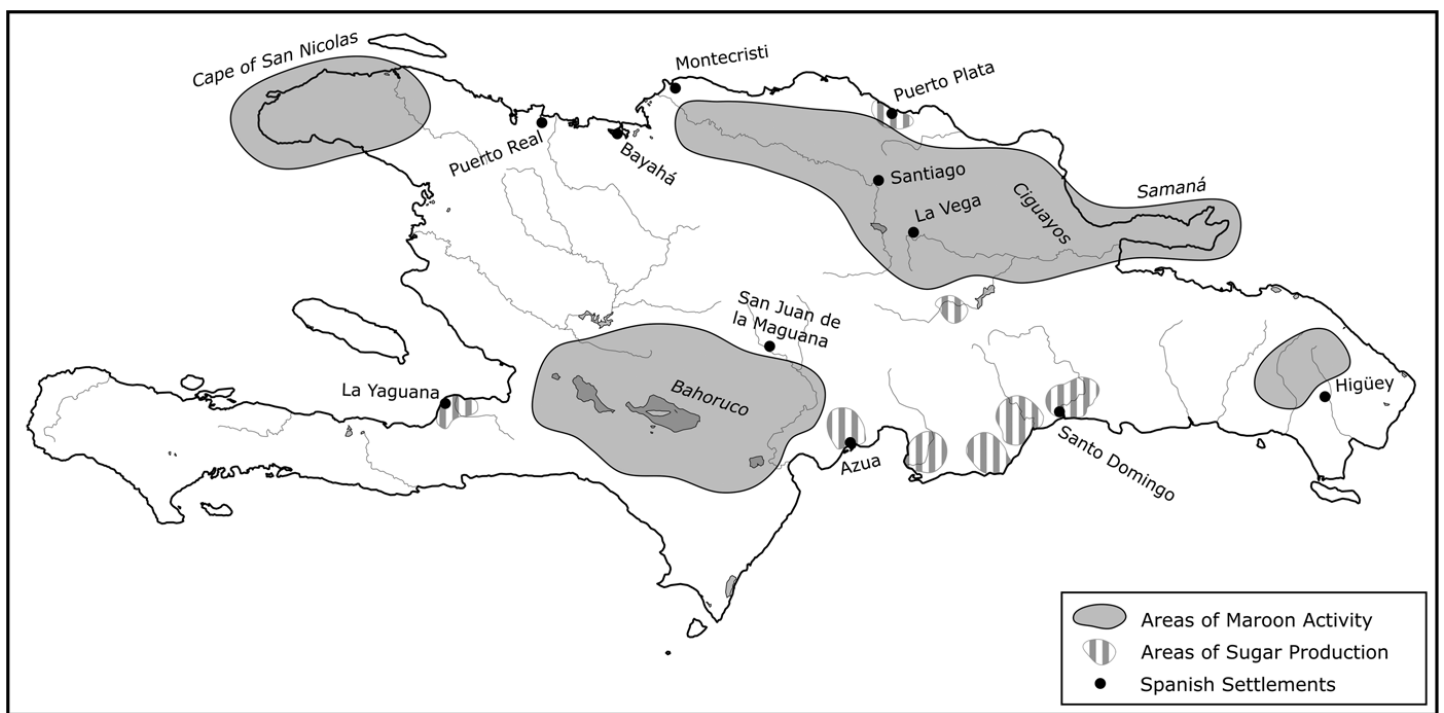


Slavery, Rebellion & The Arrival of the French

- By the 1550s, the enslaved population numbered between 20,000 and 30,000 and included mine, plantation, cattle ranch, and domestic laborers. A small Spanish ruling class of about 1,200 monopolized political and economic power, and it used ordenanzas (laws) and violence to control the enslaved population.
- The first major slave revolt in the Americas occurred in Santo Domingo (the colonial capital of the island) and during 1522, when enslaved Muslims of the Wolof nation led an uprising in the sugar plantation of admiral Don Diego Colon, son of Christopher Columbus.
 - Many of these insurgents managed to escape to the mountains where they formed independent maroon communities. By the 1530s, maroon bands had become so numerous that in rural areas the Spaniards could only safely travel outside their plantations in large armed groups. By 1545, there were an estimated 7,000 maroons beyond Spanish control on Hispaniola. The **Bahoruco Mountains** were their main area of concentration, although Africans had escaped to other areas of the island as well. From their refuges, they descended to attack the Spanish.

Maroon societies were bands of communities or fugitive slaves who had succeeded in establishing a society of their own in some remote areas, where they could not easily be surprised by soldiers or slave catchers.



