

A PRELIMINARY INVENTORY AND SHORT ESSAY ON CERAMIC AND STONE ARTIFACTS
FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS ON GRENADA AND IN THE SOUTHERN GRENADINES

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INTRODUCTION

The abundance of ceramic styles present in archaeological sites in Grenada and the Southern Grenadines, together with stone artifacts and worked shells, may be considered the source of material for extensive comparative studies in the Southern Caribbean and the Lesser Antilles.

Excavations and general field research over an extended two-year period (1985/1986) have underlined with more precision the alliance and exchange system that must have existed between Saladero, Barrancas, Trinidad and the Guianas together with Brazil towards Grenada, the Grenadines, and islands to the north. This pattern of movement has been greatly enlarged and confirmed by recent studies and research by Rouse, Allaire and Boomert, H. Petitjean Roget, this author, and Zucchi who suggests a return movement towards the Orinoco. The profusion of ceramic styles in the islands here studied points to enormous cultural interchange throughout nearly all established Horizon markers from the pre-Christian era.

The inventory which is being established would be made useful by pottery tempering samples and their analysis, especially where ceramics prove to be importations, with a photographic reference catalogue of the numerous styles encountered.

DISCUSSION

Many artifacts if not all merit discussion, but the observations will be limited here, and the reader referred to the illustrations and their accompanying remarks. The two microlith "zemis", or three-cornered "stones" (Fig. 1), both with mere 19-mm bases are amongst the smallest of their kind; both derive from the same level and context; and both have punctated summits. The green stone artifact may have been either inspired by or anterior to the identical *Strombus gigas* artifact, although the contrary case cannot be disregarded. Bases are bevelled and indicate an early time marker between 200 and 400 A.D.

To date no other green stone "zemis" have been reported from this area and those from Grande Terre in Guadeloupe (Clerc 1973:76) were in their most diminutive forms (37 mm long and 24 mm high). It may well be considered that no smaller such artifacts of this kind have been found in the Caribbean. Their size provoked the following suggestion from Dr. Jacques Petitjean Roget, that "these may well be in fact a form of 'labret' or lip ornament." It was noted at the time of collection that these two "stones" were below a crumbling sepulture area, where both juvenile and adult bones

had been observed, and that such small items might possibly have been destined as protective cult objects for the smaller beings of the tribe.

Also from this cultural context is a very finely worked belt ornament or other adornment made of shell, most probably *S. gigas*, measuring 40 mm (Fig. 2). This artifact and the rare vomiting spatula from Miss Pierre on Union Island, made from the dorsal main whorl of a *Charonia variegata* (Fig. 3), are unique shell elements from this area. We have little evidence of the use of hallucinogens in the Grenadines, apart from portions of nostril bowls and an early ceramic effigy bottle found at the Chatham Site on Union Island (Sutty 1985). Thus this spatula provides strong proof that narcotics were used and were part of the life-ways of the Grenadine cultures.

Another shell artifact, made of *Strombus gigas* and measuring 48 mm, appears to be an incrustation (Fig. 4), thus suggesting the early presence of wood carvings in this area. After careful study of numerous jadeite and shell artifacts, it became increasingly evident that many others also were incrustations, although none were of the dimension of the one figured. It is suspected that, for the most part, they were incorporated into carvings as eye pieces.

The ceramics shown here (Figs. 5-29) are from Black Bay and Grand Bay on Carriacou, Pearls Airport on Grenada; and Miss Pierre on Union Island. One particular piece from Grand Bay (Fig. 20), although reminiscent of spouts or bottle necks found on rare occasions throughout the mainland, resembles very closely a pipe from the El Palito phase, Estado Carabobo in Venezuela (Sanoja 1982:178, Plate 88). The interior walls of this ceramic are indeed blackened, and this "pipe" may well be an exchange object, brought from the mainland to the Grenadine island of Carriacou. The burnishing and colouration of the pottery is itself unique, with a mauve tinge to it that is uncommon in Grand Bay ceramics.

A number of ceramics figured are from the Pearls Airport site where human and animal representations are profuse. Both Insular Saladoid, Saladoid and Barrancoid, and in some cases Guapoid cultural influence is present. The Pearls midden together with the living area at the mouth of the river is situated on the abandoned Airport site of this name, and has now become subject to daily clandestine disturbance.

The residual artifacts are densely packed into dark earth over this vast settlement which goes back inland and up into the hills. This ancient encampment offers undeniably the most original examples of pre-Columbian ceramic art and technology. The Pearls Airport site should be considered as one of the most important sources of documentation for the archaeologist.

