

Aruban Archaeological Heritage: Nation-Building and Nation-Branding in a Caribbean Context

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Archaeological heritage is essential in constructing and defining cultures and national heritage. In the Caribbean region, these processes vary according to countries' socio-political and historical contexts. These contexts influence the research agendas, conservation, protection, and appraisal of archaeological work to transform heritage components in countries' brands and national imaginaries. Archaeological heritage and its study have marked the shaping of Caribbean nations in different ways, and influenced the development of national identities and nation-building and branding throughout the region.¹ Nation-building is understood here as the active process of crafting and adopting a shared national identity that simultaneously recognises cultural diversity and syncretism (see introduction chapter) and transcends societal differences. On the other hand, nation-branding is strongly linked to concepts of commercialisation and international tourism, where countries and regions are promoted or marketed using slogans, images, symbols, and cultural expressions.² The process of patrimonialisation of archaeological sites and material culture in the Caribbean was promoted by the development of tourist industries.³

Archaeological heritage and its study have impacted developments in nation-building and branding in the Caribbean. Nation-building and branding efforts in the Caribbean took shape alongside other profound transformations in the region, characterised by social and cultural in/exclusion imposed by the colonial metropolises and through geopolitical borders. At the same time, these developments are rooted in representation, persistence, and resistance, and in decolonisation processes across the region. This chapter focuses on the ways Aruban archaeological heritage has influenced nation-building and branding and explores how archaeological heritage has influenced these processes in countries with different colonial backgrounds and geopolitical configurations: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Haiti. We explore the instrumentalisation of archaeological heritage for the nation and identify three trends: visibility, omission, and homogenisation.

Aruba

The history and development of archaeological research in Aruba is described extensively in Dijkhoff and Linville.⁴ In the early nineteenth century, Dutch researchers recorded linear rock designs.⁵ In 1880, A.J. Van Koolwijk conducted the first archaeological excavations and collected numerous archaeological artefacts that are currently kept in the National Museum of Ethnography in the Netherlands. In the century that followed, Aruban archaeology was led by a succession of Dutch archaeologists as institutional and political support for archaeological research grew. In 1967, the Archaeological Institute of the Netherlands Antilles was founded, followed by the Archaeological Museum Aruba (now the National Archaeological Museum Aruba or NAMA) in 1981. In the late twentieth century, the Aruban government hired Aruba's first local archaeologists, fundamentally transforming archaeological heritage management and research on the island.⁶

Archaeological research in Aruba has primarily identified Indigenous sites.⁷ The National Archaeological Museum (MANA), tasked by the Aruban Ministry of Culture with preserving and managing Aruba's archaeological heritage since 1981, primarily features a collection related to the island's Indigenous archaeological heritage.⁸ Colonial material and sites were recorded in archaeological surveys carried out before 1999. However, it was not until 2001 that archaeological excavations of a historical site were conducted, with the accidental discovery of the Santa Cruz 35 cemetery. This site resulted in vast amounts of data from field campaigns in 2001, 2012, and 2016. The recent (rescue) investigations at the Santa Cruz 35 cemetery provide insights into the culture of death during the Historic Amerindian Period (AD 1515–1880), and reflect a transcultural site where Indigenous people, “Mestizos,” and Europeans were buried. These finds of the historic Indigenous period changed part of the museum's focus, and this research is presently ongoing. The African legacy of Aruba's history has not yet been identified in Aruba's archaeological record.

The museum plays a vital role in the cultural sector both nationally and as one of the focal points of heritage tourism on the islands. Pre-COVID-19, an average of 5,000 tourists visited the museum each year before the permanent exhibition closure in March 2017. The 2019 pan-Caribbean exhibition on Indigenous heritage, *Caribbean Ties: Connected People Then and Now*, incited broad public interest and support for the museum that helped trigger the formal reopening of the permanent exhibition in 2019.⁹ The *Caribbean Ties* exhibition also highlighted African and Asian cultural influences in Aruba, giving expression to the multicultural character of Aruba and the broader Caribbean. NAMA considers this part of the shift in Aruba in recognising the presence and influence of legacies that are not Indigenous.

