

# Mummies and Masquerades: English and Caribbean Connections

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## Introduction

This paper was first presented to accompany the showing videos of Mummies and related Christmas Sports of St.Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean, and among the migrant Kittitian community in the Dominican Republic. These videos are presented here as story boards of screen shots and descriptions.

## Geographical Description of St.Kitts-Nevis

St.Kitts and Nevis are two small islands, just a couple of miles apart, within the Leeward group in the Caribbean. Their total area is only 262km<sup>2</sup> (104 square miles). St.Kitts (or Saint Christopher) is the larger of the two, an elongated island, hosting the capital Basseterre. Nevis is located off its southeast tip and is about half the size of St.Kitts.

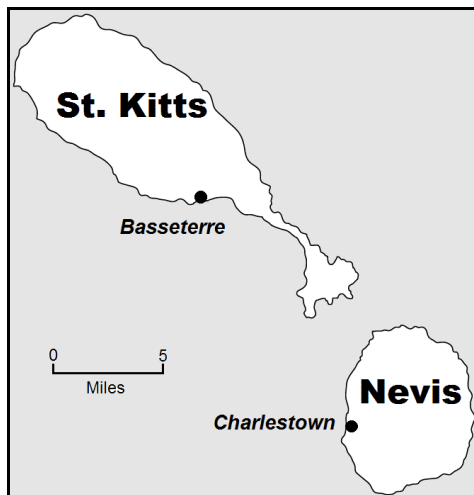


Fig.1 – Map of St.Kitts and Nevis

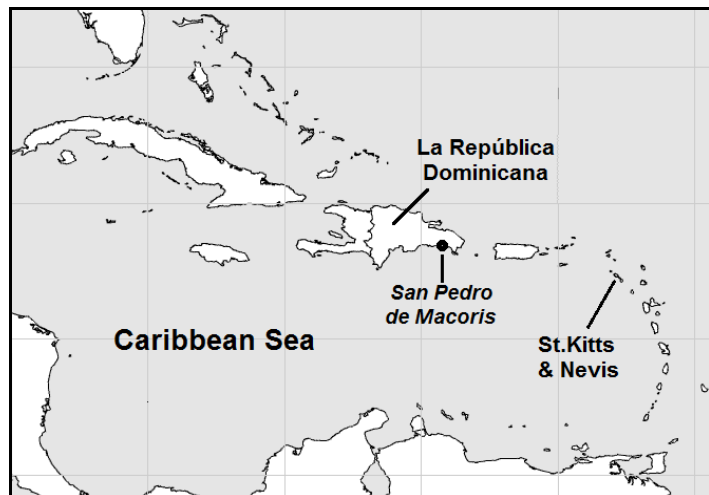


Fig.2 – St.Kitts-Nevis within the Caribbean

The population of about 51,000 is predominantly of African descent.<sup>1</sup> There is notable Kittitian émigré community in the nearby Dominican Republic on the island of Santo Domingo. This community is now assimilated with the local population, with the younger generations speaking Spanish rather than English, although they retain a distinct identity under the name of 'Cocolos'.

## Historical background

This historical summary is largely drawn from Dyde (2005).<sup>2</sup> The islands are a former British Colony, which became independent in 1983. They were among the oldest British colonies and were consequently greatly affected by the opening of new markets in Mauritius, Trinidad and British Guiana throughout the 19th century. Less than a third of St.Kitts estate owners lived on the island between 1834 and 1889, and the landlords' absence resulted in much poor management.

