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Silencing Taíno Voices: Narrating Colonial and Imperial Occupations of Quisqueya through Mapping

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Silencing Taíno Voices: Narrating Colonial and
Imperial Occupations of Quisqueya through Mapping

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

By:

Genesis Medina

Annandale-on-Hudson,

New York, May 2022

Quisqueya not Hispaniola

“Hispaniola” is the English version of the Spanish word “Española.”

The island in our present day is known as “Hispaniola.” Even after the Spanish colonizers gained knowledge that the Taíno people of the island called the island “Quisqueya,” they continued on calling the island its Spanish name “Española” and in turn the English version “Hispaniola.” I argue that the island should be known as “Quisqueya”, not “Hispaniola.” Even though the word “Quisqueya” is still the Spanish version, or Spanish sounding, of the original Arawak word, it is still the closest name we have to be able to connect to the original identity of the island.

Table of Contents

This project is a combination of my Experimental Humanities concentration and my Historical Studies major. To access the permanent link to Map Research, click

here:https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aqZGZPVJVWR-zyTVU5ZdmovVlu_EqtV-/view

To access the pdf the whole timeline, click [here](#).

To access the second component of my Story Map, click

here:<https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymaps/6d6d37945026cbec7eada4bafec9f9f/colonial-occupations-in-quisqueya/index.html> (click preview)

To access the Taíno Map GIF, click here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eE-IULqKwavVa_3zytYUE4R4aKTNctnC/view

My Connection to the Project.....	9
Introduction.....	12
Chapter 1: Maps and Taíno Silences	
Maps.....	16
Media and State Propaganda.....	17
Silences.....	18
Indigenous People Everywhere vs Indigenous People of the Caribbean.....	19
Old Archeologists Decided to not Focus on the Ancient Caribbean Civilization.....	20
Taíno History and their “Disappearance” in History.....	23
Changing and Re-thinking the Meaning of Maps: Maps as Taíno Artifacts.....	25
Did Taínos Make Maps?.....	26

Creating Taíno Maps: Materials and Practices of the Taíno People that Might Have Been Part of their Own Map-making Practices.....	28
Colonial Mercantilism Impact on The Physicality of the Island.....	29
Acknowledgement of Map Timeline Research.....	31
Colonial and Imperial Occupations and Mapping Connections.....	32
Chapter 2: Maps I Chose to focus on out of The Timeline of Occupations in the Island	
Map 1.....	34
Map 2.....	39
Map 3.....	42
Conclusion on Chapter 2	44
Chapter 3: Indigenous Communities Re-constructing the Silenced Maps	
Technology and Maps	48
Lorgia García-Peña and <i>The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, And Archives of Contradiction</i>	51
Contemporary Dominican World	53
Chapter 4: Maps Gaining New Meanings	
My Interpretation of what a Taíno Map would Look Like	56
Taíno Trading Network.....	60
On Taíno Research: Myth vs Reality.....	63
Conclusion	69

Bibliography and Works Cited72

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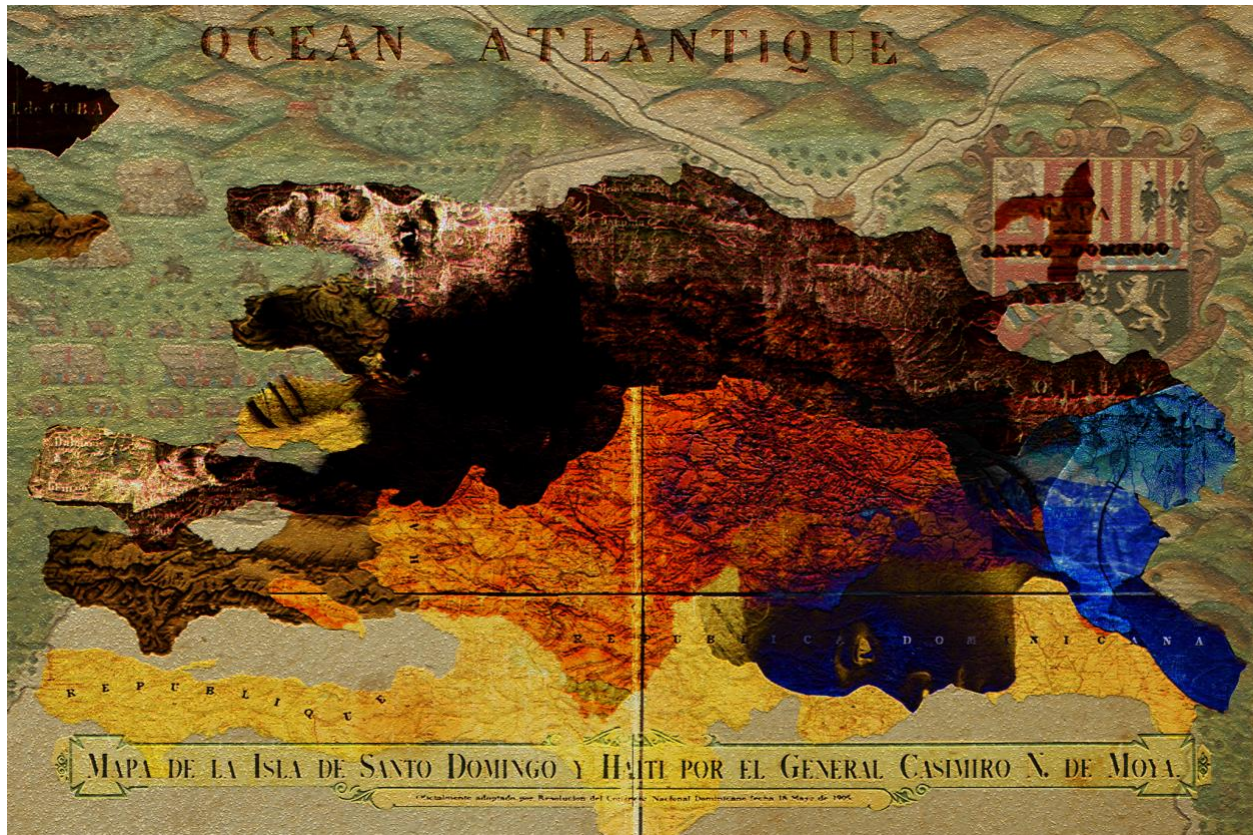
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My Connection to the Project



I created this image because I was inspired by my interest in mapmaking. I fused many of the maps that I found of Quisqueya during my research to show the production and evolution of present-day Haitian and the Dominican Republic maps throughout time. Along with the variety of maps, I wanted to show how different these maps were from one another and how each map corresponded with the period of time in which it was created. Most importantly, I wanted to show the attempt of outsiders in trying to illustrate the island and compare it to how differently each outsider painted the land. Colonial mapping was what caused the conflict between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, not Trujillo's regime, which is what many current Dominicans think.

The problem between these two countries is rooted way back in the obsessive idea of defining land by colonists.

I decided to focus on the entire island of Quisqueya instead of only the side that present-day corresponds to the Dominican Republic. Despite the fact that I was born and raised half of my life in the Dominican Republic, I value the fact that this island, as a whole, shares a big part of the same history in which Taínos shared the whole island. I wanted this image to show appreciation, and how much I value having ancestors that come from many different regions of Quisqueya meaning, the indigenous name of the island before it was re-named as La Isla Hispaniola. In doing this, I acknowledge that I come from many corners of the island, and beyond. Despite the fact that this island today shows two divided countries, I want my map to argue against that—to show that they are really one. Aside from these two sovereign countries, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, having different cultures and dialogues, we are blended into each other's past. I do not want to applaud the harm we have done to one another, but to show our identities are much more mixed with one another than they appear.

In the image above, the overlap of maps from colonial and imperial periods shows the body of trauma that the land has undergone throughout all of its periods of external control. The fusion of these maps is meant to show the exhaustion of the land, and by me being part of it, it shows that many Quisqueyans have been as exploited as the land has been through colonial and imperial control all the way to this day. With its many events of exploitation, the land shaped many identities, including political, economical, and ethnological identities.

The inspiration for how this project was organized was from Vincent Brown's analyses of maps of Jamaica¹. For his project, he had some sort of Story Map like mine in which he narrates how the rebellion moved throughout Jamaica. My story map just focuses on narrating the different colonial interests in the island throughout time. In his site he also has a "project" tab that looks very similar to the way I decided to analyze the three maps I chose with the structure being: "Map Origin Information, History behind the Map, What the Map shows, Analysis of Map, Design, and Uncertainty." What is very different about our project is that, rather than relying only on established maps, I actually create my own version of what a Taíno Map might look like.

¹ Vincent Brown, "Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761," copyrighted 2012.

<http://revolt.axismaps.com>

Introduction

The Island of Hispaniola was the primary name of the entire island under Spain's rule. In my project, I plan on explaining how the island underwent many colonial rulers and occupations after the first intervention by Christopher Columbus. I have included maps that I have found from the island's history, including sections of it as far into the past as possible, to the present day. In my research, I found out that these maps were generated outside of the island by European countries such as France, Spain, and England. I will be using these maps to show how they can be used to represent the production of knowledge we have of the island today. Our entire knowledge of Quisqueya is not entirely right—especially after realizing that many Taíno voices were silent during the process of European history-making of the Caribbean. The map of 1585, for example, serves to show only a battle in action. Maps like these are used to show the sovereignty of the European nations over the Caribbean and the Americans. Not only does this map show sovereignty for England (the maker and winner of the battle illustrated), but it also shows how maps act as a tool of narration. The narrative portrayed in this map is tied to the political dominance of the European nations, and how La Isla de Hispaniola fell vulnerable under the feet of powerful European emperors; meanwhile, these maps are documents that claim to be objective and factual. I will be analyzing when and where these maps were created, and with what objective. In reality, most of these documents came from colonial authorities. It is to my understanding that even when Haiti and the Dominican Republic became independent countries, they did not change their map. Instead, they adopted the colonial understanding of their map into their respective countries.

In our modern-day, maps are used as primary historical sources. By using maps as primary sources, we have ignored the fact that the practice of map-making is centered in Eurocentricity. Maps are such popular sources to look at, however, they silence the voices of those who never portrayed their lands through borders and shapes. We have adopted the use of map-making and reading without enough questioning about what they are representing.

France and Spain no longer remain in power in La Isla de La Hispaniola; however, the influence over the map still remains. We can see this in the violent relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Both nations fight about immigration and land occupation to this day. The colonial legacy of map-making is left on the island, along with its notion of borders, citizenship, and land sovereignty.

