

On Race Marking and Race Making in Cuba

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1 Thinking about race marking and race making in the history of Atlantic slavery

In one of his recent articles Thomas C. Holt writes: “[...] the everyday acts of name calling and petty exclusions are minor links in a larger historical chain of events, structures, and transformations anchored in slavery and the slave trade”.¹ Tracing the start of this chain, to the very beginnings of slavery in the American societies, one can find many signs and links between slavery and race. There is an enormous new wave of works on the idea of race in the Americas or in world history.² But what are the real beginnings of race marking and race making? There are, as I actually see it, two larger stages of race marking in the “big picture” of slavery:³ the first from the early links between slavery and blackness (the famous ‘*sclavus nigrus*’ in Sicily in 1430 which meant ‘black slave’)⁴ and the very beginnings of the Atlantic slave trade (1440s) till the assertion of black Africans as rural slaves (in the English and Dutch Caribbean and Northern America at the end of the first half of 16th century, in Brazil somewhat earlier, and in the French Caribbean somewhat later). The second reaches from this period to the end of slavery by abolition in the different countries or territories.

Looking a little bit closer from the perspective of the postemancipation period it will become clear that slavery itself, and first of all the so-called second slavery (D. Tomich), on the ground, in the daily face to face relations in and nearby the plantations, doesn’t need so much race-marking. First of all because the slaves came to the Americas to work. As Ira Berlin pointed out:

On mainland North America, as in the Americas generally, slaves worked. New World slavery did not have its origins in a conspiracy to dishonor, shame, brutalize, or reduce slaves on some perverse scale of humanity – although it did all those at one time or another. [...] In short, if slavery made *race*, its larger purpose was to make *class*, and the fact that the two were made simultaneously by the same process has mystified both.⁵

¹ Holt 1995:1.

² Graham 1990; Winant 1994; Hannaford 1996; for a critical evaluation of recent scholarship about Cuba, see: De la Fuente 2000:199-210.

³ Davis 2000:452-484.

⁴ Verlinden 1942:37-128; see also: Phillips jr. 1989:85.

⁵ Berlin 1998:7 (emphasis Berlin); the prologue (p. 1-14) has the title: “Making Slavery, Making Race”.

The work they do marked them. And as field workers in crop-production they were discernible as bound residents of the plantations.

Second, after one, two or three hundred years of African enslavement in the main American regions of sugar, cocoa, cotton or rice production, because of tradition slavery itself became equal to race *per se*. The class of field workers was black until the end of slavery. So this work was 'black'.

Cuba represents one of the three great examples of the modernization of slavery in the first half of the 19th century (with Brazil and the South of the United States). After about one hundred years of mass slavery in Cuba's "A-region" (the Cuba of large plantations, sugar production and mass slavery) the field slaves for the society and the owners formed the 'clase negra'.⁷ Francisco de Arango y Parreño, the great Cuban economist of slavery (and friend of Alexander von Humboldt⁸), demanded the economic integration of this 'clase negra' on the very beginnings of mass slavery in Cuba: in 1811 he also claimed to keep them for ever out of social, political or even cultural integration:

[...] las naciones cultas subsisten en la opinión de que para las ventajas políticas debe considerarse igual al bozal liberto, que al cuarterón despejado, aunque sea hijo o sea nieto de ingenuos muy meritorios, – ya que prevalece el concepto de que una gota de sangre negra debe inficionar la blanca hasta el grado más remoto, en términos de que, aun cuando nuestros sentidos, ni nuestra memoria la descubran, se ha de ocurrir todavía al testimonio de los muertos, conservando en tradición, o en apolillados pergaminos, – parece de toda evidencia –, cerradas de esa suerte las puertas de la identificación con nosotros a todos los descendientes de nuestros actuales esclavos, – también debieran cerrarse las de la libertad civil [...].⁹

