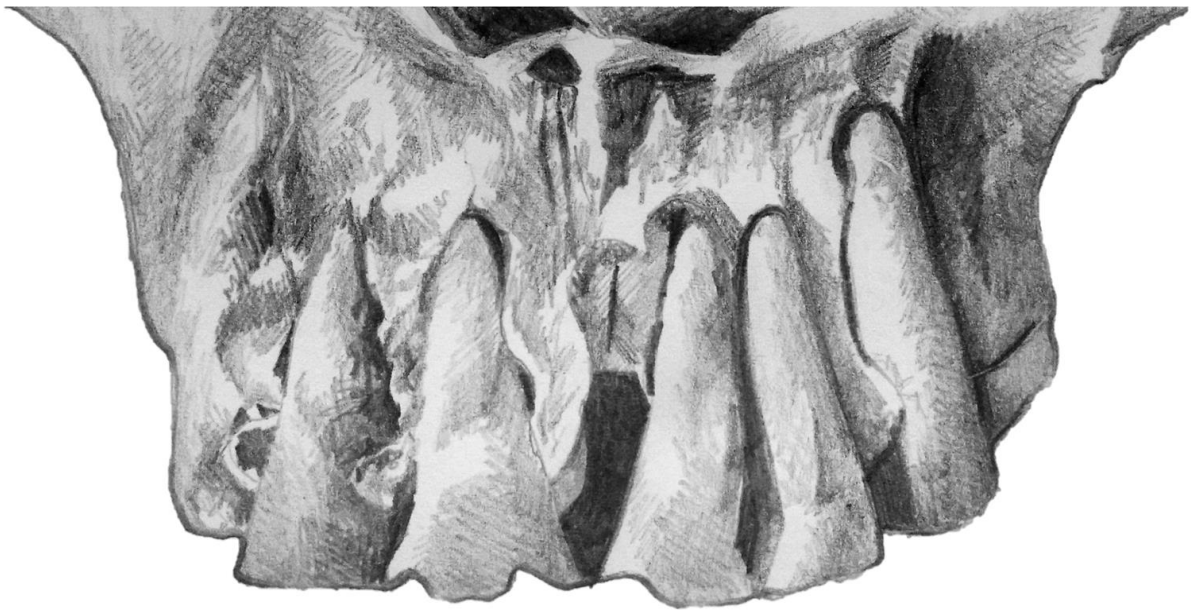


How can the Mortuary
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onial Era Cemeteries be
Compared?



Using the 16th-Century Spanish
Colonial Sites of El Chorro de Maita in
Cuba and Magdalena de Cao Viejo in
Peru as Examples

Jessica Shaw s1808435

Fig. 1: Illustration of dental
modification on an individual from
Mesoamerica, buried in the
Caribbean
(Stacey 2019)

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1. Introduction

Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis will be to carry out a comparison of mortuary practices from two different Colonial era cemeteries in order to answer the question 'How can the mortuary practices of two separate Spanish Colonial era sites from the contact period be compared, using the 16th century cemeteries of El Chorro de Maita in Cuba, and Magdalena de Cao Viejo in Peru as examples'. In order to attempt to answer this question as effectively as possible, I will be employing the use of multiple subquestions for these two sites which date to the same period and underwent similar changes. These will include '*how were the individuals interred?*' in reference to the deposition of the bodies, '*how were the individuals oriented?*' in this case I am curious as to whether or not there is any evidence in this regard to the adoption of the particular Christian burial orientation, which usually meant that the head of the individual would be lying in the direction of the west, while their feet would be oriented towards the east (Fox et al. 2012, 60). The reasoning behind this was (and in many cases still is) that the compass directions mentioned are of religious significance when it comes to the resurrection of Christ, as well as being related to the directions from which the sun rises and sets each day. The next subquestion upon which I would focus will be '*where within, or outside of, the cemeteries were the individual buried?*', as I believe that this information may be able to provide for us some insight into the status of those individuals. I also intend to look at what material grave goods were buried with the individuals. It would also be of importance and relevance to note whether the individuals in all of these cases were male, female, and whether or not they were infants, and include these details when making the comparisons, including relating this to any theories that might be proposed in the discussion chapter towards the end of this paper. I will also ask '*were there grave goods present, and if so, what kinds?*'.

I believe that is an important area of study, given that death and the way in which societies as well as individuals behave around the matter can reveal much to us about their belief systems and attitudes towards not only the death of a loved one or member of their community, but also their behaviour during life, especially

during a potentially very trying and transitional phase in their history. Belief is an especially important part of the archaeological study of mortuary archaeology. This is because belief is what is so often used to help us understand and explain the world we see around us. It is something that can come into use especially when an event occurs which has a major impact on the way in which we live our lives, such as the death of a loved one or that of a member of our community. When it comes to mortuary rituals, it is the beliefs that we hold which dictate our actions and means that they make perfect sense to those who are enacting them (Tarlow 2013, 2), even if that is not the case for people who are observing these rituals from the outside, or indeed, through the lens of time.

As with belief and emotion, there is a link from the dead that leads to the importance of politics (Stutz 2013, 1). If we consider that moments of culture contact are times of transition and interchange (Rojas 2016, 8), then it stands to reason that they might also be considered to be times of negotiation, specifically when it comes to the discussion of identity. This is demonstrated quite effectively through the observation of the mixing of European ceramics and local ceramics within just one household, as can be seen across the Americas (Van Buren 2010, 156). When we apply this idea of negotiation for an identity into death culture, it would seem to make sense that this is an area that is very often ruled by faith, which is of course something that holds a huge amount of significance and power for those who carry out the appropriate practices. This means that a mortuary ritual could be an excellent and convenient way for people to confirm and hold onto their long held traditions and beliefs.

Besides this, human remains are also rather remarkable and unparalleled within the archaeological record, as they are the only recoverable items that are a part of a person, rather than an object that they merely owned and left behind (Scarre 2013, 2).

I feel that it is also important to note that the time frame within which I will be working is one that is more often than not somewhat neglected, and not always as commonly discussed as certain pre-Colonial histories might be. Most people are aware of the main event that took place in the year 1492, the year that Columbus sailed the ocean blue, but the reality of the impact that this series of phenomena

actually had on the people and the world which they inhabited has been a less explored and often unconsidered part of history (Hofman *et al.* 2014, 591). As the history of colonization is almost always written by the colonizers themselves, we are more often than not left to try to piece together a history through the material, and human, remains, and this is one of the main reasons as to why the practice of archaeology is so important in such areas (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Colonisation of the Americas (upload.wikimedia.org)

EL Chorro de Maita

The first site I will be using is called El Chorro de Maita, and is located in the northeast of Cuba (Rojas 2016, 2). While the Caribbean was one of the very last parts of the Americas to have been settled and populated by people (Schroeder *et al.* 2018, 2341), it was in fact there that the first encounter between the 'old world' (the western Europeans), and the 'new world' (the people who were already living in the areas) (Hofman *et al.* 2014, 590). This one of the reasons for the importance of this site, but it is also due to the incredibly noteworthy fact that it is one of the only cemeteries that has ever been found in Cuba that dates back to the early Colonial contact period (Rojas 2016, 2). While the site was immediately recognized as being of huge importance when it was first discovered and excavated from 1986 and 1988, with a museum being built on the site, and in 1991 it was declared a Cuban national heritage monument (Rojas 2016, 2), much of the archaeological material that had been found was not analysed either sufficiently, or at all, and eventually research in the area ceased (Rojas 2016, 3). Research was picked up again due in part to the fact that there were some

European artefacts found on the site as well as certain unusual, non-indigenous burial practices, all of which demonstrated clear links to Spanish presence, and it was believed that these discoveries could tell us much about the interactions between the indigenous people who were established in the area, and the Spaniards (Rojas 2016, 3, 4).