After the abolition of slavery the planters were determined to maintain the status quo as much as possible. They still controlled local government and opposed any education of the working class. The education grants from the British government were very small (£800 for St.Kitts and £350 for Nevis) compared to the large sums of compensation paid to slave owners (£20 million). In St.Kitts the grant was divided between the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Methodist society. In Nevis all the money went to the Methodists. These grants ended in 1846. Improvements

to the education system were gradually made through the second half of the 19th century but it was always a low priority and resented by those in power. Even by 1928 Sir Eustace Fiennes, Governor of the Leeward Islands said – “I do not believe in over-educating the working class, it simply fills their minds with inflated ideas”.<sup>3</sup>

The sugar industry picked up in the 1870s when it was shipped to the US, where it fetched higher prices than in Britain. This comparative prosperity came to an abrupt end in 1895 when preferential duties were given by the US to sugar from Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. In 1898 when Puerto Rico became a US territory the US market was closed to sugar from the British West Indies. This had a dire effect in St.Kitts and Nevis where the rate for cutting cane was reduced from 8d to 6d per ton. “The century ended with the sugar industry in deep depression... the crop reduced to less than 7,500 tons from an annual average of 12,000”.<sup>4</sup>

Some workers emigrated for good, but the vast majority travelled back and forth for seasonal employment elsewhere. The premier destination was the Dominican Republic where there was a high demand for labour. By the beginning of the 20th century 10 per cent of the population of St.Kitts and Nevis were travelling to the Dominican Republic for the sugar harvest between January and July. The travel and living conditions were poor but the pay was \$80-\$120 US per month, five to six times higher than back home. This situation was brought to an end in 1929 when the Dominican Republic introduced stringent immigration rules to stop seasonal migration.

Although many workers were deported there was by this time a large settled immigrant community known as ‘Cocolos’ a Spanish term for English speaking black people. These came not only from St.Kitts and Nevis, but also other islands such as Antigua, Tortola, St.Eustatius, St.Marten and Anguilla. Many of these people had moved out of the plantations and had bought land and property around the prosperous industrial towns such as San Pedro de Macoris. ‘Cocolo’ was originally a pejorative term but has more recently become an accepted term for the minority community in the Dominican Republic.

### **Folk Drama on St.Kitts & Nevis**

St.Kitts and Nevis have a rich and varied folk play tradition. The plays form part of the islands’ Christmas Sports, which also include carnival style entertainments, some of which come from a wider West Indian *corpus* of traditions, such as the Moko Jumbies.

This variety is evident in the first significant description of the St.Kitts-Nevis Christmas customs by Dorothy Harding (1901).<sup>5</sup> Among the traditions she noted were two “mystery plays”: ‘*David and Goliath*, and ‘*The Mongoose Play*’.

The first in depth study of the folk plays, however, was undertaken by the US folklorist Roger Abrahams in the 1960s. He witnessed, collected and published numerous performances and scripts, including such titles as ‘*Cowboys and Indians*’ and the still popular ‘*Bull Play*’ (Abrahams, 1970).<sup>6</sup>

The “Mummies” plays he recorded on both islands are of particular interest, because they are textually identical to British and Irish Mummies’ plays. Abrahams published the scripts in a special paper (Abrahams, 1968)<sup>7</sup>, where he compared them with English scripts, and outlined his thoughts on how they might have arrived on the islands.

There have been a number of other folklorists who have added to our knowledge of the tradition more recently. John Storm Roberts (1972)<sup>8</sup> recorded traditional music from several Caribbean islands, including the Mummies of the Dominican Republic, featuring Theophilus Chiverton and others, and issued them as a long playing record. Peter Bearon and Alison Whitaker witnessed the Christmas Sports in 1991 during a yachting tour and published an interesting account in *Musical Traditions* (Bearon & Whitaker, 1994).<sup>9</sup> These included a Mummies play performed atypically as part of a festival on stage, using a single hand held microphone that was passed around.

Joan M.Fayer and Joan McMurray of the University of Puerto Rico undertook extensive research on Anglophone folk drama in the Caribbean, especially in the Antilles, in the 1990s, during which they compiled an extensive bibliography (Fayer & McMurray, 2001).<sup>10</sup> Joan McMurray in particular videoed many of the customs still active in St.Kitts-Nevis. She filmed the first of the videos discussed in this paper, which she has graciously given us permission to use.

Our own interests in the St.Kitts-Nevis plays arose along different paths.