Especially the surrounding society and the masters themselves thought this 'clase negra' had only very small differences, shaped by 'esclavo bozal' or 'esclavo criollo' (born in Africa or born in Cuba) and 'esclavo moreno' or 'esclavo pardo' (black slave or mulatto slave). Nevertheless, there was a strong inner hierarchy between the slave 'dotaciones' (the communities of slaves of one plantation or of the plantations of one owner) of which we have very little knowledge.¹⁰ For the Cuban slave society in general¹¹ they were 'los esclavos negros' according to Fernando Ortiz's famous book.¹² In Cuba therefore, visible and readable race marking and race making during slavery had more validity and importance for the 'libertos' and the free men of color in urban spaces.¹³

But if one is searching for the beginnings of race marking and race making in a Cuban society without slavery at the end of the nineteenth-century, at the beginnings of the postemancipation society in Cuba, one finds first the processes of extinguishing the old markers of slavery, both on the side of the Colonial state (1898: universal male voting¹⁴) and the

⁶ Pérez de la Riva 1977:75-90.

⁷ Röhrig Assunção/Zeuske 1998:375-443; Zeuske 1999b:234-253.

⁸ Zeuske 2000.

⁹ Arango y Parreño 1973:217-252.

¹⁰ García 1996:7-40.

¹¹ Knight 1970.

¹² Ortiz 1906 and Ortiz 1916.

¹³ Martínez-Alier 1974; Stolcke 1992:passim.

¹⁴ Scott 1985:274-75; Hevia Lanier 1996:passim; Zeuske, Max/Zeuske, Michael 1998:399-400; Roldán de Montaud 1999.

nationalist movement. Moreover, within the latter we can study the very interesting complex of "race blindness"¹⁵, in order to hide the severe conflicts about race in the whole movement¹⁶ as well as in the Cuban Liberation Army. On the national level we also find only a very tiny bit of open race marking till the end of the conflict over national independence. One can find more at the grounds of micro-history. And, sure, but this is not our theme and focus here, in the skies of ideas, between race ideas and ideologies on the one hand and the celebration of 'mestizaje' on the other hand.¹⁷

Doing research on a very small level of micro- and local-history or even more actor-centered 'life histories'¹⁸ one can find the very beginnings of the postemancipation race marking and race-making.

'Find' is a small word. The process of finding the beginnings of a new race making at the time of the final abolition of slavery in Cuba, both in reality and in documents, has taken me about seven years, since the beginning of the research-project about "Integration of former slaves in regional societies in Latin America" (1993). Only when I have, finally in 1998, decided to add oral research in my up to this moment more social-historical or structure-orientated work, I was able to detect the evidence of race marking and race making in even the documents I had worked with for five years.¹⁹

2 Naming: surnames, absent surnames and "sin otro apellido" as race markers

Everything started with a discussion about the participation of former slaves and their descendants in the war of 1895-1898 and its consequences for the postemancipation society in Cuba and with their representation in individualized juridical sources in Cienfuegos in 1997. In these sources many people are listed with a little addendum which reads "s.o.a.". "S.O.A." – 'sin otro apellido', without any other surname. This 'marker' in Cuba turns out to be crucial for any approach based on life histories and for the intention to find the sources of racism after slavery.

Marking – to start with Holt's term – people in documents with such a written addendum "s.o.a.": what exactly does it mean in correlation with the lack of a second surname and what does that addendum mark? A general low social status, illegitimacy, former slaves only, a low social status and the widely spread illegitimacy of former slaves, or simply and only race? Does it mean both, combinations or all these features together? The first and basic one of these criteria may have been used as a marker of slave and African or colored descent, because of the transmission of matrilinearity, discernible in only the surname of the mother, which was – also without civil surnames – one of the prime criteria for born in slave status or semi-slave status.²⁰ During the times of slavery and also during the first forty years of postemancipation in Cuba young men or women with a close relationship to slavery very often were presented as the "hijo" of or the "hija" of the "vieja" ... followed by the first name

¹⁵ Ferrer 1998:228-249; Ferrer 1999a:passim; Ferrer 1999b:22-46.

¹⁶ Helg 1995.

