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Archaeology, *Dominicanidad*, and Joaquín Balaguer's *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*

Arqueología, Dominicanidad *y la Guía emocional de la Ciudad Romántica de Joaquín Balaguer*

Archéologie, Dominicanidad *et la Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica de Joaquín Balaguer*

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Abstract
In 1990, the Colonial City of Santo Domingo was declared a World Heritage Site. The nomination dossier was largely based on three-time Dominican President Joaquín Balaguer's book, *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*. The World Heritage declaration not only validated Balaguer himself, but also his particular definition, or metanarrative, of *Dominicanidad*. This essay will use the case study of Santo Domingo's World Heritage dossier as a base to discuss differing metanarratives of *Dominicanidad*, and how Historical Archaeology theory and method can advocate for a wider, more inclusive, more ubiquitous definition of *Dominicanidad*, particularly with regards to tangible manifestations.

Keywords
Dominicanidad, metanarratives, Balaguer, Decoloniality, Santo Domingo, archaeology

Resumen
En 1990, la Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo fue declarada Patrimonio de la Humanidad. El expediente de

solicitud se basó en gran medida en el libro del tres veces presidente dominicano Joaquín Balaguer, Guía emocional de la Ciudad Romántica. La declaración de Patrimonio Mundial no solo validó al propio Balaguer, sino también su particular definición, o metanarrativa, de la dominicanidad. Este ensayo utilizará el estudio de caso del expediente del Patrimonio Mundial de Santo Domingo como base para discutir las diferentes metanarrativas de la dominicanidad, y cómo la teoría y el método de la arqueología histórica pueden abogar por una definición más amplia, más inclusiva y ubicua de dominicanidad, particularmente con respecto a las manifestaciones tangibles.

Palabras clave
Dominicanidad, metanarrativas, Balaguer, descolonización, Santo Domingo, arqueología

Résumé
En 1990, la ville coloniale de Saint-Domingue a été déclarée site du patrimoine mondial. Le dossier de candidature était largement basé sur le livre du triple président dominicain Joaquín Balaguer, *Guía emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*. La déclaration du patrimoine mondial a non seulement validé Balaguer lui-même, mais aussi sa définition particulière, ou métarécit, de *Dominicanidad*. Cet essai utilisera l'étude de cas du dossier du patrimoine mondial de Saint-Domingue comme base pour discuter des différentes métarécits de *Dominicanidad*, et comment la théorie et la méthode de l'archéologie historique peuvent proposer une définition plus large, plus inclusive et plus omniprésente de *Dominicanidad*, en particulier en ce qui concerne les manifestations matériels.

Mots-clés
Dominicanité, métarécits, Balaguer, décolonisation, Saint-Domingue, archéologie

Introduction

Although many believe that three time Dominican President Joaquín Balaguer's crowning glory was the construction of the Columbus Lighthouse in 1992, I prefer to believe that the declaration of the Colonial City of Santo Domingo as a World Heritage Site brought him more satisfaction. Unlike the Lighthouse, which was constructed according to plans made by English architect (CITE), the Colonial City's proposal and management plan were based on Balaguer's own book, *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*. The World Heritage declaration not only validated Balaguer himself, but also his particular metanarrative of *Dominicanidad*.

Dominicanidad, or Dominicaness, is the concept of being of the Dominican Republic. As with all concepts of Self definition, this concept requires a differentiation from an "Other" (Edwards 1967, Vol. 1: 76). This differentiation, in the broadest sense, requires the establishment of particular characteristics pertaining only to a particular group. As a relatively young country, the Dominican Republic has struggled with the definition of Dominicanidad since its creation (Sørensen 1997, 297; Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 417), particularly with regards to the scope of characteristics considered to be culturally relevant for Dominicans, and how distinct, or exceptional, these characteristics are.

Although *Dominicanidad* as a term surfaced with the naming of the country "Dominican Republic" after the separation from Haiti, debates surround its cultural scope. Of specific note is whether cultural manifestations related to the period before the designation of the Dominican Republic as a country should be considered part of *Dominicanidad*. This issue will be discussed in more detail below.

Conversely, the need to elaborate a distinctly and exceptionally separate *Dominicanidad*, different from other national identities, has been more pressing, particularly in terms of politics and foreign relations. It is an issue that requires Others to accept the difference, not just Dominicans themsel-

ves. Two of the better known "exceptions," are the historical and the racial.

The Dominican Republic's historical exceptionalism has been exalted since the birth of the country (W. Vega: 216). Its historical trajectory as the first continuing European colony of the Americas has been exalted and recognized by many, including UNESCO, through its declaration of Santo Domingo as a World Heritage site in 1990. This "exception" has been an integral part of the hegemonic view since its inclusion into the Dominican educational system by Salomé Ureña and Eugenio Maria de Hostos (Caballero 2009: 348; CITE). This definition of *Dominicanidad* is not without controversy, as decolonial studies of the underlying social relationships of the colonial period have shown.

On the other hand, the recognition of Dominican racial exceptionalism is relatively new. For many years, the Dominican Republic was seen as "too ordinary" by American academia, i.e. not exotic or foreign enough (see discussion in Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 418). However, since the mid 1990s, the study of the exceptional perception of African heritage within Dominican racial and national identity has gained notoriety (see notable publications by Martínez 1995; Baud 1996; San Miguel 1997; Austerlitz 1997; Torres-Saillant 1998, 1999; Sagás 2000; Howard 2001; Duany 2006; Candelario 2007; Simmons 2009; Rodríguez 2011; Victoriano-Martínez 2014; Mayes 2014; Reyes-Santos 2015, Thornton and Ubiera 2019, among others). As will be discussed in more detail below, this perception has become a part of subaltern metanarratives of *Dominicanidad*.

