

Indian Harvest: The Rise of the Indigenous Slave Trade and Diaspora from Española to the  
Circum-Caribbean, 1492-1542

By

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## Introduction

### *From a “Structure of Conjuncture” to a “Shatter Zone”*

This dissertation investigates the impact of the Spanish conquest on the indigenous populations of Española (present day Dominican Republic and Haiti) and the subsequent rise of an Indian slave trade and diaspora throughout the circum-Caribbean. Taínos of Española were not only the first peoples encountered by the Spanish in the New World, but the patterns arising from these early interactions eventually shaped all subsequent Spanish and indigenous relationships throughout Latin America. Despite Española’s significance as the first European settlement in the New World, previous scholarship has minimized the importance of the region, even characterizing it as merely a “staging ground” or “antechamber” for the more important conquests of Mexico and Peru.<sup>1</sup> This project highlights the role that Española, and her indigenous peoples, had on the formation of colonial institutions throughout Spanish America. In particular it argues that indigenous slavery was one of the most significant practices that developed through the process of “pacifying” and populating Española, ultimately shaping legal, social, religious, and economic colonial institutions.

Just as many scholars jump over the formative years of the Spanish conquest in the Caribbean, they also assume that Indian slavery was a limited and short-lived practice with African slavery replacing it in a matter of years. This dissertation shows that this was not the case. Not only did the Spanish and Portuguese depend on Indian slavery for decades, but all other colonial powers continued to enslave indigenous peoples, pushing the numbers of enslaved

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<sup>1</sup> Jalil Sued-Badillo, “Facing up to Caribbean History,” *American Antiquity* 57:4 (October 1992): 601. Among these historians were James Lockhart (a Mexican historian of the Nahua people) and Stuart Schwartz (largely a Brazilian historian, though he has recently broadened his work to include sugar in the Caribbean), both of which diminished the significance of the Caribbean in the 1980s.



Indians into the millions by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Despite a dramatic decline in indigenous populations, Europeans did not give up the practice of Indian slavery. Indeed the search for new sources of Indian slaves propelled much early Spanish exploration. As the presence of African slaves grew in the New World, enslaved Indians did not disappear. On the contrary African and Indian slaves worked side by side, the methods and practices of both types of slavery influencing one another throughout the centuries.

Research shows that the Spanish conducted indigenous slavery on a much larger scale and for a much longer duration than previously understood. From Cristóbal Colón in the 1490s to the German conquistadors of the 1530s, European explorers, raiders, and colonizers enslaved thousands of Indians. Some were shipped as commodities to various islands, or as far away as Spain, to be sold for immediate profit. Others became military auxiliaries, guides, miners, pearl divers, servants, or in the case of women unwilling sexual partners. Some scholars have addressed indigenous slavery within their own national frameworks, creating more limited studies.<sup>3</sup> This dissertation views the Indian slave trade through a wider lens, allowing for a more international, even global, analysis that contributes to studies of Latin America, North America, and the Atlantic World in later centuries. This way I am able to see how the early slave trade moved Indians in many different directions. While some slaves were taken from one location and sold in another, many other slaves were displaced numerous times, moving in multiple directions. For example, many Indians taken from Mexico to Cuba and Española later served as slaves in expeditions to Florida. A few travelled through the entire Atlantic World. For most of these Indians Española served as a nexus, where the majority of slaves first disembarked and

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<sup>2</sup> Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Williamsburg: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Carlos Esteban Deive's *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio* on slavery in Española and Morella A. Jimenez's work *La Esclavitud Indígena en Venezuela, Siglo XVI* that focuses on slave raiding in Venezuela.

from where they were taken to disparate locations from Spain to North America. The multidirectional movement of slaves underscores that removal of Indians was a key component to the early colonial project. Indigenous populations did not simply collapse from disease or warfare, a significant number were first removed through the Indian slave trade.

This slave trade took many forms. From 1493 to 1542 the Indian slave trade evolved depending upon which Indians could legally be enslaved and for what reasons. At first the resistant Taínos of Española served as the first victims of the slave trade. Most of these captives were sent to Spain to serve as galley slaves, urban servants, or to work in the growing sugar plantations of the Canary Islands. The enslavement of the Taínos was justified through the doctrine of “just war.”<sup>4</sup> By 1503 the Crown made it legal to enslave Carib Indians, designating the coastline of Colombia and Panama as territories where these Caribs, often meaning cannibal, Indians lived. In 1508 it became legal to enslave and transport all Indians living in “useless” islands, essentially those lacking gold. In the wake of indigenous rebellion on Puerto Rico, in which Indians from the Lesser Antilles were also implicated, the Crown greatly expanded the definition of Carib lands to include the Lesser Antilles. Finally, by 1518, the Crown legalized the enslavement of Caribs living on the coasts of South America.

One cannot forget, however, that the Indians of the Caribbean played a central role in shaping the *early* Indian slave trade. Taíno politics, connections, and knowledge in many ways dictated who would be enslaved in the first two decades post-conquest. But, by the 1520s this changed. Due to population loss, cultural change, and an influx of Spaniards, the Indians of the Caribbean began to lose control of the slave trade and the larger colonial project. As native leaders’ status diminished, Spanish colonists began to act with more and more impunity. It would

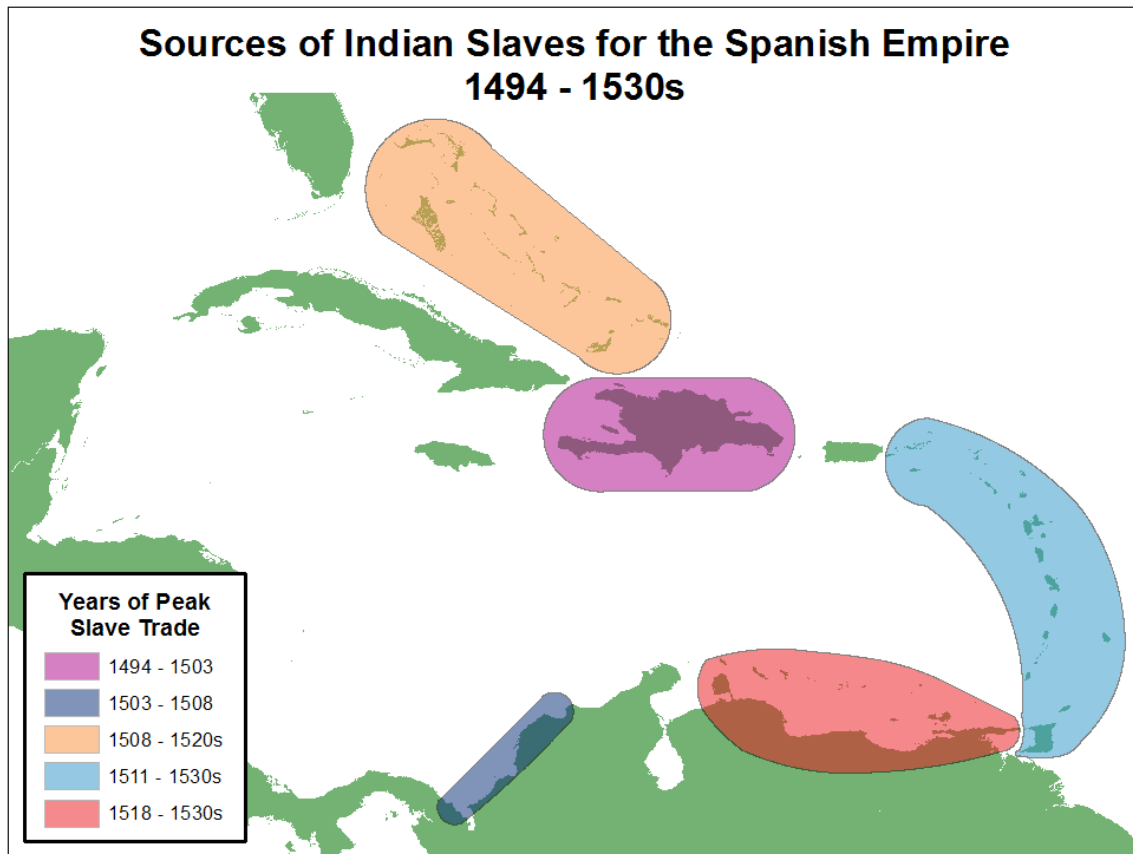
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<sup>4</sup> According to the Siete Partidas law code, justifiable war included when one was under attack or fighting in defense of one’s own sovereignty or the safety of an ally. Usually Christians were exempt from bondage. Rushforth, 92.

be this attitude that would lead to the height of the Indian slave trade from the 1520s-1542 in which the Caribbean became a “shatter zone”<sup>5</sup> ripped apart by violence, warfare, and slavery. Into this space would develop the creole culture we associate today with the Caribbean. See Figure 1 for a map of the evolution of the trade. In addition to the Indians who could legally be taken captive and sold into slavery, merchants, explorers, slave raiders, and even some officials engaged in a large scale illegal and largely undocumented slave trade. This encompassed territories as far afield as Mexico and North America as far north as the Chesapeake Bay. This project follows the growth and development of this Indian slave trade, in both its legal and illegal forms.

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<sup>5</sup> Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, eds. *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).



**Figure 1, Evolution of the Indian Slave Trade, 1493-1530s**

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Indian slaves who were shipped across the Caribbean or Atlantic from 1493 to 1542. Most of these Indians were enslaved from 1518 to 1542, or the height of the slave trade. There is record of approximately 62,000 Indian slaves including the Taíno of Española transported to Spain, the displaced Lucayos Indians from the “useless” islands, and the thousands of Indians labelled as Caribes across the Lesser Antilles and into South America. However, this a very conservative estimate. For example, in 1515 one armada captured and sold 55 Indian slaves from the Pearl Islands in Santo Domingo. In the same year twelve other slaving armadas sailed to Trinidad, the Pearl Islands, and even to Panama. We possess no document detailing how many slaves each of these expeditions captured. However, if

we estimate that each one took between 50 and 100 slaves, then in 1515 up to 1,200 more Indian slaves likely disembarked in Santo Domingo. In later years officials report as many as 15,000 Indian slaves arriving in Española. While this number seems high, at least 5,000 (with some witnesses estimating 12,000) Indian slaves came from a single port in Mexico in 1528. By the 1530s the number of slaving licenses issued by the Crown numbered in the hundreds. If most of these did indeed lead to slaving expeditions the actual number of enslaved Indians would have been in the hundreds of thousands. Illegal slaving expeditions only add to the number of displaced and captive Indians. This high number would corroborate the incessant letters to the Crown complaining of the negative impact of the Indian slave trade on the settlements of coastal Venezuela and Colombia, the areas effected by the slave raids. Given all of this, I estimate that the actual number of Indians enslaved from 1493 to 1542 in the Circum-Caribbean was between 250,000 and 500,000. If we count those taken captive temporarily to serve as porters in exploratory ventures, most of whom did not survive, the numbers are even higher.

As important as the numbers or the temporal and geographic scope of this early Indian slave trade is its larger social and cultural impact on the development of the Atlantic World. First, by following the Indian slave trade one can also see the evolution of colonial economies of which Indian slaves were the core. The transportation of Indian slaves to Iberia and the Canary Islands was Colón's first plan to exploit the New World. When the Spaniards discovered gold and later pearls, Indian slaves became laborers and miners. Later, when both gold and pearls became scarce in the Caribbean, Indian slaves were transformed back into commodities. The search for these slaves led to the "discovery" of new lands and the expansion of the Spanish Empire.

Beyond economics, religious and secular debates regarding Indian slavery shaped colonial legislation from the Laws of Burgos to the New Laws and beyond. These same discussions contributed to the creation of the Black Legend. Through examining the evolution of the legal Indian slave trade one can also see the gradual imposition of Crown power over the distant colonies. While they began as largely private ventures, with Crown supervision and funding, by the mid sixteenth century royal officials imposed Crown law and policies much more effectively. These same laws also contributed to the creation of an Iberian ideology of conquest and colonization. Indians and their labor were central to the Spanish Crown's ideology and defense of their colonies, especially as other European powers competed for territory in the Americas.

At its height (1518-1542), the Circum-Caribbean indigenous slave trade created an Indian Diaspora, scattering diverse ethnic groups and cultures across the Americas, forever altering the indigenous landscape. Indigenous slaves from Mexico, Columbia, Florida, Venezuela, and Brazil all found themselves transported to Española and other Caribbean Islands like Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Pearl Islands. This project begins to define and capture the scope of this diaspora for the first time.<sup>6</sup> While tracing the diaspora this project also reveals the hidden consequences of the slave trade, including the indigenous experience of movement and displacement across the Caribbean. The diaspora displaced thousands of Indians across the Caribbean causing them untold pain, suffering, and disorientation. Many Indian slaves lost their lives before even arriving at their new homes. However, we also see evidence of survival, incorporation, and the sharing of

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<sup>6</sup> This project is modelled on the recent works of African, Portuguese and Jewish Atlantic diasporas in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries both in the New World and in Africa. These include Toby Green's *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589*, David Wheat's dissertation "The First Great Waves: African Provenance Zones for the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Cartagena de Indias, 1570-1640," Malyn Newitt's edited work *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670* and Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta's *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World*.

knowledge in this diaspora, especially when taking into consideration pre-colonial relationships between and across islands. Indians themselves contributed greatly to this system, both voluntarily and through force. They resisted Spanish incursions, at times forcing the Spanish to alter their practices and policies of colonization. At this very early stage of colonization Indians, even some enslaved, were still able to influence and inhibit the Spanish conquest of their lands. In many cases it was the Indians who determined where the Spanish settled and which locations were successful, both temporally and economically. This dissertation examines these instances to uncover the indigenous perspective of and contributions to the Indian slave trade, diaspora, and more generally the early conquest period.<sup>7</sup>

### Historiography

Despite Española's status as the first European settlement in the New World, the historiography of the Dominican Republic, as well as that of the larger Caribbean, has fallen behind that of the rest of Latin America. It has only been in recent years, largely due to the thriving historiography of the Atlantic World, that scholars have recognized the importance of Española in the larger history of Latin America. Until the 1970s, the majority of Caribbean histories were written by and for national audiences, not only focusing on one country, for example Puerto Rico, but also using only national sources leaving documents located in

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<sup>7</sup> While research revealed evidence of displacement through this early Indian diaspora, written and archaeological sources proving cultural survival and creolization among the various Indian groups was harder to locate. One would expect to find pottery or other ceramics demonstrating cultural sharing on islands with the highest influx of Indian slaves. However, no such evidence has been located. On the other hand ceramics possessing both African and Indian characteristics are fairly common both in the Caribbean and the in the South east of North America. Perhaps this is due to a lack of archaeological digs in the Caribbean. Or it may indicate that Indian slaves did not live long enough to influence other cultures. Still, it is possible that the diaspora did in fact result in the creation of distinct creole indigenous cultures in the Greater or Lesser Antilles.

geographically distinct archives untouched.<sup>8</sup> As a result the typical narrative of Caribbean conquest relies on several thoroughly studied European chronicles written up to fifty years after first contact. The chronicles contain both misinformation and exaggerations, and perhaps most seriously privilege the voices and experiences of the Spanish conquistadores, often ignoring the actions of the indigenous and African actors. The sources in turn shaped the historical representation of Española in the most famous and important works of Caribbean history until the twenty first century. Thus, Caribbean histories were also largely written in the traditional style focusing on European perspectives of conquest and ignoring the voices and significance of both indigenous and African inhabitants, conquerors, and slaves.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1980s, Dominican and Caribbean historians began to delve into sources beyond the first chronicles. Carlos Esteban Deive worked in a wide range of new sources in the Archivo General de Indias for his 1980 two volume work, *La Esclavitud del Negro en Santo Domingo* that focused on the history of African slavery on Española. In this book, Deive traces the importation of African slaves from the first legal shipments, in 1508, until independence in 1844. Deive looks at which groups the Spaniards imported, drawing attention to the influx of Muslim slaves in the early 1520s, and then examines what type of work the Africans were required to do on Española. Deive's focus on the cycle of production and on the economic exploitation of Española's slaves reveals his Marxist or materialist orientation. He describes in detail the regimen of sugar production, from the cutting of the sugar cane with machetes at dawn to the long processing of the sugar during which the slaves had only one short break to eat a small

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<sup>8</sup> Blanca Silvestrini-Pacheco and Maria de los Angeles Castro Arroyo, "Sources for the study of Puerto Rican History: A Challenge to the Historian's Imagination," *Latin American Research Review* 16:2 (1981): 156.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of this type of scholarship include: Bernardo Vega, *Los Cacicazgos de la Hispaniola* (Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1980) and Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1966).



amount of food. Thus Deive's work broadened the scope of Dominican scholarship by analyzing African slavery and African influence on Dominican culture, a topic that historians had previously avoided, and by using Spanish sources other than those of the chroniclers. However, he still only presents the elite side of slavery, denying the slaves any agency of their own, used none of the work of Africanists, and limited his research to written sources, ignoring archeological evidence. Finally, Deive overlooks the presence of Indian slavery in his 1980 work, though he rectifies this in his more recent 1995 book, *La Espanola y La Esclavitud del Indio*. Still, Deive treats the two forms of slavery as if they occurred in isolation from one another, and as with his discussion of African slavery, he also fails to take into account the perspectives of the indigenous slaves themselves.

Current Caribbean historians have moved from top down histories to those focusing on the Taíno or the Africans as actors in and of themselves. To carry out these forms of investigation, which deal largely with illiterate peoples, the new school of Caribbean historians is embracing the methods of anthropology, archaeology, and sociology, essentially becoming ethnohistorians. A perfect example of the new type of Dominican or Caribbean historian is Lynn Guitar whose 1998 PhD dissertation, "A Cultural Genesis: Relationships among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in Hispaniola, First Half of the Sixteenth Century," examined in great depth the culture and history of the Taíno people on Hispaniola. Guitar investigates everything from Taíno foods and marriage patterns, to religious and political structures, clearly borrowing the techniques of anthropologists and archaeologists.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> By combining the theories and methods utilized by anthropologists, archeologists, and even linguists the new generation of Caribbean scholars is following the lead of other Latin American historians that made this leap in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These historians include James Lockhart, Matthew Restall, Yanna Yanakakis, Charles Gibson, and Inga Clenninden all Mexican historians focusing on either the Nahua or the Maya. Recently, Brazilian historians have also began focusing on the subaltern and on indigenous intermediaries, most notable Alida Metcalf.

Like Guitar, Ida Altman also seeks to reveal the indigenous perspective of conquest in her article “The Revolt of Enriquillo and the Historiography of Early Spanish America,” published in *The Americas* in 2009. In her work, Altman not only describes the rebellion in detail from the cacique’s perspective, but also expands her discussion to argue that the Spanish learned from this uprising and incorporated these lessons into their responses to future colonial protests. However, Altman limits her discussion to Enriquillo’s revolt, failing to connect this indigenous rebellion to the African revolt of 1521. Altman’s work nonetheless succeeds in highlighting the significance of Española and the Caribbean in Latin American history. “The early Caribbean,” she writes, “is often seen as epitomizing the worst extremes of Spanish exploitation and mistreatment of the native inhabitants of the Americas. Enriquillo’s revolt and its outcome, however, reflect the emergence of a concept of Spanish-indigenous relations that emphasized accommodation and recognition of at least limited rights for indigenous people.”<sup>11</sup> Finally, as did Guitar, Altman also utilizes the works of influential anthropologists of the Caribbean, including Kathleen Deagan, Irving Rouse, and José Maria Cruxent.

As Caribbean history is turning towards an ethnohistorical approach, most scholars remain focused on the African slave trade and diaspora. One important exception is the recent work by Brett Rushforth entitled *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France*. Here Rushforth delves into the role played by the natives of New France in creating and perpetuating the indigenous slave trade in both the Caribbean and North America. In studies of the colonial southeast other authors have also pointed out the importance of Indian slavery. For example, the works of Alan Gally ( *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717*) and Carl Ekberg ( *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the*

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<sup>11</sup> Ida Altman, “The Revolt of Enriquillo and the Historiography of Early Spanish America,” *The Americas* 63:4 (April 2007): 613.

*Illinois Country*) who study indigenous slavery in the Southeastern United States and the Illinois country respectively. Gally provides a new context for slavery in the Southeast by showing Indians in roles of enslavers as well as the enslaved while also demonstrating the cultural, economic, and social linkages that the Indian slave trade created across borders and ethnicities throughout the colonial period. While also looking at the economic and social aspects of indigenous slavery, Ekberg highlights the role of indigenous women in the formation of French/indigenous alliances in the Illinois Country through the indigenous slave trade. In the recent edited volume *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall demonstrate how indigenous cultures and peoples of the U.S. southeast were ripped apart due to their inability to tolerate long term European colonialism. This “shatter zone” was characterized by violence, warfare, displacement, and slavery. Out of this “shatter zone” emerged a new social reality and landscape, in many ways very similar to the Indian Diaspora and Slave Trade of the 1520s-1540s in the Circum-Caribbean.

While Atlantic World historiography is beginning to examine indigenous slavery, there has been little attention paid to indigenous slavery in the historiography of colonial Latin America. However, historians like Charles Gibson, James Lockhart, Inga Clendinnen, and Matthew Restall have all worked extensively with the issue of indigenous conquest and the process of cultural and social incorporation of indigenous populations into Spanish institutions. Beginning in the 1960s with the groundbreaking work of Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians in the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810*, historians have demonstrated the participation of the Indians (specifically Mexican) in the Spanish conquest and later construction of a Spanish colony. Following the publication of Gibson’s work scholars continued to delve into the perspectives and actions of Americas’ native peoples, but historians

like James Lockhart and Miguel León-Portilla took the next step by reading documents written in Nahuatl and Quiché, inspiring a generation of academics to learn and research in native languages.<sup>12</sup> With more and more emphasis placed on the agency of indigenous peoples during and after the Spanish conquest, historians began to analyze specific aspects of the incorporation of natives into the Spanish empire, for example in religious, military, and judicial institutions. As a result of these studies, carried out by Susan Kellogg, Matthew Restall, Steve Stern, Karen Spaulding, and Alida Metcalf (among others), the degree to which the native peoples of Latin America negotiated, manipulated, and at times resisted Spanish colonization, while maintaining numerous elements of their pre-Hispanic cultural and social systems has been revealed. This project extends the studies of indigenous incorporation in Mexico and the Andes to the Caribbean, utilizing what tactics and models that were pioneered by these scholars. This dissertation looks to several models from North American, Atlantic, and Latin American historiography, applying them to a Caribbean location and context, thus engaging in multiple types of historiography, from the Atlantic World and slavery to theories of Diaspora and early conquest.

### Methodology and Sources

As this project is a work of ethnohistory, it combines the use of documents written by Europeans with the application of anthropology and archaeology to access the history of the

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<sup>12</sup> Lockhart did not stop at reading Nahuatl documents, instead he created a scale of indigenous incorporation based upon the level of indigenous use of the Spanish language, which divided the colonial period into three stages, the first being characterized by mutual misunderstanding or “Double Mistaken Identity.” James Lockhart, “Sightings: Initial Nahuatl reactions to Spanish culture,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 223. While the Taíno did not possess a similar native language as did the Mexica, I use Lockhart’s scale of incorporation, specifically as to the role of translators, intermediaries, and adoption of Spanish vocabulary to demonstrate cultural change, specifically in Lockhart’s first two stages.

Indians of the Circum-Caribbean, particularly the Taíno.<sup>13</sup> Thus, I look beyond Spanish language sources to archaeological and anthropological evidence from different locations. Archaeology can help to determine pre-Hispanic cultural patterns such as land use, agricultural and cultural production, and religious practices as well as clues to pre-Hispanic relations among various ethnic groups in the Caribbean. I consider archaeological, linguistic, and religious evidence to locate cultural transformations and adaptations wherever possible. I examine vestiges of material culture found across the Caribbean, from ceramics and cemís to paleoglyphs and burial sites, to explore the process of cultural persistence and adaptation. I also search for examples of cultural sharing between the region's indigenous natives and the African slaves brought to the island.<sup>14</sup>

Adding to the archaeological sources, I examined a plethora of Spanish documents found in the archives of Spain including court cases, testaments, lawsuits, and everyday correspondence. Within these largely institutional sources I searched for references to and hints about the often obscured Indian slave trade. I also used the more commonly referenced early chronicles including the writings of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the royal historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, the Jeronymite friar/first ethnographer of the new world Ramón Pané, and Cristóbal Colón himself. While these sources are full of detail, they must be approached with caution as they were written for very specific purposes. This explains Las Casas's probable exaggerations of Spanish violence. They were also written often years after their authors lived in the New World and in some cases, like Oviedo, by men who never ventured to the Americas at all. To overcome some of the biases and inconsistencies of the early Caribbean chronicles I

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<sup>13</sup> Daneil J. Rogers and Samuel M. Wilson, *Ethnohistory and Archeology: Approaches to Postcontact Change in the Americas* (New York: Plenum Press, 1993), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Some of the best and most recent works on Caribbean Archaeology include: Kathleen Deagan and José María Cruxent's *Archeology at La Isabela: America's First European Town*, Scott M. Fitzpatrick and Ann H. Ross's edited work *Island Shores, Distant Pasts: Archaeological and Biological Approaches to the Pre-Columbian Settlement of the Caribbean*, Samuel M. Wilson's *Espanola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus*, and José R. Oliver's *Caciques and Cemí Idols: The Web Spun by Taíno Rulers Between Hispaniola and Puerto Rico*.

approached them from an anthropological perspective, reading between the lines in search of salient details supported by other sources, including archaeological. Here I follow in the footsteps of Neil Whitehead in his anthropological and historical analysis of Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana* text, which most historians have labeled as an exaggeration and unreliable due to certain mythical sounding descriptions. However, in his article Whitehead reveals what can be discovered in the text by a careful reading and simultaneous consideration of anthropological and archeological findings. With this approach Whitehead isolates numerous details (for example the natives with heads in their chests) that actually point to real indigenous traditions and perhaps even provide an avenue into the indigenous cosmology (or con-text as Whitehead calls this).<sup>15</sup> For Whitehead this type of reading of historical texts through anthropological (and perhaps literary) methods provides a "refraction" of an indigenous culture, not a reflection and must be interpreted as such. Nevertheless, this refraction brings us closer to a native perspective than traditional historical readings of early chronicles.

The refractory nature of these early sources, refractory in that they can only show glimpses of native cultures and practices through the lens of European cultural schemas, is likely a result of what anthropologist Marshall Sahlins calls the structure of the conjuncture.<sup>16</sup> This conjuncture takes place when two distinct cultural systems collide with one another, as a result of an event, to produce a moment in which multiple cultural schemas are present and interpreted in distinct ways. Because this dissertation deals with such a collision of structures in, I borrow from Sahlins's theory, and approach the conquest of Española, especially the initial years, as a structure

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<sup>15</sup> Neil L. Whitehead, "The Historical Anthropology of Text: The Interpretation of Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana*," *Current Anthropology* 36:1 (February 1995): 53 and 58. Whitehead points out that Raleigh's text likely refers to an Orinoco tribe's traditional of wearing their defeated enemy's heads around their necks to display their fierceness. Whitehead, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), xiv.

of conjuncture. I also argue that it is from this newly negotiated set of structures, and his ability to manipulate the structures, that Indians like Enrique and el Chicorano gain their agency.<sup>17</sup> Both Chicorano and Enrique were not only adapt to the new Spanish structures, but were able to manipulate it to gain their freedom. Still, the level of an actor's agency will necessarily be limited by their social role and access they have to power, therefore Enrique is able to harness his agency with much more ease than a African slave who would not possess the equivalent cultural or social reach to engage in open contestation of the social hierarchy.<sup>18</sup>

By using a diversity of sources and approaches, the dissertation is able to illustrate the breadth, scope, and significance of the earliest Indian slave trade and diaspora in the Circum-Caribbean, changing how Indian slavery has been viewed and interpreted previously. It also reveals the impact that the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean had on the evolution of colonial North and South America.

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<sup>17</sup> I use William H. Sewell Jr.'s definition of agency as something that is derived directly from societal structures and the ability of the individual to manipulate them and act within them. William H. Sewell, Jr., "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Much literature on slave agency focuses on the simple act of survival as resistance, for example James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* where he finds evidence of "everyday forms of resistance" in "hidden transcripts" as the "discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation of powerholders," and he contradicts this with the "public transcripts," which are the "open interactions between subordinates and those who dominate." Scott, 2-4.

## Chapter 1

### *Migration, Ethnicity, Kinship, and Exchange: The Pre-Colombian Caribbean*

When Cristobal Colón and his fellow Europeans discovered the Caribbean they did not enter an empty landscape. Instead they stumbled upon a highly populated and culturally sophisticated web of islands whose inhabitants were connected to one another through ties of kinship, political alliances, and trade networks. In many ways the Caribbean Sea acted as a highway tying various indigenous cultures and peoples to one another. Some maintained ties as far afield as the South American and Mesoamerican mainlands. Their relationships were not homogenous or equal. For example, ties between Española and Eastern Cuba or Puerto Rico were much stronger than connections to the Lesser Antilles and Western Cuba. Additionally, Florida and Mexico, seem to have had limited associations with the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, at least in the years immediately leading up to Spanish expansion. Though many of these links between islands demonstrate friendly relationships, it is important to note that recent archaeology also points to conflict between and within islands in the late fifteenth century. This chapter sketches the inter-island and inter-ethnic relationships of the Caribbean on the eve of the Spanish “discovery” of the Americas.

All of these connections, or lack thereof, helped to shape the pattern of Spanish conquest, the Indian slave trade, and eventually an Indian diaspora. Pre-Colombian antagonisms and tensions between indigenous chiefdoms and/or islands helped to contour the early interactions between Caribbean Indians and Spaniards. For instance this chapter argues that Carib/Taíno dichotomy was a post conquest construction created for Spanish political goals, one of them being the creation of a legal Indian slave trade. While there were cultural and linguistic, perhaps



even ethnic, differences between the populations of the Greater Antilles (those who would become Taínos<sup>19</sup>) and the Lesser Antilles (those who would be known as the first Caribs<sup>20</sup>), these two groups were not isolated from one another. Nor were their relationships solely violent and antagonistic, as in the Spanish version of events. In fact, archaeological evidence points to the growth of closer relationships between the two groups during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The firm distinction between the Taínos and the Caribs was a Spanish construction designed to enslave Indians.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Taíno means “noble” or “good,” and is a derivative of the adjective *nitaíno* in the Taíno language. It was used by the Spanish to differentiate the supposedly peaceful Indians of the Caribbean from the more savage or wild Caribs. Whether or not this is how the Taínos referred to themselves prior to 1492 is difficult to ascertain. The first European to record the term/word Taíno was Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca in a letter to the court of Sevilla in 1493. William Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus: The Prehistory of the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 11, Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Taínos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), x, and Angel Rodríguez Alvarez, ed., *Mitología Taína o Eyeri, Ramón Pané y la Relación sobre las Antigüedades de los Indios: El primer tratado etnográfico hecho en América* (San Juan: Editorial Nuevo Mundo, 2009), 3.

<sup>20</sup> The Taínos of Española referred to their southern neighbors as Caribe while the Lucayan Indians called them Caniba. It is unknown how they identified themselves in 1492. However, by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century they referred themselves as Kalinago. Fernando Santos-Granero, *Vital Enemies: Slavery, Predation, and the Amerindian Political Economy of Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 18.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: METHUEN, 1986), 46-47. In addition to Hulme other historians and anthropologists like Neil Whitehead, Jalil Sued Badillo, and José R. Oliver support this assertion. While agreeing with this recent scholarship, this chapter focuses more on recent archaeological evidence to dispel the Taíno/Carib dichotomy. Additionally, it links the pre-Colombian realities to colonial institutions, constructs, and policies.



Figure 2, The Circum-Caribbean

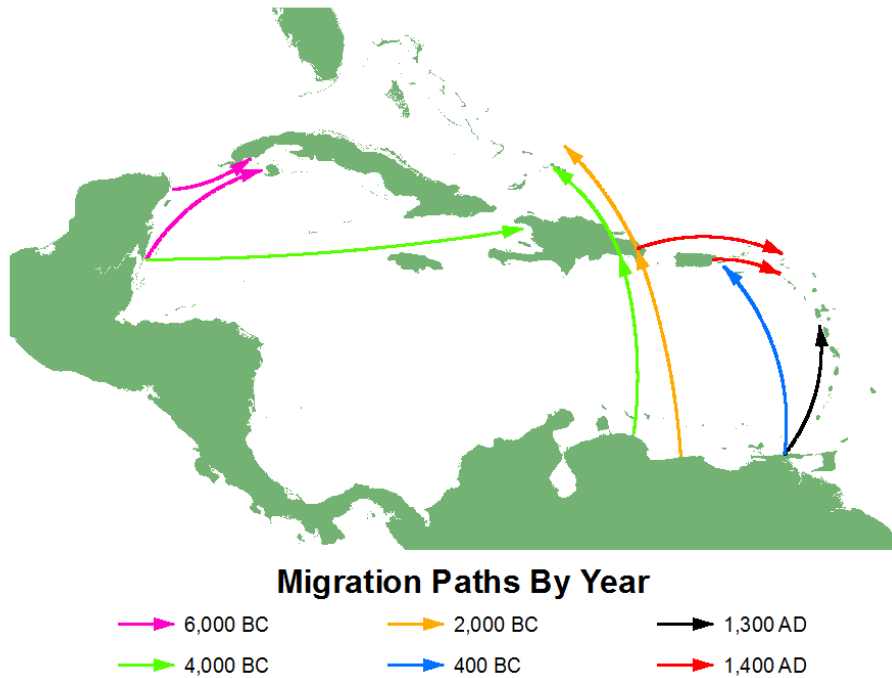
### Taíno Origins

Prior to the Spaniards' arrival the Taíno, a linguistically diverse ethnic group inhabited not only Española, but also the Lucayos Islands, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and most of Cuba. The Taíno languages belong to the larger Arawakan family, but there was considerable difference between the languages spoken by the Taíno of the Greater Antilles and the Arawaks of the Orinoco River. Additionally, there were several variations of the language spoken within the Greater Antilles, and even on the island of Española. This accounts for the Ciboney (of Cuba), Lucayos (of the Bahamas), and Macorix-Ciguayo (of Española) from whom the Taíno distinguished

themselves.<sup>22</sup> Despite the linguistic differences (and perhaps cultural as well) the peoples who became known as the Taíno shared much in common culturally<sup>23</sup>, and were seen as very distinct from the supposedly warlike Caribs of the Lesser Antilles by the invading Spaniards.

Though the Taínos were the residents of the Greater Antilles in 1492, it took thousands of years for this ethnic and linguistic group to develop. Beginning as early as 6,000 years ago, Indians from present day Colombia, Venezuela, Amazonia, and Mesoamerica (particularly the coasts of Mexico and Belize or the Yucatán Peninsula) began to move into the Caribbean basin settling both Cuba and Española.<sup>24</sup>

### Migration Paths to the Greater and Lesser Antilles



**Figure 3, Possible Migration paths to the Antilles**

<sup>22</sup> Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Some archaeologists and anthropologists now argue that instead of a Taíno people, there was a Taíno spectrum. Reniel Rodríguez Ramos, *Rethinking Puerto Rican Precolonial History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 199-203.

<sup>24</sup> The first inhabitants of the Caribbean were hunter gatherers from the coast of Venezuela, who initially only populated the islands of Trinidad and Tobago around 7,000 years ago.

Following the initial forays into the Caribbean, successive waves of settlers continued to populate the Caribbean islands.<sup>25</sup> Each of these peoples brought with them different ceramic traditions, horticulture, and mythologies, all of which likely contributed to the Taíno culture.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, as populations from South America moved northward they seem to have skipped many islands of the Lesser Antilles, or only settled on some smaller islands temporarily.<sup>27</sup> These islands then likely remained unpopulated until only a few hundred years prior to the arrival of the Europeans. New studies also suggest many voyages to and from their continental homeland continuing for centuries, well after initial migrations took place.<sup>28</sup> These journeys likely continued even into the colonial period and took many forms, from trade to hostile raids or even colonization attempts. The new chaotic migration models, proposed and supported by archaeologists such as William F. Keegan, Corinne L. Hofman, and José Oliver, challenge the long accepted unidirectional hypothesis (or “stepping stone” theory) originally proposed by Irving Rouse in the 1960s.<sup>29</sup> They also shed light on pre-colonial connections within the greater Caribbean, as trade and kinship networks seem to mirror earlier migration paths.

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<sup>25</sup> William F. Keegan, “Island Shores and ‘Long Pauses,’” in *Island Shores, Distant Pasts: Archaeological and Biological Approaches to the Pre-Columbian Settlement of the Caribbean*, eds. Scott M. Fitzpatrick and Ann H. Ross (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 16-18. Because of the now accepted diversity of the pre-Colombian Caribbean, ethnic groups are no longer identified by their material culture directly, but archaeologists are now also considering factors such as ethnohistorical accounts, linguistics, and technological advancements that allow the much more in-depth analysis of both ceramic and skeletal remains (for example DNA). These new techniques have enabled archaeologists to overcome some of the obstacles in Caribbean archaeological sites, for instance the tropical climate, which impedes the preservation of human and material remains. Fitzpatrick and Ross, eds, 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> José R. Oliver, *Caciques and Cemí Idols: The Web Spun by Taíno Rulers Between Hispaniola and Puerto Rico* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 11-17.

<sup>27</sup> Perhaps this was due to a lack of resources on some of the smaller islands. Regardless of the reason, many of the Lesser Antilles would remain unpopulated until some of the final migration waves post 1000 A.D. Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus*, 14-15 and Keegan, “Island Shores and ‘Long Pauses,’” 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Corinne L. Hofman and Menno L.P. Hoogland, “Unraveling the Multi-Scale Networks of Mobility and Exchange in the Pre-Colonial Circum-Caribbean,” in *Communities in Contact: Essays in Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and Ethnography of the Amerindian Circum-Caribbean*, eds. Corinne L. Hofman and Anne van Duijvenbode (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2011), 16.

<sup>29</sup> Hofman and Hoogland, 16 and Oliver, 9-10.

## The Taíno of Española

### *Social and Political Organization*

The Taínos lived in kin-based villages called *cacicazgos* or chiefdoms.<sup>30</sup> At the time of the Spaniards' arrival to the island of Española there were five paramount *cacicazgos* led by five very powerful *caciques* or chiefs. Two non-Taíno groups known as Ciguayos or Macorixs spoke a distinct language and resided on the north coast of Española. According to Cristobál Colón, they could also be differentiated from the Taíno by their dress, hairstyle, and weaponry. The Ciguayos in particular wore their hair very long, even the men. The Spanish compared the hairstyle to that worn by the "women of Castile."<sup>31</sup> The Spanish also described the Ciguayos as being more bellicose than the rest of the island's inhabitants. Some, including Las Casas speculated that they shared a close relationship with the Caribs.<sup>32</sup> However, after spending some time with the group Colón hypothesized that their violence resulted from their isolation on the island as they inhabited a very small, frontier like zone.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the Ciguayos were a more recent migrants to the island.<sup>34</sup> It also appears that though the Ciguayos and Macorixs did speak different languages, they were intelligible to at least some of the Taíno of the island. At this point it is difficult to make any conclusions as to how different the Macorix or Ciguayos were (culturally, genetically, or even linguistically) from the rest of Española's indigenous population.

However, it is known that by the 1530s the Ciguayo *caciques* were allied with other Taíno

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<sup>30</sup> Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 4. For more on the global development and evolution of chiefdoms see Timothy Earle, ed., *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy, and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

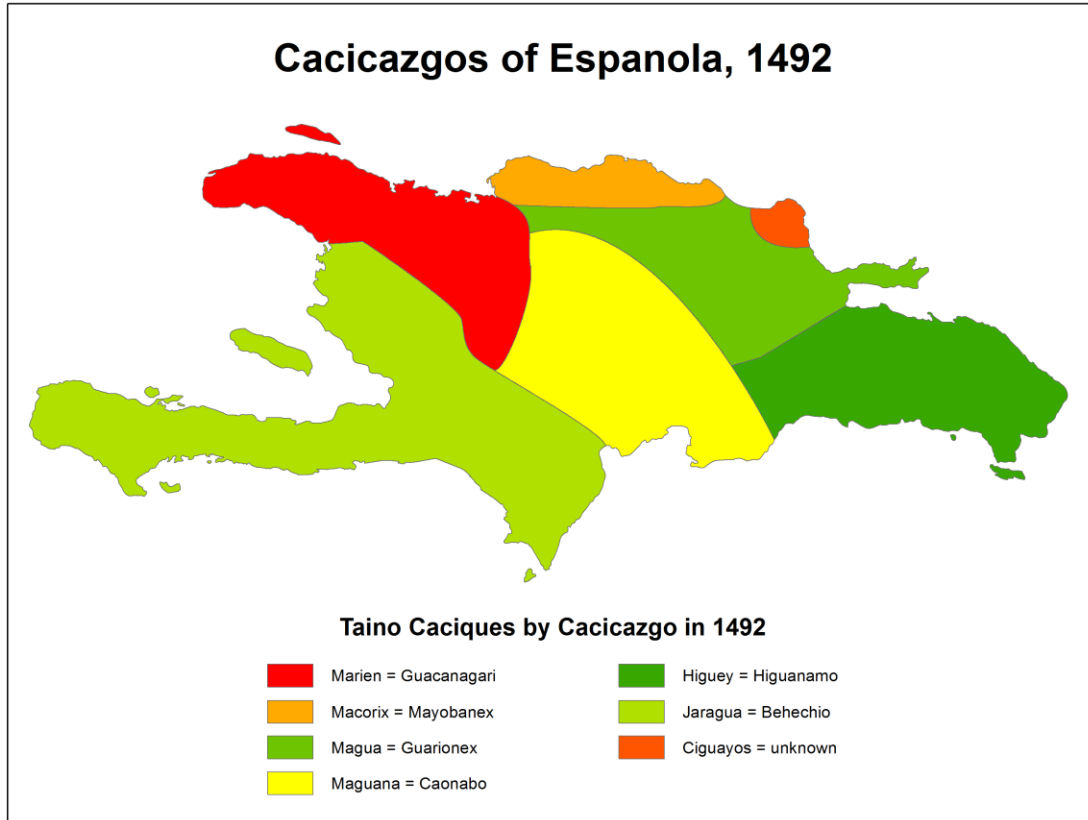
<sup>31</sup> Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias, Tomo I*, eds. Lewis Hanke and Agustín Millares Carlo (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951), 303-304. "Se llamaban ciguayos porque traian todos los cabellos muy largos, como en nuestra Castilla las mujeres."

<sup>32</sup> Dato Pagán Perdomo, "Notas Acerca de la Identificación Étnica y Arqueológica de los Grupos Macorix-Ciguayos," *Boletín 25 del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* (Santo Domingo, 1992), 51.

<sup>33</sup> Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias, Tomo I*, 305.

<sup>34</sup> Perdomo, 51-52. This is supported by their ceramic style, the meillac that points to a connection with the inhabitants of the Orinoco-Amazonas. Still there is little evidence to prove a distinct ethnicity from the Taíno.

caciques in conflicts against the Spanish, so whatever differences they once had seem to have been overcome. Figure 4 shows a map of Española's cacicazgos circa 1492.



**Figure 4, Española's known cacicazgos and caciques in 1492**

All of the caciques listed above were paramount caciques governing several villages or districts from whom they collected tribute. Beneath these powerful individuals were the shamans or *behiques* who performed powerful rituals and served as doctors and diviners. The remaining Taínos were broadly grouped into two social classes: the *nitáinos* or nobility and the *naborías* or tribute paying commoners.<sup>35</sup> It would be the second group that the Spanish would mistake for a type of slave upon their arrival in the Caribbean. Despite what the Spaniards assumed, or may

<sup>35</sup> Irving Rouse, *The Taínos: Rise and Decline of the People who greeted Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 9.

have wished, the Taínos did not possess a distinct class of slaves. And while captives could be and were taken in war and raids, they were rarely enslaved, at least according to European definitions. Often captives, like those taken by the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles, would be assimilated into the larger society and were not treated as legally lesser peoples.<sup>36</sup> This was especially true of female captives, the majority taken in raids.<sup>37</sup> This is not to say that Taíno societies were egalitarian. And captivity was inherently violent. Hence the animosity felt by the Taíno families who had lost loved ones to Carib raids. Still, neither the Taíno tribute system nor the captivity experienced in the Greater Antilles would prepare the Indians of the Caribbean for the large scale slave raiding initiated by the Spanish.<sup>38</sup>

The position of cacique was inherited through matrilineal succession.<sup>39</sup> In the best of situations the son of the cacique's eldest sister (his nephew) would inherit the title. However, at times the sister herself would be called upon to rule as the cacica. If matrilineal succession was impossible the cacique's son could inherit.<sup>40</sup> In some circumstances even a foreigner could become cacique, for example Caonabo of the Lucayos was the cacique of the Maguana cacicazgo, supposedly due to military prowess. According to Las Casas, Caonabo "crossed over here from there (the Lucayos or Bahamas) and because he was a notable man both in war and

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<sup>36</sup> However, indigenous inhabitants of the mainland in South, Central, and North America were much more familiar with the practice of slavery. Some studies of indigenous slavery elsewhere include: J.A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios en el Nuevo Mundo*, Tomo I (Habana: Librería Cervantes, 1932), 3-55, Julio Valdivia Carrasco, *El Imperio Esclavista de los Inkas* (Lima: Grabado de Guamán Poma de Ayala, 1988), and Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> For more on distinctions between captivity and slavery, especially with regard to female captives and their use as social and political capital (not economic) see Julianna Barr, "From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands," *The Journal of American History*, 92:1 (June 2005): 19-46.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the difference between indigenous captivity/servitude/slavery and European slavery see Santos-Granero, 3-5.

<sup>39</sup> Social class and all goods were also passed down matrilineally. Men even resided in the villages of their mothers bringing their wives to live with them after marriage. Rouse, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Lynn Guitar, *Cultural Genesis: Relationships Among Indians, Africans and Spaniards in Española, First Half of the Sixteenth Century* (PhD diss. Vanderbilt University, 1998), 10. Due to the upheaval and loss of population following the Spanish conquest of the island, normal succession patterns were severely disrupted. Hence, pre-colonial patterns are difficult to ascertain.

peace, he came to be the King of that province and was greatly esteemed by all.”<sup>41</sup> Caonabo was also married to Anacaona, the sister of the very powerful cacique Behechio of the cacicazgo Jaragua. Alliances between caciques and cacicazgos were solidified both through marriage and the exchange of gifts. Gifts came both in the form of valuable items and names. Additional names not only bestowed status on caciques, but more importantly created reciprocal fictive kinship relationships between caciques. The more names a cacique had the more allies and power he possessed. For example the cacique Behechio had over forty names when the Spanish arrived in Española and he expected to be addressed by each title/name.<sup>42</sup> In addition to many names, caciques also had many wives, again signifying power and alliances.

### *Daily Life*

Taínos were sedentary agriculturalists with yucca as their staple crop. Once harvested from their irrigated *conucos* (aerated mounds) the Taíno women ground and baked the tubers into a type of bread known as *casabe*.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, trans. Herma Briffault (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 38 and “Las Casas on the Five Kings of Española” 1550. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry (New York: Times Books, 1984), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 7.





**Figure 5, 16<sup>th</sup> Century image of a woman of the Indies mashing yucca into Casabe flour, Plate 86, *Histoire Naturelle des Indes: The Drake Manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library***

Taínos supplemented their diet with small rodents, fish, manatees, and other fruits and vegetables that grew naturally in the tropical climate of the Caribbean. The Spanish marveled at both the agricultural abilities of the Taíno and the relative ease with which they procured a wide variety of food. It is also likely that the Taínos cultivated a great deal of cotton. They spun this cotton into hammocks and clothing. Colón’s first report detailing the tribute he received from the island’s caciques in 1495 and 1496 sheds light on the significance and abundance of cotton in Española. In addition to grains of gold and golden leaf, the admiral received more than 1500 pounds of spun cotton (52 *arrobas*), 66 hammocks, and six spindles. The Spanish also collected numerous pieces of intricately worked gold and cotton masks, belts, mirrors, caps, arrows, and articles of clothing made from feathers.<sup>44</sup> Though few if any of these items have survived the centuries, their existence in 1495 shows the complexity and richness of Taíno culture and technology.

<sup>44</sup> “List of Products received in tribute by the Admiral,” 1495-1496. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume II: The Caribbean* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 212-213.

Between five hundred and a few thousand inhabitants lived in the larger Taíno towns or villages. They were organized around a central plaza or *batey* with the cacique's home or *caney* located directly on the plaza. Other homes/huts or *bohios* could be found behind the central plaza.<sup>45</sup> Within these bohios women and men raised their families, barbecued fish, spun cotton hammocks, and at times held ritual ceremonies. In the image below one can see such a scene. Here a Taíno woman appears to be boiling some yucca and grilling fish. To the side a man reclines in what appears to be a *duho* or ritual seat with an inhaler. Perhaps he is preparing for the *cohoba* ceremony and may be a powerful behique. Meanwhile a man prepares to go fishing and hunting outside of the bohio. While this image was painted in the 1570s, decades after the arrival of Europeans, it can at the very least suggest the richness and splendor of the pre-colonial Taíno culture and society.



**Figure 6, 16<sup>th</sup> Century image of Daily Life in the Indies**, Plate 113, *Histoire Naturelle des Indes: The Drake Manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library*

<sup>45</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 8-9 and Wilson, *Hispaniola*, 23.

In addition to holding the cacique's home, the central plaza was where the Taínos would have conducted ritual celebrations known as *areitos* and played their ballgames or bateyes. Areitos celebrated harvests, marriages, the birth of a nitaíno, or the visit of an allied cacique. They included dancing, feasting, song, and religious rituals performed by behiques following days of fasting and purging. Bateyes were a combination of fun soccer games and ritual warfare. These games may have settled disputes between cacicazgos instead of warfare. Players volleyed a rubber ball back and forth using rubber hoops around their waists in a circular or rectangular batey. The games also involved ritual elements, including the presence of *cemies* on the four corners of the playing field.<sup>46</sup>



**Figure 7, Taíno balls for the ball game or batey at Museo de Altos de Chavon**

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<sup>46</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 26-29.



**Figure 8, Mold for the Taíno ball game belt at Museo de Altos de Chavon**



**Figure 9, Tibes Ceremonial Center Ball Court, Ponce P.R.<sup>47</sup>**

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<sup>47</sup> For more on the significance of Tibes see L. Antonio Curet and Lisa M. Stringer, *Tibes: People, Power, and Ritual at the Center of the Cosmos* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010). Recent studies have also linked Tibes to the ceremonial site of Rivas in Costa Rica, again suggesting a closer relationship between Central



## *Cosmology*

Religious symbols and figures played an important role in both the political and everyday life of Taínos. This can be seen in the example of Cemíes. Cemíes are painted stone, wood, cotton, or seashell figures that come in many shapes from dog-like to those in the form of a human body.<sup>48</sup> These often include bones (usually skulls or teeth) from ancestors meant to increase the power of the cemí.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 10, Cemí from Museo de Altos de Chavon**

Some have recently argued that cemíes are not only portable objects (which would belong to one cacique or behique) but also came in the form of pictographs and petroglyphs painted or carved on cave walls or into boulders. See Figures 11 and 12 for images of both pictographs (painted symbols) and petroglyphs (carvings). Cemíes like these would have been accessible to the entire

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America and the Caribbean. Alexander Geurds, “The Social in the Circum-Caribbean: Toward a Transcontextual Order,” in *Communities in Contact: Essays in Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and Ethnography of the Amerindian Circum-Caribbean* eds. Corinne L. Hofman and Anne van Duijvenbode (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2011), 49.

<sup>48</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, 56.

<sup>49</sup> Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética Historia Sumaria, Capitulo CXX* transcribed by Angel Rodríguez Álvarez, in *Mitología Taíno Eyeri, Ramón Pané y la Relación sobre las Antigüedades de los indios: El Primer Tratado Etnográfico hecho en América* (San Juan: Editorial Nuevo Mundo, 2009), 185.

village and likely would have denoted sacred spaces.<sup>50</sup> Of great significance is that the Taínos did not view their cemíes as actual objects, but as a vital force or spirit closely linked to one specific human (always a cacique or behique) who could “unveil its identity or personhood.”<sup>51</sup> The cacique and the cemí eventually became like partners with the cacique’s success perceived as emanating from the cemí’s power. As with caciques, different cemíes possessed different levels of power along with their own kinship networks and genealogies.<sup>52</sup> The Taíno believed that distinct cemíes had different powers. Some made it rain while others could speak about the future or help a woman in labor.<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 11: Pictograph of Behiques from Cueva de las Maravillas**

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<sup>50</sup> Oliver, 62.

<sup>51</sup> Oliver, 59-61.

<sup>52</sup> Oliver, 59-61. Perhaps the most powerful or senior of all the cemíes was Yocahu Vagua Maorocoti, who according to Pané was the “Senor de los cielos” and who was immortal. Roberto Cassá, *Los Taínos de la Española* (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 1990), 157.

<sup>53</sup> “Unos tienen los huesos de su padre, de su madre, parientes y pasados, los cuales son de piedra o madera y tienen muchos de dos formas, algunos que hablan y otros que hacen nacer, lo que comen, otros que hacen llover, otros que haga aire.” Fray Ramón Pané, “Relación de las antigüedades de los indios,” transcribed by Angel Rodríguez Alvarez, in *Mitología Taíno Eyeri, Ramón Pané y la Relación sobre las Antigüedades de los indios: El Primer Tratado Etnográfico hecho en América* (San Juan: Editorial Nuevo Mundo, 2009), 30.



**Figure 12: Petroglyphs at Las Caritas, Lago Enriquillo**

Cemíes occupied a central role in Taíno rituals of fertility, healing, and divination. Included in these ceremonies was the important *cohoba* ritual. Here caciques or behiques fasted and purged for days to purify themselves prior to inhaling hallucinogenic substances that would allow them to be able to communicate with the spirits of the cemíes.<sup>54</sup> In the *cohoba* ceremonies, as in many others, cemíes played the role of intermediaries between the Taíno community and the cosmos beyond.<sup>55</sup> So important were the cemíes for the Taíno peoples that many archaeologists locate

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<sup>54</sup> Cassá, 129 and Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 26.

<sup>55</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, 59 and Pané, 37.

the unique hallmark of Taíno belief and culture in the cult of the *cemíes*.<sup>56</sup> While *cemíes* were carefully guarded by their cacique during his lifetime-though especially important alliances were cemented with the exchange of *cemíes*-upon his death foreign caciques (those outside of the cacique's own family or beyond) inherited at least some of the deceased cacique's most powerful belongings, including *cemíes*. This exchange sought to create new alliances, to bolster the rule of the new cacique inheriting the position, and to strengthen already existing alliances between kin groups related by marriage.

Beyond the exchanging or inheriting of *cemíes* was the even more prevalent practice of gifting *guaízas*. *Guaízas* were small face masks usually made of stone or shells. For images of shell and stone *guaízas* see Figure 13. For the Taíno the skull, and by extension the face, was the key part of the human anatomy and where a cacique's power resided. Thus, by giving carvings of faces to stranger caciques as part of an alliance ceremony, caciques were exchanging representations of the most important portion of the living soul. The giving of *guaízas* usually accompanied the exchanging of names and/or wives as a sign of alliance both within and between islands. Although *guaízas* were endowed with some power, they were not as significant as the *cemíes*, thus it makes sense that the number of *guaízas* that circulated the Caribbean is much larger than the number of *cemíes*. Colón received *guaízas* from both Caonabo and Guacanagarí in his early negotiations with the caciques.<sup>57</sup> There are even *guaízas* in the islands of the Lesser Antilles that could signify an attempt at expansion of trade networks or political alliances from either Española or Puerto Rico in the years prior to the Spanish arrival in the Americas.

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<sup>56</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, 56.

<sup>57</sup> Oliver, 103-149.





**Figure 13, Shell Guáizas in the Museo Altos de Chavon**

While cemíes and guáizas played crucial roles in the both the life and death of Taínos, especially caciques, sacred landscapes were also key to a cacique's power and how Taínos understood their realities. One can see this in the funerary rituals and burials of caciques and other higher status Taíno. While naborías and lower level nitaínos were buried in either village middens or just outside of settlements in places akin to cemeteries, caciques and their families were usually interred in caves. Most burial caves also house petroglyphs and pictographs showing signs that caves chosen for interment were already considered as sacred for the

Táinos.<sup>58</sup> For a few images of caves, one housing freshwater pools over 100 feet underground and another in the sculpted shape of an Indian head, see Figures 14 and 15.



**Figure 14, Cueva Ni Rahu and her underground pools in La Piedra**

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<sup>58</sup> Wilson, *Hispaniola*, 22.



**Figure 15, El Cacique Indio Statue and Cueva at Charco de los Indios**

Most burials in caves were not intact. Instead, the skull of the cacique would be removed from the body, after which the rest of the cacique's body was burned. The skull often would be used to create a new cemí, again because of the significance of the head and face for the Taíno. Next, the rest of his bones would be collected, bundled, and placed in sacred locations within the cacique's territory, usually within single or multiple caves.<sup>59</sup> The bundles marked either the point of origin for a familial line (in the case of one cave) or the boundaries of a kin group's territory. The placement of ancestral remains in caves underscores the significance of the landscape for Taínos, especially in connection with the Taíno origin myth which states that "In Española there

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<sup>59</sup> Oliver, 143.

is a province called Caonao, in which is found a mountain called *Canta*, having two caves named *Cacibayagua* and *Amayauba*. From *Cacibayagua* came the majority of the people who settled the island.”<sup>60</sup>

Caves then were the source of life and connected the Taíno to their ancestors and the underworld. From another cave, *Jovevava*, emerged both the sun and the moon. Within this cave resided two *cemíes* (*Maroyo* and *Boiniael*) and when it had not rained, *behiques* or *caciques* visited the *cemíes*. Following these visits, according to the Taíno interviewed by Pané, it never failed to rain immediately.<sup>61</sup> One mountain’s caves, those of *Canta* even represented the center of the world for the Taíno of Española.<sup>62</sup> In another cave, this one in an underground spring near the present day town of Bayahibe, many ceramics dating from the 800-1500 A.D. have been discovered. These artifacts include several intact *potizas* or decorative and sacred vases given to women prior to marriage from which they could imbibe the three sacred liquids: water, semen, and breast milk. The sacred liquids are represented within the design of the *postiza*. The center spout where the Taínos would drink the liquid is shaped like a penis. On either side of the penis are two mounds that represent breasts. For an image of *Potiza* see Figure 14. Caves also served as places of refuge, particularly during hurricanes. Taínos, and later African slaves, would continue this practice hiding from the Spanish in the Cibao and Bahoruco mountain cave systems.

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<sup>60</sup> Pané, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, *Mitología y Religión de los Taínos* (San Juan: Editorial Punto y Coma, 2006), 15 and Pané, 24. “Mas dicen, que el sol y la luna salieron de una cueva que está en la tierra de un cacique llamado Maucia Tibuel a la cueva llaman *Jovevava* y la tienen en mucha estimación y toda pintada a su modo, de follajes, y cosas semejantes, sin figuras. Había en esta cueva dos *Cemis* de piedra, del tamaño de medio brazo, y parecía que sudaban, a los cuales tenían en gran veneración, y cuando no llovía, dicen que iban a visitarlos y al punto llovía, el uno de ellos se llamaba *Boiniael* y el otro *Maroyo*.” In his work Lamarche also compares the Taíno vision of caves to earthly uteruses.

<sup>62</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, 151 and 185.



**Figure 16, Postizas from Museo de Altos de Chavon**

It is likely then that this cave, known as Manantial de La Aleta, was sacred for the Taíno and that these ceramics are evidence of offerings to cemíes or spirits of the underworld.<sup>63</sup> In addition to the offerings within the water of the cave, there are also up to twenty-six petroglyphs just on the outside of the cave, again pointing to its religious significance.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the presence of water, another purifying element, made the cave even more divine. The water within the cave, and others like it could have also symbolized portals directly to the Taíno underworld. Within their cosmology the Taíno underworld and resting place for the dead, known as Coaybay, was a watery underground.<sup>65</sup> These caves also house huge numbers of bats, again linking them to the spirit realm. Taínos believed that at night the dead were transformed into bats, allowing them to

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<sup>63</sup> John W. Foster, Charles D. Beeker, and Geoffrey W. Conrad, “Una Pequeña Potiza Encontrada en el Manantial de Chicho, Provincia La Altagracia, Republica Dominicana,” *Boletín 40 del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* (Santo Domingo, 2006), 29-36.

<sup>64</sup> Foster, et. al., 31.

<sup>65</sup> Beeker, Charles, D., Geoffrey W. Conrad, and John W. Foster, “Taíno Use of Flooded Caverns in the East National Park Region, Dominican Republic,” *Journal of Caribbean Archaeology*, 3 (2002): 3 and Pané, 28.



leave the underworld and exist among the living and to eat the fruit of the guava tree.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps this explains the prevalence of bat iconography on Taíno ceramics. Thus, when engaged in ceremonies, offerings, or in death, Taínos returned to these sacred spaces. There the cacique would call upon his cemí (which was often hidden in a cave as well) and his ancestors, both of which had to be geographically near for him to communicate with, for advice or divination. For a map of some of the known Taíno sacred spaces and landscapes see Figure 17.



**Figure 17, Known/Identifiable Taíno Sacred Spaces**

<sup>66</sup> Pané, 28. “Y por la noche salen a divertirse, y que comen un cierto fruto llamado Guazaba...y van en compañía de los vivos.”

Following the conquest of the Spanish when caciques were forced to move across the island they had to desert their caves, ancestors, and less portable cemíes (like the petroglyphs). Because it was from these elements that they derived their spiritual and political authority, caciques likely felt this desertion emotionally, spiritually, and politically.<sup>67</sup> This would have been especially true for the more powerful caciques, the leaders whose territories held some of the most important sacred elements. It is interesting to note that almost all the most significant spaces and caves were found in the cacicazgos of Magua, Maguana, and Higüey. All of these cacicazgos and their corresponding caciques (Guarionex, Caonabo, and Higuanamo) violently protested the Spanish presence and infiltration of their lands. The cacique Guacanagarí of Marién, a less powerful cacicazgo that held no identifiable sacred spaces, sought out an alliance with Cristobal Colón, even remaining loyal to the Europeans when the rest of the island rose against them. Guacanagarí may have seen an alliance with the Europeans as a way to increase his own power and status on the island, something that the other more dominant caciques would not have seen as necessary or even appealing. It would be these dominant caciques, with their sacred territories, who would suffer most from the upheaval of the Spanish, especially as the surviving caciques were forced to desert their ancestral lands in the third decade of conquest. At the same time caciques were faced with an influx of foreign Indians from across the Caribbean. The convergence of these diverse peoples, cultures, and ethnicities, most of which possessed prior knowledge of one another, would disrupt indigenous politics and lives like nothing the Taíno had experienced before.

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<sup>67</sup> Oliver, 83-85. Caves were not only significant to the Taínos of Española, they were also very religious and powerful sites for Cuba's Indians. For more on the funerary caves of Cuba see Roberto Valcárcel Rojas, César A. Rodríguez Arce, and Marcos Labada Ochoa's article "Trabajos Arqueológicos en Cueva Cerro de los Muertos I, Banes, Holguín, Cuba," *El Caribe Arqueológico*, 7, (2003): 33-49.

## The Realities of the Carib/Taíno divide

Recent archaeological and historical studies now highlight the fluidity of the pre-colonial Circum-Caribbean. While most evidence can only prove occasional trade between distant regions or islands, they suggest the possibility of tighter kinship bonds connecting the Caribbean islands to both North and South America. Here we even see connections to present day Florida, specifically between the Calusa and the residents of Cuba<sup>68</sup> and the Lucayos Islands.<sup>69</sup> A greater range of movement within the Caribbean was possible since the Taínos, and other peoples, possessed wooden canoes of various sizes. Some could hold from fifty to one hundred men, while others were smaller, personal sized canoes. The larger canoes would have been capable of making long distance voyages. Chroniclers such as Bartolomé de las Casas and Dr. Chanca marveled at the craftsmanship of the Taíno canoes.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> There is limited, but provocative ceramic evidence that occasional trade may have occurred between the inhabitants of the Florida Keys and Cuba. However, this passing contact (perhaps between fishermen) would not have taken place until very late in the pre-Columbian era, between 1200 and 1400 A.D. John H. Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida, 1513-1763* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 43. However Florida's Indians did maintain complex trade networks with other groups throughout much of eastern North America. For example, whelk shells from the coast of Florida have been found in present day Oklahoma and North Dakota, while galena (a lead ore) produced in southeast Missouri and dating from 1200 was discovered at a Calusa site called the Pineland Complex. Darcie A. MacMahon and William H. Marquardt, *The Calusa and their Legacy: South Florida People and Their Environment* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 80-82.

<sup>69</sup> The residents of the Lucayos Islands evidently traded with the Indians of the Florida Peninsula. John H. Hann, *A History of the Timucua Indians and Missions* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 1 and Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 189.

<sup>70</sup> Bartolomé de Las Casas was initially a conquistador, but later felt a change of heart and became a Dominican friar and one of the most prolific and vocal defenders of the Indians. He discusses canoes in his work *Historia de las Indias, Tomo I*, 206. Dr. Chanca or Diego Alvarez Chanca was a doctor from Sevilla who accompanied Colón on his 1493 voyage to the Americas. His letter is one of the best accounts of the Antilles. For more on the canoes see Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, "La Navegación Indígena Antillana," *Boletín 25 del Museo de Hombre Dominicano*, (Santo Domingo, 1992), 69-95.





Figure 18, Smaller Taíno Canoes at Museo de Altos de Chavon

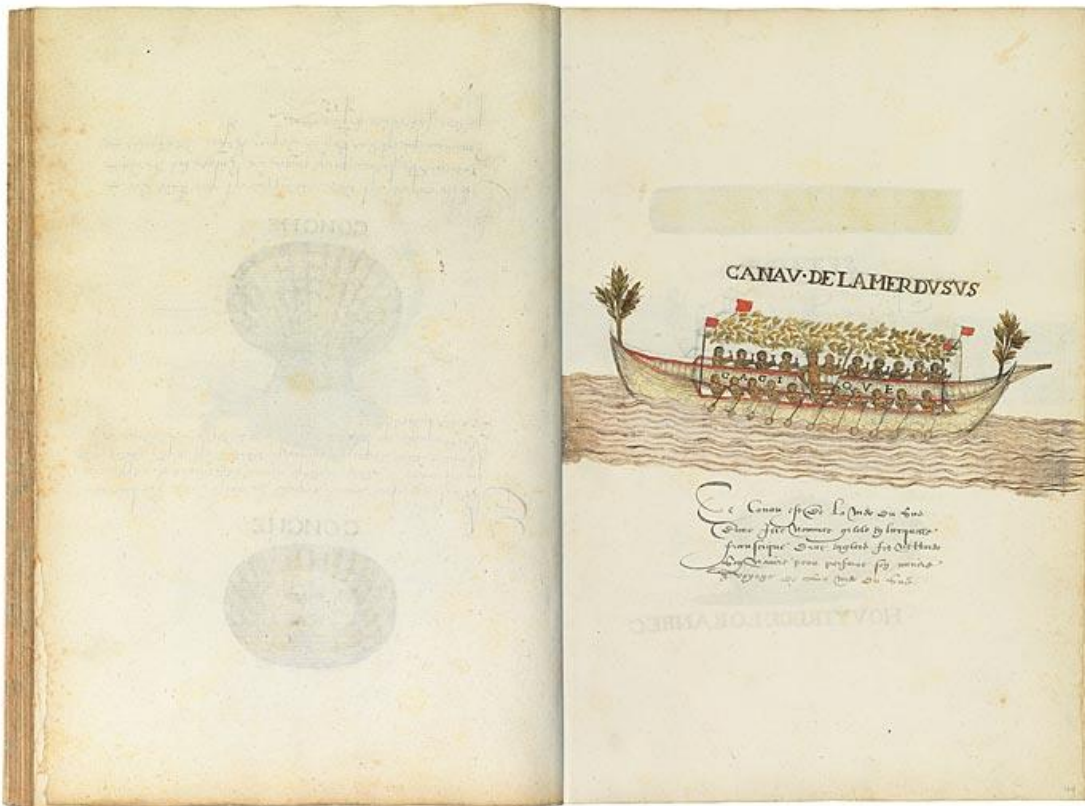


Figure 19, 16th Century image of a trading canoe headed for the South Sea, Plate 44, *Histoire Naturelle des Indes: The Drake Manuscript* in the Pierpont Morgan Library

As archaeologists accept the increased complexity of indigenous migrations and mobility within the Caribbean, they also have begun to question whether the Caribs and Taínos were really so ethnically distinct. Though few details about the Caribs can be agreed upon, it is highly probable that the Indians who would first be designated Carib were recent arrivals to the Lesser Antilles, populating the islands in the 1300s.<sup>71</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Caribs, especially those living in the northernmost Lesser Antilles or the Leeward Islands, began to have sustained contact with the Taínos of Puerto Rico and the rest of the Greater Antilles.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, the residents of the more Southern Islands, the Windward Islands, appear to have remained within the sphere of mainland South American politics and culture.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, *Taínos y Caribes: Las culturas de aborígenes antillanas* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Punto y Coma, 2003), 36-37.

<sup>72</sup> Whether the Caribs came from the Orinoco Basin or from Puerto Rico itself is still debated. However, the connections between the Leeward Islands and the Greater Antilles are evident. William F. Keegan, "Islands of Chaos," 33-44.

<sup>73</sup> Louis Allaire, "The Lesser Antilles Before Columbus," in *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean* ed. Samuel Wilson (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 25-26.

## The Lesser Antilles

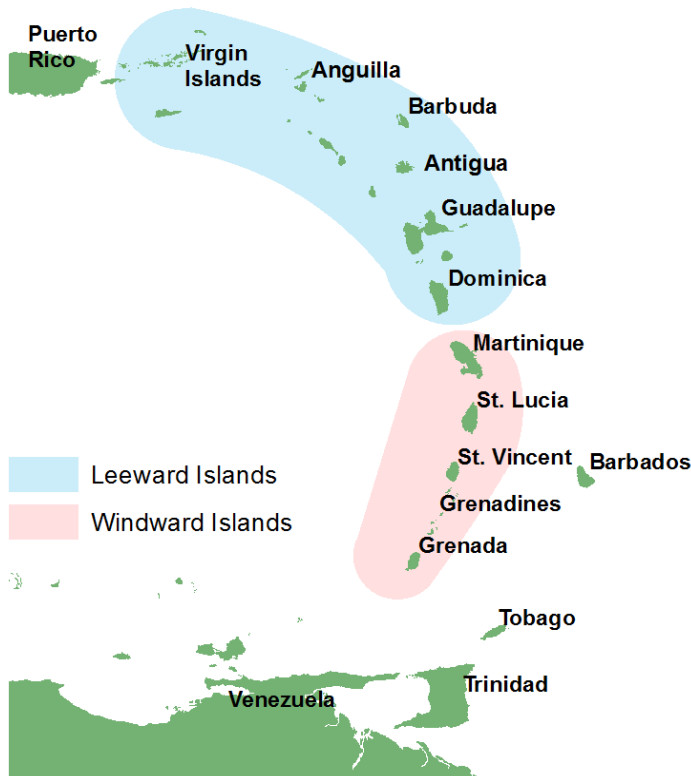


Figure 20, The Lesser Antilles

Archaeologists are able to ascertain connections between different societies by studying the physical remnants left behind, often in burial sites. These include bones, ceramics, pottery, jewelry, and religious artifacts. By studying the distribution of these items archaeologists can trace the relationships between islands and societies. Case in point, in the Windward Islands, pottery appears that signifies close interactions with the inhabitants of the Guianas and Amazonia throughout the pre-Colombian period.<sup>74</sup> It was with these peoples, the inhabitants of

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<sup>74</sup> Arie Boomert, "Island Carib Archaeology," in *Wolves from the Sea*, ed. Neil Whitehead (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995), 27-29. Boomert claims that there is "sufficient archaeological and documentary evidence to suggest that at the time of the arrival of the Europeans the inhabitants of the Windward Islands belonged ethnically, culturally, and

the Windward Islands and the mainland of the South America, that the Taíno described having hostilities, and not the residents of the more northern Leeward Islands. Even these conflicts seem to have been carried out within a single cultural landscape, with both sides conducting reciprocal raids on one another. It seems that neither side, especially the Caribs, were engaged in conquering territories but were augmenting small populations; hence the preference for taking women captive.<sup>75</sup>

Additionally, there is evidence of cultural sharing between the Greater and Lesser Antilles just before the Spanish arrival. Specifically, a type of ornamentation can be found on a few of the higher status and religious artifacts in Grenada, Guadalupe, St. Vincent and Dominica that is almost identical to the Taíno bowls of the Greater Antilles.<sup>76</sup> As seen in example below, this type of Taíno pottery shows a high degree of craftsmanship, often featuring bat and owl faces. Both bats and owls held significant meaning in the Taíno cosmology. The fact that similar decorations appear on ceramics in the Lesser Antilles points to Taíno influences on Carib culture.<sup>77</sup>

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linguistically to the mainland South America, notably the coastal zone of the Guianas, exactly as the Island Carib tales of origin indicate,” 32.

