

REVIEWS

'Ceramic Periods of St. Thomas and St. John Islands, Virgin Islands', by Ripley P. Bullen. The William L. Bryant Foundation: *American Studies*, Report Number Four, 1962 [reprinted 1974]. 74 p. \$1.50.

Eighteen years ago, ten years following the 1952 publication of Irving Rouse's 'Porto Rican Prehistory: Excavations in the West and North' (*Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands*, Vol. XVIII, Pt. 3), Ripley B. Bullen, a curator of Social Sciences at the Florida State Museum, working in the Virgin Islands, thought that the ceramic typology for the isles of St. Thomas and St. John could not be rigidly limited to Rouse's system of 'style'. On the contrary, he and his colleagues selected to use a system developed by James A. Ford and James B. Griffin, published in 1937 and 1938 in the *Newsletter of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 5-9; 10-22. The reasoning was that it was better to use a system that would 'permit the statistical handling of sherds.'

With the exception of two of Rouse's 'styles', (the Cuevas style of Puerto Rico and the Cedros style of Trinidad), which he accepts, Bullen offers a typology (which he calls a 'series'), composed of three factors: (1) geography and paste, (3) 'the last (refers to an important decoration feature, and (2) the middle, if present, modifies the last.' For example, types are known as 'Botany Large Horned,' or 'Botany Small Horned,' and these interdependent variables governed the way the ceramics were classified. Six main types having approximately thirty-seven subdivisions are offered.

In attempting to understand the prehistory of the Caribbean, the importance of a reliable method for determining pottery types can hardly be overemphasized, Ceramic analysis and typological studies take first place in excavations for a reliable determination of site chronologies, inter-site relationships and cultural contact in the area. Bullen's article offers a comprehensive view of the range of pottery types found, and most of the site reports are presented with tabular information of ceramic type distributions and frequencies of occurrence. As a general survey, Bullen provides a setting in which the ceramics of some fourteen sites can be assessed.

Unfortunately, there is a central very important weakness in the way this typology is offered; the artificial manipulations of ceramic variables is its inherent theoretical fault, for the variables either overlap one another and/or are infuriatingly vague. Confusion exists between nomenclature and what is actually meant. For example, what do 'large horned' or 'small horned' actually mean? When is 'large' large, and 'small' not large? Flaring bowls and concave rim bowls are

classified separately, but both are, in fact, flared. A Casuela bowl is a closed form, but is it not the same as a closed bowl? How with a small rim fragment is the typologist to tell the difference between one of these incomplete shapes and another? Only with a complete profile can the statistics of these forms be valid. There are also verbal confusions as to what are actually meant by paint and slip, polish and burnish, hand modeled and coiling. None of these factors are adequately explained, nor are they presented as being mutually exclusive. In the description of paste, Bordeaux is described as the 'best of Botany'. The author, himself raises the question, that due to overlaps between Botany and Bordeaux, 'It is probable, therefore, that the quantities of Bordeaux sherds indicated in the tables . . . are a little lower than would otherwise be the case.' Different parameters are selected to describe each paste, *i.e.*, sometimes a Mohs scale reading is offered and/or temper type is used, and then, occasionally, temper is just described. Furthermore, wall thickness descriptions lack consistency. There is no doubt that Mr. Bullen has set out to describe the boundaries of the ceramics, but these boundaries are not very clear. In actual fact, Bullen creates the same dilemma that he sets out to avoid.

To call this typology a standard for the islands is unfortunate; it must be reworked before it is accepted. There are many idiosyncratic errors in the detail of the ceramic descriptions that deserve restatement. In a demand for greater clarity, we should be provided with standardized, measurable descriptions and line drawings. If the main aim of this article is to provide a set of objective data for the recognition of types, then the criteria for types have to be reworked.

It is a question of the parameters and their documentation that must be recorded in a manner that suits comparative inter-site analysis. Across the board, from Old and New World scholarship, typologies are being scrutinized, reinterpreted and in some cases, re-evaluated. One common enemy appears to be syntax; we have to take the time to tell ourselves what each of our parameters actually *means*; we have to be more scientific. If some of the concepts of this typology could be reconsidered without wiping out the typology completely, the concepts that are central to this regional study would be effective. If experienced personnel evaluate this system, and tackle the inconsistencies, the result would offer a broadened control over

future excavations. If some of these ideas can be tightened, and some of the ambiguities that now layer this typology be removed, we will not be as plagued as we now seem to be in our regional ceramic studies of the Virgin Islands.