Unfortunately, the focus on exceptionality has contributed to the creation of increasingly more narrow definitions of *Dominicanidad* in recent years. This narrowing has led to a perception that there is something inherently wrong with *Dominicanidad* itself, as opposed to problems with the narration, or description, of the concept. Moreover, even those who complain about *Dominicanidad*'s narrow focus seem to

limit their scope to intangible manifestations of culture, such as language, ideology, and expressive culture, leaving tangible manifestations to the side (see Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 417; 422). This is particularly true for archaeology (KIRAN meeting).

This essay will use the case study of Santo Domingo's World Heritage dossier as base to discuss differing metanarratives of *Dominicanidad*, and how Historical Archaeology theory and method can advocate for a wider, more inclusive, more ubiquitous definition of *Dominicanidad*, particularly with regards to tangible manifestations.

Historical Archaeology and *Dominicanidad*: Theory and Method

As stated above, *Dominicanidad* is not limited to intangible issues, but can include objects that can give a visible manifestation of cultural memories (Lowenthal 1985; Tanselle 1998). Unlike documentary sources, which tend to focus on intangible cultural manifestations, Archaeology studies these tangible representations of past societies. This data can be used to create a more complete picture of the inhabitants of a particular community (Deagan and Cruxent 2002b, 4; Kulstad 2008, 17; McGuire and Paynter 1991; Scott 1994, 3; Singleton 1998). It can inform about foodways, material possessions, architecture, and urban planning, and most especially, interactions between peoples (Deetz and Dethlefson 1967; Deagan 1987, 2002a; Kulstad 2008, 17; South 1977), Most importantly, it studies the contributions of all members of the society, not just those of the dominant social, political and economic group, which is often the focus of written accounts (Kulstad 2008, 17; Little 1996, 45; Scott 1994, 3).

These manifestations can be addressed at different scales of analysis, such as regional, site, building and/or artifact (Sluyter 2001, 423). This is done through data gathered from

various sources, or avenues of inquiry (Deagan 1982; Deagan and Cruxent 2002b, 4; Deetz 1977; Jamieson 2004, 432; Little 1996, 45; Hodder 1986; Jamieson 2004, 432; Wylie 1989, 1993).

The sub-discipline of Historical Archaeology was recognized as such in the late 1960s (Orser 2001, 621). Most of in-depth historical archaeology work undertaken on Hispaniola has been done using the Processual-Plus theoretical approach - see work at Puerto Real and En Bas Saline in Haiti (Deagan 1995a, 1995b), and at La Isabela and Concepción in the Dominican Republic (Deagan and Cruxent 2002a, 2002b; Kulstad 2008; Kulstad-González 2020; Woods 1998; Cohen 1997b).

The Processual-Plus approach is not one unified theory (Hegmon 2003, 216-217), but rather identifies the most suitable paradigm to answer the research questions (Berman 2014, 7). Critical theory, particularly archaeology's connection to contemporary political, cultural, and social contexts, is an important part of the Processual-Plus paradigm (Berman 2014, 7; Hegmon 2003, 230; Trigger 2007), even when it is not the focus of the research.

This essay will examine the research questions presented below from the Decoloniality approach specifically proposed by Walter Mignolo (2011). Like other Decolonial approaches, Mignolo's Decoloniality proposes "de- linking" Latin American discourse from the sources of colonial power (Mignolo 2011, xxvii). This does not imply a rejection of the status quo, but it is rather an acknowledgement that artifacts and interactions may be functioning at more than one level at a time (Potter 1994, 126; Silliman 2010, 39). It gives all sources equal weight within the analysis (Little 1996, p. 45; Mignolo 1999, p. 239; McGuire and Paynter 1991; Scott 1994, p. 3; Silliman 2010, p. 42).

However, Mignolo's emphasizes the prioritization of the voice of the colonized (Mignolo 1999, 239). Too often, within the coloniality of power, interactions occur between people who travel and arrive, and others who are stationary and receive, with priority given to the travelers (Mignolo 1999, 239). This

priority can reach a point where the "stationary receivers" (and their culture) are objects of discussion, and yet they themselves are not invited to participate in the debate (Mignolo 1999, 241). More precisely, this approach was chosen because it can be useful in the comparison of *Dominicanidad* metanarratives created by those "on the island," and those used/created abroad.

It is not the purpose here to record all existing definitions of *Dominicanidad* (for an exhaustive review, see Thornton and Ubiera 2019), but rather to focus on the ones related to the World Heritage designation, and its influence on archaeological investigations in the Dominican Republic. The World Heritage dossier will be used as a case study to explore the following questions related to the *Dominicanidad*. Historical Archaeology research methods will be used to answer these questions. The answers will come from both tangible and intangible evidence. More specifically, the questions to answer here, are:

- Does the World Heritage site designation cover all aspects of *Dominicanidad*?
- Are Dominican scholars from outside the island obsessed with racial exceptionalism?
- Can Historical Archaeology offer a more inclusive view of *Dominicanidad*?

In the tangible sense, special focus will be centered on the evidence supporting the claim that the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan was first used in Santo Domingo, and possibly elsewhere on the island during the 16th century. In Historical Archaeology, it is assumed that the archaeological artifact distribution pattern on the landscape is a result of actions stemming from ideas and values shared by a group of people (Binford 1977, 30; Cordell and Plog 1979; Pestle et al. 2013, 2). Pioneered by Stanley South (1977) in British-American archaeological sites, this Pattern approach assumes that human lifeways and deathways follow an organized design, and are

not random or capricious (Deagan 1996, 154; Harris 1974, 4). Kathleen Deagan (1983b) later adapted South's methodology to study 18th century material culture deposits in St. Augustine, Florida. However, she had to modify South's patterns after noticing that the distribution patterns of discarded artifacts in domestic areas at these sites were different from those at Anglo-American sites. Later, Charles Ewen (2000) applied the St. Augustine Pattern to 16th century Puerto Real site in northern Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti).