<sup>75</sup> Louis Allaire, “On the Historicity of Carib Migrations in the Lesser Antilles,” *American Antiquity* 45:2 (April 1980): 238-241.

<sup>76</sup> Boomert, 28.

<sup>77</sup> Corinne L. Hofman and Menno L.P. Hoogland, “Unraveling the Multi-Scale Networks of Mobility and Exchange in the Pre-Colonial Circum-Caribbean,” in *Communities in Contact*, 22.



**Figure 21, Taíno/Chicoid Bowl from Museo at Altos de Chavon featuring a bat face**

Connections and relationships between the Taínos of the Greater Antilles and the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles could have even extended to voluntary marriage alliances.<sup>78</sup> So, maybe the presence of Arawak speaking women in the Lesser Antilles was not due to the capturing or kidnapping of women during raids by the Caribs, as the Spanish assumed. Instead, it may suggest Taíno attempts at extending political and social alliances into the Lesser Antilles in the fifteenth century. Colón first encountered the Caribs during his second voyage to the New World in 1493, when he spent six days on the island of Guadalupe in the Lesser Antilles. During his stay he captured ten or twelve women from the island of Boriquen (Puerto Rico) on Guadalupe, who he assumed were captives stolen by the Caribs from their rightful home. While this is a possibility, it could also be true that during recent diplomatic missions the caciques of Boriquen gave the

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<sup>78</sup> There is evidence that these marriages not only linked the Greater to the Lesser Antilles, but also the various islands of the Lesser Antilles to one another. At Anse a la Gourde on the island of Guadeloupe many deceased women were of nonlocal origin, suggesting intercommunity mobility for purposes of marriage. Many of these women were buried with objects made from nonlocal materials (a bead belt of foreign origins, artifacts made from St. Martin greenstone, and one made of Antigua flint). Menno L. Hoogland, Corinne L. Hofman, and Raphael G.A.M. Panhuysen, "Interisland Dynamics: Evidence for Human Mobility at the Site of Anse a la Gourde, Guadeloupe," in *Island Shores, Distant Pasts*, edited by Scott M. Fitzpatrick and Ann H. Ross, 148-162.

Carib women (in addition gwaízas) to solidify new alliances, a common practice of Taíno groups. Either way, Colón and the Spanish took the women from Guadalupe and sent them to Spain, using their presence on the island as proof of the barbarity of the Caribs.<sup>79</sup> The Spanish would continue to rely on this dichotomy to legitimize the Circum-Caribbean indigenous slave trade in the early sixteenth century.

In addition to marital or kinship connections, the Greater and Lesser Antilles were also linked by trade. The Caribbean Sea acted as a highway tying the various indigenous peoples to one another.<sup>80</sup> For example, at the time of Spanish occupation both Taíno and Carib ceramics were present on the island of Trinidad.<sup>81</sup> This demonstrates that Taíno from the Greater Antilles ventured as far south as Trinidad and the coast of South America to conduct trade in raw materials, finished pottery, and even beads made from exotic materials like jade or turquoise.<sup>82</sup> One of the best examples for trade in raw materials is the presence of stone tools made from flint or chert throughout the Lesser Antilles even though it is only naturally available in the Windward or southern most Lesser Antilles.<sup>83</sup> These pre-colonial exchange networks also help to explain the presence of guanín in Española in the fifteenth century. Guanín is largely gold, but also consists of copper and silver. It does not occur naturally, at least not in the Caribbean, and as the Spanish soon discovered the Taíno did not know how to refine or forge the metal. Therefore,

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<sup>79</sup> Jalil Sued Badillo, “Guadalupe: ¿Caribe o Taina? La isla de Guadalupe y su cuestionable identidad caribe en la época pre-Colombina: una revisión etnohistórica y arqueológica preliminar,” *Caribbean Studies* 35:1 (2007): 39-40. It is also possible that this effort at extending alliances and power may have caused recent tensions between the peoples of the Greater and Lesser Antilles, thus explaining the idea and negative depiction of the Caribs by the Taínos of Española and Puerto Rico.

<sup>80</sup> David R. Watters, “Maritime Trade in the Prehistoric Eastern Caribbean,” in *The Indigenous People*, 88.

<sup>81</sup> The presence of dual ceramics also helps to explain the Spanish assertion that Trinidad was inhabited by both Caribs and Arawaks at the time of conquest. However, the number of Caribs could have been exaggerated by the Spanish in an effort to legally enslave more of the indigenous population. Many even claimed that the island was only populated by Arawaks. Linda A. Newson, *Aboriginal and Spanish Colonial Trinidad: A Study in Culture Contact* (London: Academic Press, 1976), 17-19.

<sup>82</sup> Even though jade and turquoise are *only* found naturally in South America, beads made from the materials have been located in various islands in the Lesser Antilles. Watters, 94-98.

<sup>83</sup> Watters, 89-91.

guanín likely originated from Colombia, whose inhabitants possessed such technology necessary for the refinement of precious metals.<sup>84</sup>

While South America is the most likely source for Taíno guanín, it is also possible that guanín and other precious metals came from trade with Central America, or more specifically the Maya.<sup>85</sup> Much evidence points to pre-Colombian Taíno trade networks that extended westward to Central America. A Taíno vomiting stick, used to purge oneself prior to the cohoba ritual, was found on the coast of Belize. Additionally, in 1518 Bernal Díaz de Castillo found a Taíno woman from Jamaica living on the Maya island of Cozumel. Apparently she had been shipwrecked there after blowing off course in a fishing expedition, suggesting that the Taínos travelled regularly to waters near Central America.<sup>86</sup> Strong evidence also points to ties between Cuba (especially Western Cuba) and Central America into the fifteenth century.<sup>87</sup> This connection may help to shed light on Cuban Indians' ability to communicate with the indigenous inhabitants of Mexico. It also may explain the many similarities present between the ball game or batey of the Taíno and that of the Maya and Mexica (Aztec) of Central America.<sup>88</sup> Some postulate that the Mesoamerican ballgame, or some version, arrived in the Greater Antilles around 600 B.C. Similarities between the two games include: the use of latex or rubber balls and heavy belts, the method of play in that one could not touch the ball with one's hands or feet, the ritual

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<sup>84</sup> Bernardo Vega, *Santos, Shamanes, y Zemíes* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1987), 44.

<sup>85</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, 67.

<sup>86</sup> Dicey Taylor, "El Juego de Pelota Taíno y su Relación con las culturas Continentales," *Boletín 34 del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre dominicano, 2003), 63.

<sup>87</sup> Archaeologists are now using craniometrics and modern geometric morphometric evaluation of dental samples to test possible dispersal theories of Caribbean populations. Ann H. Ross and Douglas H. Ubelaker, "A Morphometric Approach to Taíno Biological Distance in the Caribbean," in *Island Shores, Distant Pasts*, 108-126 and Alfredo Coppa, et. al., "New Evidence of Two Different Migratory Waves in the Circum-Caribbean Area during the Pre-Columbian Period from the Analysis of Dental Morphological Traits," in *Crossing the Borders: New Methods and Techniques in the Study of Archaeological Materials in the Caribbean*, ed. Corrine Hofman, M.L.P Hoogland, and A.L. van Gijn, 193-213 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 199.

<sup>87</sup> Coppa, et. al., 211-212.

<sup>88</sup> Taylor, 51-71.

significance of the ballgame, and rectangular or square playing fields. It also calls into question the degree of displacement some Mexican Indians would have felt once brought to Cuba versus Española or Puerto Rico as slaves in the sixteenth century.

Evidence also suggests the exchange of higher prestige items between the Greater and Lesser Antilles, though not to South or Central America, revealing the deeper connections shared within the Antilles. High prestige items included guaízas and some cemíes. The trade or gifting of these items was more significant than acquiring subsistence items because they suggest political and social relationships, not just economic.<sup>89</sup> Cemíes and guaízas gifted at funerary rituals were especially significant as they cemented alliances between the new cacique and more established caciques throughout the region. By accepting a cemí or other gift, including names or wives, foreign caciques (here this could mean from different islands or simply distinct chiefdoms) were becoming indebted to and publically demonstrating their support for the new cacique.<sup>90</sup> The importance of the exchange of cemíes helps to explain the lack of cemíes found in burial sites across Española and Puerto Rico.<sup>91</sup> This suggests that cemíes remained in circulation serving to solidify military or political alliances as did names, areito ceremonies, and kinship networks.

While archaeologists have found the majority of cemíes and guaízas in Puerto Rico and Española, these items (especially guaízas) have been unearthed across the Greater and Lesser Antilles, yet again underscoring the connectedness of the region. For example, archaeologists have discovered large numbers of shell guaízas on both the Leeward Islands of Anguilla and Guadalupe and in Eastern Cuba. Some even argue that this is evidence that the northern Lesser

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<sup>89</sup> Colin Renfrew, "Alternative Models for Exchange and Spatial Distribution," in *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, edited by Timothy K. Earle and Jonathan E. Ericson, (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 71-89.

<sup>90</sup> Oliver, 104-105.

<sup>91</sup> Oliver, 107.



Antilles were in fact a part of a larger Taíno cultural sphere that spread eastward from the Greater Antilles in the Late Ceramic Age.<sup>92</sup> Though fewer in number some shell guáizas have also been found as far south as the Genadines Islands.<sup>93</sup> Archaeologists have also found cemíes, though most were broken, in the southern most Lesser Antilles.<sup>94</sup> The question remains, why they were broken. Perhaps the breaking of the cemíes was meant to neutralize their power or that of the expanding Taíno Empire. Of course the cemíes could have also simply broken over the centuries and may have been prized objects by the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles in the 1400s.

### Conclusion

The close ties between the Greater and Lesser Antilles now suggested by archaeologists, through marriage, trade, and perhaps even ethnicity, would then explain several common practices found in the entire Caribbean. These include the use of marriage across islands to create alliances, the common practice of hereditary succession to chiefly status of uncle by nephew common across the Caribbean, and the sharing of myth cycles and sacred objects, all of which support a large degree of cultural homology throughout the Caribbean.<sup>95</sup> It seems increasingly likely that Caribs were Arawakan speakers, perhaps even long time residents of the Lesser Antilles, with connections to both the Greater Antilles and the South American mainland through trade and alliance networks.<sup>96</sup> By highlighting the permeability of ethnic and social boundaries in

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<sup>92</sup> John G. Crock and James B. Petersen, "Inter-Island Exchange, Settlement Hierarchy and Taíno-Related Chiefdom on the Anguilla Bank, Northern Lesser Antilles," in *Late Ceramic Age Societies in the Eastern Caribbean*, eds. A. Delpuech and C.L. Hofman, (BAR International Series, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 139-156 and Oliver, 163-165.

<sup>93</sup> Oliver, 159.

<sup>94</sup> Corinne L. Hofman and Menno L.P. Hoogland, "Unraveling the Multi-Scale Networks of Mobility and Exchange in the Pre-Colonial Circum-Caribbean," in *Communities in Contact*, 27.

<sup>95</sup> Neil Whitehead, "Ethnic Plurality and Cultural Continuity in the Native Caribbean: Remarks and Uncertainties as to Data and Theory," in *Wolves from the Sea*, 96-97. Neil Whitehead also argues that the persistent association of Caribs with the mainland was largely a post conquest development and that Island Caribs actively participated in Arawak or Taíno political and social realms both before and after Spanish colonization.

<sup>96</sup> Dave D. Davis and R. Christopher Goodwin, "Island Carib Origins: Evidence and Nonevidence," *American Antiquity* 55:1 (Jan. 1990): 37. Davis and Goodwin also dismantle the very ethnic term of Carib, demonstrating its

the Caribbean, many archaeologists and anthropologists now underscore the colonial nature of the Carib/Taíno dichotomy created for Spanish political goals.

Nevertheless, it must be underscored that the precolonial Caribbean was a very diverse region with complex networks of kinship, alliance, and exchange all connecting the various islands that were more than likely inhabited by at least three different ethnic groups. Moreover, these ethnic groups were not equivalent to the European constructed Taínos and Caribs, but were much more diverse linguistically, culturally, and socially, all influencing one another at different points. Whoever the Carib people may have been, they were not Taínos, nor were they identifiable as the Arawaks of present day Venezuela or Colombia. Additionally, the patterns of migration that initially brought the peoples who would later be labeled as Taínos or Caribs to the Caribbean were multiple, and perhaps included different starting points from both Central and South America. We will see the impact of these pre-Colombian alliances and connections in the following chapter as Indians shared knowledge of the Spanish, found sanctuary in nearby islands from the Europeans, and even as islands rose up together to contest the Spanish presence.

While the Taínos and Caribs of the Caribbean interacted with one another regularly and shared common cultural and social structures, along with genetic linkages, they had little contact with the chiefdoms of the present-day Southeastern United States. Despite their geographic proximity, there is little evidence demonstrating that extensive trade or kinship linked the natives of South Florida, which included the Tequesta, the Calusa, and the Ais, with those of Cuba or Española.<sup>97</sup> Thus, it is unlikely if the chiefdoms of Florida had any long-term connections with

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origins in the Taíno word for the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles, and the later political use of the identification by the Spanish, showing that the term had little to do with a self-ascribed identity and much more to do with both inter-island and colonial political realities.

<sup>97</sup> For more on this topic and Florida's Indians see John Worth, *The Timucua Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida: Volume 1: Assimilation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), Randolph J. Widmer, "The Structure of

the inhabitants of the Antilles, peaceful or otherwise. Likewise, while links between Western Cuba and Yucatán Peninsula appear likely, evidence for long-term or close connections between Mesoamerica and the rest of the Caribbean is lacking. These cultural and linguistic barriers would be broken dramatically by the arrival of the Spanish in the 1492, and especially by the rise of the Indian slave trade in the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the early 1500s indigenous inhabitants of both Florida and Mesoamerica would play a leading role in the formation of an Indian Diaspora as they resisted Spanish incursions in their land and were torn from their ancestral homes to be enslaved in Española, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Pearl Islands.

Pre-existing connections also determined the ability of Española's chiefdoms to incorporate the influx of diverse indigenous slaves following the increase in slaving expeditions in the early 1500s. The earliest victims of the Spanish slave trade originated from nearby islands, already part of the Taíno cultural zone, for example the Lucayos Islands or Carib Guadalupe. However, assimilation would be more difficult for Indians captured in more disparate regions such as Florida, the interior of South America, or the Yucatán Peninsula. In many ways indigenous pre-Columbian patterns, ideas, and networks molded the Spanish conquest and colonization of Española and the larger Caribbean.

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Southeastern Chiefdoms," in *The Forgotten centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521-1704*, eds. Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), Joseph M. Hall, Jr, *Zamumo's Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), Kathleen Deagan, *Spanish St. Augustine: The archaeology of a colonial Creole community* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), and Jerald Milanich, *Florida's Indians from Ancient times to the Present* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998).

## Chapter 2

### *Two Worlds Collide: A Clash of Cultures, Conflict, and the Rise of the Indian Slave Trade*

Just as the Taínos of the Greater Antilles were expanding their horizons, toward the southeast in particular, the residents of the Iberian Peninsula were embarking on new missions of exploration. In response to the Muslim capture of Constantinople in 1453, the successful Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors culminating in 1492, and the Portuguese journeys into the Atlantic and along the coast of Africa throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Spanish began to look outside of the Mediterranean world. Exploration first took them to the Canary Islands and ultimately to the Caribbean with Christopher Columbus's fateful voyage of 1492. This momentous encounter forever changed the world for the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Europeans, and the Africans who all came together in the ensuing decades to create new hybrid cultures and societies.

In many ways Spanish responses to the Americas and its inhabitants were influenced by their very recent experiences with the indigenous peoples of the Canary Islands, the Muslims of Southern Spain, and the residents of West Africa. Additionally, many of the institutions imposed on the islands of the Caribbean, and later the mainland of North, South, and Central America, can be traced to 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain, for example the *encomienda*. Perhaps one of the most influential practices brought to the New World was that of slavery; not only the system itself, but also the laws surrounding when, how, and why someone could be enslaved. With the recent slaving expeditions in both the Canary Islands and along the African coast in mind, it is no wonder that as early as 1493 Columbus already planned on making a profit by enslaving certain Indians of the Caribbean.

While Columbus's proposal for enslaving the peoples of the New World was hotly debated at court in the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, his idea was ultimately rejected. However the ambiguity of laws surrounding the trade did not stop many entrepreneurs from bringing hundreds of Indian captives from around the Caribbean to the Iberian Peninsula throughout the 1490s. This was especially true following early indigenous revolts and conflicts on Española. But, it was not until Isabela declared it legal to enslave all Carib Indians and Indians residing on "useless" islands (those lacking in gold) that the Indian slave trade exploded. By the end of the second decade of colonization, the growing indigenous slave trade engulfed the Lucayos Islands, Puerto Rico, the Lesser Antilles (including Guadalupe, Dominica, and Trinidad to name a few), and much of the coastline of present day Venezuela and Brazil. These slaves were put to work alongside the diminishing Taínos of Española (and later Cuba and Puerto Rico) in gold mines, cattle ranches, and sugar plantations. Here we see the beginnings of an Indian Diaspora, accelerating and amplifying the inter-island connections and relationships present in the pre-Colombian world.

The influx of foreign Indians in Española helped to mask the massive depopulation of the island, but only slightly. It would be this decline in Taíno Indians alongside the visible violence of the indigenous slave trade that would inspire men like Montesinos and Las Casas to rebuke the Spanish authorities in the Caribbean. However, as we will see in subsequent chapters their efforts helped little, and this early slave trade only increased, expanding beyond the Caribbean to include lands as far away as Mexico and present day South Carolina. These legal and illegal raids, wars, and exchanges fill the colonial records. From Columbus's first proposal to enslave Indians to the height of the slave trade in the 1530s, the search for and profit from Indian captives was central to the development of Spanish colonial institutions and practices. This

chapter focuses on the origins of and first expansions of this very important trade, and the very beginnings of an Indian Diaspora.

### Iberian Exploration Expands into the Atlantic

While many individual Genoese, Castilian, Norman, and Portuguese merchants and traders had contact with the inhabitants of the Canary Islands during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, their goal was trade or raiding and not colonization.<sup>98</sup> The Spanish Crown sent Christian missionaries, often Franciscan friars, to the Canaries, where they endeavored to preach to the indigenous peoples of the islands in their own languages while setting up exchange programs, schools and churches.<sup>99</sup> During these early years interactions between the Europeans and various indigenous groups of the Canaries could be described as largely peaceful. However, this would change in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as Iberian Lords began to conquer the Canary Islands; beginning with Lazarote, Fuerteventura, and Hierro. By 1478, when Iberians undertook the conquest of the largest and most densely populated island of Gran Canaria, the monarchs of Castile added their military and financial support.<sup>100</sup> This influx of funds allowed for the eventual pacification of all the Canaries, creating in many ways some of the first examples of foreign colonization since the times of the Roman Empire. It is also in the much more violent and lengthy conquests/incorporation of Grand Canaria, La Palma, and Tenerife (not pacified until 1496) that we see the Iberian use of slavery as a tool of conquest.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> For more on the Canary Islands and their inhabitants, as well as how both Europeans and North Africans viewed the islands, from 1300 to 1496 see David Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>99</sup> Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, "The Conquests of the Canary Islands," in *Implicit Understandings*, edited by Stuart Schwartz, 139-141.

<sup>100</sup> Vallejo, 135-136.

<sup>101</sup> Vallejo, 143-145.

Faced with armed resistance to colonization, spiritual or otherwise, the Spanish responded with increased violence and the enslavement of combatants, as they later would in the Americas. Because these captives were pagans taken in what was considered legitimate or “just war,” they could legally be enslaved either in their homelands or shipped elsewhere for sale.<sup>102</sup> Captives taken in “just war” who were “enemies of the faith” could be enslaved rather than killed according to the *Siete Partidas*, a law code dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and influenced by Roman law.<sup>103</sup> Justifiable war included when one was under attack or fighting in defense of one’s own sovereignty or the safety of an ally. Usually Christians were exempt from bondage.<sup>104</sup> Nonetheless, slave raiding, whether legal or illegal, disrupted the Catholic missions on the islands, leading friars and priests to object to the practice. While the Crown did attempt to limit slaving in the wake of complaints, profits and retaliation for native resistance usually trumped humanitarian arguments. This was especially true following attacks on the Spanish by the Guanches of Tenerife and the Canarians of Gran Canaria from 1477 to 1488.<sup>105</sup>

Concurrent with the slave trade emanating from the Canary Islands was the ever growing slave trade involving Portuguese merchants and explorers along the coast of Africa. While

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<sup>102</sup> Vallejo, 138-139 and Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada, “Spain, circa 1492: Social Values and Structures,” in *Implicit Understandings*, 99-100. Treatment of pagans contrasted how the Spanish viewed Jews and Muslims who were infidels, but still people of the book who were often allowed to live under their own religious and judicial system.

<sup>103</sup> Title XXI, “Concerning Slaves” of the *Siete Partidas* states that “There are three kinds of slaves, the first is those taken captive in war who are enemies of the faith; the second, those born of female slaves; the third when a person is free and allows himself to be sold. Five things are necessary in the case of the third. First, the party must voluntarily consent to be sold; second, he must receive a part of the price; third, he must know that he is free; fourth the party who purchases him must believe that he is a slave; fifth, he who permits himself to be sold must be more than twenty years of age.” Title XXI, “Concerning Slaves,” Law 1, “What Servitude is, Whence it Derived its Name, and How Many Kinds There Are.” Transcribed and translated in *Las Siete Partidas: Family, Commerce, and the Sea: The Worlds of Women and Merchants* Vol. 4 translated by Samuel Parsons Scott, edited by Robert I Burns, S.J. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 977. The law code also discusses the rights of slaves and masters, who can hold slaves, and how slaves can be emancipated.

<sup>104</sup> Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, 92.

<sup>105</sup> Vallejo, 142-143 and Quesada, 98. We will see the exact same pattern throughout the Americas in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

slavery was a common practice in the late Middle Ages across the Mediterranean world, expansion into the Atlantic made slavery into a big business, especially for the Portuguese who early on fulfilled the Spanish demand for African slaves. As a result African and Canarian slaves arrived in the ports of Southern Spain in much greater numbers.<sup>106</sup> By the 1490s there was even a small Canarian quarter inhabited by Guanche and Canarian servants and slaves in Sevilla, the very city that would become the center of the New World enterprise.<sup>107</sup> African captives were considered to be legal, legitimate slaves because they presumably had been enslaved during war between African kingdoms. Thus, the Europeans could purchase the African slaves captured in “just war.”<sup>108</sup> Iberian experiences in the slave trade both in Africa and the Canary Islands would help to inspire the soon flourishing Indian slave trade of the Americas.

### Colón and the “Discovery” of the Americas

With the conquest of all the Canary Islands drawing to a close by the early 1490s, as did the centuries Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula, merchants and explorers began to look even further out into the Atlantic in search of trade routes, new lands, and of course profits. Chief among the goals for increased exploration was the discovery of a quicker route to Asia. One of the principal supporters of this plan was none other than the now infamous and famous Christopher Columbus or Cristóbal Colón<sup>109</sup> as he was known in Spain. Colón believed that he

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<sup>106</sup> For more on African slaves in Spain and Portugal in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries see James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and A.C. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>107</sup> Abulafia, 101.

<sup>108</sup> Rushforth, 98.

<sup>109</sup> For more on the man Christopher Columbus, his writings, and his voyages see Felipe Fernández-Arnesto, *Columbus on Himself* (Cambridge/Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010) and William D. Phillips, Jr. and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For a more heroic telling of Columbus see the writings of his son in, *The History of the Life and Deeds of the*



could reach Japan and the riches of Asia within a few short months by simply sailing westward.<sup>110</sup> Though we now know that Colón's projections on distance and the size of the earth were decidedly flawed, he did choose the best route to the Americas by sailing almost directly southwest from the Canary Islands.<sup>111</sup> Colón's largest mistake was not predicting a huge continent laying in-between Europe and Asia, an error that he would fight against until his dying days.

Colón along with three ships and a few hundred men set sail from Palos on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1492. After a brief stop in the Canaries, to refuel and gather more supplies, the group sailed for thirty-three days prior to making landfall in one of the Bahamas or Lucayos Islands on October 12, 1492.<sup>112</sup> Once on shore Colón took possession publically of the land for the King and Queen of Spain and named the island San Salvador, though the indigenous residents called the island Guanahaní. Colón and his men spent several days reconnoitering the island and exchanging goods with the Indians, though they were quite disappointed with the native's wares.<sup>113</sup> Colón also concluded that the Indians though generous must be very poor people due to their nakedness

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*Admiral Don Christopher Columbus attributed to his son Fernando Colón*, edited by Caraci Luzzana and translated by Geoffrey Symcox and Blair Sullivan in Volume XIII of the *Repertorium Columbianum* (Brepols Publishers, 2004).

<sup>110</sup> Abulafia, 24-25 and Phillips and Phillips, 99-111. Colón relied on ancient writings and his own extensive experience as a sailor having traveled along the Gold Coast of Africa, to England, and to the Madeira islands during his years serving as a Portuguese merchant to create his theory.

<sup>111</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 107-108.

<sup>112</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 145-155. Debate continues regarding which island Colón and his men first touched. Geographers, historians, and archaeologists have identified at least 10 different islands they believe to be Guanahaní and more than 30 different routes through the Bahamas Islands to the Greater Antilles. For more on the dispute see William F. Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus: the Prehistory of the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 183-187.

<sup>113</sup> While the accounts provided by Colón himself and later chroniclers and travelers describe the interaction between the Spaniards and the Indians of Guanahaní as straightforward, they were likely filled with misunderstandings. Though Colón depicts conversations, for example on where the Spanish could locate gold, they could not in fact speak the same language. Thus their conversation likely depended heavily on gestures and interpretations of movements. Here lies one of the most problematic issues with Caribbean ethnography and early accounts. Conclusions and assertions made by the explorers could have been wrong or misunderstood, but regardless have been accepted as fact for centuries. An excellent example of this is the specter of the Carib. For more on this see Peter Hulme, "Tales of Distinction: European ethnography and the Caribbean," in *Implicit Understandings*, 157-197.

and lack of weaponry. “To me they appeared to be people poor in everything. Women and men walked about naked as the day their mothers gave birth to them and none seemed to be older than thirty years of age....They do not have weapons, nor do they recognize them because I showed them a sword and they took it by the blade out of ignorance.”<sup>114</sup> In exchange for food, cotton, and very small pieces of gold the Spanish gave the Indians of the Caribbean glass beads, Castilian coins, and some European clothing. Interestingly the indigenous peoples immediately inserted the European goods into their trade network. Only days after Colón’s initial landing in Guanahaní, the Spanish overtook a canoe being piloted by a Lucayan Indian carrying a basket of coins and glass beads. From the moment of encounter both knowledge of the Europeans and their goods began to spread throughout the Caribbean.<sup>115</sup>

While the initial interactions between the Lucayans and the Spanish were peaceful, prior to continuing on with their explorations, Colón ordered the capture of seven Indians who would act as guides in their search for Cipango, or Japan. Following this service Colón planned on taking the Indians with him to Spain where they would be instructed in Spanish and Catholicism. They would then serve the Europeans as interpreters and intermediaries in return voyages of colonization to the Indies.<sup>116</sup> Here Colón was following the model used by Franciscan friars in

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<sup>114</sup> “Diario del Primer Viaje,” Octubre 1492. Transcribed in *Cristóbal Colón: Textos y Documentos Completos* edited by Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992), 110-111. “más me pareció que era gente muy pobre de todo. Ellos andan todos desnudos como su madre los pario y también las mujeres...que ninguno vide de edad de más de XXX anos...Ellos no traen armas ni las conocen porque les amostré espadas y las tomaban por el filo y se cortaban con ignorancia.” Unlike the Indians of Mexico, we do not possess any documents written in the Arawakan language. Thus, we have to rely on translations and interpretations written by 15<sup>th</sup> century Europeans, fraught with problems from initial misunderstandings and biases to the fidelity of these works through the centuries. For more on issues of translation and the benefits of using indigenous language documents and sources see James Lockhart and his school of New Philology in *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>115</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 159-162.

<sup>116</sup> For more on the importance of indigenous intermediaries, allies, and go-betweens from the initial conquest to the creation of colonial societies see Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk’s compilation *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), and

the Canary Islands and by the Portuguese along the coast of Africa.<sup>117</sup> Though these men were not slaves per-se, Colón and his colleagues saw nothing wrong with their capture and forced removal from their homes, especially because they were not Christians nor people of the Book like Muslims or Jews. He also commented on their quick wit and docile natures, remarking that these characteristics would make them ideal servants. “They say and repeat all that we speak to them very quickly. And I believe that they will be easily made Christians since it seems that they have no religion.”<sup>118</sup> This served as a foreshadowing of Colón’s future indigenous policies, many of which would be adopted by later conquistadors, explorers, merchants, and raiders. It also could reflect common European ideas regarding the inhabitants of the lower latitudes. Many Europeans, including Colón believed that they would find either very “childish” or “monstrous” populations along with a plethora of gold and other mineral wealth as they entered the “torrid zone.” These, like the supposedly simple natives of the Lucayos, would be justifiably enslaveable.<sup>119</sup>

The group spent several weeks sailing through the many Lucayos Islands, eventually landing in present day Cuba. Here again we see the same pattern as in the Lucayos Islands. Initial peaceful interactions, marked by the exchange of goods between the two parties<sup>120</sup>, were followed by the violent capture of Indian guides/slaves. In this case he took five men travelling in a canoe near the shoreline of northern Cuba. He later took many women and three children in

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Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>117</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 161-162.

<sup>118</sup> “Diario del Primer Viaje,” Octubre 1492. In *Textos Completos*, 111. “Ellos no traen armas ni las conocen...Ellos deben ser buenos servidores y de buen ingenio, que veo que muy presto dicen todo lo que les decía. Y creo que ligeramente se harían cristianos, que me pareció que ninguna secta tenían.”

<sup>119</sup> Nicolás Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), xiv.

<sup>120</sup> In this case the Indians of Cuba did have larger specimens of gold and also pearls enticing Colón to continue his exploration to the Southwest or to what he believed to be the mainland of Asia.

an effort to pacify the indigenous captives and to provide his crew with concubines, willing or not.<sup>121</sup> In his journal Colón explains why he captured the women and children: “I did this because having women from their country with them in Spain will make the men (the Indians) behave better and give them reason to negotiate with us.” The Portuguese had learned this tactic after bringing many men back to Europe from Africa who refused to cooperate without the presence of their women. Colón also hoped that the women, likely meaning those serving as concubines, would help teach the Spaniards their language.<sup>122</sup> These women would serve as the first intermediaries between the Europeans and Indians of the Americas.

### Española and Guacanagarí: the first Indigenous/European Alliance

Throughout the entire month of November Colón explored the Cuban coastline, but by December he reached its end and soon thereafter landed on the northwestern coast of Española. It was here that Colón finally gave up his belief that Cuba was the Asian mainland, and would eventually create the first European colony in the Americas. It was also on Española that Colón created his first alliance with a native ruler, the cacique Guacanagarí of the cacicazgo Marién. After several days reconnoitering the shoreline, and encountering indigenous peoples both on the beach and in canoes who all fled the Europeans, on a December afternoon a group of two hundred Taínos carrying their cacique approached the Spaniards. Excited to have finally made

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<sup>121</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 167-168.

<sup>122</sup> “Diario del Primer Viaje.” 12 de Noviembre de 1492. In *Textos Completos*, 136. “Esto hice porque mejor se comportan los hombres en España habiendo mujeres de su tierra que sin ellas, porque ya otras muchas veces se acaeció traer hombres de guinea para que deprendiesen la lengua en Portugal, y después que volvían y pensaban de se aprovechar de ellos en su tierra por la buena compañía que le habían hecho y dadas que se les habían dado, en llegando en tierra jamás parecían otros no lo hacían así. Así que teniendo sus mujeres ternan gana de negociar lo que se les encargare. Y también estas mujeres mucho ensenaran a los nuestros su lengua.” Already in this early discourse we see the gendering of America and its inhabitants as Colón feminizes the islands and the Indians. He and his men constantly “take” and “pacify” the land and its peoples, especially in their nakedness. In the European imagination America became a supine woman ready to be taken. For more on this see Jonathan C. Brown, *Latin America: A Social History of the Colonial Period* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2005).

contact with the ruler of the region, Colón offered the cacique or *rey* (king) food and invited him aboard his ship. The two men then had some form of limited conversation during which they exchanged gifts. Colón gave Guacanagarí red shoes, amber beads, orange scented water, and the sheets from his very own bed. Reciprocating, the cacique Guacanagarí provided the explorer with a few pieces of worked gold (likely guanín) and a belt.<sup>123</sup> In the following days many more Indians approached the Spanish ships, all seeking to gain some of the European goods. It seems as if they were already becoming a valuable part of the larger Caribbean exchange network.

Perhaps then it was to obtain more European commodities that Guacanagarí sent a close relative along with twenty other men to Colón's ship only four days after their initial meeting. It is also possible that the cacique sought to solidify his alliance with the strangers, possibly in an effort to bolster his overall power on the island. Guacanagarí was not one of the most dominant or powerful caciques of Española, so his embracing of a foreign alliance seems pragmatic. Not only was Guacanagarí subject to or in competition with very strong caciques like Beheccio, Guarionex, Higüey, and Caonabó<sup>124</sup>, but it is possible that he and his followers were in direct conflict with the nearby Macorix and Ciguayos, both of whom spoke different dialects. The Spaniards described the Ciguayos as being much more warlike than the Taínos of the island.<sup>125</sup> Guacanagarí's intentions also take on a more political tone when one examines the objects exchanged in this second meeting.<sup>126</sup> While in the first the cacique provided Colón with guanín

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<sup>123</sup> "Diario del Primer Viaje." 18 de Diciembre de 1492. In *Textos Completos*, 165-166.

<sup>124</sup> While the chroniclers clearly saw these caciques as the most powerful of the island, one can also draw this conclusion by examining the distribution of sacred spaces in the island. Almost all of these spaces lie within the boundaries of cacicazgos governed by these four principal rulers.

<sup>125</sup> Colón initially identified the Ciguayos as the Caribs and enemies of the Taínos, following a brief skirmish with them in January of 1493. However, after returning the Caribbean and seeing evidence of cannibalism on other islands he abandoned this theory. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 50 and "Diario del Primer Viaje" Enero de 1493. In *Textos Completos*, 196-199.

<sup>126</sup> "Diario del Primer Viaje." 22 de diciembre de 1492. In *Textos Completos*, 172-173. "El señor de aquella tierra, que tenía un lugar cerca de allí, le envió una grande canoa llena de gente, y en ella un principal criado suyo a rogar

and a plain belt, during the second encounter he gave Colón a much more politically and culturally significant item: a belt that held a guaíza in the shape of a human face.<sup>127</sup> In particular the guaíza was made of various grades of gold and featured huge ears, a tongue, and a nose. The guaíza represented part of the cacique's very essence, so giving this to Colón signified much more than a simple exchange of goods. Neither did the gift mean that Guacanagarí was becoming subject to the Europeans, as Colón took it to mean. Here the fact that Guacanagarí sent a relative and did not go himself to meet with Colón demonstrated the cacique's belief that Colón was an inferior to him. By giving the belt with the guaíza to Colón Guacanagarí signaled that the two men were entering into a reciprocal alliance; one perhaps that Guacanagarí could manipulate to increase his power in Española.

Regardless of Guacanagarí's intentions, the alliance between the two groups was immediately put to the test when Colón's principal ship, the *Santa Maria*, ran aground on Christmas day. In order to salvage the supplies aboard the ship Colón sent a message to Guacanagarí requesting help unloading the ruined vessel. In response the cacique sent large numbers of people in large canoes to help the Europeans save what provisions they could. The loss of the ship forced Colón to leave a group of men behind since there was not room on the two remaining vessels for all the Europeans to return. Near present day Port Paix on the northern coast of Haiti, the Spaniards built a small fort named La Navidad. Housing thirty-nine men, the outpost was completely dependent upon the good will and help of its indigenous neighbors. Though the Europeans did have some supplies, they would rely on Guacanagarí and his people

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al Almirante que fuese con los navíos a su tierra y que le daría cuanto tuviese; envíele con aquel un cinto que en lugar de bolsa traía una caratula que tenía dos orejas grandes de oro de martillo y la lengua y la nariz.”

<sup>127</sup> Luis J. Ramos Gómez, “Los dos pactos sellados por Guacanagarí y Cristóbal Colón en diciembre de 1492,” *Revista Española de Antropología Americana*, no. 2 (1990): 67-91.

for protection, information, and food while they awaited Colón's return. The Spaniards did not seem to fully appreciate the vulnerability of their situation at La Navidad until it was too late.

### The First "Atlantic" Indians

While he does not include it in his log or dairy, one of Colón's final actions prior to leaving for Spain was to take up to seven Taíno Indians with him, as he had done in many of his other ports of call. Of these seven, two would survive the journey to return with him the following year after being baptized in Spain.<sup>128</sup> Four additional Indians, of those he took from Española, Cuba, and the Lucayos, survived long enough for Colón to present them alongside his other discoveries at the court in Barcelona. All of these Indians were baptized in Barcelona with the King and his son Prince Juan serving as the godfathers of the converts. Among those mentioned by name during the ceremony was a relative of Guacanagarí and native of Española who received the baptismal name of Fernando de Aragón in honor of his godfather or padrino. Another, whose origin was not mentioned, received the name of Juan de Castilla in honor of his padrino Prince Juan. "Together with your Majesties, the serene Prince Don Juan, your first born and heir, were the godparents."<sup>129</sup> Of these captives Juan de Castilla was the only Indian not to return to the Caribbean. He became a house servant of the Prince under whose tutelage he supposedly learned Spanish and became a faithful Catholic. Court historian Oviedo even reported speaking with him several times during his tenure with don Juan. Sadly, within two

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<sup>128</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 186.

<sup>129</sup> "Seis indios llegaron con el primero Almirante a la corte, a Barcelona, cuando he dicho; y ellos, de su propia voluntad, e aconsejados, pidieron el bautismo; e los Católicos Reyes, por su clemencia, se lo mandaron dar; e juntamente con Sus Altezas, el serenísimo príncipe don Juan, su primogénito y heredero, fueron los padrinos. Y a un indio, que era el más principal de ellos cual era natural de esta isla Española, e pariente del rey o cacique Guacanagarí e a otro llamaron don Juan de Castilla." Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Tomo I* (Madrid, 1959), 31. Oviedo not only wrote about this event, but claimed to have been present at the baptism.

years Juan de Castilla perished.<sup>130</sup> The third Indian singled out was the “faithful” interpreter taken from Colón’s first port in the Lucayos, a man baptized as Diego Colón after the admiral’s first born son, who would continue to travel with Colón and was still alive in Española’s 1514 census and repartimiento.<sup>131</sup> Here Colón himself served as the Indian’s godfather. During the baptismal ceremonies each of the Indians received a new name, given to them by the Spanish rulers while creating a religious bond between the godparent and his charge. The baptismal ceremony in many ways mirrored the Taíno tradition of exchange names when forming reciprocal alliances and bonds of kinship. So perhaps, the Indians understood the ceremony and exchanging of names as formalizing reciprocal, even equal, bonds between themselves and the Spanish rulers. Unfortunately we can never know exactly how the Indians perceived the ritual of baptism, but it is likely that they witnessed and understood it within their own cosmology. Beyond these few exceptional characters, the record is silent as to the exact numbers of indigenous peoples taken or their survival rates. This remains true throughout the rest of the early conquest period and indigenous slave trade.

### The Creation of the Carib Trope and First Attempts to Create an Indian Slave Trade

Following his triumphant return to Spain, complete with his retinue of Taíno Indians, Colón travelled back to the Caribbean in October of 1493, this time heading for the islands to the southeast of Española first.<sup>132</sup> It would be in the islands of Guadalupe and Dominica that Colón

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<sup>130</sup> Oviedo, 31.

<sup>131</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 190.

<sup>132</sup> For this voyage, which was much better funded than his first, Colón sailed with 17 ships that held between 1200 and 1500 men who would serve to create the first permanent colony in the Americas. Kathleen Deagan and José María Cruxent, *Archaeology at La Isabela: America’s First European Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 4.



and his men would first encounter Carib<sup>133</sup> Indians. The royal physician from Sevilla, Diego Alvaréz Chanca, described the discovery of four or five human arm/leg bones in an abandoned hut on the island of Dominica proving to the travelers that the island's inhabitants were indeed the Caribs that the Taínos of Española supposedly feared.<sup>134</sup> The evidence of consumption of human flesh led Colón and his men to deduce that Caribs were cannibals.<sup>135</sup> It was also this practice that Colón and the Spaniards would use to justify the enslavement of Caribs for decades to come.

While, it is possible that the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles did consume human flesh, especially given their cultural and geographical proximity to the Indians of Brazil, it is unlikely that they did so as part of their regular diet or to the extent that the Spanish reported. As the French, Dutch, and Italians<sup>136</sup> would soon discover during the colonization and exploration of Brazil the custom of cannibalism was much more complicated. It soon became clear to those that spent more time with Brazil's Indians (such as the Dutch captive Hans Staden and the French missionary Jean de Léry whose narratives both depicted the Tupinamba and Tupinikin engaged in multiple instances of cannibalism) that the act of cannibalism had very specific and complex political and ritual significance. This was especially true for the leaders of a tribe who sought to

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<sup>133</sup> Though speakers of the Arawakan language the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles appear to have been culturally and politically distinct from the Taíno of the Greater Antilles. Whether or not they identified themselves as Caribs or if the Taíno (also an imagined ethnic category) called different cultures Carib is unknown. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 63.

<sup>134</sup> Because there were no large animals in the Caribbean before the arrival of the Spanish, the large bones must have been human.

<sup>135</sup> "Letter of Dr. Chanca, written to the City of Seville," 1493. Transcribed and translated in *The Four Voyages of Columbus: A History in Eight Documents including five by Christopher Columbus, in the original Spanish with English Translations* edited and translated by Cecil Jane (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 26. In fact, it is from the term Cariba or Carib that the very word "cannibal" as well as the name "Caribbean" was derived. Abulafia, 125.

<sup>136</sup> Some of the most detailed accounts of Brazil's native peoples come from the narratives of Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Hans Staden, *The True History of his Captivity*, trans. Malcolm Letts (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1928) and Amerigo Vespucci, *Letters of the Four Voyages to the New World*, trans. Bernard Quaritch (Hamburg: WAYASBAH, 1992).

capture and then consume their enemies to avenge the deaths (and probable consumption) of their own loved ones. Additionally, the leader who successfully captured a man during war, and then ate him, would receive a new and more prestigious name, thereby elevating his status within the group.<sup>137</sup> Those who killed and ate the most captives were ordained as chiefs and leaders of future war parties.<sup>138</sup> Such ritual cannibalism would make sense in the Caribbean context as well because the Taínos claimed that the Caribs ate those men they had captured during conflicts. However, little evidence has been found to support cannibalism in the Lesser Antilles outside of the reports emanating from Colón and other early exploratory ventures.<sup>139</sup>

Regardless of the type of cannibalism actually practiced by the Caribs, Colón and his men greatly exaggerated the custom to promote their own objectives. They also overstated the animosity between the Caribs and the Taínos, especially how much the Taínos of Puerto Rico and Española feared the Caribs and their constant raids. While it is possible that the Caribs did engage in some cannibalism and that they were enmeshed in some form of conflict with the Taínos of the Greater Antilles in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Colón, Chanca, and the other early chroniclers would not have fully understood the Taíno/Carib dynamic. In fact, the Caribs and Taínos had a much closer relationship than was previously understood. These relationships were complex and evolving, including both peaceful political alliances and kinship networks, and violent raids to capture cemíes and possibly women.

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<sup>137</sup> Gabriel Soares de Sousa, *Tratado Descritivo do Brasil em 1587* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1938), 364.

<sup>138</sup> De Léry, 115.

<sup>139</sup> By the time that Europeans had regular contact with the Caribs/Kalinagos in the early 1600s no evidence of cannibalism or the emasculation of captives was found. This could mean that the practice ended after the arrival of the Spaniards or that it had never been common. On the other hand raids to take women and other captives continued well into the colonial period. Fernando Santos-Granero, *Vital Enemies: Slavery, Predation, and the Amerindian Political Economy of Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 49-50.

Why then would Colón and other Europeans create such a clear dichotomy between the Caribs and the Taínos, with the Caribs playing the role of villain? This can at least partially be explained by miscommunication. When Colón first met with Guacanagarí and the other Taínos of Española, the Indians spoke of or gestured to an enemy that lived to the southeast that they called the Caribs. According to Colón's writings Guacanagarí described an island the Taínos called "Quari" which was "inhabited by a people who are regarded in all the islands a very fierce and who eat human flesh. They have many canoes with which they range through all the islands of India and pillage and take as much as they can."<sup>140</sup> Perhaps misinterpreting the account Colón concluded that the Taínos feared these peoples more than anything else, partially because they were such peaceful and cowardly people in his eyes. As can be seen in his later actions, Colón seems to have used the Taíno "fear" of the Caribs to paint himself as the protector of the "good" and cooperative Taíno Indians. In this way Colón and the Europeans in general could justify their colonization of the Caribbean islands, and eventually the enslavement of the "bad" Carib peoples.

Upon landing in Guadalupe, Colón ordered his men to capture some of the island's residents, ostensibly to ascertain how far they were from Española and perhaps to see if they were indeed Caribs. The explorers found human bones, including a neck that was currently boiling in a pot and other bones hung up around the houses.<sup>141</sup> These bones then could have served many different purposes or had a variety of meanings. For example, they could have served as a warning to enemies or they could have been in the process of being treated prior to their burial or incorporation in ritual and religious objects-such as cemíes that often contained bones. Not understanding the other uses of bones in indigenous cultures, the Europeans assumed

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<sup>140</sup> "Carta de Colón," 1493. In *Four Voyages*, 14-15.

<sup>141</sup> "Letter of Dr. Chanca." In *Four Voyages*, 32.

they were proof of cannibalism. This horrified the Europeans, especially since this was their first contact with possible cannibals. Neither Africans nor the Guanches and Canarians practiced cannibalism. So while the Iberians were familiar with guerrilla warfare and a wide range of cultures, this was their first encounter with possible cannibalism.

Despite the Caribs' bellicose reputation and association with cannibalism, Colón's men met very few Indians on Guadalupe. In fact, they were only able to capture eight men. Most fled to the mountains when they saw the Europeans approaching. Of these eight men, six seem to have been Taínos from Puerto Rico (Boriquen). In addition to the eight men, the party took twelve women and some children, all of whom they assumed to be captives of the native Caribs. Chanca even speculated, based upon a conversation that he had with these women using some words but largely gestures, that the husbands of the women had been eaten by the Caribs of Guadalupe.<sup>142</sup> Another chronicler, a friend of Colón's from Savona named Michael Cuneo<sup>143</sup>, described the captive women as being "very beautiful and fat, between the ages of fifteen and sixteen."<sup>144</sup> It appeared then that these women were well-treated by the inhabitants of Guadalupe whether or not they were concubines, wives, or slaves.<sup>145</sup> Throughout the eight days that Colón and his men remained on Guadalupe they continued to encounter both Taínos and Caribs, taking many by force though some came with them willingly. Of note is that the Europeans could only

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<sup>142</sup> "Relación del Segundo Viaje." In *Textos Completos*, 237.

<sup>143</sup> Abulafia, 187.

<sup>144</sup> "Carta de Michael Cuneo," 1495. Transcribed in *Primeras Cartas Sobre América (1493-1503)* by Francisco Morales Padrón (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1990), 143. "En aquella isla capturamos doce mujeres muy hermosas y muy gordas, entre los quince y los diez y seis años."

<sup>145</sup> Neil Whitehead hypothesizes that the Caribs used the captive women to produce and weave cotton cloaks, a valuable trade item in the Caribbean. Neil Whitehead, *Of Cannibals and Kings: Primal Anthropology in the Americas* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 36.

tell the two groups apart by hairstyle, with the Caribs wearing their hair very long while the Taínos preferred a shorter, bob like haircut.<sup>146</sup>

The real question remains how the women and men of Puerto Rico came to be on Guadalupe in 1493. Were they truly slaves captured during raids and were the men destined to be eaten, and if so why were they still alive and allowed their freedom on the island? Or had they served as gifts to solidify recent alliances between the Taínos of Puerto Rico and the Indians of Guadalupe as archaeological evidence suggests? Whether or not these men, women, and children were from Guadalupe, were visiting the island, or were in fact slaves/captives of the Caribs as the Europeans assumed, Colón sent them all to Spain where they would serve as examples of Caribs or Carib prisoners.<sup>147</sup> It is possible that even at this early stage Colón wanted the Crown to see evidence of the Carib barbarity to receive permission to enslave them.

Only a few days after sailing from Guadalupe, a canoe carrying many Caribs (women and men) attacked the European vessels with their arrows. Word may have been spreading throughout the Caribbean that the Spaniards were a threat, capturing indigenous peoples as they explored the area. In response Colón and his men captured the canoe and all its inhabitants, killing several Indians and taking the rest hostage. Colón gave one woman in particular to his friend Cuneo as a concubine. In his letter Cuneo describes how he subdued the woman who fought his every sexual advance with her teeth and nails. He was eventually able to overpower her by beating her, something he seemed quite proud of in his letter. Cuneo even claimed that once he succeeded in raping her the woman was pleased. "I beat her forcefully as she screamed inaudibly. Finally we came to an agreement in such a manner that I can tell you that she seemed

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<sup>146</sup> "Letter of Dr. Chanca." In *Four Voyages*, 38.

<sup>147</sup> "Carta de Micheal Cuneo," 143.

to have been brought up in a school of harlots.”<sup>148</sup> Perhaps because of behavior such as Cuneo’s ten women taken from Guadalupe swam to shore in the middle of the night, and were able to find safety with the Taínos of Española despite Colón’s demands that Guacanagarí return the women to him.<sup>149</sup> Here we see possible evidence of their pre-Colombian relationships. Perhaps the women were Taínos or were Caribs with whom the Taínos of Española had established relationships. It is also possible that they had no prior connection, but Guacanagarí felt responsible for the women and sought to protect them from the Spanish out of a sense of honor or duty. Whatever the case may be Guacanagarí’s actions demonstrate that his alliance to Colón had limits. He would not forsake the safety of the indigenous women for the sake of his relationship with the Spanish.

Of the other captives, male and female, taken in the Lesser Antilles we have no further account. It is likely that these Indians were sent to Spain with Antonio Torres in February of 1494 when he returned to gather new supplies for the nascent colony of La Isabela. By the time of Torres’s return trip to Spain, on which he carried a report by Colón to the monarchs, the admiral had formulated a plan and rationale to enslave the Caribs. First of all the Indian slaves would receive Catholic education, thus saving their souls, and those who displayed talent could serve as the perfect interpreters and guides for the eventual conquest of all the Carib islands. Secondly, the majority of Carib slaves could be put to work in Spain or in the Canary Islands. To collect sufficient slaves for both purposes Colón advocated several caravels be sent to the Caribbean to hunt for and capture Caribs. These slaves could then be traded for all of the

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<sup>148</sup> “Carta de Michael Cuneo,” 144. “Estando yo en la barca me apodere de una mujer de los caníbales, muy hermosa, la cual el señor Almirante me donó. Teniéndola en mi estancia desnuda según es costumbre, asediome el deseo de solazarme con ella; queriéndolo poner en ejecución y no admitiéndolo ella, me trato de tal manera con sus uñas, que jamás hubiese querido haber comenzado; visto lo cual, si he de deciros todo, tome una cuerda y la azote fuertemente, mientras ello daba gritos inauditos. Pero al final, nos encontramos de acuerdo de tal manera que os digo que para eso parecia amaestrada en una escuela de ramerás.”

<sup>149</sup> “Letter of Dr. Chanca.” In *Four Voyages*, 60.

supplies and food that the colonists would receive from Spain. The slaves would serve as payment.<sup>150</sup> He would adopt this same design regarding the Taínos of Española as they turned against him and the other Europeans. As early as 1494 we can see the very beginnings of the commodification of Indian slaves.

### The End of A Dream: Taíno Resistance in Española

After a brief stop in Puerto Rico, the group continued to the eastern coast of Española, landing in the Sámana Peninsula. Here Colón sent one of the four Indians taken from Española who had survived the arduous journey to Spain and back to the Caribbean-ashore. The indigenous emissary, whose name was not recorded, took with him many presents for his family and promised the Admiral that he would spread the word of the Europeans' kindness and religion to his people. He also planned to meet Colón in the Cibao region in a few days to help him with the search for gold.<sup>151</sup> The ships then set course for Montecristi, a harbor nearby to the hastily created settlement of Navidad to reunite with the thirty-nine men left behind the previous year. Unfortunately, all that was left of the colony were a few decomposing bodies, though the fact that they once had beards could still be discerned, and smoldering ashes. Though there are many theories as to the causes of the massacre, from in-fighting among the colonists themselves to retaliation for raping Taíno women, the Spaniards likely fell victim to an attack by the powerful cacique Caonabó. Caonabó led the cacicazgo Maguana located in the Cibao or central mountain range of the island. According to Guacanagarí and many of his subject Indians questioned by Colón and two of the Taínos who had accompanied him to Spain, caciques Caonabó and

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<sup>150</sup> "Memorial que para los Reyes Católicos dio el Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón en la ciudad de Isabela," 30 de enero de 1494. Transcribed in *Textos Completos*, 259-261.

<sup>151</sup> "Relación del Segundo Viaje." In *Textos Completos*, 242. According to the document the other Indians had died of disease or "viruelas," most by the time they reached Cádiz.

Mayreni<sup>152</sup> had recently conducted a surprise nighttime attack on both Navidad and Guacanágarí's village. During the fight both settlements were burned to the ground and many Indians were injured, including Guacanágarí in the upper thigh. It was during this assault that the remaining Christians had died, with some dying earlier from disease and internecine conflict.

While Guacanágarí's very generous actions make his story plausible, including the gold he sent to Colón immediately upon his arrival, the Europeans did not immediately believe his innocence. The mistrust was only made worse when the Europeans discovered valuable Spanish goods in Indian huts, objects that the Spaniards would not have willingly bartered, including a Moorish mantle taken during the Reconquista. Then, when Chanca himself evaluated Guacanágarí's leg wound, it was deemed insignificant and barely visible.<sup>153</sup> This tension is likely why Colón chose to establish his first real colony several miles eastward instead of rebuilding La Navidad. It is possible that Guacanágarí was subordinate to Caonabó, so he may have known of the attack beforehand.<sup>154</sup> However, it is also feasible that Caonabó's assault was meant to both expel the Europeans and to punish Guacanágarí for hosting them and possibly benefitting from their presence. It is still uncertain whether or not Guacanágarí was involved in the planning of the confrontation or was a victim himself. In the end, Colón did not exact revenge on Guacanágarí and maintained him as an indigenous ally for many years, an arrangement from which both men benefitted. The incident would also color all future interactions with other Taíno caciques, first and foremost with Caonabó.

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<sup>152</sup> "Letter of Dr. Chanca." In *Four Voyages*, 50. Mayreni may have been a lower cacique, subject to Caonabó, or the scribe could have mistaken the name for a Macorix cacique. The Macorix were neighbors directly to the east of Guacanágarí's cacicazgo Marién.

<sup>153</sup> "Letter of Dr. Chanca." In *Four Voyages*, 52-58.

<sup>154</sup> William F. Keegan, *Taíno Indian Myth and Practice: The Arrival of the Stranger King* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 23.



Before Colón could investigate the threat posed by Caonabó, he had to build a new settlement from scratch. Colón and his men left the ruins of Navidad and sailed eastward along the northern coast of the island. It was not until nearly a month later that the group decided upon a site, dropping anchor and performing the first mass on January 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1494. They named the new colony in honor of the Queen, La Isabela.<sup>155</sup>



**Figure 22, Ruins of La Isabela**

Even though the settlement would be abandoned within three years due to widespread illness, lack of resources, and violence, the site initially proved to be an auspicious one because the fort was in a kind of frontier zone where no one high-ranking cacique ruled. In fact La Isabela seems to have been located in-between the territories ruled by the Macorix, cacique Mayabonex,<sup>156</sup> and the Taíno caciques of Marién and Magua. Perhaps because La Isabela lay in this borderland, no cacique was immediately threatened by Colón and his men, and they were temporarily safe from another attack.

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<sup>155</sup> Deagan and Cruxent, *Archaeology at La Isabela*, 4-5.

<sup>156</sup> Mayabonex is the cacique that the ethnographer Pané first lived with first, in the settlement of Magdalena, before going to stay with Guarionex. Keegan, 26.

While the frontier location of La Isabela may have been the result of pure luck, it is also possible that Colón understood the benefits of settling in the relatively unpopulated borderland region. He even may have had help in choosing the site from his Taíno translators and guides. While few Indians lived in or nearby to Isabela, Taínos from many different cacicazgos travelled to fort in order to trade with the Europeans seeking bits of glass, metal, and other trinkets. This exchange provided the settlers with needed foodstuffs and the much sought after gold.<sup>157</sup> For nearly a full year the colonists and the Indians of Española co-existed in a tense but peaceful calm at Isabela. But Spanish incursions into the interior of the island would soon trigger violent Taíno resistance. The Taíno's defense of their native lands would lead directly to their enslavement.

#### Subjugating Caonabó: the First Wars of Conquest in the Americas

Only a few weeks after the founding of Isabela Colón sent a group into the interior region called the Cibao in search of the rumored gold mines. After finding evidence of gold, Colón organized a much larger expedition of over 400 men who marched south and established a fort called Santo Tomás by March of 1494.<sup>158</sup> This settlement provoked the first war between the Taínos and the European colonists. On returning to La Isabela, Colón found hundreds suffering from illness and hunger. He also received word that cacique Caonabó was threatening the newly established fort, which lay in the heart of Caonabó's cacicazgo.

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<sup>157</sup> Deagan and Cruxent, *Archaeology at La Isabela*, 16-17.

<sup>158</sup> Deagan and Cruxent, 7-8 and Keegan, *Taíno Indian Myth and Practice*, 26-27. This community would become Concepción de la Vega, the first boom town of the Americas.

In response Colón sent over four hundred men led by Alonso de Hojeda to reinforce the fort's commander Pedro Margarite.<sup>159</sup> With Hojeda's forces he sent instructions on exactly how to deal with Caonabó and his people. Colón's orders offer insight into his plans for the Taínos and their "pacification." Colón's very first command was to ensure that no innocent Indian was harmed in anyway. This included the taking of any goods from them without their consent so as to prevent an uprising. However, in the very next sentence Colón prescribed the cutting off of ears and noses of any Indian caught stealing from the Spanish soldiers.<sup>160</sup> "And if you find any of them stealing the punishment should be to cut off their noses and ears since these are body parts that they cannot hide so that all the people of the island will engage in *rescate*<sup>161</sup> and understand what will be done to any other Indians."<sup>162</sup> He wanted to punish all "bad" Indians and reward the "good" Indians, though in this case the reward was little more than treating them with respect. A "good" Indian could also fall from Colón's graces simply by refusing to trade with the Spanish, or even by limiting how much food they were willing to exchange. Instead of carrying provisions with them, Hojeda and his men were instructed to acquire their food through trade with the Indians of the Cibao. In exchange for food, the soldiers were to give the Taínos trinkets including silver hawk's bells. Although the local people would not have produced enough for four hundred men, the Spanish had permission to take anything they needed by force.<sup>163</sup> It would appear that

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<sup>159</sup> Deagan and Cruxent, 57.

<sup>160</sup> "Instrucción de Colón a mosén Pedro Margarite," 9 de abril de 1494. AGI Patronato 8, R.10, fol. 75v. "La principal cosa que habéis de hacer es guardar mucho a los indios que no les se ha hecho mal ni daño ni les se ha tomado cosa contra su voluntad." The title of Mosén signified that Pedro was a noble of secondary status from the Kingdom of Aragon. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*.

<sup>161</sup> According to Sauer this is the first use of the term *rescate* in colonial documents. This term signifies trade under some pressure, force, or violence and could mean the commandeering of goods. Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main*, 85. It was commonly used to describe the capture and forceful trade of Indian slaves in later years.

<sup>162</sup> AGI Patronato 8, R.10, fol. 75v. "si hallaredes que alguno de ellos hurten, castigadlos también cortándoles las narices y las orejas porque son miembros que no podrán esconder porque con esto se asegurará el rescate de la gente de toda la isla dándoles a entender que esto que se hizo a los otros indios."

<sup>163</sup> AGI Patronato 8, R.10, fol. 75v.-76r. "Porque ahora la gente no podrá llevar tanto mantenimiento de esto nuestro como es necesario para el tiempo que ande estar fuera hallaban los cuales llevan mercaderías de cuentas e cascabelas

the Taínos had few options when facing the invading Europeans. They could either give up all of their food stores risking famine or anger the soldiers bringing about dismemberment and possibly death.

Colón did not limit his instructions to the general treatment of the island's indigenous peoples. He also gave very specific orders regarding the cacique Caonabó. Despite the cacique's recent threats against Santo Tomás, Colón sought to make an alliance with the leader. He ordered Margarite to choose eleven "discreet" men to deliver gifts to Caonabó in the hopes that this demonstration of good will and friendship would gain him a new native ally as well as an avenue to indigenous stores of gold.<sup>164</sup> But, Colón also added that if the cacique refused to meet with Colón's delegation (led by the Spaniard Contreras) or did not respond favorably, Margarite had permission to capture Caonabó using any means necessary.<sup>165</sup>

Margarite followed none of these orders and while Colón resumed his explorations of Cuba and Jamaica, he abandoned his post at Santo Tomás, returning first to La Isabela and then to Spain along with many other dissatisfied Spaniards.<sup>166</sup> Las Casas related that the men Margarite left behind quickly spread out about the island wreaking havoc on the indigenous population. Not only did the soldiers seek large quantities of food<sup>167</sup>, which the Taínos did not have, but they also violated hundreds of Indians. In particular Las Casas claimed that the men

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y otras cosas... Y si por ventura no se hallase de comer por comprar que vos Mosén Pedro lo proveáis tomándolo lo mas con esta mente que podáis alagando los Indios."

<sup>164</sup> AGI Patronato 8, R.10, fol. 76r.

<sup>165</sup> AGI Patronato 8, R.10, fol. 76v. Interestingly, following Caonabó's detention the Spanish soldiers were ordered to dress him since his nudity was indecent. "y porque el anda desnudo y sería malo de detenerle así una vez se soltase y se fuese no se podría así haber a las manos por la indisposición de la tierra estando en vistas con el hacer dar una camisa ay vestírsela."

<sup>166</sup> These included the Franciscan leader Buil. Sauer, 85.

<sup>167</sup> Oviedo claimed that the Taínos refused to plant their crops in the spring of 1494 in the hopes of starving the Spaniards and forcing them to abandon the island. Oviedo, 48. This could be possible, but many other factors could explain the lack of food in the summer of 1494. Perhaps the island was suffering from a drought, or the general upheaval of the Taínos, many of whom were already fleeing their homelands to escape the Spanish could have left an insufficient number of Indians to plant and cultivate a normal crop of corn and yucca.

raped and stole any Taíno women who they found attractive, regardless of her age or if she was already married.<sup>168</sup> These actions not only reveal the Spaniards' disrespect for the Taínos of the island, but also for their own leaders. Colón's inability to control his men would continue to plague the nascent colony, eventually forcing the Crown to intervene and Colón's arrest.

Despite the behavior of the colonists and the power that Caonabó could harness, from his ally and brother-in-law Behechio of the Jaragua cacicazgo, the cacique did not attack the Europeans. While his reasons for inaction are unclear, it is possible that Caonabó did not view the Spanish as a serious threat after Margarite and most of his soldiers abandoned Santo Tomás soon after its founding. The few Spaniards who remained in the area did not possess the power or organization to challenge Caonabó's authority. It would have also been difficult to mount a force against the raiding and mobile Spanish soldiers, despite their nuisance. When Colón returned to La Isabela in the end of September 1494, he sent another envoy of only ten men led by Hojeda to Caonabó. They were to exchange gifts with the cacique and invite him to La Isabela to meet with Colón.<sup>169</sup> Instead the Spaniards captured him and took him to La Isabela in late 1494. The captivity of such a powerful cacique ultimately instigated the first full scale war against the Europeans. The violence began in late 1494 when the Macorix cacique named Guatiguará attacked the sparsely populated fort of Magdalena. The Spaniards had erected this fort during their march to Santo Tomás, along with devastating the region. During the assault between 10 and 40 Spaniards were killed.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Las Casas, *Historia Tomo I*, 399.

<sup>169</sup> There are three distinct versions of how the meeting went, and why Caonabó ended up being escorted to La Isabela in chains. The three versions are authored by Oviedo, Las Casas, and Peter Martyr. For more on each see Keegan, *Taíno Myth and Practice*, 28-31.

<sup>170</sup> Sauer, 87-88, Deagan and Cruxent, 60, Keegan, *Taíno Myth and Practice*, 32, and Las Casas, *Historia Tomo I*, 400.

In retaliation, Colón sent an army to defeat and pacify Guatiguará. During the conflict the Europeans captured over a thousand Indians who were marched to La Isabela in February of 1495. Because these Indians had violently attacked the Europeans they could legally be taken as slaves through the practice of “just war.”<sup>171</sup> Colón chose five hundred of the sixteen hundred captives to send to Spain, along with Caonabó possibly<sup>172</sup>, while the rest were partitioned out to those Spaniards who wanted them. According to Cuneo many of the captives were women “with infants at their breasts.” Perhaps because they were so indisposed, many of the new mothers were set free. But, misunderstanding the Spaniards’ intentions many of them “dropped their children to the ground” abandoning them as they fled in desperation from their captors.<sup>173</sup> Of the five hundred slaves sent to Spain, two hundred died during the journey, while the fate of the other three hundred is unknown, though Cuneo did not think they would live very long in the much colder climate of Europe.<sup>174</sup> Thus began the Indian slave trade. The Taíno rebellion soon spread from Magdalena and the Macorix. In fact, following the capture of Caonabó an alliance was solidified between the other three most powerful caciques on the island: Behechio, Guarionex, and Higuanaamá.<sup>175</sup>

### Battle of Santo Cerro: Turning Point in the Conquest of Española

By March of 1495 Colón possessed only one Taíno ally, Guacanagarí. Faced with future attacks on La Isabela and Santo Tomás, Colón and his brother Bartolomé marched an army of 200 Spanish soldiers, 20 horsemen, attack dogs, and 3,000 Indian allies led by Guacanagarí into

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<sup>171</sup> Phillips and Phillips, 207.

<sup>172</sup> One official report said that the ship on which Caonabó was held prisoner sunk in the harbor of La Isabela before he ever left for Spain. However, this detail is not included in any of the chronicles, nor is his arrival in Spain, leaving Caonabó’s fate a mystery. Keegan, *Taíno Myth and Practice*, 31.

<sup>173</sup> “Carta de Cuneo,” 160-161.

<sup>174</sup> “Carta de Cuneo,” 161.

<sup>175</sup> Las Casas, *Historia Tomo I*, 400.

the Cibao to pacify the league of caciques.<sup>176</sup> Upon reaching the central valley of the Cibao region, which they called La Vega Real, the Europeans set up a small palisade atop what would become Santo Cerro. This mountain overlooks the entire Cibao valley with views extending almost to the Atlantic Ocean. For an image of the valley see Figure 24.



**Figure 24, Central Cibao Valley from atop Santo Cerro**

In addition to the strategic advantage the mountain is located very close to Guarionex's largest settlement of Maguá. Within days of reaching Santo Cerro Colón and his men were attacked by Taíno warriors numbering anywhere from 5,000 to 100,000 depending on the account.<sup>177</sup> After a day of ferocious fighting, Colón was forced to retreat to Santo Cerro and it seemed as if the Europeans would suffer certain defeat. However, the following morning they awoke to find the valley deserted. Colón believed this signified the submission of the Taínos and many of Colón's men attributed the "miraculous" victory to the Virgin of Las Mercedes. Against all odds Colón was able to negotiate a treaty with cacique Guarionex.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Sauer, 89.

<sup>177</sup> Pauline M. Kulstad, *Concepcion de la Vega 1495-1564: A Preliminary Look at the Lifeways in Americas' First Boom Town* (Masters' Thesis, University of Florida, 2008), 39.

<sup>178</sup> It is at this point that the ethnographer Pané was relocated to minister to and learn from Guarionex.

Why the Taíno warriors actually abandoned the battle and why Guarionex decided to submit to Colón are two questions still left unanswered.<sup>179</sup> One of the best hypotheses regarding the surrender is that of double-misunderstanding.<sup>180</sup> It is possible that the Taíno warriors and caciques believed the battle to be over when the Europeans retreated in disarray back to their base on Santo Cerro. Therefore, they too returned to their respective cacicazgos after what they believed to be a victory sure that the Europeans would eventually leave. With his allies and support gone from Magua, Guarionex may have felt vulnerable and that his best option was simply to negotiate for peace with Colón and his men. Regardless, this was the beginning of Colón's imposed tribute system whereby every Taíno living in the Cibao region of fourteen years or older had to pay a Flemish hawkbell full of gold to the Spanish Crown every three months.<sup>181</sup> Eventually, especially in other regions lacking gold, cotton or other spices could be given in gold's stead. Colón returned to Spain in 1496 bringing with him the gold collected the previous year and another 30 Indian slaves.<sup>182</sup> He sold these slaves in the markets of Sevilla for 1,500 maravedís<sup>183</sup> each.

The Taínos could not fulfill Colón's tribute demands, and the resulting rebellions all increased the number of Taíno slaves transported to Spain each year throughout the 1490s. By 1497, Guarionex was again in rebellion against the Spanish government, which Colón's brother Bartolomé administered from the new capital of Santo Domingo on the Southern coast.

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<sup>179</sup> For more on these two controversies see Kulstad, 39-41 and Lynne Guitar, "What Really Happened at Santo Cerro? Origin of the Legend of the Virgin of Las Mercedes," *Issues in Indigenous Caribbean Studies* Vol. 3 (February 2001).

<sup>180</sup> For more on the issue of double-misunderstanding and double mistaken identity see James Lockhart, "Sightings: Initial Nahua Reactions to Spanish Culture," in *Implicit Understandings*, 218-248 and "Wyatt Macgaffey "Dialogues of the deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic coast of Africa," in *Implicit Understandings*, 249-267.

<sup>181</sup> Pedro Mártir de Anglería, *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo* (Madrid: 1989), 44 and Sauer, 90.

<sup>182</sup> Sauer, 90 and Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud de los Indios* (Santo Domingo: Fundación García Arévalo, 1995), 59.

<sup>183</sup> A maravedí was the smallest unit of Spanish currency, about a 30<sup>th</sup> of a real or gold coin. Usually they were minted from copper or silver. It was the first unit used in the colonies.



Bartolomé quickly quelled this revolt, with large Taíno casualties, and captured Guarionex. Interestingly, the Spanish almost immediately freed Guarionex in an effort to regain his alliance and power over the Indians of the Cibao. Through the cacique the Spanish could guarantee the cooperation of the Taínos, including the delivery of tribute. Guarionex was to act as a puppet ruler for the Spanish, the first of many that the Europeans would install in conquered territories.

### Roldán's Mutiny, 1497- 1498

Guarionex's freedom was brief due to an ill-fated alliance he made with the rebel Spaniard Francisco Roldán against the Colón government. Roldán rebelled against the Colón government when Bartolomé began preparations to move the capital of the colony from ill-fated La Isabela to Santo Domingo. For a year and a half year Roldán and his followers wreaked havoc on various parts of the island and made the collection of tribute nearly impossible for either Colón governor.<sup>184</sup> Initially, Roldán secured an alliance with cacique Guarionex and the other Taínos of the Cibao, but shortly thereafter moved his community to the Jaragua cacicazgo in the southwestern corner of the island. Further away from the central Spanish government in Santo Domingo, Roldán created an alliance with the then cacique Behechio and his sister cacica Anacaona. Roldán also cemented deep ties with the Taínos of Jaragua, including taking a Taíno "wife" and having mestizo children who he petitioned to bring back with him to Spain as part of his peace settlement in the fall of 1498.<sup>185</sup> After Behechio's death Anacaona continued to benefit from Roldán as she was able to avoid regular tribute payments and much interaction with the larger Colón government until 1503.

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<sup>184</sup> Sauer, 92-95.