Archaeological Heritage in Branding and Tourism in Aruba

Aruba's all-inclusive tourist-friendly brand touts the sun-sea-sand destination as a significant part of Aruba's branding strategy. This includes the mass-imported plastic souvenirs and merchandise printed with "Aruba 1499".¹⁰ At first glance, archaeological heritage plays a negligible role in the island's national brand, which suggests an omission of the island's Indigenous cultural heritage in the strategic nation-branding of Aruba. However, when we look beyond the Narratives of the One Happy Island,¹¹ elements of nation-building and branding in Aruba tell a more complex story and include significant archaeological heritage components to which even tourists are exposed.

The island's famous national park, the Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA), which covers over 20% of Aruba, is a popular attraction for both locals and tourists. At this 'Parke Arikok', visits often include a guided tour of the caves and of the Indigenous rock art. The national park's branding and logo design feature a hummingbird based on Indigenous rock art located in the park.¹² While this single representation does not communicate the diversity of Indigenous archaeological heritage found in the national park, the logo plays a central role in the park's



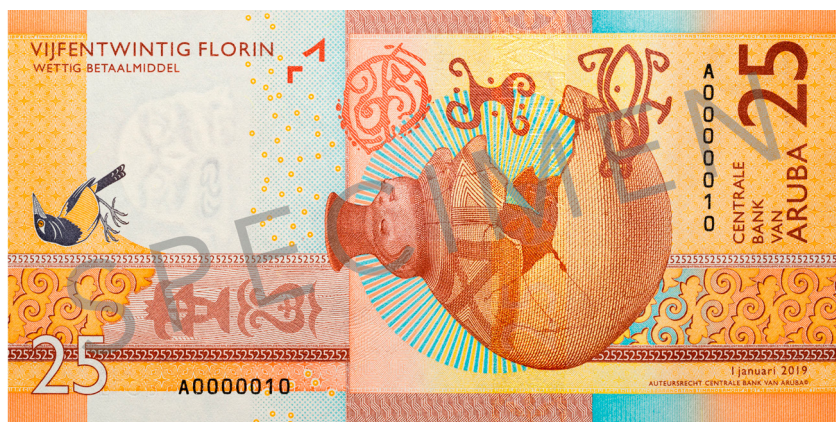
Tourist merchandise referring to the year the first European, Alonso de Ojeda landed on the island of Aruba (photo Tibisay Sankatsing)

branding—on the website, in print materials, and on the membership card—and by extension in the island’s branding.

Archaeological Heritage and the Nation: Language, Education and Currency in Aruba

Indigenous legacies are embedded in the Papiamentu language, which is a strong unifying element in Aruba: 92% of households speak Papiamentu at home. The language is the most important Aruban symbol related to nation-building and includes words of the Arawakan languages, including Caquetio, spoken by the Indigenous peoples.¹³ Many Indigenous toponyms and names for local flora and fauna are also present in today’s Papiamentu.¹⁴ Indigenous heritage was taught extensively in elementary schools in Aruba, in part due to early efforts of NAMA in developing educational materials.¹⁵ While this has decreased over the past years, NAMA continues to organise educational programs, documentaries, and activities about the Amerindian past. Contemporary legacies of Indigenous heritage in Aruba have never been part of the curriculum, likely due to lack of research and the ongoing (academic) discussions on Indigenous continuity versus “reinvented traditions” of indigeneity in Aruba.¹⁶

In Aruba, Indigenous cultural elements have also found their place on the banknotes of the Aruban florin, since the 1990 introduction of the official Aruban currency. This currency was introduced during an important period for nation-building in Aruba, shortly after Aruba’s Status Aparte in 1986, to use “fundamentally Aruban” elements.¹⁷ The original designer of the Aruban florin and a former NAMA director, Evelino Fingal, included Aruban fauna on one side of the



The Aruban banknote of 25 Florin, shows the Indigenous pictographs and material culture, but also faunal and traditional Aruban architecture elements

banknotes and decorative motifs of Indigenous ceramics on the other, explicitly emphasising “the relation between past and present.” Banknote iconography is considered an indicator of nation-building and branding efforts. Besides their utilitarian function, banknotes are a type of material culture used to shape ideas about identity; specifically, they use iconography to build collective identities.¹⁸ Specific messaging on banknotes promotes values and ontologies in a nation’s brand.¹⁹ The banknote series introduced in 2019 replaced the various Indigenous decorative patterns on each bill with the representation of Indigenous cultural heritage through a ceramic vessel and several Indigenous pictographs on the 25-florin bill. The Aruban currency is a source of national pride, and the 2019 edition fits seamlessly into the nation-building efforts invigorated in 1986 after Aruba’s Status Aparte.