In both St. Augustine and in Puerto Real, the artifact and structural distribution pattern showed the existence of Ibero-American Grid Town Plan distribution. This model organized cities using a grid pattern, with streets radiating from a central plaza, and intersecting at right angles to form an orderly, rectangular, and defined space. The main square would be surrounded by the church, government offices, military headquarters, and elite residences. This main plaza was the physical and social center of the city. It was surrounded by the church, government offices, military headquarters, and elite residences. In the 16th century, this settlement pattern reflected the ideal Spanish social canons: Catholicism, nobility, and purity of blood (Deagan 2011: 43). This model stressed the cultural and economic separatism (class and race separation) on the landscape (Charlton and Fournier 2011: 127; Rodríguez-Alegría 2005: 558; Voss 2008: 870).

The intangible evidence to be discussed is related to the differing metanarratives of *Dominicanidad* related to the World Heritage designation. In postmodern and critical theory, metanarratives are chronicles that aim to legitimize particular historical meaning, experiences or knowledge, often with the purpose of gaining political power, and controlling perceptions of the world (Lyotard 1984; Voss 2015, p. 354, 356). Metanarratives often eclipse all other possible narrations pertaining to a particular place and/or time (Voss 2015, p. 354). Their danger is that they are often mistaken as reality, rather than being recognized as subjective representations modified according to the audience, and circumstances, in which they

are told (Voss 2015, p. 353). Even worse, they become perceived cornerstones of identity formation (Mignolo 1999: 239).

As stated above, the Dominican Republic has struggled with the definition of *Dominicanidad* since its creation (Sørensen 1997, 297; Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 417). Although not the first to consider the importance of *Dominicanidad*, Professor Eugenio María de Hostos was the first to try to define the *Dominicanidad* concept in a manner which can be taught in schools, i.e. through the teaching of Dominican history - its roots, ethic and moral principles, and love of country (Caballero 2009: 348). His colleague at the normal schools, Salomé Ureña, used the ruins of monumental colonial structures as visible representations of these elements, most notably in her poem "Ruinas" (Rosario-Velez 79; García-Polanco 2020).

This idea was not new. In fact, many official national histories are based on historical metanarratives in Latin America and in the Caribbean. Historian Luis San Miguel (2001a: 7; 2001b: 37) has classified Caribbean historical metanarratives into four broad categories: economic, geopolitical, hegemonic power/ subaltern agency, and identity.

The *economic* metanarrative category is closely tied to the Atlantic plantation economy, particularly sugar, believed to be common characteristic of all Caribbean islands (Curtin 1990; San Miguel 2001: 47; Wagley 1957: 3-13). Of particular interest is the belief that any apparent cultural and geographical differences that may have influenced enslaved peoples' lifeways on the different islands, was overridden by the slavery condition (BG 2016: 11). This metanarrative is particularly prevalent when dealing with the colonial history of non-Spanish islands during the 17th and 18th centuries (BG 2016: 2; San Miguel 2001: 46-47), although some have suggested this metanarrative may apply to the Spanish Caribbean as well, going so far as coining a term for the phenomenon - "repeating island" (Benítez-Rojo 1996).

The *geopolitical* metanarrative category is based on the idea that some places are destined to be conflictive due to their

geographical location (San Miguel 2001: 45). In the Dominican Republic, the main supporter of this narrative was Juan Bosch, as explained in his book, *From Christopher Columbus to Fidel Castro: The Caribbean, Imperial Border* (1986). This metanarrative finds geography, rather than economic systems, to be the main determinant in Caribbean lifeways.

The *hegemonic power/subaltern agency* metanarrative category is related to the power struggles generated by conflicts (San Miguel 2001a: 7; San Miguel 2001b: 61), geopolitical or otherwise. In recent times, this category has grown to include metanarratives told from the points of view of the subalterns, or non-elites, who are resisting authority and hierarchies of domination, but do not include the hegemonic elements being resisted for proper comparison (San Miguel 2001b: 61; Scott 1985, 1990).

The last metanarrative category, *identity*, is the most prevalent in Caribbean Studies. Interestingly, it is based more on anthropology and social analysis than on history. As San Miguel (2001: 61), well describes, identity is not only who one "is," or imagines to be, but also the identity one wants to achieve.

The most common Caribbean metanarrative is the one of creolization, that is, the mixing and interaction between different cultures and societies (Khan 2001; Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 413). Of great concern is the political identity of mixed peoples, how mixed peoples are classified, and/or how they classify themselves (Guitar 2015). That is, whether they identified themselves as a separate group, and if so, do they identify with the elite (White, Western-thinkers) or with the subaltern (Bellegarde-Smith 1983, 1985; Nicholls 1996; San Miguel 2001: 56). This is important because the politics of belonging concerns access to material resources (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 417).

A concern of late, however, in identity metanarratives, has been the struggle to remember that identity metanarratives are based on social constructs, which are functions of context and perspective (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 416). More to the

point, the Dominican context and perspective are particular to the Dominican Republic, and Dominican people cannot replicate the racial logistics of other national identities.

Of even greater concern is the idea that because these identity metanarratives are disimilar to those of other countries, that there is something inherently wrong with *Dominicanidad*, i. e., Dominican culture. To believe this indirectly implies that there is something inherently wrong with the Dominican people. This is far from the truth. The fact that current metanarratives do not explain *Dominicanidad* accurately does not mean that *Dominicanidad* as a concept is somehow flawed. The metanarratives may be flawed, but not *Dominicanidad* itself. This will be explored in more detail below.

Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo - World Heritage Site

World Heritage sites are places that are considered to have cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance for all humanity, not just a particular country (UNESCO 2020). These are chosen by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Of importance is the recognition of Outstanding Universal Value, which is determined by the meeting of a series of special criteria (UNESCO 2020). In other words, a World Heritage site designation looks for exceptionality at a worldwide scale.

The Colonial City of Santo Domingo was designated a World Heritage site in 1990 (CITE). Its inscription was based on 3 of the 6 applicable criteria at the time. The original nomination documentation had included not only the Colonial City of Santo Domingo, but also the archaeological sites of Concepción de la Vega and La Isabela. After several failed nomination attempts, the World Heritage Committee allowed for the submission of a revised nomination only presenting the section on Santo Domingo (Rigol 2014: 6). The Colonial

City of Santo Domingo was inscribed at the 14th session of the World Heritage Committee, interestingly without a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (Rigol 2014: 3).

Santo Domingo's nomination dossier was largely based on the Strategic Plan for the Integral Revitalization of the Colonial City of Santo Domingo. This master plan, created in 1967, with funding from Esso Standard Oil, aimed to to restore Santo Domingo's Colonial City area, and was created by a group of conservation architects, led by Arq. Eugenio Peréz-Montás but supervised by President Balaguer (Ubrí 2016). The plan also created the Oficina de Patrimonio Cultural, then led by Arq. Manuel Delmonte Urraca, and the Comisión de Monumentos de Santo Domingo, then led by José Ramón Báez López-Penha (Ubrí 2016). The plan's main aim was (and continues to be) to return Santo Domingo's colonial city to its 16th century heyday (Ubrí 2016).

The Strategic Plan was largely based on the 1944 version of Balaguer's *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica* (Ubrí 2016). (The book was later edited and reprinted three more times - 1969, 1973, and 1992). The book presents the monumental buildings in Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone through the musings of a romantic poet remembering the city's glory during the 16th century, as evidenced through the surviving remains.

Unfortunately, the Romantic nature of this musings, poetic yet disorganized, makes both the book and the Stategic Plan difficult to follow (For discussion of the book, see Serrata 2013). Several UNESCO reports (2018) highlight the disorganized way in which the Colonial City is managed. Comments on issues such as the authenticity of buildings at the time of inscription, seem to point to lack of scientific rigor at the level required by UNESCO (Rigol 2014).

In the end, in spite of the importance of Balaguer, and the *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*, in the nomination process, the actual declaration of nomination was based more on the archaeological/architectural work done by Erwin Wal-

ter Palm. Palm, rather than focusing on the outstanding values of individual monuments, focused on their layout on the landscape. This urban grid layout, known as the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan, was first used in Santo Domingo in the Americas (CITE). On a more practical level, it allowed for the inclusion of several buildings in one declaration, all with equal ranking.

It is important here to define the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan and explain its importance. In the 16th century, the Spanish Crown implemented a settlement pattern that reflected the ideal social canons: Catholicism, nobility, and purity of blood (Deagan 2011: 43). This model organized cities using a grid pattern, with streets radiating from a central plaza, and adding intersecting streets at right angles to form an orderly, rectangular, and defined space. The main square would be surrounded by the church, government offices, military headquarters, and elite residences, forming the physical and social center of the city. This model stressed the cultural and economic separatism (class and race separation) on the landscape (Charlton and Fournier 2011: 127; Rodríguez-Alegría 2005: 558; Voss 2008: 870).

More specifically, this summary presents the Nomination commissions considerations (ICOMOS 2014):

The criteria for the inscription were the following:

(ii) **Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town- planning or landscape design;** Professor Lemaire had remarked that the urban grid with a checker shape employed for Santo Domingo was later adopted as a model for almost all towns in the New World.

(iv) **Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;** Lemaire´s report associated this criterion with the existence of

a great cultural heritage with its gothic buildings, unique within this region of the world.

(vi) **Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.** This was related by M. Lemaire to the historical significance of the Colonial City at a world wide level, considering it was the first European town in the New World, the departing point of a Conquest and of a cultural influence-perhaps discussible-but that transformed the face of a complete continent.

Processual-Plus Analysis of *Dominicanidad*, as Presented in the World Heritage Dossier

As stated above, it is not the purpose of this essay to record, or analyze, all existing definitions of *Dominicanidad*, but rather focus on the ones related to the World Heritage designation, and their influence on archaeological investigations in the Dominican Republic. More specifically, answers were sought for the following questions:

- Does the World Heritage site designation cover all aspects of *Dominicanidad*?
- Are Dominican scholars from outside the island obsessed with racial exceptionalism?
- Can Historical Archaeology offer a more inclusive view of *Dominicanidad*?

The results presented below are divided into two parts. First there will be a review of the metanarratives, divided into hegemonic and subaltern. The second section will deal with the pertinent archaeological data.

Apples: Metanarrative of Tangible Hegemonic History as Dominicanidad

There are many hegemonic metanarratives of *Dominicanidad* functioning at different moments at any given time. It is not uncommon for those in authority to pick and choose amongst these for the appropriate one needed to achieve a particular goal. A discussion of these is beyond the goal of this essay, which is interested in the role these play in the incorporation of archaeology and tangible representations of culture into *Dominicanidad,* as seen in the World Heritage dossier.

As mentioned above, the Dominican Republic is a relatively young country preoccupied with the scope of characteristics considered to be culturally relevant for Dominicans, and how distinct, or exceptional, these characteristics are. This is a decision often taken by the State, and is taught to its citizens. It is important to remember that identity is not only who one "is," or imagines to be, but also the identity one wants to achieve (San Miguel 2001: 61).

The Dominican State had to decide who to "Other" from in the Othering process, and chose to side with their historically Spanish roots, as opposed to the British roots of the United States, or the French roots of Haiti. It must be noted that this division was originally based on political and cultural characteristics, not necessarily racial ones. This came later, in the 20th century.

