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Indigenous ancestors and healing landscapes : cultural memory and intercultural communication in the Dominican Republic and Cuba
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CHAPTER 5. Crossroads of Cultural landscapes: the indigenous base of demographic changes

1515 Naborías the Names of the Captives
They were not cacicas.
They were not heirs to yuca fields.
There were no concessions made to their status.
They were not “queens.”
Their names are recorded in the lists of work gangs
Sent to the mines, the conucos, the kitchens, the laundries
of the Spanish invaders.
Macaney, field hand.
Franciscquilla, cook.
Ana, baker.
Catalina, pig woman.
Morales (2001).

The early colonial encounters of the Old and New World profoundly influenced the composition of the existing population of the regions under study.¹¹⁸ The following pages summarize that demographic history with focus on its indigenous element. The colonial history of indigenous ancestors is followed by an overview of the demographic history of each island and by a clarification of the historical background of selected locations from which the data originated. This review will bring us closer to an understanding of the role of indigenous ancestors within medicinal history.

Morales' poem reminds us of some of the forgotten figures of Puerto Rican history, the indigenous women who occupied low-status positions in the early colonial society. The invisibility of the colonized strata of the population has always presented obstacles to the quest for identity and to the dignification of one's own heritage, while creating severe gaps in the demographic history, also in other Caribbean contexts. The reconstruction of population records within the colonial context is in need of a deconstruction of colonial worldview, but is also problematized by the selective and fragmented content of the colonial archives (see e.g. Roque & Wagner 2012).

In general, scholars agree upon the fact that the primacy of the colonization of Hispaniola and Cuba led to irreversible destruction of the indigenous populations. The great narrative is as follows: colonial rule led to a demographic disaster before the colonizers realized the negative impact of their doings; countless indigenous people died because of violence, germs or labor exploitation. The indigenous disappearance was considered by some authors as an unavoidable, logical step in unilineal cultural and technological development. Overwhelmed by the cruelty of Spanish rule other explanations seem to underestimate the indigenous agency and various ways of resistance. These scenarios were later nuanced by combining various factors, among which the lack of resistance towards exotic germs, the insular environment and labor exploitation were the most decisive. Many of these explanations, however could not escape the dichotomy between the rebellions/resistance or peacefulness/disappearance (Valcárcel Rojas 2016). Later attempts highlighting the indigenous agency during the early colonial period were faced with gaps in the available

¹¹⁸ For studies about pre-colonial societies in Hispaniola and Cuba see among others: Keegan & Hofman (2017), Hofman et al. (2008), Ulloa Hung (2013), Ulloa Hung & Valcárcel Rojas (2016), Curet et al. (2005), Veloz Magiolo (1993).

data on the extent of the impact of 1492 on the indigenous population, the general demographic history, and the cultural transformations in the colonial context.

The estimates of indigenous population in colonial Cuba and Hispaniola are biased and often seem to be intentionally manipulated for economic, ideological (e.g. ethnic origin obstructing social mobility), and legal reasons (e.g. the illicit slave trade, the prohibitions of enslavement of the indigenous population) (Guitar 2002; Ulloa Hung 2016; Paulino Ramos 2008; Moya Pons 2010; Valcárcel Rojas & Pérez Concepción 2014; Valcárcel Rojas 2016). Briefly, the first problem with the population registers in the following sections is the general invisibility of the lower strata of the population, especially enslaved indigenous people, women, and children. The growth or decline are difficult to estimate as various methods of counting and categorization were used (*vecino* vs. church categories).¹¹⁹ To illustrate this point: the provincial council of Santo Domingo in 1623 ordered the separation of the register of the indigenous people in provinces where these people were present, and later in 1673, they issued the order to keep all registers for Hispaniola in one book, including baptisms of enslaved people (Saez 2008). In contrast, in Cuba this distinction seems to be maintained until the 19th century (Vega Suñol 2014). The bias in these registers becomes even more apparent when the same registers are contrasted with other references from the colonial archives.

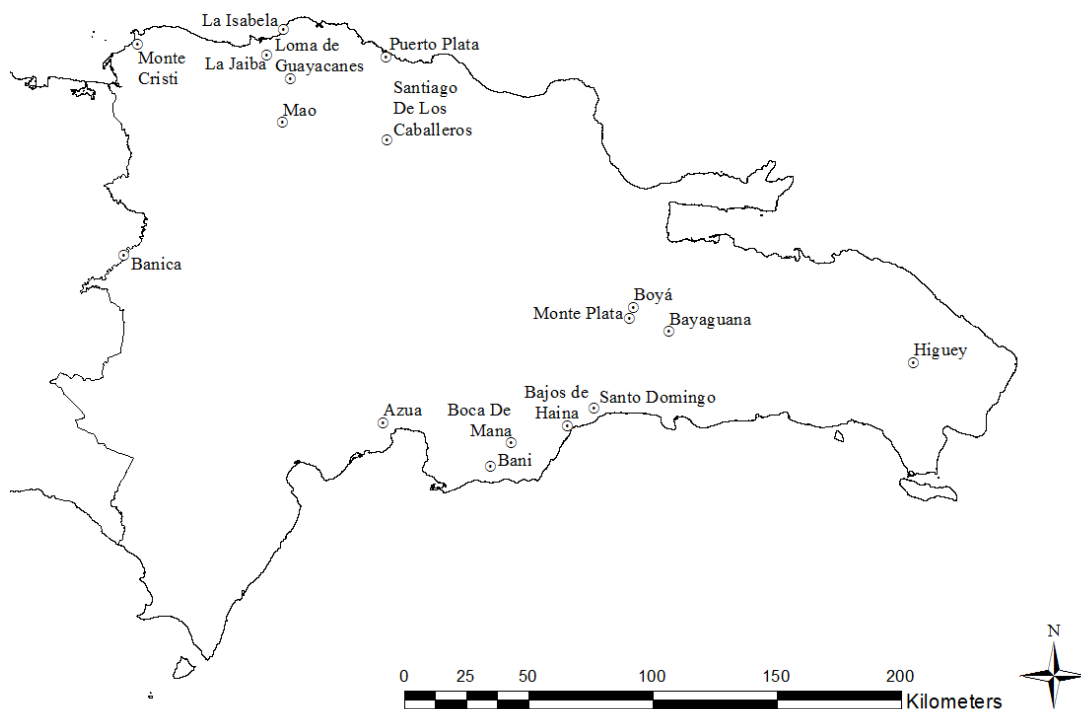


Figure 6 The Dominican locations mentioned in the historical overview.

¹¹⁹ More specifically, parochial censuses focused on different segments of society (people of confession, those being baptized, or just those coming regularly to mass). In contrast, general population estimates counted individuals with *vecino* status, according to whether or not they could be employed in war, or just in general as a person. According to Torres in 1577 in Santo Domingo *vecino* referred to a person who had a farm, small farm, or sugar mill. Neither slaves nor their families were counted as part of this category (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945). Alejandro de la Fuente argued that only the head of the household or family was counted as *vecino*. This is also the case of the census of Osorio in Hispaniola. In general, historians focusing on colonial Spanish Americas calculate the number of population by multiplying by five the number of the *vecinos*, but there have been obvious differences in the estimates and critiques of this methodology as it did not include other nationalities or freed peoples of color, which were practically absorbed into the Spanish population (see Wheat 2016).

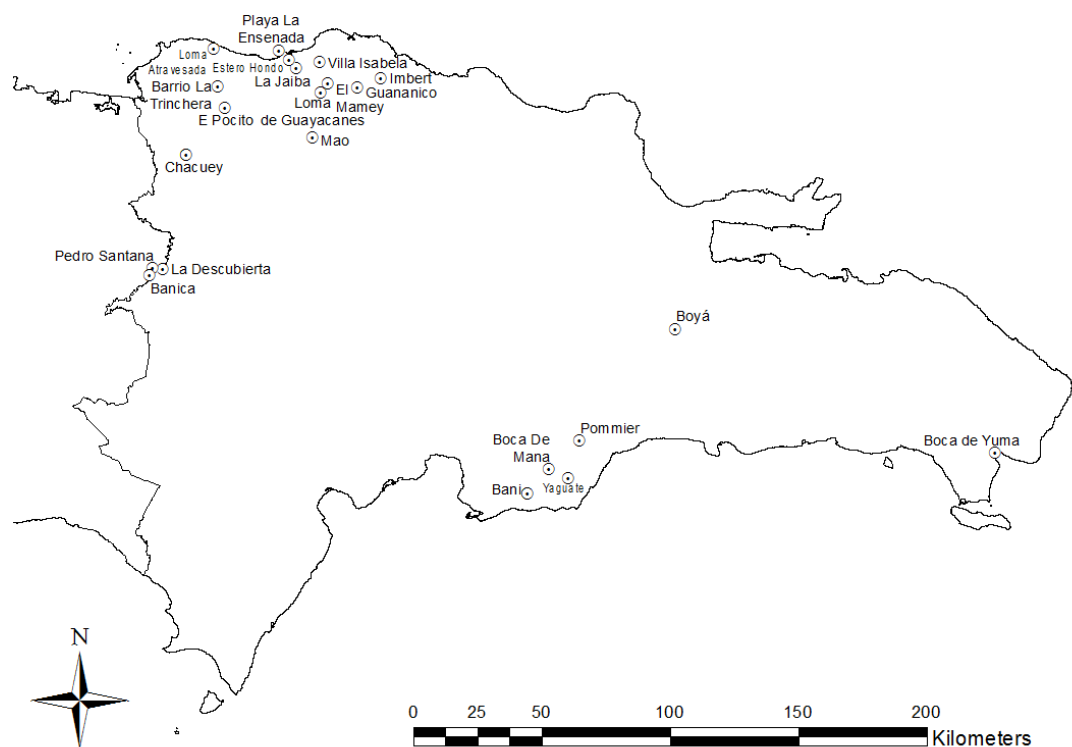


Figure 7 Dominican fieldwork locations.

Brief account of indigenous ancestors in colonial Hispaniola

Different scholars (Anderson-Cordova 1990, 2017; Guitart 2002; Deagan & Cruxent 2002; Deagan 2014; Ernst & Hofman 2018; Hofman 2018; Herrera Malatesta 2018; Mira Caballos 2009; Moya Pons 2010; Samson 2010; Ulloa Hung 2016) have addressed the early colonial history of indigenous peoples in Hispaniola. Until recently, it has been generally agreed that the Spanish conquest and colonization of Hispaniola led to a total genocide of indigenous peoples or at least to their decimation by the 1550s (e.g. Moya Pons 2010). Some historians like Guitart (2002) have argued against the rapid disappearance of the indigenous population. While her suggestions were received with skepticism, prominent historians like Moya Pons (2010) called for more research on this topic.

The early demographic development of colonial Hispaniola starts with considerable differences in estimates of indigenous population at the time of the conquest. These estimates have been debated for several decades and ranged from 100,000 to 8,000,000 (Moya Pons & Flores Paz 2013). The idea of a huge decline in number of indigenous people may have resulted from an unclear image of the original population to start with. In 1512, the Spanish population of Hispaniola was reportedly about ten thousand (Moya Pons 2010). The *repartimiento* of 1514, the only surviving document of the early colonial period that provides us with more accurate number of allotted indigenous people, counted 26,330 allocated individuals, which were divided among 3585 Spaniards (see e.g. Anderson-Cordova 1990, 2017).¹²⁰ In 1516, influenced by Las Casas' critique of the *encomienda* system three missionaries of the Hieronymite's order were sent to

¹²⁰ This document has been discussed earlier by various scholars, among them Rodríguez Demorizi (1971), Mira Caballos (2009), and Moya Pons (2010).

Santo Domingo to dismantle the *encomienda*. One year later, the Hieronymite friars estimated the number of indigenous people to oscillate between fifteen and sixteen thousand individuals (Mira Caballos 2009). This suggests that the indigenous population decreased within one year with ten or eleven thousand. In spite of great opposition from the Spanish colonizers, the Hieronymites reallocated the indigenous people into new villages of their own. In 1518, the smallpox epidemic is said to have reduced the population to only three thousand. This implied that the number of originally planned settlements was reduced to seventeen; of only fifteen of these the location is known.¹²¹ These villages are considered to have been slowly depopulated as a result of continuous Spanish attacks, and the mistreatment by *majordomos* (Mira Caballos 2009). Within this context, details about the lives of indigenous inhabitants of these settlements and their integration into the early colonial society are lacking. By the 1520s, the Spanish and other European population of the island decreased as a result of the huge scale of emigration to the mainland. In 1528, Hispaniola counted little more than one hundred *vecinos* (Moya Pons 2010).

The interpretation of events such as the smallpox outbreak may greatly have influenced the following estimates. In contrast to the Hieronymites' claims about the large population decline, a document from one year after the epidemic suggests that the population could even have been twelve thousand (Anderson-Cordova 2017). Authors and readers seeking to highlight the possible indigenous continuity in this period might immediately see this figure as a sign of the colonial manipulation of the registers. In this vein, Hieronymites could have exaggerated the impact of smallpox to protect this population and/or to justify the trafficking of humans from West Africa. In the end, the introduction of enslaved African men appeased the anti-*encomienda* critics and satisfied the increased demand for labor in sugar mills. A similar manipulation has also been observed in other colonial regions like Mexico. These revisions could further lend support to the argument that the above mentioned number of three thousand do not include all indigenous inhabitants of the island, for example those who might not have been known to colonial authorities. In contrast, other researchers could doubt the accuracy of these estimates, disregard those twelve thousand recorded by Hieronymites and point to the general inconsistencies in the records. Both interpretations are likely to influence the readers' diverse conclusions about the genetic and cultural continuities of indigenous society.

These estimates are to be complemented by data (from European colonial sources) about various indigenous responses to the initial contact, conquest and *encomienda* system, which were summarized by Anderson-Cordova (1990, 2017). The initial contact was followed by flight, exchange, and conflict (e.g. at El Golfo de Las Flechas and La Navidad). The indigenous people accommodated the colonial exploitation by following the official demands requiring them to pay tribute. At the same time, they resisted by quitting the cultivation of *conucos*, which led to starvation among the Spaniards, and by fleeing to marginal areas or to other islands. For some, the inhumane treatment and the life in captivity were only to be escaped by ending their own life and also the life of the unborn children. Lastly, the conquest was answered by the military defense of the territories of Higüey (using Spanish weapons) and Jaragua, and by a serious

¹²¹ Among them were Xaragua, Baní, Yaquimo, Verapaz, Santiago, Santa Ana, La Mejorada de Cotuí, Santa Maria de la O, San Julian, San Juan Bautista and Santo Tome, and three more villages at Míno and el Coco (Mira Caballos 2007). However, the exact location of these settlements should be studied further because there are some discrepancies among the different authors (see later the Baní case).

resistance that continued on a smaller scale until the 1550s.¹²² This resistance went in hand with good knowledge of both cultural environments.¹²³

After the establishment of different Spanish settlements close to the indigenous villages, the Spanish *encomienda* became one of the important factors shaping indigenous responses and consequently also the cultural change. Indigenous people were divided among the colonizers three times. From the data about the second allocation, it is clear that indigenous people had to work in mining and agriculture.¹²⁴ The allocations seem to have facilitated more contact among people who belonged to various ethnicities, including the Spanish. More specifically, sixty-two of the *encomenderos* were married to indigenous women.¹²⁵ The number of the illegal unions and the children resulting from these is estimated to be much higher. While among the *encomenderos* (in total at least 3,585, according to Mira Caballos 2009) were also apothecaries and surgeons, some indigenous people are likely to have served in the hospitals, monasteries, and churches of the first towns. This situation must have created a setting where distinct medicinal cultures circulated and were appropriated.

The Hieronymites left behind not only their estimates but also some insights into later indigenous responses to colonialism. Based on the Hieronymites' Interrogatory of 1517, Anderson-Cordova (1990, 2017) suggested that in spite of the colonial oppression, indigenous people maintained many of their own cultural traits. This interrogatory examined whether indigenous people were capable of living on their own and of handling freedom. It is no surprise that most Spanish settlers argued against indigenous freedom. Some of them even claimed that when having freedom indigenous people would return to their own religious practices and life-ways. Among the traditional elements were: the knowledge of the *behiques* how to prepare poisonous concoctions, the ritual cleansing and feasting, and the *cohoba* rituals. This indicates that nearly twenty years after the European invasion, at the time when the early colonial societies were established, certain indigenous medicinal practices continued to exist. An unwanted effect of the reallocation to indigenous settlements was the shifting of the villages by the indigenous people themselves. Like in the pre-colonial times, they would take all of their possessions and establish new settlements somewhere else. In this period there were still many indigenous villages, some of them quite removed from the Spanish population, even two large villages with their own cacique. Also, the more distant the settlements were from a Spanish town, the larger their population. Indigenous house servants who spoke Spanish and believed in Catholicism were given as an example of why the indigenous peoples should be located as close as possible to the Spanish settlements (Anderson-Cordova 1990).

Many of these arguments were clearly colored by the economic interests of the Spanish colonizers who opposed the freeing of the subaltern. In spite of this bias, it is indeed possible that some of these opinions were based on observations of the continuity of indigenous life-ways and worldviews. At the same time,

¹²² Leaders such as cacique Enrique and warriors like Hernandillo, Murcia and Tuerta resisted the Spanish occupation for a substantial period of time. In Enrique's case, it was at least fourteen years. But also later in the 1550s, there were around 20 to 25 insurrections in the region between Vega and Santiago. The accounts about these resisting groups indicate their extreme mobility. An army of indigenous warriors from the Baboruco, led by a leader who previously fought together with Dieguillo Ocampo, was causing harm to Spaniards in the surroundings of Santiago and La Vega (Letter from Licenciado Grajeda to his Majesty, 23.6.1549). The mobility is also evident from the fact that indigenous people from Hispaniola went to warn those of Cuba. During the Kalinago's attack on Puerto Rico also Caribs from Tierra Firme, who communicated with Kalinagos from Dominica, came to Puerto Rico and took from the estates the enslaved black people and everything they found there.

