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Starting at the Start

Approaches to Ethical Research with Indigenous Peoples and Heritage in the Southeastern Caribbean

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September 9, October 14,[1] and January 1 are important dates on the islands of Margarita, Trinidad, and Bonaire. The Dia de los Guaiquerí, the Santa Rosa First Peoples Festival, and the Maskarada Festival respectively are celebrated on these dates, and each, in their way, commemorates the Indigenous heritage of their islands. These events are only the most visible faces of communities whose historical legacies and present-day identities question the narratives that herald an "extinction" of Caribbean Indigenous populations as a result of European colonialism. The Dia de los Guaiquerí and the Santa Rosa First Peoples Festival are celebrations associated with Catholicism. On Margarita, a large procession heads out of El Poblado toward the church where the image of the Virgen del Valle is located, while on Trinidad, the inhabitants of Arima organize their festivity together with the church of Santa Rosa where they honor the patron saint of the old mission around which their community was united for centuries. The case of Bonaire is substantially different. The Maskarada celebration consists of the use of costumes and masks accompanied by music and theater. This celebration is also claimed to be associated with the Indigenous legacy of the island, although in the context of deep Indigenous erasure here, the legacy persists more diffusely than in Margarita and Trinidad (Antczak 2018).

Figure 4.1. Map of the Southeastern Caribbean region (denoted as striped area) with each island highlighted. Map by Oliver Antczak using data from ISAS/JAXA, 2018.

These examples serve to introduce some of the complexities of the Caribbean region and its multifarious expressions of Indigenous history, identity, and recognition. In thinking about the ethics of archaeological practices with Indigenous peoples, heritage, and archaeology in the Caribbean, we argue that comprehensively discussing the right and wrongs, or the dos and don'ts, is an impossible and irresponsible task. The Caribbean is a rainbow patchwork that displays nearly every color imaginable. Entanglements of archaeology and Indigenous peoples are dependent on a vast diversity of local contexts that rely on histories, cultures, economies, geographies, politics, and more axes of difference. Recognizing this, within this chapter we aim to bypass generalizing discussions of ethics, focusing rather on particular examples from the Southeastern Caribbean, a subregion of the Caribbean ranging from Aruba in the west to Trinidad in the east, and from Grenada in the north to the coasts of Venezuela in the south (see area marked in Figure

4.1). This area is like a fractal of the Caribbean. It appears to display many of the same characteristics as, and to face similar challenges to, the wider region.

We further argue that focusing on the Southeastern Caribbean is useful for four specific reasons. Firstly, it highlights the area as having a close relationship with the nearby Venezuelan mainland. Secondly, it sets it somewhat apart from the Greater and Lesser Antilles, which have been much more widely researched as representative case studies for the Caribbean (Grunberg 2015; Rodríguez Velásquez 2023). Thirdly, it reflects a commitment to this subregion that in some ways defies common generalizations of the larger Caribbean and allows us to concretely tackle ethical issues as made explicit in discrete examples of practice on these islands. Consequently, we think of this frame as a helpful window to look through, to rethink some of the classic (or hegemonic) narratives that have been constructed about the Caribbean in other, more intensively researched, areas. Finally, this category emphasizes the interrelations between a set of islands and communities that, while overtly distinguished by linguistic, socioeconomic, political, and cultural borders, continue sharing tacit similarities and relationships that have spanned millennia.

In this chapter, we engage with the Southeastern Caribbean as four experts bridging these borders to come together in discussion. The discussion is contextualized within a rising tide of critical and decolonial conversations and research taking place across academic and nonacademic spaces, particularly surrounding research ethics and design—especially when working with Indigenous peoples (Atalay 2006; Jácome 2020; Machado 2013; Ramos 2023; Wylie 1996). As early-career researchers and practitioners in archaeology, heritage, and history, we have applied a lens that looks ahead toward possible future ethical practices in the Caribbean. We aim to discuss past practices, present-day implications, and future aspirations for ethical engagements with Indigenous peoples in this region. In this chapter, we all share our long-term relationships with the islands as a result of having been born, been raised, and lived in the region. In parallel, we have maintained our own relationships with Indigenous identities and the people who hold them. We hope that with contributions like this chapter, we can continue nuancing the many ways in which Indigeneity expresses itself in the Southeastern Caribbean, and consequently, the complex identity constructions that some of our authors ascribe to, given colonial erasures, our political positions, and pervasive uncertainties, that will be described below. With experiences on Trinidad, the islands of the Venezuelan Caribbean with emphasis on Margarita, Cubagua and Los Roques, and Bonaire, we hope to outline case

studies that are unique but also shared in the Southeastern Caribbean and that perhaps offer a window for the greater circum-Caribbean.

