



NICHOLE BODIN

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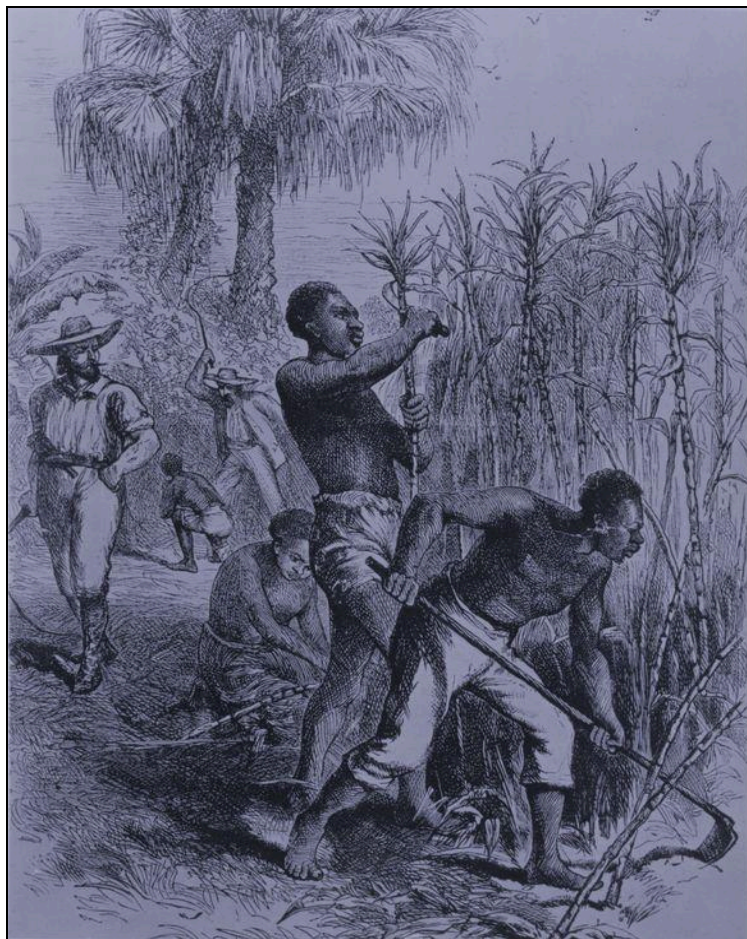
CHARACTERIZATION OF PLANTATION MATERIAL CULTURE



View from Aguirre Sugar Refinery Photo: theclio.com

Research on sugar plantations has been a focal point of Caribbean Historical Archaeology, involving interdisciplinary approaches that include archaeological, historical, geographical, and ethnohistorical viewpoints. As most of the fieldwork has concentrated on large plantation estates, archaeological investigations and the aspects of colonial society tend to be heavily focused on the material culture of the planters.

The colonial society component and its archaeological research is largely biased towards evidence of material culture with respect to planters because most of the fieldwork has been carried out in the large plantation houses. Since excavations conducted by historical archaeologists dissolve into analytical criticism for documentation of the colonial society component, the future of archaeology is looming in the face of competitiveness of foreign interest and the suppression of harmonious appeals and capitalist insight for instruction and publication practice in Caribbean archaeology.



Credit: [Lordprice Collection](#) / Alamy Stock

The little attention given to other minority aspects of society, such as foremen, servants, merchants, soldiers and/or sailors, presents evidence of the powers and efforts that have been founded within imperialist expansions and rivalries. Monumental architecture, including built heritage (such as military sites, plantations, urban, industrial and/or religious sites) have most definitely emphasized the European component in colonial Caribbean society.

The study of the *repartimiento* and *encomienda* systems have provided a process that allows us to discover the social, political and economic impact that the exploitation of mines, agriculture and other activities entailed through forced labor and slavery. Therefore, the cultural and social characterization of Amerindian sites and sites of African heritage are endless discoveries.

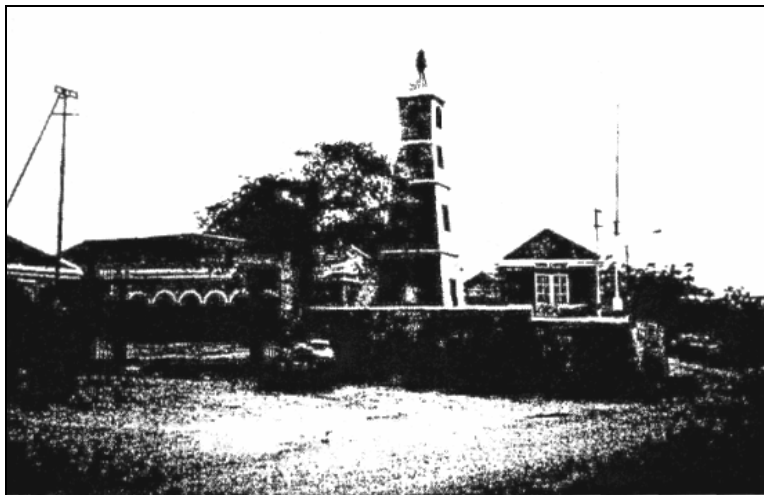


Credit: Welcome Collection/Sébastien Le Clerc, 1683

Historical Archaeology is based on the American concept of periodization and its counterparts are not direct translations. The concept of Historical Archaeology in the French islands was “*archéologie coloniale*” and in the Spanish islands the concept of “*colonial archaeology*” was more commonly used, now also “*historical archaeology*”.

Occasionally the concept of *post-medieval archaeology*, a term derived from the United Kingdom, is used for historical sites in the British Isles. Terminology and translations of these have created a diversification in the dominant vocabulary of archaeology, forcing the magnified study of cultural and social aspects that influence systematic understanding.

Jay B. Haviser in his paper **Archaeological Testing at Fort Oranje, Bonaire** states that the results based on archaeological studies in Bonaire and the identification of archaeological artifacts and structures revealed in the restoration process were the first professional investigative efforts in this region. The details presented regarding the findings in the material culture of Bonaire were so descriptive that they can be used as an exemplary guide for dating artifacts, being direct affiliations of colonial society and its collective representations.



View of Fort Oranje, Bonaire Credit: Archaeological Testing at Fort Oranje, Jay B. Haviser and Arthur Sealy



Photo: Library of Congress/ Edwin Rosskam (1903-1985)

Charles Ewen presents his concern regarding the political changes in the region of Hispaniola as the earliest Spanish settlement in his writing **First Encounters**, discussing the systematic studies carried out by archaeologists in the Caribbean area. Ewen questions

the European influence and the impact of the coalition linked to cultural and social traditions and trade between privateers and smugglers. Most characteristics of colonial settlements through historical information contrasts the results of archaeological work and the lifestyles at the time.

Therefore, the Caribbean is represented with wide contrasts between archaeological results, demonstrating a variety of theories corresponding to this space. Culture clashes in the New World contributed primarily to the influence of all the archaeological conditions necessary to identify and document a historical chronology that can be considered as legitimate and genuine.



Photo: Library of Congress/ Keystone View Company, manufacturers and publishers, c1900.

SOURCES

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