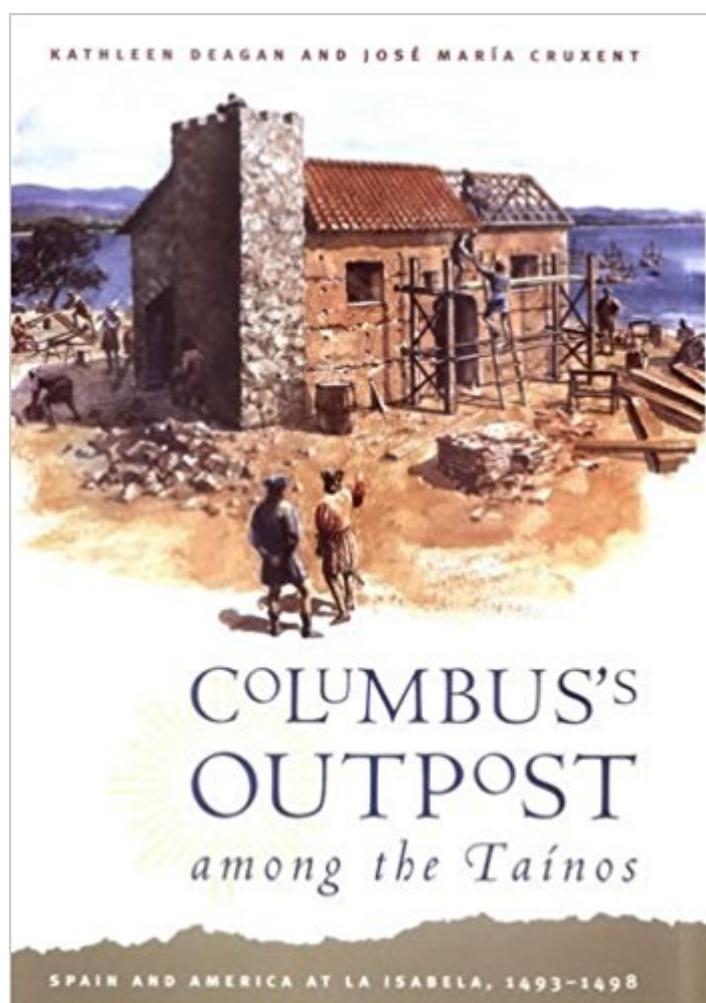


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Columbus's Outpost Among The Tañnos: Spain And America At La Isabela, 1493-1498



Synopsis

In 1493 Christopher Columbus led a fleet of 17 ships and more than 1200 men to found a royal trading colony in America. Columbus had high hopes for his settlement, which he named La Isabela after the queen of Spain, but just five years later it was in ruins. It remains important, however, as the first site of European settlement in America and the first place of sustained interaction between Europeans and the indigenous Tainos. Kathleen Deagan and Jose Maria Cruxent tell the story of this historic enterprise. Drawing on their ten-year archaeological investigation of the site of La Isabela, along with research into Columbus-era documents, they contrast Spanish expectations of America with the actual events and living conditions at America's first European town. Deagan and Cruxent argue that La Isabela failed not because Columbus was a poor planner but because his vision of America was grounded in European experience and could not be sustained in the face of the realities of American life. Explaining that the original Spanish economic and social frameworks for colonization had to be altered in America in response to the American landscape and the non-elite Spanish and Taino people who occupied it, they shed light on larger questions of American colonialism and the development of Euro-American cultural identity.

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Customer Reviews

. . . .[A]n outstanding account. . . . that clearly illustrates the importance of historical archaeology and how it expands the historical record. . . . -- (Mark Michel, American Archaeology)

"La Isabela, founded by Columbus during his second voyage, was the first Spanish settlement in the

New World. Kathleen Deagan and J.M. Cruxent are uniquely qualified to discuss this important event. Their book is based on sound scholarship and its style is clear and readable."—Irving Rouse, author of The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus

I read it in three days. A must have book for anyone interested in the Conquista and early colonization of the Caribbean and America in General. I also believe that anyone interested in the life and deeds of Christopher Columbus should read this work. The authors' combination of archaeological excavation with documentary research is excellent and should serve as an example for future research projects. Furthermore, some of the discoveries they made will be quite unexpected and surprising for the general public, and even for those familiar with their work. Despite the fact that both Deagan and Cruxent are highly regarded experts in Caribbean archaeology, they have written a book that can be enjoyed by the general public.

The story of the first Spanish settlement in the New World and its relationship with the local Taino Indians on Hispanola. Established by Columbus in 1493 the settlement faced hard times to carve out an existence in a new land. This story uses archeological evidence and other sources to tell the story. A fascinating history that is both obscure, small and very colorful. Seth J. Frantzman

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