Areas of African Maroon Activity on Hispaniola, 1520s–1550s (Cambridge University Press)

- Numerous and widespread groups of maroons severely disrupted Spanish commerce and trade. By the 1540s, the maroons of the Bahoruco had effectively cut off the overland road connecting the port of Yaguana to San Juan de Maguana. In 1543, Melchor de Castro noted that the maroons had occupied the depopulated interior of the island, where they survived on the wild cattle and boar found there. Some reports even noted that the maroons' control of the interior and its roadways had become so decisive that Spaniards traveled only in groups as large as 15 to 20.¹
- In addition to controlling these rural resources, maroons established their own commercial networks connecting maroon communities to each other and to Africans still living in Spanish communities. In his letter of 1542, Archdeacon Castro lamented that maroons conspired with urban slaves, especially women termed *ganadoras*, to sell stolen goods back to Spanish cities. By 1545, Spanish officials feared that maroons could take the entire island if they chose. During this era, several maroon leaders gained notoriety for their exploits. Spanish officials regularly lamented the attacks undertaken by Diego Ocampo, Diego de Guzmán, and **Sebastián Lemba**.
 - Lemba led a force of around 140 people and often split his forces into smaller groups to attack rural settlements (often leading the raids himself).

In one attack, **Lemba** and his warriors took a large supply of metal and freed an African slave blacksmith. Some scholars have speculated that they did so not only because of a need for metal and a blacksmith to craft weapons, but also due to Lemba's possible connection to Kongo in Africa. The name **Lemba** is associated with Kongo, making it likely that the maroon leader and his followers were familiar with the history of blacksmith kings of central Africa. Such leaders were seen as wise and generous rulers, giving the metal and the blacksmith not only a practical value, but also a symbolic one as well.

Junius P. Rodriguez, *Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion, Volume 1*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 101.

- By directing a strategy of mobile, hit-and-run warfare, Lemba succeeded in resisting and evading the colonial forces for all of 15 years. Burning and sacking their way across the island, Lemba's group of guerrilleros negros evaded the Spanish authorities until 1547, the year in which the troops captured and executed the rebel leader, hanging his severed head from a gateway as an example to others who would dare disobey their white masters. Slave insurrections continued through the mid-century.²

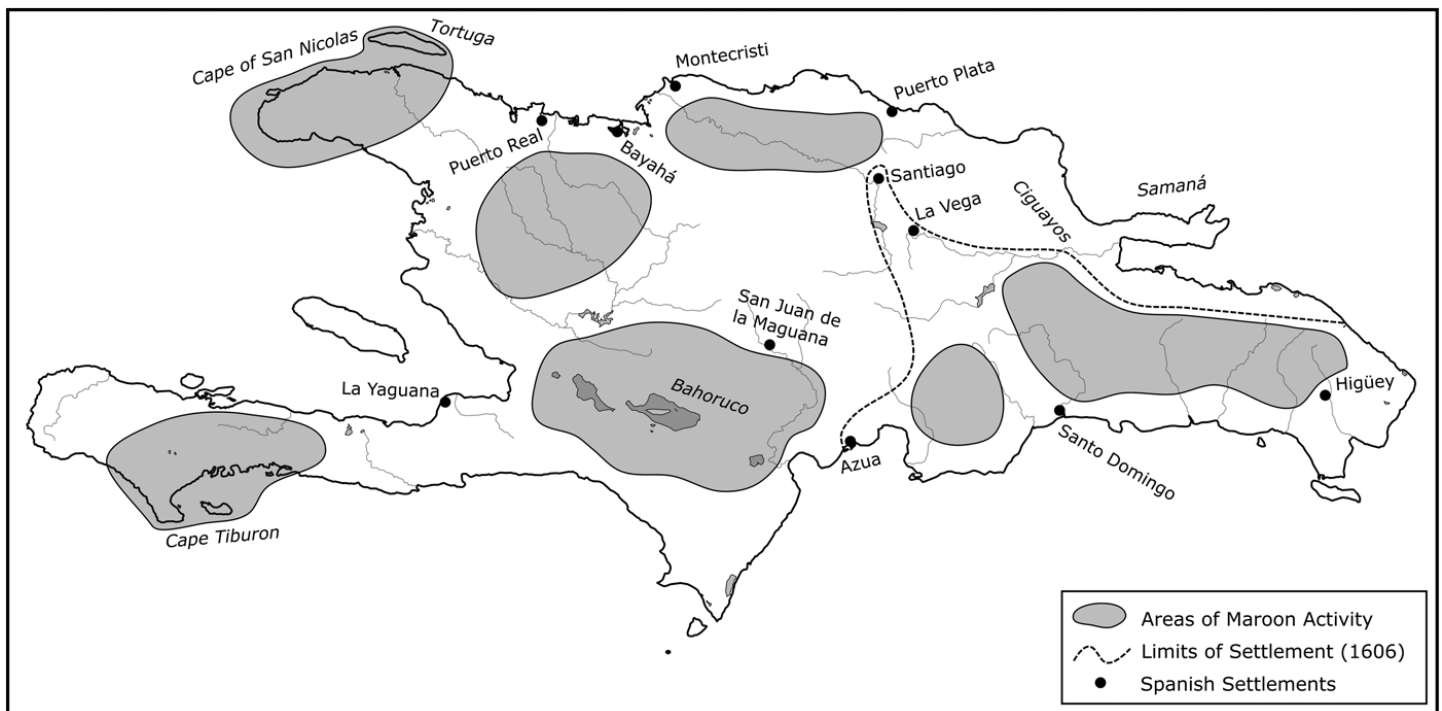
¹ Schwaller, Robert C. "Contested Conquests: African Maroons and the Incomplete Conquest of Hispaniola, 1519–1620." *Contested Conquests: African Maroons and the Incomplete Conquest of Hispaniola, 1519–1620*, Cambridge University Press, 22 Nov. 2018, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/americas/article/contested-conquests-african-maroons-and-the-incomplete-conquest-of-hispaniola-15191620/07BF714EEF5078D4DF7CF2903778BC82/core-reader>.