When studying these different art forms, in the majority of cases it was observed that the divinities were not monstrous or aggressive in their attitudes, or even particularly provocative. Indeed, they were rather pleasing, which would indicate the artist's temperament. But what is so astonishing in the cultural content of this settlement is the great abundance of so many different ceramic human and animal representations,

seeming without pair in this part of the Caribbean. It is as though migrating mainland cultures of the different origins mentioned above memorized, over a space of several hundred years, personalities that had profoundly marked them mentally and morally, and which were religious and/or mythical symbols. Many of these potteries would have been grave goods, all of them essentially hybrid in aspect--moon symbols, for example, associated with toads and frogs, turtles, armadillos, peccary, manatee, and many others.

Most settlements studied are at river mouths or on bluffs facing the ocean and fringing reefs. The use of shell material is important in the Grenadine sites and noticeably absent in Grenada settlements, where the Indians continued for some time inland hunting of the few endemic species there, i.e., birds, lizards, opossum and the now extinct armadillo, often to be seen as ceramic decoration.

CONCLUSION

Here we have perhaps a single divinity with multiple facets, portraying what was visually seen by the artist, combining different aspects of himself, transforming and transplanting personal concepts, a calligraphic simultaneity impressing thoughts and desires.

This different ceramic evidence, figured in the following pages, is in itself a dictionary, providing an elaborate picture of these cultures' beliefs, their personalities and way of life, and apparent desire to make friends and allies of their benefactors or divinities, by sending them messages via birds, beasts of the land and sea, and of their making.

It has now become imperative that it be remembered that because the Grenadines and Grenada, due to the very slow demographic population explosion in the area in modern times, are the last intact proof and evidence of 2000 years of Indian settlement (representing now extinct cultures), every measure should be taken to protect these sites and limit their disturbance. Bullen, in his study on the archaeology of Grenada more than 20 years ago, estimated that the region was inhabited on a large scale by pre-Columbian cultures from before the time of Christ, and Pearls until 300 A.D. However, these dates applying to the Grenadines may ultimately be proved more ancient in time by new dating methods.

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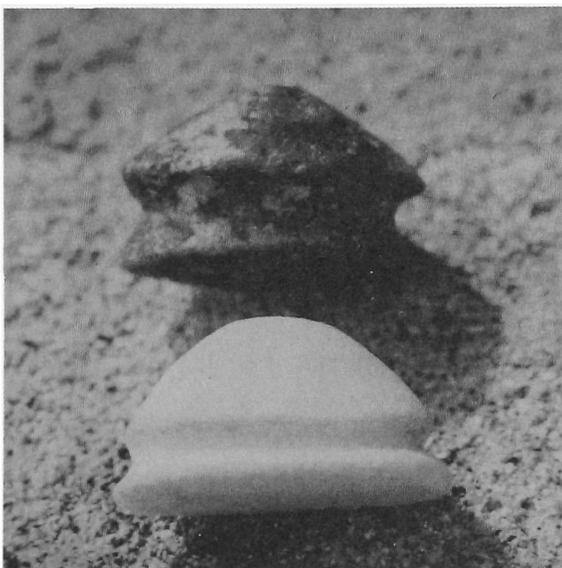


Figure 1. Identical 3-cornered "stones". The microlith "zemi" (top) is of greenstone, probably imported from the mainland; the shell artifact (bottom) is the main dorsal spine of a *Strombus gigas*. Bases are beveled, summits hollow. Both measure 19 mm at their bases and are 12 mm high. (Grand Bay, Carriacou)

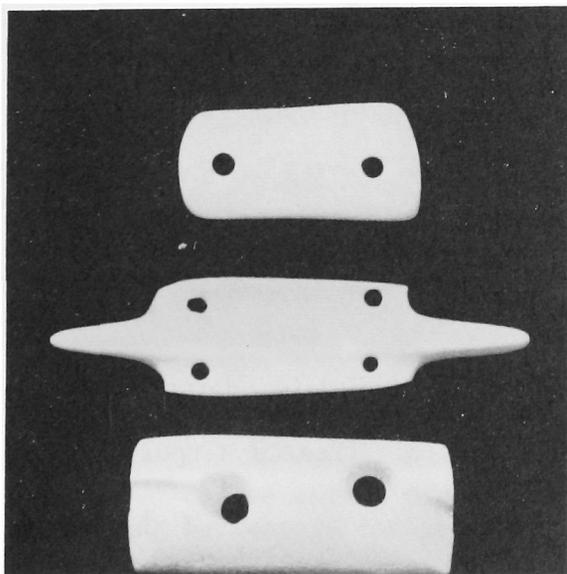


Figure 2. Shell ornaments. The central element, measuring 40 mm, probably is a unique belt buckle. (Grand Bay, Carriacou)