Archaeological and Indigenous Heritage in Contemporary Aruban Culture

Besides the (in)visibility of archaeological heritage in formal branding and nation-building elements in Aruba as described above, archaeological cultural heritage informs and inspires many aspects of Aruban culture and society, such as traditional knowledge practices among fishers, horticulturalists (rain-dependent agriculture), Carnival and Dera Gai celebrations, architecture (cas di torto or wattle and daub houses), social organisation names (Club Caribe, Club Caquetio), schools and clubs (Caiquetio School, Ceque School, Caquetio Chess Club, Arawak Checkers Club), logos for national celebrations (the “Aruba 500 years” logo from 1998–99), in culinary practices (pan bati, funchi, piedr’i mula), and in crafts and artistic expressions such as visual arts, dance, theatre, literature, and musical instruments (wiri and raspa).²⁰ These and other examples of Indigenous legacies, such as Indigenous mitochondrial DNA, are presented in NAMA permanent and temporary exhibits. Since the mid 1990s the Wayuu community in Aruba have formed their own informal organisation that promotes the ties between their homeland and the island.²¹ These ties are symbolised by a canoe of the Wayuu community of La Guajira-Colombia that was donated to NAMA in 2012, which is now in front of the museum. Wayuu individuals were prominently featured in the *Caribbean Ties* exhibition in Aruba.

Rose Mary Allen explains that songs in the former Netherlands Antilles contain important indicators of cultural traditions and daily life experiences.²² Indigenous legacies also appeared in contemporary pop culture in a recent hit song by the Aruba artist Jeon. “Ta Mi Hendenan” is a popular song (with over one million views on YouTube at the time of writing) released in 2020 by Aruban artist Jeon and Bonairean group Rincon Boyz.²³ The song explores who “mi hendenan” (my people) are on Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao. The lyrics refer to physical traits considered to be of Indigenous origin: “si bo tin color Indian, ta mi hendenan,” which roughly

translates to “if you have Amerindian colouring, you’re one of us.” Later in the song, a similar reference is made to hair type that is considered an Indigenous trait. This is one of many references made regarding the islands’ multicultural populations (including Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities).

The examples given in this section illustrate that oral history, traditions, and archaeological research have reinforced Arubans’ identification with and the prevalence of Indigenous elements in Aruban daily life. Archaeological heritage has influenced nation-building and nation-branding to a lesser extent. As such, Indigenous legacies remain a part of the Aruban national identity.

Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Cuba

In Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, nationhood is not unrelated to the narratives created or strengthened by archaeology. The past of these islands has been used, ignored, recreated, manipulated, and interpreted from archaeology according to diverse social interests and social conjunctures.²⁴ Furthermore, this phenomenon is related to the influences of foreign theoretical and methodological models in the origins and development of archaeological research in these islands, articulated in the research agendas, researcher training, and funding of research activities.²⁵

Archaeology and Early Ideas of the Nation

Supported by the emergent discipline of archaeology, Hispanisation and Indigeneity are the two poles of debate in the early ideas of the nation. Archaeological knowledge of the Indigenous peoples was integrated into narratives about nation-building based on the idealisation of these communities: the exaltation of the Indigenous as a victim, an idealised entity, representative of a pristine and natural past and completely dislocated and destroyed by colonisation. This phenomenon is later present through the model of the three roots (Spanish, Indigenous, and African) to explain the cultural formation of these Caribbean nations.

In the twentieth century, the United States considered the Caribbean islands laboratories to create, develop, or test models of thought about their populations and generate a perspective about their past.²⁶ The historical and political trajectories of each island after their independence from Spain fostered a particular relationship between archaeological research and the image of the nation. From an archaeological perspective, independence was characterised by: a) the creation of museum collections, photographic archives, and data for the understanding of the past; b) the influence of North American methodological premises in the structure of the archaeological narrative as well as in the heuristic and interpretative models;

c) emphasis on cultural history with an empiricist normative perspective, where diffusion and migrations explain cultural change and transformation.²⁷

Nation-Building and Branding in Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico

It is important to consider the processes of heritage adaptation to national identity and the tourism market in relation to narratives derived from archaeological research. Often, in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean islands, the narrative generated by archaeology is used to validate authenticity. The “exotic” or pleasant is prioritised for the spectator. The most common practice is to remove items from their contexts and complexity to conceive them as stand-alone symbols of a nation, a city, etc.

