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### An Archaeology of Black Markets: Local Ceramics and Economies in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica

Mark W. Hauser

*Northwestern University*, [mark-hauser@northwestern.edu](mailto:mark-hauser@northwestern.edu)

Audrey R. Dawson

*University of South Carolina*, [dawsonar@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:dawsonar@mailbox.sc.edu)

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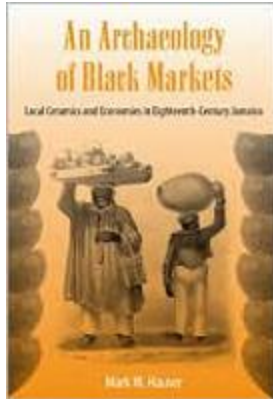
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## **H-NET BOOK REVIEW**

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**Mark W. Hauser. *An Archaeology of Black Markets: Local Ceramics and Economies in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. xxiii + 269 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8130-3261-0.**

**Reviewed for H-Caribbean by Audrey R. Dawson, University of South Carolina**

### ***Moving from "Roots" to "Routes" in the Study of Colono Ware: A Jamaican Example***

**In *An Archaeology of Black Markets: Local Ceramics and Economies in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica*, Mark W. Hauser examines the extent of the internal marketing system of eighteenth-century Jamaica through the distribution of the coarse, low-fired earthenwares known as yabbas. This pottery, he argues, "can be a venue into the cultural experiences of enslaved Jamaicans, the scales of its expression, and the historical forces that shaped it" because it is "a durable expression of the social relations that the enslaved created and operated within" (p. 4). Markets provided venues where enslaved and freed peoples of African descent could "feed themselves, accumulate cash and material wealth" (p. 2). They also provided a social setting where news, gossip, and information were exchanged. To the plantation owners, these markets were, on the one hand, economically beneficial because they provided the enslaved laborers with a way to provision themselves. On the other hand "the markets were loci of resistance, places in which the self was refashioned, and arenas for the emergence of social networks in which communities developed" (p. 2). Hauser's work shifts the conversation away from the debate over the origins of Colono ware in order to examine the social networks created through the internal marketing system in which this ware was traded.**

**Hauser begins chapter 1 with a brief overview of the current theoretical and methodological state of American, and more specifically Caribbean, historical archaeology and its current focus on social "actors" and matters of scale especially in relation to how the larger commodity networks affect communities. He argues that within the Caribbean the African Diaspora needs to be examined**

using concepts of political economy, power, embodiment, and identity. A historical context for Jamaica from its settlement by the Spanish shortly after 1493 through 1840, using these four concepts, makes up the remainder of the chapter. The section dealing with the Jamaican plantation is divided into four parts that specifically correspond to the above-mentioned concepts: The Plantation Economy, The Plantation Colony, The Plantation Community, and The Plantation in Between. Within each part, Hauser provides a review of archaeological literature dealing with the slave regime and the plantations' relationship to larger markets, the physical layout of a plantation, the villages of enslaved laborers, and the spaces used by the enslaved, which were out of view of the plantation owners.

Chapter 2 examines the current literature concerning internal marketing systems and the historical record to examine eighteenth-century markets in Jamaica. Because these markets were informal, the historical record is limited. Some available sources include planter journals, legal documents, and occasional drawings depicting Sunday markets in the larger urban areas. Hauser argues that the internal marketing system was not a single institution. It was a "complex array of interactions that focused around the planter, the merchant, the freeperson, and the enslaved laborers" (p. 41). Similarly, the system did not only involve enslaved peoples of African descent. In Jamaica, the internal marketing system was so entrenched in the social fabric of everyday life by the eighteenth century that "everybody in Jamaica was dependent on the internal economy" (p. 41). Regardless of its expansiveness, the markets were not favored by everyone; planters often viewed them negatively for the disorder they brought into plantation life.