<sup>185</sup> Jane Landers, "World Colliding: Early Transatlantic Contacts," in *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400-1888*, edited by Douglas R. Egerton, Alison Games, Jane Landers, Kris Lane, and Donald R. Wright (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc., 2007), 12.

On the other hand Guarionex's brief alliance with Rolán proved to be his downfall as it prompted another attack on the cacique when Cristobal Colón returned to Española in 1498. When Guarionex realized the dangerous position he was in, he fled the Cibao and found shelter with the Macorix cacique Mayobanex in the north of the island. This alliance only further motivated Colón, who led a force through the northern mountains capturing both caciques along with as many Indians as they could. The Spanish considered all of these Taínos and Macorixs to be slaves and shipped to Spain.<sup>186</sup> Five ships transported the 800 Taíno slaves, taken in "just war," to Spain in the fall of 1498.<sup>187</sup> In Cristóbal's accompanying letter his intentions to create an Indian slave trade become even clearer. He wrote "In the name of Saint Trinidad I send all of these slaves that can be sold along with brazil wood; of these if the information I possess is correct we can sell at least 4,000...and because in Castile and Portugal and Aragón and Italy and Sicily and the Islands of Portugal and of Aragón and of the Canaries many slaves are used up, and I believe that fewer are coming from Guinea, these Indian slaves can be sold for three times the price."<sup>188</sup> Here not only are the Indians commodified, but are described as a natural resource, like Brazilwood. Later in the letter Colón also mentions that in addition to the Indians of Española proper, there were many more Indians who could be enslaved, especially the Caribs, on neighboring islands. In Colón's opinion until larger sources of gold could be found the key to economic success in the Indies was the Indian slave trade. While Colón advocated his plan, others including Alonso Hojeda, the same captain who captured Caonabó, and the Italian

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<sup>186</sup> Sauer, 93.

<sup>187</sup> Morella A. Jiménez, *La Esclavitud Indígena en Venezuela (Siglo XVI)* (Caracas: Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, 1986), 87.

<sup>188</sup> "Carta a los reyes de Colón," Document XXXIII, *Textos Completos*, 407-408.

Amerigo Vespucci engaged in the trade. Both men sold over 200 hundred slaves from Española and the coast of Venezuela in the port city of Cádiz in 1498 and 1499.<sup>189</sup>

Slaver	Year	Captured In	Taken To	Number
Colon	1495	Espanola	Spain	500
Colon	1497	Espanola	Spain	30
Colon	1498	Espanola	Spain	800
Hojeda and Vespucci	1498-1499	Espanola and Tierra Firme	Cadiz, Spain	200
Cristobal de Guerra	1501	Pearl Islands	Cadiz , Sevilla, and Cordoba, Spain	unknown
<b>Total:</b>				<b>1, 530</b>

**Figure 25, Indian Slaves captured by Colón and other early explorers**

### Queen Isabela and The First Legal Impediments to the Indian Slave Trade

Even as Colón and his fellow Europeans developed an Atlantic slave trade, Queen Isabela questioned the practice and its morality. In 1495 she had postponed the sale of the majority of the 500 Indians Colón shipped to Spain until conferring with scholars and theologians to determine whether or not they should be slaves. She also sought a more complete description as to how the Indians came to be slaves and why they were sent as captives to Spain.<sup>190</sup> A full year later no decision had been reached, and while little documentation exists to determine the fate of most of these Indians, at least fifty were finally sold to Juan de Lezcano to serve as galley slaves.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Esteban Mira Caballos, “Isabel la Católica y el indio americano,” in *La Española: Epicentro del Caribe en el siglo XVI* (Santo Domingo: Academia Dominicana de la Historia, 2010), 44-45 and Jiménez, 87.

<sup>190</sup> “Real Carta de la Reina” 16 de mayo de 1495. AGI Patronato 9, R.1, fol. 85v.-86r.

<sup>191</sup> “Real orden mandando se entregasen a Juan de Lezcano cincuenta indios para distribuirlos en las galeras de su mando” 13 de enero de 1496. Transcribed and printed in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica, 1493-1810, Volumen I* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 3 and Mira Caballos, “Isabel la Católica,” 44.

Another, named Francisco was sold to the widow Inés Rodríguez in Sevilla for 3,000 maravedíes by two Genoese mariners Domenico de Castellón and Francisco Magdalena in 1497.<sup>192</sup>

By 1500 the Queen had come to a decision, perhaps after seeing the growing numbers of Taíno slaves arriving in the ports of Andalucía, declaring the Indians of the Americas to be free persons and subjects and vassals of the Spanish Crown. As vassals to the Crown the laws of Spain extended to the Indians of the Caribbean, and in theory prevented their abuse at the hands of the Spanish colonists. Isabela even went so far as to order the return of all the surviving Indians that Colón had brought to Spain.<sup>193</sup> By the summer of 1501 only 21 of the original 500 were still in the possession of Torres, and one of them was too sick to travel.<sup>194</sup> The other 20 men and women would be accompanied by the first large contingent of Franciscan friars to journey to the Americas in 1502.

In addition to the Indians already in Spain, Isabela also tried to protect the future for those in the colonies. In her 1501 instructions to the governor of Española, Nicolás de Ovando, she made it clear that while the Indians of the Caribbean were to serve the Spaniards they were not in fact their slaves, but vassals of the Crown.<sup>195</sup> The Indians also had to be converted to Catholicism and be treated well, “as our good subjects and vassals and that none should be hurt or suffer any indignity.” Ovando and the other colonists were to be especially respectful of the

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<sup>192</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 68.

<sup>193</sup> “Real Cedula que los Indios que se Trajeron de las Islas y se vendieron por mandado del Almirante, se pongan en libertad y se restituyan a los países de su naturaleza” 20 de junio de 1500. *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica*, 4 and Mira Caballos, “Isabel la Católica,” 47-48.

<sup>194</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 70.

<sup>195</sup> “Instrucción para el gobernador de las Indias acerca de la población y regimiento de ellas, de la contratación, de la hacienda, y otras cosas” 20 de marzo de 1501. Transcribed and printed in Roberto Marte, comp., *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos de Juan Bautista Muñoz* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Fundación García Arévalo, Inc., 1981), 45. This work is a Collection of documents discovered and then transcribed by the Crown historian Juan Bautista Munoz in 1793 and later re-printed by Roberto Marte.

caciques who would make sure that their subjects obeyed the Crown orders.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, there still existed two ways to obtain an indigenous slave legally: if he or she was already declared as a slave and there existed proof of this status or through “just war.” So Spaniards could still legally purchase or trade for pre-Colombian indigenous slaves in the Caribbean as well as enslave any Indians captured during warfare. For a time it seemed as though Colón’s dream of indiscriminate enslaving throughout the Caribbean, especially of Carib islands was not to be.

Although Isabela’s official royal policy did appear to slow down the Indian slave trade, it did not stop it entirely. For the three years that the enslavement of Indians was expressly forbidden, from June of 1500 until August of 1503, an illegal slave trade continued in the Caribbean. In 1501 Gonzalo Gómez de Cervantes, the local judge or official of Jerez de la Frontera, accused Cristóbal de Guerra of illegally capturing many Indians from the Pearl Islands of Cumaná and Cuchina. While exploring Cumaná and Cuchina, Guerra engaged in rescate, acquiring large amounts of pearls, brazilwood, and Indian slaves.<sup>197</sup> He then went on to the island of Bonaire where he encountered some indigenous resistance. During his coastal raids many Indians were killed, but he did manage to capture an undisclosed number. These Indians he transported first to Española and then on to Sevilla, Cádiz, and Cordoba.<sup>198</sup> As the Indian slave trade had recently been declared illegal, the Crown ordered Guerra to provide the records of all the Indians he had sold. The individuals who purchased the slaves would then be found and returned their money. The Indians were to be entrusted to the mayor or comendador Lares, who

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<sup>196</sup> “Instrucción al comendador Frey Nicolás de Ovando, gobernador de las islas y tierra firme del mar océano” 16 de septiembre de 1501. *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica*, 4-5. These same basic tenants would eventually be included following the establishment of encomiendas in 1505. Deive, 72.

<sup>197</sup> Sauer, 113.

<sup>198</sup> “Orden de informe de los indios traído por Cristóbal Guerra” 1501. AGI, Indiferente 418, L.1, F.70R.

was to return the Indians to their homelands as soon as possible. While the Indians were under the care of Lares, Guerra was to pay their expenses. He also had to pay a fine for his crime.<sup>199</sup> While the destiny of most of Guerra's slaves remains unknown, six of them were located in Córdoba. They were the property of Pedro Hernández de Córdoba who relinquished the Indians directly to the Corregidor Cervantes in Sevilla so that they could be returned to their native territory. Whether or not they survived to journey back to the Caribbean, or if the Spanish government ever fulfilled their promises to the Indians are unknown. Despite Guerra's punishment, slave raiding along the Pearl Islands and coast of Venezuela continued for several years, largely under Alonso de Hojeda.<sup>200</sup>

#### Expanding the Legal Indian Slave Trade to the Lesser Antilles and Tierra Firme: 1503-1514

For a brief period, the enslavement of most of Americas' native peoples was illegal, with perpetrators of the crime actively punished by the Crown, at least if the Indians were transported to Spain. However, only two years after her initial decree, Isabela was already making exceptions to the ruling against the enslavement of the Indians of the Caribbean. The first Indians to suffer from her reversal were the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles. In 1503 it became legal to enslave all Caribs or other Indians who violently resisted Spanish governance and Catholic conversion.<sup>201</sup> This change in legislation essentially opened Pandora's box, allowing for unscrupulous colonists and merchants to deem any "unpacified" Indian as a Carib. As a result

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<sup>199</sup> "Orden del rey y la reina sobre los indios que trajo Cristóbal Guerra" 2 de diciembre de 1501. In Enrique Otte, *Cedulas Reales Relativas a Venezuela (1500-1550)* (Caracas: Edición de la Fundación John Boulton y la Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1963), 11-12.

<sup>200</sup> Sauer, 114. For more on the actions of Hojeda in the islands and coast of Venezuela see "Ejecutoria en el pleito de Alonso de Hojeda, contra Juan de Vergara y García Docampo, vecinos de la ciudad de Sevilla," 5 de febrero de 1504. *Cedulas Reales Relativas a Venezuela*, 11-38.

<sup>201</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 72. At the same time she did revoke the earlier clause that had given license to enslave any Indians already held as slaves by their peoples.

many Taíno, along with other indigenous groups of the mainland, would be wrongly designated as Carib, accused of cannibalism and carried off as slaves to Española.<sup>202</sup>

In 1503 Isabela designated the islands of San Bernardo, Fuerte, and Bara, the ports of Cartagena, the Venezuelan coastline, and “anywhere where the cannibals are” as Carib lands.<sup>203</sup> Interestingly, and demonstrating the purely economic character of the designation, none of these lands corresponded with Colón and Cuneo’s reports of cannibalism. Instead the territories marked as Carib were those close to areas the Spanish believed to hold mineral wealth.<sup>204</sup>

Between 1509 and 1512 the rest of the Lesser Antilles and much of Tierra Firme or the mainland were added to the list.<sup>205</sup> Any method used to capture the Carib slaves was legal from rescue to extreme violence. From the sale of these slaves the Crown expected to receive a fifth of the profits, becoming openly involved in the slave trade and its revenue for the first time.<sup>206</sup> The merchant Juan de la Coosa commanded one of the first assaults against the Caribs, attacked the island of Codego located at the mouth of the port of Cartagena in the summer of 1503. During the raid Coosa captured 600 Carib Indians, many of whom were women and children.<sup>207</sup> Small

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<sup>202</sup> Abulafia, 126. Isabela also reiterated the prohibition to take any of these slaves to Spain; however Caribs could be captured and sold throughout the Caribbean. As did Isabela, the Spanish Crown would periodically modify their laws regarding the Indian slave trade in response to various religious, economic, and political developments. However following 1501 it would remain absolutely illegal to transport any Indian slaves for sale to the Iberian Peninsula. Repeated violations of the laws led to multiple reiterations of the legislation. For example, in 1511 the Crown again issued a royal order to Diego Colón, the son of Cristóbal and governor of the Indies, that no official, governor, or resident of Española could bring or send any Indian slaves to Castile unless they possessed a special license. If they disobeyed the law they would lose all the Indians they had transported to Spain and another third of any other Indians they possessed. If they did not have any other Indians they would have to pay 20,000 maravedís to the royal court. “Prohibición para llevar indios a Castilla” 21 de junio de 1511. AGI Indiferente 418, L.3, fol. 91v.

<sup>203</sup> “Cedula Real” 1503. AGI Indiferente General 418, L. 1, fol. 116r.-116v.

<sup>204</sup> Neil L. Whitehead, ed., *Wolves of the Sea: Readings in the Anthropology of the Native Caribbean* (KITLV Press, 1995), 69.

<sup>205</sup> Deive, 76. Some (including Las Casas) argue that had Isabela not died in 1504, she would have attempted to curtail the abuse of the labeling of Carib across the Americas and the extensive slave raiding that followed in its wake. Perhaps she would have, but we can never know. Mira Caballos, “Isabel la Católica,” 56-57.

<sup>206</sup> Deive, 77.

<sup>207</sup> José A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios, Tomo I*, 135. He proceeded to sell the Indian slaves to Luis Guerra who in turn sent them to Spain, becoming one of the first colonists to go against Isabel’s prohibition of bringing Indian slaves to Iberia.

slaving expeditions continued to capture Carib Indians from 1503 forward, but it was not until the massive depopulation of Española's Taíno population that the slave trade would really explode.

This depopulation began in the campaigns against the rebellious Taíno caciques in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, continuing apace into the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Concurrent with the legalization of slave raids against Carib Indians, was the renewal of the taking of Taínos in “just war” on the island of Española. While Isabela prohibited the enslavement of any peaceful Indians in the Americas, she also decreed that they should labor for the Spanish colonists in the construction of towns, extraction of gold, and production of food and other goods. The Spanish were to arrange the labor with the island's caciques and pay every Indian a small salary. If the Indians refused to work, they could be forced to complete these tasks, but always as free men, not as slaves.<sup>208</sup> This contradiction would soon become apparent.

#### Governor Ovando and Renewed War against the Taínos of Española

When Governor Ovando arrived in Española in 1502, he faced almost immediate resistance in gathering the Taínos to labor for the Spanish in their settlements and mines. The first cacique to rise against the Spanish and their demands was Cotubanamá, a lesser cacique of the Higüey cacicazgo located in the southeast corner of the island. First many of the caciques of Higüey told the Spaniards that they could only pay a third of the tribute owed. During ensuing negotiations a Spanish attack dog killed a lower cacique. To avenge his death, and likely to avoid

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<sup>208</sup> “Cedula de la Reina” 20 de diciembre de 1503. *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos*, 52-53 and Jiménez, 90.



paying any more tribute to the Spaniards as well, all of the Taínos of Higüey rose up.<sup>209</sup> Under the leadership of Cotubanamá the Indians killed eight Spaniards on the island of Saona (a very small island just south of the province).

Upon learning of the uprising Ovando sent 400-500 Spanish soldiers to punish the cacique and his people.<sup>210</sup> According to Las Casas, what followed was a massacre in which hundreds of Taínos perished of all sexes and ages. Cotubanamá himself was hanged along with another thirteen men.<sup>211</sup> The Spaniards took many more as slaves, before which they cut off one or both of the Taíno captives' hands<sup>212</sup>, and sold in the growing town of Santo Domingo, though some were sent to Spain. Each Spanish soldier led between 10 and 20 Indian slaves in chains on the journey back to Santo Domingo.<sup>213</sup> If this accounting is accurate a minimum of 4,000 slaves were taken from Higüey.

Almost immediately following the attack on Higüey, Ovando led another expedition into the heretofore largely untouched cacicazgo of Jaragua in the west of Española. While the cacique Behechio had agreed to provide Bartolomé Colón with cotton in 1496, after his death it is likely that his successor, cacica Anacaona, failed to fulfill most of her tribute deliveries. Her actions could be explained by her alliance with the rebel Roldán whose followers had found refuge in Jaragua for several years. Why would she pay tribute to the Spaniards at Santo Domingo when

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<sup>209</sup> “De la Guerra, que se levanto en la Provincia de Higüey, y porque causa,” Antonio de Herrera, *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos, en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano, Tomo 2* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guaranía, 1949), 13-14.

<sup>210</sup> Deive, 73.

<sup>211</sup> Troy S. Floyd, *The Columbus Dynasty in the Caribbean, 1492-1526* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 58-59 and Las Casas, *Historia Tomo II*, 264. According to Las Casas they hanged 13 men in honor of Christ and his 12 apostles.

<sup>212</sup> Las Casas, *Historia Tomo II*, 264. “Lo principal que pretendían era hacer grandes crueldades y estragos, para meter miedo por toda la tierra y viniesen a dares. Todos los tomaban a vida, como los mancebos y hombres grandes cortaban ambas a dos a manos, y enviaban, como se dijo, con cartas; fueron sin número a los que cortaron de esta manera las manos y más los que mataron.”

<sup>213</sup> Las Casas, *Historia Tomo II*, 265.

she believed herself to be under the protection of Roldán? Whether the lack of tribute or her alliance with Roldán sparked his actions, Ovando along with three hundred soldiers marched into Jaragua in July of 1503 ostensibly to meet with the cacica. Even though Anacaona greeted the Spanish entourage with ceremony<sup>214</sup>, welcoming them into Jaragua, Ovando responded with violence. At this point Ovando did not have diplomacy in mind, and instead conducted a surprise attack on Anacaona and her peoples. During the massacre Ovando set fire to Anacaona's royal house killing 84 of her subject caciques. Despite her gender, Anacaona was hanged demonstrating her status as paramount cacica.<sup>215</sup> With this massacre Ovando succeeded in neutralizing one the most powerful indigenous rulers of the Caribbean. As in Higüey the Spanish took many other Indians of lower status as slaves. However, in Jaragua many were able to escape, fleeing to Cuba and other nearby islands<sup>216</sup> or to the mountains of Bahoruco. Here again we see the continuing significance of pre-Columbian inter-island connections. Years later, caciques of Española were still seeking refuge in Cuba. Notably the cacique of Hatuey escaped to Cuba in 1511. The governor Diego Colón then justified the conquest of Cuba through the pursuit of the fugitive Hatuey. Later that year Hatuey was captured by the Spanish and sentenced to death. According to Las Casas, Hatuey said that he would rather go to Hell than live with Christians in Heaven.

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<sup>214</sup> “Salióle Anacaóna a recibir con trescientos señores, cantando, y bailando, porque así era su costumbre: y aposentado Nicolás de Ovando en una principal Casa a su usa y toda la demás gente en las demás cerca de la suya, Anacaóna hacía mil servicios mandando traer de la Casa y pesca de la tierra y demás mantenimientos en mucha abundancia, y haciendo todas las fiestas que podía.” Herrera, Tomo II, 52.

<sup>215</sup> Keegan, *Taino Myth and Practice*, 33.

<sup>216</sup> Herrera, Tomo II, 53 and Abulafia, 300.

## The Encomienda System

By December of 1503 Ovando already realized, along with the other Spanish colonists of the island, that the Taínos of Española were not going to willingly move from their ancestral lands to labor in the newly created Spanish towns. This realization brought about the creation of the very controversial encomienda. This institution formally subjected Americas' native peoples to Spanish overlords. The Crown commended a certain number of Indians (living within certain boundaries or in a specific territory under one cacique) to a single Spaniard known as an *encomendero*. This encomendero would collect all tribute from his commended Indians, usually through the help of their natural lord or cacique, giving the Crown their royal fifth. In exchange for the tribute the encomendero was in charge of ensuring that his Indians were converted to the Catholic faith and that they were treated well. The Indians serving in an encomienda, except the caciques and their families, were considered free and were known as *naborías*. This term comes directly from the Taíno word for commoner or worker. Naborías could not be sold nor inherited and were not considered property, unlike the Indian slaves taken from Carib lands.<sup>217</sup>

In theory then, an encomendero would provide his Indians with an education and legal protection, as they worked with their cacique to gather tribute for the Crown. In reality the encomienda system worked quite differently. With few authorities actually monitoring the treatment of Indians by their encomenderos, at least until the outcries of religious figures like Las Casas and Montesinos, abuse was endemic. In many cases the lives of Española's naborías was only marginally different from that of an Indian or African slave. Conditions only deteriorated further as the population of native Taínos fell, with encomenderos expecting the same amount of labor or tribute from fewer Indians. For example, if one cacique governed two hundred Indians

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<sup>217</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 74-75.

in one year and fifty died while laboring for their encomendero, the following year the encomendero would still expect the cacique to provide him with two hundred workers regardless of the diminishment of his peoples.<sup>218</sup>

### The Consequences of Disease, Slavery, War, and Famine: Population Decline

The implementation of the encomienda system in 1503, led to a precipitous decline in the native population of Española, a pattern that would be repeated throughout the Americas. The decline in population can be explained by many factors including: wars/attacks like those of Santo Cerro and Higüey<sup>219</sup>, the spread of diseases<sup>220</sup>, famine<sup>221</sup>, overwork/exhaustion in the island's gold mines<sup>222</sup>, and suicide<sup>223</sup>. While everyone agrees that Española and the larger

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<sup>218</sup> Cartas que escribieron los Padres de la Orden de Santo Domingo que residen en la Española a Mosior de Xevres” 1516. In Roberto Marte, comp., *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos de Juan Bautista Munoz* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Fundación García Arévalo, Inc., 1981), 171.

<sup>219</sup> These conflicts resulted in deaths, flight of Indians to mountains or other islands, and in the enslavement and transportation of hundreds of others.

<sup>220</sup> As has been much discussed the Indians of the Americas lacked the immunities to most European diseases, especially those carried by livestock. These included influenza, smallpox, measles, typhus, the plague, cholera, malaria, and yellow fever. While the first smallpox outbreak did not occur until 1518, there is evidence that several waves of influenza and possibly typhus or measles assailed the island in 1493, 1498, 1502, and 1507. All of these outbreaks wreaked havoc on both the rising population of European colonists and the already declining native Taínos of the Caribbean. Noble David Cook, “Disease and the Depopulation of Hispaniola, 1492-1518,” in *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol.2, No. 1-2, (1993): 220-236.

<sup>221</sup> The collection of gold to fulfill the Spanish tribute took time and laborers away cultivation of crops, hunting, and fishing. And if one did not live near the gold mines or river beds where one could find gold, the Taínos replaced their manioc, cassava, and yucca fields with cotton. This led to the first large-scale famine on the island from fall of 1495 throughout the winter and spring of 1496. Within 6 months to a year some historians estimate that up to 40% of the Taíno population of Española perished from starvation. The suffering from malnutrition would have made diseases more virulent as well. Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 91-96.

<sup>222</sup> While Indians naborías were only supposed to work in the mines, or be absent from their homes for eight months out of the year, this regulation was seldom followed. In 1516 Pedro Romero, a witness in an investigation into the treatment of Indians in Española, testified that encomenderos often forced their naborías to work year round, never allowing them to rest or paying them the small salaries they were owed. Esteban Mira Caballos, “El Sistema Laboral Indígena,” in *Cuadernos de Historia Latinoamericana*, No. 3 (1996): 21 and “Residencia tomado a los jueces de apelación de la isla Española” 1516. AGI, Justicia 42, L.1

<sup>223</sup> Many chroniclers, including Las Casas, pointed to high rates of suicide and abortions to help explain the catastrophic decline in population. While there no doubt were cases of suicide, the very high death rate cannot be explained by suicides. There are no accounts of mass suicides, and as late as 1502 the Taínos were still actively

Caribbean experienced a sharp decline in indigenous populations following the arrival of the Spanish, many argue over the actual numbers. Much controversy surrounds the pre-Colombian population estimates of the Caribbean, so it follows that the rate/percentage of loss is also disputed. Modern scholars have estimated the 1492 population of Española to have been anywhere from 60,000 (the very lowest approximation) to nearly 8,000,000 (the highest guess). These numbers come from chroniclers (like Las Casas who claimed that 3 million Indians perished or were enslaved between 1494 and 1508<sup>224</sup>), censuses conducted in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, annual loss of lives, and efforts to establish the island's carrying capacity. While each estimate has its merits, some of the most reasonable approximations for the pre-Colombian population of Española are between 500,000 and 750,000 with an upward limit of 1,000,000.<sup>225</sup> Even if we take the lowest number of 500,000 then, the decline in population is catastrophic by 1514 when a census conducted alongside the Repartimiento of Albuquerque counted only 26,000 indigenous peoples.<sup>226</sup> This was also after years of slave raiding across the Caribbean, making it unlikely that all these Indians were native Taínos of the island.<sup>227</sup> In many ways the influx of foreign Indian slaves also helped to mask the decline of Taínos on Española.

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resisting the Spanish presence, the rebellion in Higüey serving as one example that they had yet to lose hope. Wilson, 96-97.

<sup>224</sup> Sauer, 155. Also according to Las Casas six of seven Indians on the island had already died by 1504. Las Casas, *Historia Tomo II*, 327. "Que después que salio de esta isla, son muerto de los indios de ella de siete partes las sies; todos por mal tratamiento e inhumanidad, que se habia usado con ellos; unos a cuchillo, otros muertos a palos y mal tratamiento, otros de hambre y mala vida que les era dada, la mayor parte muertos en las sierras y arroyos adonde han huidos por no poder sufrir los trabajos."

<sup>225</sup> Cook, 214-220.

<sup>226</sup> Massimo Livi Bacci, "Return to Hispaniola: Reassessing a Demographic Catastrophe," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 83:1 (February 2003), 5.

<sup>227</sup> If rates of population decrease continued by the 1520s or 1530s most native Taínos had perished. However, some did survive, remaining in maroon communities in the Bahoruco Mountains, intermarrying with African slaves, or escaping the island. The idea that the Taíno people became extinct, excepted for years, is now under attack by scholars such as Guitart, *Cultural Genesis*, 285-298.

## King Ferdinand: a Proponent of Indian Enslavement, 1508-1516

As the Taíno population continued to fall, efforts to replenish the island's labor force increased with more and more expeditions setting sail for Carib lands. For example, in 1508 Diego de Nicuesa and Alonso de Hojeda received permission to engage in slave raiding against the Caramarai Indians near the gulf of Cartagena and in the islands of Saint Bernabe and Fuerte to sell in Española. For the sale of these Indians the Crown required a fifth of the profits, however if the men did not sell them they could benefit from their labor free of taxation.<sup>228</sup> In addition to the Indians they could take from Tierra Firme and the adjacent islands, the men also had license to capture up to 400 Indians from neighboring Carib islands. However these Indians were not meant to be sold, but to be put to work in the Crown's gold mines.<sup>229</sup>

By 1508 the depopulation of Española was already limiting the Crown's profits significantly. Expansion of the Indian slave trade allowed the Crown to profit from taxes, gold extraction, and other industries of the Caribbean.<sup>230</sup> The Crown's policy shift was quite pragmatic. After Isabela's death, King Ferdinand, authorized the enslaving of Indians from all "useless" islands (islas inútiles)<sup>231</sup>. Unlike his wife, Ferdinand seemed to possess few if any qualms regarding the enslavement of Americas' native peoples. The Spanish also argued that these Indians would benefit from communication with Christians as they converted them to

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<sup>228</sup> "Capitulación con Diego de Nicuesa y Alonso de Hojeda para ir a la tierra de Viaba y Veragua" 1508. AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 6v.

<sup>229</sup> AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 7v.

<sup>230</sup> "Real Cedula" 1510. Indiferente General 418, L. 2, fol. 7r. "Y en lo que decís de traer indios de las otras islas que vos parecer que tenia bien, que hay muy pocos indios en esta isla Española por ende yo vos mando que aquellas islas de las comarca de donde con buena conciencia se pueda hacer hagáis traer de esta dicha isla todos los mas indios que se pueda por la forma que otras veces sean traídos para que ellos queda para nuestra granjería los que fueren menester y los otros de repartan como hasta aquí sea fruto."

<sup>231</sup> "Useless" islands were all those lacking in gold mines, at this point only the Lucayos and Bermudas Islands. Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 127 and Enrique Otte, *Las Perlas del Caribe: Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua* (Caracas: Fundacion John Boulton, 1977), 103.

Catholicism since these “useless” islands were “filled with sinful Indian idolaters.”<sup>232</sup> Although the Indians taken from the Lucayos were to be *naborías* as well, not slaves like the Caribs, they were not afforded the same legal protections as the native commended Taíno *naborías*. Instead they were *naborías perpetuos* or perpetual *naborías* meaning they worked year round and received no protection from a local cacique. Most were destined to labor in the Crown owned gold mines, especially the “best” laborers. Additionally, if they resisted the demands of their encomendero or relocation they could be declared a slave and legally sold.<sup>233</sup> The distance between *naborías* and Indian slaves was shrinking rapidly by 1509.

In September of 1509 the King sent orders to Ovando to “capture and bring as many Indians from outside Española as possible.”<sup>234</sup> The demand for indigenous labor combined with the Crown’s new allowances sparked a huge rise in slaving expeditions in late 1509 into 1510. The exact number of voyages and how many Indians captured by each merchant remains unclear. The lack of records surrounding these missions can be explained by the fact that the slavers did not have to pay any taxes on their profits from Indian slaves.<sup>235</sup> Perhaps this is because the profits were so slim, or that most raiders and merchants kept their captives to labor in their own encomiendas or gold mines. It is even difficult to ascertain which traders and raiders travelled to “useless” islands or Carib lands to capture their merchandise. However, estimates from various officials and chroniclers do exist for these years. In 1510 alone approximately 25,760 Indians (whether slaves or *naborías*) disembarked in the ports of Puerto de Plata and Puerto

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<sup>232</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 90.

<sup>233</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 92, Jiménez, 124-125, and “El Rey al Almirante” 14 de agosto de 1509. *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos*, 72. “Si por su resistencia u otra mala obra merecieron ser esclavos, véndanse. Para nuestras minas tomaran los mejores y fueren tales los repartidos a particulares.”

<sup>234</sup> “El Rey al Ovando” 15 de septiembre de 1509. *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 73-74.

<sup>235</sup> “Licencia para llevar indios” 21 de julio de 1511. AGI Indiferente General 418, L.3, fol. 91r. “Real Cédula dando licencia para que de las islas donde no hay oro puedan traer adonde lo hay, indios para que se sirvan de ellos los cristianos y los instruyan en las cosas de la fé católica, sin pagar por esto quinto alguno, ordenándose al almirante don Diego Colón y los oficiales de la isla Española que den las licencias para ello.”

Real on Española's northern coast.<sup>236</sup> The influx of Lucayos Indians caused the native population on the island to rise by 8,000 Indians, despite an estimated net mortality rate of about 35 percent in the same year.<sup>237</sup> Their numbers helped to mask the rapidly decreasing native population on the island, but only slightly. It is likely that only a small percentage of those captured actually survived the journey and their initial days on Española due to the slavers' treatment both during their capture and the return journey. Many died of hunger or wounds received from the Spanish enslavers before they ever made it to the Greater Antilles.<sup>238</sup>

One of the most prolific and active slave traders in the 1510s was Licenciado Lucás Vázquez de Ayllón, who consistently failed to adequately provision his slaving expeditions causing the starvation of many of his captives. Perhaps this was a successful strategy because each indigenous slave only sold for 4 pesos, at least in the early years.<sup>239</sup> On one expedition Ayllón and his cohorts, Pedro de Quejo and Francisco Gordillo, captured at least nine hundred Indians, half of whom died in pens in the Lucayos while awaiting an additional ship for their voyage to Española where they would be sold.<sup>240</sup> At this point the Spaniards viewed the supply of Indians in the Caribbean islands as practically inexhaustible. Eventually this would change as the numbers of Indians continued to fall across the Americas, causing their prices/value to rise. For the Lucayos Indians who did survive the journey, it is possible that the transition to life on Española was not too difficult. Due to the widespread kin linkages throughout the islands (especially the Greater Antilles) the Lucayos Indians were likely able to assimilate to life with

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<sup>236</sup> William F. Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus*, 220. The northern ports of the island were the preferred locations for the slaving operations into the "useless" islands. Sauer, 159.

<sup>237</sup> Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus*, 221.

<sup>238</sup> "Cartas que escribieron los Padres de la Orden de Santo Domingo que residen en la Española a Mosior de Xevres" 1516, transcribed and printed in Roberto Marte, comp., *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos*, 175-176.

<sup>239</sup> Keegan, 221.

<sup>240</sup> Paul Hoffman, *A New Andalucía and a Way to the Orient: The American Southeast during the sixteenth century*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 5 and 44.



the Taínos of Española. In fact, despite the huge number of Lucayos brought to Española in 1510 alone Spanish officials reported that the Indians of Española quickly incorporated the Lucayos into their society as if they were already one people.<sup>241</sup> Prior to 1511 almost all Lucayan Indians were also declared *naborías*, a label that carried some legal protection. This would not be the case for Indians coming from more distant territories, like the coast of Venezuela, Mexico, or Florida.

The increased importation of foreign Indians accelerated the native caciques' loss of authority, affecting their relationships with both Spaniards and Indians. Unlike the Taíno Indians, and those living within the Taíno cultural sphere, who possessed loyalties to or at least familiarity with Española's caciques, the newly arriving Indians from places such as Florida and Tierra Firme would have felt no allegiance to the resident caciques. This is especially true since they were lifelong slaves of the Spanish *encomenderos*.<sup>242</sup> Simultaneously, the increase in Indian slaves began to influence how the Spaniards themselves viewed Española's indigenous peoples. In fact, by 1512 Spaniards used the word *naboría* to refer to all Indian laborers on the island, no longer distinguishing between the elite natives and their subject workers. These imported Indians were even branded on their legs to distinguish their status.<sup>243</sup> This is the first mention of the branding of Indian slaves, a practice that would continue into the climax of the Indian slave trade across the Caribbean.

After years of unrestrained slave raiding, at the latest by 1520, the Lucayos Islands were literally depopulated. Las Casas estimated that up to 40,000 Lucayos Indians were sold in

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<sup>241</sup> "Carta de Rodrigo de Figueroa" 1513. Archivo General de Indias, Patronato 174, Ramo 19. "los lucayos son como los otros de la tierra que ya son casi unos."

<sup>242</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 92.

<sup>243</sup> Luis Arranz Márquez, *Emigración Española a Indias, Poblamiento y Despoblación Antillanos*, (Santo Domingo: Fundación García-Arévalo, Inc., 1979), 26-27.

Española during the height of the trade in Indians from “useless” islands.<sup>244</sup> How many more Indians died during the process is unknown as are the fates of these Indian slaves, many of which were sent on to the Pearl Islands after 1514. In these later years of the slave raiding, the value of Lucayos Indians soared as the Spanish recognized their ability to dive for pearls. Their price rose to between 50 and 150 pesos. This increase in profit from Lucayos Indians led to even more slave raids of the islands, despite their dwindling numbers. Eventually these raids would lead to the “discovery” of present day Florida and South Carolina. Perhaps because of this valuable skill these Indian slaves were treated better, with records indicating the survival of Lucayos Indians in the pearl fisheries of Cubagua and Margarita as late as 1527.<sup>245</sup>

Concurrent with the exploitation of the “useless” islands was an expansion of the list of territories declared as Carib lands. In 1511 the Crown legalized war on the Caribs of Dominica, Martinique, Santa Lucía, San Vicente, La Asención, Los Barbados, Tabaco, Mayo, and Trinidad. Essentially the royal order labeled most of the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles as Caribs, legalizing their capture, transportation to, and enslavement in Española and Puerto Rico.<sup>246</sup> Per a royal order issued in July of 1511, all Caribs introduced as slaves to Española and Puerto Rico had to be branded as slaves on either their legs or arms, causing as little pain as possible.<sup>247</sup>

Though the brand would continue to change, the earliest model was that of an “F” for King

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<sup>244</sup> Mira Caballos, “El Sistema Laboral,” 29. Dominican friars gave a lower number 20,000, while Judge Zuazo estimated 15,000. Perhaps the discrepancy is in how many Lucayos Indians survived versus how many were captured.

<sup>245</sup> Otte, 116. For more on pearl ranches see Molly Warsh, “Enslaved Pearl Divers in the Sixteenth Century Caribbean,” *Slavery and Abolition* 31:3, (September 2010) and Michael Perri, “Ruined and Lost: Spanish Destruction of the Pearl Coast in the Early Sixteenth Century,” *Environment and History* 15, (2009).

<sup>246</sup> “Licencia para hacer guerra a los caribes” 24 de diciembre de 1511. AGI Indiferente General 418, L.3, fol. 91r. “Real Provisión por la que se concede a los vecinos y moradores de la isla de San Juan la facultad y licencia concedida a todos los que por mandado real vayan a las islas y tierra firme hasta ahora descubiertas o descubrir, para que puedan hacer guerra a los caribes de las islas de Trinidad, San Bernardo, Fuerte, Los Barbudos, Dominica, Matenino, Santa Lucía, San Vicente, La Asunción, Tabaco, Mayo y Barú, y puertos de Cartagena, y los puedan cautivar y llevar a las partes e islas que quieran, vender y aprovecharse de ellos sin incurrir en pena alguna ni pagar derecho alguno, con tal que no los vendan ni lleven fuera de las Indias.”

<sup>247</sup> “El Rey al Almirante” 25 de Julio de 1511. *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 96-97.

Ferdinand. Interestingly, while merchants had to pay the royal fifth on all sales of Indians from “useless” islands, they did not have to pay any taxes on the profits from Carib Indians.<sup>248</sup> By 1511 the Indian slave trade was on the rise, now encompassing much of both the Greater and Lesser Antilles. However, some key islands were still exempt from slave raiding, including Guadalupe and Santa Cruz, sites of burgeoning Crown colonies since 1508. This would change by the end of 1511.

### The Rebellion of Agueybana

In the late summer of 1510 up to 30 caciques of the island of Puerto Rico met secretly to plot a rebellion against the recently arrived Spaniards. Despite warnings of danger, the encomendero Cristobal de Sotomayor journeyed to the cacique Agueybana’s (Agueybana II)<sup>249</sup> territory where he demanded guides and translators to accompany him to explore the island’s central mountain range. Though the cacique initially agreed to Sotomayor’s demands, upon his departure from Agueybana’s cacicazgo, Agueybana and a small squadron attacked Sotomayor and his men. During the assault the Indians killed the encomendero and his four companions.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Saco, Tomo I, 155-156, AGI Indiferente General 418, L.3, fol. 91r., and “Introducción de indios de otras islas en Santo Domingo” 21 de junio de 1511. AGI Patronato 275, R.1, sin folio. “Por cuanto después de muy platicado con algunos del nuestro consejo sobre si debíamos mandar traer algunos indios de las islas donde no hay oro a las islas donde lo hay y a que en ellas se sirviesen los cristianos de los dichos indios. Mandamos dar licencia que pudiesen traer de las tales islas los tales indios pagando nos el quinto de los que así trajesen. Y voluntad fuere puedan con licencia del nuestro almirante vi rey y gobernador de esas islas y de las otras islas y tierra firme el almirante su padre descubrió y por su industria fueron descubiertas y de nuestros oficiales que son y fueren en la dicha isla española y no de otra manera ir a traer y hagan indios de las islas que ellos les señalaré y no de otras algunas libremente sin nos pagar de ellos quinto ni otro diezmo algunos porque de ellos yo hago merced a las personas a quien el dicho almirante y oficiales dieron la dicha licencia por esta mi cedula.”

<sup>249</sup> When Juan Ponce de León first landed on Puerto Rico he met with and allied with Agueybana I. Agueybana even accompanied León to Santo Domingo in May of 1509, possibly to visit distant relatives in the cacicazgo of Higüey. Oliver, 202. However, by 1510 his brother, Agueybana II had become supreme cacique of the territory after Agueybana I and his mother perished from an unknown illness. Karen F. Anderson-Córdova, “The Aftermath of Conquest: The Indians of Puerto Rico during the Early Sixteenth Century,” in *Ancient Borinquen: Archaeology and Ethnohistory of Native Puerto Rico* edited by Peter Siegel (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 344.

<sup>250</sup> Jalil Sued Badillo, *Agueybana El Bravo*, (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Puerto, 2008), 70-72.

Next, Agueybana and 3,000 Indians attacked and burned down the newly established town of Aguada, killing even more Spaniards. This was the beginning of a general uprising that would not be settled for several years. According to the officials and chroniclers of the time, the Caribs from the neighboring islands of Santa Cruz and Guadalupe helped the Taínos of Puerto Rico in their uprising.<sup>251</sup> These Caribs could have been from the nearby islands, or they could have been those recently brought to Puerto Rico as slaves by Sotomayor from Dominica and the other Lesser Antilles.<sup>252</sup> By 1513 there is concrete evidence that a coalition of Taínos from Puerto Rico with Indians (Caribs) from the Leeward Islands worked together to burn the northern settlement of Caparra killing 18 Spaniards.<sup>253</sup> Taínos from Puerto Rico also sought refuge in Santa Cruz, Guadalupe, and as far south as Trinidad throughout the conflict.<sup>254</sup> Here we see some of the best evidence of pre-Colombian ties between the Taínos and Caribs surviving into the colonial era.

Agueybana's rebellion prompted the Spanish government in Española to issue a Royal Order at the end of 1511 declaring general war on all Caribs and their immediate enslavement and relocation to Española or other islands with mines.<sup>255</sup> All Caribs taken during these expeditions would be slaves. Additionally no taxes had to be paid on any profits for the sale of Caribs.<sup>256</sup> This was the first decree to legally associate Caribs with cannibalism.<sup>257</sup> By the summer of 1512 two large armadas were organized to punish the Caribs and engage in rescue

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<sup>251</sup> "Carta de Don Fernando al preladados" 23 de diciembre de 1511. *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 101 and Whitehead, *Wolves of the Sea*, 70.

<sup>252</sup> Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 83.

<sup>253</sup> Anderson-Córdova, 346 and Jalil Sued Badillo, "Guadalupe: ¿Caribe o Taina? La isla de Guadalupe y su cuestionable identidad caribe en la época pre-Colombina: una revisión etnohistórica y arqueológica preliminar." *Caribbean Studies* 35, 1, (2007): 48.

<sup>254</sup> Oliver, 168-169.

<sup>255</sup> Badillo, "Guadalupe," 47. Interestingly, Juan Garrido, the most famous black conquistador, participated in the pacification of Puerto Rico and in the attacks on the carib islands. One can see a complete description of Garrido's conquests in his Probanza, published in Ricardo E. Alegría's *Juan Garrido: El Conquistador Negro*.

<sup>256</sup> "Carta de Don Fernando" 22 de febrero de 1512. *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 102.

<sup>257</sup> Whitehead, *Of Cannibals*, 12.

for slaves and pearls in Dominica and the Virgin Islands.<sup>258</sup> All the Indians captured on these ventures were taken to Santo Domingo, branded, and registered. Afterwards they were divided up between La Vega, San Juan de la Maguana, and Buenaventura to labor in the island's mines and budding sugar mines.<sup>259</sup>

Still, it was not until 1514 that the King of Spain went beyond authorizing slaving expeditions across the Caribbean to order an armada to attack the "caribes" living in Trinidad, Dominica, Santa Lucia, Barbados, and San Vicente specifically to capture slaves to sell on Española.<sup>260</sup> In response to this ruling, many private expeditions set out to conquer and raid the Carib islands of the Lesser Antilles.<sup>261</sup> Because of this authorization, the Dominican friars claimed that forty islands belonging to the Lucayos chain, as well as three more populated by the "Giants," (present day Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao)<sup>262</sup> were completely stripped of inhabitants despite their initial population estimates of over fifty thousand.<sup>263</sup> Most of the "Giant" Indians transported to Española died within a few months, many from eating a poisonous fruit. The officials of the island explained the high attrition rate to the "Giants'" unfamiliarity with the island and their suffering from homesickness. Apparently these same problems did not affect the

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<sup>258</sup> Deive, 97.

<sup>259</sup> "Auto dado por Diego Colón, jueces y oficiales" 30 de Julio de 1513. AGI Justicia 43, No.2.

<sup>260</sup> "Carta de Rey Fernando II a Obispo de la Concepción" 1514, transcribed and printed in *La Iglesia y el Negro Esclavo en Santo Domingo: una historia de tres siglos* by Jose Luis Sáez (Santo Domingo: Patronato de la ciudad colonial de Santo Domingo Colección Quinto Centenario, 1994), 206. This volume contains a brief introduction to Spanish slave policies and the church's involvement in these matters, but it is mainly a compilation of transcribed documents from archives in Seville and Madrid, Spain dealing with slavery and the Church in Española.

<sup>261</sup> "Carta al Rey" sin fecha. AGI Patronato 14, N.4, R.28, fol. 3r. Not all of these expeditions were successful, leading the private investors to request help from the Crown for future missions against the Caribs, especially those of Guadalupe and Dominica.

<sup>262</sup> In 1513 the Crown also extended the definition of the "useless" islands to include the "islas Gigantes" of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire. In August of 1514 the first armada sailed against these islands, capturing up to 2,000 Indian slaves in the venture. By 1520 Nicolás Pérez declared Curacao and the other "islas Gigantes" to be depopulated. Jimenez, 128.

<sup>263</sup> "Cartas que escribieron los Padres de la Orden de Santo Domingo que residen en la Española a Mosior de Xevres" 1516, *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos*, 175-176.

Carib or Lucayos slaves, leading the judges and officials of Española to promote their capture over the “Giants.”<sup>264</sup>

Slaver	Year	Captured In	Taken To	Number
Juan de la Coosa	1503	Codego	Santo Domingo	600
Multiple	1510	Lucayos	Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata	25,000
Gaspar de Espinosa	1515	Panama	Santo Domingo	Unknown
Multiple	1516	Pearl Islands	San Juan and San German	55
<b>Total:</b>				<b>25,655</b>

Figure 26, Estimates of Indians taken from Carib and “Useless” Lands, 1503-1516

The Requirement Further Legitimizes Slave Taking through “Just War”

Perhaps to give these large and small slaving armadas the façade of legality, or in response to the first complaints by religious officials concerned with the well-being of Americas’ indigenous peoples, the Crown instituted a new practice in 1514; the reading of the requerimiento or requirement.<sup>265</sup> This document required the indigenous peoples of the new world to submit religiously and politically to the Crown of Spain and the Catholic Church.<sup>266</sup> Before warring on the Indians, or enslaving them, the Spanish soldiers had to read the requirement publically, giving the native residents an opportunity to submit peacefully to the

<sup>264</sup> “De jueces y oficiales de Española” 6 de septiembre de 1515. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 57, fol. 353v. “La gente que mejor procura aquí son los caribes gente para mucho y pocos mueren pero suelen huirse en canoas. De las 1200 piezas traídas de la isla de los Gigantes han muerto gran numero por salir a comer por los montes una fruta que llaman hovos como no comen otra cosas y no saben la tierra se andan perdidos y tornan a las estancias flacos y dolientes.”

<sup>265</sup> Juan López Palacios Rubios, a theologian and scholar, recently developed the requirement as part of the response to calls for reform by both Franciscan and Dominican friars. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72. According to Seed the requirement was based upon the Moslem ritual of submission characteristic of military  *Jihad*  or struggle.

<sup>266</sup> The requirement cites the Papal donation of 1493, dividing the globe between the Crowns of Spain and Portugal, as the source of Spanish sovereignty in the Americas. “El Requerimiento, que los Reyes mandaron hacer a los Indios,” Herrera, Tomo II, 127.

new religion and authority. If the Indians failed to submit or refused to accept Christianity they could legally be attacked by the Spanish soldiers and enslaved.<sup>267</sup> However, the requirement, as with many other laws and policies, did little to change the actions of Spaniards on the ground. Not only was it usually read to indigenous populations who could not understand the speech, but the Spanish often read the requirement from onboard their ship or in the middle of the night to an audience of trees and empty huts.<sup>268</sup>

With the new requirement in hand, ship after ship set out to attack the Caribs, engage in rescue in the Pearl Islands and coast of Tierra Firme, and to collect all Indians living on “useless” islands. Pedrarías Dávila was the first Spaniard to use the requirement in an expedition to Santa Marta in 1514. Because the Indians did not respond peacefully and favorably to the requirement they were reduced to slavery.<sup>269</sup> By 1515, for the first time, the Circum-Caribbean witnessed a full scale Indian slave trade. Within only three months at least four armadas left from Puerto Rico, sailing for Guadalupe, Santa Cruz, and other Carib islands to capture slaves, two led or sponsored by Juan Ponce de León.<sup>270</sup> Others were captained by Juan Gil and Juan Bono, both residents of Puerto Rico.<sup>271</sup> That led by Bono sailed to Trinidad where he captured 180 Carib slaves.<sup>272</sup> In 1516 at least eight armadas assaulted the Pearl Islands, all sailing from the two main ports of Puerto Rico San Juan and San Germán, capturing slaves and engaging in rescue for

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<sup>267</sup> “El Requerimiento, que los Reyes mandaron hacer a los Indios,” Herrera, Tomo II, 127-128. “Si no hicieredes, o en ello dilación maliciosamente pusieredes, certificaos, que con el ayuda de Dios, Yo entrare poderosamente contra vosotros, y vos hare guerra por todas las partes y manera que yo pudiere y vos sujetare y obediencia de la iglesia y de su magestad y tomare vuestras mujeres e hijos y los hare esclavos y como tales los venderé,” and Seed, *Ceremonies*, 70-72.

<sup>268</sup> Seed, 71. Las Casas claimed he did not know whether to laugh or cry when he read the requirement.

<sup>269</sup> Jiménez, 137.

<sup>270</sup> “Andres de Haro tesorero a su alteza” el 8 de agosto de 1515 de San Juan and “Andres de Haro a su alteza” 6 de octubre de 1515. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 57, fol. 345r.-346v. In at least one of these expeditions the Caribs succeeded in killing four Spaniards.

<sup>271</sup> “Jueces y oficiales de la Española” 15 de septiembre de 1515. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 57, 353r.

<sup>272</sup> Otte, 134.

pearls. Only two of these aramadas recorded the number of slaves taken; one returning with 15 Indians from Cariaco and the other with 40 Indians from an unknown territory.<sup>273</sup>

Beyond the areas where the Spanish could legally engage in slave raiding, merchants also traveled to Central America and to present day Florida as the need for Indian laborers inspired missions of exploration. In 1515 Gaspar de Espinosa captured many slaves from the province of Comogre in Panama.<sup>274</sup> Espinosa was not alone. Shortly after his expedition, the Bishop Juan de Quevedo of the Panamanian province of Darien complained to the Crown about the harmful effects of taking slaves from Panama. According to Quevedo the slavers were not only depopulating his lands but causing all the Indians of the region to mistrust all Spaniards, running away from them on sight. Thus, the slave trade was preventing the conversion of these Indians to Catholicism, despite the fact that they were not Caribs.<sup>275</sup>

In the complaints of Quevedo we see just some of the arguments against the slave trade and its impacts on the native peoples of the Caribbean. It would be the calls of religious, and some secular, officials that would bring about concerted efforts to reform both the Indian slave trade and the general treatment of Americas' indigenous peoples. However, despite efforts by the Crown and various religious orders, the Indian slave trade would only grow, especially as more and more Taínos perished in the first small pox epidemic of 1518. Even as Indians fought their enslavement in numerous rebellions, the Spanish colonists sought the capture of more and more Indian slaves across the Circum-Caribbean to supplement the deteriorating labor force on Española, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The growing slave trade would bring about increased exploration into new lands and ultimately the full commodification of Americas' Indians.

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<sup>273</sup> Otte, 130. Of the 40 Indians there were at least 4 small children.

<sup>274</sup> "Relación de la Jornada de Gaspar de Espinosa" 1515. AGI Patronato 26, R. 7, fol. 1v.-2r.

<sup>275</sup> "Informaciones del obispo Juan de Quevedo del Darien" 1515. AGI Patronato 26, R. 5, fol. 36r.-43v.



### Chapter 3

*The Ties that Bind: Franciscans, Dominicans, Jeronimites, and Indian Caciques on Española,  
1500-1534*

“Are these not men? Are we not bound, in our dealings with them, by the rules of charity and justice? Do they not own their lands? Have they not their natural lords and lordships? Have they done us any injury? Are we not required to preach the law of Christ and to strive to convert them to it? How has it come that this great multitude of people who, as we are told, lived in this island, have in fifteen or sixteen years so miserably perished?”<sup>276</sup>

With these words Dominican friar Antonio Montesinos condemned the actions of the Spanish colonists of Española on the morning of December 21, 1511. Following the historic sermon, which many identify as the first call for reform in the Americas, controversy enveloped the colony and incited a debate on the humanity of America’s indigenous peoples that continued for nearly half a century.<sup>277</sup> Among the many issues addressed by Montesinos’s sermon was the recent dramatic increase and expansion of the Indian slave trade, precipitated by the huge decline in the native population of Española, which showed no signs of abating in the near future.

Though the Dominicans would bring public, and most importantly royal, attention to the plight of the Indians of the Caribbean, they were not the first or largest ecclesiastical order present in Española in 1511. When Montesinos, and the other fourteen Dominican friars arrived in the island in 1510, they joined the nearly twenty Franciscan friars who had been working and

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<sup>276</sup> “The Advent Sermons of Fray Antonio Montesinos,” 1511. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 308.

<sup>277</sup> In fact, it would be Montesinos’s rousing indictment of the Spanish settlers that would inspire the now famous Bartolomé de Las Casas to abandon his own encomienda, become a Dominican friar in 1524, and take up the defense of Native Americans.

living with the Taíno Indians for eight years. It was with the Franciscan friars that the native populations formed a closer bond. Although the Franciscans would support many of the calls for reform and change articulated by the Dominicans, they continued to concentrate on the everyday interactions and relationships with Española's indigenous peoples, eventually expanding their presence throughout the Spanish empire. On the other hand, the Dominicans focused largely in the legal realm, debating Crown policy and arguing for the humanity of Americas' indigenous peoples. These two distinct strategies and foci not only produced different results on the ground, but the struggle between the two groups also undermined their individual successes.

The situation grew more complicated with the arrival of the Jeronimites in 1517. Although they were sent to resolve the growing conflicts between the Franciscans, Dominicans, and secular officials on Española, in the end they settled nothing. As debates raged on both in the Caribbean and at the courts of Spain, indigenous populations continued to be exploited in gold mines and sugar plantations across the islands through both the untouched encomienda system and the newly forming repartimiento system. Additionally, and despite calls from both Franciscans and Dominicans, the Indian slave trade was not only allowed to continue, but underwent several periods of legal expansion in the following decades. In fact, the indigenous populations of the Americas would not see any substantial reforms in Crown law until the passage of the New Laws in 1542, decades after the first calls for action were heard.

Many factors contributed to the failure or limitations of the various reform schemes proposed and attempted by the religious orders both in Spain and the Caribbean. Perhaps the largest obstacle standing in the way of meaningful change was profit. The secular leaders, officials, and residents of the colonies fought with all their might to maintain their rights and privileges to extract labor and tribute from both the Caribbean land and its peoples. The

opposition presented by the secular powers often thwarted the best plans made by religious clergy, who did not possess the power to enforce new guidelines for the treatment of Indians. However, impediments to reform originated not solely from secular corners, but from the animosity and competition between the different religious groups themselves. The in-fighting among the religious orders only undermined an already difficult and tenuous process, allowing the clergy's opponents to persist in their exploitation of native peoples for decades more.

This chapter examines the relationships between Española's indigenous populations and the various religious officials during the early years of the colony. Through this investigation one sees that despite the efforts of both the Dominicans and the Jeronymites it was only the Franciscans who were able to create deep, long-lasting connections with the island's native peoples. These links survived and perhaps even prospered, during years of conflict and rebellion as the priests and friars defended their indigenous flock. By examining the links between Española's native leaders and Franciscan friars, especially in cases of violence and maroonage, we can gain a better understanding of how both parties challenged Crown policies that in many ways continued to promote indigenous abuse throughout the early years of colonial construction. Of even more significance, we can witness the ways in which the Taíno caciques used their ties to Franciscan clergy to ameliorate their position within the larger colonial institutions. In fact, it was through his former religious instructors that the cacique Enrique<sup>278</sup> negotiated his terms of surrender, under which he guaranteed freedom and amnesty for both himself and his people, following more than thirteen years of resistance. Despite this success story, the lives of most

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<sup>278</sup> The cacique Enrique is a celebrated figure in the history and imagination of the Dominican Republic. For many he is a hero who represents justice and the best of the island's indigenous history. One of the most famous fictional works about the cacique is Manuel de Jesús Galván's novel *Enriquillo* published in 1882. For an examination of this novel see Franklin Gutiérrez's *Enriquillo: Radiografía de un Héroe Galvaniano*, (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 1999).

indigenous people of Española and the Circum-Caribbean did not improve, and instead the Indian slave trade only grew displacing more and more indigenous peoples and societies throughout the Americas. Regardless of the reform efforts of the various religious orders and secular officials, the Indian slave trade continued to expand until its climax in the 1530s.

### The Early Franciscan Presence in Española

On Colón's second voyage in 1493, he brought the first Franciscans to the Americas; Fray Juan de la Deule, Fray Juan de Cosin, and Rodrigo Pérez. The Franciscans' early presence in the colonial project, almost two decades prior to any other orders, can be traced to the order's steadfast support of Cristobal Colón's venture. Specifically, two friars of the monastery at La Rábida (for an image of the monastery see Figure 28) were instrumental in gaining Crown support and organizing the first journey; Fray Antonio de Marchena and Fray Juan Pérez. Pérez was especially influential, intervening with both Queen Isabella personally and with the sailors and financiers of Palos (a small port town outside of present day Huelva) to secure the three ships for the expedition.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Lino Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización y Conquista: Experiencia Franciscana en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, S.A., 1977), 2.



**Figure 27, La Rábida Monasterio, Palos de la Frontera, Andalucía**

However, friars Duele, Cosin, and Pérez were not the only clergymen on 1493 journey; the Franciscans were accompanied by the Jeronymite friar Ramón Pané from the Jeronymite convent of Saint Jerome de la Murtra near Barcelona.<sup>280</sup> This was also the very convent where Colón met with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela following his first voyage to the Americas.<sup>281</sup> Perhaps his proximity to Colón in this meeting explains why Pané embarked on the second expedition to the Indies, and why Colón later entrusted him with learning the native languages and cultures of Española. His Catalan roots also help to explain why Pané was assigned the task of studying the Taíno language and beliefs. For two and half centuries Catalan friars had immersed themselves in the languages and texts of both Judaism and Islam to prepare for missionary expeditions into Northern Africa. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century languages were seen as a

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<sup>280</sup> Mariano Errasti, *Los Primeros Franciscanos en América: Isla Española, 1493-1520* (Santo Domingo: Fundación García Arévalo, Inc., 1998), 38. The Jeronymite order was a monastic order; therefore they were not typical missionaries and would play a much smaller role in the colonization of the New World. When they did spend time in the Americas, following the orders of regent Cardinal Cisneros, they relied heavily on the testimony of Spanish settlers and had little if any interaction with native peoples. For a comprehensive history of the Jeronymite order see Friar José de Sigüenza, *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo* (Madrid :Bailly Baillière e Hijos, 1907).

<sup>281</sup> Constance G. Janiga-Perkins, *Reading, Writing, and Translation in the Relación Acerca de las Antigüedades de los Indios (C. 1498) by Fray Ramón Pané* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 1.

Catalan specialty.<sup>282</sup> Due to this tradition, it makes sense that Pané, and not his Franciscan colleagues, would be given the task of learning and studying languages. Still, exactly how or why Pané joined Colón and other friars travelling to the Caribbean in 1493 is unknown.

During his first year on the island, Pané<sup>283</sup> lived in the Spanish fortress of Magdalena located in the province or chiefdom of the Macorix led by cacique Mabiatué. The inhabitants of the region spoke Macorix, a dialect of the Arawak tongue spoken by the majority of the island's inhabitants.<sup>284</sup> Purportedly, Colón met with Pané during the fall of 1494 in Magdalena, and at that point ordered him to move to the Magua cacicazgo of the cacique Guarionex.<sup>285</sup> From April of 1495 until the fall of 1496 Pané resided in Magua, learning the language and customs of the majority Arawak/Taíno population of the island. Pané's relocation makes sense at this point due to the recent conclusion of hostilities between the Spanish and several caciques across the island. This conflict was the first full scale war between Europeans and the Taíno, lasting several months. With new settlements, like Concepción de la Vega, being formed in the heartland of the island, Colón and the other Spaniards would have needed to learn more about this cacicazgo's culture, traditions, and language to facilitate their incorporation into colonial society. Per

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<sup>282</sup> Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind*, 133-134.

<sup>283</sup> Also on the second voyage was another Catalan clergyman, a former Benedictine friar named Bernardo Boyl. Boyl said the first mass on the island, and was considered the leader of the various clergymen as he was King Ferdinand's appointed missionary who had previously served the King in diplomatic missions to Italy. Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo Guaticabanú, September 21, 1496: Evangelization and Martyrdom in the Time of Columbus," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 82:4, (October 1996), 617.

<sup>284</sup> Angel Rodríguez Alvarez, *Mitología Taína o Eyeri Ramón Pané y la Relación sobre las Antigüedades de los Indios: El primer tratado etnográfico hecho en América* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Nuevo Mundo, 2009), 7 and Janiga-Perkins, 2. While some originally hypothesized that Macorix was its own distinct language, the fact that the speakers of Macorix and Arawak shared the same cultures, pottery, and social organization makes it likely that Macorix was simply a regional dialect of Taíno Arawak. Thus, it would have been intelligible for most inhabitants of the island with some different pronunciations or words peculiar to the region. Stevens-Arroyo, 624.

<sup>285</sup> There is some confusion as to how long Pané lived with the Indians, and even remained on the island of Española, however it is certain that he was with the Indians of Magdalena in the fall of 1496 when the first Taíno received baptism. It is likely that Pané did not leave the Caribbean until 1498 after Colón's return on his fourth voyage. What he did in the intervening years is unclear. José Juan Arrom, "Estudio Preliminar," to Fray Ramon Pané's *Relacion Acerca de las Antigüedades de los Indios*, (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S.A., 1974), XIII-XVIII.

Reconquista tactics, Colón also believed that the conversion of the cacique Guarionex to Catholicism would help solidify Spanish power in the region.<sup>286</sup>

While Pané was in the cacicazgo of Guarionex at la Vega the Franciscan Deule visited him and it appears that they worked together promoting the conversion of this important leader and his followers.<sup>287</sup> Through the efforts of these men the first Taínos became Christians and many were baptized, with Deule claiming up to two thousand converts by 1500.<sup>288</sup> Here we see the fruits and possibilities of the various religious orders working together. While the Jeronymites and Franciscans would not always cooperate with one another in the Americas, during these early very uncertain years there is evidence that they did.<sup>289</sup>

The first Indian who received baptism was Juan Mateo, a Macorix Indian of the province of Magdalena where Pané began his work in 1494. Prior to his conversion Juan Mateo was known as Guaticabanú and was one of sixteen servants or naborías to a small cacique of the Macorix, Guanáoboconel. It was with these servants that Pané made his first inroads into Taíno society. Even during the uprising in the spring of 1495, during which the fortress of Magdalena was attacked, the five brothers remained loyal to Pané and protected him from harm.<sup>290</sup> It makes sense then that one of the brothers, Juan Mateo accompanied Pané when he moved to Concepción de la Vega to take on the conversion of the cacique Guarionex. In La Vega Juan would have worked as a translator, guide, and overall cultural broker between Pané and the likely still very hostile Arawaks of the Magua cacicazgo. Essentially Juan would act as a

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<sup>286</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo," 622.

<sup>287</sup> Errasti, 39.

<sup>288</sup> Errasti, 59.

<sup>289</sup> Perhaps this cooperation partially explains why Cardinal Cisneros eventually chose the Jeronymite order to intervene in the fight between the Franciscans and Dominicans several decades later.

<sup>290</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo," 624-625.

diplomat. He was first of many cultural brokers or intermediaries employed by Europeans during their various efforts at conquering, colonizing, and catechizing native populations.<sup>291</sup>

It was during his time serving as an intermediary that Juan Mateo took the sacrament of baptism in September of 1496. There is record that Pané was not the only clergyman present, the Franciscan Duele was also guiding the conversion of Juan Mateo.<sup>292</sup> Duele was probably the one who conducted the actual baptismal ceremony since Pané was at this point unordained. Duele and Pané both used similar tactics at this early stage in the conversion process, methods that would continue to be utilized by the Franciscans as their numbers increased in the sixteenth century. They did not focus on changing the Taíno's culture, and even refraining from criticizing their nakedness. Instead they focused on piety, the memorization of simple prayers, the construction of small altars, and the teaching of fundamental, mystical catechisms. For Pané and Duele the understanding of the very basics of Christianity, and not the more complicated theology, was all that was necessary for conversion.<sup>293</sup>

Pané and Juan Mateo remained with Guarionex for nearly two years, moving to another cacicazgo within the Cibao region in the spring of 1497 after Guarionex made it clear that he would not be converting to Christianity. Soon after Pané and Juan Mateo moved to the cacicazgo of Mabiatué, a cacique supposedly very interested in adopting Catholicism, Guarionex orchestrated an attack on the Taíno Christians in the fall of 1497. The cacique may have viewed the converts as traitors to the Taíno people and culture. During an ambush, likely as Juan Mateo

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<sup>291</sup> Eugene Lyon, "Cultural Brokers in Sixteenth-Century Spanish Florida," in *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, vol. 24* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 329-336.

<sup>292</sup> Jorge Antonio Flores Santana, *La Isla Española: Cuna de la evangelización de América*, (Santo Domingo: Dirección General de la Feria del Libro, 2011), 41 and Canedo, 3.

<sup>293</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo," 626.



and his brothers<sup>294</sup> were traveling from Mabiatué's village to the home of their mother near Magdalena, Guarionex's men killed the Christians.<sup>295</sup>

In his final report to Colón before departing Isabela for Spain in 1498, Pané stated that Juan Mateo had inspired many more converts, including the cacique of Mabiatué.<sup>296</sup> Pané wrote a small eulogy to Juan Mateo in his *Relación* demonstrating the close relationship between the two men. "And God in his generosity provided me with the best companion of all the Indians and the one best informed in the Catholic faith. And later he took him from me. Praised be God who gave him to me and then took him away. Truly, I held him as a son and brother. He was Guatícabanu, who after becoming a Christian was known as Juan."<sup>297</sup>

Despite Juan Mateo's death and Guarionex's rejection of Christianity, Pané still presented his time with the natives of Española as a success by the time of Colón's return to the island in 1498. From these experiences, Pané wrote the first ethnography of the Taíno people entitled *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios*, in which he details their religious beliefs, rituals, and medical practices. Within a few years Pané's writings were widely read, influencing the works of Las Casas and Colón's own biography, and today are still one of the most influential documents from the early colonial period. His work would also be used by Franciscans and Dominicans to support their arguments for the freedom and humanity of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas.

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<sup>294</sup> Pané reported the baptism and conversion of Juan's entire family. Of the sixteen members we know that at least one brother received the name of "Antón" after his baptism. Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo," 626.

<sup>295</sup> Stevens-Arroyo, "Juan Mateo," 627-628 and Fray Ramón Pané, *Relación Acerca de las Antigüedades de los Indios* (Siglo Veintiuno, 1974), 46-47.

<sup>296</sup> Errasti, 59.

<sup>297</sup> Pané, 43. "Y Dios por su bondad me dio por compañía al mejor de los indios, y el mas entendido en la santa fe católica; y después me lo quitó. Alabado sea Dios que me lo dio y luego me lo quitó. Verdaderamente yo lo tenía por buen hijo y hermano; era Guatícabanu, que después fue cristiano y se llamo Juan."

## The Expansion of the “spiritual conquest”

By the second decade of colonization the very limited religious presence and program of individuals like Pané and Deule would begin to expand into the much larger “spiritual conquest.”<sup>298</sup> In 1500 a group of seven Franciscans traveled to Española, including Duele and Cosin who returned to the island, with two sets of instructions. First, they were to begin the formal institutions necessary to convert the Taíno population, and second they were charged with returning the Indian slaves brought to Spain illegally by Colón following his first two voyages. How many slaves were returned is uncertain, though it is likely that the two Indians baptized in the Franciscan monastery at Guadalupe were among the group. These two *criados* or personal servants, having risen from their initial position as slaves, were baptized in the Real Monasterio de Santa María de Guadalupe on July 29, 1496 in the presence of Cristobal Colón. Following their baptism by Chaplain Lorenzo Fernandez they received the names Cristóbal (perhaps being named after Colón himself) and Pedro. Serving as Cristobal’s godfathers were Antonio de Torres and Andrés Balsques. Pedro’s godfathers were the brothers Varela.<sup>299</sup> These two Indians were not the first to receive baptism in Spain. The pattern of bringing former captive Indians

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<sup>298</sup> Robert Ricard developed the idea of the “spiritual conquest” in his pivotal work *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572*, translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966). For Ricard the “spiritual conquest” was the successful conversion of the natives of New Spain to Catholicism, a process that occurred in concert with the military conquest of Mexico. Since the publication of Ricard’s work, the idea of the “spiritual conquest,” especially its completion and success have come under fire from many historians. Now historians like Louise Burkhart and Nancy Farriss portray the “spiritual conquest” as much more of a multi-layered negotiation between the Indians and clergy. Others, like William Taylor have questioned the success of the friars, arguing for the creation of a syncretic Catholicism infused with surviving elements of native culture, ritual, and beliefs constantly evolving over time. For more on this topic see Louise Burkhart’s *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), Nancy Farriss’s, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*, (Princeton University Press, 1984), William B. Taylor’s *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), Sarah Cline’s review essay, “Conquest and the Aftermath: Center and Periphery in Colonial Mexico,” *Latin American Research Review*, 27:3, (1992): 244-253, and John F. Schwaller’s article “Franciscans in Colonial Latin America,” *The Americas*, 61:4, (2005): 565-570.

<sup>299</sup> “Partida de bautismo de dos indios criados de Colón,” 29 de Julio de 1496. Archivo del Real Monasterio de Santa María de Guadalupe, Libro I de Bautismos, Folio 1v. Printed in *Los Franciscanos y el Nuevo Mundo* (Monasterio de Santa María de la Rábida, Abril-Mayo 1992), 39.

back to their territories as intermediaries will be seen throughout the conquest period by European explorers, conquerors, and plunderers.

Within a few months of their arrival this second group of Franciscans claimed to have baptized up to three thousand Indians. Though it is possible that this many Indians were baptized, what exactly that meant for the Taínos in question is up for interpretation. Whether or not they truly understood what baptism meant, due to both miscommunication and the difficulties inherent in fully explaining complex religious doctrine, is the first question. Did the Indians truly believe in the Catholic doctrine and church, or did they see conversion as a tool to gain political and social capital? While we may never know the answers to these queries, it is important to read the friars' accounts of mass conversions and baptisms with skepticism. For example, in the same celebratory correspondence reporting the three thousand baptisms the friars also requested the augmentation of their numbers and funding claiming that they needed many more missionaries to accelerate the conversion of the entire Taíno population.<sup>300</sup> It is possible then that the friars were exaggerating their success to attain more Crown support and funding. They also could have been genuinely inspired by their early triumphs and felt that with more friars and priests the conversion of the Taínos could be easily accomplished. On the other hand, the fact that they underscored the need for *more* missionaries shows the limitations of their work.

In response to these pleas, along with pressure from the Pope, King Ferdinand of Spain sent a larger group of twelve Franciscans, though there were originally to have been sixteen, to Española in 1502.<sup>301</sup> In addition to the missionaries, the expedition also brought the first royally

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<sup>300</sup> Canedo, 4.

<sup>301</sup> Originally, thirteen Franciscans were slated to travel to the New World, but only 12 made the journey. They were Alonso de Espinar, Bartolomé de Turuégano, Antonio de Carrión, Francisco de Portugal, Antonio de los Mártires, Maseo de Zafra, Pedro de Hornachuelos, Bartolomé de Sevilla, Juan de Hinojosa, Alonso de Hornachuelos, Juan de

appointed governor of the island (and the rest of the Indies) Fray Nicolás de Ovando along with two thousand settlers, one of whom was the soon to be famous Bartolomé de las Casas.<sup>302</sup> While Ovando was responsible for carrying out the full military and political conquest of the Caribbean, something that Cristobál Colón had failed to accomplish during his tenure, it would be up to the Franciscans to initiate the religious conquest of the New World.

Upon their arrival in Española the group separated into smaller contingents of three to four friars, each charged with building a small community alongside the largest Taíno settlements. The settlements would each include a Cathedral and Monastery to house the group of friars. The two largest groups of clergyman, four each, settled in the areas with the most Spanish colonists: Santo Domingo and Concepción de la Vega. These were also the centers of the islands' economy due to their proximity to the best harbor and gold mines respectively. The Franciscan monastery at Concepción de la Vega was the most powerful of the island at this point, partially because the leader of the order, Alonso de Espinal, was housed there.<sup>303</sup> Two to three priests traveled to the province of Jaragua (the future cacicazgo of the cacique Enrique) and began their mission in the nascent village of Santa María de Vera Paz.<sup>304</sup> It is here that the small group built one of the first monasteries in the New World, in 1504, the one which would eventually house the first school for native leaders.<sup>305</sup>

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Escalante, and Juan Francés, and Pedro Francés. Making up the sixteen clergymen were four lay brothers who remained unnamed in the documentation. Canedo, 6-7.

