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Aguasvivas Hernández, Marianny

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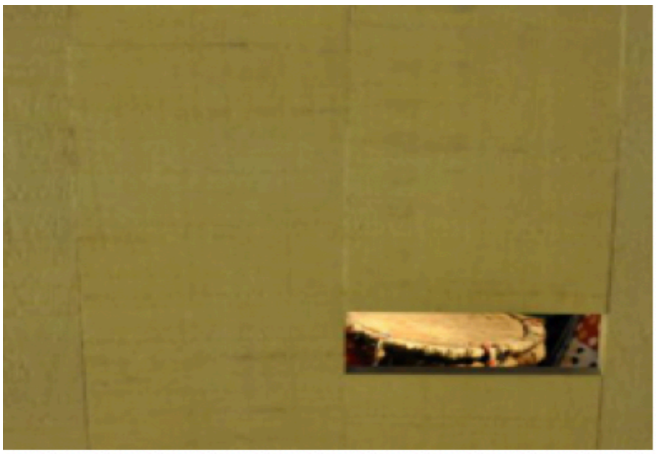

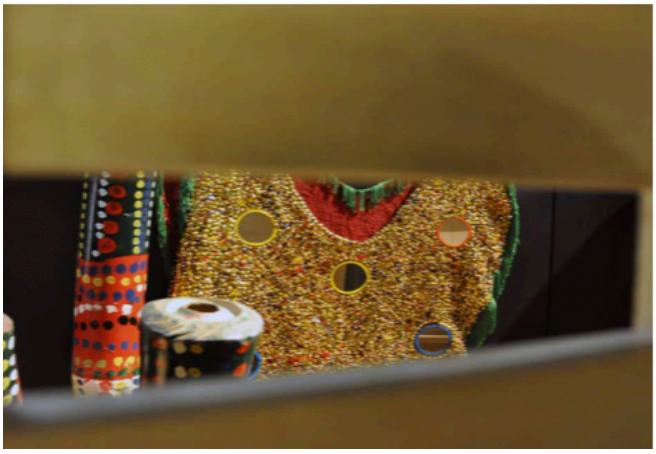

Cover image: Collage of photographs of the African legacy displays in the Centro Cultural León Jimenes (Photographs and Collage by Marianny Aguasvivas).

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Marianny Aguasvivas Hernández

RMA Thesis Archaeology 1086VTRSY

Supervisor: Dr. M.E. Berger

Leiden University, Faculty of Archaeology

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1. Introduction

Problem Statement: The invisibility of African heritage in Dominican museums

Dominican culture takes its origins from a mixture of indigenous, European and African traditions inherited from a tumultuous past. The continuous interactions between our ancestors are reflected in the language, food, music, dance, and cultural traditions, which are often highlighted and even exaggerated to satisfy our tourism-directed economy. However, while we are eager to attract tourists with the promise of a snippet of our Caribbean roots, and the reflection of our colonial past, the reality is a bit more complex and unbalanced than what we would like to admit. As a Dominican researcher, when looking at our history, our street names, our buildings and our museums, I see a great disparity between how Indigenous and European heritage are represented and how African heritage is represented. In the few cases where we see African heritage present in museum displays, it is either related to slavery, shown hidden behind a wall (Fig. 1), or displayed as a folkloric or religious 'rare' cases, reinforcing the detachment between the Dominican population today and this 'Other' that is shown as something from the past.

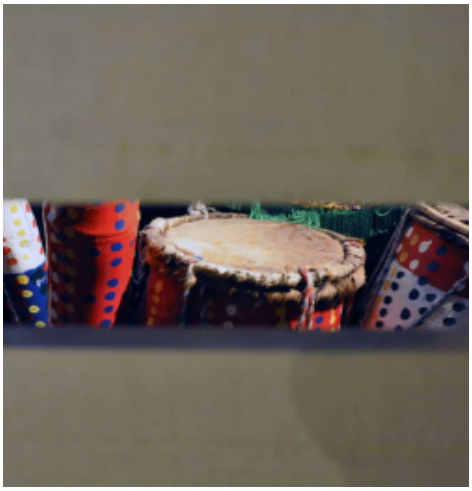

Figure 1. Afro-Dominican display in the Centro Cultural Eduardo León Jimenes. Drums hidden behind a wall (analysed further in chapter 4). (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

The main reason for the lack of African representation in the country is that the notion of Dominican identity was created under a colonial perspective and fuelled by a strong sentiment of anti-Haitianism (Howard 2001; Tavernier 2008). This sentiment developed into the rejection of blackness and African heritage as these were concepts often thought of in relation to neighbouring Haiti. Therefore, Dominicans have acquired a tendency to hide or diminish the importance of African heritage. Much of this lack of representation is attributed to the process of *creolisation*, where the indigenous, European and African traditions present in the country have continually borrowed and adapted to each other resulting in what we call Dominican culture today. However, creolisation does not account for the historical and political circumstances that led to the discrimination and subjugation of African peoples and their descendants in the country and should not be used as an excuse to hide or omit African representation. This tendency to undermine the importance of our African heritage and traditions originated from the period of Spanish colonisation in the island but was reinforced during the course of national history. This history of oppression in the country has led to the erasure of African heritage and to discrimination towards the practice of African traditions (Moya Pons 2008, 71).

As Jorge Ulloa Hung explains in his article about African material culture in the Dominican Republic (2015), most studies about African heritage in the country have focused on the ethnographical, sociological or linguistic aspects of African heritage in the Dominican Republic. However, Ulloa Hung explains that there is little research about the African material culture in the country. The displays of the local museum's permanent collections reflect this lack of interest or access to African or Afro-Dominican artefacts. However, this is not unique to the museum sector, but is also seen in the lack of African-oriented archaeological excavations as well as the lack of interest from collectors in African or Afro-Dominican material culture. Thus, Afro-Dominican material culture in Dominican collections is part of their *criollo* collections, and are displayed as Dominican folklore, often without making any reference to the African roots.

This thesis focuses on analysing the main factors that have influenced the way African legacy is represented in the Dominican Republic and proposing tangible solutions to increase the visibility of African legacy in local museums. This will be done by analysing the history of African representation in academic literature, archaeology and Dominican museography. The aim is to use trends of representation that support the decolonisation of museum displays (Maurer 2000; Blue

Spruce 2004; McCarthy 2011) as a guideline and see how these can apply to the case of Dominican museums in a sustainable way. The decolonising trends I will use as a basis are:

- collaborating with relevant communities,
- reorganising or reframing existing collections,
- recontextualising current displays and,
- including contemporary art.

These trends will be better explained in chapter 3.

Contextualisation: The importance of museums as vessels for national identity

The problem with the invisibility of African heritage in Dominican museums is that museums are seen as places of self-reflection, where the public goes to see their culture and their past presented to them from a place of authority. Museums are a reference point both for locals to learn about the history and values of the nation and for foreigners to get an overview of the local culture (Russell 2013, 184). Furthermore, museums have a vital role in complementing the school curriculum, visits to the main museums of the country are mandatory in the curriculum in the Dominican Republic. There have been multiple analyses of the impact of museum visits on school children, as well as how these visits shape their ideas of time, culture, identity, social expectation and political history (Russell 2013, 184; Tortello 2013, 207-213). Museums can be a way for minorities to receive acknowledgement about their past at a moment when they are still having to confirm their place in society. Within their role as *lieux de memoire*, museums can help these minorities reconcile with their past, as well as working on collective memory and as a reminder to the public of the importance of these minorities in the creation of the nation (Chivallon 2013, 138; Smeulders 2013, 165). However, more often than not, and as it's the case in the Dominican Republic, museums follow the narratives chosen by the people in power be it at a governmental level or within the own museums power structure. As a result, within these places of importance for the creation of national identity, by omitting or misrepresenting African heritage, museums help people disconnect from their African roots and validate the idea that our African heritage is not relevant or significant enough (Farmer 2013, 170).

From their inception, museums have been embedded with racism and colonial influence, as colonial empires used them to both justify and prolong their ideas of superiority over their colonies

(Aldrich 2009). This colonial hierarchy and institutional racism can still be found in one way or the other in most national museums in the Dominican Republic, as many were founded during a period where the government still supported and idolised Hispanic legacies in the country and promoted the 'whitening' of the Dominican race (Thompson 2002, 45). Therefore, the first step to change the way Dominican museums display their collections is to confront this colonial past. However, decolonising museums is not an initiative that can be fulfilled overnight, but instead a longwinded process that needs patience, collaboration, shifts in the role of the curator, in the position of authority of the museum and lastly a change in the displays and exhibitions that is also not easily feasible within the budget available for public museums.

Objectives and research questions

Having a closer look into the history of the African collections of Dominican museums will not only help us understand why these collections are still being cast aside in the twentieth-first century, but it will help us change the narratives towards one of better representation of African heritage and the 'decolonisation' of Dominican museums. This comes at a time where movements like *Black Lives Matter*, protests around the country and presence in social media are contesting the racial prejudices in the Dominican Republic (Deibert 2020). Giving more visibility to the African side of Dominican culture would not only be a point of departure to open conversations against racism or pigmentocracy in the country, but also a way for Dominicans of African heritage to feel identified with what they see in museums and for Dominicans in general to start recognising the diversity within the process of creation of their own identity. To tackle these objectives, I will be answering the following research question:

- How can multi-vocality help exhibition practices increase the visibility of African legacy in Dominican museums?

Subquestions:

- How have the academic, institutional and political tendencies impacted the way Dominican museums have presented African heritage?
- How is the African legacy perceived by the population in the Dominican Republic?
- What can Dominican museums learn from other case studies across the Caribbean to develop a multi-vocal and decolonial approach for displaying heritage?

Theory and Methodology

This thesis will be approached from three main theoretical frames: Critical museology and Politics of display, decolonisation of museums and creolisation. Methodologically, I will analyse the history of African presence in the country, the history of African representation in academic research in the Dominican Republic and the corelation between these two and how African legacy is represented in museums. For the latter I will analyse the display of the museums and complement the information with interviews both within the museum staff and relevant academics. I will conduct a questionnaire to the public to get their perspective on how the museums are perceived and complete the analysis by using other case studies in the Caribbean. The theory and methodology are discussed in depth in chapter 3 and 4 respectively.

Structure of the thesis

In the next chapter (Chapter 2) I will summarise the background information about the history of African presence in the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean and make a literature analysis of how African presence in the country has been represented in academic and archaeological practices. In Chapter 3, I go over the origin of museums as colonial institutions and the history of museums in the Caribbean to introduce the theoretical framework for this thesis. Chapter 4 focuses on the methodology, where I will explain the methods used for the creation of the database, the interviews, and the questionnaires for the public. In chapter 5 I go over the history of Dominican museums and present each of the case studies, presenting the biography of each museum and an overview of the African representation in each one of them. In the sixth chapter I present the results from the analysis of the museums, questionnaires and interviews. The discussion of the results of the previous chapters will take place in chapter seven, where I will answer my research questions. Finally, in the conclusion (Chapter 8) I will apply the results of these discussions to propose how Dominican museums can increase the visibility of African heritage and enhance multi-vocality and inclusivity in the stories they tell.

2. The Emergence of Dominican Identity

The idea that African legacy is both an undeniable component of Dominican culture and at the same time a hidden aspect of Dominican history might seem contradictory. In this chapter I will present the historical background that has shaped the Dominican perspective of African legacy to be the way it is today. The history of the Caribbean will help contextualise the differences and similarities of African representation in the region depending on the geopolitical background of each case. The history of African presence in the Dominican Republic will serve as a guide to understand not only the background for the setting of Dominican views on African legacy in the present, but also to understand why the representation of African legacy is so essential for Dominican identity.

2.1 The African arrival to the Caribbean

The Caribbean context

The Caribbean is a geographical region of the Americas encompassing the islands and mainland that are surrounded by the Caribbean Sea (Fig. 2). It is located to the Southeast of the Gulf of Mexico, to the East of Central America, to the North coast of South America and to the West of the Atlantic. It could be divided into the Bahaman archipelago, Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago, Southern Caribbean islands and Caribbean mainland (Keegan and Hofman 2017, 3). As the context of the Caribbean mainland is also embedded with the greater context of the other areas of these countries that do not belong to the Caribbean, this study will be limited to the Caribbean islands.

Due to the long history of interaction, colonisation and occupation of the Caribbean, it is an extremely diverse geopolitical region, now composed of island nations, estates, oversea departments and municipalities. This diverse background makes it difficult to summarise a history of the Caribbean that fairly depicts all the processes involved, since the difference in language, approaches and ideologies used to study the Caribbean change from island to island or sometimes from one side of an island to the other.

Figure 2. Caribbean landscape and networks before European Colonisation. Map by Corinne Hofman and Menno Hoogland. (Hofman et al. 2018)

First occupied around 5000 BC by people coming from South and Central America, the Caribbean islands were settled by Arawakan speakers from the mainland of South America between 800 and 200 BC later classified by archaeologists as the Saladoid people and culture (Rouse 1992; and see for an overview of the classification systems adopted in the region Keegan and Hofman 2017, 48, 51-53). It has been established that already during this period the Caribbean was an extremely diverse region with multi-cultural networks and frequent interactions and exchange (Keegan and Hofman 2017) of which the Spanish took ample advantage upon their arrival (Hofman 2019). Although after European incursions the colonial sources focused on a dichotomy between the 'good Taíno' in the Greater Antilles and the 'cannibal Carib' in the Lesser Antilles, we now know the Caribbean was populated by multiple cultural groups that arrived in the islands at different points in time and had diverse levels of interactions with each other. A distinction has been made between the Lucayo in the Bahamas, Guanahatabey in Western Cuba, Taíno in most of the Greater Antilles, Macorix in Northern Hispaniola, Ciguayos in Northeast Hispaniola, and the Igneri and Kalinago/Kalipunam for the Lesser Antilles (see Fig. 3). However, due to the history of the Caribbean, language barriers and continuous new archaeological findings, there is not a consensus between which of these names belong to archaeological nomenclature, historical misnomers or self-defined names (for more detail about the discussion of names, see Keegan and Hofman 2017, 11-15).

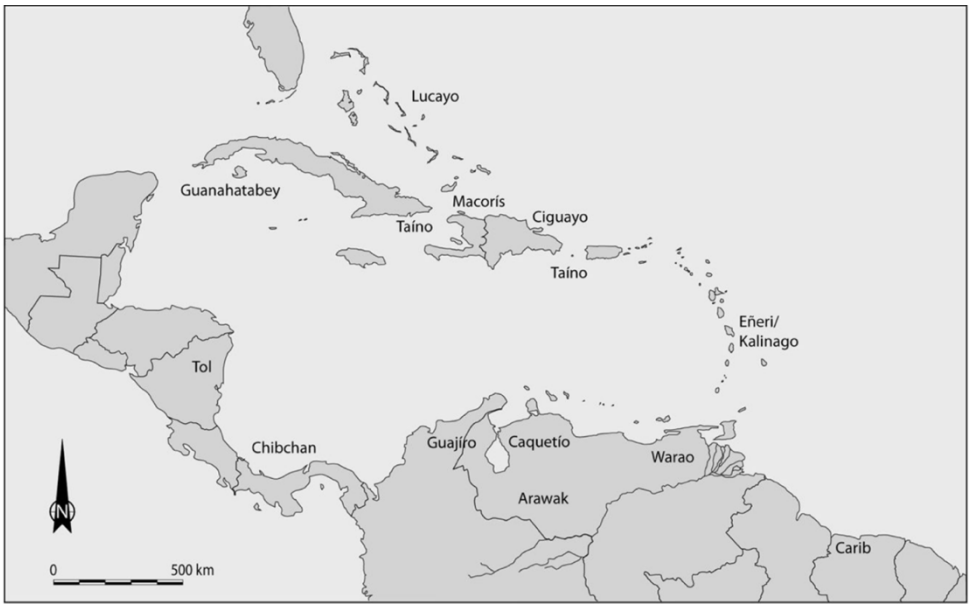

Figure 3. Map of different names used for the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean by Menno Hoogland (Keegan and Hofman 2017).

The end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century brought to what had otherwise been a network of interconnecting traditions, languages and exchange between Caribbean Indigenous peoples, into an era of submission, ethno-genocide and transformation with the European colonisation of the Americas (Keegan and Hofman 2017). Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean on October 13, 1492, believing he had found an alternative route to Asia (Keegan and Hofman 2017, 239-240). In his first trip he arrived in the Bahamian archipelago, followed by Cuba, and then Hispaniola, where part of his crew had to wait due to the sinking of the Santa Maria (Higman 2010, 2012; Keegan and Hofman 2017). On the second voyage he landed in Dominica, and travelled north through the leeward islands, North of the Dominica passage, to make his way back to La Hispaniola, Jamaica and Cuba (Higman 2010, 60-62). In the third voyage he explored Trinidad and Margarita, and in the fourth arrived in Martinique, made his way back up to the Greater Antilles and then explored central America. The Spanish colony quickly established itself in the Greater Antilles and started to take over the resources, colonising Puerto Rico (1508), Jamaica (1509) and Cuba (1511).

Soon, due to the exploits from the Spanish in the Caribbean, the region became a place of trade and contraband (Pérotin-Dumon 2003, 116). The Lesser Antilles and Southern Caribbean islands that had been mostly neglected by the Spanish, especially since the expansion towards the

mainland, became 'way stations' between Brazil and Portugal (Pérotin-Dumon 2003, 114-116). From the 1540's the English, French, Dutch and Danish started infiltrating the Lesser Antilles both via private and royal enterprises (Pérotin-Dumon 2003, 119-122). The European potencies started exploiting the Caribbean for goods such as gold, salt, pearls, tobacco, sugar, and any goods that could increase commercial revenue.

It is important to remember that the transatlantic slave trade was not the first form of slavery in the Americas. At first, the Spanish coerced the Indigenous populations for their exploits through a system called *Encomienda* (Valcárcel Rojas et al, 2020; Mira Caballos, 2013)[1]. However, with the dwindling Indigenous populations, they soon turned to Africa for the forced labour (Mira Caballos, 2013; Rodríguez Morel, 2013).

Although the Spanish were the first ones to introduce African slavery to the Americas, it was not long before other European potencies like the English, the Dutch and the French did the same (Palmer 2003, 14). The enslaved Africans not only had to endure the forced trip across the Atlantic through the risk of disease and death, but they also had dire living conditions while living in the Caribbean (Moya Pons 2008, 67-69). These living conditions were not only damaging for the physical health but also often affected the mental health of the enslaved. In order to escape such conditions, many enslaved people fled to the mountains, these people are known as Maroons. The term Maroon comes from the Spanish word *Cimarrones* that originally meant escaped cattle or hogs which ran to the mountains (Arrom and García Arévalo 1986, 15-17). There were two types of maroons, those who escaped for short term and those who escaped permanently to live in autonomous communities, known in the Hispaniola as *Manieles* (Arrom and García Arevalo 1986, 34; Andújar 2015, 51; Price 1979, 3). Maroon communities allowed Africans to not only be safe from the colonial oppression but also plot for their definitive freedom. African rebellions in the Caribbean and emancipation are some of the main factors allowing the development of independence movements across the region.

[1] Read Mira Caballos 2013 for a detailed chronology and explanation on the encomienda.

African legacy across the Caribbean

The arrival of African peoples to the Americas was a vital step for the development of Caribbean culture as we know it today. The coexistence and mingling of Indigenous, European, and African peoples, as well as the later arrival of Asians, in the Caribbean is what allowed for new cultural traditions that are both a reminder and a replacement of the previous ones to form. However, the diversity of geopolitical context in the Caribbean means that there is not only one model of development for Caribbean traditions, but these are extremely different from one side of the Caribbean to the other. For example, some parts of the Caribbean might have a closer connection to their colonial past, while others completely reject the colonial power in order to make place for a more 'independent' identity. In the same way, while some parts of the Caribbean put in advantage the Indigenous aspects of their culture like is the case of places like Puerto Rico or Dominica, others like Cuba and Barbados prioritise their African legacy. The reason for this disparity of cultural acceptance in the Caribbean goes back to not only the individual Indigenous, colonial and maroon history of each of these places, but also to political factors in the most recent history that might influence the local narrative and perspective about the past.

While some of the territories in the Caribbean still have recognised or self-identifying living indigenous and maroon communities, others believe these communities are 'extinct' and only part of their past. While as a consequence of the French revolution and the abolition of slavery in France, some of the French colonies attained emancipation and independence in the 19th century, like is the case of Haiti (see next section), other French colonies from the lesser Antilles like Guadeloupe and Martinique are still overseas departments. On the other hand, while most of the Spanish former colonies gained independence from Spain from the 19th century, some like Puerto Rico have passed to be dependencies of the United States. For the British, while some became independent, others are still part of the British commonwealth. In the same way, some of the Dutch Caribbean is divided in constituent countries and special municipalities. This complex political environment in the Caribbean region makes it difficult to study its past and present connections to African legacy in a forward manner. Multiple theoretical approaches have been proposed to the study of this multi-cultural background in the Caribbean and the development of Caribbean individual and regional culture, these will be further discussed in Chapter 3. The

relationship between the historical and political context and the African representation in the difference case studies of the Caribbean will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 7.

2.2 History of African presence in the Dominican Republic

African presence in La Hispaniola (also known as Ayiti or Quisqueya)

By the time of the arrival of the Spanish to the island, then called Ayiti, in 1492 Hispaniola had a complex political structure, established exchange between communities both within and outside the island across the whole of the Caribbean, and a diverse range of languages or dialects, and extraordinarily rich material culture traditions (Keegan and Hofman 2017). The Spanish installed themselves in the island, which they renamed La Española, between 1492 and 1504, they founded the town of La Isabela in the North of the island and started the process of evangelisation and exploitation of the Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean.

The first Africans that arrived at the island of La Hispaniola were considered *Ladinos*, meaning enslaved Africans that already had contact with the Spanish language and religion (Albert Batista 2012, 80). In general, the term ladino was used to differentiate these 'Europeanised' African peoples from what they called *bozales* or Africans that had not yet lived in Europe, did not speak the languages and were not familiar to Christian religions (Albert Batista 2012, 81). However, it is important to note that due to the long history of colonisation in the African continent, there were also ladinos that had never left Africa but had been enslaved in the African continent by Europeans.

During the fifteenth century what we now call the African continent, was an extremely diverse and complex territory with multiple kingdoms and empires, religions and languages. Usually, when studying the transatlantic slave trade or Columbian exchange, we start the African narrative from the point of arrival of the Portuguese or the 'first slave transaction' in Lagos in 1414 (Andújar 2015, 20). However, it is important to remember that trade, exchange, and even colonisation and slavery, were long part of the history of the African continent, as of the rest of the world, before the fifteenth century. Although western historians have given more importance and fame to the civilisations that had more interaction with Europe, we should not forget the presence of hundreds of communities which are often shadowed by the history of the great

kingdoms of Ghana and Mali or the Songhay, the Kongo and the Kanem empires as well as the estates of Guinea, Yoruba and Benin (Andújar 2015, 11-19). Furthermore, other factors like the long-term trade routes established both within Africa and between Africa and Asia or the expansion of Islamism, all need to be considered to understand the situation in Africa both before and during the development of the transatlantic slave trade.

The first Africans that arrived in 1503 from Seville to work in the mines almost immediately fled the precarious living conditions (Andújar 2015, 53; Moya pons 2008, 65). For a while after, most of the arrivals were of individual cases of domestic slaves, brought by their enslavers (Moya Pons 2008, 65). After the development of the first sugar plantations from 1518, and lack of workforce due to the abuses to the Indigenous peoples, the Spanish crown allowed for the import of African Slaves by providing licenses to do so to members of the royal court and other members of the elite (Moya Pons 2008, 65-66).

While at first the Europeans preferred having enslaved ladinos as they saw them as more 'civilised', they soon realised that they could not expect them to do harder work than they had been doing in Europe or Africa without any protest. The first slave revolt took place in 1522, in Diego Columbus's sugar plantation in the banks of the Nigua river (Julián 2015) with around 40 enslaved peoples most of them Muslims from Wolof origin, collaborated with Indigenous peoples to escape and fight (Moya Pons 2008, 77). After this, the Spanish not only made sure to send a message by publicly punishing the leaders of the revolt, but also the fear of retribution from slaves started to grow and new legislations were made to catch and avoid the escape of the slaves. Furthermore, the crown did not agree with the benefits some enslaved Africans that dealt as merchants, or those that were forced to prostitution as they sometimes got as high economic means as some of the Spanish settlers (Moya Pons 2008, 73-74) Therefore, they continuously passed legislations to not only keep the control over the African (and indigenous) populations, but also to maintain the economic and societal superiority over them (Moya Pons 2008, 74).

To avoid further escape or rebellion from the enslaved Africans, as well as due to the monetary advantages, preference was given to the enslavement of bozales over ladino enslavement. Due to the growth of the demand, soon the enslaved labour grew and the African population in the Caribbean surpassed the European population with La Hispaniola having between 60 to 500 enslaved Africans per plantation, and around 35 plantations in 1548 (Moya Pons 2008, 66). By

1542 there were around 2,000-3,000 maroons in the island (Moya Pons 2008, 80). Initially, these Maroons had the help of Indigenous peoples that had already escaped the European system and would go down to the plantations to get supplies. However, the collaboration between Indigenous and African people faltered after the Indigenous leader Enriquillo signed a peace treaty with the Spanish in 1528 and started persecuting the African maroons himself. However, this did not stop the revolts, notably known are the revolts in San Juan de la Maguana in 1544 led by Diego de Guzman and in 1548 led by Sebastian Lemba.

The Road to Enmancipation

After 1697 with the Peace of Rijswijk, which put an end to the European Nine Years war, the French occupation in the Western side of the island was recognised, although the borders of its territory were not demarcated. From here on, due to the different approach to colonisation and economic goals the French had at the time, we see a shift in the development of Saint-Domingue (the side of the island occupied by the French) and Santo Domingo (the side of the island occupied by the Spanish). While we have an estimate of the precedence of the enslaved people in Saint-Domingue, as the Spanish did not own their own ports in Africa and tended to call the people from where they acquired them as opposed to their ethnicity, we have less knowledge as to the origins of the enslaved peoples that arrived in Santo Domingo (Rout 1976, 27). While the Spanish were not interested on the origins of the Africans people they enslaved, they were very attentive to their religions and were extremely focused on evangelisation.

The French, however, were a lot less focused on the religion of the enslaved peoples and avoided teaching them French to keep slaves away from important matters (Williams 1969, 18). Furthermore, while the French colony flourished and increased the influx of slaves to keep up with production, the Spanish attention was drifting to bigger colonies as Mexico and Peru and no longer focused on Hispaniola, were they shifted from plantations to cattle ranching (Gates 2011, p. 123). This increase of slavery in Saint-Domingue as well as the focus in alienating the African descendants created a sense of partnership and comradeship in Africans in what is now Haiti, where they increased the sense of Africa as the motherland (Gates 2011, 124; Rout 1976, 283). On the other hand, in Santo Domingo, there was less restriction of the slaves, who were given more liberty and were, for example, allowed to mount horses and yield machetes, this inculcated

in the East side a sense of belonging and more relatedness to the term Spanish, seeing the term more as a nationality than an ethnicity (Gates 2011, 124). With the increase of the enslaved population in Saint-Domingue, and therefore the increase of maroons, came the Haitian revolution.

The 29 August of 1793 slavery was abolished in Saint-Domingue (Franco 2005, 138). Around the same time in Europe, the consequences of the French revolution were creating conflict, and on the 22nd July 1795 the Peace of Basel, which ended the War of the Pyrenees between France and Spain, gave France rights over the whole island of La Hispaniola. The Peace of Basel brought a lot of consequences for the island, one of them being the issue of what to do with the ca. 25,000 enslaved peoples that were in the Spanish side, now that France, where slavery had been abolished, also owned the rest of the island (Franco 2005, 141). The tensions from this period resulted in a revolt in October 1796 in Boca-Nigua, in the present San Cristobal, since at the time the French were still trying to handle the English in the West side of the island, the Spanish were still in control and retaliated with months of persecution and public punishments (Franco 2005, 142). During this time of uncertainty, the local slave-owners took the opportunity to sell and make profit of the enslaved people before it was too late (Franco 2005, 144). It was not until 1798, with the rise of Toussaint Louverture's military and political career, that the French were fully in charge of the Eastern side of the island.

During Louverture's command slavery was abolished in the rest of the island. To regulate the transition from slavery to freedom, Louverture created a new dependency regimen with proprietors. However, shortly after in 1802 slavery was re-established in the French colonies by Napoleon. This triggered the revolts led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the already agitated population and developed into the independence of Haiti in 1804 (Franco 2005, 153). The persecutions of the Haitian revolution brought a lot of conflict over the new ownership of lands confiscated from the colonists, which allowed General Jean-Louis Ferrand to rise to power in the former Spanish side of the island with the backing of the French. Following this period came the España Boba (1809-1821) where the East of the island went back to Spanish rule but there was not a lot of economic development due to the Spanish focus on the Peninsular War and the independence across various former colonies in the Americas. After these years of neglect, independence from Spain was achieved the 1st of December 1821, creating the new independent state of Spanish Haiti (Franco 2005, 176). However, local conflicts of power and alliances

resulted in a pro-Haitian movement and the annexation to Haiti, and therefore the final abolishment of slavery, took place the 9th of February 1822.

After the abolition of slavery, there was a process of 'racial integration,' which caused the swift emigration of the white creole and Spanish aristocracy, as well as the immigration of free African and African descendants (Fellows 2013; Franco 2005, 181). Notably immigration from Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, in the United States, to various parts of the island (Fellows 2013, 33). Under the leadership of Jean-Pierre Boyer, the land was redistributed to the emancipated peoples, which resulted in the strengthening of commerce in the island for the first few years. However, eventually different economic and political factors including the disparity in the development of the economy between the East and West side of the island, increased corruption, the forced implementation of the French language and 'social and moral crises' in the former Spanish side, led to a movement for the independence. Led by Juan Puablo Duarte and the group of Los Trinitarios, Dominican independence was proclaimed the 27 February 1844.

The rejection of African legacy

To this day, the Dominican independence is celebrated on the day Dominican Republic obtained freedom from Haitian dictatorship in 1844, instead of the day of the independence from colonial Spain in 1821 or again in 1865. This puts the Dominican Republic in a particular position compared to nations in the rest of the Americas, as the national identity was created in a context that was looking to detach the nation from Haitian power as opposed to colonial power. However, it is important to know that not all the revolutionary groups at the time were seeking the Dominican independence. There was a big movement for the annexing or protectorate of the French, as well as a pro-Spanish party led by some religious leaders, a group asking from protection from the British, and even a small group of merchants that were pro-Haiti (Balcácer 2019, 285-296). Some of these groups were still working independently for their own goals even after the proclamation of the independence in February 1844, and during the war with Haiti that followed during the next twelve years. Although the interventions by France, England, Spain, and the United States did not help bridge the gap between the different goals of these political groups, they did help reinforce a common goal: achieving total independence from Haiti.

