



2020 S4 Graduate Fellow Lecture

# ‘Monstrous Giants of Infamous Repute’:

## Wind-Powered Sugar Mills as Constructions of Control in Colonial Montserrat

Miriam Rothenberg

Friday, Oct 16<sup>th</sup> , 2-3pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Abstract:** Caribbean plantation landscapes were designed to mediate interactions between planters and enslaved laborers. In this paper, wind-powered sugar mills on the island of Montserrat are singled out as being prominent components of the plantation environment that were not only economically productive, but also served as markers of planter power and control. The mills’ distinctive shape and height render them instantly identifiable, and their integral role in the sugar production process makes them signifiers of that industry. Here, viewshed analysis is employed to demonstrate the visual ubiquity of Montserrat’s sugar mills before emancipation, emphasizing the affective power of these edifices even beyond the borders of the individual plantations they served.

### The S4 Graduate Student Paper Prize

The prize is awarded for a graduate student paper, in any discipline, that employs spatial analysis/thinking or GIS. The winner receives a cash prize of \$500, as well as the opportunity to present their research publicly to the Brown University community. The deadline for next year’s competition will be forthcoming and information is always available on our [website](#).

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**Bio:** Miriam’s doctoral dissertation, entitled *Community and Corrosion: A Contemporary Archaeology of Montserrat’s Volcanic Crisis in Long-term Comparative Perspective*, is an interdisciplinary project focused on the archaeology of volcanic disasters, which explores the volcanic crisis that has enveloped the Caribbean island of Montserrat since 1995. With Montserrat serving as both a contemporary case study and a point of comparison with ancient volcanic catastrophes, the dissertation explores the interplay between (post-)depositional site formation processes and social memory, temporality, and transgenerational trauma. Prior to attending Brown, Miriam received her B.A. from Oberlin College, with majors in Archaeological Studies and Anthropology, and a minor in Geology (2012). She spent a year on a Fulbright scholarship to Durham University, earning an M.A. with a thesis based on cost-path analysis of ancient Roman road systems titled, "Do All Roads Really Lead to Rome? Modelling Mobility in the Ager Veientanus and the Sangro Valley, Italy". Miriam has conducted fieldwork in the Caribbean, Rhode Island, and around the world, including with the Joukowsky Institute-affiliated Survey and Landscape Archaeology on Montserrat, Progetto S’Urachi (Sardinia), and Uronarti Regional Archaeology (Sudan) Projects. Her laboratory and technical experience has largely focused on GIS and remote sensing, geoarchaeological techniques, and database design and management, and she has served as a GIS and paperless database specialist/consultant for various archaeological projects. To aid in her research, Miriam is studying for an Sc.M. in Earth Sciences at Brown University, focusing on geoarchaeology in volcanic landscapes. Her research interests include contemporary archaeology, geology and geoarchaeology, landscape archaeology, social volcanology, GIS, paperless recording, and digital materialities.