They Came Before Columbus. The African Presence in Ancient America, by Ivan van Sertima. New York: Random House, First Printing 1976. [xiii] - xviii, (2) [1]-288 (6) p. \$15.00.

In recent years many popular works have been published regarding the presence and influence of Old World cultural contacts with New World pre-Columbian cultures. Unfortunately the majority of authors of these works have derived much of their information from unreliable sources, uncritical research, and mere speculation on their part.

They Came Before Columbus fits into this category. Mr. van Sertima's book is neither a scholarly work nor a historical novel but appears to be an amalgamation of the two. This book confuses fact with fiction and muddles the main issue: were there cultural contacts between Africa and the New World during the pre-Columbian period? In order to build his 'pyramid' of evidence, as the book jacket states, for an African presence in pre-Columbian America Mr. van Sertima barrages the reader with contrived historical accounts of his own creation mixed with fact and generous footnotes.

It is quite evident that Mr. van Sertima is a diffusionist who believes that civilization was transported to pre-Columbian America from Africa. This is an extreme reversal of a notion held by some authors who would like us to believe that Europeans brought civilization to the world. Once again the reader is subjected to the notion that the great pre-Columbian cultures that flourished in the Americas were, so to speak, suddenly injected with civilization from across the Atlantic. Unfortunately the American Indian's creative genius has been overlooked by Mr. van Sertima.

Of particular interest is Mr. van Sertima's belief that two human burials unearthed at Hull Bay, St. Thomas, by members of the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society are proof of an African presence in the Virgin Islands during the prehistoric period. Having been a participant in the 1974 Hull Bay excavations it is quite obvious to me that Mr. van Sertima was rather uninformed.

To begin with Mr. van Sertima was under the impression that the Smithsonian Institution was responsible for the Hull Bay excavations; however, the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society initiated the Hull Bay excavations. Following the discovery of the two human burials the Office of the Territorial Archaeologist was founded and the Hull Bay excavations

continued under the direction of the Office of the Territorial Archaeologist. The two human burials were later sent to the Smithsonian Institution where they were examined by physical anthropologists.

Even though the quality of the research makes this article worth reading, and it brings together a wide range of data, it is disappointing that not enough attention is paid to the central process of typology.

—MARTHA SHARP JOUKOWSKY

Mr. van Sertima asserts that a 'blanket of secrecy had descended' when he visited Hull Bay. However, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. van Sertima never contacted the Office of the Territorial Archaeologist nor the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society. Had Mr. van Sertima contacted the O.T.A. or V.I.A.S. instead of relying on hearsay he would have been able to examine several reports filed by the O.T.A. on the Hull Bay excavations as well as a report prepared by two Smithsonian Institution physical anthropologists, and printed in *The Journal of the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society* (Analysis of the Hull Bay Skeletons, St. Thomas, by D.H. Ubelaker and J.L. Angel, no. 3, 1976, pp. 7-9-).

Mr. van Sertima stated that a ceramic vessel associated with one of the burials was of 'pre-Columbian Indian design'; however, analysis of the ceramic vessel in question revealed that the vessel was of historic origin, not of prehistoric origin as had originally been assumed. An article dealing with locally made historic earthenware subsequently appeared in *The Journal of the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society* (Afro-Cruzan Pottery: A New Style of Colonial Earthenware from St. Croix, by R.T. Gartley, no. 8, 1979, pp. 47-61-).

Mr. van Sertima's account of the Hull Bay burials, while only a minor one in *They Came Before Columbus* serves as an example of the author's unscholarly and slipshod research methods. Had Mr. van Sertima done his homework I doubt that he would have come to the conclusion that these two intrusive historic burials represent an African presence in prehistoric America.

They Came Before Columbus should not be taken as a serious work based on fact and careful research, to determine if there were cultural contacts between Africa and the New World during the pre-Columbian period, but rather as a poorly researched and fictitious attempt to do so.

—BRUCE E. TILDEN

Under the Rainbow. Nature and Supernature among the Panaré Indians, by Jean-Paul Dumont. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, ©1976. (14) [1]-178 p. \$13.95.

'Who was stranger to whom?'
— p. 29.

It is difficult for scholars to confront this book. Anyone who thinks of himself basically as a social anthropologist, it may be argued, would find *Under the Rainbow* hard to deal with. Jean-Paul Dumont has taken structural anthropology so far into the intangible and the evocative as to bring it closer to the humanism of artistic or literary criticism than to the mechanics of the social sciences. Also, the commonplace of the anthropologist as a 'translator' for the reader of a people's 'culture language' has developed in this case into an entirely personal experience, in which Dumont (as a prominent and persistent 'I') synthesizes the Panaré world single-handedly in a manner so testimonial that it may well dispense with informants: he has *become* the Panaré.

