questions about



**Fig. 5** Cave sites and the surroundings with entangled features, images **d**, **e**, **f**, and **g** were taken from Voute à Minguet, Dondon



**Fig. 6** Colonial sites reused for spiritual practices

caves preservation of, since some of them were in constant use, he mentioned that these caves have been protected for many years by practitioners, and no institution can cast them aside in any protection project. In contrast, a former local state official from the town argued that the official institutions have the power to exercise any possible strategies for preserving the caves. The person claimed that every practitioner should then respect the official interventions to protect the sites that will benefit the community. Nonetheless, we might recognize that the accumulation of objects such as modern bottles and the constant visitation can constitute challenges for archaeological research that focuses on the distant past.

## Reimagining and Narrating Places: Towards Archaeologies of Material and Non-Material Landscapes

Above, I have described people's practices and their interactions with places that add new meaning to historical and archaeological sites. The illustrations foregrounded in the previous section provided clear lines to discuss how such practices and the stories associated with these sites contribute to individual and communities' ways of making places as unofficial heritage practices. The point of departure here is Patricia L. Price's (2004: xxii) idea from *Dry Place*, regarding the "materiality of stories and the storied nature of materiality" to provide an analytic way to understand that places such as caves, petroglyphs, and colonial sites have meanings associated with their creation, use, and subsequent interaction within society. They hold complex meanings in the present, forcing us to raise questions about their reuse aside from their original intended meaning. They also carry the meaning of their original creation and uses and their ongoing renegotiation in the present. These concerns shifted my queries towards critical reflexivity (Hamilakis 2004; Hodder 2003), which forces us to consider that archaeology in postcolonial societies should not be isolated from heritage and memory work. This reflexivity helps to understand that local people recreate places – understood as a heritage practice – developed through non-official practices that involve beliefs, reimagination, curiosity, oral tradition, and journeys to sites, providing a clear context for the set of concerns underpinning this paper (speaking to the production of place). Other narratives learned at school or church, or from the social construct about cultural practices and beliefs, can oppose practitioners' way of making places in the landscape. In this case, the meanings of a place can be flexible. In the following discussion about how people reimagine sites in a place-making process, to make the connection to heritage, two main focal points are considered: the materialities found on sites and the social connection that gives them meaning.

For the first point, I name the places composed of entangled features that are reimagined and renegotiated by people described under *sites of rasanblaj*. Fig. 6 shows a colonial archaeological site with a drawing on the wall (a) and modern glass bottle (b) deposited by a religious practitioner, shaping the site of rasanblaj. Rasanblaj provides a framework for discussing archaeological sites that are characterized by multiple distant past and contemporary components including general and grassroots stories related to them. Rasanblaj in Haitian creole means "reassembly." Popularized in Haitian studies by the anthropologist Gina Ullyse (2017) and broadly used by other scholars in Caribbean studies (e.g., Douglas 2022a, b; Dubuisson 2022; Mika 2018), the notion of rasanblaj is used mostly as a decolonial concept and method to mean the regrouping, gathering, and assemblage of things, people, ideas, and spirits (Ulysse 2017:69). The driving force behind the notion of rasanblaj is historically grounded in the strategies of resistance and the tactics implemented by the enslaved people and "captives in Saint-Domingue" (Casimir 2020) in the eighteenth century to counter the French colonial system (see also Douglass 2022a, b). In a society, the strategy of rasanblaj has the weight to support transformative changes. As unofficial practices of heritage making, practitioners recreate places of rasanblaj over time through multiple journeys by depositing perishable and nonperishable objects on site. Table 1 and Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 show different features that can compose a site of rasanblaj in



the Haitian context. Sites of rasanblaj reconfigure their meaning by the gathering of these entangled features that we see in situ including stories, memories of the past, and meanings in the present. Rasanblaj does justice to what we observe and hear without excluding deliberately entangled features.

These places expose layers of meaning and people's lived experiences through their journeys to places, practices, experiences, and narratives. By observing what people do and use, and by listening to what they say about their practices and narratives related to places of the ancestors, we can see a variety of meanings that redefine these places in the present. Investigating caves for their spiritual significance, Haitian anthropologist Beauvoir-Dominique (2009:85) sees these places as part of geographies of resistance and survival established by the past Indigenous and African people in the colonial context. The author believed that the:

linkage of past native ritual sites with present-day ceremonies represents an intricate cultural exchange that appears to have occurred between the native and newly introduced African populations during the first centuries of colonization and resistance and can be seen as an interplay that helps explain why and how the modern Haitian population exhibits many native cultural traits (Beauvoir-Dominique 2009:85).