Pedro Enriquez Ureña theorises that the idea of a national identity or conscience was not fully formed until 1873, after the annexation to Spain in 1861, and the restoration war that ensued (1863-1865), and when the president Buenaventura Baez's idea of annexing to the US was answered with a revolution and his overthrowing (Balcácer 2019, 334-335). For example, the Hispanophilia that rose in popularity in Dominican academic and literary circles during the Haitian occupation of the island, was put aside to the rise of *indigenism*, the romantisation of the Indigenous presence in the nation's past and its influence in the Dominican culture (García Cartagena 2019, 541). On the other hand, during the United States occupation of Dominican Republic (1916-1924) the sugar industry boomed, which helped the increase on density of the population, but also caused the immigration of Haitians to the frontier region of the Dominican Republic, where both Dominicans and Haitians coexisted and continue to do so today (San Miguel 2019, 31).

During Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship, in the first half of the twentieth century, there was a process of persecution and propaganda in favour of 'whitening' the Dominican population (Thompson 2002, 39). During this period, the persecution of Haitians ensued with the massacre of 1937 of around 15,000 people (García Cartagena 2019, 82). Therefore, many people felt pressured to change their race or colour denomination on their national identification card to say *Indio,* literally translated to Indian, in this case a colonial word meaning Indigenous, to justify their darker skin colour, as this was seen as preferable or less dangerous than having African roots (Candelario 2007, 2; see also Valcarcel Rojas et al. 2019). This happened in parallel to a revival of interest in Indigenous culture in the country.

It was under the influence of Trujillo's legacy and under his right-hand Joaquin Balaguer, that there was a wave of colonial buildings turned into museums, and the mayor cultural complex in the country, the 'Plaza de la Cultura,' where three of the main national museums are located, was built. Balaguer was also one of the mayor promoters of the whitening of the country, and his racist ideals perpetuating the greatness of the Europeans, and the savagery of the indigenous peoples and African peoples was still very present by the time of the opening of the main museums in the country (Thompson 2002). Therefore, in these museums we saw a lot of effort put into highlighting the history of European colonisation in the island, the influence of the Europeans in Dominican culture, and the exotification of Indigenous culture. However, if there

was any mention of African presence in the country, it was related to slavery or sugar cane plantations.

Trujillo and Balaguer's discourse of a passive Haitian invasion through the border is still very present today, and the extreme propaganda that linked Haitians with vodou, superstitions and African-ness still has repercussions on how Dominicans see both Haitians and African-ness (Douglas 2005, 87-88). The idea was of 'Dominicanidad' characterised by being white, Catholic, and Hispanic as opposed to Haitians black, vodouist and African (Tavernier 2008, p. 4). However, it is important to remember that the discrimination towards blackness and African-ness in the Dominican Republic is not uniquely caused by the relationship between Dominicans and Haitians. Although the antagonism towards Haiti has played a significant role in the disassociation with African roots and culture, the colonial structures, white and mixed elite, and historical context going back to the 15th century have all played a big part.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that despite the ideological denial of African presence in the Dominican Republic, African roots are still very present in Dominican culture and can be found in our food, music, dances, religion, rituals, and aspects of everyday life. In the theory chapter (Chapter 3), I will discuss further how it is possible to have African-ness embedded in Dominican culture whilst alienating African-ness and blackness. In the results and discussion (Chapters 6 and 7) I will analyse how African legacy has been presented in the Dominican Republic in the last century.

3. Museums as Identity Makers

In this chapter I will go over the importance of museums both as institutions of knowledge production and as Identity makers for the general population. This will help contextualise the theoretical approaches used in this study. After a brief overview of the history of museums and their context in the Caribbean, I will present and examine the fundamental theoretical concepts that frame my research: critical museology, politics of display and decolonisation. Critical museology serves to understand how museums work by looking at the context behind museums' decision-making, while politics of display help create specific narratives. Looking at Dominican museums through a decolonisation perspective will help us not only easily pinpoint what are the main factors affecting the representation in these museums but also find solutions according to decolonising practices. Finally, the process of creolisation has helped Dominican museums both include African legacy and at the same time keep it in the shadow. Understanding the way, it has both affected and benefited African representation in a deeper level will be helpful for the analysis of the museum displays and collections. Understanding the process of creolisation will help to disassociate from the idea of Indigenous, African and Spanish origins of Dominican culture as homogenous and divided blocks. Applying this concept towards the study of Dominican identity and its representation in Museums will be essential to understanding Dominican museum collections.

3.1 The Museum Setting

During the age of explorations and colonialism, cabinets of curiosities and cabinets of art started to emerge. People in good economical positions accumulated art and artefacts and would exhibit them to friends and acquaintances or make them accessible for a selected public. During this time the collectors were mainly either royalty or explorers, merchants, and scholars. However, these collections were often exhibited inside royal spaces, court stables, or personal homes which were not accessible to the general public (Margócsy 2021). Although we start to see the appearance of major collections in museums from the seventeenth century, much like a library,

membership was needed to be able to enter these collections and its acquisition prioritised researchers and the elite (Bennett 1995). It is only from the late the eighteenth century that museums become public institutions, as part of initiatives to ameliorate the general image of big cities and keep the lower classes away from disorderly conduct and excessive drinking (Bennett 1995).

From the nineteenth century, museums shifted towards a place of scientific and educational engagement with the public. Due to the role of museums as established institutions, the contents of exhibitions are considered by visitors as legitimate results of scientific research, translated into information accessible for the general public (Macdonald 1998). By the second half of the nineteenth century, we see the acceptance of a sort of idealism around the concept of museums and what they entail (Saumarez Smith 1989, 8). Saumarez Smith highlights 4 characteristics that were generally expected of museums at the time: The collections must contribute to the advancement of knowledge, should be classified in a specific way, should not be private, and should be accessible to the public (Saumarez Smith 1989, 8).

During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, we see museums start to specialise and focus in more specific areas. This was a direct consequence of the rapid expansion of public museums that we saw during the 19th century (Herle 2016). Here is where we start to see a stricter divide between art museums, ethnographic museums or natural history museums. Furthermore, from the late twentieth century, museums have started the endeavour of questioning 'scientific authority, or.. the process of exhibiting itself' (Macdonald 1998, 15). This comes both from a place of understanding that science practices cannot ever be completely objective, and that the museum as an institution, and therefore its exhibitions, have a colonial background that is still very present today. Museums became a social space, where society could go to look at itself, not only by looking at its own past and looking at the other cultures exhibited, but also because it served as a meeting place to meet others (Bennett 1995). Therefore, museums served to not only shape national identity, but also to confirm ideas of superiority over other societies and showcase the exploits of imperialism. On the other hand, when the colonies started to become independent from colonial power, museums became a place for the creation of a national identity in the former colonies (Cummins 2004).

In the last few decades, the focus of museums has shifted towards acknowledging their history and colonial past, while looking at innovative ways to stay relevant. Organisations like the International Council of Museums (ICOM) have been searching for a new way to define museums in order to adapt to the changes of the twenty first century, and include multi-vocal perspectives, digital networks and storytelling into the museum sector. The ICOM General Assembly in Prague (2022) adopted the following definition: “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” (ICOM General Assembly 2022). This new definition is necessary to understand the broad diversity of museums available in the Caribbean as it promotes the inclusion of alternative or more community focused museums like some of the cases we will see below.

3.2 The evolution of Caribbean Museums

During the colonial period, when most of the Caribbean was still under the rule or influence of European potencies, Caribbean museums recreated the same conditions as museums in Europe. In the 19th century, museums in the British Caribbean were focused on natural history collections, and the commercial sector led the support and incentive behind them (Cummins 2004). Despite opening after the abolishment of slavery, these museums were still mainly focused on the white audience and had the purpose of maintaining narrative that favours the ‘mother land’ and the colonial empires (Cummins 2004). Just like in Europe, museums were vital for maintaining a positive image of the colonial power, as well as boosting the economy and social life of the elite. On the other hand, African cultural expressions like dance, music, clothing and religion which were some of the “crucial means of collective self-expression" left for people that had no representation in positions of power and mainstream media, were not included in the museum narrative (Modest and Barringer 2018, 4).

With the movements of independence across the Caribbean, and local groups divided between being independent or stay annexed to the European potencies, museums shifted their focus towards one of national identity that emerged in opposition of the colonial power (Cummins 2004). However, this new national narrative still discriminated a great proportion of the population and continued the legacy of colonial discourse. From this point on, the development of the museums varies a lot between one island to another or between the private and public sector.[2] As we will see in chapter 6, some museum narratives keep following Eurocentric perspectives on the colonisation of the Americas. Other museums have actively tried to keep up with times and involve other perspectives into their narrative, whether that approach has been successful or not. Nevertheless, the shift from both governmental and grassroots museums towards a bigger focus on community engagement has also impacted the way locals interact with Caribbean museums (Ariese 2018). Despite the chosen narrative for the displays, which are more closely dependant on the museum's institutional directions and budget, there is often more innovation and updated curriculum when it comes to the direct engagement to the public.

3.3 Critical Museology: Theoretical approach

As we have seen in the introduction and background chapters, the issue of misrepresentation of African legacy in the Dominican Republic is a deeply rooted problem that goes back centuries. When it comes to the African representation in museums, it comes down not only to the history of African representation in the country, but also to the history of museums and museum politics. Due to the colonial origins of museums, a main function of museums was, and still is, to keep control of how the visitors see the subjects represented (Bennett 1995). For example, colonial museums would show the colonies as inferior to the empire, or as people or 'savages' that need to be saved. In the same way, national museums will often show the past of the country in a way that will validate or reinforce the historical narratives that the government, or in some cases a specific political party, wants to endorse.

To analyse how this has affected Dominican museums I will be looking at critical museology and politics of display. Looking at these museums from a decolonisation perspective, will allow

[2] See Ariese 2018 Chapter 7 for a deeper analysis of governmental museums vs grassroots museums.

to not only break apart from the Eurocentric and colonial narratives still present in many museums, but also will prioritise the representation and needs of the different stakeholders. Finally, taking creolisation into account will allow for a better understanding of both Dominican material culture and cultural practices from the past and present, which could contribute to the conciliation between Dominicans' mixed past and national identity.

Critical Museology

In his manifest about critical museology Anthony Shelton explains that there are three museologies: critical, praxiological and operational (Shelton 2013). Operational museology focusing on the practical procedures, while critical and praxiological museologies focus on the 'study and exploration of operational museology' (Shelton 2013). Whilst praxiological museology does this through 'visual and performative media', critical museology does this from a multidisciplinary approach (Shelton 2013). Shelton proposes four epistemological positions for critical museology:

1. That history is constructed by society,

2. that collections are influenced by the people doing the collecting,

3. that museums can also be biased, and

4. that objects will always end up with multiple interpretations.

The first states that history is biased by human perception and societal constructs. It is straightforward to understand why it is important to look at museums from a critical perspective. Therefore, when we look at the history of Dominican museums (in chapter 6), which is not only a relatively short history, but also extremely weighted by diverging political views, the gaps in the operational museology become clear. Due to the inherent bias in history, the narrative chosen by the museum will always be influenced by the authorities within such institutions, said authorities get to choose not only which parts and sides of history to present to the public but also how to present them. To understand these museums, we must consider what was the intention behind the creation of each specific museum, what were the views of the people in

charge of creating the museum narrative, and how did the people in charge of funding influence these views (I will present these for the individual museums in the next chapter).

The second epistemological position explains how whilst the figure of the collector has been legitimised in museums, we must also look at the history of collecting from a critical perspective (Shelton 2013). In the same vein different factors affect the objectivity of museums, these factors also apply to collections: as we have seen in the background chapter, most of the academic and archaeological focus in the country has been on the Indigenous and European presence, which directly affects the number of artefacts of African heritage that can be collected. If we add to this the problem of enslaved Africans' material culture being ephemeral[3], then it is clear to see how even before we consider any collector's intentions, personal taste, or budget, there would be a lot less African heritage to collect in comparison.

Shelton's (2013) third position explains how due to the authority given to museums as institutions, we tend to perceive them as objective narrative makers. The general public sees museums as an extension of a science, a very methodological, objective practice. However, it is impossible for a museum to ever be fully objective. Furthermore, we need to take into account that in many of the museums in the Dominican Republic, the present displays haven't been updated since their inception in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite however the science, knowledge or perspectives of these museums as institutions may have developed, oftentimes there has not been enough budget to update the displays to keep up with the times. This creates a gap between the academic developments in the country and what is being shown to the public via museum spaces.

The last point Shelton (2013) discusses, is the disparity between the meaning given by the museum to the material displayed and the different meanings it may have depending on individual context and background. It is already a difficult task in a place that attempts to be as objective as possible to use a language that is both inclusive and straightforward, especially when trying to reach a wide range of audiences. Here it is important to note that there seems to be a more pointed division in the Dominican museums field between museography and museology, which is something that, as Shelton points out, goes against critical museology as the two practices are intrinsically dependant on each other.

[3] See more on this on section 3 of this chapter.

Politics of Display

Politics of display or politics of exhibiting, refers to the different ways in which exhibitions are embedded in politics. Not only by the way political thought can influence what is exhibited and how it is presented, but also how every aspect of an exhibition depicts a political message. Politics of displays highlights the ways in which exhibition practices adapt a larger cultural and political context into what is presented to the public (Macdonald 1998, 3). This idea comes from Foucault's analysis of the relationship between discourse and the access to knowledge and power (Foucault 1980). In this case, the exhibiting strategies are the discourse, and they are used to influence what type of knowledge is disseminated (Lidchi 2013). Therefore, whoever has the power to decide what is exhibited, also has the power to control which knowledge is accessible to the public. Furthermore, this discourse does not work in isolation, Foucault talks of *discursive formations*, which constitute a body of knowledge, so in the case of museums, how the combination of media through the displays of an exhibition creates a specific narrative and how this narrative is made visible by the people in power (Lidchi 2013). Analysing the politics of display will help us understand why specific strategies have been chosen in Dominican Republic to present different histories or concepts, what have led to these choices and how do these affect the public perception.

Taking into account that knowledge production and representation are strongly dependant on each other (Allison-Bunell 1998, 68), to better understand how African representation has been exhibited in the Dominican Republic, we first need to gauge how African representation has been studied in the Dominican Republic (See chapter 6). Due to the small number of trained professionals in the Dominican anthropological and archaeological fields, there is an unavoidable crossover between academic scholars and museum staff. While this should provide a direct link between any academic development and the museum displays, other factors like power, political influence, or lack of funding are also present. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the interpretative work of the museum is different than that of its production (Allison-Bunnel 1998, 67).

Another important aspect to take into account while looking at the politics of display is the way racial differences have been historically represented (Dias 1998). As we have seen at the

beginning of this chapter, museums and exhibitions themselves have a colonial history. Main aspects of this colonial history are still very present in some museums: for example, showing a chronological structure that hints at evolutionary changes, or expressing social and political ideologies through displays (Dias 1998, p. 40). While it is important to highlight how different cultural backgrounds have impacted people in various ways during history, there is a fine line between exhibitions being a place of learning and a place of voyeurism (Dias 1998).

However, it is important to note that when looking closely at the politics of displays and the process of exhibition making, saying that a museum chose a specific narrative only because of the specific political environment at the time also falls under generalisation. Individual choices and power structures within the team in charge of setting the exhibition in place can also significantly impact the outcome of an exhibition. This means that the agency, background and ideals of the individuals planning, and taking charge of exhibition making should not be completely ignored when talking about the wider cultural and political context (Macdonald and Silverstone 1992). It is specially because of the agency of people as individuals that we could never consider museums as neutral spaces. "All exhibitions are inevitably organized on the basis of the assumptions about the intentions of objects' producers, the cultural skills and qualifications of the audience, the claims to authoritativeness made by the exhibition, and judgements of the aesthetic merit or authenticity of the objects or settings exhibited" (Karp 1991, 11-12). All these different factors must be taken into account when we want to analyse the politics of display of an exhibition and their understanding is vital for implementing decolonising strategies in museums.

3.4 Decolonisation of museums

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, from the earliest forms of exhibitions, collections have been used to not only exhibit the power of the collector but also influence the viewer's perspectives from a position of authority. Exhibiting has been a form of control and showcase power. From the power and resources needed to be able to create a collection worthy of being exhibited, to the power of having access to visit these collections. This results in a

museum's narrative that is focused on the "big majority" and not only excludes Subaltern Histories but also diminishes their importance.[4]

While the colonial influence in museums spaces is a subject that has been amply touched upon (Maurer 2000; Mignolo 2011; Azoulay 2019, Procter 2020), the overall conclusion is that there is not one simple straightforward way to "decolonise" museums (Lonetree 2012; Ariese and Wróblewska 2022). Decolonisation of museums should be seen as a long-term process as opposed to a quick fix-it-all. That is why we talk instead of 'practising decoloniality', as Ariese and Wróblewska (2022, 12) describe it: '*a process and a mode of thought that goes deeper into untangling the present-day colonial hooks from the museum'.* The first step to implement when practising decoloniality is deconstructing the established institutional hierarchy within museums. Meaning the museum not only has to acknowledge their colonial past and actively work towards dismantling the existing oppressive narratives, but to dismantle these narratives museums must let go of the idea that they have the highest level of knowledge about the subjects displayed within its walls. It is within this search to include other sources of knowledge production that collaboration with relevant stakeholders and local communities comes into place (see Phillips 2003; Lonetree 2012).

Collaboration with local communities is a broadly studied subject in the heritage field, and it has been implemented throughout the years in anthropology, archaeology, heritage management and museum studies (see Atalay 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Hodder 2000, 2008; LaRoche 2011). In her chapter about museums and source communities, Ruth Phillips (2003) explains there are two main different models of collaboration within post-colonial museums: Community based exhibits and multi-vocal exhibits. In community-based exhibits, the relevant communities or stakeholders take charge of the production of the exhibition while the museum serves as a 'facilitator' (Phillips 2003). On the other hand, multi-vocal exhibits attempt to include as many voices as possible while still giving the museum a central role in the exhibition making process. In the case of multi-vocality, the museum's colonial role is often highlighted and contextualised while inviting the public to form their own opinions about the presented displays. Lonetree (2012, 4)

[4] Here I use Subaltern Histories instead of Minorities due to the subjectivity of minority/majority used in this context, see Chakrabarty 2004.

speaks of transforming museum spaces from a unidirectional teaching environment to ‘community relevant sites.

It is through the collaboration with relevant communities and this shift to multi-vocality that Dominican museums can implement some of the methodologies tried and tested by other museums practicing decoloniality. These trends have been used by museums and exhibitions, both within the Americas and the rest of the world, as a way to increase multi-vocality in their exhibitions (See for example Blue Spruce 2004 for the National Museum of the American Indian in the United States, McCarthy 2011 for Te Papa museum in Aotearoa / New Zealand, and Beutin 2014 for the Brooklyn Museum’s African Innovations, the Penn Museum’s Imagine Africa and the South African Museum’s !Qe – The Power of Rock Art). As mentioned in the introduction, these trends include:

- Reorganising or reframing existing collections,
- Recontextualising current displays and,
- Including contemporary art.

While reorganising the classification systems in existing collections is a process that take time and resources, it helps bring to light outdated frameworks within the museum and allows for a better access to both the public and future curators and researchers (McCarthy 2011). The juxtaposition of different voices in the museology also allows for a recontextualisation of the displays where both the historical narratives and current discourses can be brought to light (Beutin 2014). Finally, complementing archaeological or historical material with contemporary art allows visitors to connect the past to the present instead of seeing the displays as something uniquely related to the past (Blue Spruce 2004). In chapter 6 I will discuss how these methodologies for practicing decoloniality have worked across the Caribbean and will further explore how they could be implemented in Dominican museums.

Decolonising museums must focus not only on giving information to people outside communities, but also to serve as a place where people from these communities can interact with their past, heal and develop new links for the future. By looking at the trajectory of African representation in the Dominican Republic, the present museography, and collecting feedback

from the public, this thesis will assess the sustainability of applying these trends to the case of Dominican museums.

4. Methodology

In this chapter I will be discussing the different steps I took for the preliminary research, museum visits, interviews, questionnaires and analysis. I will start by presenting my research strategies where I will explain the timeline for the fieldwork, interviews and questionnaires. I will follow with the sampling strategies to better explain the process for choosing the case studies and the interviewees. I will continue with the data collection methods I used, followed by the data analysis. Finally, I will end with the limitations and ethical considerations.

4.1 Research strategies

The research consisted in thoroughly documenting the displays in the museums, observing what was represented and how it was represented, and then analysing the collections available. Local archives and libraries were used to both study the history of these collections as well as the analysis of local academic representation of African legacy these can be found in Chapter 5. To complement the analysis of their displays, the museums were contacted to have an idea of their perspective on the subject and understand both their limitations as well as their plans for the future, the list of interviewees can be seen in the Appendix I. Although in most cases I managed to talk to the current director of the museum, in some I got the information from other officials of the institution as tour guides, or representatives of the ministry of culture. Finally, questionnaires were shared with the general public to understand how they perceived the African representation in these museums. All the interviews and questionnaires were conducted in Spanish. The results from this research will be presented in Chapter 6, where I will present the data from the documentation phase of the museums, their history and their displays.

The research project for this thesis started in September 2020 and finished in May 2022. I went to the Dominican Republic to conduct field research in three occasions: from late November 2020 to mid-January 2021, from late May 2021 to August 2021, June 2022. During the first trip to the Dominican Republic, I conducted the preliminary research, made the contacts necessary for the interviews and established the boundaries of my research project. I visited the museums that were open at the time and consulted local anthropologist Lenin Paulino as well as interviewed the director of the national museum directive Carlos Andújar to get an overview of

the museums available for this study and the political and economic context behind them. The museums visited for the preliminary research were the Museo Regional Altos de Chavón, Museo Alcázar de Colón, Museo de las Casas Reales and Museo del Ron y la Caña.

During my second visit, I was able to visit 6 other working museums and 2 museums being remodelled, during this part I analysed their collections, conducted research in local libraries and archives, and started the process of interviews and questionnaires which was then finished online. The Museums visited were the Museo Trampolín, Museo Subacuático de las Atarazanas, Centro Cultural León Jimenes, Faro a Colón, Museo del Arte Moderno, Kahkow Experience as well as the buildings of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and Museo de Historia y Geografía that were undergoing renovations. I also revisited the Museo Alcázar de Colón and Museo de las Casas Reales during this trip. Two other museums were studied during the visit of 2022 as they had been closed until then: Museo de la Resistencia and Casa del Tostado. Furthermore in 2023, I visited the country again and took the opportunity to visit the Museo La Isabela and the adjoining archaeological site. Finally, there are two museums that make part of the study but were not accessible for visits during the research period: INDIA and Galeria Pre-Hispánica García Arevalo. However, I had visited and documented these museums back in 2019 for my bachelor's research so will be reusing that data.

4.2 Sampling strategies

Museum sample

The sample for my museum analysis was chosen with the help of the National Director of Museums Carlos Andújar, and the local anthropologist and artist Lenin Paulino. The process for choosing the sample was to first look at all the Dominican museums, galleries and cultural centres available, and then focusing only on those whose displays and collections we considered should include or mention the African legacy either because of the definition of the institution, the narrative taken in their displays, or the context of the building the museum is placed in.

First, I focused on the national museums under the direction of the Ministry of Culture. The Museo Fortaleza San Felipe, Museo Casa Juan Ponce de Leon, Museo 26 de Julio, Monumento Heroes de la Restauración and Fortaleza de Santo Domingo were not selected as case studies

either because of the relevance, accessibility or due to covid restrictions. The rest of the museums are not under the direction of the Ministry of Culture but are not all necessarily private in nature, some have the support from the government, national institutions or foundations. Here I have a chronology of the museums visited for this study (Fig. 6). I chose to show the museums chronologically, by their date of creation, as due to the diverse nature it was the most practical way to classify them while keeping a logical structure in the next couple of chapters.

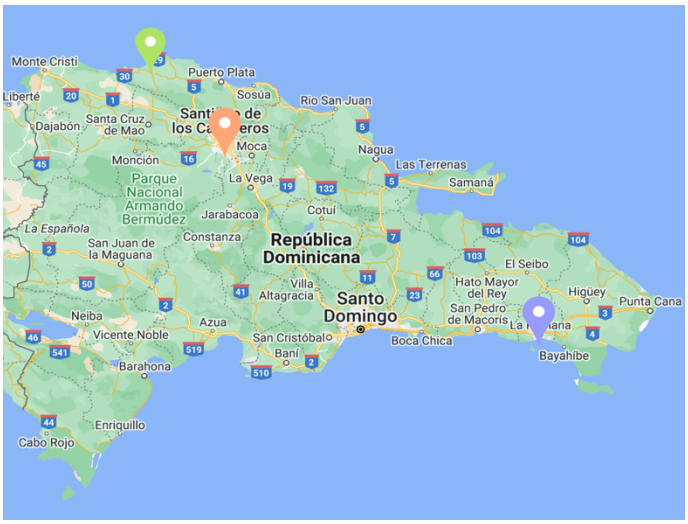

Figure 4. Map of the Dominican Republic showing the locations of the case studies located outside of Santo Domingo. Left to Right: In green Museo Arqueológico La Isabela, in orange Centro Cultural León Jimenes and in purple Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón. (Map from Google Maps edited by Marianny Aguasvivas).

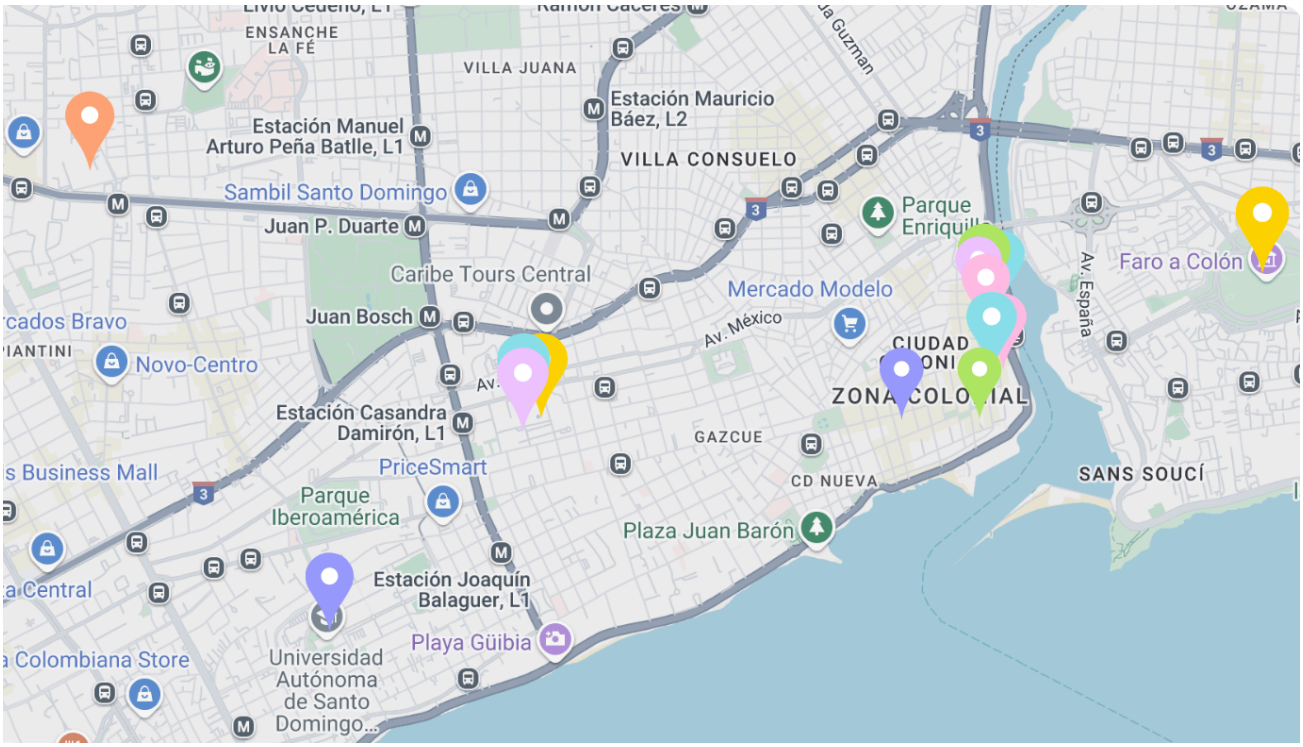

Figure 5. Map of Santo Domingo showing the locations of the case studies located in the city. Left to Right: In orange the Sala Pre-Histórica García Arévalo, in purple the Instituto Nacional Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas, in lila Museo de Arte Moderno, in blue Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía, in yellow Museo del Hombre Dominicano, in purple Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Nacional. Bottom to Top: In green Museo de la Familia Dominicana, in blue Kahkow Experience, in pink Museo Infantil Trampolín, in pink Museo de las Casas Reales, in lila Museo del Ron y la Caña, in blue Alcázar de Colón, in green Museo de las Atarazanas. Far Right in yellow: Faro a Colón. (Map from Google Maps edited by Marianny Aguasvivas).

1947

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas

Research institute of anthropology. Hosts the archaeological gallery of the first Dominican archaeologist as well as a small African collection.

1957

Alcázar de Diego Colón

Located in front of the Port of Sans Souci, the first port through which African enslaved peoples arrived to the Americas, and home of Diego Colombus who had a big influence in the Slave Trade

1973

Museo de la Familia Dominicana en el siglo XIX

Located in a sixteenth century building, this museum presents the daily life of Dominicans during the nineteenth century

Museo del Hombre Dominicano

National anthropological museum, it is in charge of the national archaeological collections. Its focus ranges from the prehistorical period to the end of the colonial period

Sala Pre-Hispánica García Arevalo

Holds the biggest private archaeological collection in the country. Although dedicated to Indigenous research, also holds African archaeological materials from maroon sites

1976

Museo de las Casas Reales

Located in the historical building of the royal houses. The museum talks about the colonial history of the country.

Museo de Arte Moderno

National modern and contemporary art museum, hosts contemporary exhibitions and the national art biennale.

1981

Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón

Regional archaeological museum located in the east of the country. The collection focuses on Indigenous archaeology, but it is a good example of national archaeological museums.