<sup>302</sup> Daniel Castro, *Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé de las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 45. Francisco Pizarro, the future conquistador of Peru was also among those who disembarked in Santo Domingo in 1502.

<sup>303</sup> Kulstad, *Concepción de la Vega*, 56. Concepción de la Vega was destroyed by an earthquake in 1562, making Santo Domingo the most populous and important settlement on the island. It is now only known as La Vega, and is very small town.

<sup>304</sup> Errasti, 140.

<sup>305</sup> Fray Cipriano de Utrera, *Polémica de Enriquillo*, (Santo Domingo: Editora del Caribe, 1973), 136. Franciscans were also sent to Mejorada del Cotuy and Villa de la Buenaventura. Canedo, 8.

Lamentably, as the number of Franciscan friars in Española continued to grow, the native population steadily fell due to disease, over work, and abuse at the hands of the rising populace of Spanish colonists.<sup>306</sup> Despite the legal restrictions and duties inherent in the institution of the *encomienda*, namely the indoctrination of subject Indians to Catholicism and their protection, the Spanish overlords continued to focus on personal gain rather than following Crown policy. As colonists attempted to amass as much wealth as possible, the exploitation and abuse of the native population only worsened. In addition to the failure to save the souls of the Taínos of Española, the Spanish residents of the island had also stopped celebrating regular masses or going to confession.<sup>307</sup> Meanwhile, the Franciscan clergy remained preoccupied with working in indigenous population centers, spreading themselves thinly across the island and often ignoring the actions and policies of secular leaders.

#### The Arrival of the Dominicans: Montesinos's Sermon

In 1510, almost two decades after the first Franciscans traveled to the Caribbean, a group of fifteen Dominican friars landed in Santo Domingo. Unlike the Franciscans, the Dominicans would focus on the spirituality of the Spanish residents of Española, specifically those living in the central Spanish settlement, Concepción de la Vega.<sup>308</sup> This concentration resulted from the Franciscan's monopoly in matters of indigenous conversion.

Because the Franciscans had been on the island since 1494 and in large numbers by 1502, local leaders did not see the benefit of supporting the newly arrived Dominicans over the

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<sup>306</sup> Scholars debate the pre-conquest population of the Americas.

<sup>307</sup> Miguel D. Mena, *Iglesia, Espacio, y Poder: Santo Domingo (1498-1521), experiencia fundacional del Nuevo Mundo*, (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2007), 237-240.

<sup>308</sup> Fray Juan Manuel Pérez, *Estos ¿no son hombres? Lectura actual del Proyecto Apostólico de la Primera Comunidad de Dominicos en el Nuevo Mundo*, (Santo Domingo: Fundación García-Arévalo, 1984), 30.

Franciscans who were already providing spiritual guidance.<sup>309</sup> Within this group of Dominicans, led by Fray Pedro de Córdoba, was the soon to be famous Antonio Montesinos. Finding themselves unable to break the Franciscan monopoly and after witnessing the treatment of the Indians by Spanish encomenderos, which the Dominicans described as being worse or equal to that of livestock, they decided to challenge the leaders and residents of Concepción de la Vega. The confrontation took place on the morning of December 21, 1511 during the Advent sermon.



Figure 28, Ruins of the Fortress of Concepción de la Vega

In this speech Montesinos condemned the actions of the encomenderos, while questioning their very right to wage war on or enslave the Indians of the Americas.<sup>310</sup> “You are in mortal sin, that you live and die in, for the cruelty and tyranny you use in dealing with these innocent people. Tell me, by what right or justice do you keep these Indians in such cruel and horrible servitude? On what authority have you waged detestable wars against these people who

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<sup>309</sup> Patricia Seed, “Are these not men?": The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilization,” in *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25:3 (October 1993), 634.

<sup>310</sup> Castro, 56.

dwelt quietly and peacefully in their own land?”<sup>311</sup> While Montesinos and his fellow Dominicans did criticize the encomenderos for their excessive exploitation and abuse of the Indians, it is important to understand that he did not question the Spaniards’ right to rule over the natives and to collect tribute and labor from them. His main contention was *how* they reigned over the Taíno, not that they did not possess the right to govern them generally from both God and the King of Spain. Montesinos also emphasized the right of the Taínos to be converted on the grounds of their humanity and accused the encomenderos of preventing conversion by overworking them.<sup>312</sup>

The encomenderos and secular leaders of Española did not react positively to Montesinos’s condemnation or accusations, despite their limitations to the modern sensibilities. The very night of the sermon, the leaders of the colony met at the home of the governor and decided to confront the friars, hoping to convince them to retract most of their statements and condemnations. However, neither Córdoba (the leader of the Dominicans) nor Montesinos would renounce the sermon, claiming that it simply represented their beliefs and service to God and the King. In response, the residents of Concepción de la Vega withdrew all food and support from the Dominican friars while also sending a letter and account of the sermon to the King of Spain convinced he would see Montesinos’s words as treasonous. Specifically they claimed that the Dominicans hoped to rob the King of his very sovereignty over the Indies and of all his revenue.<sup>313</sup> Interestingly, the man chosen to deliver the message to the court in Spain was none other than the Franciscan friar Alonso de Espinal, the leader of the group of twelve who arrived

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<sup>311</sup> “Sermón de Adviento, 20 de diciembre, 1511,” cited in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 441. Translation by author, the original reads: “que todos estáis en pecado mortal y en el vivís y morís, por la crueldad y tiranía que usáis con estas inocentes gentes. Decid, con qué derecho y con qué justicia tenéis en tan cruel y horrible servidumbre aquestos indios? Con que autoridad habéis hecho tan detestables guerras a estas gentes que estaban en sus tierras mansas y pacificas?” While there is no written transcription of the Montesinos sermon, we do have firsthand accounts of its content, and the most thorough is that of Las Casas.

<sup>312</sup> Seed, 635.

<sup>313</sup> Las Casas, *Historia Tomo II*, 442-447.

in 1502. The very fact that a priest supposedly also dedicated to the conversion of the Indians of the New World would agree to denounce Montesinos's message and sermon demonstrates the tension, and even animosity, between the two orders. The sermon, and perhaps Espinal's support of the encomenderos in its aftermath, also divided the Franciscan order into two factions: the moderate group (represented by Espinal) and the more radical idealists whose views were similar to those of Montesinos and his fellow Dominicans.<sup>314</sup> Above saving the souls of the Taínos, Espinal wanted the Franciscan order to maintain their monopoly in the Americas and not be replaced by the now vocal Dominicans. Espinal also sought to keep the land and encomiendas possessed by the Franciscan Monasteries despite their vows of poverty.

#### The Laws of Burgos and Growing Tensions between the Dominicans and Franciscans

While the Franciscan and Dominican orders shared one common goal, the conversion and salvation of the native peoples of the New World, they possessed very different visions as to achieving these objectives. The contrasting practices of the two religious orders, which had produced tension and competition between them since their conception in the thirteenth century, would ultimately produce discord both in the Caribbean and at the Spanish court, dividing the clergy and in some cases the priests from the very Indians they were attempting to help.

The majority of Dominicans were gifted theologians and scholars, much more adept at debating policy, law, rights, and methods of conquest. Thus, they remained largely in the realm of theory and legislation, focusing on how peaceful Spanish policies could attract Indians to the Catholic faith.<sup>315</sup> Meanwhile, the Franciscan order embarked on a mission to build a more

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<sup>314</sup> Errasti, 204.

<sup>315</sup> John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 5-10.



primitive, pure version of the Catholic Church in the New World, similar to efforts of Pané. Their focus was not on Crown policy, but on the actual day to day issues of converting the native populations. Their concentration on the conversion of the Indians, instead of their capacity for accepting Catholicism, led to more pragmatic strategies from co-opting indigenous religious symbols to mass baptisms and perhaps most importantly to the creation of schools to train native clergy.<sup>316</sup> To accomplish their goals the Franciscans also immersed themselves in indigenous cultures, studying their societies and learning indigenous languages, both of which greatly facilitated communication and understanding.<sup>317</sup>

This split would become clear in the debates resulting from Montesinos's sermon. Dominicans, Franciscans, and encomenderos were all present at these debates, which took place in Burgos from 1512 to 1513.<sup>318</sup> Though Montesinos journeyed to Spain to argue for the salvation and freedom of the Indians, his case and arguments were largely ignored. Instead the Crown sided with the more moderate Franciscans who sought amelioration for the Taínos within the pre-existing Spanish structures on the island, including the encomienda system. To limit the suffering of the Indians the Laws of Burgos attempted to improve the working conditions in the mines, limit the number of Indians any encomendero could possess, and ensure that the Indians received sufficient food, clothing, and religious instruction.<sup>319</sup> For example, in order XXIV it was stated that "We order and command that no person or persons shall dare to beat any Indians with sticks, or whip him, or call him dog, or address him by any name other than his proper name

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<sup>316</sup> Pablo Garcia and Kathleen Ann Myers, "Spanish Catholicism in the Era of Exploration and Early Colonization," in *The Cambridge Histories of Religions in America*, vol. 1 *Pre-Columbian Times to 1790*, edited by Stephen J. Stein, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 180.

<sup>317</sup> In addition to the divide between the Dominican and Franciscan orders, there also existed a split in the Franciscan order itself between the Observants and the Conventuals. The Observants still respected and vow of poverty as a pure and true demonstration of their faith, while the Conventuals had accepted an increasingly luxurious lifestyle. The majority of Franciscans who journeyed to the New World were Observants. Canedo, 24-25.

<sup>318</sup> Mena, 250-251.

<sup>319</sup> Sauer, 197 and Errasti, 205-206.

alone.”<sup>320</sup> The laws also tried to ensure better treatment for caciques, with the indigenous leaders receiving a much lighter work load and better clothing, along with schooling for their children.<sup>321</sup> Nevertheless, in the end the laws also validated the institution of the encomienda and the legal Crown exploitation of the native peoples of the Americas. In fact, while attempting to help the natives of Española, the laws simultaneously confirmed the status of foreign Indian slaves. Whereas naborías and Taínos of the island had to be indoctrinated in Christianity and treated with “love and gentleness” any Indian declared a slave could be “treated by their owner as he pleases.”<sup>322</sup> The Laws of Burgos, while the first step in reforming Indian policy, were riddled with inconsistencies and limitations, and ultimately did little to change the situation of America’s native peoples. Thus, the Dominicans and Franciscans harshly criticized the law code.<sup>323</sup>

Along with passing the Laws of Burgos, the Crown also charged the Franciscan Alonso de Espinal (the same friar who represented the encomenderos’ case against the Dominicans during the debates) with leading forty more Franciscans to the Americas. These friars and priests were sent to Tierra Firme, Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico where they were to begin the evangelization of the local populations.<sup>324</sup> The Crown also ordered that the officials of Española be the ones to pay the costs of Espinal and the other Franciscans. This included their passage and all necessary supplies from blankets and pans to wax.<sup>325</sup> The Treasurer, Sancho de Matienzo, was also ordered to provide Espinal with clothing for an Indian servant he was bringing back

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<sup>320</sup> “Laws of Burgos,” 1512-1513. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 343.

<sup>321</sup> “Laws of Burgos,” 342.

<sup>322</sup> “Laws of Burgos,” 344.

<sup>323</sup> It is at this point that the Dominicans, and a group of Franciscans, would plan their religious communities/utopias on the coast of Tierra Firme. For more on this see Castro, 80-90; Santana, 59-65; Sauer, 192; Mena, 249-250.

<sup>324</sup> “Designación de franciscanos para Indias,” Junio 1512. AGI Indiferente 418, L.3, fol. 316r-316v.

<sup>325</sup> “Orden de pasaje a fray Alonso de Espinal,” 28 de Julio de 1512. AGI Indiferente 418, L.3, fol. 329r.

with him to the Indies.<sup>326</sup> Espinal's Indian assistant and the other Franciscans may have even been destined to work in the newly forming schools for native leaders or "hijos de caciques" discussed below. The destiny of Espinal's Indian guide is unclear, but it is known that Espinal died during the journey to Española in November of 1513.<sup>327</sup>

### The School for "Hijos de Caciques": Representing the Pinnacle of Franciscan/Indigenous Relationships

While the Laws of Burgos did little to ameliorate the day to day suffering of the Taínos of Española, they did inspire one significant development: the schools for "hijos de caciques," (sons of native chiefs or leaders). Specifically the Laws of Burgos required that "all of the sons of caciques on the island of Española, now and in the future, thirteen years of age or younger be given to the friars of the Order of Saint Francis so that the friars show them how to read and write and the ways of our faith."<sup>328</sup> To fulfill these instructions, in 1513 Bachiller Hernán Suárez received twenty grammar books, several reams of paper, and other books with which he was to begin a school for the "hijos de caciques" in the Monastery at Verapaz on the island of Española.<sup>329</sup> For this work Suárez would earn a salary of 33,000 maravedies.<sup>330</sup> The school, the first of its kind in the New World, would provide the island's future leaders with training in Catholicism and the Spanish language, perhaps even to create a group of native clergy. While the school closed within a decade, it first produced at least one famous alumnus, cacique

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<sup>326</sup> "Orden al doctor Sancho de Matienzo" 30 de Julio de 1512. AGI Indiferente 418, L.3, fol. 338v.

<sup>327</sup> Manuel Giménez Fernández, *El Plan Cisneros-Las Casas para la Reformación de las Indias, Vol. I* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas Escuela de Estudio Hispanoamericanos, 1984), 44.

<sup>328</sup> Lino Gómez Canedo, *La Educación de los Marginados durante la Epoca Colonial*, (México: 1982, 7).

<sup>329</sup> "Orden al doctor Sancho de Matienzo" 1513. AGI Indiferente 419, L.4, F. 124v.

<sup>330</sup> "Orden al provincial de la orden de San Francisco" 1513. AGI Indiferente 419, L.4, F. 127v. Though this seems to be a large sum of money, one the maravedí was the smallest Spanish coin by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was only made from copper not gold or silver as the other units.

Enrique.<sup>331</sup> In many ways the opening of this school, following the construction of Cathedrals and Monasteries in both Concepción de la Vega and Santo Domingo (for images of the Cathedral of Santo Domingo see Figures 29 and 30) represents the high point of the Franciscan experiment in Española.



**Figure 29, Catedral Primada, complete with a statue of Cristobál Colón's in the center of the Cathedral's Plaza**

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<sup>331</sup> In 1520 not only the school, but the monastery and larger settlement of Verapaz were abandoned, with the friars and inhabitants relocating to the village of Santa María del Puerto de Yaguana. While the reason for the move is unclear, it is possible that the residents of Verapaz sought greater security by joining with the population of Yaguana. The port city may have also offered greater access to supplies or economic opportunities. Whatever the reason this village, located near present day Puerto Prince Haiti, was also abandoned by the 1550s. Errasti, 142-143.



**Figure 30, Catedral Primada in Santo Domingo's Zona Colonial**

The most bonding relationships between Franciscan friars and the island's native leaders would also form during the years from 1502-1514. As evidence of this pattern, we saw the connections between former instructor Father Fray Remigio de Mejía and cacique Enrique.<sup>332</sup> In addition to the relationships formed between the native students and their Spanish instructors, the school also succeeded in its more basic goals. As can be seen in both Enrique's letter of surrender, and in his last will and testament, the cacique did learn to read and write in Spanish. In fact, Enrique would go on to write the only documents ever penned by a Taíno Indian.<sup>333</sup> While it is possible that both these documents were written by scribes, Enrique's signature does appear on the letter of surrender. There is additional evidence that the cacique could read Spanish, as he was described by two military captains as reading the pardon signed by both the Queen and the

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<sup>332</sup> Two other Franciscan priests and instructors present at the school in Verapaz during Enrique's tenure were Pedro de Arcabandi and Guillermo de Predio. Errasti, 140.

<sup>333</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 77, R.4, N.77, fol.1r. Enrique's letter to the Crown dates from June 6<sup>th</sup> of 1534 and indicates his final submission to the Spanish authorities in Santo Domingo, including Francisco Barrionuevo. His testament, the document that has yet to be found, is described in a letter from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo to the Crown in September of 1535. At least one Spaniard, Captain Alferro saw the will and states that the cacique left power to his wife, Dona Mencia and his nephew in his testament. AGI Santo Domingo 77, R.4, N.90a, fol.1r.

royal court of Santo Domingo in their presence.<sup>334</sup> He also publically demonstrated his conversion to Catholicism throughout his marronage, meeting multiple times with Catholic clergy to receive communion and placing crosses on the doors of every structure in the mountain settlement.<sup>335</sup> Enrique also had many of his followers (especially the children born into marronage), including the cacique Tamayo, baptized while living in the mountains.<sup>336</sup> Whether or not these actions were the result of a true conversion to Christianity is difficult to ascertain. Enrique may have used the Catholic symbols and rituals as political tools. However, it is possible that Enrique had fully embraced the Catholic faith.

Perhaps because of the success of the first school, on several levels, others like it were soon created, first in Concepcion de la Vega in 1517 and then in Santo Domingo in 1523. In 1517 the encomendero Rodrigo de Figueroa placed two of his commended caciques, Don Diego and Don Henríquez, under the tutelage and leadership of the Franciscans in the monastery at Concepción de la Vega. Beyond these two caciques Las Casas recorded that several other “hijos de caciques” lived within the larger Franciscan monastery where they learned to read and write in addition to their religious education.<sup>337</sup> This may have been an attempt to fulfill the Crown’s order to create another “casa para enseñanza” (house for teaching or learning) on the island to teach the native children to read and write.<sup>338</sup> While it took several years for these more

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<sup>334</sup> “Carta del Audiencia de Santo Domingo,” 1 de septiembre de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.4, N.28, fol.2r.

<sup>335</sup> “Carta al Emperador de oidor Zuazo y Vadillo,” 4 de septiembre de 1533. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 61, fol. 299v. In addition to the religious regulations placed on Enrique’s community, he also removed all the tongues of the chickens and restricted the number of fires so as to avoid discovery by the Spanish soldiers. “Halló en todos sus bohíos cruces puestas y a todos los gallos cortadas las lenguas porque no cantar en a efecto que no fuesen servidos y prohibido sopena de muerte que ninguna de su gente encendiese lumbre sino donde él lo mandaré ni cortase rama ni palo porque no se pudiese ver humo ni hallar el rastro de ello.”

<sup>336</sup> Peña Battle, 74 and “Carta al Emperador de oidor Zuazo y Vadillo,” 4 de septiembre de 1533. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 61, fol. 300r.

<sup>337</sup> Errasti, 134.

<sup>338</sup> “Casa para enseñanza en la isla Española,” 22 de diciembre de 1517. AGI Patronato 275, R.3, sin folio.

formalized learning institutions to take shape, the Franciscans were present in Concepción de la Vega as early as 1502 and there is record of a church in the settlement by 1509. Concurrent with the first documentation of the church is an intriguing list of baptisms of indigenous peoples of San Francisco de la Vega (how the city and its monastery were commonly referred to in the documents of the period). Alongside the Indian names the record lists who the Indians were commended to (and possibly who their godparents were), perhaps in an attempt to demonstrate the encomenderos compliance with their role as leader and protector of their Indians.<sup>339</sup> Then in 1523, we finally see the opening of a school for “hijos de caciques” in Santo Domingo under the leadership of the instructor Aquiles Holden. For his work Holden was to receive thirty thousand maravedies annually.<sup>340</sup>

### The Repartimiento of 1514 and its Consequences

While the Laws of Burgos was the Crown’s first official response to Montesinos and the Dominicans’ denunciations they were certainly not the last. For the coming decades the Crown of Spain and many other religious clergy, both Dominicans and Franciscans, continued to engage in debate regarding the rights and humanity of America’s native peoples. These discussions brought about numerous changes in the laws regarding Indian labor and enslavement. Within a few short years we see a rapid succession of policies, laws, and experiments carried out by both Crown and religious officials all with the goal of ameliorating the suffering of Española’s, and the larger Caribbean’s, native population. Following the Laws of Burgos, and the intense

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<sup>339</sup> Unnamed document found in the St. Augustine Bishopric Archive.

<sup>340</sup> “Salario de Aquiles Holden, maestro de gramática,” 3 de junio de 1523. AGI Indiferente 420, L.9, fol. 97v. The Franciscans had begun their mission in Santo Domingo years earlier, beginning construction on both their permanent, stone, monastery and the central Cathedral from 1511 to 1512. Errasti, *Los Primeros Franciscanos*, 104-107 and Mariano Errasti, *El Primer Convento de América: Historia y Forma de Vida de los Franciscanos en su convento de la Ciudad de Santo Domingo, 1516-1820*, (Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, 2006), 59.

criticism that came in the legislation's wake, officials instituted a much larger scale restructuring of the colonial enterprise known as the Repartimiento of Albuquerque, the redivision and relocation of surviving Taíno residents, or the first *reducción*. Executed in 1514 this set of legislation redistributed approximately 22,000 Indians (not counting children and the aged who could not work)<sup>341</sup> across the island, radically changing the social and political landscape of the island. Through the Repartimiento the Crown of Spain tried to reign in the power of the local colonial government. It did this by taking the right to grant encomiendas away from the Governor of Española and limiting how many Indians any one encomendero could possess. These provisions were also meant to ameliorate some of the most egregious abuses of native peoples. They were also to ensure that encomenderos followed the newly passed Laws of Burgos, including such provisions as favoring married couples and those actually living in the Caribbean over single, absent encomenderos. It was thought that married men present in the Americas would better fulfill their commitments to indoctrinate and convert the indigenous populations in their care.<sup>342</sup> Thus, these changes would allow for the more efficient conversion of the surviving Taínos to Catholicism, at least in theory. The Repartimiento also relocated the Indians to towns located closer to the island's gold mines and burgeoning sugar plantations, increasing Crown revenue.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Sauer, 200-201. Sauer gives the figure of 22,726 Indians of service and naborías while Demorizi estimates 22,336.

<sup>342</sup> For more on the policies of marriage and family in the developing Caribbean colonies see Ida Altman, "Marriage, Family, and Ethnicity in the Early Spanish Caribbean," in *William and Mary Quarterly* 70:2 (April 2013), 225-250.

<sup>343</sup> "Instrucción que los Reyes dieron a Rodrigo de Albuquerque y al Licenciado Ibarra para hacer el repartimiento general de los indios de la Isla Espanola" 1513, printed in Luis Arranz Márquez, *Repartimientos y Encomiendas en la Isla Española: El Repartimiento de Alburquerque de 1514*, (Madrid: Ediciones Funadcaion Garcia Arévalo, 1991), 264-273. For the actual text of the Repartimiento and a discussion of the larger Spanish politics surrounding the creation of the document see Arranz Márquez's 1991 work and Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi's *Los Dominicos y las Encomiendas de Indios de la Isla Española*, (Santo Domingo: Editora del Caribe, 1971).



However, the Repartimiento only worsened the suffering for the Taínos of Española and did not begin to address the issues and problems with the ever growing Indian slave trade because slaves were considered personal property and thus were not subject to the laws of Repartimiento. Nor did it actually give preference to Spaniards present on the island, with the largest number of Indians going to the Crown<sup>344</sup> and/or Crown officials living in Spain.<sup>345</sup> And, as one would conclude, it did not satisfy either the Franciscans or Dominicans. In fact, the Repartimiento increased the tension between the Franciscans and Dominicans on the island as some of the Franciscan monasteries received commended Indians, such as that of Concepción de la Vega. The Dominicans viewed this as totally unacceptable and as support for the exploitation of the island's Indians. On the other hand the Franciscans claimed that they did not benefit monetarily from the Indians and that at the very least their commended Indians would receive the best religious instruction. Despite all of the hope and promise represented by the nascent Franciscan monasteries and schools opening across the island, much of their influence and power was undermined by the Repartimiento of 1514. Regardless of the stated goal of the Repartimiento, to facilitate indigenous conversion, it actually ended many of the Franciscans' established missions. For example the school in Verapaz lost many of its students, including Enrique, following the Repartimiento.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> One cacique commended to the Crown was cacique Francisco de Agueybana from the island of Saona located just south of Española. Though not mentioned in the repartimiento, this Agueybana could have been a surviving relative of Agueybana II who rebelled against the Spanish of Puerto Rico in 1511. He may have been moved to Saona in the wake of the conflict to both remove him from his homeland and to better control the cacique and his people. Following the repartimiento Agueybana along with 154 Indians were moved yet again to Santo Domingo. "Repartimiento de la Isla Española," 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 107.

<sup>345</sup> Arranz Márquez, 204-212, Kulstad, 60-62, and Demorizi, 34. The largest numbers of Taínos were allotted to Lopes Conchillos (the King's Secretary) and the King himself who received 1,430 Indians. This led to a massive exodus from the island for those without Indians. The majority moved on to explore South and Central America in search new labor pools. This led to the rapid depopulation of the island's Spanish population and consequent abandonment of some of the island's original towns, like Verapaz. Other towns saw their populations cut in half. "Memorial de Hernando de Gorjon, acerca de la despolacion de la Isla Española." 1520. CDI, Tomo I, 428-429.

<sup>346</sup> Kulstad, 60.

Native leaders were not only separated from their Franciscan instructors, the transfer of caciques from their ancestral lands also effectively isolated them from their sources of power, like their caves. In addition, the Spaniards also removed Taíno caciques from their yucca fields thereby making the natives dependent upon the Spaniards for their sustenance. The Dominicans argued that the encomenderos should free their Indians, or at the very least return them to their original encomiendas.<sup>347</sup> But, some Dominicans went beyond recognizing the subsistence issues of relocating indigenous populations. Las Casas addressed the larger social impact of the displacement in his letter to the King where he attempted to explain, and in some ways excuse, Enrique's rebellion and maroonage by stating that the cacique had simply returned to the "mountains where he was born and the location of his patrimony."<sup>348</sup>

The Repartimiento completely altered the population distribution of the island. Prior to 1514 the bulk of the native population resided in the western half of the island, present-day Haiti. However, with the Crown seeking laborers for the developing sugar plantations, located near Santo Domingo, and gold mines of the central mountain range, located near the towns of Concepción and San Juan de la Maguana, the Repartimiento transferred the majority of the Taínos to these regions. This left only a fifth of the original native population in the western portion of the island near their ancestral homes.<sup>349</sup>

Only amplifying the turmoil caused by physical displacement, the Repartimiento often combined two or more chiefdoms to account for a decrease in population. This forced as many as four caciques to live and work together, decreasing the power of each cacique and causing

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<sup>347</sup> "Carta de la Comunidad Dominico a los Jeronimos en respuesta a su comisión solicitada" 1517, transcribed and printed in *La Iglesia y el Negro Esclavo en Santo Domingo: una historia de tres siglos* by Jose Luis Saez, Santo Domingo: Patronato de la ciudad colonial de Santo Domingo Coleccion Quinto Centenario, 1994, 208-209.

<sup>348</sup> "Carta de las Casas" 30 de abril de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 95, R.1, N.11, fol. 1v. "montanas donde nacio y posee su patrimonio"

<sup>349</sup> Sauer, 201.

internal divisions within the new settlements. This was especially visible in the encomiendas granted to the Crown mines and ranches. In one case the repartimiento united the cacicazgos of caciques Diego Enrique de Guacon and San Benito in the mines outside of Concepción de la Vega.<sup>350</sup> Where these two caciques resided before 1514 and what their relationship was like are not referenced in the document. In other examples this information is at least alluded to. The royal secretary, Lope de Conchillos, was commended cacicazgos from across the island. In one entry he received power over cacique Ayraguay (of unknown provenance), the cacica of Barahona (in the Jaragua region), and the cacique Macote from Santo Domingo (of the Higüey cacicazgo).<sup>351</sup> Here at least two of the caciques, along with the Taínos they governed had to move across the island to serve the Crown in Concepción de la Vega. If the caciques did have pre-existing interactions, they may have been hostile since the caciques of Jaragua and Higüey were often in competition with another.

Spaniards found it necessary to combine cacicazgos due to the sharp decline in population on the island, which had diminished once populous indigenous settlements to as few as ten residents. Additionally, a shocking forty three percent of Taínos did not have children per encomienda lists.<sup>352</sup> In fact only nine of the forty three cacicazgos counted more than two hundred Indians by 1514, and the majority contained around forty inhabitants.<sup>353</sup> Even larger

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<sup>350</sup> “Repartimiento de la Isla Española” 1514. Transcribed and printed in *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Colonización de las posesiones Españolas en América y Oceanía, sacados en su mayor parte del Real Archivo de Indias*, Tomo I (Madrid, 1864), 59-60. Garcon was the leader of ninety-two men and women of working age and eleven persons unable to labor meaning they were either aged or children. Cacique San Benito came with one hundred and forty laborers, eleven elderly persons, and twenty-six children.

<sup>351</sup> “Repartimiento de la Isla Española” 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 60-61. Ayraguay governed seventy eight laborers along with five elderly persons and five children. The cacica of Barahona brought with her eighty five persons of service, fifteen aged Indians, and seven children. Cacique Macote led forty seven Taínos of working age, seven elderly persons, and twelve children.

<sup>352</sup> Mena, 285.

<sup>353</sup> Arranz Márquez, 242.

cacicazgos, like that of Enrique with over 100 members, were broken up and joined with other unaffiliated chiefdoms. This points to other motivations for the reorganizing of various indigenous cacicazgos in the repartimiento. Though this policy was not explicitly articulated, it is probable that the Spanish officials dissolved cacicazgos in an effort to diminish the power of any one cacique, thereby increasing the power of the encomendero over all the Indians in his encomienda. Instead of relying on one cacique, like Enrique, the encomendero could pit various caciques against one another or assign Indians with no affiliation to any of the Taíno caciques. Even Diego Colón, the Lucayan from Guanahaní, by 1514 a cacique controlling lands near Santo Domingo, suffered from the Repartimiento. The Spanish officials split his cacicazgo in two, sending twenty nine Indians to be part of Francisco de Arbolancha's encomienda while another fifteen Indians were commended to Pero Lope de Mesa in Concepción de la Vega.<sup>354</sup>

In many ways the Repartimiento produced a small scale version of a larger Circum-Caribbean Indian Diaspora. Though the Taínos of Española did not have leave their island, they were forced to abandon their ancestral homes leaving behind meaningful landscapes, burial grounds, and productive yucca fields. Many caciques also had to leave their encomenderos, with whom they may have possessed friendly relationships, and clergy like the Franciscans of Verapaz. Some of these Indians, usually “naborías de la casa” or household servants, had lived with one Spanish family their entire lives, and following the Repartimiento had to leave both their indigenous and Spanish families.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Esteban Mira Caballos, “Caciques guatiao en los inicios de la colonización: el caso del indio Diego Colón,” in Esteban Mira Caballos, *La Española, epicentro del Caribe*, 266. Diego Colón's entry in the Repartimiento of 1514 is the last record of the extraordinary Indian. He likely died soon after the Repartimiento, or he would have been listed in the Jeronymite interrogation and “pueblos tutelados” discussed below.

<sup>355</sup> Arranz Márquez, 257.

Only adding to the personal, geographic, and social displacement for the native Taínos of the island, was the still growing presence of foreign Indian slaves arriving daily to Española, who would also be destined for the new settlements created by the Repartimiento. Just as the division of cacicazgos undermined the authority of Taíno caciques, the growing number of foreign slaves further reduced the power that the caciques had once known both in their own indigenous settlements and in negotiations with the Spanish colonists. While the foreign Indians were not listed as such in the repartimiento documents, their presence is hinted at within one category. Throughout the repartimiento all Indians owing fealty to a Taíno cacique received the label of “indios de servicio” or Indians of working age. They were listed directly below the name of the cacique to whom they were related. Following the number of Indian laborers came a list of Indians who were not of service, meaning they were children or elderly. These Indians still likely owed allegiance to a particular cacique and were native to the island. After these Taínos, came the listing of any *naborías* a Spaniard was to receive. As they did not belong to any of the island’s cacicazgos, nor have any relation with a local cacique, it is very likely that the *naborías* listed were recent arrivals to the island from the Lucayos Islands. These Indians, unlike Carib Indians, were designated as *naborías*, essentially serfs to their Spanish masters.<sup>356</sup> Many of the entries on *naborías* also included who had initially registered them, alluding to their recent arrival on the island.<sup>357</sup> The highest numbers of commended *naborías* appear in the repartimientos of settlements located on the northern coast of the island, like Puerto Real, Puerto Plata, and Santiago reflecting the status of these ports as entry points for Lucayos Indians.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, only the fact that they could not be resold separated the *naborías* from Indian slaves.

<sup>357</sup> “Se le encomendó cuarenta y cinco *naborías* de casas, las que fueron registradas en nombre del almirante Don Diego Colon.” “Repartimiento de la Isla Española,” 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 109.

<sup>358</sup> Charles R. Ewen, *From Spaniard to Creole: The Archaeology of Cultural Formation at Puerto Real, Haiti* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 27.

The harsher work conditions that many of the Indians endured within the Crown's gold mines, led to a further diminution of the native population, only augmented by the first small pox outbreak in 1518. Many natives of the island fled their assigned settlements, the majority returning to their ancestral lands. The cacique Enrique is the perfect example of this pattern. In the Repartimiento a small Indian diaspora takes shape, just as a larger diaspora formed in the greater Caribbean, which would also impact the natives of Española in the coming years.

### The Jeronymite Intervention: From Hope to Catastrophe

The dissatisfaction with the limitations of the Laws of Burgos, the havoc wrought by the Repartimiento of 1514 (for both indigenous peoples and Spanish settlers who lost their Indians), and the ever growing clamor for change within religious circles all led to an in-depth examination into how to reform the governance of Española in 1517. This investigation and intervention was led by a most unlikely party, neither secular officials nor the already involved Franciscans and Dominicans, but by a small group of Jeronymite friars. In January of 1516 King Ferdinand died, leaving power to the regent of Castile Cardinal Francisco Jimenéz de Cisneros (until Ferdinand's grandson Charles came of age). Cisneros appointed the group of Jeronymites<sup>359</sup> to serve as an impartial religious government in Española. Even though Cisneros was a member of the Franciscan Order<sup>360</sup>, he ultimately decided that he had to choose an impartial judge/party or at least a group with less extreme ideas. In his discussions with Las Casas Cisneros revealed that while he believed that the Indians were inherently free, they still needed guidance (both religious and political) before they could live in a civilized manner. While

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<sup>359</sup> The three chosen Jeronymite friars were: Luis de Figueroa, Bernardino de Manzanedo, and Alfonso de Santo Domingo. Mena, 294.

<sup>360</sup> Cisneros originally considered appointing Montesinos's brother, Fray Reginaldo Montesinos, to lead reforms.

the Indians were receiving this education Cisneros believed that they could be required to serve the Spanish, but not as slaves.<sup>361</sup> Additionally, the Franciscans and Dominicans were so embroiled in their fight with one another-as can be witnessed in the very aggressive and exaggerated debates at court that resulted in the Dominicans being briefly expelled from the colonies in late 1511-that Cisneros felt he had to appoint a group not previously involved in the conflict. The Jeronymites, a completely cloistered group who had remained separate from all politics, seemed like the perfect choice for Cisneros.<sup>362</sup>

The Jeronymites were tasked with investigating and then reforming the government of the Indies, with the ultimate goal being the salvation of the land's native peoples and the resurrection of the island's failing economy. To achieve these lofty ambitions the Jeronymites planned to slowly replace the faltering and labor intensive gold mining industry with sugar production. They also sought to substitute the Taíno labor force with African slaves. The Jeronymites were also to decide the fate of the much criticized encomienda system. If they were to dismantle the encomiendas, the next step was to decide between the creation of completely free Indian towns and towns governed jointly by clergy and a cacique (*pueblos tutelados or pueblos indios*). As if these objectives were not enough, the Jeronymites were also challenged

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<sup>361</sup> Manuel Giménez Fernández, 142.

<sup>362</sup> Luis Fernández de Retana, *Cisneros y Su Siglo: Estudio Histórico de la vida y actuación pública del Cardenal D. Fr. Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros, Tomo II* (Madrid: Administración de "El Perpetuo Socorro," 1930), 311-313. Beyond their removal from the political realm, the Jeronymites had recently sheltered Cisneros and the young King Carlos during the succession struggle so he had personal ties to the Order. Manuel Giménez Fernández, 71-73. The Jeronymites were also known for their ability to transform feral land into productive and rich farms, something that they had done successfully in many of the confiscated territories taken from Jews during the Reconquista. This experience with rehabilitating land and economies would be invaluable in the struggling mines and plantations of the Indies. It is also possible that the Jeronymite Pané and his successes in Española during the 1490s while working alongside Franciscans influenced Cisneros's decision. Manuel Giménez Fernández, 154-155.

with relieving the tensions between the different religious and secular factions in Española, something the Repartimiento had only exacerbated.<sup>363</sup>

Upon arriving in Española in January of 1517, the Jeronimites interviewed the fourteen most powerful officials and encomenderos on the island. Most described the Indians as “lazy,” “enemies of work,” “liars,” “drunkards,” and “inclined only to vices not virtue,” arguing that the Indians did not possess the capacity to govern themselves in a civilized manner.<sup>364</sup> While some of the Spaniards may have honestly held these beliefs regarding the Taínos, it is more likely that they were simply protecting their economic interests. Ultimately, only two officials questioned believed that at least some of the island’s Indians had the capacity to live freely. The first, Pedro Romero was very likely the same Pedro Romero who greatly assisted in the surrender of Enrique in 1533. Romero was also married to a Taíno woman and possessed an encomienda in the southwest corner of the island, nearly Jaragua. He testified that only “exceptional” Indians could and should live freely and independently from the Spanish. What he meant by this is up for interpretation, though it is likely he meant the most hispanicized or ladino Indians, someone like Enrique who had essentially been raised by Spanish clergy.<sup>365</sup> The other defender of Indian liberty was more predictably a Dominican friar. He argued that all Indians had the ability to live in complete freedom, though some would have to be trained in pueblos tutelados first. The rest of those interviewed all agreed categorically that the Indians were innately unfit to govern

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<sup>363</sup> “Los Jerónimos enviados a la Española por el Cardinal Cisneros” 1516, printed in Roberto Marte, comp., *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos de Juan Bautista Munoz* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Fundación García Arévalo, Inc., 1981), 208-210 and Kulstad, 62-63.

<sup>364</sup> Guitar 1998, 224.

<sup>365</sup> Esteban Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía Americana: las reducciones de indios de los jerónimos en la Española (1517-1519),” in Esteban Mira Caballos’s edited volume *La Española, Epicentro del Caribe*, 348. “The Heronymite Survey,” 1517. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 329.



themselves, including at least one Franciscan friar.<sup>366</sup> Because of these reports, and a fear that the dismantling of the encomiendas would provoke a rebellion on the island, the Jeronymites advocated the maintenance of the encomienda system for an undetermined period of time.<sup>367</sup> Of course these decisions were made with no consideration of actual indigenous peoples, nor were any Indians interviewed during the process.

Nevertheless the Jeronymites did immediately prohibit the continuance of the Indian slave trade to the coast of Tierra of Firme and removed all Indians from repartimientos whose owners were absent, basically fulfilling the Laws of Burgos. The Indians just taken from absent encomenderos, of which there were approximately three thousand with the majority belonging to the Crown, were the first to move to pueblos tutelados.<sup>368</sup> The first of these settlements were in the Cibao region and the Macorís where the Indians continued to work eight months out of the year in the gold or salt mines respectively. However, instead of the profit from this work going to the Crown, or other encomenderos, the Indians themselves reaped the benefits of their labor. In fact, the mined gold was used to buy the Indians clothing, food, and to pay salaries to their religious mentors who not only taught them religious and scholarly pursuits but also Spanish methods of farming. The clergy assigned to the pueblos were not friars, but regular priests of the Roman Catholic Church. Since these clergymen were not tied to one specific order they would

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<sup>366</sup> “Interrogatorio Jerónimo” 1517. Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente 1624, f.49v.-52v. The Franciscan was Pedro de Mexia, though his reasons for supporting the maintenance of the encomienda are not clear. He had been present in the Indies since at least 1513 and served as provincial of the Franciscan order in Española. He had even been instrumental in the creation of the schools for “hijos de caciques.” (“Orden al provincial de la orden de San Francisco” 1513. AGI Indiferente 419, L.4, F. 127v.) He, like Espinal, may have personally benefited from the encomienda system since the larger monasteries often possessed encomienda grants. However he did argue that if the encomienda system were to remain the encomenderos needed to actually follow the Laws of Burgos to the letter, which would give Franciscan clergy a great deal of influence over the native population.

<sup>367</sup> Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía,” 346.

<sup>368</sup> Altman, 597, Sauer, 205, and Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía,” 351. Interestingly many of the Indians who would eventually join Enrique’s maroon community and resistance hailed from these freed towns, suggesting that the newly liberated Indians still needed protection from Spanish overlords once the Jeronymites left the island in 1519.

have been at least theoretically impartial to the larger struggles between the Franciscans and Dominicans. Two such priests were Alonso Hernández Torollo, who worked with the caciques formerly commended to Lope Conchillos and Secretary Almazán, and Pedro Sánchez who was assigned two pueblos in the Cibao region.<sup>369</sup> Interestingly, for their brief existence the “indios depositados”<sup>370</sup> or those living in the pueblos tutelados actually mined significantly more gold than their counterparts who remained in encomiendas. From early 1518 until 1519 the Indians under the Jeronymites’ supervision mined 9,960 pesos of gold, the “indios encomendados” or belonging to encomiendas only mined 7,520 pesos.<sup>371</sup> This is especially extraordinary when one considers that the number of Indians living in the pueblos tutelados was only about nine percent of the island’s total indigenous population. The Jeronymites attributed this difference to the positive effects of just and fair treatment on the Taínos.<sup>372</sup>

While the settlements were overseen by both religious clergy and secular authorities, the Jeronymites also tried to maintain the pre-Hispanic eminence of the native caciques who received better clothing, worked much less, and often assisted in the governing of the pueblos tutelados. In the Jeronymites’ plan these educated caciques would both control their subject Indians within the pueblos tutelados and eventually lead completely free indigenous towns.<sup>373</sup> These towns would serve as models for the Jeronymite’s much larger scale plan they would attempt in 1518; the creation of nearly thirty pueblos indios across the island and the end of the encomienda system entirely. In many ways the Jeronymites were trying to return to the original

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<sup>369</sup> Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía,” 356-358.

<sup>370</sup> The term “depositados” was applied to segments of Spanish society in need of protection. For instance, women who sought asylum from abusive spouses were referred to as “mujeres depositados.”

<sup>371</sup> “Cuentas de Juan Ampíes,” 1519. Printed in Roberto Marte, comp., *Santo Domingo en Los Manuscritos de Juan Bautista Munoz*, 260.

<sup>372</sup> Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía,” 353.

<sup>373</sup> Mira Caballos, “La Primera Utopía,” 356-361 and Mena, 299.

social structure that Colón tried to implement in Española in 1493 with the island's "natural lords" maintaining power and acting as intermediaries between their subjects and Spanish rulers.

Meanwhile, the Jeronymites, advocated the importation of thousands of African slaves. These new workers would aid the shift to sugar production on the island. The Jeronymites even petitioned the Crown (Cisneros) to provide Spanish residents willing to set up sugar ingenios with economic incentives, most importantly the ability to purchase slaves without paying taxes in an effort to make the transition from indigenous to African slave labor smoother.<sup>374</sup> While the Jeronymite's emphasis on increased sugar production over gold mining did not ultimately help the native Taínos, it did benefit Española's residents. In fact by the 1530s, Española shipped up to ninety thousand *arrobas* of sugar annually to Spain from as many as forty ingenios.<sup>375</sup> Even though sugar did not disappear as had the island's gold, the two did share some common factors, namely the employ and exploitation of both Indians and Africans in the same ingenios. For example, the ingenio owner, Francisco Tostado purchased a variety of slaves at a public auction in 1520, including "una india y dos niñas esclavas," while another encomendero, Diego Caballero, bought both Indian and African slaves at the same auction.<sup>376</sup> Ingenio owners often owned numerous slaves of diverse origins who worked on their plantations together.<sup>377</sup> Many of

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<sup>374</sup> Demorizi, 252-254

<sup>375</sup> Deive 1980, 78.

<sup>376</sup> Francisco Moscoso, "Un Señor de Ingenios de Santo Domingo: Francisco Tostado (1520-1528)," in *Boletín Museo del Hombre Dominicano*, 25, (1992): 126.

<sup>377</sup> Licenciado Zuazo described the process of fabricating sugar in 1518, "They began the operation of cutting the cane, which was as thick as a limb of a man and as long as two men of medium height, and they followed the cutting with the felling, mashing, draining, cooking, and finally the crystallization...It all began, if possible, at dawn and lasted all day with a brief break for lunch." Deive 1980, 329.

these ingenios held hundreds of enslaved workers. In 1530 over 3,000 slaves (of mixed origin both African and Indian) worked on the island's plantations.<sup>378</sup>

Thus, despite the efforts of Cisneros and the Jeronymites, along with various Dominican and Franciscan friars, the encomenderos of Española continued to exploit both their commended Indians and indigenous slaves, even after the arrival of more and more African slaves. By the end of 1518 the Jeronymites decided to put their full plan in motion and began the process of creating pueblos tutelados across the island. Although they originally planned thirty towns, the number had decreased to seventeen due to the loss of population during the early phases of the small pox epidemic that hit the island in 1518. They planned to carry out their vision in two phases: first by moving the most acculturated or ladino Indian caciques, and then by supervising the voluntary relocation of the rest of the Indians. The Jeronymites firmly believed that once the caciques saw the benefits of living in pueblos tutelados they would choose to move to the elected sites.<sup>379</sup> In spite of all the Jeronymites' hopes, Española's Taínos did not in fact see this second relocation as a positive occurrence. While it is likely that the majority of caciques wanted to be free from their encomenderos, they did not want to move yet again, and especially not to locations even more distant from their ancestral cacicazgos.<sup>380</sup>

Before the Jeronymites could force all the Indians to move, or the encomenderos to release their Indians, the island faced the first outbreak of smallpox in the New World in 1518. According to officials on the island at the time the illness devastated the remaining indigenous population killing up to a quarter of the Indians in Española in a few months. Sadly, the segment

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<sup>378</sup> Lynne Guitar, "Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Española, 1534-45)," in *Slaves and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*, Barry M. Robinson and Jane Landers, eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 48.

<sup>379</sup> Mira Caballos, "La Primera Utopía," 366.

<sup>380</sup> "Residencia que tomó el licenciado Lebrón al licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa," 1521. AGI Justicia 45, N. 1<sup>a</sup>.

of the population most affected were the inhabitants of the infant pueblos tutelados.<sup>381</sup> Even the Indians who survived the epidemic encountered continued abuse and exploitation in the pueblos tutelados, something the Jeronymites tried to prevent by paying salaries to the town's administrators. Nevertheless by late 1518 there were reports of widespread abuse of Indians by the town's overseers who treated the Indians cruelly, forcing them to work overtime and even stealing their yucca.<sup>382</sup> The Indians fled the pueblos tutelados to escape disease, abuse, and to return to their homelands. Despite the Jeronymites' best intentions all the towns were deserted by 1530<sup>383</sup>, with many of the former inhabitants having joined the indigenous rebellion led by Enrique. As the experiment of the pueblos indios and pueblos tutelados deteriorated so did the Jeronymites' determination and by the end of 1519 they also gave up on dismantling the encomiendas agreeing that the Taíno could continue to live under the practices of the Repartimiento system.<sup>384</sup>

However, prior to the failure of the pueblos tutelados (and other attempts at ending the repartimiento system) became clear; the Jeronymites turned their attention to finding laborers who would replace the now free Taínos of the island. From the beginning the Jeronymites promoted the use of African slave labor over indigenous, even outlawing the Indian slave trade when they first arrived in the Caribbean. Hence, in early 1518 they issued a decree that allowed for the purchase and transportation of Bozal African<sup>385</sup> slaves to the island of Española. However, they quickly realized that the labor shortage on Española required immediate attention and would not be solved by the arrival of a few thousand African slaves, thus the importation of

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<sup>381</sup> "Carta al rey y reina por el Licenciado Figueroa," el 7 de abril de 1519. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 58, fol. 91r.

<sup>382</sup> Mira Caballos, "La Primera Utopía," 367-368.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>384</sup> Guitar 1998, 176.

<sup>385</sup> Bozal slaves came directly from Africa and unlike the ladino slaves did not speak a European language and had not converted to Catholicism.

both Africans and Indians was needed.<sup>386</sup> In fact, only a year after the Jeronymites made the Indian slave trade illegal they officially lifted the prohibition on trading for slaves in the Pearl Islands and the coast line of Tierra Firme.<sup>387</sup> They then went a step further by granting licenses for Spaniards to take or trade in slaves throughout Tierra Firme that were already held as slaves by the local Indians.<sup>388</sup> The Jeronymites also revitalized the war on all Carib Indians even labeling the majority of Indians living on the coasts of Tierra Firme as “Caribs” or cannibals to legally enslave as many as possible. Thus many of the slaving licenses issued by the Jeronymite government included permission to capture both Caribs and engage in rescue for Indian slaves. For example, Treasurer Miguel de Pasamonte received a license allowing him to go to Tierra Firme to enslave any Caribs to labor in his burgeoning sugar mill.<sup>389</sup> The Jeronymites even sponsored at least one slaving caravel led by Diego de Caballero, which returned to Santo Domingo with between 150 and 200 Indians from Paria.<sup>390</sup> Slaving expeditions from June to October of 1519 captured and registered over 500 Indian slaves in Santo Domingo. Over half of these Indians were women.<sup>391</sup> Interestingly the Jeronymites even issued licenses for the residents

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<sup>386</sup> African slaves would eventually replace almost all Indian slave labor in the Caribbean, but until the 1550s the Spanish colonists continued to utilize both types of slaves largely because African slaves were much more expensive than their indigenous counterparts. It also took many years for the trans-Atlantic slave trade to become efficient enough to fulfill the labor demands of all the Spanish colonies. For example, in 1519 the King granted the Governor of Brea a license enabling him to import and sell four thousand African slaves to Española, but the total number did not arrive until 1528. Guitar 1998, 164.

<sup>387</sup> J.A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios*, Tomo I, 178.

<sup>388</sup> “Confirmación de privilegios de Santo Domingo por los Jerónimos” 1518. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 58, fol. 89r. and “Licencia para traer de Tierra Firme para esclavos los que allí lo son de otros indios. Licencia para traer negros bozales,” 1518. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 58, fol. 89r.

<sup>389</sup> “Licencia a Miguel de Pasamonte para rescatar esclavos,” 19 de junio de 1519. AGI Indiferente General 420, L.8, fol. 69r. “Por quanto por parte de vos Miguel de Pasamonte nuestro tesorero general de la isla española me has hecho relación que vos queréis hacer en la dicha isla un ingenio para hacer azúcar y porque en esta dicha isla hay mucha falta de indios y esclavos para ello vos quería de enviar a rescatar algunos esclavos a la provincia de Paria que es en la costa de tierra firme del mar océano que son de los que están declarados por caribes y que se pueden tomar por esclavos como dicho.”

<sup>390</sup> Otte, *Las Perlas*, 136.

<sup>391</sup> Dieve, 169-170.

of Española to purchase Indian slaves, specifically Caribs from the coast of Brazil, from Portuguese traders.<sup>392</sup> By 1520 Rodrigo de Figueroa, a judge of the royal court in Santo Domingo, reported to the King that the majority of ships docking in Santo Domingo carried only Carib slaves from Tierra Firme.<sup>393</sup> In the span of two months alone six hundred Indian slaves were sold publically in Santo Domingo for thirteen pesos each.<sup>394</sup> The judge Alonso Zuazo confirmed Figueroa's observations, claiming that up to fifteen thousand Indians had been captured and enslaved from the Lesser Antilles and coast of Tierra Firme in 1518 alone.<sup>395</sup> To distinguish these slaves easily from the *naborías* or from the few free Indians, they were branded with a large "C" for Carib on their upper arms.<sup>396</sup>

### Legally Defining Carib Lands and the Consequent Growth of the Slave Trade

This unrestricted slaving of Carib Indians caused many to question whether or not those labeled as Caribs were truly cannibals or even enemies of the Spanish. The Crown responded in

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<sup>392</sup> "Licencia para comprar indios a los portugueses," 9 de enero de 1520. AGI Indiferente General 420, L.8, fol. 177r-177v. The Indians on the northern coast of Brazil were easily categorized as Caribs following the accounts of early explorers, most notably the publications of Amerigo Vespucci following his 1501 journey to Brazil. In perhaps his most inflammatory anecdote he describes how two European men ventured ashore to trade with the Indians, but instead they were captured, killed, cooked, and eaten in full view of the waiting Portuguese vessel. Due to these and other narratives like them, the Indians of Brazil were among the first who could be legally enslaved with few moral arguments. Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 36. Metcalf's work does an excellent job of chronicling the early colonization efforts of the Portuguese Brazil, especially highlighting the important roles played by both Indian and African go-betweens and intermediaries during the crucial first years of the colony. Other important early colonial accounts that detail cannibalism in Brazil include: Jean de Léry's "History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America: containing the navigation and the remarkable things seen on the sea by the author; the behavior of Villegagnon in that country; the customs and strange ways of life" and Hans Staden's captivity narrative, "Hans Staden's true history : an account of cannibal captivity in Brazil."

<sup>393</sup> Saco, Tomo II, 180.

<sup>394</sup> Demorizi, 44. In the same market African slaves sold for 91 pesos each demonstrating the preference for African laborers. It is likely that at least some of these slaves came from the two caravels for which Juan de Cardenas received license in August of 1520. Cardenas was allowed to capture and trade for Indian slaves in Barbados, Isla Verde, Trinidad, and along the coast of Paria. "Licencia a Juan de Cárdenas para armar carabelas," 27 de agosto de 1520. AGI Indiferente General 420, L.8, fol. 253r.

<sup>395</sup> Neil Whitehead, *Of Cannibals and Kings*, 9.

<sup>396</sup> Saco, Tomo II, 195.

1520 by ordering Rodrigo de Figueroa, the newly appointed Justice of Española, to conduct an ethnographic inquiry into the inhabitants of the Caribbean. Figueroa was to determine exactly what territories were inhabited by Caribs and in which lived peaceful Indians allied with the Spanish, otherwise known as *aruacas* or *guatiaos*.<sup>397</sup> In his official report to the Crown, Figueroa made the purpose of his project crystal clear he was to “indicate in which territories Carib Indians live and as such can and should be taken as slaves by the Christians.”<sup>398</sup> His report was solely based on interviews with “pilots, captains, and sailors, and other persons who are accustomed to travel to the islands and coast of Tierra Firme.”<sup>399</sup> Figueroa’s sources were slavers or traders who would benefit from the expansion of the legal definition of Carib lands, not the reduction. Figueroa’s investigations coincided with a point when the labor supply of Española was reaching a new low, following the smallpox epidemic, and before the African slave trade had reached a critical mass. As a result of the loss of population, both indigenous and Spanish as the colonists searched for opportunities in other islands or the mainland, many towns had been abandoned.<sup>400</sup>

In this context Figueroa’s wide designation of Carib lands makes sense and likely was what the Crown intended. Figueroa declared that all islands in the Caribbean not inhabited by Christians, other than Trinidad, Barbuda, the Lucayos, Los Gigantes, and Margarita, were Carib

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<sup>397</sup> Figueroa was also not the first official to be assigned the difficult task of differentiating between the Caribs who could be enslaved and all the other Indians who were free. In 1515 Francisco de Vallejo had been charged with the job, but slavers actively blocked him from completing the work. Later Las Casas was asked to carry out the task, but he refused to be the man to relegate hundreds or thousands of Indians to slavery regardless of their practices and ethnicities. Whitehead, *Of Cannibals*, 13-14.

<sup>398</sup> “Información hecha por el licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa acerca de la población india de las islas e costa de Tierra Firme, e sentencia que dió en nombre de su Majestad” 1520. CDI, Tomo I, 380. “las islas y parte de Tierra Firme en que los indios e pobladores de ellas son caribes, e pueden e deben ser de los cristianos traídos y tenidos por esclavos.” For the first published English translation of the Figueroa report see “The Deposition of Rodrigo de Figueroa on the Islands of the Barbarous Caribs” 1520. Printed and translated in Whitehead, *Of Cannibals*, 115-119.

<sup>399</sup> “Información hecha por el licenciado Figueroa,” 380.

<sup>400</sup> “Memorial de Hernando de Gorjon, acerca de la despoblación de la isla Española” 1520. CDI, Tomo I, 428-429. For example, Lares de Guahaba was abandoned, its few residents joining with Puerto Real. According to Gorjon, even Concepción de la Vega was losing residents by 1520.



lands.<sup>401</sup> Most of the uninhabited islands were already depopulated; therefore to open them to slave raids would have been inconsequential. In addition to the islands, much of the coast and interior of Tierra Firme were also defined as Carib. These were some of the most densely populated regions, most of which had yet to be fully explored. Slaving licenses to these areas could have served a double purpose then, to both supply labor to the Greater Antilles, and to instigate and fund new exploratory ventures. From all of these lands licensed Christians could legally “enter and take, seize and capture, and make war and hold and possess and trade as slaves those Indians who in the designated islands, lands, and provinces are judged as caribes, being permitted to do so in whatever manner, so long as they are first given permission by the justices and officials of your Majesty.”<sup>402</sup>

After the completion and publication of Figueroa’s report the number of slaving licenses, already on the rise after the Jeronymite’s change in legislation in 1518, grew rapidly. By August of 1520 Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, Juan Ortiz de Matienzo, Marcelo de Villalobos, Rodrigo de Bastidas, García Hernández, Miguel de Pasamonte, and Diego Caballero all received licenses to conduct both rescate and slave raiding in Carib territories.<sup>403</sup> In addition to licenses issued to individuals, the Crown also provided some colonists with much larger slaving authorizations. Juan de Cardenás received one such warrant in August of 1520. This license allowed Cardenás, a resident of Sevilla, to prepare and arm two caravels in Santo Domingo. The ships were to travel to Barbados, Isla Verde, Trinidad, and the province of Paria to conduct rescate for gold, pearls, precious stones, and Carib slaves. These slaves were to be branded as such and sold in the

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<sup>401</sup> “Información hecha por el licenciado Figueroa,” 380.

<sup>402</sup> “Información hecha por el licenciado Figueroa,” 383.

<sup>403</sup> Otte, 186.

markets of Santo Domingo.<sup>404</sup> By 1521 the Indians of the coast of Tierra Firme, near the province of Chichirivichi, were in rebellion in reaction to the numerous slave raids. The Spaniards then designated many of the Indians who took part in the uprising as Caribs, though they adamantly denied the charges of cannibalism.<sup>405</sup> The indigenous resistance only solidified the Spanish legal and political designations, as any Indian who opposed the Spanish was labeled as a Carib.<sup>406</sup>

While the decision to reopen, and even expand, the Indian slave trade was partially instituted to help the original Taíno population of Española, the extension of slaving expeditions only increased the suffering of both the native residents of the island and the newly arrived captives. Most of these newly enslaved people were brought to the new settlements/reducciones created in the Repartimiento of Albuquerque in 1514. The introduction of more and more foreign Indians to the newly formed communities only further reduced Taíno caciques' power. The decline in population following the small pox epidemic caused the Spaniards to increase the importation of foreign Indian slaves even more to replace those that perished. With the new Jeronymite legislation and Figueroa's report permitting large slaving expeditions in place, the residents of Española, along with those in other islands like Cuba and Puerto Rico, were able to open up the Indian slave trade throughout the 1520s, ultimately leading to the climax of the slave trade in the early 1530s. The increase in Indian slaves began to influence how the Spaniards themselves viewed Española's indigenous peoples. By the 1530s the Spanish began referring to

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<sup>404</sup> "Licencia a Jua de Cardenás para armar carabelas" 27 de agosto de 1520. AGI Indiferente General 420, L.8, fol. 253v.-254r.

<sup>405</sup> Jalil Sued Badillo, "The Island Caribs," in Neil Whitehead, *Wolves from the Sea: Readings in the Anthropology of the Native Caribbean* (KLTLV Press, 1995), 74-75.

<sup>406</sup> Whitehead, *Of Cannibals*, 11.

indigenous slaves as *piezas* or pieces, denying them their humanity and grouping them in with the ever increasing numbers of African slaves.

Even though the Jeronymite government would come to a quick end, the policies regarding the growth of the indigenous slave trade would have much longer lasting consequences. Almost all the policies enacted by the Jeronymites, from the expansion of the Indian slave trade to the maintenance of the *encomienda* system, directly contradicted what both the Dominicans and Franciscans advocated, as well as what the Jeronymites had initially intended for the island. By 1519, the *pueblos tutelados* or *pueblos indios* had also failed. In fact, the only Jeronymite policies that seemed to be working were the augmentation of the African slave trade (though slowly) and the promotion of sugar plantations. For all these reasons, Las Casas travelled to Spain in 1519 to denounce the Jeronymites' reforms and to ask for their removal from the island. He believed that almost any secular government would be preferable to their ineffective reign. The King did in fact recall the two remaining Jeronymite friars from Española at the end of 1519 leaving their reforms incomplete, the Indians largely unprotected, and the island in a state of general disorder.<sup>407</sup>

While the majority of the efforts at reform failed, or had very limited success, their historical impact both in the Caribbean and for future colonial ventures (of Spanish explorers as well as other Europeans) is paramount. The lessons learned by both secular and religious officials in Española would influence the development of economic, social, and religious institutions and practices across the Americas. In fact, while they did not halt the abuse and enslavement of Indians in the Americas, they did change the way in which these operations were funded, justified, and at times hindered. The echoes of the religious debates can even be seen in

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<sup>407</sup> Kulstad, 66 and Guitar 1998, 176.

the discourse and laws that allowed for the climax of the Indian slave trade in the late 1520s to the 1530s. The disputes regarding Indian policy and reform would continue well into the 1550s with the now famous Sepulveda/Las Casas debate on whether or not Indians were “natural slaves.”<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Lewis Hanke, “The Dawn of Conscience in America: Spanish Experiments and Experiences with Indians in the New World,” in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 107, No. 2 (Apr. 15, 1963), 87.

## Chapter 4

### *Another Look at the Revolt of Enrique<sup>409</sup>: Indian Slaves, Sacred Spaces, and Island Politics*

As conditions for the native peoples of Española continued to deteriorate, even for the once protected caciques of the island, one leader in particular challenged Spanish dominance. This cacique was Enrique, a literate and ladino chief who fled his encomienda in San Juan de la Maguana in 1519, taking with him his wife and several of his followers. Here we find the origins of America's first slave revolt.<sup>410</sup> After his escape, Enrique returned to his cacicazgo within the caves of the Bahoruco Mountains, and nearby to his childhood home of Verapaz.<sup>411</sup>



**Figure 31, Bahoruco Mountains near Lago Enriquillo**

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<sup>409</sup> While most of the historiography on Enrique refers to the cacique as Enriquillo, this dissertation uses Enrique to underscore his power and influence as a historical actor. Calling him Enriquillo, a diminutive name given to him by his Spanish overlords diminishes his importance and impact on history.

<sup>410</sup> For more on the historical significance of this revolt for Latin American history see Ida Altman, "The Revolt of Enriquillo and the Historiography of Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 63:4, (2007).

<sup>411</sup> Manuel Arturo Pena Battle, *La Rebelión del Bahoruco* (Santo Domingo: Librería Hispanola, 1970), 76-78 and Fray Cipriano de Utrera, *Polémica de Enriquillo*, (Santo Domingo: Editora del Caribe, 1973), 89 and Altman, 4.

From these mountains Enrique successfully led a fourteen year rebellion against the Spanish government, the first slave revolt in American history. Though his group started out small, it was soon augmented by both African and Indian runaway slaves, otherwise known as *cimarrones* or maroons.<sup>412</sup> Together the motley group of Indians and Africans challenged the Spanish government and control of the island for fourteen years, with the indigenous contingent ultimately triumphing by securing their rights and liberty. Both during and in the wake of the uprising, Enrique's rebellion influenced the development of Spanish colonial society from the creation of legal mandates to the ideas surrounding Indians' capacity for freedom and self-governance.

Just as Enrique and his actions were felt across the Circum-Caribbean, his choice to rebel must be understood within the context of larger political and social policies. Most scholars<sup>413</sup> explain the cacique's desertion and resistance as personal, likely assuming the veracity of Las Casas's initial description of the case.<sup>414</sup> While Enrique's hatred of his encomendero could have contributed to Enrique's desertion of the Spanish, his actions in 1519 and throughout his marroonage, can be explained by events occurring both within and around Española. Enrique did not act in a vacuum, motivated solely by his relationship with his encomendero, but responded to

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<sup>412</sup> The term *cimarrón* is defined by the Real Academia Española as a "esclavo o del animal domestic que huye al campo y se hace montaraz." The label was first used to refer to fugitive African and Indian slaves led by cacique Enrique in 1532 by Medina del Campo in a letter to the Crown. For a complete description of the evolution of the term *cimarrón* in the Caribbean see José Arrom, "Cimarrón: apuntes sobre sus primeras documentaciones y su probable origen," published in the *Revista Española de Antropología Americana*, vol. XIII, (1983).

<sup>413</sup> This includes Fray Cipriano de Utrera, Pena Battle, Altman, and Lynne Guitar, *A Cultural Genesis*, 224. It is important to note that Guitar complicates Las Casas's narrative linking Valenzuela's disrespect to a larger pattern on the island. By 1519 many Spaniards treated all Indians with contempt regardless of their status.

<sup>414</sup> According to Las Casas Enrique revolted following the death of his encomendero, Francisco Valenzuela, in 1517 when Valenzuela's son inherited his father's encomienda. While Valenzuela the elder was described as a good encomendero, the younger Andrés de Valenzuela had little respect for his Indians or the Crown's laws. Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias, Tomo III*, 260 and Altman, 594-595.

a series of legislations and policies that left him and the rest of Española's indigenous population in upheaval.

From the beginning of Spanish colonization conditions for Taínos on Española had steadily deteriorated. By the third decade of colonization very few vestiges of caciques' pre-Columbian power remained. In the wake of the Repartimiento of Albuquerque caciques found themselves ripped from their ancestral lands and their cacicazgos divided, often separated by hundreds of miles. Meanwhile the Indian slave trade continued to grow, bringing more and more foreign Indians to the island. Many of these new comers did not share the same culture, nor did they have any allegiance to the Taíno caciques. The smallpox outbreak of 1518 only made the situation worse as the surviving Taínos watched their compatriots die, while having to endure the arrival of even more foreign Indians to compensate for the drop in native population. Experiencing spiritual, political, and physical displacement, the Taínos of Española suffered their own small scale Diaspora. Within the rebellion of Enrique we find a concrete example of how both the Indian slave trade and Diasporas (both within and between islands) negatively impacted Taíno caciques.

Moreover, the Laws of Burgos in 1512 failed to ameliorate the rampant abuse of the Indians, while the debacle of the Jeronymite intervention illustrates the contradictory Spanish policies. While some Indians found themselves nominally free in "pueblos tutelados," others remained in encomiendas as still more Indian slaves arrived, despite the Jeronymite's decrees to end the Indian slave trade in 1517. All of the various competitions and tensions between secular and religious officials disrupted indigenous life in the Caribbean.

Relocated from his homeland and with his cacicazgo divided, Enrique may have begun to doubt the benefits of cooperating with the Spanish. Instead, Enrique sought refuge in the

mountainous territory of his childhood, seeking the reunification of his cacicazgo and the recovery of his political status. It was not until the Spanish responded to his flight with violence that Enrique's maroonage became an uprising.<sup>415</sup> Only a few years later both Africans and other Indians, followed in the footsteps of Enrique, likely motivated by the same circumstances on the island. The occurrence of multiple separate revolts within a few years of one another points to larger Spanish policies and actions as the source for discontent, and not to one cacique's personal problems with his encomendero.

### Enrique's Childhood

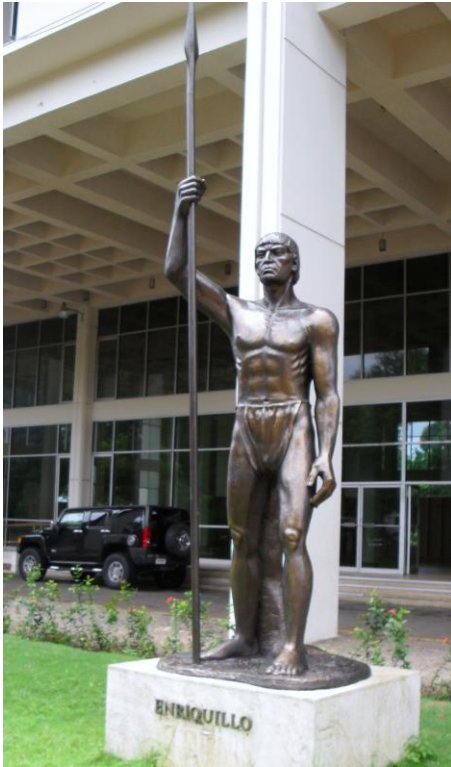
Enrique, originally named Guarocuya (see Figure 33), was the nephew of the famous and powerful Cacica Anacaona.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Even then Enrique refused to forsake his ties with the entire Spanish establishment, particularly his connections with the Franciscan friars of the island. Within Enrique's story the connections between Española's caciques and the Franciscans becomes clear, especially how he was able to use his relationship with the clergy to negotiate positive terms of submission.

<sup>416</sup> "De las causas por que Nicolás de Ovando fue a la Provincia de Xaragua; que la provincia de Guahabá se puso en armas, y las villas, que Diego Velázquez pobló en la Española," Antonio de Herrera, *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos, en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano, Tomo 2* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guaranía), 53.





**Figure 32, Statue of Enrique outside of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo**

Though his exact date of birth is unknown, Enrique was born between 1498 and 1500, the nephew of cacica Anacaona. He would eventually become the cacique of the powerful province of Jaragua.<sup>417</sup> According to Oviedo, Guarocuya escaped the massacre that claimed the lives of Anacaona and at least eighty other principal indigenous leaders of Jaragua, by hiding in the Bahoruco Mountains.<sup>418</sup> It is also possible that he was already in the care of the Franciscan friars at Verapaz, who arrived in the region in 1502, and thereby out of reach of Nicolás de Ovando. In his youth he was baptized Enrique and he spent at least a portion of his life living with Franciscan friars in the monastery located at Verapaz. There he learned to read and write,

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<sup>417</sup> Battle, 73.

<sup>418</sup> Herrera, Tomo 2, 53.

attended the first school for native leaders or “hijos de caciques,” and gained the diminutive of Enriquillo from his religious professors.<sup>419</sup>

In addition to Enrique it is possible that many other powerful caciques attended the school. Though no record of exactly which young caciques were present at the school, one can infer that the caciques who eventually joined Enrique<sup>420</sup> in resisting the Spanish government may have established their relationships in Verapaz. These included Ciguayo, Murcia, Hernandillo el Tuerto, and Tamayo. In addition to relationships with fellow classmates, the Taíno pupils also fostered connections with their Franciscan teachers. One priest above all, Father Fray Remigio de Mejía formed a lasting bond with Enrique. He even proved central to the negotiations between the cacique and the Spanish Crown, visiting Enrique multiple times during his maroonage.

### Enrique and the Repartimiento of Albuquerque

Upon reaching maturity Enrique married his cousin, also of noble blood, Doña Mencia in a Catholic service. Soon after, in 1514, the cacique was forced to move across the island to San Juan de Maguana as part of the Repartimiento of Albuquerque. In 1514 Enrique’s cacicazgo numbered 109 Indians including ten elderly Indians, seventeen children, and eighty-two Indians of working age and ability.<sup>421</sup> Despite the size, which was well above average size, his cacicazgo was split following his move to San Juan de la Maguana. Francisco de Valenzuela received forty

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<sup>419</sup> Battle, 73 and Guitar, 346-347.

<sup>420</sup> While some documents link the uprisings of these caciques, Enrique consistently eschewed violence, while the other caciques’ attacks on the Spanish were significantly more violent. Perhaps then their connections to one another by the 1530s were fairly distant.