Chapter one challenges our constructed idea and association with our modern understanding of mapping. Its goal is to see mapping as an instrument of colonial power instead of the modern-day terrestrial illustration of the world. What I want the takeaway from this project to be is that these maps are done by outsiders such as colonial powers from their own perception of the island. These maps are more than just visual representations of the land—they are newspapers to other colonial powers to show that they have legal power over the territory. These maps are tools for their government for land control. Maps are old media used to let other empires know their dominance and superiority. Therefore, I will engage with these maps to be critical of their mission and portrayal.

In chapter two, I focus on three maps from my Timeline of Occupations in the Island. In this chapter, I analyze the three maps of Quisqueya to show the imperial objectives of the colonizers and how they overruled the footprints of Taínos from the narration of their maps. In

addition to this, chapter two also shows the efforts of colonial map narrators in trying to understand the Taíno people and their relation to the island.

Chapter three debates the narratives of the extinction of the Taíno people, along with the popular narrative that the Taíno civilization is still alive in the genetics of people that inhabit the island today.

Chapter four focuses on what tools we could have used to expand our understanding of what could have been the practice of mapping for the Taíno civilization. It proposes the navigation of the sea of the Taíno people as a tool that would have helped understand their sense of space and location better. It also states that those astronomical studies are nowhere to be found, but either way, would have been a key factor to understanding their mapping. With all of these things considered, I create my interpretation of what a Taíno map would look like by creating a moving map. My Taíno Map considers the ritual and moving culture of the civilization with drawings of their mythology that show to have been tied to their daily routines.

In thinking about mapping, I will talk about alternative ways to think of land outside of the Eurocentric practice of map making. I want to use rocks and caves of the Taíno civilization found in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. I considered Puerto Rico as one of my places of research considering their proximity and the constant travel of the Taíno civilization in both of the islands. Although I mention Puerto Rico very rarely, I do it with the intent to explain the close relation between these two islands with one another during the Taíno times. All of this is with the efforts of understanding the original meaning of the land of Quisqueyans. One of the ways I explore this relationship is with the rocks found in Puerto Rico and that leads back to the batey game (a game played by the Taíno people in a court surrounded by rocks) that this civilization used to play. As well as the Taíno drawings found in the Dominican Republic. The

relationship with these two islands extends beyond its walkable lands. In thinking about mapping, it is important to understand that these islands to the Taíno were perceived to be more of one island together than two isolated nations. Every place with Taíno inhabitants in the Caribbean of the Greater Antille was seen as worthy of consideration for my research when it came to Taíno Studies. However, I mostly and almost entirely focused on Quisqueya since that is my focus point of research.

Chapter 1

Maps and Taino Silences

Denis Wood, the author of *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, argues that maps are not as ancient as many others think. They are around 500-600 years old², meaning that the practice of map making is more modern than what we currently think it is. He also argues that maps were not always what people used to get around. Instead, they used different techniques such as finding their way through “their eyes and their tongues”³ as well as “memory aids, almanacs, genealogies, inventories, histories, and description of route and territories.”⁴ He states that throughout all “99%”⁵ of human history “people didn’t use maps at all.”⁶ Wood thinks that by using the word map, we think about maps as a way of showing “earth’s surface.”⁷ By doing this, we have come to “universalize” maps. Thus, on top of the Eurocentricity of maps, maps can have different meanings. Lucchesi argues that indigenous people made maps as well, but with an entirely different purpose and an entirely different physical form than terrestrial land. Wood states that “if prehistoric humans made maps ... they were likely served broadly pictorial, religious, ritual, symbolic, and/or magical functions; their production was discontinuous with the practice of mapmaking encountered in historic populations.”⁸ This shows that there was a different interpretation of mapmaking in older civilizations that has been overwritten by the maps of today. If we change the way we understand maps, then we may begin to better

² Denis Wood, John Fels, and John Krygier, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York: Guilford Press, 2010), 7.

³ Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, 18.

⁴ Ibid, 25.

⁵ Ibid, 18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 24.

understand some of those older civilizations that have been lost in history.

Media and State Propaganda

Before continuing further, it is important to discuss some of the reasons modern maps were made in the first place—and with that, some of the deeper political reasons for the Eurocentric push of maps. Bruce Fetter, in a journal review of *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History* by Christian Jacob, argues that globalization and sovereignty are the motives behind mapmaking. He also explains that the motive of making these maps is to modernize the ancient drawings of landscape.⁹ The goal of mapping for Fetter seems to be that they show more order and sophistication. This argument helps to see how maps were, and are still, used as a medium by the state to explain landscape with the ambitious goal of making maps transnational. I think the Europeans changed the beautiful meaning maps/land had for indigenous people; they westernized it. The connection between maps and state shows how maps are more than drawings showing the landscape...they are periodical news of sovereignty to other potential invasive colonial powers. The connection of globalization and transnationalism to maps helps explain how maps are used as a method of a traveling network. It is true that social media networks like Facebook and Twitter were nonexistent back then because of the absence of the internet; however, these maps were the equivalent to these media platforms back in the time. In other words, they served as one means of communication between one country and the others; a single map could demonstrate how one country has just taken control of new territory.

⁹ Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 433-434.

Silences

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, author of *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, proposes a historiographic lens of the past. While Trouillot does not talk about mapmaking, he does talk about the past being overshadowed by political powers who take over the narrative. Trouillot states that history might be wrong because we never stopped to consider in the past if “seeing or saying what happened”¹⁰ were credible sources. This connects to my argument of mapping because we do not get many representations of natives’ own perception of land—such as primary sources like diaries from natives, or any interviews or records with them. However, we do get their artifacts and passed down knowledge that has been disregarded by many historians and archaeologists. Trouillot says that by leaving out alternative sources we silence the past.

Interestingly, Trouillot also mentions that whoever is in power is responsible for silencing the past. He states that “silencing also is due to an uneven power in the production of sources, archives, and the narratives.”¹¹ If map-makers would have captured and spread the drawings Taínos used to show their interpretation of space, perhaps the current world would not lean so heavily on Eurocentric practices of map-making. In addition to this, maps would not be used as primary sources, since there are other maps done by native groups which perhaps would contradict what Eurocentric maps show. By having maps become transnational, Taíno “maps” are buried in the soil. Trouillot is saying that we write history based on what “we know or what

¹⁰ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 2015), 22.

¹¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 27.

we think we might know and what we do not know is not even mentioned.”¹² This is where there is uncertainty in much of history.

Apart from map-making also being a practice of different meanings for Indigenous people, indigenous’ people’s knowledge of map-making is also shown in euro-centric maps. Maps are not entirely euro-centric considering that European settlers used the knowledge of Indigenous people to make their maps. But colonists never gave credit to those natives who helped them understand the space they were standing in. This is one of the many ways in which indigenous people are erased from the narrative.

All of this leads to Dominican writer Lorgia García-Peña author of *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction*, who writes about how the border that exists present day is to blame on the previous imperial tensions of the French and Spanish empires. This tension has divided the island into two and has created racial tensions between the two existing nations. All of this leading to Dominicans moving outside of the island for a better life. The dislocation of these Dominicans in the USA shows the impact that Colonial powers have had on the destiny of the nation. Although there is Dominican patriotism on the island there has been a lot of political instability that has also caused a lot of Dominicans to leave the island.

Indigenous People Everywhere else vs Indigenous People of the Caribbean

It is important for me to point out that there is a distinguishable difference between Indigenous people from all over the world and the Indigenous people of the Caribbean. There

¹² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 35.

might be trends in lifestyle in general, however, indigenous people differ greatly from tribes in culture and traditions. In fact, there is nothing in common about all the tribes in the world apart from a few similarities. This is important to highlight because I am focusing mainly on Caribbean indigenous people, particularly Taíno in my paper. Other indigenous groups may have more artifacts and maps that document their history. But my focus lies on the Taíno, whose history was largely erased or not as deeply considered to be looked into.

Old Archeologists Decided to Not Focus on the Ancient Caribbean Civilization

Louis Allaire, writer of “Archeology in the Caribbean Region” makes the claim that “The geographical unity of the Caribbean, as opposed to the Mediterranean, is a phenomenon that has been ignored by archeologists.”¹³ With this being said, archeologists were not interested in paying attention to the previous civilization that existed in the Caribbean before colonial interference, with the exception of Mexico. Archaeologists chose to ignore their importance of non-repeated artifacts in the island.

These non-repeated materials that they chose to write about were studied “in style and meaning recorded on the otherwise mute material remains revealed in these innumerable potsherds and ceramic styles that may seem to appear too frequently and in such fastidious manner.”¹⁴ It appears as if archeologists left other meaningful artifacts out of the equation that today, we might not even know about once existed. Most importantly, by archeologists stating

¹³ Louis Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 675.

¹⁴ Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” 676.

that there were enough materials duplicated throughout the island “the native voice of these ancient Caribbean civilizations”¹⁵ was once again silenced because of its failure to meet European cultural standards.

With studying the past of the civilizations that originally inhabited the Caribbean, it is important to once again acknowledge that their historical narratives are entirely controlled by the colonizers. These archaeologists were not native people, they had no insight into what these artifacts meant except for assuming their meaning and importance. Allaire states, “they nevertheless have left their very own images and symbols, certainly to be variously interpreted and understood by archeologists, yet never to be distorted as historical documents might have been.”¹⁶

The practice of archeologists being selective over artifacts mirrors the silences that Eurocentric maps held over the indigenous people. With maps, European settlers paint the areas they controlled of the Island of Hispaniola entirely, illustrating a single working society. This is unlike the Taínos, who would have probably had a very different system of land ownership that, as I will discuss further in this essay, thought about land further than Quisqueya. Similarly, to European map makers, archaeologists wanted to focus on the repetition of items, as if the repetition of items found represented the ancient civilizations that once inhabited the island. It seems that focusing only on artifacts that were found repeated around the island ignores some of the more rare, or personal artifacts that could tell some history about something less known. What I am trying to say overall is that the act of generalizing the history of the Taínos based on just the “repeated artifacts” was wrong because every region of the island differs from one

¹⁵ Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” 676-677.

¹⁶ Ibid.

another. There may have also been lesser-known tribes or individuals that would not have generated multiples of artifacts. This connects to how archaeologists were studying the island as one nation, even despite the fact that nationhood did not even exist for the Taíno people in the island. They seemed to not even imagine that there were many regions in the island and each region could have been populated by different tribes who held different beliefs and practices from the other regions.