In this sense, a kind of reductionism emerges with the presentation of specific archaeological objects. Objects inspired by archaeological finds are often (re) produced through semi-industrial methods to cater to the tourism industry.²⁸ The representation of material cultures are transformed into a source of motifs for artists, designers, and craftspeople, to be used for commercial purposes. As such, the motifs reproduced are considered symbols which refer to the presence of the Indigenous in the current nation. This in turn constitutes the basic resource to connect with a culture or cultural groups that are considered exterminated. The biased perspective of connection with Indigenous ancestors ignores the multiplicity of spaces, processes, and ways in which these ancestors were inserted to create the current regional and local cultures of these islands.

Indigenous resilience is manifested through the persistence of important Indigenous legacies in agricultural practices, the use of tools and craft techniques, culinary practices,²⁹ wooden rafts, fishing pens, canoes, hammocks and macutos, etc. These practices and objects were also essential to colonial societies’ daily lives and are still associated with domestic ritual activities.³⁰ It is also visible in words to designate species of flora, fauna, geographical spaces, personal names,³¹ and the management of landscapes for healing or ritual purposes, where caves, mountains, forests, trees, water sources, plants, stones, earth, and animals are linked with oral traditions that venerate spiritual entities of Indigenous ancestors.³²

Indigenous knowledge is used in various forms of healing,³³ and practices of popular religiosity, where the so-called Indigenous Division is commonly found, are present in variants of voodoo,³⁴ spiritism, or Santería.³⁵ In some cases, these practices incorporate Indigenous objects in altars, predictive practices, or ritual invocations.³⁶ Recent historical and archaeological studies have contributed to revealing the diversity of ways Indigenous ancestors were integrated into the societies of these islands. This integration marked diverse forms of Indigenous survival in the colonial societies and their contribution to the construction of these nations in the Caribbean.

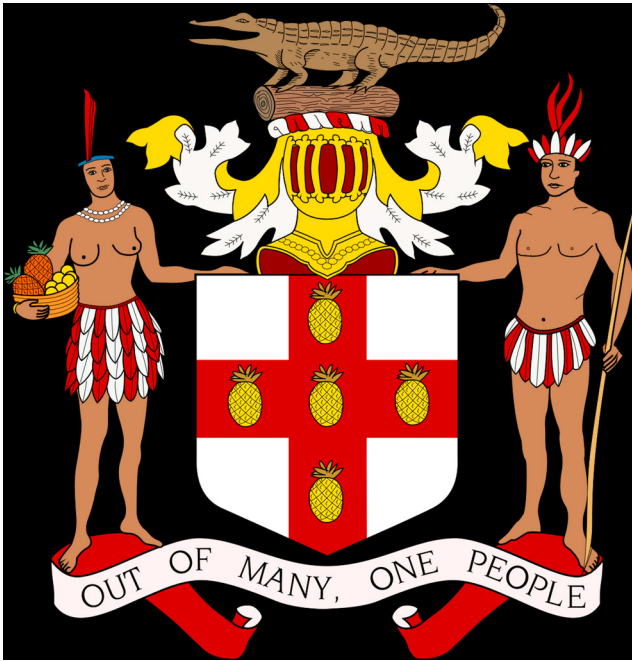
Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago, nation-building has been influenced by a multiplicity of factors associated with its variegated past. As the southernmost in the Antillean chain, these islands were conduits for waves of human movement between mainland South America and the Caribbean beginning approximately 8,000 years ago.³⁷ By 1498, Trinidad and Tobago's Indigenous population was heterogeneous, multicomponent, and multilingual.³⁸ The colonial era that followed was an equally complex milieu of Indigenous, African, European, and Asian influences that has left indelible marks on the landscape. As a result, this nation boasts an abundance of regionally significant archaeological heritage assets from Archaic Age burial sites to World War Two fortifications and beyond. Despite this abundance and the academic interest therein, archaeological heritage, especially "pre-Columbian," has been at the periphery of Trinidad and Tobago's public consciousness. Until recently, archaeological heritage was virtually absent from its national identity and invisible in its externally projected image. This omission and distortion are direct consequences of the undervaluation of indigeneity and the systemic neocolonial attitudes towards education.