Observing the engagement of individuals with places in the Haitian context to create sites of rasanblaj, we can trace the logic, somehow, in the long process of production of place that crosses many generations. This way of making and attaching to a place can be understood through Indigenous and Black geographies. Pointing this idea out is not to claim one category of landscape construction over another; however, many heritage features and traditions in postcolonial societies like the Caribbean have their roots in the spatial struggle and resistance of Indigenous communities and the African diaspora during and after the colonization. I refer here to the resistance through which their practices in the colonial plantations shaped a counter-plantation opposed to the colonial system (Casimir 2020). Black geographies approach through their pluralities as highlighted by Bledsoe and Wright (2019), excel in critiques of the exclusionary logic of knowledge production (Noxolo 2022) in the understanding of places. Ultimately, Black geographies in relation to heritage and archaeology as previously highlighted by scholars (e.g., Burnett 2022; Dunnavant 2021; Scott 2016; Singleton and Landers 2021) open up possibilities for critical attention to places associated with transatlantic slavery and how people reconstruct and reproduce, make and remake places over time (Hawthorne 2019; McKittrick 2006). In postcolonial societies, individuals and communities reshape the physical, social, and cultural spaces in which their ancestors and predecessors lived in colonial situations. This way of life encompasses the material and nonmaterial aspects of communities' relationship with their environment. This includes their history with places, beliefs, and the land itself. As example about how people expressed beliefs and spirituality through a material world, the book, *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic* edited by OgunDIRAN and SAUNDERS (2014) tackled the past realities and quotidian rituals of Afro-descendants in the Atlantic world. The archaeological debates in this book demonstrated how people of African descent practiced their beliefs and spirituality in the form of mate-



riality, through understandings of everyday life and intimate processes of cultural change and the human condition.

Taking up the long-term experiences of people of African descent in the production of place in Haiti, the archaeology of African diaspora and heritage seeks their cultural, social, and historical experiences and the ways people since the European colonization have shaped their relation to the landscape over time. In the contemporary context, people's relationship with old colonial sites, caves, and Indigenous rock art is situated in a sociopolitical and historical context, providing a spatial situation for the study of archaeology and heritage alongside the study of distant past technologies and lifeways by looking at the ongoing renegotiation of the landscape. These places carrying multiple meanings and stories for some Haitians and are included in the spatial meaning of the landscape.

This research indicates that engaging with places involves different temporal circumstances for individuals and communities. This engagement can be visible via performative experiences described earlier, the exhibition of entangled features, and the accumulation of meaning through things such as glass bottles and candle stubs along with personal curiosity about historical places, thus opening up the possibility to rethink the dynamics of heritage sites. Moreover, the entangled features are not just the materials left there; rather, the social practices and oral histories give meaning to them. In addition, entangled features are the expression of ongoing renegotiation, signs of reclaiming and redefining places in relation to lived experience, allowing us to reinterpret heritage and archaeological sites. This interpretation facilitates possibilities to raise epistemic preoccupation about, for instance, (Caribbean) contemporary archaeology and the African diaspora archaeology. For the latter, it must lie in multiple temporalities; it has the power to transcend the African diaspora's materiality of the past and think about the presence of new materiality. The entangled features (e.g., modern glass bottles, candle stubs) are not excluded from the essence of an archaeological site; they are not distant from so-called historical archaeology, but rather part of an ongoing redefinition of African diaspora places and objects in contemporary society. Individuals return to these places by mapping or remapping locations and engaging with them in the form of personal journeys.

For the second point concerning connection, I then revert here to the expression "returning to places" that individuals often mentioned when hearing and whispering voices and asking questions about their practices undertaken in a specific place. This is another layer of place-making; it anchors people's journeys, conditioned by spatial and temporal logics. As practice, this movement is translated to coming or going back to places of ancestors, exposing the notion of *retour/return* [literal translation of *return* in English and *retounen* in Haitian Kreyol]. The notion *return* is used by many Caribbean writers (e.g., Césaire 1947; Danticat 1995; Glissant 1997; Laferrière 2009; Schwarz-Bart 1979), a notion that traverses several Caribbean philosophical movements in postcolonial literature, migration and memory studies – in the form of metaphorical, physical, and spiritual return (François 2011:16; Thompson 2015:ix). For instance, in the 1920s in Haiti, during the American occupation (1915–34), the literary movement *L'indigénisme haïtien* took a significant turn in Haitian intellectual production as a political fight against the occupation (Ulbrich 2019). This occupation, which took over the politics and economy, also had a huge impact on Haitian

culture, with the spread of Protestantism in the rural areas and the use of colonial power to diminish and erase peasant folklore (Roberson and Calixte 2016). The Haitian anthropologist Price-Mars's book *Ainsi Parla L'Oncle*, published in 1928, had a considerable impact on the Haitian Indigenist movement which became a significant force in Haitian literary production to reclaim a national identity by advocating a cultural and spiritual return to the roots, namely African heritage (Price-Mars 1928). Joubert Satyre (2004) explained, that for the Indigenist poets, the renewal of Haitian poetry must be done by *un retour aux sources* meaning – returning to the sources of popular culture, impregnated with the African memory and that of *vodou*, which had long been repressed – in order to challenge the dominant culture (see also Byron 2021; Clormeus 2016; Ulysse 2022).