¹⁷ García González/Pruna 1989; García González/Naranjo Orovio 1996; Álvarez Peláez/García González 1999; Menéndez Rodenas 1994.

¹⁸ Scott 2001; Zeuske 2003.

¹⁹ García Martínez/Scott/Zeuske 2000.

²⁰ Dorsey 1994:165-207.

of the mother, like María, Bárbara, Francisca and so on. This practice in general has been prohibited by law only in 1927.²¹

To find some answers, one must go to the general forms of naming in the Castilian culture. In this culture every person with legally married parents has two 'apellidos', two second surnames; for example, Juan Martínez García is the son of the couple Pedro Martínez Mena and María García Jiménez. Juan's two surnames are composed by the first surname ('apellido') of his father Pedro as Juan's first surname (Martínez) and the first surname of his mother María (García) as second surname of Juan Martínez García. For daily use Juan Martínez García would be called only Juan Martínez (and women in the daily use often by their second surname, which was their mother's first one). But in proceedings which require status, that is either in legal transaction or official documents, the two apellidos as the official form of the name will be used as a matter of rule.

2.1 Who are those "without other surnames"?

In our research we noted first that naming, that is to say, the process of giving civil names in the form of the unique 'apellido esclavo' to people which passed from the status of slave to a status of 'liberto' (freed man) was a mass phenomenon in the period from the 1870s to 1886. These names of former slaves were for me in most cases the only instrument to recognize former slaves during the late years of slavery, which at the same time were the years of the emancipation-process, and the early years of postemancipation until 1898. This period was also the last phase of Spanish colonial rule in Cuba. But even in the first twenty or twentyfive years of the young Cuban republic, this phenomenon persists. From the actors themselves we have only individual voices from the urban sphere, like Ricardo Batrell, José Isabel Herrera or, as "memories from the future", by Esteban Montejo.²² But the vast majority of former slaves remained in the country. We don't have a study about Cuba focussing on the cultural aspects of this process, for example researching the relation between individual naming as a mass process and the categories 'campesino' and 'rural proletariat' or even, much more complicated, the opalescent term 'guajiro'.²³

In some individual cases I have the strong impression that the sons of slave mothers who were given these slave surnames were 'playing' with these surnames, because in the documents often the word "llamado" (for example: "Manuel Blanco, llamado García", called García) appears. For our understanding this shows that the slave names in some cases have few roots in the personal identity of these young men, perhaps because the group we know best are the so-called 'muchachones', young men born between 1868 and 1880 (the generation of the abolition), who were fighting in the anticolonial war of 1895-1898, and got the status of 'mambises' and later, 'libertadores', veterans. Libertadores and veterans developed enough self-confidence and status to do so. But it is also possible that many men did so, because the

²¹ Pérez Lobo 1944:46-49.

²² Batrell Oviedo 1912; Herrera 1948; Barnet 1967 (US-version: Barnet 1994). For the "popular culture" see: Ibarra 1994:194-234. Montejo always appears more enigmatic. He says in Barnet (1994:18-19): "My family name is Montejo, for my mother, who was a slave of French origin. My middle name is Mera". All that seems an invention in Hobsbawmian sense, but how were the mechanisms of that? The first mention of his two surnames we can find in the "Índice de Roloff" (that hypothetically shows that Montejo by this time has had good clientelistic relations to the compiler of this honor-list of veterans). see: Zeuske 1998:65-84;

²³ Zeuske 1999a:521-525 and Walter 2000:25-38.

For Puerto Rico see: Scarano 1999:65-74.

people of their little town, knowing them very well, were calling them by the surname of the "padre desconocido" ("unknown father" for official documents).