¹²³ Cacique Enrique or Enriquillo was raised in a Franciscan convent. After several attempts to pacify his uprising he surrendered himself voluntarily in 1533 in exchange for some land, legal status and the lives of other insurgent people, including fugitive Africans.

¹²⁴ Albuquerque's *repartimiento* of 1514 showed that the vast majority was located in mining cities like Concepción, Santiago, Santo Domingo (minas de Haina), and Buenaventura. The remaining groups were located in Puerto Plata, Higüey, Azua, Puerto Real, Bonao, Guahaba, Maguana, Verapaz, La Sabana, and Yáquimo.

¹²⁵ Note that such marriages were already prohibited at this time because in the past they had become a means for common Spanish men to receive more *encomendados*, which endangered the distribution of wealth among the colonial elite. The average of legal marriages with indigenous women varied according to the region: in Puerto Plata up to 27%, in Azua 13%, but in San Domingo only 2% of the total legal marriages (Mira Caballos 2009).

there were clearly many indigenous persons who assimilated to the colonial society. This can be seen in the case of mixed marriages, and in the re-education of indigenous children in Spanish convents, which seem to have formed a whole group of bilingual people like Enrique, or cacique Rodrigo, who were knowledgeable of and most likely also converted to Catholicism. Lastly, the further coexistence of different groups in later periods, in both urban and rural contexts, led to interactions and mutual influences between the culture of the colonizer and the culture of the colonized cultures: a form of transculturation under the colonizer's domination.

In spite of strong opposition from the Spanish *encomenderos*, the Hieronymites decided to reallocate the indigenous peoples to their own new villages. The later history of these indigenous settlements is unclear. After the exodus of Spanish people to the American mainland (New Mexico, Florida, Peru etc.), the discovery of the correct route to the Indies, and the exhaustion of some gold mines, the interest in agricultural production renewed. That shift in local demography and economy was decisive for the roles played by the indigenous people. Indigenous ancestors were to continue the production of crops for subsistence, but later they started to export crops like ginger, sugar, tobacco, cacao, *zarzaparrilla*, and *ají*, and to extract precious, colorant or medicinal wood like *cañafístola* and *guayacán*. Indigenous people were also documented as being employed as cattle herders and were valued as huntsmen.

Dominican indigenous ancestors after the New Laws

The history of the first inhabitants of Hispaniola after the New Laws issued in 1542 has not been adequately studied.¹²⁶ However, various primary sources mention indigenous individuals and communities that were integrated into the colonial society after the New Laws.¹²⁷

Some of the indigenous villages escaped the gaze of the colonialists for a long time. In 1556, Spanish settlers were searching for runaway captives and found four villages previously unknown to them, one in the neighborhood of Puerto Plata, the others on the coast in the former province of Ciguayos, in the province of Samana, and in Cabo de San Nicolás (Blanco Díaz 2009). Because the inhabitants of these villages were distributed among the Spaniards (against the prescriptions of the New Laws), an appeal was made to free them and to put them in the villages where they should not be disturbed, or at least to leave them in the places where they were found. Similarly, Friar Juan de Ortega found later many indigenous peoples "hidden" in the province of Ciguayos, the Cape of San Nicolás and the cape of Tiburón. In an attempt to convert them to the Catholic faith, this friar concentrated them in settlements. Where the friar reallocated those indigenous people remains unclear. It is possible that he created new settlements but he may have also brought them to an already existing one. According to Mira Caballos (2009) San Juan de Ortega, Cayacoa, and Villaviciosa should be some of the indigenous villages that remained after the experiments of the Hieronymites (Blanco Díaz 2009).

In more detail, the royal decree of 1563 instructed that indigenous people found on the island in this period should serve only to the King, and that the friar who concentrated the indigenous people in villages

¹²⁶ It should be remarked that the New Laws issued in 1542 were received differently in Cuba and Hispaniola. Although there were some protests against them, *vecinos* of Hispaniola issued less official complains than their Cuban neighbors did. In the context of Hispaniola, this could be interpreted as a consequence of the demographic decline and/or by the fact that the Hieronymites had taken indigenous laborers away more than twenty years before. In Hispaniola the indigenous laborers had since been replaced by enslaved individuals from Africa and the Lesser Antilles. In fact, those laws made that enslavement official.

¹²⁷ As it was not in the scope of this study to review archival records in Spain, Cuba and Dominican Republic I limited myself to existing literature on the history of the indigenous peoples in the colonial period and primary documents which were transcribed and published by scholars from the National Archive (as early as the 1950s). Additional aim of this chapter is to highlight the importance of existing bundles of colonial documents which contain important references to historically marginalized peoples but are often not cited by heritage experts.

should not be further persecuted by the Spaniards, but should be supported in his attempts to convert them. All indigenous people who were found after this date should live in liberty (Blanco Díaz 2009).

Some indigenous people stayed in urban areas. In 1551, Licenciado Zurita (in Rodríguez Morel 2011) answered a Royal request to educate the indigenous people in a monastery in Santo Domingo by justifying that there were almost no “*naturales de la tierra*” left and those who were living in the city were “ladinos”, and knew the Spanish language already. Zurita contrasted this group with those who were enslaved individuals and later were given liberty: they were said to have gone to live inland because the company of Spaniards was “loathsome” for them. In his view, to collect them all for the purpose of conversion was too difficult, unnecessary and disadvantageous for them “*because none of them have the capacity to make ranches or to have a fortune, and what they earn is spent quickly on their bad habits: drinking and eating and other similar things, and if there are some who are not so ladinos they are in their cattle and sheep ranches, and other haciendas far away from this city*” (Rodríguez Morel 2011, p. 124). This reply could be read as a lack of interest in remaining indigenous descendants on the part of some religious authorities, but also as a testimony of their integration into the colonial city, and of the withdrawal of others to rural areas.

The invisibility of the indigenous segment of society in the later colonial period might be due not only to the process of transculturation, but also to its employment in agriculture in areas more remote from the towns. Historical references to this sector proceed from complaints or from extraordinary situations rather than from the interest of the colonial authorities. In this way, we know that indigenous peoples of Mona were cultivating batatas, cassava, and melons in great quantities between 1557-1564 and exchanging them with the French (Echogioian 1565). Mona inhabitants were compared to other indigenous peoples from Ayaguana and La Vega neighborhoods, which were said to live without a village and without being converted (Echogioian 1565). The early 17th century indigenous inhabitants of Boyá are said to have owned different *hatos*, which were producing cassava and ginger (see below). Yet, Boyá inhabitants are given as an example of conversion.

Indigenous descendants lived in rural areas at the time of the evacuation of the North. The North was evacuated in order to end the large-scale contraband trade in which the northern towns were engaged. In 1604 complaints are registered about the negative impact that this policy might have if put into practice. Before the actual devastations, an appeal was sent to consider that the majority of the *vecinos* and inhabitants of this area were “*commoners, mestizos, mulatos and blacks*”, who did not have estates, had nothing or very little to lose, and lacked transport (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945). According to this command, many of these people only had a small farm with which they sustained with their own family, and while others might have had one or two enslaved persons, their help was not sufficient for such a relocation. Another danger of the whole removal of the population was that people might choose to stay there and later appropriate other people’s properties. One of the people who signed the documents was Antonio Ruiz, an indigenous man who seems to have occupied a high social rank (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945).

Although these requests may have been a bit exaggerated because they were aimed at convincing the authorities to reconsider the evacuation of the North, from later complaints it seems that some of these fears came true. Among later complaints from *vecinos* about how the evacuation impacted their lives, was that the cattle that was left behind was eaten by the people of mixed and West African origin (“*mestizos, mulatos y negros*”), and other people hiding and staying in the North (1609). Although it is not totally certain whether the text refers to local or nonlocal indigenous persons, it is possible that, like in other contexts, the authorities took them away exactly because they were locals and as such, were officially free in this period. The violation of the New Laws was not a unique case when compared to the situation in Cuba or Mexico.

Unwillingly following Osorio's mandate, Spaniards, and some "*peoples of color*" from Bayajá and La Yaguana moved east and founded Bayaguana. Small settlements from Cibao were relocated closer to Santiago, La Vega and Cotuí. Similarly, former inhabitants of Monte Cristi and Puerto Plata constructed Monte Plata next to the indigenous village of Boyá. The establishment of these new settlements also led to land struggles (see later history of Boyá).

The evacuation of the North seems to have generated space for those who wanted to be out of sight of the colonial authorities, the population that became invisible in the historic records. Sometimes, troops were sent to capture the escaped enslaved men, but it is clear that different people stayed, and continued to live from agriculture, cattle raising and most likely continued trading contraband with the enemies (see the later history of the Northeast).

The devastation of the North reinforced the process of transculturation, which seems to have taken place early after the first indo-afro-hispano encounters. The indigenous influences seem to have been visible in the material culture left from these early encounters in both urban areas and in rural areas.¹²⁸ With respect to the latter, Ulloa Hung (2016) has suggested that the process of mestizaje and creolization is apparent in the material cultures of rural areas and supports this by referring to a royal decree of 1538 about Buenaventura and Santa Cruz de Acayagua, where there was a population of more than one hundred Spanish people, and six hundred individuals of indigenous and west African origin. After more than seventy years, the population of this region seems to have remained the same. The region still had many small, very dispersed settlements at riverbanks and valleys in the Buenaventura and Acayagua regions, where congregations of Spanish people, hundreds of indigenous people, and people of West African origin (the words used are: "Black and Indians") were working in agriculture, cultivating crops and raising cattle (Gil-Bermejo García 1983).

Enslaved indigenous population

When speaking about the indigenous component of the population, it is important to acknowledge that this component in itself was composed of a great diversity of indigenous cultural elements, stemming from pre-colonial and colonial times (for pre-colonial times see e.g. the Ulloa Hung 2016, as well as Hofman et al. 2018). The inter-island mobility and engagements between communities were already occurring on a pan-regional scale in the pre-colonial period (e.g. Hofman & Bright 2010; Hofman & Duivenbode 2011; Rodríguez Ramos 2010).

Columbus' diary (1492 [1492]) suggests the existence of regular inter-island mobility. More specifically, Columbus observed an indigenous man who travelled from Santa Maria to Fernandina, people who knew how to navigate from the Bahamas to Cuba, and furthermore, he based his knowledge about the population of other islands on the hearsay of the inhabitants whom he had already met. During the later colonial period there are multiple references to – often forced – contacts among indigenous individuals. First, different enslaving voyages were organized to Cuba, and the Bahamas, and continued on other Caribbean islands and Tierra Firme throughout the colonial period. D'Anghiera estimated that between 1508 -1513, approximately 40,000 people were brought from the surrounding islands (Moya Pons 2010). Justifying their colonial invasion by allegations of cannibalism against the native inhabitants, in the context of a theory of "just war", the Spaniards captured even those who were initially reported as being very friendly and welcoming them.

¹²⁸ The urban areas have been studied in the archaeological research of sites such as La Isabela, Puerto Real, En Bas Saline, La Vega, Santo Domingo, and Cotuí.

Anderson-Cordova (2017) has provided an overview of the legislation that regulated the indigenous slave trade on Hispaniola.¹²⁹ In sum, from the legislation issued between 1495 and 1547, it is clear that slave raids were organized in the following locations: Caribbean islands (Lucayos, St. Croix, Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, La Ascensión, Barbados, Tobacco Mayo, Trinidad, San Bernardo, Fuerte Island, and Barú island), Cartagena port, Paria, Venezuela, Honduras coast (Guanajos), Pánuco, and New Mexico (Anderson-Cordova 2017). In addition, people were generally enslaved in zones of conflict and war, or where people rebelled against or attacked the Spanish estates, and in areas where there was no gold. Colonial authorities also requested to bring people from New Spain because they were skilled at searching for sources of silver, and working with silver. These orders suggested to bring them to be sent over with their families “*to make them feel well*” (Yaremko 2016).

The distribution of enslaved non-local indigenous individuals needs further investigation. In 1578, Doctor Gregorio González de Cuenca, president of the Audiencia Real de Santo Domingo, asked His Majesty King Philip II to send a declaration to free the indigenous peoples from Hamana, Maricapana and Cumanacoa, Cariaco and other provinces of Caracas, La Nueva Andalucía, Margarita and others who had been brought as captives to Santo Domingo. In contradiction to the Real degree issued in 1564, the captains did not treat them well and did not release them. Dr. González is said to have made a village for them approximately six leagues from the city, with at least twelve Indians and a friar to indoctrinate them and make them Christians and free them from captivity (González de Cuenca 1578 in Rodríguez Morel 2015). The location of this village is not clear. This creates a situation wherein the historical foundation of certain settlements is unclear. As late as in 1628, one small village on the bank of the river Yguamo was “discovered” by colonial authorities, being inhabited by around 150 indigenous descendants. As it was considered that these men were without work, they could therefore be used as workforce for planting medicinal plants. In two years, the population dropped to only 18 men and 15 women. The reason of this decline might be that the indigenous inhabitants just moved further away in order not to be harassed by the outsiders, and because their lands were taken away from them. As in other cases, the Spaniards started to claim the land as their own property, because, like in the case of Boyá, these lands were considered uncultivated (see below).

The lives of these enslaved indigenous peoples in the colonies have had the same destiny as those of other enslaved laborers. Since 1518, it was officially allowed to enslave those who were captured during the rebellions in Hispaniola. With the exception of accidental references, indigenous enslaved individuals were dehumanized and homogenized under the label of “slaves”.¹³⁰ After the number of enslaved people from Africa increased, enslaved indigenous people were sent to search for new sources of silver and gold, clearing savannas and forests, cultivating the land, and taking care of estates, while the women were making cassava, and serving those working in the mines. In the 1520s when the gold profits were invested into sugarcane production, nearly all the owners of sugar mills also had indigenous captives. They were employed in all tasks necessary for the operation of such estates, including domestic tasks, taking care of livestock (also butchering), and cultivating the crops. The Crown also employed indigenous enslaved

¹²⁹ In 1505, provisions were issued to bring ‘cannibals’ from San Bernaldo, Fuerte, the ports of Cartagena, and the Vany islands. In 1508/1509, colonizers in Hispaniola were asked to maximize the production of gold and to build villages next to the mines. The regions from which the peoples could be captured and enslaved under the excuse of cannibalism varied over time. In 1520, basically all islands where Christians did not live, were declared to be inhabited by Caribs, the only exceptions being Trinidad, Lucayos, Barbados, Gigantes, and Margarita. In 1530, the enslavement of indigenous peoples was prohibited under any circumstances, because of large-scale abuses. This prohibition was lifted only four years later, however, probably because of the rising demands for enslaved workers related to the sugar industry. In 1543, a royal prohibition was issued to transfer indigenous peoples, whether free or enslaved, outside of their province, but this legislation was also periodically violated.

¹³⁰ Enslaved indigenous individuals from Hispaniola were sent to search for pearls in Cubagua and Margarita; together with Lucayos (according to Las Casas Caonabo was also Lucayo), they were shipped to the coast of the pearls, Cabo de Vela, Río de la Hacha and other places. In the first years, *naborías* and enslaved people from the Lesser Antilles were extracting the gold.

peoples in the lime kilns, forts, road building, and boats (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957; Mira Caballos 1997; Exquemelin 1971 [1678]; Anderson-Córdova 2017).

Rural and urban areas were the settings where colonized individuals had space and opportunity for mutual exchange of knowledge, while working in construction or as household servants, at markets, churches, and hospitals, but also outside in gold mines, fields, ranches, during military operations, rebellions, and in small rural settlements of freedmen or maroon communities. The changes of indigenous cultures within these settings have taken a place under the Spanish colonial rule, yet where West and West Central African ancestors started to create a substantial part of the colonial societies.

African ancestors in Dominican demographic history

The decline of the indigenous population should also be situated within the broader context of large-scale movements of Europeans, intensified by the colonization of Cuba, Darién and Tierra Firme as well as by the later Transatlantic Slave Trade. During the initial voyages, the *conquistadores* were likely to be accompanied by their enslaved men from North Africa (officially maximum four per person). The importance of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and plantation society for both Dominican and Cuban history cannot be overemphasized. In the second half of the 16th century, thousands of African men and women were kidnapped, and shipped in horrible conditions to the Caribbean. Those who survived the terrors of the passage still had to overcome the hardships of life in slavery.

In the first half of the 16th century, the majority of the inhabitants of Hispaniola originally came from the African continent (12,000 Africans vs. 5,000 Spanish in 1546, Hernandez Gonzalez 2010). In 1568, the total population was estimated around 24,550 of which 20,000 were of Sub-Saharan origin (Echogioian 1565). In the 1580s, epidemics affected the territory, resulting in a huge death toll among the population of African ancestry. In 1609, the census after the devastation of the North approximates 9648 enslaved persons (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945). Of this number, only eight hundred worked in sugar mills (twelve at the river Nigua, Haina, including the famous Cepicepi), and the majority occupied different roles as domestic servants or farm workers raising small cattle and planting ginger, yucca and corn.