In the following sections, we discuss the case studies of Bonaire, Los Roques, Margarita, and Trinidad to further three main points that need to be addressed for future ethical engagements with Indigenous peoples in the region. The first is countering pervasive narratives of Indigenous extinctions. The second is being aware of and engaging with local narratives *about* archaeologists, which are formed alongside disciplinary narratives *by* archaeologists. The third is the development of projects with awareness of Indigenous multi-vocality in the region. We suggest that, beyond these case studies, future ethical approaches need to "start at the start," a conceptual recasting of archaeological practice that questions what the discipline prioritizes and values from the earliest stages of research and allows archaeologists to shed the "armor of expertise" (Smith 2004).

Framing Archaeological Practice in the Southeastern Caribbean

Before the establishment of clear rules of conduct, archaeologists acted according to their individual senses of ethics (Beaudry 2009: 17). The earliest archaeologists of the Southeastern Caribbean, such as H. R. van Heekeren and Theodoor de Booy, were collectors of curiosities, educated travelers, priests, and explorers, fascinated by "exotic" vestiges of the past, often taking these back to collections in Europe or North America (Curet and Galban 2019). Already in these earliest manifestations, archaeologists furnished themselves in an "armor of expertise," a concept we use to refer to archaeologists' claim of special access to, and exclusive stewardship over, the resources of the past (based on Smith 2004: 194). Rather than connect the pieces that were found to the people living around them, early archaeologists harkened back to a deep and exotic past, privileging themselves as the only ones able to appropriately access it. As archaeological practice became standardized in the early twentieth century, academics from Europe and North America accelerated the development of archaeology in the region. The cult of expertise was a constant feature of the period; contemporary inhabitants of the subregion continued to be distanced from the peoples and objects being dug up at the time, and archaeology heavily favored academic expertise and colonial documents over local oral histories.

Since the 1970s, archaeologists and anthropologies in the Caribbean have seen increasing concern about the ethics of their practice, for example the 1971 Declaration of Barbados, which marked key steps for nation-states,

religious missions, and anthropologists to support Indigenous "liberation" in Latin America and the Caribbean (Anonymous 1973). Communities played a key role in voicing their concerns, demanding more significant consideration in archaeological work, and more equitable and decolonizing research practices (see Gómez 1991). We must remember that this also occurred during a time of Caribbean independence movements and a profound critique of imperialism and colonialism. Foreign scholars and their theoretical apparatuses for interpreting the past were usually seen and criticized as part of these colonial practices and as evidence of a continued dependence of Latin American and Caribbean nations on colonial metropolises (Navarrete Sánchez 2012). As archaeologists and heritage experts beginning our careers, we position ourselves within this ongoing process and propose future directions. The following are our reflections based on our experiences on the islands of the Southeastern Caribbean.

Bonaire and the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Narratives of Extinction

Bonaire, a small Dutch public body (see kok, this volume) close to Curaçao, has faced intense erasure of its Indigenous historical and present peoples as a result of colonial efforts. Many inhabitants of the island contend that the original inhabitants, known popularly as the Caquetío, were all removed from the island by Spanish slavers or indieros in the early sixteenth century, never to return (Antczak 2018). Despite this narrative that persists in school books, Indigenous identity does maintain itself on Bonaire, and close historical readings, conscious archaeological work, and heritage research make this clear (Antczak 2018; Haviser 1991). Thus far, it has been an immense bottom-up effort for Bonaireans to reconnect with their Indigenous heritage and overturn centuries of erasure. Indigenous Bonaireans express their identity in a diversity of ways that have ensured the persistence of their identity through violent colonialism, erasure, and transculturation. These efforts have largely gone unrecognized by academics who perceive them as inaccurate, and claim that the "true" Indigenous people disappeared generations ago (Bullbrook 1939; Van Heekeren 1960: 103; see also Newton 2022).

