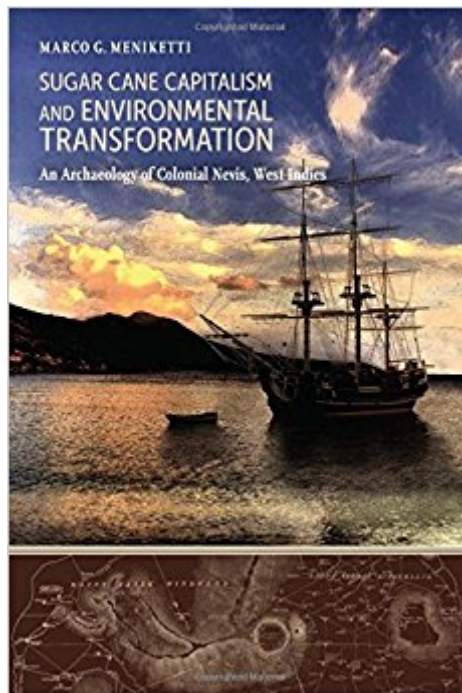




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Sugar Cane Capitalism And Environmental Transformation: An Archaeology Of Colonial Nevis, West Indies (Caribbean Archaeology And Ethnohistory)



Synopsis

In this deeply researched and multifaceted study, Marco G. Meniketti demonstrates how the landscape of the small Caribbean island of Nevis preserves and reveals artifacts and evidence of the highly complex and interrelated seventeenth- to nineteenth-century “Atlantic Economy,” comprising early capitalist sugar production, the African slave trade, and European settlement. *Sugar Cane Capitalism and Environmental Transformation* is based on twelve seasons of meticulous archaeological field work and documentary research. Although Nevis was once a bustling hub of the British colonial project, the emigration of emancipated slaves and abandonment by European planters left large swathes of Nevis vacant. Reclaimed by forests and undisturbed by later waves of economic development, the island is dotted with fascinating ruins, debris from the sugar industry, windmills, chimneys, and multistoried great houses provided Meniketti with an ideal subject for archaeological inquiry. Through intensive archaeological and landscape surveys of multiple key plantation sites, Meniketti traces the development of Nevis from its initial European settlement in 1627 to its central role as a British mercantile hub and a laboratory and prototype of capitalist sugar cultivation. His nuanced analysis explains the backdrop of European political and economic rivalries, of which the colonial agro-industrial enterprises were the physical manifestations, and makes telling comparisons with Dutch and French archaeological sites. The work also compares and contrasts the adoption of capitalist modes of sugar production and socialization at wealthy and middling plantation sites. *Sugar Cane Capitalism and Environmental Transformation* offers a vital case study of one island whose environment and archaeological record illuminates the complex webs of Atlantic history.

Book Information

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“Sugar Cane Capitalism and Environmental Transformation is a long-overdue and highly welcomed addition to the existing body of literature on Caribbean historical archaeology. The work provides the specific case study of Nevis within the context of the region, integrating well the existing body of literature in British initiatives in the Eastern Caribbean plantocracy. The book is also one of the very few to address the environmental impact of cane agriculture on the landscape. Meniketti’s study makes a highly significant and original contribution, as it marks an important shift in current approaches to the historical archaeology of plantations in the Caribbean region.”

—Georgia L. Fox, author of *The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco*

“There is a fair amount of scholarship dealing with the colonial Caribbean as a laboratory of capitalistic enterprise, but Meniketti’s study uniquely connects these views to the archaeological record of an individual island. This book will assume an important benchmark for comparative studies done elsewhere.”

—Gerald F. Schroedl, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Marco G. Meniketti is an associate professor of anthropology at San Jose State University and the director of the Institute for Advanced Interdisciplinary Caribbean Studies.

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