Millington became familiar with Abrahams' scripts through performance with a revival folk play group in England, who had chosen the play to add some variety to their repertoire. Through a chance discovery in the Folklore Society Library, he then found the textual source used by the Caribbean performers. This was the script compiled by the Victorian children's author Juliana Horatia Ewing<sup>11</sup> in 1884<sup>12</sup> to satisfy enquiries from the readers of her earlier sentimental story *The Peace-Egg* (Ewing, 1871)<sup>13</sup>, which was centred around a folk play performance. This script was republished several times, alongside *The Peace-Egg*, most notably in editions published by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (Ewing, 1887).<sup>14</sup> Millington published the analysis demonstrating that Ewing was the source used in St.Kitts-Nevis in *Folklore* in 1996.<sup>15</sup>

James's primary interest was Caribbean music, and first encountered the Mummies when he found a copy of Roberts' record in a Norwich record shop. He has since followed this up with field trips to the Caribbean, particularly among the Kittitian emigrants in the Dominican Republic where Roberts had recorded them.

#### **Mummies' plays collected by Abrahams**

Figs.3 & 4 show Abrahams' photographs of the St.Kitts' Mummies' Father Christmas and Queen of Shava respectively, with other characters and audience in the background (Abrahams, 1968).<sup>16</sup> The costumes are fairly simple and will bear comparison with the costumes filmed 40 years later by McMurray. Father Christmas wears a long false beard, which could be interpreted as dressing according to part. The other characters, however, wear fairly simple nonrepresentational costumes, covered in handkerchiefs or pieces of cloth, with prominent headgear of various shapes. A couple of these hats are quite tall.



*Fig.3 - Father Christmas, St.Kitts*



*Fig.4 - Queen of Shava, St.Kitts*

The scripts collected by Abrahams are quite close to the original Ewing text. They are slightly shorter, having suffered the usual attrition of oral transmission, but the sequence of lines is largely intact, apart from a couple of repetitions. Variations in the words also arise from oral transmission. A few variations are quite radical, and in some cases no longer make sense. It is our observation that the lines that involve unfamiliar concepts and/or use particularly archaic or convoluted language have suffered most, as in the following example spoken by Saint David:

**English Original, 1884**

Of Taffy's Land I'm Patron Saint.  
Oh yes, indeed, I'll you acquaint,  
Of Ancient Britons I've a race  
Dare meet a foeman face to face.  
For Welshmen (hear it once again;)  
Were born before all other men.  
I'll fear no man in fight or freaks,  
Whilst Wales produces cheese and leeks.

**St.Kitts, 1966**

Of Staffilan, I am patience sent.  
Oh, yes indeed, I would acquaint thee.  
Of Ancient Britain I have a race,  
And there to meet a foeman face to face.  
For a Welshman heard it once again,  
We are born before all other men.  
I fear no man in fight, nor flee,  
While grace produces cheese or leeks.

"Taffy's Land" would only be meaningful to someone who knows that Saint David is the patron saint of Wales, and that Taffy is (or was) a common nickname for Welshmen. One would not necessarily expect natives of the Caribbean to know this, so its mutation into "Staffilan" is understandable. The transformation of "patron saint" into "patience sent" is less explicable.

**Joan McMurray's Video of the Mummies**

This video was filmed by Joan McMurray of the University of Puerto Rico in Independence Square, Basseterre, St.Kitts during Christmas 2003. Long eastward shadows indicate that it was late evening.

The actor dancers enter in procession along a path, taking a turn towards the camera before moving onto the grass to perform. The procession is headed by three musicians walking abreast as they play. They are dressed in everyday clothes and they play a fife, a snare drum and a bass drum. The bass drum strikes a steady beat, while the snare drummer maintains a continuous syncopated drum roll. The fife music consists of repetitive phrases drawn from a core of several different melodies, although these are freely varied with grace notes and other extemporisations (e.g. Fig.5).