Given the above, intellectual honesty is best served with a conscious effort to understand the research interests, methods, and goals ('paradigm', if need be) of the author. Only then can one judge the work according to its own standards (this last will cause the most hesitation). Afterwards, it is fair to add what its value may be to those who do not share such research interests, methods, and/or goals. It will be seen how wide the gap can be that separates the school of thought unilaterally advocated by Dumont and that of social anthropology: any bridge (of understanding) attempted across it will be attenuated by distance nearly to the breaking point. One approach at least (Dumont's) will never serve the needs of the other. The reverse might also prove true.

Jean-Paul Dumont studied at the Sorbonne and the École Pratique des Hautes Études in France. Later, he completed a course of studies leading to a Ph.D. degree at the University of Pittsburgh. He spent nearly a full year (December 1967 to November 1968) among the specific Panaré group (Turiba Viejo) which is the subject of his ethnographic essay. Additionally, eight months were spent among other Panaré groups between 1967 and 1970 (p. 5). Dumont seems to have mastered Panaré quite well, and to have devised a phonemic transcription for it (pp. 5-6). *Under the Rainbow* itself is largely an adaptation of the academic thesis for his doctorate, which was awarded in 1972.

The book is well-written (singularly lacking in barbarisms and other faults of diction that plague the social sciences) and handsomely composed, despite the peculiar (and alarming!) editorial practice of leaving the margins unjustified and setting the type of all pages as if they were to face the reader to the left (thus

the page facing the reader to the right is numbered rather illegibly to the left and by the spine). The absence of plates is unfortunate, as much detail could be illustrated deftly through them, and they would have contributed through their publication to the ethnographic record which is avowedly being supplied (p. 1).

No data is available on the various anthropologists who may have influenced Dumont, since he does not explicitly recognize his debt to anyone, but by culling from the text and reviewing the bibliography at the end, it becomes clear that Dumont uses Lévi-Strauss and Godelier rather heavily, and finds much inspiration in Nutini. Though precise information is lacking, one may conjecture a predilection for (and perhaps also study with) the first two, and Dumont could well have been Nutini's student at Pittsburgh. It may be also that Dumont attempts very much to be 'his own man', and, certainly, the constant references to his previous publications and insistence on new theoretical (and other) insights might support this (added to the fact that protestations of indebtedness, as remarked above, are missing).

On the dust jacket, at least, Dumont's book is characterized as particularly representative of 'French structuralism'. 'Structuralism' is mentioned often in *Under the Rainbow*, but, as will be seen shortly, it may be (at least partially) improper to consider it 'French'. Certainly, Nutini (a Chilean-American) has contributed somewhat to Dumont's thinking, and Dumont himself (despite his French parents, *cf.* the dedication) is at least formally an American. The book itself seems written directly in English, and at least one previous article by Dumont written in French ('Compte-rendu de mission chez les Indiens Panaré', *L'Homme*, vol. 11, 1971, no. 1, pp. 83-88) is in a prose style very broadly reminiscent of American academia (one wonders whether it was either written or 'thought' first in English). At any rate, 'structuralism' it is, but far indeed from Radcliffe-Brown's!

What seems a key theoretical stance is given first within the conclusions (p. 162). It is a quotation taken from an article by Nutini, and in it is explained what is meant by a dichotomy between 'paradigm' and 'model'. The first is *derived* from data whereas the second is *imposed* upon data. This, then becomes roughly the often remarked extreme 'linear' positions of 'induction' and 'deduction'—one goes from one to the other *in degrees* during analysis. However, it seems clear that to Dumont it is the 'model' (both analytically and formally) that matters. The field experience, then, is to be used in deducing Panaré thought.

The most disappointing aspect of the book is that it portrays one of its goals as an ethnography of the Panaré (p. 1). It is not until the end (p. 161) that we learn that Panaré *society* was not meant even to be dealt with. *Culture* (or the 'structure' of Panaré thought) is all that is to be detailed. Thirty-seven pages (29-65) are devoted to an 'ethnographic presentation', but despite some elaborate lists of material culture and cultigens, later (p. 122) we learn more about the kinship of the stars (!) than we ever do about that of the Panaré. Indeed, this rather important subject of kinship merits only a paragraph elsewhere (*op. cit.*, p. 87), where we learn that each local group (such as Turiba Viejo) is an extended bilateral family (?) that is economically autonomous and residentially determined. Kinship terminology is of the Iroquois type for cousins, and alternates according to a Kariëra system. Bilateral cross-cousin marriage is preferred, with sororal polygyny being frequent. Residence is indifferently viri- or uxori-local.