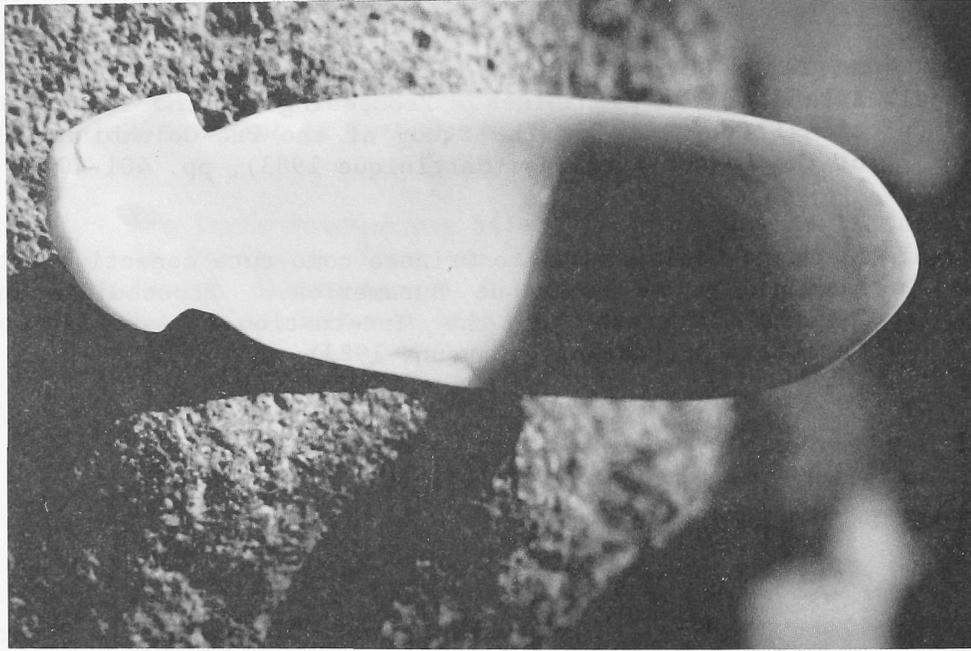


Figure 3. Vomiting spatula. Made from the dorsal region of a *Charonia variegata*, this artifact is unique in the southern Caribbean. (Miss Pierre, Union Island)

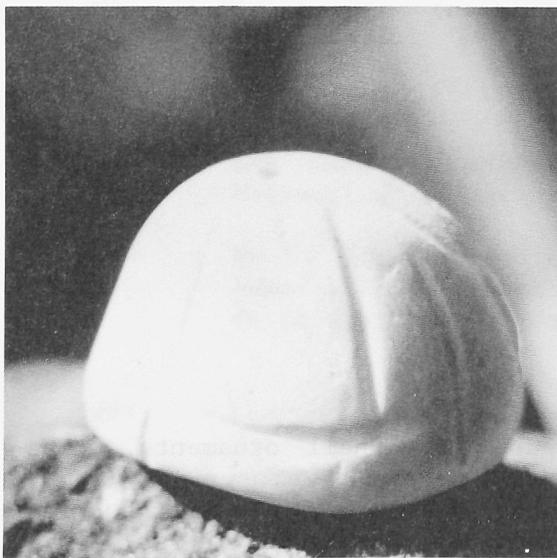


Figure 4. Incrustation. Made from *Strombus gigas* and measuring 48 mm, this artifact suggests the presence of wood carvings prehistorically. (Miss Pierre, Union Island)



Figure 5. Saladoid adorned. Eye decoration suggests representation of a turtle. (Pearls Airport, Grenada).