Magdalena de Cao Viejo

The second site that I intend to analyse is called Magdalena de Cao Viejo, and is located in the Chicama valley, on the northern coast of Peru (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 375). This site, like the previous one, is also dated to the 16th to 18th century, being estimated to have been inhabited approximately from around 1578 to 1780, and was most recently excavated from 2004 to 2010 (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376). What is of particular interest at this site is the fact that there was a Colonial-era church and cemetery built on top of, or at least within incredibly close proximity to an area that had previously been a major pre-Hispanic temple complex, thought to have dated from 100 to 700 AD (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376), meaning that there was pre-Hispanic inhabitation here, before even the arrival of the Spanish, and then the subsequent forced relocation of indigenous peoples. This seems like an interesting possible incidence of the melding of identities, both local indigenous and Spanish Colonial and likely of great interest when it comes to the analysis of the mortuary practices carried out at the site itself. In total, there were twenty-eight human burials discovered beneath the church (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376), and it is believed that, thanks to the supporting physical evidence from the mortuary practices, there was a commingling of customs that were both local, and imported from the Spanish so as to include an element of Christianity (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395).

Material and Methods

This paper will be entirely based on literature, focusing on using published work and results primarily from Roberto Valcarcel Rojas, who worked on the site of Chorro de Maita, and Jeffrey Quilter, whose focus is on the Magdalena de Cao Viejo site, as well as a variety of works by their colleges and other writers.

This thesis will start with a brief history of the contact period for both the Caribbean and the Andes, followed by a chapter on both of the cemeteries before examining the ancestry of the residents of Chorro de Maita, as well as Magdalena

de Cao Viejo, allowing for an overview of the levels of diversity present at these sites. After establishing the norms of the mortuary practices for Christianity, the Andes, and the Caribbean, the subquestions will be covered in the chapter regarding the burials themselves, followed by a chapter covering the material grave goods that were found with the burials. There will be a final chapter for discussion which contains the comparison and theories, followed by the conclusion.

2. Historical Context

This chapter will cover the historical context of the colonization of the regions of the two sites that I will be using, in this instance the Andes where Magdalena de Cao Viejo is located, and the Grater Antilles, where the site of El Chorro de Maita is located. This chapter will also look at some of the effects that colonization might have had on the indigenous populations of these areas.

2.1 Evangelisation as a Goal of Colonization

Evangelisation refers to the conversion of people from their own belief system, or lack thereof, to Christianity (Wernke 2018, 1). This conversion of local belief systems into the Christian monotheistic was among the main goals of the Spanish throughout colonisation, due the belief that their faith was the correct one, and this therefore entitled them to do whatever they saw fit and necessary in the process of what they thought of as saving the souls of others (Wernke 2018, 1). Christianity was spread not only through threats and violence, but also by the European holy men using holy objects and tales of miraculous happenings (Brosseder 2012, 393), but these methods varied from community to community, and depended on both the reactions of those who were to be converted, and the personal ideals of those who were doing the converting. Such methods appear to work well at first, as there was a sense of integration of Christianity into indigenous beliefs, and while this was in part what the Spanish had wanted, it did begin to blur the lines that had been so clearly drawn between the Spanish and the indigenous people. Sharing a religion brought them closer together in terms of the boundaries between them slowly breaking down (Wernke 2018, 2).

Given that religion plays a major role in death practices, it must naturally follow that conversion to Christianity played a role in the ways in which the dead were treated. This means that it was not just the reasoning that the ways in which things were done back in Europe were the ways that all things should be done, but rather there was the belief that the way in which the Spanish treated their dead was the only right way to properly care for the eternal souls of their loved ones (Wernke

2018, 6).

2.2 The Andes

Colonization

The Inca Empire, called Tawantinsuyu in Quechua, was a huge and powerful state system, the early stages of which are as of yet still not entirely clear, due in part to the fact that there was no reliable alphabet system in use. This leaves us to rely only oral recounts of the history, as well as the written documents produced by the European chroniclers (Andrien 2001, 12), which, in Peru especially, left open the possibility for inaccurate and biased recordings (Garland *et al.* 2016, 948).

When the Spanish arrived, they came with the clear and predictable goal of evangelisation and making as much profit for themselves as possible from the land and people that they conquered (Andrien 2001, 77). Naturally, this was met with protest, violence, and organised resistance by the people who already lived on the land, had extensive road systems, administration, bureaucracy, irrigation and trade systems, as well as economy and taxes (Andrien 2001, 21).

As previously mentioned, there was no written alphabet in use in the Andes before the arrival of the Spanish, instead, there was the Quipu, which was a recording system made up of knotted strings, which were most commonly used for administrative purposes, but it could also have been a possibility that they could have been used for recording narratives of battles, lineage, and historical events (Andrien 2001, 4). This lack of decipherable historical documentation from the Andeans themselves means that many of the records of the time come only from the Spanish chroniclers. However, as time went on, the Latin alphabet was eventually introduced in 1532, and records were written not only by European chroniclers, but also by indigenous writers (Andrien 2001, 5). The most well-known of these indigenous writers was Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, who wrote that it was only the Andeans who were good, civilised, and Christian enough, unlike the Spanish and mixed Spanish- Andean people (Andrien 2001, 121). For Guaman Poma, the only salvation for a good Christian Andes was for the corrupt colonists to give a significant amount of authority to the Andean elites, who happened to be headed by Guaman Poma's son (Andrien 2001, 123). Here is clear

evidence for the idea that Andean people who were obliged to learn the language, alphabet, and laws of their invaders (Andrien 2001, 156) were also able to use this knowledge to their own advantages. The same principle applied to the use of the Quipus around the 1560s, as the Spanish began, probably quite rightly, to suspect that they were being used as an act of rebellion, to relay secret messages only decipherable to the Andeans (Andrien 2001, 113).

Clothing, among other crafts, held a huge amount of meaning to those who were able to interpret it. From geometric Inca designs that conveyed different messages (Andrien 2001, 4), to the portraits of indigenous rulers in European clothing that were meant to confirm and secure the individual's right to leadership and power (Andrien 2001, 141), without forgetting to mention the depictions of the virgin Mary in a traditional style by indigenous artists at the time (Andrien 2001, 140). Clothing, much as it still does now, can hold a lot of meaning and, more importantly, send a message. Working with textiles continues to be an important part of Andean life for the ways in which it can so effectively convey identity (Andrien 2001, 151). When it comes to the depiction of the virgin Mary in a local indigenous style, and from the writings of the chronicler Guaman Poma, what is clear is that while there was of course resistance to the forced assimilation into Spanish culture, indigenous people were eventually able to redefine European religions to better suit their own interpretations (Robins 2005, 155).

Effects to the Indigenous Population

Along with violence, religion, laws, and language, the Spanish were also able to gain more control over the indigenous population when many Andean people died due to the spread of European epidemics (Andrien 2001, 46). These consisted of influenza, smallpox, measles, and the plague, among many others (Andrien 2001, 47). These waves of epidemics, which the indigenous population would have had no natural immunity against, were incredibly devastating to the population to the extent that in the year 1720 there were at the very least three hundred thousand dead due of illness (Andrien 2001, 64). While it may not be the case for the Magdalena de Cao Viejo cemetery, this aspect of colonization would most certainly have affected treatment and burial of the dead. There is evidence for such conditions being dealt with in the cemetery of Chorro de Maita, where there was an unusually high amount of young deceased individuals found.