2.2 Owners surnames – 'great' slaves surnames

In the beginnings of the research about "Integration of Former Slaves in Regional Societies in Latin America" in the central region of Cuba (Cienfuegos), by comparing many long name lists of plantations, residents of small towns, numbers of inhabitants of municipalities, census, voters inscriptions and so on, I noted that former slaves practically disappeared after 1886. After the abolition they elapsed their former owner's control. In the region I was researching the period of late slavery, emancipation and first years of postemancipation during all this time the big structures of sugar-centrales²⁴ still were existing. We do know the names of the owners. We also know that the slaves in the very process of individual emancipation (with very few exceptions, like the Atkins slaves in the central 'Soledad', today 'Pepito Tey'²⁵) got the first 'apellido' of their last owner (or in some cases, next-to-last) as the only surname of their own. So I was starting my research for the 'invisible' former slaves with a search for men and women, or even children, with what I call the 'grandes apellidos esclavos' ('great' slave surnames: surnames of slave owners, used by persons in other contexts that these owners) of the precise region of Lajas-Cruces.

Starting with a list of all the slaves of the Lajas region in 1875,²⁶ one can see that there, within an overall of 1852 slaves, 1331 were rural slaves in 'ingenios' (sugar plantations)²⁷ under control of a group of owners, composed by 28 natural persons, 3 societies of owners and 13 slave-hirers with 1 to 5 slaves. The owners with the biggest 'dotaciones' of their plantations were Moré, Goytizolo, Terry, Abreu, Hidalgo, Gándara y Lomba, Villegas, García Mora, Palacios, Mora, Pasalodos and López del Campillo. After 1886 these names were also the ones of the majority of the former slaves in the Lajas-Cruces region in central Cuba. By this time the Venezuelan Terrys had 156 slaves, the Colombian Conde Moré 327 slaves and the Catalan Goytizolo 110 slaves; and their numbers were already growing despite of the decrease of slavery in general.

So the biggest groups of slave surnames in this region should be the Terry, Moré, Goytizolo and so on. The voter-lists of Lajas in 1898, for example, in the electoral sources from Lajas in 1898,²⁸ that is in a colonial documentation – I found among those who voted (men over 25) 1426 persons.²⁹ 172 of them had one of the 'great' slave surnames (Terry 41, Mora 24, Moré 20, Hidalgo 18, Madrazo 15, Cruz 15, Avilés 10, Palacios 8, Barroso 7, Abreu 6, Goytizolo 4,

²⁴ Iglesias 1999:passim.

²⁵ Atkins 1980.

²⁶ Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC): Miscelánea de Expedientes, leg. 3748, exp. B, Capitanía Pedánea de Santa Isabel de las Lajas, núm. 3: "Padrón general de esclavos, 1875".

²⁷ Scott 1985:94. The numbers of Scott are depending from her method to find the ages of the rural slaves. The rest being house slaves or slaves in other forms of small production and maroons.

²⁸ "Lista por orden alfabético de apellidos y con numeración correlativa, de todos los vecinos mayores de veinte y cinco años que constan en el censo general de población con expresión de la edad, domicilio, profesión y si saben leer y escribir". In: Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos (APC), Fondo Ayuntamiento de Lajas (FAL), leg. 3, exp. 161, inv. 1 (28 ene. - 2 marzo 1898), "Expediente que contiene lista de vecinos mayores de 25 años que constan en el censo general de población", f. 2r-26r.

²⁹ APC: "Documento sin clasificar y sin foliación" ("lista II 1898"); about legislation, see: Torre 1998:71-133, 82; Roldán de Montaud 1999:286-287.

Pasalodos 4).³⁰ So using the concept of ‘great’ slave surnames we have one instrument for searching for the ‘invisible’ former slaves.

2.3 Extinguishing old markers in the fight for/against National liberation

Another instrument I found in the Spanish tradition of putting the old forms of categorizing the slaves, like ‘moreno’ or ‘morena’ and ‘pardo’ or ‘parda’ before the names in the lists of voters or taxation-lists or lists of inhabitants. In the same lists Spanish-Cubans of any social status were marked with the honourable title ‘don’ before their names. But this practice, like I pointed out above, was extinguished by the Spanish colonial State in 1891 and 1893. In the fight for the loyalty of Cuba’s black population, who have the status of ‘Españoles’ (Spaniards) in the official State papers, against the ‘Cubans’ (in the ideological sense that were white Cubans, which are presumed to be fighting against Spain), the Spanish state tries to cut the lines of the chain that linked this part of the population with slavery. Spain gave the full and official citizen-rights to all males aged over 25 years (‘voto universal’) in 1890 in Spain and, finally, 1898 in Cuba. In 1893 the pressure of the colored civil-rights movement under the leadership of Juan Gualberto Gómez, achieved the formal abolition of the old difference markers from the times of slavery, ‘moreno’ and ‘pardo’ (and the female forms) and the official use of the honourable title of ‘doña’ and ‘don’ for everyone of the population of Spanish Cuba.