1982

Museo de Historia y Geografía

National museum of history and geography. Focuses on the period from the independence from Haiti in 1844 to the present.

1992

Museo La Isabela

Museum located at the archaeological site of La Isabela, site of the first city of the Americas as well as first evidence of African presence in the continent.

Faro a Colón

Monument for the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival to the Americas. Home of collections donated by different world embassies. It also hosts a gallery of African artefacts.

2003

Centro Cultural León Jimenes

Cultural Centre which hosts both contemporary art as well as a large ethnographic collection including African artefacts.

2004

Museo Infantíl Trampolín

Children's museum with a broad range of subjects from nature, science, technology and social life. Includes a section about Dominican folklore and culture.

2010

Museo del Ron y la Caña

The museum of rum and sugarcane is a private business hosting a small gallery with the history of rum in the Dominican Republic.

Figure 6. Chronological list of the Museums studied with short description of their context (Figure by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Stakeholder analysis

In order to understand who would need to be contacted for this research, whose output would be useful as well as who would benefit from this research, I conducted a stakeholder analysis. This analysis focused first on the general stakeholders which could be affected by or could benefit from the project and then focused on any additional stakeholders for each individual case study, but these turned out to fit in the previous categories. For example, the Dominicans of African heritage that took part or are descendants of people that took part in the resistance against Trujillo, have the same values, interest and attitudes as the rest of Afro-Dominicans. The values are taken from Mason's 'Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage' (2002). See appendix II for the identification of the stakeholders for this project and their interests.

After the stakeholder analysis, I decided on two target groups: one focuses on the people on the side of the decision-making or curation of knowledge at a certain capacity, like government officials, museum professionals or academics both in the Dominican Republic as the rest of the Caribbean; while the other focuses on the locals that are affected by the displays in the museums and the result of this research.

For my interviews, I focused on the first target group. My sample was limited by the response, availability, and restrictions due to the pandemic. The stakeholders that were considered were The Dominican Government, Ministry of Culture via its dependants its attached National Museum Directive and National Underwater Heritage Directive, museum directives, museum staff, academics and researchers, professors and teachers, archaeologists, contemporary artists, collectors and other Caribbean museums. My sample was created with non-probability sampling, using purposing sampling for the museum directives and governmental institutions.

Questionnaire Sample

To answer the question about multi-vocality, I reached out to the general audience by conducting questionnaires. These concern the second target group of the stakeholders: Dominicans, people of African heritage, Africans, Afro-Dominicans, mixed Dominicans, Dominicans with no African heritage, descendant maroon communities, Haitians, Afro-Caribbeans and other Caribbean peoples. To narrow my sample, I focused on the Dominican stakeholders, whether living in the Dominican Republic or abroad. While applying convenience and snowball sampling, the stakeholders were approached online, and the sample was taken via voluntary approach sampling. The questionnaires were shared in social media including the social media pages of some of the museums. It is important to consider the limitations of this approach, both due to the limited accessibility to people who do not use the internet, as well as the tendency of people that have stronger opinions to participate in voluntary questionnaires. However, due to the limited scope of this research as well as the covid-19 restrictions it was the only available option. My sample aimed to have ideally 384 people as according to the number of visitors the museums receive a year following the formula of 95% confidence level and 5% margin error (Ministerio de Cultura website). However, I was only able to have 163 responses. Therefore, I cannot be consider this sample as representative of the population at all, but instead will treat it

as a group representing Dominicans that are avid museum visitors. I will only include Dominicans because for my thesis I only focus on Dominicans' relationship to Afro-Dominican legacy, however, I would like to see if there are differences on the relationship with Afro-Dominican heritage for people that have grown outside the country or moved away, as it would be interesting to identify these differences and the reasons behind them.

4.3 Data collection methods

I attempted to analyse the following aspects for each museum: their history, the evolution of its displays, accompanying museology, their community engagement, the public response to the museum. For this analysis I used data present in the museums themselves, data from the interviews, and data from the available literature on these museums.

The complex part was that acquiring similar amounts of data about each museum to make a fair comparison was impossible due to the gap between them. While some museums like the Centro Leon and the Museo del Hombre have years of existing literature available in public libraries, others like the Museo de las Atarazanas only have a couple of years of media coverage at most.

Some of these museums have detailed collection databases online, others were only partially available as they were being digitalised by the Departamento de Inventarios de Bienes Culturales (department of inventory of cultural property). One of them, stored in big manila envelopes that had seen better days, I was kindly allowed to peruse in person in the museum's director's office, and others have no record or documentation of their collections available at all. In the same way, while some museums were extremely helpful for the interviews and available for any questions, others were impossible to organise despite the help of the National Directive of Museums to set these interviews up.

To document the displays in these museums I focused on multiple aspects of the exhibitions. First, I had to see whether there was any African representation at all. If there was not, I went on to the second phase, to see if this had to do with the selection of what was on display, or the availability of the collection. If there was African representation, I focused on what was represented, how it was represented, and whether this was presented in a positive, negative or neutral way to the public. The objective here was to see if these displays focused more on

slavery, marronage, mainland Africa, religion, traditions or Afro-Dominican culture. The documentation was done via visit to the museums, and thorough photographic documentation of the displays.

The second phase only focused on the museums that have part of their collection in storage. This is only a few museums because most of the museums studied had their whole collection on display and did not have more artefacts on storage. The aim of this phase was to analyse if there were more artefacts in the collection that could have made the display more representative of African or Afro-Dominican legacy. After establishing what is available both on display and in storage in these museums, I researched the history of these collections and their displays using the local sources: libraries, national archives, media archives and informal interviews with historians, collectors, and people working at these museums.

The interviews informed the general history, archaeological process, and political circumstances that affected the development of Dominican museums, as well as the museum's perspective on African representation process, and political circumstances that affected the development of Dominican museums. These interviews helped me both to chose my museum sample, and to complete the data from these samples. Depending on the availability and response from the museums, these interviews were conducted either to the director or the curator of the museum and when not available to museum guides. These were semi-structured interviews focusing on what was the museum’s purpose, how it represents African heritage, and what are the main constraints it faces. Then I followed up by asking what they were doing to decolonise the museum and what was the next step for each museum. Finally, I conducted interviews to different museum entities in the Caribbean to get an insight into how they have dealt with the same problems and what has or has not worked for these museums.

For the questionnaires I used a mix of dichotomous, multiple choice and scaled questions and focused on whether Dominicans felt their identity is well represented in Dominican museums, whether they learnt about African or Afro-Dominican legacy during their studies and during museum visits, and how did they feel that museums could better represent them (See full questionnaire questions in Appendix III).

4.4 Data analysis

Due to the difference of context, format and information available, there is a great disparity between the analysis of each museum. At first, I attempted to find a more clinical way to compare the museums, however I soon found this to be extremely difficult given the diverse nature of each of the case studies. In the end, I decided to analyse each museum individually and focusing on each case study as if it was the only one, and only afterwards in the discussion I analyse the similarities between them and study them as an ensemble.

The museums are presented chronologically in the 6th chapter where I discuss the history of each museum, describe their displays and finish with details about the rest of the collection when available.

For the questionnaire results, I first exported the questionnaire results from Google Forms to Excel to have a better overview of the answers. I then analysed each question results individually and recreated the Google Forms charts and graphs in a cleaner version in Canva to easily showcase the results in a more readable manner. These can be found in the Appendix III. Afterwards, to better understand the correlations between each question I based the measures of association on Khamis (2008). Then I imported the data to SPSS to find the correlation of the questions using Spearman or Kendall τb. I then created a table with all the correlation results and focused the analysis only on the questions where there was a result with a strong correlation.

To answer my main research question 'How can multi-vocality help exhibition practices increase the visibility of African legacy on Dominican museums?', I will focus on analysing the trending methodologies that other museums practising decoloniality have applied successfully (discussed in theory chapter).

4.5 Limitations and ethical considerations

The timeframe for this thesis (originally 2020-2022) was during the global Covid-19 pandemic, which limited not only the availability of some of the museums and accessibility to the research resources, but also the quantity of people willing to collaborate for this project. Furthermore, some of the museums were not open to the public due to remodeling: the Museo del Hombre

Dominicano, Museo de Historia y Geografía, Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA), and the Museo Casa del Tostado. To analyse the collections from the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, constant collaboration with the museum staff, deep analysis of their yearly bulletins, and access to their collection catalogue as well as previous pictures and plans after reopening were acquired. Similarly, for the Museo de Historia y Geografía I was able to consult the catalogue and interview the directors.

After the timeframe for the thesis was extended in 2023, I was able to visit the Casa del Tostado. However, I did not manage to have access to the INDIA, which was also closed with no way to access or contact. The Galeria Pre-Hispanica García Arevalo was not visited during this time but had already been thoroughly documented for my previous research in November 2019. Furthermore, two case studies were taken out of this study due to lack of answer, or collections: The Casa Museo Ponce de León, although I managed to visit the site I could not find any further information on the museum and received no response from any of its authorities. The second one is the Centro Cultural Perelló, as it was also closed during the time and does not have any permanent collections.

At the moment of this thesis, the collections in Dominican museums are not classified or stored in a way that makes it easy to locate Afro-Dominican artefacts by their cultural provenance, especially the most recent artefacts dating from 1821, year of Independence from Spain, to the present. This makes it difficult for curators to build or create new exhibitions, or for academics to do African-focused analysis of the existent collections. To be able to create real change, stakeholders need to be aware of what is available in these collections, and the necessity for a different approach to the displays of these permanent collections. Given that information to these collections was not always easily accessible, there is a chance that I might have missed artefacts that are presented as Criollo or Dominican while having African legacy.

Multiple ethical considerations were considered for this study. First, since the subject of this project deals with discrimination of people, subaltern histories and marginalisation, particular care was taken when approaching the local stakeholders to not bring up any subjects that might be harmful for them in any way. All the people interviewed and questioned for this study were given a consent form beforehand explaining the details of the project, asking whether they wanted to remain anonymous, and giving them my contact details for any question they might have. They will also have full access to the study results.

Another limitation of this project is that if we are following a decolonisation perspective, then the local stakeholders should have been contacted from the beginning of this study and the main questions should have been done in collaboration with them instead of only including them at the end. Due to the nature of this study as a master thesis amidst the pandemic, and the need for creating long term relationships this was not fully possible. However, it is important to remember that the idea for this project came after conversations with local stakeholders during previous research, some of which I also collaborated with during this project. Hopefully these collaborations will only keep growing so the next research projects can be fully co-created instead of one-sided.

5. African representation in the Dominican Republic and the history of Dominican museums

In this section I will review the existing African representation in the Dominican Republic. I will start by analysing how has African presence been represented in academic research in the country. Afterwards, I will look at the archaeological focus in African presence in the country. I will end this chapter with a brief history of Dominican museums. This will allow us to contextualise the conceptualisation of each of these museums and have a better understanding about the background for the foundation of the different museums that make part of this study.

5.1 African Representation in Academic Research in the Dominican Republic

To understand how have academic reasons influenced the way African legacy has been represented in the Dominican Republic, we must first analyse the existing literature about the subject. It is important to keep in mind that most documentations we have about the arrival of African peoples to the Americas come from the colonial period. These were in the shape of chronicles, laws, codes, wills and inventories that give historians and researchers in the present more insight into the European perspective towards African peoples than about the African peoples themselves. Despite attempts from historians and researchers to look at these sources objectively, the vocabulary in the first academic texts about African presence in the country would have been influenced by the perspectives of their time.

It is not until after the end of Trujillo's dictatorship in 1961 that we start to see a rise in the interest on African legacy in the country[2]. One of the works that opened the discourse about African legacy was Carlos Larrazabal Blanco's 'Los Negros y la Esclavitud en Santo Domingo' (1967). Although this work considerably lacks referencing and only touches upon the subject of *cimarronaje* while talking in depth about other aspects of the slavery period, it is still considered essential due to filling the gap for such an important subject in the country.

An extremely useful source for Dominican academic research in archaeology and anthropology is the Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano (the museum's bulletin). Although initially the museum, as well as its bulletin, seemed to focus, by definition, mainly on the prehistoric period in the island, therefore neglecting the African perspective, after the second half of the 1970s we see a progressive inclusion of African representation in its publications (Caro Alvarez 1972a). Already in the second bulletin in 1972, the first director of the museum explained how they did not want the museum to only focus on the pre-existing collections, but also to become a place of research of all aspects of the Dominican past and present culture (Caro Alvarez 1972b).

The first publications in the bulletin of the Museo del Hombre about African legacy, starting from its fourth publication in 1994, focused mainly on the folklore. It is important to note that while sometimes the word 'folklore' has a pejorative connotation, this is not necessarily the case in these publications. While there are some words and nuances in the language that would no longer be used if these publications were made in the 2020s, most of these publications were made by people who had a genuine interest in the African legacy in Dominican culture and have a 'neutral' or positive tone when referring to Africans and African descendants.

Authors like Hugo Tolentino (1974), Walter Cordero (1975), and Esteban Deive (1976) introduced the subject of racial prejudice and discrimination against blacks and African descendants to the academic discourse in the country. From the end of the 1970s we start to see the broadening of research about the African aspect of Dominican culture, not only in the bulletin, but also in history books (Moya Pons 1977), anthropological studies (Andujar Persinal 1997), and archaeological research (See next section).

A great majority of the academic texts dedicated to African legacy in the country emerged in relation to the UNESCO project of 'La Ruta del Esclavo' (the slave route). The project started in 1994 by the initiative of Benin and Haiti with a conference that took place in 1994 (UNESCO 1995). Following this project 2004 was chosen as the International Year of Commemoration of the fight against slavery and its abolition. In honour of the occasion the national commission for the project 'Comision Nacional Dominicana de la Ruta del Esclavo' organised a conference about slavery in Santo Domingo in March 2004. The proceedings from the conference were compilated into a book (Comision Nacional Dominicana de la Ruta del Esclavo, 2006).

Nevertheless, the visibility of African legacy in the country has become a strong subject within local activists and movements impulsed by the younger generations both within and beyond acadeemia.[3] In the past two decades, more interest has been given to the subject of *blackness,* and Afro-Dominican identity by moving away from looking at African presence in the country only as an aspect of history, and instead acknowledging African legacy is embedded in contemporary issues. The development of research focused on denouncing colourism, classicism, as well as internalised and institutional racism in the Dominican Republic, came in a strong part from the outside, be it Dominicans from the diaspora or foreign academics working within the country (See Torres-Saillant 1998, 2010, Candelario 2007, Simmons 2011, Simmons 2013, Usanna 2010, Mayes 2014).

5.2 African Representation in Archaeological Projects in the Dominican Republic

Due to the nature of archaeological practice in the country, it is difficult to have an overview of most archaeological projects. There has been a lot of private projects, treasure hunting only having more restrictions in this decade (Pedro Morales Personal Communication 2021), and different organisations and institutions usually do not share their results with each other, even within the same government. Another main problem is that there are not any official archaeology studies at a university level in the Dominican Republic, so most local archaeological research is not done by archaeologists or people have to go abroad to be able to complete their studies[4]. This results in an archaeological field that is not very homogenous nor in communication within the country.

It was only from the 1970's with the opening of the Museo del Hombre that we start to have an overview of the archaeological projects present in the country. Although this mainly concerns government funded projects, and even when they are, the level of collaboration between different governmental institutions depends on the individuals in charge of each project and departmental relationships (Anonymous personal communication 2021). When we look at the Bulletins of the Museo del Hombre, the Archaeological focus in the country is mainly centered on Indigenous and European presence in the island.

Within the Museo del Hombre, the African legacy was studied under history and social sciences as opposed to archaeology (p.e. Deive 1974). Nevertheless, when at the end of the 1970s we start to see a rise in the academic research about African legacy, we also start to see an interest from the archaeological department. Between March and May 1976 there was a course on salvage archaeology which included fieldwork in an excavation in the site at Sanate, to the east of the country. The reports mention the cohabitation between indigenous, African and Europeans (Caro Alvarez 1978). Despite the fact that the majority of people living in the Sanate community at the time of the excavations were descendants of enslaved Africans who used to work on the batey of the Ingenio de Villoria, the main focus of the course was indigenous archaeology. However, the study did call for more research to be done about Indigenous and African participation and cohabitation in sugar plantations and its possible cultural and ethnical influence in the Caribbean (Mañón 1978, 153).

During excavations in the Palacio de los Gobernadores in 1976, which hosts the present-day Museo de las Casas Reales, shackles, probably used to keep enslaved people chained, were found (Moises de Soto David 1989, 90).

In 1977, historian Frank Moya Pons and architect Jose Borrell lead an archaeological expedition trying to locate the Maniel of Bahoruco (Vega 1979, 14). They found two caves, with human and non-human remains, one with indigenous peoples and the other one believed to have at least 8 African marroons due to the materials found in the site, including a *fotuto,* which is a wind instrument made from sea conchs that was often used by African marroons as a mean of communication (Fig 7)(Vega 1979, 16).

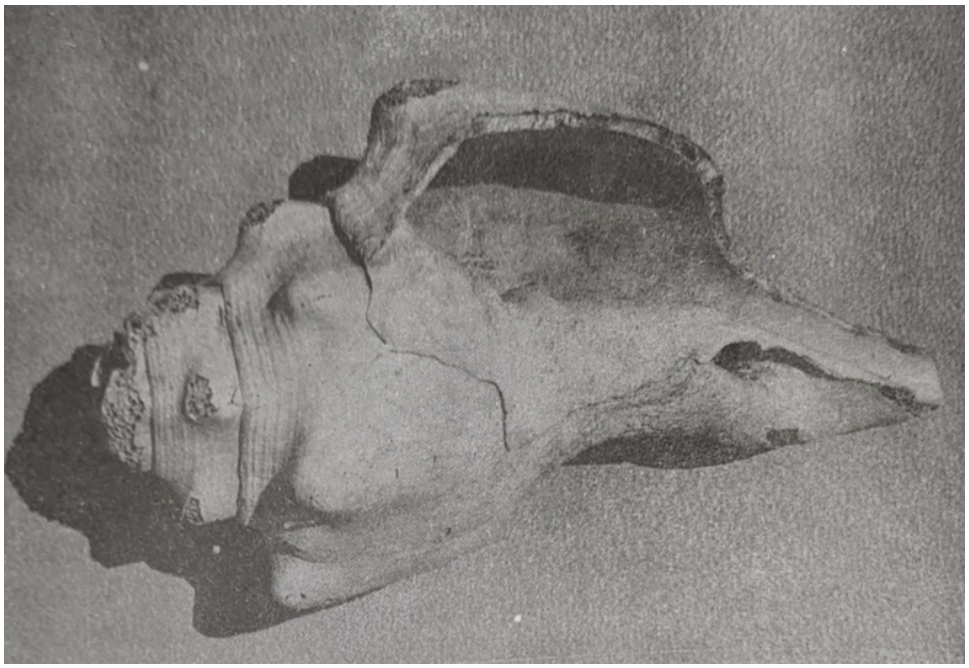

Figure 7. Fotuto found in the cave El Limonal during the excavations in 1977 (Vega 1979, 18).

It was possibly the findings at El Limonal that sparked the interest into maroon sites in the country. Bernardo Vega (1979) discusses maroon archaeology and the main sites where there may have been maroon settlements following historical sources between 1542 and 1587: in the mountain range of Bahoruco to the south of the lake Enriquillo, in the mountain range of Neyba to the North of the lake Enriquillo, in the mountains of San José de Ocoa, in the southeast of the Higüey province, as well as in Cape San Nicolás, Los Ciguayos, Samaná, and near the villa de la Yaguana. Between the recorded manieles we have the Maniel de Neiba (Deive 1985) and the Maniel José Leta, located in the East of the island (Arrom and García Arevalo 1986). Due to demographical changes in the landscape, and the nature of maroon sites as places that should not be easily accessible, it is difficult to find the exact location of these maroon sites (Singleton Personal Communication 2020). This is both because maroon sites were not supposed to be found by the oppressors or people who did not have previous knowledge of the sites, but furthermore because of the short periods of occupation in this type of site (Singleton Personal Communication 2020).

At the end of 1988 excavations started in the Ingenio of Diego Caballero in Boca de Nigua by archaeologists Dr. Fernando Luna Calderon and Clenis Tavares (Boletin 28, 2000). In 1989, Lic. Moises de Soto David did an analysis of the maroon artefacts in the bulletin to study how we can

identify ‘maroon’ material culture (de Soto David 1989). The same year, Luis Alejandro Peguero Guzman does an analysis of maroon archaeology in the bulletin (Peguero Guzman 1989, p. 163).

In 1991 Dr. Fernando Luna Calderón found in an excavation of the San Francisco convent in Santo Domingo the human remains of African (or African descendants) with shackles and ball and chains (Tavares and Luna Calderón 2002). 90 skeletons where studied including indigenous, africans, Haitians, French and Dominicans (Tavares and Luna Calderón 2002, p.30). One of them had an iron bondage in their inferior left extremity. The refuse analysis also showed the difference between the food eaten by the priests and novices in comparison to the diet of the servants and enslaved peoples. Some findings of interest during this excavation were the remains of an enslaved person with the punishment of ‘pregon’, the remains of another person next to shackles, and a lock (Tavares and Luna Calderón 2002, 37). In this same excavation the remains of two indigenous people were found buried in their own traditions. As well as the remains of Haitian soldiers. After the findings were promoted by the press, the church stopped the funding of the excavations (Anonymous personal communication 2020). In a similar way, the study of human remains of the site of La Isabela have confirmed the earliest presence of African people in the island (Douglas et al 2020).

In 2001 there was an expedition from the Museo del Hombre to Maniel Viejo in the Bahoruco mountains looking for the remnants of the marroon site, a detailed chronicle of the visit is written by Ubiñas Renville (2001). The main focus in more recent years has been on finding the sites of the first rebellion of enslaved peoples and the maroon site where the people escaped to in Ocoa. As mentioned in chapter 3 Theresa Singleton’s research is focusing in finding the maroon site(s) where the people that flew after the rebellion of installed themselves. In that same spirit, the Instituto Antillano de Antropología y Arqueología, recently did prospective research in the hydraulic plantation of Nuestra Señora de Monte Alegre, in the search for the site of the first African rebellion in the country (Peña Bastalla, Pión and Suarez 2022).

5.3 The History of Dominican Museums

As Álvarez (2021) explains in her study of the heritage legislations in the Dominican Republic, the first trace we have of heritage legislation in the country goes back to 1870 when the Álcazar de Colón was declared a national monument. It is not until 1913 that the National Congress established a law to create the National Museum (Álvarez 2021, 90). However, as Álvarez research shows we do not have any evidence of the opening of said museum until later, with a commission being created for the museum assessment in 1937. In 1927 another law creates another national museum including the national library. Whilst in 1947, the Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA), located in the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) is established containing the collection of Emil Boyrie Moya, one of the first Dominican archaeologists[1]. The law that created the INDIA made the National Museum dependant on the INDIA (Álvarez 2021). The National Museum was dissolved in 1972 and replaced by the Museo del Hombre Dominicano (Álvarez 2021, 95).

When Joaquin Balaguer came to power after the fall of Trujillo's dictatorship, he had a campaign to revive the Hispanic heritage in the island. The idea was that embracing the European heritage of the country allowed people to identify themselves with the whiter population. Within this same strategy both Trujillo and Balaguer's governments created different programs that encouraged the immigration of 'white' populations to the country as refugees: focusing on Jews, Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. These people even if considered minorities in other circumstances were considered as 'good' refugees due to their lighter skin colour, as opposed to the legislations against Haitians for example (See Balaguer 1983 for his views on the matter; Thompson 2002). Part of the movement involved the inclusion of heritage strategies to help the population identify themselves and their past with the European past of the country. Therefore, Balaguer launched a project to preserve diverse buildings in the historical area (zona colonial) and make them into historical museums. Along these were: the Alcázar de Colón, Museo de las Casas Reales and Museo de la Familia.

In this same period the project to start the Plaza Cultural (or cultural square) Juan Pablo Duarte started. This was to host the National Library, National Theatre, National Museum of History and Geography, National Museum of anthropology (Museo del Hombre), Modern Art Museum

and National Museum of Natural History. These were inaugurated between 1973 and 1976. The importance given to cultural projects helped promote tourism in the country.
Around the same time different collectors around the country decided to share their private collections with the general public. Two major examples of this are the Sala de Arte Pre-Hispánico which opened in 1973 with the collections of the García Arévalo foundation and the Museo Chavón which opened in 1981 with the collections of Samuel Pión.
With the arrival of the 1990's came the preparations for the Vth centenary of the arrival of the Europeans, which was highly celebrated in 1992. This year not only saw an increase of visit to the museums but also the opening of the Faro a Colón, a monument made with collaboration of both European and Latin American countries for the remains of Christopher Columbus. It is also around this time that the first approvals from UNESCO for the recognition of the colonial city of Santo Domingo to be a World Heritage site (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/526/).
From the year 2000 with the formation of the Ministry of Culture, most cultural institutions passed from being managed by the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Culture and its General Directive of Museums. In 2003, the Centro León opened in Santiago to host the collections from their art contest. In 2009 while the Museo del Hombre, Museo de Historia y Geografía and National Library were closed, the INDIA opened its own display have been with a small part of the collections of its founder Emile de Boyrie Moya (Silvestre 2010).
On the other hand, due to lack of funding, the museums of the Plaza de la Cultura started to see a strong decline, with the Museo de Historia y Geografía having to close from 2005, and the Museo del Hombre having to close due to the increase of mold (acento.com.do). After years of requests, in 2017 there was finally initiative to renovate the Plaza de la Cultura, although there has been a lot of controversy on the state of the museum pieces in the meantime, the lack of organisation, and the disparity between the needs of the museums and what was actually being done during these renovations (Anonymous personal communication 2019 and 2021), the museums have been gradually opening again starting with the Museo de Arte Moderno in June 2021, and then partial openings of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano the 12th October 2022 and the Museo de Historia y Geografía in December 2022.

At the beginning of this research in 2020, aside a few special exhibitions, like the Mother Africa exhibition in 2007, which was a travelling exhibition brought from the United States, there were not many instances where African heritage or its legacy in the country were represented

(Goris 2007). Nevertheless, after the movement Black Lives Matter gained more support worldwide, there has been a rise in the country for the African representation that has been expressed by temporal exhibitions like the one opened in October 2022 “La Esclavitud y el Legado Cultural de Africa en el Caribe’ which was available in the Fortaleza Ozama in Santo Domingo and in the Centro León in Santiago (Silva 2022). However, it is important to note that this was also a travelling exhibition organised by a foreign institution, in this case the Instituto de Historia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) from Spain.

5.4 Creolisation

During my preliminary research, one of the common reasons that archaeologists, anthropologists and museums claimed there cannot be more African or Afro-Dominican artefacts in Dominican exhibits is because they consider the African diaspora did not bring anything with them to the Americas. They argue that since there was not much African material culture to begin with, it is very difficult for museums to include African legacy on their display. However, my hypothesis is that African or Afro-Dominican legacy is still very present in Dominican material culture through the process of creolisation. Nevertheless, creolisation has served both to include African legacy into Dominican traditions as well to hide or deny African roots and claim they are ‘just’ Dominican.

Before talking about the impacts of uses of creolisation, I need to specify what do I mean by creolisation. Since this is a term broadly used throughout the centuries it has taken different meanings depending on the temporal and spatial context used. While in some areas of the Caribbean the term creole is seen as a denomination for people of African and European descent, or for the local transformation of a European language (nt 2008, 82), originally the term referred to the Europeans born in the Caribbean, so people that would be considered as locals but kept their old traditions (Bolland 2006, 7; Dawdy 2000, 109). For example, people born in the Caribbean with at least one parent born somewhere else, would be considered as creole. Dawdy called this *transplantation* (2000, 109). There is also the use of the term creole from the perspective of *ethnic acculturation,* this would be used for newcomers to the Caribbean that start adapting to the local food, language, music, religion and the environment (Dawdy 2000, 110). Dominicans informally call this to get or to be “aplatana’o” (aplatanado) which would roughly

translate to getting ‘plantained’ and it is also a term used for when an aspect from a foreign country gets dominicanised for example, sushi made with Dominican ingredients is called “sushi aplatana’o”.

Finally, we have *hybridisation*, this is the type of creolisation that is more applied in archaeology and refers to the “interbreeding of diverse peoples and figuratively the hybridisation of cultures” (Dawdy 2000, 110). When indigenous, European and African peoples interacted in the Hispaniola, and consequently in the Dominican Republic, different elements of their languages, religions, traditions and material culture got entangled creating what we now know as Dominican culture. In the past, academics thought that because of the oppression during the European colonisation of the Caribbean and the Atlantic slave trade, the indigenous and African traditions, as well as the people, had almost completely disappeared, they called this acculturation (White 1991, ix). However, they did not consider that, even under oppression, indigenous and African peoples were not passive spectators. Furthermore, we need to stop thinking about these cultures as separate, homogenous, static blocks with no diversity and no influence from outside factors. Even before the arrival of the Europeans there was a network of interactions between the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, the Europeans themselves had been in contact and been influenced by Asian and African societies before arriving to the Americas, and the same goes for the African peoples that were forced to the Caribbean, who came from a wide range of traditions themselves.

Therefore, it is not surprise that despite the oppression, enslavement and ethno-genocide, Indigenous and African traditions have managed to survive until the present. Even if they might look very different from the historical accounts, these traditions are still embedded deep into modern Caribbean culture. A good example is to look at the use of culinary traditions, not only the food we eat but also how we eat it (Beaudry 2013). While enslaved, Indigenous and African peoples were often in charge of the cooking for the Europeans. This resulted in them learning European recipes and using imported products, as much as it involved the Europeans learning to eat what was available locally and adapting to Indigenous and Africans culinary techniques. Therefore, now Caribbean food is a mix of indigenous, African and European dishes in our culinary spread that persisted through time.

However, one important aspect of creolisation to keep in mind, is that it is not the simple mix and match of the cultures of our ancestors. Even if we were to find a group of people whose traditions were not influenced by other cultures, traditions are not static and are bound to transform and evolve through time. The importance of creolisation is that the development of these new traditions includes components inherited by these past traditions in the creation of new traditions. This is exactly what happened with African material culture in the Caribbean.

Because enslaved Africans were not in a position where they could bring their material culture with them to the Americas, this already puts African material culture at a disadvantage when it comes to museum representation.