<sup>421</sup> Fray Cipriano de Utrera, 136 and “Repartimiento de la Isla Española,” 1514 printed in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi’s *Los Dominicos*, 218. “A Francisco de Valenzuela, vecino e regidor de la dicha villa, . . . mas se le encomendó en el cacique Enrique del Baoruco con cuarenta y seis personas de servicio, con mas todos los niños que fueren sus hijos que no son de servicio. . . A Francisco Hernandez, vecino e regidor de la dicha villa, se le encomendó cuatro naborías de casa que el registró. Mas se le encomendó en el cacique Enrique del Bahoruco treinta y seis personas de servicio. . .”

six Indians led by Enrique and Francisco Hernandez was entrusted with thirty six. Additionally, both men commended Enrique's Indians also received unaffiliated Indians from the dissolution of other encomiendas.<sup>422</sup>

While Enrique was unhappy with the division of his people, the worst affront to his status was the separation from his wife. Though they were married in a Catholic ceremony in Verapaz, his wife Mencia was commended to Rodrigo de Moscoso, another resident of San Juan de la Maguana.<sup>423</sup> The fact that the Spaniards would separate a legally married couple underscores how they viewed the Taínos at this point. Despite his noble blood and Christianity, the Spaniards treated him little better than a slave during the Repartimiento. The Spaniards may have been trying to dilute Enrique's influence by combining his broken cacicazgo with that of other caciques and foreign Indian slaves. Maybe they hoped that his loss of status and separation from his wife would make him docile or easier to manipulate. Regardless of their intentions, the physical separation from his wife and the division of his cacicazgo contributed to Enrique's eventual rebellion against his ecomendero and the Spanish government.

### Enrique's Flight

Still, Enrique did not flee San Juan de la Maguana for five years after the Repartimiento and division of his cacicazgo. Why did he remain in San Juan de la Maguana for so long and what circumstances forced him to finally act? It was likely an accumulation of grievances originating from the larger politics of the island. Initially Enrique probably suffered from

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<sup>422</sup> "Repartimiento de la Isla Española," 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 198. Valenzuela was commended eight naborías from García Soler's dissolved encomienda in Verapaz. Hernandez received another four naborías/house servants from an unknown source.

<sup>423</sup> "Repartimiento de la isla Española" 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 197-198. The numbers of commended Indians above do not include the children and elderly who belonged to Enrique's cacicazgo.

physical displacement from his homeland. He would have left his ancestors, less portable cemíes (like paleoglyphs and pictographs), and other sacred spaces behind. The distance from these important elements would also decrease his political and spiritual power, perhaps in both his own eyes and those of his subject Indians. In addition to the loss of indigenous symbols of power, Enrique was also separated from the Franciscan clergy, monastery, and school where he spent the majority of his childhood, learned Spanish, and married his wife. The loss of these Spanish/Catholic connections may have diminished his commitment to Spanish culture and society. Lastly the Repartimiento divided him and his wife, Mencia, by placing them in separate encomiendas, though in the same settlement of San Juan de la Maguana. Despite all of these difficulties, Enrique stayed loyal to his encomendero and the larger Spanish system for several years.

Even following the death of his encomendero, Francisco Valenzuela in 1517, Enrique remained within the confines of his encomienda in San Juan de la Maguana. His fealty is especially startling when one takes into the account the actions of Valenzuela's successor, Andrés de Valenzuela. According to Las Casas, the younger Valenzuela stole both Enrique's mare (an especially important status symbol for a ladino Indian) and violated his wife.<sup>424</sup> While it is possible that Enrique experienced some abuse at the hands of Andrés, it is difficult to know for sure whether or not the encomendero committed these two specific actions. The only source that describes Valenzuela both stealing the mare and raping Mencia is the writings of Las Casas, a generally problematic chronicler. There is no record of Enrique's local complaint, which he made to the lieutenant governor of San Juan de la Maguana Pedro de Vadillo, or of his trip to

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<sup>424</sup> "Entre los pocos y pobres bienes que tenía poseía una yegua; esta le tomo contra su voluntad el mozo tirano a quien servía; después de esto no contento con aquel robo y fuerza, procuro de violar el matrimonio del cacique y forzarle la mujer." Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias, Tomo III*, 260.

Santo Domingo where he presented his case against Valenzuela. While many colonial documents have been lost over the centuries, it is curious that absolutely no legal or political record of either case exists, especially since the Royal Court of Santo Domingo found in favor of Enrique.<sup>425</sup> Specifically it is questionable whether or not Valenzuela would have had access to Enrique's wife to violate her or imprison her since she was commended to a different encomienda belonging to Rodrigo de Moscoso. How far apart the two properties were is unclear, as is the mobility of Mencia or Enrique, but regardless Valenzuela's power would not have extended over Mencia.

Even if these exact allegations against Valenzuela are true, the injustices still did not cause Enrique to forsake his allegiance with and faith in the Spanish legal and political system. Instead he first turned to the local official, Vadillo, and then to the larger Spanish court in Santo Domingo. He even journeyed thirty leagues, approximately 105 miles, to present his case to the Royal Court. The court found in Enrique's favor and provided him with documents demanding that Vadillo provide justice for Enrique<sup>426</sup>, presumably the return of his mare and refuge for his wife from Valenzuela's advances. These actions demonstrate that Enrique was literate, educated in, understood, and believed in the accountability of the Spanish justice system.

However, the system that Enrique still supported and had faith in no longer existed. In the wake of massive Taíno population loss and ever increasing influx of foreign Indians through the growing Indian slave trade, Spaniards' respect for Taíno caciques was waning. With fewer Indians in their power Taíno leaders could contribute less tribute or laborers, making their cooperation unnecessary. Meanwhile more and more Indian slaves, owned out right by the

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<sup>425</sup> The lack of documentation for Enrique's legal suit is contrasted by the plethora of documentation regarding his maroonage and "war" against the Spanish government in Española.

<sup>426</sup> Las Casas, *Historia, Tomo III*, 260.

Spaniards, replaced the Taíno laborers. The rise in foreign Indian slaves would have been especially visible in the settlements near Crown gold mines, like San Juan de la Maguana, where the majority of slaves were sent. The number of Indian slaves reached new heights following the small pox epidemic of 1518 and the re-legalization of the Indian slave trade by the Jeronimites in the same year. These Indians, coming from lands as distant as present day South Carolina, the coast of Brazil, and the islands off of Mexico, did not owe any allegiance to Enrique or other caciques like him.

At the same time as Enrique faced a rise in Indian slaves who were beholden directly to his encomendero Valenzuela, he also likely suffered from the deaths of many of his subject Indians. In 1514 he governed 109 Indians, but by the time of his escape in 1519 only a few dozen Indians accompanied the cacique. Whether or not more of his Indians survived the epidemic but chose to remain in San Juan de la Maguana is unknown. However, the loss of so many subject Indians would have only diminished Enrique's influence further in the eyes of Valenzuela and other Spaniards. By 1519 Taíno caciques could not wield the power or influence over Spanish encomenderos and officials that they had once enjoyed.<sup>427</sup>

So, when Enrique returned to San Juan de la Maguana with the Audiencia's decision, Vadillo still treated the cacique with contempt refusing to punish Valenzuela or help Enrique. Instead, again according to Las Casas alone, Vadillo threatened Enrique with prison, beatings, and even with the loss of his life if he continued to pursue the matter against Valenzuela.<sup>428</sup> Here

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<sup>427</sup> For example, even after two rebellions against the Spaniards Guarionex remained at least nominally in power of his cacicazgo because the Spanish firmly believed they needed him in order to control his subjects and keep the island at peace.

<sup>428</sup> While Vadillo treated Enrique horribly in 1518, he apparently had a change of opinion regarding the indigenous peoples of the island. By the time of his death in 1530, Vadillo possessed a family with a Taíno noblewoman by the name of Teresa. Teresa was the daughter of the cacique Gómez, a cacique commended to Vadillo in the Repartimiento of 1514. Though it is unclear when the relationship between Teresa and Vadillo began, by the time of his death they had two children together named Francisco and Diego. Upon Teresa's death Vadillo set aside a

Vadillo and Valenzuela treated Enrique as they would any Indian slave or naboría, refusing to distinguish his nobility as the Spanish officials once had. This evident change in treatment and loss of status propelled Enrique to forsake his alliance with the Spanish.

In early 1519, Enrique along with his wife and no more than two dozen followers fled the reducción of San Juan de la Maguana heading to the refuge of the Bahoruco Mountains and Enrique's ancestral territory. Here we see another motivation for his flight, Enrique sought to return to his homeland from where he garnered his power and solace.<sup>429</sup> While Enrique would become the most famous Indian maroon of Española, he was certainly not the first. From the first days of the encomienda system, Spaniards complained of their Indians (both native Taínos and slaves from nearby islands) running away to the Bahoruco Mountains. Many of the Indians recently assigned to pueblos indios or pueblos tutelados had also escaped to the unpopulated region. Rodrigo de Figueroa testified that when the Jeronymites left the island, most of the few remaining pueblos tutelados disbanded leaving the Indians without supervision. Though still nominally free, many Spanish colonists tried to take advantage of the now unprotected Indians, essentially attempting to enslave them. Many of these Indians sought refuge in the Bahoruco Mountains. At least one of the pueblos tutelados was located nearby to Verapaz, so it is likely that Enrique even knew some of the freed Indians, particularly those from the pueblo of Santa

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sizable portion of his assets to pay for indulgences and requiem masses in her name. Though he never recognized his mestizo children, upon his death the two men successfully sued for 1/3 of Vadillo's sugar ingenio so their parentage must have been publically known. Interestingly, Vadillo did provide for Teresa's indigenous son, Juanico, leaving him fifty gold pesos and in the care of his cousin, a powerful judge. Vadillo also manumitted two of his female naborías providing both with dowries. Lynne, Guitar, "Willing it so: Intimate Glimpses of *Encomienda* Life in Early Sixteenth-Century Hispaniola," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* (Summer 1998), 252-253. This contradictory behavior either points to a shift in perspective, or to the possibility that the Las Casas version of events is faulty in some manner.

<sup>429</sup> Las Casas addressed the larger social impact of the displacement in his letter to the King where he attempted to explain, and in some ways excuse, Enrique's rebellion and maroonage by stating that the cacique had simply returned to the "mountains where he was born and the location of his patrimony." Carta de las Casas" 30 de abril de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 95, R.1, N.11, fol. 1v. "montanas donde nacio y posee su patrimonio"

Maria del Puerto or Verapaz.<sup>430</sup> So Enrique and his people would have been able to join many other maroon Indians, and perhaps even a few Africans, when they settled in the caves of the Bahoruco Mountains.

### From Flight to Rebellion

Even though Enrique and his people fled the Spanish without executing any violence, Valenzuela immediately responded to their flight, chasing after the group with eleven Spanish men. The small contingent failed to subdue Enrique, though they did locate the fleeing cacique and ascertain that he possessed weapons including bows and arrows. In the wake of Valenzuela's failure to stop Enrique and his followers, the Spanish government of Santo Domingo became involved. Why the larger royal government was concerned with the flight of this one cacique is intriguing. Were they afraid that Enrique's escape would inspire other Indians, both Taínos and indigenous slaves to flee their masters? Or was the royal court trying to exert their authority over the indigenous leaders of the island? Either way, the Audiencia gathered together 70 or 80 Spanish soldiers to locate and capture Enrique and his followers.<sup>431</sup>

It was at this point, after both Valenzuela and the larger government tried to impede his flight that Enrique did commit his first violent act by killing the Spaniard Peñalosa, one of the eighty soldiers sent to capture the cacique, and four other unnamed Spaniards.<sup>432</sup> Enrique and his followers also robbed many haciendas and farms around Verapaz taking chickens, yucca and any other edible goods.<sup>433</sup> But, perhaps worst of all for the Spanish government were the dozens

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<sup>430</sup> "Residencia que Lebrón tomó a Rodrigo de Figueroa," AGI Justicia 47, transcribed and printed in Utrera, 108.

<sup>431</sup> "Carta de Pasamonte el tesorero: población y gastos guerra del Bahoruco," 1529. AGI Patronato 174, R. 53, fol. 304r. and Las Casas, Tomo III, 261.

<sup>432</sup> Pena Battle, 79.

<sup>433</sup> Utrera, 108.



of Indian, both commended and enslaved, who escaped from their masters to follow Enrique, hoping to find refuge with the cacique. Las Casas estimated that between 100 and 300 Indians joined Enrique's community within a few months of his original flight. Because of the gravity of Enrique and his followers' crimes, and likely to dissuade other Indians from following in his path, Judge Figueroa provided the residents of Verapaz with license to enslave Enrique and any of his followers.<sup>434</sup> By going against the Spanish government Enrique had lost all protection that his status as cacique once afforded him.

Nevertheless, it would not be until a group of rebellious Wolof slaves from Diego Colón's ingenio joined Enrique that the Spaniards would declare the episode a war. On Christmas Day of 1521, twenty slaves rebelled on and fled from Diego Colón's ingenio.<sup>435</sup> Escaping into Española's countryside, the slaves soon gained another twenty followers with whom they proceeded to attack and destroy Melchor de Castro's cattle ranch, killing several Spaniards in the process and liberating at least a dozen slaves including twelve Indians and one African. In addition they stole provisions from the ranch, burning all that they were unable to carry.<sup>436</sup> Next, the group set course for Licenciado Zuazo's ingenio, located only eight leagues from Santo Domingo. Despite the slaves' early successes, the Spanish government rallied, sending a small group of both foot soldiers and cavalry to stop and capture the slave rebels. Before the slaves reached Santo Domingo, or Zuazo's ingenio, the Governor's forces confronted the rebels (numbering up to one hundred and twenty according to the historian Oviedo) at the

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<sup>434</sup> Utrera, 165.

<sup>435</sup> Guitar, "Boiling it Down", 49.

<sup>436</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis*, 363.

mouth of the river Nizao one league from Ocoa, killing six, and wounding several more, before the majority of the rebels successfully escaped to the safety of the Bahoruco Mountains.<sup>437</sup>

Safely within the mountains, the African slave rebels likely joined with Enrique's growing group of indigenous fugitives, soon identified as *indios negros* (black Indians). The Audiencia of Santo Domingo first refers to the larger maroon community as *indios negros* in a letter to the king in 1530 describing the tenuous position of the island's residents still combating the united indigenous and African rebels.<sup>438</sup> For the next fifteen years, these two diverse groups melded together fighting the same enemy, perhaps even intermarrying, and perhaps even creating their own distinct culture. In fact, it was not until 1534 that Enrique officially surrendered, leaving many of the African *cimarrones* or maroons to fend for themselves, which they continued to do for another fourteen years. Thus, for nearly thirty years African and Indian maroon slaves lived together in the Bahoruco Mountains while not only evading Spanish attacks, but also terrorizing the countryside surrounding Santo Domingo. In Enrique's rebellion the colony witnessed the realization of one of their worst fears, the creation of a maroon community<sup>439</sup> with both run-away Indians and African, bozal slaves.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Carlos Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo*, (Santo Domingo: Fundacion Cultural Dominicana, 1989), 33.

<sup>438</sup> The letter can be found in "Cartas de Audiencia" 1530, Archivo General de Indias, Santo Domingo 49, R.1, N.2, flr.

<sup>439</sup> For more on Maroon societies formed throughout the Atlantic World and how they helped to shape African American culture in slave societies see Timothy James Lockley, *Maroon Communities in South Carolina: A Documentary Record* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), Kenneth Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2008), Richard Price *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

<sup>440</sup> Guitar, *Cultural Genesis* 393.

## Indians and Africans: the Development of a Multi-Ethnic Alliance

While we have no evidence that the Wolof slaves of Diego Colon's ingenio, were aware of Enrique's revolt and his community living in the Bahoruco Mountains, their actions point to at least some knowledge of the Indian maroons and possibly to a pre-existing relationship between the island's African and indigenous populations. For example, the Wolof slaves freed both African and Indian slaves from Melchor de Castro's cattle ranch. These actions point to a possible feeling of camaraderie between the African and Indian slaves on the island. Indians and Africans were also at the very least familiar with one another by 1521 since Africans were present on Española from the start of the conquest as both slaves and voluntary conquistadors like Juan Garrido of Puerto Rico. Already by 1503, African runaways were becoming a problem for Governor Ovando.<sup>441</sup> In order to profit from gold mining Spaniards began to rely more on African labor, both to exploit the Africans' knowledge of gold mining and their ability to endure arduous labor in tropical climates, using their Indian slaves to execute the supporting tasks of mining. This meant that Africans and Indians worked side by side, often living in the same camps placed near the gold mines, for the first decades of Spanish conquest. This proximity made it likely that Indians and Africans developed relationships that would eventually facilitate the formation of mixed maroon communities in the Bahoruco Mountains.

At the start, the majority of Africans in Española were *ladinos*, African (slave or free) who lived in either the Iberian peninsula or in the Canary Islands prior to their residence in the New World, therefore they probably spoke Spanish and were Catholic. In 1503, both Governor Ovando and the settler Juan de Ayala, wrote a letter reporting to the King that the ladino slaves

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<sup>441</sup> Jane Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities," in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, edited by Linda M. Heywood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 234.

of Española were fleeing the mines, running to live with the Indians in the distant mountains and forests where they taught the natives “bad customs.” Here we see African and Indigenous interactions taking place well outside of Spanish encomiendas and the colonists’ control. Already by the second decade of conquest Africans and Indians were forming relationships both in the island’s nascent maroon communities and within Spanish gold mines. Because of the dangers of these alliances, Ayala went on to advise the King that he should send no more African slaves to the New World, a warning that neither the King nor his future settlers would heed.<sup>442</sup> In fact, just after complaining of the ladino slaves, Ovando requested that the King send bozal slaves to Española demonstrating his mistaken belief that bozales would be easier to control and pacify than were ladino slaves.<sup>443</sup> From 1508, forward, the colonists of Española persisted in requesting African, bozal, slaves, resulting in the Crown’s issuing of several licenses for the transportation of slaves to the New World in 1513.<sup>444</sup> While the slaves trickled into Española at an agonizingly slow rate, at least for the desperate encomenderos, Oviedo claimed that by the time of Diego Colón’s administration, beginning in 1509, the number of West African slaves in Española surpassed the combined population of Spaniards and Indians.<sup>445</sup>

As Española’s indigenous slaves continued to disappear into the Batoruco Mountains, following the Repartimiento of 1514, the chaos of the pueblos tutelados, and Enrique’s flight, the encomenderos grew more insistent regarding their need for bozal slaves. Finally, in 1519 the King granted the Governor of Bresa a license enabling him to import and sell four thousand African slaves to Española to work for the colonies’ ingenios. This license also coincided with

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<sup>442</sup> Matthew Restall, ed., *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 166.

<sup>443</sup> Guítar, *Cultural Genesis*, 173.

<sup>444</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Esclavitud del Negro en Santo Domingo (1492-1844)* (Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, 1980), 31.

<sup>445</sup> Restall, 167. This discrepancy is likely due to the prevalence of illegal slaving that went largely unreported.

the Jeronymite's efforts to bring more African slaves to the island to replace the diminishing Taíno labor force. While the total number did not arrive in Española until 1528, a significant amount disembarked on the island in 1520 and 1521, many of whom were Islamic Wolof slaves from Senegambia. Though the Wolof slaves were considered to be bozales by the Spanish, many were also literate men and women who could read and write Arabic due to their Muslim background.<sup>446</sup> Additionally, the Wolofs were part of a declining African Empire that the Portuguese had dealt with on a regular if limited (the Wolof or Jolof was largely a land-locked state) trading basis, providing the Africans with at least some knowledge of their European counterparts. In fact, some even worked as traders and merchants prior to being enslaved.<sup>447</sup> Thus, the newly arrived Wolof slaves were likely equipped to deal with diverse groups of people in new, strange situations. Finally, the Wolof people were known to be skilled warriors, themselves involved in catching slaves in Africa.<sup>448</sup>

Both the historic and more recent connections between Española's African and Indian populations possibly provided the Wolof slaves with knowledge of Enrique's flight and growing maroon community. The existence of a pre-existing maroon community may have even facilitated their decision to rebel on Christmas Day of 1521. Even if Enrique's maroonage did not inspire the Wolof revolt, it at least likely influenced the Africans to seek refuge in the same Bahoruco Mountains, an area familiar to the Taínos of the island but not to the recently arrived Africans. Although this is speculation, especially because historians have no documents written by the Wolof slaves, nor does Enrique mention the presence of African maroons living with his people, recent archaeological finds prove that the two groups did in fact reside in the same caves,

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<sup>446</sup> Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 107.

<sup>447</sup> Diouf, 19-20.

<sup>448</sup> Guitar, "Boiling it Down," 45-50.

El Limona. El Limona is a group of caves deep in the Bahoruco Mountains corresponding to the geographic descriptions of Spanish accounts dating from the time of the rebellion. Here archeologists uncovered twelve skeletons and various ceramic pieces. While the skeletons show diverse stages of fossilization, the archaeologists could identify three as contemporaneous with the Enrique rebellion, two of which were adult African males and one whose ethnicity could not be determined. Alongside these remains were indigenous, Taíno, ceramics and swine bones dating from the early colonial period, leading the archaeologists to conclude that the caves more than likely were inhabited by both Africans and Indians during the early 1500s.<sup>449</sup>

In addition to the archaeological evidence, numerous contemporary Spanish accounts unite the two rebellious groups, for example the Governor of Española declared official war against the rebels on October 19 of 1523, specifically stating that they were fighting *both* Indians and Africans.<sup>450</sup> For the next decade the people of Española constantly begged the Crown for the manpower, supplies, and funds necessary to combat the ever growing uprising in the Bahoruco Mountains, which expanded daily as slaves continued to desert to the rebels. The rebels also did not content themselves with their liberty, but executed numerous raids on Spanish ingenios, farms, and towns, stealing what provisions they needed and often killing any Spaniards that they encountered during the raid.

### Spanish Efforts to Capture Enrique and Quell the Rebellion

By the mid-1520s the residents of Española were essentially confined to the capital city of Santo Domingo or its immediate environs, with the rest of the island dominated by the African

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<sup>449</sup> Vega, B, "Arqueología de los cimarrones del Maniel del Bahoruco," *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano Saint-Domingue* 8:12 (1979), 134-151.

<sup>450</sup> Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros*, 37. The Spanish declared war because of "los grandes daños y muertes y robos y escándolos que los indios y negros que andan alzados hacen."

and Indian rebels led or inspired by Enrique. The united forces (reportedly a group of at least four hundred Indians and Africans) even attacked Enrique's former residence, San Juan de la Maguana, where they both robbed and killed many residents before retreating to the mountains.<sup>451</sup> The rebels succeeded in gaining the advantage not only because of their numbers, which may have reached into the thousands when Enrique surrendered, but also because of the natives' knowledge of the island's geography. The Spaniards mention repeatedly, the difficulties they had when attacking the rebels in the Bahoruco Mountains, where the landscape posed as many if not more obstacles than the rebels themselves did.<sup>452</sup> Although the mountains were quite high and rocky, even described by one Spanish official as greater than those of Granada, the greatest difficulty for the Spanish soldiers, and their African and Indian porters, was the distance of the mountains from Spanish settlements. In fact, by the time the soldiers reached the caves and valleys from which Enrique organized his assaults, they had already traveled up to forty leagues (over 150 miles) having to carry all of their provisions with them. Once in the mountains, food was hard to locate as the region is incredibly dry and barren making even fresh water a trial to obtain. Taking advantage of the situation, the cimarrones often climbed to the highest peaks of the mountains where the Spaniards with all of their artillery and baggage could not easily reach. The Indians also set up spies throughout the mountains to report on the Spanish army's progress so that Enrique and his troops were always prepared.<sup>453</sup> The last advantage possessed by the Indian and African rebels was their knowledge of the Spanish weaponry and

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<sup>451</sup> "Consulta del Consejo de Indias" 1532. AGI Indiferente 737, N. 25, fol. 1r.

<sup>452</sup> "Consulta del Consejo de Indias" 1532. AGI Indiferente 737, N. 25, fol. 1r. "Se han gastado cerca de cuarenta mil ducados de que acabado parte a la hacienda de vuestra majestad como los indios roban también la tierra y la montaña en que andan es tan grande y se sostienen muchos días con raíces y otras cosas silvestres que hallan y los españoles han de llevar a costas la comida para todo el tiempo que han de andar tras ellos no se les puede hacer daño por lo cual visto lo el audiencia escribía y los oidores y oficiales escriben el peligro en que aquella isla esta."

<sup>453</sup> "Carta al emperador por el licenciado Espinosa y Zuazo de Santo Domingo," el 29 de Julio de 1528. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 60, N.701, fol. 127r and "Guerra contra los indios levantados en la Española," 1529. AGI Patronato 172, R.33, fol. 382r.

tactics of war. These were ladino Indians who spoke Spanish and had lived alongside the Spaniards for years, some since birth like Enrique.<sup>454</sup>

To prevail against these obstacles in early 1528, the Spanish sent out three squadrons from San Juan de la Maguana, a city closer to the Bahoruco Mountains than Santo Domingo where all prior expeditions had begun, each with at least eighty Spanish soldiers accompanied by an unknown number of African and Indian slaves. The use of Indian and African slaves was a mistake for the Spanish because many of these slaves escaped the squadrons to join with the cimarrones who they were expected to fight.<sup>455</sup> By the end of the year all three squadrons had failed to capture more than a few rebels and the residents of the island had spent nearly 25,000 gold pesos funding the conflict.<sup>456</sup> In the wake of this failure in 1529, the Spanish led by Don Sebastian Ramírez de Fuenleal, the newly appointed president of the Real Audiencia in Santo Domingo, began to even imitate Enrique's tactics of guerrilla warfare, using all available men on the island to fight the rebels. Still, despite his new tactics, Fuenleal also failed in his endeavors, and after spending thousands more pesos, had to admit defeat when he left the colony in 1531.<sup>457</sup> By 1532 the officials of Santo Domingo estimated that as much as forty thousand ducados (a type of gold coin with each ducado being worth approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a gold peso) had been spent on the war against the cimarrones of Bahoruco.<sup>458</sup> By the 1530s the Spanish also faced attacks

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<sup>454</sup> "Carta de la Audiencia de Santo Domingo: asuntos de gobierno," 28 de febrero de 1529. AGI Patronato 174, R. 52, fol. 295v.

<sup>455</sup> AGI Patronato 172, R.33, fol. 382r.

<sup>456</sup> "Carta de la Audiencia de Santo Domingo: asuntos de gobierno," 28 de febrero de 1529. AGI Patronato 174, R. 52, fol. 294r. This sum was in addition to the more than 8,000 pesos spent by the city of Santo Domingo in combat against the maroons in 1525. "Carta al Emperador de Licenciado Zuazo y Espinosa de Santo Domingo" 30 de marzo de 1528. Transcribed and printed in Roberto Marte, *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos de Juan Bautista Muñoz* (Santo Domingo: Fundación García Aréval, 1981), 332.

<sup>457</sup> AGI Indiferente 737, N.25, fol. 1r. and Pena Battle, 105-114. Fuenleal's defeat was actually the fourth attempt to capture the rebellious Indians and Africans following on the heels of expeditions led by Licenciado Juan Ortiz de Matienzo in 1523, Pedro Vadillo in 1525, and Hernando de San Miguel in 1526.

<sup>458</sup> "Carta al Emperador de los oficiales de Santo Domingo," 9 de julio de 1532. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 61, N.36, fol. 105r.



from other caciques across the island, some coordinating their assaults with Enrique, while others may have simply been inspired by his fight. Either way, the Spanish government realized their failure to militarily subdue Enrique and his followers by 1533. Instead they turned to a new strategy: that of diplomacy and negotiation through the use of religious officials to finally end the protracted conflict in 1533.

### The Ever Increasing Slave Trade leads to more Caciques joining with Enrique

The Jeronymite government's revitalization of the Indian slave trade, specifically against "Caribs" of Tierra Firme, resulted in a rise in the Indian slave trade. Most of these slaves were destined for Española. By 1520 Rodrigo de Figueroa, a judge of the royal court in Santo Domingo, reported to the King that the majority of ships docking in Santo Domingo carried only Carib slaves from Tierra Firme.<sup>459</sup> In the span of two months alone six hundred Indian slaves were sold publically in Santo Domingo for thirteen pesos each.<sup>460</sup> The judge Alonso Zuazo confirmed Figueroa's observations, claiming that up to fifteen thousand Indians had been captured and enslaved from the Lesser Antilles and coast of Tierra Firme in 1518 alone.<sup>461</sup> The slave raiding continued into the 1520s with perhaps hundreds of expeditions launched against the Caribs of Tierra Firme or the few Indians still inhabiting the "useless" islands.<sup>462</sup> Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to calculate the exact number of Indian slaves brought to Española during the 1520s due to a lack of documentation. The only specific cases we have involve disputes or

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<sup>459</sup> José A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios*, Tomo II, 180.

<sup>460</sup> Demorizi, 44. In the same market African slaves sold for 91 pesos each demonstrating the preference for African laborers. It is likely that at least some of these slaves came from the two caravels for which Juan de Cardenas received license in August of 1520. Cardenas was allowed to capture and trade for Indian slaves in Barbados, Isla Verde, Trinidad, and along the coast of Paria. "Licencia a Juan de Cárdenas para armar carabelas," 27 de agosto de 1520. AGI Indiferente General 420, L.8, fol. 253r.

<sup>461</sup> Whitehead, *Of Cannibals and King*, 9.

<sup>462</sup> The voyages to the Lucayos Islands sponsored by Lucás Vázquez de Ayllón that discovered the coast of South Carolina were part of this pattern.

illegal activity that made its way into the court room. For example, in 1523 an armada funded by the city of Concepción de la Vega and Juan de Logroño captured 190 Venezuelan Indians. While the license for the expedition was legally issued, it only allowed for the purchase of slaves through rescate. Though the slavers claimed they followed the conditions of their license, under further investigation by Judge Figueroa, he discovered that of the 190 Indians only sixteen had been acquired through rescate. The remainder were taken by force.<sup>463</sup> In another case in 1524 a group of 130 slavers led by Martín Baso Zabala and Diego de Yllescas entered into the interior of Venezuela with license to attack and capture Carib Indians. However, instead of enslaving Caribs, the expedition attacked and captured 120 caquetíos, or friendly Indians allied with the Spanish of the region. Among those taken were several relations of local caciques, including the daughter of cacique Manaure and the nephews of cacique Baltasar. These Indians were taken to Española and sold as slaves.<sup>464</sup>

In addition to these illegal raids, and it is unlikely that these were the only two illegal or quasi illegal armadas of the 1520s, there were many more licensed expeditions that captured dozens or hundreds of legal Indian slaves. As had Enrique other caciques suffered from the continual arrival of more and more foreign Indian slaves, clearly marked by their “C” tattoos, whose presence diminished the Taíno caciques’ status and power. Perhaps this explains why by the late 1520s, years into the Enrique’s revolt, at least two other Taíno caciques began rebelling against the Spaniards within their own territories. These caciques may have been responding to Enrique’s success, having witnessed the Spaniards’ inability to capture Enrique for nearly ten years. Perhaps then the other caciques viewed the Spanish as unable to defend themselves. One

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<sup>463</sup> Otte, *Las Perlas del Caribe*, 206-207.

<sup>464</sup> Jiménez, *La Esclavitud Indígena en Venezuela (Siglo XVI)*, 211-212

final possibility is that the caciques joined with Enrique due to connections they had with the cacique. At least one of the caciques, Tamayo, attended the school at Verapaz with Enrique.

In 1528 the cacique Ciguayo<sup>465</sup> began assaulting the Spanish mining towns from the central mountain range of the Cibao.<sup>466</sup> Ciguayo started by attacking small groups of Spaniards working in mines or farms of the central valley along with ten to twelve men. During all of these attacks Ciguayo and his companions killed any Spaniard they encountered.<sup>467</sup> After several of these small assaults, Ciguayo gathered together a larger group, this time of up to eighty Indians to attack several of the central mining towns, including Concepción de la Vega, burning Spanish haciendas and killing at least five men.<sup>468</sup> Interestingly, beyond killing several Spanish men and destroying property the group of Indians kidnapped several women and children. The fate of these captives is unclear in the documents, nor do they mention if it was a common practice for the Taíno to kidnap women and children during warfare. However it is possible that the cacique expected to gain a ransom for the return of these captives, or that they took them in an effort to replace lost members of their chiefdom who had recently perished, planning to incorporate these captives into their society. Regardless of the fate of these captives, or the intentions of Ciguayo and his men, a squadron of seventy Spaniards pursued the group, but was only able to capture

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<sup>465</sup> Ciguayo was a descendant of the indigenous group known as the Ciguayos first encountered by Columbus in 1492 living in the mountains to the north of the central valley. At that point the Ciguayos were a separate group from the Taíno population, speaking a different dialect and dressing in a distinct manner. However, following years of depopulation and unrest brought by the Spaniards, it seems as though the Ciguayos were well integrated into the general indigenous population of the island. Ciguayo's participation in Enrique's revolt could also point to the pre-Colombian connections between the Taínos and Ciguayos and their general similarities despite European discourse.

<sup>466</sup> "Carta al emperador por el licenciado Espinosa Zuazo de Santo Domingo" el 29 de Julio de 1528. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 60, N.701, fol. 127r.

<sup>467</sup> Las Casas, Tomo III, 266.

<sup>468</sup> Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 60, N.701, fol. 127r. "Esta nueva que habiendo de lo sucedido en la guerra ha acabado mucho a los vecinos de la isla en especial que se ha juntado con ella otro Capitán Indio que se dice el Ciguayo con 80 indios gandules (name given to Indians living in maroon communities) ha ido a las minas de Cibao y a la Vega, Puerto Real, y Santiago y en aquella comarca he quemado 4 o 5 haciendas españoles y ha muerto 4 hombres y llevándoles las mujeres e hijos y puerto que de aquella tierra salieron 70 hombres en seguimiento de ellos no les tomaron más de un indio y la presa."

one Indian out of the force of eighty. While Ciguayo and his men escaped this encounter largely intact, by July 1529 the captains Alonso Silvestre and Bartolomé Cataño reported the cacique's death. For this service the men received five gold pesos each.<sup>469</sup>

Then in 1532 the cacique Tamayo joined in the fray, attacking the city of Puerto Real (located on the northern coast of the island).<sup>470</sup> Like Enrique, Tamayo's suffered displacement and loss of stature in the wake of the Repartimiento of Albuquerque. Prior to the repartimiento Tamayo attended the school at Verapaz and was originally commended to Bartolomé Colón. However, following the repartimiento Tamayo witnessed the breakup of his cacicazgo and his own relocation. He, with 102 Indians of service, twelve aged Indians, and sixteen children, were moved to Concepción de la Vega and placed under the power of Juan de Fonseca.<sup>471</sup> Presumably these Indians were destined to work in the Crown's gold mines. Another portion of Tamayo's subject Indians, twenty six, were commended to the Franciscan monastery of Santo Domingo.<sup>472</sup> Because the two entries relating to Tamayo are for different cities, it is possible that the two Tamayo caciques are different men. However the division of powerful cacicazgos was a common occurrence if not official policy of the repartimiento and would help to explain Tamayo's eventual rebellion against the Spanish. It also seems unlikely that there were two caciques by the name of Tamayo in 1514.

Whether or not both Tamayos listed in the repartimiento were the same man, already by 1519, almost concurrent with Enrique's original flight, Tamayo and his subjects organized a

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<sup>469</sup> Utrera, 230. For this information Utrera cites AGI, Contaduría 1050.

<sup>470</sup> Pena Battle, 115-116.

<sup>471</sup> "Repartimiento de la Isla Española," 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 60. "Al señor obispo de Plasencia, D. Juan de Fonseca, se le encomendó el cacique Ortiz Nitaino Tamayo, que solía servir al adelantado D. Bartolomé Colón, con ciento e dos personas de servicio, hombres cincuenta e dos, mujeres cincuenta."

<sup>472</sup> "Repartimiento de la Isla Española," 1514. CDI, Tomo I, 110-111.

small rebellion near Puerto Real.<sup>473</sup> While the Spaniards succeeded in quickly quelling this revolt, Tamayo and his men did not give up. In fact documents suggest that Tamayo may have spent time living with Enrique in his maroon community along with his nephew at various points during his maroonage.<sup>474</sup> As he had before, Tamayo concentrated his attack on the port city of Puerto Real.<sup>475</sup> During this encounter at least one Spanish woman (along with her two children) was killed, prompting the government to renew their offensive against the rebellious Indians with two squadrons.<sup>476</sup> In the same attack Tamayo and his followers killed fourteen Indian slaves.<sup>477</sup> The killing of these Indians causes one to wonder about the ethnicity of these Indians. At the start of the rebellion Enrique's squadrons consistently freed both Indian and African slaves during assaults, but these Indians were killed. Perhaps they defended their Spanish masters, or maybe they were Indians slaves from places like Florida with whom Tamayo and the other Taínos had little connection. At this point both Puerto Real and Puerto Plata were centers for the Indian slave trade, especially for the armadas heading northward towards the southeastern coast of North America or to the Lucayos Islands in search of Indian slaves.<sup>478</sup> Tamayo could have even seen these foreign Indian slaves as interlopers diminishing his power. It is also possible that Tamayo did not share the same respect for the greater Spanish government and institutions that Enrique possessed. Throughout his revolt Enrique tried to minimize bloodshed, and when his followers did escalate the level of violence, Enrique apologized for their actions. So it is likely

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<sup>473</sup> Ewen, *From Spaniard to Creole*, 29.

<sup>474</sup> Las Casas, Tomo III, 268.

<sup>475</sup> Tamayo's concentration on this one region could suggest that his ancestral territory lay nearby. Perhaps he was trying to rid his homeland from the Spanish.

<sup>476</sup> "Carta del Audiencia de Santo Domingo," 20 de febrero de 1532. AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.2, N.14, fol.1r. "nuevamente eran hecho otras cuadrillas de indios cimarrones que hacen mucho daño... habrá veinte días que fueron de la villa de puerto real junto a las casas del pueblo mataron a una mujer de un español y dos hijos suyos y catorce indios y indias esclavos."

<sup>477</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.2, N.14, fol. 1r.

<sup>478</sup> Ewen, 29.

that Enrique did not sanction Tamayo's use of violence, demonstrating a lack of coordination among the rebels or a divide in the group. Either way, through these incidents one can see that while the Indians of Española may not have identified with all the natives currently residing in the island, it appears that the bonds solidified in Verapaz between the Taíno caciques persisted for decades after the school's closing.

### Franciscan Intervention: From Violence to Peaceful Negotiation

Paradoxically, or perhaps not, while Enrique and his compatriots continuously warred against the Spanish officials, civilians, and military of the island, they also maintained friendly relationships with the clergy. In fact, it would be in the cacique's protracted rebellion, nearly fifteen years long, that the bond formed between Enrique and his former Franciscan instructors and classmates would become clear. The connections formed between the native leaders and the Spanish Franciscan friars endured through years of resistance and rebellion against the larger Spanish government. The best example of this phenomenon is the priest Father Fray Remigio de Mejía (one of Enrique's former teachers at the monastery and school in Verapaz) who was central to the negotiations between the cacique and the Spanish Crown. Though his connection to Enrique can be traced to his time in Verapaz, Remigio was an influential religious figure beyond Española, spending time in Spain, France, Cuba, and New Spain from 1516 to 1526. Prior to his return to Spain in late 1516, Remigio penned a letter to the newly elected regent Cisneros imploring him to send more clergy to help with the evangelization of the Indians. He also described the deplorable situation on the island, recently made worse by the Repartimiento in 1514.<sup>479</sup> Remigio then was chosen by his fellow Franciscans to lead a delegation to Europe to

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<sup>479</sup> "Carta de los franciscanos al Cardinal Cisneros," 15 de febrero de 1516. AGI Patronato 174, R.3, sin folio.

meet with Cisneros. While in Europe, Remigio also journeyed to Rouen, France. There he convinced fourteen Franciscans of the French Order to accompany him to the New World. These missionaries would begin their work in Cuba a few years later.<sup>480</sup> Soon after his return to Española, Enrique began his revolt. Showing his support of the cacique, Remigio immediately wrote to the Crown in defense of Enrique.<sup>481</sup>

Many years later, following his time in both Cuba and New Spain, Remigio returned to Española and met with the cacique in the Bahoruco Mountains at least three times during his years of rebellion. Here we see that despite the years of separation, and the many crimes both petty and violent committed by the cacique, Remigio had not given up on his former charge. However, his first meeting, in 1527, was a failure, and in some ways a disaster showing that Enrique's personal bonds with the friar were not shared by the rest of his followers. Unfortunately upon reaching the Bahoruco Mountains the friar was met not by Enrique, but by some of his supporters who mistrusting the intentions of the priest or his indigenous companion (a cacique Rodrigo) attacked the two men and stripped Remigio of his clothing. They then drowned the cacique, perhaps for being a traitor to the larger indigenous cause.<sup>482</sup> By downing Rodrigo it is possible that Enrique's supporters were trying to facilitate his voyage to the underworld as water often symbolized portals connecting this world with the next in Taíno mythology. Within their cosmology the Taíno underworld and resting place for the dead, known as Coaybay, was a watery underground.<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Errasti, 143.

<sup>481</sup> Errasti, 140.

<sup>482</sup> "Carta al emperador por el licenciado Espinosa Zuazo de Santo Domingo" el 29 de Julio de 1528. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 60, N.701, fol. 126v.

<sup>483</sup> Beeker, Charles, D., Geoffrey W. Conrad, and John W. Foster, "Taíno Use of Flooded Caverns in the East National Park Region, Dominican Republic," *Journal of Caribbean Archaeology*, 3 (2002): 3 and Pané, 28.

Despite this setback Remigio returned to the Bahoruco Mountains, at least twice, to speak with Enrique. During the second visit, in 1528, the cacique apologized to the priest for the actions of his followers in 1527.<sup>484</sup> It was during this meeting that Remigio brought with him the first letter of pardon from the Governor of Española, asking the cacique to desist from all attacks on the Spanish. In exchange he and his followers would be considered free like any other Spanish subject. Additionally, the letter promised the delivery of sheep and cows among other livestock and provisions.<sup>485</sup> At this point the government of Española chose to negotiate a peace settlement with the cacique, instead of continuing their largely futile efforts of defeating him militarily. Despite the presence of the friar and the letter of pardon, Enrique questioned this offer, partially because it came from the Governor and not the King himself. This shows the cacique's ability to distinguish between the levels of Spanish government, and his in-depth knowledge of Spanish society. Remigio was also accompanied by a military force led by Captain Hernando de San Miguel. In contrast to the largely friendly interactions between the cacique and religious officials, Enrique was wary of military or government officials who tried to negotiate with him. While initial diplomacy appeared to be leading to reconciliation, ultimately the cacique did not trust the Spanish offers of peace.<sup>486</sup> On the agreed upon day when Enrique was to surrender to Hernando de San Miguel and Remigio, all the Spanish found at the meeting place was 1,500 pesos that Enrique may have hoped would help to defray the costs of at least some of the cimarron assaults and robberies.<sup>487</sup> The money also could have been a personal gift and penance for the previous indignations suffered by Remigio at the hands of Enrique's men.

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<sup>484</sup> Altman, 603-604 and Errasti, 142.

<sup>485</sup> "Guerra contra los indios levantados en la Española," 1528. AGI Patronato 172, R.33, fol. 381v.

<sup>486</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 77, R.4, N.77, fol.1r, and Altman, 605-608.

<sup>487</sup> AGI Patronato 172, R.33, fol. 381v.



Either way Remigio and the rest of the Spanish troops returned to Santo Domingo without a peace accord, though there was still hope that with the help of the Franciscans the war could come to an end. This optimism was crushed when Enrique's men, only days after the failed peace treaty, launched an attack on the nearby ranch belonging to none other than Captain Hernando de San Miguel. During the attack the maroons took/liberated Indians and horses, burning many dwellings, and strangely drowning one Spanish child of three years of age.<sup>488</sup> These actions prompted the government to launch several more military campaigns against the cacique, as discussed earlier. Note that the breakdown of negotiations with Enrique occurred concurrently with Ciguayo's attacks against the mines of the Cibao, including those of Concepción de la Vega. Perhaps the two events were not connected, but it is also possible that Enrique saw Ciguayo's involvement as an opportunity to prolong his own maroonage. Nonetheless, even in the midst of the war the records indicate that both Indians and African maroons were still able to maintain good relations with Franciscans and other religious officials throughout their rebellion. One Spaniard even complained of priests hiding and defending the "*negros bellacos y los cimarrones*" as late as 1532.<sup>489</sup>

After several more failed efforts to pacify Enrique and his followers, the Crown sent two hundred professional soldiers, led by the new Governor of Tierra Firme, Francisco de Barrionuevo to the island in 1533.<sup>490</sup> In addition to the manpower brought by Barrionuevo, he also possessed all the necessary weapons and food to sustain them during battle with the maroon

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<sup>488</sup> AGI Patronato 172, R.33, fol. 381v.

<sup>489</sup> "De una carta de Suazo e Infante a la emperatriz Isabel sobre clerigos y abuso de los refugios" 20 de febrero de 1532, transcribed and printed in *La Iglesia y el Negro Esclavo en Santo Domingo: una historia de tres siglos* by Jose Luis Saez, Santo Domingo: Patronato de la ciudad colonial de Santo Domingo Coleccion Quinto Centenario, 1994, 263-264.

<sup>490</sup> Pena Battle, 105. It is also at this point that the Spanish claim that Enrique's rebellion is spreading across the island, specifically to the northern town of Puerto Plata where a group of Indians led by the cacique Tamayo had just rebelled against and attacked the Spanish (116).

communities. However, Barrionuevo did not seek to pacify the cacique through violence, but through another attempt at diplomacy, carrying with him an offer of a complete pardon to Enrique, which he brought directly from the Queen.<sup>491</sup> Nor did he venture into the Bahoruco mountains with only soldiers. Barrionuevo also took with him two female relatives of Enrique, a mestizo translator, indigenous guides, and the Franciscan Padre Remigio.<sup>492</sup> First, Barrionuevo arranged a meeting with Enrique, with the help of one of the women he brought on the journey, along a Lake in the Bahoruco Mountains.<sup>493</sup> This lake is now called Lago Enrique in honor of the famous rebel, and of the peace treaty he signed there in 1534. See Figures 33 and 34.



**Figure 33, Statue of Enrique just outside of Lago Enriquillo in the small town of Duvergé**

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<sup>491</sup> "Asiento: Audiencia Santo Domingo y Francisco de Barrionuevo" 1533. Archivo General de las Indias, Patronato 18, N.1, R.7, flr.-10r.

<sup>492</sup> Pena Battle, 190.

<sup>493</sup> Altman, 10.



**Figure 34, Lago Enriquillo**

During the meeting Enrique finally surrendered to the Spanish, though he still brought eighty armed Indian and African followers to the meeting<sup>494</sup>, agreeing verbally to a treaty promising his allegiance and loyalty to the Spanish Crown. In this meeting, once Enrique was convinced of the peaceful intentions of the Spanish, the cacique supposedly professed his sincere wishes for peace, even apologizing for all the acts of violence he and his followers had executed throughout the length of the conflict.<sup>495</sup>

Still, prior to putting his surrender in writing, Enrique sent one of his closest Indians, Gonzalez, with Barrionuevo to Santo Domingo, where he was to observe and confirm all of Barrionuevo's reports and offers of peace.<sup>496</sup> After the original meeting, Barrionuevo sent another delegation (in which Gonzalez returned to his cacique) led by Pedro Romero equipped

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<sup>494</sup> "Carta al Emperador de oidor Zuazo y Vadillo," 4 de septiembre de 1533. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 61, N.68, fol. 299r.

<sup>495</sup> Pena Battle, 91. "Yo no deseaba otra cosa sino la paz...E diciendo esto, dió muchas disculpas particulares y quejas de lo que con él se había hecho, relatando desde el principio de su alzamiento."

<sup>496</sup> Pedro Mir, *Tres Leyendas de Colores: Ensayo de Interpretación de las Tres Primeras Revoluciones del Nuevo Mundo*, (Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, 1984), 158.

with wine, clothes, ornaments for his church, and tools as gifts, to meet with Enrique and to obtain a written declaration of peace from the cacique.<sup>497</sup> Pedro Romero was married to a Taíno woman and possessed an encomienda in the southwest corner of the island, nearby Enrique's former cacicazgo and ancestral land of Jaragua. It is probable then that Romero knew Enrique as a boy living with the Franciscans in Verapaz.<sup>498</sup> Though it is unclear when exactly Enrique met Romero, Barrionuevo mentions that the two men did know one another prior to the delegation of 1533.<sup>499</sup> This helps to explain Romero's involvement in the very sensitive peace negotiations with Enrique and the other maroons. During his stay in the maroon community Romero observed that every bohio in Enrique's town possessed a cross on the door.<sup>500</sup> Whether or not the placement of crosses was a sign of true belief and conversion to the Catholic Church is impossible to know.

Enrique made one final effort to prove the validity of the peace offer by traveling to Azua, near where his town would be located, to speak to the residents. During this meeting the truth of the armistice was verified and Enrique did ultimately end his revolt by October of 1533. Then, again showing his reliance on religious officials and distrust of military leaders, Enrique requested several priests from the Franciscan order come to his maroon community to baptize all the children living there before he would journey to Santo Domingo to formalize the peace

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<sup>497</sup> Pena Battle, 128. Romero brought up to 120 pesos worth of goods to Enrique's community. "Carta al Emperador de oidor Zuazo y Vadillo," 4 de septiembre de 1533. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 61, N.68, fol. 299v.

<sup>498</sup> "The Heronymite Survey," 1517. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 329.

<sup>499</sup> "fuese allá un Pedro Romero que lo haría muy bien...mostró confiarse dél porque le conocía de tiempos pasados." "Carta al Emperador de Oidores Zuazo y Vadillo" septiembre de 1533. Marte, *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 365.

<sup>500</sup> "Carta al Emperador de Oidores Zuazo y Vadillo" septiembre de 1533. Marte, *Santo Domingo en los Manuscritos*, 365.

agreement.<sup>501</sup> This may have been to ensure that the children could be not declared as slaves after the surrender.

Also with Enrique in the town of Azua was the famous Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas with whom Enrique had a lengthy encounter. A few months after the encounter Bartolomé de las Casas described his month long visit with the cacique Enrique and his family in a letter to the King of Spain, in many ways using the opportunity to extol his own virtues to the Crown. During their time together the friar gave confession to Enrique, his wife (Mencia), and all of the cacique's captains, while also soothing their fears regarding their upcoming surrender to the King of Spain.<sup>502</sup> According to the letter, Las Casas even accompanied the cacique and his people to their new residence seven leagues outside of Azua, a free town given to them in exchange for their peaceful surrender. Once in the new settlement the friar, along with the Spanish residents of Azua, helped the new arrivals to procure bread and other necessary provisions for the nascent community. Beyond describing his very friendly encounter with the cacique, Las Casas claimed that he played an essential role in the ultimate surrender of Enrique. He even dismissed the actions taken by the military leader Francisco Barrionuevo, arguing that he barely interacted with the cacique.<sup>503</sup> Additionally he asserted that had he been involved in the earlier attempts at negotiation the conflict would have been resolved ten years earlier, saving the Spanish Crown untold amounts of money and soldiers lost during the futile attacks on Enrique's

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<sup>501</sup> "Carta del Audiencia de Santo Domingo" 1 de septiembre de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.4, N.28, fol. 2v-3r. For more on the various encounters and negotiations see Altman, 605-608 and in various ramos of the AGI legajo Santo Domingo 49.

<sup>502</sup> "Carta de las Casas" 30 de abril de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 95, R.1, N.11, fol. 1v. "Y asegurar al Don Enriquillo y le firme y corrobore en el servicio del emperador nuestro señor y estuve un mes con él y le confesó a él y a su mujer y a todos sus capitanes y le quiete todos los muy justos temores que tenia que no quisiese venir de allá hasta que le traje conmigo a la villa de Azua."

<sup>503</sup> "Carta de las Casas" 30 de abril de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 95, R.1, N.11, fol. 1v. "porque aunque Francisco de Barrionuevo fue alla y comenzo las paces y no es razon que sea defraudado de lo que hizo pero estuvo una sola noche y parte de medio dia y luego se torno y esto no bastaba."

maroon community.<sup>504</sup> Las Casas also failed to mention the presence of Franciscan Remigio at the meeting, perhaps in an attempt to both highlight his importance and to minimize the influence that the other friar had with the cacique (here we see the tension between the two orders yet again).<sup>505</sup>

After Pedro Romero, and presumably Las Casas, spent eight days with Enrique in both his maroon community and in Azua the cacique finally accompanied him to Santo Domingo. At the actual signing of his formal surrender to the Crown of Spain in June of 1534, at least one Franciscan friar (Francisco de Bobadilla) was with the cacique in addition to the Captain Francisco Barrionuevo.<sup>506</sup> Bobadilla was a more recent addition to the island's Franciscan community, arriving in 1526 along with another twelve priests and friars. This new group was an attempt to reform the Franciscan Order in the New World, which some (like the Dominicans and Cisneros) believed had lost themselves in the possibilities of wealth in the Americas.<sup>507</sup> Perhaps because of his dedication to reform, Enrique chose Bobadilla to stand beside him when submitting to the colonial authorities. Enrique spent two months in the capital, during which time he recorded his surrender to the Crown in a letter that is now the only document in existence written by a Taíno Indian.<sup>508</sup> The document is quite formulaic, following and using established language, demonstrating Enrique's extensive knowledge of Spanish culture. On the other hand, he may have received help while writing the document or it could have been written by a scribe with Enrique simply signing the finished letter. An excerpt of the letter follows:

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<sup>504</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 95, R.1, N.11, fol. 1v.

<sup>505</sup> Interestingly, Las Casas's named his last attempt at the creation of a religious settlement, this time in Guatemala, Verapaz, perhaps after the town of Enrique who the friar so admired.

<sup>506</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 77, R.4, N.77, fol.1r. Altman, 602.

<sup>507</sup> "Pasaje y matalotaje a fray Francisco de Bobadilla," 16 de agosto de 1526. AGI Indiferente General 421, L.11, fol. 114r and "Recomendación fray Francisco de Bobadilla," 28 de julio de 1526. AGI Indiferente General 421, L.11, fols. 98r.-99r.

<sup>508</sup> Altman, 11.

For the mercies provided by your Majesty, I kiss your imperial feet and hands to show the eternal obedience that I owe you as your lowly vassal who will obey everything that you mandate, as will all of my Indians of my land. We will also now come to the Spanish towns after having captured some maroons that were moving about the island.<sup>509</sup>

In exchange for his surrender, the cacique received the title of “don,” becoming Don Enrique, acquired amnesty for all of his followers, and secured his own family’s freedom in a free Indian town called Sabana Buey, seven leagues from Azua.<sup>510</sup> And despite the entreating tone adopted by Enrique in the letter, he also describes his surrender as a “consultation” with the judges and president of the royal court. This implies that he saw himself as an equal to these men, and as a subject only to the Crown of Spain. Enrique would die only a year later in 1535, leaving behind a testament (never before seen) declaring that his surviving wife, Doña Mencia, and nephew should govern the town as caciques in his place.<sup>511</sup>

Prior to his death, Enrique agreed to help the Spaniards in their efforts to find and capture all future run-away slaves, and any African maroon communities not allied with his group already in existence. But, there is no evidence or reports that Enrique or his people ever did help in the capture of other maroons so this promise may have simply been for show. Still, at least on paper, the Spaniards successfully destroyed the alliance uniting the Indians and Africans of Española, a situation they would try their hardest to avoid in all future colonies. Beyond, avoiding interactions between Indians and Africans, the Spaniards also immediately hardened their slave codes following the rebellion on Christmas day of 1521. These actions demonstrated

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<sup>509</sup> “Carta de Enrique” 1534. Archivo General de las Indias, Santo Domingo 77, R. 2, N. 77, f1r. “me manda hacer beso los imperiales pies y manos de vuestra majestad luego que sucederé mandado con la obediencia de vida y como su menor vasallo la obedezca y puse en efecto y así todos los indios de mi tierra y yo nos venimos a los pueblos de los españoles y después de yo haber ido a asegurar algunos marrones que andaban por las otras partes de la isla vine a esta ciudad a consultar con el presidente y oidores algunas cosas que ha sucedido de vuestra majestad convenía para la paz y la tratamiento y en ellos y en todos los demás españoles he hallado mucha voluntad y así yo me parto para.”

<sup>510</sup> Vega, B., 158.

<sup>511</sup> “Carta de Capitan Alferro” 1535. AGI, Santo Domingo 77, R. 2, N. 90<sup>a</sup>, f1r.

both the degree that the Spanish feared the power of African slaves, and the lengths that they would go to in order to prevent further revolts. These codes are the *Ordenanzas* de 1522, written only thirteen days after the initial rebellion of Wolof slaves in Colón's ingenio. These new laws made running away a crime punishable by mutilation, even if the slave voluntarily returned to their owner, and made rebellion a capital crime. Additionally, the ordinances made it illegal for slaves to carry weapons, except for a small knife, while also restricting the movement of slaves unaccompanied by their masters.<sup>512</sup>

While the simple presence of Las Casas, Remigio, and presumably other Franciscan friars in Enrique's maroon settlement is significant, the larger message that their relationship projects regarding the connections between native leaders and religious officials during the early colonial period is much more significant. Even after the cacique's violent revolt and escape to the Bahoruco Mountains, the cacique remained friendly with the island's Franciscan friars (and at least one Dominican friar) showing the depth of the bonds created at the monastery and school of Verapaz.<sup>513</sup> The success story of Enrique, made possible largely by his Franciscan education and continued relationship with multiple clergymen, shows the significance of indigenous relationships with Spanish religious officials in the formative years of Spanish colonization. The school in Verapaz also helped in the creation of a formula for conversion and catholic education

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<sup>512</sup> Dieve 1992, 135-137.

<sup>513</sup> Although this chapter focuses on the relationships between Indian leaders and religious clergy, it is worth noting that both Franciscan and Dominican monasteries throughout the island of Española maintained ties with and offered refuge to maroon or run-away African slaves. For example, in 1532 (at the height of Enrique's resistance) the royal court in Santo Domingo complained to the Crown regarding the custom of providing shelter to run-away African slaves, arguing that it only encouraged more slaves to flee their masters since they knew they could hide with the religious officials. They then requested that the King remind the friars that they too were within royal jurisdiction and should respect the secular laws of property. One even wonders if the Africans receiving shelter in these monasteries were also allied with the cacique Enrique, or were attempting to reach his multi-ethnic settlement in Bahoruco. AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.2, N.14, fol. 5r.



that would spread throughout Latin America. And, as did Enrique other indigenous leaders (and Africans) in the New World would also find their agency in an alliance with clergyman.

### Conclusion

Underlying the story of Enrique, are struggles not visible from his rebellion alone. Enrique and his people were pushed into revolt by specific Spanish policies and practices. Some of these were secular, while many others were attempts by clergy at reforming the position of the natives of Española. To truly understand Enrique's revolt, from its inception to its conclusion thirteen years later, we must investigate it from within the evolving Spanish colony and not in isolation. While previous scholars have isolated personal reasons for Enrique's flight and rejection of Spanish society, when one looks at his actions within the context of larger Spanish policies and practices a much more complex and textured picture emerges. Of course it is likely that a personal disagreement with his encomendero spurred Enrique's flight in 1519, but the conflict between Enrique and Valenzuela must be understood as emanating from greater island politics. By 1519 the position of Taíno caciques had eroded significantly in the wake of depopulation, an ever growing Indian slave trade, the Repartimiento of 1514, the Jeronymite intervention of 1516, and ongoing conflicts between secular and religious officials in the island. When Enrique fled his encomienda, seeking shelter in the caves and mountains of his homeland, he was responding to these threats and tensions. Additionally, his maroonage was able to last for so long due to the same pressures and stresses that motivated other slaves, both Indian and African, to not only flee their masters but to violently oppose the Spanish government as well. And finally, we can only understand why negotiations finally succeeded between Enrique and

the Spanish establishment by acknowledging the importance of connections and relationships between Taíno caciques and Catholic friars on the island.

It is also important to note how Enrique's flight, maroonage, and revolt ultimately impacted the shape of colonial America. The conflict changed laws regarding Indian and African slaves working together, whether or not the statutes were actually followed on the ground notwithstanding. For the first time the Spanish realized that alliances could be formed between Africans and Indians, a dangerous development. Concurrently, the loss of indigenous labor only led more expeditions searching for Indian slaves, voyages that would ultimately lead to the discovery of Florida and New Spain. The unrest also only further accelerated the population decline of Española as Spanish colonists sought wealth and opportunity in more secure or at least new territories like New Spain or the coast of Venezuela. It would be on the coast of Venezuela that the business of Indian slavery would reach its climax by the 1530s. Essentially Enrique and his rebellion provide us with an excellent case study to view both how much Spanish colonial society had changed by 1519 from its origins in 1492 and how the colony continued to evolve under the stress of Enrique and his allies.

## Chapter 5

### *Indigenous Slaves as the Key to New World Exploration and Conquest, 1513-1538*

By the second decade of the Spanish colonial experiment, the search for new sources of labor led to the massive expansion of the Indian slave trade. However, following the frenzied slaving in the Bahamas or “useless” islands and throughout the many islands declared as Carib lands, the residents of both Española and Cuba still faced a shortage of laborers.<sup>514</sup> This hunt for native populations led to increased exploration during the third decade of conquest. These ventures went past the known ports of call, heading north and westward into territories like present day Florida and Mexico. The first European explorations of present-day Mexico and Florida were largely slaving missions.<sup>515</sup> While it is true that the Spanish explorers also hoped to locate new, more plentiful, sources of mineral wealth on these voyages, the underlying and most important motivation for the journeys was to find new supplies of native labor to exploit in the growing sugar plantations and waning gold mines of Española and Cuba.<sup>516</sup> Despite the clearly stated goals of these expeditions by both the Spanish financiers and crews, historians have overlooked the role that the Indian slave trade played in promoting exploration and expansion in the Circum-Caribbean, instead always explaining exploration as a search for gold and silver. By

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<sup>514</sup> There were contemporaneous exploration missions that did not focus on the search for new sources of Indian slaves, most notably the expeditions from Darien to locate an entrance into the South Sea and an actual path to Asia. Additionally, most of the missions of discovery during the first and second decades of colonization returned to islands or lands first explored by Columbus to create settlements, for example Cuba, Jamaica, and the Pearl Islands. For more on the early trajectory of exploration and settlement in the Caribbean see Sauer’s classic work *The Early Spanish Main*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

<sup>515</sup> This pattern is very similar to early exploration and slave raiding on the Western Coast of Africa by the Portuguese where privateers and raiders slowing became explorers and commercial brokers between Europe and African communities. For more on this subject see Malyn Newitt’s edited volume *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670: A Documentary History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>516</sup> In fact, most of the financiers and leaders of these expeditions sought indigenous laborers for their own properties and not for immediate resale. Here than the Indian slaves were a means to acquire profit, but not immediate profit for the enslavers as they would become by the late 1520s and early 1530s, or the peak of the indigenous slave trade.

investigating this aspect of the trade, this chapter demonstrates another way that the Indian slave trade influenced the growth and shape of Spanish Latin America.

From at least 1513 until the mid-1520s the pursuit of Indian slave labor inspired the majority of Spanish expeditions of conquest and exploration, especially into the more distant lands to the north and west of Española. However, following the discovery and conquest of both Mexico (in 1521) and Peru (in 1532) indigenous slaves took on two new roles in successive expeditions of conquest; first as forced collaborators and second as consolation prizes. The discovery of these two incredibly wealthy and populous civilizations altered the objectives of successive Spanish conquistadors and explorers. While the earlier conquests of the Caribbean islands had provided the Spaniards with some mineral wealth, it was not until their entrance into the Inca and Aztec Empires that their dreams of mountains of gold, among other precious stones, would come true.<sup>517</sup> In these later entradas indigenous slaves served as active participants. While their participation was not voluntary, they nevertheless enabled the Spanish forces to cover huge swaths of territory by serving as guides, translators, porters, and servants. Although recent historiography has focused on the role that Indians played in pacification and conquest in the New World, as both willing conquerors and go-betweens or intermediaries, little attention has been paid to the forced allies or conscripts of Spanish conquistadors. This chapter argues that

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<sup>517</sup> José Ignacio Avellaneda, *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 11-20. By 1535 the explorers had begun to search for El Dorado, a mythic land full of gold governed by a golden Indian. According to the story the Indian chief, who lived somewhere in present day Colombia by the 1530s, covered his body in gold dust once a year prior to rowing to the middle of an enormous lake where he bathed, bestowing the gold as an offering. This legend was first articulated in 1535, and soon after spread throughout Spanish America. For a full discussion of the myth see the introduction by editor V.T. Harlow to Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Discoverie of the Large and Bewtiful Empire of Guinana*, (1928), xlv-xcvi. Though this Indian chief was the source of the specific El Dorado myth, the idea that massive amounts of gold would be located at the equator had been promoted for decades, if not centuries. This belief motivated Columbus to focus his exploration to the south and would inspire many of the later explorations of present day Colombia.

indigenous slaves were vital parts of almost all exploratory ventures during the sixteenth century, allowing for the conquest of otherwise impenetrable territories and cultures.

In later years, once conquistadors realized that their initial dream of locating fabulous wealth or civilizations was not to be, they captured scores of indigenous slaves as compensation. By the late 1530s indigenous slaves appear as an afterthought to the conquistadors, as a way to profit from an otherwise unsuccessful entrada. For example, many of the numerous attempts to find the mythical El Dorado in present day Colombia led to the enslavement of thousands of Indians. This pattern also held true in Trinidad, Venezuela, and the Yucatán Peninsula. Here we see the continuing commodification of Indians. In the end, undergirding the claims of exploration for mineral wealth and religious conversion appears a pattern of conquest centered on indigenous enslavement. In almost every armada or expedition from 1513 onward one finds records of Indian slaves, whether they were part of the initial force, the goal of the entire trip, or appear as an afterthought making a failed mission profitable.

As the indigenous slave trade continued to grow, an already forming Indian Diaspora moved more and more indigenous peoples across the Caribbean. While the earlier indigenous slave trade focused on the neighboring Lucayos or Carib Islands, both populations that possessed a familiarity (if not kinship) with the Taíno society they were joining, the expanding trade post-1513 absorbed a much more diverse group of Indians from Florida, Mexico, and the interior of Tierra Firme. Not only would these foreign Indian slaves feel more displaced by their transport to the Caribbean Islands, but the natives of Española would suffer a much greater political, social, and spiritual upheaval when faced with the incorporation of these foreign peoples. Nonetheless, the Indians displaced by this diaspora did not encounter homogenous experiences. While most of the indigenous peoples' experiences examined in this chapter are those of the

displaced who suffered greatly from their participation in the Spanish entradas, a few Indians were able to find power and opportunities in these instances, especially those who were able to accompany the Spaniards back to their ancestral territories. In a few of the most striking and exceptional cases, Indian slaves were able to navigate the Spanish system by converting to Catholicism, learning Spanish, and even traveling to Spain and a myriad of other colonies. These “Atlantic” Indians were able to gain the trust of their masters, something they eventually used to exact revenge on their Spanish captors.<sup>518</sup> Still others were able to take advantage of the new lands or disorganized expeditions to resist or escape the Spaniards and reclaim their freedom. Either way, the experiences of Indian slaves (and their ability to gain agency) taken on journeys of exploration or captured during the voyages is a significant part of the story of a forming Indian diaspora and slave trade.

### The Quest for Indian Slaves and the Discovery of Florida and Mexico

While it is unknown when the Spanish first “discovered” Florida, or Bimini as it was known prior to 1513, slaving expeditions frequented the territory many times prior to Juan Ponce de León’s 1513 famous and ill-fated expedition of colonization.<sup>519</sup> In fact, the peninsula appears on a Portuguese Map as early as 1502. Additionally, many in Puerto Rico and Española spoke

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<sup>518</sup> These worldly, bi-cultural Indians are very similar to the African actors (both slave and free) who have been commonly described as Atlantic Creoles in recent scholarship. In his seminal work, Ira Berlin describes Atlantic Creoles as someone with “linguistic dexterity, cultural plasticity, and social agility.” Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass, 2000), 24.

<sup>519</sup> Following the failure of Ponce de Leon were a string of would-be-conquerors (Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, Pánfilo de Narváez, Hernando de Soto, and Don Tristán de Luna y Arellano) ending with the successful voyage of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565. This chapter discusses most of these men and their relationship to the Indian slave trade. However, for more on Menéndez, and the actual conquest of Florida see Eugene Lyon’s seminal works *The Enterprise of Florida: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the Spanish Conquest of 1565-1568*, (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1974), the document collection *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), and *Richer than we Thought: The Material Culture of Sixteenth-Century St. Augustine*, (St. Augustine, FL, 1992).

generally of “lands to the North,” the idea that motivated Ponce de León’s first voyage to the Florida Peninsula.<sup>520</sup> There were also concrete, though rare and brief, accounts of visitors to Florida before the spring of 1513. One of the first Spaniards to encounter Florida’s Indians was the slaver Diego de Miruelo, a resident of Española, whose ship was thrown off course during a storm in 1513. Miruelo’s intended destination was not Florida or new lands at all, but the Lucayos Islands where he hoped to capture and transport more indigenous slaves. Instead, upon his landing in Florida, Miruelo was reportedly well-received by local Indians with whom he then traded some items for a “few pieces of gold and silver” before sailing on to Cuba.<sup>521</sup> Beyond Miruelo’s accidental visit, it is likely that two of the territory’s earliest would-be conquerors first heard of or encountered the land from or as slavers during the second decade of the sixteenth century, including Juan Ponce de León and Licenciado (judge) Lucás Vázquez de Ayllón. It was not gold or precious metals that first attracted the Spanish to Florida, but the land’s inhabitants (that some Spaniards referred to as “Giants”) who would be put to work in Española’s gold mines and budding sugar ingenios.

When Juan Ponce de León, inspired by previous slaving armadas, set sail for Florida in 1513, he embarked on a mission of discovery, exploration, and settlement. Specifically he had permission and license to “go to discover and settle the island of Bimini.”<sup>522</sup> However, the asiento, or contract with the King, went beyond allowing Ponce de León to execute a “repartimiento de indios” to those men that the King deemed worthy. It also gave him

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<sup>520</sup> Douglas T. Peck. “Reconstruction and Analysis of the 1513 Discovery Voyage of Juan Ponce de León,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 71, 2 (October 1992): 135.

<sup>521</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Española y La Esclavitud del Indio*, (Santo Domingo: Fundación García Arévalo, Inc. 1995), 244.

<sup>522</sup> “Asiento con Juan Ponce de Leon” 23 de febrero de 1512. AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 9r.

permission to enslave any Indians who refused to accept the requerimiento.<sup>523</sup> After disembarking from Añasco Bay on the island of Puerto Rico in March of 1513, Ponce de León's armada traveled through the Lucayos Islands and eventually landed near present day Cape Canaveral on the second of April.<sup>524</sup> However, not finding any indigenous people at this site, the expedition continued southwest, landing again at Jupiter Inlet where he had his first interactions with the peninsula's native peoples.

Unlike Miruelo, Ponce de León was not met by friendly Indians.<sup>525</sup> While it is possible that the Indians associated the newly arrived Spaniards with previous armadas that had violently enslaved their people, it is also possible that Ponce de León and his men simply encountered a different group than Miruelo. He may have even come upon the Ais, an indigenous people who would later attack a group of shipwrecked Spaniards in 1566.<sup>526</sup> Regardless, finding his first landing site inhospitable, Ponce de León continued southwest traveling along the coast and then through the Florida Keys. Here he found few inhabitants, and those that he did meet attacked his

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<sup>523</sup> AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 10r and fol. 11v.

<sup>524</sup> Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, "Another World," in *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*, edited by Milanich and Milbrath, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991), 13 of 1-26 and Antonio de Herrera, "De la Navegación de Juan Ponce de Leon, al norte de la isla de San Juan: y descubrimiento de la Florida; y porque la llamó así," *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano*, Tomo II, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guaranía, 1726-1730), 207.

Herrera's chronicle was first published in 1601. Antonio de Herrera was the official/royal historian and chronicler at this point for the King of Spain. It is in his transcriptions that we find the only record of Ponce de León's voyage in 1513, so presumably Herrera had it in his possession when he penned his chronicle.

<sup>525</sup> Interestingly, at the end of his expedition, in July of 1513, Ponce de León met up with Miruelo, on one of the Florida Keys or along the northwest coast of Cuba, though it is difficult to ascertain an exact location from the sources available, where it appears that they shared information regarding their voyages to Florida.