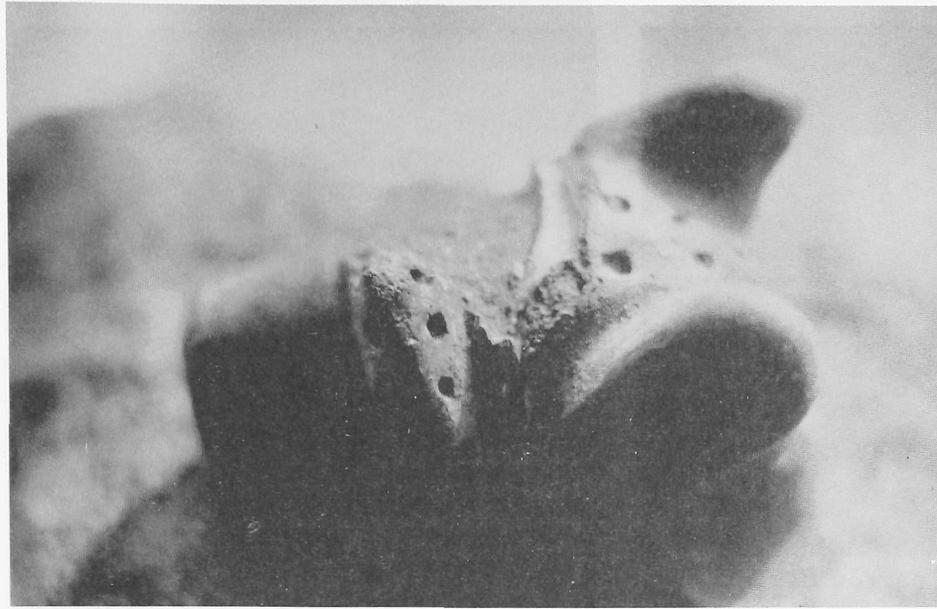


Figure 6. Unique armadillo divinity. (Pearls, Grenada)



Figure 7. Unique animal divinities, exhibiting Barranoid influence. (Pearls, Grenada)

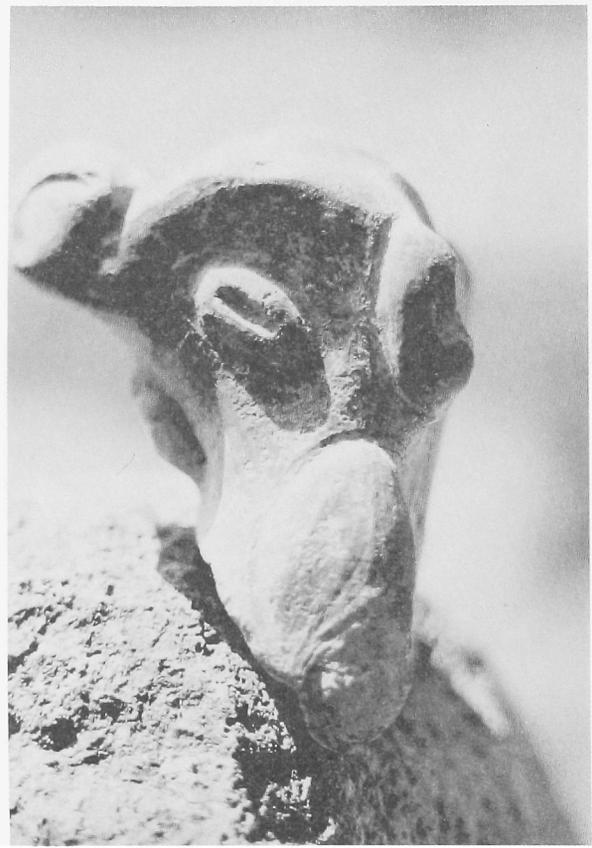


Figure 8. Animal divinity, showing Barranoid influence, ca 400 A.D. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figure 9. Unique parrot divinity.
(Pearls, Grenada)



Figure 10. Bat divinity, showing
Guapoid influence and having
mainland ceramic composition.
(Pearls, Grenada)



Figure 11. Hybrid animal divinities,
100-400 A.D. (Pearls, Grenada)



Figure 12. Unique Barrancoid influ-
enced animal divinity, ca 400 A.D.
(Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figure 13. Unique Barrancoid influenced animal divinity, ca 400 A.D. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)

