

The Caribbean before Columbus

Keegan, William F., author

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Abstrak

The Caribbean before Columbus is a new synthesis of the regions insular history on multiple scales: temporal, spatial, local, regional, environmental, social, and political. It combines the results of the authors 55 years of archaeological research with that of their colleagues. For the first time the complete histories of the major islands and island groups are elucidated, and new insights are gained through inter-island comparisons. The concepts of series and ages provide structure, but historical names, such as Taíno and Lucayan, are avoided. The authors challenge the conventional wisdom concerning island colonization, societal organization, interaction and transculturation, and other basic elements of cultural development and change. The emphasis is on elements that unite the Bahamas, Lesser Antilles, and Greater Antilles as a culture area, and also on their divergent pathways. Colonization is presented as a multifaceted wave-like process. Continuing ties to the surrounding mainland are highlighted. Interactions between residents and new colonists are recognized. New solutions are offered to the Huecoid problem, the Carib problem, the Taíno problem, and the evolution of social complexity, especially in Puerto Rico. These solutions required a rethinking of social organization and its expression on the landscape.