When we look at the ongoing process of reconnecting to place and shaping sites of rasanblaj, it reminds us how the notion of *retour/return* to places of ancestors can help to make sense of complex relationships interplaying people and (small) places like caves, petroglyphs, ruins of colonial plantations, and symbolic landscapes when it comes to navigating the reasons for which individuals chose to come and go (back) to specific places during their religious journeys, and not to other places. Drawing from the anthropological and ethnographic research related to archaeology and heritage studies, I recover the expression “return to the site /*retounen nan plas la*” to embolden the entanglement of individuals and communities in the landscape. This is an ongoing engagement, translated into spiritual and religious journeys in a physical space during which demanding a favor from a spirit inhabiting a site can be expressed to ask for protection in daily life and/or to improve the future (see also Pesoutova 2019). One explanation provided by Beauvoir-Dominique (2009:85) concerning the long process of making places is that to revere them today “might be a way of healing the trauma of the past (the subject of slavery being generally avoided in conscious memory).” Therefore, returning to a place is an action undertaken by individuals, consisting of coming and going (back) to a place, for a purpose. The action of *returning* for different purposes to these sites - places of ancestors - contributes to sustaining the routes that connect people to a location.

Ultimately, returning to places of ancestors circumvents the metaphorical dimension of the notion of return. Instead, it becomes a practice of heritage by creating sites of rasanblaj stamped by meanings, attachment, memories, and other things. Individuals express these practices through mapping – or mind-mapping – the colonial ruins, caves, rock art, and fortresses. Practitioners then assign personal significance to them. In fact, the mapping of places for coming and going (back) to them from a long and short distance indicates a geography of knowledge transmitted through successive generations, and through oral history. Returning to a site clandestinely or openly is an action situated in the connection of people, with places, building layers of meaning such as personal and community, archaeological and historical significances. Features accumulated in places, including stories, allow us to see places as dynamic and evolving aspects of the present and future. Surveying archaeological sites while listening to individuals and observing entangled features was the matrix of my investigations, providing possibilities to evoke how sites are reimagined and renegotiated today. In this reimagination, one might open other lines of inquiry about who owns these places.

## Making and Owning Heritage

The way archaeological sites can be reimagined today calls for an answer to a fundamental question: who owns the archaeological heritage? Bearing in mind several complex issues to consider, including legal, ethical, and cultural aspects, a number of scholars have addressed the issues of archaeological sites and artifacts ownership (e.g., Benhamou 2004; Brown 2009; Carman 2005; Cuno 2010; Doğan et al. 2021; George 2010; Graham et al. 2004; Harrison 2012; Hodder 2010; La Follette 2013; Nicholas and Bannister 2004; Young 2006). In the context of the present study, the literal expression “the site is ours,” or *sit la (yo) se pou nou* in Haitian Creole, often asserted by practitioners, resonates with narratives of “belonging.” There are two interconnected meanings of belonging in this case, and it is fluid: through the level of liaison as an attachment to place and the literal level of ownership as possession. There is a possible contestation of ownership in the Haitian case. Firstly, the discussion about ownership can be grounded in the Haitian sociohistorical understanding of land issues, land appropriation, and land grabbing (Oriol 1992; Osna 2022), prompting other conversations about who owns an archaeological site beyond a legal aspect. The Haitian legal aspect recognizes cultural heritage as a national property dedicated to the common enjoyment of heritage, meaning that heritage is a public property (Jean et al. 2020), however it does not discourage any cosafeguarding strategies. Secondly, tension can be situated vis-à-vis landowners, official institutions, and practitioners who use a site. For instance, a local resident around the *Lovana* site in Quartier Morin expressed disappointment about the fact that a part of the land which contains archaeological features was given to someone to build a school. Here there is an underlying confrontation of meanings and ideas between officials and the practitioners who have reclaimed such sites for many years. Thirdly, the reclamation by practitioners is visible through lived experiences and everyday practices, given the place’s multiple meanings in the understanding of place. Considering the overlapping of meaning offers the possibility of raising concerns about archaeological and heritage investigations when negotiating permission for digging up or solidifying a collaborative-archaeological investigation, beside the conservation of archaeological artifacts. Nevertheless, besides the sites and the documentation of practices in northern Haiti, there are multiple stories crossing generations related to the places, stories of ongoing practices, and stories of people who have made these places, and are continuing to make them today. All these materialities deposited in a site associated with stories tied to the renegotiation of meaning to places, and their contestation, construction of belonging, and memories are among the elements that make sense of heritage-making. A more critical archaeological investigation has the potential to amplify the overlooked voices and practices of people who renegotiate the places and tease out potential room for unsettling the knowledge boundaries about archaeological and heritage practices.

