THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CUBA.

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On page 244 of The Archaeologist for September, the editor very appropriately directs attention to the archaeology of Cuba, and conveys an inquiry as to what already has been accomplished in that line by the educated inhabitants of the island, or travelers.

It is certainly timely to give a brief review of their labors and results, and this I shall attempt, without, however, aiming at completeness.

The earliest special article on the subject with which I am acquainted is that of Senor Andres Poey, of Havana. He was a member of the American Ethnological Society, and in 1855 read before it a paper entitled "Cuban Antiquities; a Brief Description of Some Relics Found in the Island of Cuba."

The article was not printed in English, so far as I know, but a Spanish rendering was published in the Revista de la Habana, Tome IV, 1855. In this paper, Poey remarks on the scarcity of relics in Cuba, and figures four stone images found there, and attributed to the aboriginal inhabitants. All four represent rudely some sort of anthropoid, or man-like animal, and as monkeys were not found in Cuba, Poey concludes that they were brought there from the continent.

In March, 1862, Jesus Q. Garcia agreed to write a communication for the American Ethnological Society on the antiquities of Cuba (Bulletin of Proceedings, p. 14); but I find no further account of it in the records of the society. Garcia was the editor of the Revista de la Habana, and was interested in archaeology. In one of its numbers he gives an illustration of what is called a duchi, which is the common term in Cuba for the figures of stone or clay attributed to the aborigines. This particular duchi was a stone ring, with eyes and ears of gold, and was supposed to be the seat or throne of a chief, but probably was a stone collar.

Another writer is Don Francisco Pi y Margall. In his Historia General de America, published at Barcelona in 1880, he figures and describes a number of relics from Cuba; but does not add the precise localities where they were found. Several of them are jars of pottery, without handles, finelyfinished; the others are representations, in stone or pottery, of various objects; a fig (native); a head with large ears and a wide mouth; an arm, and two spheroidal objects which may have been duchis.

In 1881, Nicolas Fort y Roldan published his book Cuba Indigena (Madrid), in which he has a few pages on the archaeology of the island. Apart from quotations, he mentions only arrow points of stone, perforated stones, and semis, or small idols and amulets, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Madrid and in the University of Havana.

In the same year, 1881, the International Congress of Americanists met at Madrid, and one of the questions proposed by it was: "From the archaeological investigations made in the island of Cuba, and from the types of the idols found there, can it be inferred that they were the work of others than the tribes found there at the Discovery?"

To this question Don Miguel Rodriguez-Ferrer prepared a reply, which, with the discussion upon it, occupies forty-five pages of the Compte Rendu of the Congress. His conclusions were partly based on a cranium and skull
found in a cavern, which he figures, and claims to belong to a race different from the known natives; and further on two interesting idols in partly human form, of which also illustrations are given. He believes they must be attributed to some source not Antillean.

So far as the bones were concerned, their value was disputed, and I think successfully, by M. Henri de Saussure; and I may add that a comparison of early sources, such as Oviedo, etc., leaves no reasonable doubt that the duchi were made and used by the natives met by Columbus.

This same writer, Rodriguez-Ferrer, is the author of a book entitled "Naturaleza y Civilización de Cuba," in which he has a chapter with the title, "Archaeological Studies on the Island of Cuba"; but not having seen the volume I do not know its scope.

It should also be noted that in 1885 there was established in Havana an Anthropological Society, which published some numbers of reports; but as I have not met with all of them, I am uncertain whether they contain archaeological material.

When U. S. Commissioner to the Columbian Exposition at Madrid in 1892 I was disappointed to find that in the exhibit from Cuba there were no archaeological specimens whatever, and I noted this unfortunate omission in my official report (p. 43, Washington, 1895). Nor do I remember that any were displayed by the Archaeological Museum at Madrid, although some specimens could surely be discovered in its roomy installation.

It is unfortunate that the precise provenance of the specimens which have been described is so indefinite. Those reported upon by Garcia appear to have been obtained near Bayamo in the province of Santiago; and it is noteworthy that it was on the north shore of this province, near Manicaras, that the first explorers, in 1492, said that they found figures of animals, carved from a single piece of stone, in a sitting position, with arms, short legs, and a tail, the eyes and ears of gold (Fort y Roldan, p. 82).

Another interesting locality, mentioned by Ferrer, is along the river Cuyaguatege, which is in the province of Pinar del Rio, and on the south of the island. This stream flows between lofty and broken banks in which are caves, where the aborigines interred their dead. The full examination of these would be doubtless of importance. Similar sepulchral grottoes have been found along the river Maya, about twenty miles from Baracoa. Some of the human remains and relics from these sites have been figured and described by Sr. Felipe Poev in his work entitled, Repertorio físico-natural de la Isla de Cuba, published about 1870.

One of the objects found by Ferrer and presented by him to the Museum of the University of Havana (where it yet should be) was a statue three feet high, of black marble, representing the upper portion of a human figure, the face bearing a mild expression. This also was found among the mountains of the province of Santiago.

As for earthworks, Ferrer refers to two localities, in the eastern part of Santiago province, the one known as "Pueblo Viejo," the other as "La gran tierra de Maya," where there are circles, squares, mounds and enclosures, which, he says, resemble in general character, those of the Mississippi valley. They are described in his work on Cuba above named (Vol. I, chap. III). (This Maya is not a Yucatecan but an Arawack word.)