For the same process of fighting for the loyalty on the side of the “Cuban Republic” and its problems, which the author calls “race blindness” we have the well researched and written book by Ada Ferrer and some of her articles.³¹ So what concerns the name form in the separatist sources in the times of war, it is a fact that only the first ‘apellido’ is used for men and women, often related with the concept of ‘ciudadano’ (citizen) and military ranks.

In short: the two instruments we have to recognize former slaves lacked on the national level of sources, documents and discourses from the years 1891-1895 onwards until the end of war in 1898.

But: in the official and status bearing list of the so called “Índice de Roloff”,³² produced directly after the war in the years 1899 and 1900, the two forms appear again – two surnames as the official form of castilian surnames and one only surname in the cases of men who often had ‘great’ slave surnames.

3 Race marking on the ground

But there is another level on the ground of everyday-life. In some sense it is far from the political-ideological level of fighting for loyalties and also very far from the levels of ideas and ideologies.

³⁰ See for example: “lista de número de patrocinados por propietario” (oct. de 1883). In: APC, n° 111, leg. 2, exp. 78, inv. 1, f. 18r-19r.

³¹ Ferrer 1998:228-249; Ferrer 1999a.; Ferrer 1999b:22-46.

³² *Índice Alfabético y Defunciones del Ejército Libertador de Cuba.*

This was the last form of naming and race marking I detected in the research process. I only was able to see it in a local archive (in this case ‘Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos’, because only in this place of memory the local notarial records were collected), when we started to ‘make the documents speak’ up from 1998 with microhistory Italian style,³³ oral history³⁴ and research of property rights for former slaves. So we began a re-reading of the informations of very individualized sources, like notarial records and hereditary cases of former slaves which bought land or lent money to do so. Two main bodies of sources, we have analyzed, were first notarial records of land buying on the part of former slaves³⁵ and second the notarial records and hereditary cases of the famous payments (‘haberes’) for the fighters of the anticolonial war 1895-1898.³⁶

In these documents the problem of naming appears in all the forms described above: only one surname, ‘great’ slave surnames and until the 90s in many cases with the direct marker of constructed color (‘moreno’/‘pardo’). But in almost all the cases we also find the addendum “s.o.a.” – ‘sin otro apellido’. This explicit writing out of “s.o.a.” can be found with the majority of those individuals in the region of Lajas-Cruces who have what seems to be recognizable as ‘slave surnames’ as first and only ‘apellido’. Thus, surnames link them to their previous state of being owned. For me that is a hidden marker and a hidden transcript for marking former slaves. This is another important point in the search for the open secrets of race in Cuba.³⁷

The first time we came across “s.o.a.” was linked to the ‘apellido’ Fortún, and appears in records about land buying in the country town of Lajas in the hinterland of Cienfuegos:

[...] los morenos libres Leon y Natalia Fortun, sin segundos apellidos, que son de Africa [...].³⁸

In the first mentioning of such a sale we find dates from the year 1877.³⁹

But what exactly was the meaning and the advantage of this “s.o.a.” from 1877 onwards until the end of colonial period? (The last information we have in our sources dates from 1904/05 and we know that in the tradition of using this addendum for dozens of years has shaped a rare second surname in Cuba, like González Soa).

3.1 The practical and pragmatismal sense of “s.o.a.”

“S.o.a.” as a marker has had a very practical and pragmatismal sense. On the one hand it is part of the answer to the old question: where did they go after slavery and how can we know that?, and on the other hand it is linked to the problem of the municipalities in Spanish-Cuban history, one of the crucial problems of the Spanish history of the 19th century. For us the relation between life-histories and social history marks one of the very good examples of the application

³³ Levi 1991:93-113; Revel 1996.