*Fig.5 – Sample of phrases played by the Mummies' fife player. This is only a rough transcription, as befits the extemporary nature of the music.*

The six actor dancers follow the musicians, weaving between the edges of the path in a sinuous line (Fig.6). They dance by bouncing alternately on each foot. There are four men and two boys. The foundations of their costumes are brightly patterned trousers and shirts or jackets, although one actor wears a dark shirt. They wear short skirts covered with coloured ribbons of varying length, and capes similarly covered with coloured ribbons that hang to the waist, with ribbons also hanging to a greater or lesser extent over their chests. They wear cylindrical paper or cardboard crowns with

three horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green, and with pointed crenulations. Two actors have feather cockades on the front of their crowns. One has long braids hanging down either side in front. They each carry staves about four feet long that are painted with broad bands of red, green and yellow, possibly meant to signify the national colours.



*Fig.6 – Entering the square*



*Fig.7 –Circling dance*

On leaving the path, the musicians move to one side and back up towards a nearby tree. The dancers, meanwhile, initially dance in a circle, breaking into a sort of trot (Fig.7). They soon move into a line facing the camera and drop their staves to the ground while continuing to dance. The audience is not very apparent; just a few people under the aforementioned tree, although there may have been an audience behind the camera. There immediately follows a series of figures in which pairs of dancers spiral towards each other while dancing a particular move. These moves include, gyrating the hips suggestively, hopping on one leg with the other leg extended forward (Fig.8), a sort of backwards run, hopping alternately with the legs to the side to achieve a swaying effect, hopping on one leg while turning the other foot through 180 degrees as in *The Twist*, and so on.



*Fig.8 – Pair from the first dance*



*Fig.9 - St.George and Slasher clash staves*

The end of the dancing is signalled with a blast on a football referee's whistle. The musicians stop playing, and the actors pick up their staves and form a semicircle. The first actor (named St.George later in the play, but here with the lines of St.David quoted above) goes round all the other actors in no particular order and gives their staves a mighty thwack with his own. He then declaims his

speech, issuing a challenge to the “bravely soldier”, which is answered by Slasher. St.George responds in turn, but Slasher’s dialogue is continued by a different actor altogether. In many of the speeches, the actors pause after every line or two to clash staves with one or other of the actors – not necessarily the actor involved in the current dialogue.

Although this is a classic challenge dialogue, there is no fight, except for the ubiquitous clashing of staves mentioned above (Fig.9). The end of what we may call Act One is signalled by a short toot on the fife. The music starts up. The actors drop their staves to the ground, and another series of dances by pairs of actors takes place (Fig.10). This likewise is terminated with a blast of a referee’s whistle, and the actors retrieve their staves.



*Fig.10 – Second dance - Gyrating*



*Fig.11 – The fallen Black Prince of Paradise*

This time there is no introductory round of stick clashing before the speeches commence. St.George announces the death of the Black Prince of Paradise, signals for one of the boys to kneel in the middle of the circle, which he does with his staff placed vertically on the ground (Fig.11), and then calls for him to be taken away. The delivery continues with his habitual stick clashing with other cast members after every line or two. The King of Egypt (the actor who was Slasher earlier) enters, seeking his son. St. George gives him the bad news. Their dialogue becomes a dispute (Fig.12), during which the Black Prince of Paradise rises back into line, and at the point where a combat would ensue, the whistle blows again for another round of dancing. In this case the dance incorporates two short stick clashing duels. A whistle ends the dancing.



*Fig.12 – King of Egypt disputes with St.George*



*Fig.13 – The end*

St.George once again boasts of his prowess as the “chief of all these valiant knights”, and is challenged by Slasher/King of Egypt, who has now become Salabim [sic] – a giant. As before, a whistle terminates their dispute, and more combative dancing takes place. This time there are also solo and three person figures, and much more stick clashing. At one point, they all drop their staves to form a line, and then led by St.George they dance around the performing area. Then there is another set of figures dancing in pairs. Towards the end, all the actors except St.George form a line, initially holding hands, and dance towards him a couple of times. Finally, they all line up holding hands, dance toward the camera and bow extravagantly. It takes two blasts of the whistle before everything ceases.

The total duration of the performance is just over 17 minutes. By the end of the video, an audience has gathered. A dozen or more people can be seen in the background watching, sparsely dispersed in ones and twos around the performance area, and keeping at a distance of about ten metres.