At the beginning of the 17th century, a considerable number of inhabitants were of mixed origin, among them quite a few freedmen with increased social mobility. Around 1606, different people of mixed origin (“negro”, “moreno”, “mulato”) and freed persons received the status of *vecino*. These *vecinos* were owners of estates and farms, which produced cassava, corn and vegetables.¹³¹

The influx of enslaved laborers to the Spanish part of Hispaniola is displayed in Table 1. The inter-and-intra-island human trafficking should color these estimates. At the same time, the process of transculturation continued and the number of the free people of color increased, soon becoming an important component of the new society. In one of the descriptions of the islands from 1679, people of color formed the vast majority of a total of 7,500 inhabitants. In 1862, the Spanish crown issued an order to bring families from the Islas Canarias to the island as a human shield against the French intrusion (Hernández González 2006). Two years later, the first families from the Canary Islands arrived, and were

¹³¹ The census made in 1606 monitoring the situation in the town after the destruction of the north, counted *vecinos* of the remaining cities, sometimes mentioning their names, race, occupation, marriages and children. This gives us estimates: Santo Domingo had 620 *vecinos* (the majority having family) and 27 representatives of church, Santiago 150 *vecinos*, and 4 clerics, La Vega 38 *vecinos* and 2 clerics, Bayaguana 115 *vecinos* (among them Juan Tamayo), Monte Plata 83 *vecinos* (incl. 1 *moreno libre* and 1 cleric), Boyá 13 *vecinos* (incl. 1 cleric), Higüey 22 *vecinos*, Seibo 7 *vecinos*, Azua 46 *vecinos*, in Cotui 24 *vecinos* (incl. 1 priest). More specifically, among the registered persons there are 18 “blacks”, 18 “morenos” and 20 “mulatos” (in majority women). For the category *morenos* known examples of baptisms of enslaved people are Antón de Juanes *moreno libre*, Francisca de Moronta, *morena esclava* and also clearly from African continent Pedro Biafara, *moreno libre*. The denominations “mulato/a libres”, “moreno/a”, “moreno/a libre” “moreno/a jorros”, “cimarron”, “negro/a libres” are marked by the colonial categories and hierarchies of race (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945).

sent to the border between the Eastern (Spanish) part and the Western (French) part, as well as to the previously depopulated North and South. At the same time, enslaved individuals escaping from the French area were seeking refuge in Hispaniola, and were granted their freedom.¹³²

Tracing the origins of the African ancestors

After a general overview of the origins of the African ancestors of the Dominican and Cuban population this section will proceed to shed light on the ethnic hyper-diversity of African descendants, which contributed even further to the emerging Dominican composition. The identification of the origins of the African peoples in the Caribbean is conditioned by the history of the Spanish slave trade.¹³³ The methodological difficulties related to the determination of the exact ethnic origin of the enslaved people have become proverbial, and have already been discussed by many authors (Deive 1988; Guanche 2011).

The persons that were captured and trafficked, belonged to various ethnic groups from regions of West, Central and later also East Africa. The majority of African people coming to Spanish America until the 1630s seemed to be from the region of Upper Guinea (Rawley & Behrendt 2005 [1982]; Wheat 2016).¹³⁴ Upper Guinea includes present-day Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, with many peoples whose descendants are i.e. the Wolof, Serer, Biafaras, Mandinga, Malinké, Mende, Joola, Fulani/Fulbe, Susu, and Temne (Zapes). Also inhabitants of Cape Verde islands and later (1590 and 1640) of Angola (São Tomé island and Luanda being an important embarkation ports) were shipped to the Caribbean (Transatlantic Slave Voyage Database 2017, further only SVD).¹³⁵ Some Cuban and Dominican ancestors proceeded also from the mouth of the river Congo and from present-day Gabon (Rawley & Behrendt 2005; SVD 2017).¹³⁶ For overview of regions from where African ancestors were shipped to Santo Domingo see Table 1 and for Cuba see Table 2 and Figures 90 – 92. The high estimates from 16th century of captives shipped to Santo Domingo reflect the fact that from there people were shipped onward to other regions of the Spanish Americas.

In the first half of 18th century people from present-day Ghana (Gold Coast, port Ardra), Angola, Nigeria (Calabar) were enslaved and brought to Spanish Americas. In 1778, when Spain established its trading base in Fernando Po (Bioko) more Caribbean captives originated from the Bight of Biafra, which is situated in Equatorial Guinea.¹³⁷ The regional history showed that especially in the later period the French exchanged captives (most likely from regions Angola, Bight of Benin, the Windward Coast, and the Gold Coast) with

¹³² In the 17th century the French were bringing most people from Senegambia, later from Bight of Benin, West Central Africa, less numbers from the Gold Coast and Bight of Biafra (SVD 2018). For more on the topic of tracing the African origins of Haitians see the work of Fouchard (1979).

¹³³ The demarcation line that granted large part of the Americas to the Spanish Crown also caused the colonial society to be dependent on the Portuguese, Dutch, English and others for the source of their workforce. In the 16th century the Spanish bought persons from the Portuguese, first shipping them from Sevilla and Madrid, and later from African ports. During the 17th century the slave trade was affected by the raise of other European countries and conflicts restraining the official means to purchase enslaved peoples from the sub-Saharan region. By the mid 17th century the Portuguese lost their monopoly in West Africa and Caribbean to Dutch (Curaçao, Goreé island, El Mina), English (Barbados, Jamaica, Gambia, Ghana) and French (St. Kitts, Senegal). Portuguese maintained their posts from Senegal to the Angolese post in Beguela, including large parts of Upper Guinea, and in the Cape Verde islands. Together with the Independence of Portugal (1640), the Dutch revolt and 80 years war against Spain (1568-1648) and the continuous seizing of African and Caribbean Spanish colonies by Dutch, French and English formed obstacles to official trade and led to large-scale contraband from Barbados, Curaçao, Jamaica, which supplied legally and illegally the Spanish speaking Caribbean (Rawley & Behrendt 2005). At the beginning of the 18th century Spain was forced to grant England the right of Transatlantic Trade (Rawley & Behrendt 2005). In the 1740s, the Spanish Crown returned to domestic trade and gave *asiento* to the Havana company. After the English occupation of Cuba and the Haitian revolution in 1791 the sugar industry expanded and with this also the demand of labor.

¹³⁴ The ships from this region boarded at the Cape Verde islands, Buguendo (present-day Sao Domingos Guinea Bissau), and unknown ports at Grande River (Wheat 2016). Also captives embarked from Banjul at the mouth of Gambia river.

¹³⁵ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database can be consulted on slavevoyages.org. The present-day peoples were identified using the People's Atlas of Africa by Felix & Meur (2001), and its adapted and georeferenced version as published on <https://worldmap.harvard.edu/>.

¹³⁶ These peoples were most likely shipped from the ports in São Tomé and Príncipe and Bioko/San Fernando Poo. In the 17th century also the French established their slave trade companies in Gabon. Among the biggest ethnic groups in Gabon are Ndzabi, Fang (Okak), followed by Kota (Mahongwe, Mbaamba), Eshira, and Punu.

¹³⁷ This region is inhabited today by the Bubi people, but also by different Bantu peoples such as the Fang of Rio Muni.

the Spanish for goods and other merchandise (Rawley & Behrendt 2005). In the 18th century the import of captives to Cuba significantly outnumbered those imported to Hispaniola (68,033 vs. 2057). In addition, the number of the African ports included in the trade also increased significantly.

Between 1821-1843, people were carried away from Western Guinea, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, Congo, Angola, and Mozambique. In this period, captives were mostly shipped from the rivers Gallina, Manna, Pongo (Rep. of Guinea), from Bonny Island, and from posts like Lagos, Old Calabar (both in Nigeria) and Whydah (Ouidah in Benin). In the 19th century Cuba was much more dependent on the workforce of AfroCuban ancestors brought in great numbers. In fact, the number of captives that were brought to Cuban during 19th century is more than twenty seven times higher (710,172 vs. 28507) than the total amount of captives shipped to Dominican Republic during the whole colonial period (SVD 2018).¹³⁸

With respect to the tracing of the Dominican roots, Deive suggested that the Bantú, Guinean, and Sudanese cultural areas were the most represented in the local historical documentation of this part of Hispaniola (Deive 1988).¹³⁹ These three areas incorporate a rich diversity of identities. In the Bantú group, Deive included peoples denominated Ambos, Angola, Bamba, Casanga, Congo, Lemba, Malemba, Manga, Matamba, Mondongo, and Sambú. The area of Guinea comprises the Ewe-Fon family, to which the Arará, Ardá, Tarí, Yoruba, Bañol, Bervisi, Biafara, Biochos, Carabalí, Mina, and Zape peoples belong.¹⁴⁰ Lastly, the Sudanese cultural area was said to consist of Bambara, Barva, Chambá, Fula, Mandinga, and Wolof peoples (Deive 1988).¹⁴¹ At last, it is worthwhile to remark that the hyper-diversity of the African ancestors was often accompanied by multilingualism (e.g. among Ghe language group), and occasional common cultural traits (their religions including Islam and Catholicism¹⁴²), factors that could facilitate the transfer of cultural information, including medicinal knowledge and beliefs, among the enslaved population.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ There are considerable differences SVD data that are presented here and database and Rawley & Behrendt (2005).

¹³⁹ His analysis was based on different documents like ordinances, reports on slave revolts, maroons, Osorio orders, baptismal and matrimonial records in the period 1547-1821. See also the work of Saez (2008).

¹⁴⁰ Ellis' work (1894) includes a brief (although biased) description of Yoruba speakers.

¹⁴¹ As clear these don't correspond with contemporary ethnic group names with which the people self-identify in the present. The group denominated "*mina*" proceeded from San Jorge Elmina castle in the present Ghana but sometimes it referred also to Golden Coast or Mina de Oro (probably ancestors of Gen people). Biafaras referred to the region Bight of Biafra, Arará (Aradá) from Allada current Benin, Carabalí from Old Calabar in present-day Nigeria, and Zape were most likely Temne. Matamba was a kingdom at Cuango river in present-day Angola. About more details on the 17th century knowledge about Zapes or other peoples see Sandoval (Sandoval 2008).

¹⁴² The missionary activities in West Africa started nearly in parallel to the Portuguese and European colonization. Enslaved people, therefore, may have had knowledge of Catholicism and Protestantism religions prior to their arrival to the Americas.

¹⁴³ The hyper-diversity is evident when looking at the present-day panorama of peoples (generally called ethnic groups) in the enormous regions of Africa. Felix 2001 registered around 1,900 distinct ethnic groups, based on how these groups self-identified. This hyper-diversity together with the complex dynamic societal situation during the European colonization of West (Central) Africa has complicated endeavors trying to trace the places of origin of Caribbean ancestors. One of the historical documents that brings us a little bit closer to understanding the complexity and hyper-diversity of the cultures and healing practices that were brought to the Caribbean, is the work of Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval (1576-1652), which provides a wealth of information about the enslaved persons brought in the first half of 17th century to Cartagena. Sandoval described over 300 ethnic groups, or nations, their linguistic skills, bodily markings and sometimes how colonizers perceived their value as a laborer or ability to convert (Sandoval 2008 [1627]). Thus, for example, ethnicities belonging to the Ghe language group, representing approximately twenty languages, including Ewe, Fon, Aja, Gen (Mina), and Phla-Pherá spreading from Ghana to Nigeria, were said to be able to communicate among each other (Sandoval 2008). In addition, several groups from Senegambia had Islam or Catholicism as a shared religion.

Period	Senegambia & offshore Atlantic	Sierra Leone	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra & Gulf of Guinea islands	West Africa Helena	Central and St.	Other Africa	Total
1501-1600	8715	279	0	0	3658	643		3839	17134
1601 -1700	0	0	0	1201	380	5565		2170	9316
1701 -1800	0	0	412	0	0	736		909	2057
Totals	8715	279	412	1201	4038	6944		6918	28507

Table 1 Overview of Regions from which captives were brought Hispaniola.¹⁴⁴

The interactions among the colonized strata

The arrival of the Africans to the islands gave rise to hyper-diverse communities, whose composition diversified even further through the interaction with the local population. The cultural interaction of the life-ways of subaltern classes seems to have occurred as early as 1503, when the Spaniards warned people against the influences of enslaved men on the indigenous population. While there is some historical and archeological evidence that has started to shed light on these types of interactions (Pereira Pereira 2007, 2008; Valcárcel Rojas 2012; Ulloa Hung 2016), more research is needed. Concerning the written documentation, Cerrato writes that in 1547, Spanish people who were searching for revolting black Cimarrons, led by Lemba in the mountains of Bahoruco, found some indigenous men and women living with the Cimarrons (Rodríguez Morel 2011).

The colonized peoples of different origins cooperated together (Rodríguez Morel 2011). In 1577, indigenous and enslaved people gave information about the Spanish to the Portuguese and the French in the surroundings of Yaquimo and Sabana, in exchange for wine and trinkets (Exquemelin 1971 [1678]). The exchange of information continued in other regions in the early 17th century. Before its evacuation, Yaguana inhabitants sold cowhides to the French and the Portuguese. Inhabitants of this region, described as being of local, West African, and mixed origins, were informing the other parties about the location of Spanish troops in exchange for textiles and other goods (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945).¹⁴⁵

During the second half of the 17th century, locations like Azua, Tortuga, Boyá, and Bánica all are said to have had a population of indigenous and West African descent, who were not only likely to have children with each other, but also to influence each other in cultural ways. More specifically, around the 1670s, indigenous laborers (probably paid) worked alongside those of African origin in La Tortuga and in Azua (Exquemelin 1661). Azua's population counted inhabitants of mixed origin; among the "*mulato*" inhabitants were also "*mestizos*" and "*alcatraces*" (descendants of indigenous and West African persons). All groups had their own racial preferences concerning marriages, which reflected the social status of the respective groups (Exquemelin 1971 [1678]).¹⁴⁶ During the last allocations, approximately eight hundred indigenous persons were brought to this town (Mira Caballos 1997). Therefore, the origin of the indigenous descendants might be both local and non-local.

¹⁴⁴ Data retrieved from the database of slavevoyages.org. This estimates concerns disembarked individuals in ports such as Isabela, Monte Christi, Samana, Santo Domingo, Ocoa, Nizao, Puerto Plata, Isla Saona or in general Hispaniola.

Note that some of the captives brought in 18th century might be brought to Saint Dominique not Santo Domingo.

¹⁴⁵ Mixed origin in this case refers to the colonial category "*mulato*", "*mestizo*", and local to "*indio*".

¹⁴⁶ Azua, together with Santo Domingo, maintained their populations and grew even during the period of heavy emigration towards the mainland. Azua's population remained numerous because it had still gold and copper mines and quickly transitioned to the sugar industry (CepiCepi sugar mills).

The subsequent historical development of Dominican society

Further insights into the evolution of the Dominican population come from the study of Moya Pons (2009). The Hispaniolan population grew around 2.3%, reaching a total of over 18,400 persons, between the years 1681 and 1716. Since this period, the population and economy continued to grow throughout the 18th century. The mutual influences among Canarians, West Africans and other groups intensified and the process of transculturation continued. In the first half of the 18th century, in the majority of towns the “people of color” were more numerous than the “white population” (Baní being the only exception). In 1740 Álvarez de Abreu described Santo Domingo as having 1,800 inhabitants, among them there were only twelve or fifteen Spanish families, and the rest were free, liberated persons and captives (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957). Around that time, the total population was more than thirty thousand, the majority of which were people of color and of different social strata. The annual growth of the population maintained a relatively stable rate of 2.5% throughout the 18th century. In the 1750s, the total population of Santo Domingo was around 70,626 persons. About 12% of this population was enslaved, and the large majority was more or less equally divided between “*white and of freedmen of color*” (Moya Pons 2009). In 1792, the Spanish part of Hispaniola had around 125,000 inhabitants. This growth was maintained until the 1795 Basel Treaty, when France gained control over the island. Two years before the Haitian revolution (1791) slave trading was made free in Cuba, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico. The Haitian revolution, followed by Toussaint Louverture’s abolition of slavery, its reestablishment under the twelve-year Spanish rule, and the twenty-two years of Haitian occupation, produced economic and demographic decline. This period was marked by massive emigration and internal migration. Moya Pons estimated that between 1795 and 1812, 100,000 persons emigrated from the island towards Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. Among them were elites who were deprived of their lands and their enslaved subjects, and also Dominican families without great possessions. The arrival of Boyer and his troops provoked further waves of migration.

The first decennia’s of the 19th century are marked by significant population decline 1819 (71,223 persons) (Moya Pons 2009). During Boyer’s reign, many people from the French areas had married Dominican women and established themselves there as agriculturalists. Since 1844, the annual growth rate was approximately 2.6%, which remained stable through the first republic (1844-1861), the annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain (1861), and the war of restoration (1863-1865). In this period, immigration from Spain and Cuba (independence war 1868-1878) seems to have contributed significantly to this growth. In 1888, the second republic counted around 382,000 inhabitants. Twenty years later a population of around 638,000 persons was registered (Moya Pons 2009).

By the beginning of the 20th century, a large proportion of the population was living in rural areas.¹⁴⁷ In addition, around 10% of the inhabitants on the island were foreigners, the largest group being Puerto Ricans coming to Santo Domingo after the American occupation. Between 1920 and 1935, the annual growth rate reached 3.4%, a percentage that reflects the immigration related to the sugar industry and the provoked European migration (Jewish and Spanish exiles). The US occupation, which broke up the communal lands and dispossessed thousands of peasants, is likely to have also caused internal migration. The annual growth for the subsequent periods was, on average, around 3.06% (varying from 2.4% to 3.6% according to Moya Pons 2009).

One of the political events that shaped the Dominican demography and identity was the dictatorship of Trujillo (1930-1961). In 1937, the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic was expelled and killed on a large scale. It is estimated that between one and twelve thousand died in the Parsley Massacre.

¹⁴⁷ To describe the general tendencies of demographic development we follow the insights put forward by Moya Pons (2009).

During this dictatorship, the national statistics were falsified in order to “whiten” the Dominican population, denying the West African origin of the majority of the Dominican population. In order to avoid calling Dominicans “*mulatos*” the censuses of 1920, 1935, 1950, and 1960 used the term “*mestizo*” and “*indio*”. Although the last census registering race was the one from 1960, to this day the category of “*indio*” has replaced the category “*mulato*” in official documents like ID cards. Moya Pons’ analysis of electoral registers shows that 82% of the Dominicans have been registered as “*indian*” while only 4% were registered as “*black*”, 8% as “*white*” and 2% as “*mulato*”. These proportions most likely reflect long-term discrimination within Dominican society.

In 1960 the population was around 3 millions, and since then it increased rapidly until the present, when the country has over ten million inhabitants. Since the 1970s, industrialization, urbanization, improvement of health care, and education, together with programs directed at the regulation of birth rates, seem to have stabilized the population growth. The urbanization was reinforced by commercialization of agriculture producing rice, sugar, coffee or cattle on large scale. By 2010, 25.6% of the Dominicans (2,421,332 persons) lived in rural areas (Moya Pons 2009).