There were several attempted uprisings against the Spanish, the first of which was led by Manco Inca, who had previously been chosen by the Spanish to act as the titular leader of Tawantinsuyu (Andrien 2001, 41). However, when, on the 6th of May in 1536, he attempted to throw the Spanish out of Cusco (Andrien 2001, 41), the effort did not prove to be successful, and the result was the assassination of Manco Inca several years later at the hands of Spanish (Andrien 2001, 42). The Spanish were also able to overthrow the Inca through the formation of alliances with the Huaca and Cañari peoples, who were opposed to the Inca (Andrien 2001, 45).

Arguably one of the most famous of people to oppose Spanish rule was Tupac Amaru (the 1^s), - often credited with being the last true Inca ruler. He was executed in Cusco on the 24th of September in 1572, beheaded after being forced to declare to a gathered crowd of spectators that he had converted to Christianity (Andrien 2001, 194). His influence and importance were so great that even after his death, the Spanish were obliged to remove his severed head from public display, as they did not want the Andean people to be able to worship it (Andrien 2001, 194). Many years later, on the 18th of May in 1781 another man named Tupac Amaru the 2nd, whose birth name was actually José Gabriel Condorcanqui, was also executed in Cusco, also for the crime of rebellion against the Spanish rule of the Andes (Andrien 2001, 1940). This time, most of the man's family were also executed, along with the majority of his closest followers, before he too was eventually beheaded (Andrien 2001, 195). Spanish Colonialism continued long after the contact period, and the message that the Spanish were continuing to send was clear, there would be no such thing as a good death afforded to any who dared to oppose them.

2.3 The Greater Antilles

Colonization

The very first colony that Columbus founded in the Caribbean was on the Dominican Republic, in 1493, and was located in a place named La Isabella (Van

Buren 2010, 156). However, while this colony was meant to have been suitably equipped for survival, populated by more than 1500 people, it quickly suffered from sicknesses and a lack of food, and was subsequently abandoned in 1498 (Van Buren 2010, 156). This was largely put down as an unsuccessful attempt due to failure to integrate or consider any of the pre-existing local practices and conditions (Van Buren 2010, 156).

At first, the Spanish simply referred to everyone that they encountered in the Caribbean as 'Indians', however, they did later begin to distinguish the different types of people that they came across, but of course, the names that the Spanish used were not what the indigenous people called themselves (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 16). The Caribbean islands have been inhabited for an incredibly long amount of time, and the Greater Antilles had people living there who are thought to have descended from agricultural ceramicists who travelled from island to island, bringing with them their own, and then eventually, also a mixture of cultural traditions (Hofman *et al.* 2014, 594), thus making the people that Columbus encountered the product of much historical development (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 17). Upon his arrival to the region, he also described what he saw of the Caribbean islands to have been home to many people, as well as remarking on how well the land was being cultivated (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 29). From these observations we can quite clearly and confidently ascertain that the Greater Antilles, and by extension the Caribbean, had a large, varied, and long-established population, who would most certainly have had their own cultures and traditions. The combination of cultures, European, indigenous, and African, would also have led to a population that had a much more diverse ancestry (Hofman *et al.* 2014, 596), a fact that is quite visible through the analysis of human remains at the El Chorro de Maita cemetery, although there was of course interaction between different cultures before the arrival of the Spanish.

Cuba itself was first conquered by the Spanish in 1510, and was a process that did not take long, as the Spanish had already had ample experience with indigenous groups previously, and the people who lived on Cuba at the time were already aware of their presence (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 51). As was seen in the Andes, here too the indigenous people tried to rebel against the Spanish invaders, and here too these efforts resulted in defeat (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52). However, Cuba is an interesting case in that it is one of the few, if only, places in the Antilles

in which indigenous communities continued to exist, even throughout the Colonial period, up to and including the present day (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52).

Effects to the Indigenous Population

Within the Caribbean, it was the island of Hispaniola that acted as a base for the continued colonization of the other Greater Antilles islands, including Cuba (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 38). This idea of a central point of power from which the Spanish could rule ties in with their use of slavery and imposition of the *encomienda* system. The *encomienda* system was implemented in 1513 in Cuba (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 51), this meant that groups of indigenous people would be separated and taken from their original home areas, and be given as a designated work force to certain Spanish nobles, often with the intention of setting them to work for Spanish households, on Spanish estates, or in Spanish owned gold mines (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52). While there were a few laws set in place to protect those who were under Spanish rule as *encomiendas*, there were none for slaves. Slaves could be bought and sold however the Spanish pleased, and these individuals were often indigenous people who had tried to rebel against Colonial rule (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 53). Some of the people who were brought in as slave labour were actually often not from the islands that they found themselves on, and served the secondary purpose of replacing the falling indigenous populations of wherever it was that they had been sent to (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 53). There was also an influx of slaves imported by the Spanish from their slave-trade connections in Africa (Van Buren 2010, 156), adding even more to the mixing of cultures throughout the islands.

Once again, this largely involuntary movement of people between islands means that there would have been a mixture of cultural practices as people carried their own local and personal beliefs with them, as well as meaning that there would have been a number of people who would have come from a variety of different origins, which is something that is very present in the cemetery of El Chorro de Maita.

One of the reasons for a significant decline in population, along with the *encomienda* system, was similar to events that took place in the Andes, that being

the spread of illnesses to which the indigenous population had no immunity due to the previous lack of these pathogens being present in that part of the world (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 76). Some of these epidemics included, among others, smallpox, influenza, measles, and the bubonic plague (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 76). It is possible that the sheer magnitude of damage that was caused by these epidemics might have been responsible for the eradication of complete groups of people (Van Buren 2010, 164).

The decline in indigenous population would have made the survivors easier to control for the Spanish, but Christianity would also have been used to further spread their own way of life and influence. This resulted in pronounced cultural changes (Van Buren 2010, 159), which would of course also have affected the mortuary practices being carried out.

3. The Cemeteries

This chapter consists of a summary of the historical background of the two cemeteries used as case studies, which will include some context as to the living situation that would have been surrounding the burial sites. This will provide a more focused insight into the background information than the previous chapter, which will have given a slightly broader overview of the areas within which these sites are found.

3.1 Magdalena de Cao Viejo

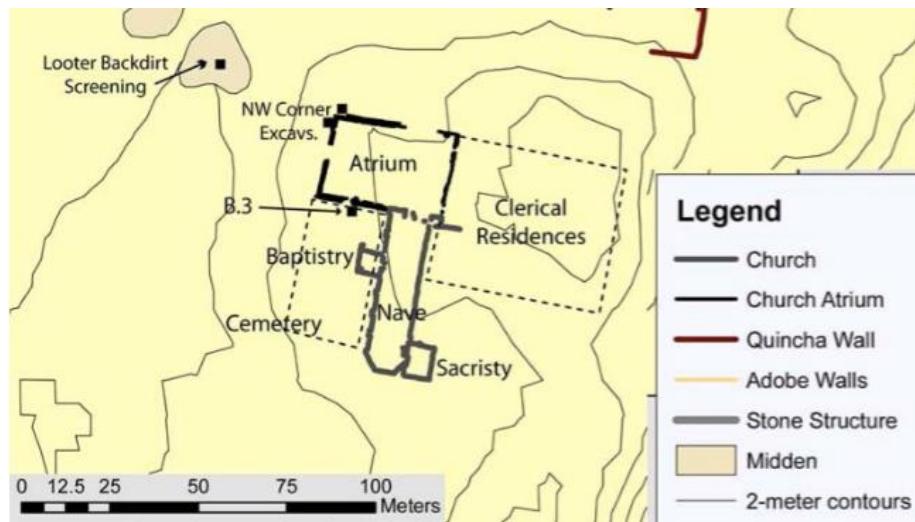


Fig. 3: Magdalena de Cao Viejo church layout (Quilter 2017, 71)

Magdalena de Cao Viejo was the result of the Spanish imposed 'reducciones' system, most likely establishing this site in 1566 (Quilter 2011, 105). The term 'reducciones' refers to a system in which indigenous people were forced out and away from their homes to live, work, and eventually die in communities designed and built by the Spanish (Quilter 2011, 106).