Nevertheless, the knowledge to create material culture was not completely left behind. This is something we can see a lot in maroon archaeology for example. Although enslaved Africans could not bring physical objects to the Americas, they brought their knowledge with them. We can see this in some Dominican maroon sites like Nigua, Neyba and Jose Leta (García Arevalo 1986; Rincourt 2016). Maroon sites give us evidence of African construction techniques, and in some of the maroon sites we can find materials like wood, clay or iron that were repurposed with the skills of African traditions (Fig 8) (Arrom and García Arevalo 1986). The problem with maroon sites is that they are by nature, hard to find. As the idea was that these were supposed to be hard to find by the oppressors. Given the ephemeral life of maroon sites due to persecution, often the archaeological depth is not bigger than 15-20cm (Personal communication Singleton, 2020). However, some archaeologists and anthropologists like Theresa Singleton, Cheryl White and Ruth Pion are currently working on giving more importance to the search and research of maroon archaeology in the Dominican Republic.

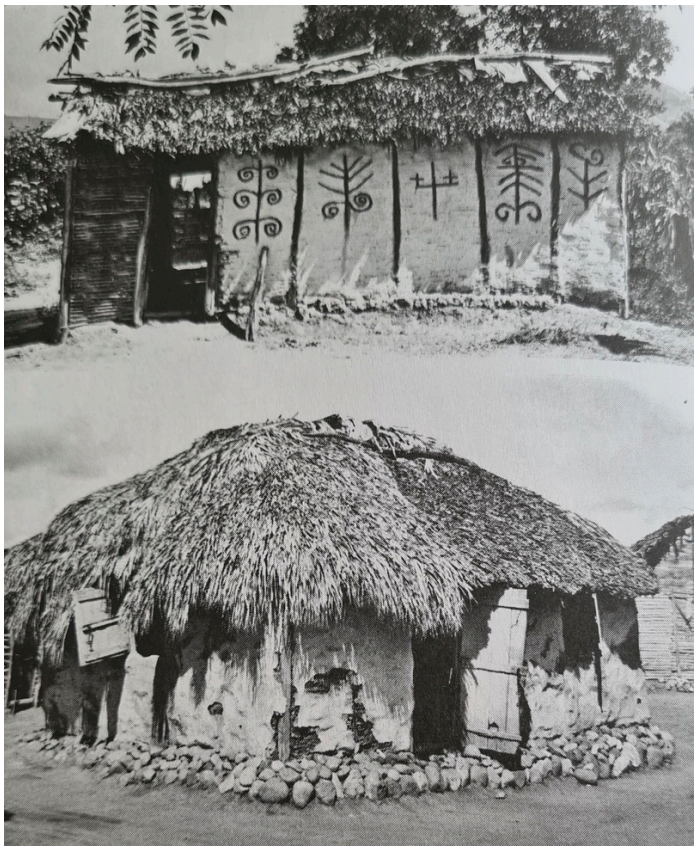

Figure 8. Countryside house in the Dominican Republic with African construction practices and decoration. (Arrom and García Arevalo 1986, 36).

Furthermore, African presence in Dominican material culture is not only present in maroon archaeology, but it can also be observed in different contexts like when there is evidence of slavery (see Boletin 31, 2002) or evidence of resilience (see Ernst 2015).

5.5 Caribbean Precedents

To better understand how decolonising practices could be applied to Dominican museums, I thought it would be important to see what methodologies other Caribbean museums have applied and what has worked for them. Other Caribbean countries have the same problems for presenting African heritage as the Dominican Republic but have found solutions to these problems. I will focus in two exemplary case studies: The Barbados Museum and Historical Society and the

National Museum of the Slave Route in Cuba. These case studies were chosen due to their renown representation of African heritage.

Barbados Museum and Historical Society

Founded in 1933, the Barbados museum has its own African Gallery, *'Connection and* Continuities', dedicated to Charles A. Robertson a collector of African artefacts (barbmuse.org). The gallery focuses on the African continent, its history and its relationship to contemporary heritage in the Caribbean. It then goes back to the African subject in their '*Jubilee Gallery'* which gives a more complete overview of Barbados from prehistory until the 1940's (barbmuse.org). In this gallery there is a more general representation of the different influences and circumstances that built Barbadian society as we know it in the present. They present the slavery period, the rebellions and emancipation as well as life in Barbados after the emancipation. There are however multiple galleries in the museum: The *Cunard Gallery* focusing on fine arts, the *Harewood Gallery* focusing on flora and fauna, the *Jairus Brewster Children's Gallery* gives interactive displays for younger audiences*,* the M*ilitary Gallery* with an overview from the 17th century to the second world war*,* and the *Warmington Gallery* depicting a plantation house. We can see African representation in one way or the other across the museum. There are depictions of Africans and their descendants within the fine arts showcasing African presence in the country. We can see the representation of animals and plants that arrived from Africa, and explanations of the context of their arrival. The Military Gallery works on giving visibility to the black lives lost during military conflicts, and there are African instruments and cultural elements in the Jairus Brewster Children's Gallery. While the Warmington Gallery has a more colonial aspect as it focuses more on the life of people living in plantation houses, as opposed to the enslaved people that worked to keep that lifestyle, this is contextualised in the rest of the museum, notably the Jubilee gallery (Personal communication Farmer 2025).
The Barbados museum and historical society found that co-creating exhibitions with young people gave them a sense of curatorial responsibility which resulted in more consistent participation engagement (Csilla Ariese 2018, 14). When asked about the local response to the African representation in the museum, Alissandra Cummins, director of the museum, has explained that when the idea of giving more visibility to the process of slavery was brought up,

some people from the Afro-Caribbean community expressed they would rather leave that side of history in the past and focus instead of other themes like resilience (Cummins Personal communication 2023). This opens a difficult discussion: how do we make sure to give visibility to harmful pasts, without perpetrating that harm to the descendants of the victims? If we ignore the slave trade in museums this part of the history is made invisible, and this overlooks an important part of Afro-Caribbean history and heritage. However, if we just ignore the wishes of the African descendants, we also become part of the oppressive structures that we are trying so hard to fight. This is what happened with the Mémorial ACTe in Guadeloupe, to be respectful to people's wishes they decided to avoid showing enslaved peoples and their descendants as 'victims' and instead focused the narrative on resistance, adaptation and 'creativity' (Mulot 2018). This resulted in a memorial centre that is widely criticised for downplaying the harms of slavery and omitting important parts of history (see Grandeurnoire 2019).

This dilemma was brought up to discussion during one of the Caribbean research seminars at Leiden. The conclusion we arrived to is that there should be trigger warnings added to any exhibition or displays portraying harmful or traumatic events as the Atlantic slave trade, forced labour and other discriminatory practices. While this may have the consequence of non-affected communities also skipping that part of the displays, the wellbeing of the harmed communities and their descendants should take precedent.

National Museum Site of the Slave Route

Installed in 2009, this museum complex is a result of the UNESCO Slave Route project mentioned earlier in this chapter (5.1). Located in the San Severino Castle fort in Matanzas, Cuba, the National Museum Site of the Slave Route focuses on the memory of the slave trade in the Caribbean. While the original fortress was destroyed, after the British were defeated, the castle was rebuilt with the labour of enslaved peoples[5]. The site consists of a visit of the fortress, four permanent galleries: the *Commander's house, Archaeological gallery, the gallery of Slavery and the Orishas gallery,* as well as the Matanzas Art Museum.

[5] I visited this museum during the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology (IACA) conference in Cuba in 2022.

The visit of the castle and fortress highlights both the labour put by African people in the construction, as well as the place where imprisoned maroons were kept in the fortress. The galleries focus on both the impact of slavery in Africans and their descendants, as well as the legacy of African heritage in Cuban culture. This is then linked to the present via aspects as music and religion. Within the Spanish speaking Caribbean Cuba is known as the country with more acknowledgement to their African past. The *Orishas gallery* focuses on Santeria, a religion that comes from the syncretism of Catholicism and different African gods. The Matanzas Art Museum hosts the collections of Lorenzo Padilla Diaz a local Afro-Cuban artist which consists of traditional African artefacts, as well as contemporary art from different artists depicting their relationship to African heritage. Finally, the museum collaborates with local artisans to promote and sell their crafts in the store.

This site manages to both showcase the hardships and injustices that enslaved Africans, and their descendants have gone through, as well as highlighting their resilience and the different ways in which African heritage is still part of Cuba. The contemporary art helps bridge the gap between the artefacts used for violence and a site of memory with a difficult past, and the need to acknowledge present issues within Afro-Caribbean communities. The San Severino castle is not only a host of multiple events regarding African heritage both with local communities as well as researchers and academics. Furthermore, they found a way to also benefit local afro-descendants by giving them a channel for economic improvement. However, it has been noted that the site has a low number of visitors compared to other museums in Matanzas as it is located at the outskirts of the city.

6. A look into Dominican museums and their representation

In chapter 5 we have seen an overview of how African legacy has been analysed by academics and researched in local archaeology. While this gave us a glimpse of the historical and political context during the creation of different Dominican museums, in this chapter I will focus on each museum individually. 16 museums were selected, due to the relevance of their definition or history for the subject (as previously discussed in chapter 4). I will first analyse their exhibits and permanent collections. I will then present the perceptions of the general public collected by questionnaires.

6.1 The Case Studies

Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas (INDIA) was founded in 1947 as the Centro Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas (CEDIA) under the faculty of Philosophy of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) (Silvestre 2010). It oversaw the Museo Nacional which was located in the Centro de los Heroes, as well as the National Commission for Archaeology (Silvestre 2010).

Its founder Emile de Boyrie Moya, known as the father of Dominican Archaeology, was the director until he passed away in 1967 (Jose Guerrero Personal Communication 2019; Silvestre 2010). It is Emile de Boyrie Moya's archaeological collection, at its time the biggest in the Caribbean with around 7,000 artefacts, that founded the collection of the Museo del Hombre (Álvarez 2021).

Although it is unclear whether after the creation of the Ministry of Culture, the INDIA still has any duties towards the Museo del Hombre, they still work close together and collaborate in research. Now belonging to the Faculty of Humanities of the UASD, the INDIA is located in the interior courtyard of one of the buildings of the university.

It is in 2009 when history professor Jose Guerrero takes over as director of the INDIA, that he advocates for the creation of a small hall dedicated to Emile de Boyrie Moya's legacy. To do this the department of anthropology made use of parts of the collection from Emile de Boyrie Moya

that was stored in the Museo del Hombre. It also hosts another part of the loaned African collection present in the Museo del Hombre.

As of 2019 the African displays in the INDIA were not inside the Emile de Boyrie Moya Hall, but next to its entrance, in two vitrines located in the INDIAs office (Figs 9 and 10). There is no text accompanying them, but Jose Guerrero was happy to give a short explanation about their provenance and significance.

During the time of my research the INDIA's buildings were in renovations, it is unclear if said renovations have been finished and how they have affected the displays as it was impossible to contact the INDIA directly through the UASD and it was still not accessible to the public (Jose Guerrero is now the director of the Museo de Historia y Geografía).

Figure 9 and Figure 10. Vitrine with African artefacts in the INDIA (Silvestre 2010).

Museo Alcázar de Diego Colón

The Alcázar de Colón is located in the colonial city of Santo Domingo, it was built in the gothic *mudéjar* style (meaning from Muslim influence but for or by Christian patrons) between 1511 and 1514 as the residence for the Spanish viceroyalty in the Americas (Personal communication

from the Tour Guide at the Museum, 2021). The viceroy at the time was Diego Columbus, the son of Christopher Columbus. Diego Columbus, his wife Maria de Toledo and their descendants lived in the Alcázar until circa 1577. In 1586 the building was looted by pirate Francis Drake and had to be abandoned for a while. The building was left in ruins until it was declared a national monument in the 19th century, and then restored between 1955 and 1957 the year it was inaugurated. This museum is relevant for this study not only for its location with views to the port of Sans Souci, where all the ships carrying the enslaved people arrived to the continent, but also because the role of Diego Columbus in the Slave Trade. It was during his time as governor that the spanish crown started allowed the official import of enslaved people to the island. As we saw in Chapter 2, the first African revolt in the country started in Diego Columbus plantation. Furthermore, this is the most visited museum in Santo Domingo.

The display focuses on the history of the building, the customs and traditions of the Spanish court during the 16th century and how the Alcázar would have looked like while inhabited. Although most of the artefacts in the collection were not actually used by the Columbus family, the display is composed by authentic artefacts from the period between the 13th and 20th century that were acquired by the Dominican government in 1950. Visitors are welcomed to the museum by a fully armoured knight and horse opposite a display of mannequins representing the court of Maria de Toledo, the first vicereine and regent of the Spanish colonies, and the traditional nobility fashion of the time.

The visit follows to the ladies' dining room, this is where the court ladies of Maria de Toledo would eat. Whilst the original kitchen would have been located outside during this period, for display purposes it is represented in the inside of the building with original utensils of the time. After the kitchen is the service dining room, where the servants would try the food before giving it to the royals in case it was poisoned. Going up the stairs through the servants' staircase, we arrive to the balcony, with views to the Ozama river and the old (and new) port.

The tour of the museum goes back inside to the room of Maria de Toledo, where the audio-guide or tour guide focuses on the 'toilets' of the period, which were basinets located in small closets made for this purpose and taken out each morning by the servants. Adjacent to this room was a sitting area or office for Diego Columbus and Maria de Toledo's personal use, next to which was located Diego Columbus' bedroom. In front of Diego Columbus bed there is a chest made of African elephant skin (Fig 11).

Figure 11. North African elephant skin trunk in the Museo Alcázar de Diego Colón (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Next to Diego Columbus' bedroom is his office, which is followed by the main reception room. The reception room is not only the biggest in the museum but also the one with more extravagant decoration. This is followed by the music room, and then the main dining room which was reserved for Diego Columbus and Maria de Toledo. Then we have the library, which holds books from the 16th century written in Castilian. Followed by the room where all the jewellery and riches were saved. The tour is ended by descending the main stairs of the building or the 'viceroy's stairs. Throughout the whole building there is no museology mentioning the African presence.

It is important to note that on top of the audio-guides, the Alcázar offers the service of tour guides, who sometimes give some extra information that is omitted in the generic guide. For example, in the Alcázar de Colón segment made by the local television channel VTV Canal 32 (VTV Televisión 2019) the tour guide explains that there was between 1,000 and 1,500 enslaved peoples needed for the construction of the building. He claims that to achieve the glue consistency in the mortar animal blood was used, but that in some cases the blood of enslaved people would also occasionally be used when they died.

Figure 12. Map of the Alcázar de Colón (Map by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Museo de la Familia Dominicana del Siglo XIX

The Museo de la Familia Dominicana del Siglo XIX, museum of the Dominican Family in the nineteenth century, is located in the historical building La Casa del Tostado in the Colonial City. La Casa del Tostado, was built in 1520 for Francisco del Tostado, a scribe of the Spanish crown. The museum was inaugurated in 1973 and focuses on recreating the life of families in Santo Domingo during the XIX century.

The display is arranged very similarly to that of the Alcázar, recreating each room and its purpose with mobiliary of the time. The artefacts from the XIX century were donated from families from around the country: furniture, paintings, books, photographs, bronzes, silver and everyday objects. Due to all the families living in the building being of direct European ascendance, there is little to no representation of African heritage in the country. When questioning the tour guide about this, he excused it by explaining that it focuses not on all families of the XIX but on the accommodated ones (Personal Communication from Museum

Guide 2023). There is also no mention of Francisco del Tostado's sugar plantation on the banks of the Nigua River or how this would have influenced his economic position.

Museo del Hombre Dominicano

The Museo del Hombre Dominicano is the national archaeological and ethnological museum. It was created in 1972 and inaugurated the 12th October 1973. Located in the Plaza de la Cultura, this museum oversees the country's archaeological collections. Not only it inherited the collections previously hosted by the Museo Nacional Dominicano, but as the main archaeological institution the Museo del Hombre is by law in charge of any archaeological findings in the country. Although as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Museo del Hombre was closed during my research period, due to its importance it was impossible not to add it to this study. As at the time of writing the museum is still not fully open except for a small section on the Indigenous archaeology, I will focus on the museum's display before it closed.

The Museo del Hombre focuses on Dominican folklore, religion and traditions. It's displays used both archaeological material as well as more ethnographic materials such as images, costumes and dioramas, to showcase Dominican culture from the prehistoric period until the present. It is also the host of part of an African collection from French collector Jean-Michel Montespan (Carlos Andújar Personal Communication 2020).

Although originally the museum had a more Indigenous and European focus, with two floors dedicated to Indigenous material, as we see the academic research take an interest in the African legacy in the second half of the 1970s, this is also reflected in the activities organised by the museum. The first one I could find evidence of was in October 1978, the same year Bernardo Vega took over directorship of the museum, when with help of funding from the Eduardo León Jimenes Group (see in this chapter Centro Cultural León Jimenes), there was a series of displays about traditional folkloric dances starting with the Congos de Villa Mella (Museo del Hombre 1978, 275; 1979, 380-388). In 1979 the museum led a series of conferences about the 'Roots of Dominican Culture', where Esteban Deive talked about 'African heritage in Dominican Culture Today' (Fig 13)(Museo del Hombre Dominiciano 1980, 432). The talks about African legacy were not only present in the academic sphere with Deive's second edition of his book 'Vodu y Magia en Santo Domingo' being part of a joint book event hosted by the museum, but also there

were news from the archaeological findings in Cuba about a marroon site with African materials, and the museum hosted a round table about *GaGá,* a music style also inherited from African roots (Museo del Hombre 1979, 388-391; 1980, 391-395, 424-426, 432-433).

Figure 13. Bernardo Vega and Esteban Deive presenting 'African heritage in Dominican Culture Today' the 29th May 1979 (Photograph by Leonel Castillo, Museo del Hombre Dominicano 1980, 432).

It is within this context that the museum renovated their museography and included a section about Vodú in 1979, in this section Vodú is presented as a syncretic cult that has spread to the Dominican Republic due to Haitian influence (1980, 415). In the segment about the renovations of the etnographic museography in the 13th bulletin of the museum (1980a) it is described:

> *"El vodú, culto sincrético, cuyas raíces se encuentran en Dahomey, África, ha arraigado en la República Dominicana por influencia del Haitiano, donde surge y se desarrolla. Menos complejo y rico en su mitología y ritual, el vodú dominicano está intrínsicamente ligado a las prácticas de la magia y la brujería.*
>
> *Los centros voduistas dominicanos suelen ser pobres y casi siempre, se reducen a un altar casero muy rudimentario. En ese altar figuran los numerosos objetos y elementos del culto, mezcla de creencias y ritos de origen africano con otros de naturaleza católica."* [6]

[6] "Vodou, a syncretic cult, whose roots are in Dahomey, Africa, has taken root in the Dominican Republic through Haitian influence, where it emerges and develops. Less complex and rich in its mythology and rituals, Dominican vodou is intrinsically linked to the practices of magic and witchcraft. Dominican vodou centres tend to be poor and

Afterwards in 1980, the museum went through renovations, the entrance of the museum which originally had a statue of the Indigenous leader Enriquillo, was adorned with two new statues accompanying Enriquillo: Spanish Bartolomé de las Casas and leader of the first African rebellion Sebastián Lemba (Vega 1981, 129). Vega explains that this change signifies the shift from the museum from mainly Indigenous focused to studying all aspects of Dominican culture (Vega 1981, 130). Bernardo Vega tasked a team consisting of Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, Carlos Dobal, Rubén Silié, Carlos Esteban Deive, Frank Moya Pons and José del Castillo to work on the museography of the fourth floor which would focus on the impact of 'Taíno, Spanish and African heritage as well as the process of creolisation and the emergence of Dominican Culture' (Vega 2023). From the results from this team's research, with the help of interior designer Patricia Reid, in July 1980 is inaugurated the hall 'African Presence in Santo Domingo'. The aim of this new room was to show "the origins and characteristics of slavery in the island, as well as its incidence in the conformation of different aspects of Dominican culture" (fig, 14)(1980b, 224).

Fig. 14 Inauguracion del salon Presencia Africana en Santo Domingo. (Boletín 15, 1980b, 221).

are almost always reduced to a very rudimentary homemade altar. This altar contains the numerous objects and elements of the cult, a mixture of beliefs and rites of African origin with others of a Catholic nature....'.

In 1981 Dr Hoetink from Utrecht University went to the museum to give a talk about Afro-American research (MDH 1983, 267). This same year Esteban Deive gave a six-week course about Afro-American cults (MDH 1983, 268). For the tenth anniversary of the Museo del Hombre, they did an anthology of Dominican folkloric dance in the national theatre which included indigenous, European, and African dances (congos and sarandunga) as well as carnival related and 'criollos' dances (carabine, chenche matriculado, merengue, atabales).
In May 1985 the exhibition 'Elementos Rituales del Vudú: Religión Popular Haitiana' was open for a month (Fig. 15)(MDH 1987, 146). In this same year there was a special art exhibition about sugar mills, or plantations, with artist Jorge Reyes Abreu, who himself was born in a modern sugar plantation (MDH 1987, 153)

Figure 15. View of the exhibition 'Elementos Rituales del Vudú' 7 May 1985. (Museo del Hombre 1987, 146).

In 1980 the museum presented the display of *Aseres,* musical instruments from African origin, as the chosen piece of the month (MDH 1989, 240). In 1992 the museum opened the exhibition 'Africa, Caribe y Pacífico Latinos', this exhibition focused on the heritage of countries that spoke Latin languages, meaning countries that had been colonised by the Spanish, French and Portuguese empire (MDH 1992, 169). In 1994 there was an event organized with the embassy of Venezuela and UNESCO focusing on the African diaspora, the event consisted of a conference about 'The Diaspora of the Congo in the Americas and the Caribbean", the launch of a book titled "I am Afro-American" and the presentation of the film "Jump over the Atlantic" (MDH 1994, 191).

The *Vodú* display, as well as a B*atey,* a modern sugar workers town, display in the Museo del Hombre Dominicano were replaced in 1995 by displays of the Dominican carnival and diverse Mesoamerican artefacts (Thompson 2002).

Before its closing, the museum consisted of the ground floor (first floor in Spanish) with the hall of monoliths *Narciso Alberti Bosch* for speleology finds and the hall for special exhibitions. The second floor mainly consists of offices and the library. The third floor focuses on indigenous archaeology with halls 'paleoindio, mesoindio and neoindio'.

As of 1999, the fourth floor focused on ethnology was structured as follows (Thompson 2002):

- Hall of Taíno and Spanish Contributions to Dominican Culture: The Discovery; Topology; Spain; The Conquest; Spanish Influences: Architecture, Government and Colonial Institutions; The Encomiendas; Religion and Santos de Palo; Indohispanic Period; Disappearance of the Indians; Taíno Influences: Agricultural Products, Animals, Casabe, Housing, Fishing, Transportation Methods, Crafts, Music, Religion and Superstitions, Dominican Culture, Taíno words used today.
- Hall of Origins and Contributions of the African Presence in the Dominican Republic: Origin (Point of Departure) in Africa; Capture; The Crossing; Oficios Castigos; Cimarronaje; African Art in the Dominican Republic; Transculturation: Extension of the African Culture, Motor Skills, Ornamentation, Work, African Words Used Today, Agricultural Products from Africa, Foods of African Origin, Place Names of African Origin, The Creole, The Pilón, Basketmaking, Transportation of Goods, Higueros and Gourds; Dominican clothing: The Taínos, The Spanish (16th Century), The Africans, The 17th Century, The Buccaneers, The 18th Century, The 19th Century, Clothing at the end of the 19th Century, Clothing at the Beginning of the 20th Century; Latin American Cultural Objects; Images of Dominican People, Popular Religiosity in the Dominican Republic: The Resguardos, The Cult of the Dead, Beliefs and Popular Practices, Liborio Mateo, Elupina Cordero, The Morenos of Villa Mella, The Church of Las Maravillas, The Church of Mana, Objects of Magic Use, Saint Cristo of Bayaguana, The Vigils, Pilgrimages, The Virgin of Altagracia Higuey, Saint Cerro and Virgen de las Mercedes, Cromolitografías, The Calvarios, Santos de Palos.
- Hall of Folklore: GaGá a Complete Dominican Syncretism; Campesino House and its Kitchen, The Dominican and Housing: Models of Two Taíno Bohios, Transformations

Across two Centuries; Dominican Carnival: Santo Domingo, San Pedro, La Vega, Monte Cristi, Santiago, Cabral.

It is during the early 2000's while Carlos Andujar Persinal was the director, that the museum acquired a loan of the African art from french collectionist Jean Michel Montespan. Part of this collection was moved to the INDIA when Andújar moved to this institution, while another part of the collection is at the Centro León (both institutions also mentioned in this chapter) (Carlos Andújar Personal Communication 2020).

Although there is not much more evidence of updates to the museography after the turn of the century, there are more events related to African heritage at the beginning of the 2000's:

In 2001 a course on percussion and Afro-Dominican voices by Eddy Sanchez (MDH 2001, 192-193), the proclamation of the Cofradía de los Congos del Espiritu Santo as intangible and oral heritage by UNESCO (Andújar 2002, 3), the exhibition 'Afroamérica, Nuestras Raíces' (MDH 2002, 179). In 2002, the 'Festival de Cimarronaje' in the Nigua community (2002, 177), conference 'El Ingenio de Diego Colón y la Primera Rebelión de Esclavos en la Isla Española', by Dr Amadeo Julian (MDH 2002, 197).

I did not get access to the rest of the museum's cultural agenda as the rest of the bulletins were not accessible to the public yet at the time of this study, but local newspapers mention an exhibition about African masks titled 'Africa, Esculturas y Máscaras rituales' in 2012 with the Montespan foundation (El Nacional 2012). It is reported that in the 2010s the museum saw a decline due to lack of funds and decay of the infrastructure. After having no working air conditioning system, the elevators being out of service, and having no means to clean inside the displays as the museum did not have the technology to open the vitrines, the museum closed in 2017 (Clenis Tavares Personal Communication 2021; Alvarez 2021, 123). After renovations the museum partially reopened in October 2022 with an indigenous section and has been working on the new museography plan. In a more recent interview with the museum's education manager, she explains that, rather than just focusing on one of the roots of Dominican culture, the museum's new management plans to create a more inclusive narrative, where other traditions that have also been marginalised in the museum's trajectory, such as Lebanese or Jewish, will be included.

Sala Pre-Hispanica García Arevalo

The Sala de Arte Pre-Hispánico García Arévalo is a non-commercial gallery hosting the biggest private collection of indigenous artefacts in the country. Opened by the García Arévalo Foundation in 1973, this collection was possible thanks to the boom in archaeology in the country and García Arevalo's private collection. In an interview to García Arevalo back in 2019 he explained this space works more as a gallery than as a museum, having a different role in the objectives of the display. This allows the gallery to focus on the aesthetics of the artefacts as opposed to the museums who should focus on the anthropological analysis (García Arévalo Personal Communication 2019). Although its main subject is indigenous peoples, I added this gallery to my research since it hosts a small section with the finds from a maroon site.

Manuel García Arévalo is a renown Dominican businessman and historian, who is better known for his passion for archaeology since a young age. Due to his family means he was able to pursue multiple archaeological expeditions which allowed him to create such a big private collection (Lopez 2021).

Despite the indigenous focus of the gallery, the Sala Pre-Hispánica is still relevant for this study due García Arévalo's influence in the excavation of maroon sites in the country (see previous chapter). One of the displays of the gallery showcases both bronze bracelets used by African peoples (Fig. 16) and transcultural ceramics (Fig. 17). While these are the only mentions of African presence in this gallery, due to the scarcity of African material culture found in Dominican archaeological sites, these hold great significance for the study of maroon archaeology.

Figure 16. Display of the Sala Pre-Hispánica García Arévalo showcasing two bronze bracelets used by African people in the island (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 17. Display of the Sala Pre-Hispánica García Arévalo showcasing transcultural ceramics (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Museo de las Casas Reales

This museum located in the colonial city consists of two buildings built in 1511: the *Casa de la Real Audiencia,* or royal houses, and the Viceroy's palace. The buildings later became the Palace of the Governors and then the seat of the Dominican government until the 20th century, in 1976 it was inaugurated as a museum. The museum narrative focuses as much on the history of the building as in the development of colonial history in the island.

The museum welcomes guests with a painting representing the encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. Next to the painting there is an ivory host depicting images of Spanish royalty during the 16th century. The entrance to the first room is also guarded by two armours.

After entering the 'discovery' gallery, the display shows paintings of Christopher Columbus next to pages of his diary. These are followed by replicas of the Pinta, Niña and Santa Maria and diverse naval tools dating to the 16th century which accompany the informative texts about the 'men of the discovery' and the naval techniques of the time. In front of these we have a painting dedicated to the American peoples that disappeared as a consequence of the European colonisation. The display proceeds to talk about Villa La Isabela, and the *Camino de los Hidalgos*, while the second part of the room focuses on the context of the island at the time and the Indigenous peoples.

After presenting Santo Domingo as the point of departure for European expansion in the Americas, and talking about Columbus other voyages to the Americas, the last part of the first room focuses on the religious aspect of colonisation, showcasing the process of evangelisation and some of the major religious orders at the time. The adjacent room uses cartography and ship models to focus on the navigation of the Atlantic, piracy, and commerce. From here they move on to the economy of the island, which by the 17th century was dominated by sugar production. The 'Economy and Slavery' gallery is presided by a *trapiche,* a mill used for the extraction of sugar cane (fig 18), and begins by explaining the process of sugar making and the history of sugar plantations in the island. This is followed by panels explaining the shift from the enslavement of indigenous peoples towards the enslavement of African peoples, as well as panels about the first African inhabitants in the Americas, and the first African revolt. Accompanying these panels are the artefacts used to subjugate African peoples during the times of slavery (Fig 19). This is followed by an overview of the imports and exports at the time,

showcasing tobacco and pearl trade artefacts ‘a costa de la vida de los mismos esclavos indigenas y negros obligados a extraer las ostras perlíferas de sol a sol’. To the exit of the room there is a pair of *Atabales o Palos,* drums of African origin used for traditional and religious music in the Dominican Republic (Fig 20).

Figure 18. Trapiche in the Museo de las Casas Reales (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 19. Displays in the 'Economy and Slavery' room of the Museo de las Casas Reales. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 20. Atabales o Palos, drums of African origin. Museo de las Casas Reales. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Across the courtyard visitors enter into the second building by the room dedicated to transport and are received by a carriage from the 18th century. The room is decorated by illustrations of horse riding from the period and holds a riding seat and another type of carriage. Next to the carriage there are mannequins representing the servants of the time (Fig. 21). The carriages lead to a room that recreates an apothecary of the 18th century.

Figure 21. Mannequin representing a servant from the eighteenth century. Museo de las Casas Reales. Photo by Author.