In sum, the sites I visited in the northern Haiti offer an overview of what a place can mean to individuals. As another line of inquiry, other forms of meaning and heritage practices can be found in different parts of the country, formulated by landowners, farmers, local associations, and institutions. As an authorized form of heritage practice, institutions may invest funds in restoring historical monuments and brand-

ing them as tourist attractions. In parallel, my main focus is investigating local practices, showing a need to reenter unofficial processes of heritage-making, and raising other interesting avenues for archaeological and heritage practices.

## Conclusion

Based on archaeological, anthropological, and ethnographic research, this paper examines the importance of considering entangled features in archaeological sites such as caves, rock art, colonial plantations, and fortresses. The features observed at such archaeological sites are signs of the renegotiation of places by individuals and communities today. They also illustrate how the meanings of these places were constructed and have changed over time. The focus was on sites that have experienced constant reuse and have been redefined by people over time, situating practices that combine activities and stories. These places illustrated earlier in this research accumulated diverse objects and signs that continue to reconfigure them today. In this vein, one may wonder what the significance is of modern glass bottle at French colonial ruins. While sampling and identifying the typologies of what we see on a site, one can recognize the archaeological and nonarchaeological embodiment of typologies of what is there. In one way or another, the conditions under which the features have been created tell us about the development of changes to the landscape. Reframing such places as *sites of rasanblaj* offers methodological and theoretical pathways to grasp the diversity of material and nonmaterial realms that make up a site as a nonseparate entity. Entangled features observed on sites and described earlier in this article have the potential to advance archaeological interpretations in terms of methodology and theory. They offer counter-linear narratives to enrich the history of an archaeological site.

During the archaeological investigation of precolonial and colonial sites, an archaeologist can be interested in fixed or movable objects of a more distant past. However, entangled features can also be used to build more inclusive narratives around what we found. I illustrated how people's ways of negotiating places through journeys, curiosity, and entertainment open possibilities to reinterpret archaeological sites to shift the traditional perspective. At the same time, we may address challenges of heritage co-safeguarding when we consider that ongoing local practices might affect archaeological sites. In this case I oppose looting activities to local practices on site.

When asking about the implications of local practices for archaeological investigations, including approaches and methodologies, it is clear that listening to and observing people in a community can help make sense of the ways we may rethink heritage and archaeology research. In this case, one may ask about what social practices in the context of place-making might tell us about archaeological research, as well as the implications for heritage practices. In my view, archaeology and heritage practices cannot avoid the contemporary sociocultural context in which heritage is embedded. For an emancipatory archaeological practice, an NDN (Narratives-Digging-Narratives) approach would be an improvement over the current dominant DN (Digging-Narratives). Narratives collected in the community before digging

can deeply enrich an understanding of the site, foster community involvement in research and enable research that is more inclusive (see also Auguiste and Hofman 2022; Flewellen et al. 2022; Gonzalez-Tennant 2014; Havisier 2015b; Hofman and Havisier 2015; Hofman et al. 2021; Ryzewski and Cherry 2012; Sankatsing Nava and Hofman 2018). Considering local practices and the way people perceive sites allow for a more holistic approach to archaeological investigation, and allows for the incorporation of both material and nonmaterial aspects of a site. The collection of stories in local communities before excavation, and data-gathering during excavation can be used to provide more holistic narratives about heritage sites. This will result in better archaeological research that combines narratives from the community and archaeological data to formulate knowledge about the past. One might posit that, in many postcolonial social contexts, *a site is not just a site to dig up* with the sole aim of uncovering the past, however a place that carries many biographies from era to era, from generation to generation, that should be documented in the context of its multiple temporalities.