Within this context, the Bonaire Archaeological Institute (BONAI) was founded in 2003 by Jay Haviser, Jackie Bernabela, and Hubert Vis, who were all active in heritage management on the island. The institute was created through an initiative of the Netherlands Antilles government, which was looking for innovations in the public educational system of the Dutch

islands. Haviser was stationed on Bonaire for three years to set up this pilot youth program, not only to stimulate more local youth to get involved in science-based careers, but also to counterbalance the dominance of foreign specialists in archaeological research (Haviser 2003). The program was also geared to prepare youth to become leaders in ecotourism and heritage/nature conservation (Haviser 2014). Ethics in archaeology and heritage management formed the base for this youth program that has been running for more than 20 years and within which one of the coauthors was raised.

The experience of growing up in this program helped participants overcome many of the shortcomings of the current educational curriculum on Bonaire. Since October 10, 2010, Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius are formally a part of the Netherlands and their school textbooks are designed in the Netherlands. From personal experience, these history books continue telling a story of the Caribbean region from a European point of view. Indeed, such phenomena have been reported across the Caribbean (Con Aguilar 2020). This educational slant is felt clearly by Bonaireans who have lived their whole life on the island and to whom the books do not speak adequately. In the books, information about precolonial times and the Indigenous slave trade is scant and the myth of Indigenous extinction continues to be promoted.

Following adjacent conversations within sociology, psychology and education, we argue that if youth do not learn about their heritage, culture, and history in a familiar voice, they become dissociated from it (see, for example, Barton and Levstik 2004). Youth develop their perspective toward the past based on what they begin to value at an early age, and this is where ineffective and inaccurate education from a colonial metropole can cause children to be alienated from their heritage, culture, and history. We argue that adequate ethical practices in managing the past cannot develop in the present circumstances, as the current curriculum creates unsound premises. Through this process, Bonaireans continue being misled about the disappearance of Indigenous peoples from the island.

Over its years of existence, BONAI has headed various projects of conservation, excavation, and restoration at sites around Bonaire, including Washington Slagbaai National Park (see Figure 4.2) and the Tanki Maraka Heritage Park, what is left of a World War II US military base (Nicolaas et al. 2005). Through these efforts, the youth of Bonaire were introduced to the tools of archaeology: fieldwork, scientific methods, documentation, registration, conservation, academic writing, press communication, and policy work. The youth program has now trained students who have turned out to be government officials, lawyers, heritage managers, and much more across

Figure 4.2. Bonaire Archaeological Institute (BONAI) group picture after activities at Tanki Maraka Heritage Park (US military base Bonaire) in 2023. Photo courtesy of BONAI, 2023.

Bonaire's job landscape, setting the stage for more ethical engagements with the past. With the support of various organizations, Haviser argues that BONAI has become a regional model for Caribbean youth and archaeology programs (Haviser 2015: 138).

Where schoolbooks and traditional educational techniques have thus far failed in connecting Bonaireans with their past, particularly with the Indigenous past, BONAI has succeeded in creating a new generation of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about their heritage and capable of protecting it. Recognizing the dissociation from heritage, culture, and history that is experienced in Bonaire, it becomes apparent that archaeologists and heritage professionals need to carry a toolkit that can facilitate overcoming these narratives of extinction, leading stakeholders and broader audiences to value their archaeology and heritage in a way that they may not have been officially educated to do.

We argue that tailored outreach programs such as BONAI can be one of the tools that archaeologists use to patch the fissures caused by narratives of Indigenous extinction that still pervade the Southeastern Caribbean. Such programs could also focus on professionals in various sectors and on elders, the latter often feeling that they are not knowledgeable enough about their own past (Antczak 2018). We suggest that in cases such as Bonaire, the need

for such a program also extends to professionals who are brought to the island to work in powerful positions, but who have never lived there before.

The case of Indigenous identity is not unique to Bonaire. Subtle and unexpected (to outsiders) expressions of Indigenous identity are a feature across the Caribbean and are a result of adaptations in heritage and identity methods to resist active and violent colonial erasure. We argue that archaeologists need to openly engage with and recognize these expressions, facilitate the connections of present-day Indigenous peoples with their past, and actively design their research with policy and educational components that cater to the specificities of the region and to the challenges it has historically faced and overcome.

The Venezuelan Caribbean: Parallel Stories

Shifting focus to the east, we reach the islands of the Venezuelan Caribbean. We argue that any attempt to think about the ethical implications of doing archaeology on these islands, particularly Margarita, Cubagua, and Los Roques archipelago, which have seen the most research, must always begin with a historical reconstruction of the communities' experiences with archaeology. That is, archaeologists must recognize that just as archaeology has constructed a history of the region from the material culture recovered in fieldwork, local inhabitants and communities have simultaneously constructed a history of archaeology and of their own experiences with archaeological projects. In some cases, these community histories represent the only source, other than the archaeologists themselves, for reflecting on the history of archaeology.