Taíno “artifacts” can also go above materialistic items. For example, oral history for the Taíno people is an artifact that is carried throughout the knowledge of the Taíno people.¹⁷ These oral stories carry the origins of Taíno people.¹⁸ Perhaps, in the Taíno version of mapping, it would have been only showing regions that they have heard stories passed down from.

The importance of the Caribbean ancient civilization was chosen not to be a big subject of study back then, which helps explain why it is almost impossible to find Taíno civilization practices that would include their own version of map-making. However, many think that much of the history is based on the cultural practices that have been passed down through generations—also including the artifacts that we have. We can assume that perhaps native Taínos might have assimilated similar practices of map-making that might have been conserved through stones, wood and bone tools such as mammal bones.¹⁹ It is important to also comment on the fact that it was, in general, Western science that silenced the voices of the Taíno people, which of course includes ethnohistorians, anthropologists, and historians.

¹⁷ Erica Neeganagwedgin, “Rooted in the Land: Taíno Identity, Oral History and Stories of Reclamation in Contemporary Contexts,” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 11, no. 4 (December 2015): 380.

¹⁸ Neeganagwedgin, “Rooted in the Land”, 380.

¹⁹ Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” 687.

Taíno History and their “Disappearance” in History

For this section I plan on debating the points that Erica Neeganagwedgin and Neil L. Whitehead make about the ancient civilization of La Hispaniola in their chapter and article named, “The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: The Caribbean states” and “Rooted in the Land.”

In the Whitehead chapter, the narrative of Taíno people starts with the Spanish Conquista, like most or all of the historical books. Whitehead states, “In the islands of the Caribbean, a series of brutal occupations, particularly in the Great Antilles, meant that the native population had all but disappeared from view within a few decades of initial encounter.”²⁰ Allaire, the archaeologist mentioned before, also states, “The case of the Taíno is the most dramatic, with a practically total depopulation within a single generation of initial European contact.”²¹ This is an example of how power structures that had rights to narrate the stories of Taíno decided to tell the narrative of this civilization and state they were killed. The word “killed” on its own feels too harsh. Although there are no pure Taíno left, there are footprints of them in the DNA of Dominicans. According to the 23andmeBlog page, “Taíno ancestry is almost completely absent from the islands formerly controlled by Britain and France, such as Jamaica and Haiti....” However, “Native Caribbean ancestry, primarily Taíno, is still found among Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans.”²² If the Taíno people were to be killed, that means there

²⁰ Neil L. Whitehead, “The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: The Caribbean (1492-1580),” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 864.

²¹ Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” 723.

²² “Now I Know Where I Belong”, 23andMe Blog, last modified August 11, 2019, <https://blog.23andme.com/23andme-customer-stories/now-i-know-where-i-belong/>.

would not be traces of them still around the world. This makes me wonder what archaeologists and historians might think would be enough to qualify as being part Taíno.

Neeganagwedgin argues that “The Taíno people were the first to see Christopher Columbus, yet they are among the least known.”²³ Neeganagwedgin believes that because archaeologists such as Whitehead and Allaire, many believe in our modern day that the Taíno people are forever extinct. Neeganagwedgin states “Indigenous people’s history begins with the arrival of the Europeans...such thinkings reflect the belief that history is bound by written documents penned by “dead white men.”²⁴ As previously mentioned, these narratives of Taínos disappearance did not reflect the voices of the Taíno people nor what is left of them. This once again proves the point that the stories in history of Taíno people are not entirely representative of what a Taíno is and is not.

I personally believe Neeganagwedgin's argument that the existence of the Taíno people still exists. I do not believe that there are pure indigenous people of the Caribbean left. However, what is left of the indigenous people of the Caribbean is us. Dominicans, Haitians, Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans, Cubans and all of the other regions that Taínos before might have inhabited. As Neeganagwedgin said, it is important to celebrate whatever trace of Taíno blood there still exists to remember them. Indians before are not the same as Indians might look today, but they exist within the multi-ethnic mixture of the people of Quisqueya.

²³ Neeganagwedgin, “Rooted in the Land”, 377.

²⁴ Ibid, 378.

Changing and Re-thinking the meaning of maps: Maps as Taíno artifacts

Annita Hetovehotohke'e Lucchesi, author of *"Indians Don't Make Maps": Indigenous Cartographic Traditions and Innovations,* argues that the ideology of maps did not start with colonial occupation. She argues that Indigenous people actually knew the practice of map-making; however, for them, mapping held a humanistic meaning, and although their maps were not done with paper and pen like the European, they were done in wood, rocks, and other natural materials that came from the resources of the land. According to Lucchesi, these maps, unlike the Europeans', held cultural traditions that were passed down to other generations in their tribes through materials such as the ones previously mentioned, as well as oral history or body embodiment. It is important to recognize that there are many other sources that can be an additional source to written history, such as dance, cultural practices, and food.

Since European settlers did not speak the different Taíno tribal languages from the island, many practices of "map-making" in Taíno culture might have been lost. Due to lack of communication and dialect, Europeans did not pay attention to these practices, nor had a close relationship with their understanding of mapping. Lucchesi states, "Indigenous mapping traditions were not included in any textbook, assignment, or lecture... I have repeatedly received questions and criticism accompanied by claims that mapping is a colonial tool inconsistent with Indigenous cultures... I am here to tell you: yes, Indians do make maps. Pretty special ones actually. But that history has been erased, forgotten, and willfully ignored, arguably due to the persistent racism and imperial attitudes within the fields of geography and cartography."²⁵

²⁵ Annita Hetovehotohke'e Lucchesi, "Indians Don't Make Maps: Indigenous Cartographic Traditions and Innovations," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, (2018), 2.

Did Taínos Make Maps?

Although Lucchesi is referring to indigenous people in general, in her article of Indians do not make maps, it is important to also recognize that all indigenous people's practices differed from one another in culture. Despite this, Lucchesi does make a good point that this practice of map-making could have existed for indigenous people, but with different motives. It is important to acknowledge this to add on to the idea that Taíno traditions are not entirely lost.

According to Allaire, archeologists found standing stones which appeared to be part of a unique ball court game. Which appeared to hold “religious ceremonies and dances.”²⁶ This is interesting because it shows that if we are challenging our modern definition of mapping, then these standing stones could represent the mapping of one of the traditions of the indigenous people of the Caribbean. Instead of the road maps that appear in colonial maps, these standing stones shaping the “ball court” could map the existence and value of such practice. In other words, mapping does not have to be only land representation, but it can also be representation of common practices or traditions. In here, I am proposing to think about mapping as a tool to narrate cultural tradition.

If we look at maps from the perspective of Taíno people we would think about maps differently. In other words, I have not much basis to support such a claim that these artifacts are examples of mapping but they are an imaginary method of thinking about them. With this being said, this does not make this method of thinking absolutely accurate, but based on their practices and culture, it is the only way for me to try to gain proximity to what their synonym of mapping

²⁶ Louis Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 719.

could have been. I state this because of the need to express that when thinking of Taíno Mapping, I also think about the limit to my assumptions on this civilization, but there is not much to scholarly work with apart from these artifacts.

Once again, our current meaning of maps serves the power dynamic of the world we live in. Western mapping exists in the form of European and Western influence. However, that does not mean that has to be the only perspective on mapping. According to Lucchesi, “What a map is, serves colonial interests and excludes Indigenous practices.”²⁷ A map is not only to locate a place and give directions. A map can be a ritual or an artifact that can help future generations to find their way around their indigenous culture or practices.

Lucchesi is saying that indigenous people did make maps, but for different purposes and different reasons; and that they may not be considered “maps” in the traditional understanding of the word, but can still be researched as such. It is important to have present that Europeans did not share the same “relationship to land”²⁸ as indigenous people. For indigenous people, the relationship they had with the body and land was one that was more supernatural instead of governmental and systematic. For some indigenous people, these maps/artifacts represented the grounding of their traditions, culture, and rituals.

Lucchesi states, “it is necessary in ongoing efforts to document Indigenous histories and cultures, as well as efforts to strengthen tribal sovereignty and mobilize towards restorative justice.”²⁹ Lucchesi relates mapping for indigenous people as a conservation of ancestral value towards land. “Similar to songs, dances, and ceremonies, these maps remind us of our contractual responsibilities to the land and show us how our ancestors meant for us to engage

²⁷ Lucchesi, “Indians Don't Make Maps,” 2.

²⁸ Ibid, 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

with it.”³⁰ She is talking about maps being a testament left behind for other generations to follow. Lucchesi also comments that indigenous maps are “storytelling devices rather than navigational tools—oddly assuming that because a device assists in telling a story about the land it is precluded from being a navigational tool... Apparently, maps are “folk art” when created by indigenous people, and “scientific tools” when created by Europeans or settlers.”³¹

The reason for why these indigenous maps or artifacts might have not been important for these archeologists might have been because they were not part of the “scientific tools” they wanted to document. Particularly in past times, there was a general understanding of what was considered scientific, or worthy of importance for history. Partly it could have been by mistake leaving certain types of maps behind, but another part could have been on purpose. Lucchesi suggests that “we emphasize the importance of this map by interpreting it not as a document portraying the inevitability of colonial rule or assimilation, but as a guide to Indigenous survivance.”³² Perhaps the Europeans purposely wanted to erase such artifacts that they thought were more “folk art” than science. This way, history would be told much more in the dialect and understanding that European settlers wished to have it told.

Creating Taíno maps: Materials and Practices of the Taíno people that might have been part of their own map-making practices

Instead of the standard ink and paper, which is what we generally think of for the medium of maps, Taínos used other kinds of surfaces. What Taínos might have used as items to

³⁰ Lucchesi, “Indians Don’t Make Maps,” 3.

³¹ Ibid, 4.

³² Ibid, 8.

map on could vary from ceramic, wood carving³³, and ground stones.³⁴ According to Allaire, “The less common sea mammal, the manatee, whose hard wood like ribs were traded all across the Caribbean, was valued everywhere not only as food but as raw material for small carvings.”³⁵ This connects to the reading about Indians making maps because we can assume that what was carved were meaningful things that they wanted to conserve and pass down. Overall, it is difficult to tell what may have been intended as a source of recorded history or not, and thus it is important not to ignore any type of artifact, no matter how insignificant it may seem. While we may think about this nowadays, it is difficult to preserve that history as we cannot go back and protect artifacts that may have already been discarded and lost. But it is important to think about what history could have been, or how it can be handled going into the future if we treat all artifacts with their deserved importance.