Dominican demography has been shaped also by emigration to the United States that increased during the Trujillo era and by 2015 was close to one million. The previously mentioned law 169-14 that retroactively revoked their citizenship of thousands of peoples seems to have had a long term impact on the immigration from Haiti and as such also on the composition of the future Dominican nation.

A brief overview of demographic background of selected Dominican sites

Based on this summary overview of historical references to the indigenous peoples of Hispaniola, we may conclude that the indigenous population lasted much longer than is generally assumed. These ancestors in many cases seem to have been exposed to the long term cultural influences from the newcomers. The next section briefly summarizes the history of the locations where the fieldwork was conducted. Again, following the objectives of the overall project, where possible the emphasis is laid on the colonial history of the indigenous populations.

Boyá

Boyá is a small settlement situated six kilometers from Monte Plata in the province of Monte Plata. No archaeological surveys of this province have yet been published.¹⁴⁸ Local inhabitants reported three sites, which may be related to the pre-colonial history. It has been suggested that its founding was related to it possibly being the last resting place of cacique Enrique, one of famous leaders of indigenous resistance, but verification is problematic because of the symbolic character of that status and the scarce research on this topic.¹⁴⁹

The first direct written reference to Boyá is given by Fray Andrés de Carvajal, in his letter to the king (1571): *“there is another village, of Indians, eight leagues from this city, which is called Boyá, it has twenty five neighbors, all old and poor without children. This place is new, created by a member of the Saint Augustin order who brought the Indians here from those mountains and made them a church with a thatched roof”* (Blanco de Diaz 2009, pp. 470 - 437).

¹⁴⁸ According to Ortega (2005) in the neighboring provinces Hato Mayor, SaManá, Santo Domingo, Sánchez Ramírez, and San Pedro Macorís some archaeological sites have been registered. The province Monte Plata is not included in that overview but possibly the data will be published in the future, in the second volume of that publication.

¹⁴⁹ Some authors (e.g. Vega 1988) have argued that cacique Enrique rests in Sabana Buye, close to Baní, located near Azua, much closer to the place where the treaty was negotiated. It is perhaps worthwhile to mention that a few kilometers from Boyá is a municipality called Sabana Grande de Boyá. His properties were inherited by Doña Mencía (his wife) and Martín de Alfaro (his cousin), who later appealed for and received a confirmation of their status as caciques of the indigenous peoples from the Royal Court.

The founding of Monte Plata and Bayaguana led to a land conflict. In 1610, newcomers issued an official complaint that the inhabitants of Boyá were hunting cattle on their properties.¹⁵⁰ Indigenous residents opposed that and argued that in fact the newly established settlement prevented them from hunting. The official response was clearly partial, and even contradictory, arguing that the indigenous inhabitants did not use the land properly while those who had signed were owners of yucca and ginger farms (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945; Gil-Bermejo García 1983).¹⁵¹ This dispute is comparable to complaints about usurping lands from Cuban Caney (1562), Trinidad (1514), and Jiguaní (1700). Altogether, these disputes indicate that, like in other indigenous communities of the Americas, in the indigenous Caribbean the land was considered communal property.

Later, Boyá is mentioned during pastoral visits, which yield some demographic estimates and some bits of information about local religious life. According to church statistics, the population (of believers) in Boyá seems to have been small and to have fluctuated over time. Alcocer (1650) writes that Boyá slowly became depopulated, because the indigenous inhabitants went in search of a new life in other locations, and, as a result, only six houses remained in the location. Despite this, the church was well-built (from guano) and decorated with nice ornaments and lamps gifted by devotees of Nuestra Señora de Agua Santa. According to Alcocer, the origin of the image of the Virgin is unknown; he stated that, as far as was informed, this image had been brought by Antonio Moiano, but he acknowledged that it could also have been brought by another Dominican priest. The only certain thing was that the image was deemed to be miraculous among the population at large. Twelve years later, the depopulation of the village was said to have reached such an extent that it was decided that approximately thirty indigenous men would be brought over from La Tortuga (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957).

During his pastoral visit, Francisco de la Cueva y Maldonado (1666 in Gil-Bermejo García 1983) compared Boyá to other eastern villages like Higüey, El Seibo, Bayaguana, and Monte Plata, which were all nearly depopulated. In his comparison, Boyá was doing much better: it had twenty families, increasing in number, and a sanctuary that was taken good care of.¹⁵² The subsequent pastoral visits inform us that many of the inhabitants officially declared to belong to the Catholic faith, and later, other authors even give examples of successful conversion.¹⁵³ In his attempt to reunite and baptize enslaved persons that had run away from the French, Friar Domingo suggested nominating a “protector” and leaving them in their village, and from there the maroons would work for the Spaniards once a week: *“if the indigenous village Boyá is governing itself and does not cause difficulties for anyone, and is not being harassed by the Spanish, it seems that the blacks could also govern themselves”* (Fray Domingo 1679 in Rodríguez Demorizi 1957).

Later news about the demographic development of Boyá is less positive: there are no more than two descendants left, one “*mestizo*” and one “*castizo*” (Fernandez Navarrete 1680 in Rodríguez Demorizi 1957). Navarrete’s successor wrote that Boyá was the only indigenous village that had 37 persons of communion and 6 of confession (Friar Fernando Carvajal y Rivera 1690). Fifty years later, the population was reported as being composed of 65 persons, “Yndios,” with eleven “slaves”, and 24 men of arms (Álvarez de Abreu 1740 in Rodríguez Demorizi 1957). In the late nineteenth century, Boyá’s population is described as being

¹⁵⁰ AGI Santo Domingo, 54, Cartas del presidente al Rey (3 diciembre 1610), published in Gil-Bermejo García (1983).

¹⁵¹ The following persons were registered as owners of yucca and ginger estates around 1609: Tomás Aquirre, Antonio Gato, Domingo González, Bartolomé Pérez, Francisco Ortiz, Pedro Jorge (Councilor), Juan Hernández, Pedro Rubio, Cristóbal Santa Ana, Andrés Hernández, Mariano Hernández, Amador Hernández, Diego de Céspedes (Presbyter) (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945).

¹⁵² Carta del arzobispo don Francisco de la Cueva y Maldonado, dirigida a S. M., sobre haber hecho la Visita pastoral de la villa de Higüey, Santo Domingo, 15 de enero de 1666, as published in Blanco Díaz (2015b).

¹⁵³ Nine years later, Fray Domingo Fernández Navarrete, archbishop of Santo Domingo in his description of the island stated that Boyá had: “14 *bohios*, 43 are of confession of faith, indios and indias and some mestizos, hermitage of the Lady of Holy Water, which is now in reconstruction” (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957, p. 15).

of small size and composed of indigenous descendants (Monte y Tejada 1890 evaluated them as “mestizos”). Monte y Tejada (1890) sees the great devotion to the Virgin as the reason that indigenous descendants persisted in this location. Some of his ideas might be influenced by the novel *Enriquillo* (Manuel de Jesús de Galván 1882), published ten years earlier. According to this novel Boyá is the last residence of cacique Enrique and his subjects. The 1888 parochial census counts 450 devotees.

In general, rather than monitoring precise population growth or decline, the sporadic visits of church officials give us a picture of the small size of the population.¹⁵⁴ The process of transculturation seems to have been reinforced by the size of the population and later exponential demographic growth. If at the end of 19th century, the population was deemed to be of mixed Spanish and indigenous origin, their descendants would probably have less and less indigenous ancestry in each generation if marrying outside of the location. The close proximity of Monte Plata, and its position on the royal roads between Santo Domingo and Higüey are just a few factors that may have contributed to further demographic diversification.

According to the most recent census, Boyá has, at present, 5267 inhabitants, of which 61% are living in poverty and 14% in extreme poverty.¹⁵⁵ The present-day economy is, in general, restricted to public services and agriculture, including small scale cattle raising, and cultivation of yucca, peas, yautía, coconuts, and more recently cocoa.

Current inhabitants are aware of the historical link that Boyá has with indigenous people. According to oral history, the settlement was founded after the Virgin of the Holy Water manifested herself in an orange tree to hunters searching for cattle in the area.¹⁵⁶ At the same place a chapel – and later a church – is said to have been built by indigenous ancestors. The remains of cacique Enrique are believed to have been buried in the yard in front of the church. Among the holy relics of the church, indigenous ceramics are displayed. The fence protecting the church includes pillars with statues that have indigenous faces. This historical consciousness is further reinforced by Mr. Zambrano and his family, who have made a collection of material culture related to the history of Boyá, including some indigenous artefacts. Mr. Zambrano also published an overview of the local history, arguing against the hypothesis that Enrique is linked to Boyá. One of the residents of Boyá claims to be the last indigenous descendant, and her neighbors support this claim: Mrs. Ramona González Moreno self-identifies as being of indigenous descent on the basis of the oral tradition of her family, which includes a narrative about her own mother, a midwife who was able to communicate with indigenous ancestors. A preliminary research in the baptismal book could not verify this genealogical link, although it is possible that Mrs. González descends from the González family mentioned in 1609s as one of the owners of the estates (Rodríguez Demorizi 1945). According to oral tradition, the González and Moreno families, together with the Zambranos, Luises, and Alcántaras descend from the founders of Boyá.

¹⁵⁴ This fluctuation may be partially due to how the census of that time was constructed. To determine the population growth through these estimations remains a difficult task, because different sources use diverse categories for counting, such as the number of houses or families, of persons who made their confession or who received communion, the number of enslaved persons, or simply use very general estimates. A considerable amount of the population may have been left out, especially the inhabitants of areas surrounding the small settlement or the enslaved persons.

¹⁵⁵ The number of people living in extreme poverty is even larger when the rural sections belonging to the municipality are included.

¹⁵⁶ The original settlement of Boyá, according to tradition, is situated in a place called El Horno, where the bricks for the church are said to have been made. From there it was moved to its current location because of a huge plague of ants. The holder of the statue of Señora de Aguas Santas is dated 2 march 1533, the same year when the peace treaty with Enrique was signed. However, the holder itself seems to have been made much later. Las Casas mentions a great ant plague around 1511, but plagues tormented the region more frequently also throughout the posterior centuries.

Bánica

Bánica is a municipality situated at the bank of the Artibonito river on the Haitian border. This region has not been archaeologically investigated, with the exception of the work of investigators from the Museo del Hombre in Santo Domingo, such as Glenis Tavares and Rafael Puella Nina, who has registered the rock art in the cave of Saint Francis. Moreau de Saint-Mery (1796) suggests that Bánica was founded by Diego Velázquez in 1504. In the parochial statistics, the founding of San Francisco de Paula de Bánica is indeed dated to 1504. According to Benzo de Ferrer (2005), Bánica is one of the villages founded by the Hieronymite friars in 1516 and one of the last six indigenous villages that remained after the government of Rodrigo de Figueroa (Ferrer 2005).¹⁵⁷ However, a transcript made by Mira Caballos (2009) mentions only Baní and not Bánica among the remaining villages. According to Benzo de Ferrer, the remaining population disappeared soon afterwards. The founding of Bánica and its further demographic development might be related to the history of La Hinchá, Guaba, and St. Tomé, as in historical maps these appear on the road between these locations. However, further study of primary historical resources is necessary.¹⁵⁸

In the 17th century, conflicts with the French led to immigration from Villa Guaba and according to Moya Pons the fear of the French was the main motive for founding this town in 1664 (Hernández González 2006; Moya Pons 2010). Canarian families arrived in Bánica in 1687, the same year the church was built. At the end of the 17th century, Friar Fernando Carvajal y Rivera (1690) reported more than 160 devotees and a small number of black refugees (24), who had fled from the French mines.¹⁵⁹ Around fifty years later Bánica had four hundred faithful men, the church of San Francisco de Paula was taken good care of, and it had five brotherhoods one of them dedicated to San Miguel (according to Archbishop Álvarez de Abreu 1739 in Demorizi 1957).

During the 17th and 18th century, inhabitants of Bánica seem to have been involved in contraband with the French, selling them cattle and horses in exchange for enslaved persons and different items (Rodríguez Demorizi 1946; Ferrer 2005). With respect to the demographic situation, Moreau de Saint-Méry (1796) states that, like in the case of Boyá, the people of Banique continued to identify with their indigenous ancestry in the cases in which a historical link could be proven. Saint-Méry is skeptical about those who identified as indigenous descendants in other locations. As he argues, there were many *criollos* who claimed to be of indigenous descent and who had the corresponding physical characteristics, but unlike the situation in Boyá and Bánica their historical link could not be proven. In the same period, Bánica was famous for its mineral spring, which became very popular and was visited by people from even the French areas for curing different illnesses (Paulino Ramos 2008). As a post on the Dominican-Haitian border Bánica has been involved in different military confrontations. As a consequence of Toussaint Louverture's taking control of the French speaking part, inhabitants of frontier posts like San Rafael, San Miguel and Hinchá moved to Bánica. Soon after, his troops also occupied Bánica, which was followed by an English attack on Toussaint Louverture. Like other regions, Bánica was occupied by the French in 1856. In the parochial census of 1869, the Catholic population of this town amounted to more than 1000.

The present-day municipality has around 2112 inhabitants. The vast majority of Baniqueros - 75% - are facing poverty, and 44% face extreme poverty. This reflects the regional provincial trend in which Elías Piña has for many years had the highest score on poverty rank (Morillo Pérez 2014). The main economic

¹⁵⁷ Others were Jaragua, Mejorada, and Puerto Real, all being under the Hieronymite friars of Rodrigo de Bastidas (Ferrer 2005).

¹⁵⁸ For a map see caribsmaps.org (Title: Saint Domingue. Year: 1742. Maker: Covens et Mortier; Lisle, Guillaume de).

¹⁵⁹ The church was built with clay walls, and a guano roof; it had no income and only one priest who had passed away that year. Later registers of pastoral visits provide similar information about the amount of believers and church properties but do not contain further references to the patronal feast (and do not clarify whether it was celebrated in the cave). One of the interesting details is the reference to the use of *canoas* in the river in 1765.

activities are trade with Haiti and agriculture.¹⁶⁰ The study of Puella Nina & Tavaréz (2013, 2016) has dealt with some aspect of local healing and religious practices.

According to oral history, the founders of the village were the Alcántara, Fernández de Oviedo, Llanes, Moreta, Mora and Ramírez families.¹⁶¹ One of the most prominent events in the oral history is the appearance of Saint Francis, the local Patron Saint, who manifested himself in the cavern on the hill with the mineral spring, overseeing the municipality. Historical consciousness of the indigenous past is present in the belief that the church of this Patron Saint was built by indigenous people. In addition, the cavern where this Saint was manifested is also a place where indigenous ancestors may manifest themselves. In contrast with Boyá, there are no individuals who would identify as indigenous descendants. Some inhabitants, however, feel a strong spiritual link with the indigenous ancestors. One of the contributors to this research indicated that in the past, there lived a woman, Ms. De Los Santos, who was said to be of indigenous descent. This association was made on the base of her physical appearance and weaving skills.

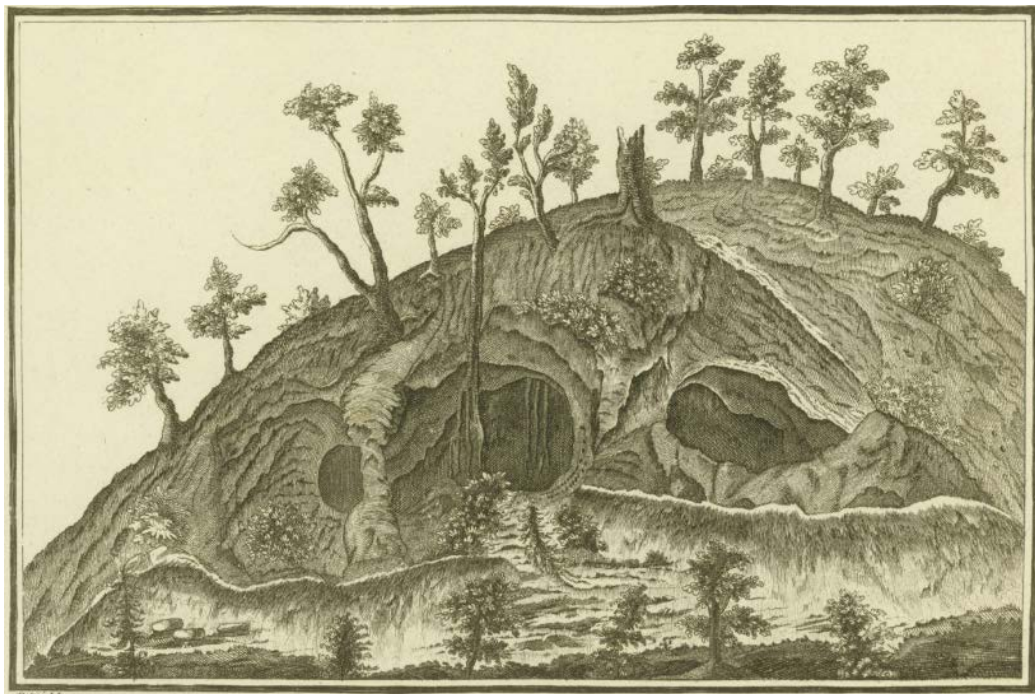


Figure 8 View of limestone caves in Bánica on the island of Hispaniola, by Ponce, Nicolás in Moreau de Saint-Méry (1791).

¹⁶⁰ Interviews with local inhabitants indicate that the traditional crops are batatas, peanuts, corn, peas, rice, yucca, yautia and fruits (incl. plantains, bananas).

¹⁶¹ Interview no. 160957.

Boca de Mana

Boca de Mana and Monte Bonito are sections of the municipality Yaguata at the bank of the Valdesia damn, which is situated on the border between the provinces of San Cristóbal (the capital of which is San Cristóbal) and Peravia (capital Baní) in the South of the Dominican Republic. The few known references about of municipal history will be situated to the provincial histories. The relationship between Baní and San Cristóbal is important because according to oral history, the founder of the section of Monte Bonito, Bibiana de la Rosa, came from Baní and an influential healer, important in this study, came from Haina, which is closely related to the history of San Cristóbal.