These chosen political and cultural characteristics were related to the moment considered to be of greatest importance of the new country in World History –the 16th century. The underlying metanarrative would be that, no matter how many times the country failed, it would rise again. This is most famously exemplified by the last stanza of the Dominican National Anthem, which is traditionally sung at least once a week in Dominican schools– "Que si fuese mil veces esclava, otras tantas ser libre sabrá…" [For if it were a thousand times a slave, That many times it will be free]. The 16th century mo-

numental ruins found around the country, but particularly in Santo Domingo, were said to be a reminder that it was possible to achieve that pinnacle of importance and glory again because it had happened before.

The 16th century as the pinnacle of tangible *Dominicanidad* implies particular exceptional characteristics, implemented within the Dominican secular education system by Puerto Rican Hostos, Dominican colleague Salomé Ureña de Henriquez, and her son, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, to a lesser degree, starting in 1880 (Perdomo 2015; Rosario-Vélez 2018: 70). The first being that Dominicanidad was a continuous whole since the arrival of the Spanish, not since independence from Haiti and the official denomination as "Dominican Republic." This implied that the the ideal social canons of Catholicism, nobility, and purity of blood, strived for in the implementation of the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan, should be the values the new country should have as objectives. This would be physically demonstrated by housing and archaeological artifacts separated by class and race within the city (Charlton and Fournier 2011: 127; Rodríguez-Alegría 2005: 558; Voss 2008: 870).

This became the foundational hegemonic metanarrative of the country, later expanded upon and modified in the 20th century by Trujillo and Balaguer. It differs from the economic plantation metanarrative, predominant in the Caribbean, where agricultural production via slavery during the 17th and 18th centuries is the main characteristic. The Spanish colonial focus on urban, rather than rural environments, as well as the virtual disappearance of the sugar industry in the 1580s on Hispaniola (Cebrián-Echarri 2010), were not conducive to making the plantation metanarrative hegemonic in the Dominican Republic.

In the 20th century, Balaguer expanded on the "Grand 16th century" metanarrative through the *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*. It was not until the 17th century that other, non-Spanish, European powers began to colonize the Caribbean (Knight 1990: 335). French Saint Domingue does

not officially become a colony until 1697 (Knight 1990, p. 336). By declaring the 16th century as the pinnacle of the colony, there is an implication that the best times in the Caribbean were when in was all Spanish. Consequently, according to this metanarrative, non-Spanish Caribbean colonies do not play a part in *Dominicanidad*. Needless to say, this includes French Saint Domingue and Haiti. Conversely, there is a push for great affinity with the rest of the Spanish Caribbean, and Latin America (Caballero 2009: 348).

Interestingly, although this metanarrative patently prioritizes Spanish material culture to be the most influential within *Dominicanidad,* it does acknowledge that Dominicaness is a mix of Spanish, Indigenous and African ancestry. This is famously represented by the statues of Bartolomé de las Casas, Lemba and Enriquillo, all historical figures of the 16th century Spanish colony of Hispaniola, in front of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano. However, like in the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the Spanish statue (and culture) is front and center. Most importantly, it presents a metanarrative in which Haiti is not present and plays no role.

In recent times, there has been some acceptance of a more prominent role of African heritage within this metanarrative, particularly to explain certain cultural traditions considered to be "folkloric" and related to certain cultural practices (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 417). This is quite possibly related to the inscription of the Cultural Space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, i.e. the recognition as Intangible World Heritage (2001). However, within this hegemonic metanarrative there is little acceptance of prominent African influence in everyday life.

A large part of this lack of acceptance is the fact that there are few tangible representations of "African" culture on the Dominican landscape and in Dominican museums. Acceptance of Indigenous heritage has been easier, in large part due to the large amounts of Indigenous artifacts found by archaeo-

logists since the first excavations undertaken in the later half of the 19th century (See Alberti-Bosch [1912] 2011; Ober 1893).

Finally, it must be noted that, although this metanarrative was one of the first to attempt to describe Dominicanidad, it was not the dominant metanarrative of *Dominicanidad* during the 20th century. Other metanarratives held greater political power, such as the one presented in Balaguer's book, *La Isla al Reves* (1983). In this book, Balaguer presented a metanarrative which attempted to explain the racial/national relation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, absent in the hegemonic metanarrative presented here.

Oranges: Subaltern Metanarratives of Dominicanidad

As noted above, the Dominican Republic is still struggling with the definition of *Dominicanidad*. Neither the hegemonic metanarrative presented in the *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*, nor the one of racial/national distinction presented in *La Isla al Revés* offer a complete and inclusive view of Dominicanidad. For many, there is a need to counter the definition of *Dominicanidad* with characteristics found beyond these hegemonic metanarratives.

There is a belief among these objectors that the *Dominicanidad* metanarrative being taught at schools (and presented above), needs to be taught from the point of view of the subalterns, and greater focus should be placed on narratives of resistance to domination. Given the Dominican Republic's racial configuration, this amounted to placing more importance of Afrodescendant history and culture. This, however, has never been accepted in the hegemonic sphere, and Afrocentric *Dominicanidad* is still considered subaltern, not hegemonic.

The lack of tangible monuments and artifacts identified as "African" has also contributed to the marginalization of Afrodescendant culture within *Dominicanidad*. Unfortunately, rather than focusing on finding and/or identifying tangible

examples of the African Diaspora within the Dominican Republic, most subaltern researchers have focused on the intangible aspects of *Dominicanidad*, particularly "race" and "nation" (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 413). More specifically, on the denial of Blackness and the country's relation to its neighbor, Haiti.