Colonial Mercantilism Impact on the Physicality of the Island

The purpose of a colonial map is not only to show territory gained and superiority of the colonial powers, but to also show the wealth of goods acquired in such as tropical land. The island of Quisqueya was and is a very good place to produce goods. The wealth that Europeans were getting from this island was not only the gold but it was also fruits such as “ radishes, chickpeas, bread, wine, olive oil and certain meats, wheat, rice, barley, oats, coffee, sugar cane, citrus fruits and melons.... Over time, olive, lemon and orange trees were planted.”³⁶ Not only

³³ Allaire, “Archaeology of the Caribbean Region,” 720.

³⁴ Ibid, 688.

³⁵ Ibid, 673.

³⁶ Tori Avey, “Foods of the New World,” last updated June 13, 2020, <https://toriavey.com/history-kitchen/foods-of-the-new-world/>

were fruits being brought into the island but also goods were being taken out excessively such as tobaccos. The planting of new fruits and the exploitation of the goods that were already native to the island changed and moved the form of the natural landscape. As the land kept on being exploited, I wonder how the mapping of the island was changing. Perhaps this is another way to think about European mapping; to say that these maps were not only tools of sovereignty and power expanding but also a way to chain the land as well as the people inhabiting it.

Apart from the urban style the island was starting to gain, and the new non-native goods being planted on Quisqueya there were also many different animals being introduced. With new animals being also brought into the island, perhaps the environment started to naturally gain a new structure. “Livestock came from Europe, including horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and chickens.”³⁷ Animals in their nature produce new environments of their own. How different would a Eurocentric map of Quisqueya and an untouched map of the island look? How is imported European luxury moving the physicality of the land? With all these speculations being stated, I ponder on how the Taínos saw a natural environment such as Quisqueya change in front of their eyes. As the Taíno eyes saw the change in the space, I ponder how the original mapping form of Taínos started to change as well.

Having so many new goods into Quisqueya silencing and forever erasing the original nature of what the island was. It is true that the Taíno civilization was known as travelers and traveled all throughout the Antilles and obtained different goods. But these new goods being brought from Europe were forcibly impacted into the land and excessively. These non-native

³⁷ Tori Avey, “Foods of the New World,” last updated June 13, 2020, <https://toriavey.com/history-kitchen/foods-of-the-new-world/>

goods were extremely new to such a tropical habitat and also to a whole different side of the world.

Acknowledgement of Map Timeline Research

When analyzing the maps, it is important to recognize that these maps were not made by the Taínos—the original native inhabitants of the island. Neither do we know if the Taínos used maps at all as a way of understanding space. We know some native groups used rocks or wood as the surface of their printing instead of ink and paper, and instead of map-making

Wood states, “the map is nothing but an assertion of the state of the world desired by its makers.”³⁸ Maps are done through the lenses of its maker—through the way they perceive the world—rather than the way people who live in those places see it. Wood also states, “They are not representations but systems of propositions, arguments about what the world might be. It was this propositional logic that made maps attractive to states in the first place, and makes them more and more valuable to the state every day.”³⁹ This shows that maps are designed for the interest of the state, rather than to present a visual of a location. Wood argues about the power of maps, in this case, is linked to notions of power by the state.

He says that “maps are human constructs... there were no maps before 1400 anyway.”⁴⁰ What made the 1400’s the trend of mapmaking was its use for “military and naval purposes, for making political and judicial decisions... For economic and financial planning (mines, canals, fiscal decisions).”⁴¹ Wood’s claim about how maps hold political power show how mapmaking erased the way lands were perceived by the natives before they were first colonized. Mapmaking

³⁸ Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 29.

overwrites the narrative of land that belongs to the natives, creating silences by taking the right of natives to be able to illustrate the land they lived on based on their own perceptions and cultural values. “There’s no question that the nascent European mapmaking tradition was transported around the globe.”⁴² Mapmaking was the tool used to declare land ownership that belonged to the colonial world. Maps went from simple drawings to tools of greater intelligence—tools used to make a market out of the land. An example of this is the sugar making in Quisqueya during the Atlantic Slave Trade. European colonizers made Africans work the sugar fields in Quisqueya with the objective of expanding the European market. In thinking about mapping, the tropical weather was a wise environment to use to expand on the production of sugar. The use of map-making does not only state the belonging of the island to the colonizers, but it also shows the economic advantage that the island has given in terms of being fertile land.

Research of Timeline of Occupations in the Quisqueya

(To full the whole timeline click [here](#))

[Story Map Link](#) (Click Here to see Story Map of Occupations)

Colonial and Imperial Occupations and Mapping Connections

This timeline of colonial and imperial occupations shows the many different colonial and imperial powers that occupied the island from the 1400s to the present day. This timeline shows how each colonial power decided to make a different map with their colonial language. Some maps also show how some colonial powers decided to leave Native-sounding names on the map. It is interesting to think about the reason why they must have decided on leaving Native names

⁴² Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, 28.

on the map. What I noticed during my research during each colonial occupation was that there was a period in which maps stopped being heavily produced. I found it hard to find maps from the time period of the early 1800s to the late 1800s, for example. My assumption as to why there was a decrease in map-making was that the period of the 1800s was a time in which Haiti and the Dominican Republic were somewhat fighting for independence. The absence of these maps shows the rebellion of the natives of the 1800s on the island against their colonial rule, as well as conflicts of land ownership between Haitians and Dominicans. Haitians and Dominicans awakened themselves for the desire to be Sovereign. Another one of my speculations of the absence of maps during the 1800s, was because Haitians and Dominicans did not have enough sovereignty yet to think about maps. This failure of narrating through maps from the early 1800s perhaps shows how dominant colonial rulers did not want to document their failures of not having possession of the island.

In 1824 we can see a map done around the time the Dominican Republic regained control over the Eastside of the island. Here we can see how the practice of mapmaking comes back to Dominicans in the year that they retake control. This is an example of how the Dominicans are making national and transnational news that they are becoming stronger. Another time a map is done of the whole island is in 1844, the year the Dominican Republic gained its independence from Haiti. Ironically these maps start to be published by Dominicans with each territory win, just as the island's previous colonists.

Chapter 2

Maps I Chose to Focus on out of The Timeline of Occupations in the Island

Map 1



Map Origin Information

Map of Santo Domingo: 1585 assumed to have been done in London.

Analysis of Map Design

This map shows the gridiron patterns being used strategically as a defense system from other colonial invasions to the island. At the time of 1502-1519, many Spanish buildings were being constructed for authorities that worked for the crown. This explains the infrastructure and

grid patterns of buildings that show on the map from 1585.⁴³ The mid and late 1500s were important moments because these were when Santo Domingo became the central point in which Spaniard settlers would be traveling in and out of the island. This central point was also important because it served as a stepping-stone for the Spaniard military. This urbanized part of the island was essential for the Spaniard conquest of the Americas; settling ships in Santo Domingo was an easier way to make a journey to what was yet to be discovered instead of traveling from Spain.⁴⁴ At this moment, most of the focus seemed to be put on that part of the island, as the rest is not always mentioned based on my research from David F. Marley. As stated in my Story Map at the end of chapter one, Columbus arrived in San Nicolas, now called Môle-Saint-Nicolas (current day located in Haiti). It appears to be a mystery how Santo Domingo became such a focus point and what exactly brought colonists there.

The absence of roads is striking to me because according to Wood, “Roads, for example, were not an important subject. Nor were the state functions maps did initially serve newly created in the 15th century.”⁴⁵ This map is not only showing grip patterns, but representing the social tradition of the Spaniards and their value in infrastructure. According to Wood, maps started from small scale to big scale, which helps explain why this map is focusing on a small area of the island.⁴⁶ Wood mentions how maps can make borders, and García Peña also mentions borders when talking about mapping.

⁴³ David Marley, *Historic Cities of the Americas: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 91.

⁴⁴ Marley, *Historic Cities of the Americas: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 92.

⁴⁵ Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, 28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

History Behind the Map

This map only showed Santo Domingo's battle in 1586, which occurred because of the Anglo-Spanish War in which Protestant England and Catholic Spain went to war. During the Anglo-Spanish War, there was marine activity in the west indies from England. The map shows that the war broke out in Hispaniola Santo Domingo; Britain attacked first in what today we know as the Haina River; they attacked on the beach because it was more vulnerable with the hope to weaken the enemy.⁴⁷ The map illustrates earthworks to defend the beaches and other larger bodies of water. This map narrates the conflict between both empires, with specific focus on Hispaniola as the place in which war took place. England then occupied Santo Domingo, taking gold and other valuable ransoms, and destroying some of the Spaniard buildings on the island.⁴⁸ Based on my observations, I was able to identify cannons located in a very colonized part of Santo Domingo. I also noticed some buildings such as cathedrals. The map shows Spanish and English ships surrounding the island. We can see that towards the west there is still a lot of fighting between two colonial powers, Spain and England. We can see men fighting on horses, which I assumed are the Spaniards, since England could not have brought those horses in their ships for that extended period of travel. Some men are fighting with some type of weapon that appears to be knives on a long stick.

⁴⁷ Marley, *Historic Cities of the Americas: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 73.

⁴⁸ Angus Konstam, *The Great Expedition: Sir Francis Drake on the Spanish Main 1585-86* (Oxford: Osprey Pub, 2011), 41-53.

Analysis of Map Design

I noticed how the Spaniards, before the battle of Santo Domingo had broken out, had managed to expand throughout the island; however, the central place of power is mostly in Santo Domingo. There are mountains and greenery in the layout, which I believe shows a lot of the areas in Santo Domingo, or around Santo Domingo, that have not yet been colonized and urbanized by the Spaniard settlers. There are some houses that do not appear to belong to the indigenous people; perhaps they are colonial houses that were established there by Spaniard settlers to civilize the people, natives, and Africans, and stay in control. We can also see some crosses that have been established in some mountains, most likely to represent the lives that have been lost during the war.

Uncertainty

It calls to my attention how this map was done in London, England, and it is not only a map that shows Santo Domingo—it is a map that shows the Battle of Santo Domingo happening in action. Something I found conflicting with this map is how the map was done in England, but the information written on the map is in Latin. I am also surprised that we see creatures in the water, such as marine crocodiles and giant crocodiles. It calls to my attention because it shows the colonist emperor's prejudice toward the Americas—the mystical, dangerous view the colonists have of the island.

What the Map does not Include

As the focus of the map is to narrate the conflict between these two empires, the map does not mention any civilian who inhabited the island at the time. The importation of slaves

started during the very late 1400's. This map, however, was done in 1585, which means that they should be shown in this map as well as Taínos. The satellite viewpoint of this map does not show villages of these marginalized groups. The map does not seem to care about showing how these marginalized groups were affected during this war. I wonder about how incorporated were the indigenous people and the African who lived on the island with the Spanish modernized society. When thinking about borders, I wonder, is this map showing any borders or any other representation of what a border might look like? Is there a separation from the native life ?