Indigenous Heritage in Trinidad and Tobago

Archaeological heritage and contemporary Indigenous people have a symbiotic relationship. This heritage is vital to the formation and maintenance of Indigenous identities. Conversely, Indigenous peoples worldwide fiercely protect tangible heritage, which is the patrimony of their forebears. In Trinidad and Tobago, this relationship is strong and mutually beneficial. The First People of Trinidad and Tobago regularly perform spiritual rituals using archaeological sites such as Banwari Trace, San Fernando Hill, and Caurita petroglyphs.³⁹ However, First People communities and organisations have historically not been afforded the same recognition found in other territories mentioned in this discourse. "Here every creed and race find an equal place" is a twice-stated refrain in Trinidad and Tobago's national anthem. This verse is a national commitment to social justice and parity for the components of Trinbago's multicultural society. However, despite approving the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, the term "Indigenous peoples" is not legally defined by the government of Trinidad and Tobago.⁴⁰ Further, the country's decennial population and housing census has only recently included an "Indigenous" ethnic grouping. In 2011, the number of census respondents identifying as Indigenous stood at 1,394 of a total population of 1.3 million.⁴¹

This country attained its independence from Great Britain in 1962, but the first official recognition of an Indigenous group occurred in 1990. Trinbagonians have



The Jamaican national coat of arms is a striking example of Indigenous heritage imagery used in nation branding

been taught from an early age that their history begins with transatlantic contact in 1498 and all else prior is preamble. Traditional historical accounts have habitually distorted the role of Indigenous peoples in the post-nineteenth century development of Trinidad and Tobago.⁴² These narratives suggest the oblivion of Indigenous people and their meaningful absence from the historical discourse. According to Forte, “Asserting extinction is one blunt way of not having to answer the question of who is an Indian.”⁴³ As a result, Trinbagonian nationalism has not been equipped with an appreciation for “Indigenous” archaeological heritage or symbolism. For example, the nation’s coat of arms displays Columbus’s three vessels but bears no Indigenous symbolism. This emblem appears on every denomination of Trinidad and Tobago’s currency and every government building. It was designed by a committee of noted artists such as Carlisle Chang and George Bailey to “select symbols that would represent the people of Trinidad and Tobago.”⁴⁴ The national icon reinforces the commonly held notion that Trinidad and Tobago’s history began in 1498. In direct contrast, Jamaica’s national coat of arms prominently features Indigenous history while acknowledging its colonial past. These nations have similar histories, Indigenous populations in both territories suffered under the yoke of Spanish and British colonialism, and they attained independence from Britain in 1962. Nevertheless, one boldly displays its Indigenous heritage while the other is obscured.

Recent Developments in Trinidad and Tobago

Recently, attitudes toward archaeological heritage management as it pertains to Indigenous identity have changed on the community and national levels. The National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago has been empowered by an act of Parliament to safeguard and promote archaeological heritage. This organisation legally protected the Banwari Trace Archaeological site in 2013. This site has been described as the oldest pre-Columbian site in the West Indies.⁴⁵ October 14, 2017, was designated as a one-off public holiday called First People Day. This observance allowed the citizens of Trinbago to reflect on the country's Indigenous history.