Indeed, to identify characteristics of *Dominicanidad* not imposed by the hegemonic authority, it is necessary to undergo a process of comparison to differentiate from an identified "Other" (Edwards 1967, Vol. 1: 76). Often in comparisons one characteristic is considered as "normal," and those not complying as "flawed," or in the best of cases, "exceptional." The question then is, who is authorized to define what is "normal" in this scenario? Is it all Dominicans? Is it only Dominicans on the island? Is it UNESCO? Is it scholars (foreign and/or domestic) studying the Dominican Republic?

This is not as straight forward as it may seem. Unlike other national identities which firmly self identify their own characteristics, *Dominicanidad* has always needed the validation of travelers (outsiders). It is important to remember that the first efforts to teach *Dominicanidad* were led by a Puerto Rican scholar, Eugenio María de Hostos. This need for validation by Others, as well as comparison to their cultures, has led to many Dominican scholars to believe there is something inherently flawed about *Dominicanidad* itself, with Dominican culture/society itself, as opposed to it being a case of the use of flawed metanarratives which do not reflect *Dominicanidad*'s actual cultural underpinnings.

There are several metanarratives of that propose this idea of Flawed/Exceptional *Dominicanidad*, but only three will be highlighted here. One was created on the island, the other in Haiti, and the last within the Dominican scholar diaspora in the United States.

The first Flawed *Dominicanidad* metanarrative to be examined is that of "historical arrhythmia," proposed by Juan Bosch (Cebrián-Echarri 2010; Fernandez 2010). Bosch proposes that

the Dominican historical trajectory is unlike that of the rest of the Caribbean due to the irregular communication between the Spanish Crown and Spanish Santo Domingo throughout the colonial period, due first to foreign pirate attacks, and later by the absorption into the French empire (Cebrián-Echarri 2010). This arrythmia made the Dominican Republic achieve capitalism at a much later time than the rest of Latin America, causing social marginality, poverty, and even Haitian migration processes (see discussion in Cebrián-Echarri 2010). Bosch also considered the country's failure to produce a viable sugar plantation industry, like the rest of the Caribbean, another cause of arrhythmia (Rosario 2014).

The second metanarrative of Flawed *Dominicanidad* to review is the best-known Haitian metanarrative on Dominicanidad - Jean Price-Mars' claim that Dominicans suffer from "collective bovarysme." Price-Mars, an ethno-anthropologist, was the main leader of the Francophone Negritude movement in Haiti in the 1930s (Embassy of Haiti in Washington, DC. 2020). Together with his students, Louis Diaquoi, Lorimer Denis, and Francois Duvalier, he started the Griots movement in Haiti in 1932 (Smith 2009). They believed that mulattos in Haiti were too linked to the interests of the French elite, and that they should be more interested in exploring their African roots, particularly those related to slavery (Balaguer 1983: 142-43; Dumas 2005; Smith 2009). This identification with the elite is known as "collective bovarysme," as per a description in Price-Mars' book, "Thus Spoke the Uncle" (1928). Price-Mars considered that the mulattos in the Dominican Republic went further, to the point of denying their African roots (Price-Mars 1995; San Miguel 2000: 241-42).

The third metanarrative of Flawed *Dominicanidad* is prevalent amongst scholars focusing on the Dominican Republic in the United States. It focuses particularly on definitions of Afrodescent, nation and race within *Dominicanidad* (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 413). In broad strokes, it is concerned with the exceptional vision of race and nation present in the Dominican Republic, *i. e.* that Dominicans are not black, and

the association of blackness to Haiti. This metanarrative contains an undercurrent which focuses on the need to "educate" Dominicans about their rightful (Afrodescendant) heritage, fitting into a long time tradition of seeing Caribbean peoples as "troubled and in need of liberation" in North American academia (Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 419-20), but also in a way trying to imitate Hostos' motivation - education of the people. It must be noted that this metanarrative sees *Dominicanidad* as starting with the cultural relations at the border with Haiti, not with the arrival of the Spanish to the island (See Thornton and Ubiera 2019: 415; Sagás 1993; Wucker 1999; Turits 2002; Johnson 2002; García-Peña 2016; Martínez 2003; Martínez-Vergne 2005; Derby 1994; Adams 2006; Fumagalli 2015).

Besides presenting a vision of problems with *Dominicanidad*, these metanarratives share other similarities. The first is the focus on post-16th century temporality, particularly dealing with moments during which Spain is not the only colonial power in the Caribbean. The second is the assumption of Haiti/Haitiness as the "Other" to which *Dominicanidad* should be compared to.

Apples vs Oranges: Comparing Metanarratives of Tangible Dominicanidad

It bears repeating that a great many discussions about *Dominicanidad* involve determining which of its many metanarratives is the "real" one. Indeed, the lack of acceptance of the idea that various *Dominicanidad* metanarratives can exist concurrently may be the biggest problem within Dominican identity studies today. In fact, this is evident in the metanarratives presented here.

In other words, the hegemonic metanarrative based on tangible representations of *Dominicanidad* and the three metanarratives of Flawed *Dominicanidad* are incommensurable because, although they all deal with *Dominicanidad*, they

do not deal with the same temporality. The hegemonic metanarrative deals with the 16th century when Spain was the only European colonial power in the Caribbean. The metanarratives of Flawed *Dominicanidad* deal with later periods, in which other European colonial powers were present and Haiti already existed (for 2 out of the 3). More succinctly, the hegemonic metanarrative sees *Dominicanidad*'s starting point as the arrival of the Spanish to the Americas, while the Flawed *Dominicanidad* metanarratives see the creation of a border with Saint Domingue/Haiti and the Dominican Republic as the starting point. Despite many other common characteristics, it is not scientifically accurate to compare these two types of metanarratives, but rather there should be an acceptance that they both exist within *Dominicanidad* as a whole, but do not offer a complete view of the concept.