Map 2

1664: The French come to the West of the Island, Taking Control of Some Areas Naming Them Saint-Domingue



Map Origin Information

1682-1773, done in Paris: French Map of Hispaniola also shows the Antilles.

History Behind the Map

To understand how France gained control of the island, it is important to understand that after the English occupation of 1585, the English became weakened by diseases. Eventually this

made them vulnerable and in 1664 the French took advantage and started to take control of the island starting from the west, making their way into the northwest portion of the island.⁴⁹

What the Map shows

It seems as if the whole island is under one imperial control—that being the French. For some reason the island’s west side (which today is Haiti) is severely written over a lot more than the rest of the island. This perhaps is to show that this map is from the French occupation perspective. Hispaniola is in the center of the map, but we can see current day Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico in this map as well. However, Hispaniola remains the center of attention in this map.

Analysis of Map Design

There is a plan on the top left of the map that seems to translate to “Map of the Spanish city of S.Domingo and part of its surroundings.” I wonder why the French might have included this when, at that time, they were only in control of the West. Also, this is a map of the whole island, when they could have simply just shown the side of the island that they controlled. This also points back to Wood’s comment that back then maps started from small scale to big scale. This is an example of how the small scale of mapping has enlarged. The enlargement of this map shows that they desired for even more control, and by having this “plan” on the left, it meant they were probably doing some land analysis of what other areas to acquire. A lot of the names in the west side are already in French. The fact that there are still names in the east of Hispaniola

⁴⁹ Marley, *Historic Cities of the Americas: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 94.

that show to be in Spanish, such as “La bega” and “los cavalleros”, shows an imaginary border between the two sides.

Uncertainty

If the French did not occupy the island entirely yet, I wonder why they made a whole map in French. This perhaps helps explain France's deep interest in the Island. Something else that comes to mind is how the name Domingo remains the same, but is converted to French. One would assume that since these colonial rulers were at odds with each other, they would want to change all of the names on the map. However, they did not change the city name of Santo Domingo because the name marks the European encounter in the Americas; this explains why leaving the name is important to preserve as a historical archive of that accomplishment. Aside from the French side, the English still had control of the east side of the island. I wonder why they did not change the name of the regions of the side they controlled into English and instead maintained the Spanish names. My assumption here is that their plan was to profit off the land as a type of colony, rather than to stabilize it as a region that belonged to the English.

Spain's Attempt of Talking about Taíno Culture in Mapping

Map 3



Map Origin Information

1731 (French Map)

Jean Baptiste is the Map-maker

Title: The Spanish Island Under the Indian Name of Hayti where it was possessed by its natural inhabitants at the time of the discovery, with the first Establishments of the Spaniards.

What the Map shows

The translation of the text on the left of the map says "The Spanish Island Under Indian Name D'Hayti," showing the attempt to include Taíno mythology into the perspective of Hispaniola.

The text to the left demonstrates the prejudices that colonial powers had over the native people of the island; i.e., calling them “possessed” simply for having different spiritual beliefs compared to theirs. Spain made this Taíno Map in Latin in 1731. The map seems to be divided into five different sections which states to be the five chiefdoms of Hispaniola.

Analysis

On the top of the right corner is the coat of arms of Christopher Columbus. The objective of the map is to show how the island might have been seen through the eyes of the Taíno people. However, I find myself confused about the need for the coat of arms to be included on a map that was meant to analyze the island through the perspective of the Taínos. This map was said to be designed by Jean Baptiste based on some type of research⁵⁰, which to my assumption, must have been based on the early colonial periods. An example of writing that Jean Baptiste could have accessed was writing from Bartolomé de las Casas, a Spaniard priest who focused on narrating the injustices of the Indians by the Spaniards was able to write on these chiefdoms. Perhaps Jean Baptiste used Bartolomé de las Casas as the tool for his research when making this map. However, it is striking that although this map is supposed to be about Taino people it is still put into the already European style map. Apart from this, the zemis (Taíno mythological gods) seem to be out of place considering that they laying outside the map. There is no context that could explain further why this was chosen to be illustrated this way.

One final observation I have on this map is that many of these names are still used in the modern-day map of the island. For example, “Maguana” and modern day “San Juan de

⁵⁰ Pierre-François-Xavier Charlevoix, and Jean Baptiste Le Pers, *Histoire de l'Isle espagnole ou de S. Domingue* (Paris: Chez Hippolyte-Louis Guerin, 1730-1731), 61.

Maguana,” “Higüey” is still present day “Higüey” and for some reasons “Maguá” still remains but it is very associated with “Higüey” which might be because of its proximity. The area “Marién,” mostly present-day Haiti, seems to not be associated with our modern-day map. I could not find any area of our modern map that is named “Marién.” Jaragua is only found in the side of the Dominican Republic but as a town not as the intense area that it is shown in this map. Jaragua in this map is mostly showing the side that current day belongs to Haiti and its modern-day name “Jacmel.”

Uncertainty

With this being said, it is three hundred years after the first colonization, and we now see the Spaniards gaining some interest in finding out what the island might have meant to the natives. I am curious to know the need to make this map after so many years in a way that is also highlighting the presence of Taíno artifacts in the island. I wonder how they could obtain the names of these chiefdoms from the natives. Were the makers of this map actively working with a native from the island, or did they base it on archives done by other earlier colonists? Is the spelling of each chiefdom written accurately on the map, or is it a Spanish interpretation of how Taínos might spell it? This map shows the island’s chiefdoms and the mythological Gods lying all around the map. Why choose these zemis and not any others? Why were these more important than the many other artifacts?

Conclusion on Chapter 2

After having studied all these maps, one of my analyses was how Christopher Columbus arrived in what today is known as Haiti, but then there was a whole city built in Santo Domingo. I wonder why and how Santo Domingo is the center of attention and one of the biggest locations

for other empires to want to control. Apart from this, I wonder what was it about the land that made it suitable for it to become a city. I supposed that the whole island was very well suitable for economic wealth accumulation for the Americas and perhaps this might have been why it became a center of interest. Santo Domingo can be looked at as a nexus for the development of infrastructure in the island.

Map 3 is separated from the other maps because it is connected to the Taíno civilization in a form. There is not as much depth as the previous maps because we do not know what Baptiste's original research about this map was based on. More than anything, this map serves as evidence of the manipulated presence of the Taíno Civilization through mapping and history. However, Map 3 made me think of conversations I hear every time I go to the Dominican Republic. Since I was born in San Juan de La Maguana, I often hear that the GPS there does not work or that the only place it works well is in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. Many say that the GPS does not show roads in any other place except for the capital, so people rely on asking for instructions of how to get to places to the people around the town. When someone stops in my hometown (San Juan de La Maguana), I often hear the towners, "eso está por Higüey" or "eso está por Jaragua," which translates into "That's around Higüey" or "That's around Jaragua." To know that these might be perhaps the Spanish sounding of the original Arawak language (the Taíno's language) but they are still so heavily used names for people in the island to get around is very impactful to me, because it shows a trace of the Taíno people in our present day. The sounding of the words printed in the map show the imprints from empires such as the Spanish and French over the indigenous Taíno names. The last two maps show how these names have all mixed and coexisted together leading up to our present-day map of Quisqueya.

Chapter 3: Indigenous Communities Re-constructing the Silenced Maps

Peter H. Herlihy and Gregory Knapp authors of *Maps of, and for the people of Latin America* propose the use of maps differently than the traditional use of euro-centric maps. They state that “participatory research” and “power mapping” could be used as needed ways to re-think mapping and readjust its purpose. Power mapping shows maps as a space to actively work on rather than just a visual that shows data. It works closely with communities to locate the things that are valuable to them within their region. These maps are more designed to give a voice to the communities and raise awareness of their struggles. What I found interesting about this method is its irony. Power mapping and participatory research both rely on using euro-centric practices of mapping, but just changing its purpose to create more genuine representation of the people that live in those areas.

Herlihy and Knapp state, “these mainly non-text-based societies are adopting participatory research methods and western style maps as tools of empowerment in what advocates call “counter mapping,” “social mapping” and “remapping.”⁵¹ This goes with the modern saying of “decolonizing maps.” Many can say that this practice is just adding on to the euro-centric mapping ideas, however, it is actually going in reverse. Instead, it is shining light on the geographical landscape that has been mis-represented or hidden from Eurocentric maps.

Although this article was talking about native people of Mexico and the colonization of maps, this is still relevant to my topic because it is an example of Erica Neeganagwedginm, who I mentioned at the beginning. Neeganagwedginm mentions that Taínos are still around and that they did not disappear like many historians have said. She goes on explaining how we still use

⁵¹ Peter H. Herlihy and Gregory Knapp, “Maps of, by, and for the peoples of Latin America,” *Human Organization* 62, no. 4 (2003), 303.

Taíno practices in our modern day, such as our neighboring customs and our current use of cassava in our cuisine.

Based on Neeganagwedginm's comment about community sharing, I can testify that while living in the United States, I noticed that Americans barely know who their neighbors are. In the Dominican Republic, every neighbor after lunch goes outside their house and sits on their balcony with their neighbor to discuss the well-being of each other's family. In fact, neighbor relationships are such an important part of the societal system for Dominicans that we exchange fruits and vegetables from each other's backyards. For example, I recall that it is a belief that Dominican cherries can cure anemia, therefore, when my sister found herself with anemia, and we did not have a Dominican Cherry tree in our grandmother's backyard, my grandmother went to her neighbor across the street to ask for some cherries to make juices for my sister. Of course, this exchange of goods is free; neighbors do not expect anything in return for giving away their food. This connects to Neeganagwedginm's point about this neighborhood practice being an element of Taíno practice because it shows that there does not need to be an economic system that moves food across communities. The good will of caring for one another is something rooted deep within us. This resembles the relationship that colonizers and Taínos had with land. For Taíno, land was righteous and a god in itself, while for the colonizers, land was used as means to create an economical system that relied on exploitation. Since food moved around countries based on the capitalist system that rules the world today, it is easy to think that Taíno food sharing practices have stayed in the past. However, this is all due to the economic power dynamic of the world, where food equals wealth.

