Karen F. Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest: Indian Fight, Flight, and Cultural Transformation in Hispaniola and Puerto Rico*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017. xiv + 258 pp. (Cloth US\$64.95)

The arrival of Columbus remains one of the central themes in Caribbean history. This event and the subsequent imposition of colonial rule, however, have masked a chapter always seen as secondary: that of the indigenous peoples who lived and suffered through these events. These people not only were changed, but also devised ways of confronting the conquerors and colonization, surviving in the new environment and persisting in spite of the demographic disaster to influence our present moment. These are the arguments developed by Karen Anderson Córdova in *Surviving Spanish Conquest* in a brilliant and new reading of the impact of the colonizing experience.

The book is based on her 1990 Yale University Ph.D. dissertation but incorporates new material and expands on the ideas and perspectives of the original. Her anthropological approach to the conquest and colonization of the insular Caribbean focuses primarily on Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, two key islands because they were the first to suffer under the Spaniards and because they functioned both as centers for the sociocultural development of the indigenous peoples of the Antilles and as centers from which networks developed that connected the various islands.

The book is organized in six chapters, with two appendices about indigenous mobility and the traffic in indigenous slaves—themes that have received little attention elsewhere. It analyzes the societies that the Europeans found, focusing particularly on their sociopolitical profile and cultural variability. In addition, it examines the processes of contact and the strategies of domination and labor management of the indigenous population, especially by means of the *encomienda* and the enslavement of the Indians. The specificities of each island are taken into account and enter into the final axis of analysis, which is the issue of indigenous mobility. This is considered in terms of both autonomous mobility and development as a response to the pressures of conquest, often using pre-Columbian systems and connections, such as the one related to the forced migration generated by the Spaniards, mainly through the slave trade. Mobility affected indigenous demography, transformed populations and social networks, and mixed ethnicities, lending specific characteristics to the interaction between Europeans and indigenous people operating in a cultural universe.

Anderson-Córdova uses the concept of cultural transformation to analyze her data and the processes it deals with because of its integrating nature. It is not clear, however, to what extent this approach can be more effective than more familiar concepts, such as ethnogenesis, transculturation, or cre-

olization, when dealing with issues such as the emergence of new ethnicities, which are often associated not only with cultural transformation but also with biological mixture. Equally problematic is the use of the term cultural contact to talk about interactions developed in a fully colonial environment. The text addresses a repeated plea for Caribbean research to strengthen the links between ethnohistory and archeology in order to better understand changes in indigenous societies. It does not go so far as to compare or contrast information or analysis provided by the different disciplines, although in terms of Caribbean research its analysis provides a somewhat useful solution.

Research on the mobility of the indigenous population is popular in precolonial archeology but rarely considered after the Spanish invasion. In this book the discussion of the subject is revitalized, and central space is given to the question of indigenous slavery, a problem that is still insufficiently treated in the region, particularly from an archaeological point of view. Indigenous postures in the face of Spanish pressure varied according to the stages of colonial advancement, the social and labor status of the individuals, their ethnic origin, and more. The importation of slaves from other regions makes the analysis more complex because their life circumstances, as well as their reactions to Spanish domination, were different in many ways from those of local indigenous people. On the other hand, this is a vital issue because demographically they will replace the original population and become pre-eminent, as the colonial world matures.

This is a well-informed, creative, and inspiring book for anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists, as well as for the general public. Regarding this last aspect, it is necessary to observe how the theme of human and cultural diversity generated by the entry of indigenous people from other areas relates to the persistence of populations and the contemporary indigenous legacy. This is a matter to consider not only for those who claim a connection with this past but for all those who seek a comprehensive and integral understanding of the history of the Antilles.

Roberto Valcárcel Rojas

Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC), Santo Domingo

rv.rojas68@yahoo.es