The local history reaches back to the time before the conquest. The study of López Belando (2011) registered multiple caverns with rock art. Based on testimonies of inhabitants more archaeological sites are likely to be found when a systematic survey is carried out. The first written reference to Yaguata is dated to 1504, when Pope Julius II in his Bull declared Hayaguata the first Archdiocese in Hispaniola, though this bull was never implemented (Peña Herrera 2006, p. 20). The name of the archdiocese of Hyaguata could refer to the province and to the village.¹⁶² Later records from the beginning of the 17th and the 18th century mention Mana as a small-scale farming region.¹⁶³ At the end of the 19th century, the new sugar mill Italia was established. Until now, this sugar mill contributes to the local economy.

Both provinces are historically agricultural regions focusing on farming, cattle raising, and sugar production. Baní figures as one of the names among the indigenous villages founded by the Hieronymites during the infamous reductions of the years 1517-1519 (Mira Caballos 2009).¹⁶⁴ In 1609, various farms holding cattle and sheep were registered. At the end of 17th century, the Baní population was reinforced by Canarian migrants (Carvajal y Rivera 1695 in Demorizi 1953). The foundation of the town around 1763 is related to an attempt of the authorities to facilitate inhabitants of the Baní valley access to religious services.¹⁶⁵ The period of the official foundation was also characterized by prosperity generated by the trade of livestock in exchange of slaves with the French part. In the second half of the 19th century the population increased to 1,500 inhabitants exporting guayacán, colorant wood (Campeche, guatapaná), sugar, coffee, tobacco, and turtle shells (Tejeda Ortiz 1978).

The history of San Cristóbal is marked by early colonization and the first sugar production along the surrounding rivers.¹⁶⁶ Current San Cristóbal is situated at the fort Buenaventura founded by Miguel Díaz who was married to an indigenous woman named Catalina who showed him gold sources along the western bank of the river Haina. Councilors of Buenaventura (Diego López de Salcedo and Fernando Mesa) were

¹⁶² Bull *Illius fulciti praesedio* of November 15, 1504. With respect to this, Blanco Díaz (2009) writes: “En 1504 fueron creados por el Papa Julio II un arzobispado y dos obispados en la isla, aquel en la provincia de Hyaguata en la que está el puerto de Santo Domingo y “la propia ciudad Hyaguatense” y estos en Lares de Guahaba y Concepción de La Vega. Accedió a ello el Santo Padre pero sin resultado; y anulada en 1511 la erección efectuada el 15 de diciembre de 1504, de la silla metropolitana Hyaguatense y de los obispados sufragáneos de Maguá y Bainoa, fueron creadas dos Iglesias, una en la Concepción de La Vega y otra en Santo Domingo, a las cuales se donaron los diezmos, quedando asegurado el Patronato Real”. Pedro Suárez de Deza, was assigned to be the bishop of Hyaguata, but was later reassigned to the Diocese of Concepción de la Vega. The diocese of Santo Domingo was erected in 1511 and is situated in the province Hyaguata.

¹⁶³ The 17th century records mention a farm named Mana, owned by Luis Alonso, and a farm named Yaguata owned by Capitan Juan Tello de Guzmán (Gil-Bermejo García 1983).¹⁶³ Yaguata was acquired forty years later by Juan Rivera y Quezada and in 1648 the farm was donated to the Jesuits who owned the farm and its herd until 1767 when the Jesuits was expelled from Santo Domingo (Reyes 1950, p. 195). This small farm later changed owners – one of them was Dona Margarita Fuentes, the spouse of Don Antonio Álvarez, who is said to have founded the community Yaguata in 1818.

¹⁶⁴ The rebellious *grifos* from Bahoruco were moved to Buenaventura (Rodríguez Morel 2007).

¹⁶⁵ Incháustegui (cited by Rodríguez Demorizi 1974) says that Baní was founded in 1764. In the 1740s, church representatives registered in Baní a population of 525 inhabitants, of which 270 were children and enslaved people. The houses of its inhabitants were said to be two or three leagues from the church; only the house of the priest was near the church. According to the words of one of the founders, José Luis Peguero, the main reason was to facilitate access to the religion. Until then, the inhabitants of the valley Baní (estimated to be 718 people) did not attend any mass due to the remoteness of the small church dedicated to the Virgen de La Regla, as well as because of their poverty, the size of their family or transportation issues (Rodríguez Demorizi 1974).

¹⁶⁶ The history of the Haina region is of interest also because one contributor who provided us with many insights about the importance of the Mana cave is from Haina.

allocated 180 indigenous slaves (Mira Caballos 1997). Around 1517, after the establishment of the fort, sugar mills were built along the Haina, Nigua, and Ocoa riverbanks producing sugar for export. The founding population was composed of African, indigenous and European inhabitants.¹⁶⁷ Since the first half of the 16th century until the end of the 18th century many inhabitants of this region were enslaved and were forced to work at sugar plantations and cattle herds.¹⁶⁸ Also here the limited influence of the official church gave space for non-institutional religious practices.¹⁶⁹ In 1796, the plantation Boca de Nigua inscribed itself into the national history as the site of a famous slave revolt followed by the sanguinary reprisal of the colonial authorities, who feared a revolution like the one taking place in the French part.

At present, the majority (88%) of the population of the municipality Yaguatae (42,325 inhabitants in total) lives in the rural area. In this case, no exact number of inhabitants was recorded for the municipal sections. According to Tejeda, the community of Mana counted approximately 2,000 inhabitants in the 1980s.

The Boca de Mana section faces an enormous degree of poverty: 96% of the population was evaluated as poor, and 55% as living in extreme poverty, according to governmental statistics. My own observations during fieldwork make me estimate even higher ranks of extreme poverty for another section called Monte Bonito. As the above-mentioned sections, the villages near the river of Mana face a lack of employment opportunities, which make the rest of the population move to the capital in search for jobs, or rely on governmental subsidies. Many inhabitants of these sections rely on small-scale agriculture (producing coffee, tobacco, tubers as yucca, guáyiga, fruits) and large-scale agriculture (rice and sugar) in the close surroundings of Yaguatae.

Few publications have mentioned the ritual use of the cavern La Mancha. Firstly, Tejeda Ortiz (1978) wrote a biography of Bibiana de la Rosa, describing her miracles, prophecies, the places associated with her role as a healer and messianic figure, and the celebration of the Virgen Mercedes.¹⁷⁰ López Belando (2011) has carried out archaeological surveys in the area and reports existence of altars of 21 Division in close by caverns. Lastly, Toño Arias Peláez, a visual anthropologist, has conducted long-term fieldwork in the communities surrounding the river Mana, focusing on the religious practices, and at this point is writing a promising thesis on the biography of Mana.

¹⁶⁷ In 1538, Diego Caballero, who owned cattle herds and two sugar mills along the river Nigua, founded a village with approximately sixty houses and a church. During this period, the population was composed of Spaniards, indigenous people, and West Africans. Diego Caballero owned two sugar factories, one at the bank of the river Nigua and the other the SepiSepi of Azua.

¹⁶⁸ According to the census of Osorio (1606), there were at least 12 sugar mills between Santo Domingo and Azua, along the rivers Haina, Nigua, Ocoa, and Itabo. In the beginning of the 17th century, there were many sugar mills, farms, with their own hermitages, and cemeteries. Nearly one hundred years later (1692) at the river Haina were 10 sugar mills, 33 farms and cattle herds, having a population over one thousand persons, the great majority being black enslaved people (990 persons, only 15 whites and 40 free black) (Carvajal y Rivera 1692). In the first half of the 18th century, there were seven sugar mills, many herds and farms, the great majority of the population being enslaved people: 15 “white”, 40 “mulatos”, and 995 “black slaves” (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957).

¹⁶⁹ Carvajal y Rivera describes also the little interests to spread the Catholic religion among the enslaved people of Haina and Nigua. Although a priest visited this zone by 1692, there was no church, and devotees were unable to pay tithes because of the deaths and robberies. At the end of the 17th century, some families from the Canary Islands settled at Nigua and in Baní (Rodríguez Demorizi 1957).

¹⁷⁰ With regard to the cavern of Mana, Tejeda Ortiz (1978) writes about Mr. Reyes de las Rosas, one of Bibiana’s associates, active as a healer, was using the cave for his practices and describes this place as a dwelling of indigenous peoples. Knowing their secrets, this associate had its altar at a huge rock, to which the worshippers were attributing supernatural powers, and he himself used a small piece of it as an amulet.

La Jaiba

Different small sections of municipalities in three different provinces –Puerto Plata, Monte Cristi, and Valverde, situated in the Cibao region – were visited during fieldwork. Some of the data presented below are from the small settlement La Jaiba, located in the municipality Villa Isabela in the northwestern part of the province Puerto Plata.

According to the most recent census, La Jaiba had 2,273 inhabitants, of which 67% were evaluated as poor, and 26% as extremely poor. The inhabitants are employed in the public sector, agriculture, small shops, work in larger towns like Imbert or Puerto Plata, or live on remittances from the USA.

As in the case of many other rural settlements, for the history of La Jaiba we have only oral history to rely on. As for the town's origin, the oral history is limited to a few names of founding families. Therefore, the history of the two provinces Puerto Plata and Santiago will be summarized in order to help us understand the broader picture of regional development, because to my knowledge there are no more specific historical data available.

The archaeological examination of Northern Cibao has yielded rich evidence of pre-colonial settlements (Ulloa Hung 2014; Herrera Malatesta 2018). The early colonial history of this region is related to the establishment of the first Spanish towns and fortifications, like La Isabela, Concepción de la Vega, Puerto Plata, Santiago, and small fortifications like Santo Tomás de Jánico, Esperanza, and later Monte Cristi (Hofman et al. 2018; Ulloa Hung & Sonnemann 2017).¹⁷¹

La Jaiba is approximately 22 kms from the first European town in the Americas: La Isabela (founded in 1493). Different publications have addressed the history of La Isabela (e.g. Chiarelli & Luna Calderón 1987; Deagan & Cruxent 2002). The general consensus is that after the discovery of gold in other regions, early settlers of this town started to move to other places. Around 1498, La Isabela was nearly abandoned. However, it seems that a small part of the population remained, established their herds, engaged in trade with cattle, and hunted wild pigs (Blanco Díaz 2009). La Isabela emerges repeatedly in records as part of a farming area. In 1609, La Isabela had cattle herds and estates producing ginger. In the late 18th century references, a river of La Isabela appears again in a cattle estate of Tomasa from El Castillo (Hernández González 2007). Now, the ruins of the first town are situated in a small community called El Castillo. Whether or not the present-day community can be linked to some of the farms or the original town is unclear. The lands around La Jaiba are fertile and used for agriculture but the population has been facing problems of water shortages, which were considered consequences of the large-scale deforestation, linked to large-scale cattle raising.

The existing cultural expressions of inhabitants of La Jaiba should be understood as a part of larger provincial rural history. Within the province where the settlement is situated, different early colonial forts and towns relied on food supplies first produced by the indigenous subjects and later by the population of mixed origins. In the *repartimiento* of 1514, around 1200 indigenous subjects were allocated to Puerto Plata, Santiago, and La Vega.¹⁷² The demographic growth of Puerto Plata during the second half of 16th century was the consequence of an economic boom related to its port, its sugar mills (30-40), and contraband (Blanco Díaz 2009).

Because of the contraband, Osorio's troops forced the inhabitants of the northern region, including those of Puerto Plata, to move to Monte Plata and Bayaguana in 1609, in order to end this illegal trade (Rodríguez Morel 2016b). At the time of that forced removal around 22 farms existed between Santiago, Montecristi

¹⁷¹ For recent archaeological studies of this region see Ulloa Hung (2014), Ting et al. (2016), Herrera Malatesta (2018), Keegan & Hofman (2017, 2018), Hofman et al. (2018) and forthcoming publications from the ongoing archaeological excavations of the Nexus 1492 project.

¹⁷² For more details on this *repartimiento* see Mira Caballos (1997). The transcript of the original document is to be found in the *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de las posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía*.

and Bayajá.¹⁷³ In complaints against the relocations, the majority of the *vecinos* and inhabitants of the northern area were described as “*commoners, mestizos, mulatos and blacks*”, who did not have large houses, or much property to lose. The farms were sustained by their respective resident families, and just one or two enslaved individuals, if they had any at all (Blanco Díaz 2009). Some of the existing farms were relocated closer to Santiago, La Vega, and Cotuí but some of them also stayed (Hernández González 2007).¹⁷⁴ After the beginning of the 17th century there are few historical references to the town Puerto Plata or the settlements in the province of the same name. This lack of information remained until the town’s repopulation by people from the Islas Canarias in 1736.

The 18th century demographic increase was stimulated by economic growth, which profited from the free port policy. Among the commodities produced in this region were onions, garlic, tobacco, salted fish, palm and mangle wood (Rodríguez Demorizi 1979). In the 1780s, Puertoplateños were forced to resettle in Santiago and other areas outside of the town, due to severe droughts and lack of medical attention within their town (Hernández González 2007). During the 19th century, Puerto Plata regained its trade town status with the majority of workers focusing on work in the port, caoba exploitation, and cultivation of vegetables, sugar, tobacco and cacao, as well as cattle raising (Moya Pons 2010). During this period, the rural population of Puerto Plata exceeded the inhabitants of the town (17,479 vs. 7,370). Sugar production remained an important contribution to the local economy until 1930 (Moya Pons 2010).¹⁷⁵ The information about the past economy of this town and the activities of its inhabitants again refers to the rural areas outside of the town.

In general, the provincial histories are based on the histories of the major towns, which are better mapped. In the case of Puerto Plata province, however, the depopulation was accompanied by a silence of the historical records for both the rural areas and the town of Puerto Plata. The town Puerto Plata is quite remote (73 km) from the location of La Jaiba. In fact, Santiago de los Caballeros is not much farther than Puerto Plata (only three km difference). Unlike Puerto Plata, Santiago escaped Osorio’s devastation and from 1609 onward it became an economic center of the region in the fertile Cibao valley. Santiago was founded as a small fortification, which was later relocated, repopulated, and which gained town status at its current location.

At the beginning of the 17th century, there were many scattered small communities outside of Santiago, cultivating crops, hunting and trading in cowhides. At the end of the eighteenth century around 26,000 inhabitants belonged to Santiago’s jurisdiction (Hernández González 2007). This part of the population is described as poor, living in small villages, dedicated to hunting and raising small numbers of domestic animals, while having little access to the institutional religion (Sánchez Valverde in Hernández González 2007). The agricultural production of this region increased, especially with the boom of the sugar industry in Haiti. In the first half of the 17th century, Santiago already had churches (with eight brotherhoods), a hospital, and around two hundred *vecinos* (Hernández González 2007). From the end of the 17th century to the first half of the eighteenth century, Canarian families moved into the region and contributed to the socio-economic development through their involvement in agriculture (tobacco and livestock) (Hernández González 2007).

¹⁷³ For the most recent archaeological study of Monte Christi see Herrera Malatesta 2018; for Bayajá see Sony Jean (forthcoming), and Ulloa Hung & Malatesta (2015).

¹⁷⁴ In the Mao region, there were various farms, such as Jaibón, Yaque, or Guayacanes. The farm of Guyacanes and Pontón, owned by Juan Cid, was moved to a location called Payavo, between the towns of Cotuí and Boyá (possible current Payabo at the river Payabo) (Blanco Díaz 2009). Some of the residents, like the owners of farms at Mao, stayed (Blanco Díaz 2009). In the late 18th century, the Tejadas family is said to have owned a farm in Mao, and Tomasa del Castillo had a farm at river of La Isabela (Hernández González 2007).

¹⁷⁵ Similarly, the rural population of Mao was around 7,324 while the town had only something over 1,800 inhabitants (Moya Pons 2010). The urban population increased later on with the commercial production of rice for the internal market.

In various periods the Santiago population suffered from violent conflicts (1660, 1805, 1822, 1863) and several earthquakes (1775, 1783, 1842), which led to demographic decline.¹⁷⁶ The ethnic composition of Santiago in the first half of the 18th century was highly diverse, including more than three hundred men of arms, the rest being “*mulatos*, free blacks, and *mestizos*” (Hernández González 2007). The lifestyle of farmers in 18th century Cibao was described by a Frenchman, Vincent (Rodríguez Demorizi 1979). Farmers lived in *bohios*, slept in *hamacas*, were self-sufficient, producing everything they needed for alimentation, ate from plates of calabash, and produced their own furniture. With some exceptions, *hateros* in Cibao did not exploit slave labor to the same extent as the sugar regions in this period. On average one cattle holder would have a maximum of four enslaved laborers.¹⁷⁷

In the 19th century, Santiago’s rural economy was dependent on the cultivation of tobacco and vegetables, as well as on cattle raising, while the town had many craftsmen, tailors working in tanneries, and producers of brick and cigarettes (Moya Pons 2010). In 1904, Santiago had around eleven thousand inhabitants and continued to grow further in the 20th century.¹⁷⁸

From this brief overview of the local histories it is clear that indigenous predecessors were present in the area where I conducted my fieldwork for much longer than is generally assumed. We must, however, consider these continuities within the general demographic development, wherein the majority of the Dominican ancestry is of non-local origin.

¹⁷⁶ Santiago’s relative proximity to the French territory led to its being subjected to attacks from there: the town was burned down and surrounding farms were plundered on different occasions. These attacks caused a decline, which in turn stimulated the Canarian immigration.

¹⁷⁷ To illustrate, an owner of one farm at Guayacanes, Melchor de Chaves, is said to have exchanged his tobacco with the French for two persons labeled as Congolese, and another as Bambara (Hernández González 2007). Also Tomasa from El Castillo had one *Creole* from Carolina in North America (Hernández González 2007). In 1776 the Congo group seems to have been quite prominent in this region. Among other groups of enslaved people in this region were also individuals called Congo, Carabali, Bambara, Mandinga, Mina, Senegal, Nago, Cotucolí (Hernández González 2007).

¹⁷⁸For more detailed information about the exponential growth of Santiago from 1800 until now, see the work of Paulino Ramos (2007).