On the second floor of the museum, we see a bigger focus on the European past of the building. There's a recreation of the tribunal of the Real Audiencia, the armoury containing swords and weapons from around the world, but with no African representation whatsoever. All the rooms on the second floor contain displays ranging from the governor's room, the auditor and the captain's office as well as other rooms displaying information about legislation, accounting and life in general at the time. The only trace of African 'presence' we find in the top floor is a few soldiers in a display of the army during the colonial era.

Museo del Arte Moderno

The Museum of Modern Art is another museum located in the Plaza de la Cultura. Inaugurated in 1976 this museum does not have a permanent exhibition on display but instead focuses on the collections of the national art biennales. As a full analysis of the evolution of the biennales is a very necessary study but beyond the scope of this thesis, I will focus on the selection of the biennale that was presented during this study: the XXIXth biennale.[7]

The National Biennale for Visual Arts started in the 1940's and has been one of the most important cultural events for visual arts in the country, as it has helped both to trace and shape the evolution of visual arts in the Dominican Republic (López Meléndez 2018). While the XXIXth biennale was originally planned for 2017, due to the renovations in the Plaza de la Cultura and the Museo de Arte Moderno the deadline for the XXIXth biennale was moved first to 2018 and then to 2019. It was then delayed for the next year, and it is not until 2021 that the biennale finally opened to the public with 286 pieces out of the 626 applications (Pichardo 2021; Casasnovas 2022).

The art pieces included painting, sculptures, photographs, videos and art installations. The pieces selected for the biennale, spread throughout the four floors of the Museo de Arte Moderno were available for the public to view and vote for the 'Public's choice'. The themes of the art were broad and varied from politics, environment, nostalgia, family, and more relevant for this study, colonisation.

While traces of African legacy can be seen throughout Dominican contemporary art, not often it is as clear as in the winning piece: the installation 'The Sugar Maafa' by Aniova Prandy (Fig. 22). The installation consists of *'catorce cojines de terciopelo blanco.. rellenos de azúcar morena. Sobre ellos yacen catorce collares de hierro rellenos de azúcar blanca. Las formas creadas con el azúcar blanca representan las montañas a las que huyeron los esclavizados cimarrones en búsqueda de libertad'* (Pichardo 2021)[8]. The piece was specially praised for its work torwads the visibilisation of transatlantic slavery and African legacy in the country.

[7] There is a publication called 'Historia de la Bienal/La Bienal en la Historia 1942-2015' published in 2018 by the ministry of culture but I was not able to access it.

[8] Translation: fourteen white velvet cushions.. Filled with brown sugar. On them lay fourteen iron collars surrounding white sugar. The shape of the white sugar represents the mountains where the enslaved marroons escaped while searching for freedom.

Figure 22. ‘The Sugar Maafa’ by Aniova Prandy (https://princeclausfund.nl/awardees/aniova-prandy).

African legacy was not only present in the biennale through the support of Afro-Dominican artists, but could be visible through themes like migration, justice, poverty, slavery and emancipation.

Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón

The Museo Chavón is a regional museum located in La Romana in the East of the country. Hosting the indigenous archaeology collection of Samuel Pión, this museum open since 1981 is considered one of the most important indigenous museums in the country.

Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón is a regional archaeological museum which also hosts an indigenous archaeological collection, but it is included in this list both because as a regional museum it should at least mention the presence or lack of presence of archaeological records about African peoples, and/or should at least mention the intersection between indigenous and African peoples that happened in the country.
Whilst due to the indigenous focus this museum has no artefacts or material representations of African legacy, the museum briefly mentions African legacy and how the ‘intermixing’ with Spanish and African culture has allowed for Indigenous culture to survive (Fig. 23).

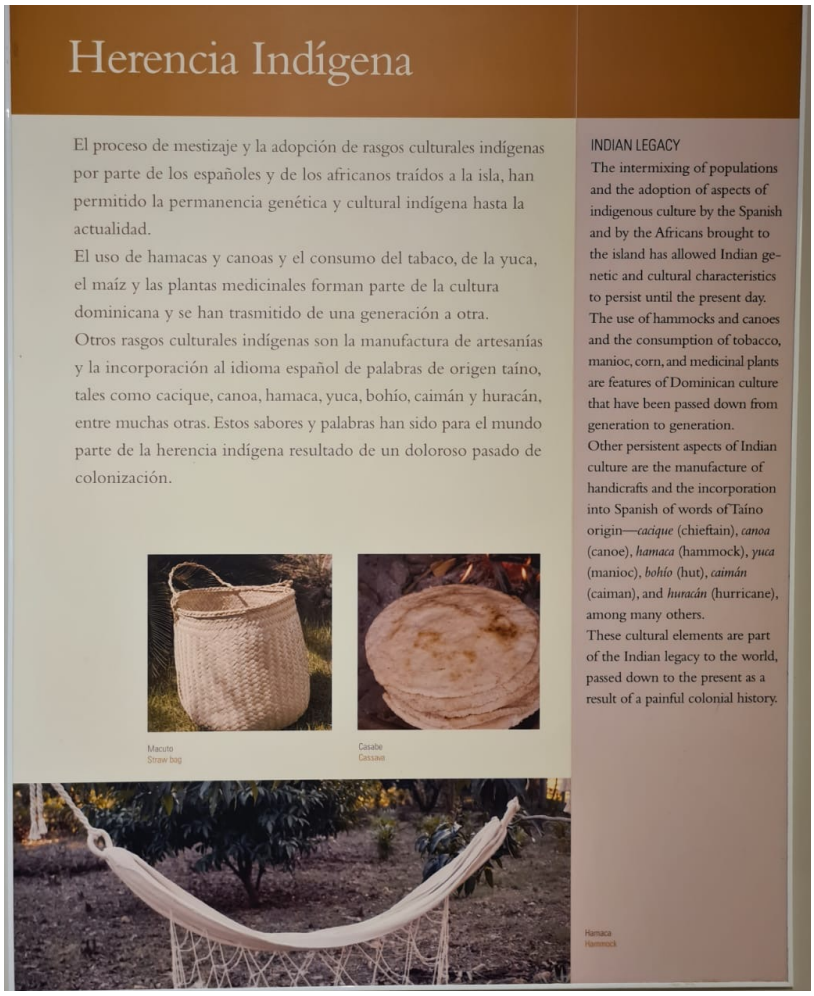

Figure 23. Pannel from the Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía

The Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía (MNHG), the national history and geography museum, opened in 1982. This museum, also inheritor of the Museo Nacional mentioned before, focuses on the history of the country from the seventeenth century until the present. The museum had to close in 2005 given to the increased deterioration of the building, due to lack of funds, that included water leaks, mold and fungus that was harmful both to the stored pieces as to the people working and visiting the museum (Bisonó 2020). During my research period the museum, which had recently been renovated, was completely empty as the pieces had not been properly stored

and were still in extreme decay. However, thanks to the director of the museum Jose Guerrero, I managed to get a look at the catalogue and have more information about the museum.
The museum was reinaugurated in 2022 with 18 different galleries or halls: Sala de la Patria, Salón de los Presidentes, La Era de Trujillo, La guerilla de Caamaño (or hall of BlackJack) and the Jardin de Hostos. The director Jose Guerrero explains so far they have around 20% on display while the rest is still being restored (Guerrero 2023). However, only two of these will be permanent the Sala de la Patria (or hall of the homeland), and the Hall of the Blackjack[9]. The rest of the historical items will be divided into the historical periods of the First Republic (1844-1861), the Second Republic (1865-1916) and the Third Republic (1924-1965), and the last hall will be an immersion hall.
Due to the period of the museum being more modern it is harder than the other museums to fully classify what is considered from African descendance. Specially given that the older parts of the collection before the 1800's are still being restored. However, in March 2024 the museum inaugurated the itinerant exhibition 'La Esclavitud y el Legado Cultural de Africa en el Caribe' (DGM 2024). This exhibition was part of the European project 'Connected Worlds: The Caribbean, Origin of Modern World' with collaborations between Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Colombia, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba and Chile (Naranjo Orovio 2021; DGM 2024). The project was led by the Instituto de Historia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) from Spain which collaborated with the Centro de Estudios Caribeños from the Pontifical Catholic University Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) (Listín Diario 2022).
The exhibition was brought to Santo Domingo with a conjoint effort from the Delegation of the European Union in the Dominican Republic and the Centro León (see below in this chapter), first to the Museo de la Fortaleza Ozama and then to the MNHG.
Curated by Miguel Angel Puig-Samper, and the adaptation of the museography the Dominican spaces by Virgina Flores, the exhibition uses 34 panels to talk about 'different cultures, languages and peoples of Africa' going chronologically from the XVI century to the transatlantic slave trade and the abolition of slavery in 1886 (Fig. 24)(MRD 2024). The panels are accompanied by an audioguide accessible by QR code, and a short 5min video as well as its own documentary with the same information. The exhibition not only touches upon the process of

[9] Boat used by Coronel Alberto Caamaño in 1973 to overturn Joaquin Balaguer's government.

slavery in African, slavery in the Caribbean, and the fight for emancipation, but also about the legacy of African presence in the Caribbean and how it is manifested in identity, food, religion, music, carnival, and art.

Figure 24. Visitors in exhibition exhibition ‘La Esclavitud y el Legado Cultural de Africa en el Caribe’ (MDR 2024).

Museo Arqueológico La Isabela

This museum is located inside the National Historical and Archaeological Park of Villa de La Isabela, to the North of the Dominican Republic. This is the place of the first European settlement in the Americas. Inaugurated in 1992, the museum serves as an introduction to the rest of the archaeological park (Alvarez 2021).

The visit starts with the contextualisation of the situation in Spain at the time of the arrival of Columbus to the island. Going inside, it showcases the factors that made ‘discovery’ of the Americas possible, for example the naval instruments and the political context. Then it moves on to talk about the people that made it possible, Columbus, the Pinzon brothers, and the crew, as well as presenting the ships used for the first trip.

It is only after talking about the ‘discovery’ of the Americas that the display talks about the indigenous peoples, their mythology and their context at the time of arrival of the Europeans. When talking about the consequences of the ‘discovery’ the display focuses on the Columbian exchange, but mainly about the exchange of flora, fauna, and subsistence networks and does mention the negative side of it. Afterwards they explain the process of tributes imposed by the spanish crown, but do not mention anything about slavery whether indigenous or African. The museum then focuses on the layout of the Villa, the beginnings of evangelisation, the government set up and Columbus third trip. Finally, the display discusses the abandonment of the Villa La Isabela and the shift of the colony centre towards Santo Domingo.
After the visit of the museum there is a guided visit of the archaeological site. Although the presence of African remains in the site (see previous chapter) were not mentioned during my visit, after asking another guide of the site he explained he does mentions it in his visits and it all depends on the narrative of each specific guide (personal communication 2022).

Faro a Colón

The Columbus lighthouse was built in honour of the five-hundred-year anniversary of the ‘discovery’ of the Americas and for the safe keeping of the remains of Christopher Columbus. The monumental building is shaped as a cross representing the arrival of Christianisation to the Americas during the colonisation period.
In the forty-eight rooms the Faro a Colón hosts donations from embassies with diplomatic links to the country. The original idea was to hold exhibitions of each country of the Americas, in the present there are some displays from outside of the Americas as well. The building is not a museum by itself, but instead a complex that holds the mausoleum, the Navy Museum, the Archaeological Museum for Underwater Rescue, the Santa María de la Rábida chapel, the Virgin Mary’s gallery, and the Vatican room. The building also counts with a gallery dedicated for the African presence in the Dominican Republic. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, due to remodelling I was only able to analyse in person the ground floor holding the displays of the Americas, the chapel, the Virgin Mary’s gallery, the Vatican room and the Cartography room.

When entering the building the visitor arrives to the Mausoleum where Christopher Columbus remains are held. Made in a gothic style, the inscription of the mausoleum calls him the 'discoverer of the Americas'. The hall of Virgin Mary presents a collection of 21 paintings introducing the patron virgin from 22 American countries. Although most of the paintings are made by the same painter, we can still see the diverse background of each virgin, including the syncretic image of virgins like the Lady of Guadeloupe (Mexico). The Cartography room hosts maps donated by the Spanish embassy, depicting different areas of the Americas during the period of colonisation.

The Americas hall hosts the displays of 48 countries, due to the size of the gallery, I will only mention in the results the displays representing African legacy. One of these was France, whose display talks about the French role in colonialism and mentions the Atlantic slave trade. The display also talks about resistance to the colonial regime and the maroon movements, crowned by a painting about emancipation (Fig. 25).

Figure 25. Painting about emancipation in the French display of the Columbus lighthouse. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

The Portuguese display presents maps and images of Portugal history as a country of exploring and 'discovery' of new land. They mention the first coast explorations of West Africa, and their influence on the transatlantic slave trade. Furthermore, it talks about the Portuguese expansion. The Brazilians on the other hand, have an Afro-Brazilian mask on their display (Fig. 26). The Cuban display talks about the period of colonisation and the process of creolisation: 'Su alto grado de mestizaje es consecuencia de la fusion de españoles, negros, antillanos y asiáticos,…'. They also mention the Santería or *Regla de Ochá,* as a religious syncretism between African beliefs and catolicism.

Figure 26. Afro-Brazilian mask and other artefacts donated by the Brazilian embassy to the Faro a Colón. (Photography by Marianny Aguasvivas).

For the Dominican display, there is a case with traditional instruments: different types of drums, maracas, a tambourine, and a güira. These instruments are usually used in traditional Dominican music and are representative of the different cultural background that make Dominican national identity. The Dominican display uses an illustration of the sugar industry in the background: 'Primer Azúcar elaborado en América. La primera industria azucarera de América nace en la isla La Española con los trapiches e ingenios que se establecieron en las cercanías de Santo Domingo…'.

Figure 27. Illustration used for the background of the Dominican display in the Faro a Colón. 'Sugar-Making'. (DeBry) Published in Samuel Hazard (1873). Santo Domingo, past and present; with a glance at Hayti.

Colombia mentions their African influence when talking about traditional music, also showcasing drums to represent this part of their legacy. Brazil uses white cloth called *paño de Alaká* or of the coast (coast of Africa) to represent their African roots:
'el mito de las tres razas – indios, negros y blancos – es poco para hablar sobre un pueblo y su capacidad de mezclar o hacer convivir, con diferencias y jerarquias, con unidad y diversidad,

muchas tradiciones culturales…. De las naciones indígenas que alli viven de larga fecha, de las muchas Africas llevadas para allá, de portugueses, alemanes, turcos, libaneses, italianos, españoles, japoneses, coreanos y muchos otros que también llegaron, en epocas diversas y por motivos varios, se have la expression impar de un pueblo plural'.

At the end of the Americas collection, you can also visit the small room called 'Spain in Africa' showcasing twelve illustrations of the plans for the African campaign (Hispano-Moroccan war) between 1859-1860, as well as 15 landscapes of the African North coast. These were donated by the Spanish government.

The Faro Colón used to host an African gallery as well. While I was not granted access to this gallery, as the upstair floors were out of service during my visit and are still being renovated as of 2025, the museum staff was able to show me pictures of the collection of African artefacts. It is not clear whether the African gallery is part of the permanent collection and it's out of service just temporarily or whether it will remain closed and the collection will go somewhere else.

Centro Cultural León Jimenes

The León Jimenes Group is one of the biggest companies in the Dominican Republic. It started as a tobacco company in 1903, but now it is more known for controlling the greatest part of breweries and beer imports in the country as well as having the fourth most important bank of Dominican Republic. In 1964, the León Jimenes Group started the Eduardo León Jimenes Art Contest to support and promote Dominican art. In 1999 the Eduardo León Jimenes Foundation, founded in the same year, announced that they would build the Centro León to exhibit the collection that was born from this contest. It was after this announcement that the foundation received donations, loans, and acquired art, archaeological, ethnological and bibliographic collections all pertaining Dominican culture (Centroleon.org.do). The Centro Cultural León Jimenes opened in 2003 in Santiago de los Caballeros and has since then become one of the leading cultural centres in the Dominican Republic.

As for the Museo de Arte Moderno, the study of the contemporary pieces from the visual arts contest Eduardo León Jimenes, displayed in the *Genesis y Trayectoria* gallery, deserves its own analysis which is above the scope of this research. There is also the permanent exhibition Huella y Memoria which tells the history of the tobacco business and the roots of the Centro León.

Instead, I will focus on the ethnological collection presented in the gallery *Signos de Identidad* which includes a small part of one of the only African artefacts collections in the country. These come originally from the same collection loaned to the Museo del Hombre and the INDIA. The centro León also hosts a very complete media library where I was able to access most of the sources for this thesis.

The *Signos de Identidad* (signs of identity) gallery exhibits a selection of the ethnographic collection of the Centro León. It shows a chronological evolution of the Dominican past starting with nature, the indigenous peoples, colonisation, slavery, creolisation, and then arriving to the present and showing the characteristics of Dominican folklore.

The gallery starts by introducing the Caribbean with a focus on biodiversity in a platform with images and sounds of Caribbean landscapes and culture. Then the visitors walk 'under' a mangrove environment where they can learn about the flora and fauna of these environments. Mangroves are introduced as the first place of habitation and food source for the first inhabitants of the island. At the end of the mangrove, we arrive to a case with a wide range of stone tools that leads us to the area of the agricultural societies, with displays about indigenous life including ceramics, weaving and a burial representation.

The arrival of the Europeans and Africans is introduced under the subject of *mestizaje* which they define as the product of a *'mezcla racial y cultural que se inicia con la* ***explotación*** *del aborigen y el africano, emergiendo nuevos valores, nuevos modelos de vida, nuevas formas de expresión cotidiana, basadas en implantaciones de modelos económicos que generaron* ***reacciones de resistencia*** *y supervivencia'*[10]. This is followed by three fragments of poems about being mixed, 'Balada de los dos abuelos' by Nicolás Guillén, 'Mulata-Antilla' by Luis Palés Matos and 'Material de Mi Aldea' by Pedro Mir.

Behind these we find a room which surrounds a trapiche, which is used to talk about the plantation economy and the transatlantic slave trade. To one side of the trapiche we have a display called 'Hispanic influence', holding a wide range of diverse artefacts from the daily life during the colonial period. This is a very well-lit and accessible display, which contrast with the 'African influence' display to the other side of the room, a wall with a projection on top, and

[10] 'racial and cultural mixture that begins with the **exploitation** of the indigenous and the African, emerging new values, new models of life, new forms of daily expression, based on the implantation of economic models that generated **reactions of resistance** and survival'(words highlighted by the museum in the display).

various peep-holes at eye-level (Fig. 28). Through these peep-holes we can see diverse items depicting African legacy: artefacts from West Africa including jewellery, utensils, masks and statues; a *fotuto, a* seashell instrument used by maroons for communication; instruments derived from African heritage used in traditional music and instruments and vest used in Gagá, as well as instruments used in the rituals of the Cofradía del Espiritu Santo or Congos de Villa Mella (Fig. 29).

Figure 28. African legacy display in the Signos de Identidad Gallery in the Centro Cultural León Jimenes. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 29. Drums, bambú and Gagá vest as seen in the African influence display in the Signos de Identidad gallery of the Centro Cultural León Jimenes. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

The exit from this room is directed through the representation of a small house typical of the traditional Dominican countryside. The house represents the ‘sociedad mulata’ or mulatto/mixed raced society. The display explains how the low percentage of Hispanic women during the sixteenth century resulted in ‘ethnical mixing’, added to the intermixing of Africans and Spanish this resulted in a hybrid culture with mixed characteristics already in the seventeenth century. Inside the house or hut we see purely creole representations, this is shown in the religious aspect with syncretised religious expressions (Fig. 30), as well as in diverse rural utensils that come from African, Indigenous and European origins.

Figure 30. Ermita Sincrética (syncretic altar typical of a family home), wood and glass, contemporary. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

From here we pass to the urban life showing the life in the market in order to highlight creole culture and values, the display highlights the subjects of interrelation, dynamic spaces and Dominican personality. In this area we can see artefacts deriving from multiple ethnic groups, where they mention ‘Haitian, Spanish, *cocolos* (Afro-Caribbean), Arab, Chinese, Jewish, African

Americans' and the exchange of artefacts as well of cultural practices. Art, religion, food, tools, serve as a form of expression to showcase the results of the centuries of interaction and exchange between cultures. This interactive display uses audio, visual and tactile replicas to show at the same time how diverse the different aspects of Dominican culture are, and how difficult it is to separate or draw the line between what originates from where.

The market is followed by life in the city, as opposed to the previous hut showing creole life in the countryside. This section is led by architectural details facing images and artefacts of modern life (ca 1800 to late 1900). Here there's no longer an attempt to represent any different origins nor roots but showing Dominican life during this period.

Afterwards the display talks about urban growth and focuses on the growth of the city of Santiago. Here it shows the consequences of urban growth and images of contemporary life. The end of the gallery uses see-through suitcases to present the travelling and the emigrant Dominicans and what they take with them to the rest of the world. This is finalised by a display showcasing the first Dominicans to reach the peak of Mount Everest, showing Dominican representation abroad.

The Centro León was also the only case study to have a completely digitalised catalogue of its collections. Their collections are divided into visual arts with around 15,400 pieces, the ethnographic collection with around 3,000 artefacts, the archaeological collection with around 2,800 artefacts and the general archive with around 1,300 photographs. As mentioned before, due to the size of the visual arts collection as well as the general archive it deserve their own separate study. From the ethnographic and archaeological collections consisting of a total of 5,895 pieces, there are 699 pieces in the Signos de Identidad gallery. While originally the plan was to analyse both the ethnographic and archaeological collections, there are no African artefacts in the archaeological collection. Concerning the ethnographic collection, African heritage is represented in the form of African masks and sculptures, musical instruments, and syncretic items used for religious practices. While the artefacts explicitly considered African make up around 1% of the ethnographic collection, the African legacy is represented in a broader variety of Afro-Dominican artefacts. After comparing the material in the collections with the displays in Signos de Identidad, the African legacy seems to have a proportionate representation. My main complaint is that these artefacts are hard to find while browsing the collection catalogue, but this seems to be the case regardless of the origin of the artefacts.

Museo Infantil Trampolín

The Museo Infantil Trampolín is an interactive museum targeted towards children of ages between 4 and 12. Inaugurated in 2004, the museum has become an emblematic place for children to learn about the universe, science and society (Trampolin.org.do).

The pedagogical displays start with a journey through the universe, followed by an area focusing on earth and geology, the palaeolithic world, energy, ecology, nature, relationships and balance, the human being and Dominican Society. For the purpose of this thesis, we will only focus on the last one.

The Dominican society room is organised as a Dominican street, with little shops and stands. They talk about Dominican culture, carnival and society. With traditional music in the background, the street showcases some essential buildings for any town: it shows a school, a hospital, a main square represented by a kiosk, a corner store, a bank, a cafeteria and a school. There is a 'stand' of a Dominican market with souvenirs or typical artefacts that are often seen in local markets, especially those targeted for tourist consumption (Fig. 31). Here, through material culture like instruments, dolls, kitchen utensils, furniture and small sculptures, the museum shows the different origins of these artefacts and how they have all become part of Dominican identity. With the help of a tour guide, this section of the museum explains creolisation to children in a simple but effective way which informs them about the African presence among the Indigenous and European.

Figure 31. Mercadito Trampolín. (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 32. Dolls inside the Mercadito Trampolín (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Museo del Ron y Caña

Opened in 2010, the Museo del Ron y la Caña is a small private museum which is part of a rum distillery's bar, showcasing the history of sugar cane and rum production. While conducting my questionnaires, it was brought of my attention by one of the comments that despite its name, the Museo del Ron y la Caña is mainly a bar and not a museum. However, the museum section has thorough explanations about the history of sugar cane and rum and how it developed in the island and the rest of the Caribbean. Although it is part of a business, I am considering it as a case study as the museum section is free to the public and follows the requirements under the International Council Of Museums (Kendall Adams 2022)[11].

Located in the colonial city, the private collection contains artefacts like *cunyayas,* old appliance to obtain sugar cane, trapiches, *guarapos,* a strainer for sugar cane juice; as well as a collection of old rum bottles, labels, and other artefacts used for the rum process. Although many of the artefacts are not local and are imported from the U.S., Europe, and other Caribbean islands in this small exhibition the museology makes an emphasis on the role of enslaved peoples for the development of rum industries in the Caribbean.

The small exhibition explains the role of slavery on the development of the rum and sugar cane commerce (Fig. 33). It also explains how emancipation of African enslaved peoples in Haiti affected the rum commerce after 1791. The tour guide also highlighted the contrast between the people making the rum, and the white owners of the different renown rum brands in the Caribbean.

[11] "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."

Figure 33. Displays in the Museo del Ron y la Caña (Photography by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Figure 34. Information panel in the Museo del Ron y la Caña (Photography by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Nacional

The Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Nacional, or Museo de la Resistencia, depicts the history of the dictatorship by Leonidas Trujillo and the resistance against the dictatorship in the first half of the 20th century. The museum opened in 2011 and it's a part of private foundation with the support of the Ministry of Education. Due to the period represented in this museum, there are less opportunities for an implicit representation of African legacy. However, this museum was still included in this thesis due to the strong relationship between discrimination and the way African legacy has been rejected in the country, especially during Trujillo's dictatorship (Fig. 35).

The museum's display starts by using the example of Trujillo's regime to explain the concept of dictatorship. Then the museum uses a chronological discourse from 1916 with the United States intervention in the country and ending in 1978 with the fall of the Balaguer dictatorship.

While the museum does not have explicit mention of African heritage, there is more inclusivity displayed in the different stories, and members of the resistance against Trujillo.
However, the problem lays on the way the museum narrative is presented. This museum has a great amount of text within its display. Although this was most likely done with the need to include as much as possible for both the descendants and the families of the revolutionaries, there is so much text that the visitor can feel overwhelmed while trying to grasp all the information.

Figure 35. 'Matanza de Haitianos, 1937' by José Ramirez Conde and Roberto Flores, 1974. Mural at the entrance of the Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Dominicana (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Kahkow Experience

Kahkow experience is a small interactive museum explaining the history of cacao and chocolate, how it arrived in the country, and how it has been processed throughout history. While it is known amongst locals and tourists for being an experience where you can make your own bar of chocolate, the experience starts with a small museum's permanent exhibition about cacao.

The museum visit introduces the history of cacao with a video explaining the role of the Maya empire in cacao production. Then they explain how it arrived from the mainland to the Caribbean islands during the colonial period, and the history of chocolate from being used as a drink to chocolate bars and chocolate truffles. The second room mimics a *cacaotal* or cacao plantation, where they explain the process of cacao collection and the uses of the plant. While the mention that cocoa production is intensive labour, they make no mention of who were the people doing the labour: Indigenous and African enslaved peoples. In the next room they show the process of selection and fermentation of cacao. The visit ends with the sensorial room, where there is a chocolate degustation, and a display different ingredients used to enhance chocolate flavours.

The reason why it is shocking that there is no mention of forced labour, African workforce or African descendants in this experience, is because of the impact of the transatlantic cocoa trade, and slavery in cocoa still being an issue in West and Central Africa (Cocoarunners 2025).

Museo de las Atarazanas Reales

The Museo de las Atarazanas Reales, or royal shipyards museum, is the most recent national museum. Inaugurated in 2019, the museum hosts the national collections of the National Directive of Underwater Cultural Heritage. It is located in Santo Domingo's colonial city, in the same street where both main entrances to the city, the one for free people and the one for enslaved people, were located. The museum uses interactive displays and the latest technologies to show a selection of shipwrecks, as well as information about commercial routes and conflicts from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.

After being introduced to the history of the building, in the first gallery (room 4 in the map in Fig 36), the visitors are introduced to historical shipwrecks near the island, introducing the Santa Maria as the main ship to arrive in Columbus first voyage as well as the first shipwreck and the base for the Christmas fort. An interactive electronic display (number 3 in the map) allows

visitors to choose from the first shipwrecks, between the 15th and 16th century, and gives more information about them.

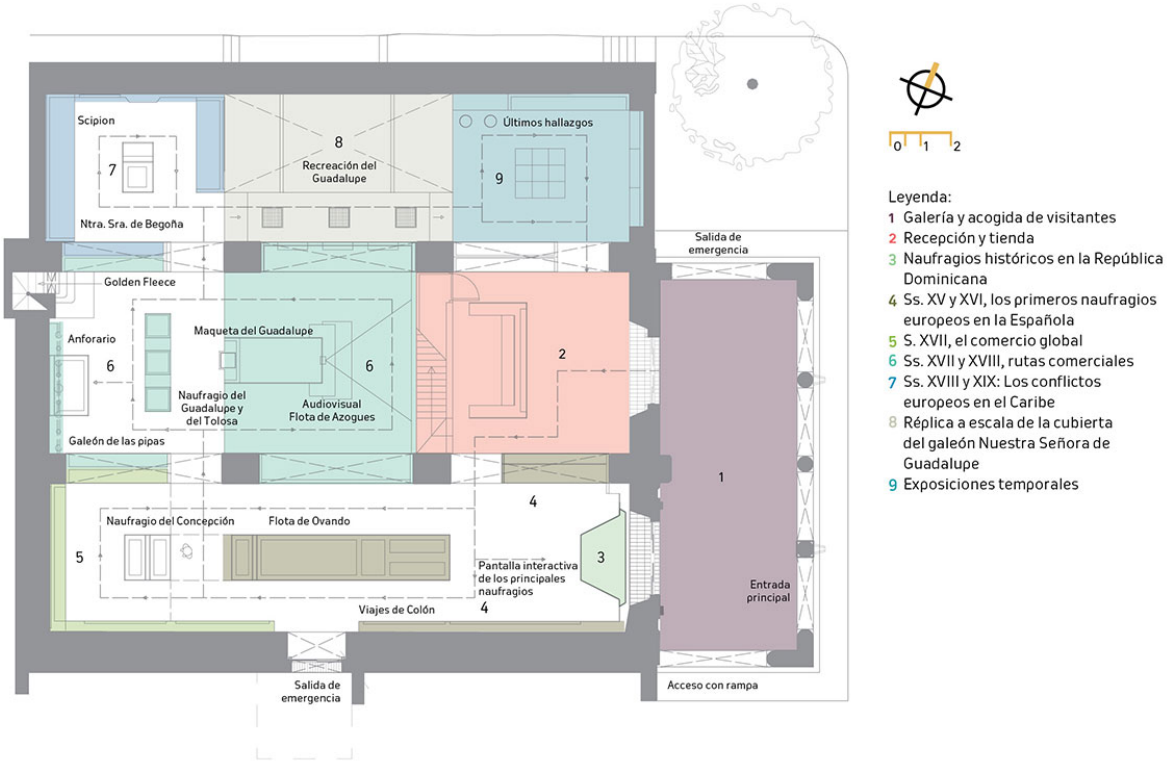

Figure 36. Map of the Museo de las Atarazanas Reales. Image from https://arquitexto.com/2020/05/museo-las-atarazanas-reales/

A series of audio-visual resources and artefacts from these shipwrecks and information about the fortifications around the Caribbean in the 16th century, lead us to the 17th century and the global commerce section, which focuses mainly on trade and smuggling (area 5 in the map). Although this section mentions the 'European powers, above all Spain and Portugal, began to bring enormous quantities of gold and silver into Europe from Africa and the Americas', it does not mention anything else about the transatlantic slave trade and the Columbian exchange. They use the Concepción shipwreck to talk about smuggling and trade.