³⁴ Scott 1999:89-108.

³⁵ Scott/Zeuske (forthcoming).

³⁶ Zeuske 2001:193-234.

³⁷ De la Fuente 2000:199-210.

³⁸ APC: “Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos”, Nr. 12 (1883), f. 418r-421r, escritura del 14 de Junio de 1883.

³⁹ APC: “Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos”, Nr. 64 (1878), f. 387r-388v, escritura no. 149.

of microhistory – a problem that can only be resolved by reducing the level of research and by making evidences discernible with the help of bigger lenses.⁴⁰

Rebecca J. Scott has analyzed the first problem on a national level in her *Slave Emancipation in Cuba* and both of us under the strong lens of microhistory.⁴¹ The second part is unknown till today. It was linked to the will of the Spanish state to end the Ten Years War (1868-1878) in Cuba, which led to some deep transformation in the basic structure of the politics – the structure of the provinces and municipalities – and also in the access to land for the insurgent fighters, among them also for former slaves. The question of forming a new structure of ‘*términos municipales*’ (heads of municipalities) with own rights to manage a part of the tax incomes linked this state interest with the interest of the Cuban ‘*vecino*’ elite of towns with a population around 8000 people, like for example in our case the town of Lajas. The Spanish constitution of 1876, applied to Cuba, defines towns with 8000 inhabitants or more as the lowest level of the state structure and as ‘*términos municipales*’. When the government in Madrid made the declaration of the intention to suppress all towns as ‘*términos municipales*’ with less than 8000 inhabitants in 1884, the local government of Lajas (‘*ayuntamiento*’) felt threatened. The secretary of the ‘*ayuntamiento*’, Agustín Cruz y Cruz, wrote in December 31, 1883 that Lajas had 7548 inhabitants. During the next year, until December, 31, 1884 there was a strong increase in the number of inhabitants, representing 828 persons through birth and, even more interesting, through immigration. With 191 cases of deaths and emigration this represents a net increase of 637 inhabitants. Therefore Lajas has had already in 1884 a population of 8185 persons.⁴² Almost all the individuals who caused this net increase were persons appearing in the ‘*vecino*’-lists with open race markers like ‘*moreno*’ or ‘*morena*’ and ‘*pardo*’ or ‘*parda*’ before their names and 90% have only one surname.⁴³ The town’s power-holders, in effect, stood to benefit from an influx of former slaves that could push their population over 8000.

Some of these new inhabitants, so wanted by the ‘*vecino*’ elite of Lajas, appear in the notarial records as buyers of land; the majority of the purchasers were women who had recently been slaves.⁴⁴ They were a very welcome new clientele for some of the land sellers or notarians and they also were a very welcome target of the new political correctness of the late Colonial state.

3.2 “S.o.a.” as race marker and race maker

As the ‘*protocolos*’ are more individual documents than the official census lists, it seems that the land sellers and notarians were more and more ashamed to mark their new clientele openly

⁴⁰ Aguirreazkuenaga/Urquijo 1993.

⁴¹ Scott/Zeuske (forthcoming).

⁴² APC: leg. 2, exp. 108, n° 111, inv. 1, f. 7r-8r.

⁴³ APC: n° 111, leg. 2, exp. 132, inv. 1 (14 dic. 1884 - 2 ene. 1885): “Rectificación del padrón vecinal del año 1884”; Ibid., n° 111, leg. 2, exp. 133, inv. 1: “Expediente que contiene documentos relativos a la rectificación del padrón vecinal del año 1885” (31 dic. - 20 ene. 1886); “Estado de las altas y bajas en el Registro de vecinos en este barrio desde 1° de Enero á 31 de Diciembre de 1885”, *ibid.*, f. 6r-21r; Ibid., leg. 2, exp. 108, n° 111, inv. 1, f. 4r; APC, n° 111, leg. 2, exp. 114, inv. 1 (14 marzo 1884 - 18 feb. 1885): “Expediente relativo a un acuerdo de este ayuntamiento pidiendo el título de Villa para este pueblo”; Ibid., no. 111, leg. 2, exp. 108, inv. 1, f. f.5r.