In March 2013, discoveries including human remains, artifacts, and other archaeological material were made at the Red House, Trinidad and Tobago's seat of Parliament, during restoration works. Preliminary data from this investigation suggested that the Red House site was a relatively sizable Indigenous settlement that was continuously inhabited for over 1,200 years (AD 125–1395).⁴⁶ This chance discovery galvanised the importance of the country's archaeological heritage. The project's committee included a consultation phase where information was shared with all major heritage stakeholders. The First People groups of Trinidad and Tobago, including the Santa Rosa First People Community and the Warao Nation, played an active role in deliberations concerning excavation methodology, and finds care and processing. After this research was completed, the First People communities of Trinidad and Tobago held a reinternment ceremony on the grounds of the Red House in October 2019. The human remains uncovered during the project were reburied in accordance with ritual and religious rites. This gesture of respect allowed for a national reflection on the country's Indigenous past. Perhaps in time, the archaeological heritage directly associated with African and Asian presence during the country's colonial past will also enter the public consciousness, for there are numerous historical archaeological sites such as sugar estates, maroon communities, and forts waiting to be explored. Archaeological heritage has traditionally not informed nation-building and branding in Trinidad and Tobago. This occurred due to systemic neocolonial attitudes towards education, the undervaluation of indigeneity, and lack of management. However, recent trends demonstrate a shift towards emphasising the importance of Trinidad and Tobago's archaeological heritage.

Haiti

Behind the early French works of literature on Haiti's first inhabitants, the French colonists manifested interest in collecting indigenous archaeological objects found in many parts of the country during French colonisation leading to the reorganisation

process of the landscape. More often considered “fetish” objects, some of them were sent to the *Cabinet de Curiosité* in France. This interest has been further manifested by attempts to establish an Indian museum in Cap-Francais (today Cap-Haitien) by the Cercle des Philadelphus, founded in 1784 in Cap-Francais, in which emerged intellectual activities based on science and medicine. These colonial interests for the Indigenous material past are considered an early archaeological step.⁴⁷

The interest in collecting archaeological objects continued in Haiti for many years after its independence. Scientific archaeological practices can be traced to early 1900, mainly with the arrival of American anthropologists and the significant inputs of Haitian scholars.⁴⁸ Certainly, foreign anthropologists have contributed to establishing the foundation for archaeological development. However, Haitian scholars’ research objectives can be traced parallel to the Americans’ by considering sociological stakes. These stakes consider the social context in which Haitian archaeological practices and discourse on heritage appeared in early 1940. The creation of the Bureau d’Ethnologie in 1941 by the Haitian ethnologist Jacques Roumain aimed to establish a museum to conserve archaeological objects and inventory and classify archaeological objects.⁴⁹ This official institution, implemented to save Vodou objects threatened by the Catholic Church’s anti-superstitious campaign, is situated in this social context.

The debate on identity that started to foreground the African legacies largely emerged through literature productions and was deeply discussed in anthropological research during Haiti’s U.S. occupation (1915–1934). While the first inhabitants of Haiti were mostly romanticised in literature productions, Jacques Roumain and other Haitian ethnologists placed the Amerindian and African legacies at the heart of Haitian popular culture, which has been primarily repressed by the Haitian elite.⁵⁰ To reinforce this discussion via scientific productions, Haitian scholars have undertaken archaeological investigations to promote Amerindian history by highlighting this past’s materiality, and have rescued Amerindian objects from the *oumfò* (Vodou temples) that had been damaged during the anti-superstitious campaign by the Catholic Church and were preserved at the Bureau d’Ethnologie. This demonstrates the Indigenous-African syncretism that formed Haitian popular culture. Haitian scholars’ archaeological practices contributed to promoting this culture in scientific debates. Nevertheless, this research outreach lasted for a short time after the creation of the Bureau d’Ethnologie. The first official laws and regulations on heritage established archaeological heritage as a public domain and appealed for its protection and preservation.⁵¹ However, Indigenous material culture was not branded Haitian, as is the case of some built heritage.

In this case, the most emblematic aspect of Haiti-branded heritage comes from another path of heritage practices in Haiti that took place in the 1950s. These practices have mostly focused on mapping, preserving, and revalorising historical monuments. Later, in the 1970s, interest in promoting historical heritage went

hand-in-hand with tourism's rise and promotion in Haiti. This interest has taken shape by focusing on mapping, identifying, and restoring Haiti's historical monuments.⁵² From this perspective, the Parc National Historique—which encompasses the Palace of Sans Souci and the Ramiers and Citadelle buildings, built in the early nineteenth century—was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982. As universal symbols of liberty and as the first monuments to be constructed by black enslaved people who had gained their freedom,⁵³ these monuments are considered veritable archaeological components that convey nation-building discourses. La Citadelle refers to Haiti's defensive strategy against the potential French return to the country after the nation's independence and is the most highly prized Haitian heritage component among other archaeological sites. It is also used as a material feature to brand Haiti in terms of history and tourism. Other historical monuments such as fortresses also received some attention and are part of the nation's identity and memory, since they are illustrated in the local currency.