The fact that this site was designated as one of the reducciones by the Spanish means that it was also built on a grid system town plan made by the Spanish, with the church complex which was run by members of the religious Dominican order

(Quilter 2011, 106). This religious complex was built on the northern end of the Huaca Moche plaza of Cao Viejo (Quilter 2017, 70), with the church itself located in the centre, oriented north-south, with an open courtyard, a cluster of administrative buildings towards the east, and its cemetery on the west of the church structure (Quilter 2011, 106). The town then found itself on a lower level than the elevated church, and towards the north (Quilter 2011, 106).

What is especially interesting and worthy of note is the fact that the church was actually built on what had already previously been a plaza in prehistoric times (Quilter 2017, 70), likely even is the possibility that it was a large and important pre-Hispanic temple complex, possibly Moche in origin (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376). Spanish occupation at this site had already been established for a slightly longer amount of time when compared to Chorro de Maita in Peru, and this is seen in part through the presence of the church complex and the amount of Christian organisation as displayed by the burials found beneath and next to the church. This raises an interesting question, in that we are able to speculate as to how the placement of the church and its associated buildings would have been viewed by the Spanish and indigenous people alike. From the perspective of the Spanish religious leaders, the church most likely stood as a symbol of Christian and European victory, but for the indigenous people, this placement may well have acted as a sort of recognition for the validity of this area as one of great importance and as a sacred place (Quilter 2011, 110). The church is even oriented in a non-Christian direction, ten degrees east of magnetic north, as opposed to the usual east-west placement that was more commonly favoured in Christianity (Quilter 2011, 110). The cemetery itself (Fig. 3), which is on the western side of the church (Quilter 2011, 106), is not the only place in which human burials were uncovered, as there were also remains found beneath the floor of the church (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376). In total, there were twenty-eight burials uncovered in total (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 376), seventeen of whom were fetuses or neonates (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 380), meaning that the fetus would have died in utero (White and Folkens, 2005, 364), and the neonate would have died at or around birth.

3.2 El Chorro de Maita

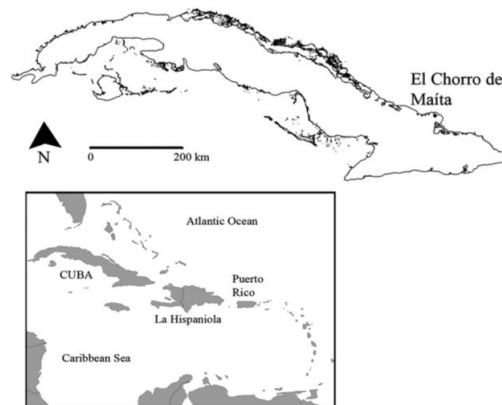


Fig. 4: Location of Chorro de Maita site (Rojas 2016, 3)

El Chorro de Maita is a site on the island of Cuba (Fig. 4) that had no geographical ties to any Spanish town, instead, much like the Magdalena de Cao Viejo site, the inhabitants of this town found themselves there due to the 'encomienda' system (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 71). This meant that indigenous people would be moved away from their original homes, and allocated to work for either a Spanish individual, household, or Spanish owned mine (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52). Not unlike the site of Magdalena de Cao Viejo, this site too had been in use before the Spanish arrival and imposition of the encomienda system, in fact, it is thought that this site had been in use for up to two centuries prior to its Colonial use (Rojas 2016, 4). Despite the Spanish influences, this is a site in which there was still a hugely significant amount of indigenous influence and continuity (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52). The continued survival and hold of indigenous culture is something that is especially evident on the island of Cuba (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52), and it is likely that this is because the site of El Chorro de Maita was just enough removed from any main, more populated seats of power and strongholds that there was a certain amount of freedom possessed by the inhabitants which might not have been so much the case in other more Spanish led settlements.

While the cemetery was indeed the result of evangelisation by the Spanish, it is also possible that there might have been some individual burials on the site before its official Colonial establishment (Rojas 2016, 4). Given that the cemetery is the earliest ever to have been investigated on the American continent, it certainly serves to highlight the fact that this was one of the funerary places that was

comprised of such a combination of different practices and belief systems (Rojas 2016, 4).

In total, there were 133 individuals buried in the cemetery, with 40 of those being juveniles, most commonly of ages five to nine years, and one foetus was also found (Rojas 2016, 165). The remaining 94 were adults with the age ranges of 18 to 25 year of age, and then 26 to 35 years (Rojas 2016, 4).

What is especially important to note in the case of this site is that it is incredibly probable that this cemetery acted as a sort of catastrophe cemetery (Rojas 2016, 4). This is thought to be due to the sheer amount of children aged from five to nine years old. This comes across as unusual because the most dangerous times associated with mortality are the infancy years (Rojas 2016, 196), which range from birth to the age of three (White and Folkens 2005, 364).

It is therefore reasoned that many of the individuals who were buried in this cemetery were the victims of either a natural disaster, or more likely, an epidemic brought on by contact with the Spanish (Rojas 2016, 195), especially when compared to the organisation that can be seen to be present at Magdalena de Cao Viejo (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394).

4. Diversity Within the Population

In order to be able to more completely understand the context of the mixture of mortuary practices that are seen at the cemetery of El Chorro de Maita (and Magdalena de Cao Viejo), it is necessary to use a more multidisciplinary approach, looking not just at the material evidence and the context in which the human remains were found. It is therefore also important to examine the diverse and international nature of the cemetery's residents. Not only were there indigenous and Spanish people buried there, but there were also people who were of mixed decent, as well as some who were neither Spanish nor indigenous. Due to the nature of the Caribbean climate there is often little material evidence left for archaeologists and historians to examine and learn from, and this means that it can be easy to overlook the huge amount of more diverse materials, such as chert and ochre.

4.1 Skulls and Cranial Modification

There are multiple individuals from Chorro de Maita who are strongly believed not to be local or from the immediate surroundings, one is believed to be from Africa, and the other is Amerindian (Rojas 2016, 168), as well as there being a presence of white Europeans, and people who were of mixed decent (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 233).

One of the first and most obvious ways of immediately determining whether an individual from this cemetery was of European origins or not is by examining their skull. The skull is one of the very few skeletal elements within the body that can be used by an osteologist to estimate the approximate geographic ancestry of a person, as there are several variational indicators that can help to tell whether and individual was from Europe, Asia, or Africa (White and Folkens 2005, 403). Asian population skulls tend to have narrower nasal bones, more projecting cheek bones, circular orbits (eye sockets), as well as often having more shovelled incisors, while African population skulls are more likely to have rectangular orbits, wide nasal apertures, and gracile cranial superstructures, and European

population skulls are the most likely to have narrow nasal apertures with prominent nasal spines and bones, and receding cheek bones (White and Folkens 2005, 403).

In the case of the residents of the Chorro de Maita cemetery however, there is an even easier way to distinguish the local from the non-local by their crania, and that is to look for the presence of intentional cranial modification (Fig. 5). Within the population of Chorro de Maita, cranial modification almost entirely takes the form of fronto-occipital parallel modification (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 234). This means that pressure would have been applied to the frontal (forehead) and the occipital (back of the head) bones of the skull, resulting in an elongated head shape. This practice was very definitely not a European one, and this is seen partly in the way that the majority of individuals who had cranial modification were adults, and the practice seems to have faded out as there are far fewer children who have intentional cranial modification (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 234). This is most likely a result of European intervention, as the practice would have been met with disapproval for a variety of reasons, including the fact that cranial modification is thought to have been used in certain circumstances as an aesthetic, status, or, most likely in this case, as a religious indicator. Whatever the true specific purpose for cranial modification, it acted as an effective indicator of identity, and this was something that the Europeans must have felt would hinder the success of their gain of control and its continuation in the Americas, and so by starting to eradicate it from the following generations, they were able to ensure that this was a part of indigenous cultural practices that had been stamped out.