The history of archaeology across the islands of Cubagua, Margarita, and the archipelago of Los Roques can be summarized in six periods. The first is marked by the founding works of Adolfo Ernst in the archipelago of Los Roques (1871) and of Theodoor de Booy in Margarita Island (1915). The second period launched with discussions between researchers of the Universidad Central de Venezuela and the Instituto Pedagógico de Caracas in 1948 on the "discovery" of the remains of the city of Nueva Cadiz on Cubagua (see Rodríguez Velasquez and Antczak 2023). A third moment was initiated with the works of José María Cruxent on Cubagua in 1954 and Pedro Jam in 1956 in the archipelago of Los Roques. The declaration of the "Ruins of Nueva Cadiz" as national patrimony of Venezuela in 1974 denotes the following period. Next, a fifth period began in 1982 with the foundation of the project "Archaeology of the Venezuelan islands" by Andrzej Antczak and Maria Mag-

dalena Antczak (Antczak and Antczak 2006). Finally, the sixth moment began in the 2000s and was marked by wider and more diverse participation and larger international projects. This period featured community archaeology initiatives in the archipelago of Los Roques led by the Unidad de Estudios Arqueológicos of the Universidad Simón Bolívar (UEA-USB) (Antczak et al. 2013); the declaration of the island of Cubagua as a "property of cultural interest"; and successive projects led by the Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural (IPC). These projects included new excavations at the Nueva Cadiz site and the rest of Cubagua Island; the project to create an archaeological, geological, and paleontological park; the museum exhibition on Nueva Cadiz; and the candidacy of Cubagua Island as a World Heritage Site before UNESCO (see Rodríguez Velasquez 2020).

The community correlate of these experiences persists in the memory of many locals and Indigenous peoples, particularly fishermen, with whom the authors have worked in recent years. Some of them recall that part of their childhood was spent in the midst of the archaeological excavations initiated by José María Cruxent in 1954 in Cubagua. Others remember their childhood during the beginnings of the project in Los Roques in 1982 by Andrzej Antczak and Maria Magdalena Antczak (see Figure 4.3). These community members worked as assistants, as key informants, and as patrons, guaranteeing vital resources for the fieldwork, such as maritime transportation between the islands and lodging, as well as water and food for the archaeologists. Consequently, archaeological stories have become deeply woven into the heritage and identity of the region decades after the archaeologists themselves have left. The experiences on the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, as well as those of the Los Roques Archipelago, show two possible types of relationship that archaeologists can forge with communities.

In the case of Cubagua and Margarita, when listening to the stories of archaeology told by the community, the first great contrast that arises is related to the academic valuation of the results of these works and their dissemination among the community actors who were involved in the development of these investigations. That is, what appears in the disciplinary narrative as a coherent history of successive scientific projects with results that have deepened the knowledge of the pre-Hispanic and colonial history of these islands, is instead presented by the community as a series of successive cycles of a history that repeats itself. Namely, long periods of absence and total abandonment of the island, punctuated by short periods in which new archaeologists arrive with new excavation projects. Rarely do any of

Figure 4.3. *Top:* At left, aerial view of the ruins of Nueva Cadiz in Cubagua (photo courtesy Giancarlo Orco, 2022), and at right, Cristóbal Rojas, a fisherman and worker at the first archaeological excavations on Cubagua in the 1950s (photo courtesy of Cesar Escalona, 2014). *Bottom:* Community archaeology work done in Los Roques, on the left excavations done in Krasky in 2015 (photo courtesy of M. M. Antczak, 2015), and on the right in Boca de Sebastopol in 2007 (photo courtesy of M. M. Antczak, 2007).

those archaeologists return to present results or reengage with the site or its communities. This archaeology is characterized in community narratives as pioneering efforts that are isolated and without any kind of continuity over time. As demonstrated in interviews with fishermen from Cubagua and Margarita Island by a team coordinated by Fidel Rodríguez Velásquez as part of a local history project in 2014,[2] the consequences of these perceptions are important. This history of repetitive cycles has generated distrust and resistance in stakeholder communities, which perceive each new project as another tired episode in the repetitive cycles of great absences and brief presences.