Regardless of the discourse and practices about Haitian heritage's multiple material components, the emblematic buildings have received more attention in constructing narratives about nation-building. An Amerindian statue was placed in a public space (Champs de Mars) at Port-au-Prince in 1983 under Jean-Claude Duvalier's dictatorship. It was associated with an attempt to claim 28 November as an "Indian National Day of Culture" in Haiti, published as a decree.⁵⁴ The statue was vandalised in 1986 during the fall of Duvalier's dictatorship, not because the statue is not linked to Haitian history but because its controversial character was associated with Duvalier and inherited from political tensions that oppressed the freedom of expression in Haiti. There is a lack of public spaces such as archaeological museums to promote the multiple Haitian heritage traces. At the same time, there exists in Haitian society today an enormous market in Indigenous fake objects geared towards certain "*collectionneurs*" who are actively engaged in collecting Indigenous objects. Finally, the narratives about the first inhabitants are still biased in the school curricula, to such an extent that the general textbooks are not updated with new knowledge of the past from archaeological research in Haiti and the Caribbean.

Towards a Conceptualisation of Archaeology and Ideas of Nationhood in Aruba and the Wider Caribbean

Despite the diversity of ways archaeology has influenced nation-building, the analysis of archaeology's impact on creating a nationhood ideal allows us to define a set of trends: visibility, homogenisation, and omission of archaeological heritage in nation-building and branding. The manifestation of each of these is not exclusive to the others, and in general, these trends can be considered inherent biases in the

formalisation of the so-called Caribbean national heritages. In most cases, their manifestations permeate academic, educational, scientific and societal discourses and the efforts to study, appraise, or protect archaeological heritage. For example, the choices in archaeological practices (such as a focus on precolonial archaeology in Aruba) are influenced by geopolitical and historical aspects and both reflect and influence the inclusion of cultural elements in nation-building and branding. This is exemplified by the differences between the archaeological research and nation-building and branding efforts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In the Dominican Republic, the celebration of Hispanic and Indigenous cultural roots through archaeology has contributed to a nationalism that differentiates itself from neighbouring Haiti and to the creation of a country brand associated with tourism marketing. This has formalised a narrative that generally reduces the presence of African roots and idealises the Indigenous presence in the nation-building process.

Visibility of Archaeological Heritage in Ideas of Nationhood

In Aruba, we can recognise visibility in the way archaeology is “utilised” for the nation. Visibility is the politics of heritage that foregrounds some types of archaeological heritage while repressing others. Visibility also refers to how archaeological heritage is used as performance, for representation, identity, and community across the Caribbean. This visibility does not reflect the complex cultural diversity of archaeological heritage across the region. In fact, as is argued in this chapter, the archaeological heritage that has marked the nation-building and branding of Caribbean countries is limited to certain aspects of the cultural diversity found in the Caribbean prescribed by the islands’ colonial geopolitical context.

Aruba’s archaeology, which is largely excluded in the island’s official tourism branding strategy, formally begins with Van Koolwijk. However, expressions of the first islanders beyond archaeological research are visible through the examples of petroglyphs, oral tradition, food, the national park, education, and popular culture,⁵⁵ which permeate into the tourism experience. This visibility can transform into performative spotlighting of particular aspects of heritage. For instance, in the case of Haiti, Jean et al. show how the Parc Historique and other monuments are used to remake the past.⁵⁶ The Dominican case shows that discourses about identity can be manipulated via historical texts, and how archaeological heritage is used to make certain components of national history visible.⁵⁷ In Trinidad and Tobago, archaeology exists outside the realm of common social discourse. However, “Indigenous” heritage is clearly less visible in comparison to tangible colonial culture. For instance, the National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago is responsible for listing and legally protecting heritage assets of national significance. At the time of writing 43 sites have attained this legal protection. However, only three assets bear

any Indigenous or First People significance; Banwari Trace Archaeological Site, the Caurita Petroglyphs, and the imagery depicted in the Conquerabia mural.