This type of cranial modification is also present and visible among the residents of Magdalena de Cao Viejo, for seven of the individuals comprising of six adults and one non-adult (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 380).



Fig. 5: Fronto-Occipital cranial modification of an individual from Chorro de Maita (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 234)

4.2 Teeth and Dental Modification

One of the other factors that can help to denote one of these individuals as non-European and non-indigenous is the presence of intentional dental modification (Rojas 2016, 176). Much like cranial modification, dental modification was used throughout many parts of the world at many different times, and for many of the same reasons that people would choose to modify their crania (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 235). Unlike cranial modification, dental modification requires a much more intense approach which yields more immediate results, involving filing, chipping, cutting, drilling, inlaying, and extraction (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 235). Dental modification is particularly interesting, as along with cranial modification, it is one of the very few forms of body modification that is preserved and can be seen in the archaeological record, and it is a modification that is still being carried out in certain regions today (Burnett and Irish 2017, 1).

When such intentional dental modification is found in the Caribbean, it is almost always thought to mean that the individual originated from Africa or was of African descent, and found themselves in the Caribbean through either travel, or most likely, due to an expansion of the European slave trade (Roksandic *et al.* 2016, 1). However, in the case of Chorro de Maita, the individual who was found to have intentional dental modification was not from Africa, but actually someone who had been from Mesoamerica (Roksandic *et al.* 2016, 1). This became apparent through the style of the modification, which was different from what is normally seen with African individuals which is reduction of the crown of the tooth by chipping (Roksandic *et al.* 2016, 2), whereas the Mesoamerican individual has a form of filing instead (Roksandic *et al.* 2016, 1). The modification (Fig. 6), which is to be found on the maxillary incisors as well as the maxillary canines, and is apparently the most similar to what is seen from sites in the post-classical Mayan Belize (Rojas 2016, 176). This individual was also found to have been buried in a unique position, lying face down and with a stone placed over the legs (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 234).

Among the population that was examined from Magdalena de Cao de Viejo there was discovered to be a relatively high amount of two-rooted premolars and four-cusped molars, both of which are typically European traits (Ortiz *et al.* 2017,

389). This is indicative of European ancestry within the population at this site and in its cemetery, or perhaps these were Spanish European individuals who were buried here (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394).



Fig. 6: Dental modification of an individual from Magdalena de Cao Viejo (Rojas et al. 2011, 236)

4.3 Isotope Analysis

As each human skeleton is unique, the biological indicators used by osteologists tend to vary naturally, and there are of course very few absolutes, essentially only estimates. Given that this is the case, the use of Isotope analysis can prove to be exceedingly useful.

Stable Isotope analysis allows for the reconstruction and study of the diets of individual people, as well as being able to demonstrate the dietary variation within a community (Bogaard and Outram 2013, 333). As insight into the variation between individuals is ascertainable, as is made possible the tracking of mobility among people (Makarewicz and Sealy 2015, 146), meaning that through an isotopic analysis of the residents Chorro de Maita cemetery it is possible to learn whether or not each person's diet originated from the area, or if they had travelled from somewhere else.

Within Chorro de Maita, it was the strontium isotopes that were used, which is common practice within the Caribbean, due to it being an ideal biological and geological environment (Laffoon *et al.* 2012, 2371).

At Chorro de Maita, the strontium isotope analysis indicated strongly that there were more males than females who had a greater diversity, meaning that they were more likely to have come from a multitude of different places (Rojas 2016, 177). The individual with the deliberate dental modification had isotope levels

that indicated a Mesoamerican origin, further corroborating previous ideas about their identity, and there was another individual who seemed to be from somewhere a little further beyond the Greater Antilles (Rojas 2016, 178). The analysis of another individual indicated that they had an isotope signature similar to an African slave population from a plantation that had been located in Barbados, meaning that they would have originated from the African continent (Rojas 2016, 179).

In total, it was determined that there were sixty-six local people and twenty-two non-local people in residency at Chorro de Maita out of the 133 individuals who were buried in the Cemetery (Rojas 2016, 179).

The presence of these multiple different biological and cultural identities, some of which may even have been present within the region before the contact period, means that not only is there the presence of pre-Hispanic and contact-period Colonial mortuary practices, but it is also becomes important to factor in the potential for mortuary practices of people from a variety of cultural, biological, and geographical backgrounds.

5. Mortuary Practices

Mortuary practices can be defined as those rituals that are performed deliberately and intentionally around the death of a person by their community and loved ones, with the additional possibility of conveying certain information about the person and the context in which they lived, such as social status, wealth, cultural and personal beliefs, as well as sentiments surrounding the deceased (Kus 2013, 4).

It is the deliberative nature that surrounds mortuary practices that makes the evidence associated with them that can prove to be so useful in the archaeological record, as this makes mortuary practices especially visible, however much they might vary, and however difficult that it might be to interpret the intentions of people from the past (Kus 2013, 1).

5.1 Christian Mortuary Practices

The most general and commonly carried out positioning of a deceased body in the Christian tradition involves placing the person on their back so that they are lying supine, then having the legs extended straight, traditionally they would have been pointing towards the east, the head would have been in the west, and the hands would be crossed over the chest or abdomen (Rojas 2016, 249). The reasoning behind this very specific and deliberate orientation was the idea that this would allow the person to meet God in the east when the dead were due to awaken and rise on judgement day (Rojas 2016, 249).

Within Christianity, it was not the norm to bury people with grave goods or personal ornaments, as this practice was seen as distinctly unchristian, however when it came to only certain materials in the context in which we are working with here, items made of for example jet, could have been used and given a religious symbolic Christian meaning (Rojas 2016, 260). It is also not unreasonable to presume that, in being so far from home and the usual Christian context that they were wont to find themselves in, they might have been known to make exceptions and choose to be buried with items that were significant and

sentimentally important to them. While this would not have been within strict accordance of either Catholicism or the belief that drove the mission of evangelisation, it is important to also include and make exceptions for the unpredictability of human nature.

5.2 Caribbean Mortuary Practices

One of the main aspects of mortuary practices that has been recorded as occurring throughout the Caribbean, is the burial of individuals in a flexed position (Hofman *et al.* 2014, 599). Another not uncommon practice within the Caribbean was the removal or addition of bones to the already buried individual (Hofman *et al.* 599). In indigenous Cuban agricultural ceramicist tradition, the body of the individual will usually be positioned on their side, in a sort of squatting position, with the legs being semi-flexed, flexed, or extremely flexed (Rojas 2016, 257).

The inclusion of grave goods, usually in the form of body ornaments was not uncommon throughout the Caribbean, and there are reports of stone bead necklaces being found in burial in Cuba (Rojas 2016, 260).

5.3 Andean Mortuary Practices

Commonly, in the pre-Colonial Andes, it was customary for people to be buried in communal burial areas, especially organised by who was related to who (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 383). In regards to the positioning of the individuals within their graves, it was common on the northern coast of Peru for individuals to be interred in either a seated, or flexed position (Donnan and Mackey 1978, 379).

Along with shrouding the body, it was common for the individual to be interred with material items, commonly metal, but not excluding other materials such as textiles and ceramics (Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo 2015, 96).

Another practice that was recurrent in the Andes is the manipulation of the post-mortem remains occurred (Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo 2015, 108). This

means that the living would return to where they had buried the individual in question, and alter, move, or remove things from said individual, usually their bones.