**Acknowledgments** I extend my thanks to communities in Fort Liberté who assisted me during the early phase of my research. My gratitude goes to M. Erol Josué, Director of Bureau National d' Ethnologie for the administrative support to conduct archaeological surveys in Fort-Liberté. Many thanks to David Eustache and Jean V. Eustache of Association des Dondonnais en Action - ADA/Dondon to connect me with people in Dondon. I offer my gratitude to Rock H. Bastien, Hantz Peter Meneus and Elion Monjeune for the assistance in Dondon. Mr Pierre Rogene, has welcomed me for a visit at Sainte Suzanne, Jeannot facilitated me visiting the site Bassin Waka. My thanks go to many people encountered at Roche à L'Inde. Thanks to Junior Theodore and Assédius Bélizaire for helping me with the workshops about Archaeology and Education in Dondon and Fort Liberté, and thanks to Samuel Saint-Vil, the logistics were assured. I am grateful to Jerry Michel's assistance from his UEH awarded project during the field research in 2022. My gratitude goes to Jana Pesoutova, Rachel Douglass, and Eduardo Herrera Malatesta, for reading the first draft of the manuscript. Finally, I extend my gratitude to Prof Charles Orser and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

**Funding** This work was supported by Le Fonds de la recherche scientifique (F.R.S.-FNRS) and Dutch Research Council (NWO Veni Project. VI.Veni.211 F.084).

## Declarations

**Conflict of Interest** The author declares no conflicts of interest.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Altman, I. (2007). The Revolt of Enriquillo and the historiography of early Spanish America. *The Americas* **63**(4): 587–614.
- Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for belonging: an analytical framework. *Geography Compass* **4**(6): 644–659.
- Auguiste, I. N. and Hofman, C. L. (2022). Indigenous archaeology in Waitukubuli (Dominica): perspectives of a community leader. In Smith, C., Pollard, K., Kanungo, A., May, S., Lopez Varela, S., and Watkin, J. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Indigenous Archaeologies* University Press, Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197607695.013.11>; accessed Sept. 2023.
- Balutansky, K. M. and Sourieau, M. (eds.) (1998). *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.
- Beauvoir-Dominiques, R. (2009). The rock images in Haiti: a living heritage. In Hayward, M. H., Atkinson, L-G., and Cinquino, M. A. (eds.), *Rock Art of the Caribbean*. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, pp.78–89.
- Benhamou, F. (2004). Who owns cultural goods? the case of built heritage. *Contributions to Economic Analysis* **260**: 187–202.
- Benson, J. (2005). Sacred sites, shifting histories: narratives of belonging, land and globalisation in the Cokpit Country, Jamaica. In Olwig, K. F. and Besson, J. (eds.), *Caribbean Narratives of Belonging: Fields of Relations, Sites of Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan, Oxford, pp.17–43.
- Bernabé, J., Chamoiseau, P., and Confiant, R. (1989). *Éloge de la créolité*. Gallimard, Paris.
- Bledsoe, A. and Wright, W. J. (2019). The pluralities of black geographies. *Antipode* **51**(2): 419–437.
- Brathwaite, K. (1971). *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820*. Clarendon, Oxford.
- Brown, M. F. (2009). *Who owns Native Culture?* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Bulamah, R. C. (2018). *Ruínas circulares: vida e história no norte do Haiti*. Doctoral dissertation, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas.
- Burnett, J. J. (2022). Seeking radical solidarity in heritage studies: exploring the intersection of black feminist archaeologies and geographies in Oak Bluffs, MA. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* **26**(1): 53–78.
- Byron, J. P. (2021). Représentations de l’Afrique dans l’imaginaire haïtien au vingtième siècle. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* **25**(3): 199–209.
- Carman, J. (2005). *Against Cultural Property: Archaeology, Heritage and Ownership*. Bristol Classical Press, Bristol.
- Casimir, J. (2020). *The Haitians: A Decolonial History*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Césaire, A. (1947). *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* Bordas, Paris.
- Clormeus, L. A. (2016). Éclairage sur la situation du vodou durant l’occupation américaine d’Haïti (1915–1934). In Roberson, E. and Calixte, F. (eds.), *Le devoir d’insoumission: regards croisés sur l’occupation américaine d’Haïti (1915–1934)*. Presses de l’Université Laval, Québec, pp. 197–224.
- Cooper, J., Samson, A., Nieves, M., Lace, M., Caamaño-Dones, J., Cartwright, C., Kambesis, P. N., and Frese, L. d. O. (2016). "The Mona Chronicle": the archaeology of early religious encounter in the New World. *Antiquity* **90**(352): 1054–1071.
- Cuno, J. (2010). *Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle over our Ancient Heritage*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Curci, S. (2008). Mapping Haitian history: a photo essay. *Journal of Haitian Studies* **14**(2): 120–130.
- Danticat, E. (1995). *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Soho Press, New York.
- Davies, A. (1953). The loss of the Santa Maria Christmas Day, 1492. *American Historical Review* **58**(4): 854–865.
- Davis-Palmer, Y. (2005). Narratives and the cultural construction of belonging in Sligoville, Jamaica’s first free village. In Olwig, K. F. and Besson, J. (eds.), *Caribbean Narratives of Belonging: Fields of Relations, Sites of Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan, Oxford, pp. 44–62.
- Deagan, K. (2023). *En Bas Saline: A Taíno Town Before and After Columbus*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.
- Delancy, K. (2020). History to heritage: an assessment of Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera, the Bahamas. In Webb, J., Westmaas, R., Kaladeen, M. P., and Tantam W. (eds.), *Memory, Migration and (De)Colonisation in the Caribbean and Beyond*. University of London Press, London, pp. 37–55.
- Doğan, E., Thys-Şenocak, L., and Joy, J. (2021). Who owns the dead? legal and professional challenges facing human remains management in Turkey. *Public Archaeology* **20**(1–4): 85–107.