### **Evolution of the Tradition**

Over the forty year period for which we have witness reports, one of the most obvious changes in the Mummies has been the change in the proportion of dance to drama. Interestingly, Ewing gave details of a “Grand Sword Dance” in the original text, which she had copied from the chapbook “*New Mumming Book. : The Four Champions of Great Britain*” (c.1879-1884)<sup>17</sup>, without understanding the moves “for the benefit of those who can interpret it”.<sup>18</sup> No dancing is mentioned in Abrahams’ accounts of the Mummies, and no dancers or musicians are visible in the photographs he published, but then he gives very little information about the context of the performance, entry, exit, and so forth. He does, however, mention the separate Masquerades morris dance-like tradition. His scripts are quite long, so there would have been little if any time for dances. The play that Bearon and Whittaker witnessed started with a dance in the manner similar to the dancing in McMurray’s video, but then there appears to have been no more dancing, although there was an interlude of fife and drum music. It is impossible to say if this was their normal practice because of the special nature of the performance on stage. Bearon and Whittaker also describe several teams of Masquerade dancers wearing costumes very similar to both the Mummies that they saw, and the Mummies in McMurray’s video. The dancing in McMurray’s video occupies more than half of the performance time, presented in four episodes, and it seems that the play has been merged with a Masquerade troupe.

Costumes reflect the move towards dance. The photographs of Abrahams’ performers indicate an effort to dress according character, whereas both Bearon and Whittaker and McMurray’s groups have adopted Masquerader-style costumes. For comparison, the actors in the Bull Play, which McMurray recorded on the same tape, all dress according to part. The Bull Play also has a higher proportion of dialogue relative to the dancing, which is more mimetic and relevant to the plot.

It is unsurprising, in view in the increase in the dancing, that the amount of dialogue reduced over time. Ewing’s original script has about 330 lines in. The plays collected by Abrahams from St.Kitts and Nevis had c.230 and c.200 lines respectively. This is till impressively long. The length of the Bearon and Whittaker script is unknown, but with a performance time of about 25 minutes, it must have been reasonably long. The dialogue in McMurray’s video only amounts to 66 lines, and there are dances where fights used to be. McMurray’s group use four blocks of dialogue relative to Abrahams’ St.Kitts script. Both plays end the same, but McMurray’s group omits the first third of the Abrahams

text, and the remaining three blocks appear in reverse order, drawn from diverse parts of the script. Further modification of the lines has also occurred due to oral transmission, as in Slasher's speech:

***Abrahams St.Kitts script, 1966***

I am a valiant soldier,  
and Slasher is my name,  
With sword and buckler by my side,  
I hope to win most plain;  
But for you to fight with me  
I see thou art not able,  
For if I draw my broadsword  
Soon will I disable.

***McMurray's Group, 2003***

I am a valiant soldier,  
Slasher is my name,  
With sword and buckle by my side,  
I hope to win most fame;  
For you to fight me  
I have to sit on a table.

[Line omitted]

The correspondence between scripted characters and actors is complex. Ewing's original featured 18 characters, and Abrahams' texts have 17 and 15 characters respectively. However, Abrahams noted that only seven actors performed the St.Kitts play, with each actor playing at least two roles. Bearon and Whittaker's play had six actors, but reported that all the parts in the play they saw were spoken by just three performers, plus one line from female performer. The video is similar. Only three actors speak, although all but one speech are spoken by just two actors.