What could have been expected in pre-Hispanic Peru would be to find individuals buried in a flexed position, and with the strong likelihood of accompanying grave goods. This is incredibly similar to what could have been expected from pre-Hispanic Cuba.

These contrast starkly with the Christian Spanish way of extending an individual in a particular orientation, along with the domineering presence of not only Christian religious officials, but also religious structures, such as either a cemetery, or a church.

One of the many changes that Christianity brought was the interference of the church when it came to caring for and preparing the dead. The roles that the family members of the deceased would normally have played along with the involvement of the wider community as a whole was drastically reduced, and the clergy members stepped in to these places and thus wielded yet another modicum of power, not only over the lives of the population, but now also over their deaths (Zucchi 1997, 35).

Despite the evangelisation that the Spanish sought to bring to the areas that they had colonised, there were still very distinctly non-Christian burial practices being carried out, as is seen at both El Chorro de Maita and Magdalena de Cao Viejo, as will be seen in the next chapter, which covers the burials themselves at the sites. This strongly suggest that there was, in reality, only so much power that the Spanish could exert, and that there were limits to the extent of their influence (King and Ponce De León 2017, 773), and what is seen in the chronicle records should always be corroborated using evidence form the archaeological record before it is completely believed.

6. The Burials

This chapter will look at burial positions of the individuals within the cemeteries, followed by the deposition of the bodies. The explanation of the mortuary practices will give a helpful insight into understanding the significance of what we will see when it comes to the way in which the individuals at these cemeteries were buried.

6.1 Magdalena de Cao Viejo: Burial Positions

There were three main areas within this site where burials have been uncovered. First there were two different units that were located beneath the floor of the church, and then there is the cemetery located next to the church, meaning that all of the burials were found upon consecrated ground (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395).

Beneath the church there were two areas of burial, one was located in the northeast, and the other was located towards the northwest (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 384). In the north-eastern part of the church burial area, the remains of the individuals were organised in a linear system, with the bodies arranged going from the northwest side of the church to the northeast corner of the church (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394). The arrangement of the bodies for the northeast are arranged very differently compared to the carefully linearly laid out set that was found in the first area. The bodies that were found in the northwest from beneath the church were grouped towards both the northeast and the northwest of the area, and they were found to have been stacked one on top of the other (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394), which is quite an organisational change compared to the layout that had been observed beneath the church. It would not seem that either sex or age had any influence on who within the community was permitted to be buried beneath the church or within the cemetery on holy ground.

6.2 Magdalena de Cao Viejo: Deposition

Within both areas from beneath the church, the north-eastern and the north-western groups, the vast majority of the individuals were found to have been in an extended, supine position, meaning they were lying on their backs, with their heads facing upwards, and their hands crossed over either their chests or their abdomens (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394). Their feet were oriented to be pointing towards the altar (Ortiz *et al.* 394), which makes sense when we take into account the fact that the more ordinary Christian positioning would have been to have the head in west and the feet in the east (Rojas 2016, 249). This was not put into practice here, as the entirety of the church having been built in a non-Christian north-south orientation (Quilter 2017, 70), due to it having been built on the location of a pre-Hispanic plaza. Keeping these factors in mind, it would seem fair to say that these burials were done in a Christian fashion according to their contexts.

Within the cemetery, which found itself adjacent to the church, there were only five individuals found (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394). Of these five individuals, two were buried in the Christian position mentioned previously (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395), but the remaining three burials were not the norm compared to what we have seen from this site. This group of three was comprised of one adult female, who was in a supine, but semi-flexed position, with only one of her arms folded over her abdomen (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395). Then there were two fetuses, both of whom were found to have been lying on their sides, in a flexed position (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395). These three individuals are clearly not in the more conventional Christian positions, but once again, they were within the confines of the church cemetery, meaning that they would most likely have been members of the community, and would have been baptised.

6.3 Chorro de Maita: Burial Positions

All of the individuals were found within the cemetery of Chorro de Maita, which was to have been expected, given the fact that, unlike Magdalena de Cao Viejo, this site does not have the presence of a church to reckon with. The burials were

also highly unlikely to have been marked, and there were bodies interred frequently and within the bounds of a short amount of time, given the shallow depth and chaotic nature of the positions of the individuals within the cemetery (Rojas 2016, 189). These factors coupled with the evidence that, quite possibly apart from the individuals who were buried lying face down and grouped in the southern part of the cemetery (Rojas 2016, 195), there does not seem to have been any importance placed on the age, sex, or ancestry of a person in regards to where within the cemetery they were buried.

6.4 Chorro de Maita: Deposition

Unfortunately, it did not seem to have been possible to identify the burial of 47 out of the total 133 individuals (Rojas 2016, 247), however, the remaining number of individuals were able to have their positions within their graves recognised and recorded. A total of 61 individuals were positioned lying on their backs, then there were 10 individuals who were on their positioned to be lying on their right sides, and then a further 10 more individuals who were found to be lying on their left sides (Rojas 2016, 247).

Interestingly, there was also only one singular individual who was found to have been placed in a seated position, but the positioning of this persons legs was not identifiable, and four individuals who were found lying in a face-down arrangement (Rojas 2016, 247). These face-down individuals all had their legs in a semi-flexed or completely flexed position (Rojas 2016, 247). This face-down position is one that, while occasionally recorded as present in Puerto Rico, it is not at all an expected observation for Cuba, and the singular individual who was found to be in a seated position is also an exception rather than a part of the norm (Rojas 2016, 248).

For those individuals who were found to be lying on their backs, many did have their legs in the more traditional indigenous flexed, semi-flexed, or very flexed positions (Rojas 2016, 248). At an immediate glance, this would seem to indicate

the continuation of indigenous mortuary practices (the flexed legs) combined with the Spanish Colonial influence of lying the dead on their backs.

The combination of an individual lying on their back, and with their legs extended is not common in indigenous mortuary practices for Cuba (Rojas 2016, 248), and although there have been burials found like this in certain locations on the island, they all appear to have come from sites that have had European materials found there (Rojas 2016, 249), which further indicates the use of this practice in Chorro de Maita as a result of the encomienda system, and of course colonisation efforts as an a part of this.

Only four out of the 61 individuals who were on their backs had their heads positioned in the west (Rojas 2016, 249).

There would appear to have been an approximately equal number of males and females (as well as probable males and females) who were buried in the extended, Christian position (Rojas 2016, 251), but while there is no obvious difference when it comes to the sex of the individual related to this particular burial position, there may be a deviation when it comes to the age of the individual. This is evidenced by the fact that there were only two juveniles in the extended position, out of the total 61 individuals (Rojas 2016, 251).

One female individual was found to be lying face down, and with a stone placed over the legs (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 234), and would appear to be the only individual to have been found in this position. It should be noted that this is also the individual who was found to have clear dental modification.

7. The Grave Goods

There is a significant lack of grave goods found at the Peruvian site of Magdalena de Cao Viejo, which means that this chapter will focus primarily on the materials found in Cuba, at the site of El Chorro de Maita. These have been placed into the categories of 'Items within the Burials', which refers to any objects that were found where there was a burial, but does not necessarily mean that these items were placed there with any deliberation, or are meant to be thought of as directly in association with the individual who was found buried in that location. The category then of 'Items with the Human Remains' refers to any objects that are believed to have been deliberately placed with the buried individuals.

7.1 Magdalena de Cao Viejo

At the site of Magdalena de Cao Viejo, which finds itself in Peru, there were incredibly few grave goods found, especially when compared with the cemetery at the site of El Chorro de Maita.

One of the only things that could be found which could constitute as grave goods are the burial shrouds that were found, and further textile items that were also found with very few of the buried individuals.

