PART 1

REPORTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR CARIBBEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

ACTAS DEL DECIMOTERCER CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE ARQUEOLOGIA DEL CARIBE

COMPTE-RENDU DES COMMUNICATIONS DU TREIZIEME CONGRES INTERNATIONAL D'ARCHEOLOGIE DE LA CARAIBE

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EDITORS

PART 1

Dr. Jay Haviser and I wish to express our gratitude to the IACA for entrusting us with the editing and publishing of the Proceedings of the 13th International Congress for Caribbean Archaeology. This publication will undoubtedly contribute to our understanding of the way of life and the history of the early inhabitants of the Caribbean islands.

The Archaeological and Anthropological Institute of the Netherlands Antilles (AAINA) is proud to incorporate this volume of the Proceedings into its Report Series.

We would also like to thank the OKSNA and the Government of the Netherlands Antilles for their financial assistance, and Mrs. Areli Martha and Mr. Willem Cyntje for their valuable aid in preparing the manuscripts for publication.

Edwin N. Ayubi
Director AAINA
There are several reasons why I accepted the invitation to open this Congress. One reason, is that it is a privilege to inaugurate a conference of this level, which includes persons of high professional authorities.

Another reason, of no less importance for me, is my professional involvement with the past - and certainly, also with the present - of the Caribbean region.

Putting the Caribbean region on the archaeological map, is of great importance for the history of the area, and not only regarding the pre-Columbian period, but also with respect to the early-colonial and contemporaneous history.

Using the word history, I mean here history in a broader sense, that is, including the formation of the different cultural variants which we find on the different islands. In cultural anthropology of the past, too often one started from the idea that the culture of the indigenous inhabitants of this region, usually called "Indians", had little or no influence in the formation of present Creole societies in the Caribbean region.

Still less than thirty years ago, anthropologists whose opinions were considered authoritative, pretended that the culture of the indigenous inhabitants of this region was of little importance for the study of contemporary societies. Thus Vera Rubin in 1957 meant to state that: "For all practical purposes, primitive society, that is society and culture of the indigenous Amerindian groups, was obliterated in the sixteenth century." Recent research demonstrates that the facts do not support this thesis. In fact, the necessity to validate this point of view played a partial role in the establishment of an archaeological institute in the Netherlands Antilles. If I am not mistaken this was in the same period, as when this Association was founded.

It is a great pleasure to observe the development of the pre-Columbian and early-colonial archaeology as these are being reflected in the papers being presented at this Congress. From these papers, the picture which is presented is a broad and varied mosaic, in which still some stones are missing, but which nonetheless is showing a clearer image. A quick glance at the paper's subject-matters, which are being presented at this Congress, already shows a clear progress which is being made by the description and determining of the finds. Through this a structuring of the past into periods has been made possible, while on the other hand, these broad divisions made determination of the finds easier. Thus now by research on the various islands it appears, that the means of subsistence and food customs used as survival by the early inhabitants, such as fishing, shellfish collecting, turtle hunting, iguana and birds hunting, were very similar and spread over the entire region.

Also referring to the material culture, as can be understood from the archaeological finds, the similarities are striking, while in some cases it shows clear overlaps.
The artifacts appear, as expected, to show not only functions within the contexts of the material culture, but also within the magico-religious experience of the people.

Cultural overlaps have occurred with the early-colonial peoples, as well as among other periods. A clear example of this, we find in the excavation of Fort Amsterdam on St. Maarten. Amerindian, European and African cultural elements show the probability on an acculturation process which must have taken place there in the 17th century.

Another interesting point that has come forward now, is the existence of trade, from Pre-Columbian times through the colonial period, among the inhabitants of the different islands. In a word, we are slowly gaining a new perspective of the Caribbean region.

It seems to me that with this conference, we should not only orient ourselves to the past, but also work for the present. I believe the question should be presented, how can we agree to fill-in the blank areas on the archaeological map, and this forum of professionals is the most qualified source to work on this problem. A concrete possibility, I think, is for the various researches from the different islands, who are working on similar and/or complimenting studies, to mutually construct research programs.

Maybe this Association can give an example to politics and economics, by establishing a wider base for cooperation. In this region, we are notorious for our insularity; an insularity that was apparently less in Pre-Columbian times. I am not here to praise the "noble savage", nevertheless I think regarding this, we can learn from the past.

A second point I wish to make, in reference to the future, is the need to draw lines of the past to the present. Again, to give a concrete idea, what are the influences from Pre-Columbian times which are still valid. I then think further than of "strange sounding names" which sound very melodious and mysterious, but in fact say nothing to us. Obviously, there exists the necessity to bring more clarity in this matter of terminology. But I think now much more of cultural elements which are still of influence in our lives, and have their roots in the ancient past.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to further wish you much success with the Congress. Do not let anyone try and convince you, that your work is less important than that of those who are involved with research in modern technology. It is merely that their work appears more spectacular, but this for me is not a criterion for importance.

Curaçao, July 24, 1989.
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