An examination of the sites from which samples of yabbas were collected is provided in chapter 3. The pottery was collected from seven previously excavated sites with eighteenth-century components from both urban and rural contexts. The sites include three sugar plantations (Seville, Drax Hall, and Thetford), a provisioning estate (Juan de BOLLAS), the governor of Jamaica's residence in Spanish Town (Old King's House), and two urban locations from Port Royal (Old Naval Dockyard and Saint Peter's Church). The sites are spread across the island, with two sites (Seville and Drax Hall) located along the north coast, one site (Thetford) situated near the island's center, and the four remaining sites located around Kingston Harbor along the island's south coast. Historic roads and waterways connected the sites.

The following two chapters focus on pottery. Chapter 4 provides a detailed examination of the literature surrounding the coarse earthenwares of the African Diaspora commonly lumped together and referred to as "Colono ware." Often,

research concerning these historic, hand-built wares focuses heavily on questions of ethnic and cultural identity.[1] Hauser argues that by viewing Colono ware "as a localized ceramic material whose production, distribution, and use are affected by the emergent Atlantic economy," the geographical extent of this ware should be extended "to include not only Brazil, the North American colonies, and the Caribbean, but also the settlements and factories located along the West African coast" (p. 97). Extending the geographic distribution of Colono ware shifts the focus away from trying to identify the "identity(ies) of the potters and their antecedents" and onto "issues of political economy, social transformations, and local responses to global colonialism and capitalism" (p. 97). Chapter 5 examines the yabbas in greater detail. Specific vessel forms and types along with information on the frequency of each form through time are presented here. Ethnographic work with a local potter, Marlene Roden, is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 6 discusses the process and results of ceramic petrography and neutron activation analysis of the yabbas from eight archaeological contexts on the seven sites mentioned above (two separate samples were examined from Drax Hall). Samples from Marlene Roden's waster pile were subjected to neutron activation analysis. Ceramic petrography uses a high-powered microscope to identify and count specific minerals in the ceramic paste. Neutron activation analysis determines the types and concentrations of elements in a sample. The results of this analysis show that pottery from the sites on the north coast (Seville and Drax Hall) was most likely made using the same recipe as pottery from the other sites in the center of the island and along the south coast. The results suggest that the coarse utilitarian wares were not produced for home or even local consumption. In fact, some wares traveled great distances, which suggests that the enslaved vendors who sold these wares were incredibly mobile given the constraints placed on them by the plantation economy. This analysis also shows that Marlene Roden's recipe matches that of the eighteenth-century slipped and burnished pieces, suggesting that recipes were passed from one generation to the next.

In the book's epilogue, Hauser summarizes the work by relating the results of the petrographic and chemical analysis back to the movement of enslaved laborers and goods in Jamaica and to the creation of identity among enslaved laborers in the plantation economy. The results in tabular form for the petrographic analysis are presented as appendix A while appendix B presents the technical results from the neutron activation analysis. A comprehensive bibliography completes the book.

**This book is an excellent example of applying petrographic and chemical analysis to coarse earthenwares of the African Diaspora in order to examine the social networks created by enslaved laborers on Jamaica within the larger colonial and capitalist systems. Looking past the idea that Colono ware is an ethnic or cultural marker, Hauser has highlighted the extensive social networks created among the enslaved laborers on Jamaica through the island's internal marketing system. The immense amount of research conducted by the author is evident in the comprehensive bibliography. Overall, this book is a wonderful contribution to Caribbean historical archaeology and would be useful for courses and/or people interested in African Diaspora archaeology, Caribbean archaeology and history, internal marketing systems, and/or case studies in chemical compositional analysis.**

*Note*

**[1]. Examples of historic archaeological research concerning Colono ware as an ethnic or cultural marker include Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); James Deetz, "American Historical Archaeology: Methods and Results," *Scienc* 22 (January 1988): 362-367; and David L. Mouer et al., "Colonoware Pottery, Chesapeake Pipes, and 'Uncritical Assumptions,'" in *'I Too, Am America,' Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, ed. Theresa Singleton (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), among many others.**

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