<sup>526</sup> The Ais, whose settlement was located near present day Cape Canaveral, allied with Menéndez during his search for surviving Frenchmen and even invited him and his men to stay in their territory to establish a fort following the defeat of the French. Menéndez gladly accepted their invitation, leaving many of his soldiers with about one hundred French captives in the newly formed Fort Santa Lucia at Cape Canaveral, and then embarked for Havana seeking more men and supplies for the coming winter in Florida. However, those left behind soon found themselves threatened and then abandoned by the Ais, forcing them to travel northward to another river where they encountered another Indian group that likewise continuously attacked them. They spent the next two months suffering from starvation and attack from various Indians (both those with whom they had a previously been friends, and their new enemy the cacique named Jega), ultimately resorting to cannibalism in order to survive. "Méritos y servicios: Diego López," 1569. AGI Patronato 51, N. 3, R. 3, fols. 1r.-22r.



men when they went ashore to gather wood or water.<sup>527</sup> Heading back north, he encountered a larger indigenous settlement, a group later known as the Calusa, and more interestingly an Indian they believed to be from the island of Española or one of its neighbors.<sup>528</sup> Ponce and his crew came to this conclusion based upon the Indian's ability to speak Spanish, though the accounts do not mention whether he was a Taíno or how he came to be on the west coast of Florida.<sup>529</sup> It is possible that he escaped the Spanish during an earlier slave raid, or that he travelled there on his own following the Spanish conquest of Española. Regardless, he must have spent considerable time with the Spanish colonists to have learned Spanish this early in the conquest period.

Here we see an early example of an Indian Diaspora taking place across the Caribbean following the arrival of the Spanish. Whether this particular Indian was forcibly removed from his homeland or chose to flee his native island to escape the Spanish, he was displaced within the first two decades of Spanish colonization. Either way he likely assumed that the Spanish intentions were malicious, because he delayed the men from coming ashore for a full day. Throughout this period he promised Ponce that if they stayed overnight, the local cacique Carlos would be able to greet them and bring pieces of gold.<sup>530</sup> Instead, after waiting for the cacique, the

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<sup>527</sup> Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 208.

<sup>528</sup> Following the arrival of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés the Spanish would maintain a tenuous though friendly alliance with the Calusa for several decades with the sons of Cacique Carlos even traveling to Havana to be schooled in the Catholic faith. However, this alliance would ultimately fail leading to the expulsion of the Jesuits first from Calusa and later from Florida as a whole. For more on the Calusa and their relationship with the early Spanish colonizers see Ruben Vargas Ugarte's *The first Jesuit mission in Florida* and Stephen Edward Reilly's article "A Marriage of Experience: Calusa Indians and Their Relations with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés," published in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.

<sup>529</sup> Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 209.

<sup>530</sup> While Herrera refers to the cacique in question as Carlos, it is possible that he is applying the name of a much later cacique of the Calusa to this earlier chief. When Pedro Menéndez de Avilés undertook the conquest of Florida he encountered a cacique by the name of Carlos with whom he had a complex relationship, as described above in footnote sixteen. Perhaps Herrera is simply transposing the name of Carlos on this much earlier cacique. However, it is also possible that the Calusa possessed a word describing their chiefs or their ethnic group that sounded like Carlos and thus the Spanish mistakenly believed this term to be a proper name. It is also likely that the Spanish mistook the word or name Caalus for Carlos. For more on the controversy see John H. Hann's *Indians of Central and South Florida, 1513-1763*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 13-16.

Spanish faced an attack of up to twenty canoes filled with Indians. During the ensuing skirmish one Spaniard died and at least five Indians were killed. The Spanish also captured four Calusa, although they released two of the captives immediately, sending them home to communicate to their cacique that the Spanish were willing to ransom the other Indians for gold. They then remained in the area awaiting communications with the cacique for nine more days. Again, instead of a meeting with the cacique Ponce and his men faced another attack, this time by eighty canoes or more, which ultimately persuaded them to return to San Juan without erecting a settlement in Florida.<sup>531</sup> Here we see the potential power that a former Indian slave could harness during the uncertain and volatile encounters of exploration and attempted conquest. It is likely that Ponce's journey would have had a different ending had it not been for the presence of the Taíno Indian who likely influenced the Calusa's reaction to the Spaniards' appearance on their shores. As would many other former Indian slaves of the Spanish, this man was able to use his knowledge of the conquistadors to successfully thwart their ambitions, at least for a time.

Following the failure of his colonization efforts, Ponce de León sailed back to Puerto Rico; however not all of his ships accompanied him. One of the three instead journeyed back to the Lucayos Islands, though the purpose for their trip is unclear. This ship was piloted by Antón de Alaminos, one of the most experienced sailors in the Caribbean even having served under Columbus on one of his earlier voyages. According to Herrera's chronicle, the ship returned to the Lucayos in an effort to locate the true Bimini Island and with it the fabled "fountain of youth."<sup>532</sup> This version of events was accepted for many decades. However in recent years

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<sup>531</sup> Herrera, "Que Juan Ponce de Leon, acabada su Navegación por la Costa de la Florida, volvió a la Isla de San Juan," *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 209-210.

<sup>532</sup> Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 210-211, and Peck, 136. "De enviar al uno a reconocer la isla de Bimini, porque lo quisiera hacer el mismo por la relación que tenia de la riqueza de esta Isla y en especial de aquella

historians have disproved the notion that the Spanish, or Juan Ponce de León, ever searched for the “fountain of youth,” much less in 1513 or in Florida or the Lucayos Islands. In fact, the only thing that Ponce de León was searching for, at least according to the original asiento between the conqueror and the King was riches, more than likely referring to gold and silver, but perhaps to Indian slaves as well. What then could the third ship have sought from returning to the Lucayos Islands? The answer lies in what the ship’s cargo held when it arrived in Añasco Bay in February of 1514. Though there is no mention of new lands (or a fountain), Alaminos brought with him four Indian men from Bimini and six Indians (two men, three women, and one woman with a young child) from other Lucayos Islands.<sup>533</sup> Thus, it is likely that the ship sailed back to the Lucayos on a slaving mission to make a profit out of an apparently failed expedition; a practice that would become more common in the following years. Though Alaminos did not engage in mass enslavement of Lucayos Indians during his voyage in 1513, we do know that he captured a few Indians, which may have inspired his future, much larger, slaving enterprises. In the following year he led a slaving trip back to Florida and then in 1517 participated in one of the first slaving armadas to visit the Yucatán Peninsula.<sup>534</sup>

In the wake of Juan Ponce de León’s failed attempt to colonize the “land to the north,” explorers from Puerto Rico and Española ventured out to find new sources of enslaved indigenous labor. In particular two influential and wealthy judges of Española, Lucás Vázquez de Ayllon and Juan Ortiz de Matienzo, both sponsored journeys to Florida to capture Indians to

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señalada Fuente que decían los Indios que volvía a los Hombres de viejos mozos,” Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo II, 211.

<sup>533</sup> Vicente Murga Sanz, *Juan Ponce de Leon: Fundador y primer gobernador del pueblo Puertorriqueno descubridor de la Florida y del Estrecho de las Bahamas*, (San Juan: Ediciones de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1959), 114.

<sup>534</sup> Juan Ponce de León returned to Florida in February of 1521 in a second attempt at colonization that likewise failed, this time also taking the life of the would-be conqueror himself. Florida was not colonized successfully, though the success of the colony for its first hundred years is still debated, until 1565 under Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.

sell on Española, but instead found a new land, La Chicora.<sup>535</sup> In the summer of 1521 two of these quests would meet one another in the Lucayos Islands and together would go on to “discover” what would become the northern frontier of Spanish Florida several decades later, present day South Carolina.

The first of the two expeditions was led by the pilot Pedro de Quejo and funded by two of Española’s leading officials.<sup>536</sup> Quejo’s stated goal was two-fold, first to deliver a great deal of merchandise to Cuba and then to move onward to the Bahamas islands with a license<sup>537</sup> to hunt for and capture slaves to be brought back to Española. The other armada, led by Francisco Gordillo, funded by one of Española’s most infamous officials and slave traders, Licenciado Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón<sup>538</sup>, was to go first to the Lucayos Islands to gather slaves. However if Gordillo did not find a plethora of Indians in the Lucayos he was ordered by Ayllón to locate the source of the Indians of “giant stature” that another slaver found “at the end of a voyage to the north” and brought to Española at some point in-between 1514 and 1516.<sup>539</sup> This slaving venture would have especially interested Ayllón due to his multiple holdings and investments on the island of Española, which in 1520 included a large sugar mill on the northern coast of the island near Puerto Plata. In fact, Ayllón already owned hundreds of slaves, and had recently received

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<sup>535</sup> Many other Spanish slavers continued to frequent parts of the very large territory then known as Florida during the interim between Ponce de Leon’s first voyage and the multiple journeys sponsored by Ayllón and Matienzo. One of these slavers, pilot Esteban Gómez, is described by Herrera in his chronicle as sailing from present day Panama northward to the Florida coast. Gómez made port at multiple locations along the peninsula of Florida taking as many Indians captive as he could at each juncture. He then sailed to Cuba with his slave cargo, off loading some in the island and taking many more Indian slaves all the way to Castile, disobeying the King’s laws against the transportation of indigenous slaves to Spain. Herrera y Tordesillas, “Del viaje del Piloto Esteban Gómez, y del que hicieron a Chicora los navios del Licenciado Ayllón,” *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo III, 25-26.

<sup>536</sup> These were Licenciado or Judge Juan Ortiz de Matienzo and Sancho Ortiz de Urrutía.

<sup>537</sup> The license was issued by then governor Diego Colón.

<sup>538</sup> The mission also received sponsorship from Secretary of the Audiencia (royal court) Diego Caballero.

<sup>539</sup> Hoffman, *A New Andalucía*, 3-6. This slaver was Captain Pedro de Salazar.

his salary from the governor in the form of four hundred slaves (though whether they were Indian or African was not specified).<sup>540</sup>

In the end both expeditions found few if any Indians on the Lucayos Islands since they had likely been depleted by the decade or so of slave raiding that preceded the two journeys. As a result the two pilots, finding themselves in the same predicament, resolved to sail together for either the peninsula of Florida or to locate the land of “giant” Indians. On June 24, 1521 the two crews sighted land and soon after began exploring the land just south of present day Myrtle Beach along the South Santee River. There they encountered numerous Indian villages, including “Arambe, Guacaya, Cuoathe, Tazaca, and Pahor,” traded with the Indians, and of course took possession of the province in the name of their employers and patrons.<sup>541</sup> After a few weeks of exploration and reconnaissance, at which point the sailors claim to have been on good terms with the native Indians, the group took advantage of the Indians’ trust, invited them on their ship and proceeded to capture sixty of them to take back as slaves to Santo Domingo.<sup>542</sup> To support this action to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, Quejo testified that the Indians “ate human flesh,” and were lazy, sodomites, and lacking the ability to even speak without inciting horror in the Spanish.<sup>543</sup> Here we see a continuation of the Carib/cannibal trope created by Colón to justify the enslavement of indigenous peoples. The Indians were also described by all who saw them, many

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<sup>540</sup> Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora: The Carolinas under Spanish Rule with French Intrusions, 1520-1670*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1956), 7.

<sup>541</sup> Hoffman, 10.

<sup>542</sup> “El Licenciado Juan Ortiz de Matienzo contra el Licenciado Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón sobre licencia para descubrir, pacificar, y poblar una tierra nueva en 35 y 37 grados” marzo de 1526. (AGI Justicia 3, R. 3, F27v.).

<sup>543</sup> AGI Justicia 3, R.3, fol. 27v. According to Quejo and Gordillo the Indians or “naturales” of the land were “nefandos y comían carne humana.” This testimony appears as part of the much larger case that Licenciado Matienzo presented against Vázquez de Ayllón in March of 1526 in an effort to prevent him from using the license from the crown to “discover, pacify, and settle” the new lands located between the latitude of 35 and 37 degrees because it was in fact his ship and men who had discovered this land in 1521 and not those of Ayllón.

of whom also testified in the proceedings of March 1526, as taller than the Taínos of Española or the Lucayos of the Bahamas, so perhaps the expedition had indeed located the “giants.”

Within the group of natives we find the Indian Francisco or el chikorano, a nickname meaning something in-between “little frog” and “frog boy,” who would become the basis of one of Florida’s most lasting myths, the land of La Chicora.<sup>544</sup> The Chicora myth, created largely by Ayllón’s communications with the Indian chikorano in both Española and on his voyage to Spain, centered on Florida’s amazing agricultural and mineral potential, as a land that was simply waiting to be settled and exploited by the Spanish.<sup>545</sup> The name Chicora likely comes from the actual name of the region’s native inhabitants, the Shakori, who the Spanish mistakenly called the Chicora. The Shakori practiced the elongation of the skulls of infants, for both cosmetic and practical reasons (to improve eyesight for hunting), which produced bulging eyes in many offspring. This trait could explain why the Spanish referred to the Indian as “frog boy.”<sup>546</sup>

In addition to his role in the creation of the Chicora myth, el chikorano both orchestrated Ayllón’s attempted colonization of Florida and destroyed the nascent settlement. After Chicorano’s arrival in Santo Domingo, he befriended Ayllón, learning Spanish and sharing his knowledge of his homeland with the judge. After two years with Ayllón in the islands, Chicorano journeyed with the conquistador to Spain where he was baptized at the royal court as Francisco de Chicora. During these ceremonies Ayllón served as Francisco’s godfather or

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<sup>544</sup> Hoffman, 6-11.

<sup>545</sup> Hoffman, 21. In addition to testimonies of the Indian el chikorano, this myth also utilized Ptolemy’s geography and argued that present day South Carolina was actually located at the same degrees and parallels as Andalucía, and thus would support the same plants and animals as those native to Spain. Although created by Ayllón, Peter Martyr later publicized the myth in his account of Juan Ponce de Leon’s expedition entitled *Decadas del Nuevo Mundo* and published in the 1530s. Ultimately this myth, whether present in Ayllón’s contract with the King or in Martyr’s writings, would inspire continuous attempts at conquering La Florida, despite its numerous errors and exaggerations. Hoffman, 3.

<sup>546</sup> Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 322.

padrino. While at court Francisco regaled the King with tales of the bounty of his homeland, a purportedly rich land ruled by a King of gigantic stature, in both mineral and agricultural wealth. He especially highlighted the availability of pearls and copper in his territory. He also extolled the virtues of his people, describing how skilled they were in hunting, medicine, and tailoring, while also depicting them as morally righteous and sexually chaste (at least the women).<sup>547</sup> Essentially, Francisco presented La Chicora as a paradise, perhaps to inspire the King and Ayllón to fund and organize an expedition during which he could return to his birth place. If this was indeed Francisco's plan, it worked. He and Ayllón returned to the Caribbean in 1525, after Ayllón received the governorship for La Chicora, no doubt partially due to the testimony and presence of Francisco at court.

Sadly, the rest of the Indians captured by Quejo and Gordillo would not be as lucky as Francisco Chicorano and would suffer a much nastier fate. Despite the fact that the very legality of the Indians' capture was questioned, though not until 1526 after the majority of them were deceased, the other fifty nine Indians were divided up amongst the financial supporters of the expedition, and promptly put to work on the properties owned by the various proprietors of the voyage. Matienzo's indigenous slaves likely went to work on his cattle ranch located five leagues outside of Santo Domingo, while Ayllón's share either were sent to labor on his new sugar ingenio near Azua or to his older mining holdings located close to Concepción de la Vega.<sup>548</sup> Regardless of where the Indians found themselves following their arrival in Española, it

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<sup>547</sup> Peter Martyr D'Anghera, *De Orbo Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr D'Anghera*, two volumes, Francis Augustus MacNutt, trans. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 259-263. According to Peter, he met with both Francisco and Ayllón during their stay in Spain in 1524.

<sup>548</sup> Hoffman, 15 and 40. While Hoffman claims that the Indians were sent to work in a gold mine, this industry was waning by the 1520s in and near Concepción de la Vega. While the Spanish did attempt to replace mining with sugar, as they successfully in the southern regions of the island, sugar plantations did not survive in the Cibao. Instead cattle ranching became the most profitable trade after 1514, so it is possible that Ayllón's lands were used for this purpose instead. Kulstad, *Concepción de la Vega*, 232.

is clear that nearly all of them died within a few months of starvation, disease, or general “mistreatment” per Matienzo. In fact, only one of the captured Indians was known to be alive in 1526 and he was working in a pearl fishery in Cubagua.<sup>549</sup> At the closure of the judicial proceedings in 1526 the Indians were ordered to be returned to their lands at the earliest convenience. Unfortunately, the rulings made little difference since the Indians, if they could be found, were likely dead after five years of laboring for the Spanish far from their native lands.<sup>550</sup>

Even though Ayllón was neither able to return the Indians to their homeland, nor use the majority as translators and soldiers during the conquest of the land as he had hoped, he did return to Florida in the spring of 1526 accompanied by Francisco el chicorano. The purpose of this mission was to create a permanent settlement in the new lands, supposedly ruled by an Indian cacique of giant stature, per Francisco.<sup>551</sup> While this was not a slaving voyage, nor would the Crown allow Ayllón to create encomiendas or repartimientos of Indians in Florida to prevent the harm that had already befallen the indigenous populations in the rest of the Caribbean, the conqueror was still allowed to trade the native peoples for slaves.<sup>552</sup> Indians who were enslaved by other Indians could be purchased or bartered for, even through rescate, and then sent back to Española to be sold as a slave. Not only did Ayllón’s men have license to trade in slaves, but they also were not required to pay taxes on any of these slaves once they were sold in the

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<sup>549</sup> AGI Justicia 3, R.3, fol. 31r. In Juan Ortiz de Matienzo’s testimony he states that the Indians cannot be returned to the land or help in the conquest of it “porque a los 30 indios que se le depositaron y en tal caso debía llevar para pacificar los demás naturales les dio tan maltrato que solo quedo uno y cierto le tenía en la Isla de Cubagua cogiendo perlas.” Here we see again the scope of the Indian Diaspora as it took shape in the third decade of conquest with Indians from South Carolina not only working in Española, but also becoming pearl divers in Cubagua and even venturing as far afield as Spain.

<sup>550</sup> AGI Justicia 3, R.3, fol. 29v.

<sup>551</sup> “Capitulación con el Licenciado Ayllón para lo de la Florida” 1523. (AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 23r.).

<sup>552</sup> AGI Indiferente 415, L.1, fol. 33r. “Otro si nos suplicastes que pues los indios no se pueden con buena conciencia encomendar ni dar por repartimiento para que sirvan personalmente y sea visto por experiencia que de esto se han seguido muchos daños y a solo muerto de los indios y despoblación de la tierra en las islas.”



islands.<sup>553</sup> However, likely due to the legal debacle following the arrival of original sixty slaves taken from Chicora, Ayllón was under strict instructions to treat any future Indian slaves well, even to supply them with a wage, and to ensure that they received religious instruction.<sup>554</sup>

Despite these allowances, and much to Ayllón and his cohort's dismay, the expedition ended in complete failure with the newly established town of San Miguel del Gualdape abandoned by mid-November of 1526. Hardship for the new settlement began immediately with the loss of one of the group's three ships (along with many of its necessary supplies and food), which ran aground and sank at the mouth of the Rio Jordán at the point of Santa Elena.<sup>555</sup> Next, Ayllón and the Spanish lost their most valuable tool, the Indian ally Francisco Chicorano who was to serve as the settlement's intermediary with the native Indians of the province. Within only a few days of his return, Francisco fled the Spanish. Here we see the fulfillment of what could have been Francisco's plan throughout his time with the Spanish in both the islands, and Spain. While he spoke of the marvels of his homeland, for example its mineral riches and climatic similarity to Andalucía, in an attempt to convince Ayllón to return to the province he could have already been planning his escape from his captors.

Following Francisco's flight, the Spaniards, nearly six hundred colonists at the start of the enterprise, were left with few supplies in an unfriendly land without native assistance, a recipe for disaster. Soon the group faced starvation and widespread illness, a combination that

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<sup>553</sup> AGI Indiferente 415, L.1, fol. 36r. "Y ten vos doy licencia y facultad para que si en alguna parte de la dicha tierra que vos ansi descubieredes en poder de los indios naturales de ella si hallaren esclavos de los que ellos toman en guerras en la manera en que se han hallado en la cota de tierra firme y en otras partes de las indias siendo de lso que justa y verdaderamente fueren esclavos que habiéndolos vos comprado por rescate y voluntad de los indios que les podáis llevar a la isla española libremente o a cualquiera de las otras islas para los poner en vuestras haciendas o disponer de ellos a vuestra voluntad sin que seréis obligado a nos pagar al diezmo ni otro derecho alguno."

<sup>554</sup> David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 134-135. Quinn only engages with the Spanish colonization of North America briefly in this work, focusing much more on the English efforts of exploration.

<sup>555</sup> Herrera y Tordesillas, "Del Viage del Piloto Esteban Gomez, y del que hicieron a Chicora los Navios del Licenciado Ayllón," *Historia de las Indias*, Tomo III, 27.

led to Ayllón's death on October 18, 1526. Only making matters worse, Gualdape soon faced multiple attacks by the region's native population likely led by none other than their former ally and slave, Chicorano.<sup>556</sup> It remains unclear from the documentation whether the Indian assaults were large, organized attacks on the actual settlement, or were more disparate harassments of smaller groups of Spaniards out hunting for food or mineral riches like pearls. Regardless of the size or shape of these indigenous strikes, it is clear that they led to many Spanish deaths and ultimately helped to bring about the abandonment of the settlement.<sup>557</sup> This episode illustrated the ambiguous nature of indigenous allies. While they could greatly help the Spanish, they could simultaneously ruin a new settlement.<sup>558</sup> And incredibly, both despite and because of Francisco's time as a Spanish slave and servant, he was able to orchestrate his return to his homeland, and eventually to even expel his former captors. Here we see the possible power held by an indigenous intermediary.

Interestingly, a group of ladino African slaves/servants also attacked the Spanish at Gualdape, burning down several buildings, at the same time as the Guale Indians assaulted the Spanish settlers. Of the many dwellings set ablaze by the African slaves, the majority of whom were household servants or artisans, was the house of Ayllón's self-appointed successor Ginés Doncel.<sup>559</sup> The fire led to the almost complete destruction of the settlement and was the first slave revolt in North America. These two attacks, in combination with Ayllón's death, led to the

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<sup>556</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 36-37 and Hoffman, 77.

<sup>557</sup> Decades later in St. Augustine and Santa Elena Spanish colonists would face similar assaults, often finding themselves confined to a settlement's fortress or garrison for multiple months in the face of indigenous attacks by the Timucua, Guale, Ais, and many other ethnic groups.

<sup>558</sup> I look at this pattern in much more depth later in the chapter when I focus on Indian slaves as unwilling allies during conquest and exploration.

<sup>559</sup> It is worth noting that there was a great deal of controversy surrounding Doncel's assumption of power over Captain Francisco Gomez, leading to the arrest of multiple colonists and several assassination plots. For more on this subject see Paul Hoffman's *A New Andalusia*, 76-79.

failure of the colony and its abandonment within two months of its foundation. By the time of Gualdape's desertion only one hundred and fifty of the six hundred colonists escaped with their lives.<sup>560</sup> Because of the high death rate and chaotic end to the colony, it is unlikely if any of the surviving Spaniards returned to Española with indigenous slaves, or any other profitable goods. In the end it appears that Ayllón's attempt at settling Florida also ended the area's participation in the indigenous slave trade.

Just as the Spanish were initially drawn to Florida in their search for indigenous slaves, Spanish slave traders were also the first to interact with the Indians of the territory known as Mexico or New Spain. Prior to the Spaniards' arrival in the Yucatán Peninsula, and later central Mexico, slavers first frequented the islands off of present day Central America, namely the Guanaxas Islands located off the coast of Honduras and one of which is today known as Roatan. As early as 1515 the governor of Cuba, Diego Velázquez, began sending slaving missions to the Guanaxas Islands following reports from Cuban caciques who described the arrival of foreign Indians in large canoes from a territory almost due west. These Indians, traveling up to five or six days to reach Cuba, brought with them a variety of goods and were supposedly large in stature. More than likely these mysterious Indians were the Maya, who possessed sea faring technology and whose canoes had been sighted by Columbus in his voyage to the Gulf of Honduras. Bits of Mayan pottery found in Cuba present additional evidence of the pre-Hispanic trade route between the Maya and the Taíno population of Cuba.<sup>561</sup> The indigenous groups of

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<sup>560</sup> Weber, 37 and Quattlebaum, 24-25. Among the survivors was one of the three Dominican friars that accompanied the group with the intention of building a Church and of course converting the native peoples of La Chicora, the famous Antonio Montesinos. While he survived this mission, he would later become a martyr in present day Venezuela as discussed in Chapter four.

<sup>561</sup> Sauer, 212-213.

present-day Mexico and Cuba could have also possessed common ethnicities, making their relationship closer than with other Caribbean islands.<sup>562</sup>

Perhaps the connections between the two areas extended beyond the arrival of the Spaniards with the Cuban Indians communicating their experience under Spanish domination to the Mayas. While, we have no hard evidence of this, it would help to explain the incredibly negative response to the arrival of a Spanish slave hunting ship in the Guanaxas Islands in 1515. Despite the numbers of slave ships capturing Indians throughout the first decades of Spanish colonization, there are very few records of on-board mutinies (unlike in the African slave trade), and of the few documented instances, two involved the Indians taken from the Guanaxas Islands. First, in 1515, the Indians took advantage of the majority of Spanish sailors going onshore for water on the southern coast of Cuba to seize the ship and return to their homeland. Despite, the loss of their slaves and ship in 1515, Velázquez ordered another slaving mission to the Guanaxas one year later.<sup>563</sup> This expedition was part of a larger royally funded armada to attack all islands inhabited by caribs, and to enslave the rebellious Indians.<sup>564</sup> It is from this mission that we know of the fate of the first group of mutinous Guanaxas Indians. Upon their arrival in the islands in 1516 the Spaniards chanced upon the wreckage of the ship. Beyond locating the ship, which had been run aground on one of the islands, the second expedition to the Guanaxas captured up to five hundred Indians from various islands (including one called Utila). However, the Spanish conquistadors again suffered a mutiny, this time while at sea prior to arriving in Cuba. Because this mutiny occurred onboard heavy fighting ensued during which several sailors were murdered

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<sup>562</sup> Through the use of craniometrics and modern geometric morphometric methods archaeologists are evaluating possible dispersal theories of Caribbean populations. An example of this type of research is found in Ann H. Ross and Douglas H. Ubelaker, "A Morphometric Approach to Taino Biological Distance in the Caribbean," *Island Shores*, 124-125.

<sup>563</sup> Sauer, 213.

<sup>564</sup> Deive, 131.

by the Indians, but the Spaniards ultimately managed to take control of and bring four of the five hundred indigenous slaves back to Cuba.<sup>565</sup>

Although the Spanish slavers approached the Yucatán Peninsula in both 1515 and 1516, they would not actually “discover” the mainland of New Spain until the voyage led by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba. Córdoba accompanied by pilot Antón de Alaminos,<sup>566</sup> the future chronicler and conquistador Bernal Díaz de Castillo, and one hundred men sailed from Habana Cuba in February of 1517.<sup>567</sup> The expedition possessed orders from Governor Diego Velázquez, along with a ship belonging to the governor purchased on credit by Córdoba, to travel to the Guanaxas or Guanaxas Islands to enslave Indians to bring back to Cuba.<sup>568</sup> Thus, Córdoba would have been returning to a familiar slaving area, albeit one that he would have had to treat with caution. Despite the stated purpose for the voyage, Córdoba and his men instead sailed to the coast of the Yucatán Peninsula in search of new lands and opportunities for wealth. The pilot Alaminos may have inspired this change in plans. It is also possible that the sailors altered their destination due to statements from the recently captured slaves of the Yucatán Peninsula who spoke of a rich land further to the northwest beyond the Guanaxas and Florida.<sup>569</sup> Another explanation comes from Díaz’s chronicle where he claims that the expedition never intended on fulfilling their promise to Velázquez regarding the capturing of slaves since they “knew that

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<sup>565</sup> Deive, 131 and Sauer, 213. The record is silent on the fate of the one hundred Indians; however I would assume that they either died during the mutiny or from disease prior to their arrival in Cuba.

<sup>566</sup> This was the same pilot who led Ponce de León’s expedition in 1513 and more than likely continued on to capture slaves in the Lucayos Islands following the failed attempt to settle Florida.

<sup>567</sup> Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 4-5 and Sauer, 214.

<sup>568</sup> Jose A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios*, Tomo II, 77-78 and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, edited by David Carrasco, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 2.

<sup>569</sup> Robert S. Chamberlain, *The Conquest and Colonization of Yucatan, 1517-1550*, (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1948), 11.

what Diego Velázquez asked of us was not just.”<sup>570</sup> While it is possible that some of the men involved in the expedition felt this way regarding the morality of Indian slavery, this is more than likely a defense of their mission after the fact. Either way, the men did deviate from their initial slaving endeavor and consequently sighted the Yucatán Peninsula following twenty-one days at sea.<sup>571</sup>

During their exploration of the Yucatán Peninsula, Córdoba and his crew encountered vast evidence of a highly advanced indigenous culture along with many impressive cities including Campeche and Champotón. This voyage only took two Indian captives who were later baptized as Julian and Melchior and who would presumably serve as guides or translators for future expeditions. Additionally, it sparked the imagination of dozens of men in both Cuba and Española, ultimately leading to the 1518 journey of Hernando Cortés and the conquest of New Spain from the Mexica.<sup>572</sup>

### Forced Collaborators: Indigenous Slaves as Tools of Conquest and Exploration in Florida

Beginning with the “discovery” of America in 1492, Spanish explorers and conquistadors, continuously dreamed of locating the rumored lands of plenty, which would provide them with enough gold and silver to live out the remainder of their lives in fame in prosperity. Failing to find these fabled sources of wealth, the Spanish moved forward with more reasonable schemes of success, exploiting the limited gold mines of the Caribbean while beginning sugar and cattle ranching enterprises, in the first three decades of colonization. For all

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<sup>570</sup> Díaz del Castillo, 2.

<sup>571</sup> Díaz del Castillo, 3.

<sup>572</sup> Díaz del Castillo, 4-5. While the actual conquest of Mexico has been well documented and analyzed in multiple excellent historical works, the actual discovery of Mexico has been neglected by historians, especially how it relates to the larger Indian slave trade and early diaspora. Thus, I deal with only the brief encounters prior to Mexico’s actual conquest and colonization beginning in 1518.

of these endeavors Indian labor played a pivotal role, hence the exuberant search for new sources of indigenous slaves throughout both the known and unknown lands of the New World.

However, following Hernán Cortés's conquest of the Mexica Empire in 1521, the Spaniards' earlier dreams suddenly appeared attainable. Conquistadors would no longer be contented with the discovery of fertile lands, native labor forces, or small amounts of gold.

While the Spaniards were no longer motivated by the chance to locate and enslave large numbers of Indians, they did still depend upon indigenous slaves for the successful execution of their voyages and entradas, a practice used since the first conquests of Española, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Spanish explorers both brought Indian slaves with them to serve as guides or translators, in addition to accomplishing menial labor as servants and porters, and captured native peoples along the way to work as local guides or to replace deceased slaves. Although these men and women played invaluable roles in the conquest and exploration of many territories, from Florida and Mexico to present day Colombia and Venezuela, they were involuntary collaborators and as such received no part in the spoils of victory.<sup>573</sup> In fact, other than stating their presence in many of these voyages, both sixteenth century Spaniards and historians have ignored their impact. Beyond their actual contribution to each entrada in which

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<sup>573</sup> On the other hand it is well documented that certain indigenous groups willingly became Spanish allies and participated in the conquest of other territories for which they received a special status in the larger Spanish colony. For example, up to twelve thousand Xochimilco troops fought in the siege of Tenochtitlan alongside Cortés's soldiers and many years after the conquest of Mexico Maya warriors accompanied the Pedro de Alvarado to the conquest of the Andes in 1534. For more on the presence of indigenous allies throughout MesoAmerica from the initial conquest forward see Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk's compilation *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007). Indian leaders made pragmatic alliances throughout the Americas in many lesser known episodes throughout conquest, for example when the Timucua of Northeast Florida allied with the Spanish against the existing French colony. These alliances often allowed Indian groups access to European goods, improved status in colonial settlements, and an opportunity to attack their own enemies using European weapons and soldiers. Indian allies also worked with the Spanish beyond conquest, sometimes even facilitating the construction of colonial societies and helping the Spanish to fulfill labor requirements for nascent economies. For more on these influential characters, known as go-betweens, see Alida C. Metcalf's *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) and Yanna Yannakakis's *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

they participated, the transport of these diverse indigenous slaves during various missions of exploration and conquest throughout the 1520s further helps us to map the larger Indian Diaspora and see the magnitude and complexity of the Indian slave trade. Here, Indians were not simply brought from one location (be it Florida or the Lucayos Islands) to labor in one of the central Caribbean Islands; many were then taken to a third, perhaps even more distant location. This rapid movement around the Caribbean-all contributing to the creation of an Indian Diaspora-displaced some indigenous peoples, but also returned others to their homeland.

Indigenous slaves were indispensable for the maintenance of Spanish missions of explorations, thus we see Indians as part of the initial forces journeying to new lands with the Spanish soldiers.<sup>574</sup> However, the Spanish also supplemented these original unwilling intermediaries during their expeditions, continually capturing native Indians to serve as local guides and translators. The Crown recognized the necessity for the taking of more slaves, giving conquistadors license to capture any Indians as captives who rebelled against the Spanish or defied the *requerimiento*, basically following the laws of “just war.”<sup>575</sup> Though forced to work

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<sup>574</sup> For example in 1528 the unsuccessful conquistador of Florida, Pánfilo Narváez, brought an unknown number of Mexican Indian slaves with him, perhaps in the hopes that the Indians from New Spain would be able to communicate with the inhabitants of Florida. He may have drawn this conclusion because the Mayan Indians were able to converse with at least some of the natives of Cuba. On an earlier venture, this time to New Spain to oppose Cortés, Narváez’s forces also included a thousand Indian slaves from the island of Cuba. Document 17, “Carta escrita al Rey por los oidores de la real audiencia de la española” 20 de agosto de 1520. (Archivo del Museo Naval, AMN 0031, Ms.0039ter/000, Navarrete, “Asientos, aprestos de armadas, despachos, instrucciones, viajes, y descubrimientos” 1514-1581, F67r.) Though, the documents are silent on the origin of these slaves, it is likely that at least some of these Indians were originally from the Guanaxas Islands off of the Yucatan Peninsula, perhaps even some of those recently captured by the Velázquez sponsored raids of 1516. Narváez would have preferred these Indians because they would have been able to communicate with the native population of New Spain and therefore serve as guides or translators for his mission

<sup>575</sup> This clause appeared in Pánfilo de Narváez’s contract with the King, along with many other conquistadors, though in an interesting twist Narváez was also ordered to free any indigenous slaves that he encountered being held by the natives of Florida. “Capitulación que se tomo Pánfilo de Narváez para la conquista del Rio de las Palmas” 1526. AGI Indiferente General 415, L.1, fol. 96v. Throughout his expedition Narváez would capture and enslave many Indians, both through legal and illegal methods. The best account of this voyage was written by one of its few survivors, the royal treasurer Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. Two excellent versions of the document are “The 1542 Relación (account) of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca,” edited and translated by Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2003) and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragio*, (Barcelona:



with the Spanish these local conscripts were usually temporary, and not permanently enslaved so if they survived their time with the Spanish, they were free to return to their native lands.

While Spanish interest in Florida began in the second, or even the first, decade of the sixteenth century as a source for Indian slaves, Spanish explorers found new interest in the territory after reading the accounts of judge and slave trader Lucás Vázquez de Ayllón.<sup>576</sup> One such man, Hernando de Soto, would try to locate the territory's famed riches of gold and pearls. As can be seen by his constant movement, Soto was not interested in conquering Florida, but in simply finding the land's material wealth and plundering the riches. At the end of May of 1539, Hernando de Soto with over six hundred men, landed somewhere near Tampa Bay. In addition to the Spanish who accompanied Soto, he brought with him several Indians from Florida captured during the previous winter. In fact, in Soto's orders for the preliminary mission were instructions to capture Indians in Florida who would later serve as guides for the larger expedition. These instructions underscore the importance of Indian slaves to Spanish conquistadors both during their missions and in preparation for them.<sup>577</sup> Upon his arrival in Florida, Soto and his men immediately marched inland where the Indians that grew the largest quantities of corn resided.

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Diferencias, 2006). This relation, beyond being one of the first narratives of European captivity in North America, Cabeza de Vaca's account is also significant for its descriptions of peoples, flora, and fauna never before encountered by Europeans, many of which (especially the indigenous peoples) no longer exist today. Following Cabeza de Vaca are many other captivity narratives from Brazil to New England, all of which captured the imaginations of Europeans throughout the colonial experiment while helping to shape how those across the ocean viewed the New World. Captivity of Europeans also became a form of indigenous resistance to colonization or as a way to replenish their numbers following warfare, this was especially true of kidnapping women and children. For more on the indigenous practice of captivity see Fernando Operé's *Indian Captivity in Spanish America: Frontier Narratives*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), James Brooks's, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), and Juliana Barr's, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) among others.

<sup>576</sup>According to Ayllón, and the famous Chicorano, Florida possessed incredibly fertile lands, an abundance of resources, and most importantly (especially after Mexico and Peru) a large supply of "gold in the form of grains."

<sup>577</sup> Charles Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997) 57 and 66. The pilots who captured these few Florida Indians were Juan de Añasco, Francisco Maldonado, and Juan López. These men also possessed instructions to identify the best bay from which to begin their explorations. As discussed earlier, Narvaéz also had Indian guides with him, but his originated from Mexico and did not speak the language of the Florida natives.

For a map of Soto's possible route, the actual path traveled by the expedition is still debated by many,<sup>578</sup> see figure 39. Intrigued by the reports of abundance found in the province of Apalache<sup>579</sup>, Soto too began his journey of reconnaissance through La Florida searching for Apalache, which he eventually reached in October of 1539 in time to winter in one of the province's principal towns, Iniahica (present-day Tallahassee, Florida)<sup>580</sup>. The expedition had difficulty locating the central settlement due to several Indian guides misleading them, perhaps on purpose to protect the town, and when they arrived, they were dismayed to find it deserted. Nevertheless, De Soto and his troop camped in the empty town for five months during which time they suffered almost constant attacks by the Apalache Indians.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> For more on the possible twists and turns of De Soto's travels see: Charles Hudson, Chester B. DePratter, and Marvin T. Smith's chapter "Hernando de Soto's Expedition through the Southern United States," in *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*, edited by Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), 77-98, Joyce Rockwood Hudson's *Looking for De Soto: a Search through the south for the Spaniards' Trail*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993) and Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman's edited work *The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543*, (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993). On other issues of the expedition, from archaeology and the life of De Soto before the expedition to the problems with all the De Soto narratives see Patricia Galloway's edited volume, *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) and Jerald T. Milanich's *The Hernando de Soto Expedition*, (New York: Garland, 1991).

<sup>579</sup> De Soto knew of the Apalache following his meeting with Cabeza de Vaca, the famous survivor of the ill-fated Narváez expedition.

<sup>580</sup> For more on how this important site, now called the Martin site, was discovered and the artifacts (for example copper coins minted in Spain between 1505 and 1517 and Nueva Cadiz beads) found during archaeological digs see Charles R. Ewen and John H. Hann's work *Hernando De Soto among the Apalachee: The Archaeology of the First Winter Encampment*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998).

<sup>581</sup> Jerald T. Milanich and Charles Hudson, *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 212-218.



Figure 35: Hernando De Soto’s Route based on Charles Hudson’s work *Knights of Spain*. This is one of many possible routes taken by the Soto expedition, his actual path is still debated by both archaeologists and historians.

While Hernando de Soto had license to legally enslave Indians who violently opposed his presence or those given to him by indigenous leaders, he exceeded these lawful avenues of indigenous enslavement by several levels throughout his time in Florida. Soto would not wait for indigenous provocation or the deterioration of peaceful negotiations; these interactions were often characterized by the exchange of gifts, at times in the form of Indian slaves. Nor would Soto only take the Indian slaves he absolutely needed for his expedition. Instead Soto began with violence and armed combat, even in situations when an indigenous group or leader cooperated with his demands.<sup>582</sup> One of the soldiers who accompanied Soto on his journey through America, the now famous chronicler the Portuguese Hidalgo de Elvas, described in often graphic detail the violence perpetrated by Soto and his men regarding Florida’s native peoples, including women.

<sup>582</sup> Charles R. Ewen and John H. Hann. *Hernando De Soto among the Apalachee*, 5-8. This policy can be traced to lessons De Soto more than likely learned while serving under Francisco Pizarro, Pedro Arias de Avila, and Blasco Núñez de Balboa (before de Avila executed him) in Panama, Nicaragua, and Peru.

This Governor (Hernando de Soto) was much given to the sport of slaying Indians, from the time that he went on military expeditions with the Governor Pedrarias Dávila in the provinces of Castilla del Oro and of Nicaragua; and likewise he was in Peru and present at the capture of that great Prince Atabalipa, where he was enriched... So then, continuing his conquest he ordered General Vasco Procallo de Figueroa to go to Ocita because it was reported that people had come together there; and this captain having gone there, he found the people departed and he burned the village and threw an Indian, which he had for a guide, to the dogs. The reader is to understand that *aperrear* (to throw to the dogs), is to have the dogs eat him, or kill him, tearing the Indian in pieces, since the Conquistadores in the Indies have always used to carry Irish greyhounds and very bold, savage dogs... In this way this Indian guide was killed because he lied and guided badly.<sup>583</sup>

As this suggests, Soto practiced very little negotiation and gift giving with the natives of La Florida, and instead enslaved or slaughtered those who resisted his advances. Even the indigenous leaders who cooperated were not exempt from captivity and conscription, though they did escape slavery. For example the Cacica of Cofitachequi<sup>584</sup> gave Soto her best pearls (five or six kilos of pearls), all the food he requested, canoes to help his men cross the nearby river, shelter in her settlement, and instructions on how to reach the next town, but she still

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<sup>583</sup> Hidalgo de Elvas. "True Relation of the Hardships suffered by Governor Don Hernando de Soto and certain Portuguese Gentleman in the Discovery of the Province of Florida, 1557." In *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, Vol. II*, edited by David B. Quinn (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 108. While this relation of the De Soto expedition is popular for its literary flair, and long exaggerated descriptions, it is questionable whether it was written by a firsthand witness of the journey. The first publisher of the account (in 1557) does claim that it was written by a member of expedition, but to this day the actual author of the work is unknown. Elvas's relation also shares a great deal with another soldier's (who also served as De Soto's personal secretary on the voyage) account, Rodrigo Rangel, so some have speculated that the author of the Elvas account borrowed much from that of Rangel. Rangel's relation was also more than likely expanded upon by the court historian and writer Gonzaló Fernández de Oviedo who purportedly took Rangel's journal from him and later published it after adding some entertainment value to the work. George E. Lankford, "How Historical are the De Soto Chronicles?" in Vernon James Knight, Jr.'s edited work *The Search for Mabila: The Decisive Battle Between Hernando de Soto and Chief Tascalusa*, (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 34-35. One of the few other existing records of the expedition is Garcilaso de la Vega's *The Florida of the Inca*, which while probably the most entertaining of group, is also the least reliable. Not only is it not written by a participant in the mission (though the author supposedly interviewed multiple survivors of the expedition), but it was not published until nearly a hundred years after the De Soto journey in 1605. Because of the problems with La Vega's account and both the Elvas and the Rangel narratives, I rely almost entirely on the account of Luis Hernández de Biedma, the shortest and least sensational relation, discussed in greater depth below.

<sup>584</sup> Interestingly, by examining Francisco Chicorano's statements and descriptions of his territory, some have theorized that he hailed from none other than Cofitachequi or one of its secondary or tribute towns/regions. Charles Hudson, *The Juan Pardo Expeditions: Exploration of the Carolinas and Tennessee, 1566-1568*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 81-82.

suffered his wrath.<sup>585</sup> Despite her compliance, following four or five days residence in Cofitachequi, a very powerful chiefdom with a principal settlement located in present-day Camden, South Carolina<sup>586</sup>, Soto and his men only demanded more, this time hundreds of porters and slaves for the next leg of his journey. These men and women the cacica was not willing to supply, leading her to renounce her brief alliance with the Spanish and to escape Soto by fleeing to the nearby foothills.<sup>587</sup> Not willing to accept defeat, and needing the cacica to ensure discipline among her people and to supply him with his unwilling allies, Soto and his men pursued the cacica and her people eventually taking her prisoner along with many others. Additionally, once in the foothills the Spanish located caves filled with pearls, which they consequently stole, though these were of lesser quality than those given to the Spanish by the cacica.<sup>588</sup> While it seemed as if the cacica<sup>589</sup> was defeated at this point, she was still able to escape the clutches of Soto, fleeing the group as they attempted to cross the Appalachian mountains. Here we see another way that Indian captives and slaves could use Spanish missions of exploration or reconnaissance to gain their freedom and agency. While she did not have to go

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<sup>585</sup> “Relacion de la Jornada a Florida con De Soto por Luis Hernández de Biedma,” AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 3v.-4r. Unlike Elvas’s account, Biedma’s (the journey’s royal factor or treasurer) is the only written first hand, primary relation of the De Soto expedition we possess. For more on import of the narrative, along with its possible silences and history, see Ida Altman’s chapter “An Official’s Report: The Hernández de Biedma Account,” in Patricia Galloway’s edited work *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and “Discovery” in the Southeast* previously cited.

<sup>586</sup> Charles Hudson, *The Juan Pardo Expeditions*, 68-70.

<sup>587</sup> While there could be many reasons for the cacica’s refusal to supply De Soto with Indian porters or slaves (as did many other native leaders encountered by the conquistador), one of the most likely explanations stems from the fact that most of Florida’s Indians lived in very small societies or chiefdoms. The significance of the chiefdom will be discussed in much greater depth in Chapter one, but essentially due to the small and tight-knit nature of these chiefdoms (often with five hundred or fewer members) the loss of a few individuals would have a much greater impact on the kinship networks and economic survival of the communities than in a larger state or province. Hudson, 21-23.

<sup>588</sup> “Relacion de la Jornada a Florida con De Soto por Luis Hernández de Biedma,” AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 4r. During their campaign to find the unlucky cacica, the Spanish also encountered clear evidence of Spanish tools and trading goods, causing them to believe they had located one of Ayllón’s encampments in the interior.

<sup>589</sup> For other female guides and intermediaries (both voluntary and involuntary) during various conquests across the Americas see Frances Karttunen’s *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994). Some of the more famous historical characters featured in the work are Mexico’s La Malinche and the United State’s Sacajawea.

to the lengths of Chicorano, she did take advantage of the disorganization of Soto's group and the familiar rough terrain to get away from the Spanish. And she was not the only captive to do so. Following her escape from the group, the cacica encountered a multi-ethnic group of slaves who had also deserted the Soto expedition, including a black slave by the name of Gómez, an Indian slave from Cuba, and a Moorish or Barbary slave. Within this diverse group we find that at least one indigenous slave from the islands was able to take advantage of the De Soto venture by securing his freedom in the mountains of present day South Carolina. Together this motley crew returned to Cofitachequi from where the cacica and Gómez, who she took as a lover, continued to govern the province.<sup>590</sup>

Beyond this cacica, Hernando de Soto conscripted and enslaved many more Indians, with some estimates entering into the hundreds or even thousands. He and his men required so many unwilling intermediaries, taking more at each indigenous settlement they encountered, largely because of the incredibly high mortality rate of those taken captive by the Soto mission. While disease and starvation took many, the horrific treatment the Indians received at the hands of the Spanish, with some even being thrown to the dogs if they gave incorrect directions, resulted in the deaths of hundreds more. For example, early on in his journey Soto captured nearly three hundred and fifty Indians from the Aguacaleyquen people. Despite this huge number of indigenous slaves, by the time Soto reached Cofitachequi in the spring of 1540 the majority had perished from exhaustion and exposure because Soto failed to provide the Indians from south

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<sup>590</sup> We know the fate of the cacica from two sources, one is the soldier Alaminos who either briefly deserted De Soto or was lost and met with the group of escaped slaves in late May of 1540, and the other is the explorer Juan Pardo who journeyed to Cofitachequi and heard the tale of the De Soto encounter many years later following Menéndez's conquest of Florida in 1565. Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 192-93 and Hudson, *The Juan Pardo Expeditions*, 68-82.

Florida with suitable clothing for the Georgia/Carolina winter.<sup>591</sup> Thus, he needed to replenish his numbers of porters and guides, leading to his conflict with the cacica of Cofitachequi. The pattern would continue throughout Soto's reconnaissance of the present day U.S. south, with indigenous groups either fleeing from the Spanish or welcoming them into their settlements only to receive violence, exploitation, and enslavement (whether temporary or permanent) in return. At many points in the narrative of Soto's expedition the record is silent as to how many Indians were taken from any one village, only saying that "they detained or were given many Indians."<sup>592</sup> It is only in the tales of battle that the chroniclers give clear numbers of how many Indians were enslaved versus how many were killed. For example, the record is clear as to how many slaves resulted from Soto's engagement with the village of Aguacaleyquen, one of the expedition's first major conflicts.

The clash began when Soto and his men arrived at what appeared to be a substantial town, except that it was deserted. The inhabitants had apparently fled the settlement upon hearing of the Spaniards' entrance and had also hid their corn, demonstrating their knowledge of the threat posed by the Spanish invasion. As the Spanish searched the settlement, located on the Ichetucknee River in central Florida, they found somewhere between ten and seventeen women (depending upon the chronicler) hiding in the cornfields outside of the village proper.<sup>593</sup> While it is unknown why the men left these women behind, the Spanish captured them to serve as both guides and translators. When the cacique realized the Spanish had detained these women, one of whom was his daughter, he returned to the settlement to secure their release by offering food and guides for their future journey. When the cacique did not fulfill his promise immediately, Soto

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<sup>591</sup> Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 146.

<sup>592</sup> AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 3r. "dieron nos ciertos indios que nos llevasen muchas cargadas de comidas y ropas y otros indios que nos guiasen."

<sup>593</sup> Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 107.

and his men took the cacique as prisoner and continued their march northward with this small group of captives serving as guides. Following sixteen days of travel, and rebuffing several attempts by allies of the Aguacaleyquen cacique to secure his freedom peacefully<sup>594</sup>, a group of nearly four hundred Indians attacked the Spanish.<sup>595</sup> During the battle approximately forty Indians were killed and the rest, nearly three hundred and fifty, were taken prisoner to be used as enslaved, unwilling and shackled, porters and guides for the Spanish.<sup>596</sup> Because these slaves were taken during “just war” they were considered permanent slaves by the Spaniards.

In the fall of 1540 a dearth of indigenous slaves and porters would bring about one of Soto’s most violent encounters-during which he lost much of his supplies and all the samples proving the land’s wealth that he intended to take back to Spain-<sup>597</sup> this time at a town called Mabila, perhaps nearby present day Selma, Alabama. Here, despite an initially friendly welcome from the cacique Tascalusa, the Indian’s refusal to provide Soto’s expedition with a sufficient number of Indian servants produced tension between the two groups that ultimately exploded

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<sup>594</sup> Aguacaleyquen was part of a much larger alliance of chiefdoms in central Florida that was referred to by the Apalachee as the “Yustega” and included the chiefdoms of Uriutina, Napituca, and Uzachile, all of which participated in the later attack on the De Soto party to rescue their allied cacique. One of these caciques, the chief of Uzachile was even a kinsmen of the cacique of Aguacaleyquen. Milanich and Hudson, *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida*, 158-161.

<sup>595</sup> “Relacion de la Jornada a Florida con De Soto por Luis Fernández de Biedma,” AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 1v. “para buscar algunos indios que nos guiasen yendo a buscar algunos indios se tomaron diez o doce mujeres en que nos decían que la una era hija del cacique por lo cual vino el cacique a nosotros de paz y dijo que nos daría lenguas y guías para adelante”

<sup>596</sup> AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 1v. “trescientos y cincuenta indios a nosotros con arcos y flechas a propósito de quitar nos el cacique que llevábamos matamos algunos de ellos y prendimos todos los demás entre ellos.” Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 109-115 and Milanich and Hudson, *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida* 161-163. Of those taken hostage were five caciques who soon after organized a revolt among the Indian prisoners, but this was swiftly quelled by the Spanish only resulting in the deaths of many more Indians, though a few Spaniards were killed in the fray and De Soto himself sustained a blow to the head.

<sup>597</sup> Prior to the festivities the Spaniards had entered the palisaded town of Mabila with an unknown amount of their belongings which were consequently lost during the battle and fire. The different chronicles disagree on exactly what and how much was lost, but at least ten horses, supplies for mass, and most of the pearls collected at Cofitachequi were not recovered. Robbie Ethridge, Kathryn E. Holland Braund, Lawrence A. Clayton, George E. Lankford, and Michael D. Murphy, “A Comparative Analysis of the De Soto Accounts on the Route to, and the Events at, Mabila,” in Vernon James Knight, Jr.’s edited work *The Search for Mabila: The Decisive Battle Between Hernando de Soto and Chief Tascalusa*, 173-174.



into an all night battle.<sup>598</sup> What began as an apparent festival and banquet, perhaps to welcome the Spaniards, ended in a massacre when Tascalusa and several other Indians refused to leave their shelters or speak with Soto and his soldiers. Additionally, the promised supply of Indian slaves was never produced during the evening's festivities. Whether or not the festival was a trap, as the chronicler Biedma deduced, or the groups simply suffered from a miscommunication, the night ended with a Spanish soldier assaulting an Indian with his sword after which a group of hidden Indians emerged from the bushes shooting arrows at the Spaniards. Being unprepared for battle, Soto and his men fled the settlement, but soon returned to place the village under siege, ultimately setting it ablaze. As the inhabitants of Mabila tried to escape the fire the Spanish attacked them, killing the majority and enslaving others, including twenty women originally brought for their entertainment.<sup>599</sup> Still, the Spaniards did not escape unscathed, with two hundred and fifty wounded and twenty dead.<sup>600</sup>

By following the trail of terror produced by Soto and his men, one can see the importance of possessing Indian slaves on these lengthy expeditions of exploration, reconnaissance, and plundering. While it is possible that Soto enjoyed terrorizing the indigenous inhabitants of North America, he also needed them to carry his supplies, guide the men through difficult territories, and to translate his wishes and questions to new Indian groups. Just because these men and women, for the most part, remain unnamed does not diminish the larger role they played in Soto's expedition. Without the forced intermediaries Soto's expedition would have faltered much

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<sup>598</sup> AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 5r.

<sup>599</sup> AGI Patronato 19, R. 3, fol. 5v. "Cerca de noche quedaban solo tres indios y tomaban aquellas veinte mujeres que habian traído para bailar"

<sup>600</sup> For more on the battle of Mabila, from its archaeology and location to a discussion of its portrayal in the various De Soto narratives, see Vernon James Knight, Jr.'s edited work *The Search for Mabila: The Decisive Battle Between Hernando de Soto and Chief Tascalusa*, (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009).

earlier.<sup>601</sup> Nevertheless, it is also within the accounts of Soto's journey that we see the continued dehumanization of America's indigenous populations. Despite the crucial roles played by his captive Indians, Soto did not attempt to care for them. Instead he treated them with the utmost cruelty, casting them off as soon as they lost their usefulness, replacing them with newly obtained captives. For Soto quantity mattered more than quality, except when considering able and knowledgeable guides or translators to avoid as much miscommunication as possible. In fact, he only treated indigenous leaders with a molecule of respect, even turning on them if they did not completely bend to his wishes. While his actions do not connote the full commodification of Indians, as we will see in the expeditions of the German conquistadors and others in the final section of this chapter, they do illustrate the evolving Spanish perception of Indians as little more than any other tool or commodity.

On the other hand, for the few Indians and African slaves who were able to use the arduous journeys to gain their freedom, participation in missions of exploration were invaluable. While we only possess concrete evidence of a few Indians, and one African slave, achieving liberty during the Soto mission, it is likely that many more succeeded in escaping the Spanish and perhaps even returning to their homelands. The same upheaval that promoted both the enslavement of thousands of Indians and expansion of an Indian Diaspora also created a space where a few lucky and motivated captives could attain freedom. In this case Soto's lack of care for his forced collaborators actually could give them more opportunities to escape.

Like Chicorano and the cacica of Cofitachequi, the Algonquin Indian Luis, who also began his time with the Spanish as a captive, secured his liberty and return to his ancestral land

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<sup>601</sup> De Soto would eventually die from an unknown illness along the bank of the Mississippi River in May of 1542, effectively ending his dreams and the fruitless search for another Inca Empire in the Southern United States. Hudson, 349.

through the guise of helping a Spanish expedition of exploration and settlement. He, like Chicorano before him, lived and traveled extensively with the Spanish; becoming someone they perceived as their ally. In reality, Luis was possibly orchestrating his escape and revenge on the Spanish for the majority of his time living among them. Luis first encountered the Spanish when he was captured by slavers as a child in 1559 or 1560 from Jacán, a territory encompassing the Chesapeake Bay and where he would have inherited the title of cacique had the Spanish not intervened. Following his capture, Luis was first taken to New Spain where he met Pedro Menéndez de Avilés-the future conquistador of Florida who was very interested in the young boy as a future guide and ally-and was baptized, receiving the name of Luis after the viceroy of New Spain, Luis de Velasco.<sup>602</sup> It is likely that Luis de Velasco served as the boy's godfather, hence the origins of his name. After his baptism Luis accompanied Menéndez to Spain in 1566, following the initial conquest of Florida from the French, where he was presented to King Philip II. Within a year Luis returned to the New World, more than likely to Cuba, and became an integral part of Menéndez's plan to settle the Chesapeake, which the conquistador believed would lead him directly to the Pacific Ocean or the South Sea.

However, Menéndez's plans for settlement were usurped by those of the Jesuits who also chose Luis's territory for a special kind of settlement in February of 1570 that they hoped would solve the problem of converting Florida's native peoples.<sup>603</sup> By 1568 priests had set up missions with the Calusa, Tequesta, Timucua, Ais, and Guale Indians of Florida. However, the Jesuit priests continued to report that, regardless of their ardent efforts at converting Florida's natives, the Indians simply refused to renounce the devil or give up some of their most pagan customs.

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<sup>602</sup> Clifford M. Lewis and Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia, 1570-1572*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 15.

<sup>603</sup> Lewis and Loomie, 26.

The Jesuits constantly complained about the migratory nature of Florida's inhabitants, arguing that it prevented them from keeping contact with or track of their native charges. Therefore, the priests believed that only if the Indians could be gathered and forced to settle in towns would their preaching be effective. To put this strategy to the test a group of eight Jesuits led by Father Segura journeyed to the Chesapeake Bay area (very close to the eventual site of the English colony and Powhatan's village)<sup>604</sup> to establish another mission in September of 1570.

As with prior missions of exploration or settlement (for example that of Ayllón in Gualdape with Chicorano), the Jesuits brought with them a former Indian slave, Luis, to serve as the group's guide and translator. Essentially Luis was to be the cultural broker to facilitate relationships between the Jesuits and natives of Jacán. Beyond Luis, the Jesuits brought little else to help them in the case of conflict, even refusing Menéndez's offer to be accompanied by soldiers.<sup>605</sup> Once they arrived in Jacán the Jesuits would discover that their trust in Luis was misplaced, as was Ayllón's faith in Chicorano.

Upon his return to his native lands Don Luis immediately deserted the Jesuits, leaving them alone and without provisions. He then returned to his people, likely explaining to them the Spanish predilection for native enslavement and exploitation. Regardless of what he actually conveyed to his family, it resulted in very negative interactions between the natives of Jacán and the Jesuit settlement. Don Luis's people even refused to trade with the Jesuits, leaving them to search out other indigenous groups (often located much further from their settlement) with which

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<sup>604</sup> J. Michael Francis and Kathleen M. Kole, *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida: Don Juan and the Gualde Uprising of 1597*, American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers, Number 95, 2011, 30.

<sup>605</sup> They declined the offer for soldiers, both because of their faith in Luis and their opinion that misbehaving soldiers were the true cause of Indian rebellion and slow conversion to Catholicism.

to bargain copper and tin for corn and grain.<sup>606</sup> For a full year the Jesuits waited in vain for an expected Spanish supply ship and sent several messages to Luis begging him for his help and censuring him for abandoning his Christian ways.<sup>607</sup>

Luis was not satisfied with simply abandoning his former masters. As his later actions suggest, he also wanted to prevent the formation of a permanent Spanish settlement in his territory, and with the Jesuits refusing to leave, he and his large ruling family planned a brutal attack of the Jesuits' camp. On the morning of Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup> of 1571, Luis and a larger group of Indians assaulted the camp, first with arrows, and later clubbing the Jesuits to death. Some were also beheaded.<sup>608</sup>

After the massacre, Don Luis divided up the Jesuits' clothing and sacramental objects, including bibles, crucifixes, and chalices, among the local Indians. Hence, when the first relief mission arrived in Jacán the Spanish witnessed Indians wearing the Jesuits' vestments. The silver chalice was given to another important cacique (to solidify an alliance according to the one survivor Alonso) who resided several leagues further inland<sup>609</sup>, showing the value of European

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<sup>606</sup> "Carta de Juan Rogel al Francis Borgia," 28 de agosto de 1572. Transcribed and printed in Lewis and Loomie's work previously cited, 104-105. It is difficult to determine Don Luis's ethnic group since the Spanish failed to give any place name, beyond Jacán or Ajacán, to describe Luis's territory. We also do not possess any written record from the settlement itself since the Jesuits and all their books were destroyed during the massacre. The only clues can be gathered from the sailor's descriptions of the bays, coastlines, and rivers where they disembarked. By linking these geographic references with the much more detailed records of the English Raleigh's expeditions, we can make some guesses of the regions' ethnography during Luis's time, but these are still questionable. Lewis and Loomie, 231-239.

<sup>607</sup> Lewis and Loomie, 44-45.

<sup>608</sup> "Carta de Juan Rogel," 28 de agosto de 1572, 105. While the historical record shows no impetus for the Indian attack, on the part of the Jesuits, all the documentation of the assault also comes from Jesuit sources which are naturally biased against the Indians' actions.

<sup>609</sup> Ruben Ugarte Vargas, *The first Jesuit mission in Florida*, Vol. 25, 1935, 139-142 and "Carta de Juan Rogel," 107. Another later relation goes beyond stating that the Indians wore the Jesuits' vestments to claim that they wore them specifically to perform native ritual dances while also drinking sacramental wine from the Jesuits' skulls. However, Rogel does not mention this occurrence, and his is the closest thing to a firsthand account we have due to his traveling with the boy Alonso. Additionally, Alonso described how Don Luis seemed repentant following the murder of the friars and asked the boy to help him give the Jesuits' a proper Christian burial.

goods for the indigenous populations of North America.<sup>610</sup> The only survivor of the attack was a child, known as Alonso, who had helped the priests during their journey from Santa Elena to the Chesapeake. Though Alonso escaped the massacre, he was kept as a prisoner by the uncle of Don Luis for over a year before he was rescued by the Spanish in July of 1572. The boy was likely spared due to his youth, as it was customary for the Indians of the Chesapeake to adopt the children of their enemies following their defeat. Following Alonso's rescue, carried out by Menéndez and a group of Jesuits, the Spanish were finally able to learn the tragedy that had befallen the Jesuit settlement of Jacán.<sup>611</sup> Ultimately, the massacre ended the Spanish colony on the Chesapeake and also brutally ended the Jesuit presence in Florida.<sup>612</sup> Here we see again that while a willing and loyal Indian ally could allow for the success of a Spanish mission, an ambivalent or hostile intermediary could completely destroy a nascent colony if they understood and were able to harness their power, as we can see with both Don Luis and Francisco Chicorano. Luis and Chicorano were able to use their knowledge of the Spanish culture and practices, as well as the larger Atlantic system, to exact revenge on their former captors and to

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<sup>610</sup>According to recent archaeological, ethnohistorical, and anthropological studies the introduction of European tools, firearms, and other trade items radically changed trade patterns and even the balance of power among existing indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. Some groups with increased access to European goods were even able to expand their power, both through warfare and trade. For more on the incorporation of European trade goods (for both religious and utilitarian uses) see Jonathan D. Hills' essay "Violent Encounters: Ethnogenesis and Ethnocide in Long-Term Contact Situations," in James G. Cusick's edited volume *Studies in Culture and Contact: Interaction, Culture, Change, and Archaeology*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1998), 146-171 and Bruce G. Trigger's article "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations," in *The Journal of American History*, 77:4, (March 1991): 1195-1215.

<sup>611</sup> The Spanish sent the rescue mission in the summer of 1572 when they received news that the boy Alonso was alive. This information came from a relief expedition sent to Jacán the previous year (led by Brother Juan Salcedo and Vicente González) that located the mission, but instead of finding friars, found Indians wearing Jesuit robes. This strange site caused the group to immediately question whether they should go ashore, a thought only supported when the Indians sent out several canoes to attack the ship. During the skirmish the Spanish did succeed in capturing two Indians from whom they learned that the boy Alonso was indeed still alive, but could garner no further information. Lewis and Loomie, 49-51. Jesuit Father Juan Rogel was among the rescuers, allowing him to write the only contemporaneous relation of the massacre.

<sup>612</sup> For more on the eventual English settlement of the Chesapeake Bay, during which they employed many of the same techniques as the Spanish including Indian intermediaries (both voluntary and coerced) see Karen Ordahl Kupperman's *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

ensure the failure of at least two Spanish colonies in North America. Nevertheless, and regardless of the risks involved, the Spanish depended on their unwilling collaborators for everything from information and guidance to physically carrying supplies. Despite the successes of the few exceptional characters (Chicorano, Luis, Gómez, and the cacica of Cofitachequi), the majority of the Spaniards' forced intermediaries did not harness their agency to overpower their masters or to secure their freedom. Hence, the Spanish continued to rely on coerced labor and go-betweens. Essentially supporting every famous conquistador was a line of indigenous slaves and intermediaries.

#### Indian Slaves as Consolation Prizes: Failed Entradas in Tierra Firme and Trinidad

While the previous section focused on the use of slaves or unwilling allies in the explorations and entradas of Florida, the pattern was not confined to this territory. In fact, we see almost identical actions undertaken both in preparation for and during the conquests and expeditions into the interior of Tierra Firme (from present day Colombia and Venezuela to Chile and Argentina) along with other islands, like Trinidad, throughout the 1530s. For example in 1538, the bishop of Venezuela wrote to the King reporting the devastation of the coastline to the east of the city of Coro (the largest, central port and settlement of Venezuela), stating that by then it was virtually unpopulated due to the constant enslavement of the local Indians. For the most part the Spanish captured these Indians for the sole purpose of accompanying them on their entradas into the interior in search of El Dorado or other mineral wealth. This lack of Indians now prevented the resident Spaniards from possessing repartimientos, likely the true cause for the complaint over the moral implications of illegal enslavement.<sup>613</sup> While it was still legal to

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<sup>613</sup> “Carta de Obispo de Venezuela de la ciudad de Coro,” 2 de abril de 1538. AGI Santo Domingo 218, N.12, fol. 2r.

capture Indian slaves from certain regions of Venezuela, and its adjoining coastline, in 1533 the King declared it illegal for the Spanish to forcibly enslave any Indians from the province of Paraguana. This order likely followed the solidification of an alliance between the cacique of Paraguana, known as Don Alonso signifying that he was baptized, and the Spanish residents of Coro since indigenous allies or “indios amigos” of the Spanish could not be enslaved.<sup>614</sup> Thus, the Bishop especially criticized the German conquistador Nicolás Féderman for capturing and enslaving multiple caciques of the region, including Don Alonso of Paraguana. Many of these Indians later died during the Féderman expeditions leaving their provinces and villages in chaos for the few surviving inhabitants.<sup>615</sup> It is also possible that the Spanish Bishop singled out the German conquistador<sup>616</sup> because of an underlying animosity between the Spanish officials of the Caribbean and the newly arriving Germans, who the Spanish may have perceived as interlopers in the colonial game.

However, in these later ventures we also see the development of a new element in the use and enslavement of forced intermediaries during, and most importantly, after the culmination of an *entrada*. Here instead of leaving the surviving captives and conscripts behind, as did Soto’s soldiers following his death on the Mississippi, the explorers, conquistadors, and plunderers of Nueva Granada (Colombia), Venezuela, and Trinidad all kept their Indian slaves with them until the bitter end when they often sold them to make a slim profit out of a failed venture.

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<sup>614</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Venezuela de Coro,” 6 de octubre de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 206, R.1, N.2, fol. 9r. These Indians could not even be taken as *naborías*, they were to remain totally free, though as parts of *repartimientos* laboring for certain periods of time for the local Spaniards.

<sup>615</sup> “Carta de Obispo de Venezuela de la ciudad de Coro,” 2 de abril de 1538. AGI Santo Domingo 218, N.13, fol. 2r. Some of the captured caciques (either through the use of force or trickery) beyond Don Alonso were the principal cacique of the province of Coro itself named *Todariquiba*, the cacique of *Miraca* (who died during the journey), and the cacique *Esteban*, principal leader of the town *Cayarina*.

<sup>616</sup> While this chapter refers to Féderman as a conquistador, in many ways he was not. As Soto did in Florida, Féderman conducted missions of reconnaissance searching for specific things, like gold, and was not interested in creating settlements or pacifying indigenous populations. However, for simplicity’s sake, and because many other historians have labeled Féderman as a conquistador, this term is used here as well.



Additionally, if they did not have a great many slaves at the conclusion of their journey, which many did not due to the very high death rates suffered by Indians and Spaniards alike on these ambitious and lengthy entradas, they often captured a great many as they approached Spanish settlements with the intent to sell the slaves when they finally reached a port city. Perhaps because these explorers, who include Ambrosio/Antonio de Alfinger and Nicolás Féderman (German conquistadors and governors of Venezuela from 1529 to 1539), Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, and Antonio Sedeño (the would-be conquistador of Trinidad and the province of Paria, about whom we will see much more in the next chapter) planned on profiting from the sale of their forced collaborators, they captured more slaves than necessary for their immediate service in case they failed to locate the mythical El Dorado. Here Indians became consolation prizes or even played the role of foot soldiers' salaries for expeditions that were unsuccessful in finding new sources of mineral wealth. It is in these actions, viewing Indian slaves as commodities in and of themselves instead of as sources of labor, intermediaries, or porters, that the Indian slave trade reached a new level.<sup>617</sup> These Spaniards not only used unwilling intermediaries during their expeditions, but made sure to capture enough to sell for a profit once they returned to the markets of Nueva Cádiz, Coro, Santa Marta, Puerto Rico, or Santo Domingo. Basically the conquistadors of Trinidad, Nueva Granada, and Venezuela combined the motives and practices of our first two examples by engaging in explorations inspired by the possible profit from captured Indian slaves that were simultaneously fueled by the use and presence of unwilling allies or slaves.

In 1530, the King of Spain (Carlos I or Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) entrusted the conquest of Trinidad, an island supposedly inhabited by Carib Indians that attacked the Spanish settlements located on both the coast of Tierra Firme and the island of Puerto Rico, to

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<sup>617</sup> The commodification of Indians will be explored in much greater depth in the next chapter that focuses on the climax or height of the Indian slave trade and diaspora.

Antonio Sedeño.<sup>618</sup> While Sedeño was to pacify the Indians of Trinidad, taking Indian slaves as necessary when confronted with opposition from the island's natives, his true interest in the venture was a launching point for expeditions or entradas into the heart of Tierra Firme, specifically the adjacent province of Paria. For a map of the region see Figure 37. Although the origin of Sedeño's interest in Paria is unclear, based upon his later actions it is likely that he desired control of the region to benefit from the traffic of indigenous slaves (the main source of income for the province) to the Pearl Islands and the larger Caribbean markets, like Cuba and Española.<sup>619</sup> Sedeño also hoped to be able to profit from the capturing of slaves on Trinidad proper—a practice common since the island's inhabitants were declared as Caribs in 1511—both during his conquest of the island, and afterwards through rescate with the pacified Indians.<sup>620</sup> However, the King refused to allow the conquistador to simply declare the Indians as rebels, as had been done in the past and would be done in many future conquests, in order to enslave them. Instead Sedeño was required to document the Indians' refusal or rejection of the requirement and then to petition the Council of the Indies in Sevilla for permission to enslave the rebellious indigenous populations. The King also charged Sedeño with releasing any slaves held by the

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<sup>618</sup> The designation of Trinidad as a Carib Island was heavily debated in the early 1500s with many officials, including Las Casas and the protector of the Indies Rodrigo de Figeroa claiming that it was one of the only islands in the Caribbean *not* inhabited by Caribs. Other Spaniards, including Sedeño reported at least two populations on the island, one being Carib, while the other was Arawak. The Arawak people, the same ethnic group (but different culturally at the time of Spanish colonization) as the Taíno of Española and Puerto Rico, were allies of the Spanish, and thus could not be enslaved. Linda A. Newson, *Aboriginal and Spanish Colonial Trinidad: A Study in Cultural Contact*, (London: Academic Press, 1976), 17-18. The ethnic make-up of the pre-Hispanic Caribbean, and how it impacted the actual process of conquest, will have been discussed in Chapter one of the dissertation.