² Eugenio Matibag. *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola*, (Palgrave, 2003), 32.

"This resistance tells us that the Spanish conquest hadn't really been completed and the actors that prevented that completion were African maroons. The act of becoming maroons and living as maroons represented a form of conquest in and of itself. What we see then is that African resistance challenged the Spanish narrative that they conquered the island."

- Robert Schwaller, University of Kansas associate professor of history

- By the 1540s, the Caribbean Sea had become overrun with French pirates. In 1541, Spain authorized the construction of Santo Domingo's fortified wall, and decided to restrict sea travel to enormous, well-armed convoys. In another move, which would destroy Hispaniola's sugar industry, Havana, more strategically located in relation to the Gulf Stream, was selected as the designated stopping point for the merchant flotas, which had a royal monopoly on commerce with the Americas.



Areas of African Maroon Activity on Hispaniola, 1570s–1610s (Cambridge University Press)

- Many Spanish colonists left for the silver-mines of the American mainland, while new immigrants from Spain bypassed the island. Agriculture dwindled, new imports of slaves ceased, and white colonists, free blacks and slaves alike lived in poverty, weakening the racial hierarchy, resulting in a population of predominantly mixed Spaniard, African, and Taino descent. Except for the city of Santo Domingo, which managed to maintain some legal exports, Dominican ports were forced to rely on contraband trade, which, along with livestock, became the sole source of livelihood for the island dwellers.

- In 1586, Francis Drake captured the city and held it for ransom. Drake's invasion signaled the decline of Spanish dominion over Hispaniola, which was accentuated in the early 17th century by policies that resulted in the depopulation of most of the island outside of the capital. An expedition sent by Oliver Cromwell in 1655 attacked the city of Santo Domingo, but was defeated.



What were the English doing poking around the Caribbean? (Remember our discussions from earlier in the course.)?

- In 1605, Spain, unhappy that Santo Domingo was facilitating trade between its other colonies and other European powers, **and because it could not destroy or control the Maroon Settlements across the island**, attacked vast parts of the colony's northern and western regions, forcibly resettling their inhabitants closer to the city of Santo Domingo. This action, known as *the devastaciones de Osorio*, proved disastrous; more than half of the resettled colonists died of starvation or disease. The city of Santo Domingo was subjected to a smallpox epidemic, cacao blight, and hurricane in 1666; another storm two years later; a second epidemic in 1669; a third hurricane in September 1672; plus an earthquake in May 1673 that killed two dozen residents.
- In the 17th century, the French began occupying the unpopulated western third of Hispaniola. Intermittent clashes between French and Spanish colonists followed, even after the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick recognized the de facto occupations of France and Spain around the globe. In 1777, the Treaty of Aranjuez established a definitive border between what Spain called Santo Domingo and what the French named , thus ending 150 years of local conflicts and imperial ambitions to extend control over the island.³

³ "Haiti." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Oct. 2019, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti>.

ISLE DE S^T DOMINGUE

A Paris
Chez Crèpy 1767

MER DU NORD

QUARTIER FRANÇOIS

QUARTIER ESPAGNOL

3 10 15 20 Lignes marines de France