The next room (6 in the map) focuses on the trade routes of the 17th and 18th century by showing a short documentary about the Flota de Azogues, and artefacts from Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe shipwreck and using the Galeon de las Pipas and the Golden fleece to show the type

of artefacts traded and transported in these ships at the time. Room 7 talks about European conflicts in the Caribbean during the 18th and 19th century. Here they mention the French Vessel the Marques de Gallifet, which 'was found, carrying slaves, at the end of the 18th century, when it sank'. However, there are no artefacts on display directly related to the African presence in this ship or any other through the museum display.
Room 8 is a recreation of the first and second battery of the 18th century vessel Nuestra señora de Guadalupe. This part highlights how would life on a ship would look like at the time. Finally, the last room dedicated to temporary exhibitions talks about underwater archaeology and restoration processes.

6.2 Questionnaire results

After analysing the museums, I conducted a survey with a section of the local general public to better understand their perception on the museums of this study (Appendix III). The questionnaires were given to the public to get their input on my two main research questions. I will present the perspective of the public on this subject, and their recommendations for achieving a multi-vocal museum.

The survey took place between November 2021 and February 2022, with 163 respondents. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, due to the way the questionnaire was shared, it cannot be considered a representative sample of the Dominican population. Instead, I will be looking at the sample as a representation of people that have a certain interest for the cultural sector already and are at least privileged in their education opportunities or economical resources. As such, the aim of this analysis is to bring light to the perspectives of a small part of the visitors of Dominican museums, with the hope that a bigger study can be done with a more representative sample.

Presentation of the Sample

The age of the respondents ranges from 16 years old to 74 years old, with many of them (32.5%) being between their mid 30s and their mid 40s. While the majority (55.2%) of the respondents have always lived in the Dominican Republic, a significant percentage (44.8%) have lived abroad at some point, with 20% still living abroad, 20% having moved back to the country, and

4% living in between the country and abroad. Therefore, even if a total 75,5% of the respondents live in the country in the present it is fair to say a significant proportion of the respondents have had some experience as Dominican diaspora.

Concerning their heritage, 63.8% of the responders self-identified with having African heritage with 7.9% respondents feeling their heritage is fully African, 57.1% identifying as having part African heritage, and 7.4% defining their heritage as latinx or mixed.[12]

The most visited museums from the sample were the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Alcázar de Colón, Museo de Arte Moderno, Faro a Colón, Museo de Historia y Geografia and Museo de las Casas Reales. 17.8% of respondents felt their heritage is not represented in Dominican museums, with 47.9% feeling they were represented and 34.4% undecided. When asked how much respondents agreed with the way their heritage was represented, only 7.5% of them fully agreed, 16.3% partially agreed, 45% felt neutral, 22.5% partially disagreed, and 8.8% fully disagreed. Nonetheless, 57.4% of respondents feel they learnt new aspects of their own culture in these museums, while 23.5% was undecided and 19.1% felt they did not learn anything new .

As to whether respondents see the museum as a place that informs our own identity, 56.4% agree, 26.4% are undecided and 17.2% disagree. On the other hand, when asked whether the public should have a say in what is displayed in museums 42.3% agreed, 36.2% disagreed and 21.5% were undecided. The majority of the respondents (55%) felt African heritage was presented in a neutral way, with 23.5% seeing it represented positively and 21.6% negatively. When asked about whether they had learnt about African heritage in school, 55.8% had, 39.3% hadn't and only 4.9% were unsure.

Most respondents agreed that there is a lot of African traditions still present in Dominican culture, with 43% seeing it present in general, 44% only seeing it depending on the context or region, and 13% not agreeing. When asked in which aspects of Dominican culture they noticed African heritage, most respondents agreed on music (133), food (112) and art (102), a little less than half noticed it in religion (76), objects (63), and language (60) and it is noticed less in clothing (45). Nevertheless, 73% wants to see more representation of African legacy in Dominican museums with 19.6% being undecided whether they would like that or not and 7.4%

[12] I am assuming the mixed or Latinx as part African given the context of the questionnaire as these were self drafted answers, in Spanish some of the answers mentioned Mulato as well as Mixto.

disagreeing. Furthermore, 71% believe African legacy should have the same amount of representation as indigenous or European does, with 11.7% disagreeing and 16.6% undecided. Finally, the most chosen approach for better representation in museums was more activity in the media (124) and including local narratives (123) as well as outreach activities (116), with having more artefacts on display coming being closely behind (104) and 90 respondents wanting more information on the panels. One respondent also added the option for workshops and site visits, and another more rescue of looted objects.

7. Discussion

As we have seen, there has been multiple historical and political reasons that have shaped the way African legacy has been presented to the Dominican public. I will start this chapter by summarising the results from the diverse case studies by grouping them on the type of representation they had. Then I will discuss what has been the impact of these academic, institutional and political tendencies in the case studies that we have seen. I will continue the discussion of the questionnaires results to understand how the African legacy is perceived by Dominicans. Finally, I will base myself in the Caribbean case studies to propose how we can apply decolonial practices to Dominican museums.

An invisible legacy

It would be unfair to say that African presence is completely invisible in Dominican museums. After analysing and comparing all the case studies, it seems only two of them treat African legacy as invisible. These are the Museo de la Familia Dominicana or Casa del Tostado, and Kahkow Experience. The Museo de la Familia is supposed to focus on the life of the Dominican family in the nineteenth century. However, their definition of the Dominican family has a connotation very focused in Hispanophilia. In the museum there is no mention of African heritage, nor how the rest of Dominicans that were not direct descendants of Europeans lived at the time. While the owner of the house and its namesake Francisco del Tostado had a sugar plantation, owned slaves and likely owed part of his fortune and means to African people and their descendants, none of this is mentioned anywhere in the museum. Due to the origin and trajectory of the museum, it is easy to perceive how this invisibility came to be. First of all, it is a historical building from the colonial period, so the history of the building focuses on the families that would have lived there which were Europeans or Criollos. Second, the history of acquisition of the museum, the collection was built mainly of donations from prominent families from Dominican society. This is linked to the third and final point which is the political context at the time of the opening in the museum. As we saw in chapter 5, the Museo de la Familia opened under the initiative of the Balaguer government. Balaguer publicly advocated for the whitening of the Dominican race, and the return to our Hispanic roots while perpetuating the persecution and oppression of black Dominicans. Which would lead us to believe that not only any prominent black families during that period would not

be in good terms with the government at the time, but also it could be considered dangerous at the time to describe the Dominican family as anything but Hispanic descendants.

Kahkow experience being a more recent museum and part of a private company, this case has slightly different implications. While slavery has been a big part of cacao production for centuries, reminding people about it is not a good method for selling chocolate. While the exhibition talks about the history of cacao and how chocolate arrived to the Caribbean and the rest of the world, this is still done from a very colonial perspective and conveniently leaves out the oppressive systems that made this happen. Even when talking about the Maya and Aztecs they do it from a colonial perspective and continue the idea of a 'discovery' by Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortez. We could say that the invisibility of African legacy in this museum is not as much an effect of political censure as much of a marketing strategy to protect the interests of a company.

In other cases, the invisible African legacy is not an attempt to hide things as much as a consequence of narratives that focus on Dominican society as a whole. This is the case in museums with more modern collections that do not make a specific division between indigenous, European or African heritage. Meaning we see the presence of African descendants in Dominican society; but this is simply not addressed. As mentioned before, this is not necessarily negative, as in these cases the focus is on Dominican culture and not on the differences that make up its roots. However, it is important to consider the consequences of omitting the aspects that led to the formation of Dominican culture in the present. Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, this helps make integral aspects of the past invisible. This is the case of museums such as the Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía (MNHG) and the Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Nacional.

The National Museum of History and Geography focuses on the country's history from the independence in 1844 to the present. Given its focus on moments of historical importance to Dominicans, it is logical that this museum would give more visibility to elements, characters or processes of importance that stand out in the national narrative. However, given the lack of representation of Afro-Dominicans in the Dominican narrative from the academic perspective, these highlighted moments in history like the First Republic, the Restoration, the US intervention and the Trujillo era, also tend to leave out the importance of African legacy.

First of all, there is a significance to MNHG's narrative starting from 1844, the Dominican independence from Haiti, and not in 1697 when the island was divided between France and Spain therefore delineating what is now the Dominican territory, nor 1793 after the first abolition

of slavery, or 1821 the independence from Spain. There is a gap in Dominican museums between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. The director of the MNHG explained that this belongs to the museums in the colonial zone, most likely the Museo de las Casas (Guerrero personal communication 2022). In the end, the only museum that actually mentions the end of slavery is the Museo del Ron y la Caña which is not even considered by everyone as an official museum. Therefore, by starting Dominican history from the moment of independence from Haiti as opposed to other previous historical events that are also significant for the history of the country, the MNHG is already making a powerful statement.

Furthermore, it is during the Second Republic, the next period presented in the MNHG, that we see the idea of a national identity forming, in the context of rejection of Haiti, a second annexation to Spain and the restoration war. While we see the representation of important African descendants for Dominican history like Gregorio Luperon and Ulises Hereaux in the presidents gallery, the political environment explains the shift of the focus of the national narrative from African resilience in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, to Hispanic and Indigenous legacy by the end of the nineteenth century. There is also the need to acknowledge the role of African descendants during both U.S. occupations, as not only they suffered extreme discrimination but also played an important role on the fight against the U.S. While the silence of the MNHG about the consequences from the historical and political narrative on black Dominicans can be seen in their permanent collection, they have expressed that they are conscient about this silence, and have taken the initiative to support public outreach events focusing on African heritage as well as opening a special exhibition focusing of African legacy as we saw in chapter 6.

The Memorial de la Resistencia focuses on the period of the Trujillo dictatorship and the political processes in the country between 1916 and 1978. As mentioned in chapter 2, there was, and still is, a strong relationship between discrimination towards Haitians during the Trujillo dictatorship and the rejection of African heritage in the country. The idea that to be associated with the African past means that people are more likely to be associated with Haiti, is still visible in Dominican society today. This is especially harmful for black communities during the continued campaigns for the deportation of Haitians and puts them at risk of being targeted by ultra-nationalist organizations. An example of this was seen during the Black Lives Matter

protests in 2020, the Antigua Orden Dominicana attacked a group of peaceful protesters with the excuse of 'defending the country from a Haitian invasion' (Deibert 2020).

The Memorial de la Resistencia does a thorough job at highlighting the violence during Trujillo's dictatorship and acknowledging the Haitian genocide of 1973. It includes black Dominicans indistinctly and focuses more specifically on the oppression from the dictatorship and the people that helped defeat it. Furthermore, the collections of this museum and its satellite buildings have been donated by the families of the people that fought in the resistance movement. Therefore, it would be unfair to say that the invisibility of African presence in this museum is caused voluntarily or a result of censorship. Instead, it seems to be the result of focusing on Dominican society as one, with shared struggles and working together for the same goals. Even when the Memorial de la Resistencia includes black people in their displays, the way Trujillo's and consequently Balaguer's policies of persecution harmed specifically African descendants and other minority groups like LGBTQIA+ or people with disabilities for example, is not addressed. While like the MNHG this museum has an active cultural program often organising special exhibitions and events for the public about resilience, resistance and freedom, it is unclear how often, if ever, these focus on the African legacy and resistance.

A legacy in the shadows

Other museums that have more direct African presence, do not address the African legacy or its implications in the context of the museum, leaving the African legacy in the shadows. Having African or Afro-Dominican artefacts in a display without any context, helps perpetuate the idea that the African presence is something of the past and has no connection to Dominican culture today. This is the case of the INDIA, the Alcázar, the Museo Isabela, the Museo de las Atarazanas.

The national institute for anthropological research, INDIA, has part of a collection of African objects, but no context or text accompanying this collection. On the one hand, it is only by the initiative of one of the directors of the INDIA that there is an African display at all, as these artefacts, belonging to the Montespan collection, were in the storage of the Museo del Hombre. The idea to take these out of the storage and bring them to the INDIA so the students from the

UASD and any other visitors of the institute can have access to them is already a resourceful way to give representation to an often-forgotten part of Dominican identity.

The problem is that there is no information about these artefacts unless you happen to talk to a person that knows about them. The INDIA serves mainly as a research institute and not as a museum open to the public. There are only two rooms, and the African artefacts are in a corner of what is also used as an office or meeting space. Therefore, its main audience consists of the faculty of anthropology. Visitors from outside of the faculty that have no information about these African objects might misinterpret them. They cannot know what the context of these artefacts is, how old they are, how they arrived to the country or their connection to Dominican culture. This means that whoever passes by can make their own conclusions about these artefacts. In an educational setting like this, having the whole history of each artefact in depth is not necessary, as letting people make their own conclusions about art and displays in museums can be an excellent didactic resource. However, some minimal information like the provenance and provenience of the objects and estimated dates, would help avoid the spread of misinformation and the perpetuation of misguided perceptions about these artefacts.

In the case of the Alcázar, the African presence is less obvious. As mentioned in chapter 2 and chapter 5, Diego Columbus played an important part in the establishment of the slave trade. This is not only because of his role as governor and eventually viceroy, but also as the owner of a sugar mill that used slave labour which not only had the biggest concentration enslaved people in the island at the time but also was where the first African rebellion took place. None of these are mentioned in the museum. In the kitchen area, there is a mention of the servants eating separately to check for food poison, but it does not talk about the context in which the servants were working or give any information about them. Despite there being an African elephant skin trunk in Diego Columbus bedroom, there is no mention about the context in which Europeans would hunt in Africa, or how they acquired items from Africa nor how this trunk would have gotten to the Americas. While the furniture in the museum is not the original from the time the Columbus family lived there, this could have been an opportunity to make a connection with the impact the Columbus had on the Atlantic slave trade.

If you hire a guide for a tour of the museum, they usually tend to mention how enslaved people were needed for the construction and renovation of the Alcázar. However, since they started

implementing the use of audio-guides, guides are hired less often unless it is for bigger groups. The audio-guides do not mention the role of the enslaved people in the building of the Alcázar nor how the port of sans souci, which is the focus of the view from the balcony on the second floor, was the port of entrance for enslaved Africans to the continent. The Alcázar ends up being a place of strong significance for the history of slavery, the most visited museum in the country and still a place where African presence is left in the shadows.

The oldest evidence of African people in the Americas was found on the archaeological site of La Isabela. Of course, this is not the only reason why the La Isabela archaeological site is important, it was also the first European settlement in the Americas, as well as the first evidence of contact between indigenous and Europeans. However, the museum focuses only in the indigenous and European aspects. Even while talking about the indigenous presence, the museum maintains a colonial narrative that focuses on the 'discovery' of the Americas. Slavery is also not mentioned while the Columbus exchange is explained. These narratives of Indigenous peoples being saved by the Europeans is extremely harmful in the first place, but on top of that ignoring the role of slavery during colonialism and omitting to mention African people gives the visitors the idea that colonisation was a positive thing and Dominicans should be thankful for it.

Like in the Alcázar, it is up to the guide to mention the African remains found on the site and their context and importance. During my visit it was not mentioned at all, and it was only after I asked a second guide explicitly that I was given information about it. This could be in part due to the lack of research about the subject, as the initial studies on the African remains were done by foreign researchers. It is important to note that the site of La Isabela is quite remote compared to the rest of case studies, which has influenced the leadership of the site as an institution. It seems that it has been difficult to convince qualified people to take over the management both due to the low budget and remote location as well as safety issues (Paulino Personal Communication 2020). Due to the centralisation of the bureaucracy of national museums after the Ministry of Culture was founded, museums and archaeological located outside the capital have often to go through the Museo del Hombre for archaeological research, which tends to slow the process due to budget and personnel issues.

The Atarazanas museum is an interesting case because of its location by the main doors from the port sans souci to the city, on the same street where the enslaved people entered the island.

Although the museum mentions that “European powers, especially Spain and Portugal, began to bring enormous quantities of gold and silver to Europe from Africa and the Americas”, it does not mention anything else about the transatlantic slave trade and its consequences. The museum discusses European conflicts in the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they mention the French ship Marques de Gallifet, which “was found, carrying slaves, at the end of the eighteenth century, when it sank”. However, there is no further information about who these enslaved people might be, where did they come from, and there are no artefacts on display directly related to the African presence on this ship or any other through the museum’s exhibits. We can see in an interactive display of a life in a ship, how the crew used to travel, but there is no reference towards the treatment of enslaved peoples during their journey from Africa to the Americas. This is a completely missed opportunity not only because of the enormous role sea travel had on the transatlantic slave trade, but also because of how new the museum is. While the lack of representation in other case studies might be excused by the political climate in the 70’s or antiquated views of the colonisation process, the Atarazanas museum opened in 2019. After talking to the director of underwater heritage I understand that the museum narrative was restricted by the archaeological material available: not only it was counterproductive to acquire more artefacts when the direction of underwater heritage barely has the physical space or means to store what they have already, but underwater archaeology also is extremely delicate and hard to store in the first place. Therefore, the curation process of the museum focused on using what they already had and what could be included to complete their narrative following different ships at different times in history. However, the museum includes the use of interactive displays and electronical devices that complement the archaeological materials and fills the gaps left by the artefacts. To leave information out and therefore leaving the African legacy in the shadows when adding written, audiovisual or interactive displays was part of their budget already, seems inexcusable.

An informed representation

The next case studies do have explicit African representation which is addressed and contextualised in the museum. These give a more complete visitor experience and allow us to see different aspects of African presence in the country.

In the Museo de las Casas Reales, the 'Economy and Slavery' gallery touches upon different aspects of African presence in the country. The discourse about African presence starts in 1493 with the first arrivals of the ladinos and ends in the sixteenth century with instruments used by enslaved Africans. They talk about the shift from indigenous to African slavery which acknowledges that both were oppressed by the Europeans. I think it is interesting how they decided to show the economic development of the colony alongside the process of slavery and African presence, as this allows visitors to understand how deeply linked the two were. This narrative shows how important African presence has been through showing both the oppression of African peoples as well as the benefits they brought. Such a complete display was partly possible due to the access to archaeological material found in the building. It was likely enslaved people we kept or tried in the building as shackles were found in an excavation in 1976. However, we see that is not only archaeological material informing the displays: there are maps that help contextualise the transatlantic slave trade and changes in the economy, there are illustrations that depict the treatment of enslaved people, the arrival of staple crops like plantain, and the first African revolts. Furthermore, there are instruments used by African peoples and their accompanying text explains that these are still used in the present. These allow visitors to understand that while slavery was something of the past, there are still remnants of African legacy in Dominican society today.

While the contextualisation of African presence in the country stops there, with the last information mentioning the first revolt in 1521, we see African descendants represented in the rest of the museum. In the side of the courtyard, where there is a display of a chariot from the eighteenth century, we see a mannequin representing a black servant or driver with clothing of the time. While in the upper floor the focus of the museums shifts to the European court that used to be hosted in the building, we still see some hints of African presence. For example, in the courtroom gallery they explain that sugar mill owners were usually within the privileged people that were allowed inside. Without the context of the previous floor this would not say much, but after seeing how the sugar mill owners treated their workers, it is interesting to see how they were also an important part of the decision making in the island. Finally, in the room about the military around the eighteenth century, we see how there is an inclusion of black soldiers within the ranks. It is important to note the title one of the illustrations depicting a black soldier, it

translates to ‘a voluntary from the Santo Domingo infantry, third black camp’ (Fig. 37), suggesting that while black people were part of the army, they were probably segregated.

Figure 37. Illustration depicting a black soldier in the Museo de las Casas Reales (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

Compared to all the previous case studies, it seems that the African displays in the Museo de las Casas Reales is the most complete as it represents multiple facets of African presence. The only problem is that it still does not address the gap within the Dominican museums about the history of African resilience and their work towards freedom. We saw that the narrative in the MNHG starts only in 1844, and they said that the role of African representation should be in the zona colonial. However, the displays in the Museo de las Casas Reales ends in 1521, leaving a gap between the two museums from 1521 to 1844 that is not covered in any of the other national museums.

The only place where this period of resilience is actually mentioned, is the Museo del Ron y la Caña. This place is considered more of a bar or tourist attraction than a cultural venue by locals, however it is the only museum that mentions the end of slavery in the country. The narrative of the exhibition is very similar to the ‘Economy and slavery’ gallery in the Museo de las Casas Reales. The main difference is that instead of focusing on the broader economic impact of sugar plantations and the transatlantic slave trade, it focuses on how it affected rum production.

However, the aspect of the impact of slavery on enslaved African people is explained in a more engaging way for the public. This leaves a message that even if African people and their descendants were enslaved and mistreated, they also had their ways of resistance. This case shows us how the importance is not in the quantity of the collection or the period being discussed, but in the impact that the way the narrative is represented in the space can have.

There are two museums that seem out of place in this study: the García Arevalo Pre-Historic Art Hall and the Chavón Museum. Both these museums focus on the indigenous presence in the country. However, they both acknowledge that there is a link between indigenous and African experiences that should not be omitted in their displays and therefore give visibility to African presence in the country.

The Sala de Arte Pre-histórica García Arevalo, as the name implies, focuses primarily on the pre-historic era. However, due to his research, part of García Arevalo's collection comes from maroon archaeological sites from the maniel of Jose Leta ca. the seventeenth and eighteenth. As one of the few spaces where maroon material culture can be observed, it is important to include it in this study. Although this gallery is not as accessible to the public as the other museums in this study, the visibility it provides to the African legacy, however minimal, is considered positive in this context as it is a place where a number of archaeological researchers in the country turn to expand their knowledge.

While the main focus of the Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón is the indigenous presence, meaning that it has no artefacts or material representations of the African legacy, the museum does briefly mention the African legacy and how the process of interbreeding with Spanish and African culture has allowed the indigenous culture to survive. However, it is also interesting to analyse the definition of this centre as a regional archaeological museum, when its collection originates from a collection entirely focused on the indigenous presence in the region and does not include other archaeological themes of the area.

A political representation

In some of the case studies, there was a highlighted political influence in the exhibition choices. For the case of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Thompson (2002) argues that because of the

relationship between political changes in the country and the direction of the museum, Dominican cultural policy has had a great impact on the way the museum's narratives are handled. As we saw in chapter 6, when José Antonio Caro Alvarez was the director mention of African heritage and Haitian influence were generally sidelined. However, when Bernardo Vega, who supported the idea of seeing the legacy of indigenous, European and African culture with equal importance, became director in 1978, he took it upon himself to give more visibility to the African legacy (Thompson 2002, 43). This was done by including more explanatory texts in the museum, as well as creating more inclusive spaces such as the Gallery of the Origins and Contributions of the African Presence in the Dominican Republic. Adding themes such as origins in Africa, capture, crossing, punishment, marroons, African art in the Dominican Republic and transculturation; helped the visitor have a more informed overview of Dominican roots in African culture. However, later on during Morban Laucer's directorship from 1986 to 1996, some of the African displays were replaced. Thomson suggests that Laucer was pressured by the government to detach some practices from Dominican culture. The specific practices being vodou and batey culture, which are both closely related to Haiti, brings us back to a common theme throughout the case studies: African culture is okay as long as it's not too similar to Haitian culture.

While the policies of display of the Museo del Hombre during its first few decades were closely intertwined with governmental narratives, this does not seem to be the case after the turn of the century. When talking to former directors Carlos Andújar and Christian Martínez, they claim that the lack of changes or development of the museography in the last few decades, whether pertaining to African narrative or any other field, is more due to a lack of funds than to a lack of initiatives. More than the direction of the museum changing in relation to political views of the party, it is very related to the people working in the museum at the time. The personal and professional trajectories of the people working at the museum are also an extremely important factor that must be considered.

During the campaigns and projects for the renovation of the museum, representation of African heritage manifested itself in the form of cultural activities or temporary installations (Personal communication Martinez 2019, Personal communication Andujar 2020). Going beyond the historical aspect of African presence and showcasing the different ways it is engrained in Dominican culture in the present allows visitors to identify with diverse aspects of African

legacy. Finally, it seems that the intentions after the museum's renovation is to make up for past exclusionary practices and add a more multi-vocal narrative.

On the other hand, we have the case of the Faro a Colón where the mere existence of the monument has extremely political implications. The monumental structure of the Faro is dedicated to commemorating the colonisation of the Americas, its cross shaped building an ode to the arrival of Christianism to the 'new world'. The Dominican Republic being a predominantly catholic country, this does not seem out of place. However, a monument to the oppressive systems that supported one of the biggest genocides in history, the colonisation of the Americas, should address and contextualise said oppression in their narrative.

The Faro also gives us a glimpse of the diplomatic relations between the Dominican Republic and other countries. We already saw that while the hall of the Americas was originally meant to be a collaboration with other countries of the Americas, there is also donations from embassies from European and Asian countries. There is the presence of dedicated spaces to countries like Japan, Russia, China and Korea which have an economical relationship with present day Dominican Republic but not many links to the colonisation of the Americas. Then there are missing countries from the Americas which in many cases have an empty space in their honour, such as Haiti or Jamaica. Again, these say more about the international relations than about the museum, but it is nevertheless interesting to see there is not one single African collaboration in the hall.

From the countries present, it is also interesting to analyse which aspects they chose to show. It is understood that the idea is to highlight the indigenous culture of the continent before the arrival of the Europeans, and how it has been transformed after the period of colonisation. While most of the countries focus mainly on their indigenous roots, the only countries that also present their African legacy are Cuba, Colombia and Brazil. The sections of countries that are not part of the Americas but still decided to contribute to the project also stand out: the French section talks about France's role in colonialism and mentions the Atlantic trade in enslaved people, and the Portuguese section talks about Portuguese explorations in West Africa.

We also see African representation outside of the gallery of the Americas in the 'Spain in Africa' hall and in their African Gallery. However, the African gallery still being closed to the public

raises the question of what is going to happen to the artefacts there and what is the future of this collection.

A multicultural legacy

Finally, we have the case studies that show African legacy within the context of multiculturality. Here the focus is not in showing all the different aspects of African history like in the Museo de las Casas Reales but instead, like in the Museo del Hombre, their final aim is to show how African legacy is still present in Dominican culture. The Trampolín Children's Museum does this by going straight to the point. While this museum does not go into detail about the historical aspects that built up Dominican culture, they introduce children to the idea that Dominican traditions have different roots. They use common every-day objects and tourist souvenirs to explain how it is not one single aspect of indigenous, European or African culture that makes us Dominican but a combination of different legacies.

The Centro Cultural León Jimenes builds up this same message of multiculturality by first giving some context which leads to the expression of Dominican culture. However, the museography in the section dealing with African influence has long been criticised for "hiding" the African legacy (Candelario 2007). The idea of presenting the African legacy behind a wall (Fig. 1) was itself intended to criticise the tendency of Dominicans to leave the African legacy in the shadows (Personal communication Carlos Andújar 2020). In other words, the Centro León conceived the museography with the aim to make visitors think about the hidden aspects of Dominican culture. However, since it seems not everyone immediately gets the point, it raises the question whether the display is achieving this goal, or if it is inadvertently reinforcing the idea of African legacy needing to be hidden.

In contrast, the section dedicated to "mulatto society" is a very good example of how African influence has become part of all aspects of Dominican culture. The only problem with this section is that it is difficult for visitors to identify or have more information about which objects come from African, indigenous or European traditions. More information on this could help the public better understand the connection between these roots and the present.

Given its focus on contemporary art, the Museo de Arte Moderno is another example that gives visitors a glimpse of African legacy through a multicultural focus. It would be interesting to study the level of representation of Afro-Dominican artists in the museum. Due to the complex background of the Dominican population, it is difficult to say which pieces were produced by Afro-Dominican artists and which were not. This is specially the case when concerning subjects that are not directly related to the African experience. However, in the exhibitions in the museum like the biennial it is possible to appreciate how contemporary artists perceive the African legacy.

7.1 How have the academic, institutional and political tendencies impacted the way Dominican museums have presented African heritage?

Looking at Dominican museums, we have seen that there have been multiple academic, institutional and political reasons behind the way African legacy has been presented. If we look at these museums through the epistemological positions for critical museology we can conclude a few things.

First, we can confirm that African history in the country has been shaped by the leaders of the Dominican society, as they have had the power to influence the narratives of its telling. Dominican identity has been forged on the basis that we are descendants of Europeans, with the legacy of indigenous traditions left by our ancestors and predecessors in the island and some hints of African presence. However, we know not only that the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean have not been completely exterminated, as that idea was mainly spread for the purposes of land ownership; but also, that our African ancestors have had a big influence in the shaping of Dominican modern culture.

Nevertheless, the national narrative remains on the basis of Dominicans and our identity seen as opposition of Haiti. This is not an uncommon situation between bordering countries, and it does not always has a negative impact. However, in the case of the Dominican Republic who still to this day celebrates independence from Haiti, has suffered before under Haitian dictators and has

a big portion of the population that is composed of Haitian immigrants, this creates a significantly tense political environment. The way Dominican history has been shaped, results in the idea that being associated to Africa can be mistaken by being associated to Haiti, and that in general is seen in Dominican society as a negative thing. This results in Dominicans adopting racist and xenophobic behaviour that is strongly fuelled by lack of education on the subject. We have had African presence in the island well before the division between the two countries. African traditions are not savage, outdated or 'from the devil', these are all European narratives from the colonial period told to excuse their abuse and oppression in favour of their economy.

Second, critical museology states that collections are influenced by the people collecting. We have seen this with Dominican museums not only in the collections available via donations in the Faro a Colón, Museo de la Familia, Alcázar de Colón, or Museo del Hombre, but also in the way access to collections can influence a museums narrative. The access to collections from different countries is what shaped the hall of the Americas in the Faro a Colón, each collection dictating the narrative of the country and adding information to the bigger picture. In the case of the Museo de la Familia the donations from accommodated families, result in a museum depicting the life of accommodated families. We saw that the main reason the Museo del Hombre, the INDIA and the Centro León have a collection of African artefacts its due to the collections of Montespan being loaned to the Museo del Hombre in the first place. The main reason they spread from one museum to the other was thanks to the initiative of one of the directors who then became director of the INDIA and later worked for the Centro León. Therefore, not only is the collection influenced by the collector but also the dissemination of the collection is dependent on the interest of individual people.