<sup>619</sup> Jimenez, 199-200. Sedeño's attention to Paria, and its plethora of Indian slaves, continued into the mid 1530s when he returned to the area with a much larger expedition of exploration and slave raiding, challenging another conquistador, Gerónimo Dortal. However, in this later mission, Sedeño's motives were mixed, with he and his men also engaged in a search for the region of Meta, a possible El Dorado. While this expedition fits squarely in this chapter, Sedeño's second entrada into Tierra Firme appears in Chapter six with the larger discussion of the commoditization of Indians during the height of the Indian slave trade.

<sup>620</sup> I will examine the slave raiding of Trinidad, among other islands throughout the Caribbean in Chapter 3, which focuses on the initial growth and expansion of the Indian slave trade.

Carib population of the island, especially those Indians taken from Puerto Rico or other Spanish colonies.<sup>621</sup>



Figure 36, Settlements in Nueva Granada and Venezuela circa 1530

Perhaps because of these stipulations there exist no records showing Antonio Sedeño taking or selling of any slaves during his initial attempt to conquer the island of Trinidad in 1530, despite the violent resistance he experienced from the natives of the island. In fact, Sedeño's first effort at pacifying the island was a complete disaster due to constant (and violent) indigenous opposition to the Spanish presence.<sup>622</sup> Yet, he purportedly enslaved no Indians, and on the contrary, in one of his letters to the King, he details how he rescued a bound Indian (who had been taken during a raid of the island Cubagua) from being eaten by the Caribs of Trinidad. After freeing the Indian from the Caribs, Sedeño reported that he took the Indian with him to Puerto

<sup>621</sup> "El Asiento de Antonio Sedeño con su magestad sobre la isla de la Trinidad" 1530. AGI Patronato 18, N.9, R. 3, fol. 1r., and Jimenéz, 200.

<sup>622</sup> Jimenéz, 201.

Rico where he was baptized and had begun to learn Spanish under his tutelage.<sup>623</sup> Though it is unclear whether or not Sedeño enslaved any Indians during his time in Trinidad in 1530, he did not immediately return to Puerto Rico after withdrawing his forces from the island. Instead, he and his surviving companions journeyed to Paria where they did engage in the illegal capture of numerous Indian slaves that they attempted to sell upon their return to Puerto Rico.<sup>624</sup> Here we see one of the first of many instances where conquistadors attempted to compensate for a failed expedition with the capture and sale of Indian slaves. Although Sedeño could not pacify the Indians of Trinidad, nor could he complete an entrada into Tierra Firme (due to the King's awarding of the governorship of Paria to Diego de Ordás, another character who we will see again in the following chapter), he still tried to make a profit from the unsuccessful voyage by enslaving Indians in (likely) both Trinidad and Paria.

Only two years later (in November of 1532), Sedeño returned to Trinidad to finally fulfill his contract with the King to conquer and pacify Trinidad. However, again, he and his force of eighty men<sup>625</sup> were defeated by the natives of the island, this time during a surprise attack by Indians who had just pledged their alliance and friendship to the Spanish. During the altercation twenty-three Spanish men were killed along with "some blacks" (though the documents do not state whether they were free or slaves), one woman (again her ethnicity is unclear), and a few horses.<sup>626</sup> The Indians then claimed that they planned to voyage to Paria in short order to attack

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<sup>623</sup> "Carta de Antonio Sedeño" 1532. AGI Patronato 18, N.9, R.3, fol. 1r.-1v.

<sup>624</sup> "Información sobre tratamiento de indios de Trinidad por Antonio Sedeño" el 24 de julio de 1531. AGI Patronato 18, N. 9, R.4, fol. 1r.-1v. Sedeño justified the arrival of the Indians from Paria by claiming that some, including the cacique of Paria known as Cariarto, had willingly accompanied him to Puerto Rico, while he had rescued the others (also natives of Paria) from being captives of Trinidadian Caribs. Regardless of the truth behind the matter, Sedeño was ordered to return the Indians to their native lands. Though Sedeño was commanded to return the Indians, there exists no record of what actually became of them.

<sup>625</sup> This was a relatively small group for this type of enterprise and more the size of slave raiding mission, perhaps providing us with a clue as to what the men's true intentions for the venture were.

<sup>626</sup> "Carta de Antonio Sedeño desde Puerto Rico" 1532. AGI Patronato 18, N.9, R.3, sin folio.

the Spanish settlements located there. It is unlikely that the Indians actually intended to attack any Spanish towns; however, by making this claim Sedeño justified the capture and enslavement of numerous Indians. These he declared as rebels and Caribs, and took them to Puerto Rico, where this time he did succeed in selling them.<sup>627</sup> One year following this incident, in September of 1533, Sedeño received license to enslave all Caribs residing in Trinidad, prompting one final voyage to the island and the capture of even more slaves. This license was part of the larger Crown policy allowing the colonists of Puerto Rico and Española to conduct slaving raids in the islands of Guadalupe, Trinidad, Dominica, and Tabaco, in other words to the islands located immediately to their east (the Lesser Antilles or the *Islas Comarcanas*), which of course were conveniently inhabited by carib Indians.<sup>628</sup> In the end the enslavement of Carib Indians became Sedeño's main goal for returning to Trinidad, despite his initial plans for the island focusing on conquest and pacification paired with its proximity to Paria for future *entradas* there. However, after several failed attempts to subdue the island's native population, he engaged in slave raids both in Trinidad proper and on the nearby coast of *Tierra Firme* to make a profit out of an unsuccessful venture. Sedeño would continue to benefit from the indigenous slave trade well into the mid-1530s, this time in present-day Venezuela and Colombia, taking Indians from deep within the interior of South America as we will see in the next chapter.

Just as Sedeño combined missions of conquest with slave raiding expeditions, turning to slaving when his first goal of pacification failed, a series of German conquistadors and governors of Venezuela also captured indigenous slaves as consolation prizes when their ventures of

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<sup>627</sup> AGI Patronato 18, N.9, R.3, sin folio. "debajo del dicho seguro de ella los indios del dicho pueblo con los comarcanos de la dicha provincia como gente infiel y con ánimo bestial mataron a esta veinte y tres españoles y ciertos negros y una mujer y los dichos caballos y otros ganados y no contento con lo suso dicho continuando su maldad fueron a la provincia de Paria con ánimo de matar los españoles que en ella residen."

<sup>628</sup> Jiménez, 186.

exploration ended in disappointment.<sup>629</sup> As had Sedeño, the newly arriving Germans sought a new Incan Empire or El Dorado in the interior of the South American continent; thus they conducted almost constant entradas from 1529 until 1539, most ending in disillusionment. This frustration often led the men to seek a quick and easy way to profit from their thwarted entradas, usually with the sale of Indian slaves captured during their expeditions.

While the German conquistadors, along with some of their Spanish counterparts in Nueva Granada (present day Colombia), would learn to view Indian slaves as consolation prizes, in their first expeditions into the interior of Venezuela and Nueva Granada they refrained from engaging in slave raiding as an end unto itself. As usual, the conquistadors captured hundreds of Indians to serve as their guides, porters, or translators as had the majority of Spanish explorers before them in Florida and other regions, but at the culmination of their entradas they returned to Coro with few if any Indian slaves. At this point then, early on in the penetration of the continent when the Spanish could still sustain hope for encountering a new incredibly wealthy civilization on their ventures, the benefit from taking huge numbers of Indians as slaves did not exceed the possible consequences of disrupting the indigenous settlements of the land or disobeying Crown orders. Following decades of experience in establishing colonies in the Americas, the Spanish understood that the enslavement of hundreds of peoples often led to unrest, rebellion, or depopulation of a region, essentially ruining the area for future Spanish settlement and exploitation. Thus, if there was hope to profit from a region using the area's native peoples as a willing and sustainable labor force, the removal of its indigenous population through the slave

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<sup>629</sup> The German conquistadors discussed here were appointed by the Welser family (an incredibly expansive merchant family from present day Germany) who possessed factories and trading houses throughout continental Europe. They first dealt in goods and trade with the Orient, but in 1526 expanded to the New World opening a factory in Santo Domingo. In 1528 they were awarded the contract to conquer and settle the territory of Venezuela by the King of Spain. Juan Friede, *Vida y Viajes de Nicolás Féderman: Conquistador, Poblador, y Confundador de Bogotá, 1506-1542*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Librería Buchholz, 1960), 13-18.

trade was discouraged, especially by Crown officials. In fact, the Crown actively attempted to curtail the transport of enslaved Indians from the province of Venezuela in 1531.<sup>630</sup> Instead, all Indians captured by the Germans were to be employed within the province of Venezuela, for example, in the very important *entradas* into the interior.<sup>631</sup>

Hence, when Nicolás Féderman did engage in notorious and very public abuse of numerous indigenous peoples during his *entrada* in 1530, he was harshly censured and perhaps inspired the elaboration of Crown policy regarding the selling of Indian slaves from Venezuela. However, the majority of his abuses still occurred under the pattern of capturing Indians for use *during* *entradas*, in this case for a mission to explore the interior of Venezuela in search of the South Sea and mineral riches, beginning in September of 1530.<sup>632</sup> During his seven month voyage, Féderman took nearly a hundred Indians from each settlement he encountered as porters and guides, however when these servants were willingly bestowed upon him Féderman rewarded the Indian leaders by releasing their subjects after they reached a new province. For example, from the indigenous town of Hittoua, Féderman was given one hundred and fifty Indians to serve as porters and guides, but once the group reached a neighboring province inhabited by a different group known as the Aymanes, the conquistador allowed almost all the Indians from Hittoua to

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<sup>630</sup> Though they did give license to Governor Antonio de Alfinger to enslave any rebel Indians who refused the requirement in his original contract with the King as long as they paid the royal fifth on the sale of the Indians

<sup>631</sup> “Capitulación con los alemanes,” 27 de marzo de 1528. “Vos doy licencia y facultad a vos y a los dichos pobladores para que a los indios que fueren rebeldes, siendo amonestados y requeridos, los podáis tomar por esclavos... los podáis tomar y comprar, siendo verdaderamente esclavos, pagándonos el quinto de los dichos esclavos.” Transcribed and printed in Enrique Otte’s compilation *Cedulas Reales Relativas a Venezuela, 1500-1550*, (Caracas: Edición de la Fundación John Boulton y La Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1963), 250. The elaboration on the policy of enslaving the Indians of Venezuela, as in keeping them within the province, appears in the “Real Provision del Consejo de Indios,” 10 de mayo de 1531. Transcribed and printed in Enrique Otte’s compilation *Cedularios de la Monarquía Española relativas a la Provincia de Venezuela, 1520-1561*, Vol. I, (Caracas: Edición de la Fundación John Boulton y La Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1965), 97. Accompanying this provision is a license allowing the Germans to transport up to 4,000 African slaves to Venezuela.

<sup>632</sup> Friede, 37-39. At the start of the journey Féderman’s group counted 112 Spaniards and over 100 Indians from the area surrounding Coro. One year prior to Féderman’s expedition, the governor Ambrosio de Alfinger, also led a venture of exploration to the lake of Maracaibo in search of mineral wealth and a passage to the South Sea (the Pacific Ocean). However documentation for this voyage is scarce.

return home (only keeping the interpreter in his custody).<sup>633</sup> According to the account, Féderman did this not out of the kindness of his heart, but to demonstrate the “generosity” of the Spaniards and the benefits of forming an alliance with them.<sup>634</sup>

On the other hand, when the principal Indians or caciques disobeyed the conquistador, or worse, fled and hid from his approaching force, he often captured as many Indians as he could, but especially favored the detention of a cacique’s female relatives (though he would supposedly settle for the company of any beautiful women).<sup>635</sup> These men and women, who were considered as permanent slaves by Féderman, were then divided up among his men to serve them during their journey. However, if they survived the expedition they may have eventually served as a supplement to the soldiers’ salaries.<sup>636</sup> In fact, towards the end of Féderman’s entrada, there is evidence that he began collecting and capturing Indians for export. Particularly, following an altercation and battle with the Indians of two towns, Paraguana and Tocayo, located to the southwest of Coro on Lake Maracaibo. Here Féderman imprisoned all of the “rebel” Indians on a small island located in the center of the lake. These Indians were described by the Spanish of Coro as “rancheados,” meaning they were sequestered or imprisoned awaiting their sale and

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<sup>633</sup> “Historia Indiana o primer viaje de Nicolás Féderman,” translated and edited by Juan Friede and printed in *Descubrimiento y Conquista de Venezuela (textos históricos contemporáneos y documentos fundamentales)* Tomo II, (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1962), 171-172. This is supposedly a firsthand account of the 1530 Féderman expedition written by Féderman himself, first published in German but translated to French in 1916 and then to Spanish by Friede.

<sup>634</sup> In addition to the taking of Indians whether as temporary unwilling allies or permanent slaves, Federman also engaged in rescate for pieces of gold with each indigenous group he encountered during his mission. While this expedition did not in fact locate another Incan Empire, the samples of gold that he did succeed in collecting only whet his imagination and inspired future, lengthier, voyages of exploration into the interior of the continent by along with many other conquistadors.

<sup>635</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Venezuela de Coro,” 6 de octubre de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 206, R.1, N.4, fol. 14v. In addition to the enslavement of Indians for entradas during this period, it also appears that slave raiding continued unabated both along the coastline and into the interior with Spanish slavers coming both from the islands and settlements of Venezuela to gather Indian slaves. Something I examine further in the next chapter.

<sup>636</sup> During some of his more violent encounters with the Indians of Venezuela, Féderman would capture and enslave up to 600 Indians, though many more died in the battle itself. Friede, 58-67.



export, almost like livestock.<sup>637</sup> Additionally, with the Indians isolated on the islands, the Spanish freely looted their villages and settlements, taking all the gold and other trade goods they could locate. It would be these appalling actions, which destabilized the entire province-sending many indigenous groups into rebellion against the Spanish, which conversely only provided the Spanish with more Indians to legally enslave and sell in Cubagua or the Caribbean islands-that would draw attention to the conquistador.

Immediately following his return to Coro, Féderman's cruelties were publically denounced and he was exiled from the province for four years. At the same time the Crown issued a new royal order prohibiting the removal of any Indians from Venezuela. In addition to the change in policies regarding where Venezuelan Indian slaves could labor, a new policy made it illegal to take the Indians from Paraguana as slaves or even *naborías* without their consent. These Indians, known as *Caquetios* in contrast to their "carib" neighbors, received this special consideration as Spanish allies and friends, otherwise known as "indios amigos." The *Caquetios* even participated in Spanish, and later German slave raids against the Indians designated as *Caribs*.<sup>638</sup> Again, the reaction of Spanish officials against the German conquistador's actions could have had larger, geopolitical origins. On the other hand, it is possible that the Germans themselves did not fully respect the commands of the Spanish Crown or the officials on the ground in the Americas, only fueling the tension between the two groups. It is also possible that Féderman and his companions were some of the more extreme examples of an ever growing

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<sup>637</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 206, R.1, N.4, fol. 20r. "se alzaron los más de los dichos pueblos especial unos pueblos que se llaman paraguana y el tocayo y todos los otros pueblos hacia barlovento y allí en los pueblos de paraguana estaban unas lagunas muy grandes y unas isletas en ellas adonde los dichos indios estaban rancheados después que se rebelaron y siempre el dicho tiene deseo y procuro de los enviar a ranchar por les toman sus haciendas."

<sup>638</sup> "Orden al gobernador de Venezuela sobre el cacique Marcos" 1535. AGI Caracas I, 13r-13v. The group designated as *Caribs* were not ethnically Carib, but were an Arawak group known as the *Jirajaras*. They were an enemy of the *Caquetios*.

practice that Spanish conquistadors would also adopt; the commodification and dehumanization of Indians.

While the Spanish Crown tried to protect at least some of the Indians of Tierra Firme, the conditions on the ground in Venezuela prevented any actual justice for the native peoples. The colonists, both Spanish and German, of Venezuela argued that they depended upon the servitude of these Indians, especially when engaging in the entradas into the interior. Thus, a local slave trade remained in effect, while Féderman's "rancheo de indios" did in fact fall from favor for several years.<sup>639</sup> It is also unclear if Féderman and his companions made a profit from the sale of these Indians, since most of the accusations against him focus on the larger impact of the mistreatment to the province as a whole.

In the wake of Féderman's first entrada, the governor Antonio de Alfinger embarked on his second expedition into the interior of the province, a journey that would last two and a half years (from June of 1531 to November of 1533) and end in the conquistador's death. It is also in this particular venture that the new practice of taking Indian slaves to supplement soldiers' meager salaries or to turn a profit from a failed expedition can first be witnessed clearly, even from the start of the campaign. Upon reaching Maracaibo, the lake and settlement only forty leagues from Coro, Alfinger captured, branded, and arranged the transport (by González de Leiva) of two hundred and twenty-two Indian slaves to Santo Domingo.<sup>640</sup> This being the very beginning of his expedition, he clearly was enslaving these Indians for sale only since they did not accompany him or his men into the interior. Alfinger's men also captured their share of slaves throughout the expedition, branding and selling them in both Santo Domingo and Jamaica,

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<sup>639</sup> Jiménez, 223-224.

<sup>640</sup> "Información y Cargos contra Alfinger por Juicio de Residencia del Dr. Navarro," 1538. AGI Justicia 56, N.2, fol. 57v.-59.

going directly against the Crown policy prohibiting the removal of Indian slaves from Venezuela. The same man who shipped the two hundred and twenty two slaves to Española, González de Leiva, also sold sixty five Indians (for seven and a half pesos each) captured during the venture in Jamaica in 1533.<sup>641</sup> For the sale of these slaves, acquired illegally, Leiva also failed to pay the royal tax, the crime that he was ultimately punished for.<sup>642</sup> Throughout the deposition and testimony, the Indians in question are referred to as *piezas*, or pieces, demonstrating their commodification. Indians would be referred to more and more regularly as *piezas* throughout the rest of the 1530s. Beyond the significance of being reduced to a thing, the conquistadors also treated the Indians they captured with little or no humanity, even beheading the sick Indians so that they would not delay the progress of the expedition.

Beyond those transported by Leiva, other larger shipments of Indian slaves taken during the *entrada* began arriving in Santo Domingo by April of 1534, only a few months after the conclusion of Alfínger's *entrada*. The Protector of the Indians himself, Bishop Bastidas, wrote to the Crown from Santo Domingo reporting the arrival of many Indian slaves from the "government of the Belzares." While Bishop Bastidas admitted the questionable origin of the Indians, who were likely taken while at peace and therefore illegally and should never have left Venezuela, the government of Santo Domingo still sold the cargo of Indians as *naborías* at the modest price of six *castellanos* (a type of gold coin worth roughly the same amount as a peso of gold) each. The *naborías* would then be required to serve their Spanish masters for a period of six

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<sup>641</sup> "Información y Cargos contra Alfínger por Juicio de Residencia del Dr. Navarro," 1537. AGI Justicia 56, N.2, fol. 34r-34v. The witnesses who made these assertions were Gil Navas and Virgilio García.

<sup>642</sup> AGI Justicia 56, N.2, fol. 55v. and Jimenéz, 232.

years.<sup>643</sup> In addition to the capture of indigenous slaves for profit, and the many that were used during the mission of exploration itself, Alfinger also adopted Féderman's practices of assaulting and sequestering Indian villages in order to acquire both slaves and gold.<sup>644</sup> For example, after attacking a group called the Pacabueyes, Alfinger constructed a corral in the town of Tamara where he imprisoned up to two hundred local Indians, depriving them of all water and food until their relatives ransomed their release at a hefty price of slaves and gold.<sup>645</sup>

The first entradas of Alfinger and Féderman amplified the destabilization of the interior of Venezuela, extending into Nueva Granada, which reached a pinnacle under the pressures produced by a series of entradas in the mid-1530s.<sup>646</sup> Among these expeditions were the double-pronged entrada conducted by Nicolás Féderman and Georg Hohermuth von Speyer (Jorge Espira) from 1535 until 1539, the venture of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada's from April of 1536 to early 1539 deep into Muisca territory, and the vying missions of Antonio Sedeño and Gerónimo de Ortal in 1535-1536 into Paria and Meta. Each one of these entradas covered vast amounts of territory, encountered many diverse indigenous groups, and met with varying degrees

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<sup>643</sup> "Carta del Obispo de Santo Domingo," 16 de abril de 1534, AGI Santo Domingo 218, N.5, fol. 1r. "los dichos indios se dieron por naborías obligados a servidumbre de seis años y se vendieron cada uno a precio de seis castellanos y así se repartieron por esta isla."

<sup>644</sup> "Declaración y Relación del Entrada del Gobernador Alfinger por maestre del campo Esteban Martín," 18 de agosto de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 206, N.4, fol. 33r.-33v. He even set fire to destroy entire settlements leaving the Indians with nowhere to hide. After capturing one group of fleeing Indians, Alfinger claimed that the Indians ran from the approaching Spanish brigade because they feared they had come from the settlement of Santa Marta. The Indians explained that the Spaniards who journeyed from Santa Marta forced them to engage in trade, at first in gold, until none was left and then they would attack the Indians taking as many as they could as slaves back to Santa Marta. "porque lo habían así usado con los dichos cristianos de Santa Marta y también supimos de ellos que los rescataban por oro y después que no tenían más lo llevaban presos," AGI Santo Domingo 206, N.4, fol. 27r.

<sup>645</sup> Jiménez, 232. Alfinger sequestered at least one other population, at the town of Yjara, along with torturing their cacique for six months until receiving 6,000 pesos of gold for his ransom.

<sup>646</sup> The destabilization of Venezuela had begun decades earlier with the first slaving raids of the second and third decades of Spanish colonization, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

of success (monetarily speaking, especially in regard to discoveries of great mineral wealth).<sup>647</sup> However, what is most significant here is that all of these men engaged in the enslavement of massive numbers of indigenous peoples, both to serve them during the expedition and to sell afterwards. Even Quesada, whose expedition was the most successful of the group,<sup>648</sup> did briefly engage in the enslavement of Indians to serve as payment for his soldiers.<sup>649</sup> For example, the Spanish under Quesada prepared an ambush on a group of Indians near present day Bogotá, in which they captured up to three hundred women and children who were divided up among the soldiers as compensation for their service.<sup>650</sup>

Slaver	Year	Captured In	Taken To	Number
Sedeño	1530	Paria	Puerto Rico	unknown
Federman	1530	Paraguana	unknown	unknown
Alfínger	1530	Venezuela	Santo Domingo	107
Alfínger and Leiva	1531	Maracaibo	Santo Domingo	222
Ordas	1531	Paria	Cubagua	Unknown,
Sedeño	1532	Trinidad and Paria	Puerto Rico	Unknown
Leiva	1533	Venezuela	Jamaica	65
Federman	1535	Venezuela	Santo Domingo	174
Quesada	1537	Nueva Granada	unknown	300
	<b>Total Known:</b>	<b>868</b>		

**Figure 37, Indian Slaves Captured During Entradas into Nueva Granada and Venezuela, 1530-1537**

<sup>647</sup> For an overview and description of all most of these expeditions, and a few more, from their origins to their outcomes see José Ignacio Avellaneda's *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

<sup>648</sup> Quesada's success came from his discovery and sacking of the Muisca's capital of Tunja that provided he and his men with thousands of pesos in gold and hundreds of emeralds.

<sup>649</sup> J. Michael Francis, *Invading Colombia: Spanish Accounts of the Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada Expedition of Conquest*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 83-85.

<sup>650</sup> "Relación de Santa Marta," 1545, transcribed, translated, and published in Francis's *Invading Colombia*, 65-66. The taking of these Indians occurred in early 1537, well prior to the discovery of great riches, which in the case of Quesada's expedition would take the place of slaves.

Meanwhile, Féderman, having returned to Venezuela following the death of his opponent Alfinger, began his entrada by taking one hundred and seventy four Indians from the Cabo de Santa Cruz y la San Antonio who were to be sold in Santo Domingo. These Indians were branded as soon as they were captured, in a location very near to where Féderman's expedition began at Cabo de la Vela, and evaluated as being worth between eight pesos and six pesos depending on their age and size.<sup>651</sup> These slaves could be branded and sold openly, due to another change in Crown legislation in 1533 and 1534 that reversed the provision of 1531, reestablishing the legal removal of Indian slaves from Venezuela.<sup>652</sup> As one can imagine, Féderman continued to take more slaves than necessary throughout his lengthy voyage into Nueva Granada, but how many survived to be sold at the end is unknown.<sup>653</sup> Because of the double role played by the Indian slaves, all the would-be conquistadors of Nueva Granada captured hundreds, perhaps thousands of Indians, leading to the rapid depopulation of many regions of present day Colombia and Venezuela.

By late 1538 multiple officials reported to the King of Spain that there literally were no Indians from which to create repartimientos in the entire province of Venezuela.<sup>654</sup> According to Bishop Bastidas, the Belzares reported selling 1,005 indigenous slaves obtained through "just war" at a return of 1,499 pesos, 1 tomín, and 11.5 grams of gold since 1529. In the two years that the Welser Company reported slaves obtained through rescate, 1536-1538, the total sale of 539 indigenous persons was 3,713 pesos.<sup>655</sup> These numbers only reflect the sales that were recorded and considered legal. Many more remain hidden, especially those where "indios amigos" were

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<sup>651</sup>Avellaneda, *Los Compañeros de Federman*, 31.

<sup>652</sup>Jiménez, 221-222.

<sup>653</sup>For a list of at least some of the many caciques (along with their subject Indians) who Féderman captured (many of who died soon after) and enslaved see the letter written by the Bishop of Coro to the King in 1538 located in AGI Santo Domingo 218, N.13, fol. 2r.-3r.

<sup>654</sup>"Carta de obispo de Venezuela de la ciudad de Coro," 2 de abril de 1538. AGI Santo Domingo 218, N. 12, fol. 2r.

<sup>655</sup>AGI Contaduria 1609, R.1, N.1 and AGI Patronato Real 193, R.25, 1538.

sold into slavery or where the slave traders sought to avoid paying the royal fifth. Only amplifying the impact of the various entradas were the numerous licensed and unlicensed slave raids (originating from Cubagua, Española, Cuba, and Puerto Rico) of the coast of Tierra Firme (which began decades before) that became more and more frequent as the 1530s progressed. Essentially the collecting and capture of Indians in Tierra Firme had become a business in and of itself, a process examined in much greater depth in the following chapter.

While the enslavement and exportation of the indigenous populations of Venezuela and Nueva Granada best highlights the cruelty and abuses of the Spanish conquistadors, one must look at the many expeditions prior to those of the German conquerors to see the larger role played by Indian slaves in all aspects of exploration and conquest. From their part in motivating voyages of exploration to new territories (like Florida, South Carolina, and Mexico) to their presence in the expeditions themselves as guides, porters, and translators, one cannot underestimate the importance of the Spaniards' forced collaborators and auxiliaries during the early years of conquest and colonization throughout the Americas. Their significance becomes clear, especially that of the translators and guides, in the Spaniards' persistent return and use of enslaved Indians in missions of conquest and settlement (Chicorano of Gualdape and Don Luis of Jacán) despite the dangers inherent in bringing these Indians back to their ancestral lands. Here we see how some indigenous peoples were able to harness their power and agency, using the Spanish to not only return to their lands but to exact revenge on their former captors. Previously enslaved Indians also shared their knowledge of the Spanish with other indigenous groups, for example the Taíno Indian who helped to thwart Ponce de León's conquest of Florida by keeping the cacique of the Calusa from forming an alliance with the Spanish expedition. In other cases, many Indian slaves simply used the trials and disorganization of journeys of

exploration to escape their masters, finding refuge in foreign indigenous societies as seen on the De Soto entrada. Still others chose to minimally help the Spanish and by befriending them succeeded in escaping some of their worst abuses. The Spanish voyages of discovery, and how Indians slaves at times succeeded in manipulating the journeys to their purposes, only adds to the larger story of an Indian Diaspora. While this diaspora was chiefly a tale of forced movement, migration, and displacement; it was also one of opportunity, survival, and empowerment for at least some indigenous peoples.

Nevertheless, the majority of Indian slaves taken by the Spanish were unable to overcome their situation and suffered in unimaginable ways through incredibly lengthy treks across difficult terrain (or weeks at sea) during which they received little sustenance and were forced to carry heavy burdens of trade goods, corn, and other materials. Those who survived these trials, which were not many, would often only find more suffering at the end of the journey, as they were sold far from their native lands facing displacement and more years of slave labor in even more distant and unfamiliar lands. Here we see a new element to this diaspora as many Indians were displaced not once, but twice through the Spanish desires of conquest and exploration. Whereas the majority of this Indian diaspora thus far examined has focused on the forced movement of an indigenous group from their homelands to another foreign environment (whether on the same island in the case of the Repartimiento of 1514 on Española or from other islands to Cuba or Española), here we witness a much more complex and multi-directional movement of enslaved Indians. For example, we see Indians being enslaved in Mexico, taken to Cuba, and then transported to Florida by the Narvaéz venture. In another instance we see Indians taken from the coast of present day Virginia traveling all the way to Mexico, then Spain and finally back to the New World. At times pre-Hispanic trade or kinship networks would make



these migrations less traumatic, while other indigenous groups would have had no previous knowledge or contact with one another. This diversity in the experience of a diaspora only further complicates this story of fluid movement, displacement, and creation of new ethnically diverse societies across the Caribbean, which would reach its height in the 1530s alongside the peak of the Indian slave trade.

## Chapter 6

### *Granjerias de Indios: The Climax of the Indigenous Slave trade in the Americas 1526-1542*

As the initial conquest enterprises, from the pearl fisheries of Cubagua to the gold mines of Cuba, decreased in profitability more and more Spaniards looked to the gathering and selling of indigenous slaves as the next big business. These slavers searched for indigenous slaves in the mainland of the New World including Mexico (New Spain), Venezuela, the Pearl Islands, Tierra Firme, and Brazil. Although Spanish explorers and slavers had already visited the majority of these regions, for example the Pearl Islands of Cumaná and Cuchina in 1501, it was not until the late 1520s, or the peak of the slave trade, that the mainland became the source of the majority of indigenous labor for Caribbean industries.<sup>656</sup> In addition to hunting in new territories, where it was often illegal to enslave Indians, the slave traders also had a new interest in the hundreds of slaves they collected. In previous decades most slavers were sponsored by officials and wealthy landowners and instructed to capture slaves for a particular island, mine, or fishery. By the late 1520s, slavers were no longer solely focused on the labor they (or their sponsors) could harness from the captured Indians in sugar plantations or gold mines of the Caribbean. Instead, they were more focused on the profits they would receive from selling the Indians in any colonial market.<sup>657</sup>

The growth of the indigenous slave trade as its own economic venture mirrored the decline of many of the earliest colonial endeavors. In fact, by following the slave trade, one can also witness the evolving colonial economy and the formation of new businesses, one of them of

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<sup>656</sup> “Orden de informe de los indios traído por Cristóbal Guerra” 1501. Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Indiferente General 418, L.1, F.70R

<sup>657</sup> This is reminiscent of Colón’s idea for a large Indian slave trade, selling Indians to Anadalucía to make the Indies venture profitable and sustainable. For more on this plan see Chapter 2.

course being the selling of Indian slaves. While the gold mines of Puerto Rico and Española were no longer productive, Cuban gold mines were still profitable. However, by the 1520s, sugar plantations and ingenios had largely replaced the gold mining industry in much of the Caribbean. In addition, by the late 1520s we see the emergence of cattle ranching in Española. Meanwhile, in the Pearl Islands, as older fisheries in Cubagua produced fewer pearls, new oyster beds were discovered in Coche and Margarita, shifting the destination of the newly captured indigenous slaves.

These Indians, wherever they were delivered, were both replacement laborers for the diminishing Taíno populations of Española or Cuba, and merchandise for the new slaving entrepreneurs. In this economy, slavers and officials could make a profit by selling more than captured Indians. They could also sell the slaving licenses to fellow colonists. The Crown even used slaving licenses as currency to pay administrators, including religious officials, throughout the Americas. With the commodification of Indians we also see the Spaniards referring to Indian slaves in new, less humane ways. It is in the late 1520s that we begin to see Indian slaves labeled as “piezas” or pieces whereas in earlier transactions they were described as “indios esclavos,” as slaves yes, but also as human beings. We also see a decrease in the number of Indians taken as *aborías*, with a correspondent rise in the branding of captured Indians as slaves.<sup>658</sup> Because the Indian slaves could be resold they remained potential commodities or experienced terminal commodification, thereby impeding the process of resocializing or rehumanizing the indigenous

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<sup>658</sup> Whereas a *aboría* was not subject to resale, as they were considered part of their owner’s *encomienda*, their purchaser was also legally obligated to give them their freedom following a stipulated number of years of labor, usually no more than eight years. An Indian marked as slave had no such protection. These Indians were branded in different manners depending upon the location and decade. As covered in Chapter 2, some of the first brands marked Indians with an “F” for King Ferdinand. By 1528, in Pánuco, slaves received an “R” from the royal brand on their face, while in Cubagua slaves were marked with a “C” for “carib” on their upper arms. The rationale behind the different brands is unclear.

person, as *naborías* would experience upon entering an *encomienda*.<sup>659</sup> Overall, the dehumanization of Indian slaves matched the rise in profits to be made from the capture and sale of indigenous peoples in the sixteenth century. By the peak of the slave trade, the 1530s, Indian slaves are treated more and more like African slaves, as property and not as souls to be saved.

In this new climate, with the expansion of the profit-driven indigenous slave trade we see the replacement of traditional debates surrounding the legality or morality of Indian slavery that occupied the Crown and officials throughout the second and third decades of colonization.<sup>660</sup> Instead, the Crown and colonial leaders focused on issues regarding jurisdiction, the branding of slaves, and taxation. However, humanitarian arguments and accusations were still articulated to mask the purely profit driven conflicts between the Crown officials and colonial merchants. Additionally, the fine line dividing legal and illegal activity throughout the Circum-Caribbean, shown through the explosion of the indigenous slave trade in the 1520s and 1530s, further demonstrates the chaotic nature of the Spanish colonial experiment in the early sixteenth

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<sup>659</sup> I use the definition of commodification of people through slavery postulated by anthropologist Igor Kopytoff in his essay “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as process” that appears in the classic collection *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* edited by Arjun Appadurai. On page 65 of the compilation Kopytoff describes the process of commoditization of a slave: “Slavery begins with capture or sale, when the individual is stripped of his previous social identity and becomes a non-person, indeed an object and an actual or potential commodity. But the process continues. The slave is acquired by a person or group and is reinserted into the host group, within which he is resocialized and rehumanized by being given a new social identity.” While any slave, from the first days of the colonial experiment until abolition, was considered to be a commodity for a period of time, I argue that it is not until the height of the indigenous slave trade that the majority of Indians enslaved remained commodities following their initial sale, demonstrating a change in how Spanish colonists perceived Indians and in the overall moral economy of the Circum-Caribbean. Essentially by the fourth decade of colonization slaves were subject to “terminal commoditization.” Kopytoff, Igor, “The Cultural Biography of Things,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* edited by Arjun Appadurai, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 75.

<sup>660</sup> By the 1520s, the laws regarding Indian slavery should have been settled, following the debates of Las Casas and Montesinos that resulted in the passing of the Laws of Burgos in 1512 and the codification of the Requirement (both discussed in Chapter 3) meant to protect innocent and free Indians from exploitation. Additionally the laws sought to ensure that the native inhabitants of the Americas would receive instruction in the Catholic faith to save their souls and create a docile, civilized indigenous population.

century.<sup>661</sup> Conversely, the range and scope of both legal and illegal indigenous slaving raids implicates the Crown in many cases, at the very least for implicitly supporting the slaving armadas with semi-legal licenses. Here again we see the drive for profits trumped the moral imperative in the highest levels of Spanish colonial government. In fact, the Crown only appeared to legislate against the Indian slave trade when it negatively impacted their proceeds. For example, it became illegal to take indigenous slaves from New Spain in 1526, in order to develop local industries that required their own Indian labor supply, when it became clear that the possibilities for wealth in New Spain greatly surpassed those of the smaller, less populated Caribbean Islands.

By the late 1520s the slave traders, now hailing from Cuba, Puerto Rico, New Spain, Trinidad, and the Pearl Islands (well beyond the first traders who largely sailed from Española alone) began to search for new sources of indigenous slaves looking beyond the Lucayos chain, other “useless” islands, and the nearby islands inhabited by Carib Indians. In this ever widening lens the lands and inhabitants of present day Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela, and Brazil all came into focus. Armadas were sent to these locations with licenses of varying degrees of legality that allowed for different levels of exploitation and enslavement of incredibly diverse groups of indigenous peoples. These slaves of various ethnicities, transported by an ever diversifying set of slave traders, would then be brought back to the islands of the Caribbean to be sold for profit. While many of the newly enslaved Indians were brought to Española, as had been the traditional pattern, the slave traders now expanded their markets visiting Cuba, Puerto Rico, Cubagua,

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<sup>661</sup> Scholars from Kenneth Andrews (in *The Spanish Caribbean: Trade and Plunder, 1530-1630*) and Carl Ortwin Sauer (in *The Early Spanish Main*), to David Ablulafia (in *The Discovery of Man: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus*) have discussed the lack of authority and control present in the early Spanish colonial world, especially in the recently conquered territories. This chapter argues that by focusing on the indigenous slave trade into its later years, the limits and the strengths of the Spanish colonial government become clearer. This was not a lawless frontier, but a developing maritime periphery where power and legality were constantly in flux, though the Crown did ultimately consolidate its power by the mid sixteenth century.

Margarita, Coche, and even Panama when selling their merchandise. In these diverse locations the Indians would work in a variety of commerce, depending on the location and the decade. In essence, we see a full scale Indian Diaspora (much like the African Diaspora of the Atlantic World) during the height of the indigenous slave trade with Brazilian Indians living alongside Mexican Indians in Española, an amazing and complex situation. By viewing the Indian slave trade as a diaspora, it forces us to look at both sides of the trade, from where the Indians were taken and to where they were delivered, broadening the number of actors involved and the diversity of ethnic groups impacted. Because of the number of places and peoples touched by the expanding slave trade in the 1520s to 1530s, as evidenced in the number of documents produced during and following these slaving expeditions, it becomes clear that the practice of slavery influenced all other aspects of life, especially the economies of these nascent colonies.

Competition for control of the indigenous slave trade, and the Indian slaves, was a central concern for officials as high as the Crown and merchants throughout the Caribbean by the fourth decade of colonization. In fact, this chapter argues that the most profitable business in the New World at this point was not gold, silver, sugar, or livestock, but Indians.

#### Indians for Livestock: Panuco and the Yucatan Peninsula

During the early years of the colony of New Spain the enslavement of Indians was commonplace, but in November of 1526 the King passed a mandate, or Real Cedula, making it illegal to capture any new slaves from New Spain. The laws also made it illegal to *herrar* (brand) and transport a slave outside of New Spain, especially when traveling to Spain. Surprisingly, the law even made the offense punishable by death or the confiscation of a person's

wealth.<sup>662</sup> Finally the decree required that residents of New Spain bring their indigenous slaves forward, to the royal court, to prove that they were enslaved legally, returning those that were enslaved unjustly to their homelands. As with many other decrees and laws issued by the far away King of Spain, this new ordinance did little to curb actual practices on the ground in the Caribbean or New Spain, at least for the first several years. However, by 1529 we see one of the first attempts to enforce the law in a case brought against the high profile officials of New Spain, Nuño de Guzmán (governor of the province of Pánuco and interim President of the Royal Court in Tenochtitlan) and the Licenciado Juan Ortiz de Matienzo (judge/oidor of the royal court in Tenochtitlan) by the Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga.<sup>663</sup> After the passing of the royal decree or *cédula* forbidding the transportation of Indian slaves from New Spain, the two officials continued to grant licenses to enslave Indians in Pánuco (see figure 1 for a map of the region).<sup>664</sup> While Guzmán and Matienzo's illegal activity demonstrates the limits of the Crown's power on the ground in the Americas, the fact that they were eventually brought to trial for their actions shows that the Crown (or at least the royally appointed colonial officials) was able to exert their will when their economic interests were at stake.

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<sup>662</sup> José A. Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud de los Indios*, Tomo II, 101.

<sup>663</sup> "Indios o esclavos sacados del Panuco para las Islas" 5 de julio de 1529. AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 1r. Nuño de Guzmán was not the only colonial governor to make a profit in the Indian slave trade. Almost concurrent with his exploits was the case of Pedro de Rios and Diego López, the governors of Panama and Honduras respectively, who enslaved at least two hundred Indians in Nicaragua which they then attempted to sell in Panama. The two officials hoped to make two thousand pesos from the sale. "Memorial de Rodrigo del Castillo a su Magestad y autorizado de Samano" 1528. AGI Patronato 26, R. 5, fol. 138r.-138v.

<sup>664</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 1r. Testimonies against the two officials appear in two documents in the same Ramo, first against Juan Ortiz de Matienzo and later against Nuño de Guzmán. Witnesses include: Cristóbal de Quevedo, Diego de Padriera, Lope de Sayvedra, Pedro de Barboa, Juan de Cartucha, Juan Pardo, Gomez Meto, and Gonzalo Ruiz Solano.



Figure 38, “Scheeps Togt Van Iamaica Gedaan na Pánuco en Rio de las Palmsa Aan de Golf van Mexico Gelegen [Cuba, Gulf Coast, Yucatan & Florida]” by Pieter Vander A in 1706. Images/Descriptions provided by www.RareMaps.com -- Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.<sup>665</sup>

In this case, while some slaving and transportation of Indians to the islands for sale was beneficial to the Crown’s purse (in providing labor for the developing sugar ingenios and cattle ranches of Española for example), the removal of too many indigenous peoples would impede the development and expansion of local industries in New Spain. Specifically the Crown and local leaders both sought wealth from tribute provided by the region’s huge indigenous population, as well as from the expansion of cotton (and other agricultural economies). In the case of Pánuco, the officials on the ground in New Spain wanted to limit the removal of those indigenous populations, at least to the Caribbean islands, since the province of Pánuco had

<sup>665</sup> Translation of map title, "Ship voyage originating in Jamaica sailed to Panuco and Rio de Las Palmas was located/situated in the Gulf of Mexico," by Angela Sutton.



served as a source of captive Indians for Mexico City prior to Guzmán's arrival. In fact, several residents of the very small settlement claimed that three to four thousands slaves had just been taken from Pánuco to Mexico City.<sup>666</sup> Beyond agricultural pursuits, these slaves may have also been employed in the search for mineral rich mines, which if discovered would have only made the maintenance of New Spain's indigenous labor force more important. In 1546 the Crown's hopes were fulfilled with the discovery of the silver rich mines in the nearby province of Zacatecas.

Beyond the purely economic reasons for the officials of New Spain to attack the actions of Nuño de Guzmán, were political and personal reasons due to Guzmán's appointment as governor of Pánuco that effectively took power of the province from Cortés and his entourage in Mexico City. Pánuco was a stronghold for pro-Cortés sentiment and the arrival of a new, Crown appointed leader threatened the region's traditional elite and power structure, much of which depended on personal favors from Cortés.<sup>667</sup> In fact, the majority of the witnesses who later testified against Guzmán opposed his leadership, and consequently many of them suffered economically during his reign in Pánuco, even losing control of their encomiendas. For example, only a few days after Guzmán assumed power in Santisteban, the official Lope de Sayavedra (a vocal witness against Guzmán) was arrested for mismanaging the estates of deceased persons.<sup>668</sup> Even the Bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, who prepared the accusations against Guzmán in 1529, was a well-known enemy of the Governor, even publically claiming that Guzmán held a vendetta against Cortés from their time in Cuba together. According to Zumárraga, this animosity

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<sup>666</sup> Donald E. Chipman, *Nuño de Guzman and the Province of Panuco in New Spain, 1518-1533*, (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1967), 200.

<sup>667</sup> Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, "Introduction," to *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 9 and Chipman, 144-145.

<sup>668</sup> Chipman, 165.

explained why Guzmán attacked supporters of Cortés, or those enjoying encomiendas granted to them by Cortés, in Pánuco.<sup>669</sup> Then perhaps, the entire suit against Guzmán had little to do with his abuses of power or treatment of the Indians of Pánuco, and much more with larger issues of economic and political competition in New Spain. Regardless of the motivations behind the case against Guzmán, it is clear that under his leadership the indigenous slave trade in Pánuco exploded, sending Huastecs (the native inhabitants of Pánuco), Mexicans, Otomís, and Chichimecs (all neighboring indigenous groups) across the Caribbean.

While both the Crown and leaders in New Spain had reasons to limit the indigenous slave trade in Pánuco, the actual residents of the province had every reason to encourage it. The region, despite initial speculation possessed few natural resources, and absolutely no mineral wealth. Thus, from the very beginning the only commodity readily available to the residents of Pánuco was the Indian population.<sup>670</sup> The idea of profiting from the sale or exchange of their neighboring Indian groups would have been appealing to the majority of Spanish colonists in the region, and perhaps was suggested by them, as Guzmán claimed in defense of his actions to the Crown. The economic opportunities available to these residents, a very small Spanish population (no more than sixty or seventy) concentrated in the port town of Santisteban, would have become even more limited after Guzmán's arrival and initial decrees that essentially attacked the inhabitant's encomienda grants, likely their only source of income.

Immediately upon his arrival in Pánuco, Nuño de Guzmán removed all of the Indians from the power of their local encomenderos, placing them under his rule and leaving the citizens of Pánuco without Indians from which to extract tribute. Once the encomenderos provided Guzmán with the appropriate documentation proving their legal claim to the encomiendas, which

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<sup>669</sup> Chipman, 152-153.

<sup>670</sup> Chipman, 10.

could only be issued by the Crown and not Cortés, their Indians would be returned to them. However, the majority of encomenderos in Pánuco either did not possess documentation for their encomienda grants, or held Cortés appointed encomiendas, which Guzmán did not consider legal.<sup>671</sup> This resulted in the immediate loss of status or wealth of many residents of the province, while simultaneously creating enemies for Guzmán. He then ordered all of the caciques in the province to gather in the town of Santisteban and to bring with them gold, clothing, and Indian slaves. Beyond collecting tribute from the caciques at the meeting he also made it clear that they no longer were beholden to their former encomenderos, at least for thirty days pending the demonstration of legal titles by the embattled encomenderos. From this initial gathering and suspension of encomiendas Guzmán took a large number of indigenous slaves, including 70 from the total of 80 Indians belonging to the encomienda of regidor Cristóbal de Quevedo (who lost all of his property after being convicted for “crimes against the government”) alone.<sup>672</sup> In exchange for this first batch of slaves the province and Guzmán received a shipment of cows, goats and horses, presumably from Española.<sup>673</sup> In addition to being the first of many deliveries, this round of slaves was also one of the few legal shipments since the Indians sold as slaves were already considered slaves by their caciques. Spanish colonists could purchase and trade in already marked indigenous slaves per the royal provision signed in Burgos in 1528 which stated

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<sup>671</sup> Chipman, 145.

<sup>672</sup> Chipman, 165. While the removal of Quevedo’s Indians would have been significant to him, his encomienda was a fairly small one. For example, a more famous conquistador of Mexico, like Hernán Cortés controlled close to 60,000 Indians. Even in the largely depopulated island of Española an important Crown official, like Judge Zuazo, benefitted from the labor and tribute of 200 Indians. Lesley Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 165-167 and Esteban Mira Caballos, “El Sistema Laboral Indígena en las Antillas (1492-1542)” in *Encomiendas, Indios, y Españoles* coordinated by Julián B. Ruis Rivera and Horst Pietschmann (Munster: Cuadernos de Historia Latinoamericana): 28.

<sup>673</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 3r.-3v and Ramo 2, fol. 9r. Testimonies of Cristóbal de Quevedo and Gonzalo Ruiz Solano. While the island of Española lacked Indians by the 1520s, it did have a surplus of livestock. Within a few years, at least by the 1530s, cattle ranches were one of the more profitable industries on the island. By the 1580s there were over 400,000 cattle on the island allowing the ranchers to export up to 50,000 hides a year. “Carta de Audiencia de Santo Domingo,” 25 de enero de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 49, R.4, N. 23, fol. 2r-2v. and Andrews, *The Spanish Caribbean*, 13.

that “Of the new lands: Santa Marta, Tierra Firme, Higueras, Yucatan, Nueva Granada, Pánuco, Rio de Palmas you can traffic in Indian slaves already held by caciques as slaves.”<sup>674</sup> Clearly this provision had its limits, which Nuño de Guzmán (along with many other conquistadors and slavers) would exceed and ignore, leading to the illegal enslavement and removal of thousands of Indians from Pánuco in the span of only two years. The very existence of this provision, nullifying part of the Real Cedula of 1526, shows that the Crown was only opposed to indigenous slavery that endangered other sources of income for the royal purse.

Following the loading of his first ships of arguably legally enslaved Indians, Nuño de Guzmán began giving slaving licenses to the residents of Santisteban. These licenses gave certain men the authority to capture and sell between twenty and thirty slaves taken during an *entrada* into the province, supposedly attacking rebellious Indians. The Indians in question were the Chichimecs of Río de las Palmas, who had supposedly conducted multiple raids on Spanish settlements killing several Spaniards in the process.<sup>675</sup> Men providing a horse for the expedition received the maximum allowance while those traveling on foot could take a few less slaves.<sup>676</sup> Guzmán issued larger licenses to the higher ranking members of Pánuco’s society legalizing the capture of anywhere from three hundred to one thousand Indian slaves. The *entrada* lasted four to five months, and while it did not pacify the region, it did accomplish the capture of some legal Indian slaves through “just war.” For example, Cristóbal de Quevedo witnessed the loading and departure of a small *pataje* (a small boat or patache) containing three hundred Indian slaves with room only for them to stand. They were shipped ninety leagues from the port of Santisteban,

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<sup>674</sup> “Provisión Real hecha en Burgos para el factor de Cuba,” 15 de febrero de 1528. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 60, fol. 69v.

<sup>675</sup> Chipman, 157.

<sup>676</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 3v. and fol. 6v. Testimonies of Cristóbal de Quevedo and Diego de Padriera.

presumably to the island of Cuba.<sup>677</sup> The three hundred slaves in this one pataje, were the only Indians legally captured and enslaved in Río de las Palmas during the “just war.”<sup>678</sup>

Most of the slaves taken during the expedition, and in many other slave raids were not captured during war, but were questionably acquired during rescate (the unfair or uneven exchange of merchandise, often under the threat of violence). Beyond the boat that left carrying the three hundred slaves, another sixteen or seventeen ships (though the witness Lope de Sayavedra puts the number as high as twenty-one boats) sailed from Santisteban filled with indigenous slaves.<sup>679</sup> Of these numerous vessels, at least two carried a thousand or more slaves including those belonging to the merchants Miguel de Ibarra and Juan de Utria.<sup>680</sup> Many others carried between one hundred and four hundred slaves each, including those belonging to Alonso Valiente (four hundred), Juan de Cordero (one hundred and twenty), Licenciado Zuazo (two hundred), Cristóbal de Bezos (four hundred), and Quintero (two hundred and fifty). Of the slaves carried by these ships, one third of the profits to be made from the sale of the Indians on each boat were claimed by Nuño de Guzmán.<sup>681</sup> In other boats Guzmán expected to benefit from the entire cargo or at least half, for example he would claim the entire profit from Sancho de Caniego’s load of two hundred slaves. However, Guzmán and Matienzo did not hold a stake in all the cargos. Many other ships were operated by independent merchants, like the ships belonging to Cuban residents Duero (two hundred slaves) and Comacho (three hundred and fifty).<sup>682</sup> These slavers would keep all the proceeds of the Indian slaves’ sale.

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<sup>677</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 3v. A pataje or patache is a type of boat used during times of war to carry new or alerts and to reconnoiter coastlines or guard the entrances of ports.

<sup>678</sup> Chipman, 207.

<sup>679</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 6v. and 9v. Testimonies of Diego de Padriera and Lope de Sayavedra.

<sup>680</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 3v. Other vessels were owned by Cristóbal Bezos, Alonso Valiente, and Nuño de Guzmán himself. Fol. 9v.

<sup>681</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 12r. Testimony of Pedro de Borboa.

<sup>682</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 12r.

In addition to the Indians to be taken in war, Nuño de Guzmán also continued to take any already branded slaves from caciques that he encountered during the entrada.<sup>683</sup> While these slaves could be legally traded if they were indeed slaves, some witnesses claimed that many caciques often presented free Indians belonging to enemy groups as slaves to Guzmán. In one case a young, female Indian was declared as a slave by the leaders of her village despite the fact that she was not a slave and that the Spaniard Lope de Sayavedra knew her as a free person. Sayavedra even told Guzmán that she was free, only accepting the mark of a slave under the threat of death. Sayavedra's testimony did not appear to have helped the girl as she was sent to the islands with thousands of other indigenous slaves.<sup>684</sup> Some caciques even offered up other caciques as slaves for the Spaniards, removing many indigenous leaders from their territories illegally.<sup>685</sup> Of course the indigenous leader left behind would have benefitted from the elimination of competitors, which helps to explain their deceitful actions while demonstrating the ability of many indigenous leaders to take advantage of the Spanish presence to achieve their own goals. Any Indians wrongly declared as slaves should have been discovered during the inspections that preceded the actual branding of a slave prior to their transfer to the islands. However, the inspection and branding were largely handled by Guzmán, whose scruples did not prevent him from branding free Indians, like the girl discovered by Sayavedra. Once declared a legal slave the Indian would be branded on the left side of their face with the letter "R," which stood for "real marca" or royal mark.<sup>686</sup> It was through the process of branding, that these Indians became commodities for the residents of Pánuco. Also of note is that all the Indians were

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<sup>683</sup> AGI Patronato, 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 10v.

<sup>684</sup> AGI Patronato, 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 10v.

<sup>685</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 3v.

<sup>686</sup> Chipman, 208.

branded as slaves, none receiving the designation of a naboría, showing the larger commodification of the indigenous slaves under Guzmán.

Slavers	Numbers of Indians transported
Gúzman removes slaves from Pánuco encomiendas	At least 70 Indian slaves exchanged for livestock in Española
Gúzman ships Chichimecs captured in “just war”	300 Indian slaves to Cuba
Miguel de Ibarra	1,000 Indian slaves
Juan de Utria	1,000 Indian slaves
Alonso Valiente	400 Indian slaves
Juan de Cordero	120 Indian slaves
Licenciado Zuazo	200 Indian slaves
Cristóbal de Bezos	400 Indian slaves
Quintero	250 Indian slaves
Resident of Cuba, Duero	200 Indian slaves
Comacho	350 Indian slaves
	4,290 Total documented

**Figure 39, Slaves taken from Santisteban in 1528**

As late as April of 1529, only a few months prior to the start of the investigation into the actions of Nuño de Guzmán several more ships laden with indigenous slaves departed Santisteban for Santo Domingo. One such vessel, owned by Alonso Valiente and piloted by Juan Rodriguez, carried one hundred and twenty slaves while two other boats (belonging to Pedro de Mina and Miguel de Ibarra) each sailed with a cargo of three hundred. As he had in the earlier shipments, the governor Nuño de Guzmán possessed a stake in many of these slave cargos, including three hundred of the three hundred and thirty slaves that sailed on Juan Perez de Gijón’s vessel for Santo Domingo. Yet more ships held larger numbers of slaves, including

Juan de Utria’s craft that sailed with eight hundred souls aboard.<sup>687</sup> At least two of the witnesses who testified during Nuño de Guzmán’s proceedings saw Utria’s ship at dock in Santisteban filled with slaves, and also observed the ship at its destination, Santo Domingo, where one witness, Juan Pardo was surprised to see that nearly half of the slaves had survived the journey and were being sold in the island’s port.<sup>688</sup> This same witness also saw the licenciado Matienzo (apparently less involved in the enslavement of the Indians of Pánuco than his colleague Guzmán) in the village and port of Santisteban filling two ships with slaves in April of 1529. However, his luck did not hold because one of these vessels sunk during the voyage to Santo Domingo killing most of the slaves along with at least three or four Spanish sailors.<sup>689</sup>

Slavers	Numbers of Indians Transported
Alonso Valiente	150 Indian slaves
Pedro de Mina	300 Indian slaves
Miguel de Ibarra	300 Indian slaves
Juan Perez de Gijon	330 Indian slaves to Santo Domingo
Juan de Utria	800 Indian slaves
	1,880 total documented

**Figure 40, Slave Shipments from Santisteban in April 1529**

By the end of his term in Pánuco, Nuño de Guzmán was responsible for the enslavement and transportation of up to twelve thousand Indians, the majority of whom were allies of the Spanish colonists, and therefore legally free.<sup>690</sup> With so many Indians being taken from the province in a short time frame, the region suffered a huge decrease in its native population. Some witnesses stated that as a result of the entradas executed by Guzmán, and supported by

<sup>687</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 13r. Testimony of Juan de Cartucha.

<sup>688</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fols. 14r.-14v.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., fol. 14v.

<sup>690</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 4r. This estimate comes from the testimony of Cristóbal de Quevedo.



Matienzo, there no longer were any indigenous slaves left in the province of Pánuco.<sup>691</sup> Some witnesses even reported that the province was generally depopulated. The few Indians left fled to the mountains in fear of the Spanish since the majority of the slaves taken were under the power of allied caciques; thus none of the Indians felt safe or secure remaining nearby to their former allies, the Spanish.<sup>692</sup> In fact, of the thousands of slaves captured, only three hundred were taken in actual combat, or “just war” according to the witness Lope de Sayavedra.<sup>693</sup> While the consequences of these massive slaving expeditions were negative for Pánuco and its permanent residents, the fate of the slaves taken to the islands was even worse, where most of them would die within their first year of residence if they survived the journey. According to the witness Diego de Padriera, many of the enslaved Indians died before reaching their final destinations, some even throwing themselves overboard and drowning prior to leaving Santisteban.<sup>694</sup>

Complicating the entrance of Mexican Indians to Española further, is the likelihood that they were completely distinct ethnic groups, unlike the Indians arriving in Santo Domingo from the Lucayos Islands or even Venezuela, who possessed similar biological links. However, for those Indians brought to Cuba, the transition may have been smoother, both due to the two regions’ historical trade relationship and the possibility that the earliest settlers of Cuba were from Mexico.<sup>695</sup> Despite the upheaval that Guzmán’s slaving expeditions caused in the province of Pánuco and in the islands where the slaves were sold, he ultimately did not have to pay for his misdeeds and instead was authorized to assemble an army of conquest in May of 1529 to pacify

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<sup>691</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 6v.

<sup>692</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fols. 6v.-7r.

<sup>693</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 10v.

<sup>694</sup> AGI Patronato 231, N.4, R.1, fol. 7r.

<sup>695</sup> Ann H. Ross and Douglas H. Ubelaker, “A Morphometric Approach to Taíno Biological Distance in the Caribbean,” *Island Shores*, 124-125.

the province of Nueva Galicia.<sup>696</sup> Perhaps, the Crown was willing to overlook his abuses of power in Pánuco in order to remove Cortés's influence from New Spain, as he had in Satisfiban. Or it may have been in the Crown's interest to allow the removal of Indians from Pánuco, a province with no mines or other economic pursuits to employ the large indigenous population. Whatever the reason, Guzmán went on to serve as the first president of the Audiencia of Mexico from 1529 to 1533.<sup>697</sup> He was eventually put on trial for his misdeeds in Pánuco, among other areas that he governed, but remained a presence at court (though he may have been a prisoner at court) until his death in 1551 in Spain.<sup>698</sup> While the Spanish did not punish Guzmán, his actions in both Pánuco and Nueva Galicia were notorious even in geographically distant areas of present-day Texas and northwestern Mexico. During Cabeza de Vaca's journeys through these areas he heard tales of the "Mala Cosa" or "Evil Thing," whose description shares much in common with a Spanish soldier. The Indians who were said to have witnessed the "mala cosa," and escape it, often had scars similar to the brands seared into the skin of Indian slaves.<sup>699</sup> Meanwhile the Crown also reiterated its policies regarding how Indians could legally be branded as slaves both in New Spain and the larger empire. In a royal provision from August of 1529 the Crown attempted to ensure that each province's royal brand was kept under lock and key, particularly in a chest that two keys had to unlock. One key would be held by the Bishop while

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<sup>696</sup> For more on his entrada into Nueva Galicia, which was at least as bloody as his time spent in Panuco, see Ida Altman's new monograph, *The War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550*.

<sup>697</sup> Chipman, 10-11.

<sup>698</sup> Chipman, 280.

<sup>699</sup> Daniel T. Reff, "Text and Context: Miracles and Fear in the Relación of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca," in *Journal of the Southwest*, 38:2, (Summer, 1996): 115-138 and Rolena Adorno, "The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca's Naufragios," in *Representations*, 33, Special Issue: The New World, (Winter, 1991), 163-199. For more on the fascinating story of Cabeza de Vaca's captivity and journey following the failure of Pánfilo de Narváez's entrada in Florida see "The 1542 Relación (account) of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca," edited and translated by Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2003) and Fernando Operé's *Indian Captivity in Spanish America: Frontier Narratives*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

the other was to be guarded by another royal official. In this way only Indians captured legitimately as slaves would be branded as such, in theory at least.<sup>700</sup>

Even after Nuño de Guzmán exhausted the province of Pánuco of its indigenous population, Indian slaves from New Spain continued to arrive in the Caribbean islands. For example, in 1530 many indigenous slaves from New Spain were sold in Cuba, though the exact number cannot be ascertained. We know that a significant number of slaves or “piezas” were delivered to Cuba because of complaints registered by residents regarding taxes they paid on top of the slave’s purchase price. For each indigenous slave the buyer paid an additional seven and a half percent of the purchase price as they would have paid for any African or Negro slave brought from Castille.<sup>701</sup> However, after paying this tax or diezmo, the officials of Cuba became aware that the residents of Española did not have to pay, or at the very least failed to pay the same seven and a half percent on all the slaves brought from New Spain.<sup>702</sup> The officials Gonzalo de Guzmán and Diego Caballero both confirmed that in Española indigenous slaves purchased from New Spain, in addition to those from provinces such as Santa Marta (present day Colombia), were not subject to the royal diezmo. Following this discovery, the officials of Cuba began to petition for the taxes paid to be returned to those who purchased slaves brought from New Spain.<sup>703</sup>

A few years later the residents of Cuba again petitioned the Crown for the same privileges regarding indigenous slaves, which the populace of Española enjoyed, most notably a

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<sup>700</sup> “Real Provisión sobre la manera de herrar los esclavos indios” 24 de agosto de 1529. Transcribed and printed in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica, 1493-1810, Volumen I* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 130-131.

<sup>701</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Cuba a Vuestra Magestad” 15 de Septiembre de 1530. AGI Santo Domingo 118, R.1, N.7, fol. 3r.

<sup>702</sup> The diezmo was ten percent of the total value of any merchandise trafficked through, arriving at, or entering into a Spanish colonial port paid to the Crown.

<sup>703</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Cuba,” 23 de noviembre de 1530. AGI Santo Domingo 118, R.1, N.17, fol. 1r.

reprieve from paying the quinto on all gold mined by Indian slaves.<sup>704</sup> At the same time they agreed to pay the royal fifth on all gold mined through African labor, but argued that the limited amount of gold mined by Indians, along with the lack of native Indians in Cuba, both made the quinto untenable when applied to the fruits of indigenous labor. In fact the residents of Cuba went as far as to threaten to stop the mining of gold if they had to continue to pay the quinto on gold mined by Indians.<sup>705</sup> While the focus of this letter is on the tenability of indigenous slave labor, it is interesting that the document refers to residents that own *both* indigenous and African slaves that seem to work together demonstrating the close relationship that the two ethnic groups may have had this late in the colonial period and after at least two rebellions where the two groups joined together.

Even after it became common knowledge that the transportation of Indian slaves from New Spain was illegal, many indigenous (mainly Mayan) slaves continued to appear in the ports of both Cuba and Española causing great confusion regarding what to do with the new arrivals.<sup>706</sup> Some thought the new slaves may have been a part of the agreement with Nuño de Guzmán whereby they traded the slaves for livestock, and therefore were considered legal to buy and own if they were previously enslaved by the native leaders of Pánuco.<sup>707</sup> Indians could also legally be sold as slaves if they had been captured during “just war.” The origin of the majority of the slaves was unclear, though it is likely that most were taken during the lengthy conquest of

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<sup>704</sup> The quinto was another tax paid to the king, this time five percent, of all treasure found or taken in any colonial Enterprise.

<sup>705</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Cuba a la emperatriz y reina nuestra señora,” 9 de julio de 1532. AGI Santo Domingo 118, R.1, N.22, fol. 2v. While the focus of this letter is on the tenability of indigenous slave labor, it is interesting that the document refers to residents that own *both* indigenous and African slaves that seem to work together demonstrating the close relationship that the two ethnic groups may have had this late in the colonial period and after at least two rebellions where the two groups joined together.

<sup>706</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de Cuba,” 18 de agosto de 1534. AGI Santo Domingo 118, R.1, N.30, fol. 1r.

<sup>707</sup> “Carta de Manuel de Rojas de Santiago de la Isla Fernandina,” 10 de noviembre de 1534. Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Colección de Juan Bautista Muñoz, Tomo 62, fol. 17r.

the Yucatán Peninsula. Thus, the bulk of the slaves taken by the Montejo family remained in the custody of the royal court in a kind of limbo until the Crown determined what would become of them.<sup>708</sup> Problems regarding the origin and legality of indigenous slaves, something we will see frequently with slaves taken from the coast of Venezuela, plagued colonial courts more and more often as laws regarding indigenous slavery became more stringent in the 1540s.

### The Paradox of the Pearl Islands and Jurisdiction: From Harvesting Pearls to Indians in Cubagua, Margarita, and the Coast of Tierra Firme

Shortly after the discovery of the islands of Margarita, Coche, and Cubagua (known as the Pearl Islands), located off the coast of Venezuela, the Spanish colonists established the first pearl fisheries (for a map of the region see Figure 42 below).<sup>709</sup> The Spaniards employed Guaquerí Indians of Margarita and Lucayos Indians in these early fisheries. The presence of Lucayos Indians, and perhaps Taínos from the Greater Antilles, explains the as yet unidentifiable indigenous pottery found at Nueva Cádiz. This foreign ceramic style likely was brought by Indian slaves from the northern Caribbean in the early 1520s. The pottery was found alongside typical ceramics of Venezuela Indians. Interestingly, the Indians of Nueva Cádiz seem to have developed a new fusion style of pottery that was adopted by most of Eastern Venezuela by the 1530s. Here is a perfect example of the impact of a growing Indian Diaspora.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Francisco de Montejo tried to conquer and pacify the Yucatan in 1527 without success. He returned in 1531 and by 1537, with the help of thousands of Indian allies, gained at least partial control of the Yucatan. These years of nearly constant war produced many of the Indian slaves were captured and sent to be sold in Espanola and Cuba. John F. Chuchiak IV, "Forgotten Allies: The Origins and Roles of Native Mesoamerican Auxiliaries and Indios Conquistadores in the Conquest of Yucatan, 1526-1550," in *Indian Conquistadors*, 178-182.

<sup>709</sup> C.S. Alexander, "Margarita Island, Exporter of People," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 3, (October 1961): 550.

<sup>710</sup> Irving Rouse and José M. Cruxent, *Venezuelan Archaeology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 134-135.

The Spaniards brought Indian slaves from so far away due to their diving skills, a necessity for harvesting pearls. Because of this skill set Spanish residents of Cubagua reportedly paid up to one hundred and fifty pesos in gold for one Lucayan Indian slave. This was an enormous sum when the majority of Indian slaves sold for fewer than twenty pesos and usually not more than eight pesos.<sup>711</sup> One of the first of these *rancherías de perlas*, or pearl fisheries, opened in 1516 on the southern coast of Cubagua, but by the 1520s there were over one hundred such fisheries.<sup>712</sup> In the fisheries' most lucrative years, during which they produced up to 1.2 billion pearls, it was illegal for Spaniards to conduct slaving armadas in the Pearl Islands or in the adjacent coastlines. The Spanish Crown feared that any slave raiding would destabilize the region and reduce the profitability of the pearl fisheries. Thus, it was not even legal to trade slaves for goods or to participate in the practice of rescate.<sup>713</sup> While these laws were not always followed, they did protect the islands' native Indians from outside enslavement, of course many of them were still forced to work in the fisheries diving for pearls, until late in the third decade of conquest. By this point the coast of Tierra Firme, and even some of the Pearl Islands themselves, became harvesting grounds as residents from the Caribbean islands of Española, Cuba, and Puerto Rico flocked to the Islands and surrounding coast of South America in search of indigenous slaves. In 1527 alone there were at least eighteen expeditions of rescate that sailed from Española to various parts of the coast of Tierra Firme. When each of these caravels returned, they all counted Indian slaves among their cargo.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>711</sup> Michael Perri, "Ruined and Lost," 136.

<sup>712</sup> Molly Warsh, "Enslaved Pearl Divers," 346-347.

<sup>713</sup> Warsh, 346.

<sup>714</sup> Otte, *Las Perlas del Caribe*, 457-460. The Spaniards on these voyages traded for much more than slaves, with most only claiming around six indigenous slaves alongside their cargo of guanin and pearls. However, some ships did contain nearly fifty Indians, for example those of Francisco de Cisneros and Juan Bono de Quejo.

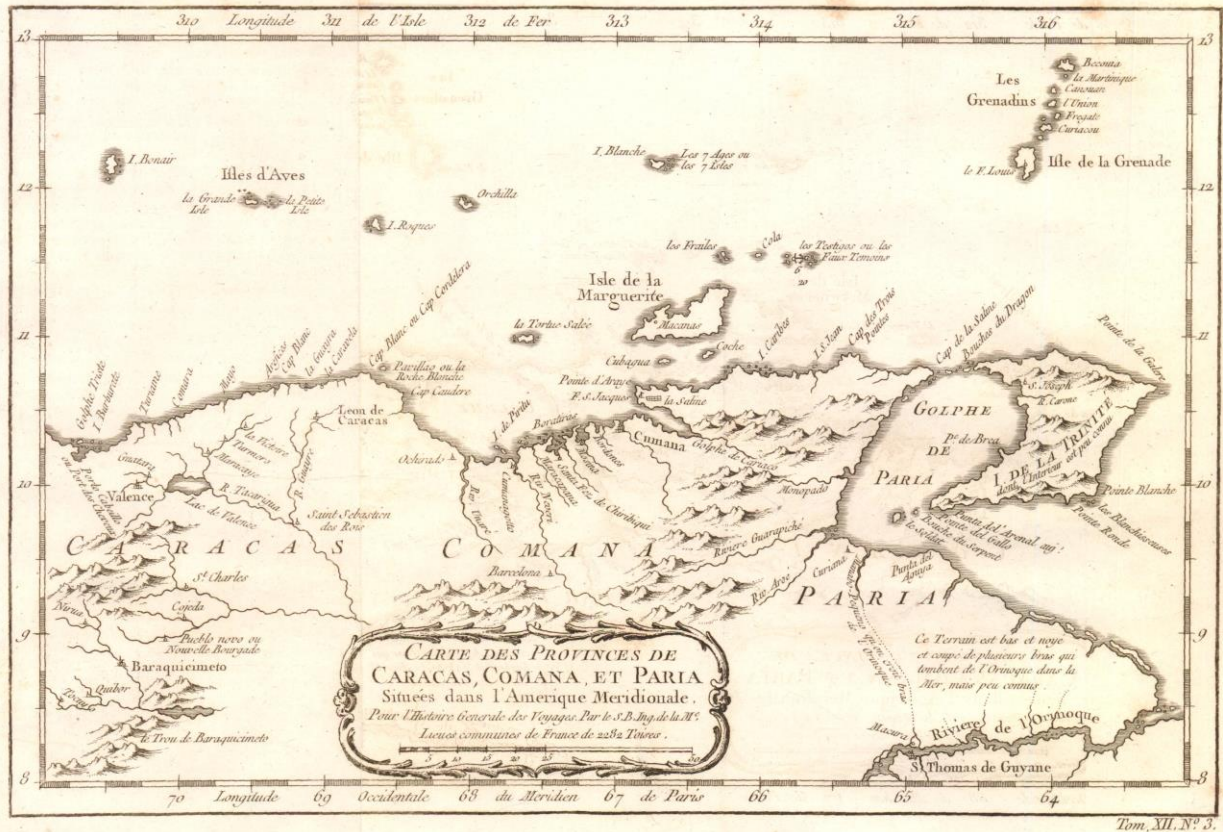


Figure 41, “Carte des provinces de Caracas, Comana et Paria..” by Harrevelte, E. van/ Changuion, D.J. in 1773 from Old World Auctions.

Like the slavers from the Caribbean islands, the inhabitants of the Pearl Islands themselves soon had to expand their web to obtain enough slaves to complete the very dangerous work of pearl collection. Some operations needed as many as forty Indian divers per day to collect the pearls. This number combined with the high mortality rate of pearl divers gives one an idea of the need for new labor pools.<sup>715</sup> To fulfill these needs the residents of the Pearl Islands conducted more frequent raids into the mainland or Tierra Firme.<sup>716</sup> As we saw in earlier chapters the most commonly raided areas prior to 1526 were those in a state of war or inhabited by Carib Indians. These included the coastline between the peninsula of Araya to the gulf of

<sup>715</sup> Perri, 137.