It is important to recognize that food and land are almost religious tools for native people. As someone who has Taíno roots, it hurts to see how food and land have largely lost their sacred

essence. “Over the five centuries since the European conquest, most indigenous spatial knowledge has gone unrecorded. Native communities have maintained cognitive maps that are delineated verbally using place names that convey place and spatial orientations. Only occasionally have they converted these cognitive orientations into sketch maps for use in their daily lives. Coincident with the formation of federations and nongovernmental agencies to represent their interests, indigenous leaders learned some decades ago that national maps were symbols of state identity and not their own, seeing how maps helped outsiders formalize control over their lands and resources.” I think the overall point of the concept of mapping for this author is to show the maps are more for governmental interests; they silence the voices of those who live in those areas.

Technology and Maps

The technology that comes with map-making is important to acknowledge when thinking about map-making in our modern day. Now maps are constantly changing due to satellites that update our geographical landscape changes after every war or every natural disaster. It also shows how detailed the world has gotten with mapping. Now maps do not get to be just a section of the land or a big picture of the land, but it also allows us to be able to zoom into specific routes, and act as a navigation through houses and neighborhoods. Although some of the colonial maps that I showed in this essay, such as the Map of 1585 showing the war between England and Spain, show a system of grids in the residences, nowadays GPS dives into looking at each residence one by one, even showing you how to get around.

Margaret Wicken Pearce and Renee Pualani Louis, authors of “Mapping Depth of Place”, talk about how indigenous people have been using “ahupua‘a” to challenge the western map-

mapping ideas. These authors argue that indigenous people need to stand as sovereign people with their own culture. She states that Indigenous communities are now utilizing geospatial technologies such as “digital maps, satellite images, geographic information systems [GIS], and global positioning systems [GPS]”⁵² to project their own tribes and territories. This is interesting because it shows that although some native communities are utilizing maps to remap and reclaim land and empower their voices, some are using the technologies to continue protecting themselves. The idea of sovereignty that Pearce and Louis are proposing intrigues me. This is because it is pointing out the significance it would create if Indian communities were to be recognized as nations instead of being a nation within a nation. For indigenous communities to be independent would also improve the security of their territory, but more than anything, it would give them the right to govern themselves.

Not only is sovereignty important for these communities, but also the availability for others to understand it and respect it. Pearce and Louis state, “When Indigenous cartographies are removed from the context of their knowledge space and placed in colonial conditions, Indigenous maps do not convey the same level of power and authority naturally conveyed by the Western maps. The need for Indigenous communities to adapt Western mapping techniques for the representation of local knowledge remains essential to both the preservation of Indigenous cultural diversity and the realization of Indigenous self-determination in the face of global change.”⁵³ This is saying that indigenous mapping, when they stand alone, they convey a distinct power and narrative than Western maps do not. This goes back to when I previously mentioned that Indigenous maps serve a different purpose than Westernized ones. In order for Indians to be

⁵² Margaret Wicken Pearce and Renee Pualani Louis, “Mapping Depth of Place,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (2008), 107.

⁵³ Pearce and Louis, “Mapping Depth of Place,” 108.

able to do their own maps, they have to work with western maps so that those who are not indigenous can understand how and why they are trying to maintain their culture through "global change." It is important not only for the indigenous to know what these maps are saying, but also for the non-indigenous so that they can understand the importance of their culture and gain supremacy in the world that has forgotten about them.

There's an ironic parallel here. Pearce and Louis are talking about indigenous people using maps to show their "determination," in other words, their sovereignty as independent people. This is very similar to European settlers that back in colonial times used maps to claim territory. The difference is that by using mapping, indigenous communities are claiming their territory, but also being able to decide how their representation of land will be portrayed. I think the difference here is that one side was forcefully taking over a territory, and changing the way the land was perceived, while the other is trying to re-claim that perception by advocating for their own maps. Thus, it is not necessarily a power move for indigenous communities to claim territory, but to un-do some of the harm that the previous colonizers had caused. Pearce and Louis state, "The map extends from the community into the landscape through inscriptions on trees and rocks, drawings on the ground, or dance and ceremony. Indigenous processual cartography also often emphasizes the significance of storied place names and the recitation or visiting of those named places for recollection of situated stories."⁵⁴ Modern indigenous communities can attempt to re-shape perception of their lands through certain practices like these.

Most importantly, it makes me wonder how these new geographical technologies do not always show all the borders that we put on maps when we print them out. There are also not

⁵⁴ Pearce and Louis, "Mapping Depth of Place," 110.

always names to each country when we look at things like satellites. Instead, we see the world as a whole without boundaries—all the green land masses stuck together without lines or titles. To me, it is important to talk about how no boundaries are shown in satellites, and overall, I think it's important to acknowledge the humanity there is in that. With this acknowledgement, maybe we should feel some shame for disturbing such harmony; instead of uniting us as a whole, like the satellite images show, we are separating each other with drawn borders.

Lorgia García-Peña and *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction*

In *Borders of Dominicanidad* by García-Peña, Peña's talks about the idea of contradictions; she intends to be critical of how she is re-mapping the borderline of both countries—Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Peña brings an "urgent questioning of the multiple ways in which silences and repetitions operate in the erasure of racialized Dominican subjects from the national archive."⁵⁵ Later on she emphasizes that the current racial tensions between both nations are due to their colonial past; this means that the rivalry between them is because of the rivalry between the colonial powers that once colonized the whole island, or parts of it. In an interview done by Ibram X. Kendi, an anti-racist activist in American, states, "Those silences are often filled with fantasies that reflect colonial desires and fears that in turn cement exclusion ... I propose the idea of reading in contradiction, against the dominant archives in order to break silences that dominate national narratives."⁵⁶ What Kendi proposes here is to be

⁵⁵ Lorgia García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction* (Duke University Press, 2016), 1.

⁵⁶ Ibram X. Kendi, "Borders of Dominicanidad: A New Book on Dominican Racial Identity," *Black Perspectives*, November 4, 2016, <https://www.aaihs.org/borders-of-dominicanidad-a-new-book-on-dominican-racial-identity/>

critical of the archives to be able to find the hidden silences of those whose voices are not represented in the archives.

In García-Peña's introduction, she mentions *Él Nie*, stating, "belonging to neither nation."⁵⁷ "El Nie" signifies not the border space that the subject inhabits... but rather the body that carries the violent borders that deter from access to full citizenship and from public, cultural, historical, and political representation."⁵⁸ *Él Nie* is what sets people from one region apart from the others. Even if the border exists geographically, we find the border in the body when we go to the other side, and we find ourselves unable to speak or understand the other's culture.

"*Él Nie* expands our understanding of borders: it displaces the location and polarity of the nation border, instead proposing the body as the location that contains and reflects national exclusion (borders) across history and generations."⁵⁹ This is important to analyze for my project since I am talking about maps and the narratives of the people who lived in those geographical areas that are missing or have hidden under the society colonists build upon it. This creates a border in the many ethnic identities that the island carries that have to submit to national identities that might not be fully representative of who they are.

The reason why I use the name "Quisqueya" is because of the multiple names it has undergone throughout time by different colonial rules. Even though García-Peña' offers a more contemporary approach to her writing about borders and mapping, her argument of silencing voices through mapping is a valid point that connects with my project. Especially because it connects to the impact that colonial actions have had on the lives of the people who currently inhabit the island.

⁵⁷ García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad*, 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 5.

Contemporary Dominican World

As Hawaiian native people are trying to re-construct mapping in a way that serves their cultural knowledge, the Dominican Republic habitants do not actively engage to also re-construct ideas of mapping that might have belonged to the Taíno people. Dominicans in the United States are more likely to acknowledge their Taíno and Africans roots than those Dominicans living in the homeland. This is because of the racial awareness that exists in the USA, while in the homeland, Dominicans “children aren’t taught to consider themselves “negro” instead they are to consider themselves “indio.”⁶⁰ Unlike Dominicans in the United States, Dominicans in the homeland have not gained awareness that they are silencing their own black heritage by not accepting it. It is unfortunate that Dominicans state to have “Taíno” roots but many inhabitants are very unaware of how their daily practices connect to what it is to be of Taíno heritage.

As previously mentioned, Lucchesi said in her article of “Indians Don’t Make Maps,” that the traditions of Taíno people are still alive and live through us in the present day. Considering Neeganagwedgin’s argument that Taíno history has not been the total focus of historians and archeologists in comparison to Mesoamerica, it is important to understand that little education is given to Dominicans about both Taíno history and African history. Not many Dominicans in the island receive education due to economic hardship. And those who do, are not interested in the subject because once again, history neglects that Taíno people are still alive and so many Dominicans think so as well. This makes it harder for them to be proud of their heritage and for them to stand up to defend it, and more than anything, to be able to spread awareness

⁶⁰ Vwede Ohworho, “Are Dominicans Black? Yes, but They're Also...,” *Black Excellence*, January 13, 2022, <https://www.blackexcellence.com/are-dominicans-black/>

around the world of its importance. Therefore, this explains why it is extremely rare to see a Dominican in the homeland trying to recall their Taíno or African cultural heritage, nevertheless, interpreting mapping in indigenous artifacts.

As Peter H. Herlihy and Gregory Knapp suggested, “participatory research” and “power mapping” can give maps a totally different meaning. To remind us again of what power mapping is, it is a tool used to promote social awareness from a marginalized group about a marginalized topic. According to their journal article, “Participatory research (PR) recognizes the knowledge and wisdom of local peoples... The researcher lives in a community and participates in daily life while observing and collecting data by using questionnaires and interviews...”⁶¹ Even though this research is meant to analyze life in communities that have been marginalized, they are not represented accurately or totally since this research method is done “usually by outsiders” who are collecting these interviews. In other words, giving the platform to these native individuals to be able to tell their stories is crucial. This makes me wonder how much gets lost in just seeing how a community acts instead of experiencing it. Considering language barriers, history erasure, and the stolen lands, with this comes the question of will we ever be able to accurately represent marginalized communities in mapping? Meaning, would anyone ever be able to “display a humanistic concern for the people being studied?”⁶²

I think that the overall take away from this is that maps inherently have been tied to political gain and what indigenous people would think of map is more so the relationship between the human and land. In other words, the tradition of mapping is called Maps, meaning colonial mapping is a way of showing how maps were dehumanized and turned into a tool rather than a map that can show knowledge and cultural values. Indigenous connection with land is intimate

⁶¹ Herlihy and Knapp, “Maps of, by, and for,” 304.

⁶² Ibid.

as opposed to the euro-centric perspective that they want to control land to exploit its goods and people.

With all this being said, it is important for me to make a map that I think would be representative of African and Taíno roots. I believe that even though I have spent half of my life living outside the Dominican Republic, I can testify that, as Neeganagwedgin said, cultural traditions are oral practices that are passed down and they are symbolic of the presence that Taíno and Africans still have in our present day.