Major tendencies in Cuban ethnogenesis

The early colonial population of Cuba was characterized by huge demographic changes. Besides the well known devastations, Velázquez' landfall and colonization triggered a profound transformation of Cuban demography and spawned unique cultural, spiritual, and social patterns. Like the Dominican history, the Cuban past is punctuated with acts of survival, human suffering, rebellion, and adaptation in the aftermath of the European invasion. After the violent occupation of selected regions, the island was colonized through the establishment of permanent European settlements between the years 1511 and 1515. Even before the first conquest was concluded, Velázquez was already allocating indigenous people to his army. The first inhabitants of the newly established cities were the men of Velázquez with their indigenous captives. The reconstruction of Cuban demographic history faces the same problems as the studies on that process in the neighboring island of Hispaniola. One of the obstacles in comprehending the formation of the Cuban society is our lack of knowledge concerning the colonial history of the indigenous people.

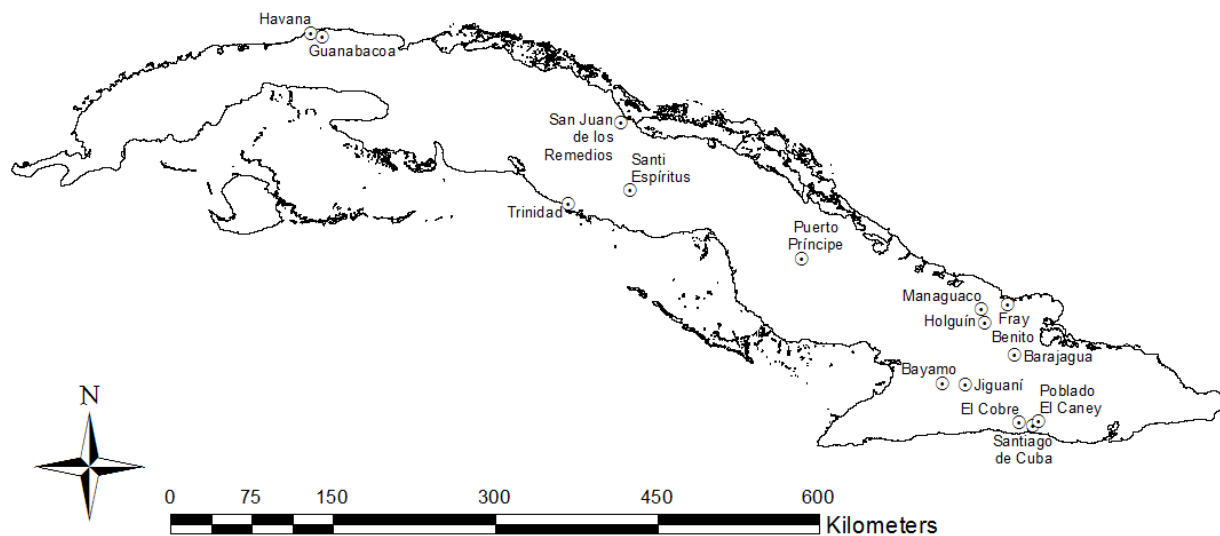


Figure 9 Cuban locations mentioned in this section.

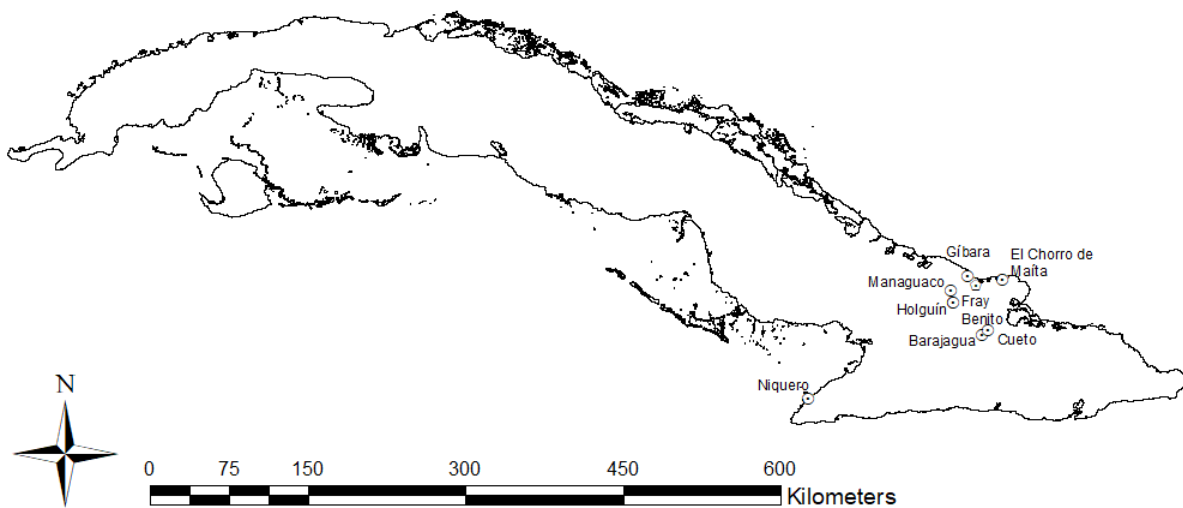


Figure 10 Cuban fieldwork locations.

Colonial history of Indigenous Cuban ancestors

As in the case of Hispaniola, the grand narrative argued that the European colonization caused a demographic catastrophe during which the indigenous peoples vanished. Unlike the Dominican case, different studies have revised this traditional vision of indigenous rapid extinction in Cuba. In 1945, Pichardo Moya wrote a pioneering article on indigenous colonial history, in which he argued that historical sources, archaeological evidence and heritage documentation suggest that this disappearance was exaggerated. Similarly, García Castañeda (1949), one of the founders of archaeology in Holguín, was one of the first to discuss the relationship between the indigenous people and the Spanish settlers in eastern Cuba (Valcárcel Rojas 2014). Pichardo Moya's call for more studies on this topic was answered much later when an increasing body of studies from historical, archaeological, and anthropological perspectives nuanced Ortiz' conclusion about the failed indigenous transculturation (e.g. Badura 2013; Barreiro 2006; García Molina 2007; Mira Caballos 2000; Portuondo Zúñiga 2014; Roura Álvarez 2008; Valcárcel Rojas 1997, 2012, 2014, 2016). These studies also suggested that the European colonization led to a complex process of transformations of indigenous life and culture.

As for Eastern Cuba, the investigations by Valcárcel Rojas and his colleagues from the CITMA department have provided new data and perspectives on the indigenous life-ways in the colonial period. Valcárcel's most recent studies (2012 - 2017) expanded the evidence for a wide array of responses of indigenous people to the colonial situation in Cuba. The author suggests, that in spite of the conquest and colonization of Cuba, leading to large-scale destruction, death, and cultural loss, the indigenous people also resisted, took refuge, isolated themselves from the colonialists, or immersed themselves in the colonial society.

As De La Fuente (2009) suggested, it is nearly impossible to establish the extension of this demographic catastrophe. While the quick decline of the indigenous population has been one of the hallmarks in the historiography, the size of the Spanish population in the same period seems to have been even smaller.

Expeditions for riches in New Spain, Peru, and other regions of Tierra Firme provoked a decline of the indigenous population and destabilized the early Spanish strata. In 1519, about one to three thousand Spaniards were living in Cuba (De la Fuente 2009; Guanache 2011). Before the Spanish governor Velázquez died in 1524, many early colonial towns became depopulated (Portuondo Zúñiga 2012a). The estimates of urban populations are sometimes likely to be downsized intentionally as these were done in a period when local authorities sought to maintain the population on the island. The first two decades after the conquest, the indigenous inhabitants were more numerous than the colonizers (in 1520 about 18,700; in 1532 about 5000). Around 1544, registers speak of only 750 persons of Spanish origin, the majority of which were men living in the new established towns with indigenous subjects.

Considering the indigenous influence in the Cuban genetical makeup it is indicative that in the context of the male predominance of the colonizers, one year after the European invasion in Hispaniola, the first child of a Spaniard and an indigenous woman was born.¹⁷⁹ Still in 1534, inhabitants of San Salvador, Puerto Principe, and Sancti Spiritus were said to have frequent sexual relations with *naborias*, natives (*naturales*) from the island and enslaved people (Portuondo Zúñiga 2012a).¹⁸⁰ One of the observers, Manuel de Rojas, complained about this and argued that the fact that Spanish and “*mestizos*” married indigenous women lead to the indigenous “disappearance”. According to de Rojas, to avoid this disappearance, indigenous women from Florida should be sent to the island. De Rojas’ petition was repeated word for word by Bishop Diego Sarmiento twenty-two years later, using the exact same arguments for bringing indigenous women from Florida (Portuondo 2012a). A prominent Cuban historian, Portuondo Zúñiga, agreed that one explanation of the indigenous “disappearance” is the process of “*mestizaje*” (2012b). This disappearance refers to groups that are distinguished by visible aspects such as skin color and hair type. Therefore, these accounts then speak about demographic loss of population, which in the public display and outsider’s evaluation would imply loss of linguistic skills, continuity of beliefs, and other cultural traits.

This “disappearance” should however be placed within the context of imposition of colonial power through the introduction of the colonizer’s genes, language, religion, and culture, within a society in which all non-European traits became a cause of stigma and a justification of exploitation. In contrast to Ortiz’ idea of failed transculturation the invisibility of certain physical and cultural markers could be explained by their integration into the new genetic and cultural reality.

The colonization profoundly affected the indigenous life-ways. After birth many people were baptized, received Catholic names, spoke Spanish, and dressed in Spanish clothes (Valcárcel Rojas 2012, 2016). For some of these changes there is documentary evidence, for example during the *repartimiento* of 1527. Catholic names prevail among the mentioned individuals, sometimes in combination with non-Catholic names like Bartolomé Zemcubadahaguano, Ximón Çococamayaciniguaya, or Beatrizica, who is now called Constanza Puacayma (AGI, Justicia 52, N. 11 in Mira Caballos 1997a).

The cultural changes did not restrict themselves to renaming, but extended to the whole spectrum of social positions and daily occupations. Indigenous people occupied different positions in society. There have been various cases of indigenous men that had a quite high social position. One of these was Miguel Velázquez, of indo-hispano ancestry, who was canon and musician in the cathedral of Santiago de Cuba

¹⁷⁹ The Spanish conquest and colonization were executed primarily by Spanish men.¹⁷⁹ Iberian women were incorporated much later into the colonial endeavor. Similarly, later transatlantic human cargoes mainly consisted of male adolescents, not of families (with the exception of Angolans, see Guanache 2011). The percentage of women arriving from the Hispanic peninsula to Cuba increased especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, but even then it never exceeded 30% of the total Iberian migration (Guanache 2011). The gender balance was recuperated later through the demographic growth.

¹⁸⁰ There are numerous accounts of how colonizers used sexual abuse and gender violence as weapons (Mira Caballos 2000). The sexual conquest of indigenous women, and later of African women, together with less violent encounters in the colonial society created a new class of people whose social status contested the colonial categories of colonizer and colonized.

around 1544 (Portuondo 2012a).¹⁸¹ During the same period (1531), indigenous enslaved persons owned by Miguel Ramírez, bishop of Santiago de Cuba (1530-1534), constructed the Franciscan convent and church in Santiago (Mira Caballos 1997a). Some of the friars of the Franciscan convent instructed indigenous children in the Catholic beliefs (Portuondo 2012a). Similar to the early and later

colonial history, Santiago church officials seem to have had servants of indigenous origin as late as 1695.¹⁸² In addition, indigenous descendants worked as servants, military troops, carpenters, potters, agriculturalists, watchmen on the coasts, constructors of the main roads (*caminos reales*), and carried out paid labor in sugar mills (Valcárcel Rojas 2016).¹⁸³

Some individual and small communities such as Macurige withdrew from permanent contact with the Spaniards and their history remains untold (Valcárcel Rojas 2016). During the initial phase of colonization some independent groups attacked Spanish farms and settlements (e.g. Baracoa 1538 and a series of insurrections in 1524-1550). One of the Spanish complaints addressed the attacks of indigenous Maroons that burned ranches, killed servants and other “tamed Indian” servants. The social organization and sense of identity of these Maroons may have been based on the still continuous practice of *areítos* (Portuondo Zúñiga 2012a, p. 55).¹⁸⁴

Thus the colonial landfall provoked a large-scale internal movement of people, which forced indigenous ancestors to enter into contact with other people of local and non-local origin. At first, these movements of people were related to the initial phase of the conquest, when people were searching refuge in the areas that were remote from the Spanish occupation. When Velázquez forcibly divided indigenous ancestors (through the *repartimiento*) he brought together inhabitants from different villages and even provinces, several of whom spoke different languages.¹⁸⁵ In the 1530s, Spaniards from Bayamo, Baracoa, Puerto Principe and Habana were allotted persons who belonged to at least 75 indigenous settlements.¹⁸⁶

These movements continued with the establishment of indigenous towns after the *encomienda* period, such as Guanabacoa (1555) or Caney (Badura 2013). The foundation of settlements such as Guanabacoa seems to have been stimulated by the fact that indigenous people already inhabited this place in 1525 (Roura Alvarez 2011). Economic developments and the establishment of new settlements further motivated indigenous intra-island and inter-island migration in the 17th and 18th centuries. Concretely, in the 18th century indigenous people from Jiguaní and Bayamo moved to Camagüey, and in the 18th and 19th centuries indigenous people from Bayamo, Jiguaní, El Caney, and Baracoa moved to Holguín, from Caney to Tiguabos and Yateras, and from Bayamo to Jiguaní (Valcárcel Rojas 2016).¹⁸⁷ Moreover, these population shifts did not remain within the boundaries of the island. The Spanish conquest implied large-scale displacement of people. The invasion of the mainland was carried out on the shoulders of the

¹⁸¹But also see: AGI/10.42.3.300//CONTRATACION,5506,N.1.R.3 1763, Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a Indias de Juan Basilio Rodríguez, ministro provincial de Santa Elena de La Florida, fraile franciscano, con Juan de Dios Rodríguez, franciscano, donado, mestizo, natural de Cuba, a Florida.

¹⁸²AGI/10.42.3.249//CONTRATACION,5456,N.3.R.40. Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a indias del doctor Andrés de Olmos, racionero de la catedral de Santiago de Cuba, con su criado mestizo Tomás de Olmos, a Cuba.

¹⁸³During the attack of Havana by Jacques de Sores, indigenous, African and Spanish people fought together, the latter being a minority. The fear of depopulation, reinforced by attacks, gave the colonizer space to negotiate the implementation of the New Laws, which could be postponed up to 1553. See also 1756 AGI/27.29//MP-VARIOS,5.

¹⁸⁴The indigenous descendants from Caney and *cobrer*os attacked Santiago and put into jail governor Villalobos 1692. During attacks of Britain militias composed of the people carrying the following colonial categories: “*mulatos, negros libres, esclavos and indios*” in 1740-41 (Portuondo 2012a).

¹⁸⁵Real Cédula a Gonzalo Guzmán, 1529, published by Mira Caballos (1997).

¹⁸⁶Some of these settlements are: Gueynaya, Guanacobi, Guanarabi, Tinama closeby to Bayamo, Mayci, Mayaguano, Guanyguanyco, Banibacoa, Guamanicao, Barajagua.

¹⁸⁷As Valcárcel suggests, these movements may be explained by a search for ways to improve wellbeing or by existing land conflicts, and in some cases they may have been motivated by relationships between families, friends, and by solidarity among the people (ethnicity) concerned. Such internal migrations were likely accelerated due to the demographic growth and changes in economic developments.

indigenous people from Cuba and Hispaniola, who were used as logistic help. Although it is not clear how many indigenous people were displaced in this way from Cuba, around three thousands of them were transported from Hispaniola to Tierra Firme in the 16th century (Mira Caballos 1997; for Cuba see further Morales Patiño 1945). The Spanish colonial enterprise on the mainland implied in turn an influx of local inhabitants from there to the Caribbean.

Non-local indigenous peoples in Cuban history

After the colonization of the mainland, indigenous peoples from the continental Americas reinforced the plurality of indigenous cultures in the Caribbean, also in Cuba. As earlier suggested, the interregional links with other islands and with the mainland were already established prior to the European conquest. The conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1844: Ch.8 [1568]) gives an interesting eye-witness account of how during the expedition of Grijalva from Cuba to Mesoamerica (1518) the Spaniards encountered on the island of Cozumel (in front of the Yucatan coast) an indigenous woman from Jamaica, who had got there two years before by accident (the large canoe with which she and ten other indigenous persons had set out to go fishing, had been driven by the currents to the shore of Cozumel). The indigenous language of Jamaica she spoke was the same as that of Cuba, so that several Spaniards, including Bernal Díaz himself, could communicate with her. She had also learned the local (Maya) language and could communicate with the native people of Cozumel. It is likely that this was not a unique incident but that such casual (but without doubt significant) encounters and communications between the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and Mesoamerica did occur more often in the pre-colonial period.

The interregional movements of Caribbean indigenous inhabitants evoked by the Spanish colonization can be considered another motor of enhancing the cultural diversity of the indigenous segments of local societies. Furthermore there were the raids and enslaving voyages of the Kalinagos and indigenous peoples from the Circum-Caribbean.

Yaremko (2016) presents the dynamics of the indigenous movements from the American continent under various conditions from the 16th century through the 19th century. During the colonial period thousands of peoples including Yucatec Mayas, Chichimecas, Nahuas, Calusas, Timucuas, Creeks, Seminoles, Apaches, and Pueblo further diversified Cuban cultural heritage. Yucatecos and Panucos were shipped to Guanabacoa close to Havana and Baracoa since the first half of the 16th century. Archaeological evidence confirms Maya presence in rural Eastern Cuban in the first half of the 16th century (Valcárcel Rojas 2012). In the first half of the nineteenth century some indigenous families from the Florida Keys and others from the Yucatan peninsula were brought to the Cienfuegos area (Zapata 2011; see also the Census of 1845 and 1861).¹⁸⁸ Later ethnographic studies affirm that some of these forced migrants were inserted in small rural settlements like Madruga in Mayabeque, Los Palos, Nueva Paz, Sabana, Cubacanacán, and Hanábana Quemada. Yaremko (2016) suggests that in the location of Hanábana Quemada there is a case of a man of Arawakan ancestry who married to a women of Yucatec Maya origin.

