Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, *Tainos and Caribs: The Aboriginal Cultures of the Antilles*. San Juan: Editorial Punto y Coma, 2019. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

This English translation of Sebastián Robiou Lamarche's *Táinos y Caribes: Las cultural aborígenes antillanas* (2003) provides a synthetic overview of precontact societies of the Antilles based on ethnohistoric and archeological evidence. Its publication some 16 years after the original Spanish text is testimony to its popularity and utility as a primer on indigenous societies of the region. The book contains two forewords—one by Ricardo Alegría from the original Spanish edition, and one by Antonio Curet for the English edition. Both contextualize the volume within contemporary archaeological and historical research of the region, with Alegría's offering a nuanced and eloquent narrative of the historical genealogy supporting and leading to the development of the book.

This overview of the development and organization of precontact cultures of the Caribbean, broadly defined, consists of 17 chapters in nine parts, organized by Taíno and Carib cultures in the Greater and Lesser Antilles, respectively. Each part of the book represents an area of broad topical focus (for example, "Tainos: Mythology and Cosmology") and is divided into subtopics (for example, "Space and Social Structure") that detail current historical, anthropological, and archaeological evidence. The first 10 chapters focus on cultural organization and development of the Taíno in the Greater Antilles, while Chapters 11 through 15 discuss the Carib culture of the Lesser Antilles. The final part of the book (Chapters 17 and 18) serves as a sort of epilogue, bringing the discussion of the indigenous history into the modern colonial era and underscoring the important link that indigenous history and remnant cultural practices serve in the creation of modern national identities in the region. With over 80 illustrations, tables, and maps, the volume provides ample supporting documentation and graphics to keep readers engaged and amazed at the complexity of these precolonial societies.

One of the more useful aspects of *Tainos and Caribs* is its arrangement by topical categories rather than a temporally linear perspective of social and cultural developmental traits. This allows readers to quickly reference and engage in those topics that are of interest. While the book benefits from its succinct and detailed treatment of topics, the brevity of these sections sometimes homogenizes the complexity and variability of perspectives and cultural diversity within each cultural area. It would have benefited from more updated in-text citations, or footnotes, to direct inquisitive or academically-minded readers to contemporary sources.

The sections on mythology, symbolism, and astronomy, which occupy a significant portion of the book, offer an interesting glimpse into the world view

of these past peoples. While thoroughly researched and discussed, the conclusions tend to be speculative and should be regarded with some level of scrutiny. The Table of Contents does not list the figures, and some of the figures and plates lack captions or bibliographic citation. In an effort to modernize the book Lamarche has inserted brief reference to some of the more influential academic research on the region from the past decade (for example, by Reniel Rodríguez Ramos and Alice V. Samson). These additions seem like a limited effort to reify the contemporaneity of the existing volume, and end up becoming a foregone conclusion rather than an opportunity to highlight current research directions.

Overall, *Tainos and Caribs* is an excellent overview of indigenous precontact cultures of the Caribbean. One of its most beneficial aspects is Lamarche's masterful synthesis of the ethnohistoric record and detailed yet succinct discussion of central topics. Despite the lack of modern references, it offers a robust listing of touchstone documents in Caribbean research published in English, Spanish, and French which provides a good picture of the cultural diversity of the modern research arena. The translation by Grace M. Robiou Ramírez de Arellano is well done, capturing the information and spirit of the original volume, and written in a style that makes it accessible without detracting from the academic content. By providing a straightforward perspective on the big topics of the precontact history of the Antilles and inspiration for future research, this volume will continue to serve as a resource for those interested in the rich indigenous history and culture of the region for years to come.

Joshua M. Torres

National Park Service, National Capital Area, Washington DC, U.S.A.

joshua_torres@nps.gov; joshmtorres@gmail.com