

2014

## Caribbean Heritage

Konrad A. Antczak  
*College of William and Mary*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/aspubs>

---

### Recommended Citation

Antczak, Konrad A., Caribbean Heritage (2014).  
10.1163/22134360-08803060

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Arts and Sciences at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Arts & Sciences Articles by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@wm.edu](mailto:scholarworks@wm.edu).

**Basil A. Reid (ed.)**

*Caribbean Heritage*. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2012. x + 394 pp.  
(Paper US\$ 40.00)

*Caribbean Heritage* promises a multidisciplinary contribution that exposes through twenty-five essays the diverse contemporary perspectives on Caribbean heritage. It probes the rich range of heritage, from cultural to natural and tangible to intangible, in the Anglophone Caribbean, principally the two-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The topics covered include, among others, symbolism, literature, linguistics, pedagogy, philanthropy, natural history, ethnobotany, land tenure, townscapes, archaeology, and museology. Patrick Bryan and Basil Reid introduce the collection by voicing dissatisfaction with the common definitions of heritage and proposing a less neutral, more inclusive one that unlocks the rich plurality of the concept.

Part I, "Intangible Heritage," begins with "Anansi: An African Legacy Bridging Time, Spaces and Spirits," in which Claudius Fergus critically analyzes the cultural resilience of Anansi, the Ashanti spider god and trickster figure in the Creole lexicons and stories of the African diaspora in the Caribbean. The multivocality and embrace of multiple perspectives endorsed in the volume informs Béatrice Boufoy-Bastick's call for a postmodernist view of Caribbean heritage. Identifying and managing heritage is a contested and complex process that requires the involvement of different ethnic and religious groups, as Bridget Brereton makes clear in detailing the case of the highest national award in Trinidad and Tobago, the Trinity Cross, and the way it reflects ideas about heritage and nationalism in a multicultural and multireligious Caribbean context. In "The Politics of Perspective: Counter-Discourse and Popular Romance within the Caribbean," Karen Sanderson-Cole treats the subject of counter-discourse in historic/popular romance in the Caribbean, showing specifically how Valerie Belgrave's *Ti Marie* contributes to a new Caribbean consciousness. The following two essays, one by Susan Herbert and another by Ian E. Robertson and Beverly-Anne Carter, discuss a culturally relevant pedagogy in which bridges can be built between traditional and contemporary scientific epistemologies in the classroom and traditional proverbs can be adopted in the educational system. In "Caribbean Languages and Caribbean Linguistics," Jo-Anne S. Ferreira provides an overview of the rich linguistic panorama in the Caribbean, discussing the dangers it faces and actions taken to ensure its preservation. Essays by Gerard H. Rogers and Lorraine M. Nero then discuss the heritage preservation and dissemination efforts of the Alma Jordan Library of the University of West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, in Trinidad and Tobago and examine postcard images of Trinidad and Tobago held in this library,

highlighting their heritage value as windows onto the social and cultural history of these islands.

Part II, "Philanthropy" includes just two essays. Inette Cambridge analyzes the important legacy of philanthropist Audrey Lane Jeffers, and Margaret D. Rouse-Jones and Estelle M. Appiah examine the case of reverse migration of Dominica native George James Christian to the Gold Coast, arguing for his importance to nation building in the Caribbean. In Part III, "The Natural Environment and Plant Uses," Judith Gobin discusses the sea as common Caribbean heritage; Courtenay Rooks and Gregor Barclay present an overview of the natural history of Trinidad and Tobago; Gregor Barclay discusses the medicinal plants of these islands; and Laura B. Roberts-Nkrumah examines Caribbean food plants, an often neglected heritage. In Part IV, "Land Tenure and Built Heritage," Charisse Griffith-Charles and Sunil Laloo discuss the "family land" form of land tenure as a valuable part of Caribbean heritage that deserves attention and preservation efforts. Elizabeth Pigou-Dennis examines extant images of Jamaican Port Antonio's past and the evolution of its townscape, offering interpretations of the way these serve particular agendas with respect to colonization, creolization, and collective memory. In a more pragmatic contribution, Brent Wilson exposes the urgency of addressing precarious cracks in the structure of Brimstone Hill Fortress, St. Kitts. The often overlooked and underappreciated industrial heritage of the Caribbean is explored by Allison C.B. Dolland and Clement K. Sankat.

In Part V, "Archaeology and Museology," Margaret E. Leshikar-Denton and Della A. Scott-Ireton focus on the various exemplary maritime heritage management strategies employed in the Cayman Islands. Andrea Richards offers a concise assessment of Jamaica's movable cultural heritage and a proposal for how to regulate it. The final two essays, one by Alissandra Cummins and one by Kevin Farmer and Alissandra Cummins, discuss the colonial origins and commercial and political overtones of museums in the Caribbean and the role of independence and postindependence era museums in decolonization and the forging of a new Caribbean nationalism and national identities.

Taken together, this volume's essays suggest that heritage can be considered virtually limitless. They range broadly in scope, from overviews such as those by Rooks and Barclay, Ferreira, and Robertson and Carter, to more analytical contributions involving fresh research such as those by Sanderson-Cole, Herbert, and Pigou-Dennis, among others. This aspect reflects the integration of various visions of heritage, from the regional to the local, from the general to the specific, and from informative texts to the more scientifically detailed, offering a balanced view of both extremes of heritage study and the shades of grey in between. The collection is a valuable contribution to the study of Caribbean

heritage of the Anglophone islands, underlining the social importance and cultural value of heritage within its specific sociocultural contexts as well as its broader Caribbean setting. Written in a style that will both satisfy academic readers and appeal to the lay public, it provides people from the Anglophone Caribbean and beyond a published testimony to the diversity of their rich heritage.

*Konrad A. Antczak*

Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary

Williamsburg VA 23187, U.S.A.

*kaantczak@email.wm.edu*