John F. Cherry & Krysta Ryzewski, *An Archaeological History of Montserrat in the West Indies*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxbow, 2020. xvii + 189 pp. (Paper US\$40.00)

Throughout the human history of the Caribbean, the variability of island environments has helped shape the socioeconomic trajectories of populations on individual islands. In *An Archaeological History of Montserrat in the West Indies*, the small island's physiography looms large as the backdrop for a case study of one island environment's diverse and unique human history. One of the main protagonists of this well-written and informative book is the Soufrière Hills volcano, which began erupting in 1995 and continues to threaten the island's current inhabitants, who are now forced to live in only a fraction of the tropical island. The year 1995 represents an archaeological time marker, both for the history of archaeological research on the island and for the physical status of the archaeological resources that constitute(d) a significant component of Montserrat's cultural heritage. John Cherry and Krysta Ryzewski illustrate how Montserratians' adaptation during the volcanic era follows a crisis survival instinct repeated throughout the island's history, following major hurricanes and devastating raids by the French and Caribs. Collectively, these experiences have helped define the identity of those who have called Montserrat home and demonstrate their persistence and resilience in the face of adversity.

Cherry and Ryzewski use both their own research and the work of others to construct the island's Amerindian, European, and Afro-Caribbean archaeological history, while also acknowledging the enduring role of the Montserrat National Trust for serving as *the* steward of the island's natural and cultural heritage. The book's accessible and well-illustrated format uses informative sidebar boxes to delve further into important topics such as Amerindian ceramics and the sugar and lime industries, as well as relevant issues such as the naming of Amerindian cultural groups and the difference between indentured servitude and chattel slavery.

The volcanic eruption took a major toll on the island's archaeological heritage, destroying or obscuring premier sites such as the 1500–2500-year-old Amerindian village at Trants and the mid-seventeenth-late nineteenth-century Galways Estate sugar plantation. In the posteruption era, even though access to large parts of the island remain restricted and new deposits have made survey challenging, Cherry and Ryzewski's work and that of their students has filled important gaps in the island's occupational history and demonstrates the benefits of intensive field research and the application of newer technologies such as LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging).

Among the significant sites discussed is Upper Blakes, dating the first human presence to 4,800–4,600 years before present and a rare undated rock art or

“petroglyph” site at Soldier Ghaut. The Indian Creek site and sites such as Valentine Ghaut shed light on important cultural processes on the island, documenting population growth over time, as well as a continued Amerindian presence following the arrival of Europeans.

Cherry and Ryzewski also use a host of newly identified/studied sites to explore life on the island from the colonial era to the present. An impressive array of recently recorded residential, special-purpose, and industrial sites include those described in documentary records, such as at the Weekes and Elbertons estates as well as those only known through archaeological remains, such as mid- to late-nineteenth-century residences and schoolhouse on Potato Hill. Together, these sites provide tangible physical evidence of the daily lives of elites, laborers, and slaves from the arrival of Gaelic Irish, Old English, New English and Africans in the seventeenth century, to the abandonment of homes and businesses in 1995.

An Archaeological History of Montserrat also reflects on the origins of elements that have become closely associated with the island, such as its intriguing reputation as “the Emerald Isle.” Today a week-long celebration of St. Patrick’s Day represents a uniquely Montserratian syncretic tradition honoring some its first European immigrants, a slave uprising planned for St. Patrick’s Day in 1768, and its open-armed approach to tourism. Somehow, through and through, Montserratians remain joyful.

Cherry and Ryzewski maintain an objective tone throughout, avoiding some archaeological controversies that have distracted specialists for decades (for example, arguments over ceramic typology or pre-Columbian sociopolitics) in favor of appealing to a broad audience. They are appropriately critical, however, in the final chapter, which is devoted to heritage management and the way it has often conflicted with Montserrat’s economic redevelopment. This struggle is not unique to Montserrat, but perhaps this attractive book will help save what remains of Montserrat’s impressive archaeological legacy.

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