The above, extracted from a brief report, is not wholly reliable. The elaboration and detail that give one confidence in the reliability of such schemes are not available. It seems that kinship and social organization as a whole were peripheral to Dumont's interests. Occasional references to a 'chef politique' (*op. cit.*, p. 85) or to a 'headman' (p. 29) are left dangling. Obviously, this is the leader of the 'famille étendue bilatérale', the ruler of the *churuata* (household), but what he can or can not do and how or why he comes to be (and many more intriguing questions) just never come up. Clearly, Dumont feels that, were he to let us know how the Panaré 'think', we could figure out all this detail from that insight, or else such detail would in the event be useless (since it would be present at the whim of the 'culture'—Panaré thought—and would be restrained or changed by that 'culture', the reverse not being possible).

'Time and Astrosexuality' seem to be much more important, but face some difficulties such as the sexlessness (in Panaré minds) of most stars. The whole chapter (pp. 91-129), as well as the initial section (p. 15) on Panaré conceptualization of the world, seem *artifacts of method* imposed upon Panaré culture. A 'model', *i.e.*, that does not reflect reality but may only deflect it.

It does not seem credible that, armed *a priori* with notions about the sex of the heavenly bodies and the triadic confrontation of Nature, Culture, and Supernature (one of Dumont's novel schemes, elaborated upon Lévi-Strauss, *cf.* p. 164), and, further, uninterested in how the Panaré have expressed *socially* their thoughts (but, rather, forcing the Panaré language to yield the 'truths' that were decided upon beforehand), one can 'elicit' anything legitimately.

Astrosexuality is there whether the Panaré think of stars as sexed or not. Equally, it seems certain that something else (how about Sphaeromusicology?) may be demonstrated to exist among the Panaré by means of similar selective and/or arbitrary 'elicitations'. Put in trite terms, Dumont does not succeed in being either *emic* (asking his people what they think), or *etic* (observing how his people think). Informants (whether a whole settlement as is the case here, or not) seem irrelevant except as an abstraction, or subjects to whom one attaches norms and beliefs arbitrarily.

To think of 'Panaré thought' (read here Dumont's *artifact of method*) as determining settlement patterns and other serious business such as dealing with survival seems rather absurd (p. 15). One may argue that the 'axis' where the Panaré settle is also the best place to be located in order to exploit the various environments accessible therefrom (forest, savannah, etc.).

As with kinship and social organization, when we come to religion and economics we find little of value in Dumont's presentation. It is *Dumont's* thought as to how *the Panaré* think (*which* Panaré?) that matters, and of Panaré religion we learn almost nothing. Similarly, *e.g.*, the Panaré have been trading with Venezuelans for quite a long time (*cf.* pp. 23, 35, 40), and imported objects such as metal tools are very much a part of the Panaré tool kit. We learn elsewhere (J.-P. Dumont, 'L'alliance substituée', *L'Homme*, vol. 14, 1974, no. 1, pp. 43-56) of a system of name-exchange governing contacts between the Panaré and the Venezuelans (probably, modified, also between the Panaré and other aborigines), but this is not elaborated upon in this 'ethnography'. How Panaré 'culture' deals with 'nature' (socio-economic adaptations) and 'supernature' (religion) remains a mystery.

In summary, it may be stated that, after reading Dumont's *work*, one does not know how the Panaré 'think'. Neither does one have an ethnography of the Panaré. One has, rather, a single man's appreciation of what Panaré thought means to him. It may be argued that, were one to go from the empirical (or observed behavior) to the general rules ('models') that Dumont seeks, equal subjective gratification (appreciations of Panaré thought) would have been possible. One can not, however, derive empirical data from a subjective evaluation of Panaré thought (however well diagrammed). Social processes largely remain unknown after 166 pages of insights, inspirations, and revelations.

Dumont's unhappy loss of valuable data (p. 5) may have hampered a full ethnography, but his return for two months in 1970 (*loc. cit.*) should have allowed him to recoup a lot of information about a people who (caught in the middle of a diamond rush) is near cultural extinction if not outright genocide.

—ALFREDO E. FIGUEREDO