- Douglas, R. (2022a). Futures in the presents: decolonial visions of the Haitian Revolution. *Interventions* **24**(7): 1029–1052.
- Douglas, R. (2022b). Unsilencing the Haitian Revolution: CLR James and the Black Jacobins. *Atlantic Studies* **19**(2): 281–304.
- Dubuisson, D. (2022). Ethnography in-sight and sound: rasanblaj and the poetics of Creole orality. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* **27**(3): 220–226.
- Dunnivant, J. P. (2021). Have confidence in the sea: maritime maroons and fugitive geographies. *Antipode* **53**(3): 884–905.
- Finneran, N. and Welch, C. (2023). *Materialities of Religion: Spiritual Traditions of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Caribbean*. Routledge.
- Fleury, G. (2021). Lakou Lovana: un patrimoine au cœur de Quartier-Morin. *Le Quotidien News*.
- Flewellen, A. O., Odewale, A., Dunnivant, J., Jones, A., and White III, W. (2022). Creating community and engaging community: the foundations of the Estate Little Princess Archaeology Project in St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* **26**(1): 147–176.
- François, A. M. (2011). *Rewriting the Return to Africa: Voices of Francophone Caribbean Women Writers*. Lexington, Lanham, MD.
- Fricke, F. (2020). *Slaafgemaakt: Rethinking Enslavement in the Dutch Caribbean*. Common Ground, Champaign, IL.
- Geller, P. L. and Marcelin, L. H. (2020). In the shadow of the Citadel: Haitian national patrimony and vernacular concerns. *Journal of Social Archaeology* **20**(1): 49–73.
- George, W. E. (2010). Intangible cultural heritage, ownership, copyrights, and tourism. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* **4**(4): 376–388.
- Glissant, E. (1995). Creolisation in the making of the Americas. In Hyatt, V. L. and Nettleford, R. (eds.), *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- Glissant, É. (1997). *Le discours antillais* Gallimard, Paris.
- González-Tennant, E. (2014). The “color” of heritage: decolonizing collaborative archaeology in the Caribbean. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* **3**(1): 26–50.
- Graham, B., Ashworth, G. J., and Tunbridge, J. E. (2004). The uses and abuses of heritage. In Corsane, G. (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries*. Routledge, London, pp. 28–40.
- Gray, D. E. (2021). *Doing Research in the Real World*. 5th ed., Sage, London.
- Hamilakis, Y. (2004). Archaeology and the politics of pedagogy. *World Archaeology* **36**(2): 287–309.
- Harrison, R. (2012). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. Routledge, London.
- Haviser, J. B. (2015a). Truth and reconciliation: transforming public archaeology with African descendant voices in the Dutch Caribbean. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* **4**(3): 243–259.
- Haviser, J. B. (2015b). Community archaeology as an essential element for successful Archaeological Heritage Management. In Hofman C. L. and Haviser, J. B. (eds.), *Managing our Past into the Future: Archaeological Heritage Management in the Dutch Caribbean*. Sidestone Press, Leiden, pp. 133–152.
- Hawthorne, C. (2019). Black matters are spatial matters: Black geographies for the twenty-first century. *Geography Compass* **13**(11): e12468.
- Herrera Malatesta, E. N. (2018). *Una Isla, dos mundos: estudio arqueológico sobre el paisaje indígena de Hayti y su transformación al paisaje colonial de La Española (1200–1550)*. Sidestone Press, Leiden.
- Hodder, I. (2003). Archaeological reflexivity and the “local” voice. *Anthropological Quarterly* **76**(1): 55–69.
- Hodder, I. (2010). Cultural heritage rights: from ownership and descent to justice and well-being. *Anthropological Quarterly* **83**(4): 861–882.
- Hodder, I. (2023). *Entangled: A New Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ.
- Hofman C. L. and Haviser, J. B. (eds.) (2015). *Managing Our Past into the Future: Archaeological Heritage Management in the Dutch Caribbean*. Sidestone Press, Leiden.
- Hofman, C. L., Stancioff, C. E., Richards, A., Nanichi Auguiste, I., Sutherland, A., and Hoogland, M. L. (2021). Resilient Caribbean communities: a long-term perspective on sustainability and social adaptability to natural hazards in the Lesser Antilles. *Sustainability* **13**(17): 9807.
- ISPAN (2011). Fort Picolet (à Cap-Haïtien), verrou de la défense du Cap. *Les Bulletins de L'ISPAN* **23**: 1–23.



- Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy* **5**(4): 87–88.
- Jean, J. S. (2019). *La Biographie d'un Paysage: Etude sur les Transformations de Longue Durée du Paysage Culturel de la Région de Fort-Liberté, Haïti*. Sidestone Press, Leiden.
- Jean, J. S., Joseph, M., Louis, C., and Michel, J. (2020). Haitian archaeological heritage: understanding its loss and paths to future preservation. *Heritage* **3**(3): 733–752.
- Jean, J. S., Sonnemann, T., and Hofman, C. L. (2021). Complex landscape biographies: palimpsests of Fort-Liberté, Haiti. *Landscape Research* **46**(5): 618–637.
- Jones, S. and Russell, L. (2012). Archaeology, memory and oral tradition: an introduction. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* **16**(2): 267–283.
- Keehnen, F. W. and Mol, A. A. (2021). The roots of the Columbian Exchange: an entanglement and network approach to early Caribbean encounter transactions. *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* **16**(2–4): 261–289.
- La Follette, L. (2013). *Negotiating Culture: Heritage, Ownership, and Intellectual Property*. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst.
- Laferrère, D. (2009). *L'énigme du retour*. Grasset, Paris.
- Londoño, W. (2014). Reflexivity in archaeology. In Smith, C. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. Springer, NY, pp. 6258–6261.
- Martinez Rocourt, G. (2023). Archéologie de l'esclavage en Haïti: une gageure physique, mentale et morale. In De Andreis, S., Guillaume, G., Salviani, C., and Taieb, J. (eds.), *Archéologie et fouilles en contexte difficile*. Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne. <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pSORbonne.112140>
- McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- McKittrick, K. (2020). *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Michel, J. (2021). *Patrimonialisation et construction de la mémoire dans les sociétés post-esclavagistes: le cas des habitations coloniales en Haïti*. Doctoral dissertation, Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis and Université d'État d'Haïti, Paris, Saint-Denis.
- Michel, J. (2022). Les habitations coloniales entre récits mémoriels, logiques patrimoniales et représentations sociales en Haïti. *Práticas da História. Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past* **15**: 23–65.
- Mika, K. (2018). *Disasters, Vulnerability, and Narratives: Writing Haiti's Futures*. Routledge, London.
- Monroe, J. C. (2020). Sovereignty after slavery: universal liberty and the practice of authority in postrevolutionary Haiti. *Current Anthropology* **61**(S22): S232–S247.
- Morison, S. E. (1940). The Route of Columbus along the north coast of Haiti, and the site of Navidad. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* **31**(4): i–285.
- Nicholas, G. P. and Bannister, K. P. (2004). Intellectual property rights and indigenous cultural heritage in archaeology. In Riley, M. (ed.), *Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights: Legal Obstacles and Innovative Solutions*. Altamira, Walnut Grove, CA, pp. 309–340.
- Noxolo, P. (2022). Geographies of ace and ethnicity 1: Black geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* **46**(5): 1232–1240.
- O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Key Concepts in Ethnography*. Sage, London.
- Ogundiran, A. and Saunders, P. (eds.) (2014). *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Olwig, K. F. and Besson, J. (2005). Introduction: Caribbean narratives of belonging. In Olwig, K. F. and Besson, J. (eds.), *Caribbean Narratives of Belonging: Fields of Relations, Sites of Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan, Oxford, pp. 1–14.
- Oriol, M. (1992). *Structure foncière et système agricole dans le sud d'Haïti: éléments de sociologie pour une réforme agricole*. Doctoral dissertation. Université de Paris VII, Paris.
- Ortiz, F. (1995). *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. De Onis, H. (trans), Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Osna, W. (2022). (Éco). Tourisme en Haïti: le cas du mégaprojet Destination Île à Vache. *Téoros: Revue de recherche en tourisme*. <http://journals.openedition.org/teoros/11018>
- Ozuna, A. (2018). Rebellion and anti-colonial struggle in Hispaniola: from indigenous agitators to African rebels. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* **11**(7): 77–95.
- Pagán-Jiménez, J. R., Ali, Z., Santiago-Marrero, C. G., and Hofman, L. (2020). Plantscapes of dwelling: precolonial household mounds, phytocultural dynamics and the ensuing human ecosystems at El Flaco and El Carril (cal. AD 990–1450), northern Dominican Republic. *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* **274**: 104160.