In addition, it should not be overlooked that, amid the great absences, the community has created its own mechanisms to discuss, analyze, and co-write its history. This brings into focus the second contrast, which has to do with the history of the results of archaeological research on the islands. There have been very few publications directed at local actors, and most of the texts produced by archaeologists remain partially (if not totally) unknown to the community today. This vacuum has meant that most of the archaeological studies in the region have not been translated into knowledge that can be used by teachers in schools, and for many teachers, it is very difficult to distinguish legitimate archaeological work from circulating versions that lack a scientific basis. This situation has greatly hindered the appropriation of archaeological knowledge, which has resulted in the proliferation of myths and stereotypes that end up being an obstacle to the dissemination of the region's history. Ultimately this lack of access to knowledge alienates the present inhabitants from their past.

The archipelago of Los Roques brings the two contrasts into clear view, particularly when looking at a series of community archaeology efforts carried out between 2006 and 2015 (Antczak et al. 2013). The communities inhabiting the research area here are not descendants of the peoples being "uncovered" archaeologically. Archaeological evidence suggests that the islands were visited seasonally by the inhabitants of the central Venezuelan coast between AD 1000 and ca. 1500 (Antczak and Antczak 2006). Meanwhile, the present-day Roqueños mostly settled from Margarita Island to the east, with a majority of permanent settlers coming during the twentieth century. Other influences and migrations have come from the mainland coast, for example from Caracas and La Guaira; from the Dutch Caribbean, specifically Bonaire and Curaçao; and more recently around the growing European tourist industry, especially from Italy, Spain, and Portugal. While in most of the Caribbean, the absent ancestor is largely a myth, in Los Roques it is a reality, not because the Indigenous inhabitants were "eradicated," as is insisted in pan-Caribbean myths, but rather because visitors only occupied the island for brief periods until they ceased to do so altogether. Los Roques becomes a counterpoint for the apparent "disconnection" elaborated upon in the case study of Margarita and Cubagua above, as the islands were inhabited seasonally, visited sporadically, and eventually settled permanently by different groups, and yet archaeology here has fostered a "connection."

Actively fostering relationships with a heritage they did not consider their own was one of the aims of the community archaeology work carried out with Gran Roque schoolchildren who were mostly of Margariteño descent.

Six community archaeology projects were undertaken with final-year schoolchildren from the high school in Gran Roque, a community of some 3,000. Workshops involved the children in the archaeological work, excavating, documenting, cleaning, and interpreting the finds, while also receiving lectures from the archaeologists. The workshops took place on various islands of the archipelago and concluded in the Unidad de Estudios Arqueológicos laboratory at Universidad Simón Bolívar. The results of the project have been palpable with awareness of the history being visible in tangible artisanal products on Gran Roque, in informed tourist tours of the islands and particularly in the sensitivity and protectiveness of local inhabitants toward the past (Antczak et al. 2013). In more than one case, the network of parents contacted archaeologists when they found out about archaeological objects being discovered, and finds were reported to specialists.

The juxtaposition of the Los Roques example with that of Margarita and Cubagua leads us to reflect on how effective archaeologies can connect supposedly disconnected people with a heritage that is effectively theirs, and on how ineffective archaeologies can fail to do so even when the Indigenous inhabitants are active participants in the research project. Consistent with the arguments made by Antczak et al. (2013: 204), archaeological principles and expectations should be expanded to include "broader civic responsibility [so that] we can improve communities through archaeology and improve archaeology through communities." To improve local people's relationships with archaeological work in cases such as Cubagua and Margarita, archaeologists must always include considerations of community involvement and heritage management, and this should not be left to heritage experts alone. On the contrary, archaeological projects and commitments should include, from their inception, provisions and considerations for community involvement and heritage impacts that actively engage with local perspectives on, and commitments to, previous archaeological work.

Trinidad: Multivocality

For the final case study, we move farther east to Trinidad, one-half of a nation-state that also includes Tobago. Much like the rest of the Southeastern Caribbean, the trajectory of archaeological scholarship in this twin-island nation began during the mid-nineteenth century. Early archaeological ventures in Trinidad set the stage for an era of archaeological research in the twentieth century that has deeply impacted the present-day understanding of the island's Indigenous peoples and the nation's cultural heritage (Boomert

2000; Guppy 1984). Through the later part of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century, there was a significant shift in research approaches and priorities as researchers focused on reconstructing Indigenous lifeways, conducting ethnohistorical research, and addressing cultural resource management (Boomert 2000; Boomert et al. 2013). This shift represented a broader recognition of the value and importance of cultural heritage in understanding Trinidad and Tobago's past.

