

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study concerns the physical manifestation of one element of the economy of early modern Europe, namely the sugar plantation. The analysis of this particular mode of production is critical to an understanding of the evolution of European culture in the western hemisphere, for as sugar cane can only be produced in tropical and semitropical climates, its cultivation required adaptation to climatic zones previously alien to Europeans as well as Africans. The sugar plantation was the tangible expression of this adaptation and its affects on the complex relationships among European markets, economic imperialism, and African slavery.

Because in many places the physical remains of the plantations are the best surviving historical resources, the methodology of historical archaeology is the most useful way to approach the study of these manifestations of the early European world economy. This study takes such an approach. Before examining the evidence, however, it is necessary to outline some of the more useful theoretical developments of the field which have influenced the methodology of this study.

Historical archaeology is by its nature an interdisciplinary; as such it suffers from a sort of parental