In the particular case study of the World Heritage dossier, it is obviously based on the hegemonic narrative presented above. The exceptionality comes from being a historical first. Not only do the three narratives of Flawed *Dominicanidad* presented above deal with the wrong time period, but in addition do not deal with tangible manifestations of *Dominicanidad*.

On another note, given that the hegemonic metanarrative is taught in most schools in the Dominican Republic, we can assume it is fairly ubiquitous. Most persons who receive schooling in the Dominican Republic have come in contact with this metanarrative, as opposed to other hegemonic metanarratives, which are part of society, but not taught in school (The anti-Haitian metanarrative in *La Isla al Revés*, for example). For this reason, most people schooled in the hegemonic metanarrative presented here would consider a definition of *Dominicanidad* devoid of tangible culture, and focusing mostly on the definition of "Blackness," as "obsessed with race."

The next question to consider, then, is how to find these tangible manifestations of Afrodescendant culture within *Dominicanidad*. Are they, indeed, relegated to a few intangible manifestations in folkloric practices, as the hegemonic meta-

narrative currently maintains? Can archaeological investigations help in this quest?

Archaeological Analysis

Historical Archaeology has played a role in the hegemonic narrative since soon after its creation. Adolfo de Hostos, Eugenio Maria de Hostos' son, born in Santo Domingo, became one of Puerto Rico's first archaeologists. The first important archaeological explorations undertaken in the Dominican Republic were part of the preparations of the Colombian Exposition of 1893. Both US and Spanish investigators came to recover archaeological artifacts related to the 15th and 16th century contact and colonization, not only in Santo Domingo, but around the island (Ober 1893). Although both groups collected large number of artifacts, these did not confirm or deny the "Grand 16th century" metanarrative, since many of these artifacts were similar to ones found elsewhere in the early colonial Americas.

In the 1940s, coinciding with the 450th Anniversary of Columbus's arrival, the Dominican government sponsored a nationwide survey of Dominican monumental architecture, particularly focusing on standing 16th century structures (Palm 1951, 1955a, 1955b). In 1955, Erwin Walter Palm, one of the archaeologists involved in the project, suggested focusing archaeological investigations on the identification of the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan not only in Santo Domingo, but also in other parts of the Dominican Republic. He based this change on historical information stating that by 1509, Governor Nicolás de Ovando had either created or reorganized 16 settlements on Hispaniola according to this model (Cassá 1978, 42; Charlevoix 1730, 196; Deagan 1999, 9; García 1906, 65; Moya-Pons 1987; Sauer 1966). The exact list of settlements varies according to the sources, but all agree that only two were considered "ciudades" [cities], while the rest were considered "villas" [towns]. These first two European cities

in the Americas were Santo Domingo and Concepción de la Vega (Concepción 1981; Herrera-Tordesillas 1601; Marte 1981; Peguero 1975, 154-155; Rodríguez-Morel 2000, xvii). Palm was only able to determine an imperfect grid town plan in Santo Domingo (Palm 1955a: 75), but not at Concepción de la Vega.

However, because the Strategic Plan for the Integral Revitalization of the Colonial City of Santo Domingo was based on Balaguer's *Guía Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*, rather than on Palm's work, during the restoration of Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone in the 1970s, most of the attention was paid to individual buildings, and not the grid layout (Coste 2014; Ubrí 2016). In spite of all the information gathered, when the various individual buildings were proposed to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, they did not meet the criteria. By the 1980s, Palm's idea of focusing on the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan was revived (Palm 1974; Ubrí 2016) and supported by archaeological and architectural research compiled by the project's director, Pérez-Montás (1984). Finally, in 1990, the *Comisión Dominicana Permanente para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento y Evangelización de América's* nomination of Santo Domingo as Cultural Patrimony of the World, was accepted and approved, based on its "monumental heritage ensemble," i.e. being the first example of the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan in the Americas (Pérez-Montás 1998; Ubrí 2016).

Unfortunately, due to an attempt to both confirm and replicate this finding elsewhere in the country (Coste 2014), the gathering of tangible data, both archaeological and architectural, became increasingly biased, particularly at Concepción de la Vega, the "other" first city, and at La Isabela, the first Spanish settlement.

Part of the Concepción de la Vega archaeological site lies within the Parque Nacional Histórico y Arqueológico de la Vega Vieja (known as La Vega Vieja), found 8 km north of the current city of La Vega, at the foot of the Santo Cerro, in the La Vega province. In spite of its short period of occupation

(1494-1564), the city of Concepción de la Vega was as big, if not bigger, than the current colonial city of Santo Domingo, according to a survey undertaken by the University of Florida in the 1990s. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1562 (Kulstad 2008; Kulstad-González 2020).

Meanwhile, La Isabela was the first planned Castilian settlement in the Americas. It was founded on the north coast of what is now the Dominican Republic in 1493 but was moved to the south coast in 1498 (Deagan 2002c: 1989). Nueva Isabela, on the eastern shore of the Ozama River, was later renamed Santo Domingo (CITE).

The first bias came from digging with an architectural, rather than archaeological focus (González 1984). Rather than trying to determine the layouts of Concepción de la Vega and La Isabela, excavations were limited to areas around masonry remains. Attempts to determine these settlements' layouts did not occur until the 1990s (Deagan 1999). Analysis of the data gathered at Concepción de la Vega seem to point to the existence of a grid plan layout there (Kulstad 2008: 114), but the same was not true of La Isabela. Explorations showed that La Isabela's its main buildings were aligned with major geographic features such as the cliffs and coastline, not on a grid (Deagan 2002c: 1990). It is highly likely that this discovery may have caused the elimination from La Isabela from the nomination dossier.