<sup>716</sup> Alexander, 550.

Cariaco, Santa Fe and Chichiriviche (in a state of rebellion since 1520), and the area from Neveri to Cumanagoto and Cabo Codera. Because these territories were at least partially depopulated before the climax of the indigenous slave trade we see Spaniards trying to limit the slaving from these regions while expanding their activities into the interior of Tierra Firme.<sup>717</sup> To help supplement the labor force for both the pearl fisheries and the increasingly productive sugar ingenios of Española, the Crown began issuing licenses to engage in trade and rescate (including the purchase of indigenous slaves) along the coast of Tierra Firme in 1526. Some of these licenses, like that issued to Judge Alonso Zuazo were to be used annually.<sup>718</sup> By 1528 the number of licenses again multiplied with hundreds of slaving armadas assaulting the coast of Tierra Firme, many under the guise of legally operating trading fleets.<sup>719</sup> After two years, these armadas had left much of the coastline in ruin, along with the hard won coastal alliances between the Spaniards of the Pearl Islands and the indigenous inhabitants.<sup>720</sup> The licenses of rescate essentially facilitated the legal and illegal enslavement of hundreds of Indians along the coast of Tierra Firme.

While the majority of the colonists, and most leaders, sanctioned the slaving expeditions, the slavers did occasionally face opposition from various secular and religious officials who attempted to curb the slave raiding. But, because the majority of those who tried to control the slavers only sought to garner the profit of the Indian slaves themselves, these efforts were largely too limited and ultimately ignored. For example, in 1527 the leaders Jacomé de Castellón (of Nueva Toledo or present day Cumaná and nearby coast of Venezuela) and Pedro Ortiz de

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<sup>717</sup> Jimenez G., *La Esclavitud Indigena*, 177.

<sup>718</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Espanola y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 263-265 and Otte, *Las Perlas*, 210.

<sup>719</sup> In 1528 licenses to engage in rescate were provided to Martín Alonso Alemán, Pedro Ortiz de Matienzo, Alvaro Beltrán, Andrés Hernández, Pedro de Alegría, Alonso Díaz de Gibraleón, Diego de la Peña, and Rodrigo de León, among others. Otte, 211.

<sup>720</sup> Deive, *La Espanola y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 268-269.



Matienzo (of Santo Domingo) reached an agreement promising to desist from all slaving from the gulf of Cariaco to Santa Fe or Chichiriviche for forty days in an effort to let the native inhabitants recuperate. Following the forty days of respite, only small expeditions would be permitted to trade or practice rescate in the area, and these for a limit of two days. Finally, all Indians purchased during the small tours could only serve as *naborías*, meaning they could not be branded and sold again as slaves in another local nor could they labor for more than six to eight years before regaining their freedom.<sup>721</sup> The fact that the two leaders only called for a forty day lull, instead of halting the slaving expeditions entirely, highlights how often the slaving armadas were visiting the region.

Demonstrating the hypocrisy of the agreement, both officials ignored the treaty immediately after signing the document. For example, Pedro de Barrionuevo, the substitute judge for Matienzo, who arranged an expedition of rescate destined for Cariaco on the same day that Matienzo signed the treaty. From this voyage sixty slaves were taken from the gulf of Cariaco.<sup>722</sup> Concurrent with the illegal trips to Cariaco were voyages of rescate to Cupira, Piritu and Maracapaná, and to Paria.<sup>723</sup> The mission to Paria was supported by the Crown itself, revealing the royal leadership's tacit and explicit support of the illegal slave trade, and took between one hundred seventy and one hundred eighty slaves in 1527.<sup>724</sup> It becomes clear that the Crown only enforced its own laws regarding Indian enslavement when it served the royal purse, and not for the benefit of the Indians. By 1528 the Crown had even more incentive to turn a blind

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<sup>721</sup> Jiménez, 177-178. Outside of this small zone rescate and enslaving Indians through warfare was still legal, including in most of Paria and in the coastal areas from Chichiriviche to Cumanagoto and Tagares. Jimenez, 178.

<sup>722</sup> Deive, *Esclavitud del Indio*, 268-269. Castellón also organized an armada to attack supposed rebellious Indians along the exact same stretch of coast protected in the treaty. During this voyage he enslaved a great number of Indians (it is not clear how many) and branded them as slaves.

<sup>723</sup> Two armadas registered to Gonzalo Hernández and Gonzalo Martel sailed to Cupira where they captured and later sold eight Indian slaves. Another two armadas, licensed to Fernando Riberos and Andrés de Villacorta, journeyed to Piritu and Maracapaná.

<sup>724</sup> Jimenez, 178.

eye to the illegal slave trade.<sup>725</sup> In this year they declared a royal monopoly on the pearl trade, making the need for laborers in the pearl fisheries of utmost importance to the Crown. Therefore, the majority of captured Indians were sent to labor in the pearl fisheries of Cubagua and Margarita, though a few were still destined for the sugar ingenios of Española.

While these Indians were still seen as laborers, and were not yet a commodity in and of themselves, we see the origins of the “grangerías de indios” (ranches or farms of Indians) in these massive expeditions of rescate from 1526 to 1528.<sup>726</sup> From these so-called ranches, which encompassed much of Tierra Firme, Spaniards would gather and harvest thousands of Indian slaves for the next decade. These massive operations, augmented by the smaller expeditions, would bring the indigenous slave trade to its climax and devastate many of the native populations of present day Venezuela and Columbia. Even some Indians, usually caciques or other principal Indians, found a way to profit from the Indian slave trade, declaring free Indians as slaves and selling them to the unscrupulous Spanish traders. While, these Indians usually marked their enemies or neighbors as slaves, at times they even sold family members to the Spanish in order to secure trade goods and to nurture their alliance with the Spanish colonizers.<sup>727</sup> Ultimately, the drive to find and supply Indian slaves would create a new enterprise, with Spaniards becoming wealthy and receiving a salary solely from the capture and sale of Indian slaves.

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<sup>725</sup> For a discussion on the good of the Metropole versus the public good of the colony, specifically in cases of illegal trade and contraband in African slaves see María Cristina Navarrete Peláez’s article “De las “malas entradas” y las estrategias del “buen pasaje”: el contrabando de esclavos en el Caribe neogranadino, 1550-1690,” in *Historia Crítica* 34, (Julio-Diciembre, 2007): 160-183.

<sup>726</sup> Historian Enrique Otte describes the coastline of Venezuela as a “granjería de indios,” for the residents of Cubagua by the late 1520s, in his extensive work on the history of Cubagua. Otte, *Las Perlas*, 205.

<sup>727</sup> “Carta de Jácome de Castellón para que se haya cierta información,” 13 de marzo de 1528. Printed in the compilation *Descubrimiento y Conquista de Venezuela (Textos históricos contemporáneos y documentos fundamentales)*, Tomo II (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1962), 51-52.

Slavers/Sponsors	Taken From	Transported To	Number of Indians taken
Pedro Barrionuevo	Gulf of Cariaco	Santo Domingo	60
Gonzalo Hernández and Gonzalo Martel	Cupira	Santo Domingo	8
Fernando Riberos and Andrés de Villacorta	Piritu and Maracapana	Santo Domingo	unknown
The Crown	Paria	Santo Domingo	180
Pedro de Rios and Diego López	Nicaragua	Panama	200
		<b>Total Known:</b>	<b>448</b>

**Figure 45, Slaving Expeditions 1527-1528**

Only making matters worse, by 1528 the oyster/pearl beds of Cubagua were becoming depleted leaving the merchants with little or no ready income source.<sup>728</sup> Some officials, as high as the Crown, considered slaving licenses as forms of payment for other services rendered. By using slaving licenses as compensation for services rendered, the Crown acknowledged the new industry of harvesting Indians, something they would do a few decades later with African slave licenses. The Judges of the royal court of Nueva Cadiz issued one such license to Pedro de Herrera, the mayor of Nueva Cadiz, in 1528. This license permitted him to organize an armada of rescate. With the profit from this mission Herrera would then be able to improve the conditions of his “house, land, and wife.”<sup>729</sup> Others sold the licenses they received from the royal officials, making an immediate profit. Some licenses sold for as much as ninety pesos.<sup>730</sup> Even religious officials turned to slaving licenses as their salary, including the priest Francisco de

<sup>728</sup> Perri, 137.

<sup>729</sup> Otte, 216-217.

<sup>730</sup> Otte, 217.

Villacorta (of Nueva Cádiz) who accepted his payment in the form of several licenses of rescate in 1532.<sup>731</sup> We can see these men with the Crown turning from the waning pearl industry to the growing trade in Indian slaves, targeting indigenous groups in neighboring islands and in Tierra Firme. In fact, already in 1528 the indigenous slave trade was considered to be the second best way to profit from Tierra Firme, just behind the pearl fisheries.<sup>732</sup> By the 1530s the Spanish slavers would move beyond the coastline of Tierra Firme, where most of the rescate took place in the 1520s, into the interior of the South American continent, finding even larger sources of indigenous slaves as seen in the previous chapter. At the same time the pearl industry would become nearly exhausted, leaving many without the means to support themselves or the need to own hundreds of Indian slaves. Thus, the area transformed from one where slaves were delivered to one where slaves were harvested.

Because of the resultant competition for the indigenous slaves of Tierra Firme, an industry attracting Spaniards from across the Caribbean, we see an explosion of legal disputes between the locals of the Pearl Islands, who were accustomed to controlling the indigenous populations of their islands and neighboring coastline, and growing numbers of slavers from Española or Cuba. At the heart of the majority of these cases is the question of jurisdiction, or more specifically who has the right to legally take Indians from Tierra Firme. While it is possible that these complaints were made for humanistic reasons (as the majority of the charges claim) it is far more likely that a competition for valuable resources, in this case Indian slaves, prompted the accusations. Either way they provide the historian with a plethora of data regarding the

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<sup>731</sup> Otte, 218.

<sup>732</sup> AGI, Justicia 50, fol. 867v. Testimony of Lope de Gámez. This legajo contains the residencia, or report and examination of the judges Cristóbal Lebrón, Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, Juan Ortiz de Matienzo, Marcelo de Villalobos y Pedro León by the judges and treasurer of the royal court of Santo Domingo, led by Judge Gaspar de Espinosa.

numbers of slaves taken from the coasts of Venezuela and Columbia in the 1530s and where these slaves were later sold. Basically, they allow us to begin to map the Caribbean Indian Diaspora in the very early years of Spanish colonization.

This competition for Indian slaves was of course destructive to the native peoples of Tierra Firme (as well as to the Spanish residents that depended upon them for important goods and labor), causing the Crown to take action against the slave raiding along the coast of Tierra Firme in 1530. The royal provision, passed in August of 1530, abolished all legal forms of indigenous enslavement in the islands and coast of Tierra Firme, including during “just war.”<sup>733</sup> The new legislation ended the earlier policies from 1503 onward that permitted the capture and enslavement of Carib Indians and provoked the massive slave raiding of the late 1520s. Though this change in policy could have been prompted by humanitarian impulses, it is more likely that widespread tax evasion was the real impetus behind the alteration of laws. There are multiple reports of colonists in Tierra Firme failing to pay the required royal fifth on all slave sales just before the change in legislation. For example, in June of 1530 Antonio de Alfinger, the German governor of the province of Venezuela, captured one hundred and seven Indians of various ages which he then sold in the island of Española without paying the *quinto* to the Crown.<sup>734</sup> To explain his misstep, Alfinger described the poverty of the province of Venezuela, whose only resource was indigenous slaves. He then promised to send the royal fifth at the first chance he got in the form of either slaves or gold.<sup>735</sup> Later, in December of 1530, Luis González de Leiva was caught failing to pay the quinto on two hundred and twenty-two Indians that he captured and

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<sup>733</sup> “Real Provisión que no se pueda cautivar, ni hacer esclavo a ningún indio” 2 de agosto de 1530. *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica*, 134-136 and Jiménez, 180-181.

<sup>734</sup> For more on the conquest of New Granada by the German Conquistadors see Ignacio Avellaneda’s work *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada*.

<sup>735</sup> “Testimonio y requerimiento sobre el quinto de los esclavos,” 19 de junio de 1530. AGI Santo Domingo 203, fols. 1r.-2v.

branded in Maracaibo. He argued that he should be exempt from paying the fifth on the slaves, which he sold in Santo Domingo, because they had been enslaved in new territories where the Spaniards were still trying to pacify the indigenous peoples. To defend his actions, he even cited the example of the conquistadors in Venezuela, like Alfinger, who did not pay the quinto on the slaves they caught while waging war on bellicose Indians.<sup>736</sup>

Regardless of the reasons behind the alteration of the laws surrounding Indian slavery in Tierra Firme, whether to protect the Indians or to try to control the profit made from the slave raiding, the residents and leaders throughout the Caribbean immediately protested the new law and solicited its abolishment. One official, López de Archuleta a judge in Nueva Cádiz, went so far as to refuse to publish the alteration in legislation.<sup>737</sup> Archuleta was not the only official to ignore the new legislation. Many of Cubagua's elite continued to grant licenses for rescate and to engage in war against rebellious Indians, for the purpose of capturing slaves, throughout Tierra Firme. Pedro Ortiz de Matienzo, mayor of Cubagua, issued a license permitting Andrés de Villacorta and Hernández Riberos to pacify the rebel Indians of Cumaná in March of 1531. The conquistadors would receive payment for their efforts in the Indian slaves that they were able to capture during the expedition.<sup>738</sup> During Villacorta's mission against the rebel Indians of the

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<sup>736</sup> Deive, *Esclavitud del Indio*, 325. Many other slavers looked to the coasts of Brazil and Colombia to engage in the illegal slave trade in the early 1530s. These men also avoided paying royal taxes on their cargo, whether legal or illegal. One such slaving voyage precipitated a case being brought against the pilots Cristóbal Alvarez and Pedro de Paz who either purchased or captured an unknown number of indigenous slaves from the province of Santa Marta in the spring of 1531. They then transported these slaves to the island of Española where they attempted to sell them without paying the requisite diezmo and other taxes on them thereby defrauding the royal treasury. To do this Paz and Alvarez did not present them to the royal treasurer upon arrival in Santo Domingo to be evaluated and declared as legally captured (or purchased through rescate) slaves. However when this deceit was discovered a royal order was released requiring the two traders to have the slaves assessed for value and legality and for them to then pay the legal royal taxes on their cargo. Here, we see that even when the slave trade was illegal, the Crown chose to enforce taxation of the slaves over their return to their native lands. "Indios esclavos traídos desde S. Marta por Cristobal Alvarez," 11 de marzo de 1531. AGI Indiferente General 1120, L. 1, fol. 73r.

<sup>737</sup> Jiménez, 182.

<sup>738</sup> Jiménez, 181. Payment for services in Indian slaves, not just in the licenses to capture them, was a common practice, especially as the sale of indigenous slaves became more profitable. Licenses for other armadas, these only

coast of Tierra Firme at least five hundred slaves were captured and branded as slaves, with three hundred of them later sold in Española and Puerto Rico.<sup>739</sup> Once the Indians were branded as such, usually receiving a “C” for “carib” or cannibal to differentiate them from the naborías who were not branded, they could be sold as slaves in any marketplace. The branding of captured Indians determined their future in the most basic way.<sup>740</sup> While in the early years of slaving in Tierra Firme, most Indians were designated as naborías by the late 1520s almost all captured Indians were branded as pure slaves so that they could immediately be sold for a profit. The change in branding policies shows the dehumanization and further commodification of the Indians of the Caribbean, pushing them ever closer to the status of African slaves, whose presence was also growing in the Spanish colonies by the late 1520s. Branding is also yet another example of how the Spanish conquistadors used the written word, from legal documents to the reading of the Requirement, to maintain and demonstrate their power over the natives of the Americas.<sup>741</sup>

While many of these illegal slaving voyages went unpunished, or even unquestioned by the authorities in the Caribbean, some of the most prolific slave traders did face legal

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allowing rescate for slaves, were given to Juan de Ribas, Pedro Herrera, Francisco Portillo, and Antón de Jaén in 1531.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>740</sup> Correct branding of one’s Indians also ensured that a Spaniard’s slave could not be stolen from him. For example, a resident and official of the island of Puerto Rico, Hernando de Lope, wrote a letter beseeching the King to force the return of his two Indian slaves that Judge Frías of Cubagua had recently taken from him under the pretense of branding them. While Lope argued that he had obtained the slaves legally, through rescate with Indinas on the coast of Tierra Firme who had captured the slaves during war, he failed to brand them. Thus, when Frías arrived in Puerto Rico he confiscated the Indians saying he was simply going to brand them. Instead, he gave the slaves to two of his friends on the island, effectively appropriating Lope’s slaves. “Carta de Hernando de Lope al Rey,” 16 de agosto de 1539. Printed in Enrique Otte’s compilation *Cedulas Reales Relativas a Venezuela, 1500-1550*, (Caracas: Edicion de la Fundacion John Boulton y la Fundacion Eugenio Mendoza, 1963), Document 229, 360.

<sup>741</sup> Patricia Seed and Margaret Olsen have both explored the meaning writing and literacy during the early conquest period of Latin America for both Indians and Africans. See Seed’s *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* and Olsen’s recent article “Negros Horros and Cimarrones on the Legal Frontiers of the Caribbean: Accessing the African Voice in Colonial Spanish American Texts,” published in *Research in African Literatures*.

repercussions. In 1530, just after the change in legislation, a law suit was filed by the royal court in Española against the inspector general of the island of Cubagua, Juan López de Archuleta (the official who also refused to publish the new law). In this case, Archuleta was accused of illegally enslaving many peaceful Indians during multiple raids to the province of Cariaco from the end of 1529 through the beginning of 1530. He later sold them to several Pearl fisheries of Cubagua.<sup>742</sup> The trial took place in the capital of Cubagua, the city of Nueva Cádiz, under the leadership of the mayor Gonzalo Hernández de Rojas and the judge Antonio Clavijo.<sup>743</sup> During the trial Archuleta was accused of organizing armadas to travel to the province of Cariaco to capture peaceful Indians to both serve as his own slaves and to sell for a profit. Not only did these expeditions exceed what Archuleta was legally allowed to do in Tierra Firme, specifically he held a license to participate in peaceful trade and rescate along the aforementioned coast, but they also left the region in a state of upheaval for other traders.<sup>744</sup> In addition to the expeditions that he participated in personally, he also distributed several illegal licenses to residents of Cubagua giving them permission to violently capture Indians in Cariaco while also participating in the coercive practice of rescate in the province. From these slaving expeditions Archuleta claimed anywhere from a fourth of the profits to one half of the total sales.<sup>745</sup> Finally, many of the Indians illegally captured during these raids or expeditions were ultimately branded as slaves

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<sup>742</sup> “Proceso que hacia Antonio Clavijo por Comisión de la Audiencia Real de la Española contra Juan López de Archuleta Veedor de la Isla de Cubagua sobre Ciertos Delitos,” en Santo Domingo el 11 de agosto de 1530. AGI Justicia 8, N.1, fol. 1r.

<sup>743</sup> AGI Justicia 8, N.1, fol. 1r.

<sup>744</sup> Archuleta was granted a license to participate in *rescate* along the coast of Tierra Firme in 1526 along with many other high ranking officials in Espanola and Cubagua. However, it is unclear whether this license was still valid in 1529 and 1530 when he is accused of illegally capturing peaceful Indians. Deive, *La Espanola y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 263.

<sup>745</sup> Deive, *La Espanola y la Esclavitud del Indio*, 264.



and sold in full public view in the city of Nueva Cadiz without being examined to determine the legality of their sale.<sup>746</sup>

Because of these insufficient examinations into the origins of the indigenous slaves Archuleta captured an important allied cacique, named Chatima, and his wife during one of his raids, later selling the cacique to Pedro de Herrera.<sup>747</sup> Prior to his enslavement this cacique was a well-known friend of the Spanish, even participating with his people in military engagements against the Caribs of Cumaná. Thus, it was soon determined that he had been enslaved illegally. While he was to be returned to his lands following the trial, first he was removed from the power of Herrera (where he was working as a diver in a pearl fishery) and placed in the protective custody of Antón de Jaén.<sup>748</sup> Sadly, beyond this bit of information the fate of the hostage cacique is unclear, though some historians believe he remained with Antón de Jaén as a *naboría*.<sup>749</sup> However, we do know that many Indians enslaved concurrently with Chatima were transported to Santo Domingo and sold there with the help of Pedro de Alegría.<sup>750</sup> Ultimately these slaving operations destroyed the once peaceful and friendly relationships between the Spaniards and Indians inhabiting the province of Cariaco in Tierra Firme, leaving the territory in a state of war. Due to these slave raids, the residents of Cubagua complained that they had lost some important

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<sup>746</sup> AGI Justicia 8, N.1, fol. 1r. In addition to the charges regarding Indian slaves, Archuleta was also accused of the more mundane crimes of re-selling goods purchased from the Crown at excessively high prices, including wine and flour. Lastly he was accused of helping Don Francisco Fajardo to escape from prison where he was being held for his treasonous relationship with some French sailors to whom he apparently sold salt and other goods. *Ibid.*, fol. 1v.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 30v. Testimony of local mayor (regidor) Diego de Leon.

<sup>748</sup> AGI Justicia 8, N.1, fol. 30v.

<sup>749</sup> Otte, 222.

<sup>750</sup> AGI Justicia 8, N.1, fol. 33v. The history of the friendship between the Spaniards of Nueva Cadiz and the cacique of Cariaco, along with many other caciques of the province (for example the cacique of Macarn and the cacique known as Camayacoa) is described in great detail in a letter to the Crown from several religious officials working in the region in 1533. "Autos Hecho por el señor Francisco de Villavarta el Beneficiado de la isla," julio de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 175, fols. 22r-25v.

indigenous allies, while several religious officials blamed the slave raiding for the native's slow conversion to Christianity.<sup>751</sup>

The cacique of Cariaco was neither the first nor the last friendly indigenous leader to be illegally captured and enslaved by unscrupulous slave traders along the coast and islands of Tierra Firme.<sup>752</sup> Only one year after the dispute over the illegal enslavement of cacique Chatima, the well known allied cacique Turipiari of Paria was taken during an illegal entrada into the province by the conquistador Ordás. Instead of laying the ground work for a new settlement at the mouth of the River Marano, as his contract stated he would be doing, Ordás continued up river well into the province of Paria where he seized, perhaps through violence or through rescate, an unknown number of Indian slaves. One of these was the cacique Turipiari, a well known ally of the Spanish colonists of Cubagua. In fact, the inhabitants of Cubagua and the other Pearl Islands engaged in frequent trade with Turipiari, even stating that the cacique journeyed to Cubagua himself multiple times a year.<sup>753</sup> Thus, the capture of this important cacique, and possibly others alluded to in the letter to the crown, not only ended the commercial relationship between the Cubaguans and Tuipiari, but endangered their affiliation with many of the Indians in the entire province of Paria. While the province had formerly been at peace, the Bishop and other leaders now worried about its future stability if slave raids continued to occur, especially if the Spanish persisted in the capture of powerful caciques on these raids. By losing the native leaders allied with the Spanish, who had served as go-betweens or intermediaries, the Cubaguans feared that they would not be able to rely on the obedience of the larger indigenous populations. In addition, they feared that even if the Indians did not rebel in response to these incursions they

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<sup>751</sup> AGI Justica 8, N.1, fols. 72v.-73r.

<sup>752</sup> Concurrent with the enslavement of Chatima, was the capture of cacique Alonso (friend of the residents of Margarita) along with several of his men. Otte, 222.

<sup>753</sup> "Carta del Obispo de Santo Domingo," 11 de agosto de 1531. AGI Santo Domingo 93, R.1, N.2, fol. 2r.

would flee to the mountains leaving the areas depopulated and the Spaniards without a ready labor force or trading partners.

To highlight the potential danger that the region could be in if the slave raids were not halted, the Bishop reminded the King of the recent destruction of the port city of Santa Marta, which daily suffered the ill effects of robberies and attacks by formerly friendly Indians.<sup>754</sup> Thus, the correspondence asked the King to prohibit any slave traders or conquistadors from slaving in the province of Paria.<sup>755</sup> Underlying the complaint regarding the illegal enslavement of the cacique lies the issue of jurisdiction, with the Bishop repeatedly commenting on Ordás's encroachment into a territory that he was not authorized to conquer nor did he have permission to engage in the capture of slaves through rescate or war while in the said province. So perhaps the real impetus behind this complaint to the King was the Cubaguans' desire to maintain control of the Indians they perceived to be within their sphere of influence and less about the humanitarian violations of Ordás and his slave raiding. In fact, it is not till the final lines of his letter to the King that the Bishop of Santo Domingo mentions the moral obligation of converting the Indians of the province, which was also inhibited by the constant slave raiding of the province. Specifically he cites the delays in building a church in Tierra Firme following the destruction of the church at Santa Marta.<sup>756</sup> Instead most of his letter focuses on how Ordás's actions impeded the regular trade and other economic activity of the region, making the religious issue appear to be an afterthought or a more formulaic complaint mirroring the language used in the Crown's own royal orders and provisions. For example, in a royal provision executed in 1528, the Crown chastised the residents of the Caribbean for exceeding the slaving allowances of prior laws, and

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<sup>754</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 93, R.1, N.2, fol. 2r. Cartagena would replace Santa Marta as the most important port in present day Columbia, perhaps because of the attacks alluded to by the Bishop of Venezuela.

<sup>755</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 93, R.1, N.2, fol. 2r.

<sup>756</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 93, R.1, N.2, fol. 2r.

specifically for capturing and enslaving legally free Indians who were not at war with the Spanish. Because of this behavior the Crown ordered the officials of the Americas to re-read earlier provisions, to make sure they were followed, and to examine the validity of claims of indigenous insurrection. The Crown even required that indigenous populations had to be in a state of rebellion for an extended period to qualify for enslavement. For their rationale, the Crown began by citing their service to God, “we, looking principally to faithfully serve God,” and the importance of protecting and converting the Indians.<sup>757</sup> However, following this formulaic statement, the royal order continues to cite the negative impacts of Indian rebellion, brought on by unscrupulous slave raiding, on the economic and social stability of the colony. It is in this portion of the provision that the Crown’s real concerns become clear. They wanted to limit slave raiding not for moral reasons, but to protect the royal purse and their Spanish subjects suffering from the attacks of angered native peoples. “The Indians fear being taken prisoner or captive by our subjects so they flee their lands leaving the territory desolate and depopulated, while some of them unite and arm themselves in order to kill many Christians and religious officials.”<sup>758</sup>

Regardless of the consequences of slave raiding, and in direct contradiction of the 1530 law, the Crown issues a new decree in 1532 making it legal *only* for residents of Cubagua to attack and enslave rebellious Indians residing along the coast of Tierra Firme, many of which lived in the interior province known as Paria.<sup>759</sup> One wonders if these newly rebellious Indians were the same populations devastated by recent slave raiding expeditions, like that of Ordás or

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<sup>757</sup> “Hostilidad con los indios y su esclavitud: Santo Domingo” 20 de noviembre de 1528. AGI Patronato 275, R.6, sin folio. “vosotros que mirando principalmente al servicio de dios y nuestro haréis bien y fielmente.”

<sup>758</sup> AGI Patronato 275, R.6, sin folio. “los dichos indios con temor de los dichos danos y muertes y prisiones se ausentasen de sus propios asientos y naturaleza y dejasen la tierra desierta y inhabitada y algunos de ellos se juntaron con mano armada a matar muchos cristianos nuestros súbditos y personas religiosas.”

<sup>759</sup> Perri, 140. The majority of these Indians were transported to Panama and sold to merchants and conquistadors heading across the isthmus to the recently discovered Peru. Perri, 142.

the German conquistadors discussed in the previous chapter. The same decree that made it legal for Cubaguans to enslave these Indians simultaneously only authorized the Indian slaves to work in the pearl fisheries of Cubagua, Coche, and Margarita. It was illegal for them to be sold elsewhere. Despite this provision, ship after ship piloted by residents of Cubagua, and filled with indigenous slaves originating from the coast of Tierra Firme, began arriving in the ports of Española, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Clearly, the Cubaguans were using their ability to conduct slaving raids to supply themselves with more than a renewed labor force for the pearl fisheries; they were also using the licenses to sell Indian slaves as a separate and profitable business.

By June of 1532 the officials of Puerto Rico were already writing the King about their confusion regarding the matter and what they should do with the newly arriving Indian slaves from Tierra Firme. As far as the administrators of Puerto Rico were aware the slaving of Indians anywhere along the coast of Tierra Firme or in the Pearl Islands was still completely illegal, yet they were faced with the delivery of hundreds of indigenous slaves. Things only grew more convoluted with the Cubaguan slavers claiming that they had license from the Crown to conduct the slaving raids, presenting the Puerto Rican officials with a legal quandary. Did everyone in the Caribbean have license to engage in rescate or enslave rebellious Indians on the coast of Tierra Firme or were these residents of Cubagua trying to sell patently illegal slaves?<sup>760</sup> The case for deceit from the Cubaguans appeared more likely, especially since the slavers refused to show the Puerto Rican officials their licenses permitting them to enslave rebel Indians, perhaps because these licenses only allowed for ostensibly local enslavement and labor.

Even without knowing the full story behind the Cubaguan slaving raids into Tierra Firme, the officials of Puerto Rico appear to have purchased the slaves. They then excused their actions

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<sup>760</sup> “Carta de los oficiales de San Juan de Puerto Rico,” 2 de junio de 1532. AGI Santo Domingo 166, R. 2, fol. 110r.

by describing how few native Indians the island had left making these indigenous slaves especially necessary to keep the Spaniards' farms producing and to continue to serve the King.<sup>761</sup> The Puerto Rican officials then requested that they too be allowed to form their own slaving armadas to journey to Tierra Firme where they would enslave rebellious Indians, or more specifically Caribs. They argued for this right based upon the frequent attacks that Puerto Rico suffered from the Carib populations living in the Lesser Antilles and along the coast of Tierra Firme, whose assaults on the island's new settlements caused a great deal of damage. Puerto Rico was especially vulnerable due the island's proximity to the Carib islands; with only a short canoe ride separating the populations. Going beyond the excuse that they should be allowed to enslave Indians who attacked their island, the inhabitants of Puerto Rico also employed the tried and true accusation of cannibalism to support their request. "Your majesty will be served if the caribs are made slaves and they deserve to be enslaved because of their bad custom of eating human flesh as they commonly do."<sup>762</sup> Thus, we see another example of various colonies competing over both the right to and profits of enslaved Indians in Tierra Firme. Through their letters and correspondence it becomes clear that the residents of Puerto Rico were not satisfied with simply purchasing already enslaved Indians from the citizens of Cubagua, whose labor they could then harness. Instead they sought their own licenses to be able to personally profit from the trade in Indian slaves, not only from their labor.

While the Crown did not provide the residents of Puerto Rico and Española with slaving licenses for the coast of Tierra Firme, they were granted permission to conduct slaving raids in the islands of Guadalupe, Trinidad, Dominica, and Tabaco in September of 1533. Essentially the law gave the colonists of Puerto Rico and Española license to conduct raids and attacks on the

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<sup>761</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 166, R. 2, fol. 110r.

<sup>762</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 166, R. 2, fol. 110v.

islands immediately to their east, the Lesser Antilles or the Islas Comarcanas, which of course were conveniently inhabited by Carib Indians.<sup>763</sup> As late as 1539, but still within the peak of the indigenous slave trade, merchants from Puerto Rico were sending armadas to gather slaves from the islands to their east to be sold in Puerto Rican markets. For example, in May of 1539 a ship disembarked in San Juan, piloted by Bartolomé Carreno, carrying a cargo of many “carib” slaves that had failed to be branded as such. Thus these Indians could not be sold as slaves until they had been branded, something that should have been done immediately upon their capture to prove that they had been legitimately captured in war.<sup>764</sup>

The issue of branding or marking of slaves continues to arise throughout the years of the climax of the indigenous slave trade, sometimes as a way to justify enslavement (especially when the Indian is branded by his own people as a slave) and other times as proof of a crime or illegal enslavement. The amount of documents focusing on when or how an Indian was branded, and what mark they received, demonstrates the power that branding had over the future an indigenous slave’s life.<sup>765</sup> This was especially true in areas in which Spanish colonists could legally engage in rescate with their Indian allies, for example in certain villages on the coast of Tierra Firme. Here the Spaniards could trade for or purchase an Indian slave who had already been branded as such by their Indian group. However, by the 1530s, with the prices paid for indigenous slaves rising and the ability for Indians themselves to profit from the exchange, many Indian groups began capturing members of enemy tribes and branding them as slaves illegally.<sup>766</sup> These Indians, many of which were at peace with the Spanish and therefore could not legally be

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<sup>763</sup> Jimenez, 186.

<sup>764</sup> “Carta de la isla de San Juan,” 29 de mayo de 1539. AGI Santo Domingo 166, R.2, fol. 167r.

<sup>765</sup> We also see the importance of branding in the rising African slave trade of the period.

<sup>766</sup> Here we see a repetition of the pattern already witnessed in the province of Panuco during Guzmán’s extensive slaving enterprise.

enslaved, were then sold to unscrupulous Spanish traders who did not look into the origin of the slaves that they purchased through rescate. This was especially disconcerting to the government of Cubagua which wished to maintain good relationships with the various allied Indian groups with whom they engaged in regular trade or from whom they received indigenous slaves. In fact, in February of 1533 the Judge Francisco de Prado of Cubagua complained to the Crown about this practice, even stating that he could not trust residents to speak truthfully about the legal status of the branded slaves. He continued to state that as a result of the illegal capture of at least some friendly Indians that the pearl fisheries were now short three hundred Indian laborers normally sent by the allied or tributary caciques.<sup>767</sup> Only making matters worse for the officials of Cubagua was the fact that the majority of slave traders who were taking these peaceful Indians from the nearby coast were not delivering them to the fisheries, but were instead selling them for higher prices throughout the larger Spanish Empire. For example, an armada organized (illegally) by the leaders of Española in 1533 captured and branded two hundred and fifty two slaves from the coast of Tierra Firme with the intention of selling them in Santo Domingo. However, upon their arrival in Santo Domingo, only twenty days after their initial enslavement by Luis Guerra in December of 1533, Bartolomé de las Casas learned of their presence and immediately protested their sale, demanding that they be returned to their native lands. While his arguments did cause the royal court to prevent their sale as slaves, the Indians were not returned and instead were sold as *naborías* for the limited gain of six pesos per Indian. The Indians were then forced to serve for their new Spanish *encomenderos* for six years.<sup>768</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> “Carta a su magestad de El Licenciado Francisco de Prado juez de residencia de Cubagua,” 1 de febrero de 1533. AGI Santo Domingo 183, R.4, N. 139, fol. 3r.

<sup>768</sup> Otte, 207-208.



All of these smaller legal disputes arising from the newly expanded industry of Indian harvesting in Tierra Firme, would finally culminate in the lengthy legal battle (from 1535 to 1537) waged between a group of Cubaguan officials (including treasurer Francisco de Castellanos and inspector general Francisco de Lerma) and the conquistador Geronimo Ortal. At the center of the dispute was the taking and enslaving of hundreds of Indians in the province and gulf of Paria.<sup>769</sup> Underlying the problem of illegal slave raiding were related issues of jurisdiction, licensing, and branding, raising the question of who had control of the region and its native populations. Central to the debate was the question of who would and could profit from either the labor or the sale of the Indians in question. Ortal's actions were first brought to the attention of the Crown in a letter dating from February of 1536 sent by the mayor of the city of Nueva Cádiz, Alonso Diaz de Gibraleón.<sup>770</sup> In his letter he reminds the King of the Crown's own ordinances forbidding any unauthorized person from taking Indians from the Pearl Islands or the adjacent coastline without the express permission and license from a judge of the city of Nueva Cádiz. These laws assured that the residents and leaders of Cubagua, at this point a deteriorating colony due to the diminishment of their pearl fisheries, controlled the more recent and highly profitable trade of Indian slaves along the coast of Tierra Firme through the monopoly of slaving licenses. Any legal license also limited the Indians a slaver could capture to those taken during "just war" or rebel Indians. If the licensed individual were to enslave any unsanctioned or free Indians they would be banned from the island of Cubagua for two months and be forced to pay a fine to the royal court of Nueva Cadiz of ten thousand maravedies.<sup>771</sup> Among the Indians who were *not* considered to be rebel Indians, and therefore not legal slaves, were those inhabiting the

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<sup>769</sup> "Francisco de Lerma, veedor de Cubagua, con Jeronimo de Ortal, de la misma vecindad, sobre haber cautivado ciertos indios Pescadores de la isla," 1536. AGI Justicia 974, N.2, R.2, fol. 2r.

<sup>770</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N.2, R.2, fol. 6r.

<sup>771</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N.2, R.2, fol. 6r.

coast of Tierra Firme from Maracapana to Enmanagoia. Avoiding the involvement of these Indians in the slave trade was especially important to the Cubaguans because these indigenous groups often helped them in their wars against the neighboring Carib Indians, who they could enslave.<sup>772</sup>

Unfortunately for Ortal, it was from the interior of this territory that he engaged in slave raiding, making the slaves he captured legally free according to the laws of Nueva Cádiz. In fact, according to the judges and officials of Nueva Cádiz, Ortal and his men entered into the province of Cumanagoto via the territory of Paria for the express purpose of taking and capturing indigenous slaves and not in order to explore the region as he later claimed. This province was within the jurisdiction of the government of Cubagua, and thus for Ortal to legally conduct a slave raiding mission in these territories he would have needed a license from the judges of Nueva Cádiz, something he most definitely did not possess in 1535.<sup>773</sup> Therefore, when a ship belonging to Ortal anchored in the port of Nueva Cádiz, its officials took control of all the Indians onboard, which Ortal had illegally branded as slaves prior to their inspection. The officials of Cubagua then began a lengthy process (officiated by the judge Francisco de Lerma) to determine if any of the Indians in Ortal's ship had been legally enslaved. If they were pronounced as slaves then the officials of Cubagua would take one half of the profit of their sale from Ortal and his men. However, if the Indians were declared free then they would be liberated and returned to their lands.<sup>774</sup> Until a decision was reached the Indians remained in the custody of Francisco de Reina, a resident of Nueva Cádiz. In addition to the judgment regarding the

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<sup>772</sup> Perri, 143.

<sup>773</sup> "El Proceso contra Gerónimo Ortal," 11 de octubre de 1535. AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 1r.

<sup>774</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 1v.

future of the Indians, if Ortal was found guilty of acting outside of his legal jurisdiction he would be forced to pay two hundred pesos of gold to the officials of Nueva Cádiz.<sup>775</sup>

As the trial progressed it became clear that Gerónimo Ortal did not have the legal right to capture slaves from the provinces of Paria or Cumanagoto.<sup>776</sup> Ortal also admitted to attacking and killing many Indians in the provinces of Paria and Cumanagoto. Of those that he captured, he shipped about one hundred Indians to the island of Cubagua. Sadly the majority of these Indians had already died by the date of the trial.<sup>777</sup> Though they were not many, of the Indians he did ship to Cubagua, the majority of them were women and children. The taking of these slaves, especially the capture and illegal branding of children under the age of twelve (for whom it was absolutely illegal to enslave and brand), were enough to throw the territories he visited into a state of rebellion. Additionally, after Ortal retired to the island of Trinidad (where he apparently sold more of his recently acquired slaves), one of his captains, Alonso de Herrera, journeyed to the nearby province of Rio Huyaporía to attack even more peaceful indigenous groups. Following Ortal's instructions, Herrera captured up to one hundred and fifty Indians, again the majority of them women and children.<sup>778</sup> These Indians were later sold in the islands of Margarita and Trinidad.<sup>779</sup> Of special concern were the actions of Herrera since the Indians that he attacked commonly traded with the residents of Cubagua, providing them with valuable supplies and labor for their pearl fisheries, but in the wake of Herrera's attacks the province of Rio Huyaporía was left in a state of unrest. The former allies even murdered several Spaniards,

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<sup>775</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 2v.

<sup>776</sup> However, he did have the right to engage in rescate while in the provinces conducting his explorations and settling a new colony, which could have produced some of these slaves.

<sup>777</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 10r, (Testimony of Francisco de Reina) and fol. 16v, (Testimony of Diego Gomez). There were only thirty four Indians left by the end of the trial.

<sup>778</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 10v.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 16r. Testimony of mayor Diego Gómez on October 26.

including and perhaps fittingly the unlucky Herrera during his entrada, in retaliation for the slave raids.<sup>780</sup>

Through Ortal's testimony we also learn that he was not the only Spaniard executing slave raids in Paria. Instead it appears that Ortal's men faced competition in the province of Meta (one hundred leagues into the interior of Venezuela and presumably within Paria and close to Rio Huyaporía) from the entrada of Antonio Sedeño, the governor of Trinidad. Sedeño was accompanied by up to six hundred men, some on foot with others on horseback, making his expedition much larger than Ortal's which had only possessed two hundred soldiers.<sup>781</sup> In addition to Sedeño's much larger army he also received financial and legal backing from the royal court of Santo Domingo, which provided him with a license to explore and engage in rescue in the province of Cumanagoto.<sup>782</sup> The amount of funding that Sedeño received, along with the size of his army, reveals the profitability of slave raids like this. Clearly officials were willing to invest large sums of money in order to reap even larger profits from the sale of Indian slaves by the late 1530s, a flourishing business. Likely due to his much larger force, Sedeño succeeded in capturing close to four hundred slaves in the provinces of Cumanagoto and Neverí, near the River of Maracapaná. Sedeño then transported the slaves to Puerto Rico where they were sold without being branded or examined to see if they had been legally enslaved. Beyond the slaves captured and sold by Sedeño and Ortal, the presence of both armies generally unsettled the formerly peaceful province and left it barren and largely depopulated.<sup>783</sup> In fact, the two competing slavers caused even more damage in the region by combating each other for control

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<sup>780</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 11r.

<sup>781</sup> "Carta de los oficiales de Cubagua," 27 de febrero de 1537. AGI Santo Domingo 183, R.4, N. 147, fol. 1r.

<sup>782</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 183, R.4, N. 147, fol. 1r. The legality of Sedeno's mission was discovered by Ortal who journeyed to Santo Domingo to plead his case and accuse Sedeno of illegal slaving in 1537.

<sup>783</sup> AGI Santo Domingo 183, R.4, N. 147, fol. 1r.

of the provinces and their native populations. The officials of Cubagua wrote to the Crown describing the impact that Ortal and Sedeño's presence had on the region, claiming that they had burned entire villages to the ground and turned the province into a war zone.<sup>784</sup>

Regardless of the atrocities committed by Ortal (and Sedeño during the same time period), it was decided that the slaves residing in Cubagua, under the care of Francisco de Reina, were legal slaves. This ruling goes in direct contradiction to all the testimonies presented at the trial which clearly described the Indians of Cumangoto, Paria, and the River Huyaporía as allies of the Spanish, even detailing their participation in wars against the Caribs and in commonplace local trade with the Pearl Islands. Here we see that despite the discourse censoring the capture of Indians, especially those allied with the Spanish, the allure of profit from their sale superseded moral impulses. Only adding to the profit from the sale of the slaves, the court of Nueva Cádiz also benefitted from the fines levied on the original sellers and buyers of these Indians as punishment for their participation in the illegal transaction.<sup>785</sup> Upon deciding that the Indians could be sold as slaves, they were sold in public on November 14<sup>th</sup> of 1536 for anywhere between five and twelve pesos, depending upon their sex and age. Francisco de Reina himself bought and kept eight of the Indians that had been placed in his care, while the other surviving twenty-six were sold to various residents of Cubagua. The males sold for more than the females, and the older slaves, ie. not the boys or muchachos, went for a higher price. Also telling is that in the document at least half of the Indian slaves are referred to as "piezas" or pieces instead of as

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<sup>784</sup> Saco, Tomo I, 255 and Perri, 145. Saco claims that Ortal burnt down the villages and initially began attacking and enslaving Indians in the province of Paria, near the Rio Neveri, in retaliation for the death of three Christians supposed killed by these Indians.

<sup>785</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2<sup>a</sup>, fol. 28v. For example, Francisco de Lerma had to pay two hundred pesos, half to the judges of Cubagua and half to the Crown, for buying slaves without license. Additionally, Francisco de Mellan had to pay a fine of forty pesos and Alonso Diaz owed ninety pesos for his indiscretion.

people demonstrating their continued commodification.<sup>786</sup> For example, Juan de Ribas (the scribe of Nueva Cadiz) purchased “dos piezas” as did Alonso de Burgos (in the name of the town’s mayor). It is clear that in this case, and many others like it, profit and greed superceded morality in the business of Indian slavery.

Slaver	Year	Captured In	Taken To	Number
Archuleta	1530	Cariaco	Pearl Islands	unknown
Alvarez and Paz	1531	Santa Marta	Santo Domingo	unknown
Villacorta and Riberos	1531	Cumana	San Juan and Santo Domingo	300–500
Luis Guerra	1533	Tierra Firme	Santo Domingo	252
Ortal	1535	Paria	Nueva Cadiz	Unknown
Herrera	1535	Meta	Margarita	150
Sedeño	1536	Neveri	Puerto Rico	400
	Total Known:	1202		

**Figure 46, Known Slaving Expeditions/Armadas from 1530-1536**

While the Crown appeared to try to ameliorate the abuses of the slave traders in the Circum-Caribbean during the 1520s-1530s, it is clear that royal control was limited and that profit was more important than ethics or justice. Only compounding the negative effects of the slave raiding for the Indians of Tierra Firme during the late 1530s were the simultaneous entradas of the German Conquistadors (as we saw in Chapter 5), and the discovery of pearl fisheries in 1538 in Cabo de la Vela.<sup>787</sup> With the majority of pearls coming from elsewhere,(in 1537 the King received a report claiming that no pearls had been harvested for a year and a half) the coast and interior of Venezuela became solely a place to harvest Indian slaves for the

<sup>786</sup> AGI Justicia 974, N. 2a, fol. 17r.

<sup>787</sup> Otte, 234-235.

residents of Nueva Cadiz, Margarita, and of course Española and Puerto Rico.<sup>788</sup> In reality the Indians were the only product available for these colonists to profit from by 1538.

From Pánuco Mexico to the coast of Venezuela and into the interior of Colombia and Brazil the hunt for Indian slaves consumed hundreds of Spanish and Portuguese colonists throughout the late 1520s and 1530s. These men were not searching for new sources of labor or naborías (except for some of those hailing from the still productive pearl fisheries of Margarita and Coche), nor were they attempting to pacify new territories for settlement. By and large they were simply gathering Indian slaves or pieces as they would any other natural resource in the Americas. For many areas of present day Central and South America, the removal and sale of their indigenous peoples was the quickest and easiest way to make a profit. In the majority of these locations the laws regarding who could be enslaved, how and when they could be branded, and most importantly to the Spaniards themselves, who could profit from the sale of these slaves, were ignored or stretched.

While we can never know how many slaves were taken from the various regions of the Circum-Caribbean, we can get an idea of the enormity of the slave trade by the sheer amount of illegal slaving activity that was caught and documented. For each case we know of, there could be as many as three or four more raids that went unaccounted for. Of the documented slaving expeditions, combined with the entradas of the German conquistadors discussed in the previous chapter, we can count a minimum of 9,000 Indian captives who were ripped from their homelands and shipped across the Caribbean as slaves within a single decade. Undoubtedly there were many more who went unrecorded. Others likely did not survive the journeys. Regardless of the actual number of Indians captured and transported throughout the Caribbean during the

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<sup>788</sup> Aldemaro Romero, Susanna Chilbert, & M.G. Eisenhart, "Cubagua's Pearl-Oyster Beds: The First Depletion of a Natural Resource Caused by Europeans in the American Continent," *Journal of Political Ecology*, vol. 6 (1999): 64.

climax of the indigenous slave trade, it is clear that for approximately a decade the commerce of Indian slaves was one of the most profitable and widespread in the Spanish Empire. It also caused untold suffering, chaos, violence, and the depopulation of huge swaths of territory. It would be the magnitude of the Indian slave trade, peaking in the late 1530s, that would finally force the Crown to take firm action against the slave raiders in the form of the New Laws of 1542.



## Conclusion

This project began as a study of the revolt of one cacique, Enrique, and the Taínos of Española. However, through rewarding archival and archaeological research it became a much larger exploration of the multiple aspects of the earliest Circum-Caribbean Indian slave trade. Though Española remained at the core of the dissertation, I went on to investigate the rise of an Indian slave trade and diaspora throughout the region. While this project still highlighted the role that Española, and her indigenous peoples, had on the formation of colonial institutions throughout Spanish America, it focused much more on the development and larger significance of indigenous slavery. In particular it argued that indigenous slavery helped shape legal, social, religious, and economic colonial institutions.

Through studying the earliest indigenous slave trade, this dissertation showed that Indian slavery was not a short-lived or limited practice. Instead my research revealed the scope, scale, and impact of Indian slavery in the New World. Not only did the Spanish and Portuguese depend on Indian slavery for decades, but all other colonial powers continued to enslave indigenous peoples, following in the path of the first Spanish slavers. Even as indigenous populations declined, Europeans did not give up the practice of Indian slavery. Indeed the search for new sources of Indian slaves propelled much early Spanish exploration. As the presence of African slaves grew in the New World, enslaved Indians did not disappear. On the contrary African and Indian slaves worked side by side, the methods and practices of both types of slavery influencing one another throughout the centuries.

Research shows that the Spanish conducted indigenous slavery on a much larger scale and for a much longer duration than previously understood. From Cristóbal Colón in the 1490s to

the German conquistadors of the 1530s, European explorers, raiders, and colonizers enslaved thousands of Indians. Some were shipped as commodities to various islands, or as far away as Spain, to be sold for immediate profit. Others became military auxiliaries, guides, miners, pearl divers, servants, or in the case of women unwilling sexual partners. Because this project viewed the Indian slave trade through a wider lens, that of the Atlantic World, Indian slaves came into focus across the Americas, including South America, North America, and the Caribbean. By viewing the trade internationally, without borders, I was able to see how the early slave trade moved Indians in many different directions. While some slaves were taken from one location and sold in another, many other slaves were displaced numerous times, moving in multiple directions. A few travelled through the entire Atlantic World. For most of these Indians Española served as a nexus, where the majority of slaves first disembarked and from where they were taken to disparate locations from Spain to North America. The multidirectional movement of slaves underscores that removal of Indians was a key component to the early colonial project. Indigenous populations did not simply collapse from disease or warfare, a significant number were first removed through the Indian slave trade.

As we have seen, this slave trade took many forms, both legal and illegal, documented and undocumented. From captives taken in “just war” to Caribs and Indians living on “useless” islands, the slave trade engulfed much of the Americas. Within this trade Indians themselves played a central role in shaping the *early* Indian slave trade. Indigenous politics, connections, and knowledge in many ways dictated who would be enslaved in the first two decades post-conquest. But, by the 1520s this changed. Due to population loss, cultural change, and an influx of Spaniards, the Indians of the Caribbean began to lose control of the slave trade and the larger colonial project. As native leaders’ status diminished, Spanish colonists began to act with more

and more impunity. It would be this attitude that would lead to the height of the Indian slave trade from the 1520s-1542 in which the Caribbean became a “shatter zone” ripped apart by violence, warfare, and slavery. Into this space would develop the creole culture we associate today with the Caribbean.

Though it is difficult to estimate the exact number of Indian slaves who were shipped across the Caribbean or Atlantic from 1493 to 1542, my research suggests that the number reached into the hundreds of thousands, likely nearing a half million. As important as the numbers or the temporal and geographic scope of this early Indian slave trade is its larger social, economic, and cultural impact on the development of the Atlantic World. By following the Indian slave trade one can also see the evolution of colonial economies of which Indian slaves were the core. Beyond economics, religious and secular debates regarding Indian slavery shaped colonial legislation from the Laws of Burgos to the New Laws and beyond. These same discussions contributed to the creation of the Black Legend. Even as the new Crown legislation slowed the Circum-Caribbean slave trade, Indian slavery continued in the borderlands regions of the Empire, in some cases for hundreds of years.

At its height, the Circum-Caribbean indigenous slave trade created an Indian Diaspora, scattering diverse ethnic groups and cultures across the Americas, forever altering the indigenous landscape. Indigenous slaves from Mexico, Columbia, Florida, Venezuela, and Brazil all found themselves transported to Española and other Caribbean Islands like Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Pearl Islands. This project began to define and capture the scope of this diaspora for the first time. While tracing the diaspora this project also revealed the hidden consequences of the slave trade, including the indigenous experience of movement and displacement across the Caribbean. The diaspora displaced thousands of Indians across the Caribbean causing them untold pain,

suffering, and disorientation. Many Indian slaves lost their lives before even arriving at their new homes. However, we also see evidence of survival, incorporation, and the sharing of knowledge in this diaspora, especially when taking into consideration pre-colonial relationships between and across islands. Indians themselves contributed greatly to this system, both voluntarily and through force. They resisted Spanish incursions, at times forcing the Spanish to alter their practices and policies of colonization. At this very early stage of colonization Indians, even some enslaved, were still able to influence and inhibit the Spanish conquest of their lands. In many cases it was the Indians who determined where the Spanish settled and which locations were successful, both temporally and economically. This dissertation examined these instances to uncover the indigenous perspective of and contributions to the Indian slave trade, diaspora, and more generally the early conquest period.

## Epilogue

### *The Slow Decline of the Iberian Indian Slave Trade*

Following years of debate, pressure from religious leaders like Las Casas and Pope Paul III<sup>789</sup>, and a visible decline in the indigenous population of the Americas, King Charles I passed a set of legislation that would be known as the “New Laws” in November of 1542. The laws attacked the class of powerful encomenderos, especially those in Peru, and most importantly for our purposes outlawed Indian slavery.<sup>790</sup> Though it would take decades, and in some isolated areas along the frontiers of the Spanish Empire centuries<sup>791</sup>, the New Laws marked the end of the widespread and legal Indian slave trade. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Indian slavery was no longer a viable industry for Spanish and Portuguese merchants within the Circum-Caribbean, even in areas such as Brazil and the Guyanas where it persisted into the final decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>792</sup>

It is also at this point African slaves began to outnumber, and in many colonies replace Indian slaves. Access to African slaves increased exponentially following the unification of

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<sup>789</sup> In 1537 Pope Paul III issued a papal decree against the enslavement of America’s indigenous peoples or the seizure of their property. In the decree the pope sided with Dominican friars like Montesinos and Las Casas concluding that Amerindians possessed the capacity to be converted to Christianity through teaching and did not need to be conquered by force. Elena Isabel Estrada de Gerlero, Donna Pierce and Clare Farago, “Mass of Saint Gregory,” in *Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Life, 1521-1821* edited by D. Pierce, R. Ruiz Gomar and C. Bargellini, 94-102 (Denver: Frederick and Jan Mayer Center for Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art at the Denver Art Museum, 2004), 98.

<sup>790</sup> The New Laws made the inheritance of encomiendas illegal. Following the death of an encomendero his encomienda and all of its future profits would default to the Crown. The laws also prohibited the issuance of any new encomiendas in the Americas. They also attacked all those involved in the recent Civil War in Peru, stripping these participants of their encomiendas immediately. The mandates for encomenderos of Peru inspired rebellion in the colony leading to the death of the region’s first viceroy and a revision of the New Laws. Still, even after the revisions the New Laws, at least nominally kept indigenous slavery illegal. Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 119-120.

<sup>791</sup> Locations where Indian slavery persisted well into the 17th century include the northern frontier of New Spain and present day Argentina and Chile.

<sup>792</sup> Slave expeditions into the interior or *sertao* of Brazil even increased in the 1580s as relations between the Portuguese and Tupiniquim among other indigenous groups deteriorated. John Manuel Monteiro, *Negros Da Terra: Indios e Bandeirantes nas origens de Sao Paulo* (Sao Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994), 51-52.

Spain and Portugal, allowing Spanish colonies to benefit from the Portuguese control of the African slave trade or *Asiento*. Between 1590 and 1640 nearly 500,000 African slaves were shipped to the Americas.<sup>793</sup> As the availability of African slaves increased, the risks involved in the indigenous slave trade proved to be too high. Not only was the trade now illegal, but the Spaniards had learned that indigenous cooperation was crucial for the economic prosperity of their American colonies. Indian enslavement and the violence it entailed put this cooperation in jeopardy. Rebellions such as Enrique's in Española had taught the Spaniards this hard lesson.

This is not to say that Spanish colonists and merchants gave up the Indian slave trade or *encomiendas*<sup>794</sup> without a fight. The practice had been too lucrative, necessary, and widespread for the previous five decades of colonization to be abandoned immediately. In 1545 the government of Española admitted that there were 5,000 Indian slaves from various parts of the Caribbean still working on the island.<sup>795</sup> These were the slaves that were judged to be legal, likely because they were considered Caribs.<sup>796</sup> The number of Indian slaves of questionable origin and legality was likely much higher. And the colonists still sought new Indian slaves. Well into the 1570s, letters continued to reach the Crown pleading for the reinstatement of the trade. Concurrently, an illegal Indian slave trade thrived at the edges of the Empire. Many of these slaves came from the Portuguese territory of Brazil. Well after the passage of the New Laws

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<sup>793</sup> David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>794</sup> Debates for and against the continuance of the *encomienda* system persisted at court well into the 1550s. One of the most famous proponents of the system was Juan Ginés de Sepulveda, Las Casas's ardent opponent. Sepulveda argued that there was a natural hierarchy that included natural servants or slaves, in this case Indians. The Indians were "natural slaves" due to their lack of reason, a "fact" proven by their idolatry and cannibalism. "Sepulveda on the Justice of the Conquest," 1547. Translated and printed in *New Iberian world: a documentary history of the discovery and settlement of Latin America to the early 17th century, Volume 1: The Conquerors and The Conquered* by J.H. Parry, (New York: Times Books, 1984), 323 and Vanita Seth, *Europe's Indians: Producing Racial Difference, 1500-1900* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 44.

<sup>795</sup> Neil L. Whitehead, *Of Cannibals and Kings: Primal Anthropology in the Americas* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 9-10.

<sup>796</sup> In 1547 the Crown exempted male Caribs from the New Laws, making their enslavement legal. William Arens, *The Man Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 49.

Brazilian indigenous slaves<sup>797</sup> kept arriving in Santo Domingo. To receive permission to buy these slaves from the Portuguese traders, who also sold the colonists Brazil wood and sugar, the officials of Santo Domingo created a compromise that they argued would eventually benefit the Indians, especially since they were already enslaved, removed from their native lands, and likely Caribs<sup>798</sup>. The essence of the compromise was first proposed by Doctor Mexia in October of 1568 in response to the arrival of eight Brazilian Indian slaves. He suggested that the colonists of Española should be allowed to buy the slaves, who were sold for the very moderate price of twelve gold pesos<sup>799</sup>, but only be permitted to retain them in their service for seven to eight years during which time they would also be tutored in the Catholic faith.<sup>800</sup> After their eight years as a slave, the Indians would be free and have the benefit of this education. On the other hand, if the Indian slaves remained with the Portuguese, they would be destined for servitude in the Canary Islands or Portugal remaining slaves for the duration of their lives.

The King did not respond to the proposal, but Mexia soon gained the support of several other officials in Santo Domingo with whom he continued to petition the King for license to purchase Brazilian slaves to replace or augment the very expensive African slaves. With this new

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<sup>797</sup> Interestingly Brazilian slaves had been especially sought after by the colonists of Española since the 1530s. The officials of Santo Domingo were even willing to pay a seven and a half percent tax on each slave, the same amount as for an African slave, if the Crown would legalize the purchase of Brazilian indigenous slaves from the Portuguese. “Carta de los oficios de la isla Espanola,” 12 de septiembre de 1536. AGI Santo domingo 74, R. 1, N.35, fol. 2v. The willingness to pay the same tax as for an African slave suggested that Indians from Brazil may have had a higher perceived value, perhaps because they lived longer or were already accustomed to growing sugar cane, the strongest industry of the Caribbean islands by the 1530s. On the other hand the readiness to pay a higher tax for an Indian slave by the mid-1530s could also result from the ever higher prices that African slaves were selling for. In fact, by 1536 the African slaves from Cabo Verde were selling for seventy or eighty pesos each while Indians only cost about twenty pesos. AGI Santo domingo 74, R. 1, N.35, fol. 2r.

<sup>798</sup> Despite the passage of the New Laws Caribs could still be enslaved if they attacked Christian colonies. Expeditions would continue to enslave Caribs throughout the Caribbean islands and into Tierra Firme well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, though not to the extent as the armadas of the 1530s. For more on these later slave raids see Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Española y la Esclavitud del Indio* (Santo Domingo: Fundación García Arévalo Inc., 1995), 354-368.

<sup>799</sup> The price was especially advantageous when compared to the one hundred or one hundred and fifty ducados that the bozal African slaves sold for in the Americas in the 1570s.

<sup>800</sup> “Carta del Doctor Mexia de la Española,” 10 de octubre de 1568. AGI Santo Domingo 71, L.1, fol. 491v.

found support from judges Caceres, Peralta, and Santiago de Vera, Mexia again wrote to the King in June of 1569 and in August of 1569. In both letters he reiterated his plan for the benefit of both Brazilian Indian slaves and the residents of Española. However, he increased the number of years that the Indians will serve as slaves to twelve by August of 1569.<sup>801</sup> By this point even the archbishop of Santo Domingo, Friar Andrés de Carvajal, wrote to the King championing Mexia's plan for the Brazilian slaves adding the traditional argument that the Brazilian Indians were in fact Caribs and cannibals who consumed human flesh. Once serving as a slave, working in the gold mines or sugar ingenios of Española, they could be dissuaded from their immoral practices and be more easily converted to the Catholic faith.<sup>802</sup> Despite all the letters, from both secular and religious officials, the King refused to grant the residents of Española permission to buy Brazilian slaves, though they continued to petition the King for this right as late as 1573.<sup>803</sup> Though he refused to legalize the trade in Brazilian indigenous slaves, it is likely that the King's ruling was often ignored and that Brazilian slaves were in fact purchased regularly just not through legal channels.

Indian slaves hailing from Brazil were not the only Indians that Spanish colonists sought permission to purchase or capture as the 16<sup>th</sup> century came to a close. After several years of attempting to peacefully negotiate with the native peoples of Florida, the territory's governor and conqueror Pedro Menéndez de Avilés wanted to force the Indians into submission. Whereas he had once praised Florida's indigenous peoples for their physical strength, prowess in battle, and generous nature, by the 1570s Menéndez and his men commonly referred to their former allies as

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<sup>801</sup> "Carta de los oficiales de Santo Domingo, incluyendo Mexia, Caceres, Licenciado Peralta, y Licenciado Santiago de Vera," 26 de agosto de 1569. AGI Santo Domingo 71,L.1, fol. 535r.-55v.

<sup>802</sup> "Carta de Arzobispo Fray Andrés de Carvajal de Santo Domingo," 25 de agosto de 1569. AGI Santo Domingo 71, L.2, fol. 452r.

<sup>803</sup> "Carta de Fray Diego de Santa Maria de Santo Domingo," 31 de abril de 1573. AGI Santo Domingo 71, L.2, fol. 196r. He as did the friar Carvajal focused on the fact that the Brazilian Indians were cannibals to legitimize their enslavement.



savages, brutal devil worshippers, and liars who could not be trusted.<sup>804</sup> Menéndez even went so far as to advocate the extermination of Florida's natives or at the very least their enslavement and removal from the province. According to Menéndez's proposal to the Crown these Indian slaves could be sold in Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico benefiting all the colonies involved.<sup>805</sup> As with the Brazilian Indian slaves, the King failed to respond to Menéndez's proposal and the colonists of Florida were left to fight rebellious Indians for decades to come.

With these two examples we can see that the residents and leaders of the Spanish colonies did not want to give up the Indian slave trade, a practice that began alongside the birth of the first settlements on Española. Nor did most Iberians stop viewing Indians as perpetual servants following the passage of the New Laws. Even in the courtrooms of Castile, where King Charles I tried to implement the new legislation to the fullest, Indian slaves had to battle their masters in lengthy trials. Though approximately 100 Indian slaves did gain their freedom through these procedures, many others were sold, beaten, or branded by their masters before they could attain liberty. Slaveholders utilized these illegal means since most did not hold legal documents on their indigenous slaves stating how or where they were captured. According to the New Laws slaves could only be retained if it could be proven that they were indeed taken in "just war" or were Caribs from Portuguese territories.<sup>806</sup> Increasingly slaveholders used physical traits to distinguish their Indian slaves, bringing race and appearance into the discussion of indigenous slavery for the first time. By the 1550s many Indian slaves were identified as *loro* or even black

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<sup>804</sup> Daniel S. Murphree. *Constructing Floridians: Natives and Europeans in the Colonial Floridas, 1513-1783*, 39.

<sup>805</sup> "Daños of the Indians of Florida," Petition by Menéndez to the Royal Court, translated by Eugene Lyon in *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés*, 427-429.

<sup>806</sup> Nancy E. van Deusen, "Seeing *Indios* in Sixteenth-Century Castile," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 69, N. 2, (April 2012), 211-213.

to defend their status as slaves.<sup>807</sup> The fact that these cases continued to be presented in American and Iberian courts into the early 17th century is testimony to the longevity of the indigenous slave trade, even in a more limited form. Additionally, in the more colorized discourse of the Indian slave trade we see the influence of the growing African slave trade and its legal institutions and policies.

Despite the Indian slave trade's persistence, in both Portuguese and Spanish territories for decades after the passage of the New Laws, the practice did eventually subside, at least in the Iberian colonies of the Circum-Caribbean. This was likely due to both the rise in African slaves and the concurrent drop in Indian populations in most of the Americas that made huge sources of Indians to exploit and enslave harder to find. Additionally, as time passed the Crown was able to gain more control over the governance and economies of the Americas. This royal control curtailed illegal and rogue activity, like the Indian slave trade. The Crown also provided laws authorizing other forms of indigenous labor and servitude within which indigenous people could be and were legally exploited in the more profitable centers of the Empire, for example in the mines of Mexico, Peru, and Bolivia. Indian slaves would no longer be exported from areas with mineral resources. However, at the edges of Empire, Indian slavery persisted for decades if not centuries, especially in Northern New Spain and Southern Chile and Argentina. As with the Caribbean of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Indian slaves served as one of the few marketable commodities in these underpopulated frontier zones.

Even as African slavery increased, and Spanish enslavement of Indians waned, Indian slavery in the Americas did not disappear. In fact, other newly emergent colonial powers picked up where the Spaniards left off. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century English and Dutch explorers,

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<sup>807</sup> Van Deusen, 227-228.

merchants, and colonists were all embroiled in a Circum-Caribbean indigenous slave trade centered on capturing Indians from the Guyanas and Brazil. Many of these territories were the same as those exploited by the German and Spanish conquistadors/raiders in the 1530s-1540s, such as Diego Ordás.<sup>808</sup> Perhaps because of their recent experience with the Spanish merchants, the Indians of the region engaged in an active slave trade, selling “cannibals” into slavery in the West Indies. During his travels through the territory Sir Walter Raleigh witnessed one such slave market near the intersection of the Orinoco and Meta Rivers where Arawak Indians sold Caribs to the Spanish of Nueva Granada for 3-4 pesos.<sup>809</sup> Here we see that an illegal slave trade did persist decades after the passage of the New Laws, into the 1590s, especially in border regions on the edges of the Empire. While Raleigh criticized the Spanish for this slave trade, the English and Dutch would soon participate in these same slave markets both officially and informally. Pirates, merchants, explorers, and soldiers all engaged in the Indian slave trade, with or without sanction and license from their governments. Indian slaves were important for the larger contraband system in the Circum-Caribbean.<sup>810</sup> War between European powers especially accelerated the slave trade. Throughout the Anglo-Dutch wars of the 1660s-1670s, both sides captured and enslaved their enemy’s indigenous allies. For example the English Captain Peter Wroth took several Indians captive when attacking the Dutch at Approwaco in 1666, selling

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<sup>808</sup> As late as the 1590s there are records of Spanish leaders, such as a Captain Berrio, torturing and enslaving indigenous peoples in Guyana, even caciques. Supposedly this treatment is what allowed the English to make further progress into the interior of the province in the 1595. Sir W. Raleigh, “The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Emphyre of Guiana,” transcribed and annotated by Neil L. Whitehead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 133.

<sup>809</sup> Raleigh, “The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Emphyre of Guiana,” 179.

<sup>810</sup> María Cristina Navarrete Peláez, “De las “malas entradas” y las estrategias del “buen pasaje”: el contrabando de esclavos en el Caribe neogranadino, 1550-1690,” *Historia Crítica*, N. 34 (Julio-Diciembre 2007): 160-183.

them soon after in Barbados. Conversely, the Dutch commander Cornelis Evertsen sold 206 Indian slaves, all declared Carib allies of the English, in Curacao in 1673.<sup>811</sup>

An Indian slave trade also prospered in the territories that would become the continental United States. Here English, Scottish, Welsh, French, and Spanish colonists perpetrated a large scale Indian slave trade, often according to the pre-colonial indigenous politics and customs of the various native peoples. An Indian slave trade engulfed, and in many ways connected, the southeastern colonies of the Carolinas, the Chesapeake, Florida, and the lower Mississippi for much of the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>812</sup> Indian slavery in New France, from the Caribbean to the Pays d'en Haut, endured well into the colonies' last century. This trade linked the various territories of the French Empire and in many ways provided a space for Indian leaders and groups to harness power and manipulate colonization.<sup>813</sup> The Indian slave trade in the Illinois Country provided a space for indigenous women who played a central role in the formation of French/indigenous alliances and in the perpetuation of the indigenous slave trade.<sup>814</sup> These examples, among many others, show the reach and significance of Indian slavery throughout the Americas.

As the Indian slave trade, legal and illegal, continued to influence the formation of American colonies, the consequences of the sixteenth century Indian Diaspora were also felt for centuries. As Indians from distant parts of the Americas came together on the islands of the Caribbean, they formed new cultures. These indigenous cultures then melded together with

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<sup>811</sup> Carolyn Arena, "The Carib/Anglo-Dutch/Arawak War: Strategic Knowledge and Alliance Formation in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Caribbean" (paper presented at "Transmitting Knowledge in the Early Modern Dutch World," December 6-7, 2013), 10-12.

<sup>812</sup> Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 1-9.

<sup>813</sup> Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Williamsburg, VA: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2012), 10-12.

<sup>814</sup> Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

Iberian and African traditions, ultimately creating Colonial Creole societies. Within the blended societies one can still find vestiges of Taíno culture, including language, culinary practices, and elements of their cosmology<sup>815</sup>, proving that despite the huge decline in population during the first decades of colonization, at least some Taíno customs and peoples survived both in the Greater Antilles and across the Lesser Antilles and mainland of South America.<sup>816</sup> It would be these evolving, hybrid societies that would become the Spanish Caribbean colonies by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Just as the Indian slave trade and diaspora influenced many different aspects of the Iberian colonial experiment, indigenous slavery throughout the Atlantic World impacted the social and cultural formation of English, Dutch, and French colonies. As long as Europeans faced labor shortages or encountered challenges of a new land or colonial project, Indian slavery could be found. Contrary to predominant historiography of slavery and conquest, the Indian slave trade was not a short lived or unsuccessful practice quickly replaced by African slavery. Instead Indian slaves were continually relied upon and sought after first by the Iberian conquerors and colonists and in later decades and centuries by the newly arriving Northern Europeans. Throughout the creation of American colonies the constant search for and enslavement of Indians helped to shape the Circum-Caribbean and Atlantic World.

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<sup>815</sup> Before the arrival of the Europeans the inhabitants of Grenada, one of the southern most of the Lesser Antilles, had few if any cemíes. However, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Dutch colonizers spent more time on the small island, they discovered a fully formed cult to the cemíes. They would even bury the three-pointed cemíes in fields of recently planted crops. This tradition can be found in Española as of the 1490s. Did run-away Taínos then bring the cult of the cemíes to Grenada or did briefly enslaved Caribs adopt the practice in the Greater Antilles and bring it back to their homelands with them? Lennox Honychurch, “The Leap at Sauteurs: The lost Cosmology of Indigenous Grenada” (paper presented at Grenada Country Conference, University of the West Indies, January 2002), 6.

<sup>816</sup> Francisco Moscoso, *Caciques, Aldeas, y Población Taína de Boriquén (Puerto Rico), 1492-1582* (San Juan: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 2008), 22-23. One example of the survival and even spread of Taíno or Arawak language is the term cacique. Spaniards continually referred to indigenous leaders as “caciques” across the Americas, despite the terms’ inaccuracy in most territories. Barbecue, maize, potato, canoe, and hammock are some of the other more well known Taíno words still in use today. Stevens Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua*, 4-5.

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