Seascape corridors : modeling routes to connect communities across the Caribbean Sea

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Slayton Propositions:

1) The study of past sea-based mobility in the Caribbean region should follow a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates the archaeological record, ethnographic and/or ethno-historic research, and modern experimental voyages to evaluate how Amerindian islander technology may have influenced inter-island activity and relationships.

2) Computer-generated routes derived from modern environmental data can provide key information about possible early inter-island mobility routes to explore observations from the archaeological or ethnographic records.

3) Analysis of computer modeled routes indicates there may have been a link between the location of canoeing routes and the placement of pre-Columbian settlements and coastal landing point.

4) If routes are shown to align with the archaeological record, they can be used to suggest new areas for archaeological survey or excavation.

5) To better understand human movement in the past, archaeologists should incorporate sea-based mobility as well as land based travel. This is especially important for studying connections between peoples living on islands who relied heavily on sea travel.

6) Applying computer models to archaeological questions cannot prove what occurred in the past.

7) Applying the same computer modeling methodologies to different environments and geographic areas can show the effectiveness of the method to test micro and macro regional mobility patterns.

8) Traveling between two points on the same island by boat in calm water can be easier than traveling through the center of that island if it is mountainous.

9) Current interest in early seafaring and wayfinding traditions is increasing, as evidenced by the film Moana that referenced both phenomena.

10) Everyone who studies past seafaring practices should engage in experimental voyaging, as it opens the eyes to the true difficulties, possibilities, and beauty of traveling on water.