Recently, the Red House archaeological project has emerged as a watershed moment in ethical archaeological research in the region. In 2013, during a restoration project at the Red House, the seat of Parliament in Port of Spain, an archaeological excavation unearthed the remains of 60 individuals and associated artefacts (Reid 2018). Factions of Trinidad and Tobago's First People community were consulted on matters specifically related to the treatment of the discovered human remains, and permission was granted to conduct multidisciplinary investigations, including radiocarbon dating, DNA analysis, and stable isotopic analyses. However, approval was contingent upon the timely reinternment of all remains (not destroyed in sampling) at the site. The reinternment ceremony, held in 2019, was a regional affair attended by representatives from South American and Caribbean Indigenous groups who employed rites derived from their traditions (Figure 4.4).

In its disciplinary context, the reinterment ceremony at the Red House stands as a poignant example of ethical archaeological practices in the Caribbean. It resonates with scholarly assertions that it is entirely feasible to honor the cultural and spiritual tenets of Indigenous communities whilst concurrently safeguarding the multitudinous layers of archaeological, historical, and heritage significance (Agbe-Davies 2010; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Hofmann and Hoogland 2016). However, it also presents challenges that as of yet remain unaddressed: namely a disconnect in disciplinary narratives and modern identities. Today, Trinidad is host to many Indigenous groups that identify variously as Nepuyo, Carib, Black Indian, Warao, Kalinago, and Santa Rosa First People, to name a few. It may seem obvious to say, but it is important to highlight here that each group, and individual who forms part of it, has their priorities that sometimes intersect with and even contradict the goals of others.

The overlapping narratives surrounding this site epitomize some of the challenges, and simultaneously the possibilities, of ethical archaeological heritage management in the Caribbean. Beyond its role as the active seat of government and its architectural significance, the Red House has today evolved into a multifaceted heritage site. It is simultaneously an archaeologi-

Figure 4.4. Reinterment ceremony at the Red House in 2019. Photo by Ashleigh Morris, 2019.

cal site, a national architectural landmark, an important government building, and a site of memory for the First Peoples' descendants. The Red House archaeological project illuminates the potential inherent in a collaborative framework of heritage management and underscores the many times previous archaeological work failed to implement such designs. However, while descendant First Peoples, archaeologists, and governmental bodies synergistically converged to deliberate upon the appropriate treatment of ancestral remains and the overarching management of the site, such a collaborative situation is not devoid of challenges. On the one hand, it undeniably presents a more encompassing and ethically robust model for heritage management than a total lack of multilateral engagement or open deliberation at all. But on the other, it raises new questions, such as how to effectively balance the interests and concerns of all stakeholders, how to ensure that the narratives presented do not marginalize or distort any particular group's perspective, and how to address potential conflicts that arise from differing interpretations of the site's significance.

This challenge was made evident for example when during the 2020 wave of protests and statue topplings, the Columbus statue in Tamarind Square, Port of Spain, was defaced and a public debate on it was initiated. Chief Ricardo Bharath Hernandez of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community publicly opposed the movement to remove the statue as he preferred changes his people would feel more directly, stating, "If it is just removing Columbus' statue for the sake of removing it, I see no benefit and no merit. The removal must be replaced with something significant to advance our cause today" (in Forte 2020). Meanwhile, Donna Bermudez-Bovell, the Warao Queen, and several other Indigenous spokespeople, countered Chief Bharath Hernandez's claims, calling for the removal of the statue for its controversial message (see, for example, Anonymous 2020; De Souza 2018; Gioannetti 2020).

What this example and the example of the Red House reinterment show is that consultation and inclusion in archaeological and heritage work needs to always be a carefully designed process that consciously assesses stakeholders and their opinions, to the breadth of their expressions. Additionally, the complexities of establishing a hierarchy of importance among the various narratives, and determining which aspects to prioritize in heritage presentations to the public, become paramount. As in the case of the Red House, while a collaborative approach brings more voices to the table, it also demands a nuanced understanding and navigation of the cultural, political, and historical intricacies inherent in such a diverse group of stakeholders.

Determining the right stakeholder communities is particularly challenging in Trinidad. Archaeologically, Trinidad has been viewed as a sort of stepping stone in the population of the Lesser and Greater Antilles (Rouse 1947). Periods of successive migrations and population growth suggest that Trinidad was a patchwork of Indigenous communities of various identities in non-conflictual cohabitation and constant negotiation and adaptation (Kerrigan 2012). And yet, as critiqued by Kerrigan (2012: 27), "the work of well-intentioned archaeologists of the 20th century can be classed as neocolonial in the sense of producing clear racial and ethnic divisions where a situation of prolonged and constant differential acculturation and interaction was more likely."

