

## ***ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARIBBEAN ARCHAEOLOGY***

Edited by Basil A. Reid, and R. Grant Gilmore III (2013). University Press of Florida, Gainesville. ISBN

Reviewed by

*Carmen A. Laguer Díaz*  
*Department of Anthropology*  
*University of Florida*  
*Gainesville, FL 32611*  
[c.laguer@ufl.edu](mailto:c.laguer@ufl.edu)

The Caribbean is a varied and complex region that has garnered the attention of researchers with a wider array of interests and perspectives. This complexity should put into perspective a project as ambitious as this one. Basil A. Reid and R. Grant Gilmore III took it upon themselves to accomplish this task, rather successfully. Both editors acknowledge the great amount of research that is coming out of the Caribbean and recognize that there is a need for a resource that can make it easily accessible for other Caribbeanists as well as the general public.

As a start, the volume provides a general introduction to Caribbean archaeology which covers the geographical and temporal extent of what has been covered in academic research. The introductory portion is a great tool to help refresh the basic framework of Caribbean archaeology, but it also provides information on the path that the research is currently taking. In other words, the volume respectfully commemorates the past, while attempting to leave behind misconceptions so the present and future research is at the forefront.

The encyclopedia has a total of 84 contributors, including the editors. The contributors varies from established Caribbeanists like Douglas Armstrong, L. Antonio Curet, Kathleen Deagan, Jay Haviser, Corinne Hofman, Lennox Honeychurch, Peter E. Siegel and Samuel M. Wilson, but it also encourages the participation of a newer generation of archaeologists like Lesley-Gail Atkinson, Mark Donop, Jeremiah Kaplan, María A. Nieves-Colón and Joshua Torres. Each contributor engages in their own research or regional interests making this volume as inclusive as possible.

The volume covers 174 entries that are grouped alphabetically, but there are some obvious general trends in their thematic grouping. These thematic groupings are not necessarily that of the editors, but are easily observed. Some of the entries are terms better explained as concepts that have framed archaeological and ethnographic research, like “Columbus’ Landfall” by Jeffrey P. Blick, or “Archaeological Heritage Management” by Peter E. Siegel. There are also specific vocabulary words that are important in the research like “*Duhos (Dujos)*” by Joshua M.

Torres, and “Guano” by Kevin Farmer. Other entries include names of organizations and institutions that have had an impact on Caribbean archaeology like “The International Association for Caribbean Archaeology (IACA)” by Basil A. Reid and Alissandra Cummins, “The Florida Museum of Natural History” by Elise V. LeCompte and Gifford J. Waters, and “The Jamaica National Heritage Trust” by Andrea Richards. Most of the entries, however, fall in specific archaeological themes.

The archaeological themes include methods, cultural groups and periods, island-specific information, types of artifacts and sites, and biographies. Entries related to methods include “Archaeometry” by Corinne L. Hofman, and “DNA and Caribbean Archaeology” by María A. Nieves-Colón. Discussions on “Arawak versus Taíno” and “Ciboney versus Guanahatabey”, both by Basil A. Reid, challenge misconceptions as well as provide new evidence for (or against) these labels. Similarly, discussions on “The Casimiroid” by Alexandra Sajo, and “The Chican Ostionoid Subseries” by L. Antonio Curet enlighten the readers on similar issues. Nonetheless entries like the two previously mentioned do not thrive on the compare and contrast and focus on the current notions of these labels. Island-specific information includes overviews on the archaeology of some of these islands, like the entry for “The Cayman Islands” by Peter L. Drewett and “Grenada” by Scott M. Fitzpatrick, others focus on specific sites well known from these islands like “The Cabrits Garrison (Portsmouth, Dominica)” by Zachary J.

Beier and “La Isabela” by José G. Guerrero. Other entries like “Griddles” by Mark C. Donop, “Dutch Colonial Ceramic types” by R. Grant Gilmore III focus on types of materials commonly found in the Caribbean and their significance as objects of study. Finally, the encyclopedia is enriched with the biographies of renowned figures in entries like “Cruxent, José María (1911-2005)” by Kathleen Deagan, “Bullen, Ripley (1902-1976), and Adelaide Bullen (1908-1987)” by George M. Luer, and “Petersen, James B. (1954-2005)” by John G. Crock.

It must be noted that the volume’s strength is actually in its self-referential nature, and complementary information: bibliography, images, maps, and graphs that will allow the reader to do further reading, if they so desire, as well as to visualize the information properly. In addition, the glossary at the end of the volume will help anyone to properly consume the information provided. These aspects prove that the encyclopedia serves not only as a tool for Caribbeanists who want quick access to information, but it can also be of great interest to the general public.

The Encyclopedia of Caribbean Archaeology is, as previously mentioned, an ambitious project. Basil A. Reid and R. Grant Gilmore III, with the help of 82 other contributors, were able to bring a valuable resource to the archaeologically and Caribbean inclined. The project, for obvious reasons, is not as exhaustive as one would think, but it is still able to be thorough and inclusive to the theoretical and methodological approaches in the Caribbean.

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