Chapter 4

Maps Gaining New Meanings

My Interpretation of What a Taíno Map would look like



Taino Map GIF

For this piece I used the drawings of Taínos found in the Dominican Republic in Cueva de Borbon, located in La Avenida Independencia in Santo Domingo and Cueva de las Maravillas located in La Romana, San Pedro de Macoris. My goal with this piece was to go out of the traditional mapping practice and focus on drawings, which is generally a common practice for indigenous people. Aside from the drawings found in these caves, I used rocks that are found in Caguana Ceremonial Ball Courts in Utuado Puerto Rico. I was personally intrigued by the drawing in rocks and in the caves. This is why my image gif is just showing those instead of the ceramic structures created by the Taíno people.

The process of deciding what to use for this map was experimental. My biggest challenge in making this piece was moving from my own understanding of what a map is. I started this piece with the outline of the map of the Dominican after knowing that this outline was designed and done by the influence of western technology and ideas. Therefore, I started it all over again and thought about what could be the base of this creation. Then I went on with my research and found that material artifacts from the Museum of Taínos in Haiti were not quite what I was looking to work with. Neither were the mythology alone that I wanted to work with but instead, these caves that to me were astonishing because of their natural nature of being one with the island. I chose the caves because they are already integrated into the land and then I chose the rocks because they have conserved the mythological drawing for such a long time as well as the cave drawing have. To me, they seemed like the perfect combination that connected to my theme of mapping.

The reason why this map is in movement instead of being static is because I want it to give the sense that there's a story in motion, along with the movement of light, that when it is darker or lighter the focus on the symbols shifts from one place to the other. The moving of the light also represents the moving culture through the drawings. These drawings are a form of artifacts representing the Taíno system of meanings. The materials they carved on were just materials that symbolized a realm of spiritual forces in movement. Lastly, flickering light like this is very reminiscent of light coming from a fire, which would often be the only source of light before there was electricity; if you were to look at this image on a cave wall lit from a fire, the light would dance exactly like this. In connection to maps, I want to experiment with the idea that these tools are also another imaginary representation of what mapping could have looked like for the Taíno civilization.

My primary goal with this moving image is to only focus on the drawing but to equally focus on the idea of it. This is not a traditional map that has borders and highlights the body and shape of the land, this is a map of meaning. The idea of land ownership and territory is not portrayed in this map. Instead, it proposes a culture in which motion is attached to the land.

Dances and body movement are also reasons for why this is acting as an animated photograph. Rouse says, “Other rituals were performed there before and after battles and upon the marriage or death of a chief, and so were ceremonies (areito) celebrating the deeds of ancestors. The dancers were accompanied by singing, drumming, and rattling (Lovén 1935: 492-97).⁶³” Even if this is an experiment, there are a lot of limitations with this material. I would love to have worked with body movements and rituals. However, since there is not much on that topic, I just used the animation to embody the flow of the body during these rituals.

The rocks on top of the moving image represents the Taíno game called batey. Rouse states, “Classic Taínos also played ball on the central plaza and elsewhere. Their ancestors appear to have used non structured areas, which may be termed ball grounds. They themselves often constructed specially designed ball courts...”⁶⁴ Batey was actually a ball game that was in honor of a ceremony. By having these stones in my Taíno map, I wanted to give the impression that apart from ritual, the game represents a way of life and a big practice of his civilization.

Moreover, the drawings on the rocks and the cave are being used to put all the spiritual rituals together. Since the gods were heavily linked to the lives of Taínos, this piece is invoking the presence of their gods with the hope that they manifest in this piece.

⁶³ Irving Rouse, *The Taínos. Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993), 1-25.

⁶⁴ Rouse, *The Taínos*, 17.

During this piece I thought about including foods and other cultural traditions in our present day that Neeganagwedgin proposes to be linked to the Taíno Civilization. One of them being these caves and stones. There is barely national recognition to these caves, at least Cueva Borbon does not even have an online site informing more about this cave. What they do have is an Instagram page showing pictures of the artifacts and cave. The likes of these pictures vary from 100 to 300 likes and videos to one thousand views. According to their Instagram on February 8, 2019, they had Danilo Medina (former president of the Dominican Republic) come to visit the cave and they have a video which ended up only having 620 views. According to the World Bank the population of the Dominican Republic is 10.8 million. The Lascaux cave in France has received not only local but world admiration. To have so little attention to something so valuable as Taíno art and culture, a valuable artifact and meaningful location such as this cave in particular is a shame. Not only should such a location receive national recognition but it should receive recognition worldwide just like the Lascaux cave has and many others such as Machu Picchu or the Aztec pyramids in Mexico. This is also an example of how Taíno culture and practices have been hidden and not appreciated. Perhaps the reason for why these caves are not as talked about is because of the narrative of the extinction of this civilization. Even so, this should not take away from talking about what is still left of this civilization. This Taíno map that I have created gives value and recognition to these caves. This is my effort to give Taíno people a voice through these caves and rocks instead of the maps that silence places like these.

In Taíno Trading network shown below, I will talk about these neighboring practices of our present day as something that not only seems to be a practice of the present day, but how it is also a tradition that mirrors the Taíno trading system—not only within the island of Hispaniola but also all around the Caribbean and North and South America.

for an apple, while a barter system would trade an orange for an apple. Instead, the Taínos would give away an apple for nothing at the moment, but it was assumed that whenever in the future they needed an orange from their neighbor that they would also give one away for nothing. This invokes a sense of strong trust and community that is often lacking in the present day. As I mentioned earlier, most people don't even know their neighbors well, let alone are willing to give materials to them for free. This is thus a very traditional practice in the Dominican Republic that was able to be preserved throughout time from the Taínos.

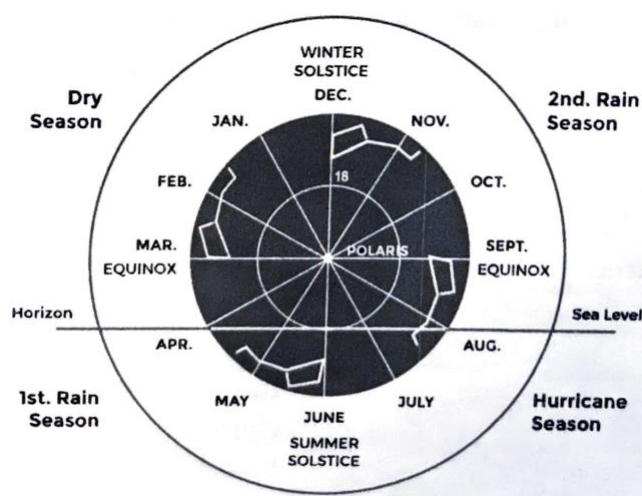
What I found most intriguing was the reasons for why they might have made such long journeys sometimes just to share objects. Since these objects were connected to their religious beliefs, I wonder what impact might it have had on the other lands in the Americas that they were being exchanged to. It is also said that the colonizers have used this trading system to find other parts of the Americas to colonize.⁶⁶ My uncertainty here is how did the colonizers get to have access to this trading system if perhaps what the Taíno people used according to professor Peralta was the guide of the stars and sun?

“The close relations between the Classic Taínos of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola is evidenced by a report that they visited each other daily.⁶⁷” Perhaps the mapping of Taínos went more beyond Hispaniola than it originally appeared. Their traveling system all around the island and the Americas represent how they must have had a system of navigating all around. Professor Alfonso Peralta, in his talks to the Dominican Embassy in Colombia, states that they used the stars and sun. Despite the fact that he just mentions this without citing any sources, I would have

⁶⁶ Corinne L. Hofman, Jorge Ulloa Hung, Eduardo Herrera Malatesta, Joseph Sony Jean, Till Sonnemann, and Menno Hoogland, *Indigenous Caribbean Perspectives: Archaeologies and Legacies of the First Colonized Region in the New World* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 200–216.

⁶⁷ Rouse, *The Taínos*, 7.

loved to look at any astronomical knowledge of the Taíno civilization and would have used that as one of the bases for reconstructing a method of Taíno mapping. However, as stated earlier, very little is found on this matter. I could only find that they were very skilled navigators of the sea but there was not much I could find in my research on tools or practice the Taínos used to guide themselves. However, I did find some type of compass (shown in the image below) in *The Mythology and Religion of the Taínos* by Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, a historian dedicated to the studies of the Caribbean and Caribs. I found this compass very intriguing because it seems to rely on the Polaris star and where the Ursa Major constellation is based on the month of the year. What is skeptic about this is that Robiou does not state where this type of compass came from or simply, how did the Taíno civilization know what season it was, and what could have they based this on. This compass or calendar does not appear to have come from a Taíno drawing because it has the Latin Script alphabet on the dates of the month and seasons, therefore, I wonder what the origin of it is. Lamarche states the Polaris star is the “center of the universe, the unmoving star Anacacuya, which serves as the basis for navigation since the remotest of times...”⁶⁸ but there does not seem to be more to it afterwards.



⁶⁸ Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, *The Mythology and Religion of the Taínos* (2021), 91.

On Taíno Research: Myth vs Reality

The reason for why I felt the need to include Taínos in my research is because they were the first inhabitants of the land, which means that for what we know, they were one of the very first civilizations to see the island for what it was before colonial contact. As I was doing research about the Taíno civilization, I came across a lot of problems. It was difficult to find scholarly sources that could prove credibility. Even though I was not able to find much scholarly research on the matter, I tried to see what was out there. I searched through YouTube, as alternative sources and through self-published books and lectures about the Taíno civilization. One of the other things that I was curious to know about was people in other parts of the Caribbean who claimed to have Taíno ancestry and have and are actively trying to understand this civilization. Among what I found and selected is a YouTube video of Professor Alfonso Peralta, who is an anthropologist, political scientist, linguist, researcher, writer, musician, artist and director of the Caribbean Ancestral Knowledge Center. He also considers himself to be part Taíno in the Dominican Republic. In this video he talks to the Dominican Embassy in Colombia about “La inarú (mujer)”, which talks about the role Arawak speaking women played in Taíno societies.

Although Peralta does not back up any of these statements by stating any of the sources, I find it interesting to have such a unique perspective of the woman as the origin of humans. This is very different from the Christian narrative that Eve (the women) came from the ribs of Adam (the men). The origin of women, according to Peralta, was coming from the inriri as they peeked wool and created what we present day call vaginal. This is also a symbol of how women are born out of nature and are the link between nature and the human.