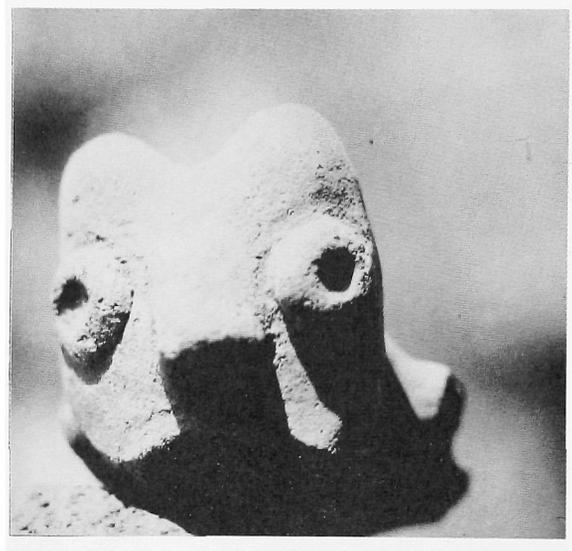


Figure 14. Unique hybrid animal divinity, ca 400 A.D. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figures 15 and 16 (left to right). Human divinities. Apparent mainland characteristics provide an example of the influence of migrating cultures, ca 0-200 A.D. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figure 17. Human divinity, showing Barranroid influence. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)

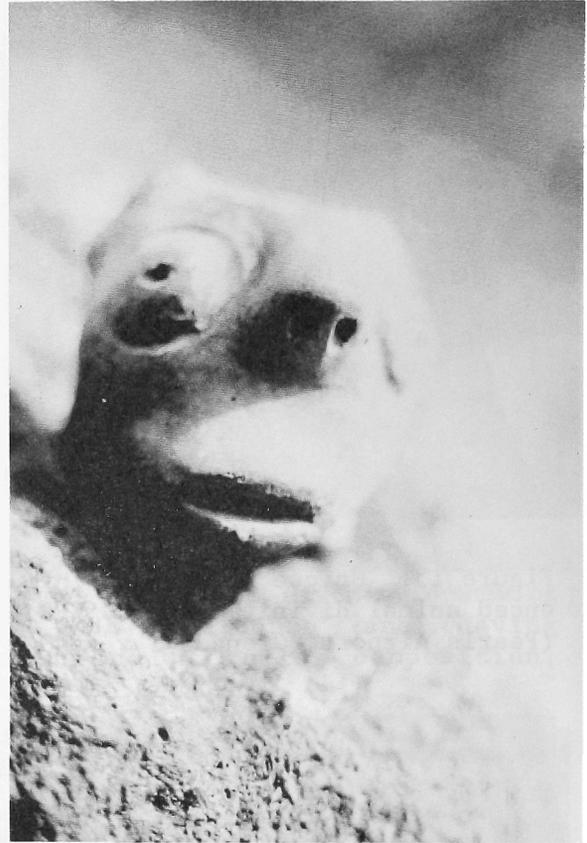


Figure 18. Human divinity, showing Barranroid influence. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figure 19. Unique hybrid animal divinity, ca 400 A.D. (Pearls Airport, Grenada)



Figure 20. Unique red-burnished, bottle-necked vessel, possibly a "pipe". (Grand Bay, Carriacou)



Figure 21. Calivignoid adorned vessel of the "chimney-top" style defined by E. Kirby.



Figure 22. Unique Calivignoid geometrically-incised divinity. (Grand Carriacou)

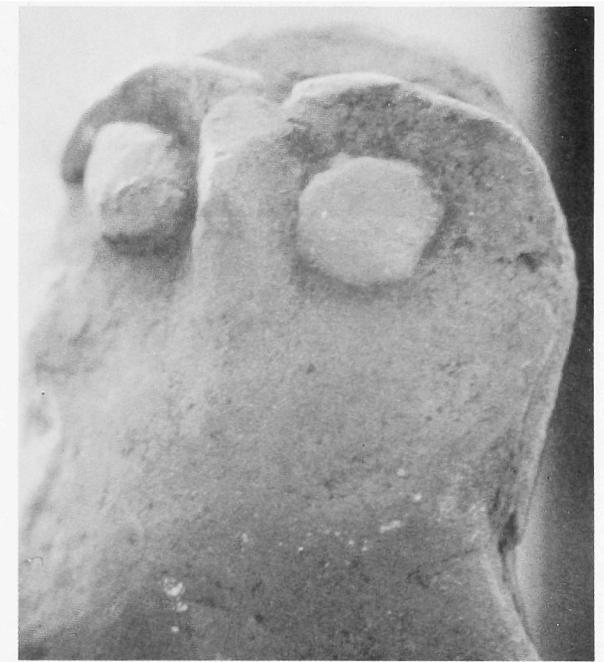


Figure 23. Unique late Calivignoid, mouthless, biomorphic representation.