The diversity of identities and its translation into the early colonial situation, up to the present day, has been a challenge for both academics and the Indigenous peoples of Trinidad and Tobago. The historical, archaeological, and modern categories all speak over each other in the present identity landscape of Trinidad. Archaeological labels like "Arauquinoid," "Saladoid," "Barrancoid," and others have not been picked up as modern identities,

and archaeologists have noted the difficulty in linking them to modern-day identities (Boomert 2016). "Carib" and "Arawak," long favored, are no longer used, as evidenced in the change in name of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community.[3] Linguistic and/or ethnic labels such as "Kalinago," "Nepuyo," "Yao," and "Warao" have had more success and are more used—though they also are not always directly linked to precolonial groups, with the exception of the Warao. The result is that in the present day, there is still a broad range of diverse Indigenous identities and expressions in Trinidad, but heritage management and many archaeological endeavors tend to operate predominantly within the paradigms of government recognition.

In the case of the Red House reinterment, the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community played a protagonist role in the negotiations and consultations around the reinterment. As the only officially recognized Indigenous community on Trinidad, this was the clear path for government decision makers—but in a deeper-time and whole-island perspective, this stifled the involvement of a possible broader range of Indigenous groups. To be clear, we do not aim to undermine the self-organization and internally determined leaderships within Indigenous groups. Instead, we raise concerns about the currently limited scope of communications between academics and Indigenous peoples in an area that has historically always been marked by its diversity of Indigenous identities. We suggest that future engagements of this type must be supported by a comprehensive recognition of Indigenous expressions across the entire nation, and a responsible and sensitive appreciation of the wide diversity of identities that cover the twin islands.

Starting at the Start

In the sections above, we have raised three main points that we consider essential for ethical research with Indigenous peoples in the Southeastern Caribbean. Firstly, Indigenous peoples, like all peoples, change and transform without necessarily "losing" their identity and their Indigeneity. This must be made clear in publications and community engagements. In other words, archaeologists must actively counter narratives of Indigenous extinction in the Caribbean. Secondly, we highlight that local stories of archaeologists are created in tandem with academic stories made by archaeologists. We must be sensitive to these stories and create projects that improve and build on previous engagements. As made evident in the example of Margarita and Cubagua, archaeological publications and presentations are not enough. Thirdly, we highlight that work must also be cognizant of Indigenous com-

munities beyond the officially recognized communities because identities can be widespread and diverse, and often relationships mediated through institutions and/or governments (as heritage work often is) privilege certain voices over others.

These points do not exist in isolation, and in each case, they rely on changes occurring at the first stages of research: research design. A key takeaway from the experiences described in this chapter is the need for locally sensitive research projects built on previous engagement with relevant stakeholder communities. We contend that doing so requires that archaeologists, at least to start, do away with the "armor of expertise" that they wear when interacting with stakeholder communities. As Lynne Meskell (2002: 293) points out, we need to move past a disciplinary "illusion that the subjects of our research are dead and buried, literally, and that our 'scientific' research goals are paramount." This also means that simple consultation with Indigenous and other stakeholder groups can no longer be seen as good enough (Smith 2004: 198). A changed and future-oriented ethical practice must "start at the start"—we must actively listen to people.

"Starting at the start" refers to a deep self-reflection upon and an active defiance against valued traditional academic practices that affect research from its inception. One notable example is the academic desirability placed on single-authorship, which continues being sought for position, grant, and studentship applications. Such academic pressures disincentivize archaeologists from sharing authorship with stakeholders and instead incentivize a certain blurring and generalization of knowledge sources that appropriates, redefines, and isolates knowledge in academia. In drastic contrast, some departments demand authorship to be attributed to laboratory heads or supervisors who are little involved in the research, but do not encourage or ensure sharing coauthorship with participants and teachers "in the field." Actively countering this would mean more liberally recognizing coauthorship of nonacademic stakeholders who contributed knowledge to research; removing the "armor of expertise" involves democratizing the ascription of coauthorship beyond just academics.[4] Another example is departmental and institutional guidelines, which are often inflexible and impose a certain standardization that leads to ineffective and problematic research that is not designed according to the specificities and needs of its context (Meskell and Pels 2005). We would encourage, instead or in tandem, that flexible and responsive ethical committees be developed that enforce training, parse ethics applications, follow up with oral questioning, and finally debrief upon the completion of fieldwork. Such a system would allow applicants to present

and justify their approach to ethics, guided by community and stakeholder interactions, permitting ethical engagements to take a variety of forms not necessarily strictly in line with formal guidelines.