African ancestors in Cuban ethnogenesis

As long as the Spaniards could exploit the indigenous workforce, the transatlantic human trafficking was restricted. In 1526, it was prohibited to put indigenous people to work in mines. This abolition lead to many complaints of the Spaniards, who argued that the mines on the surface were not physically demanding for indigenous laborers (Mira Caballos 1997). The same year, the king (Charles V) was convinced by those

¹⁸⁸ In 1743 Governor Juan Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas in his letter to the King about the instruction of the indigenous peoples of Los Cayos at Florida writes that they were fleeing because they were afraid to be sent to the Bay of Jagua (Yaremko 2016).

arguments and authorized that indigenous people might be put to work in the mines again. In 1528 the Spaniards started to exploit the copper mines of Santiago. Only one year later, smallpox epidemics caused the death of thousands of indigenous people. Like in the Dominican cases, the quick decline in population was used as an argument for bringing peoples from Guinea to Santiago de Cuba (De la Fuente 2009). The extent of this decline might have been exaggerated in order to convince the Crown to send more enslaved Africans. The replacement of indigenous forced labor by African ones was much more profitable, as the taxes on the gains made by using African labor were half of those on gains made by using indigenous labor (Mira Caballos 1997). In addition, the exploitation of these enslaved men was not restricted by the Burgos Laws nor complicated by obligations of providing religious instruction.

In 1532, another appeal was issued to send new enslaved peoples from Africa. This appeal explains that it was important to bring in this workforce before indigenous peoples declined further, as Spanish survival depended on forced labor. Without these laborers the colonizers were forced to leave and exploit the peoples of Peru. In 1535, Santiago de Cuba officially estimated that there were around one thousand enslaved people originating from Africa. This African labor was employed in the construction of urban centers, mines, and agricultural fields. Some of such petitions, like that of Gonzalo Guzman (1535), asked to receive more enslaved peoples by pointing to the inequality in the allocation of indigenous laborers. Guzmán claimed that indigenous people should not be allowed to have freedom because it was neither useful for them nor for the colonizers.¹⁸⁹ Four years later, the same person asked to bring African enslaved peoples, because, as he explained, “*they (indigenous people) are few to serve but many to rise and damage*”. Around the same period, permission was asked to bring forced labor to help develop sugar mills (Fernando de Castro 1534; Ortiz 1947). After the New Laws, the *encomenderos* from whom the indigenous enslaved individuals were taken away, applied again for permissions to bring Africans. As Fernando Ortiz (1947) suggests, “*there was no end to the requests: governors, bishops, monks, municipalities, landowners, and merchants asked for slaves and more slaves. And this went on for over three centuries*” (1947, p. 280).

The newly emerging population of people born on the island (*Creoles*) should be seen in the context of general demographic developments. De la Fuente (2007a) suggests that the Cuban free population (*vecinos*) grew according to the following estimates: 1,100 in 1608, 6,000 in 1689, and 12,000 around 1755.¹⁹⁰ According to the account of bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano in 1604 the Oriente region had around 1800 people of African origin (Portuondo 2012a). This is considerable less than the 6,000 estimated for Havana alone in the same period (De la Fuente 2007a). Both numbers suggest that by the beginning of the 17th century the process of transculturation continued and incorporated large numbers of Cuban ancestors of African origin.¹⁹¹ The overview of data relevant for Cuban demographic history since 1750s until 2012 is presented in Table 2.

¹⁸⁹ Gonzalo de Guzmán sobre la condición de los indios y su sustitución por africanos (1535).

¹⁹⁰ The differences in the estimates of De La Fuente (2007) and Engerman and Higman (1997) are considerable if we keep taking into account that the population size was five times the number of the *vecinos*. According to SVD only around three hundred enslaved subsaharans were brought to Cuba in the 17th century. This obviously does not include the illicit trade, which was prominent in this period.

¹⁹¹ If we take into account that the size of the free population was five times the number of the *vecinos*.

	1750s	1774	1792	1817	1827	1830s	1841	1880s	2012
Total	170,000	171,620	273,979	553,033	704,487	775,695	1,007,624	1,494,966	11,167,325
White (%)	69	56'2	48'8	43'4	44'2	44	41'5	66	64
Free of color (%)	14	18	20'4	20'6	15'1	15	15'2	18 ¹⁹²	(36)
Enslaved (%)	25	25'8	30'8	36	40'7	41	43'3	13	

Table 2 Demographic development in Cuba in the last 250 years.¹⁹³

In total, at least 778,541 persons came from Africa to Cuba (SVD 2017).¹⁹⁴ The horrors of the slave trade are not easy to be quantified, as this has had an enormous negative impact on many societies, with consequences even today. Large-scale slave trade began in the 16th century with the Portuguese traders. Gómez Reynel received a royal decree to bring every year approximately 4,500 enslaved men to Cuba (Rawley et al. 2005). The peak of the slave trade is related to the expansion of the sugar industry between 1790 and 1860. In the 18th century there were approximately 68,000 enslaved persons, and in the 19th century disembarked around 710, 000 enslaved people in Cuba (SVD 2017). According to Engerman and Higman (1997), between 1815-1819 and 1835-1839 more than 1,137,300 enslaved individuals was seized in various regions of West Africa and brought to Cuba. The sugar and coffee boom in Cuba has lead also to considerably differences between Cuban and Dominican demographic histories (see Table 3).

In total, there has been also much more African captives brought to Cuba then to Spanish speaking Hispaniola. The West-Central African influxes have been constantly renewed, with new ships coming to the Cuban harbors. One of likely factors in differences in the demographic development in Cuba and the Dominican Republic is the fact that the slavery in Cuba was abolished in 1886, which was 64 years later than in Hispaniola and 93 years after the revolution in Haiti. This is an important factor for the preservation of cultural traits, oral history, and knowledge related to slavery. One of the breathtaking testimonies of the late Cuban slave period is Esteban Montejo's description of his life in Barrancones, and later his flight and survival in the Cuban mountains (Barnet 1966).

¹⁹² Plus 3% Asians.

¹⁹³ Based on Engerman and Higman (1997) and the census of 2012. The estimate of the Cuban population between 1774 and 1841 is based on Naranjo Orovio (2007).

¹⁹⁴ Based on official registers, it has been estimated that at least 111,000 persons, who were embarked with the destination Cuba, passed away on their journey (SVD 2017).

	1750s		1830s	
	Cuba	Hispaniola	Cuba	Hispaniola
Total	170,000	70,625	775,695	
White (%)	69	44	44	42
Free of color(%)	14	44	15	42
Enslaved (%)	25	13	41	16

Table 3 Comparison Cuba and Hispaniola in the 18th and 19th centuries.



Figure 11 Scenes from Havana, end of the 19th century by Landaluze in Bachiller y Morales (1881).

The heterogeneity of the Cuban ancestors of African origin

Similar to what happened in Dominican history, the forced African migration to Cuba was marked by great heterogeneity. According to Guaniche (2011), based on parochial books, the majority of the enslaved people that were brought to Cuba throughout the colonial history belonged to the Niger-Congo language family.¹⁹⁵ Their presence in ecclesiastical statistics may be due to the early conversion of this region to the Catholic faith. Another important multi-ethnic group called Lucumí grew especially between the second half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the 19th century (Guaniche 2011).¹⁹⁶ From the present-day Benin area (the old kingdom of Dahomey) came Ararás, while present-day Carabal on the Nigerian coast was the

¹⁹⁵ According to Guaniche, the Congo included different groups from those living across the region below the Congo river up to the south of Angola. These included Banda, Boma (probably from the surroundings of the city Boma, not the ethnic group Boma), Bubi, Kamba, Kongo, Kuba, Mbala, Mbamba, Mbundu, Ndamba, Orimbundu, Songe, Sundi, Yaka (Guaniche 2011).

¹⁹⁶ In the Lucumí group Guaniche included Yoruba, Bariba, Bini, Bolo, Chamba, Gbari, Hausá, Mosi, and Nupe. Others have argued that among the Lucumí were also Yorúbá, Nago, Arará, Ajá, Fon, Mahi, Ewé. According to Guaniche's description the Arará coincide with the present-day Ewe and Fon-Gbe people from Benin (former Dahomey).

homeland of the so-called Carabalís. This hyper-diversity was also related to a high percentage of exogamy. However, parochial books from Pinar del Río (1822-1870) show also some cases of couples married within their own ethnic group (see Guanche 2011).

As the popularity and composition of the Cuban brotherhoods indicate, transculturation went beyond genetic exchanges. In spite of being considerably fragmented by the process of colonization, the colonized shared religious ideas and practices around established models of “colonizer institution”, which were consequently reinterpreted in a creative manner. As the richness of the Cuban religious practices indicates, also Cuban ancestors of West African origin managed to maintain many of their own traditions and worldviews.

Period/Region	Senegambia & off-shore Atlantic	Sierra Leone	Windward Coast	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra	West Central Africa & St. Helena	South- east Africa & Indian ocean islands	Totals
1601-1700	0	0	0	0	0	336	0	0	336
1701-1800	2702	10282	713	19817	5241	15241	10007	4030	68033
1801-1900	18453	79219	12236	16727	106161	173925	233530	69921	710172
Totals	21155	89501	12949	36544	111402	189502	243537	73951	778541
% of Total	2,72%	11,50%	1,66%	4,69%	14,31%	24,34%	31,28%	9,50%	

Table 4 Overview of regions prominent in Transatlantic Slave Trade Cuba 1601-1900.¹⁹⁷

Distinctive character of the demographic history of the eastern Cuba

Various economic specializations within specific regions have contributed to the formation of distinctive regional demographic characteristics. When Havana started to gain significance as a port, the 16th century economy of the Eastern Cuba (Oriente) started to shift towards the construction of estates with cattle ranches relying upon indigenous and African labor.

As earlier suggested, the population of the first colonial settlements in Eastern Cuba was of small size and there were many mixed marriages. The posterior composition of the Eastern Cuban towns is displayed in the Table 5.

¹⁹⁷ Retrieved from from slavevoyages.org, accessed on 1 August 2017.

Period	1570 ¹⁹⁸		1604 ¹⁹⁹				1620 ²⁰⁰		1774 ²⁰¹				1861 ²⁰²		
Place	<i>Inhabi- tants</i> 203	<i>Married Indians</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>Whites</i>	<i>Inhabi- tants</i>	<i>Souls</i> 204	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Whites</i>	<i>Free of Color</i>	<i>Enslaved</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Free of color</i>	<i>Enslaved</i>
Baracoa	8	17	100			20	30		350	1001(4 5%)	1001(45 %)	220 (10%)	4342	4308	2708
Santiago	32	20 Caneyes	77	221	327	65	250	12	313	6525 (36%)	6084 (33%)	5765 (31%)	25406	35295	34500
Caneyes		20							294						
Puerto Principe	25	40	150	600	750	150	300	6	2539						
Bayamo	70	80	250	1000	1250	250	1500		4180	5995 (48%)	4023 (32%)	2430 (20%)	12081	10803	2708
Holguin jur.										1606	547	287			

Table 5 Selected census of the Cuban East demographic history.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁸ Visit of the Bishop Juan del Castillo through the island of Cuba, 1570 in Portuondo Zúñiga (2012b).

¹⁹⁹ The census directed by Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano, Wright and Macías Domínguez summarized by Portuondo Zúñiga (2012a).

²⁰⁰ Relación del obispo fray Alonso Enríquez de Armendáriz, 1620 in Portuondo Zúñiga (2012b).

²⁰¹ Ramón de la Sagra (1838) cited in (2012a).

²⁰² Noticias estadísticas de la isla de Cuba en 1862, as published by Portuondo Zúñiga (2012a).

²⁰³ Vecinos is generally to be translated as inhabitants. See earlier explanation of the vecino.

²⁰⁴ This count included together the following categories: Spanish, Blacks, Indians, and Mulatos.

²⁰⁵ The information in this table is from various historical documents as published by Portuondo Zúñiga (2012a,b,c).

First displayed accounts from 1570 are from Bishop Del Castillo who registered inhabitants with the status of vecino and indigenous persons who were married in some of the towns in the Eastern Cuba (Portuondo 2012a). Accordingly, Bayamo was the major town, considered to be the best off economically, profiting from farms in the surrounding area. In addition, the richness of the Bayamo was closely related also to contraband (Portuondo 2012a).

Another important document that gives us insights into the early 17th century composition of Cuban society is the account of the visit of Bishop Cabezas (1608). Bayamo continued to be the biggest town, followed by Santiago de Cuba, El Cobre, which gained clearly in economic importance, Puerto Principe and Baracoa, which appears as a predominantly indigenous town (Portuondo 2012a). The composition of these towns is of multiple origins including still communities of indigenous descended.

In his later description (1608) Cabeza reveals the criteria of the Spanish definition of indigenous population: for Cabezas some villages could not be called indigenous because they had been “hispanized”. Most likely, this notion was also applied to hispanized indigenous inhabitants of Baracoa. The indigenous segment of society was definitely changing in its culture and ancestral heritage. The indigenous descendants lived in a society of strong Spanish influences but of African ancestors and an influx of indigenous peoples of non-local origins. According to Cabezas, part of the indigenous population localized at peripheries of Bayamo and Puerto Principe seems to have been brought in from New Spain.

Bishop Alonso Enríquez de Armendáriz registered more details of the composition of these towns in 1620 (Portuondo Zúñiga 2012a). Bayamo maintained its primacy with a population. The Bayamo town was criticized for not being devoted enough to the Catholic religion. Like Bayamo’s Santiago’s inhabitants (including those closeby copper mines) were of including colonizers and colonized (i.e. indigenous people, of African ancestry and people of mixed origin). This bishop furthermore argued that the individuals of combined indigenous and Spanish ancestry were “not truly indigenous” and were to be treated and instructed in the same way as the Spanish population. For example, indigenous inhabitants of Bayamo were said to be so mixed that it was difficult to distinguish between the different groups, and in Santiago they were assimilated with Spanish so that it was not necessary to instruct them separately in the religious doctrine. Again, we see here how Spanish authorities saw the imposed acculturation – or at least the public exercise of Spanish religion and customs – as incompatible with the continuation of indigenous traditions.

The 17th century economy of Cuba was dominated by large estates with cattle and mines. In Santiago there were sugar mills and many farms with cattle; in Bayamo the greater emphasis was on legal and illegal trade with sugar, tobacco, and cattle (especially cowhides). The demand for copper and cattle from Jamaica and Saint Dominique and an increase of the plantation production increased the contraband. The peace treaty of Rijswijk (1679) had a positive impact on the economy of Eastern Cuba as it reduced piracy. With the English occupation of Jamaica, the local Spanish families, freedmen of color, and enslaved people were forced to move to Bayamo, Santiago and Trinidad (Portuondo 2012a). The fortification of San Pedro de la Roca was built in Santiago and sugar plantations relied also on an immense amount of slave labor in Santiago. In contrast to the sugar industry and the mines, the cattle estates relied upon the labor of only a few enslaved men. In this context, the family members of the owners of small farms participated in carrying out the work.

The 18th century was a period of progressive demographic development also in Eastern Cuba. In comparison to the populational growth of Habana in the same period (1774) the amount of the enslaved population in the Western jurisdiction was three times larger than in the Eastern Departement. The jurisdiction of Santiago focused on growing coffee, on sugar plantations, and copper mines and had more enslaved black laborers than Holguin, Jiguaní, and Bayamo, where the free populations (of Hispanic or

mixed origin) worked on farms and tobacco fields. In fact, the North East has maintained the farms since the second half of the 16th century up to the 18th century.

Because of the Haitian revolution, thousands of people of different social statuses fled to Cuba in the years 1791-1805 (Portuondo 2012a). Owners of sugar and coffee plantations contributed to the transition towards monocrop cultivation with extensive exploitation of enslaved labor in Eastern Cuba. This process was also accompanied by a move to populate the interior of the island and to construct railways, which led to the foundation of new settlements and to support for the infrastructure of the sugar industry (Portuondo 2012a). The sugar revolution and the associated influx of Africans in the years 1792-1846 changed the general composition of the Cuba population, as people of Afro-European ancestry became more numerous than those of Hispanic origin. The new character of the population was further modified by official policies in the first part of the 19th century when royal decrees stimulated an influx of “white” migrants to the island.

The increase of the plantations also led to the growth of urban centers. Therefore, enslaved people were concentrated in the city and sugar mills. The census of 1861 shows clear differences between populations in relation to their economies (see the following table). This census is also one of the few that specify what is meant by the category “white”. In this census whites are defined as “whites, Asians, Mexicans, Yucatecos”. The growth of the white population in rural areas was stimulated by the official policies to “whiten” the island, establishing new settlements in regions that until that time had been depopulated, in order to create services for the sugar plantations. The war of ten years and the abolition of slavery in 1886 stimulated the internal migration.

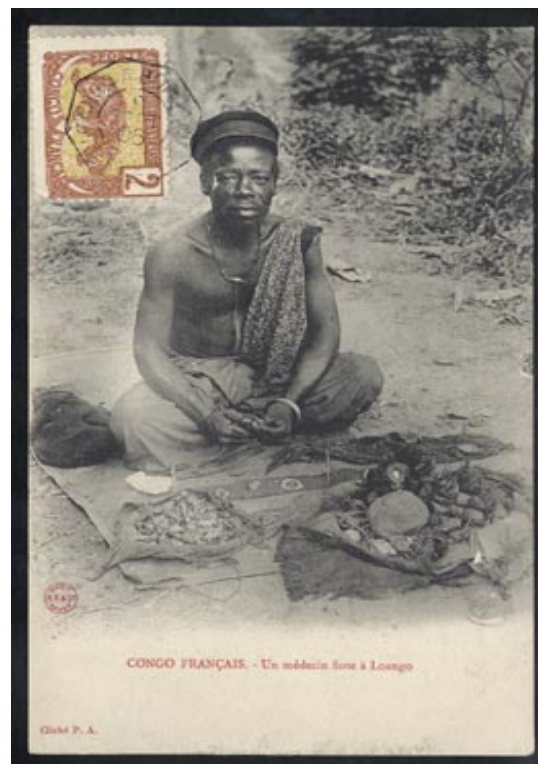


Figure 12 “Vili Diviner”, Loango in what is now the Republic of Congo, taken around 1900.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Retrieved from National Museum of African Art Smithsonian Institution, <https://africa.si.edu/> [accessed on 28 january 2018].