One of the other mentions of Peralta in the video was the connection to land and body when stating “We have to learn from the land, as the land gives, we have to give among ourselves.” This shows how there seemed to be a dynamic of power between nature and the human—meaning nature as a divine creature and teacher to the humans. The idea is that no other human knows better than nature. He also then states in his video, “The Arawak traditions consisted of learning from the organisms that were there before the human being, such as the sea, the animals, the bushes that bear fruit, etc. We as humans are the youngest species that we have to learn from around us.”

Since I was very intrigued by all this information that Professor Peralta was sharing, I took the liberty of looking for any work he might have published. Unfortunately, I could not find anything on the internet or anywhere at all. I just found several YouTube videos of him speaking about Taíno people. I did email him directly to see if he would share the origin of these findings that talk about the Arawak speaking women (never heard back).

Peralta does make a comment on ancestral knowledge, however. He states, "Ancestral knowledge is not written in books, ancestral knowledge is based on the experience of being alive and walking on earth." I think this might have been his effort to explain how much ancestral knowledge is hiding in the culture that exists in the island. However, this makes me wonder, when it comes to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, how much is there in both of those cultures that highlight the Taíno heritage. Like Peralta said, there are many words that Dominicans use that belong to the Arawak language. Haiti, having inherited French creole, and Dominicans speaking Spanish, I wonder if there are any interceptions of Taíno dialogue in both of the languages spoken in Hispaniola.

When it comes to artifacts, Peralta writes about Taínos keeping information in "caves, stones, oral history, mostly because of the tropical temperature." Based on this, I know that there is the Caguana Ceremonial Ball Courts Site in Puerto Rico, which is a circle made of stones that have Taíno drawing on them. This court is still present in Puerto Rico and according to the National Park Services, this line of stones has been present since 1200 and 1500 AD.

Alfonso Peralta then mentions that "stones cannot be burned, they are objects that can be preserved and are difficult to destroy." When it comes to Haitian research of caves, all I could find was the Taíno Museum; meanwhile when I searched for stone artifacts in the Dominican Republic, I came across some caves that have Taíno drawings such as Cueva de Borbon and Cueva de las Maravillas, of which the drawings appear to be related to Taíno mythology. I plan on looking at some of those pictures from those caves to translate those images to the indigenous practice of map-making that might have existed according to Lucchesi.

Throughout Peralta's speech I also learned that there is an Arawak Festival which is on March 13th in the Colonial Zone every year. To me this was surprising because, as a Dominican, there is no national recognition anywhere of such festivals, and it appears that not many local Dominicans in the island know about this either. Even so, I am glad to know about this because I do believe that it is important to raise awareness of the Taíno people as the first inhabitants of the island. But most importantly, to not forget who they were. I wonder though, what is the reason for why this festival occurs in La Zona Colonial of all places—the place in which the Spanish colonizers held control of the island. As stated previously, they are caves that have Taíno presence—I wonder how much differently would it be to perform there. Although, I do see why La Zona Colonial is a perfect site to make a statement.

Despite my skepticism of evidence, these are very beautiful words to say about the Taíno civilization, and I agree with Peralta's point of focusing on oral history and the dynamic of Dominican culture as a source. However, my hesitation is to what extent can we do that. It's a fact that academic press books are more reliable and contain years of research. As a historian that wants to think about history beyond script, the ideas of thinking about body and land as archives is fascinating. I just wonder to what extent we can work with oral history and what are its limitations as time passes by.

Gabriel Haslip Viera, professor of sociology, wrote a critical review of the book *The Myth of Indigenous Caribbean Extinction*, in which he writes about Tony Castanha's attempt to reclaim the existence of the Taíno people in our modern day. Viera, in his book review, argues against Castanha, saying that Taíno are in fact extinct. Viera states that Castanha is convinced that "modern scholars who claim that the Taínos became extinct in the sixteenth century have been allegedly misled or duped by the deliberate lies and distorted accounts of the chroniclers and officials of the Spanish colonial period and should therefore not be trusted." (193). Later in his critique, he states that Castanha interviewed "residents" who are a part of the Taíno revival movement for more information for his book. What seemed to bother Viera about this, was the lack of "citation" for what the residents responded (194). One of them being that Taínos hid in mountains and that how some of them were able to survive. He is also bothered by the fact that Castanha criticizes scholars and journalistic sources for claiming that they have erased the survival of the Taíno people in historical narratives (194). Stating that Dominicans and Puerto Rican genetic makeup is mostly a hybrid between African and European, these so-called "residents" that Castanha seemed to have interviewed could have little to no Taíno ancestry (196). He later on goes on saying that, " Puerto Ricans are 61.7 percent European, 21.7 percent

African, and only 16.8 percent Amerindian... Dominicans are 46.8 percent European, 41.7 percent African, and only 11.5 percent Amerindian.” (196). Viera’s point on genetic makeup points out to his big argument that there is no pure Taíno. Even though I seem to agree with him that there's no such thing as a pure Taíno, I do not agree with the fact that he has chosen to ignore the 11.5% or 16.8% Amerindian.

What we have today is the multi racial genetic makeup of many ethnicities within the Caribbean. Despite the heavily mixed genetic makeup, it is important to emphasize that Viera’s statement of genetic makeup just represents the sum of the whole countries of Puerto Rico or Dominican Republic. Aside from this, I would like to add that the genetic makeup varies from person to person in these countries. Despite his criticism of Castanha having interviewed residents, who could have or could have not had Taíno ancestry, I think that this might be a source of information even if it is very little. However, I do agree with Viera’s point of the importance of DNA testing, unlike Castanha, who does not think DNA testing is important. This is because we do have to draw a line for culture appropriation. Just because we stand in the land of where native people inhabited, it does not mean we necessarily have connections to them. Despite the fact that we might share a culture that has traces of Taíno people, such as words and cuisine like cassava, it does not mean we can all claim such an identity.

To put this to a better understanding, I would like to compare this with an example of the United States. Many white Americans are born in the United States; however, this does not give the right to White Americans to claim being Native American just for being born in the same land as Native Americans. Perhaps my comparison may look very unrealistic, but Africans were taken to the Caribbean for labor exploitation, and Europeans as well were outsiders. Although the racial mixture in the Caribbean was a lot bigger than in the United States, I do think that there

has to be a limit to claiming Taíno heritage. At least, I think that no one should claim to be fully Taíno, because as Viera and many scholarly researchers have stated, there is no pure Taíno left and what we have today is a small percentage of DNA in some people of the Caribbean. That being said, I do want to agree with Castanha's point that “extinction” is perhaps too harsh of a word to use. As Lucchesi said, there are traces of Taíno history in our culture, cuisine, and dialogue. Indeed, this is a very controversial topic.

Irving Rouse, an archaeologist professor writes “Our best sources are Columbus and other observers who were in Hispaniola and Puerto Rico; at the turn of the sixteenth century.⁶⁹” It is important to recognize that a lot of what we know about this civilization is biased to Columbus’ scrutiny. Even if we do not wish for it to have been his way, it was mostly through him and other colonizers that we know what we know.

Even so, Viera makes a very important point of the need to be critical of sources in order not to be misinformed by other writers and pass down misleading information. However, there is still essence in looking at many other realms outside the traditional written history, such as cultural history. It is appreciative to see Dominican people like Peralta and Castanha attempting to dive into this matter since authors that tend to write and have written about the Taíno civilization are outsiders. Meaning, people who have never lived on the island or have any linkage to it whatsoever were the ones writing most of the history. It is important to have researchers who have connections to the land dive into the cultural heritage internally of the country.

⁶⁹ Rouse, *The Taínos*, 9.

Conclusion

My image from the beginning of this project represents my refusal to erase my mixed cultural identity that led to the current day development of how our map looks. The maps today, and in all colonial occupations, show the trauma the land has undergone according to García. Eurocentric maps have always been intended to show imperial and colonial dominance over other imperial powers. What's different about mapping today is that it is used to show sovereignty over the imperial powers. For Dominicans and Haitians, it is a way to show national strength and unity to not let themselves be seen as unable to govern themselves. The map is synonymous with the flags that represent the nations within the island.

The final image of my project is an attempt to bring a different, imaginary narrative of what mapping meant to the Taíno civilization. I recognized that this does not call for the actual and accurate representation of what map making could have meant, but it offers a door for discussion of this theme in the Caribbean—particularly by thinking about the organic nature of the land as an archive. As unreachable as Taíno history might be, there are little things that can make us imagine and make sense of their practices and values, such as drawings on stones and caves. It is a way to remember them and include them in the narrative that our current form of map making takes away from.

My research and my project prove that skepticism still manages to offer doors of scrutinizing discussions. It shows that we are trying to comprehend—whether that be through mapping, identity, land structure, cultural history, or the body of what happened with the Taíno civilization. Mapping was also a way to then claim Nationalism through land sovereignty. Maps have become much like a flag by delivering a sense of proudness. The reason why I am included in the first map is because, although I acknowledge the euro-centricity of map making, I still

connect to the history of the island. That although we should rethink mapping, we can divorce ourselves from the history it ties us to. We can see my last image as not only an interpretation of mapping but also as an archive of its own. This is a map that leaves traces as it moves. Its form is meant to show rituals and a moving culture. As stated in my introduction, these maps are one of the instruments used to narrate history.

The object of mapping made me wonder about the Taíno civilization and if they perhaps had a similar practice of map making. Mapping also helped in explaining the exploitation and oppressive nature of the land in the present day and after colonialism.

My image from the beginning of this project represents how we can't erase or deny our mixed cultural identity that leads to the current day development of how our map looks. A Taíno map would not show a border, it would be the wholeness of all the islands Taínos from Hispaniola traveled everywhere. My final map shows the lively narrative of Taíno mythology. My Taíno map is a ritual and a historical narrative. The Taíno map is an example of my project being experimental. It is meant to challenge new meanings of mapping, but also to call for the recognition of more historical narratives that are exceptions of the current methods of history. Our present-day map illustrates borders and boundaries, splitting the island into two and erasing the original state of what the island used to be prior colonialism. With this being said, present day maps are fractures colonial and imperial power has left on the island.

If I would have done something differently, I would have done a Story Map marking caves all throughout the island that contains Taíno artifacts. This to me would have shown a comparative narrative that could fight the colonial and imperialist narrative of map making that eliminates Taíno's presence in the island of Hispaniola. However, although this is an aspect that would have added an even stronger aspect to my project, I still managed to navigate the silences

and to also bring to life the essence that still exists of the Taíno Civilization in their tierra, Quisqueya.

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