- Paul, L. and Sylvestre, M. R. (2013). Le culte de l'Esprit Lovana. <http://www.ipimh.org/fiche-culte-esprit-lovana-37.html>; accessed April 2023.
- Pesoutova, J. (2019). *Indigenous Ancestors and Healing Landscapes: Cultural Memory and Intercultural Communication in the Dominican Republic and Cuba*. Sidestone Press, Leiden.
- Price, P. L. (2004). *Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Price-Mars, J. (1928). *Ainsi parla l'oncle*. Imprimerie de Compiègne, Compiègne.
- Puri, S. (2004). *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Rizvi, U. Z. (2016). Decolonizing methodologies as strategies of practice: operationalizing the postcolonial critique in the archaeology of rajasthan. In Bruchac, M., Hart, S., and Wobst, H. M. (eds.), *Indigenous Archaeologies*. Routledge, London, pp. 308–313.
- Roberson, E. and Calixte, F. (2016). *Le devoir d'insoumission: Regards croisés sur l'occupation américaine d'Haïti (1915–1934)*. Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec.
- Ryzewski, K. and Cherry, J. F. (2012). Communities and archaeology under the Soufrière Hills volcano on Montserrat, West Indies. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 37(4): 316–327.
- Salgado, A. (1980). *Hauts-lieux sacrés dans le sous-sol d'Haïti*. Ateliers Fardin, Port-au-Prince.
- Sankatsing Nava, T. and Hofman, C. (2018). Engaging Caribbean island communities with indigenous heritage and archaeology research. *Journal of Science Communication* 17(04): C06.
- Satyre, J. (2004). La Caraïbe. In Ndiaye, C. (ed.), *Introduction aux littératures francophones: Afrique · Caraïbe · Maghreb*. Presses de l'Université de Montréal, Montréal, pp. 141–196.
- Schaepe, D. M., Angelbeck, B., Snook, D., and Wesh, J. R. (2017). Archaeology as therapy: connecting belongings, knowledge, time, place, and well-being. *Current Anthropology* 58(4): 502–533.
- Schwaller, R. C. (2018). Contested conquests: African maroons and the incomplete conquest of Hispaniola, 1519–1620. *The Americas* 75(4): 609–638.
- Schwarz-Bart, S. (1979). *Ti Jean l'horizon* Seuil, Paris.
- Scott, J. N. (2016). *Constructing Place, Building Community: The Archaeology and Geography of African American Freedmen's Communities in Central Texas*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.
- Sesma, E. (2022). Materializing memory and building community: contemporary landscape archaeology of a nineteenth-century Bahamian plantation. *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 33(1): 24–41.
- Siegel, P. E. and Righter, E. (eds.) (2011). *Protecting Heritage in the Caribbean*. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
- Singleton, T. A. and Landers, J. (2021). Maritime marronage: archaeological, anthropological, and historical approaches. *Slavery & Abolition* 42(3): 419–427.
- Stewart, S. (2020). *Decolonizing Qualitative Approaches for and by the Caribbean*. Information Age, Charlotte, NC.
- Thambinathan, V. and Kinsella, E. A. (2021). Decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: creating spaces for transformative praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766>
- Thompson, R. G. (2015). *Narratives of Return: The Contemporary Caribbean Woman Writer and the Quest for Home*. University of London, Goldsmiths.
- Trouillot, M. R. (1995). *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press, Boston.
- Ulbrich, D. J. (2019). Stability or disruption: the US Marine occupation and the Voodoo Trails in Haiti, 1926–30. *Marine Corps History* 5(2): 21–38.
- Ulysse, G. A. (2017). Why rasanblaj, why now? new salutations to the four cardinal points in Haitian Studies. *Journal of Haitian Studies* 23(2): 58–80.
- Ulysse, S. (2022). La problématique du retour à l'Afrique dans la quête d'un art authentique: l'indigénisme haïtien. *Africanidades: A Revista do Mafro* 2(2): 20–25.
- Webb, J., Westmaas, R., Kaladeen, M. P., and Tantam, W. (2020). Introduction. In Webb, J., Westmaas, R., Kaladeen, M. P., and Tantam, W. (eds.), *Memory, Migration and (de) Colonisation in the Caribbean and Beyond*. University of London Press, London, pp. 1–18.
- Young, J. (2006). Cultures and the ownership of archaeological finds. In Scarre, C. and Scarre, G. (eds.), *The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 15–31.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.