A brief overview of demographic background of selected Cuban sites

Within these regional demographic developments particular histories of localities should be considered as well. The following pages discuss briefly some of the known aspect of the history of locations where I did my fieldwork (the data which will be presented in Part II). Again the emphasis is on the information about the indigenous inhabitants during the colonial time.

Jiguaní

Jiguaní is one of the municipalities in the province Granma, situated approximately 25 km from Bayamo, one of the towns founded by Velázquez in 1515. Together with Caney and Guanabacoa, Jiguaní was one of the officially founded villages of indigenous descendants in Eastern Cuba. Various archaeological sites have been registered in the surrounding areas of Jiguaní. In spite of the archaeological sites' great informative potential regarding the transformation of indigenous cultures after the European conquest, systematic excavations have not yet been carried out at these sites.²⁰⁷

The first historical references to the region of Jiguaní date from 1535. In that year, Manuel de Rojas mentions that close to Bayamo a village was to be founded where indigenous peoples would be located in order to experiment whether they can live in freedom. Whether this settlement has any link with the later village of Jiguaní is unclear, however. About one hundred and fifty years later, General Pardon (1684) identified communities of indigenous descendants in the surrounding areas of Bayamo.²⁰⁸ These settlements enter the registers because of disputes among the herd owners in these locations. Miguel Rodríguez, son of a Spanish man and an indigenous woman of Bayamese origin, owner of one of the herds in Jiguaní Arriba, disputed with Géronimo Palacín, owner of Jiguaní Abajo, about land rights. Miguel Rodríguez opposed Palacín's intention to sell the herd in Jiguaní Abajo because he claimed this land was granted to indigenous people, it was common property, inalienable, and therefore its sale was against the law (Frómeta Suárez 2003). Their dispute informs us about successful integration of indigenous descendants into colonial society preserving their own cultural concepts.

Soon after, in 1701, Miguel Rodríguez succeeded in founding Villa San Pablo de Jiguaní, which was populated by indigenous descendants that had suffered mistreatment by the Spaniards (SEH 1847).²⁰⁹ The town is named after the river Jiguaní; its Patron Saint, San Pablo, was renowned as the Christian symbol of conversion. In 1703 Jiguaniceros were granted a substantial part of land. The construction of the church (1720) and the municipality building (1737) also display the wealth of the local inhabitants. The first priest was Andrés de Jerez, who baptized in the church since 1739 (SEH 1847).

Over one hundred years later (1847), the population of Jiguaní was estimated as approximately 2,000 people, and the total of its jurisdiction exceeded 10,000 people (SEH 1847). The majority of its urban population was identified as "white" (1340), with 275 "free brown (*pardos*)", 25 "brown slaves", 90 "freed black", and 212 "black slaves" (SEH 1847). The number of the indigenous descendants in the jurisdiction is difficult to estimate. If there were indigenous descendants they seem to have been integrated into of these categories. Valcárcel has confirmed in his study (2017) the bias of the official censuses and has argued that this bias was motivated by the formation of the sugar industry and commercial agriculture. Although the baptismal records have not been preserved, at least in Bayamo, the church kept using a separate registration

²⁰⁷ Among the registered sites are La Yaya, Dos Ríos, La Pelua, Jiguaní Abajo, Jiguaní Arriba, El Fuerte, El Huerto, Calabazar, El Faldón, Las Cabezas, La Rinconada, and Cuatro Caminos. Some of the materials together with the map of the sites are displayed in the Jiguaní Museum.

²⁰⁸ Among these were location Santa Ana, Guanarubí, Jiguaní Arriba, Los Quemados and Sao Cautillo.

²⁰⁹ Rodríguez executed this together with his brothers Domingo and Antonio and with the help of other countrymen, including a foreigner: José Sanchez from Mexico (SEAP 1847).

for indigenous people until 1803 (Yero Masdeu 2016). In the censuses of 1778 and 1814, the indigenous descendants of Jiguaní, Caney, and Tiguabos were categorized as “whites” and “*mulatos*” in order to diminish their right as indigenous people (Portuondo 2012b; Valcárcel Rojas forthcoming).

The 19th century economy of Jiguaní and places in its jurisdiction was based on agriculture, cultivation of tobacco (important for the national market), corn, yucca, plantain, rice, but also on manufacturing tiles, brick, hats of *yarey*, and wax. The census of 1847 shows that the tradition of weaving was alive. Finally, according to this census the Jiguaníeros cured themselves on large scale with green medicine. In 1824 Jiguaní lost its rights and privileges as an indigenous village. At the onset of the Great War a fort was built (Frómata Suárez 2003).

According to the most recent census (2012) Jiguaní had 60, 573 inhabitants, of which 45% lived in the rural area outside of the town.²¹⁰ This census documents that 46% of the population was “white”, while 51% belonged in the category “*mestizo* or *mulato*”, and 3% were “black”.²¹¹ The present-day economy relies on the production of marble, tobacco, poultry, and asphalt. There are plans for the promotion of tourism. Consciousness about the indigenous past is very much alive.²¹² The local museum, library, *casa de la cultura*, radio, publications, different schools, all disseminate the knowledge about Jiguaní’s indigenous past. Hugo Armas, the historian of the town, could establish a genealogical link between certain families and indigenous ancestors: for example the Anayas family can be linked to the cacique Anaya mentioned by Manuel de Rojas.²¹³

Barajagua

Barajagua is small settlement, situated in the Holguín province that holds a great importance for the national history because of being one of the sites displaying a contact of material Spanish and indigenous expressions and because of its link to the appearance of the Virgin of Charity, the Patron Saint of Cuba in 1612.

Barajagua (Bacaxagua) is one of the first regions in which Velázquez had contact with indigenous people in 1513 (Portuondo 2012a). In the first half of the 16th century (1547) indigenous people were raising pigs in one of the estates of Juan Escribano (Mira Caballos 1997). Also, later in the 16th century some of the resistant indigenous troops were residing in the Barajagua province (Mira Caballos 1997). The first settlements in Barajagua supplied the royal copper mines next to Santiago (founded in the 1530s) with crops, meat, and salt (Peña Obregón et al. 2012). The archaeological excavations of sites in the same location confirmed pre-colonial human occupation of these sites, which seems to have continued up to the first half of the 16th century (Valcárcel Rojas 1997). The human presence in the colonial period can be related to the estates with cows that appeared in 1598 (Valcárcel et al. 2014; Peña Obregón et al. 2012). During the early colonial period, Barajagua maintained itself as a farming region, and continued to do so in the following centuries. This small settlement entered national history with the Marian manifestation during the beginnings of the 17th century. An account by Juan Moreno (1687) described how the Virgin of Charity manifested herself at the Nipe Bay to three children, two of indigenous descent and another of West African origin. After the discovery, these boys went to announce the miracle in the *hato* Barajagua where also the first hermitage was built (Valcárcel et al. 2014). As in the case of Bayamo, the 17th century economy

²¹⁰ Población de Cuba. Retrieved from <http://www.one.cu/EstadisticaPoblacion/EstadisticaPoblacion.asp>. [accessed on 18 May 2017].

²¹¹ Retrieved from <http://www.one.cu/publicaciones/cepde/cpv2012/20131107resumenadelantado/Tablas/4.pdf>. [accessed on 18 May 2017].

²¹² But also proud for its role in the independence war and for being a place where José Martí has died. This event is commemorated in the museum by a vessel with earth at display with the following description: The Earth of Dos Ríos, the sacred place of the nation where General José Martí Pérez has fallen.

²¹³ In 1535, Rojas informs us that one cacique called Anaya, was removed with his wife and allocated to one of the *vecinos* of Bayamo. A la Emperatriz Manuel Rojas Santiago 1535 (in De La Sagra 1861).

of this region profited from the proximity to the Bay of Nipe, securing a safe harbor for contraband in meat, cowhides, candles, soap, and salt (Valcárcel et al. 2014).

Managuaco

While Managuaco is distant from Barajagua (approx. 60 km), both settlements have some similarities in their importance for the regional religious history. Managuaco is also a small rural settlement in the Holguín province, where the first Catholic hermitage was built in 1692.

The inhabitants of Managuaco engaged in small-scale farming and cattle raising since the end of the 17th through the 19th century (Rodríguez Bruzón 2015). Animal husbandry (especially pigs, horses, and cows) and the cultivation of crops (most likely yucca, corn, plantains, sugarcane, coco, tobacco) appear to have been the major sources of income throughout recent centuries (Rodríguez Bruzón 2015).

The scarce information about the history of Managuaco and Barajagua guides us to see their development as a part of the provincial history. In the present-day Holguín province there are multiple lines of evidence confirming the integration of the indigenous population within the urban and rural societies. Vega Suñol's study (2014) of parochial books from the church of San Isidro provides data that show that indigenous descendants were part of the 18th century population of Holguín province. More specifically, that study suggests that in the years 1713-1819 there were at least 274 indigenous baptisms, of which the majority were of persons who descended from two indigenous parents (173), or at least from an indigenous mother (96), but in some cases (6) from one parent of African ancestry (Vega Suñol 2014). The last baptism of an indigenous child was registered in 1860 in the church of San José de Holguín (Vega Suñol 2014). These findings are confirmed by Novoa Betancourt's analysis (2014) of the rural census from 1775 wherein 7.5% (137) of the total of 1,830 inhabitants were registered as indigenous people. Some of these were foremen, owners of estates in Ejido, but the majority were laborers. The excavations of the first colonial buildings in Holguín where ceramics of indigenous traditions were found confirm that some of indigenous pottery skills were existent between the 17th till the 19th century in this urban section (Jardines Macías et al. 2014).

The indigenous people were present also throughout the colonial period in different rural settlements in the Holguín province. Early in the 1550s, Castañeda (1949) addressed the transculturation mechanisms within these spaces. Drawing on material evidence from sites at Barajagua, Banes, El Yayal and El Pesquero, Castañeda argued that the first two were contact sites, while the latter two were long-term occupations, showing intensive relationships between the Indigenous people and the Spaniards (Valcárcel Rojas 2014). Local investigations have registered more sites where materials of European and indigenous traditions were encountered together.²¹⁴ Of these sites, Chorro de Maíta exposed complex place formations, where the local and non-local indigenous individuals coexisted (individuals from Cuba, other Caribbean islands, and Mesoamerica), with some people of West African and mixed origins (Afro-hispanic, Indo-hispanic) (Valcárcel Rojas 2012). The analysis of the data from Chorro de Maíta also suggests influences of the Catholic faith in indigenous mortuary treatment, causing the modification of some of the indigenous cultural traditions. A particular case, exemplifying both continuity and change of indigenous culture, is a child's burial. The forehead of this child (age 3-5) was modified in conformity with a pre-colonial tradition, but several grave goods, such as a brass tube and coral beads along with a jet bead, indicate colonial

²¹⁴Among these sites are: Alcalá, El Porvenir, Los Buchillones, Potrero del Mango, Maniabón, Loma de Baní, Loma de los Mates, La Siguaraya, La Guanaja, María Luisa, El Jobo, and El Chorro de Maíta (for more details see Novoa Betancourt 2015 and Valcárcel Rojas 1997).

influences. The jet stone is one of the Moorish influences in Catholic religion, and is currently used in the Caribbean as well as the Iberian Peninsula for protection against the evil eye.

In both Barajagua and Managuaco, the awareness of a link with the local indigenous past has been reinforced by recent archaeological research conducted by Valcárcel and his colleagues from the CITMA Holguín. In the case of Barajagua, this identification is further developed through the historical knowledge about the manifestation of the Virgin. In Managuaco the connection to indigenous ancestors has been developed through *Espiritismo del Cordón*. One of the *Espiritismo* believers has attributed his spiritual link with the indigenous ancestors to a possible genealogical descent. This would not be unique in the region as according to the oral tradition of the Zaldívar family from Fray Benito they are indigenous descendants as well; and other members of the community share this conviction.



Figure 13 Scenes from the Cuban rural area at the end of the 19th century by Landaluz in *Bachiller y Morales* (1881).

Revising the indigenous component in demographic histories

Understanding the indigenous contributions to the present-day medicinal culture is conditioned by knowledge of demographic history, including that of relations among different population groups. This chapter highlighted some major tendencies of the development of the indigenous component within the demography of Hispaniola and Cuba. The earliest, more or less accurate documentary information on the size of the indigenous population in Hispaniola comes from 22 years after the first colonial encounter in Hispaniola and from the same time in the early colonial history of Cuba. Although the vast majority of the 26,000 people was located in mining towns, a substantial number was also sent to towns with agricultural and trade based economies.²¹⁵ Only four years later, before the friars were able to reallocate the indigenous people into new villages, their number officially dropped to four thousand. Some of these survivors were distributed to indigenous villages which were established in 1519.²¹⁶ While some of the names could

²¹⁵ These were Azúa, Buenaventura, Bonao, Lares de Guahaba, Puerto Plata, Puerto Real, San Juan de Maguana, Vega, La Sabana, Santo Domingo, Salvación de Higüey, Santiago, La Verapaz, and Yáquimo.

²¹⁶ The seventeen indigenous villages that were earlier mentioned by Mira Caballos (1997).

suggest that these were located in the vicinity of towns that have the same names today (Yaquimo, La Sabana, Santo Tomás de Jánico, Verapaz, San Juan, Báni), their exact location as well as the later history and the biographies of their inhabitants, are unclear.²¹⁷

After the *encomienda* was dismantled, indigenous people were settled in the regions of the cape of San Nicolás, Tiburón, the province of Ciguayos, and Samaná. In the second half of the 16th century, indigenous persons were residing in Boyá, La Mona, Sabana, Santo Domingo, La Yaguana, Yaquimo, and settlements nearby La Vega, Buenaventura and Santa Cruz de Acayagua.²¹⁸ The 17th century resources briefly mention indigenous descendants in Azua, Boyá, Cibao, Yaguana, Tortuga, and on the bank of the river Yguamo. At the end of the 18th century, inhabitants of Bánica and Boyá are acknowledged as indigenous descendants. While in this period more people self-identified as such, their identity was doubted because, according to one author (Moreau de Saint-Méry 1796), it could not be proven historically. Some people of mixed ancestry (indigenous, African, and European) were registered by other sources in Santiago. By the end of the 19th century the inhabitants of Boyá are described as having mixed racial composition including phenotypic traits that are considered to be typical for the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Cuba's demographic development is marked by similar long-term continuities of people of indigenous origin in both urban and rural locations. The small size of the indigenous people present in the major towns in the second half of 16th century and the first half of the 17th century have to be considered within the context of the overall small size of the population at large. The focus on the regional and local history brings to light significant differences not only in the economic but also in the demographic history. Colonial authorities registered indigenous people and in the later period their descendants in the following Cuban settlements: Bayamo, Baracoa, Puerto Principe, Sabana/Los Remedios, Sancti Spiritus, Habana, Guanabacoa, Caney, and Macurige. With the exception of San Juan de Remedios, all these settlements maintained indigenous population or its descendants in the 17th century. Camagüey, Caney, Guanabacoa, Jiguaní and Holguín had populations of indigenous origins throughout the 18th century, and Holguín until the beginning of 19th century. As the histories of Boyá, Jiguaní, Caney or Guanabacoa illustrate, indigenous people lived in settlements that were not isolated but rather close to important economic centers.

On both islands, demography was profoundly shaped by the decline of indigenous people, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the series of immigration waves (including Canarian and Caribbean immigration), emigrations (16th century till present), epidemics, population movements after the Peace Treaty of Basel in 1795, series of foreign occupations, together with other particular local historical events like the evacuation of the North, the profound economic changes (production of monocultures, industrialization), agrarian reforms, and technological changes.

Based on this overview of historical references to the indigenous people of Hispaniola and Cuba, we conclude that the hypothesis of the failed indigenous transculturation needs to be revised. The indigenous population lies at the foundation of the early colonial Creole societies on both islands. It is also worthwhile to emphasize that the indigenous population was composed of people of local and non-local origin, and that the labels defining their identities were imposed by the colonial regimes and likely ignore self-identification with their own ancestors and heritage. The colonial emphasis on race should not blind us for the multiple ways in which indigenous descendants were able to maintain distinct ethnic identities, medicinal cultures and cultural transfer.

²¹⁷ Whether San Juan de Ortega and one of the first villages San Juan de Maguana or San Juan Bautista, were among the villages established by the Hieronymites is unclear. While Mira Caballos (2007) locates some of the villages such as Santiago and La Mejorada, in the vicinity of the earlier Spanish settlements carrying the same name, both San Juan Bautista and San Juan de Ortega are located quite far from San Juan de Maguana.

²¹⁸ At present there is a small village Dicayagua next to the Jánico, near to San Tomé de Jánico, one of the first forsts established by Spaniards in this region.

The consideration of the indigenous influences in the transculturation process does not deny that the number of people of indigenous descent was always relatively small when compared to the immigrant population in each of the particular historical trajectories of the discussed settlements and regions. The regional and local histories complement and nuance the general developments defined earlier for Cuba as the counterpoint between the sugar/African ancestors and tobacco/European ancestors. This development creates a historical context from which the present healing traditions emerges.

The colonization and the transculturation made large part of the strata of the population including indigenous descendants invisible in the historical records. The poem of Morales (2001), drawing our attention to the indigenous women of low social status, cited at the beginning of this chapter, reminds us how little is known about the commoners and marginalized strata of the population. The demographic overview clearly shows that neither *caciques* nor *conquistadores*, but the commoners of plural origins were the forefathers of the majority of the present population.