The majority of the individuals who were found buried in the church were extremely likely to have been shrouded in textiles (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394), as were those individuals who were found in the cemetery attached next to the church (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395).

Of the funerary shrouds that were worn by the individuals of this site, they were styled in an indigenous way, but they were made using European design, as well as using European technology (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 396). This is important as it indicates a style of clothing, and clothes production that has incorporated both the indigenous and Colonial elements.

Clothing, and textiles, would have been exceedingly important during times such as these, as clothing could indicate identity and allegiance, and it is often seen that

men's clothes tended to have been adapted to the new Spanish styles much faster than those of the women, likely because men tended to be more involved in public and political affairs. It is also the case that there were very few to no European women present at this site, and therefore a lack of reference clothing or patterns in this area (Quilter 2017, 74). Although it does not strictly count within the definitions of grave goods, it is important to note that there were body parts, or at least bones, removed post-mortem from individuals at this site (Ortiz *et al.* 398).

7.2 El Chorro de Maita

Unlike at Magdalena de Cao Viejo, El Chorro de Maita did indeed have a wide array of grave goods, both indigenous, European, and in some cases, items that had entered the grave unintentionally, such as ceramics and faunal remains.

Items Within the Burials (found in the immediate surroundings of where there was a burial):

Ceramics: There were indigenous ceramics found with forty-one burials (Rojas 2016, 200). Of the 450 sherds that were found, absolutely none were complete, and neither were there any pieces that were around or over five centimetres, and it is thought that there were no complete vessels placed with the individuals either (Rojas 2016, 201).

There were also European ceramics found for 15 of the burials, and 32 sherds were found, and once again the majority of these pieces were below five centimetres (Rojas 2016, 203).

Faunal Remains: Unusually, there are a lot of burials that have animal remains present at this site, among them were thirty-two taxa of both land and marine molluscs, crustaceans, salt-water fish, terrestrial amphibians, fluvial reptiles, and terrestrial mammals (Rojas 2016, 203).

Of the fifty-four burials who had animal remains, there were pig remains in forty-one of them, and none appear to have been found in any of the deeper burials (Rojas 2016, 205).

It is thought that, much like the ceramics, the faunal remains that were found to be present in the burials at this site were not placed there intentionally, but rather

found themselves there accidentally, possibly due to disturbance of the soil layers (Rojas 2016, 205).

Utilitarian Indigenous Artefacts: There were not too many practical artefacts found, but from the twenty artefacts that were looked at, the majority were found to be chert (a type of silica rock) fragments, including an unused chert flake that was found in one of the burials (Rojas 2016, 202). There were also some scrapers made from bivalves, as well as a piece of coral that showed evidence of use-wear (Rojas 2016, 202).

Other Indigenous Materials: There are even fewer non-utilitarian indigenous artefacts that were found. There was a little piece of a bead made out of quartzite, a nodule of apparently unused red ochre, and a piece of stone that was traditionally used for indigenous engraving (Rojas 2016, 202).

Other Materials: There were found by some of the burials pieces of ferrous metal, as well as little pieces of charcoal, but both of these materials are too little or too new to provide any informational insights of real value or interest (Rojas 2016, 206).

Items with the Human Remains (deliberately placed with the remains):

Metal Tubular Artefacts: Out of the twenty-five metal tubular objects (Fig. 7) that were found, there would seem to be only five complete, with the other twenty being only fragments (Rojas 2016, 92). Many have slight remains of cotton thread inside them, and while there are thought to have been around seventeen burials with these metal tubes, there was usually only one tube found per burial, with it being located by the neck area of the individuals (Rojas 2016, 92). Given the shape and cotton thread remains of these tubes, it is incredibly likely that these were in fact aglets (Rojas 2016, 220), which would have been used at the ends of the cords that were used to lace together and close clothing, much like buttons or zips would function on clothing today, the metal aglets would help to stop the ends of the cords from fraying, and would also facilitate the threading of the cords through the fabric holes of the clothing (Rojas 2016, 219).



Fig. 7: Metal tubular artefacts (Rojas 2016, 93)

Metal Beads and Pendants: There were two cylindrical and one hollow spherical metal bead found, as well as four laminar (meaning thinly plated) pendants, one hollow bird's head figurine (Fig. 8), and one bell (Rojas 2016, 90).



Fig. 8: Hollow bird head figurine (Rojas 2016, 213)

Non-Metal Beads: There were two beads made of pearl, eighteen of pink coral, twenty three shell micro-beads, four calcite beads, one modified fish vertebra and four white lithic micro-beads (Rojas 2016, 84). The main majority of the beads were cylindrical, and none bigger than a centimetre in size (Rojas 2016, 84). There were also 114 pieces of quartzite beads associated with just three individuals (Rojas 2016, 225).

Earspools: There were four earspools (used for stretching and/or adorning through the earlobe) found in total, two out of resin, and two that were made of quartzite (Fig . 9). The resin earspools, possibly amber, which are cylindrical in shape, and have a notch on one end (Rojas 2016, 88). These are brown in colour, and have a cracked surface effect (Rojas 2016, 88). The quartzite earspools are

shaped more like reels, meaning that they have something more like cylindrical outward flairs at either end (Rojas 2016, 88).



Fig. 9: Quartzite earspools (Rojas 2016, 89)

Cloth: There were only two very little fragments of cloth found at this site, and both were found in the same burial, by the mandible of the individual (Rojas 2016, 89). This textile would appear to contain granules of some sort of black sediment (Rojas 2016, 90). One of the fragments of cloth looks to have been made with flax fibres, indicating that this was of a high quality European production (Rojas 2016, 227).

8. Discussion

8.1 Discussion: The Cemeteries

There is an obvious immediate difference between these two sites, that being the presence of the church at Magdalena de Cao Viejo. While both sites had been inhabited previous to the Colonial Spanish occupation, and both sites were also used as either a *reducción* (Quilter 2011, 105), or, in the case of Chorro de Maita, a part of the *encomienda* system (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 71), there was certainly more Spanish influences at play at Magdalena de Cao Viejo. El Chorro de Maita did not have ties to any Spanish ruled town directly, and was therefore not only more rural, but the people there were left somewhat more to their own devices, with significantly less interference from the Colonial way of doing things.

Magdalena de Cao Viejo on the other hand, was very much a Spanish run town, made especially religious the way that the presence of a Christian church would have affected the acceptability of indigenous practices (Quilter 2011, 106). The influence of the church would of course have meant that there were Spanish figures of authority (and figures of religious authority) present at almost all times, which would have affected the way in which people behaved too, likely in way which would make them seem more palatable to the Colonial sensibilities. Given the established nature of the church at Magdalena de Cao Viejo, it becomes clear that the Spanish occupation had been established there for somewhat longer than at Chorro de Maita, and therefore so had the catholic conversion efforts too. Both colonisation and evangelisation were a process that took time, and would not yield immediate results.

In Cuba, at Chorro de Maita, given that there is less direct and constant Spanish influence, the indigenous culture is somewhat more prevalent, and was able to persevere for a long time forward (Anderson-Córdova 2017, 52).

8.2 Discussion: The Burials

Neither at Chorro de Maita or Magdalena de Cao Viejo did age, ancestry, or sex matter when it came to the deposition of the individuals in the ground, or where they were buried within the cemeteries. The main difference between these sites is the presence of the church, and the burials beneath its floor, with there being two separate groups of individuals. All of the individuals found beneath the church were positioned in a Christian way of burial. There were three individuals who were not in Christian burial positions found in the cemetery right next to the church (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 395). While these people were buried in a way that was not seen for any of the other individuals who were buried there, they were still within the grounds of the cemetery, meaning that they would have been baptised, and members of the church and not excluded from rest of the community. It is also incredibly Christian to want to be buried within a church. Martyrs and saints were often buried beneath church floors, making such a position a great honour and very desirable for those who wanted to be close to god and their church.

