



José Antonio Caro Alvarez
1910-1978

A Memoir

By Alfredo E. Figueredo

José Antonio Caro Alvarez was born in the noble city of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic, on the 7th of June, 1910. He graduated as an architect from the Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture, Paris, in 1934. Caro was one of the many Dominicans whose interest in archaeology was stimulated by Emile de Boyrie Moya and René Herrera Fritot.

His career as an architect was long and productive. He planned the campus of the University of Santo Domingo, and the building of the National Library of the Dominican Republic. He found time for teaching, and was a Professor at the Faculty of Exact Sciences of the University of Santo Domingo since 1939. Appointed Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture in 1958, he became Rector of the University in 1961, being in fact the successful promoter of autonomy.

Caro's private archaeological collection has been referred to in the literature since the early 1950's, as a valuable asset to the profession. His closeness to government (he held positions of cabinet rank) gave him the opportunity to conceive and carry through to completion a projected Dominican Museum of Man, which opened its doors to the public in 1973. Caro designed the building and became the first Director.

Under Caro, the beautiful building eventually housed one of the most valuable collections of Dominican archaeology and ethnography anywhere.

The Museum became a thriving institution, inaugurating research inside and outside the country, and publishing a *Boletín* which has now grown to the status of a major regional journal. Archaeologists from all over the Caribbean visit the Museum for instruction, and a list of its staff would be a veritable *Who's Who* of Dominican anthropology.

The great man died of a cerebral haemorrhage on the 11th of February. In a move that did credit to his wisdom and intelligence, President Joaquín Balaguer appointed to succeed his late friend of many years, the energetic and talented Bernardo Vega de Boyrie. In a short time, he has become a worthy successor to a directors' Director, and the Dominican Republic has just cause to be proud of both, and satisfied that chief executives who know how to govern have governed indeed!

Caro left us a major Museum (born out of his hands and mind), and an exemplary life: ever the very soul of patriotism, modesty, kindness, and courage. We shall miss him dearly!

Archaeological Bibliography

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- 1973a La Isabela. *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano*, no. 3, pp. 48-52. Santo Domingo. [21.1 cm.]
- 1973b Estado General de las Poblaciones de la Isla Española de Santo Domingo, con el Número de su Vecindad, a Fines de 1769 y el que en el de 1782 le Regula el Racionero Don José Sánchez Valverde. *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano*, no. 3, pp. 327-331. Santo Domingo. [21.1 cm.]
- 1975 *Cemíes*. {private and limited edition which I have not seen}
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- n.d. *Cemíes y Trigonolitos*. Santo Domingo. (40) p. {it was published in 1977} [21.8 cm.]
- n.d. *La Coboba*. Santo Domingo. (32) p. [+ plate] {it was published in 1977} [21.8 cm.]