Homogenisation of Archaeological Heritage in Representation of Indigenous Elements

The examples from across the Caribbean demonstrate how homogenisation processes of heritage reduce and simplify cultural diversity through the dissemination of a set of symbols, material culture, customs, ideas and values of one culture, often to the detriment of other symbols present in a nation. Homogenisation can contribute to national stereotypes in the tourism imaginaries and to a colonial image of cultural identity.⁵⁸ As becomes clear from the Aruban examples, the most visible elements of archaeological heritage in Aruba do not reflect the diversity present on the island. They also do not reflect the cultural diversity and cultural interactions of the Indigenous peoples of the island, and homogenise this rich cultural capital into a simplified category like “indjan.” The aspects of cultural heritage that are made national across the Caribbean can be associated with strategic political goals, ethnic or social segregation, cultural revival processes in the face of external cultural threats, or stereotyping within cultural industries or the tourism market.

Omission of Archaeological Heritage

There is intense focus on precolonial and Indigenous archaeology across the Caribbean, inherited from the earliest archaeological practices in the region. Concurrently, there is notable literature on Caribbean archaeology related to the African diaspora.⁵⁹ However, the material culture that reflects the atrocities of slavery is not well represented in museums and in museum-led nation-building in the countries addressed in this chapter. The choice of archaeological artifacts displayed in museums and public spaces at the expense of others corresponds to the devaluation or silencing of certain cultures and histories. This *omission* is prevalent across the region: cultural values associated with particular social actors are omitted in the construction of the idea of national culture or brand.

Until recently in Aruba, archaeology and MANA focused mainly on the Indigenous cultural heritage and reinforced the already present orientation of Indigenous cultural heritage in society. The museum’s permanent exhibition refers to multiculturalism and elements of Indigenous and European influence. However, Afro-Caribbean heritages are glaringly absent at the museum and in archaeological research on the island in general. This is being addressed by the “Manteniendo Herencia Bibo den Tempo” project, which highlights the Ecury family and their relationship to the physical building of the museum. This project, however, is not directly related to the archaeological research conducted by MANA. In the case of

Haiti, the lack of archaeological research and public spaces in general, which could give rise to new discourses on Haitian history, is a real disadvantage in discussing issues related to omission and homogenisation. However, the built heritage, such as the Citadel, is the element most often used to brand the country, despite objects related to the Indigenous past often being displayed at Bureau National d'Ethnologie and the Musée du Panthéon National.

Building and Branding the Nation: Local Leadership and Multivocality in Caribbean Archaeology

Traditional ideas of nation-building based on archaeological research in the Caribbean have been critiqued from the second half of the twentieth century, specifically relating to the efforts to create national archaeological research agendas and to decolonise archaeological practices. The liberation from traditional normative perspectives⁶⁰ was considered essential to establishing a true connection between archaeology and society and contributing to the understanding of the complex process of nation-building.⁶¹

Homogenisation and omission are closely associated with creating imaginaries related to tourism development, expanding the market and cultural industries,⁶² and creating or strengthening a country's brand. As this chapter shows, the emergence of multivocality in agenda-setting and heritage-making in archaeology in the Caribbean is crucial to this. While in Aruba archaeological research is led by local archaeologists, archaeological research was until recently mostly conducted by foreigners without the participation of local scholars, stakeholders, or community members. This contributes to omission and homogenisation in archaeological research and the subsequent influence of archaeology in building and branding Caribbean nations. Similarly, archaeological research in Trinidad and Tobago overwhelmingly remains a pursuit of foreign scholarship. Archaeology and First People culture are not important factors in Trinbago's present tourism strategy. For example, "Visit Trinidad" and "Visit Tobago," the country's new official destination websites, hardly feature archaeological heritage beyond that of the colonial era.

Multivocality can amplify alternative ways of making heritage by critically addressing how archaeological heritage is used in museums, public spaces, and education.⁶³ This should also become a standard in archaeological projects, where community engagement⁶⁴ and co-creation with local stakeholders are prioritised in the valuing and protection of archaeological sites.⁶⁵ Gradual shifts in research agendas and new opportunities for researchers throughout the Caribbean have led to a growing number of local Caribbean archaeologists and heritage managers. These developments contribute to more heterogeneous and inclusive practices in archaeological research and are expected to provide novel stories of Caribbean nations.