The burials in Chorro de Maita are a little less organised in the way in which the individuals were positioned within the cemetery, with the burials being scattered in no particular order or direction. Many of the burials would appear to have been hastily carried out with little attention being paid to previous burials in the immediate vicinity. The only individuals that were buried in a noteworthy way are the four individuals who were found to be lying face down in the southern part of the cemetery, and these burials are indicators to the idea that this might have been a disaster cemetery, and these burials might have been the results of an epidemic (Rojas 2016, 195). Another reason for the lack of Christian organisation among the burials of this Cuban cemetery is the lack of direct and strict influence of Spanish rule, while something close to the opposite can be seen at the site in Peru.

8.3 Discussion: The Grave Goods

One of the differences that is very obvious between these sites is the presence, or in the case of Magdalena de Cao Viejo, lack of grave goods. At El Chorro de

Maita there is an apparent abundance of indigenous and non-indigenous material found by graves and intentionally buried with the individuals, but the same cannot be said for Magdalena de Cao Viejo. There what we see instead is the use of textiles as funerary shrouds (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 394), something for which there is also evidence for at Chorro de Maita. The textiles and their patterns could be used as indicators of origin, status, and allegiance, which makes them so interesting in the context of being worn by non-Europeans in a Colonial context. At Magdalena de Cao Viejo the textiles were worn in an indigenous way, but made using European styles (Ortiz *et al.* 2017, 396), which given the burial location, position, and orientation, indicates an indigenous practice that has persisted despite the presence of another, more forcefully predominant culture. At Chorro de Maita, there is diminished evidence for the presence of textiles, likely due in part to the lack of preservation rather than presence.

At Chorro de Maita, all of the female individuals who were found with grave goods are believed to have been local, while there were no non-local female individuals for whom there was a presence of grave goods (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 240). In addition to this, it was only individuals who are believed to be local who were found with coral and stone materials (Rojas *et al.* 2011, 240). These would appear to be the only distinguishing features between local individuals and those who indicated different origins, further emphasising the way in which indigenous practices were continuing to be carried out despite Spanish efforts. It was not really within the Christian burial norms to bury people with objects (Rojas 2016, 260), which is probably the main reason that there are none seen within the church and cemetery burials at the site in Peru.

It would be acceptable to say that how and what we are buried in was important to many people in the past, as it is for many people today too. Some choose to be dressed post-mortem in their best set of clothes for a more traditional religious ceremony, while others might prefer to be wrapped in biodegradable, eco-friendly shrouds better designed for the green burials that are rising in popularity.

Whichever way a person's culture might choose to dress them after their death, it can make a statement about who they were, and what kind of social circles that they moved in during their lifetime, and in the case of the burial shrouds from the Peruvian site, it would seem as though people did hold onto a part of their

identity, culture, and traditions despite influences coming in strongly from the outside.

While examining the variety of grave goods and burial positions present at these sites, especially El Chorro de Maita, it is important that the diversity of the population not be overlooked. Because the individuals of the cemetery can not be simply categorised as only either Spanish or indigenous, it becomes difficult to do the same for the observations that have been made. Some of the practices seen may have not have been important for people who originated from Cuba, for example, but were brought over from somewhere else geographically and culturally, and held meaning to those who wished to continue the traditions of their own places of cultural origin.

It should also be noted that while local materials might have been used, such as coral, it is possible that this was done out of necessity rather than by choice, as certain materials which would normally have been used might have been unavailable to individuals who came from different geographic areas compared to where they were buried.

In addition to this, it is also difficult to say what personal and emotional meaning was placed onto the mortuary practices that are seen at these sites. It is possible that some individuals truly believe that the Christian method of burial was the best, and only, option for their deceased loved ones, while others may have vehemently disagreed with the Colonial practice and done their best to counter it where they could. Others still might not have felt strongly about the change in the way in which the dead were treated, perhaps because they held to their own perspectives or were able to integrate Christian concepts into their pre-existing beliefs, and for some it may have simply been easier to do as the church asked and conform to what the majority of their community was doing.

The reasons for the actions of people can often be incoherent and difficult to understand, especially when such actions are carried out under situations in which we have not found ourselves, and the lack of a written record for each individual's personal choices certainly does not make the past clearer to us.

9. Conclusion

There are several differences in the mortuary practices seen between the two sites. At Magdalena de Cao Viejo there are burials beneath a church and the cemetery is directly tied to this Christian church as well, whereas there is no church presence to be seen at El Chorro de Maita. Similarly, there is little attention given to Christian burial orientation at Chorro de Maita, whereas the extended, supine, arms crossed Christian position is the norm at Magdalena de Cao Viejo. Running with the trend of the mortuary practices at Magdalena de Cao Viejo being more Christian in nature, there are little to no grave goods buried with the people there, while there are a wide variety of materials from Chorro de Maita. Despite these differences, both sites still had a mixture of Spanish European, Christian practices that sat alongside indigenous ones. At both sites there was the removal of bones after death, even at Magdalena de Cao Viejo where the affairs surrounding the dead would have been closely monitored by the church (Ortiz *et al.* 398).

In order to continue to fully answer the questions that have been posed in this thesis, I believe that a cumulation of further research on not only the two sites that have been used in this thesis, but of others like them. I think that the most effective way to compile a more comprehensive and accessible database of information would be to include statistics from more sites which date to the same period as well as a little earlier, but from a much more wide and varied selection of locations, as well as including information about the origins of the individuals found there, with a focus on their cultural norms and traditions. I believe that by combining such sets of data from a wide variety of sites, it would become possible to get a far better understanding of the wider patterns and trends that have occurred during such transitional periods of history. Such insight would be especially valuable in recording the differences seen between pre-Colonial, contact-period, and Colonial Era changes which took place in such closely successive periods of time. It is possible that this might allow us to recognise some of the changes our cultures and societies are going through.

How we treat our dead reflects strongly the ways in which we treat the living within our society, and that goes for societies in the past too. What these two sites

tell us about the people who lived and died in those places is that, however much people adapted to the European standards of religion, personal presentation, and care of the dead, they still held onto and continued some of their own practices. This is an important aspect to note coming from two places that had and were going through periods of transition and uncertainty, and it should make us reflect on how we will, and do, treat our own dead in times of climate and political change, as well as dealing with a continuous growth in population.

10. Abstract:

This thesis asks the question 'How can the mortuary practices of two separate Colonial era sites be compared, using the 16th century cemeteries of El Chorro de Maita in Cuba, and Magdalena de Cao Viejo in Peru as examples', and follows this main research question with the subquestions '*how were the individuals interred?*', '*how were the individuals oriented?*', '*where within, or outside of, the cemeteries were the individual buried?*', and '*were there grave goods present, and if so, what kinds?*'. All of the research carried out for this thesis is based entirely on literature.

First, there is a brief explanation of the historical background of the two regions that the sites find themselves in, followed by a more narrowed down look at the cemeteries themselves, and the roles that they played in the *encomienda* and *reducción* systems as imposed by the Colonial Spanish.

In the chapter about the burials, it becomes clear that for both sites the age and sex of a person did not seem to have mattered when it came to the location of the burial within the cemetery. Both sites also have evidence for the deposition of individuals in a Christian burial position, this is much more prevalent in the Peruvian site at Magdalena de Cao Viejo. When it comes to the presence of grave goods, they are very much lacking at Magdalena de Cao Viejo, while there is a large and varied amount of material found at El Chorro de Maita in Cuba, possibly due to a less direct amount of contact, and therefore influence, from a Spanish ruled settlement.

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