**Continuing the Story in the Dominican Republic**

Having established that the St.Kitts and Nevis Mummies used Ewing's text as their script, the question arises as to how it arrived there. Its publication by the SPCK suggests that missionaries or clergy could have been involved. Evidence that this was case comes from the Dominican Republic. Theophilus Chiverton, known as "Primo", the leader of a group of Mummies in San Pedro de Macoris was interviewed in Spanish in the film by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano (2005)<sup>19</sup> described here. The English subtitles read as follows:

"The origin of the mummies comes from an English priest who had a book... And a man who worked for the church stole it and copied all the lessons. The game has about 28 cast members. And each individual has to learn his lessons to do it... At the end of the game, one fights with the Giant... and he is killed. During that time in England, if you and I were in love with the same woman, you had to fight with clubs... There was no gun, no sword... none of that stuff. That meant that if you defeated me, you took my woman... You had to get over clubbing each other... Pure clubbing! In those times..." (Fig.14)

Thus we have direct confirmation from a performer that the St.Kitts and Nevis Mummies originally drew their text from a book. The textual correlations alone are sufficient for us to be confident that that book was one or other edition of Ewing's '*Peace Egg*' script. The fact that they acquired the book from an English priest suggests that it might have been the edition published by the SPCK.

In the Dominican Republic the turbulent political history including the vicious dictatorship of Trujillo (1930-61) had a devastating effect on the Cocolo traditions. Despite some support for the masquerade tradition in San Pedro (James spoke to a former masquerade performer who danced for Trujillo) there was also much violence and repression as well as great political turmoil after Trujillo's death. Many 'Cocolos' emigrated to the United States or returned to St Kitts and Nevis. The Christmas masquerade was pretty much killed off in the countryside but continued in San Pedro; Primo, a medical worker, had the support of a German doctor and the wealthy Arab community.



You had to get it over clubbing each other...

*Fig.14 – Primo and Gerald club fighting*



*Fig.15 – Initial procession*

Primo (born 1907) was a central and well-respected member of the community and greatly encouraged the masquerade tradition, particularly the ‘mummies’ which he performed until his death in 2001. He lived in Miramar, the main Cocolo neighbourhood of San Pedro de Macoris and even sent word back to St Kitts requesting particular exponents of the masquerade to come and live in the Dominican Republic, such as the snare (or ‘kittle’) drummer ‘Japón’ seen in the video.

Another member of the Cocolo community – Juan Felipe Simon Leonard, known as ‘Rudi’ also talks about the mummies as follows:

“Mummies is a game that has a cast of a Giant, a Doctor and a King. It so happens that the Giant kills a citizen who is walking on a bridge... And the King finds the dead citizen... And he wants the Giant, as an order to bring to life the dead... In the middle of this, a Doctor, in a horse, appears... And the Doctor gives a medication to the dead that is already dead... And bring him to life! And they fight clubbing each other... And the King kills the Giant... In between dances, they do different choreography... It is very beautiful!”



*Fig.16 – Lining up in front of a house*



*Fig.17 – The band*

The rest of the film of the ‘Mummies’ is made up of a clip without commentary. The group is seen in procession through the street (Fig.15) they then line up (with Primo directing proceedings from the front) in the front of someone’s house (Fig.16). The band is made up of a bass drum, snare drum,

triangle and fife (Fig.17). The drums are made of wood and animal skin. The music is slow and march like at this point. At a signal from the fife the rhythm section is called to a halt whilst the performers in their line-out formation are bowing to the audience (Fig.18). Primo then starts with his version of the opening lines of the play text (Fig.19):



*Fig.18 – Initial bow to the audience*



*Fig.19 – Primo's opening speech*

Room, room here!  
 Gather and give us room to sport  
 For we are a merry actors that provoke in the street  
 We are a merry actor that shows pleasant meat  
 We are a merry actor that shows pleasant play  
 So stand forth great St George and Boldly clear they way

This is the second stanza of his speech as it appears in the John Storm Roberts recording. In this recording (released 1972) Primo is the only actor and speaks all the lines. In the film there are at least two speaking actors with Gerald (1928-1999) playing the part of the Giant (Fig.20). There are also two other actors apparently taking the part of the women over whom the clubbing contest takes place (Fig.21). One of these other actors is 'Chaplincito' a prominent member of the current masquerade group who does not speak good English and we do not believe that he would have had lines to say.



*It so happens that the Giant kills a citizen who is walking on a bridge...*

*Fig.20 – The Giant*



*And the King finds the dead citizen...*

*Fig.21 – Female characters (1 & 3 from left)*

After the lines spoken by Primo, the dancing resumes (Fig.22) and it is probable that the rest of the play including the action previously described (Figs.14, 20, 21 and 23 below) would have unfolded in between these musical interludes (in accordance with the Roberts recording).