Going further, the collections of local archaeological materials are heavily dependent on the archaeological research done in the country. If there are no initiatives for archaeological research about the African past, then of course we have little access to archaeological artefacts depicting the African presence. Archaeological research is also strongly dependent of the people doing the archaeology. If it is difficult to become an archaeologist in the country, the archaeological field is controlled by external fundings. Therefore, the archaeological developments are a consequence of individual interest of non-Dominicans.

Third, it would be impossible for museums not to be biased. Dominican museums are not only managed by human beings with their own ideologies and personal beliefs, but national museums are highly influenced by the political environment. This is partly due to how the Dominican government works. Whenever the government changes, the directors of the museum change and therefore the people in charge of decisions in the museums also change. Nevertheless, the idea that museums can be neutral when history itself cannot be neutral is based on the illusion that that museums are under an untouchable institutional power.

Fourth, objects will always end up with multiple interpretations. In the same way that history is influenced by the people telling it, collections are dependent on the people collecting and museums will display the way the people working at the museums want to make the displays, objects will be interpreted how people want to interpret them. This means that the contextualisation of an object is extremely important to avoid misconceptions, as mentioned before in the case of the INDIA. Nevertheless, the contextualisation itself will be influenced by whoever is in charge, and how people perceive it will be affected by their personal experiences. We saw this happen in the Centro Leon, the displays of African artefacts hidden behind a wall were put there with a specific purpose. However, different visitors can have completely opposite reactions to these displays.

The exhibiting strategies in Dominican museums have been impacted by the history of the country. The focus on academic research in the subject of African presence in the country and its legacy has directly shaped how this presence is presented in museums. From the vocabulary used, to the artefacts displayed as well as the amount of space it has been given in museum galleries and when it was introduced, it has all been linked to academic interest in the subject. Institutional bureaucracy has dictated where and how African representation is appropriate or necessary to show. We saw that not only the demarcation of each museum dictated what could or could not be represented but also how the type of museum affected its means. For example, national museums were more restricted when it comes to the budget and had to stick to the period assigned to them. Private museums on the other hand sometimes omitted information to benefit their sales.

Finally, we saw how political tendencies are closely related to what is accepted to be display in museums and has a lot of power about the narrative. This is not only found at the superficial

level but also more intrinsically, the political environment dictates what type of stories can be told. In countries like the Dominican Republic where the shift of the government from one party to the other means a change of the whole cultural structures, museum spaces are highly dependent on politics.

7.2 How is the African legacy perceived by the population in the Dominican Republic?

Within chapter 6 and this chapter I have discussed what aspects of African legacy have been represented in Dominican museums. To better understand how the Dominican population perceives African legacy, I looked for the link between the questionnaire answers.

First, I wanted to check whether there was a significant difference between the respondents' answers depending on their age, to see if there is a gap from the perspective of different generations. When looking at the age average, older people were more likely to feel represented in Dominican museums than younger people. Not only was the age average of people that felt represented 46.4 years, while the age average of people that did not feel represented was 42.8 years, but no one over 65 expressed that they did not feel represented in Dominican museums. This might indicate that older people agree more with the way museum displays present Dominican culture while the younger generations are being more critical of said displays.

My main aim with the age was to determine whether there was a big correlation between the age and whether people had studied about African heritage in school, it seems that overall, the younger people are, the most likely they had learnt about African heritage in school. This indicates that the school system has gradually made more efforts to include African legacy in the curriculum.

While the majority in most age groups agree that the public should have a say in what is shown in museums, there was a big difference for people aged between 36-45 years old. With 46.2% disagreeing with the public's right to have a say in museums displays compared to a 26.4% agreeing and a 26.4% undecided. Lastly, I wanted to determine whether people from different ages had specific preferences between the methods for implementing multivocal approaches in museums, while there was a slight difference between the preferences between the age ranges,

the majority agreed on wanting the implementations of more media engagement and inclusion of local narratives and in all the age ranges the less voted method was the inclusion of more information panels.

Regarding any disparities between the opinions of local Dominicans and Dominicans in the Diaspora, while in both cases the majority of respondents said they felt represented in Dominican museums, 27% of the diaspora respondents say they did not feel represented, against only 10% of the local Dominicans not feeling represented. This could be because living in the diaspora makes people more passionate about preserving their culture. Furthermore, they would have more exposure to how other cultures are represented in museums. Therefore, people that have lived abroad would be more likely to see what is missing.

When asked if they had seen any African heritage in the museums they had visited, while the general majority replied they had seen at least some African representation, 33% of the diaspora said they had not seen any African representation against only 12% of the locals. On the other hand, when asked if they had learnt anything new about African culture in the visited museums, while the majority of locals (52%) said they had, the majority of Dominicans from the diaspora said they had not learnt anything new (51%). While this is not a striking difference, it hints at the Dominicans in the diaspora having a slightly different expectations of African representation in museums than local Dominicans.

While the vast majority of respondents agreed that they would like to see more African representation in museums, 29% locals replied they were unsure of whether they wanted more representation or not, against only 8% of the diaspora being undecided. This gives the impression there was more dissatisfaction with the current representation within the diaspora than the locals. Similarly, while the vast majority agreed that African heritage should have the same level of representation in museums as Indigenous or European heritage, 26% of locals were unsure as opposed to only 5% of the diaspora.

When focusing on the heritage of the respondents, I wanted to see if there was a big difference in the responses for those who identify as Africans versus those who did not. Of the 163 respondents, 8% identified their heritage as fully African, 61% considered themselves to have some African heritage, and 31% identify themselves as having no African heritage. Taking this into account, when asked whether respondents felt represented in Dominican museums 56% of

the respondents with no African heritage felt represented in Dominican museums against 44% of respondents with African heritage. Furthermore, only 31% of those who identify as fully African descendants feel represented in Dominican museums.

In summary, the respondents do feel that African heritage is visible in Dominican museums, but they consider that it could be improved. It is not so much about whether they feel represented or not but more about how museums present our legacy. The respondents agree that museums are an important place for the creation of our identity. As such, it is important that museums displays are not only accurate but also easy to understand and reach different audiences.

As for the inclusion of multi-vocality in museums, respondents understand that the museum has a responsibility to the public: showing different perspectives and following the publics' needs. For example, the majority believes that African traditions are only present in specific context or regions in the country. This means the public acknowledges how areas like the southern region and some specific municipalities still hold some African traditions dear. However, this could also imply that there are still slight misconceptions that African legacy is only important because of its connection to these specific contexts.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the respondents agreed that they want to see more African representation in Dominican museums, and this should hold the same amount of representation as Indigenous and Europeans traditions. As for how this representation could they place, the majority considers that more activity in the media, inclusion of local narratives and outreach activities would be the most effective.

7.3 What can Dominican museums learn from other case studies across the Caribbean to develop a multi-vocal and decolonial approach for displaying heritage?

We saw in chapter 3 some of the trends for the decolonisation of museums: collaboration with local communities, reorganising existing collections, recontextualising current displays and including contemporary art. While these have successfully been applied in museums around the

world, it raises the question of how Caribbean museums can adapt to these trends. In chapter 5, we saw two examples of Caribbean museums that have applied decolonial practices to their exhibition policies the Barbados Museum and Historical Society and the National Museum Site of the Slave Route in Cuba. Both countries have very similar historical context to the Dominican Republic. In this section I will connect the decolonial trends and these two examples to see how these processes can be adapted to the circumstances, contexts and budgets of Dominican museums.

The most urgent cases are the ones where the African legacy is completely invisible. For the case of the Museo de la Familia, there have been conversations about the plan to make an alternative space at the other end of the colonial zone: Santa Bárbara. Located near the Atarazanas museum, Santa Barbara is a neighbourhood where the African-descendant population can both be represented, as well as benefit from a cultural space in their own community (Paulino personal communication 2022). However, while this would be an ideal scenario, creating a whole new museum takes a lot of resources and time.

In the meantime, a good alternative would be, as other museums have applied, to work on the decolonisation of their narratives: to include signage or museology within their narrative, explaining what the limitations of the museum are, explaining that although this museum reflects the reality of many Dominicans at the time, this was not the only reality. If we look at the Warmington Gallery in the Barbados museum, its displays of a plantation house have a very similar set up as the Museo de la Familia. The main difference in these two case studies is that the Warmington Gallery is presented within a greater context, you go through the Barbados museum learning about African culture, the importance of African presence in the country, and seeing different aspects of African legacy. It is only after this contextualisation that they present the colonial displays. Adding a sign to the Museo de la Familia contextualising where the Tostado made their fortune, how there were different lifestyles for Dominican families with different backgrounds and what implications this has for present populations is not going to change the whole museum's narrative, but it will bring forward the uncomfortable truths that seem hidden in this museum.

In the case of Kahkow experience, we can also apply this solution while expanding it. Since the exhibitory space is more focused on interactive displays than on archaeological artefacts, it is

very easy for information to be added to these displays. Of course, we still have the problem of a private company not wanting to harm their image. From a corporate perspective however, the best solution is not to hide and hope for the best but address the problem and do something about it. Kahkow experience could acknowledge the dark history of chocolate production, while benefitting their sales. Coming clean as a company and saying: here is how chocolate production has harmed people in the past, and here are all the things that we are doing about it, makes people have more trust in the company. One way they can balance the negative output is following the example of the Slave Route monument in Cuba and working with local Afro-Caribbean artisans. Since Kahkow experience is a very popular location for Dominican and tourists alike this would help promote local businesses to an audience with a higher economic presence. This would still greatly benefit the company's image by presenting themselves as a company that supports the community.

Cases like the Museo Nacional of History and Geography are more complicated. The gap left between the Museo de las Casas Reales and the MNHG between 1521 and 1844 is unacceptable. However, we have seen that the MNHG has worked since 2022 to give more visibility to the African presence and its importance for Dominican history. While ideally, we would look at the collections of the museum and recontextualise them so we can reframe the museum period to include the two centuries that are missing. I have looked at the catalogue of the museum, and the material culture is simply not there. We know that maroon archaeology is specifically difficult due to the nature of manieles to be hard to find. Furthermore, the marroon material culture was often ephemeral, borrowing from indigenous and European utensils and leaving them behind when it was time to run. While we have few examples of artefacts made by marroons in some of the manieles, these are not enough to fill a 200-year gap. Even if the 200 years also focused on all the other aspects of history building up to the Dominican independence, the museum barely has the budget to restore the artefacts that are already in their possession. Therefore, it seems that the MNHG can only keep doing what it has already been doing: collaborating with researchers that have been focusing on African research and open their spaces for locals to have access to this information. Having a section of their museum hold a summary of the 'La Esclavitud y el Legado Cultural de Africa en el Caribe' exhibition, would already be better than nothing. Nevertheless, this period within which they are still slowly rebuilding the permanent displays is the perfect opportunity to explore how the museum can include a multi-vocal perspective.

In the case of the Memorial de la Resistencia, I would not propose to include more text as the museum already has too much information in text. So much text in the museology can overwhelm the public, and the thread of the narrative is lost. Adding more text in this case would be counterproductive. On the other hand, since they already do many activities to discuss resilience, it would be a good idea to include snippets of these other forms of resilience in their special exhibition via images or video. In this case, the whole museology needs to be worked on and more interactive ways of getting the information to the public without tiring them out. Then, when these changes are made, the different perspectives of the various groups or people related to the subject both in the past and in the present have to be taken into account.

We have already seen that museums as a whole can benefit in different ways from more collaboration with the public. This is specially the case when focusing those collaborations on local communities or the descendants of the people represented in their displays. Some of the museums studied have a very active cultural agenda which already help involve the public. However, collaboration is not only about the output of resources but also about the exchange of ideas and mutual benefits. These can take different shapes: for example, the INDIA working together with the anthropology students from the UASD to fix the gaps in their displays, which can take the shape of credits for a final project or an internship.

In the case of the Alcázar, adding text contextualising the building, or including the information in the audioguide would already make a big difference. Furthemore, including contemporary art in the upstairs balcony that focuses on the subjects of slavery and resilience would be a way for visitors to connect with the impact of the decisions made in the building. Like in the Slave Route museum in Cuba, it would not necessary to transform the whole collection or displays. Simply dedicating a space for the expression of afro-descendants and their experiences in the most visited museum of the island would have a big impact on the African representation in the country. Adding contemporary art to archaeological and historical exhibitions has been implemented in many museums representing Indigenous peoples as it helps to break with the idea that the narrative presented is something exclusive of the past and does not affect anyone in the present.

As we saw for the Museo Arqueológico de La Isabela, the narrative is extremely colonial not only in the way it diminishes the African presence, but also in the way it presents the indigenous

presence from a very European perspective. Although at this site, it would also be necessary to revise the entire museography, see how reframing their collections can bring light to the different stories that this archaeological site is trying to tell us. The process of putting back together all the research that has been done on the site, the artefacts that are dispersed and have been taken away, and finding a more stable form of management is all not only time consuming but also budget dependent. Adding temporary signage explaining that the narratives displayed are in the process of revisions due to the colonial implications would already make a significant change. This measure has been taken in several museums around the world where it is known that the perspectives displayed need to be updated but that the process or budget would take some time (van Huis 2019).

In the case of the Atarazanas the effort should concentrate on giving more support to research focused on the slavery process. The museum could show in more detail the circumstances of the transport of enslaved people, and the transatlantic slave trade. This does not require major physical changes to the museum, but could be added to its many electronic devices, or further developed in the Gallifet ship area. Working with the neighbouring community of Santa Barbara for the contextualisation of the museum within the area would also be a great opportunity to discuss how the histories in the ships in the museums translate to Dominican life in the present.

As mentioned before with the MNHG, the Museo de las Casas Reales would need to add more information about what happened to the slave resistance movement after 1521. Furthermore, like the Barbados museum it would be interesting if beyond having Africans and their descendants represented in the military gallery without any context, the museum could take the opportunity to highlight their presence and talk more about the black experience in the country. Or like the Alcázar, the museum could implement contemporary art to link those experiences to the present.

The Museo del Ron y la Caña could also implement the same strategies as proposed for Kahkow. While they are already doing half of the job and calling out oppressive practices, discussing how slavery was used for the development of the rum market and how this history has had the consequence of most workers being black while most rum company owners being white. Nevertheless, supporting local afro-caribbean businesses and small entrepreneurs would benefit both the museum's image and the local community.

As for the Museo del Hombre, they have been working on including more multi-vocal perspectives and the plans to redo the African section of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano are still in motion. During the discussions for the new museum narrative after the renovations of the Museo del Hombre in Santo Domingo, some of the key players were the older generation of people who worked on the museum. While it is extremely valubale to have input from these people, they were also emotionally attached to some of the displays that had been done in their time in the museum, p.e. dioramas that to a decolonial perspective seem outdated and out of place. However, the power dynamics present make it difficult for newer generations working in the museum to exclude the old narrative altogether without this being seen as an insult to the older generations (personal communication 2021 kept anonymous). A good solution for this would also be contextualizing these displays and explaining how they were part of the original exhibitions in the museum. Explaining how the way things are displayed can perpetuate colonial narratives for visitors is a way for people to better understand museums as institutions.

In the case of the Faro, the building needs to be contextualised. While the Faro is still working on its renovations for the upper floors is the perfect moment to reframe their exhibitional practices. Hopefully they will be opening their African gallery again, and that way more people can have access to knowledge about African presence in the country. Furthermore, it would be a good initiative for the country to try to connect with the countries where there are gaps in the hall of the Americas. Due to its location, the faro is a bit isolated from the rest of the museums. As they have so much empty space available, opening the site for more community events would be a way to attract more public to the Faro.

I don't consider the Museo Trampolín needs to contextualise their display of the African market as opposed to the rest of the case studies the main target of this museum is often too young to read, so the visits are contextualised in person by the guides. Therefore, their focus should be in updating their engagement program and making sure African legacy is represented.

Finally, in the case of the Centro León, I think the wall hiding the African artefacts should be address within the exhibition, to avoid misunderstandings of its purpose.

8. Conclusion

Summary

This thesis has worked on the representation of African legacy in the Dominican Republic. Looking at the academic, archaeological and historical background we have seen the trajectory of African representation in the country. In the second chapter I did a short overview of the history of African presence in the Dominican Republic. As we have seen, African presence in the territory that is now the Dominican Republic goes back to at least 1503. Africans and their descendants mainly arrived to the island between the early 16th century and the early 19th century. This arrival of Africans to the island being a consequence of the slave trade and forced migration, we do not see such a direct inclusion of African material culture as we see it happen with the Europeans for example. Instead, African legacy is more visible in our language, food, arts and traditions, all transfers of knowledge that were easier to pass down generations despite colonial oppression. Nevertheless, there is still African influence in contemporary Dominican material culture. However, this influence in material culture has been studied less broadly. The creolisation process that has helped African legacy to become an intrinsic part of Dominican culture, also leads to the erasure of African roots and this can be clearly seen in Dominican museums.

In chapter 5, we saw how African legacy was presented in the academic field. At first academic research about African presence in the country was very grounded in the remnants of colonial perspectives. Nevertheless, gradually there was an increase of interest in African folklore and its presence in Dominican culture. In the late 1970s we start seeing the emergence of a critical discourse against racism and discrimination. This is parallel to the excavation of archaeological sites where we see the cohabitation of indigenous, Europeans and African peoples. We start to see more evidence of the mistreatment of African enslaved peoples and by the 1980s the focus shifts to looking at evidence of resistance. By the 1990s, the academic papers on the African presence of the country no longer focuses only on aspects such as music and religion, but also the acknowledgement of the slave trade and the African experience.

These developments on the study of African presence in the country were also visible in museum displays. In the 1970s we see the opening of multiple national museums in Santo Domingo. Due to the political tendencies of the time these museums focused mainly on the indigenous and

European perspectives in the island. However, gradually the academic research done on the subjects of African culture made its way into museum talks, symposiums and special exhibitions. We also see a relationship between the big ceremonies for the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' of the Americas in 1992, with the inauguration of the Faro a Colón and the diplomatic visits from all over the world, and Benin and Haiti's initiative only two years later in 1994 to work with the UNESCO to give more visibility to the transatlantic slave trade.

While after the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 2000, the centralisation of Dominican museums resulted in bureaucratical restrictions for national museums. On the other hand, we saw a rise in the development of private museums to fill the gap where national museums were falling behind. While the museums in the plaza de la cultura are still recovering from their eventual closure and fight for funds for renovations, the museums in the zona colonial as have been left to make up the difference.

To address the way African legacy has been presented in Dominican museums, I looked at relevant case studies that by their definition, history or context should have African representation. To analyse these, I looked at them through the lens of critical museology and politics of display. Based on common trends for decolonising practices in museums I also used two Caribbean examples as the ideal of good practice for decolonial museums: the Barbados Museum and Historical Society and the National Museum Site of the Slave Route in Cuba. These examples were chosen due to accessibility and the similarity between their context and the context of Dominican museums.

Afterwards, I focused on studying the history, context and displays of the individual case studies: Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Museo Alcázar de Diego Colón, Museo de la Familia Dominicana, Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Sala Pre-Hispánica García Arévalo, Museo de las Casas Reales, Museo del Arte Moderno, Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón, Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía, Museo Arqueológico La Isabela, Faro a Colón, Centro Cultural León Jimenes, Museo Infantil Trampolín, Museo del Ron y la Caña, Museo Memorial de las Resistencia Nacional, Kahkow Experience and the Museo de las Atarazanas Reales. The information for the analysis of the museums was a compilation of site visits, interviews with museum staff, and documental research. The museum analysis was complemented by a questionnaire given to the public to get an insight into their perspectives.

How can multi-vocality help exhibition practices increase the visibility of African legacy in Dominican museums?

After analysing how African legacy is represented in Dominican museums it would be misguiding to say that African legacy is invisible. However, in some of the case studies like the Museo de la Familia Dominicana and Kahkow Experience, the African presence is not represented. The lack of representation of African history in the country ironically becomes more visible in places where it should be mentioned but is instead found missing. However, we saw that this lack of visibility is not necessarily routed in negligence but is sometimes influenced by political or institutional policies.

In other cases, the invisibility comes from a place of inclusion. The process of creolisation in the country has made the different indigenous, African and European components that originally built Dominican culture often inseparable from one another. This results on exhibitionary practices that are so inclusive within their Dominican perspectives that the individual aspects of the legacies behind it can be forgotten. This is the case of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and the Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Nacional.

Then we have the museums that have African presence but have forgotten to address it: the Instituto Nacional Dominicano de Investigaciones Antropológicas, the Alcázar de Diego Colón, the Museo Arqueológico La Isabela, and the Museo de las Atarazanas Reales. These museums are already halfway there; they have artefacts depicting African legacy or their locations are significant for the history of African presence in the country. What they are missing is some contextualisation so visitors can learn about this history.

Nevertheless, we do have a group of museums with an informed museum narrative that do address the presence of African legacy in the country. These are the Museo de las Casas Reales, the Museo del Ron y la Caña, the Sala Pre-Histórica García Arévalo and the Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavón. While they all acknowledge African legacy in different ways, they also demonstrate that this is not only possible but also a necessary part of their narratives.

While all of the case studies have been influenced at one point or the other by the political environment in the country, in some cases like the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and the Faro a Colón this influence has been more transparent. These museums help showcase why we always need to look at museums from a critical perspective, as it is almost certain that the displays have been impacted by the multiple people behind their making such as the archaeologists, collectors and curators.

Finally, we have the case studies that showcase the multi-culturality present in Dominican society. These are the Museo Trampolín, the Centro Cultural León Jimenes and the Museo de Arte Moderno. Again from very different methodologies these museums show how even looking at Dominican culture as a melting pot, it is possible to acknowledge and highlight the different components such as African legacy.

What all of these case studies tell us, is that academic, institutional and political tendencies have influenced Dominican museums in a multitude of ways. Academic research has dictated the information available for museums to work with. Institutional policies have determined the importance of talking about African legacy in their spaces and what shape should this take. While political tendencies have restricted or encourage new discourses about African history.

These tendencies have manifested in shortcomings as:

- lack of contextualisation in museums, where we have no museology or text accompanying artefacts to address important aspects of African legacy in the country;
- Museums trying to survive under very low budgets, which affects the conservation of the artifacts or the employment of qualified staff;
- Poor management which results on the same museums having completely different visitor experiences depending on the day or the guide; and
- Alarmingly, a historical gap within the historical narrative of national museums where the period between 1521 with the first African Revolt and 1844 with the independence of Haiti is not addressed.

This is important because it has been established that museum displays have an important role to play in the development of national identity. Therefore, the way Dominicans see African legacy represented in museums, influences their view of African history and traditions. Having information about the slave trade, but no representation of the marroon communities, the fight

for the end of slavery, emancipation, or how African descendants influenced present Dominican culture, diminishes their role at the eyes of museum visitors.

We have seen in the questionnaire that not all Dominicans learnt about African heritage in school. Therefore, for a lot of people the information that they receive about African presence is mainly informed by what they see represented in social dynamics: learning that a certain food comes from Africa, recognising African instruments in Dominican music, hearing about African religions, or seeing how different aspects of African legacy are represented in the media. Museums are the one place within these options that have the institutional duty to educate its visitor as openly as possible.

While the respondents of the questionnaire expressed that they do feel African heritage is present in Dominican museums. They also explain that they do not totally agree with the way this is represented. It is important to not only have a mention of African legacy, but also to keep in mind how the way displays are presented to the public can leave different messages to people from different backgrounds. The respondents agree that museums have a responsibility towards the public and need to improve their representation of African heritage, so it is in the same level as Indigenous and European currently is.

After taking into account the feedback from the public and looking at how the Barbados Museum and Historical Society and the National Museum Site of the Slave Route in Cuba implemented decolonial practices in their exhibitions, I focused on how these decolonial practices can be applied to Dominican museums. The main focus of these methodologies is making a space for the inclusion of multi-vocality in the exhibitory practices.

While the idea of collaborating with local communities may seem like a happy, easy fix for most museum problems. We know that in reality the process of real collaboration is a long-term commitment that comes with a lot of restrictions and impediments. Multi-vocality implies that there is not only a right or wrong history, but there are multiple perspectives that need to respected. When consulting with locals about their thoughts on the inclusion of displays depicting the injustices African people suffered during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Barbados museum ran into the problem that some afro-descendants did not want the side of history that shows them as victims to be displayed for the whole world to see.

It is also important to take into account is that not everyone is willing, or mentally able to face the past. I agree that it is the duty of a museum to make the information of the atrocities of the past available. It is not only necessary for people outside of the communities that were harmed to be confronted with the truth to be able to understand the harm that these communities have suffered. Furthermore, people within these communities that are looking to overcome or process their own past should have all the access they need. On the other hand, I do not agree with some authors like Lonetree (2012) that people within these communities have to face the past as this would help them in the end. This would be like imposing a traumatic experience on victims without their consent for the sake of therapy. This was a subject of discussion in our research seminars at Leiden University, where we had multiple guests from Caribbean museums (p.e. Alissandra Cummins) explaining how they had museum visitors who expressed how they did not want to be stuck in the past and would rather focus on the resilience from their people. After much deliberation most of us concluded that the best solution would be for museum spaces to have trigger warnings.

However, there are also other ways to include local communities in the collaboration and co-creation of multi-vocal exhibitions. Apart from consulting them for how they wish to be represented and what are the needs of the community, it is also important to make sure the museum is not the only one benefitting from collaboration. In the case of the National Museum Site of the Slave Route in Cuba, we see two different opportunities for the local afro-cubans to get involved with their representation that also benefits them. The first, is giving them space to explore and expand contemporary art practices which express their relationship with key elements of African legacy like religion, slavery or the diaspora experience. The second, is working together with local artisans so they can sell their crafts in the museum. This is not an uncommon practice in museums, but due to the focus on Afro-Caribbean art in this case, it helps afro-Cubans directly benefit from this collaboration with an economical value.

Based on the examples of these two museums, I theorised how decolonising practices can help Dominican museums increase the visibility of African legacy. All of the case studies could use some focus on collaboration with the public. Museums like the MNHG, Museo del Hombre, Memorial de la Resistencia, Museo Trampolín and the Centro León already have very active links with local communities via their outreach strategies. These however could always be strengthened and shift from a focus on dissemination of knowledge to a focus on a more

multilateral collaboration. In some museums, these collaborations could follow the Cuban example, whether via working with local artisans which would be beneficial for cases like the Kakow Experience and Museo del Ron y la Caña; or by including contemporary art in their displays which would benefit museums like the Alcazar, Casas Reales, the Faro, and MNHG.

In some cases, the main focus should be on recontextualisation. This is the case for the Alcázar, the Atarazanas, the Museo de las Casas Reales, the INDIA, Centro León. While in others there needs to be a reframing of the museums boundaries and how they organise their collections. Taking into account the budget and personnel restrictions these decolonising practices take the shape of temporarily recontextualising their displays while a bigger restructuration of their collections and exhibitory practices takes place. This would be the case of the Museo de la Familia, Kahkow Experience, Museo Nacional de Historia y Geografía, Museo del Hombre, Museo La Isabela, Memorial de la Resistencia and Faro a Colón.

There are also plans for multiple initiatives in the south of the country in Azua, Barahona, Ocoa and San Juan that could allow more space for experimentation with, and a break from antiquated museology traditions (Personal Communication Andújar 2021). Furthemore, a few of the museums used as case studies have been going through a process of renovation and reframing of their collections already. The hope is that their new exhibitions would be more inclusive and take multiple perspectives into account.

Recommendations for Future research

Originally, part of the aim of this thesis was to create a database with all the African collections in the Dominican Republic. At the time of my research some of the catalogues were being digitalised by the Centro de Inventario de Bienes Culturales. Although this was too ambitious for a master's thesis and the circumstances of Dominican catalogues made it more difficult, I still believe that creating such a database would be of extreme benefits for both museums and future researchers.

I also believe that while the results of the questionnaire where extremely useful to get an idea of Dominican perspectives about African representation in museums. Future studies with a bigger sample that is more representative of the whole population could enrich the views on Dominican

museums further. Finally, I think that a study of how we could use archaeological sites in the country to further explore African legacy and exhibitionary practices in a sustainable way for the communities around it would be the next step necessary looking forward.

Abstract

The representation of African legacy in museums has been a subject that has been neglected in the Dominican Republic. While Dominican museums have exemplary exhibitions about indigenous and European presence in the country, this is not often the case for African presence. This is mainly due to the historical circumstances that have led to the discrimination of the Afro-Dominican population.

The political environment in the country has influenced the direction of archaeological and academic research. This has had as a consequence that research about African material culture in the country has been left behind. Another problem has been the nature of African material culture: objects that would have survived the transatlantic journey were often left behind when facing a life of slavery. In the case of marroon material culture, the precarity of life and the hidden nature of manieles has made it hard to identify marroon sites as well as which artefacts were used by African marroons.

Nevertheless, material culture is not the only way to represent African legacy in museums. Working through the lens of critical museology and politics of display, the academic, institutional and political tendencies that have influenced the representation of African heritage in Dominican museums are analysed. This will be done by looking at the history, context and displays of 17 different Dominican museums. These museums are analysed with the help of archival research and interviews with local academics, historians and people working in the museums.

The aim is to understand how we can use multi-vocality to better increase the visibility of African legacy in the country. To complement the museum analysis, a survey to the Dominican public in the shape of an online questionnaire, helps gain insight into the public's perceptions of African legacy in Dominican museums. Two different Caribbean museums are used as examples of decolonial practices in the Caribbean. Using common trends for the decolonisation of museums as a basis, a proposal curated for each museum is made. These proposals are based on the collaboration with local communities, recontextualisation of the displays, reorganisation or reframing of the collections, and inclusion of contemporary art.

Figure list

Figure 36. Map Museo de las Atarazanas Reales.

Figure 37. Illustration depicting a black soldier in the Museo de las Casas Reales (Photograph by Marianny Aguasvivas).

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Appendix

I. Interviewees

Dirección General de Museos – Carlos Andújar, director.