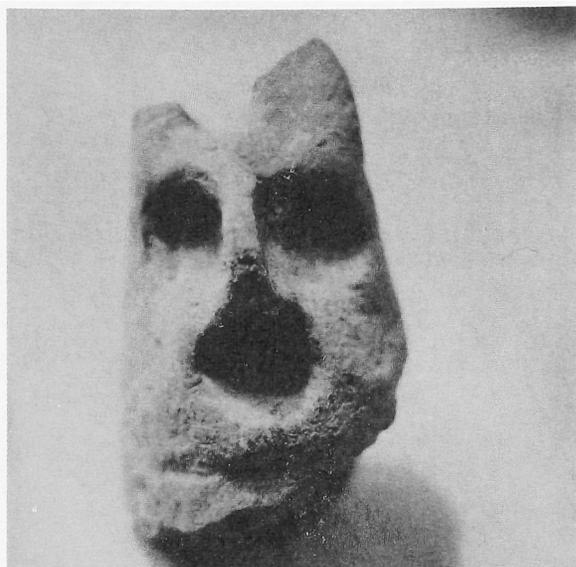


Figure 24. Suazey loomweight.
(Miss Pierre, Union Island)



Figure 25. Suazey/Calivignoid
anthropomorphic representation.
(Black Bay, Carriacou)

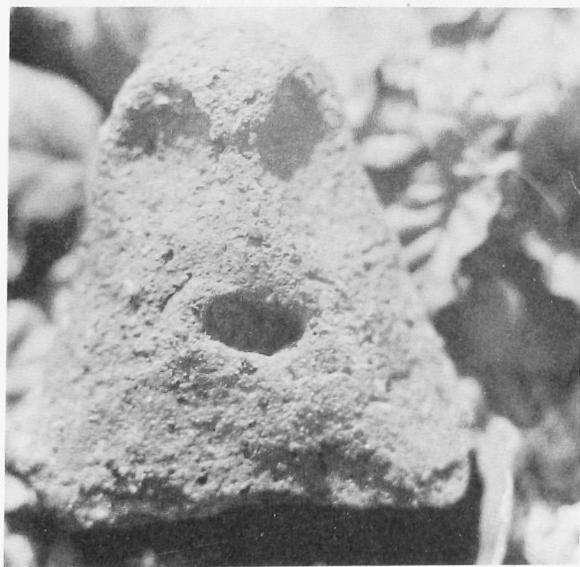


Figure 26. Terminal stage of
Amerindian, or Suazey/Carib, art in
the Grenadines. (Grand Bay,
Carriacou)



Figure 27. Terminal stage of Amerindian, or Suazey/Carib, art in the Grenadines. (Grand Bay, Carriacou)

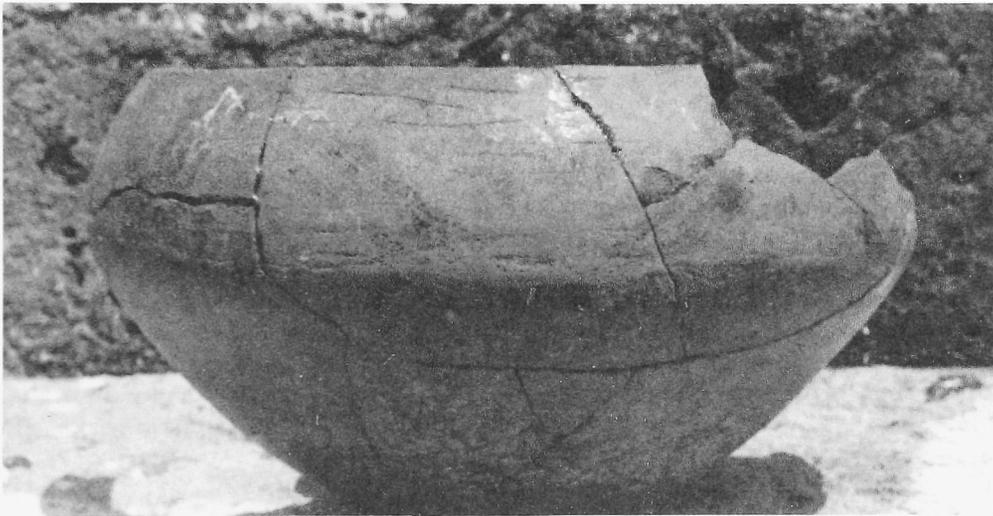


Figure 28. Calivignoid casuela. (Grand Bay, Carriacou)



Figure 29. The Grenadine marsupial "manicou". This nocturnal animal, a main food source, is unprotected by law and rarely seen today.