*Fig.22 – Dancing resumes*



*Fig.23 – The Giant killed*

The costumes are richly decorated with mirrors and beads. It was remembered with pride by older members of the Cocolo community that they were able to create more impressive costumes with their greater resources in the Dominican Republic than was possible in their islands of origin.

#### **UNESCO and beyond. The story continues...**

With the death of Primo the 'mummies' is no longer performed in San Pedro de Macoris. In 2005 the last remaining masquerade group the 'Wild Indians' received a UNESCO heritage award. This has greatly raised the profile of the community and their heritage.

Part of the UNESCO award was dependent on the revival of previous masquerade forms such as the David and Goliath play. When James last visited the group in 2010 the figure of Goliath was being reincorporated into the Wild Indians performance adding an extra element to the groups' celebrations. The Wild Indians dress is similar to that worn by the characters in the mummies (ornately decorated aprons and capes). The main difference is the Wild Indians wielding of wooden axes and the head-gear which for most of the group are made with tall peacock feathers. A number of members of the group particularly the women wear crowns of a similar design to those worn in the Mummies (these crowns can also be seen in a one-off reconstruction of the David Goliath play also filmed by the Museo del Hombre). Chaplincito has, for many years used a whip in conscious imitation of Primo rather than an axe. It is Chaplincito who James saw performing some basic interaction with the reintroduced character of Goliath in 2010, including some mock English words in Primo's distinctive recitative style.<sup>20</sup> The bull play has also been revived in recent years by a separate group based in a former industrial town inland from San Pedro.

One aspect of the older style of masquerade that has not received attention is the music. Wooden snare drums are no longer used and it may be the use of louder modern metal snare drums that has contributed to the decline of the melodic role of the fife. The interplay between the fife and snare drum in call and response patterns is still impressive but many of the older generation have commented that these days the fife only 'whistles' and does not play the old tunes (which included seasonal favourites such as 'Jingle Bells' and 'Auld Langs Syne'). This decline may also relate to the loss of other seasonal Cocolo traditions from the community's golden age such as 'serenading' and

'nega business' that involved the singing of songs in English accompanied by home-made banjos and other instruments on Christmas Eve.

The prestige created by the UNESCO award has been very welcome for the community that is still living in very poor conditions over a century after their forbears arrived in the Dominican Republic in search of a better life. It has certainly created greater awareness of the cultural value of the masquerade tradition within and without the group itself. Within the group this external endorsement has added to the already strong prestige of being a member of the group and the way that the community naturally honoured the memory of those who helped keep it together, such as Primo. For those outside the community or Cocolos on the fringes of the core masquerade group based in Miramar the award has probably had a more profound effect as these traditions are, as in many other parts of the world commonly held in low esteem.

While we believe that the complete revival of lost Anglophone traditions will not be possible or relevant to the current (mostly Spanish speaking) community the impetus from UNESCO has led to some interesting organic developments from within the group such as the reincorporation of a Goliath character with reminiscences of the Mummies. The tradition has always been flexible, dependent upon the number of people available on any particular day and their individual artistic inspiration. The Cocolo community of the Dominican Republic has a rich heritage from which to draw upon in the future and it is a testament to their durability and flexibility that despite political and economic adversity they are still dancing today.

### **Acknowledgements**

We are very grateful to Joan McMurray of the University of Puerto Rico, who graciously gave us permission to use her video of the Mummies on St.Kitts. We thank Edis Sanchez for his assistance in the Dominican Republic, and the Museo del Hombre for permission to use the film. We are also very grateful to the Cocolo community of San Pedro de Macoris especially 'Chaplincito', 'Pepin', Nadal Walcott and in grateful memory of 'Linda' and 'Rudi' who have died since the filming of the tradition for the Museo del Hombre.

