Preface

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Mark W. Hauser and I organized and edited this volume as a special issue of the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*. The volume has grown from papers presented at a session on Caribbean Historical Archaeology that we organized for joint meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology and the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology that took place in York, England in January 2005. Since then we solicited papers and organized through a combination of editorial and peer review these papers which introduce a number of new studies on Caribbean Historical Archaeology. While the session was generally about Caribbean Historical Archaeology, as we were listening to our colleagues in York, we realized that most of the papers presented in the session kept coming back to the topic of scale.

In our work, Mark and I have regularly focused on how we can use archaeological research to supply insights into the strategies used by members of local communities to interact with local, regional, and global processes. As Mark and I went through the papers, issues of abstraction, the variability of meaning, and the importance of regionally grounded analysis kept emerging. This was in part a result of similar interests among the various authors, but also due to the influence scholars like Charles Orser, James Delle, Douglas Armstrong, Laurie Wilkie and Paul Farnsworth have had on the field. As will be clear to the reader, while this volume addresses plantation slavery in some contributions, it also recognizes the complexity of local and regional histories by exploring urban archaeology, landscape, and heritage management. In this way, the contributors recognize that while the majority of publications on Caribbean historical archaeology have focused on plantation life (approx 31%), there is a growing body of scholarship that has

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looked beyond the estate grounds to urban (14%), cemetery (13%), and military sites (11%), among others (Schied 2004).

This importance of regionally grounded analysis is also a result, however, of the uneven topography past colonial societies left in the form of documents and archaeologically visible remains. We did not edit this volume to highlight, or even redress some of the major gaps in the archaeological record—that is being done by these and other researchers elsewhere. Rather it is an attempt to explore how to think critically about the effects scale exerts on our understanding of colonial regimes in the Caribbean, in the place where Europe first experimented with modernity.

References

- Schied D (2004) What's happening in the Caribbean: analysis of a bibliographic data set. Paper presented at the Conference of the Society for Historical Archaeology, St. Louis.