A second broad bias was related to the material collected and recorded in the archaeological assemblage. By stopping excavation at the "Spanish floor," or what is assumed to be Ovando's 1508-1509 floor, the artifacts recovered would necessarily be from the post-European/African contact period. Additionally, an interview of the archaeological workers involved in excavations, both in Santo Domingo and Concepción de la Vega during the 1970s and 1980s, mentioned a bias towards primarily recording "white ceramics," or white-glazed wares, particularly of the kind known as "majolica," often defined as the "index artifact" of Spanish colonization (Voss 2012: 40).

This designation is in part due to Dr. John Goggin's research focus during the 1950s (Goggin 1968; Kulstad-González 2020: 36). He conducted a Caribbean-wide investigation in which he collected samples of different types of majolicas, while not paying attention to other ceramic types.

A high frequency of majolica is also believed to be an indicator of high-status Spanish households (Deagan 1983a, 1983b; Shepard 1983). As expected within the Ibero-American Grid Town Plan, more majolicas were found in the excavations of buildings closest to the Cathedral of Santo Domingo (Coste 2018), confirming that the higher status households were indeed closer to the main Cathedral square of the grid. A similar pattern was also found at La Vega Vieja (Deagan 1999; Woods 1999).

Interestingly, in spite of these major biases towards the recovery of Spanish related material, the archaeological material assemblage in both Colonial Santo Domingo and in La Vega Vieja at the micro level is surprisingly diverse. Although there was a priority in the *recording* of "white ceramics," all types of ceramics were collected and stored. When re-analyzing the excavated assemblages it is possible to see that most ceramics were not majolicas, or even European, and all of these were found together. It is important to point this out, since archaeological reports of the 1970s did not mention this important fact, preferring to analyze artifacts by origin type (i.e. European together; Indigenous together), creating an illusion that some type of spatial cultural separation between classes and/or ethnic groups existed.

However, cultural separatism became difficult to sustain with the discovery of colonowares. Also known as transcultural wares, these are ceramic types with attributes borrowing from two very distinct pottery and cultural traditions – European, Indigenous, and/or African (Aultman et al. 2014, 43; Deagan 2002; Roland and Ashley 2000, 55). Elsewhere in the Caribbean, these wares are believed to have been produced by Afrodescendant peoples, not Indigenous (Deetz 1977; Polhe-

mus 1977; Roland and Ashley 2000, 36). In fact, the appearance of these ceramics possibly produced by Africans prompted a return to the historical documents to learn why these artifacts were present in urban environments.

A more thorough look at the documents showed a significant population of Afrodescendants, both in Santo Domingo and in Concepción de la Vega in the 16th century (See Deive 1980, 1989; Kulstad 2008; Kulstad-González 2020). These were urban dwellers and workers, not limited to plantations (Kulstad 2008). Archaeologically then, some of the archaeological material found in Colonial Santo Domingo and at La Vega Vieja must have been used by Afrodescendants, yet they are not considered in the hegemonic metarrative. This may be partially due to the belief that because there are few documents available about Afrodescendant peoples, and these are mostly related to those enslaved, there must not have been many Afrodescendants present in the colony (Symanski and Souza 2007, p. 215). Although investigations about the urban dwelling Afrodescendants have been conducted elsewhere (CITE), most State sponsored archeological exploration into Afrodescendant heritage has focused on sugar mills (Coste, Peña-Bastalla and Pión, Ubri).

Conclusions and Future Research

This essay has attempted to explore the relation between historical archaeology and *Dominicanidad*. It has examined the hegemonic metanarrative of Dominicanidad presented in the World Heritage dossier related to the hegemonic metanarrative presented in Balaguer's *Guia Emocional de la Ciudad Romántica*. It has also examined subaltern metanarratives which question this hegemonic assertion. This essay also reanalyzed the related archaeological material using a Processual Plus approach.

The analysis has yielded several important finds related to historical archaeology and *Dominicanidad*. The most important being that, although the exclusion of non-Spanish cultural elements in the hegemonic metanarrative has been noted, the fact that subaltern metanarratives do not address tangible cultural elements of *Dominicanidad* has not been widely acknowledged. This has unwillingly pigeon-holed Dominican historical archaeology into upholding the hegemonic narrative of *Dominicanidad*.

As the archaeological analysis presented above shows, the tangible expressions of culture found through archaeological methods do not always come from European culture and can be objects which were used by people from all ethnic/cultural/social groups. Just as the hegemonic metanarrative has been critiqued for choosing not to acknowledge widespread Afrodescendant (and Indigenous to a certain degree) influence in *Dominicanidad*, so should subaltern metanarratives be critiqued for not dealing with tangible culture.

Additionally, little effort has been done to identify and incorporate "African/Afrodescendant/Afrodominican" tangible cultural elements within subaltern narratives/metanarratives. Indeed, this is a major flaw in subaltern metanarratives of *Dominicanidad*, not in *Dominicanidad* itself. In other words, the fact that *Dominicanidad* metanarratives do not deal with tangible Afrodescendant expressions does not mean *Dominicanidad* excludes them from its definition. These tangible expressions of Afrodescendancy must exist in the tangible record, because their users existed and still it exist. The flaw has been that they have not been correctly identified and/or described.

In this regard, an additional concern would be whether historical archeologists should strive to have one particular type of metanarrative incorporate their findings (hegemonic/subaltern), or whether the information found should be the basis of a totally new metanarrative. This is not as straight forward as it may seem, given the widespread economic consequences

resulting from a change in the Outstanding Universal Value statement related to a World Heritage designation.

Careful thought must be undertaken on this matter, but at the same time, it is important to equally acknowledge and value all physical representations of *Dominicanidad*. It is imperative not to repeat the mistake of substituting one flawed metanarrative for another, but rather to strive to define *Dominicanidad* in a more inclusive manner, both at the social and academic level.