

and Grafstein should be to make the work more easily accessible to those outside of academic circles.

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Ball Courts and Ceremonial Plazas in the West Indies. *Ricardo E. Alegria*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology Number 79. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Department of Anthropology, 1983. ix + 185 pp. \$12.50 (paper).

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The native American rubber ball game played on a clay or masonry court was a well-defined institution in Middle America. Kirchoff's 1943 listing of traits defining Mesoamerica makes clear reference to this game. As much as any other prehispanic architectural or artifactual accomplishment, the form and function of the ball court allows comparison of past societies through one comparable analytical unit. With Ricardo Alegria's book, a major piece of what can be considered Greater Mesoamerica has now been set in place.

Alegria's monograph carefully describes the location, architecture, and artifactual association for over a hundred *bateys* or ball game plazas in the Greater Antilles and Virgin Islands. Two introductory chapters review the wealth of ethnohistoric material indicating that the game was played by the Taino Indians on large courts of packed earth, with 20-30 players on a team. The solid rubber ball was acquired locally and volleyed without the use of hands. Chroniclers suggest that spirited wagering and the sacrifice of a human captive sometimes accompanied this event.

Following the introduction, the next five chapters constitute the core of the book and reflect Alegria's collection and reexamination of ball court data since 1949. These chapters are a compendium of archeological site data organized by island group. Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico provide the vast majority of information, and Puerto Rico alone is responsible for 79

accounts. Quadrangular and elliptical courts have been identified, while oval courts were perhaps less suited for the game and better adapted to ceremonial activities such as in *areytos* or dances. Quadrangular courts are the most numerous, and are sometimes enormous. The largest quadrangular court at Pueblo Viejo, Cuba measures 250 meters by 135 meters, and is reported to have an earthen side wall three meters in height. Courts in Puerto Rico are generally smaller than on the other two islands, but their parallel embankments are usually faced by stone slabs. At the important site of Caguana in Puerto Rico, where ten courts have been identified, elongated upright stones rise 2.7 meters above the ground. Many of these sites are associated with sidewalks or pavements which sometimes link a court with a stream in immediate proximity.

Ball courts are associated with petroglyphs, and some of the best anthropomorphs in the Antilles are depicted at Plaza A at Caguana. Dateable ceramics from the few well-excavated courts are sparse. Alegria suggests that the earliest courts date to the seventh century, with the game enjoying increased popularity until the conquest.

The final chapters of this book examine the ball game in a broad regional context and review the literature from South America, Mesoamerica, and the American Southwest. Little that is new is found in this synthesis, and the chapter on the American Southwest is less thorough than the others. After Stern (1948), a South American origin for the game is presented.

Alegria takes a conservative stand in the manipulation of collected data. Although an attempt is made to compare court size with geographic area in Puerto Rico, no clear interpretation of these data follows. We might ask: How do sites without ball courts differ from those with ball courts? What is the relationship between mountain sites and coastal communities? We are told that sugar cane activities have destroyed coastal sites in Puerto Rico, but many coastal sites in Cuba are reported. Political organization is seldom alluded to, and the anthropomorphic petroglyphs might provide a key. By Late Formative times at Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico, petroglyphs suggest a confederation of local chiefdoms and the glorification of human sacrifice. Clearly there are differences between sites, but a site as complex as Caguana in Puerto Rico warrants greater interpretive insight.

Alegria has provided a well-written and thorough compilation of the ball game in the Antilles. Although this study lacks broad interpretive statements about the effect of the ball game on political and economic life, Alegria's work is careful and will be a major reference for both the Antilles and any examination of the native American ball game.

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Sledy Vremjon Minuvshih (*The Traces of Times Passed*). A. I. Popov. Leningrad: Nauka Publishing House, 1981. 206 pp. 0,45 rubles. ISBN 8833.

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A new collection of A.I. Popov's toponymic investigations and ideas has emerged in the form of a book published some eight years after his death in 1973. The book is devoted to the history of the geographical names of the Lake Region of the northwestern part of the U.S.S.R. (i.e., the combined regions of Leningrad, Novgorod, and Pskov). Popov was widely respected for his advanced training, research, and teaching in history, philosophy, mathematics, and Finno-Ugric studies. Much of his prodigious energy was devoted to the study of geographical names and their origins, a specialty which employed his vast knowledge of Russian dialects, Finno-Ugric, and other languages. His book is a pleasure to read, with a splendid literary style which allows its seven chapters (206 pages) to be read in one sitting. There is a foreword by the editor, Professor F. P. Filin, an outstanding specialist in Russian language and history who finds the only drawback in the book to be Popov's discussion of the name "Pskov." Popov has written a second foreword, wherein he gives a short outline of the book and explains his methodology for describing and analyzing such vague geographical names as "Pskov" (pp. 8-14).

Popov's introduction to the book (pp. 15-27) describes and analyzes main features of the history of the Lake Region of the U.S.S.R. and the reflections of this history in geographical names. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Lake Region was inhabited by old Estonian or "Chudj" tribes who spoke old Est (old Estonian), by Vodj tribes whose language was close to old Est, by Izhora tribes whose language was close to Karelian, and by Vesj people (old Veps). There were also Slavonic-speaking Krivich tribes, one branch of whom were Slovens. In the ninth century, a tribal union occurred between Slavonic and Balto-Finnic tribes in this territory. Later, this union became the Novgorod Republic which lasted for