The aim of conceptualizing "starting at the start" is to pivot the direction of research and impact all stages, from the very start to the very end (if there is such a moment) of research. Such a change could redirect the amateur and professional impetus to discover the sensational and exotic (sometimes literal, but often metaphorical) "treasure."[5] The Caribbean is still exoticized for its headline stories about pirates, cannibals, treasure ships, and lost cities, but academically pursuing these topics can easily lead researchers to reissue a history of exploitation and looting of Caribbean riches at the cost of the local inhabitants, their heritage, economy, and environment. Sensitive research design and execution must be guided by awareness and an active countering of such sensationalism and exoticizing.

We suggest that to "start at the start," archaeologists must arrive at and interact with the area of research and its stakeholders in meaningful discussions that will guide the research design before any research officially begins. To shed the "armor of expertise" archaeologists must recognize "Indigenous and other non-positivist knowledge claims within archaeological theory" (Smith 2004: 202). And, as evidenced in the case of Trinidad, it must be done without falling into the trap of essentializing the community. To do this, archaeologists must cede the labels of archaeological material and archaeological heritage—in this way giving room for non-archaeological claims about the significance and meaning of these elements of the past (Smith 2004: 137). One major component of this is bringing oral histories to an equal standing with other sources of knowledge about the past, such as archaeology and written history.

Ultimately, starting at the start would lead to improved identification and publication of materials. Objects identified to static cultural groups and applying the cultural-historical model of one-to-one representation have failed repeatedly in the Caribbean both to tell a nuanced history of the region and in connecting modern-day descendants with their precolonial ancestors. For this to improve, archaeologists need to revise the theoretical underpinnings of much of Caribbean archaeology and shift their interpretations and categorizations into more fluid and less essential categories of identification that facilitate both richer understandings of the past and more diverse identification with that past. Doing so can start with understanding the historical changes, the present-day fluidity, and richness of Indigenous identity across the region, and letting go of notions of authenticity, a well-

challenged notion within heritage studies (see Silverman 2015) that often determines archaeological responses to present-day Indigenous expression.

A final element of "starting at the start" is that it does not have a clear conclusion. Archaeologists today still often close field sites and research projects, never to return. We argue that in an archaeological engagement, relationships and entanglements never end—they continue long after the archaeologists remove themselves from the area. In this view, it is irresponsible for the archaeologist to "close" the research and artificially and one-sidedly end these relationships. We argue that if an archaeologist disturbs the soil, they cannot then leave it, expecting it to bring itself back to a normality. We urge future work to consider engagement with local communities as an open-ended engagement with no finality. This means leaving open channels of communication, maintaining open spaces for learning and sharing of knowledge, and continuing work with the heritage and didactic aspects of archaeology.

Many archaeologists would today likely agree that archaeology should not remain in the laboratory, and that it cannot be divorced from politics. As Meskell (2002: 293) develops, the "'terrain of ethics' lies in the 'nexus of politics and identity.'" A future archaeology that we hope to contribute to with this chapter would include shifting perspectives around looting and falsifying of objects (see Ostapkowicz and Hanna 2021: 56), and redefining notions of authenticity and ownership of heritage. Reburial, reconnection, restitution, and reparations would all be concerns of such an archaeology. In this way, we argue for an integration of the remits of heritage managers/researchers and archaeologists, so that both share the responsibility of how archaeological work is used and made relevant in the present (see Santikarn et al. 2022).

Notes

1 The date varies; sometimes August 20 is used.
2 Funded by the Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales (FaCES), Universidad Central de Venezuela.
3 The group originally went by the name Santa Rosa Carib Community.
4 Though it is important to note that anonymity should always be a possibility and choice for participants in research.
5 Legends exist in Venezuela surrounding *morocotas* (gold coins) and *entierros* (burial sites); the stories promise that whoever might find these while digging will be immensely rich but may also be cursed. Archaeologists are often accused by local inhabitants of looking for these treasures, and it is an interesting conceptual metaphor for reflecting on extractivism and the sensationalism of archaeology.

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