I have also learned of a locality, which I will not now further speciify, in central Cuba, a river valley, along which, from time to time, one meets grim faces, carved from the natural rock, and sometimes monolithic statues, the work of the aborigines and believed to represent the guardian spirits of the river. This locality I hope to have visited by a competent person this winter.
Ferrer further mentions some ossuaries or interments near the Bay of Santa Maria Casimba, on the southern coast of the province of Puerto Príncipe, at a place called Los Caneyes. These were noted as early as 1843, and some unsatisfactory reports made about them; but Ferrer himself seems unable to have reached the locality.

The local archaeologist who has been the most active of recent years is Dr. Montane, whose residence is in Havana. Five years ago he had investigated the contents of 150 caverns, mostly in the province of Santiago, and had a list of 250 more for further examination! He is a graduate of the Paris School of Anthropology, and announced in 1893 the publication of a full description of his archaeological work, with maps and illustrations. I have not learned that he carried out this laudable intention.

One of his finds in the caves was a nephrite axe, or rather celt, seven and a half inches long, symmetrical and beautifully finished. It was shown to the Berlin Anthropological Society, and was acknowledged to be the finest object of the kind from America the members had seen (see the Verhandlungen of the Society for October 28, 1893). This was exhumed in the extreme east of the island, where there are many caves near the shore and looking seaward. These are particularly rich in pottery, bones and stone implements.

More successful attention has been paid by Cuban writers to preserving the linguistic than the archaeological remains of the native inhabitants. The standard work on this branch is that of Esteban Pichardo, entitled Diccionario Procinial de voces Cubanas. It has passed through several editions, my copy being of the third (Havana, 1862). The author diligently collected all the peculiar and local terms, embracing very many which had been derived from the natives before their extinction. Another list is contained in the work of Fort y Roldan, above quoted.

These sources, together with the words and terms preserved by the first explorers, enable us to ascertain beyond doubt the linguistic affinities of the native inhabitants at the time of the conquest. There is no question but that the whole island was occupied by one stock, and this a branch of the great Arawack family of South America. This family can be traced in an uninterrupted series of related dialects from the banks of the river Paraguay to the Bahama islands. There were no Caribs in Cuba and none of the Maya stock, though both these stems were known to the Cubans through expeditions of war or commerce.

No trace of the Arawack linguistic stock has been discovered in North America, and the "Antillean art" discerned in the Gulf States by Professor W. H. Holmes, as well as the traces of Southern affiliation in the art of the Floridian "Key-dwellers," exhibited by Mr. F. H. Cushing, are recent introductions and not more than could have been conveyed by the slight trade connections which we know existed between the Cubans and the Chal-ta-Muskoki of the Floridian peninsula, at and for generations after the voyage of Columbus.

The identity of the primitive language of Cuba with the Arawack was first shown, I think, by myself, in an article in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society for 1871, in which a considerable number of Cuban words are identified as of that stock.

This was, at that time, a needed demonstration, as the opinions were currently entertained that the natives spoke some dialect of the Tupi stock (of Brazil), of the Maya, or of the tongue of the Canary islands. These notions were set forth in a work by Antonio Bachiller y Morales, entitled Cuba Primitiva. The announcement of it, which is before me, dated "Havana, 1881," states that it will discuss the antiquities of the island, and the traditions and languages of its early inhabitants. Whether it was published or not, I have not
learned. The same author had published a volume as far back as 1845, entitled *Antiguiedades Americanas*, but from the notices I have seen of it, I doubt if it is occupied with the archaeology of Cuba.

The ancient craniology of Cuba has been the subject of active debate. A number of skulls from the caves show artificial deformity. In the *Thesaurus Craniorum* of J. Barnard Davis will be found the description of six such, exhumed in a grotto near Puerto Plata by Colonel J. L. Heneken. Others were obtained by M. Ferrer in 1847, and sent to the University of Havana. The discussion as to whether they were the crania of Caribs or of the native islanders is briefly, but sufficiently, summed up in Professor Virchow’s *Crania Americana*, pp. 18, 19. He reaches the unquestionably correct opinion that there is ample evidence to show the custom of artificially modeling the head prevailed widely through the island. Dr. Montane, however, asserts that there are yet living near Baracoa a few families descended from the native inhabitants who still have the same peculiar form of skull as shown by the skeletons in the caves. His note is in the *Verhandlungen* of the Berlin Anthropological Society, June 16, 1894.

A few words about the natives: The island was well populated, and divided into a number of tribal areas, the names and locations of which have been preserved. Their villages consisted of ten or a dozen communal houses, built of perishable material. Stone structures are not mentioned. The natives were medium stature, with narrow noses and large eyes. Artificial deformation of the cranium is distinctly mentioned.

They were skillful boatsmen, and there is ample evidence that their trading voyages extended to Yucatan, whence they brought wax and woven goods; to the Bahamas, and to Florida, whence it is likely they obtained the gold which they had in small quantities.

The Conquest of Cuba occurred in 1514. In 1532 the first official census of the Indians took place. They then numbered only 4,500. Their destruction had been rapid, and they often killed themselves in groups of twenty or thirty at a time to escape capture and slavery. A few of their descendants, of mixed blood, are said to have survived until this century.

These hints about the archaeology of Cuba could be extended. I have seen references to articles upon various ancient remains in the *Memorias de la Sociedad Economica de la Habana*, and by an energetic collector, Sr. Francisco Jimeno, in the *Revista de Cuba*. But these publications are not within my reach.

What I have said will be sufficient to show that the subject has not been wholly neglected by intelligent Cubans, although it is true that there has been little serious investigation of the remains. The most promising localities for research would seem to be the extreme eastern and western provinces, Santiago and Pinar del Rio. In the caves of the latter we should, if anywhere, find traces of the Mayan culture, as it was from natives of that district that the Spaniards first heard vague rumors of the grandeurs of Mayan and Aztecan civilization.

Media, Pa.