⁴⁴ Most of the sales are found in APC: “Protocolos de José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos”. See for example, no. 12 (1883), f.412r-415v, *escr.* no. 97 and *ibid.*, no. 12 (1883), f.418r-421r.

with well-known (and illegal after 1893) old markers, like ‘*morena*’/‘*moreno*’ or so. And so they got used to the less visible and less offensive “s.o.a.”. But this doesn’t explain “s.o.a.” as a race marker. “S.o.a.” had many more functions on this pragmatical level. The ‘*vecino*’ elite and the white population of Lajas needed more population and inhabitants in general. But they did not want them to live in their ‘*barrios*’. So in all the hinterland of Cienfuegos and in Cienfuegos (‘*Barrio nuevo*’) during the last years of slavery as well as the first years of the postemancipation period new quarters for the black and colored population were established. In Lajas this new quarter (‘*barriada*’) formed a part of the official quarter ‘*Centro*’. But it was situated on the other side of the railroad, which separated the new part of the quarter from the older houses of the ‘*Centro*’. The semi-official name of the new quarter was “*la Calle del Ferrocarril*” (Railroad-Street), as it appears in the official documents like the census of 1907.⁴⁵ In order to detect the former slaves and Blacks without having them face to face, the notarians and land sellers used the new race marker “s.o.a.”.

So in this new part of an old quarter in the sugar town of Santa Isabel de las Lajas, a settlement by former slaves very early took on a surprisingly formal and durable character. The town produced two newspapers at this time, and bordered the immense Caracas plantation. Popular memory in Lajas attributes to the powerful planter family of Emilio Terry the donation of the tract of land along the “*Calle del Ferrocarril*” to his former slaves, during and after the period of emancipation. These lands of the new ‘*barriada*’ came to be seen as a ‘*black*’ settlement. Historians, linguists, and ethnographers working in the area in the 1970s were told that the Terry family had distributed parcels of land in 1885-86 on which former slaves built wooden board houses with palm-thatch roofs.⁴⁶

The families in this neighborhood often carried the ‘*great*’ slave surnames Terry or Moré, and included the grandparents of the future musician Beny Moré. We know that in the documents that were recording the individual processes of selling and buying, they do appear with the addendum “s.o.a.”. So from this point on a new construction of postemancipation race began, because the settlement where the ground had been sold to them, soon came to be known as ‘*La Guinea*’, and was referred to as a ‘*land of Congos*’. Residents of ‘*La Guinea*’ apparently referred to the back of that settlement using a terminology that echoed the racist labelling of the time: “*La Cueva de los Monos*” – Monkey Cave.⁴⁷ This ‘*gift*’ of land by Terry seemed to scholars in the 1970s to represent a reformist, paternalistic set of gifts of land by the grand planter Emilio Terry, designed to assure a labor force in the nearby Caracas sugarmill, at this time one of the world largest ‘*centrales*’.⁴⁸

If one goes to the archives, and then returns to carry out further interviews, a more complex picture emerges.⁴⁹ Some of the residents of ‘*Guinea*’ held legal title to urban plots measuring

⁴⁵ ANC: “Censo de Septiembre 30 de 1907. Lista Electoral Municipio de Santa Isabel de las Lajas Provincia de Santa Clara”, leg. 265, núm. 14530, Secretaría de Gobernación.

⁴⁶ Valdés Acosta 1974:67-85; García Herrera 1972:145-181; see also: Dumoulin 1974:3-66, especially 19.

⁴⁷ See García Herrera 1972:145-146, and the discussion in: Zeuske 1994:6-9. On an earlier use of the term “*Guinea*” see: Tomich 1993:221-242.

⁴⁸ See García Herrera 1972:145-146ff.

