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PROPOSITIONS

Archaeology of Northwest Hispaniola: Landscape, pottery and interactions

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1. The Caribbean cannot be perceived as a single cultural area with homogeneous features. Rather it is characterized by fluidity and change, which affects attempts to define its territorial limits as well as the diverse meanings assigned to it from various different disciplines and theoretical approaches.

2. Conceptualizing the Caribbean as a space of articulation necessitates archaeological study of this region from a historical perspective. This offers a clearer view of the Caribbean as a multi-cultural mosaic, and the ways in which protection and conservation of the region's cultural heritage should be managed.

3. The recognition of historical diversity and complexity within Indigenous Caribbean communities goes hand-in-hand with a critical stance towards traditional reductionist schemes and their consequent chrono-cultural schemes based on a correlation between ethno-historical information and archaeological data.

4. Interaction should be more than just a theoretical perspective used to interpret the development of Indigenous Caribbean societies: it should be a methodological requirement for our scientific endeavors.

5. Transculturation and syncretism are vital concepts to understanding cultural change in the pre-Columbian period of the Greater Antilles. Both concepts help reveal how new cultural expressions did not develop uniformly in time and space (Chapter VIII pp. 226, 230-231; Chapter IX pp. 234).

6. The historical significance and archaeological importance of the northern region of Hispaniola is not solely related to its role in the early colonization of the Americas, but also to the socio-cultural dynamics and interaction processes in the pre-Columbian period (Chapter IV pp. 54; Chapter V pp 70-81, Chapter IX 233).

7. It is impossible to understand indigenous socio-cultural dynamics in northern Hispaniola through the study of isolated settlements alone. On the contrary, it is precisely the connection and interaction between different cultural groups which is crucial to understanding the changes throughout the region’s entire historical development (Chapter VI pp. 101, 153; Chapter IX pp. 235).

8. The ceramic styles of Indigenous communities in northern Hispaniola were not mere reflections of a static, simple, or homogeneous, identity. On the contrary, they have the potential to reveal interactions, transformations, exchange, and competition between groups, revealing complexity and the capacity for agency (Chapter, VII; Chapter VIII pp 201,226; Chapter IX pp 234-235).

9. The location and distribution of Indigenous settlements over the landscape, issues of accessibility to a diversity of resources, and visibility are important factors to consider when analyzing interaction between different Indigenous communities in the northern Hispaniola (Chapter VI; Chapter VIII pp. 215).

10. Studying indigenous communities that lived in northern Hispaniola not only contributes to a better understanding of pre-colonial history of the Caribbean. It is also a way of giving voice to hundreds of people who for centuries have been condemned to remain silent.