INDIA – José Guerrero, former director

Alcázar de Colón - Tour guides

Museo de la Familia – Tour guides

Museo del Hombre Dominicano – Christian Martinez, former director; Carlos Andújar, former director; Clenis Tavarez, physical anthropologist; Orli Peña, education department

Sala Pre-Histórica García Arévalo - Manuel García Arévalo

Museo de las Casas Reales – Tour guides

Museo de Arte Moderno - Tour guides

Museo Arqueológico Regional Altos de Chavon – Arlene Alvarez, former director

Museo de Historia y Geografía - JoséGuerrero, director

Museo Arqueológico La Isabela – Tour guides

Faro a Colón - Amelia Torres, tour guide

Centro Cultural León Jimenes – Winston Rodriguez, research and documentation; Ada Lora, Cultural Proyects

Museo Infantil Trampolín - Tour guides

Museo del Ron y la Caña - Tour guide

Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Dominicana – Tour guide

Museo de las Atarazanas Reales – Pedro Morales, underwater heritage

Lenin Paulino – local anthropologist

II: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Value(s)	Interest(s)	Attitude	Importance/Relevance
Dominican Government	Historical, economic, political	Historical, economic, political, educational, aesthetic and social	Positive, negative	One of the main decision makers in the direction of museums and budged for the ministry of culture.
Ministry of Culture	Historical, economic, political	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, aesthetic, economic	Positive, negative	One of the main decision makers for the national museums
Ministry of Tourism	Historical, economic, political	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, aesthetic, economic	Positive, Negative	One of the main promoters and beneficiaries from Dominican Museums
Ministry of Education	Historical, economic, political, educational	Educational, Economic, Political, Historical, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	One of the main decision makers for Dominican museums
Museum directives	Economic, political	Educational, Economic, Political, Historical, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	One of the main decision makers at the individual museum level and directly affected by the study

Museum Staff	Economic, political	Educational, Economic, Political, Historical, socio-cultural, aesthetic	Positive, negative	One of the main decision makers at the individual museum level and directly affected by the study
Academics and researchers	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Educational, historical, economic, political, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	Directly influence the narrative in the museums. One of the main promoters for the museums.
Professors/teachers	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, economic	Educational, historical, economic, political, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	Directly influence the narrative in the museums. One of the main promoters for the museums.
Students	Historical, socio-cultural	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	One of the main audiences of museums
Dominicans	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, economic	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	One of the main audiences of museums as well as directly affected by the museum narrative
Tourists	Socio-cultural, economic	Educational, historical, socio-cultural, aesthetic	Positive, negative	One of the main audiences of museums and bigger economical benefactors
People of African heritage (in General)	Historical, socio-	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	Positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative

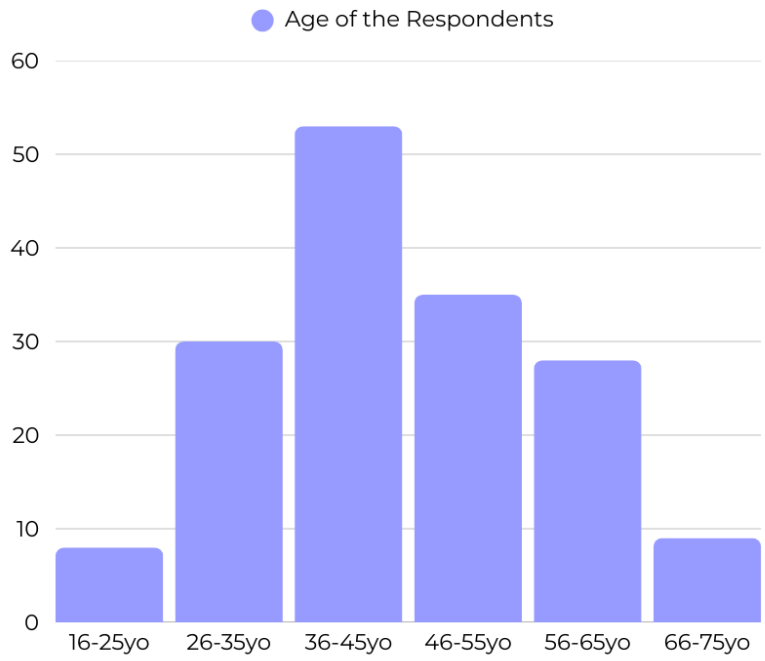
	cultural, educational			
Africans	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Afro-Dominicans	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Mixed Dominicans	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Educational, historical, socio-cultural	Positive, negative	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Dominicans with no African heritage	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Positive, negative	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Archaeologists	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Positive, negative	Directly influence the narrative in the museums. One of the main promoters for the museums.
Contemporary Artists	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, aesthetic	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, aesthetic, economic	positive	Indirectly affected and inspired by the museum narrative
Descendant Maroon Communities	Historical, socio-	Historical, socio-cultural,	positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative

	cultural, educational,	educational, economic		
Haitians	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, economic	positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Collectors	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, economic	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, economic	Positive, negative.	Directly affect the museum collections.
Business owners in the areas surrounding the museums	Socio-cultural, economic	Socio-cultural, economic, aesthetic	Positive, negative	Are directly affected by the museum audiences.
Local communities living around the museums	Socio-cultural	Socio-cultural, aesthetic, economic	Positive, negative	Are directly affected by the museum audiences.
Other Afro-Caribbeans	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	positive	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Other Caribbean peoples	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Historical, socio-cultural, educational	Positive, negative	Indirectly affected by the museum narrative
Other Caribbean Museums	Historical, socio-cultural,	Historical, socio-cultural, educational,	Positive, negative	Both have influence in and are affected by the

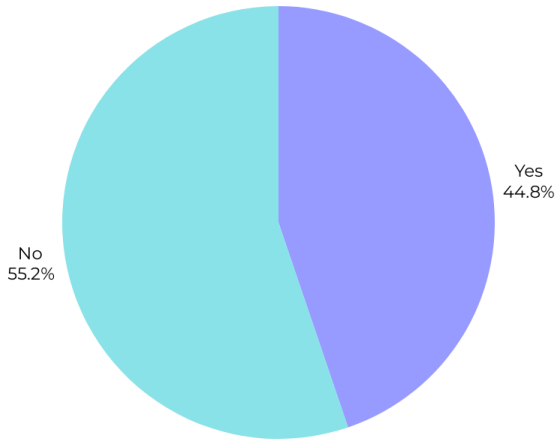
	educational, political	political, economic		narrative in Dominican museums
Future generation in the Heritage sector	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, economic	Historical, socio-cultural, educational, political, economic	positive	Future decision makers, affected by the present narrative

III: Questionnaire Results

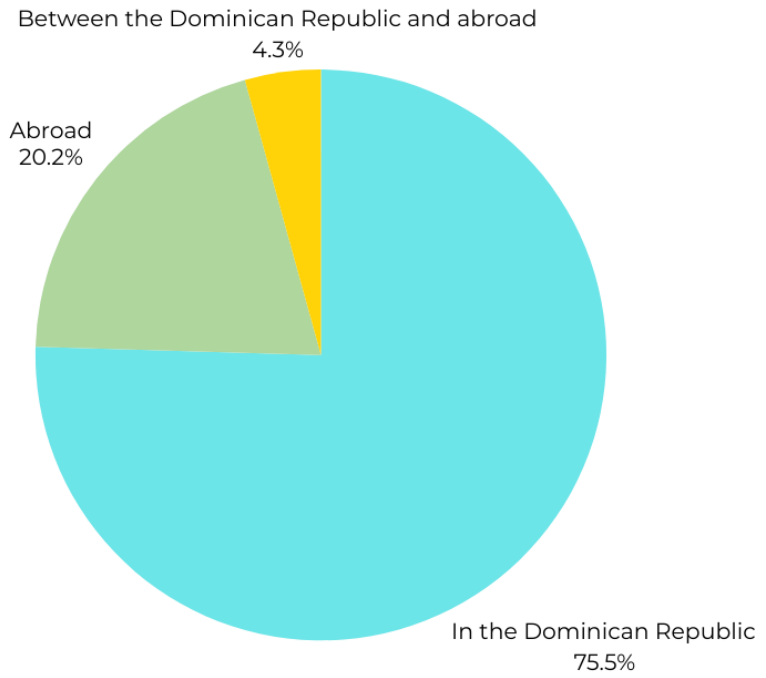
1. What is your Age?



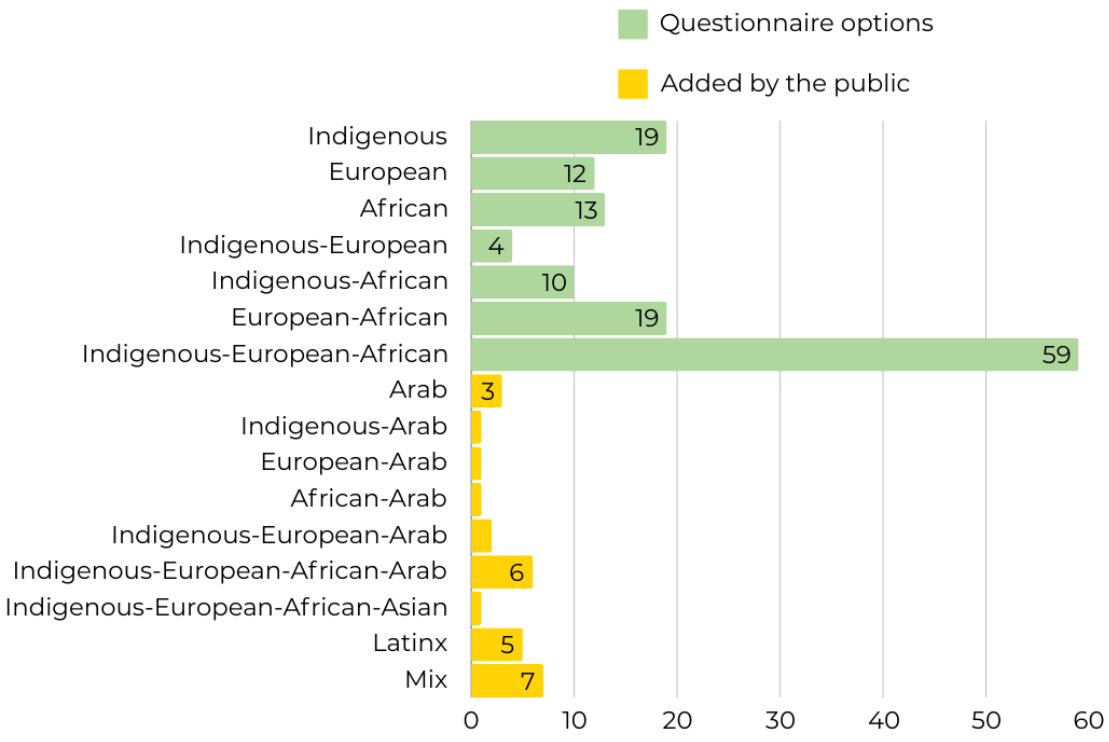
2. Have you lived outside of the country?



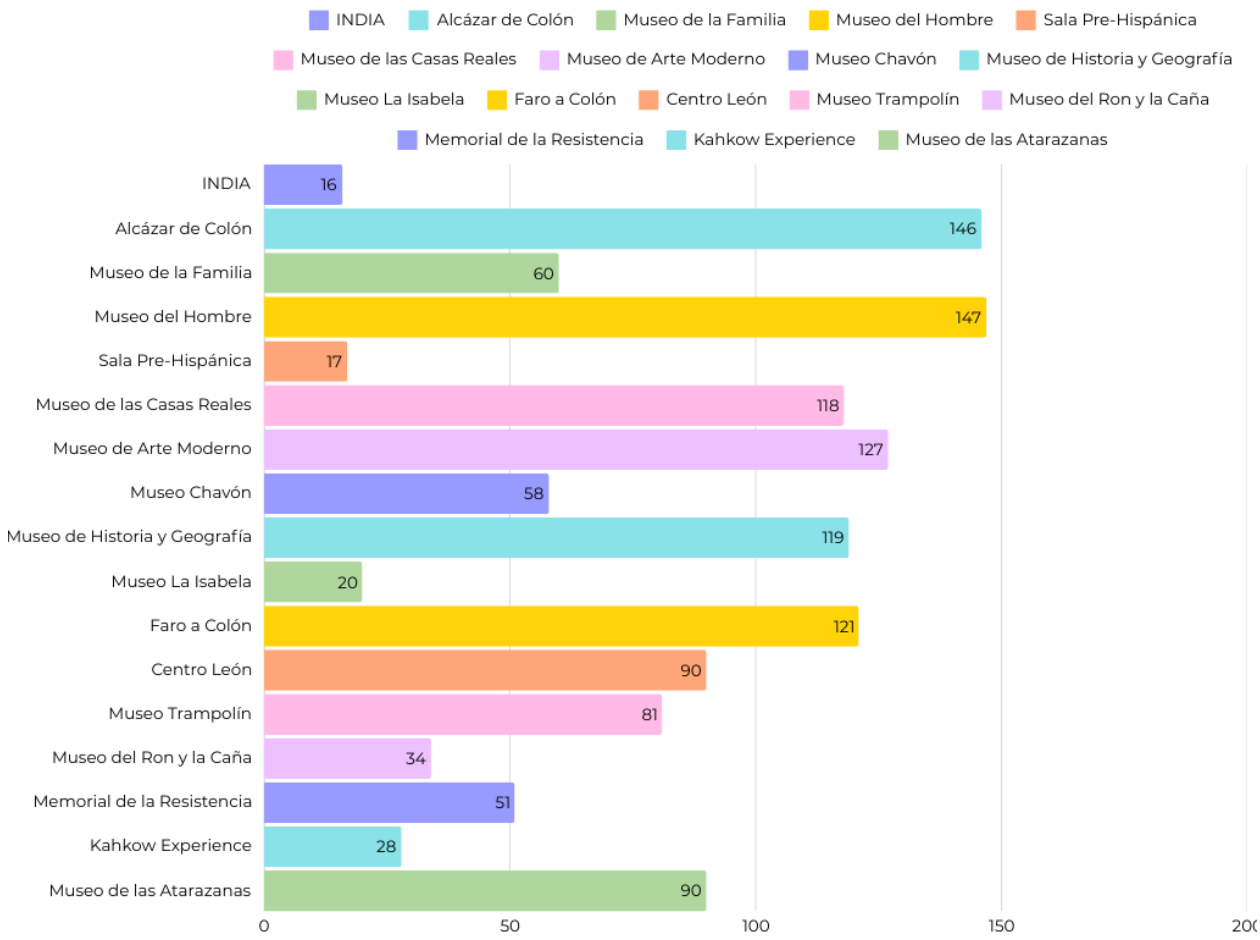
3. Where do you live now?



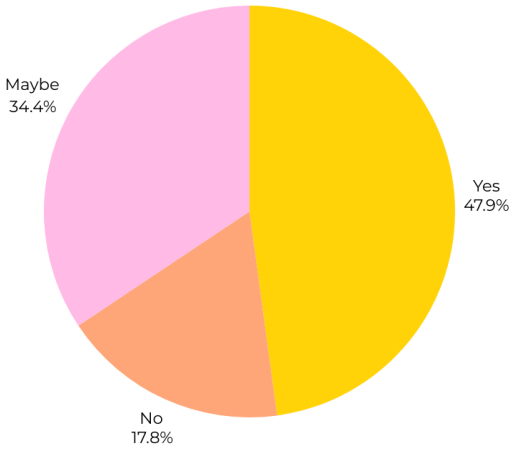
4. Would you consider your heritage as: (mark all that apply)



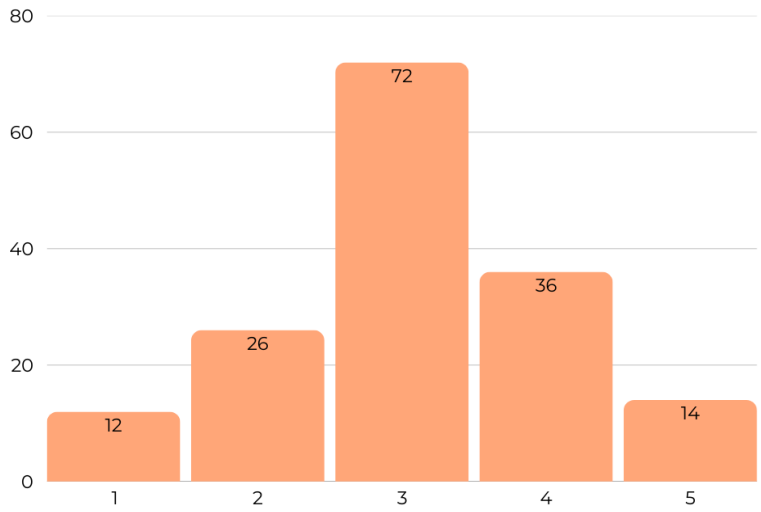
5. Have you been to any of the following museums/galleries? (mark all that apply)



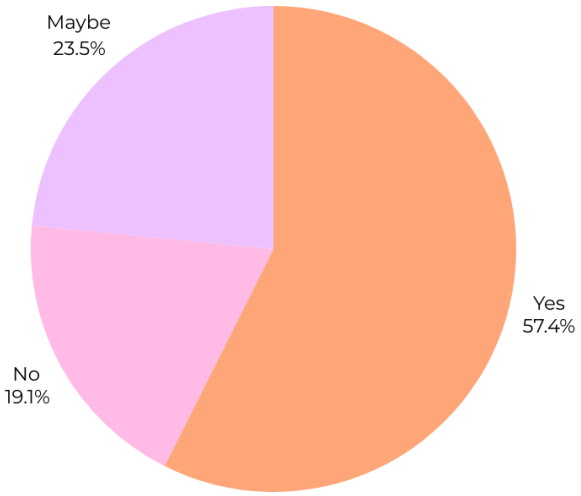
6. Do you feel your heritage is represented in Dominican museums?



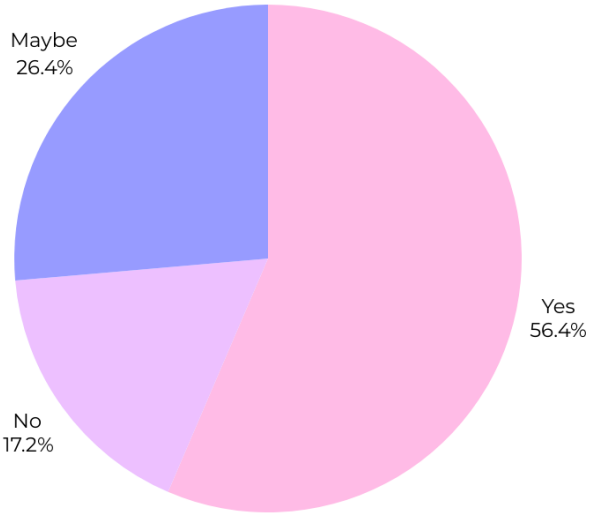
7. How much do you agree with the way your heritage is presented in Dominican museums? (with 1 being Completely Agree and 5 being Completely disagree)



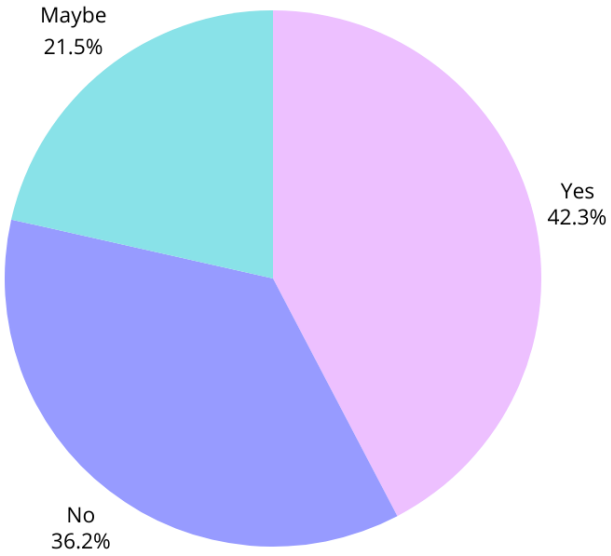
1. Did you learn about new aspects of your own heritage in these museums?



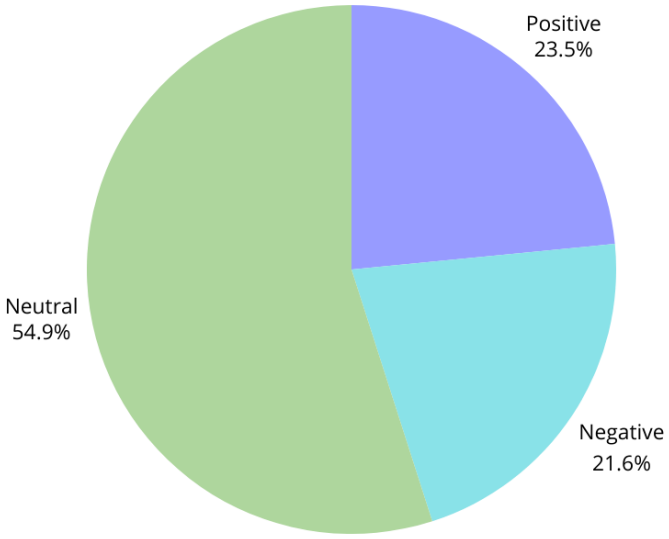
2. Do you believe the way museums represent our past influences how we perceive ourselves and how we perceive others?



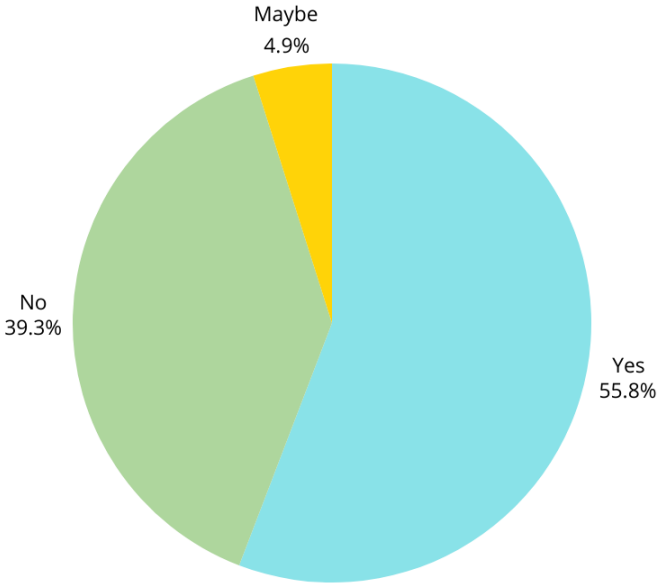
3. Do you believe the public should have the right to decide what is shown in museums and how it is shown?



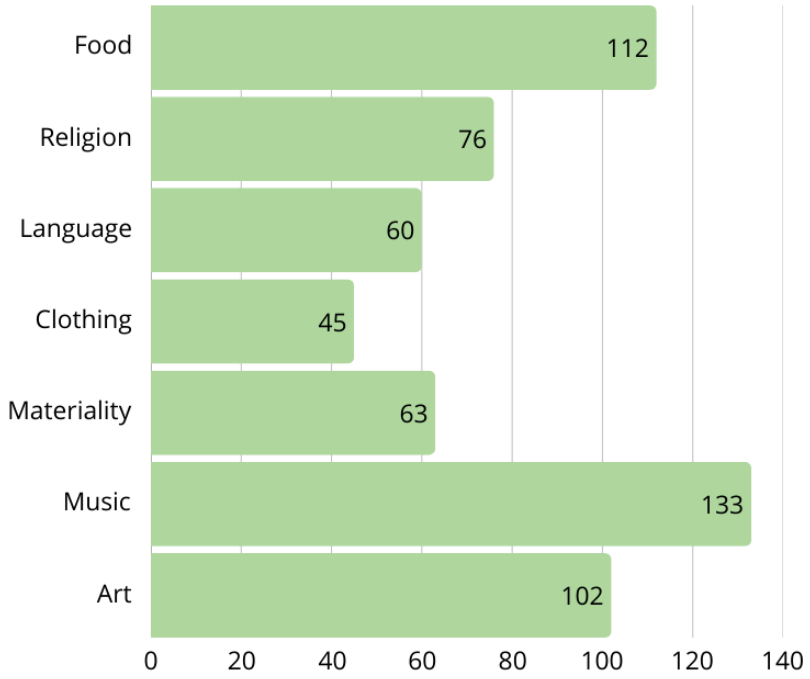
4. Do you consider African legacy was presented in a positive, negative or neutral way in these museums?



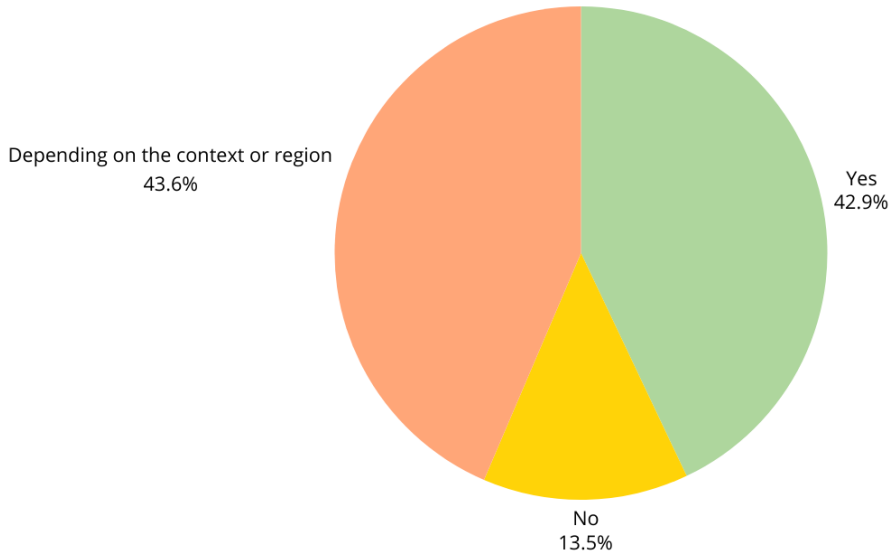
5. Did you learn about African legacy and traditions in school?



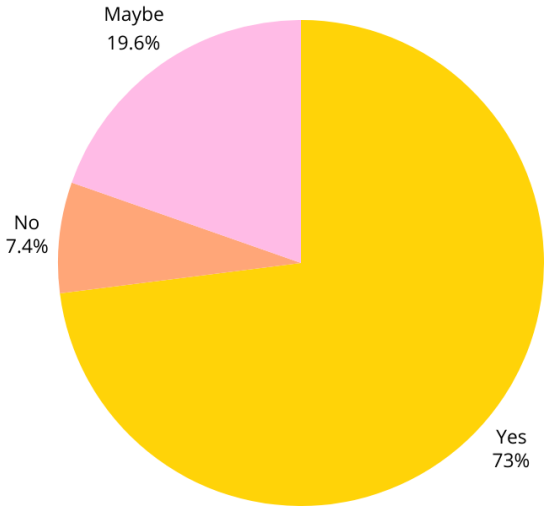
6. On what aspects of Dominican life have you noticed African legacy?



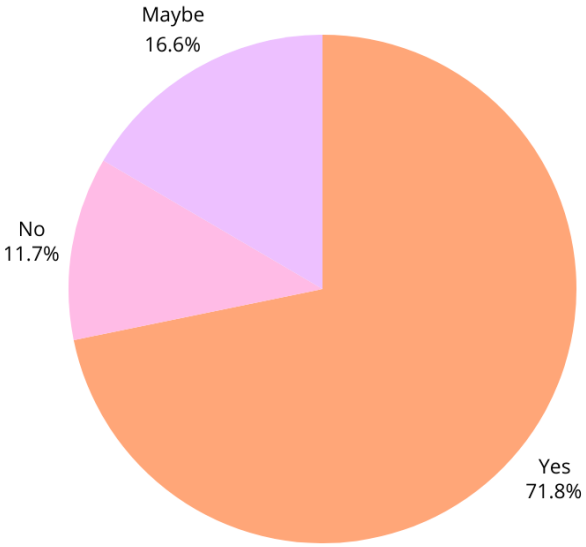
7. Do you believe there is a lot of influence from African traditions in Dominican culture?



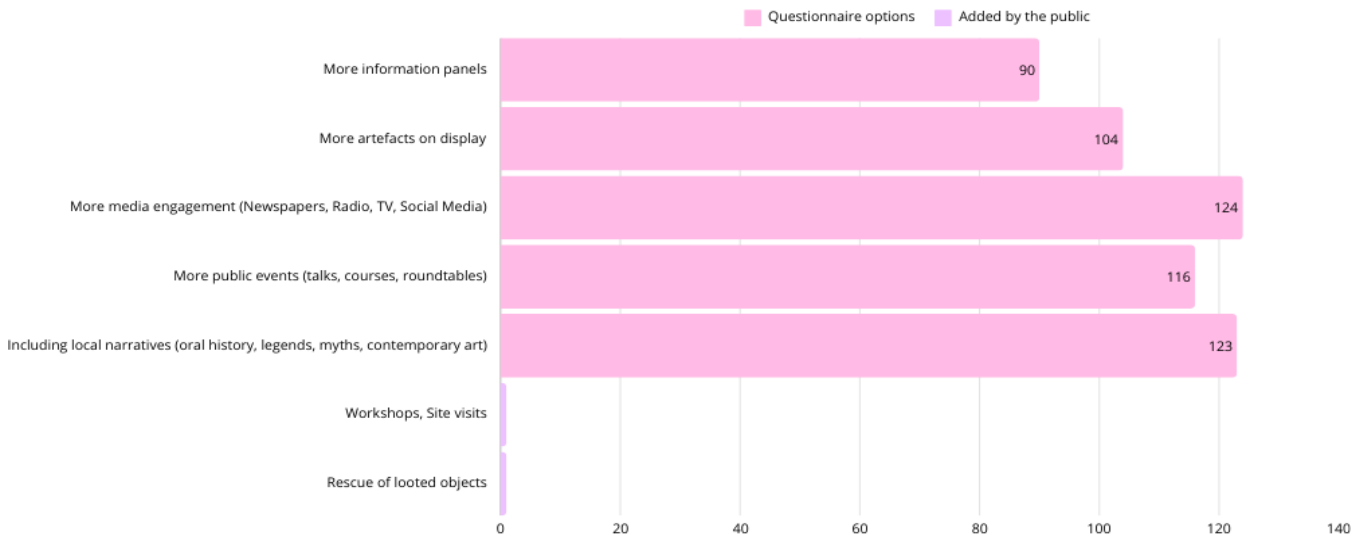
8. Would you like to see more representation of Afro-Dominican traditions in Dominican museums?



9. Do you believe African representation should have the same place in museums as Indigenous and European representation?



10. In what ways do you think museums can better represent our culture and its past?


Questionnaire options
Added by the public
More information panels
90
More artefacts on display
104
More media engagement (Newspapers, Radio, TV, Social Media)
124
More public events (talks, courses, roundtables)
116
Including local narratives (oral history, legends, myths, contemporary art)
123
Workshops, Site visits
Rescue of looted objects
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140