⁴⁹ Several such interviews were carried out by the author in Lajas in March 2000. Most of the sales are found in “Protocolos de José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos”. See APC: “Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos”, Nr. 64 (1878), f.387r-388v, *escritura* no. 149, for a sale to asiático Donato Terry. See also a sale by Julian Romero “[...] á la morena libre Filomena Viera [...] natural de Africa, soltera, mayor de edad, sin profesion [...] dos solares de su pertenencia fuera de Santa Isabel de las Lajas [...] cada uno veinte y cinco varas de frente y cuarenta de fondo, lindan por el Norte con terrenos de D. Manuel Rodríguez de

some 1000 'varas' (a little less than 700 square meters). Tracing these titles back through the notarial records held in the 'Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos', one finds documentations not of gifts but of the purchase of land by former slaves. The sellers were people like Bárbara González Mesa, daughter of one of the major cane farmers of Lajas, former owner of the 'ingenio' Santa Sabina (later Caracas). These landowners conveyed the title as a sale, at a price of 50 pesos for an empty house lot.

Later, in June of 1883, Don Julian Romero sold similar empty land to "las morenas libres Mónica y Victoria de la Torre [...] que son de Africa". They were identified as being without profession, singles, aged thirty and forty-four years, residents one of Lajas and the other of Sagua la Grande.

The seller, Romero, was born in Santa Clara, worked in the country and lived in Lajas. The land itself came from the property that had previously belonged to Bárbara Gonzalez, and it bordered the lot belonging to "la morena Antonia Terry".⁵⁰ One possible interpretation is that these were two sisters who had been separated by slavery, who now were able to set up a household together. Other sales suggest a more desperate search for lodging. León y Natalia Fortún, 'morenos libres', bought from the same Julian Romero a house lot on which their descendants still live.⁵¹ The buyers were listed as "los morenos libres León y Natalia Fortún, sin segundos apellidos, que son de Africa, solteros [...] dedicados al campo [...]". Again the seller was Julian Romero, and the lands had belonged to Bárbara González; the price was fifty pesos.⁵²

In one case the language conveys the strong form of the title being conveyed, in this case to Joaquin Palacios, a free black man born in Africa. Julian Romero sold an unnumbered house lot "en venta real por juro de heredad y perpetuo traspaso al moreno [...] y su sucesores [sic] los deslindados dos solares yermos, tramitiendo aquel la propiedad y dominio con todos los usos, derechos reales y personales".⁵³

The volume of transactions of this kind suggests that the land market in Lajas was an active one. Thus parallel with the process of slave emancipation in the countryside a new racial geography developed in the towns that attracted migrants, starting in texts with the marker "s.o.a.". Its lines are still indistinct to us, but one can envision a significant set of changes in codes and comportment as the formerly free were joined by the recently enslaved.⁵⁴

So the lens of a microhistory that combines individual life histories with social history and different types of hermeneutics (bring written sources to 'speak' with oral history; search for 'hidden transcripts' and the relations between written sources and the practice of power) can show us the concrete development of a new society and the shaping of a new racism that forms part of the open secrets of Cuban history in the 20th century.

Rey [...] y por el Oeste con el asiático Donato Terry, cuyo predio hubo de Da. Bárbara Gonzalez [...] (en 1877), [...] con el precio de cincuenta pesos oro español" (f.387v.).

⁵⁰ APC: "Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos", Nr. 12 (1883), f.412r-415v. escr. no. 97.

⁵¹ Interview by Orlando García, Félix Tellería and M. Zeuske, with Cándido Terry y Terry and Zenaida Armenteros Bejerano, 15 March 2000. Terry and Armenteros generously showed us their property title, which is a copy of the original located in APC: "Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos", Nr. 12 (1883), f.418r-421r. escr. no. 98, 14 June 1883.

⁵² APC: "Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos", Nr. 12 (1883), f.418r-421r, 14 June 1883.

⁵³ APC: "Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos", Nr. 12 (1883), f. 745r-748r.

⁵⁴ In this last part I'm following Scott/Zeuske (forthcoming).

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