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<sup>1</sup> The population of St.Kitts-Nevis is either about 39,000 or about 51,000 depending on which source is used. Later figures are extrapolated estimates based on earlier population growth (all websites accessed 31st March 2012):

- 38,958 (July 2005 est.) – <http://www.kitts.kn/>
- 39,000 (BBC, quoting UN, 2005) – [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/country\\_profiles/1202982.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/country_profiles/1202982.stm)
- 46,325 (2001-05-12 census) – <http://statoids.com/ukn.html>
- 50,314 (July 2011 est.) – [http://www.indexmundi.com/saint\\_kitts\\_and\\_nevis/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/saint_kitts_and_nevis/demographics_profile.html)
- 50,726 (July 2012 est.) – <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sc.html>
- About 51,300 (Wikipedia, July 2005 est) – [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Kitts\\_and\\_Nevis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Kitts_and_Nevis)

Results from the 2011 census should provide more reliable figures in due course.

<sup>2</sup> Dyde, Brian (2005) "Out of the Crowded Vagueness – A history of the islands of St.Kitts, Nevis & Anguilla", Oxford : Macmillan Caribbean, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Dyde, 2005, p.229

<sup>4</sup> Dyde, 2005, p.171

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- <sup>5</sup> Harding, Dorothy (1901) "Mystery Plays in the West Indies", *Wide World Magazine*, May 1901, Vol.VII, No.38, pp.189-191.  
Available online: <http://www.archive.org/stream/wideworldmagazin07londuoft#page/189/mode/1up>.  
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- <sup>9</sup> Bearon, Peter and Whitaker, Alison (1994) "Christmas Sports in St.Kitts-Nevis - II: Christmas Sports observed - Christmas 1991." *Musical Traditions*, 1994, No.12 pp.32-35. Reproduced online: <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/kitts.htm>, Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.2012
- <sup>10</sup> Fayer, Joan M. and McMurray, Joan F. (2001) "Annotated Bibliography of Folk Plays in the Anglophone Caribbean", URL: <http://humanidades.uprrp.edu/ingles/students/resources/caribfolkindex.htm>, 2001 (Revised October 2007), Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> Feb.2012
- <sup>11</sup> Mrs Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841–1885) was a daughter of the famous Gatty family of Ecclesfield north of Sheffield, and a successful Victorian children's author. Like her other short stories, "The Peace Egg" was first published in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* in 1871, and later republished in book form. After the publication of the story, Mrs. Ewing was badgered readers for the script of the "Peace Egg" play. This she duly published in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* in 1884, which was compiled from five chapbook and traditional texts. The play script was subsequently often published alongside the story. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) published a particularly popular edition in 1887.
- <sup>12</sup> Ewing, Juliana Horatia (1884) "A Christmas Mumping Play." *Aunt Judy's Magazine [New Series]* 3 (Jan.1884), pp.155-173
- <sup>13</sup> Ewing, Juliana Horatia (1871) "The Peace Egg : A Christmas Tale." *Aunt Judy's Magazine* 10 No.68 (Dec.1871): 98-117
- <sup>14</sup> Ewing, Juliana Horatia (1887) "The Peace Egg and a Christmas Mumping Play". London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, [1887]
- <sup>15</sup> Millington, Peter (1996) "Mrs Ewing and the Textual Origin of the St.Kitts Mummies' Play", *Folklore*, 1996, Vol.107, pp.77-89
- <sup>16</sup> Abrahams, 1968
- <sup>17</sup> New Mumping Book (c.1879-1884) "New Mumping Book. : The Four Champions of Great Britain : Showing how St. George of England; St. Patrick of Ireland; St. Andrew, of Scotland, and St. David, of Wales conquered the Representatives of all Nations", Leeds, C.H.Johnson, [c.1879-1884]
- <sup>18</sup> Ewing, 1887, p.53
- <sup>19</sup> Museo del Hombre Dominicano (2005) "Cocolo Dancing Drama Tradition" [Video]. Secretaria de Estado de Cultura, 2005
- <sup>20</sup> For more information, including film of the current 'Wild Indians' masquerade group see <http://www.culturecrossroads.co.uk/losguloyas>